

My First Period Project

Increasing Youth Confidence with Menstrual Hygiene Management and Readiness for Menarche

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BACKGROUND

Menstrual Health:

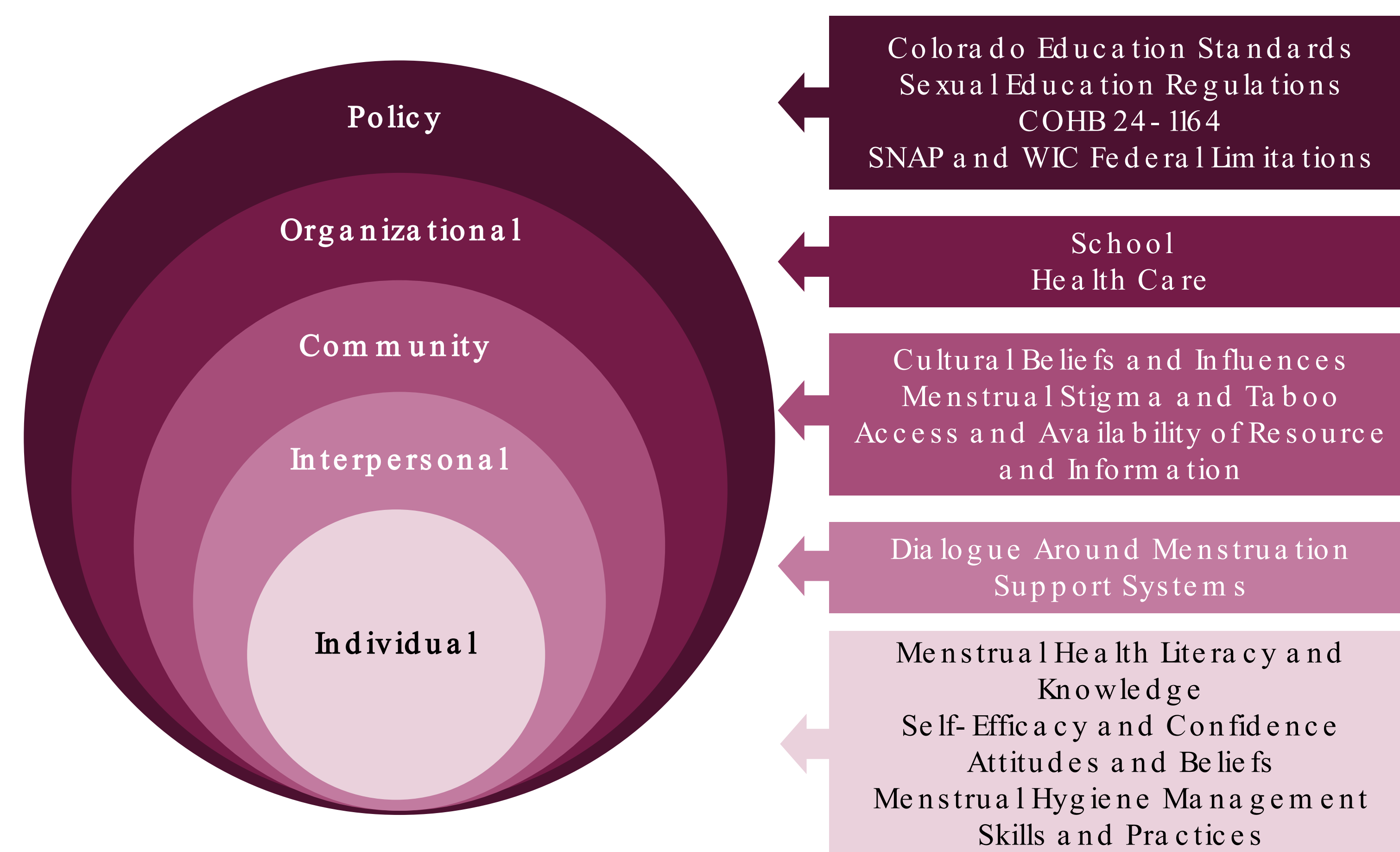
- **Definition:** “Menstrual health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in relation to the menstrual cycle” (Hennegan et al., 2021)
 - Menstrual health is achieved when individuals who menstruate have access to accurate information regarding the menstrual cycle and self-care, appropriate menstrual products and materials, adequate sanitation facilities, healthcare services, and supportive, safe environments that facilitate full participation in daily activities without stigma or restriction (Hennegan et al., 2021).

Statement of Need: Early, developmentally appropriate, skill-based interventions are needed to improve menstrual health among early adolescents.

- Menstrual health is under-prioritized in U.S. public health and education systems
- Many early adolescents lack the knowledge, resources, and support to manage menstruation confidently and with dignity
- Inadequate or delayed education and limited access to resources contribute to:
 - School absenteeism
 - Delayed medical care-seeking
 - Reduced participation
 - Risk of adverse physical and mental health outcomes

Figure 1.

A Social Ecological Perspective (McLeroy et al., 1988) for Developing a Menarche Readiness and Menstrual Hygiene Management Program



GOAL

Goal Statement: The goal of the capstone project is to develop and assess the feasibility of a menarche readiness and menstrual hygiene management program for early adolescents, with the use of ‘My First Period Kits’ to equip participants with the knowledge, tools, and lifelong skills necessary for safe and effective menstrual hygiene management, especially within school contexts.

Learning Objectives & Activities:

1. **Literature Review and Preliminary Program Planning:** Action Plan
2. **Evaluation Plan:** Creation of pre- and post-program surveys
3. **Development of Program:** CDC Training: Communicating Science Clearly; Creation of program materials and ‘My First Period Kits’
1. **Implementation Planning:** Recruitment of pilot sites
2. **Program Implementation:** Pilot trial
3. **Program Evaluation:** Collect and analyze data
4. **Dissemination:** Capstone site and CSU capstone poster presentations

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Methods: To evaluate the *My First Period Project*, two pilot sessions were conducted at separate after-school youth centers. Participants included English-speaking, cisgender females aged 10–13 years. Pre- and post-surveys assessed program effectiveness across the following

outcomes:

- Menstrual Health Literacy
- Knowledge
- Self-Efficacy
- Beliefs & Attitudes
- Program Implementation
 - Feasibility
 - Acceptability
 - Appropriateness
- Clear Communication



Figure 2: My First Period Kit

FINDINGS

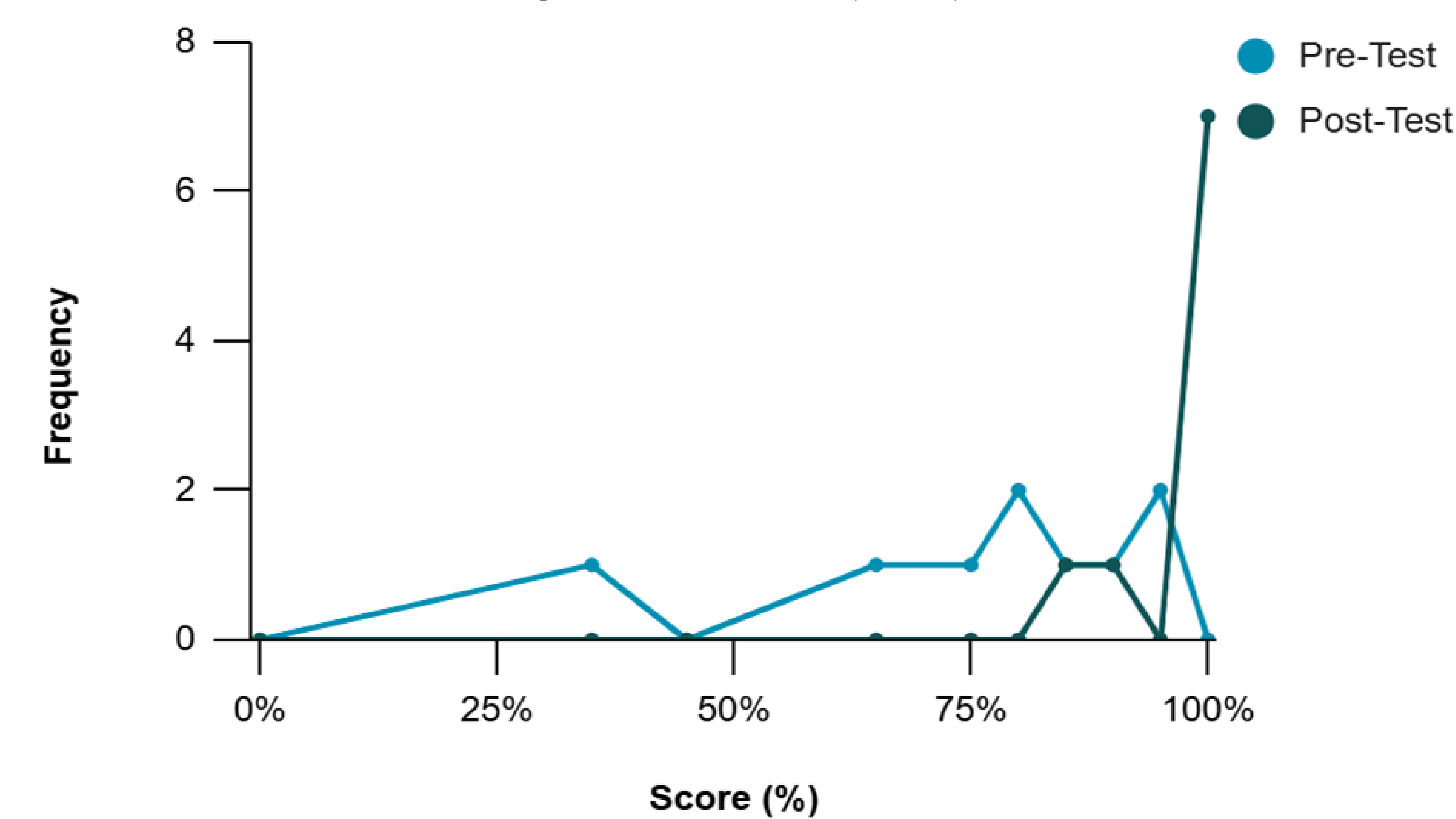
Sample: A total of 20 participants were included in the final data analysis. The sample consisted of 25% 5th-grade, 55% 6th-grade, and 20% 7th-grade students. Additionally, 50% of participants reported having experienced menstruation, 35% had not yet begun menstruation, and 15% were unsure of their menstrual status.

Data Analysis: The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test (two-tailed, $\alpha = 0.05$) was conducted using paired pre- and post-survey data from participants with complete responses for each outcome. Observations with no change between pre- and post-scores (zero differences) were excluded from the analysis.

- H_0 : The median difference between paired observations is zero
- H_1 : The median difference between paired observations is not zero

Figure 3.

Frequency Polygon of Pre- and Post-Test Self-Efficacy Scores for Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (n = 9)



Mean scores increased:

- Pre-test: 78% (SD = 0.19)
- Post-test: 97% (SD = 0.06)

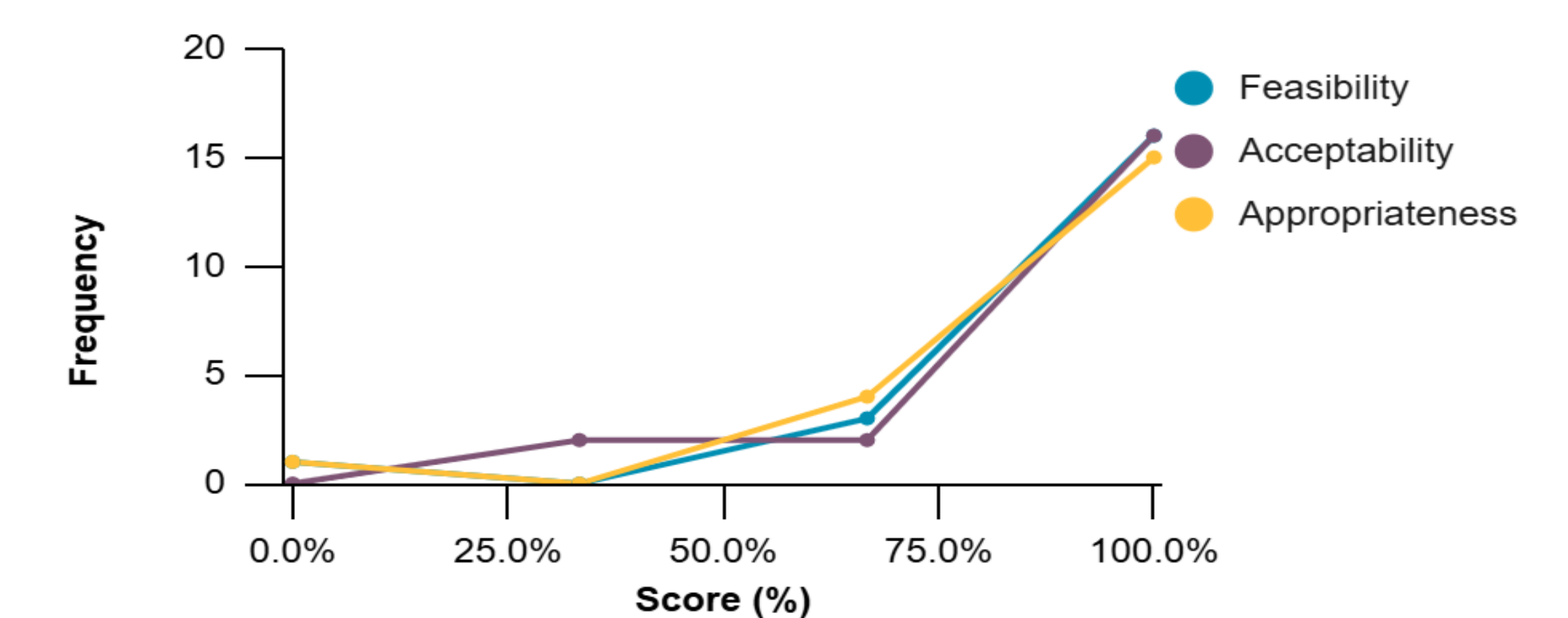
Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test:

- Reject H_0 because $W_{test stat} 0 < W_{critical} 6$

There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the *My First Period Project* significantly improves overall self-efficacy in performing menstrual health tasks ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Figure 4.

Frequency Polygon of Program Feasibility, Acceptability, and Appropriateness Scores (n = 20)

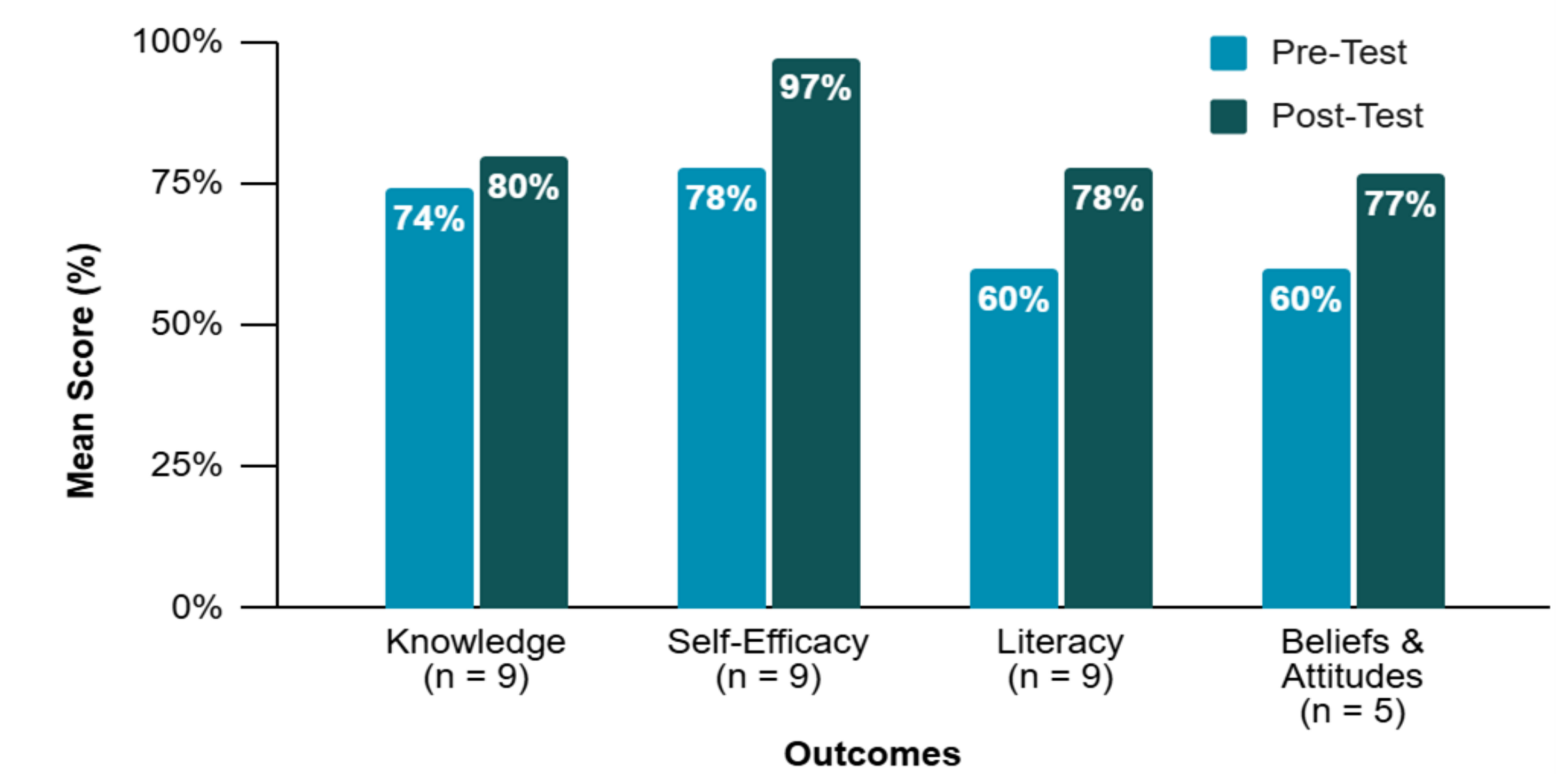


Participants reported high satisfaction across all domains:

- Mean Feasibility: 90% (SD = 0.24)
- Mean Acceptability: 90% (SD = 0.22)
- Mean Appropriateness: 88% (SD = 0.25)

Figure 5.

Pre- vs. Post-Test Mean Outcome Scores for Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Analysis



CONCLUSION

Menstrual health is a fundamental right, not a privilege, and ensuring access to menstrual-related resources is essential for gender equality, public health, and occupational justice. This capstone project addresses occupational performance barriers related to menstruation by promoting knowledge, preparedness, and self-efficacy. It also highlights the role of occupational therapy in addressing public health issues such as menstrual health and period poverty, supporting emerging community-based practice.

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Capstone Site:

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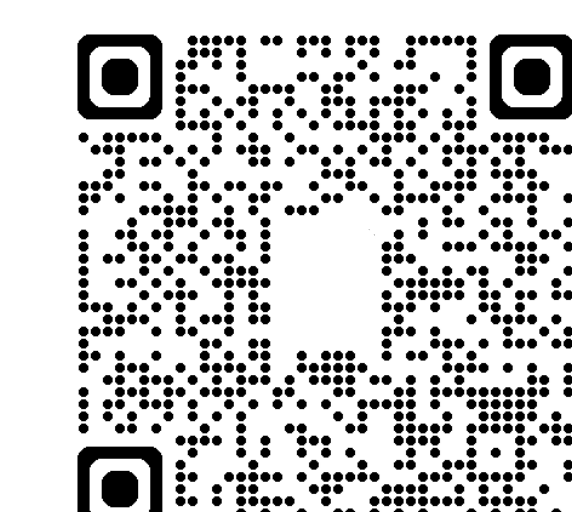
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References

 Scan the QR code for capstone project references and logic model.