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HOW DO DOCTOR OF PHARMACY CANDIDATES IDENTIFY AND OBTAIN POST-GRADUATE POSITIONS?

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INTRODUCTION

- In recent years, there has been some concern regarding the availability of post-graduate opportunities for Doctor of Pharmacy candidates.
- As the pharmacy landscape continues to evolve it is important to know the factors that contribute to position obtainment upon graduation.

OBJECTIVE

- To assess post-graduate placement and factors that contributed to the identification and obtainment of these positions.
- To determine actions completed during the position seeking process.

METHODS

- A survey was created in Qualtrics.
 - Candidates were asked to provide their company of employment and position details (if applicable) such as title, practice setting and location.
 - Candidates were asked to identify all applicable factors that contributed to their obtainment of the position (multiple choice questions with free text option).
 - Candidates were asked to identify all activities in which they had participated as part of the position seeking process.
- This survey was sent via email in April 2015 to all Doctor of Pharmacy candidates at a private, direct entry college of pharmacy during their final advanced pharmacy practice experience (APPE).
 - Participation was voluntary.
 - No incentive was offered.
 - One follow-up email was sent.
 - This survey received exemption from the University's Institutional Review Board.

RESULTS

- Response rate: 147/155 students (94.8%)
- 87.8% had obtained a position at the time of the survey

RESULTS, CONTINUED

Figure 1

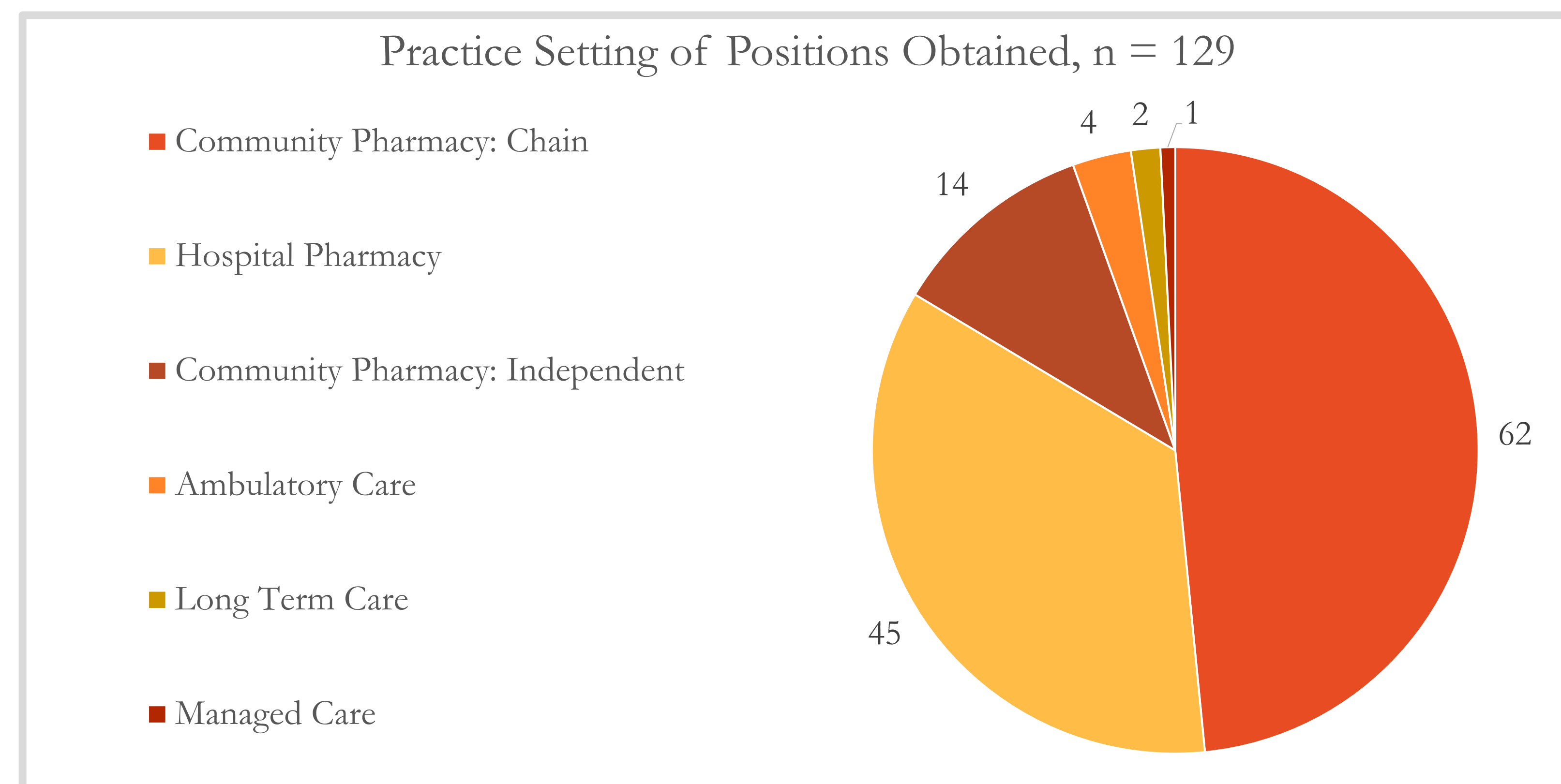


Figure 2

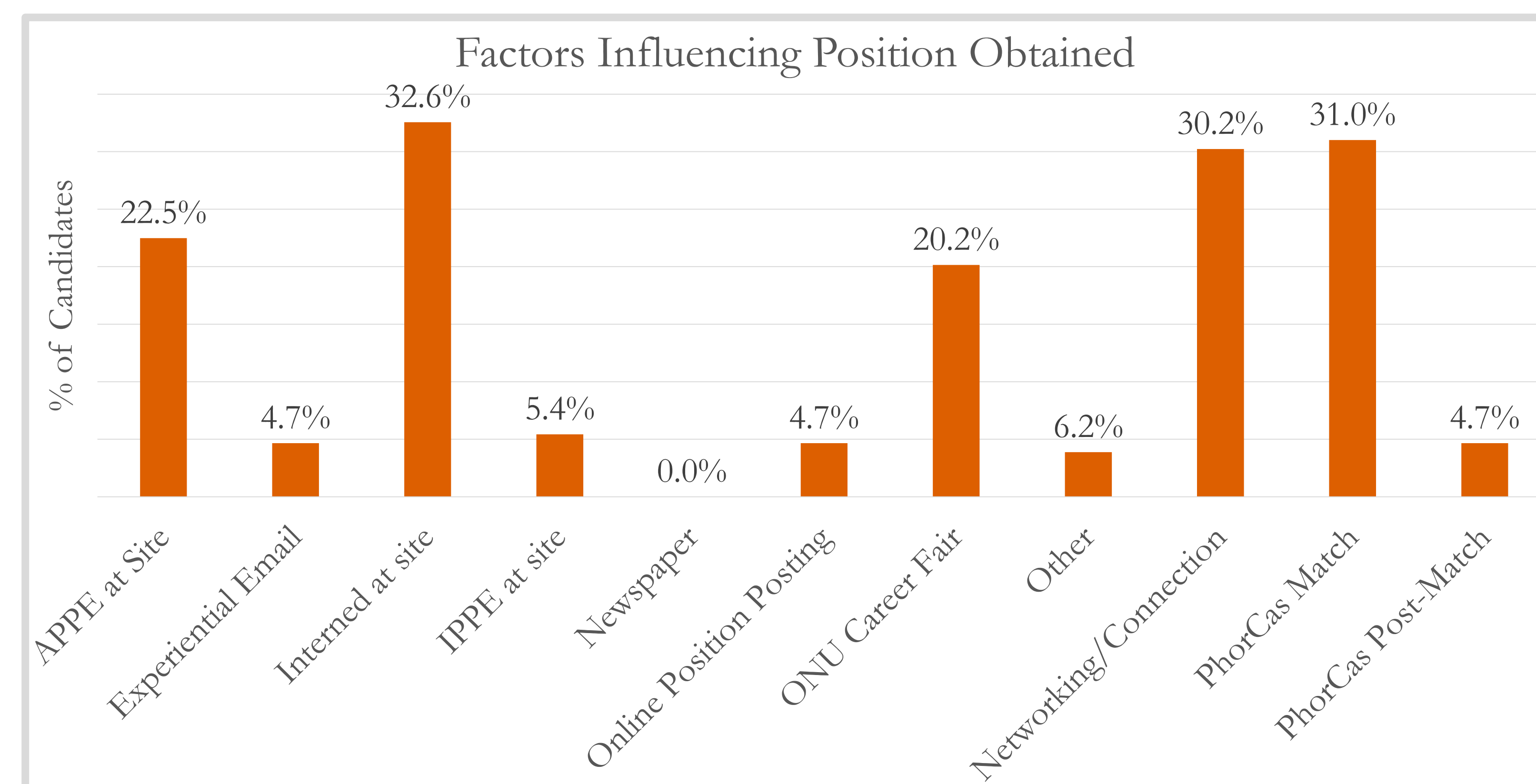
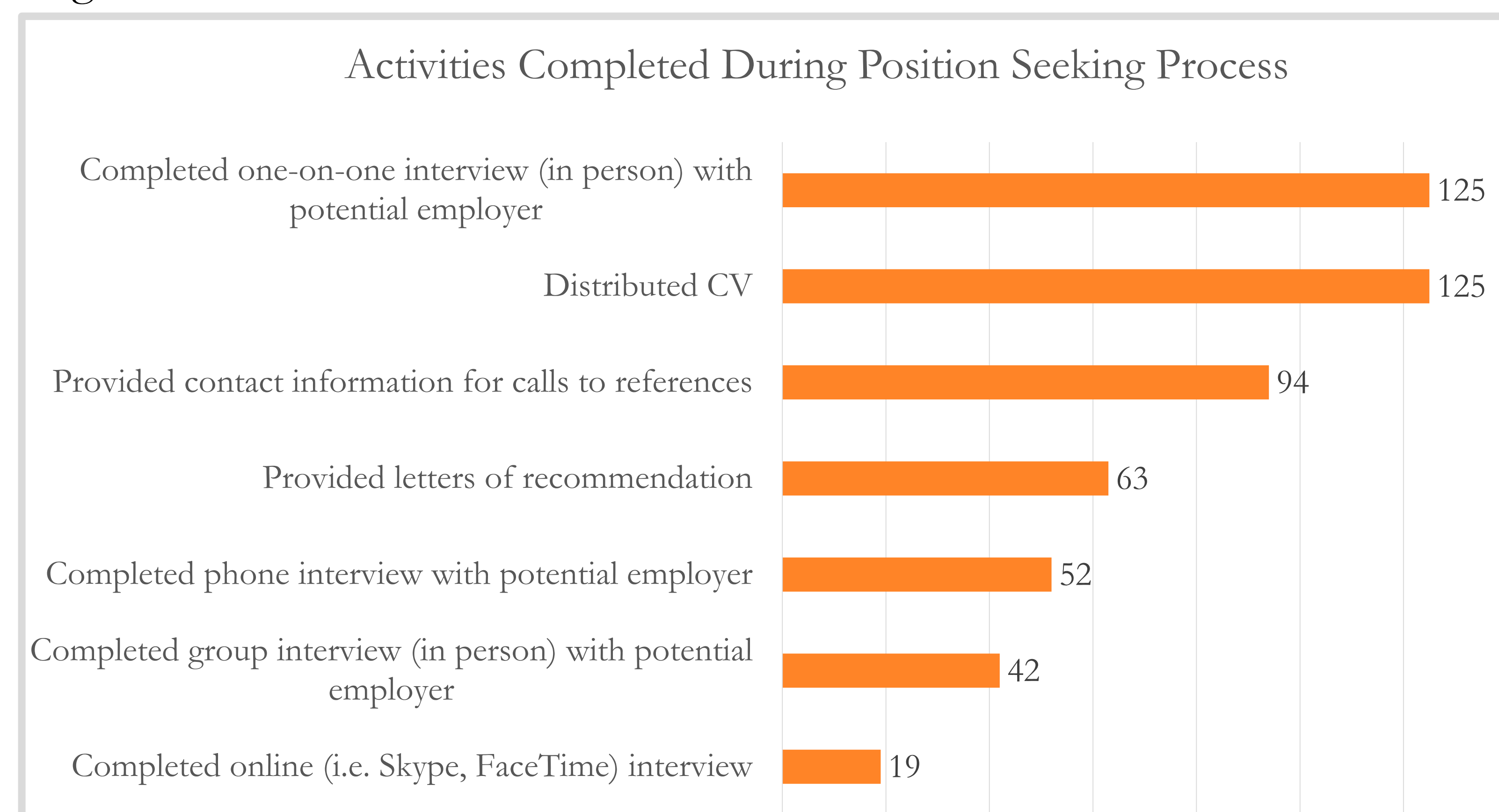


Figure 3



DISCUSSION

- Candidates reported a range of post-graduate positions, practice settings, and geographic locations (22 different states) (Figure 1).
 - 38.8% of candidates accepted a residency position
 - 58.9% of candidates obtained positions in community pharmacy (chain or independent); 35.7% obtained positions in hospital pharmacy
 - Top states where positions were obtained: OH (81); MI (7); AZ (4); NC (4)
- The importance of internships and APPEs may extend beyond the immediate experience and significantly influence employment opportunities for Doctor of Pharmacy candidates (Figure 2).
 - 32.6% of candidates obtained a position at a site/company where they had previously interned.
 - 22.5% of candidates obtained a position at a site/company where they had completed an APPE.
 - Other factors identified included professional meetings, trade shows and residency showcases.
- The value of personal connections and networking must be recognized.
 - 28.7% of candidates indicated a personal connection or networking contributed to obtaining their position.
- The majority of candidates distributed their CV and completed one-on-one interviews while fewer candidates completed online interviews (Figure 3).
- Limitations of the survey include unknown generalizability to other schools, other states and other student populations.
- Future studies should include: comparing multi-year data, including other schools and gathering more specific information regarding activities completed during position seeking process.

CONCLUSION

- Courses focused on topics such as professionalism or career planning should highlight the potential impact of internships, IPPE and APPE placement, participation in career fairs, and personal connections/networking on a student's career.