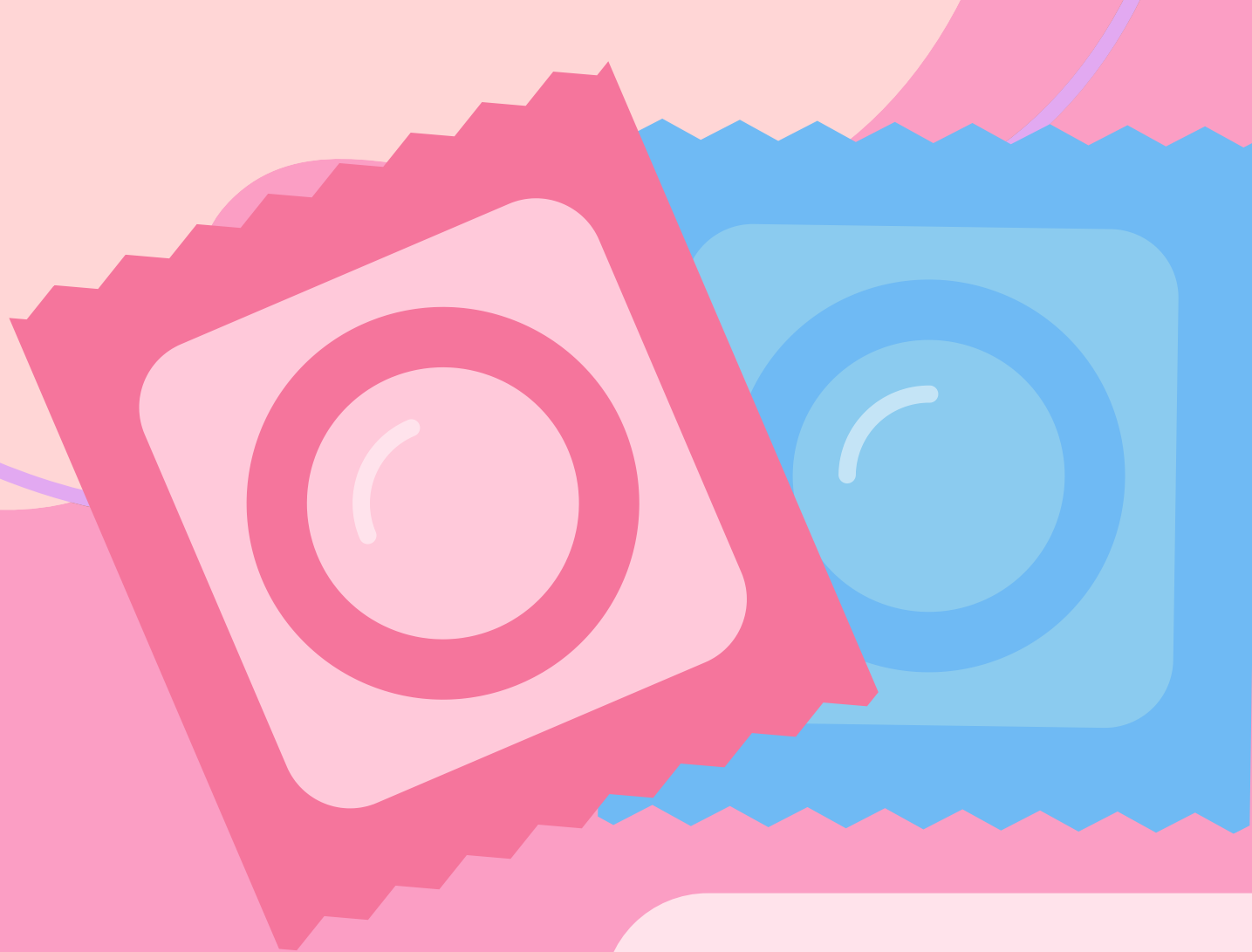




CULTURE, CONDOMS, AND CONVERSATIONS

Unwrapping the Mediator of Sexual Health Literacy in Undergraduates

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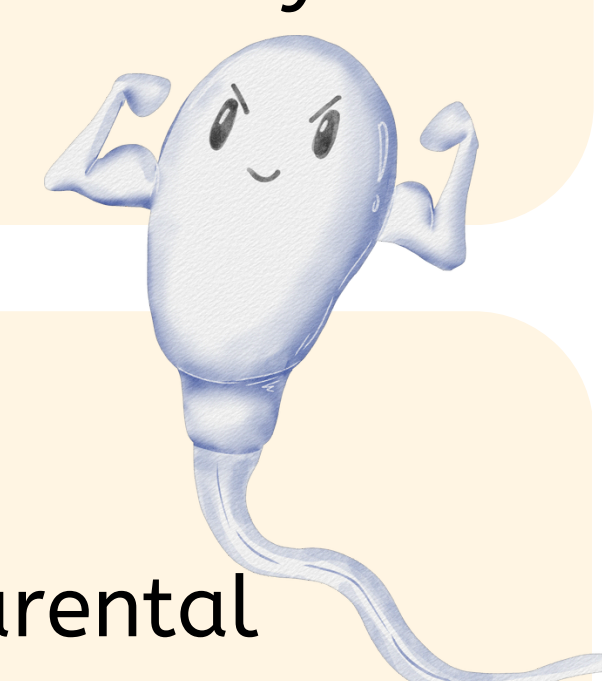
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Among UCSD undergraduates, is the relationship between cultural identity and sexual health literacy mediated by parental sexual health communication?

Background

- Parental sexual health communication is consistently associated with safer sex behaviors and improved sexual health literacy, including increased condom and contraceptive use among young adults.
- Asian young adults reported lower rates of parental sex communication (39.7%) compared to Latino (69.6%) and White (67.7%) peers, often due to cultural taboos surrounding discussions of sex and reproductive health.
- The mediating role of parental sexual health communication between cultural identity and sexual health literacy remains understudied in diverse university populations, highlighting the need for more culturally targeted interventions.



Objective

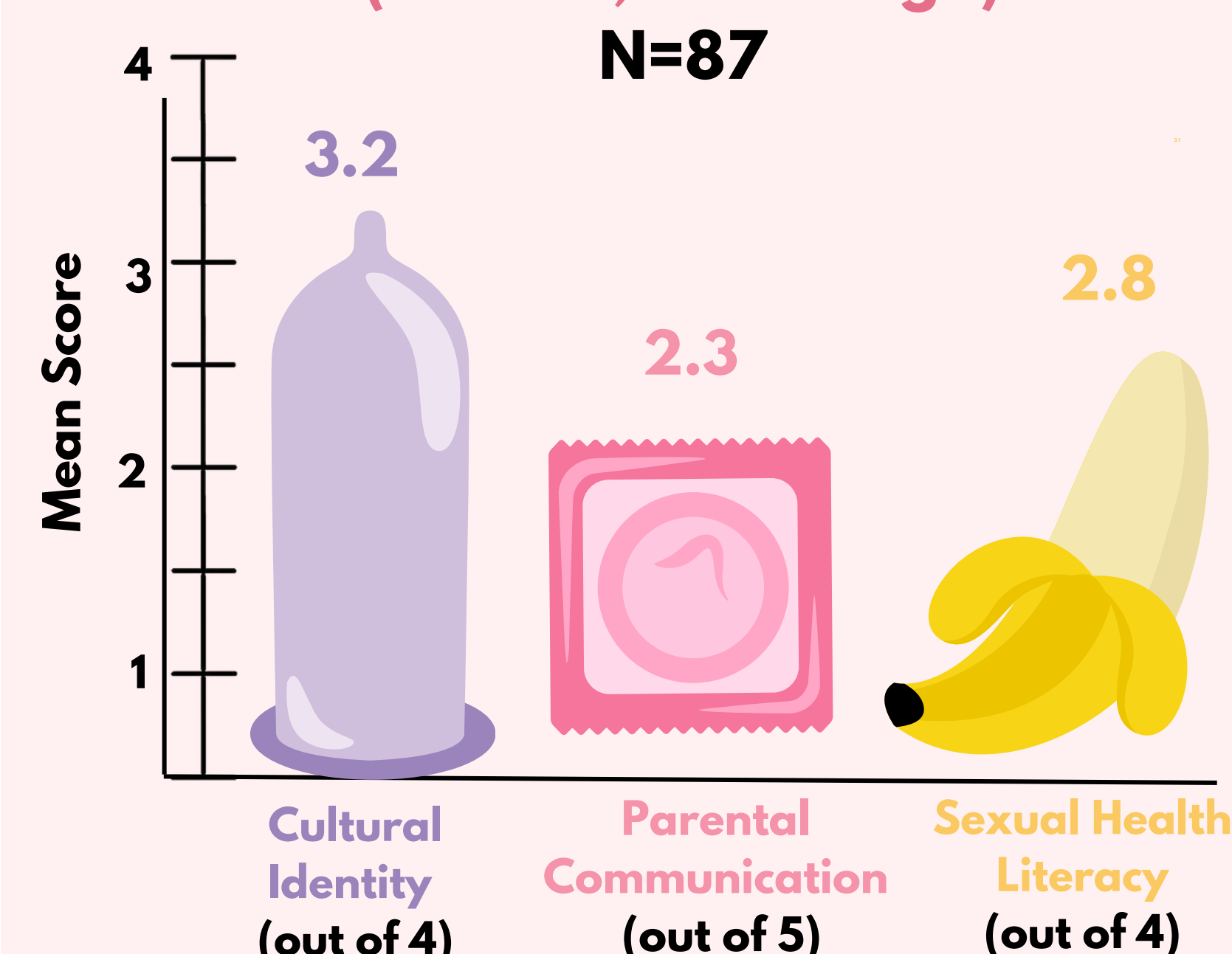
- Assess levels of sexual health literacy and parental communication across different cultural identity groups among UCSD undergraduates.
- Test whether parental sexual health communication mediates the association between cultural identity and sexual health literacy.

Methods

- Study Design:** A UCSD cross-sectional survey using Qualtrics distributed via email.
- Participants:** UC San Diego undergraduates between the ages of 18 & 25 (N=87)
- Exposure:** Individual culture identity & parental sexual health communication.
- Outcome:** Comfortability & level of knowledge regarding sexual health education
- Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, three-step linear regression (mediation), and one-way ANOVA; RStudio ($\alpha = 0.05$).

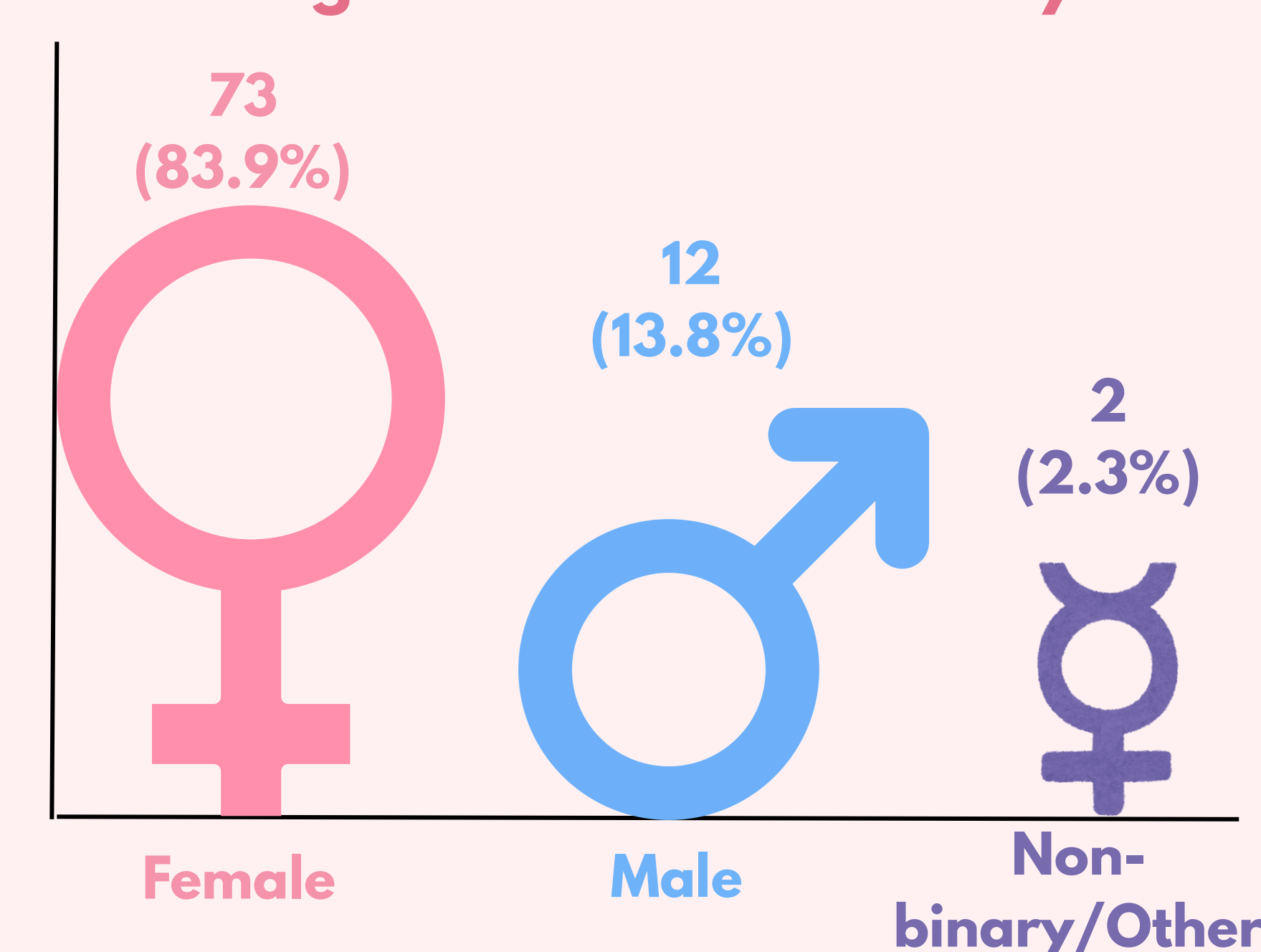
Results

Figure 1. Mean Study Scores (1 = Low, 4-5 = High)
N=87



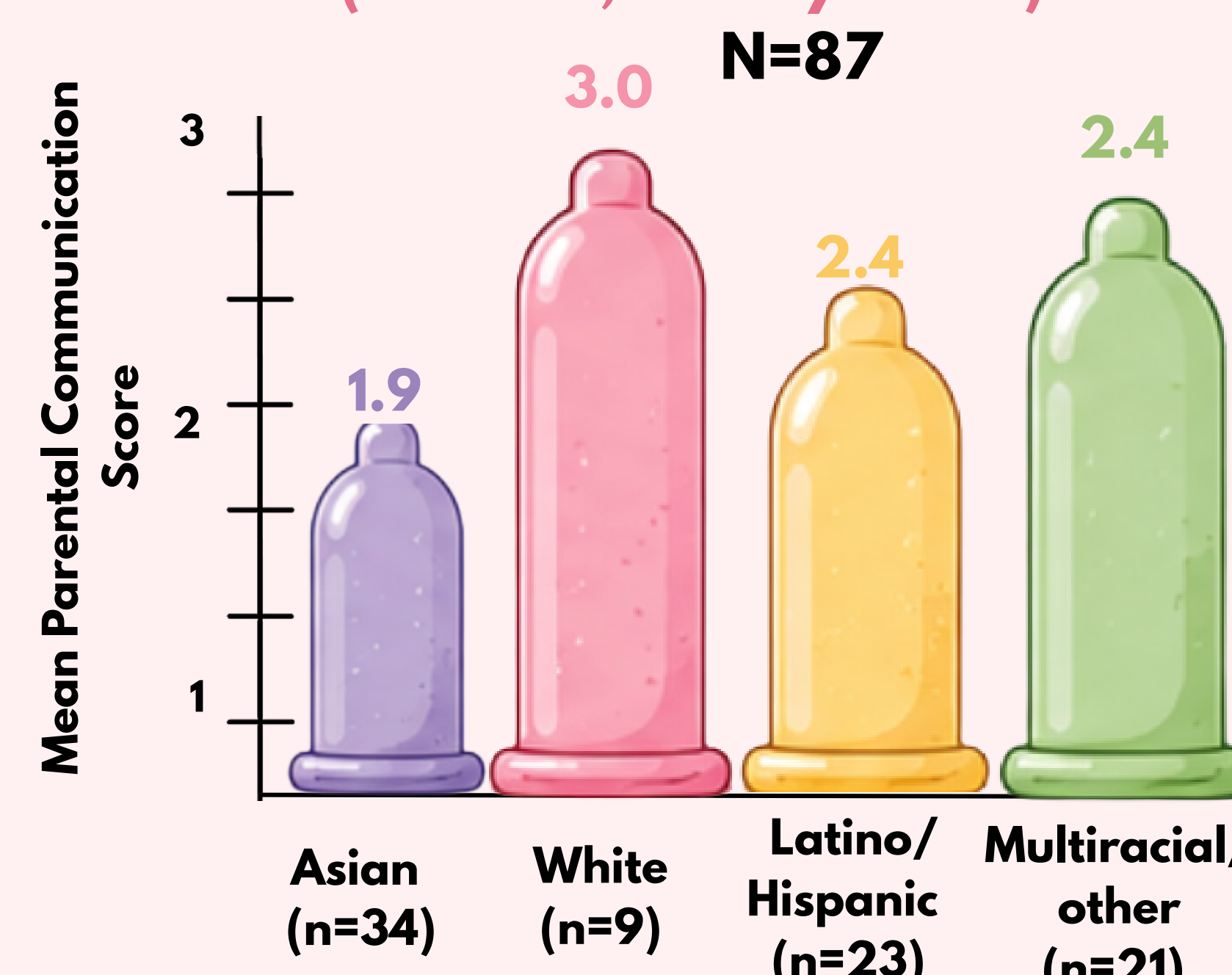
Measured: On average students felt fairly connected to their culture (3.2 out of 4), but reported low parental communication about sexual health (2.3 out of 5), for most students, these conversations happened rarely.

Figure 2. Gender Identity



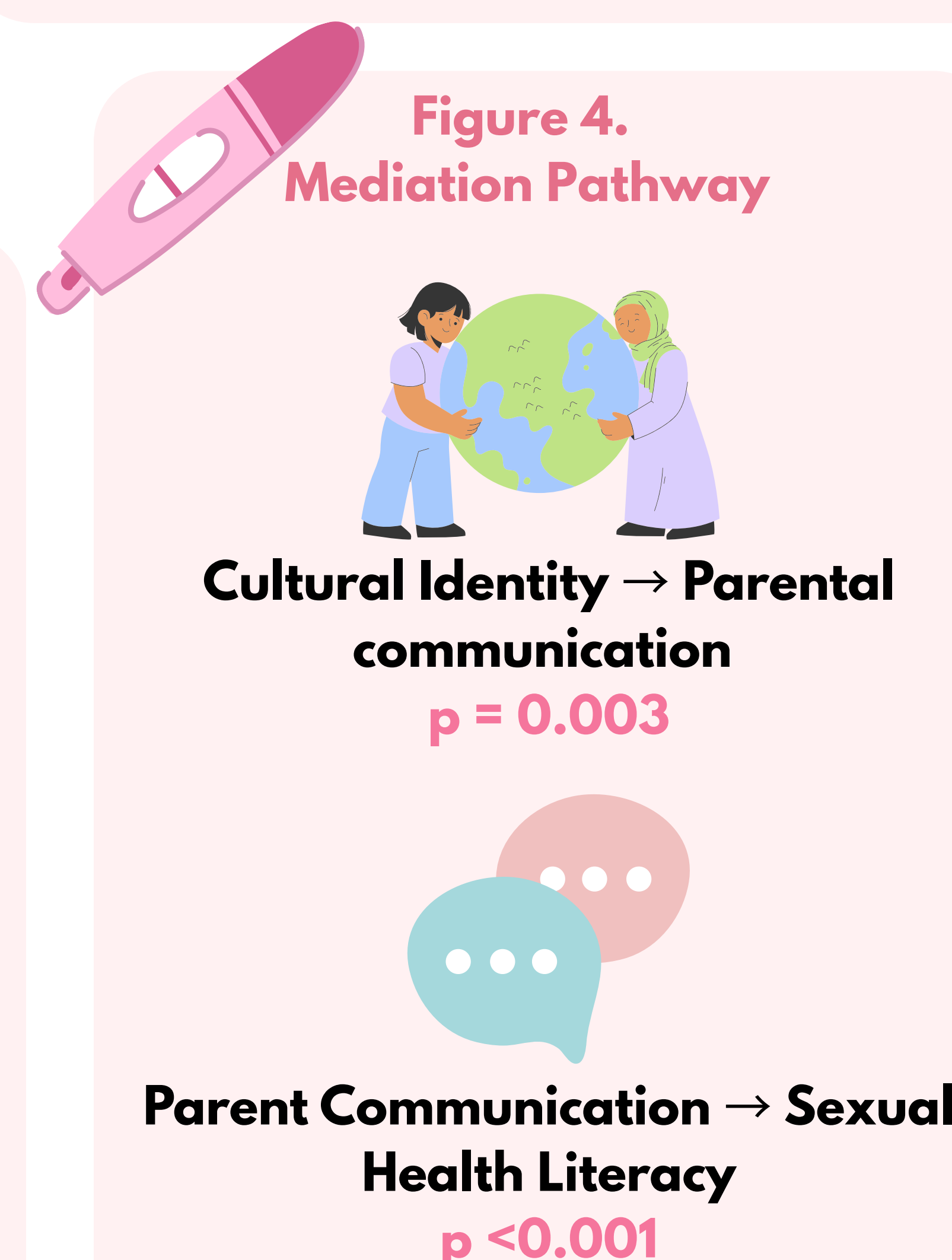
Demographics: It skewed heavily female and heavily Public Health majors (78.2%)

Figure 3. Parental communication About Sexual Health by Ethnicity (1=Never, 5=Very Often)
N=87



Parental communication was NOT the same across racial/ethnic groups ($p = 0.002$). Asian students report the least parental communication about sexual health; White students reported the most. The Asian and White difference (about 1.1 points apart on the 1-5 scale) was the one gap large enough to be statistically significant ($p = 0.002$)

Figure 4. Mediation Pathway



Discussion

- Students with a **stronger cultural identity** reported **fewer parental conversations** about sexual health, suggesting cultural norms may influence openness around these discussions.
- Students who had **more parental conversations** scored significantly **higher on sexual health literacy** ($p < 0.001$), supporting the importance of family-based communication in promoting sexual health knowledge.

Limitations

- This study was limited because it used a small cross-sectional sample (N = 87), mostly women and Public Health majors, which limits generalizability, prevents showing cause and effect, and reduces the precision of racial/ethnic group comparisons.
- Future research should include larger, more diverse student populations and work with cultural groups and organizations to identify barriers and develop culturally tailored interventions that support parent-child sexual health communication across different cultural groups.

Conclusion

- Parental communication plays an important role in sexual health literacy among undergraduate students.
- Stronger cultural identities are associated with fewer conversations about sexual health with their parents, which in turn is linked to lower literacy levels.
- Culturally sensitive efforts are highly necessary to support and promote open parent-child sexual health communication.
- UC San Diego Student Health Services should implement a policy by providing **culturally competent discussion toolkits** to students and cultural organizations/spaces on campus to help students and parents engage in sexual health discussions more effectively.

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For References!

