

## Background

### Introduction

- Growing nationwide inequality linked to reduced interpersonal trust that extends to institutions and leaders<sup>2</sup>.
- Leadership qualities from childhood have significant continuity to adulthood<sup>3</sup>.
- Often analyze them through warmth and competence, which represent crucial aspects in which people perceive groups<sup>1</sup>.
  - Warmth: Prosociality, Reliability
  - Competence: Effort, Talent (smartness)
- Little research exists investigating children's thoughts of leaders<sup>5</sup>.
  - Few have investigated across multiple social behaviors and through their own justifications

### Purpose

- This study explores whether children aged 4-12 associate leaders with effort, prosociality, reliability, and talent.

## Contact

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact me (nnp5kp@virginia.edu), Yuhang Shu (jxd2cf@virginia.edu), or Amrisha Vaish (av8u@virginia.edu)

## Methods (a)

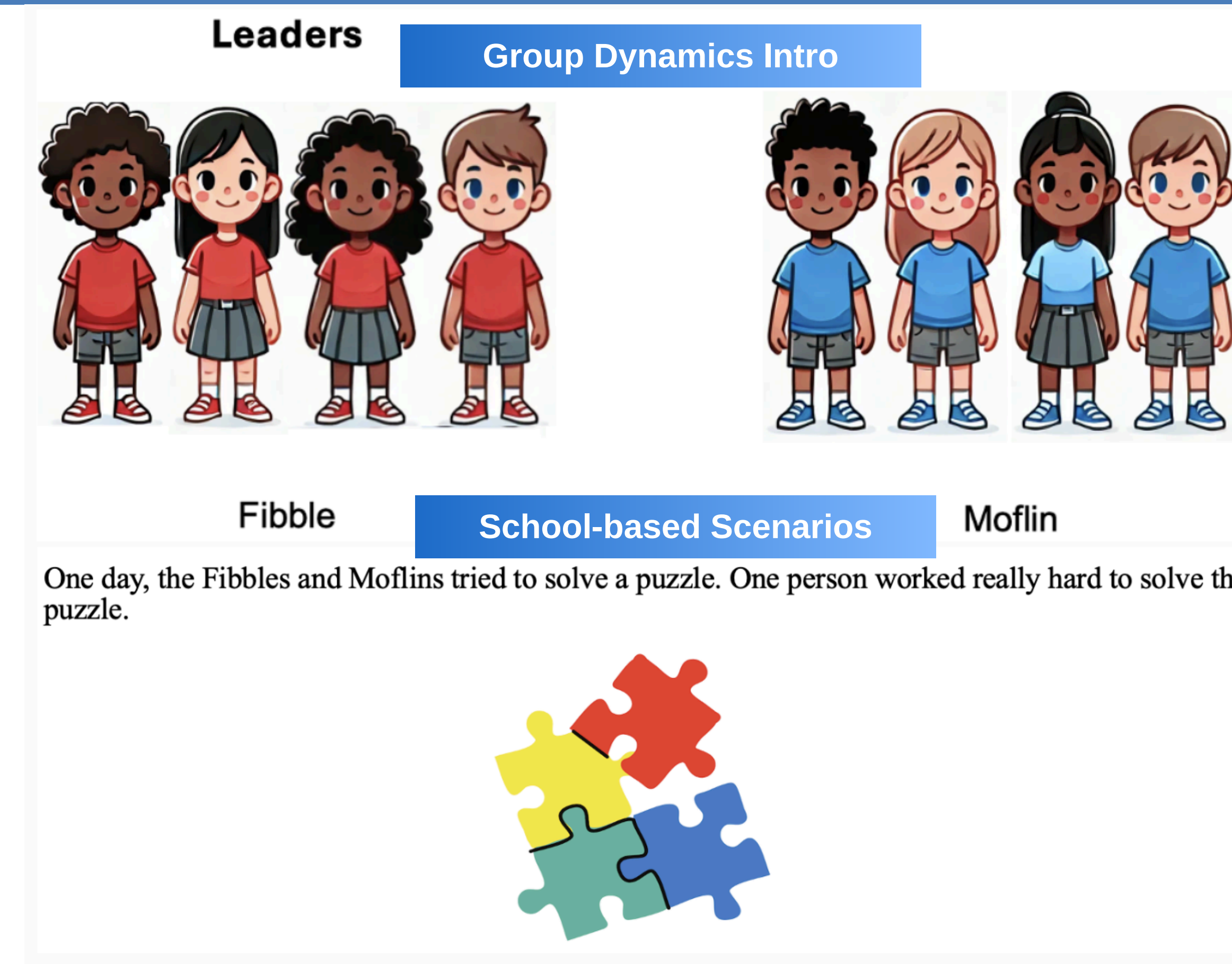
### Participants

- 96 U.S. children aged 4-12 ( $M_{age} = 8.27$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ , 47 girls)

### Procedure

- Target: Leader vs. Non-Leader (within-subject).
- 4 domains: Prosociality, Reliability, Effort, Talent.
  - Every-day school scenarios
- 2 valance: positive vs. negative.
- Completed forced-choice and open-ended questions.
- Research assistants recorded and transcribed responses.

## Methods (b)



Why do you think this person is a (Fibble/Moflin)?

## Conclusions

- Younger children, overall, think leaders are more effortful (marginally), prosocial, reliable, and talent (smartness) than non-leaders, but with age, this preference decreases (only marginal for reliable), but not for talent.
- All age groups significantly associated talent with leadership.
- Older children gradually think non-leaders are more effortful but think leaders and non-leaders are equally prosocial, reliable.
- Study offers novel insights by examining children's reasoning across multiple behavioral domains.

### Limitations

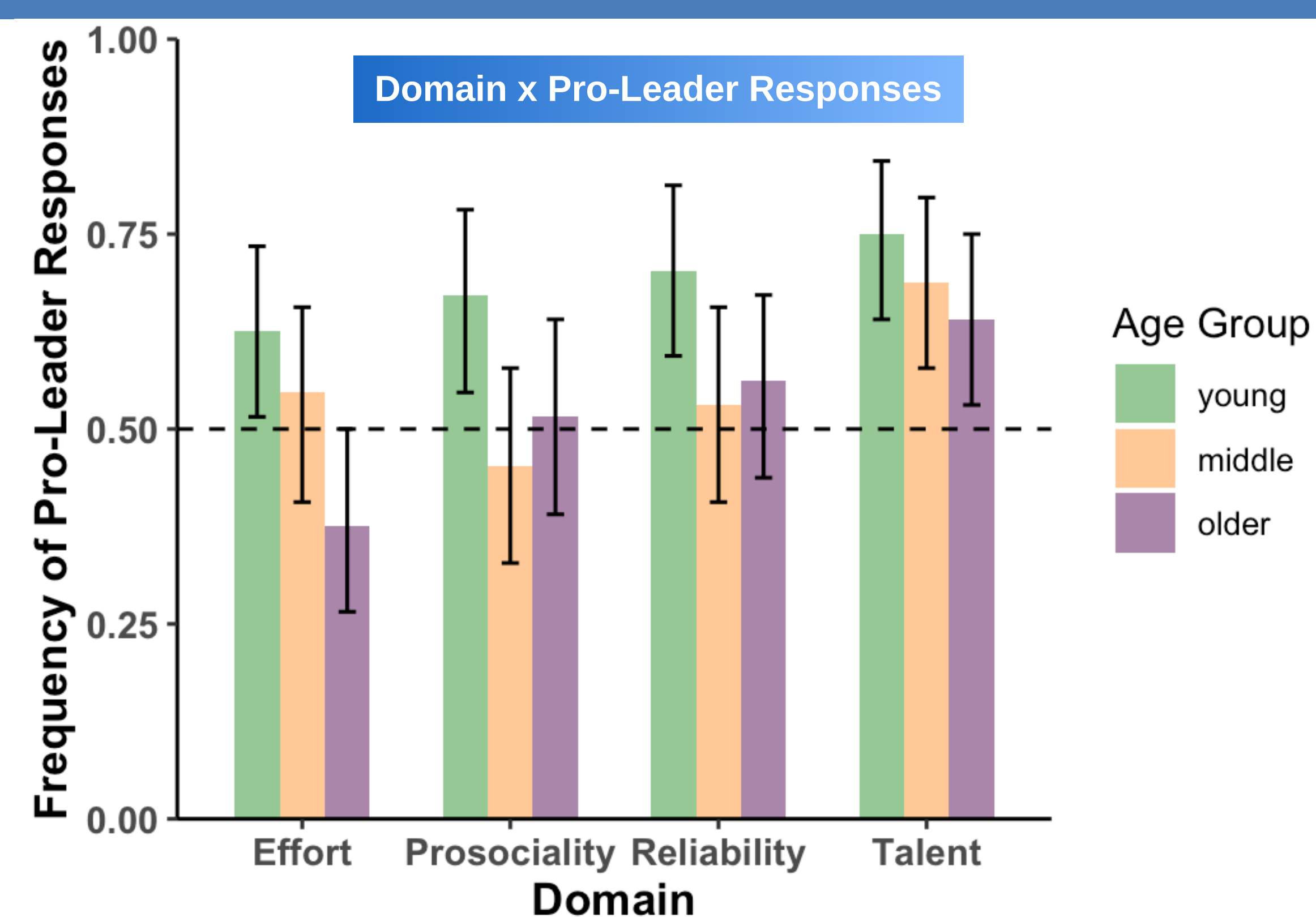
- Limited demographic diversity: sample was predominantly White and upper-middle class.

## Future Directions

### Implications

- Younger children may hold a positivity bias.
- Children's beliefs about effort and leadership may shift as they begin to separate effort from ability with age.
- Talent may be seen as a stable leadership trait across childhood.
  - Aligning with adult perceptions<sup>4</sup>
- Conduct longitudinal studies to track how leadership beliefs evolve over time.
- Explore cross-cultural definitions of leadership and how cultural values influence children's perceptions.

## Results



- Effort:
  - 4-6 year-olds chose leaders significantly more than 10-12 year-olds ( $p = .02$ ).
- Prosociality:
  - 4-6 year-olds chose leaders significantly more than 7-9 year-olds ( $p = .05$ ), but 7-9 year-olds and 10-12 year olds did not significantly differ.
- Reliability: 4-6 year-olds significantly chose leaders for keeping promises ( $p = .01$ ).
- Talent: All age groups significantly associated leaders with talent above chance ( $p < .01$ ).

## References

1. Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Beninger, A. (2011). The dynamics of warmth and competence judgments, and their outcomes in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 31, 73–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2011.10.004>
2. Davies, J., & Shorrocks, A. (2021). Comparing global inequality of income and wealth. *Inequality in the Developing World*, 49–73. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/48448/9780198863960.pdf?sequence=1#page=70>
3. Gottfried, A. E., Gottfried, A. W., Reichard, R. J., Guerin, D. W., Oliver, P. H., & Riggio, R. E. (2011). Motivational roots of leadership: A longitudinal study from childhood through adulthood. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(3), 510–519. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.04.008>
4. Pew Research Center. (2015). What Makes a Good Leader, and Does Gender Matter?. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/01/14/chapter-2-what-makes-a-good-leader-and-does-gender-matter/>
5. Stavans, M., & Diesendruck, G. (2021). Children Hold Leaders Primarily Responsible, Not Entitled. *Child Development*, 92(1), 308–323. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13420>