



The Florida Marriage Enhancement Project: Improving Marriages Across the State



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Abstract

This study aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the skills-based *Adventures in Marriage (AIM)* program and its ability to improve marital quality and stability, so more children in Florida would grow in happier and healthier families. Findings showed that partner affection, intimacy, conflict management, and high-risk conflicts were significantly improved after participating in the marital education program. **This study has important implications for family policy to increase funding at the state and federal levels to support marriage education programs.**

Introduction

As society undergoes continuous changes, the role of marriage education becomes increasingly crucial in helping couples navigate the complexities of modern relationships. Previous literature has demonstrated positive impacts of marriage education on family life, including lower divorce rates, increased relationship stability, improved parenting abilities, and reduced risk of intimate partner violence (Stanley et al., 2020). **Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the skills-based marriage education program, *Adventures in Marriage (AIM)*, in enhancing relationship quality among married couples.**

Methods

Analyses: Paired Samples t-test was used.

Sample: The sample included 1,948 married heterosexual couples who participated in a 12-hour skill-based AIM program and completed pre- and post-surveys.

Measures:

- 1) **Partner Trust/Affection:** 5 items were used.
- 2) **Partner Intimacy:** 3 items were included.
- 3) **Conflict Management:** 2 items were used for each positive and negative conflict management.
- 4) **High-Risk Conflict:** 4 items were used to measure "Partner blame/yell at me" and "I blame/yell at partner".

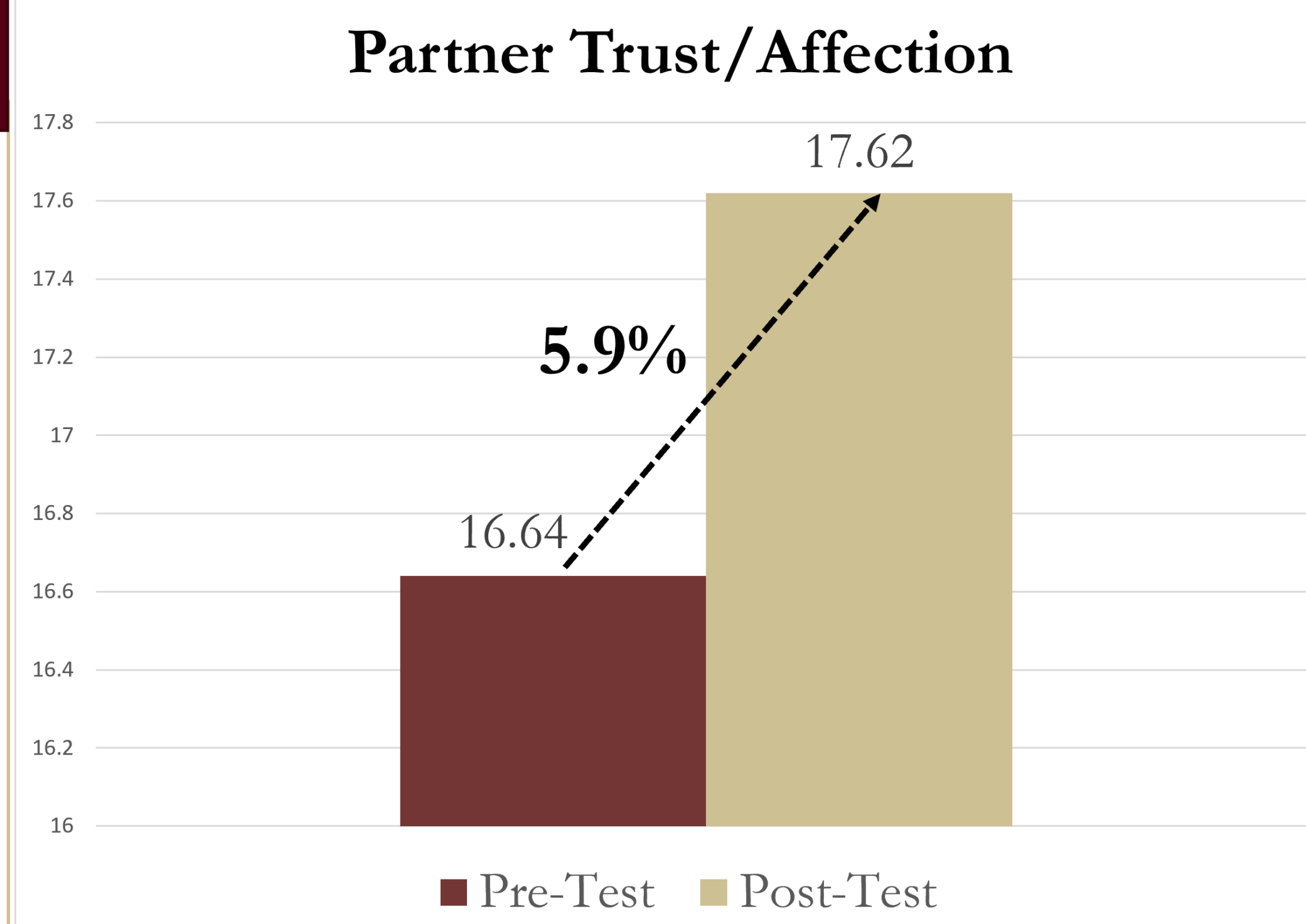


Figure 1. Partner Trust/Affection Mean Change ($t=-20.74, p<.001$)

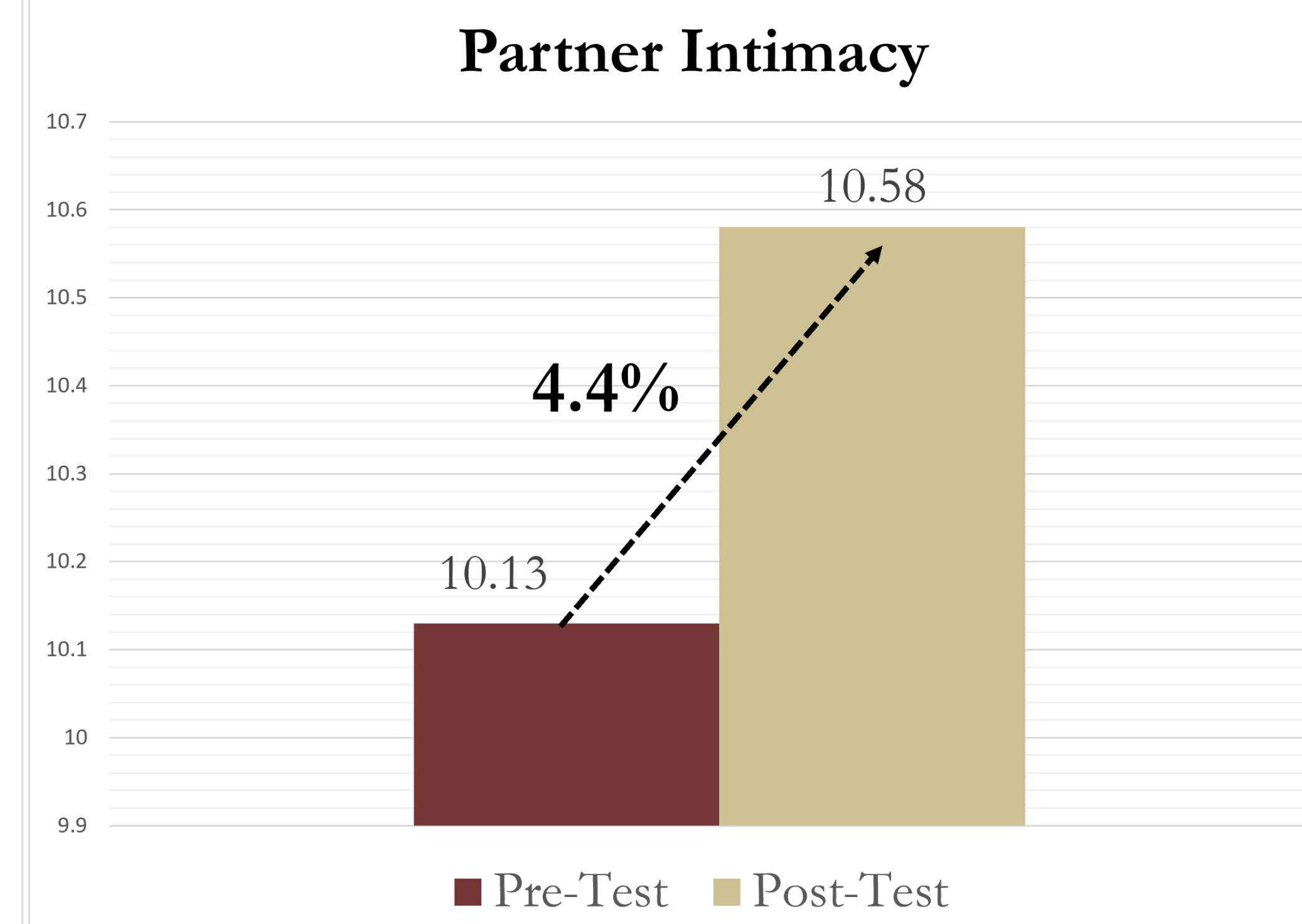


Figure 2. Partner Intimacy Mean Change ($t=-14.23, p<.001$)

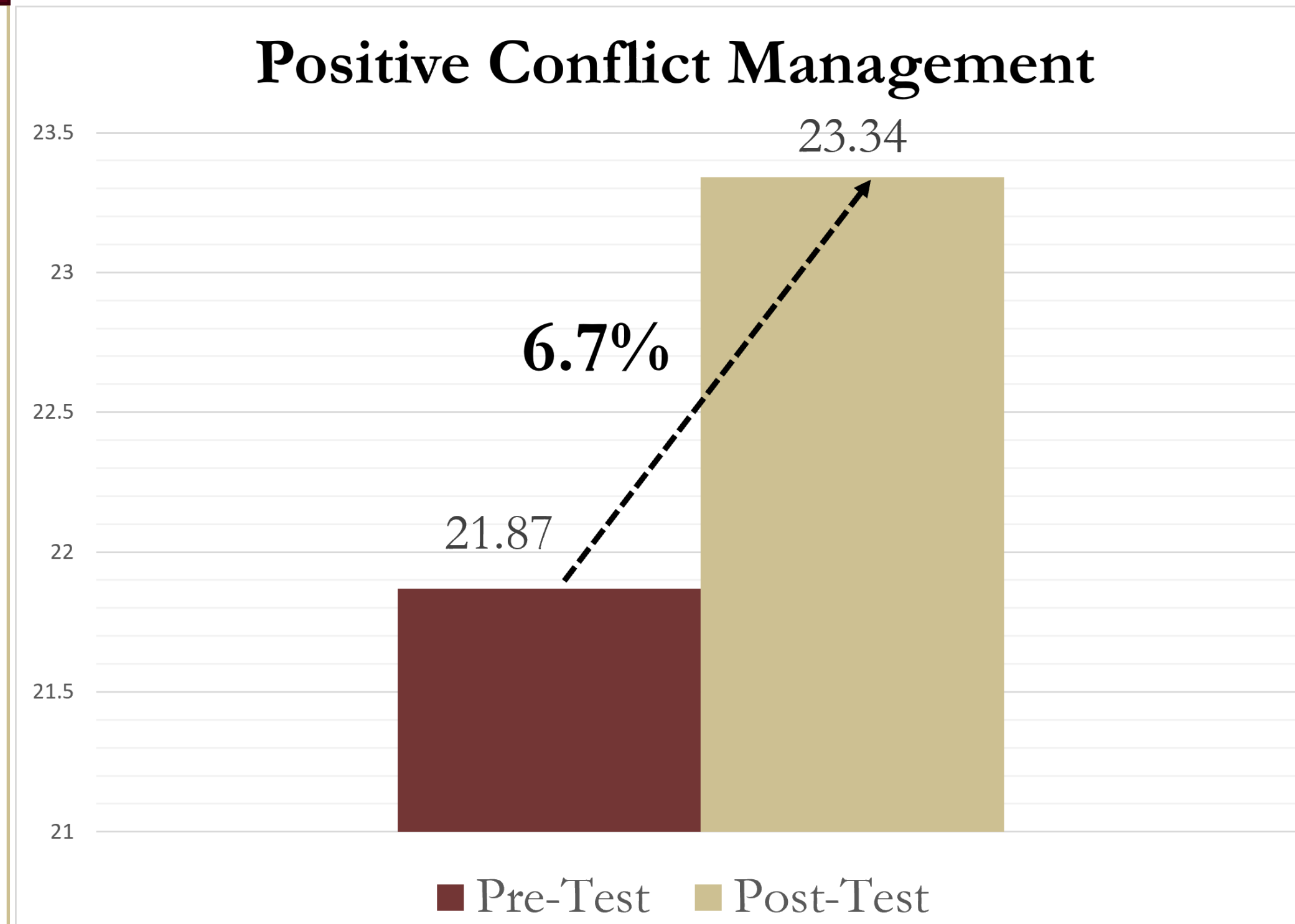


Figure 3. Positive Conflict Management Mean Change ($t=-20.91, p<.001$)

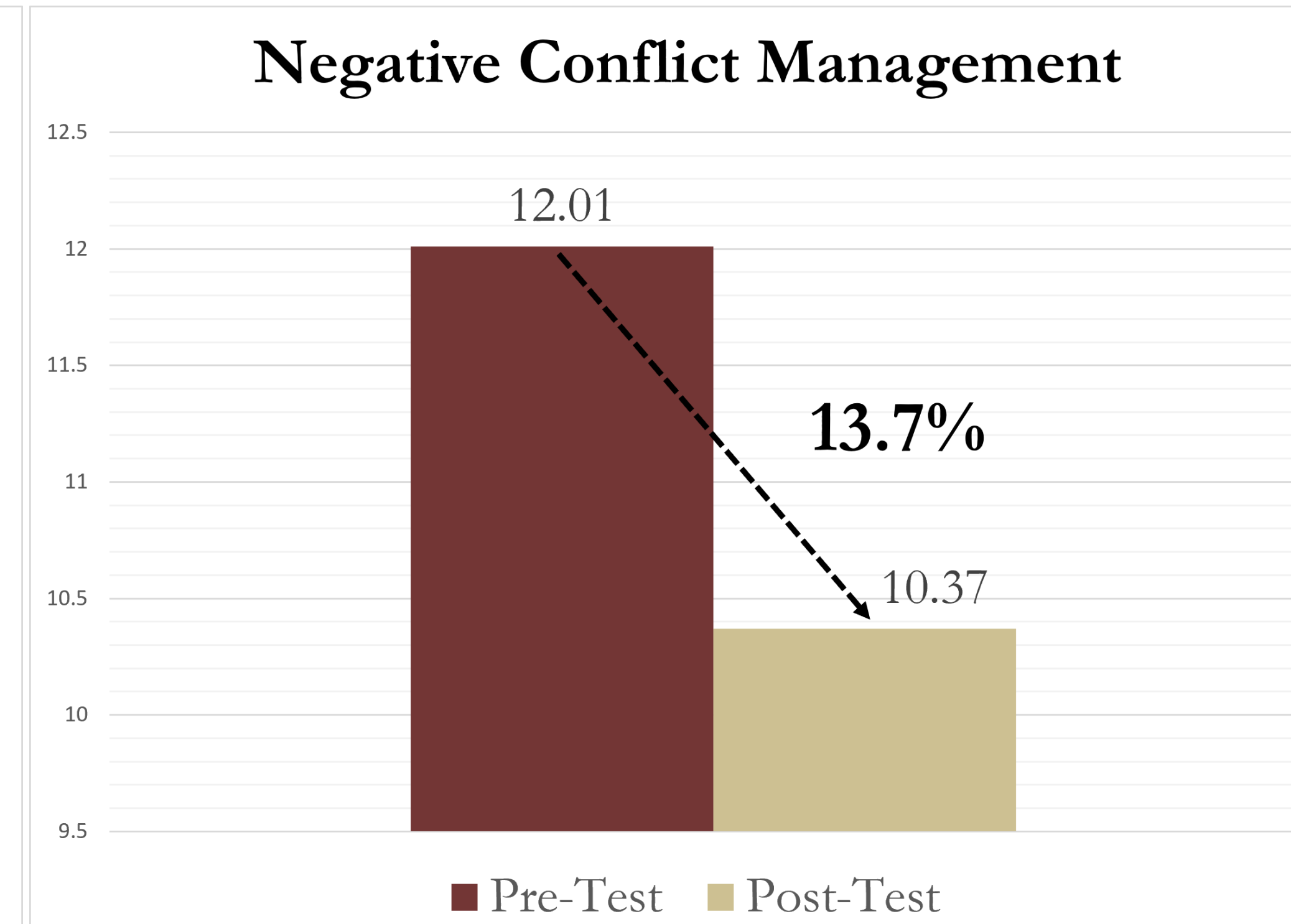


Figure 4. Negative Conflict Management Mean Change ($t= 24.89, p<.001$)

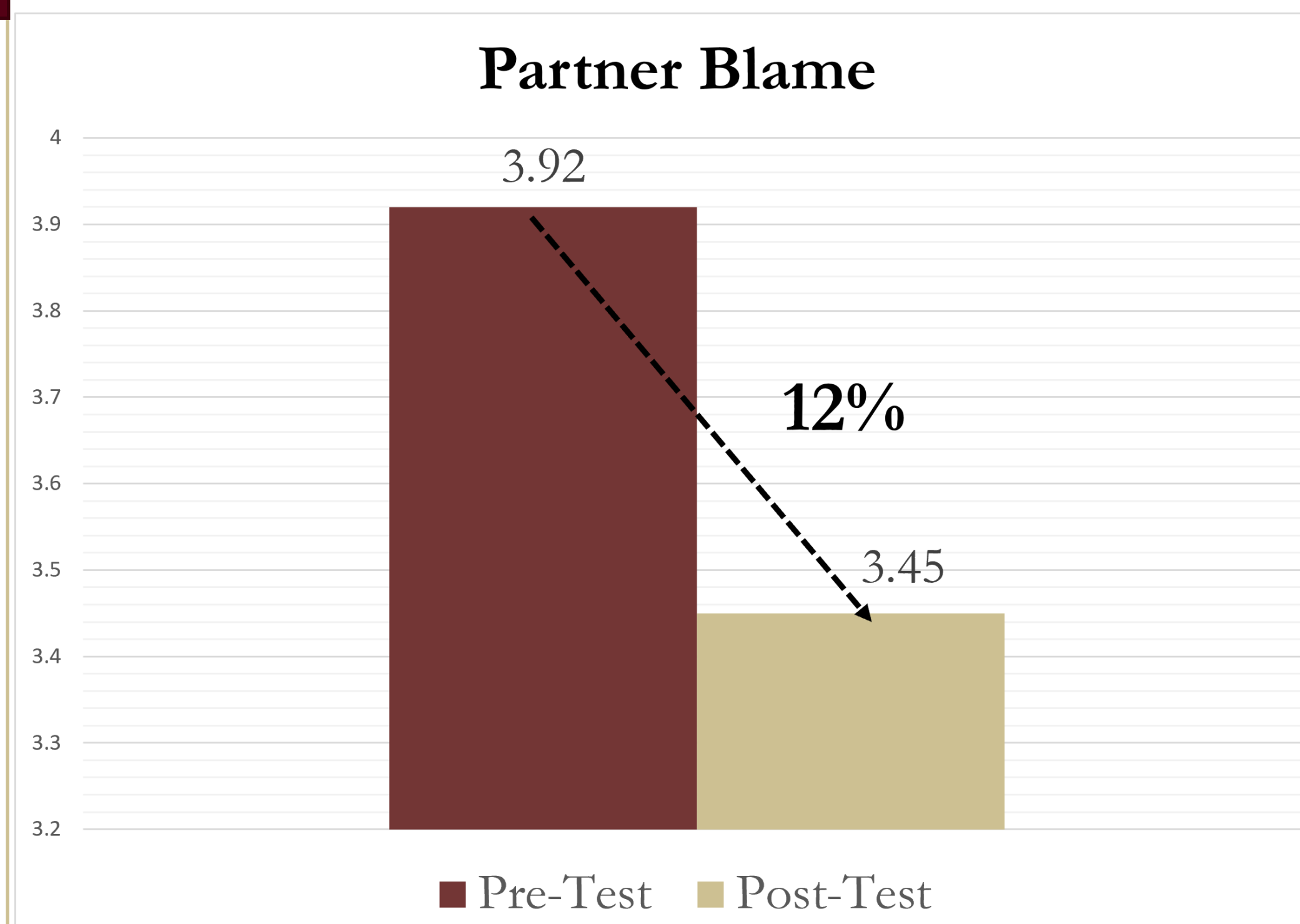


Figure 5. Partner Blame Mean Change ($t=15.63, p<.001$)

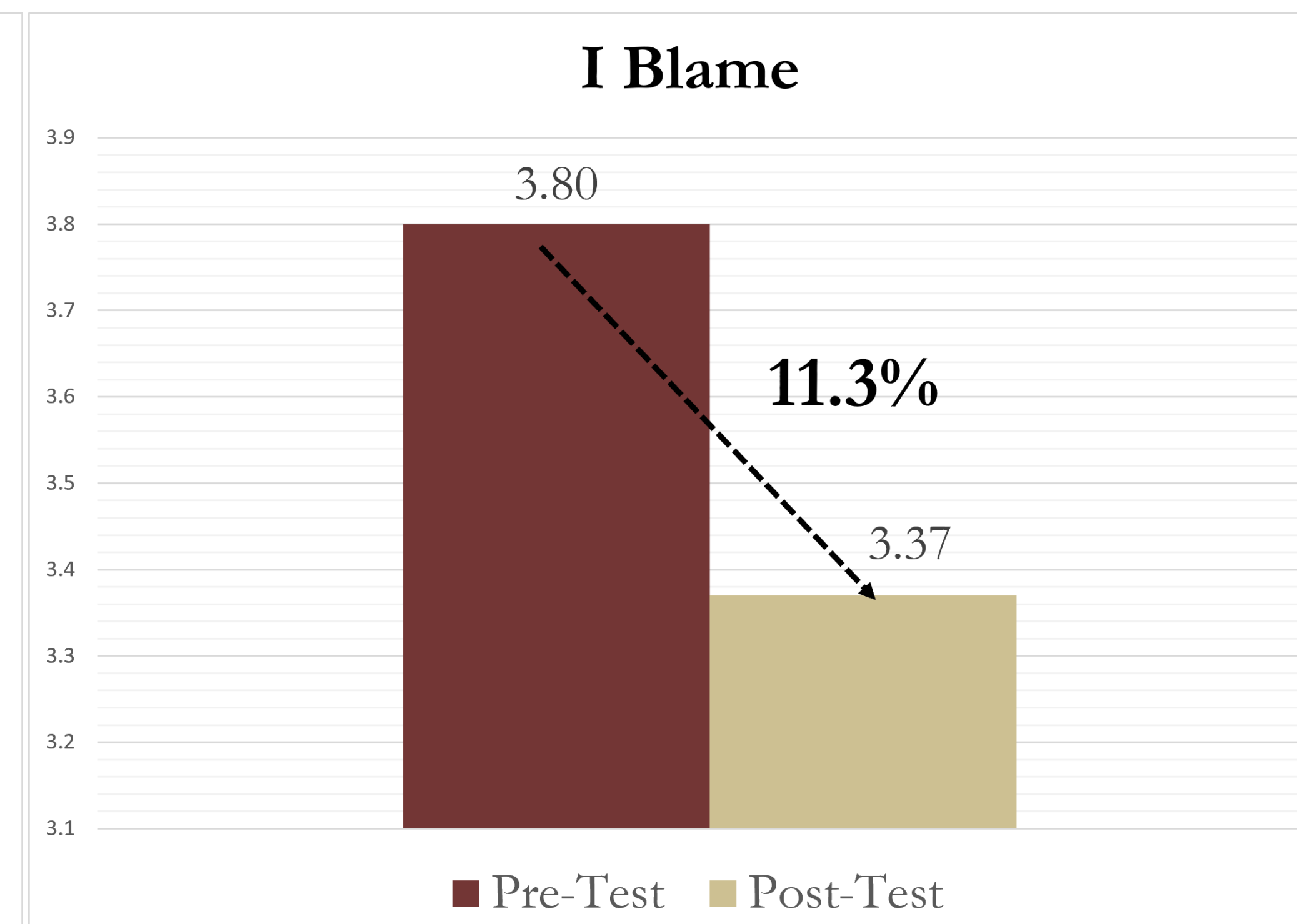


Figure 6. I Blame Mean Change ($t=14.67, p<.001$)

Results

1. **Partner trust and affection** exhibited substantial enhancement after participating in the AIM program, indicating a positive shift in emotional dynamics within couples.
2. **Partner intimacy** was significantly improved for couples who participated in AIM, contributing to a deeper emotional connection.
3. **Positive conflict management** was increased, and **negative conflict management** was decreased, strengthening couples' conflict management skills.
4. **High-risk conflict** scores were significantly reduced after participating in the AIM program.

Implications

1. Such positive outcomes contribute to a broader understanding of the impact of skills-based marriage education programs and emphasize their potential to foster resilient couple relationships in an ever-evolving societal landscape.
2. This study also has important implications for family policy, as it further justifies the need for increased funding at the state and federal levels to support marriage education, potentially drawing from state TANF funds.

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