

Thoughts on Furies?

LGBTQ+ phobia can hide in some strange places...

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Abstract

By common definition, the “furry” fan community is a broad but relatively obscure fandom centered around a shared interest in animal characters in various artistic contexts, from film to costume. The popular name for an individual fan is a “furry” (plural “furries”). Beyond this basic definition, the fandom is also a majority-LGBTQ+ community. Simultaneously, it also manages to be highly stigmatized, ridiculed, and, in popular media, historically misrepresented (*Roberts et al. 2023*). More recently, the furry fandom is even among the latest targets for moral panic and political alarmism (*Weill 2022; F.U.R.R.I.E.S. Act, 2025*). Through conducting a survey both online and in-person, this project investigates the rising suggestion that personal unfavorable attitudes toward furries may be related to unfavorable attitudes toward diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page #</u>
• <i>Abstract</i>	1
• <i>Table of Contents</i>	1
• <i>Introduction</i>	2
• <i>Research Question</i>	4
• <i>Data Sources</i>	4
• <i>Data Engineering</i>	4
• <i>Ethics</i>	6
• <i>Context</i>	8
• <i>Survey Design</i>	9
○ <i>Questionnaire Section: Furries</i>	12
○ <i>Questionnaire Section: Sexual Orientation</i>	31

○ Questionnaire Section: Gender Identity	45
○ Questionnaire Section: Supplemental Questions	61
● Analysis	67
○ Scoring Favorability	67
○ Sub-question 1	70
○ Sub-question 2	71
○ Sub-question 3	72
● Conclusion	73
● Definitions	74
● Acknowledgements	75
● Links	76
● References	77

Introduction

On a scale from one to five, how familiar are you with furies? How cringeworthy, likeable, strange, cute, unsettling, or abhorrent do you find them? And where might these feelings be coming from?

There are two things about furies that I found interesting enough to be worth focusing this project on. The first is that they are pretty famously stigmatized, regarded as anything from a good subject for cringe content, to sex perverts, to identity-confused people rejecting their humanity. The phenomenon of the furry fandom as a stigmatized group is well documented, including in publications from the International Anthropomorphic Research Project (IARP) (Roberts *et al.* 2023), so I feel little need to justify it with data. As a personal anecdote, among the first things I learned about furies, as a teenager in high school, was that it was cool to condemn and make fun of them if I wanted to fit in with my peers. After all, they are the first image on the Wikipedia page for cringe culture (*"Cringe culture,"* 2026), a practice well known by former teens of my generation of making fun of the weird and socially awkward. More contemporarily, you may hear some amount of alarmism in the news about furry kids, including unsubstantiated rumors about them demanding litter boxes in public school restrooms (Weill, 2022; Roberts, 2022; Talarico, 2025). At its worst, anti-furry hate has even culminated in violence such as the 2014 gas attack against Chicago's Midwest Furfest convention (Chachkevitch & Ziezulewicz, 2014). But what could be so serious about stigma toward a fan community, and arguably such a weird one at that? The second very interesting thing about

furries is that they are vast-majority LGBTQ+. While the phenomenon of furry as a queer* subculture may be fairly well known at this point (*Baska, 2026*), to justify it with data, I reached out to researchers from IARP directly for some of their survey data on furry gender identity and sexual orientation, which showed only nine percent of sampled furries identifying as both heterosexual and cisgender.

These two interesting things create a third interesting thing in their intersection. It is curious when a group so prominently stigmatized or misrepresented is one with such strong associations with marginalized people, and it is tempting to assume that this prominence may be a product of homophobia and transphobia. I have lately been seeing a rising suggestion that anti-furry sentiment is related to or itself a form of anti-queer bigotry (see *Ten examples of people expressing opinions that anti-furry stigma may be related to homophobia/transphobia*), but no efforts to justify these claims with data (besides solely the statistics on queer identities within the fandom).

My project seeks to do something like that. Through surveying 200+ respondents on their attitudes toward furries, sexual orientation, and gender identity, I aim to determine whether anti-furry and anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes are significantly associated. It is important to note that it is impossible to conclude from these data alone whether individually disliking or having any amount of reservation against furries is inherently homophobic or transphobic; only whether these things tend to be related on a population scale.

Existing research into the furry fandom has largely been conducted by IARP and presented through its public face, Furscience.com. IARP presents the furry fandom as a case study of a stigmatized community, challenging that stigma with data, with the goal of improving its public perception (*Roberts et al. 2023*). Most of its research involves conducting surveys within the furry fandom and other fan communities. Though my goal is similar, my personal data collection differs in that I instead attempt to survey a sample of outside attitudes beyond the furry community, as broadly as possible. Additionally, my motivations extend beyond the interests of furries themselves, to the broader LGBTQ+ community.

In the current climate of rising political and cultural threats to the rights and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people within the United States and beyond (*ACLU, 2026*), being an effective ally is increasingly important. Strong allyship ends with concrete and ongoing action in support of pro-LGBTQ+ causes, but it also begins with a look inward at personal biases. This extends all the way down to examining small, unconscious, or seemingly innocuous gut feelings. For example, *why might some subculture with strong ties to the LGBTQ+ community make you feel a certain way?* More examples of such communities may exist (such as perhaps drag, therianthropy, and certain kink communities for example), but investigation into these is more in the scope of potential future research. This project is intended for allies to the LGBTQ+ community, presenting furries as a case study of where stigma and feelings of discomfort are common, yet associated with homophobia and transphobia. It serves as a reminder to be sensitive and respectful to any such potential instances of this association - not just furries.

**Note that I am using the word "Queer"/"queer" non-derogatorily, as an adjective describing LGBTQ+ people and communities. Historically this term has been used as a slur against the Queer/LGBTQ+ community, and though it has since been reclaimed, it should still be used with sensitivity to its origins.*

Research Question

Are unfavorable attitudes toward furies significantly associated with stigma toward LGBTQ+ people and issues? How does the relationship with furry favorability differ between attitudes toward gender identity (including transgender/non-binary/2-spirit/etc. people and issues) versus toward sexual orientation (including gay/homosexual/bisexual/pansexual/etc. people and issues)?

Data Sources

Primary Data

on attitudes toward furies, etc.

- Survey conducted by author
- Online & in-person, 2026
- 208 respondents

Outside Data

on furry gender & sexual identities

- Survey conducted by the International Anthropomorphic Research Project (Unpublished; acquired with permission from Dr. Courtney Plante)
- Online & in-person, 2023
- 995 respondents

Data Engineering

The survey itself is hosted on Google Forms. I turned on Google Forms' built-in feature that automatically updates an associated Google Sheets spreadsheet with new responses each time a response is submitted. I can manually download this spreadsheet at any point, including before I closed the survey at 208 responses, to access the raw data for any purpose, such as analysis, visualization, dashboarding, or publishing.

Instead of using the raw data for any of these purposes, I first run it through ``transform_data.Rmd`` for data cleaning. The data cleaning process involves changing column names from question text to shorter and more easily identifiable/queryable names; dropping the consent agreement column for redundancy, since all respondents selected "Agree;" dropping the timestamp column (*see Ethics*); calculating favorability scores (*see Analysis: Scoring Favorability*); and shuffling rows (*see Ethics*). The clean dataframe is then exported as ``answers_clean.csv``. It is used to perform machine learning analysis in ``Predict_Favorability.ipynb`` using scikit-learn (*see Analysis: Sub-question 3*) and then to create data visualizations in ``visualize.Rmd`` using ggplot2.

The other outputs of ``transform_data.Rmd`` are eight more CSV files. I run an SQL file ``import.sql`` to copy their data into tables in a PostgreSQL database. These create eight tables, as described below. The Database is hosted on Railway with a connection to Grafana, which

queries from these tables to create an interactive dashboard showcasing survey results (see *Links*).

- ``answer_lookup``
 - For looking up answer text, given the section (AKA “category”) a question came from and the numbered ID of the answer given (note that sections/categories are grouped in this case for having the same answer options)
 - Columns:
 - `category_number`
 - `answer_number`
 - `answer_text`
- ``category_lookup``
 - For looking up brief text descriptions of a question section given its uniquely identifying number ID
 - Columns:
 - `category_number`
 - `category_text`
- ``favorability_lookup``
 - For looking up a favorability category’s name from its numbered ID
 - Columns:
 - `fav_number`
 - `fav_description`
- ``questions``
 - All questions, including question text and section number
 - Columns
 - `question_id`
 - `question_text`
 - `category_number`
- ``respondent_favorability``
 - Three rows for each respondent (one for each favorability score type), including favorability score ID and the topic / group the favorability is directed toward
 - Columns
 - `respondent_id`
 - `towards_group`
 - `fav_number`
- ``respondent_question_answer``
 - A row for each combination of respondent and question, with the numbered ID of the answer given
 - Columns
 - `respondent_id`
 - `question_id`
 - `answer_number`
- ``respondents``
 - Redundant; effectively a list of all respondent IDs

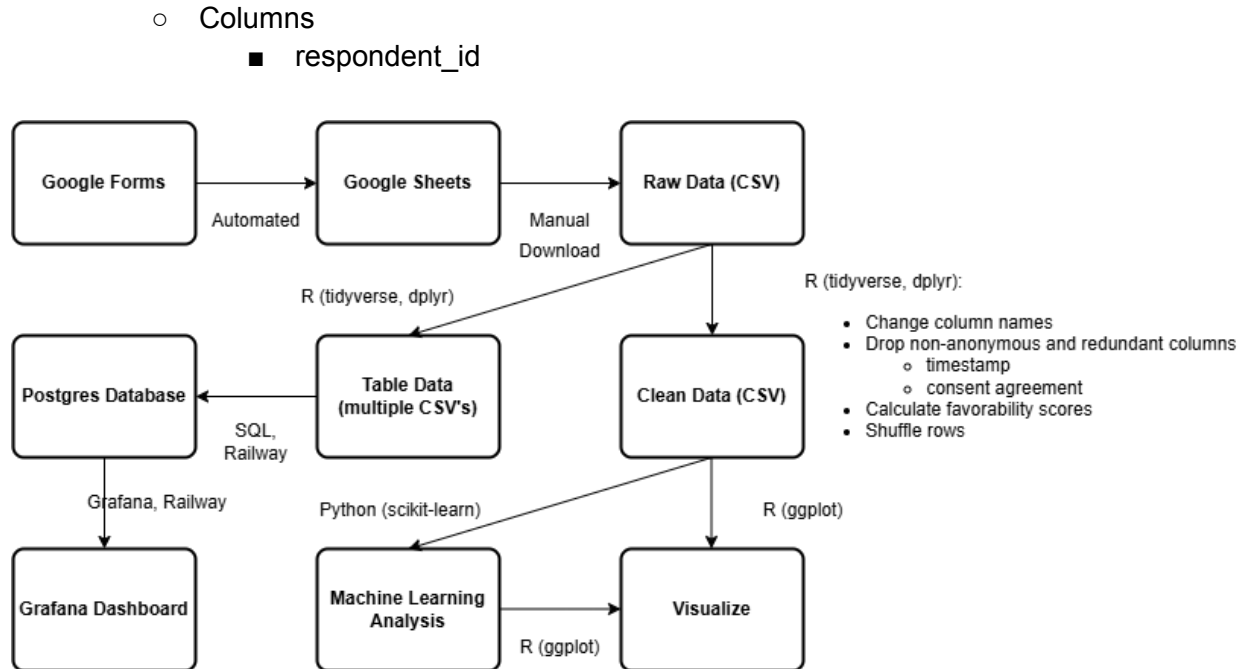


Figure 1: Data pipeline diagram

Ethics

I required informed consent from all participants and forbade response by minors under the age of 18. The entire questionnaire existed beyond the first page of the survey (hosted on Google Forms). Participants were only allowed to proceed past the first page by selecting “Agree” in response to a “Respondent Consent Agreement,” which read as follows:

All respondents must be at least 18 years old.

This survey will take some time. You may take it now or any time before Monday, July 27th.

There is no reward or compensation for taking this survey.

All responses are completely anonymous. I will not collect or ask you to provide any personally identifiable information, though you have the option to skip any questions you are not comfortable responding to. I am not responsible for and do not have access to any data Google may collect for the use of Google-owned products such as Google Forms.

Participating in this survey is completely voluntary. Even if you start the survey, you are not required to submit and may stop at any point before submitting. Because responses are completely anonymous and are not traceable to respondents, your response cannot be edited or deleted after you have submitted it. Aside from the respondent consent

agreement, all individual questions are completely optional and may be skipped for any reason.

Please do not submit more than one response per person.

The following questionnaire contains potentially disturbing content, including both implicit and explicit references to sex, sexual violence, and anti-gay and anti-transgender sentiments.

As per course policy, I will make all responses publicly available for data analysis. Once again, all responses are anonymous, and I will publish no personally identifiable information.

Please select "Agree" below if and only if you understand and consent to all of the above.

When considering releasing response data publicly, such as in a Grafana dashboard or on Kaggle, it was important to ensure that responses remain as anonymous as possible. The Google Forms questionnaire did not collect names or email addresses. By default, Google Forms exports a timestamp to Google Sheets with each response. In the process of data wrangling, I dropped the timestamp column, out of concern that some respondents could be traceable by time of response, such as by locating a comment declaring completion on one of my r/SurveyExchange posts from the same minute. In the sections on how a respondent found my survey, some methods of collection, such as scanning a QR code on a tee shirt I wore, and in-person locations, including Salem, Oregon and Vashon, Washington, had very few responses. Thus, I set all such responses to blank (NA). Lastly, out of similar concern to timestamping, I shuffled the order of all rows.

One challenge in conducting a survey was finding a representative sample. My target population was the entire world in theory, but not realistically. I recruited online respondents through survey exchange websites and Reddit communities, who, though international, are generally students and younger people conducting their own surveys. My few in-person responses are from liberal-leaning areas in Washington and Oregon of various age groups. All participants are English language readers. Neither sample should be assumed to truly represent everyone in the world.

I confirmed permission in advance from the organizers of all events I sought participants at. The Marketing & Community Outreach Director at Salem Community Markets, Jenna Davis, confirmed that, while I was not allowed to conduct a survey within the bounds of the Salem Saturday market, I would be allowed to do so in public areas such as the sidewalk along the perimeter of the block. The project manager of Vashon Island's Strawberry Festival, Lynann Politte, confirmed permission to solicit respondents at the festival, given that I wore something to clearly identify me as a student conducting a survey.

IARP researcher Dr. Courtney Plante trusted me with confidential survey data only after some amount of anonymization and given that I respect some conditions. The anonymization done prior to my acquisition involved cutting survey data down to a small number of variables. These variables needed to be multiple-choice, as opposed to write-in. For example, I was not allowed access to a write-in fursona species variable, since some respondents may have unique or hyper-specific fursonas (e.g. “dinosaur-dragon-moth hybrid”), which would risk allowing respondent identifiability. The first condition that I promised was never to publish or share the raw data, with some strictly necessary exceptions, such as if I was working with a research partner or required data analysis help from an instructor (neither of which occurred). I was allowed to share the results of my findings wherever I pleased. The second condition was to credit IARP for data acquisition, while claiming all results and interpretations as strictly my own.

Context

According to a survey conducted by IARP both online and at in-person conventions, the vast majority of the furry fandom is made up of people with identities other than cisgender and heterosexual. I used the fur quilt shown in the photo below (*Fig. 2*) as a supplemental material during the capstone poster presentation to visually emphasize this fact in a physical data visualization. Proportions are represented in the size of each piece, and different identities are represented in color and texture. Since the information does not communicate as well in photo format, the captions and proportions shown are detailed in the table below.

How LGBTQ+ is furry? This quilt shows the proportions of gender identities and sexual orientations within the furry fandom, according to a survey by the International Anthropomorphic Research Project (IARP). Please touch and interact! Can you find the proportion of furies that identify as both straight/heterosexual and cisgender?	Cisgender 58% Gender identity aligns with assigned sex at birth	Other Gender Identity 42% Includes: “Trans woman”, “Trans man”, “Genderqueer”, “Gender non-conforming”, “Agender”, “Genderfluid”, “Non-Binary”, “Two-Spirit”, “Questioning/Unsure”, and Other. (Though often referred to broadly as transgender, not all people under the non-cisgender umbrella identify with the “transgender” label.)
Bisexual 25%	16%	9%
Lesbian/Gay/Homosexual 21%	14%	7%
Pansexual 19%	7%	12%

Straight/Heterosexual 11%	9%	1%
Asexual 9%	5%	4%
Demisexual 6%	2%	4%
Something else 5%	2%	3%
I don't know 4%	2%	2%

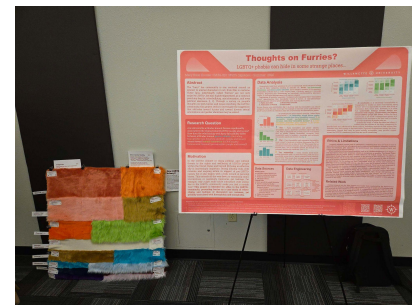


Figure 2: A physical visualization of the proportions of gender identities and sexual orientations within the furry fandom

Survey Design

I hosted my survey on Google Forms and recruited responses through primarily online methods. My initial plan was to seek out respondents in person, such as at public events. I ordered a custom tee shirt (Fig. 3) to wear to these events, for the purposes of providing a link to the survey, capturing attention, and visually identifying myself as somebody intending to solicit survey responses (see *Ethics*). Since I found little success with this method, I quickly

pivoted to prioritizing online recruitment methods. For online methods, I sought respondents on a website (SurveySwap.io) and a Reddit community (r/SurveyExchange). Each platform offered a similar model of receiving survey responses in exchange for completing other users' surveys.



Figure 3: My tee shirt (Uberprints), captioned “Want to help me with my grad school project?”

The survey itself asked 20-24 questions on each of three topics: furries, sexual orientation, and gender identity, which were later used to approximate favorability toward each of furries, non-heterosexual orientations, and diverse gender identities, respectively. These favorability assessment sections were followed by several supplemental questions for further information. Respondents answered favorability assessment questions on the five-point Likert scale below, being asked to skip questions they do not understand. The numbering of responses may have been unintuitive to some respondents, and it is possible that some responses were opposite from what the respondent intended. As a side note, while it may be observed that many of the “questions” being referred to are actually statements, they can be thought of as questions in the sense that they ask an implied question: “Do you agree with this statement?”

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Each section documented in the following pages was presented to respondents almost in the exact order shown, and all questions within each section were presented completely randomized. The section on furries was presented first, on its own page, followed by all questions on gender identity and sexual orientation shuffled together on the next page. The first question in the supplemental questions section, asking respondents for their best estimate on the proportion of furries identifying as LGBTQ+, was in its own standalone page on the Google Forms interface, shown before the rest of the supplemental questions, which were randomized. If it is possible for responses to any question to be influenced by any beliefs or attitudes a

respondent may have acquired in reading previous questions, then assigning each respondent a different randomized ordering of favorability assessment questions ensures the best possible data quality. The only mention of gender identity or sexual orientation occurring before presenting questions on furies was in the strictly necessary content warning in the consent agreement on the cover page. If I had ordered questions such that it may become clear to respondents that they are being assessed on their attitudes toward queer people and issues before they answer all questions about furies, it may lead them to infer an association between queer people furies, and thus bias their responses in the section on furies.

My initial intentions for the sections on gender identity and sexual orientation was to borrow entirely from existing assessment scales, namely the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*), and the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (*Willoughby, 2005*). However, these scales appeared to be intended to detect more extreme cases of homophobia and transphobia, including statements reflecting more explicitly hateful and even violent attitudes (e.g. “I have damaged property of a gay person, such as “keying” their car,” “I have beat up men who act like sissies,” etc.). While explicit hate may be an important factor in the “favorability” I aimed to assess toward non-heterosexual orientations and diverse gender identities, I also wanted to detect for non-extreme cases of people who still exhibit some beliefs or attitudes that are at odds with the interests of gay and transgender people and may indicate less explicit forms of homophobia and transphobia. I suspect that if I had used the questions from these scales, then there would have been less diversity in responses, with poor representation of neutral and unfavorable attitudes on the respective aggregated favorability scales. At the time that I made this change, I was still intending to conduct my survey primarily or entirely in-person, so my other concern was not just that more homophobic and transphobic people would be difficult to find, but fear for my safety if I found them or sought them out.

Although many respondents may be unfamiliar with furies, I intentionally neglected to provide a definition. Some respondents hold incorrect beliefs about what furies are, and since misconception was important in my assessment of favorability, I did not want to correct these respondents. Additionally, with furry being such a broad genre, there is not necessarily one correct or universally agreed upon definition. Any definitions I provide would necessarily be influenced by my personal attitudes about which is most correct, and thus risk biasing responses. Instead, I opted to provide pictures of fursuits, a well known icon of the furry fandom, as a banner on the top of the Google Forms page (*Fig. 4*). This gave some respondents with little to no previous knowledge some hint of what “furies” and “furry animal costumes” refers to, while leaving it up to their assumptions to decide what these words mean.



Figure 4: Google Forms banner, featuring five examples of fursuits (photos provided by subjects pictured, with consent for use)

For questions in the favorability assessment sections (Furries, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity), the full text of each is documented in the following pages with four bulleted contextual details, described below:

- How the question is scored when evaluating a favorability score: this is represented as a black zero (0) for attitudes holding no weight in favorability assessment, a red plus-sign (+) for attitudes holding positive weight and demonstrating *lower* favorability, and a blue minus-sign (-) for attitudes holding negative weight and demonstrating *higher* favorability
- Purposes & Context: A statement on why the question is included and/or what it represents, as well as any other elaboration or context
- Possible Interpretations: Comments on wording issues and ambiguity and/or speculation on unknowable respondent thoughts and experiences, such as possible interpretations and understanding of the question
- Results: A graphical representation of the distribution of responses (with the omission of non-response)

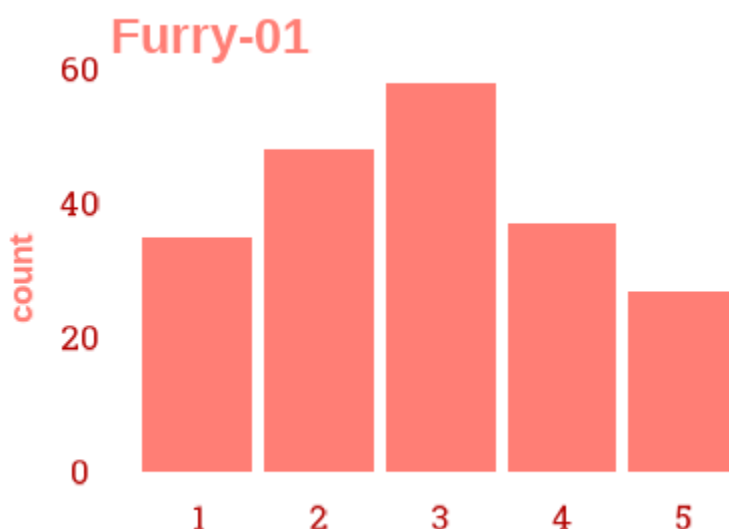
For questions in the supplemental section, the full text of each is documented in the following pages with two to four bulleted contextual details, described below:

- Purposes & Context: A statement on why the question is included or what kind of additional research questions it could be helpful in answering, as well as any other elaboration or context
- Possible Interpretations: (Optional) Comments on wording issues and ambiguity and/or speculation on unknowable respondent thoughts and experiences, such as possible interpretations and understanding of the question
- Options: (Optional) A list of all options available on the form; for questions where some options had no responses or few enough to be hidden for anonymity
- Results: A graphical representation of the distribution of responses (without the omission of non-response)

Questionnaire Section: Furries

1. I am familiar with the furry fandom and could confidently define what a furry is.
 - 0

- Purposes & Context: This is a neutral question, holding no weight in the evaluation of someone's favorability toward furies. Still, it provides a useful dimension for analysis, considering that furies are still quite an obscure topic. How familiar someone believes they are with furies could put their favorability and other attitudes into the context of gut reactions versus more established opinions. For someone encountering furies for the first time, the content of the survey will take responsibility for their first impressions. Their impression of the fursuits in the banner image (*Fig. 4*) could be anywhere from strange to endearing. Some may be off-put by the beliefs reflected in any of the questions they may encounter, influencing their responses even if they do not fully or consciously believe them to be true.
- Possible Interpretations: It may have been a mistake to phrase this in a double-barreled question. If each clause were broken into a separate question, respondents may have answered differently, even if similarly. For those whose responses to the individual clauses were different enough, choosing a response encompassing both may have been confusing. Additionally, the scale of responses to this question may not necessarily reflect the spectrum of familiarity with furies. For example, there may exist a respondent who indicates disagreement but is closely familiar with furies, or even is one, but is not confident in their ability to define it or finds the definition elusive.
- Results:

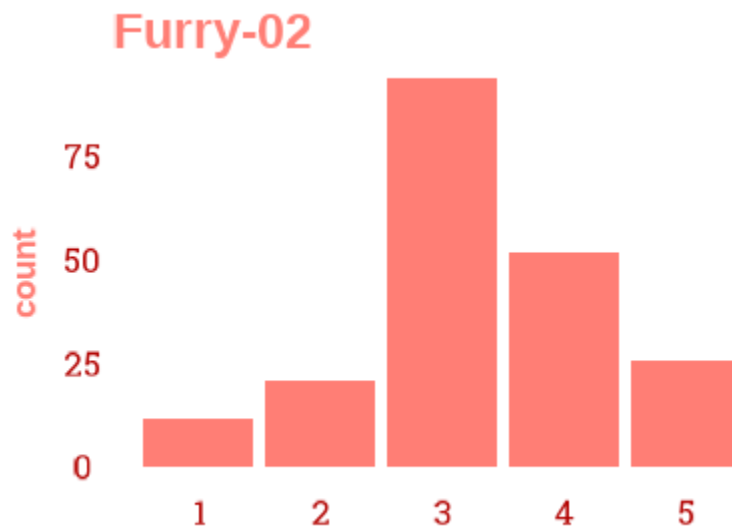


2. Furies wear animal costumes because of a sexual fetish.

- **0**
- Purposes & Context: This is a neutral question, holding no weight in the evaluation of someone's favorability toward furies. To assert that agreement implies unfavorability or ignorance would also necessarily imply unfavorability toward sexual fetishes, or that furry is not a sexual fetish. For example, there may exist a respondent who selects "Strongly agree," who holds a strong conviction

that furry is inherently sexual or fetishistic, while also holding both highly sex-positive attitudes and high favorability toward furries. Additionally, strong agreement cannot necessarily be ruled out as ignorance. The question of whether furry is a fetish has been investigated by IARP, with results suggesting that about 5-10% of furries may consider the fandom a fetish (*Furscience*, 2019a).

- Possible Interpretations: It is worth noting that this question does not ask directly about whether furry is a sexual fetish, but whether the specific behavior of wearing a fursuit is fetishistic. Not all furries necessarily own or wish to own fursuits (*Furscience*, 2019b). Additionally, it is possible that there exists a respondent who believes that fursuits are worn exclusively for sexual or fetishistic gratification, while other types of engagement with the fandom are not inherently fetishistic.
- Results:

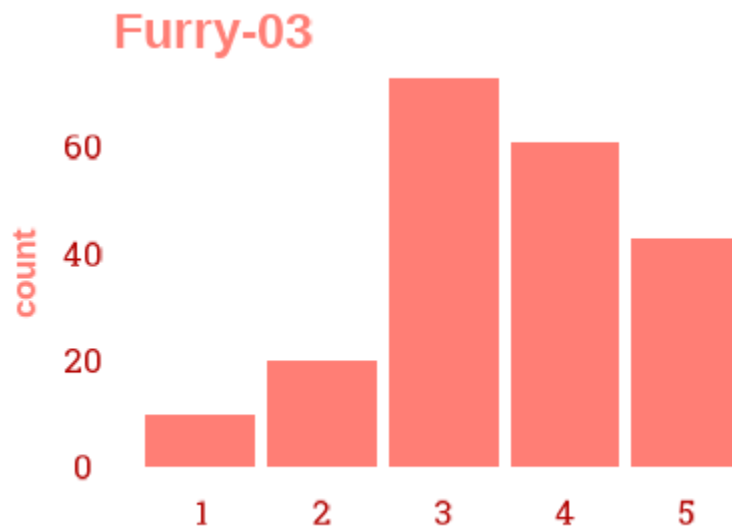


3. Furries wear animal costumes because they believe they are not human.

- **0**
- Purposes & Context: This is a neutral question, holding no weight in the evaluation of someone's favorability toward furries. To assert that agreement implies unfavorability or ignorance may imply unfavorability toward beliefs in alter-human identities, or that furries do not believe themselves to be non-human. As shown by a later question (*Furry 22*), not all respondents necessarily take issue with identities beyond 100% human. A study by IARP shows 22% of sampled furries believing that they "are less than 100% human", and 23% believing that they "are other than 100% human (e.g., human plus something else)" (*Furscience*, 2019a).
- Possible Interpretations: It is worth noting that this question does not ask directly about a belief that furries believe they are not human, but that those who wear

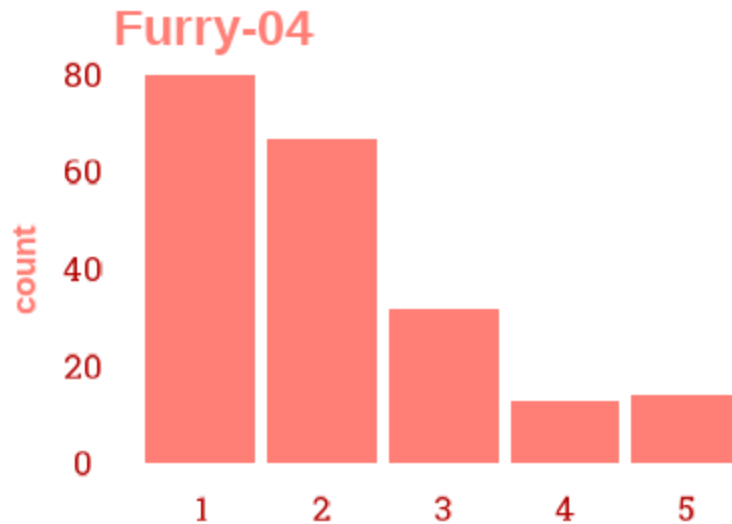
fursuits do. Not all furries necessarily own or wish to own fursuits (*Furscience*, 2019b).

- Results:

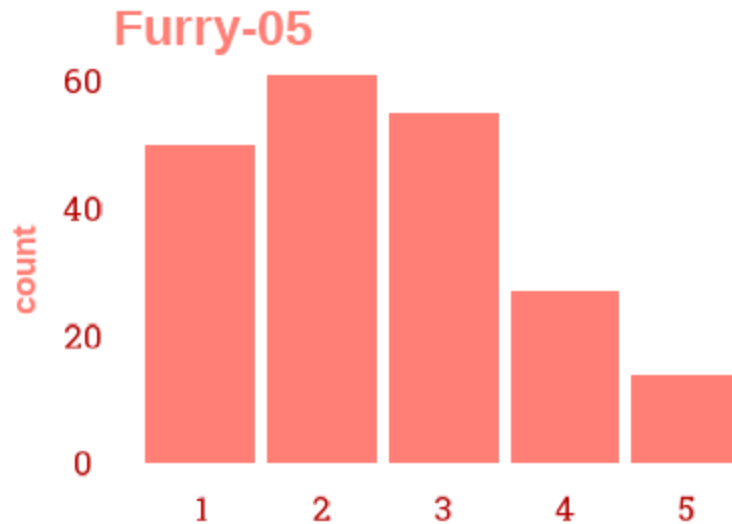


4. Wearing costumes or performing as a character is an acceptable hobby.

- **0**
- Purposes & Context: This is a neutral question, holding no weight in the evaluation of someone's favorability toward furries. It exists to be compared to the following question (*Furry 5*), which does hold weight. Any beliefs or baggage a respondent holds about furry/animal costumes may be reflected in the difference in response between this question and the next.
- Possible Interpretations: In the context of other questions pertaining to furries and animal costumes, the respondent may read this question and imagine specifically furry/animal costumes or character performance, even without having it explicitly hinted at. The hope is that they may be imagining costume and character performance more broadly.
- Results:

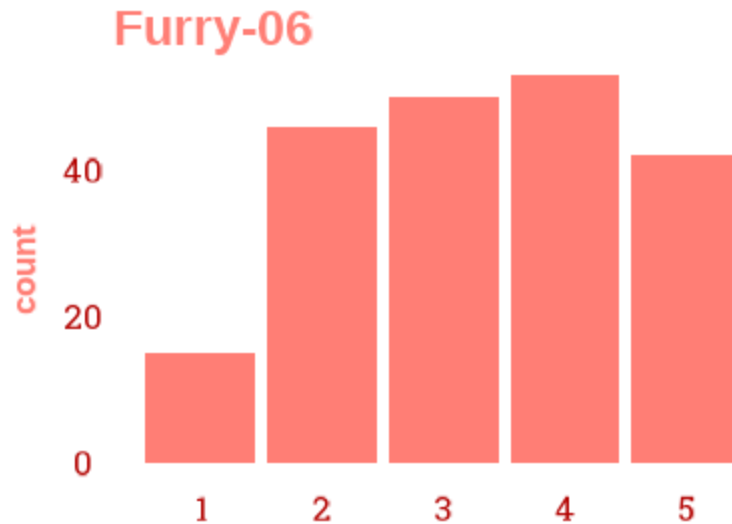


5. Wearing furry animal costumes or performing as a furry animal character is an acceptable hobby.
- -
 - Purposes & Context: How a respondent rates the acceptability of a furry-specific hobby in costume or character performance should reflect their favorability toward furies in general. If someone rates this less favorably than general costume and character performance (*Furry 4*), that may be indicative of a special unfavorability toward furies as a concept, regardless of the lack of indication of different behavior in costuming or performance besides the appearance of the costume and its association with a “furry” community.
 - Possible Interpretations: Respondents with little familiarity with the furry fandom may be confused about the role of the word “furry” in this statement.
 - Results:

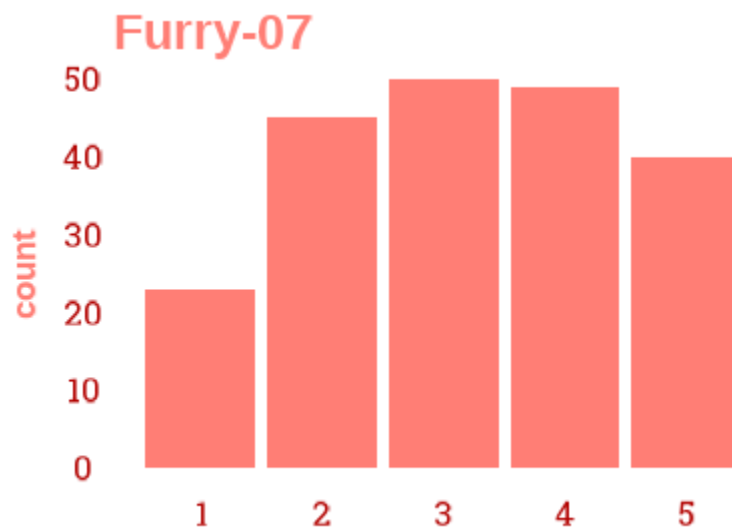


6. Wearing furry animal costumes in public is inappropriate.

- +
- Purposes & Context: Responses to this question may reflect unfavorability toward furies, but may also reflect cultural beliefs about what sorts of behaviors are appropriate in public. A generic version of this question, asking about costumes in general (not furry-specific), was not asked.
- Possible Interpretations: The types of public contexts someone may bring a costume to are left completely up to interpretation. Whether a respondent is imagining less (e.g. a restaurant or grocery store) or more (e.g. a festival or public park) socially acceptable contexts may affect their response. The reasons a respondent may find costumes in public inappropriate were not asked, but may vary from finding it rude or disruptive to a possible belief that furry costumes are sexual/fetish/kink gear or an equivalent, and thus should not be worn in public.
- Results:



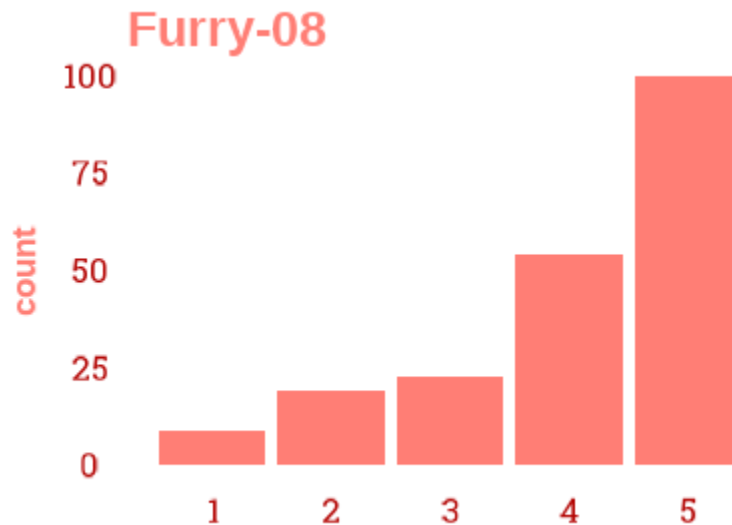
7. If I encountered a person in a furry animal costume in public, I would feel uncomfortable.
- +
 - Purposes & Context: This question is similar to the previous (*Furry 6*), but focuses more on expected personal reactions than beliefs on social acceptability.
 - Possible Interpretations: Once again, the types of public contexts a respondent imagines may vary (see *Furry 6*).
 - Results:



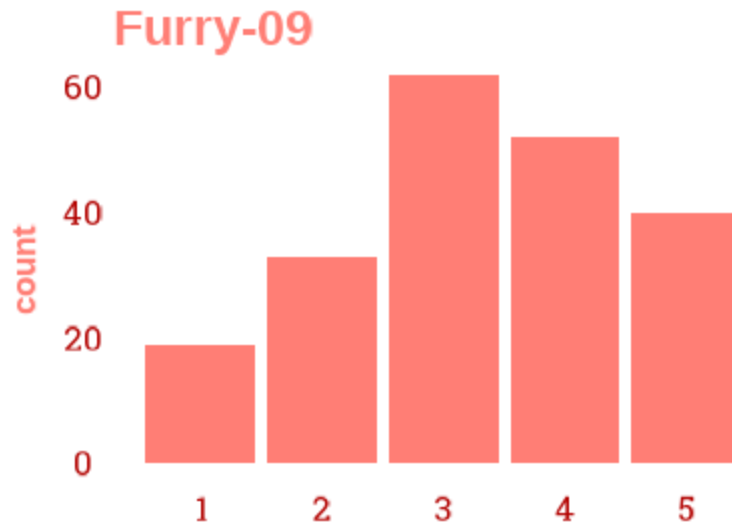
8. If I encountered a person in a furry animal costume in public, I would make fun of them.
- +
 - Purposes & Context: This question is similar to the previous two (*Furry 6, 7*), in that a response may reflect personal beliefs or feelings about furries and/or cultural social norms. It goes a step further from internal thoughts and feelings to

external behavior, gauging whether an individual is bold enough to express their discomfort as bullying or harassment.

- Possible Interpretations: Making fun of someone can come in many different forms. A respondent may imagine anything from privately joking with friends, to making rude remarks directly to the costumed person, to making a scene in front of other members of the public. Each step along the way varies in social acceptability, so those imagining less acceptable scenarios may be less likely to agree.
- Results:

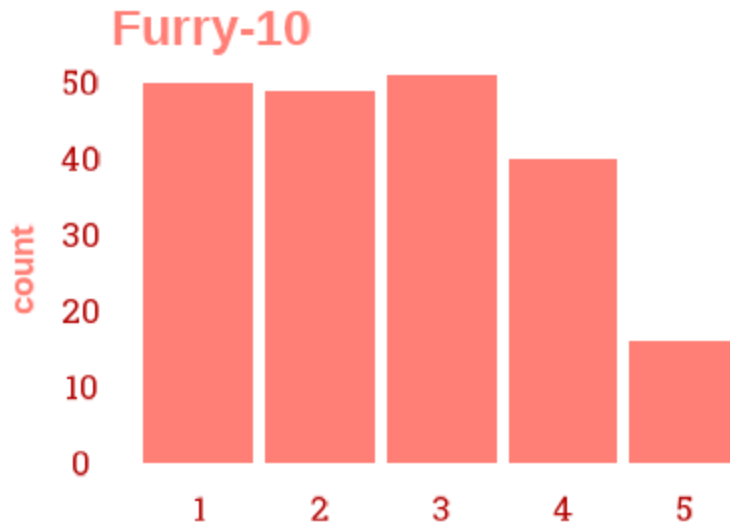


9. If I saw a person in a furry animal costume interacting with a child, I would be suspicious of their intentions.
 - +
 - Purposes & Context: This question carries heavy implications, suggesting child predation, grooming, or pedophilia. This question is present because of a seemingly prevalent misconception that furies may dress as cartoon characters to attract children for nefarious purposes.
 - Possible Interpretations: The scenario this is meant to convey is a controlled public setting, with parents present and encouraging interaction with a character performer. Since none of this is stated explicitly, it is possible that a respondent imagines more alarming scenarios.
 - Results:

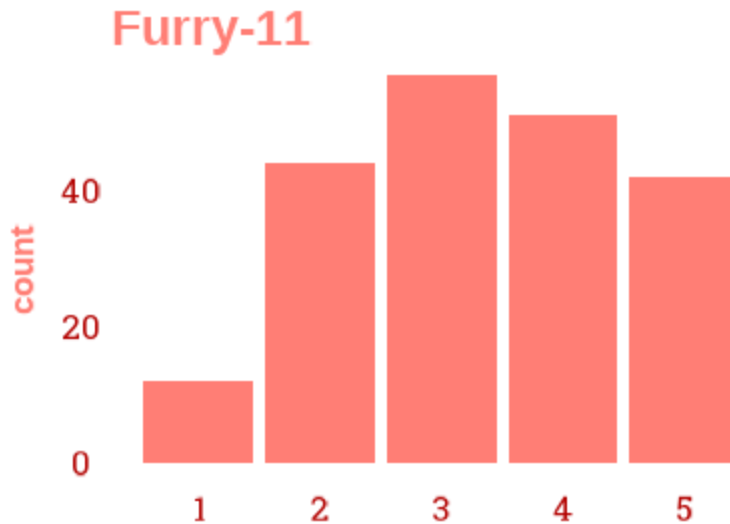


10. If any of my closest friends identified themselves to me as a furry, I would fully support them.

- -
- Purposes & Context: This question invites the respondent to imagine a close and likely well respected friend hypothetically as a furry.
- Possible Interpretations: Support can come in many forms. Not supporting a friend in this scenario could come in the form of remaining friends while discouraging a furry interest or ending a friendship altogether. Some respondents may even consider it a lack of support to remain friends but respond neutrally, neither encouraging nor discouraging. The adverb “fully” may add some confusion, where some may imagine full support as going the extra mile by, for example, going with their friend to furry conventions or even becoming a furry themselves.
- Results:

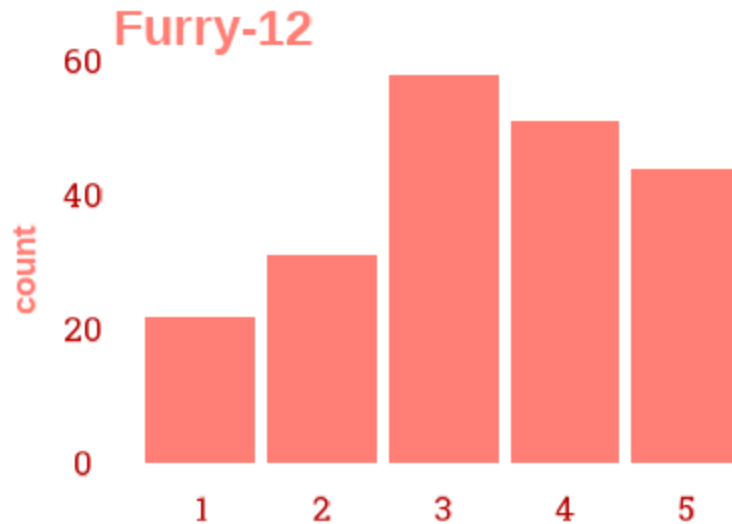


-
- 11. All furry activity and expression should stay behind closed doors.
 - +
 - Purposes & Context: This is almost a rephrasing of a previous question (*Furry 6*). Not only changing the phrase “in public is inappropriate” to “should stay behind closed doors” (which effectively carry similar meaning), the subject is shifted from furry costumes specifically to any imaginable form of “furry activity and expression.” Whatever type of “activity or expression” the respondent imagines, as well as their favorability toward furries, regardless of specific activity, should affect how they respond.
 - Possible Interpretations: “Furry activity and expression” is left open-ended, since it is very broad in reality. The respondent may also imagine a breadth of examples. This is left intentionally vague, because what the respondent imagines should reflect their biases about what furries are, and they will answer by whether what they are imagining is appropriate for the public eye.
 - Results:



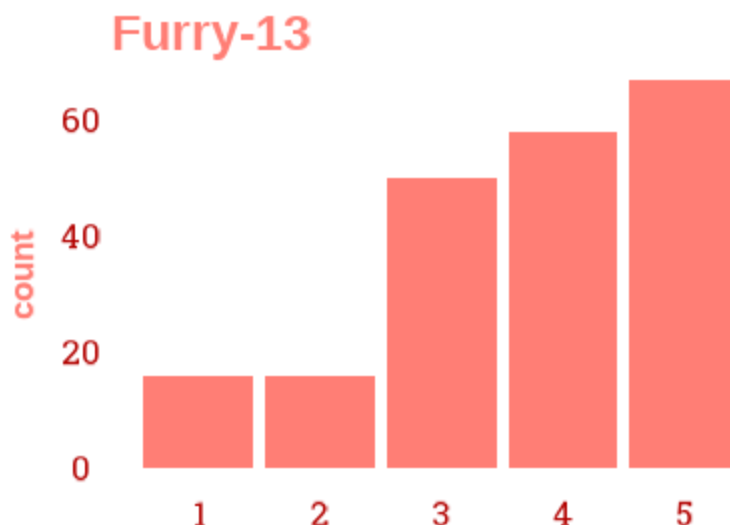
12. Art featuring furry animal characters is weird.

- **+**
- Purposes & Context: A generic version of this question, omitting the word “furry,” was not asked.
- Possible Interpretations: Judgement here could be based on either the respondent’s impression of typical themes and content of furry art, or the presence of furry animal characters in the art. Art produced within the furry fandom is extremely varied, with animal characters seeming to be the only coherent theme. More notoriously “weird” examples, produced by niche and fetish-based communities under the furry umbrella may come to mind for some respondents. Alternatively, there may exist a respondent who considers the presence of animal characters themselves in art to be “furry.” Considering the cultural prevalence of animals in art outside of furry fandom, this respondent may be more likely to disagree. Respondents with little familiarity with the furry fandom may be confused about the role of the word “furry” in this statement.
- Results:



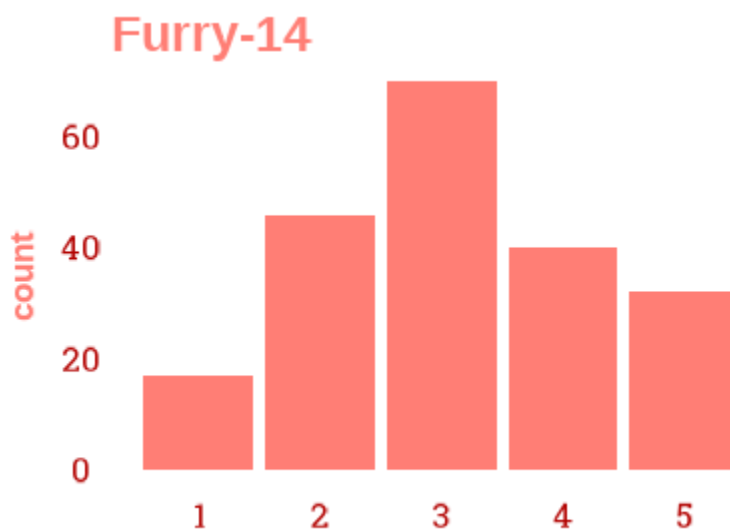
13. Identifying as a furry is morally wrong.

- **+**
- Purposes & Context: This question gauges any moral opposition to both furies as a concept as well as any feelings around the phrasing of “identifying as” something.
- Possible Interpretations: The “identifying as” phrasing may put off some respondents, especially those holding anti-transgender attitudes. The phrase may carry the same meaning to some as similar but less stigmatized “considering oneself” or “being,” while for others, it may hold a connotation of rejecting your identity or believing you are something you are not. It may have been useful to include an additional question with one of these more neutrally perceived phrasings, especially if conflation with attitudes toward transgender people is possible.
- Results:



14. Most furries are out of touch with reality.

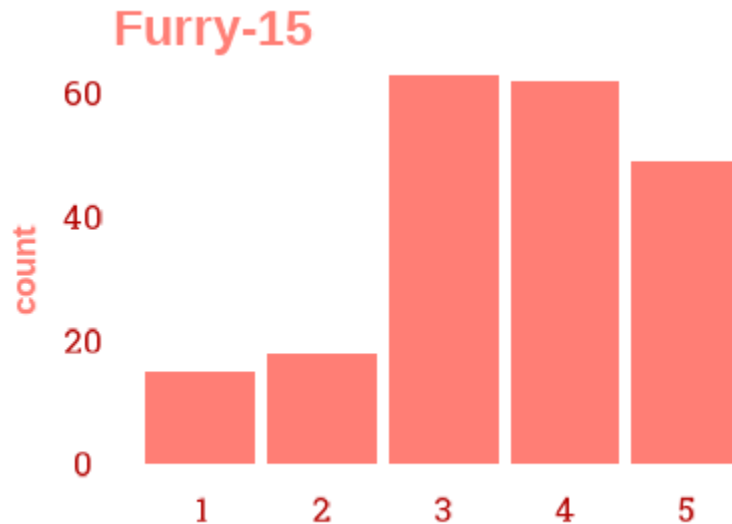
- +
- Purposes & Context: Responses may reflect common misconceptions that furries suffer from delusion or believe themselves to be something they are not (*Furscience*, 2019c).
- Possible Interpretations: Responses may differ if “most” were replaced with “all.”
- Results:



15. Most furries are sexually perverted.

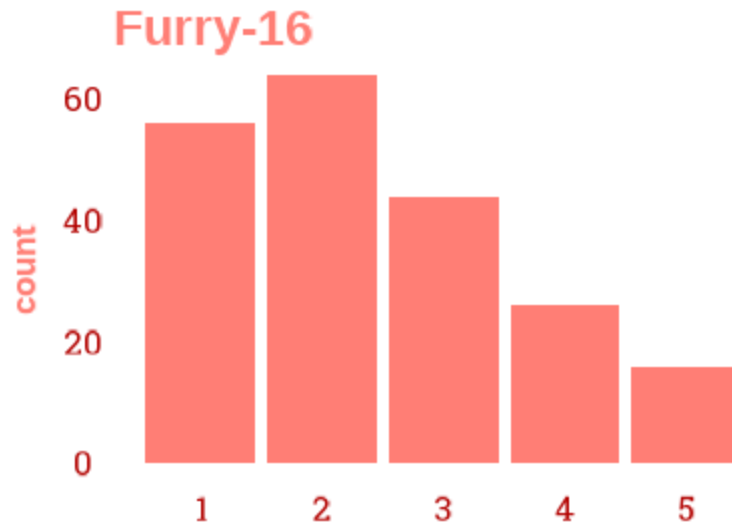
- +
- Purposes & Context: Responses may reflect a common belief that furries are sexually deviant or perverted.

- Possible Interpretations: This question may be interpreted in the same way as the sexual fetish question (*Furry 2*) by some, such as those who view sexual fetishes negatively or, on the flipside, who do not find negative connotation in “perverted.” The intended connotation behind sexual perversion is a sense of wrongness in someone’s sexuality; not just abnormality.
- Results:



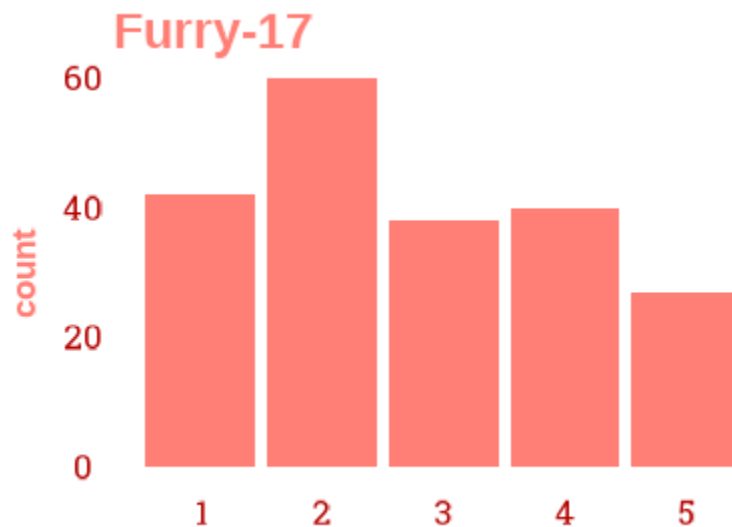
16. I am impressed with the artistry that goes into furry animal costumes.

- -
- Purposes & Context: Assuming some familiarity or imagination for how costumes are built, responses may reflect a level of respect for the art form.
- Possible Interpretations: Many respondents may be ignorant to the work required to build furry costumes. Disagreement with this statement may not necessarily reflect disdain for furry costumes as an end product, but also possibly an under-estimation of time and skill.
- Results:



17. Furies make me cringe.

- +
- Purposes & Context: Responses may reflect a common perception of furies as cringeworthy. Cringing does not necessarily imply a dislike or disrespect; it plays a separate part in favorability.
- Possible Interpretations: Cringing could be either at the general concept of furies or at the behavior of furies they have perceived or imagined.
- Results:

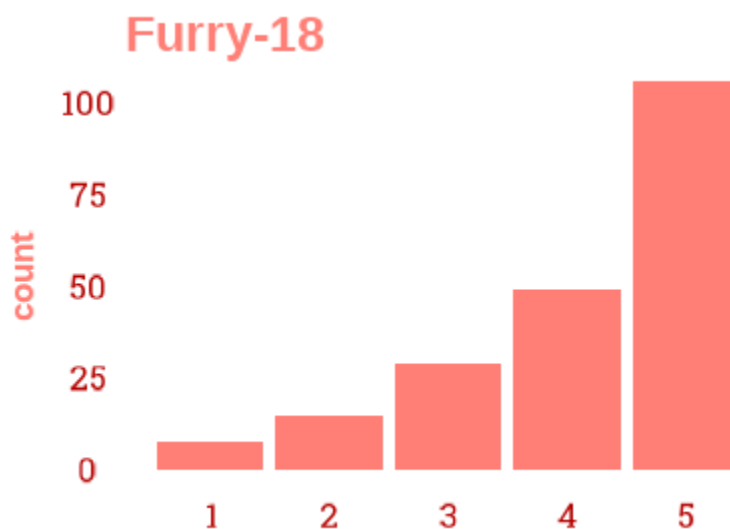


18. If I encountered a furry on the internet, I would make fun of them.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is similar to a previous question in an in-person public context (*Furry 8*). It also assesses not only an amount of

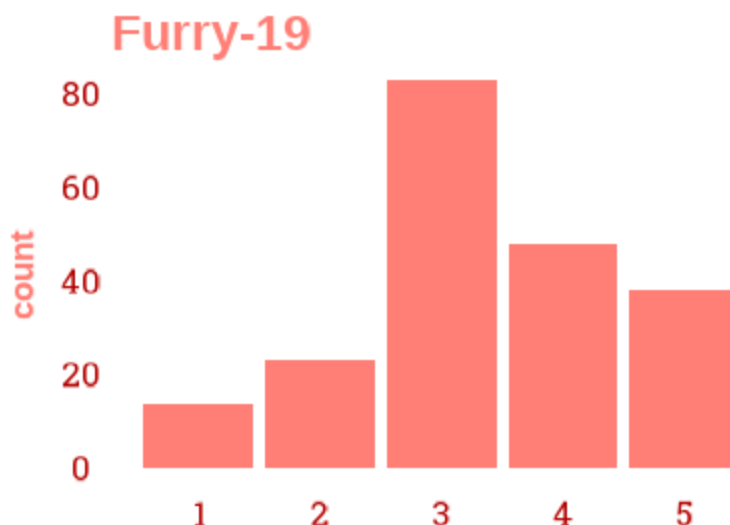
unfavorability, but willingness to go a step further from internal thoughts and feelings to external behavior, gauging whether an individual is bold enough to express their discomfort as bullying or harassment. Some social incentives toward politeness present in in-person settings may be absent in the perceived anonymity of the internet.

- Possible Interpretations: Making fun of someone can come in many different forms. A respondent may imagine anything from privately joking with friends, to making rude remarks where the targeted person can see. It is possible that there exists a respondent who wrongly believes or intentionally lies that they would never make fun of someone on the internet, even if they may actually do so in reality.
- Results:



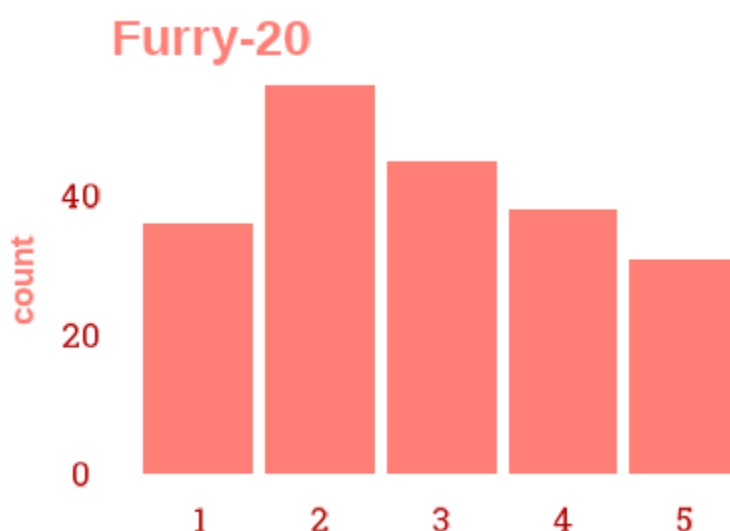
19. I like furies.

- -
- Purposes & Context: Disliking does not necessarily imply a lack of respect; it plays a separate part in favorability.
- Possible Interpretations: Some respondents may see strong agreement as a strong liking for or interest in furies, a strong conviction that they like furies, or a strong conviction that they do not dislike furies.
- Results:



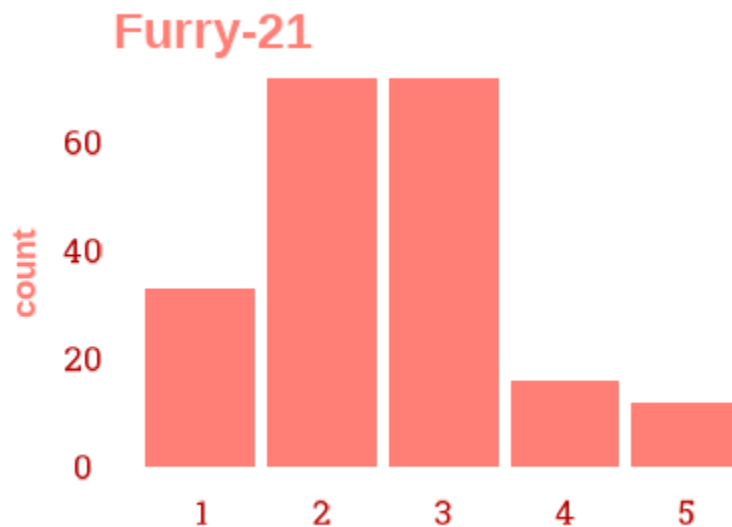
20. Despite everything I might have heard, something about furies just makes me uncomfortable.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is for respondents who may have been told good things about furies, such as from a PSA by Furscience (*e.g. Roberts, 2022*), but still feel some gut feeling of discomfort.
- Possible Interpretations: Discomfort with furies despite receiving good press about them may stem from unconscious bias, a conscious disagreement with these messages, or a feeling that something is being left out. It is also possible that some are familiar with drama or controversies existing within the fandom, which may affect their comfort with furies in general.
- Results:



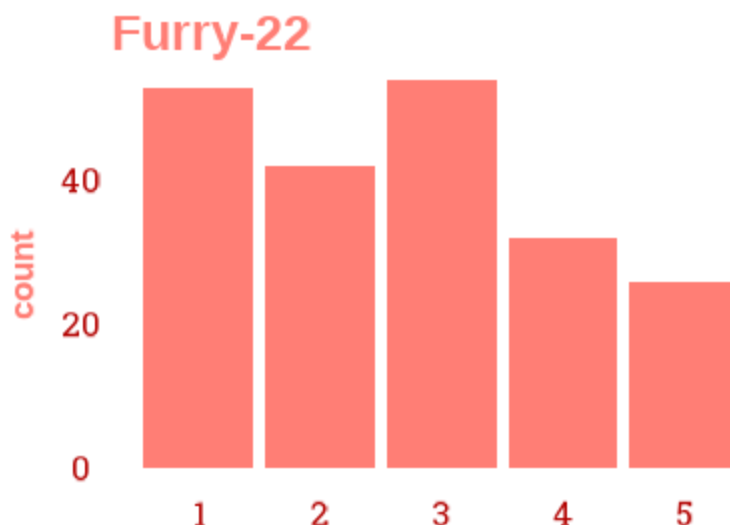
21. Furies receive too much hate.

- -
- Purposes & Context: Responses should indicate some favorability toward furies in whether they believe hate directed at the community is unfounded or excessive.
- Possible Interpretations: If the respondent catches on to the implication that furies receive hate, their response should indicate a belief that it is unfair. Some respondents may not receive this implication, and thus their responses should also indicate whether they believe furies receive hate at all.
- Results:



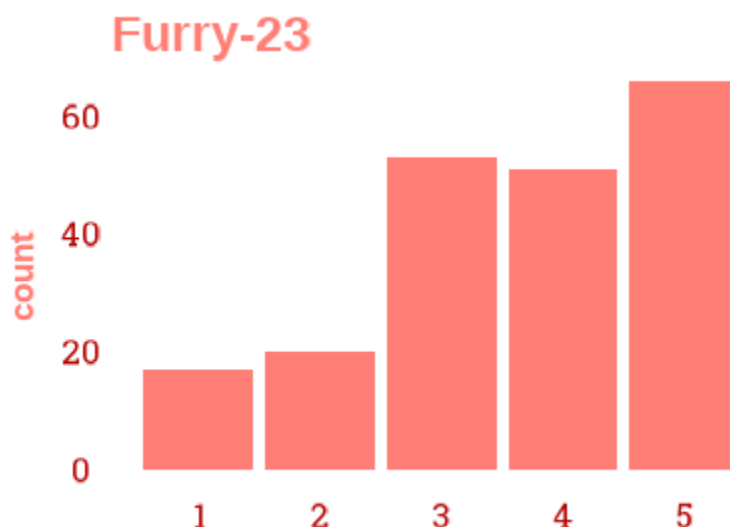
22. Identifying as anything other than 100% human doesn't make sense.

- +
- Purposes & Context: Although it is a misconception that furies identify as animals as a rule, a sizable minority do feel this way to a degree (*Furscience*, 2019a). Additionally, with it being widely believed that furies may identify as other than human (see *Furry 3*), holding that belief while feeling some amount of contempt or disagreement toward alter-human identities must indicate some unfavorability toward furies.
- Possible Interpretations: The phrasing “doesn’t make sense” could indicate either a disagreement or disdain toward alter-human identities, or a neutral confusion.
- Results:



23. If I saw that a furry was the owner of a pet such as a dog or cat, I would be concerned for the animal's safety.

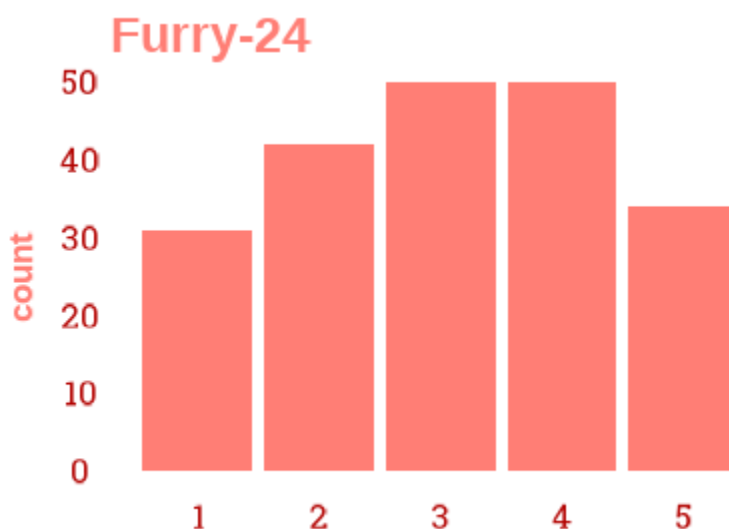
- +
- Purposes & Context: This question carries heavy implications, suggesting zoophilia or bestiality. This question is present because of a seemingly prevalent misconception that furries are sexually attracted to animals.
- Possible Interpretations: The respondent may interpret the suggestion of a pet being unsafe as non-sexual forms of animal abuse or neglect.
- Results:



24. Children identifying as furries or behaving like animals at school is a serious issue in the public school system.

- +

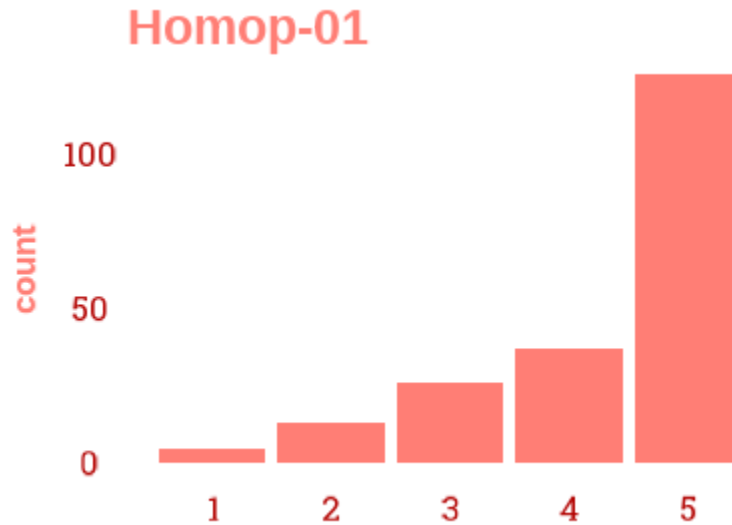
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief in rumors, myths, and alarmism regarding the behavior of children who are furies or identify as animals in public schools and deeming it a problem; one which public schools are failing to address. These rumors range from schools failing to penalize some childhood behaviors that are more benign and non-unusual, though potentially distracting in an educational environment, such as wearing cat ear or tail accessories or playing pretend, at best. At worst, rumors claim that schools are meeting outrageous demands, such as providing litter boxes as an alternative to toilets or lowering lunch tables so children can dine hands-free like dogs (Weill, 2022). Although there exists no known evidence to suggest that these demands have ever been made or accommodated by schools, these rumors remain rampant enough that a failed Texas bill in 2025 proposed to fine school districts ten thousand dollars or more for any accused violation by the district or its student of a ban on “non-human behavior” (*F.U.R.R.I.E.S. Act, 2025; Talarico, 2025*).
- Possible Interpretations: There may exist a respondent who considers this a “serious issue,” even if they do not believe outrageous rumors, just considering play and make-believe not to be conducive to a productive educational environment.
- Results:



Questionnaire Section: Sexual Orientation

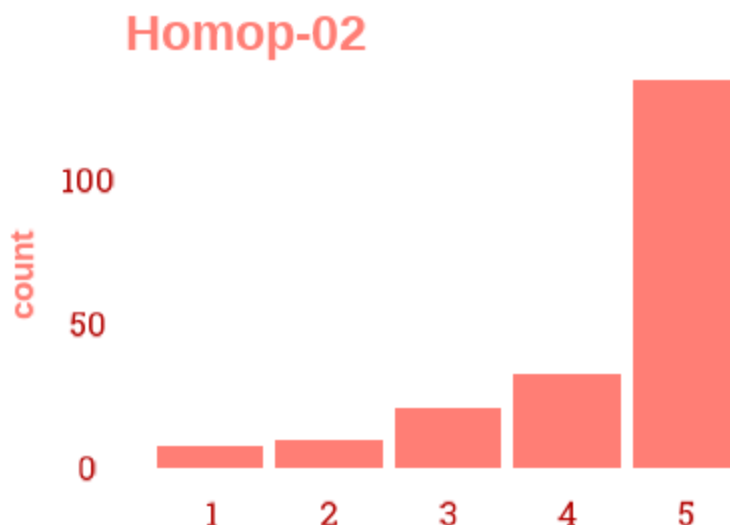
1. If I saw a gay person interacting with a child, I would be suspicious of their intentions.
 - +
 - Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief in myths about gay people being child sexual predators.

- Possible Interpretations: While the nature of interaction is not defined, if without explicitly hinting at it the respondent imagines an inappropriate form of interaction, that should be indicative of a bias against gay people.
- Results:



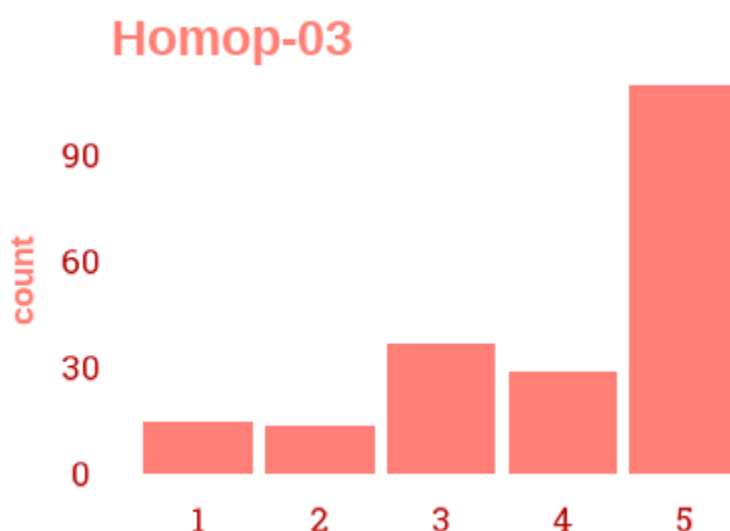
2. Most gay people are sexually perverted.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that gay people are sexually perverted.
- Possible Interpretations: Responses in agreement indicate unfavorability toward non-heterosexual orientations, assuming the respondent finds a negative connotation in the word “perverted.” Even if they do not, agreement still indicates ignorance in the belief of this harmful myth.
- Results:



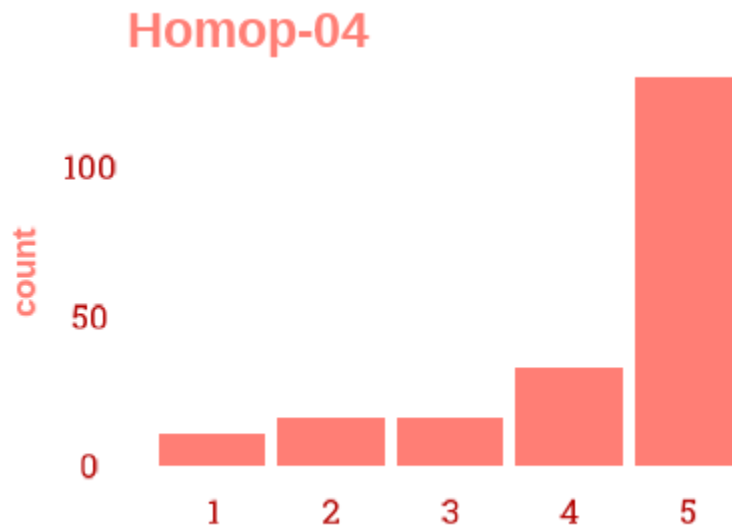
3. Children identifying as gay in school is a serious issue in the public school system.

- +
- Purposes & Context: While this question is mainly intended to parallel a question about children identifying as furies in school (*Furry 24*), agreement could indicate unfavorability toward children identifying as gay or doing so specifically in school, where their parents may not be aware.
- Possible Interpretations: While agreement is intended to indicate a belief that children identifying as gay in school is itself an issue, there may exist a respondent who does not believe so, but indicates agreement from a concern for issues regarding gay children in schools, such as bullying by other children or outing to parents against a child's consent by adults.
- Results:



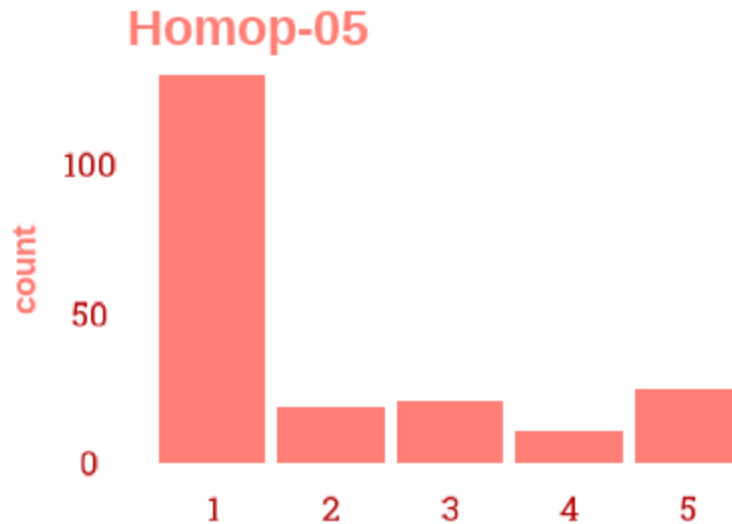
4. If my child came out to me as gay, I would feel disappointed.

- +
- Purposes & Context: Responses should indicate unfavorability to the hypothetical scenario of their own child coming out as gay. This could indicate a belief that being gay is bad for a child to be or a sign of poor parenting, or indicate a preference toward heterosexual children.
- Possible Interpretations: There may be some confusion in respondents who do not have children or do not intend to. There may exist a respondent who indicates disagreement solely by virtue of disagreement with the perceived implication that they have or intend to have children.
- Results:



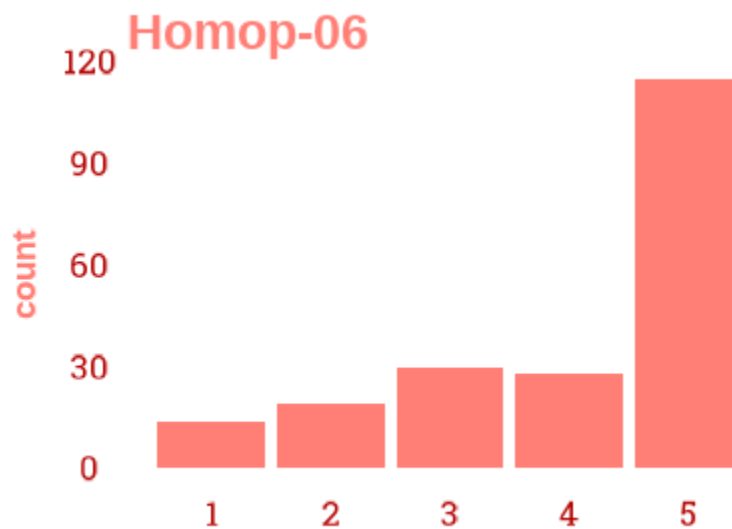
5. Same-sex marriage should not be against the law.

- -
- Purposes & Context: Responses indicate a level of support for the protection of same-sex marriage by law. This may not necessarily match with a belief in the morality of same-sex marriage, but it plays a separate part in favorability.
- Possible Interpretations: This question is fairly straightforward, save for the possibility that a respondent mistakenly misses the word “not.”
- Results:



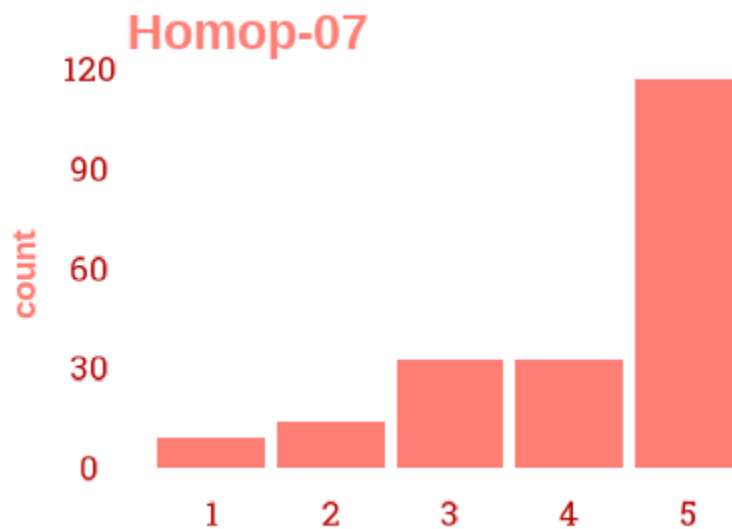
6. I would feel uncomfortable sharing a public bathroom or changing room with a gay person of the same sex.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a fear of sharing traditionally gender-segregated spaces with members of the same sex who are attracted to the same sex. This fear may reflect a belief that gay people may commit sexual assault or voyeurism in these spaces.
- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that there exists a respondent who interprets “bathroom” or “changing room” as a single toilet or stall, which they may be uncomfortable sharing with anyone, regardless of sexual orientation.
- Results:



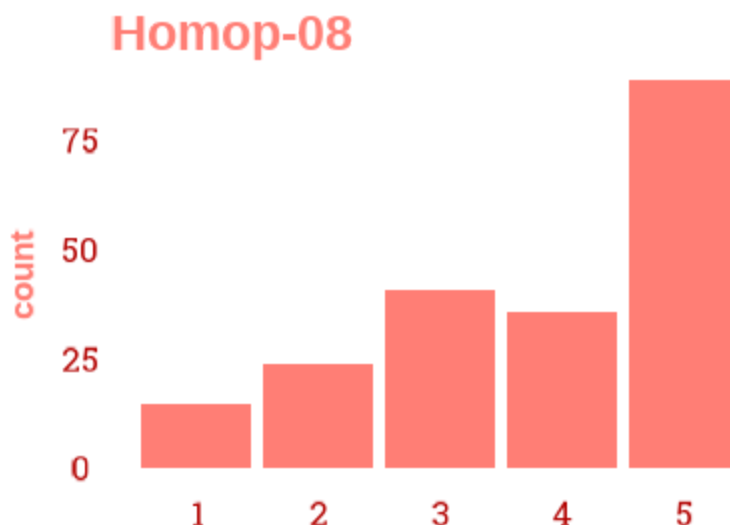
7. All homosexual activity and expression should stay behind closed doors.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture the belief that it is inappropriate to express homosexuality in public. Whatever type of “activity or expression” the respondent imagines should affect how they respond.
- Possible Interpretations: “Homosexual activity and expression” is left open-ended, since it is very broad in reality. The respondent may also imagine a breadth of examples, from wearing pride accessories, to holding hands, to sexual activity. This is left intentionally vague, because what the respondent imagines should reflect their biases about what homosexual people do, and they will answer by whether what they are imagining is appropriate for the public eye.
- Results:



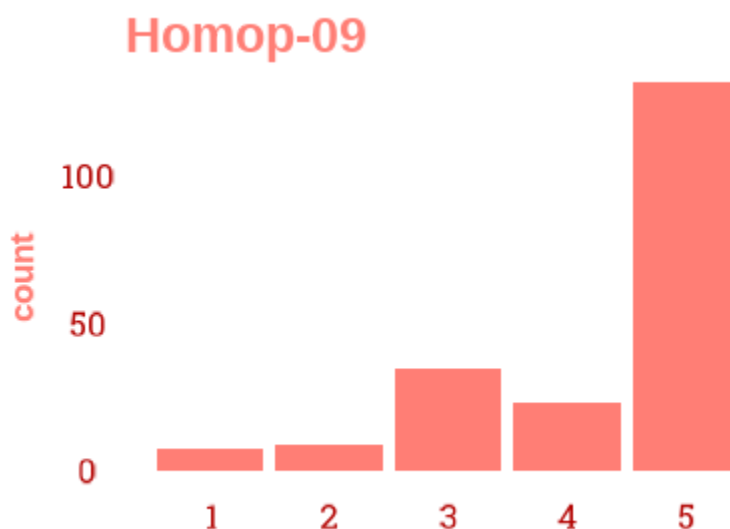
8. I would feel embarrassed to be perceived by strangers as gay.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that it is shameful or embarrassing to be gay or be perceived as such, and possibly an effort to intentionally present oneself as heterosexual.
- Possible Interpretations: It was difficult to phrase this question in such a way that it minimizes an interpretation of responses as an indication of fear of or lack of safety in being perceived as gay. Still, there may exist respondents who do not consider it shameful to be perceived as gay, but may feel embarrassed out of fear of being mistreated.
- Results:



9. Anyone can be straight if they try hard enough.

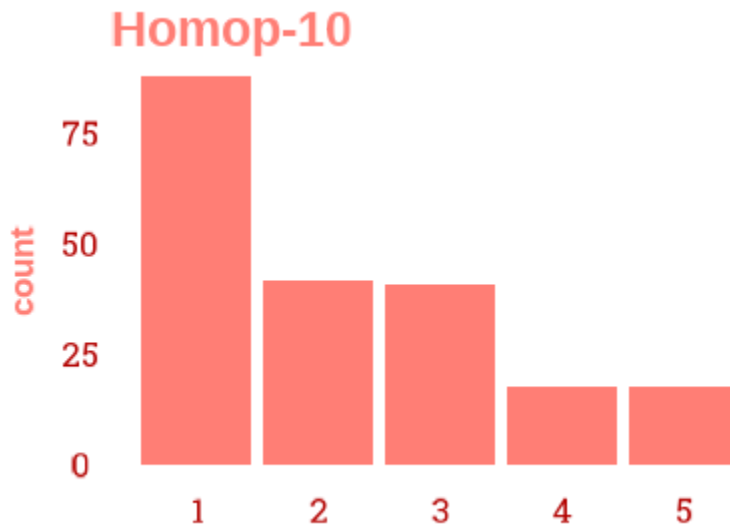
- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that sexual orientation is a choice or a bad habit.
- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that some respondents indicating agreement are interpreting the quality of being straight not as the internal experience of being attracted to exclusively the opposite sex, but as describing behaviors such as romantic or sexual relationships with exclusively the opposite sex, which while different is also a harmful misconception.
- Results:



10. School teachers should be allowed to be openly gay in front of their students.

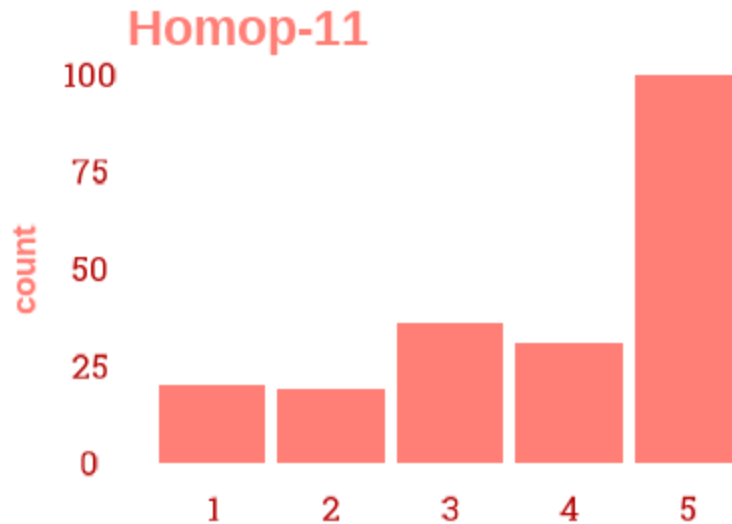
- -

- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that exposing children to non-heterosexual orientations by non-parental adults is inappropriate.
- Possible Interpretations: The intended meaning of teachers being openly gay is things such as mentioning a spouse of the same sex, displaying pride flags, or explicitly telling their class that they are gay. Some respondents may imagine more questionable expressions, such as inappropriate displays of affection with a member of the same sex in front of their students.
- Results:



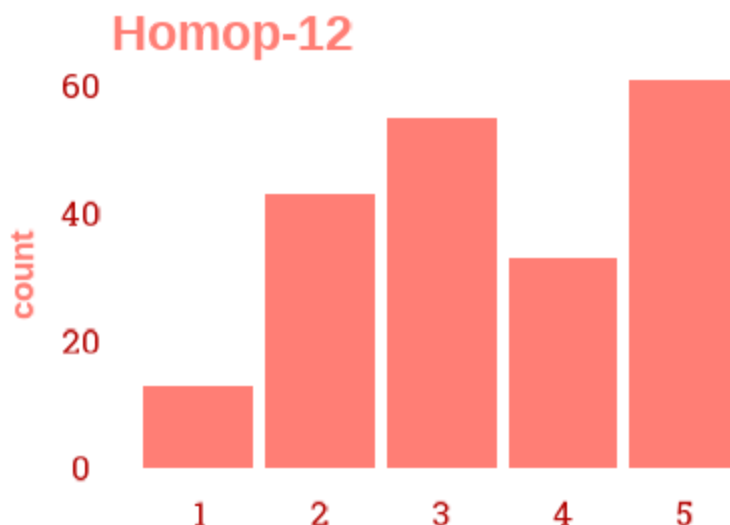
11. I would not expose my children to media featuring same-sex relationships.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that it is preferential parenting practice not to expose children to non-heterosexual orientations in media.
- Possible Interpretations: Some respondents may mistake the intended meaning of the word “media,” to mean media such as books, movies, and TV, for a narrower use of the word referring to news media. There may also be some confusion in respondents who do not have children or do not intend to. There may exist a respondent who indicates disagreement solely by virtue of disagreement with the perceived implication that they have or intend to have children.
- Results:



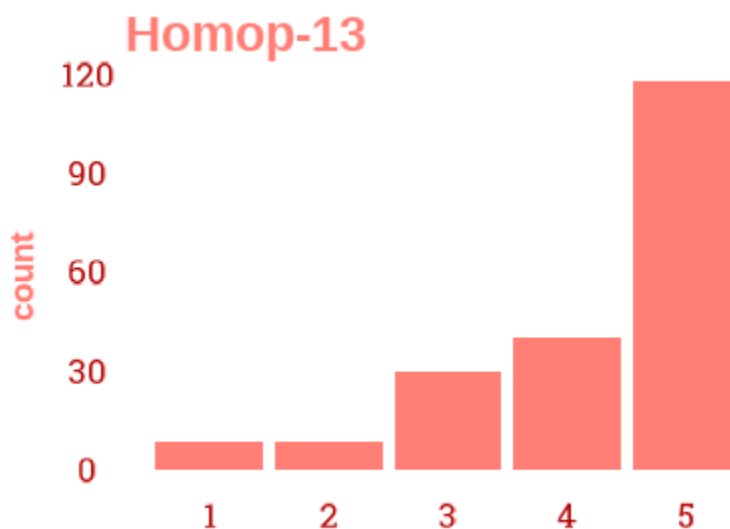
12. Homosexuality may be caused by influence from others in childhood, or how someone was raised.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a common misconception that gender orientation may be caused by outside influence, such as by parental or social environment. Existing evidence favors biological factors such as genetics and prenatal conditions rather than social influence (*Rinaldi, 2022*).
- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that some respondents indicating agreement are interpreting homosexuality not as the internal experience of being attracted to exclusively the same sex, but as describing behaviors such as romantic or sexual relationships with the same sex. These behaviors may be less likely in people growing up in families and communities who discourage them.
- Results:



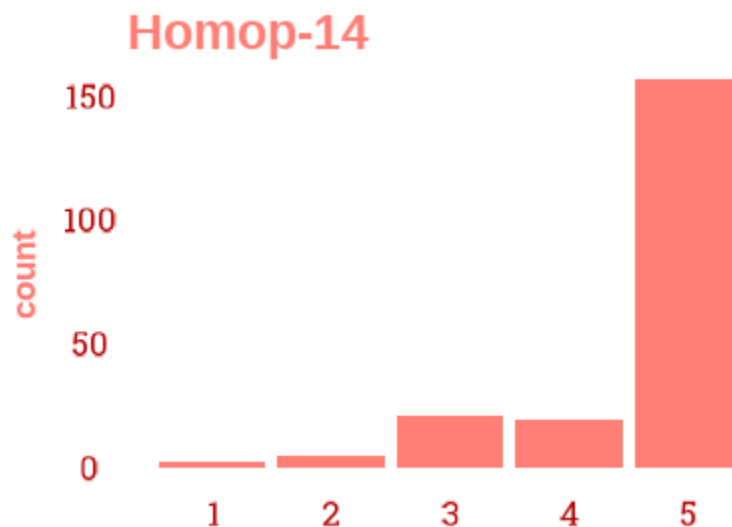
13. If I discovered a friend of the same sex was gay, I would be suspicious of their true feelings for me.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question could capture a belief that gay people cannot hold authentic same-sex friendships without romantic or sexual motivations, that gay people may be attracted to every individual of the sex they are attracted to, or that homosexual people may be untrustworthy.
- Possible Interpretations: It may not be clear to the reader that the implication behind a suspicion of “true feelings” is a suspicion that a friend may be romantically or sexually interested in you.
- Results:



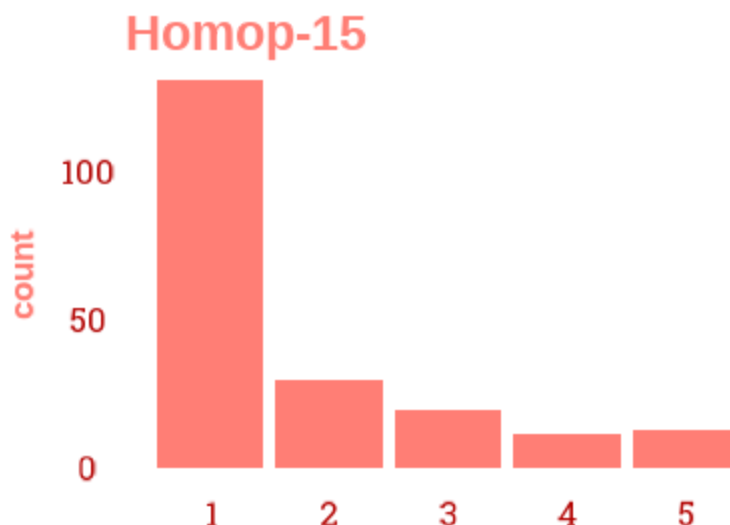
14. If I discovered a friend was gay, I would end the friendship.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*). It captures favorability in whether a respondent would be willing to continue a friendship after a friend has come out or been revealed as gay.
- Possible Interpretations: This question is fairly straightforward.
- Results:



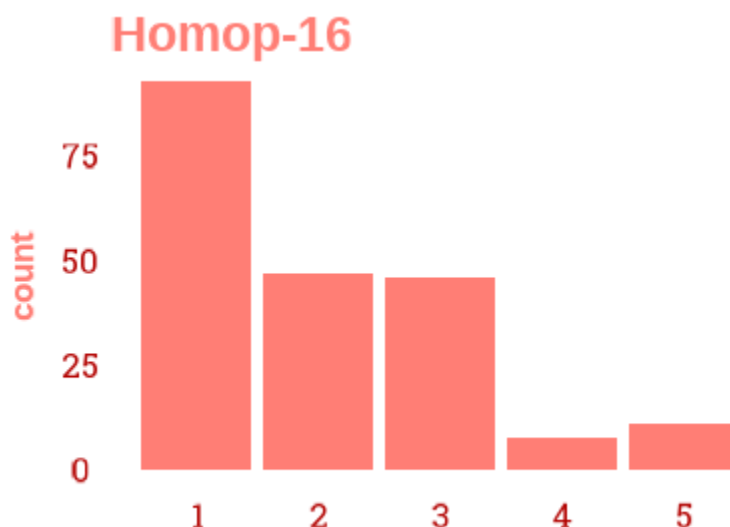
15. Homosexuality is acceptable to me.

- -
- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*). It captures favorability in whether a respondent considers homosexuality to be “acceptable.”
- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that some respondents indicating agreement are interpreting homosexuality not as the internal experience of being attracted to exclusively the same sex, but as describing behaviors such as romantic or sexual relationships with the same sex. However, a respondent’s interpretation under this misconception will not necessarily devalue the favorability assessed in their response.
- Results:



16. I enjoy the company of gay people.

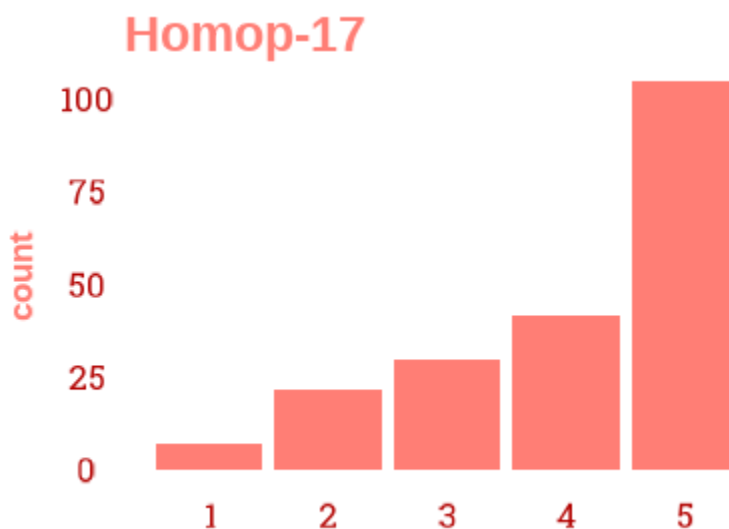
- -
- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*). It is meant to capture favorability in positive attitudes around real-life social experiences with gay people.
- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that some respondents would enjoy the company of gay people but have too few gay people in their lives to honestly assert that they do enjoy.
- Results:



17. I tease and make jokes about gay people.

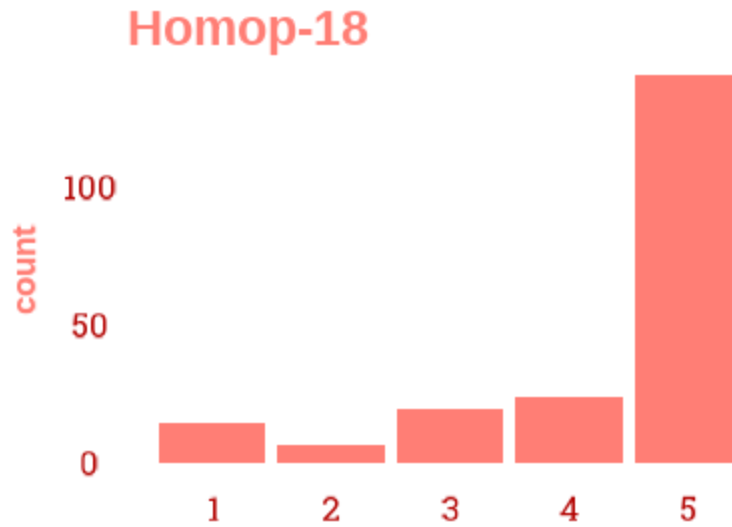
- +

- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*). It captures favorability in willingness to make jokes at the expense of gay people.
- Possible Interpretations: The wording of the statement is not explicit about whether “jokes about gay people” includes only mean-spirited jokes at the expense of gay people or also inoffensive jokes relating to gay people.
- Results:



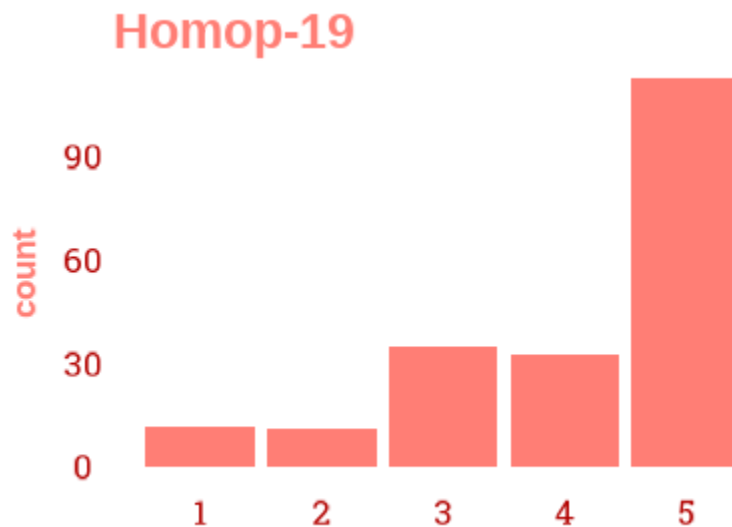
18. Homosexuality is immoral.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*). It captures favorability in moral judgement on homosexuality.
- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that some respondents indicating agreement are interpreting homosexuality not as the internal experience of being attracted to exclusively the same sex, but as describing behaviors such as romantic or sexual relationships with the same sex. However, a respondent's interpretation under this misconception will not necessarily devalue the favorability assessed in their response.
- Results:



19. Organizations that promote gay rights are not necessary.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*). It captures unfavorability in a belief that gay rights may not be an important issue or in some disdain toward gay-rights organizations.
- Possible Interpretations: This question is fairly straightforward.
- Results:

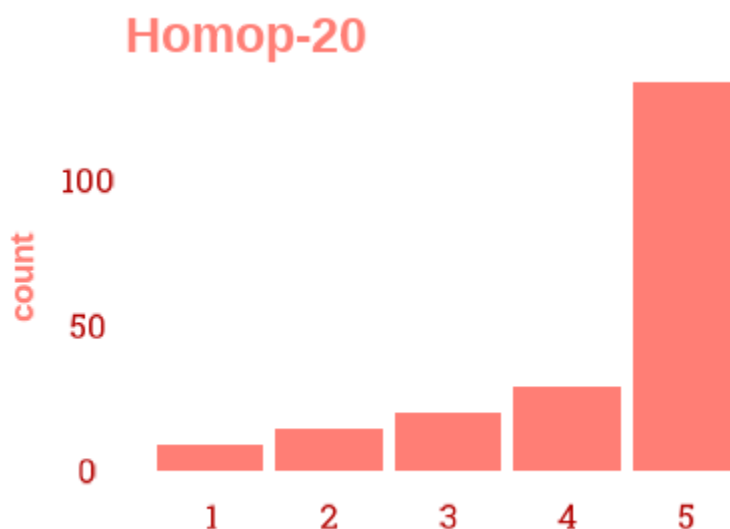


20. I would feel uncomfortable having a gay roommate.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Wright, Adams & Bernat Homophobia Scale (*PBS, 2015*). It captures unfavorability in any reason for

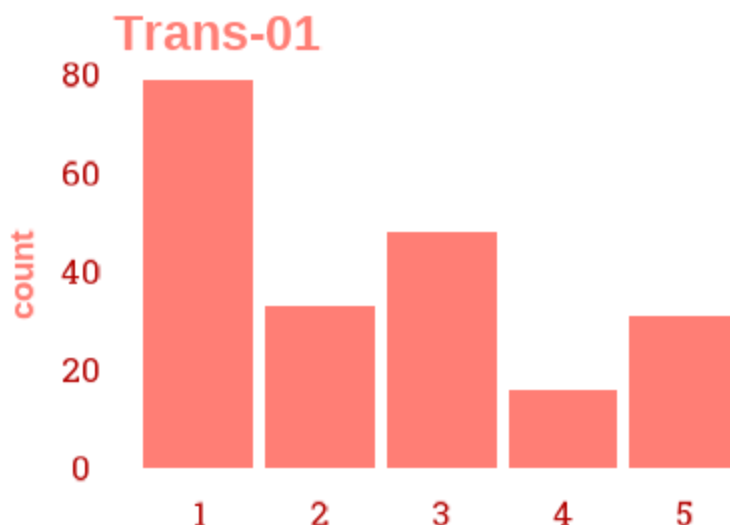
discomfort around living with a gay person, such as a fear that they are untrustworthy or may make unwelcome sexual advances.

- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that responses would have differed had “of my sex” been added to the end. There may exist a female respondent who indicated disagreement, interpreting “gay roommate” as a gay male, and that she would be comfortable with that, but not with the scenario of living with a lesbian woman.
- Results:



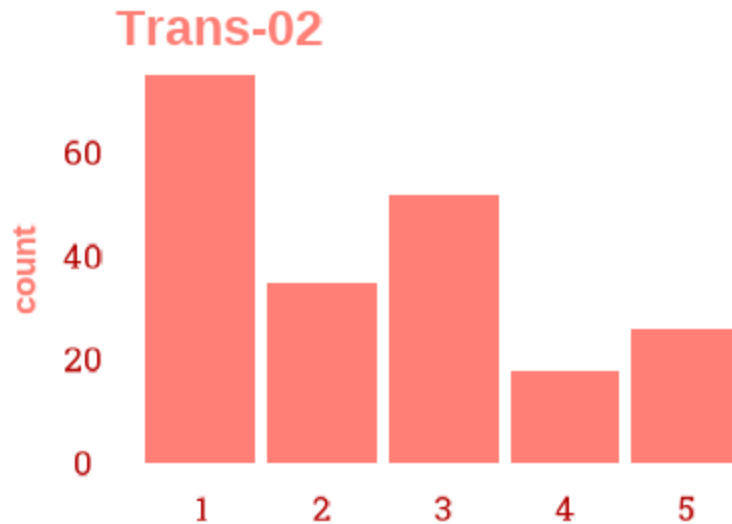
Questionnaire Section: Gender Identity

1. Transgender women (born male, female-identifying) are women.
 - -
 - Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture agreement with the belief that a person’s self-identified gender is their true gender. It is separated from a nearly identical question on transgender men, to capture any difference in attitude toward each of these genders.
 - Possible Interpretations: I included the parenthetical to avoid any confusion on who “transgender women” describes, considering that respondents for whom responses of disagreement are intended may use the phrase with near opposite meaning (female-assigned transgender people, including transgender men). While I received criticism from one respondent on this parenthetical, preferring the more respectful “born x, y-identifying” wording, I chose the “born x, assigned y” wording to avoid confusion from respondents less familiar with respectful terminology. For example, some may not understand whether “assignment” represents gendering at birth or from self-identification.
 - Results:

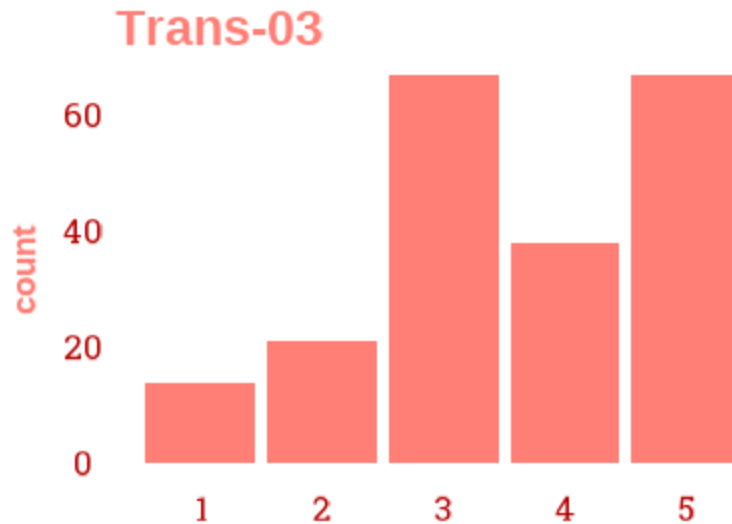


2. Transgender men (born female, male-identifying) are men.

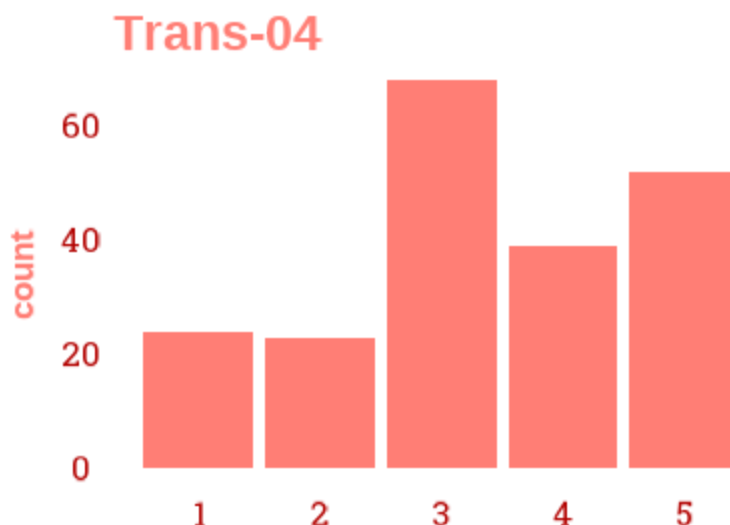
- -
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture agreement with the belief that a person's self-identified gender is their true gender. It is separated from a nearly identical question on transgender women, to capture any difference in attitude toward each of these genders.
- Possible Interpretations: I included the parenthetical to avoid any confusion on who "transgender men" describes, considering that respondents for whom responses of disagreement are intended may use the phrase with near opposite meaning (male-assigned transgender people, including transgender women). While I received criticism from one respondent on this parenthetical, preferring the more respectful "born x, y-identifying" wording, I chose the "born x, assigned y" wording to avoid confusion from respondents less familiar with respectful terminology. For example, some may not understand whether "assignment" represents gendering at birth or from self-identification.
- Results:



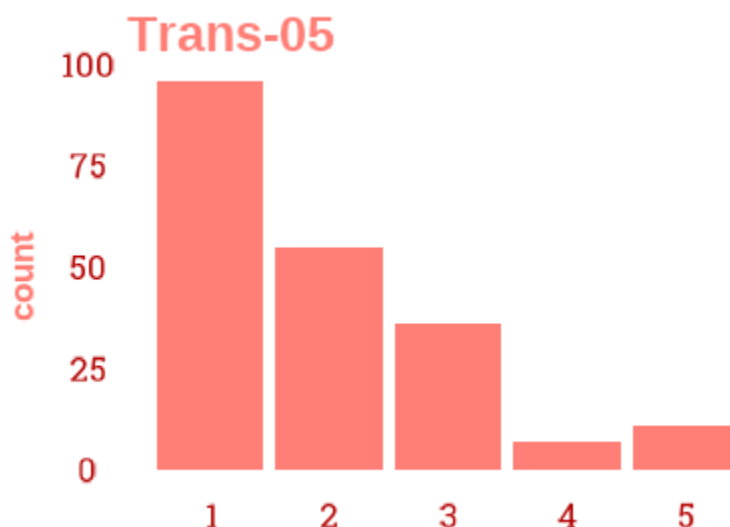
3. It would be gay for a man to be attracted to a transgender woman (born male, female-identifying).
- +
 - Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a belief that attraction to a transgender person implies attraction to their gender assigned at birth, as opposed to their self-identified gender. An equivalent question involving a woman attracted to a transgender man was not asked.
 - Possible Interpretations: I included the parenthetical to avoid any confusion on who “transgender woman” describes, considering that some respondents may use the phrase with near opposite meaning (female-assigned transgender people, including transgender men). While I received criticism from one respondent on this parenthetical, preferring the more respectful “assigned x at birth” wording, I chose the “born x, y-identifying” wording to avoid confusion from respondents less familiar with respectful terminology. For example, some may not understand whether “assignment” represents gendering at birth or self-identification.
 - Results:



4. It would be gay for a man to have sex with a transgender woman who still had a penis, even if she otherwise appeared female.
- +
 - Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a belief that the birth-assigned gender or genitalia of a sexual partner imply attraction to their birth-assigned gender. An equivalent question involving a woman having sex with a transgender man was not asked.
 - Possible Interpretations: I included no parenthetical clarifying the definition of “transgender woman,” in hopes that the phrasing of her “still” having a penis would imply that that was the type of genitalia she was born with. The wording of this statement may have been disrespectful in both the possible implication by “still” that all transgender women should be expected to have the goal of surgical reassignment, and the possible implication that “appearing female” means not being truly female.
 - Results:

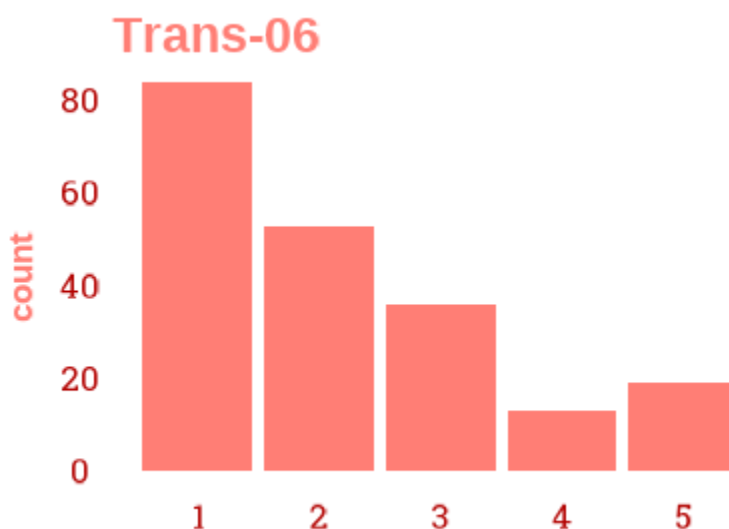


5. I do my best to refer to people by the name and pronouns they want to be called by, even if it's not the name and pronouns they used when we first met.
- -
 - Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a willingness to refer to people by their self-identified name and pronouns.
 - Possible Interpretations: Some respondents' most spoken languages may not necessarily be ones that use gendered pronouns in the same way as English, and thus may not respond as expected.
 - Results:

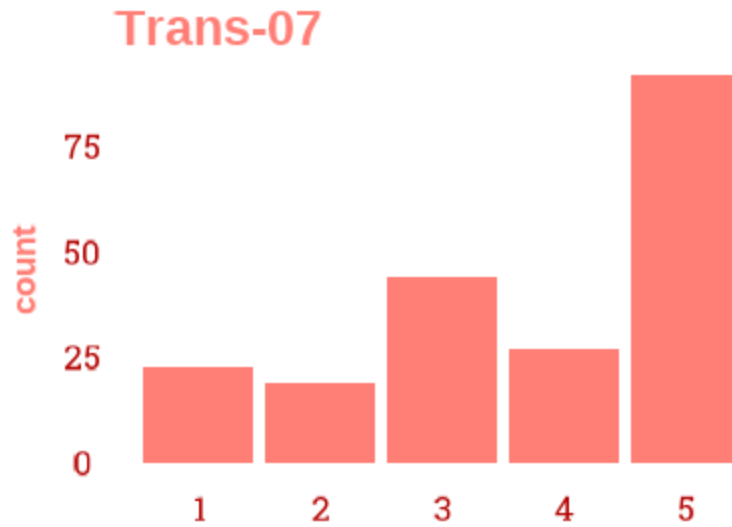


6. I would call my child by the name and pronouns they wanted to be called by, even if it did not match the name I gave them at birth.
- -

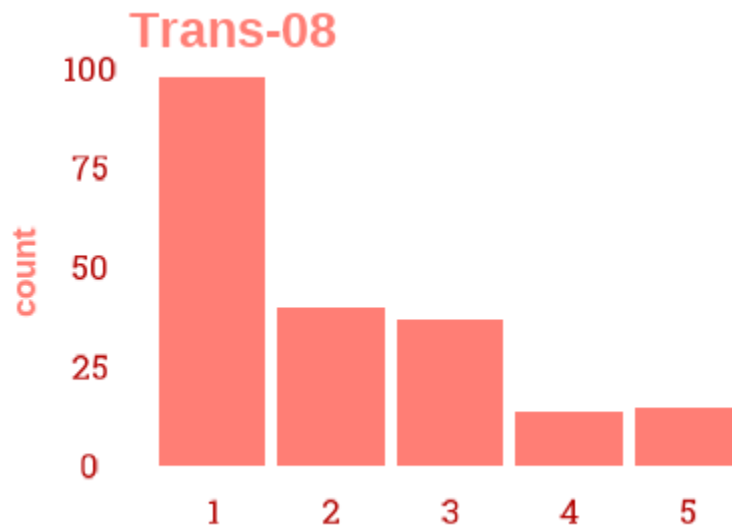
- Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a willingness to offer the same respect of using self-identified names and pronouns as the previous question (*Trans 5*) to their own child.
- Possible Interpretations: Some respondents' most spoken languages may not necessarily be ones that use gendered pronouns in the same way as English, and thus may not respond as expected. There may be some confusion in respondents who do not have children or do not intend to. There may exist a respondent who indicates disagreement solely by virtue of disagreement with the perceived implication that they have or intend to have children.
- Results:



7. Changing your gender marker on legal ID documents (e.g. driver's license, passport, birth certificate) should not be allowed.
 - +
 - Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture support for legal recognition of self-identified gender.
 - Possible Interpretations: This question is fairly straightforward.
 - Results:

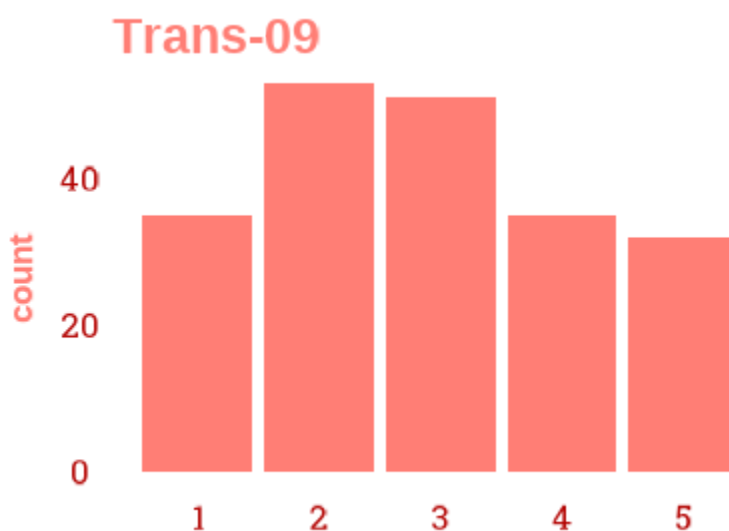


8. I use gender-neutral pronouns (e.g. they/them) to refer to any person who wants to be called by gender-neutral pronouns.
- -
 - Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a willingness to offer the same respect of using self-identified pronouns as a previous question (*Trans 5*) to somebody who uses gender-neutral pronouns, including but not necessarily limited to they/them.
 - Possible Interpretations: Some respondents' most spoken languages may not necessarily be ones that use gendered pronouns in the same way as English, and thus may not respond as expected.
 - Results:



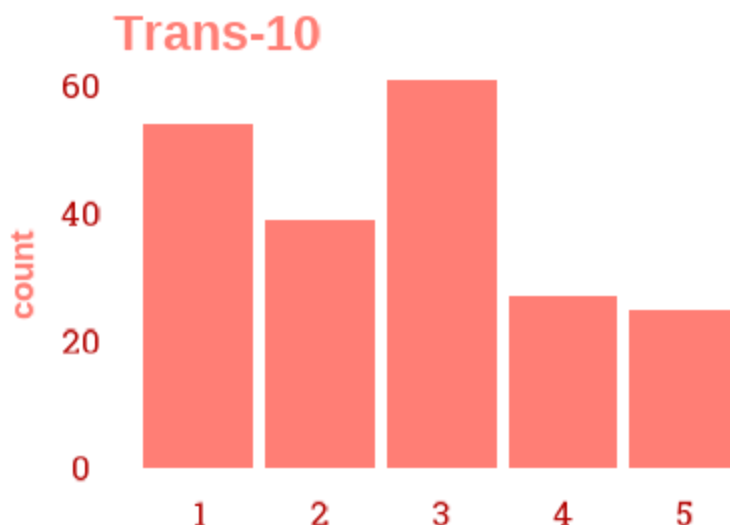
9. If a friend of mine liked to sometimes be referred to by words that aren't normal personal pronouns (e.g. "xe," "e," "ze," "fae," "bun," etc.) to be used as pronouns, I would incorporate those words in my speech when talking about them.

- -
- Purposes & Context: This question is meant to capture a willingness to offer the same respect of using self-identified pronouns as a previous question (*Trans 5*) to somebody who uses neopronouns, or words not conventionally used as personal pronouns being used as such, often to reflect a gender identity outside of the male-female binary (*YIP, 2021*).
- Possible Interpretations: Some respondents' most spoken languages may not necessarily be ones that use gendered pronouns in the same way as English, and thus may not respond as expected.
- Results:



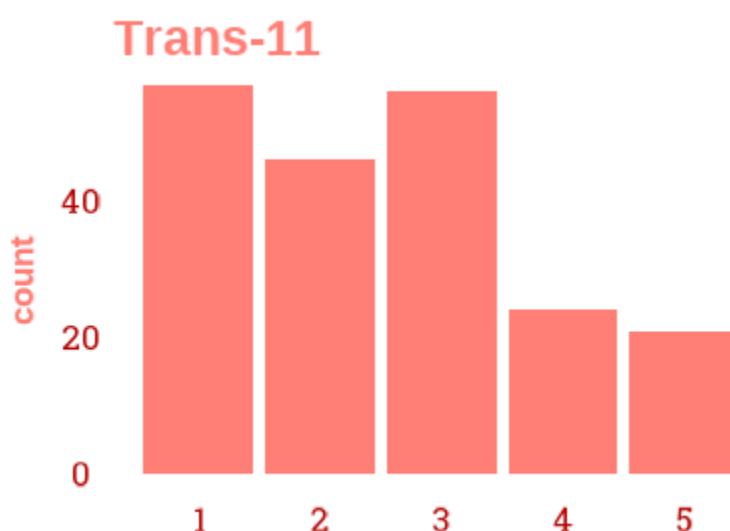
10. All health insurance should cover surgeries and hormone prescriptions for transgender people.

- -
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that gender-affirming care should be covered by health insurance.
- Possible Interpretations: Responses may be influenced by personal beliefs on laws regulating private health insurance, enforcing that "all health insurance should cover" something, regardless of whether the thing being required is related to transgender health.
- Results:



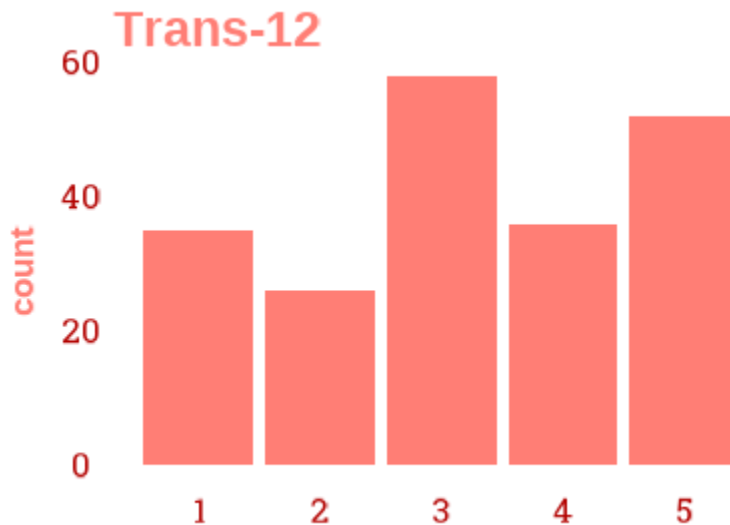
11. All workplaces should offer paid medical leave to employees recovering from gender-affirming surgeries.

- -
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that recovery for gender-affirming surgeries should be eligible for paid medical leave. Often paid medical leave may be associated with medically necessary procedures, so agreement may indicate belief that gender-affirming surgeries are medically necessary.
- Possible Interpretations: Responses may be influenced by personal beliefs on laws enforcing requirements for paid leave on private employers, regardless of if the thing being required is related to transgender health.
- Results:



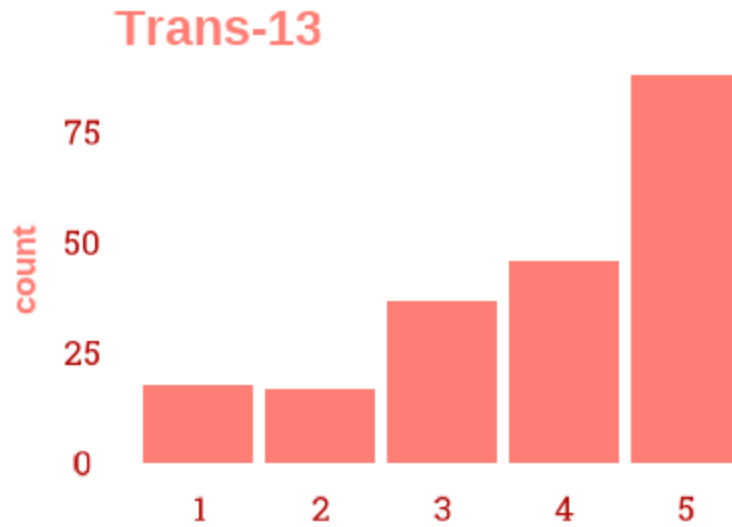
12. People who were born male should not be allowed to use women's restrooms.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This belief could reflect a variety of underlying beliefs, such as one that transgender women pose a danger to cisgender women in public restrooms.
- Possible Interpretations: This question is fairly straightforward, save for the possibility that a respondent mistakenly misses the word "not."
- Results:



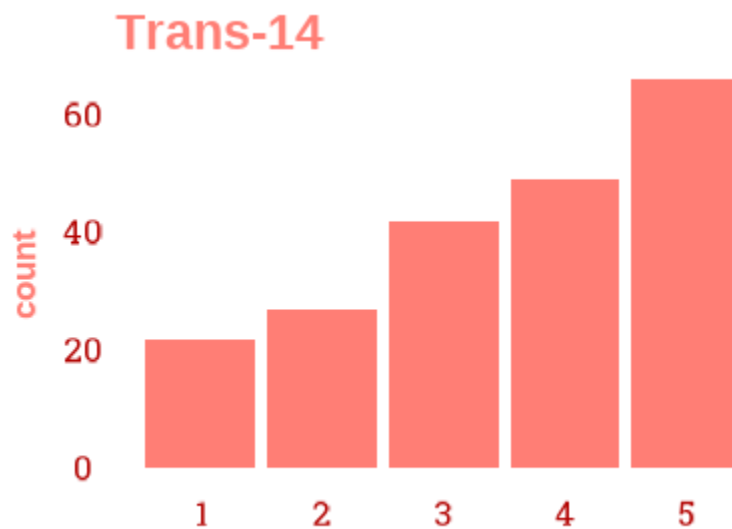
13. People can only be male or female, with no in-between.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question captures disagreement with the validity of gender identities falling outside of the male-female binary.
- Possible Interpretations: It is possible that there exists a respondent who does not believe in the validity of non-binary gender identities who indicates disagreement out of consideration for intersex individuals.
- Results:



14. “All-gender” public restrooms are not necessary.

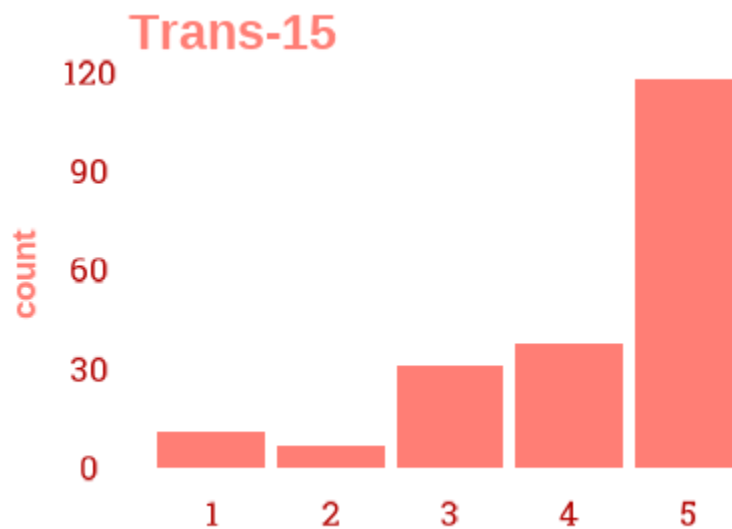
- +
- Purposes & Context: This question captures disagreement with the belief that public restrooms without segregation by gender are a necessity.
- Possible Interpretations: This question is fairly straightforward, save for the possibility that a respondent mistakenly misses the word “not.”
- Results:



15. Men and women should only wear clothing appropriate to their gender.

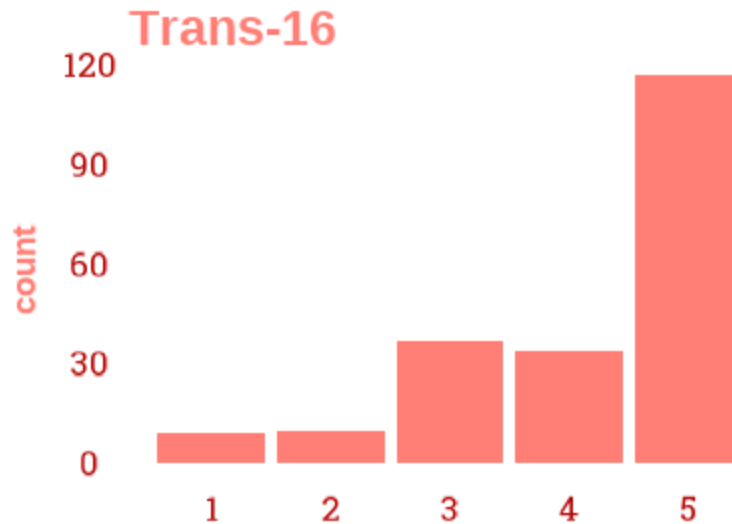
- +
- Purposes & Context: This question captures a belief that people should not wear clothing of the opposite gender. Individual and cultural values about what clothing is appropriate to what gender will vary.

- Possible Interpretations: While the intended interpretation of clothing being appropriate for a particular gender is that it is not the clothing of the opposite gender, individuals may hold other values, such as that women should avoid more revealing garments. Any such interpretation may also demonstrate some amount of sexism, though not necessarily an unfavorability with gender non-conformity.
- Results:



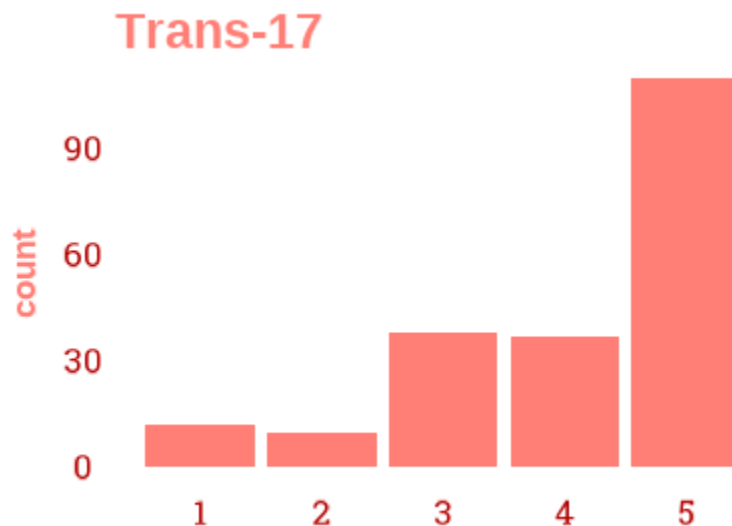
16. If I saw a transgender person interacting with a child, I would be suspicious of their intentions.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief in myths about transgender people being child sexual predators.
- Possible Interpretations: While the nature of interaction is not defined, if without explicitly hinting at it the respondent imagines an inappropriate form of interaction, that should be indicative of a bias against transgender people.
- Results:



17. Most transgender people are out of touch with reality.

- +
- Purposes & Context: Responses may reflect a belief that transgender people suffer from delusion or believe themselves to be something they are not.
- Possible Interpretations: Responses may differ if “most” were replaced with “all.”
- Results:

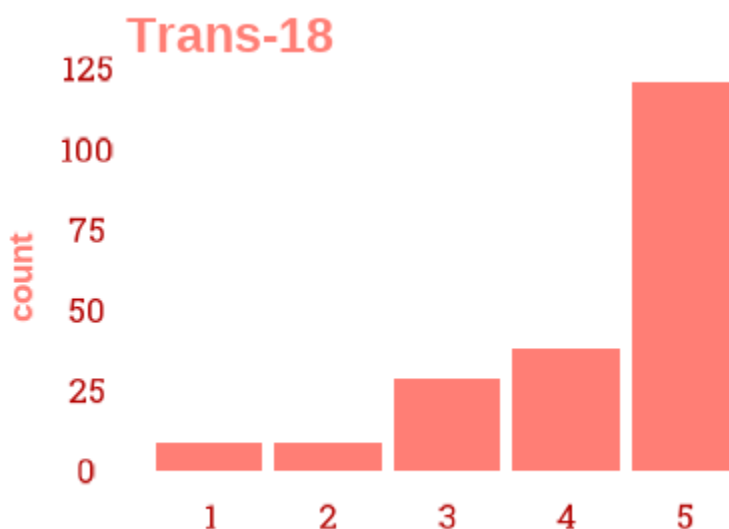


18. Most transgender people are sexually perverted.

- +
- Purposes & Context: This question is intended to capture a belief that transgender people are sexually perverted.
- Possible Interpretations: Responses in agreement indicate unfavorability toward non-heterosexual orientations, assuming the respondent finds a negative

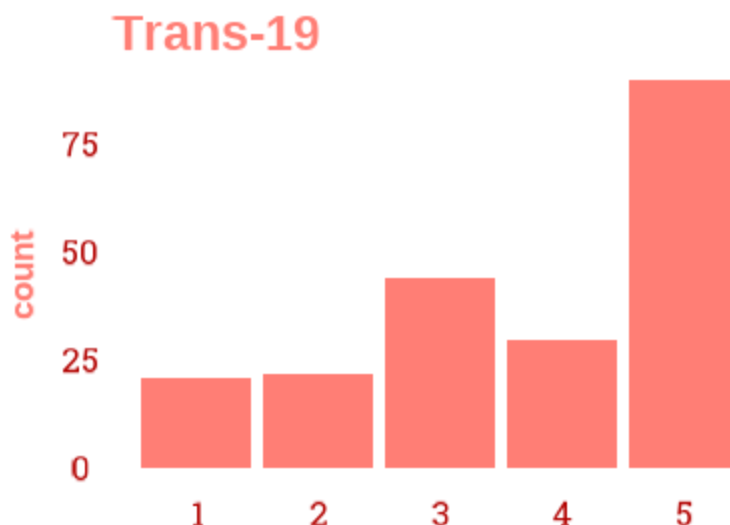
connotation in the word “perverted.” Even if they do not, agreement still indicates ignorance in the belief of this harmful myth.

- Results:



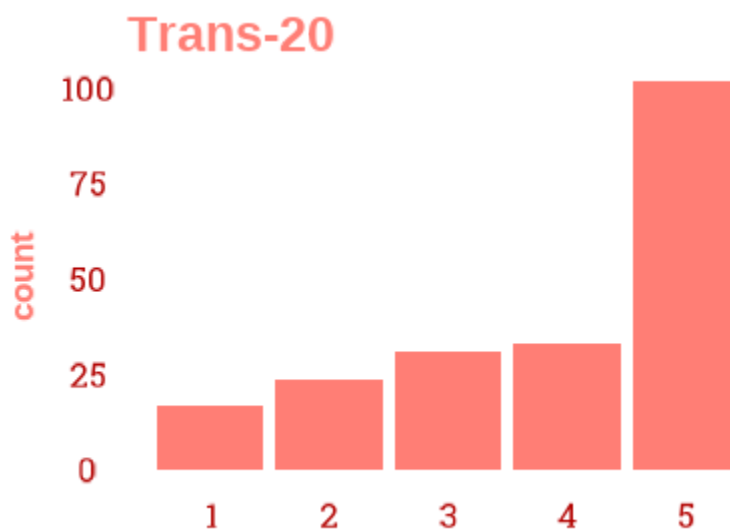
19. Children identifying as the opposite sex in school is a serious issue in the public school system.

- +
- Purposes & Context: While this question is mainly intended to parallel a question about children identifying as furies in school (*Furry 24*), agreement could indicate unfavorability toward children identifying as transgender or doing so specifically in school, where their parents may not be aware.
- Possible Interpretations: While agreement is intended to indicate a belief that children identifying as gay in school is itself an issue, there may exist a respondent who does not believe so, but indicates agreement from a concern for issues regarding transgender children in schools, such as bullying by other children or outing to parents against a child’s consent by adults.
- Results:



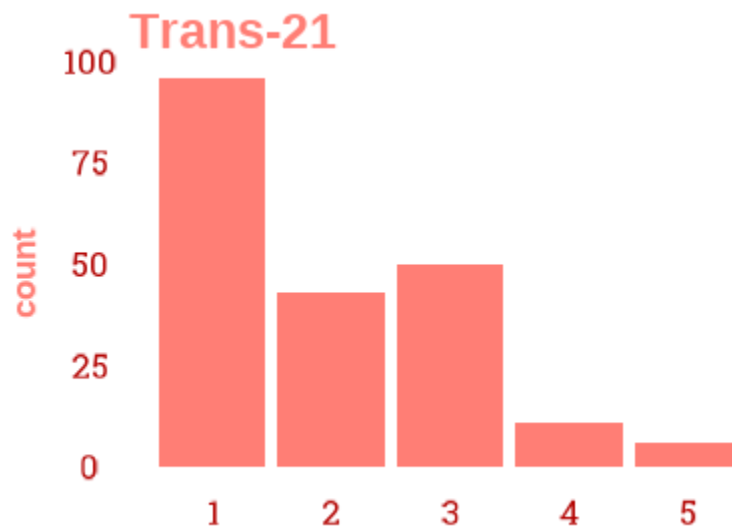
20. If my child came out to me as transgender, I would feel disappointed.

- +
- Purposes & Context: Responses should indicate unfavorability to the hypothetical scenario of their own child coming out as transgender. This could indicate a belief that being transgender is bad for a child to be or a sign of poor parenting, or indicate a preference toward cisgender children.
- Possible Interpretations: There may be some confusion in respondents who do not have children or do not intend to. There may exist a respondent who indicates disagreement solely by virtue of disagreement with the perceived implication that they have or intend to have children.
- Results:



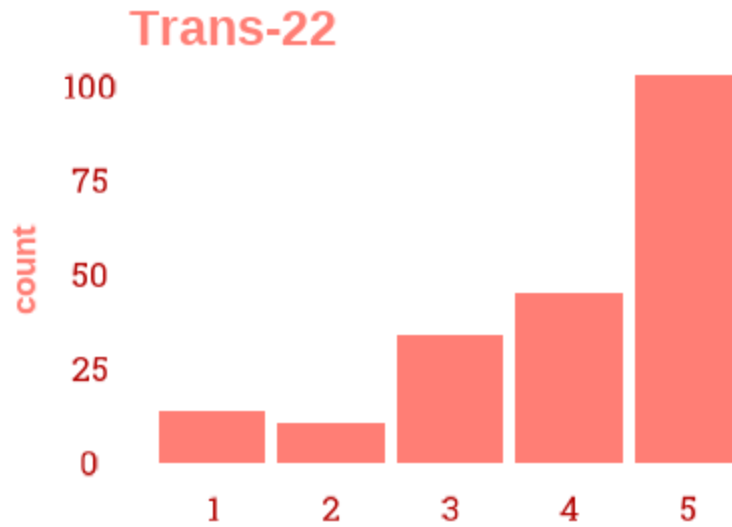
21. Children should be encouraged to explore their masculinity and femininity.

- -
- Purposes & Context: This question borrows from the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (Willoughby, 2005). Responses may indicate a belief that children should be encouraged to explore gender identity/expression or to define it for themselves.
- Possible Interpretations: There is an intended implication that each individual child should be encouraged to explore *both* their masculinity and femininity, but some may interpret it as that boys should explore masculinity and girls should explore femininity.
- Results:



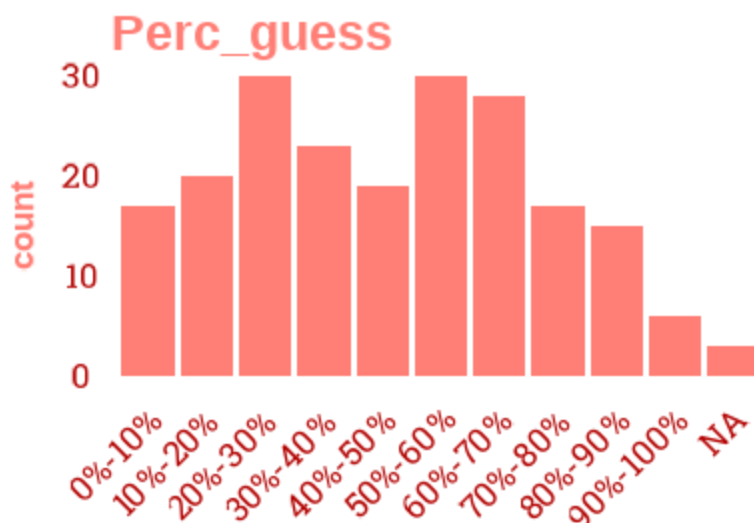
22. Sex change operations are morally wrong.

- +
- Purposes & Context: A moral opposition to gender-affirming surgeries indicates unfavorability toward transgender identities.
- Possible Interpretations: This question is fairly straightforward, though the phrasing of “sex change operation” may not be considered the most appropriate or respectful.
- Results:

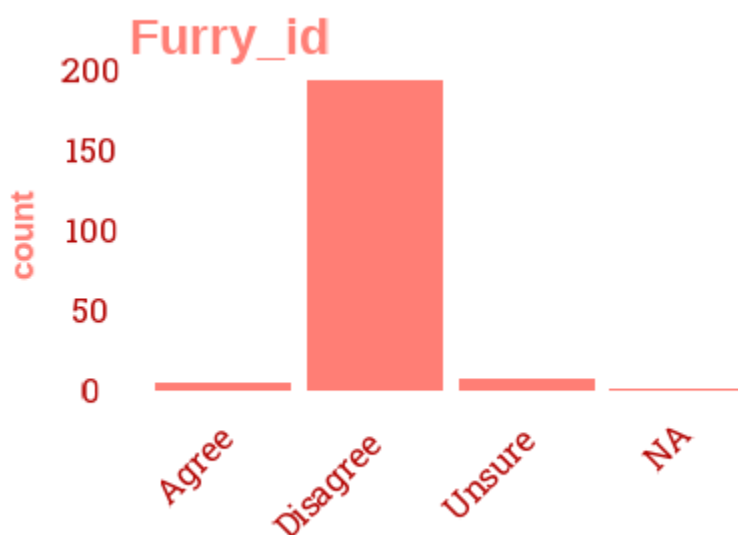


Questionnaire Section: Supplemental Questions

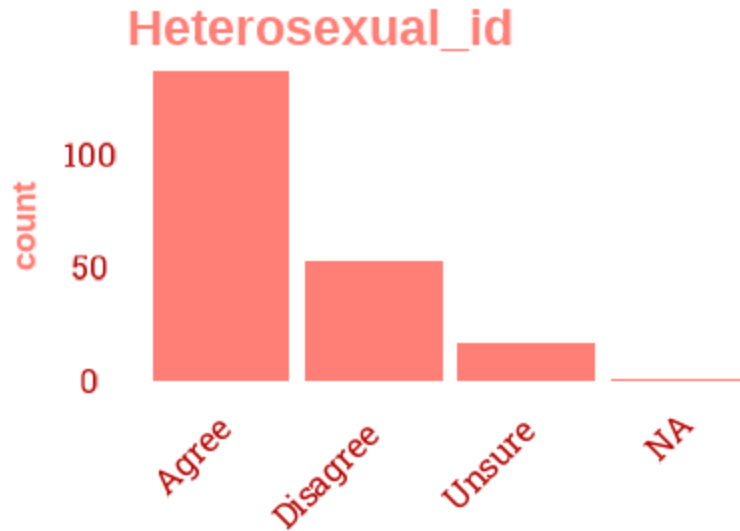
- *Perc_guess*: By your best estimation, what percentage of furries do you think identify as LGBTQ+?
 - Purposes & Context: This dimension is potentially interesting in comparing a respondent's favorability toward furries and toward either of non-heterosexual orientations and diverse gender identities. Selecting an estimate significantly higher than the general population indicates some amount of awareness of the furry-LGBTQ+ overlap. This could be used to differentiate respondents who are unfavorable toward furries despite or potentially because of it (though cause cannot be inferred).
 - Results:



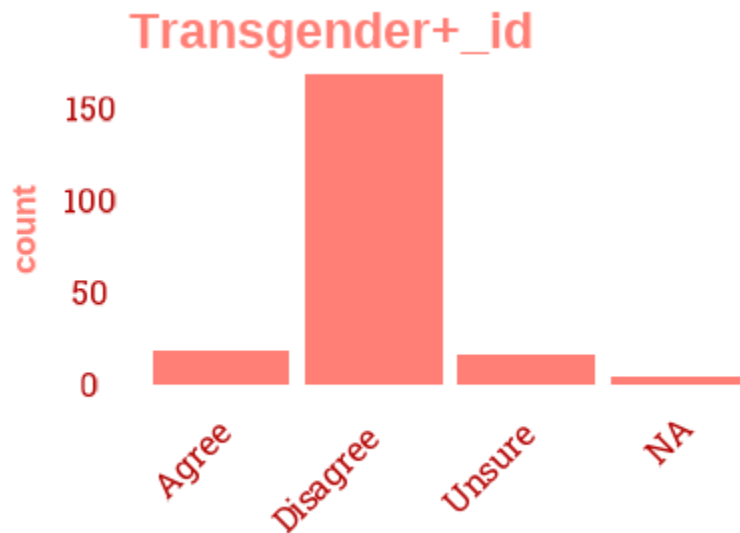
- *Furry_id*: I consider myself or identify as a furry.
 - Purposes & Context: Survey recruitment methods did not actively seek out respondents identifying as furries, but did not reject them from the sample. This dimension can be used to filter for only respondents not identifying as furries.
 - Results:



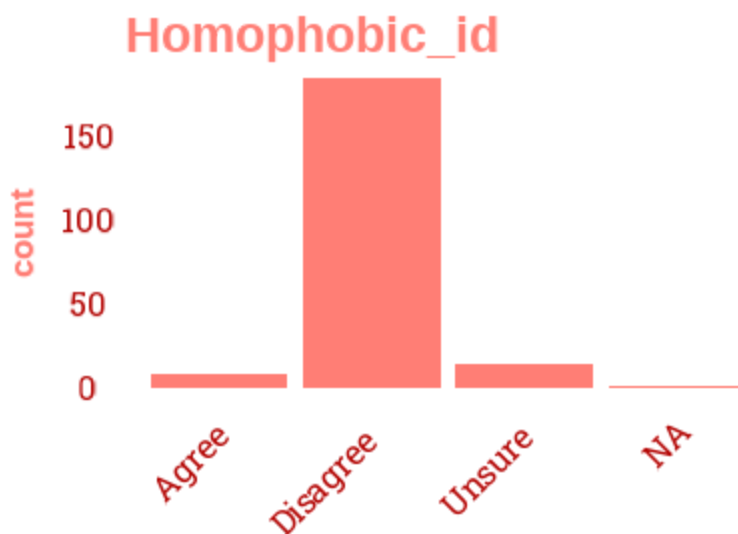
- *Heterosexual_id*: I consider myself or identify as straight or heterosexual.
 - Purposes & Context: This dimension is potentially interesting for comparing favorability score distributions between its categories.
 - Results:



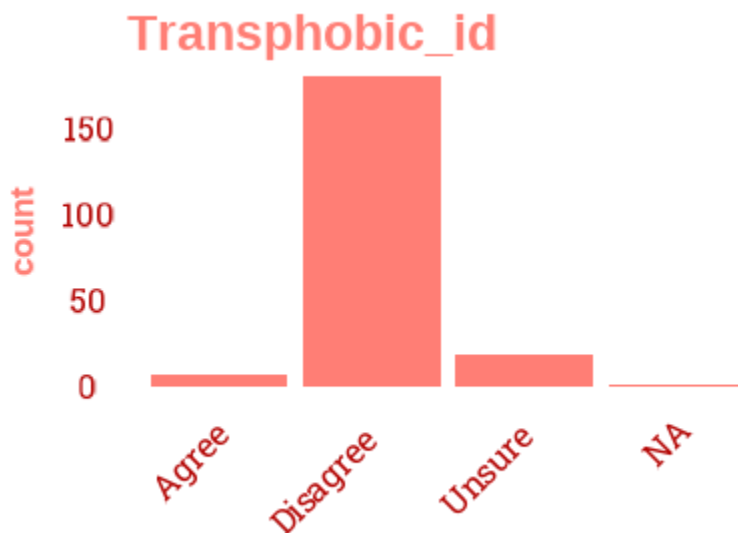
- *Transgender+_id*: I consider myself or identify as transgender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, agender, genderfluid, non-binary, or two-spirit.
 - Purposes & Context: This dimension is potentially interesting for comparing favorability score distributions between its categories. The identities listed are borrowed from the IARP gender identity questionnaire.
 - Results:



- *Homophobic_id*: I consider myself or identify as homophobic.
 - Purposes & Context: This dimension is potentially interesting for comparing non-heterosexual orientation favorability score distributions between its categories, such as to ask a question like how unfavorable people get before self-identifying as “homophobic.”
 - Results:



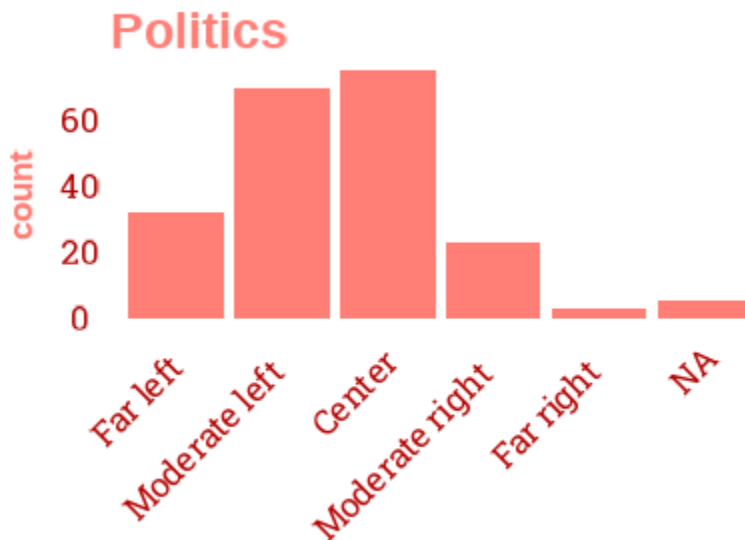
- *Transphobic_id*: I consider myself or identify as transphobic.
 - Purposes & Context: This dimension is potentially interesting for comparing diverse gender identity favorability score distributions between its categories, such as to ask a question like how unfavorable people get before self-identifying as “transphobic.”
 - Results:



- *Politics*: Please select the option that best summarizes where you currently stand on the political spectrum.
 - Purposes & Context: This dimension is useful for getting a sense of sampling bias. It could potentially be used to weight respondents with the assumption of a true distribution of the target population (in combination with other variables, such as whether a respondent is from within the United States), though usefulness

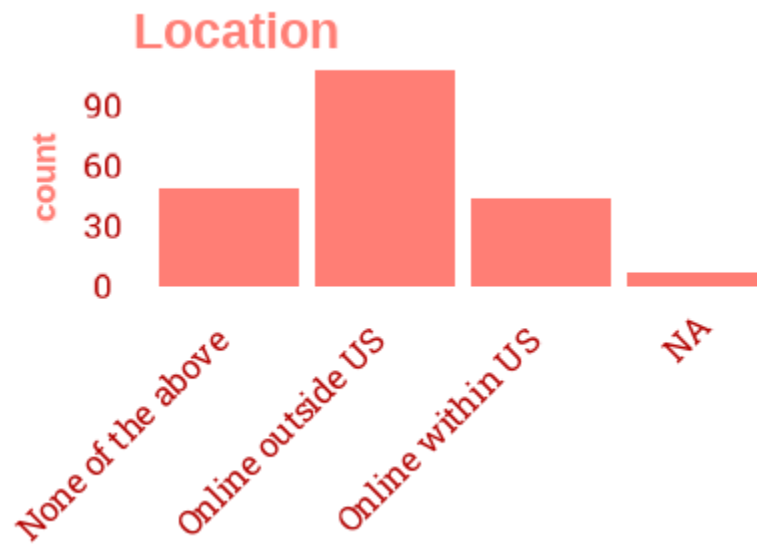
would be limited. This dimension is also potentially interesting for comparing favorability score distributions between its categories.

- Possible Interpretations: The categories named do not necessarily represent a true objective segment of a one-dimensional spectrum of all political positions, but rather have their meaning assigned by cultural context and use. For example, while the small size of the “Far right” category may reflect the true distribution, it is also possible that respondents were less inclined to choose it due to negative connotations.
- Results:

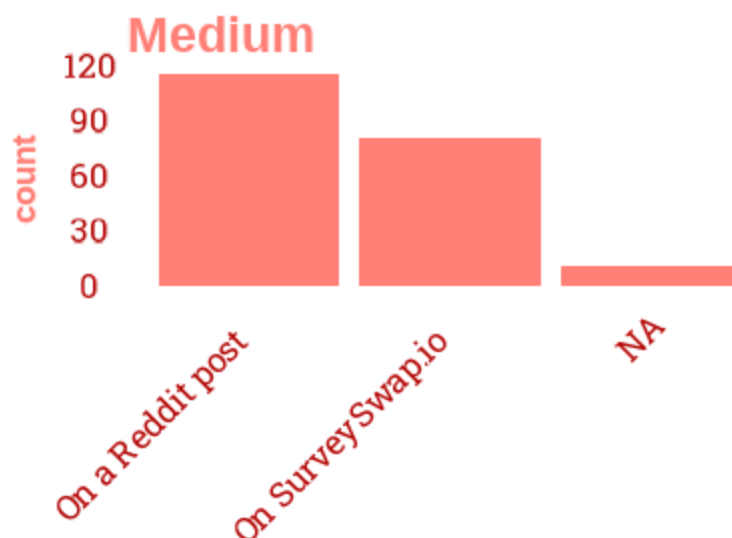


- *Location:* At what event/location did you find this survey?
 - Purposes & Context: The original reason for including this question was to differentiate in-person from online respondents. However, in-person turnout was so small that in sharing these data publicly, all options with fewer than 5 responses are set to NA.
 - Possible Interpretations: As far as I am aware, all possible response collection locations are covered in the options provided, and “None of the above” is a mystery. Respondents selecting “None of the above” may have done so out of confusion with the meanings of the options, or for anonymity, doing so instead of leaving no response.
 - Options:
 - At the Salem Saturday Market (Salem, OR)
 - At the Vashon Island Strawberry Festival (Vashon, WA)
 - Downtown Salem or Minto Brown Park
 - Online or sent to me, and I'm taking this survey from within the United States
 - Online or sent to me, and I'm taking this survey from outside the United States
 - None of the above

- Results:



- *Medium:* On what did you find the link to this survey?
 - Purposes & Context: This dimension is potentially useful in comparing the responses and favorability scores of users from Reddit vs those from SurveySwap. In sharing these data publicly, all options with fewer than 5 responses are set to NA.
 - Possible Interpretations: A small number of respondents chose options for response collection methods that I never used. These responses would have also been masked to NA for impossibility, though their response counts were so small that this function was covered in masking all with responses < 5. Options representing collection methods that were truly used are marked below in **bold**. Also, while I did not sample respondents by sending my survey individually, “Sent to me by someone” is included for the possibility of respondents sharing the survey link with others.
 - Options:
 - **On a tee shirt worn by a student**
 - On a tee shirt worn by a student in a furry costume
 - On a poster
 - **On a Reddit post**
 - On a LinkedIn post
 - **Sent to me by someone**
 - **On SurveySwap.io**
 - None of the above
 - Results:



Analysis

Scoring Favorability

To calculate each of three favorability scores (1: toward furries, 2: toward non-heterosexual orientations, and 3: toward diverse gender identities), all questions from each respective topic are aggregated into raw scores. To calculate raw scores, all unweighted questions (marked with 0) are omitted, and all reverse-scored questions (marked with -) are first set to their inverse (multiply by -1 and then add 6). Ignoring all skipped questions, all responses (after reversing) are then averaged. The distribution of each raw score is shown below (Fig. 5-7).

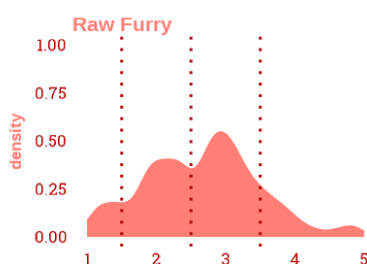


Figure 5: Raw furry favorability score density distribution, with cutoff thresholds for final score

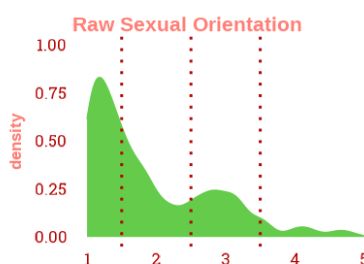


Figure 6: Raw non-heterosexual orientation favorability density distribution, with cutoff thresholds for final score

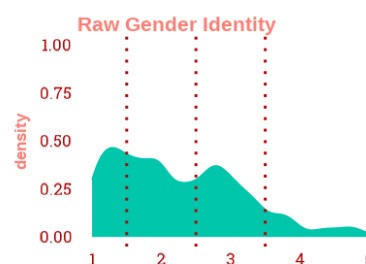


Figure 7: Raw diverse gender identity favorability density distribution, with cutoff thresholds for final score

Rather than using raw scores in the final analysis, they are transformed further into four-tier ordinal scales. It would be inadvisable to treat raw scores as continuous variables in analyses, because of the nature of Likert-scale responses and the equal weighting of all

questions. There is no measurable difference between consecutive answers on the five-point agreement scale, and different respondents may treat these levels differently. Also, while every question used in evaluation contributes the same weight as all others answered in its category, not all questions necessarily hold the same subjective “severity,” so treating them objectively would be misguided. (This is also why favorability can only be compared within the same score type. For example, if someone scores unfavorably on gender identity and neutrally on sexual orientation, they are not necessarily less favorable on gender identity than sexual orientation.) Raw scores are split into ordinal scores between three thresholds (see also Fig. 5-7) as follows, resulting in the distributions below (Fig. 8-10):

- $1 \leq \text{Highly favorable} < 1.5$
- $1.5 \leq \text{Moderately favorable} < 2.5$
- $2.5 \leq \text{Ambivalent or neutral} < 3.5$
- $3.5 \leq \text{Unfavorable} \leq 5$

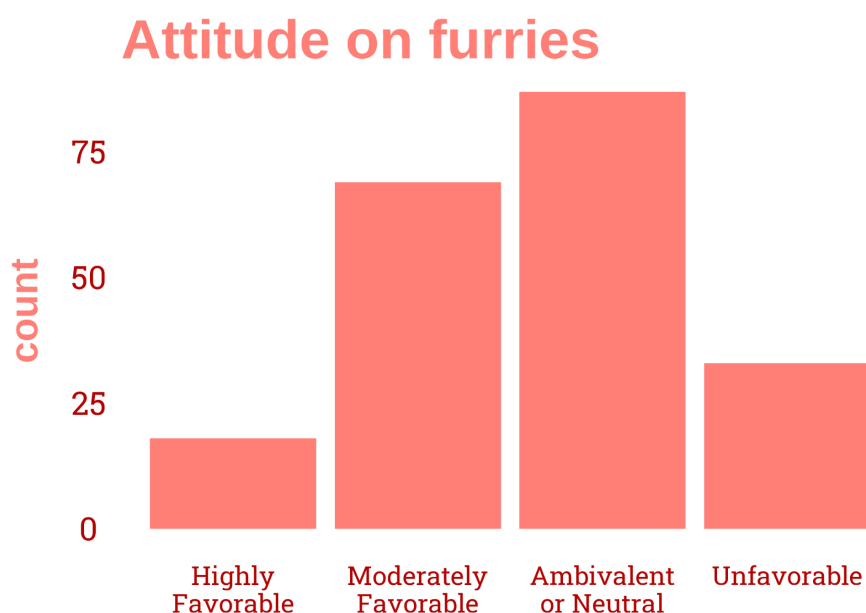


Figure 8: Favorability toward furries categorical score distribution

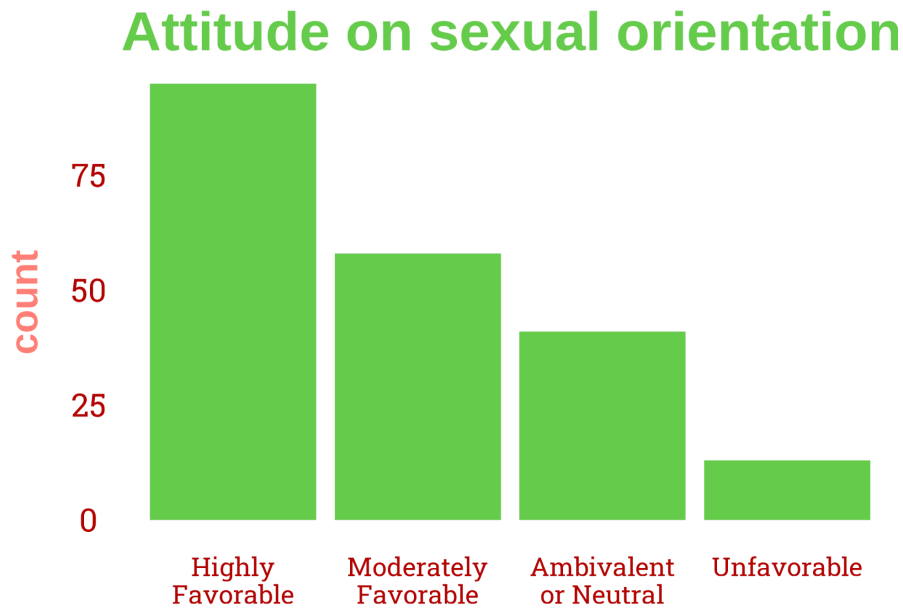


Figure 9: Favorability toward non-heterosexual orientations categorical score distribution

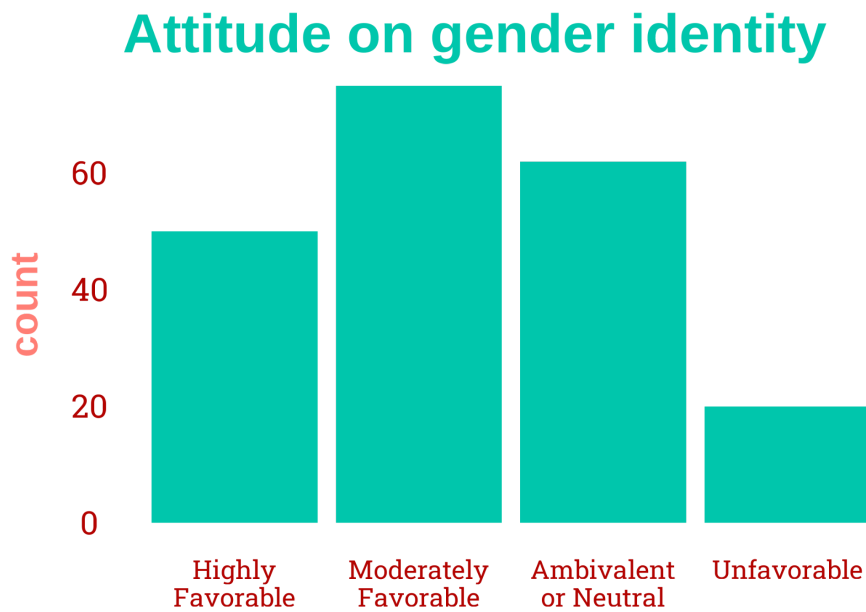


Figure 10: Favorability toward diverse gender identities categorical score distribution

Analysis

To investigate the main research question (see *Research Question*), I asked three sub-questions that could each be realistically supported with data:

1. **As favorability toward non-heterosexual orientations increases, does furry favorability increase?** Determine using Spearman's rho.
2. **As favorability toward diverse gender identities increases, does furry favorability increase?** Determine using Spearman's rho.
3. **Is furry favorability predictable given responses to all specific questions on both gender and orientation?** Determine using macro-averaged mean absolute error on an ordinal regression analysis.

The reason for choosing Spearman's rho as a correlation coefficient, in sub-questions 1 and 2, over Pearson's r was because Pearson assumes a roughly linear relationship between continuous variables. The variables whose relationship is being measured in this case are not continuous but ordinal categorical, and since ordinal scales have no objective change in value between consecutive values, linear relationships are impossible. Whereas, Spearman only assumes ordinality (a set ordering of categories) and monotonicity (consistently only increasing or decreasing).

Sub-question 1

Short answer: Yes.

Long answer:

Furry favorability and non-heterosexual orientation favorability share a weak correlation (Spearman's rho: 0.36), with an extremely low p-value ($1.5e-07$). This means that as orientation favorability increases, furry favorability tends to increase only a low to moderate amount, but enough to be extremely statistically significant. Visually, the distribution of furry favorability appears to become less favorable with each consecutively less favorable sexual orientation category (*Fig. 11*).

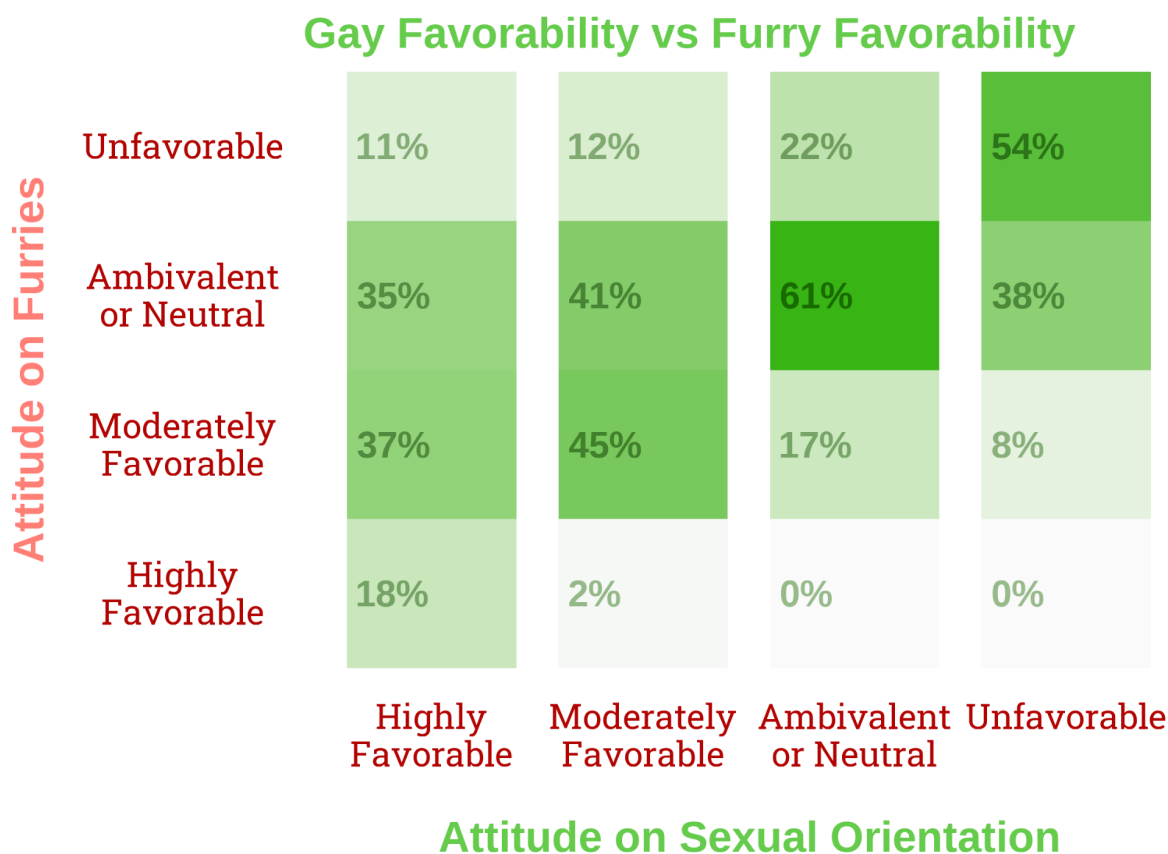


Figure 11: The distribution of furry favorability within each category of non-heterosexual orientation favorability

Sub-question 2

Short answer: Yes.

Long answer:

Furry favorability and diverse gender identity favorability share a moderate correlation (Spearman's rho: 0.52), with an extremely low p-value ($<2.2e-16$). This means that as gender identity favorability increases, furry favorability tends to increase a moderate and extremely statistically significant amount. Visually, the distribution of furry favorability appears to become less favorable with each consecutively less favorable gender identity category (*Fig. 12*).

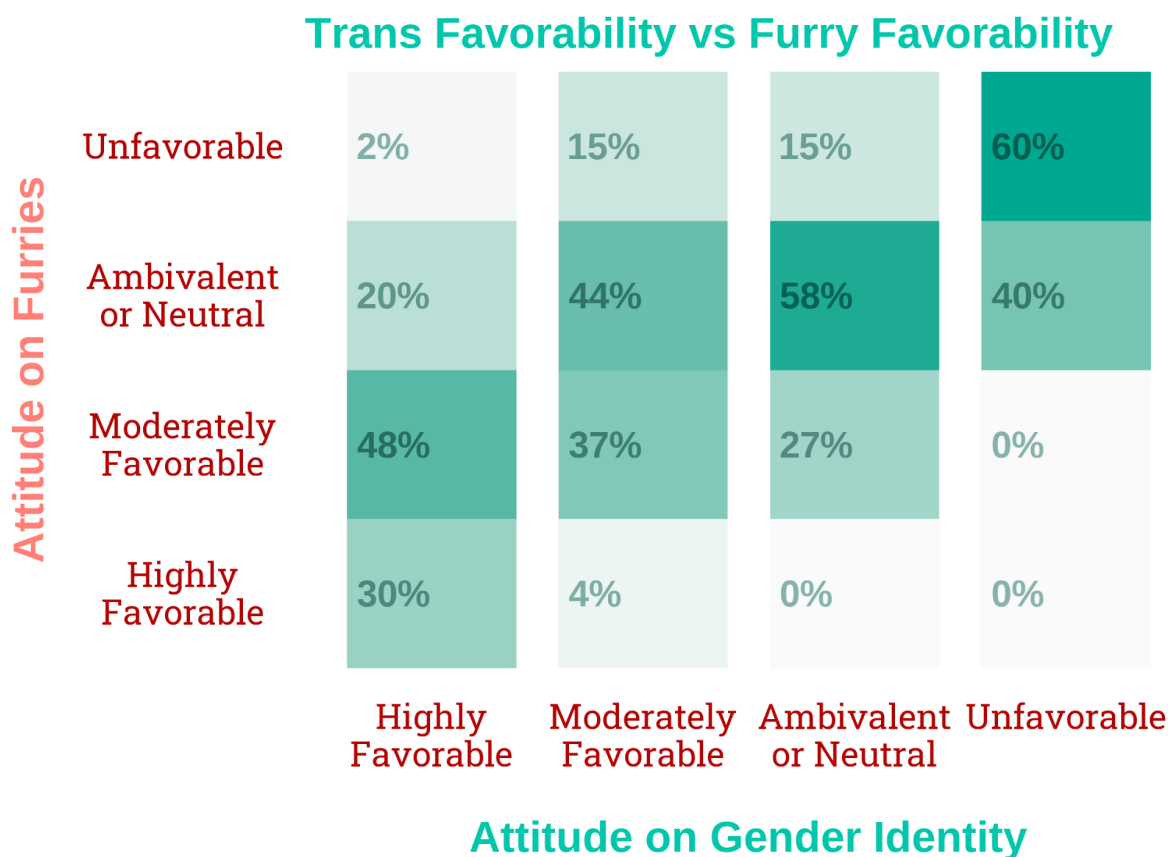


Figure 12: The distribution of furry favorability within each category of diverse gender identity favorability

Sub-question 3

Short answer: Somewhat.

Long answer:

Using random forest-based ordinal regression with a 3:1 train-test ratio and stratified by class, predicted furry favorability scores have a macro-averaged mean absolute error (macro-MAE) of 0.59. This means that averaged across all possible values, predicted values are on average 59% of one step on the favorability scale away from true values.

The model was given the answers to all questions in the categories of gender identity and sexual orientation, and none in the furry category, in order to predict the furry favorability score, which had been separately aggregated from all answers from the furry category (see *Analysis: Scoring Favorability*). A 3:1 train-test ratio and stratification by class means that the testing set is made up of a random quarter of all rows in the original data with as close to the original distribution of furry favorability as possible, proportionally.

For k classes, ordinal regression performs $k - 1$ binary random forest classifications, each predicting whether the true class is higher than each of the lowest $k - 1$ classes. The

probability of each class i is then calculated as described below, and the category with the highest probability is chosen as the final prediction:

- For the lowest class ($i = 0$): One minus the probability that the true class is higher than class 0
- For each class in between ($0 < i < k$): The probability that the true class is higher than class $i - 1$ minus the probability that the true class is higher than class i
- For the highest class ($i = k$): The probability that the true class is greater than class $k - 1$

Macro-MAE of 59% indicates fairly moderate predicting power. High favorability is most often confused as moderate favorability (which is unsurprising considering that realistically they are rather similar), but it is never misclassified as unfavorability. Unfavorability is confused as neutrality just as often as it is correctly classified, but it is never misclassified as any level of favorability (*Fig. 13*).

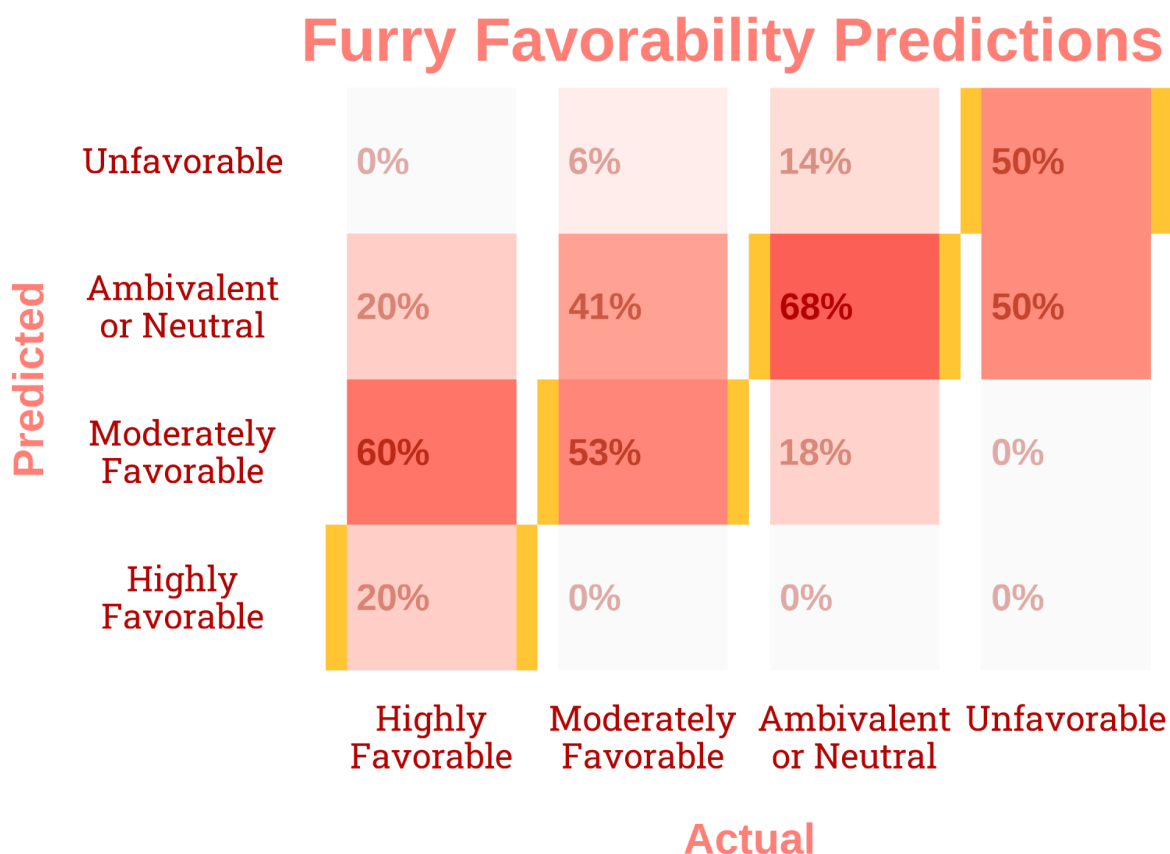


Figure 13: True vs. predicted furry favorability scores based on answers to all questions relating to gender identity and sexual orientation, with correct predictions highlighted

Conclusion

fursona

A portmanteau of *furry* and *persona*, this refers to a personally owned or imagined animal character used to represent oneself as an avatar or alter ego. Fursonas are almost universal among furries.

LGBTQ+, Queer, queer

LGBT, LGBTQIA+, Queer (caution, sometimes derogatory), etc., as an adjective refers to a broad minority demographic of people whose gender identity, sexual orientation, or romantic orientation does not align with the norm of *cisgender*, heterosexual, and hetero-romantic.

homophobia, transphobia

These refer to any prejudice or oppression directed toward non-heterosexual or non-hetero-romantic people and toward non-*cisgender* people, respectively. *LGBTQ+* people have historically faced homophobia and transphobia for failing to conform to cultural expectations around gender and sexuality.

cisgender

This adjective describes people whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth. This word is inoffensive and helpful in differentiating from people whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth. Though often thought of as non-transgender, not all people under the non-cisgender umbrella necessarily identify with the “transgender” label.

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