

Social, emotional, and behavioral skills in adolescence

Tommaso Feraco


tommaso.feraco@unipd.it

University of Padova

YLC, Evanston, June 26 2025

Who am I?



- Assistant Professor at the University of Padova
- **Psicostat** core team member 
- Memory & learning lab member

What I do

- SEB skills
 - Measurement
 - Change goals
 - Learning and achievement
- Methodology
 - Meta-research
 - Psychometrics
 - Statistical methods
- Geographical psychology

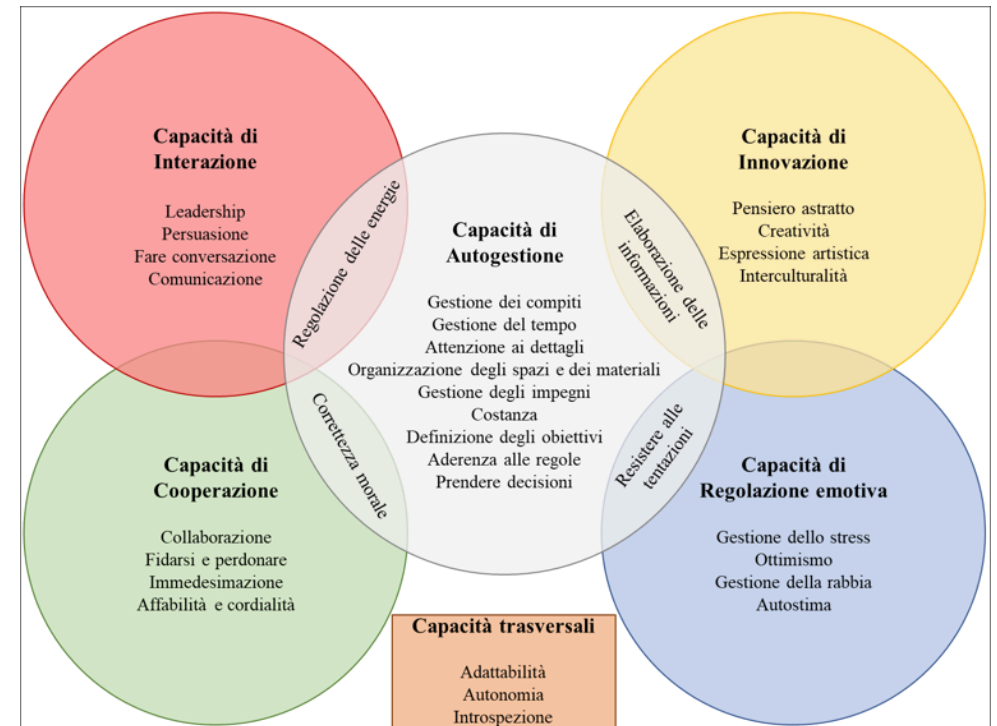
Social, emotional, and behavioral skills

- Definition
- Normative change
- Change goals
 - Students' perspectives
 - Parents' perspectives
 - Teachers' perspectives

A definition (again)

Social, emotional, and behavioral skills represent the abilities to establish and maintain social relationships, regulate emotions, and effectively manage behaviors toward goals and learning and mainly fall into five areas¹:

- Self-management skills
- Social engagement skills
- Cooperation skills
- Innovation skills
- Emotional resilience skills



Normative skill change

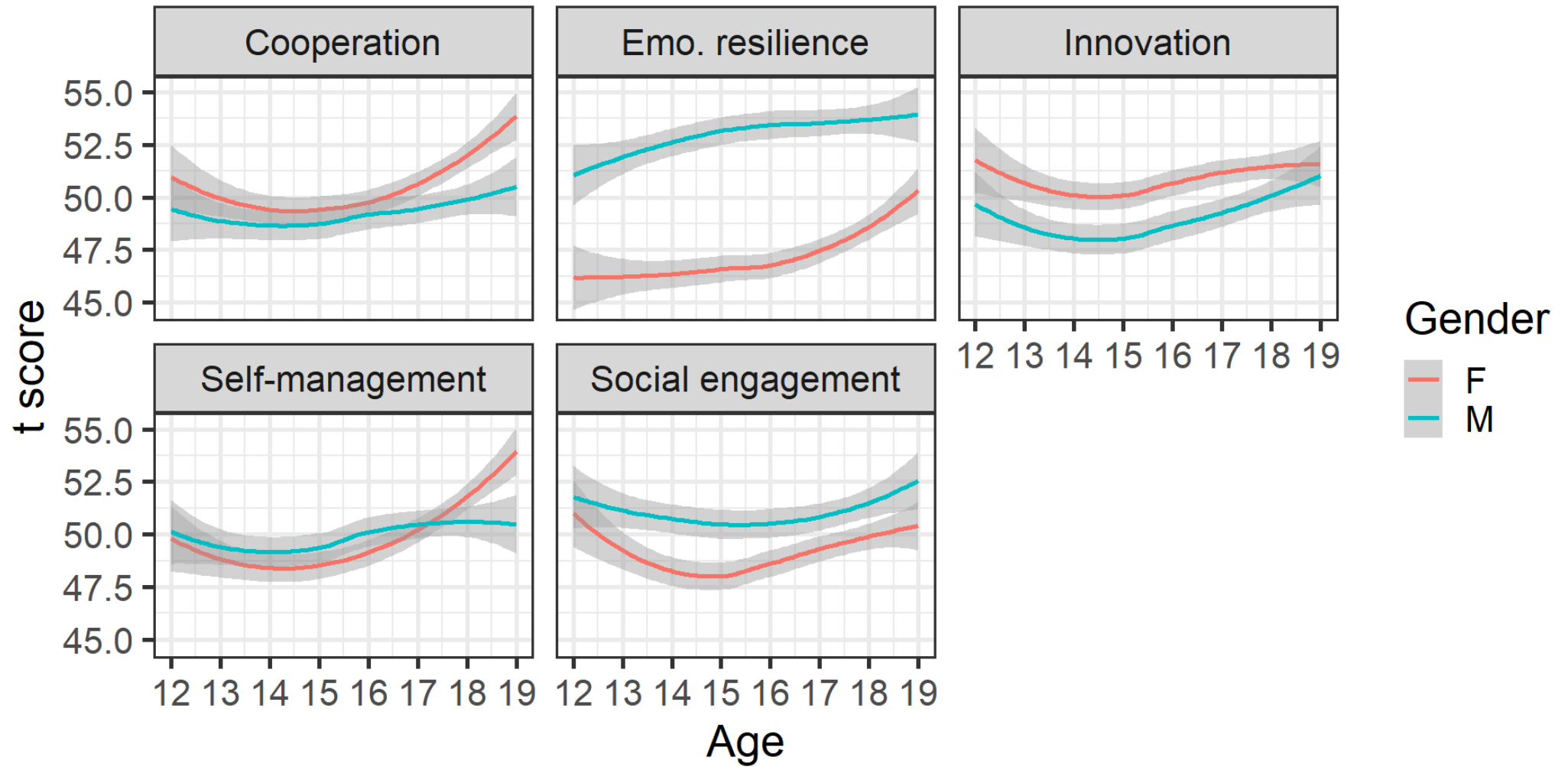
Do we observe normative changes in adolescence?²

- N = 4106 (F = 2215)
 - IT = 2888
 - US = 676
 - GER = 542
- Age = 15.94 (*sd* = 1.93)
 - Range = [12; 19]
- Measures: BESSI-192

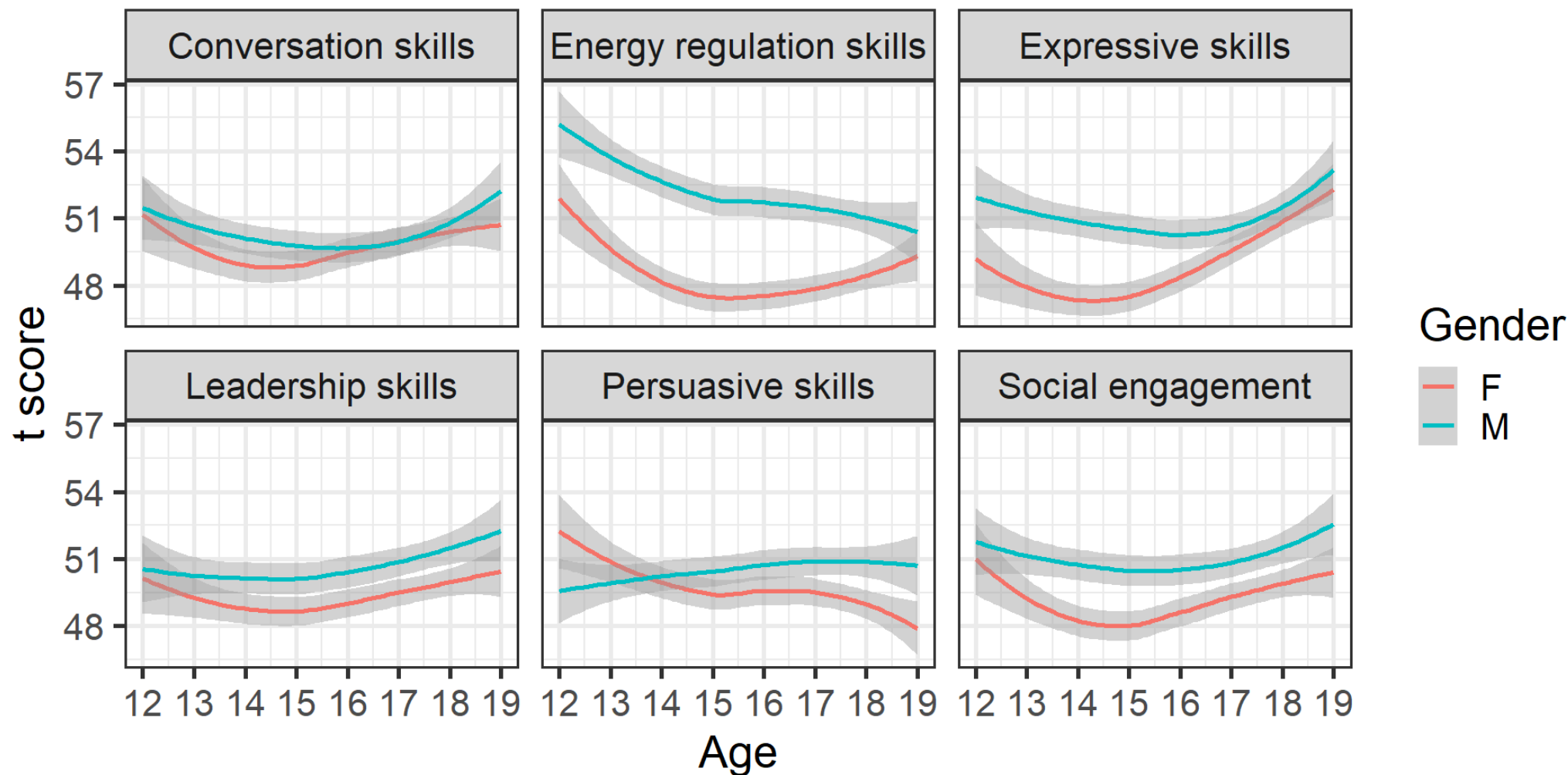


Feraco & Meneghetti (2023) Journal of Intelligence

Results



A focus on self-reported leadership



Change goals and beliefs

Method and people

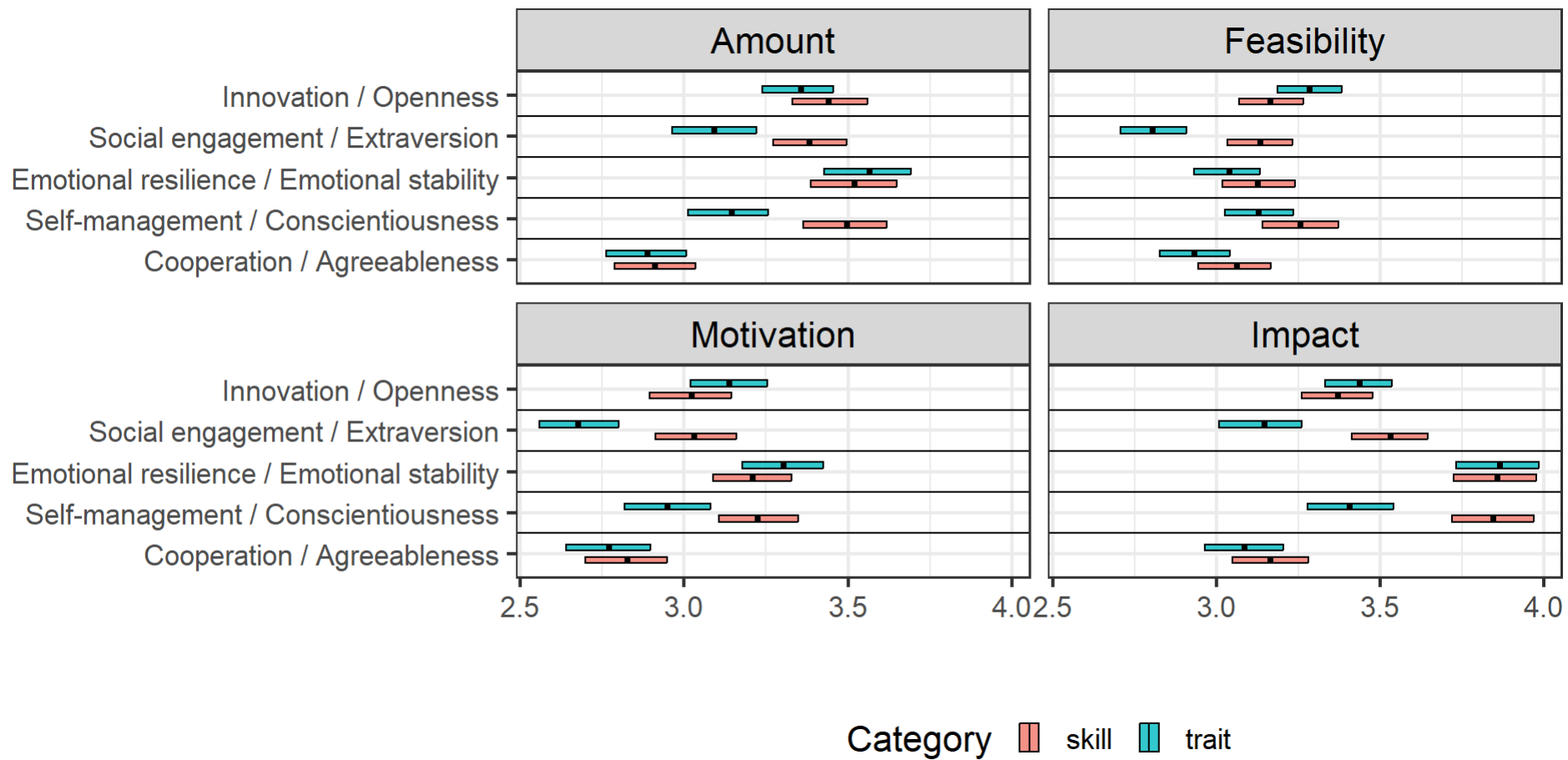
- A brief definition of the trait/skill: “Whether someone ‘*tend to behave*’/‘*is capable of behaving*’ in a social, assertive, and energetic way[, *when they want or need to do so*]”
 - **Amount:** “How much would you like to increase your level of [skill/trait name]?”
 - **Feasibility:** “How much do you think you could increase your level of [skill/trait name] during the next year, if you tried to do so?”



A first study on college students³



- $N = 264$ ($F = 184$, $IT = 276$, $US = 252$)
- Age = 20.83 ($sd = 2.68$ [18; 46])



Feraco, Hudson & Soto (2025) Personality and Individual Differences

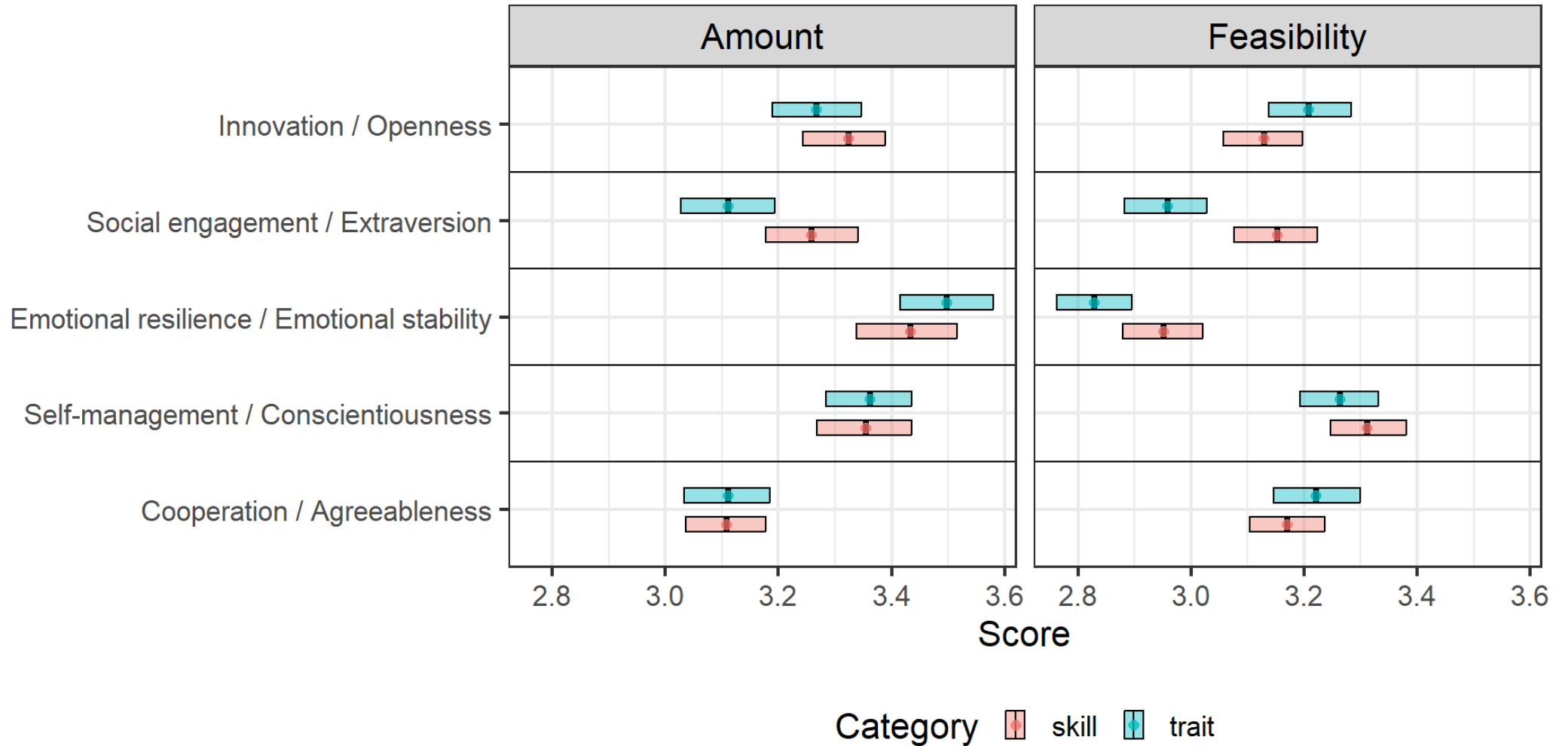
Moving toward adolescents - Students, teachers, and parents opinions

	Students	Parents	Teachers
N	676	460	704
Females	424	293	430
Males	250	167	265
Age	16.75 (1.53)	50.19 (5.78)	38.57 (11.37)

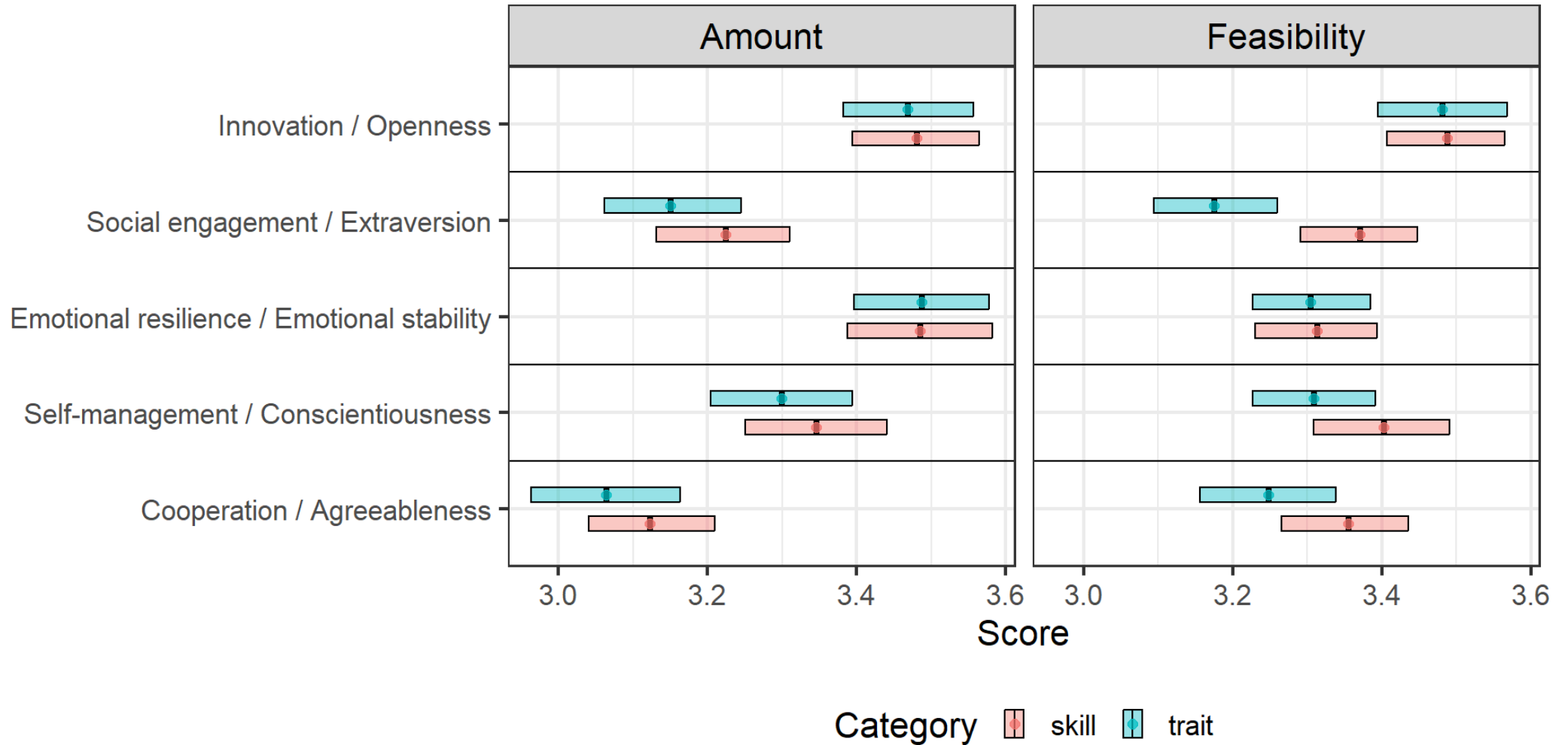
- What are the opinions of high school students about changing their traits or skills?
- What about their parents’ and teachers’ opinion about changing their students/children traits and skills?

Feraco, Jach ... & Soto (in prep)

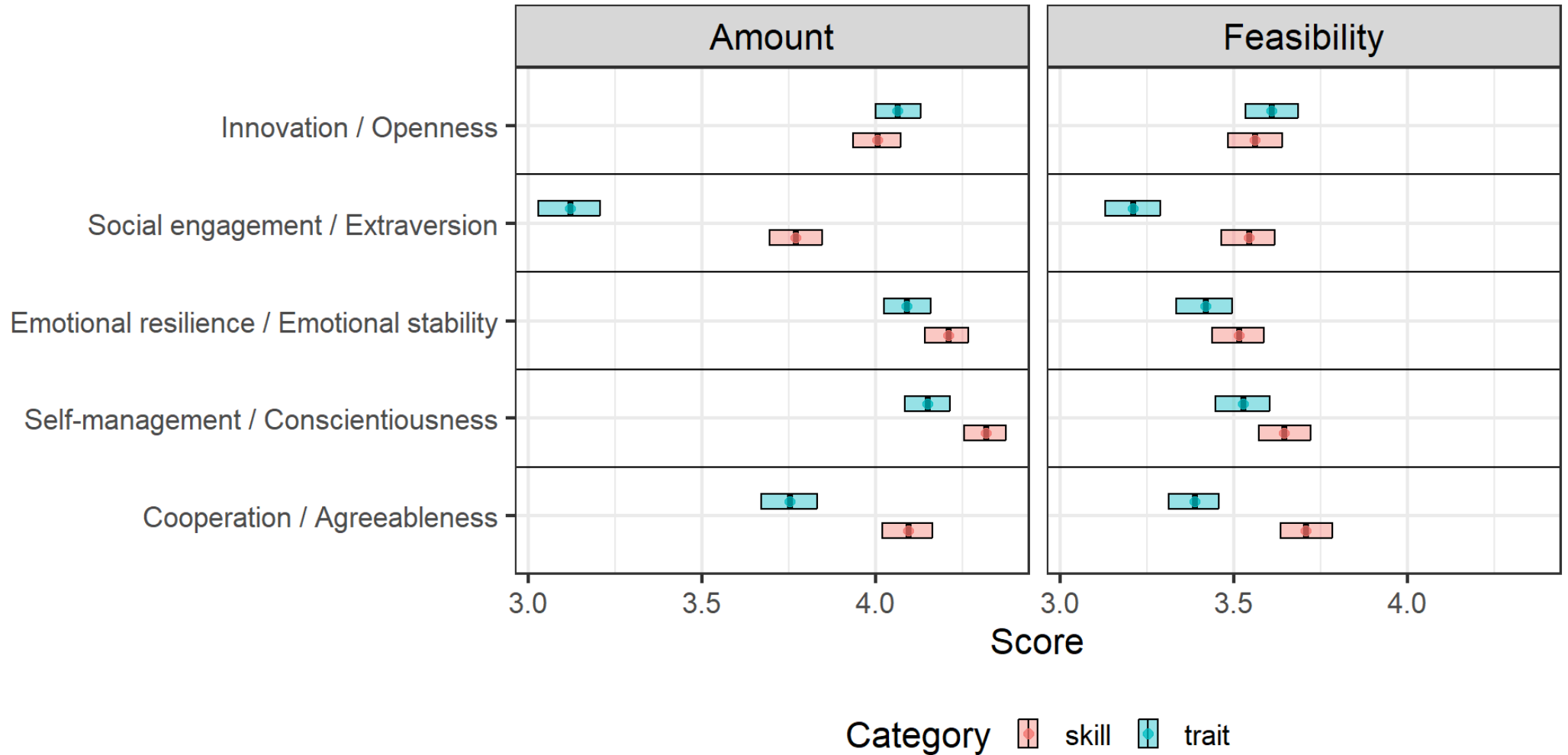
...the students



...their parents

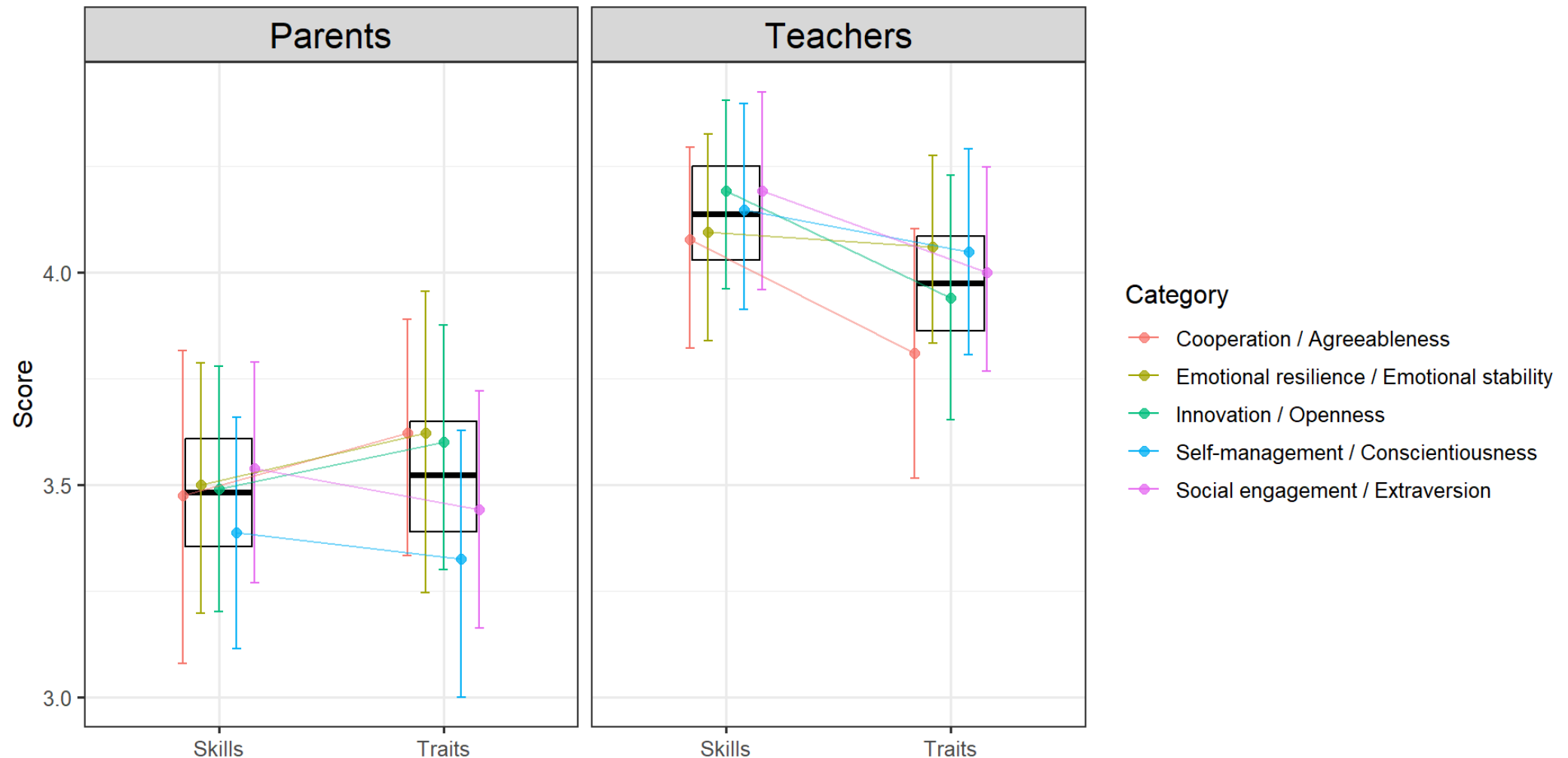


...and their teachers



...what if we ask them whether they want to participate in a workshop?

...what if we ask them whether they want to participate in a workshop?

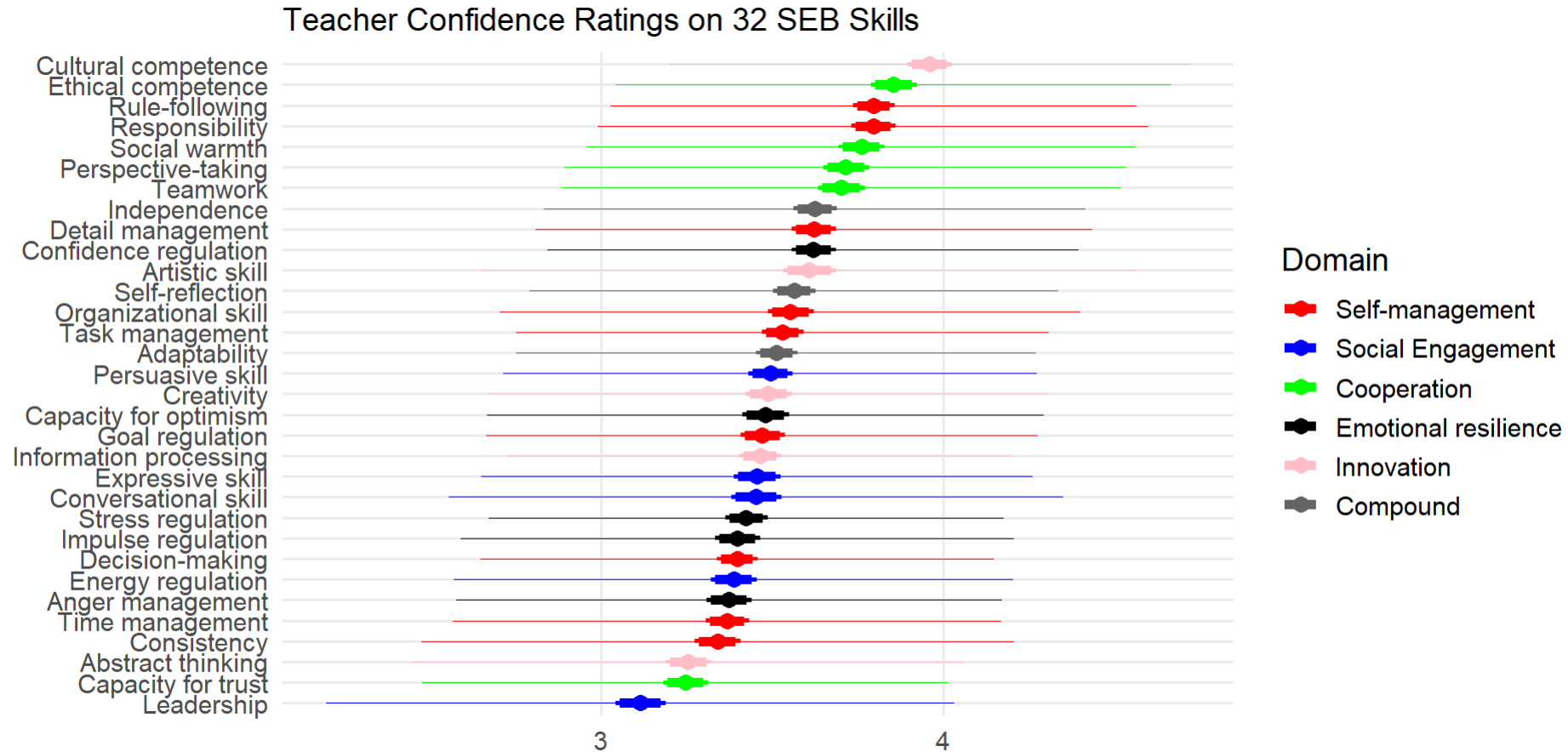


More about teachers

Variable	
N (Females)	1480 (1270)
Age (Mean)	49.12 (9.72)
Experience (Mean)	17.44 (11.27)
Class Time (Mean)	10.89 (7.73)
Grade: Primary (2)	518
Grade: Middle (3)	364
Grade: High (4)	432
Role: Support (1)	374
Role: Curricular (2)	1016

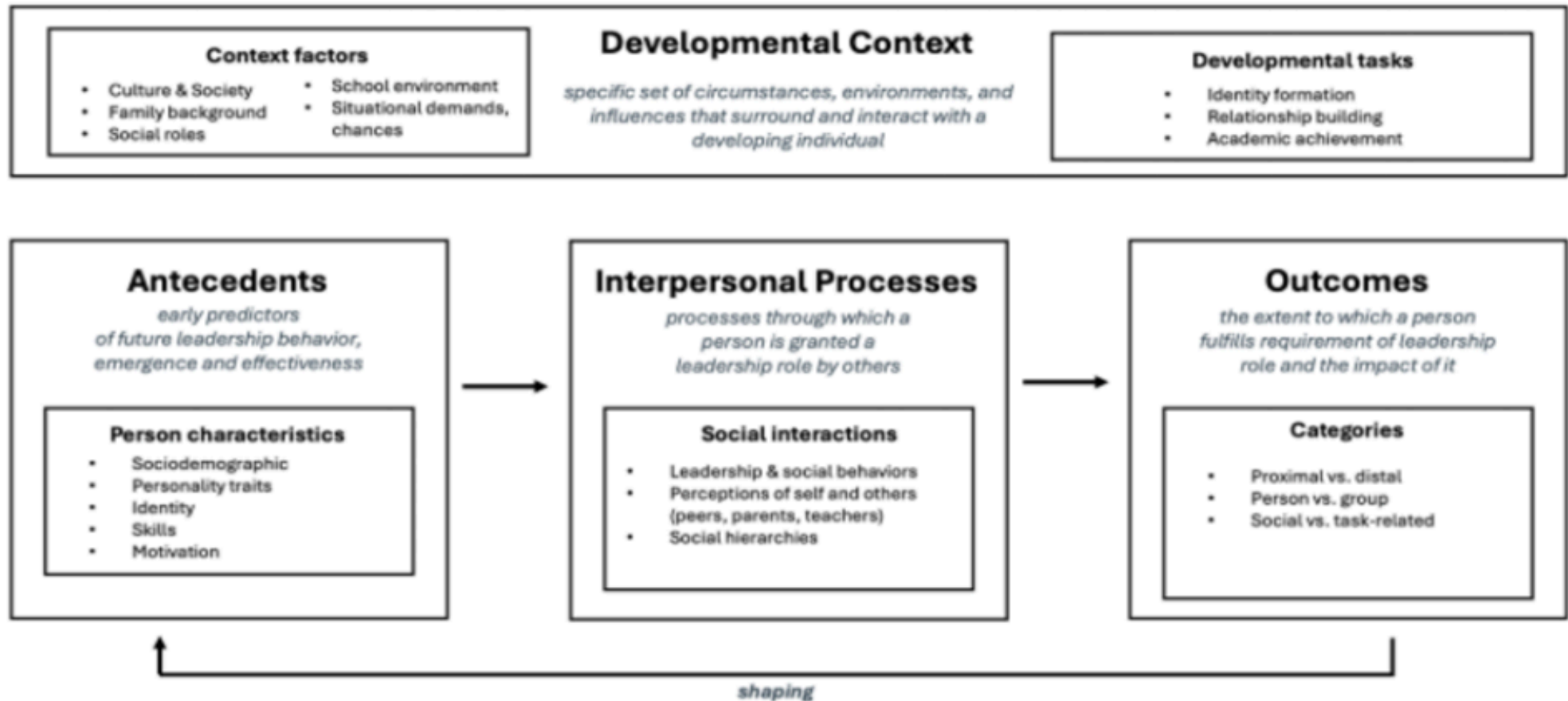
Pellegrino ... & Feraco (in prep)

...results



All teachers read definitions of the 20 random SEB skills, and reported about their perceived confidence in teaching it to their students.

Back to the seed questions



Thank you all!



Free slides here!



Data, code, and materials needed to reproduce these slides are available at:
<https://github.com/feracotommaso/Slides/>

References

1. Soto, C. J., Napolitano, C. M. & Roberts, B. W. [Taking Skills Seriously: Toward an Integrative Model and Agenda for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills](#). *Current Directions in Psychological Science* **30**, 26–33 (2021).
2. Feraco, T. & Meneghetti, C. [Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills: Age and Gender Differences at 12 to 19 Years Old](#). *Journal of Intelligence* **11**, 118 (2023).
3. Feraco, T., Hudson, N. W. & Soto, C. J. [Differences in change goals between personality traits and social, emotional, and behavioral skills](#). *Personality and Individual Differences* **241**, 113200 (2025).