Results from Phase One and Two of a Theory to Practice Approach to Advocacy Training

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BACKGROUND

- Literature suggests that student pharmacists do not get ample opportunities to practice legislative skills via simulated activities prior to real life visits with legislators[1]

- Didactic lectures are beneficial for student pharmacists to build background knowledge to aid in the development of abilities toward advocacy, but might not be directly correlated with effective advocacy attributes among student pharmacists[2,3]

- Simulations with a standardized actor playing the role of a legislator may be effective in developing such skills and competence before student pharmacists are expected to advocate for their profession[4]

- There is limited literature that evaluates the impact of a curriculum-based standardized legislator simulation and active legislator outreach toward student pharmacist political advocacy competence, and the student pharmacists' change in knowledge, attitudes, and political advocacy skills

OBJECTIVE

- To improve the student pharmacists' knowledge, attitudes, skills and competence in advocacy for the pharmacy profession

METHODS

- A single-center prospective cohort study consisting of first professional year student pharmacists at the start of Fall 2022

- A survey to gather baseline data regarding prior participation and attitude towards engagement in legislative advocacy, knowledge of state and federal legislators, and self-perceived political advocacy skills utilizing the Political Skills Inventory (PSI) scale during Fall 2022 (T1), at the start of Spring 2023 (T2)

- PSI was scored on a seven-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree

- Paired sample t-test to determine a statistically significant difference with α < 0.05

Figure 1. Timeline of All Phases of Study
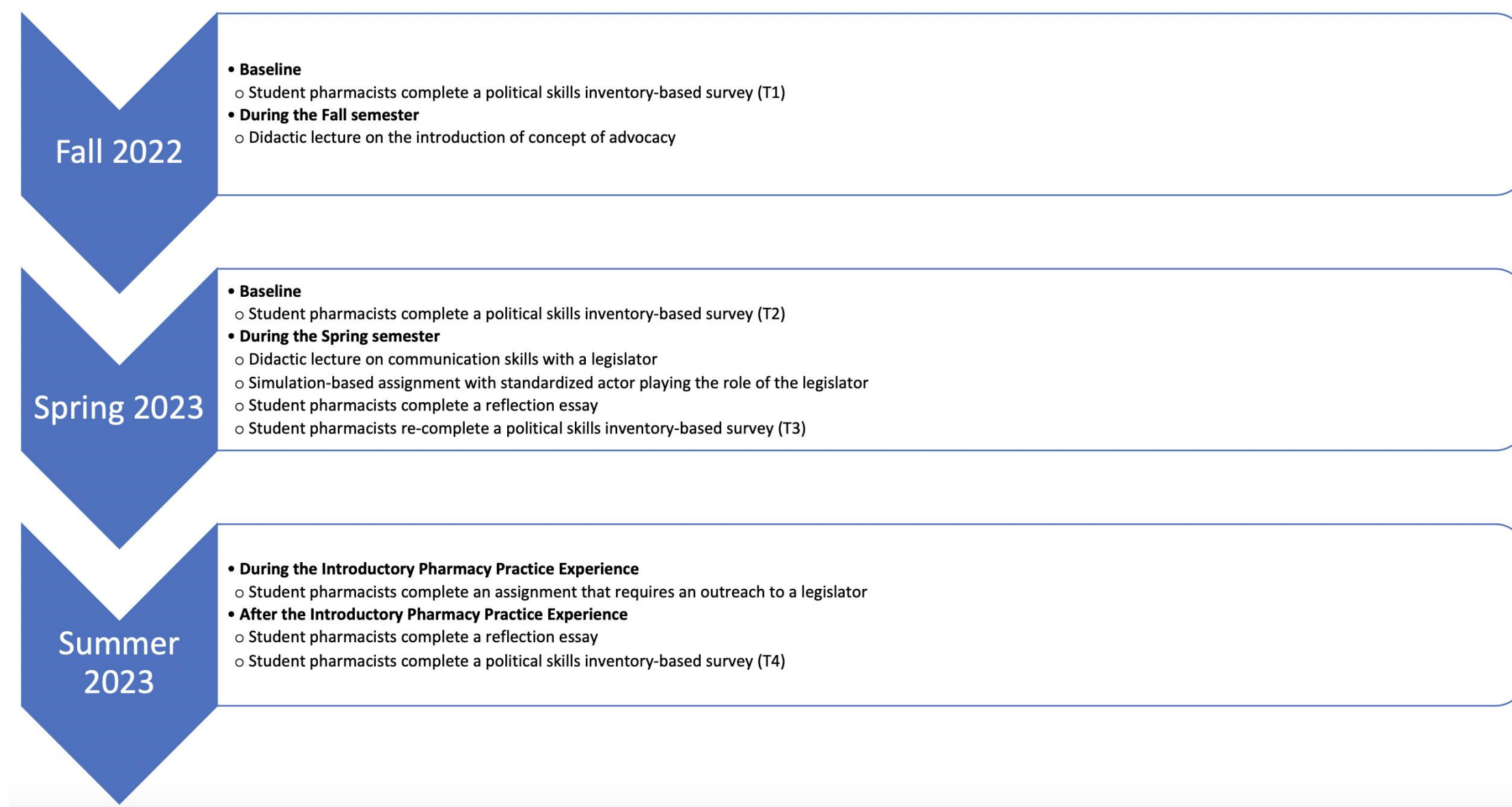
SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Figure 2. Political Skill Inventory[5]

1.	I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others (NA)
2.	I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me. (II)
3.	I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others (II)
4.	It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people (II)
5.	I understand people very well. (SA)
6.	I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done. (NA)
7.	I am good at building relationships with influential people at work. (NA)
8.	I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others. (SA)
9.	When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do. (AS)
10.	At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected. (NA)
11.	I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others. (NA)
12.	I am good at getting people to like me. (II)
13.	It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do. (AS)
14.	I try to show a genuine interest in other people. (AS)
15.	I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work. (NA)
16.	I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others. (SA)
17.	I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others. (SA)
18.	I pay close attention to people's facial expressions. (SA)

NA = Networking Ability   II = Interpersonal Influence   SA = Social Astuteness   AS = Apparent Sincerity

Figure 3. Perceptions of Advocacy Skills and Responsibility[6]

1.	If needed, I am able to effectively communicate my position to my legislators and/or their staffers
2.	If meeting, I know what to expect when I meet with legislators and their staffers
3.	If asked, I can describe how public policy affects the populations that I serve
4.	As a student pharmacist, I believe I can influence policy being considered by my legislators
5.	As a student pharmacist, I believe it is important to contact my legislators about issues affecting my future patients
6.	As a student pharmacist, I believe it is important to contact my legislators about issues that will affect the way I practice within the profession of pharmacy
7.	Participating in the legislative process affecting the health of the community in which they practice is a professional responsibility of pharmacists
8.	It is worthwhile to spend some of my time to meet with legislators and help shape policies affecting me, my profession, or the health of my community
9.	It is worthwhile to spend some of my time to meet with legislators' staff and help shape policies affecting me, my profession, or the health of my community
10.	It is part of my role as a student pharmacist to advocate for health needs within society
11.	I plan to engage in health legislative advocacy activities in the future
12.	I plan on being an active participant/member of a professional society in the future

Using a 7-point scale, responses were given a quantitative value for each item that best described how much they agreed with each statement about themselves

1 = Strongly disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Slightly Disagree   4 = Neutral   5 = Slightly Agree   6 = Agree   7 = Strongly Agree

RESULTS

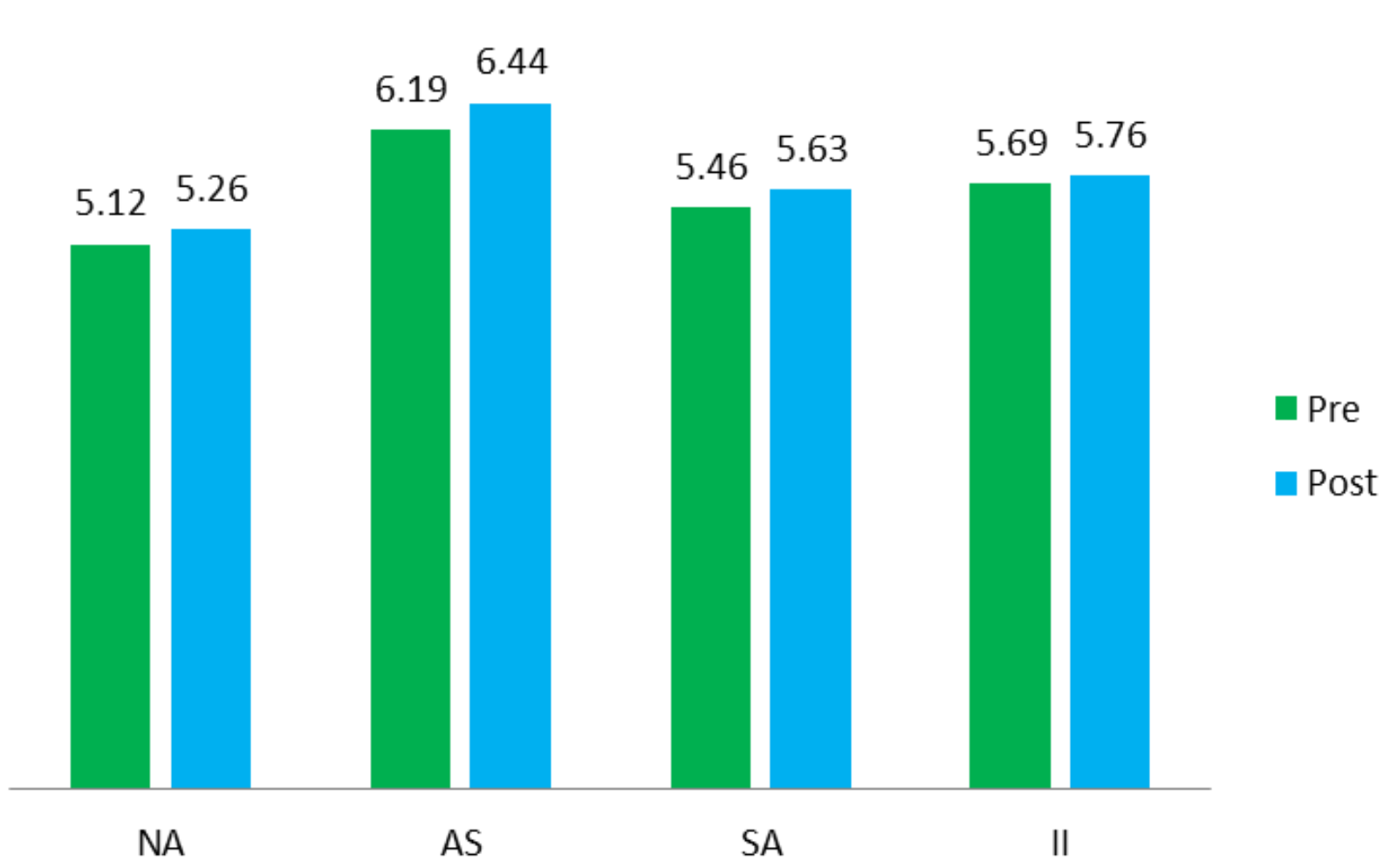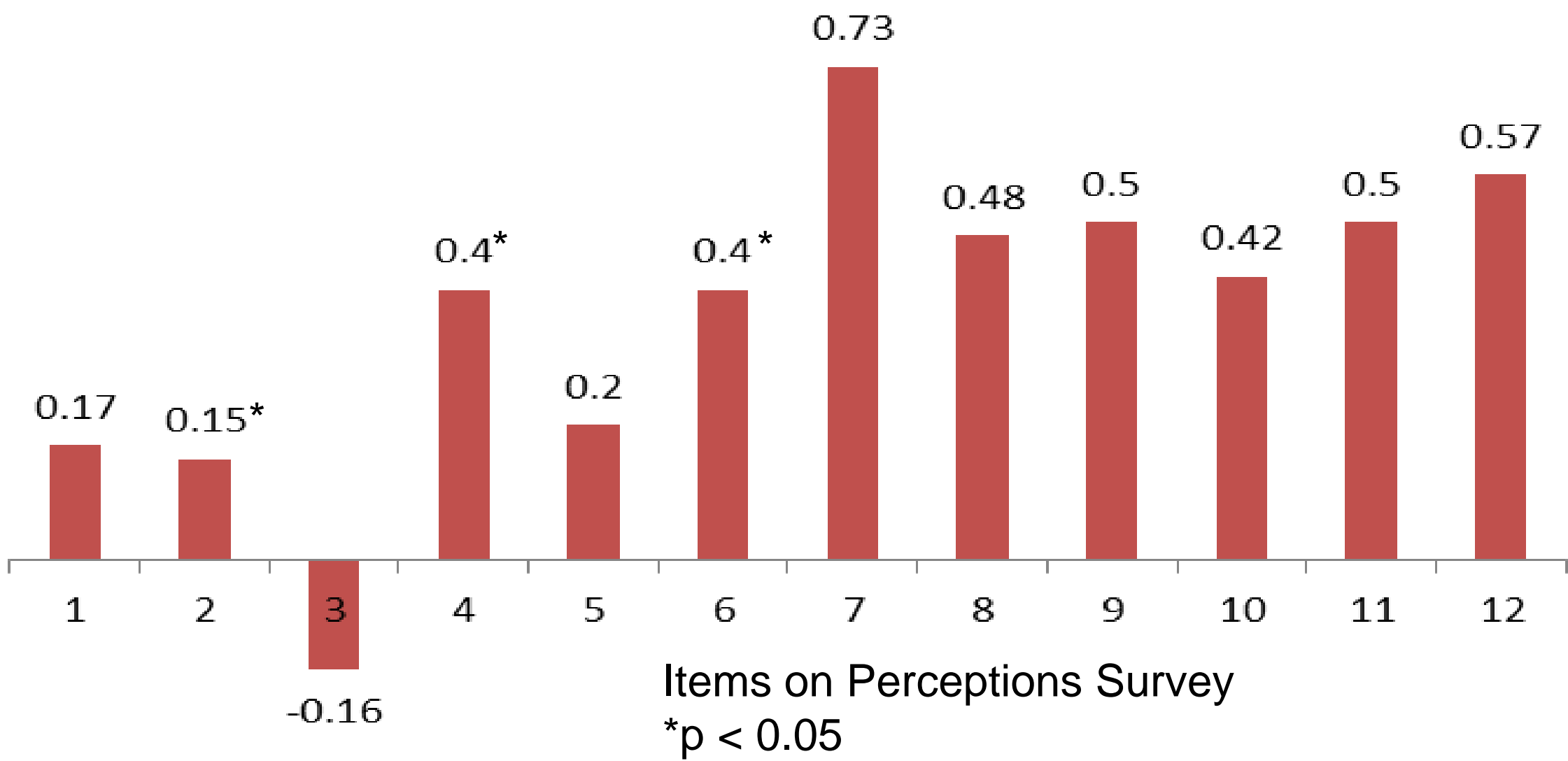Figure 4. Political Skills Inventory Pre vs Post (N=40)

Figure 5. Perceptions of Advocacy Pre vs Post (N = 40)

Items on Perceptions Survey
*p < 0.05

DISCUSSION

- Similar to previous literature, the perceptions of advocacy skills and responsibilities improved for a majority of the items[2,4]

- Significant improvements were found in items #2 (p=0.010); #4 (p=0.023); #6 (p=.002)

- Overall PSI composite scores increased from 5.52 to 5.67, which is comparable to previous literature[4]

- Marginal improvement in the PSI subscales-apparent sincerity (6.19 vs. 6.44) and social astuteness (5.46 vs. 5.73) confirm similar findings of previous literature[4]

- Limitations:
  - Small sample size
  - Lack of evaluation of long-term theory-based advocacy skills retention

CONCLUSION

- Curricular-based approach to advocacy training of student pharmacists significantly improves the perceptions of advocacy skills and responsibilities

- PSI subscales of apparent sincerity and social astuteness also improved after curricular based training

DISCLOSURES

- Dr. Andrade has given presentations for Shionogi Inc. and have received compensation
- Drs. Wang, Shah, Unni, and Ray, and Miss Holz have no conflicts of interest to disclose

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