

The effect of participation in undergraduate research on soft skills and career plans

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Introduction

- Undergraduate research has been shown to increase confidence in research protocol and technical skills.
 - Limited research clarifying how participation affects other soft skills that employers look for
- Limited research on how participation in undergraduate research affects undergraduates career paths.

Objective

- To determine how involvement in undergraduate research enhances common soft skills and affects future career plans.

Survey

- Mixed Survey by e-mail
- 26 participants
- Ages 18-45+
- Urban (23%), Suburban (27%), Rural (50%)
- Male (23%) and Female (77%)
- 9 departments and 11 universities

18. Please indicate an estimation of your feelings regarding the following statements by placing an **X** in the appropriate boxes below. Please mark a box for both sections: **Before** participating in undergraduate research and **After** participating in undergraduate research.

	BEFORE					AFTER				
	Undergraduate Research					Undergraduate Research				
	Very Low 1	Low 2	Average 3	High 4	Very High 5	Very Low 1	Low 2	Average 3	High 4	Very High 5
Interest in conducting research										
Confidence in executing research protocol										
Ability to analyze data										
Interest in making a career in research										

22. Please indicate with an **X** in the boxes below an estimation of how completing undergraduate research affected you with regard to each of the following statements.

	Negatively 1	No Effect 2	Mostly Positively 3	Positively 4	Very Positively 5
Clarification of career plans					
Your credentials or qualification for future employment					
Preparation for future career/graduate school					

Results

**Interest in
Conducting
Research**



**Interest in
Research
Career**

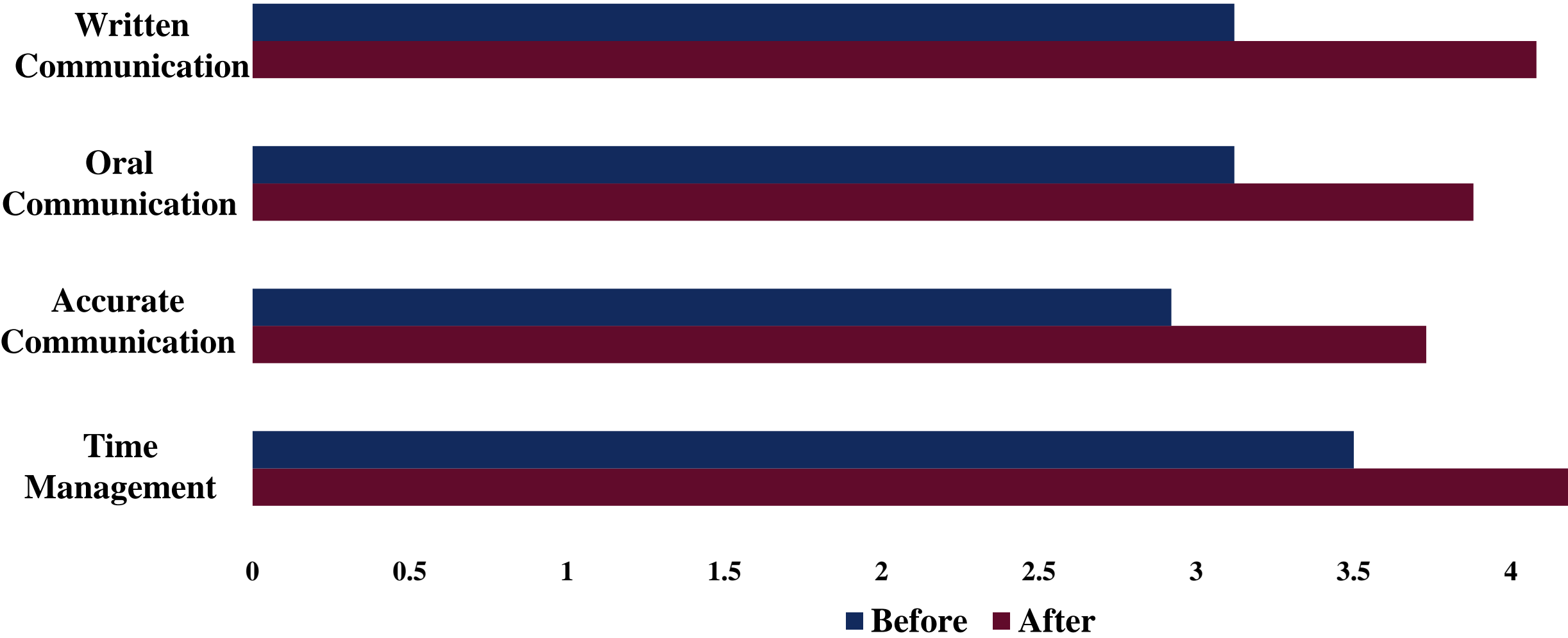


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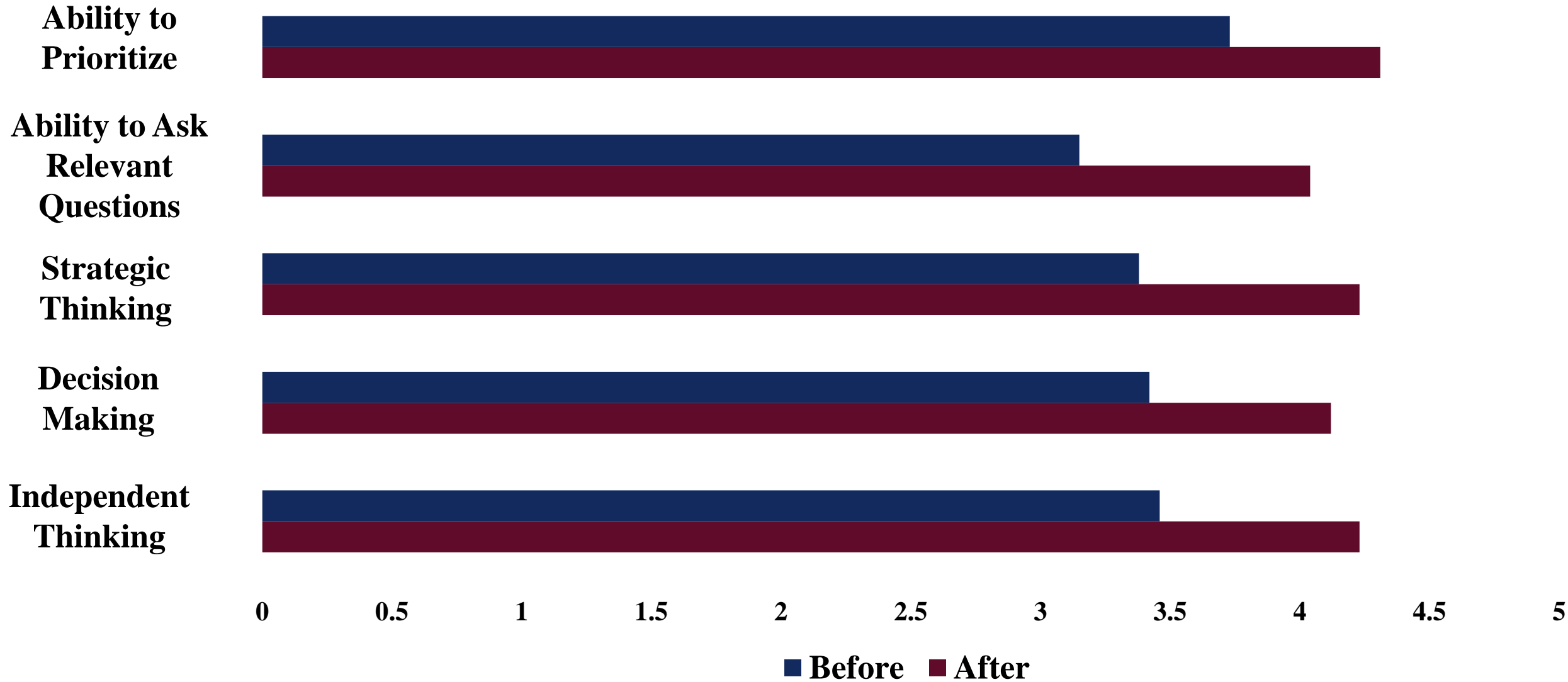
■ Before ■ After



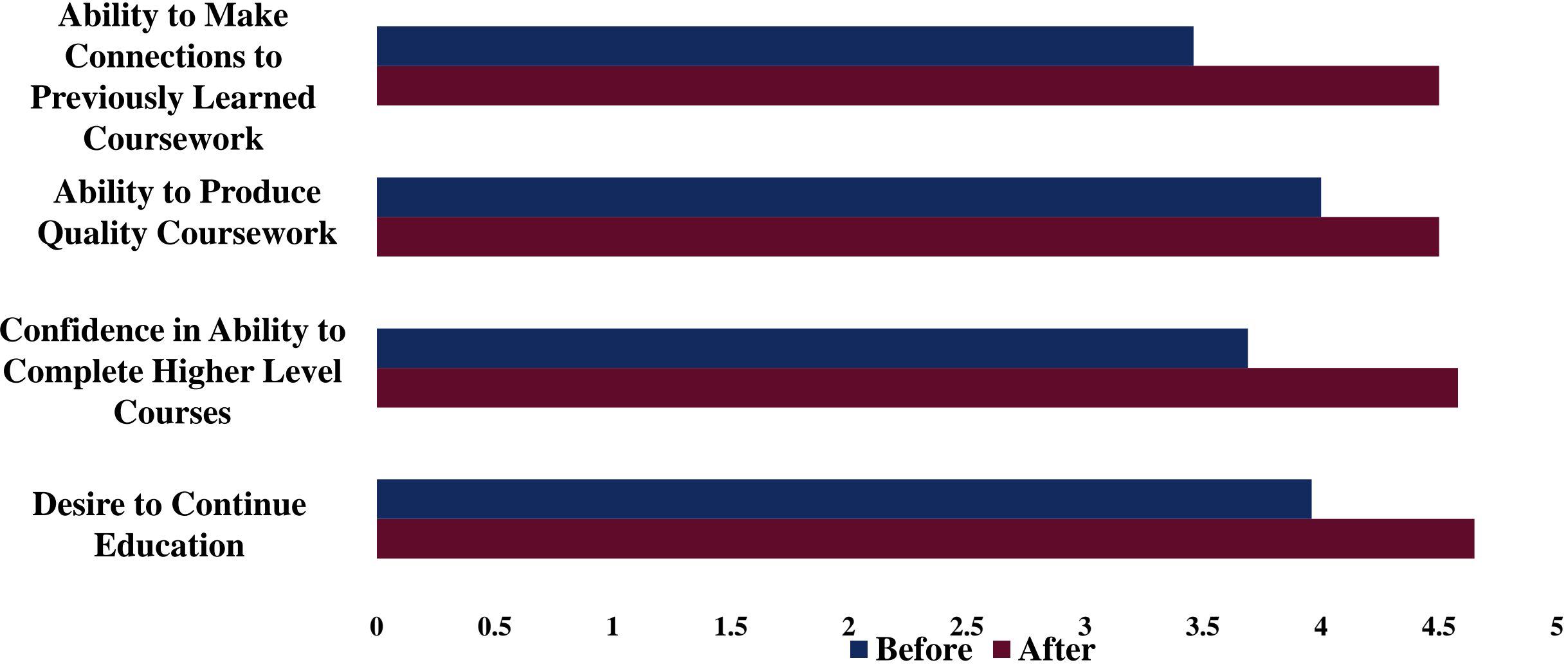
Results



Results

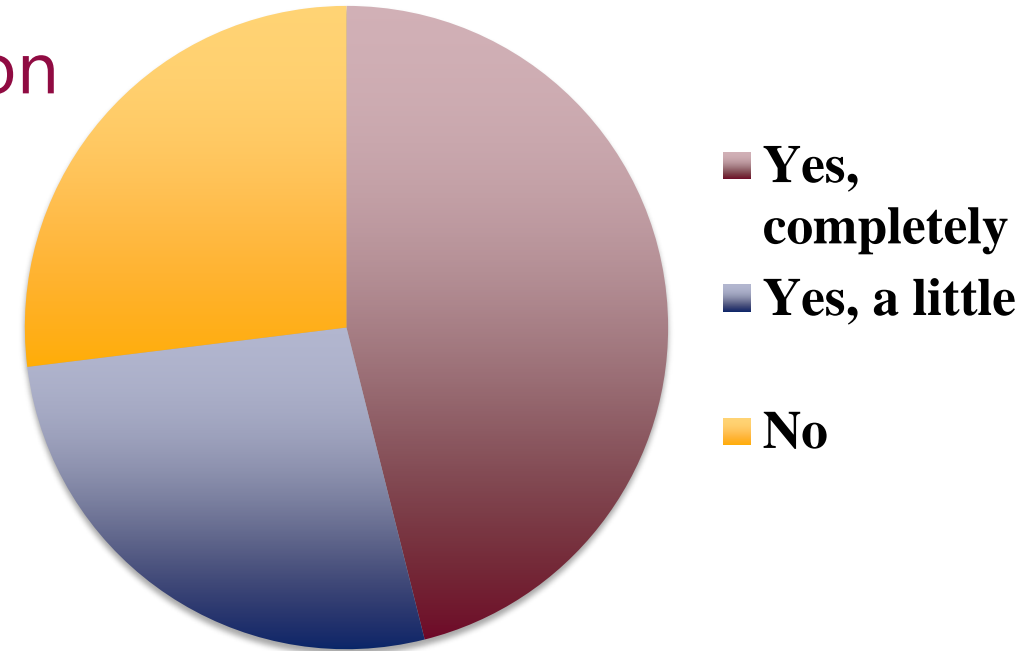


Results



Results

- 73% of participants stated that participation directly changed their future plans
 - 100% Stated that involvement in undergraduate research benefitted their college experience



Comments

- “Opened my eyes to new education and career opportunities”
- “Introduced me to techniques I will need to perform as a veterinarian”
- “I was able to network and connect with other faculty within my department.”
- “Allowed me to confirm my desire to want to go to grad school”
- My skills have helped me in my internships and given me a leg up on my classmates”
- “Became more concise and precise with my words to share information.”
- “I truly believe all students should try it. It has been the best experience!”

Conclusion

- Participants felt involvement in undergraduate research improved their communication skills, ability to make decisions, connect with classwork, and overall improve their learning experience.
- Undergraduate research participation encouraged students to pursue higher education or follow a research based career path.