

Publicly targeting group identities impacts take-up of educational opportunities

Manu Munoz (manumunoz.github.io)



Motivation

General aim

How does informing people that they are chosen for an opportunity because of their group identity impacts take-up?



Motivation

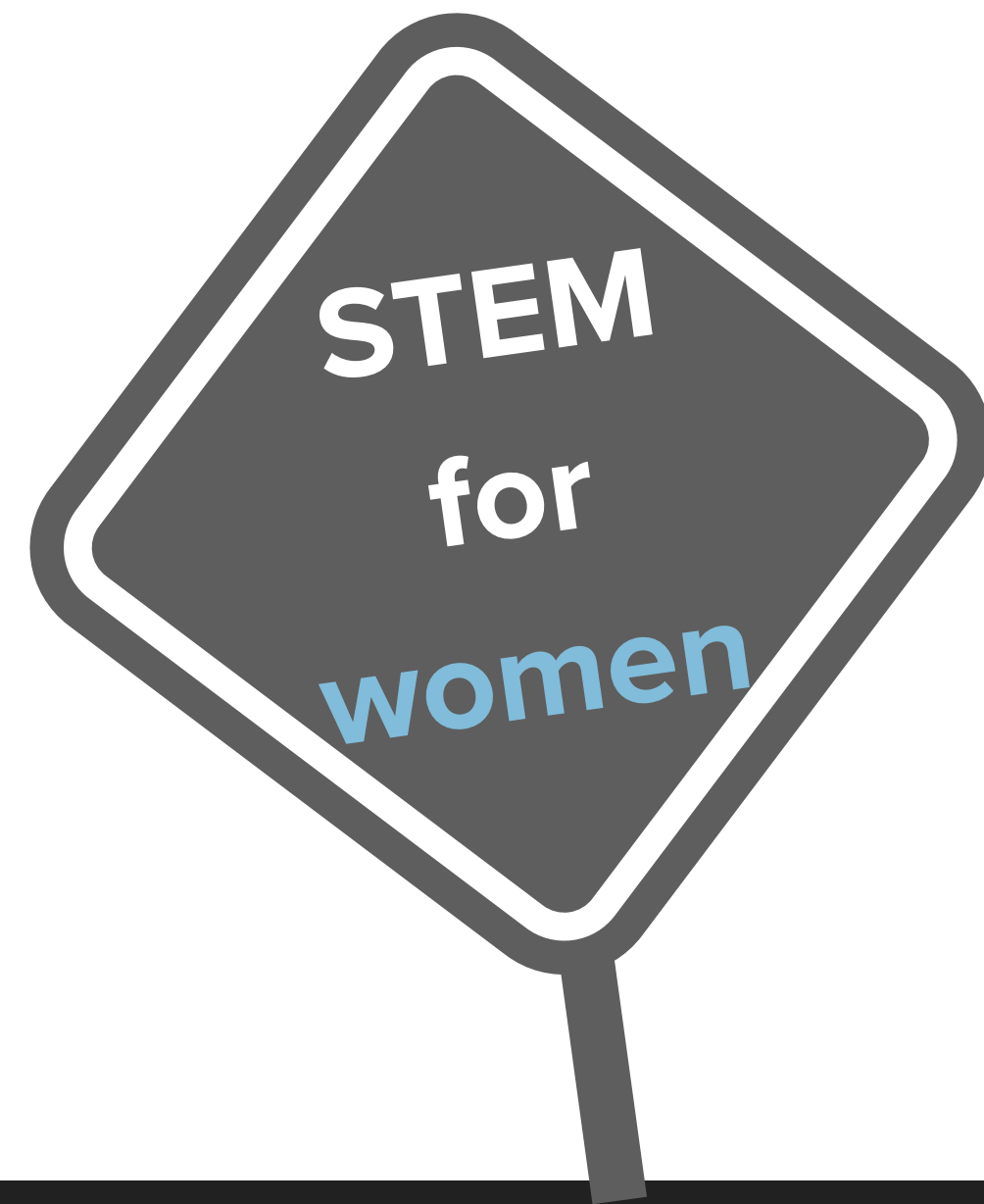
Organizations publicly emphasize identities of target populations to

- Show their commitment to equity
- Sense of “*being seen*”: Increase take-up of offered opportunities

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Unintended consequences of public targeting



Overview

Natural Field experiment



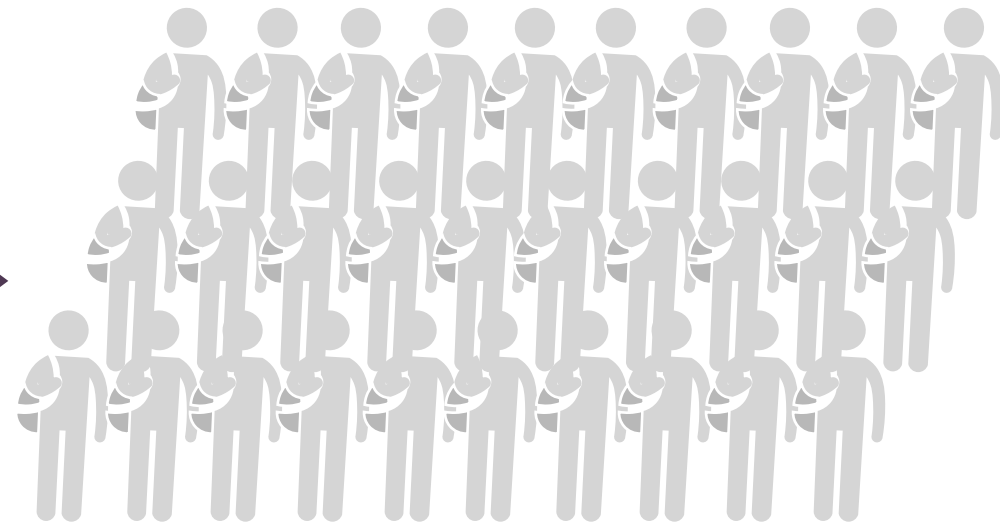
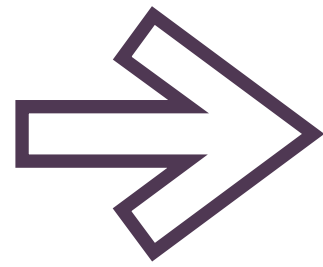
International
Program

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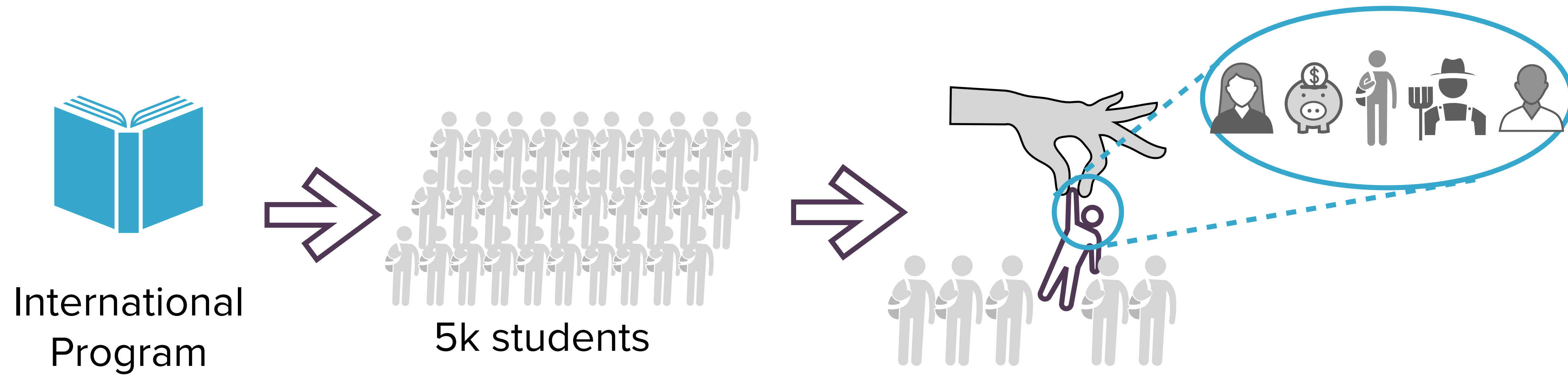
International
Program



5k students

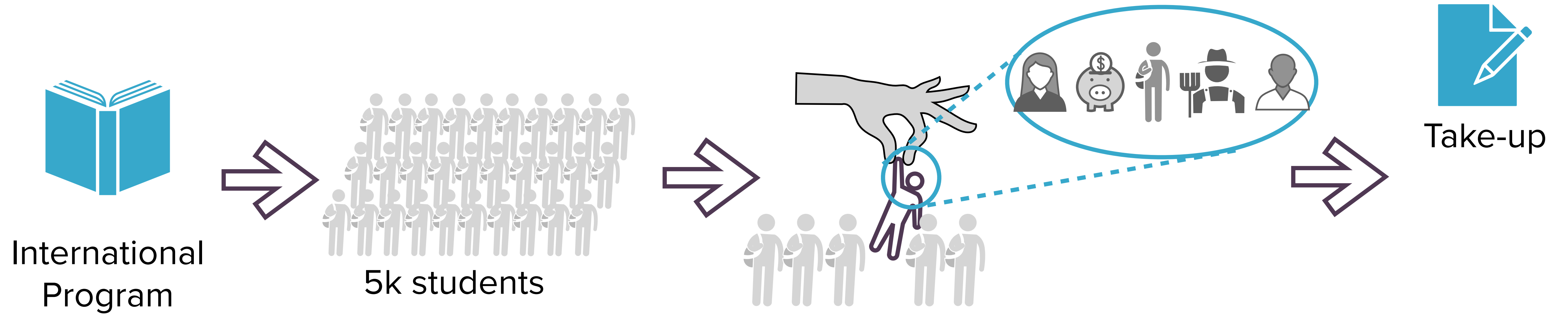
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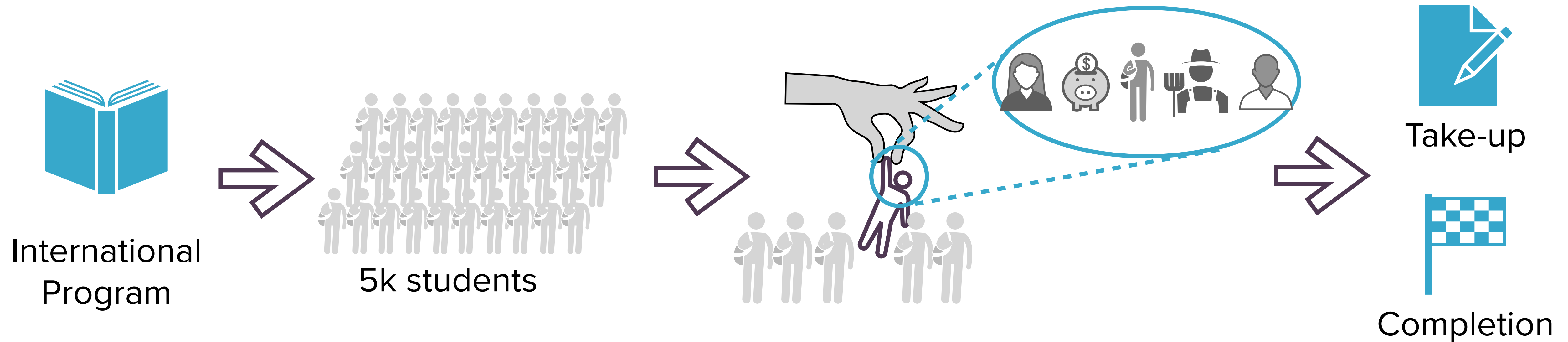
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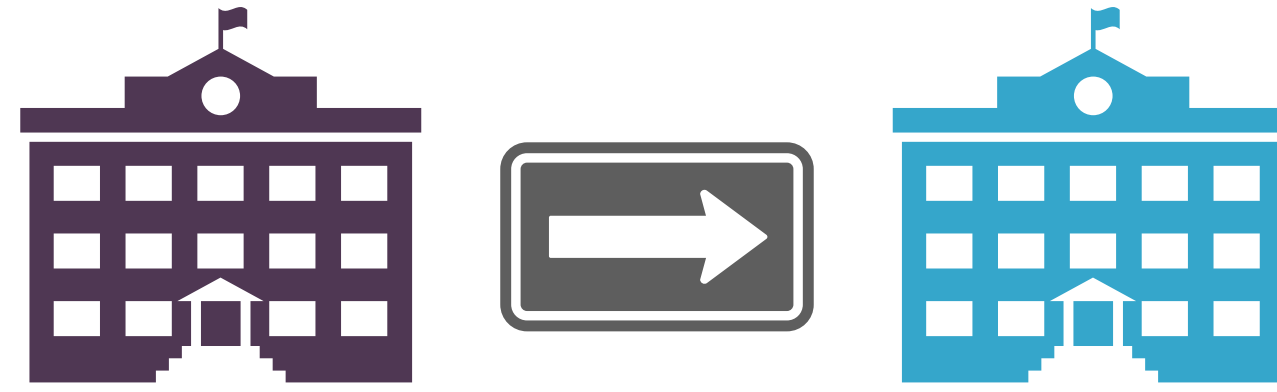
Natural Field experiment





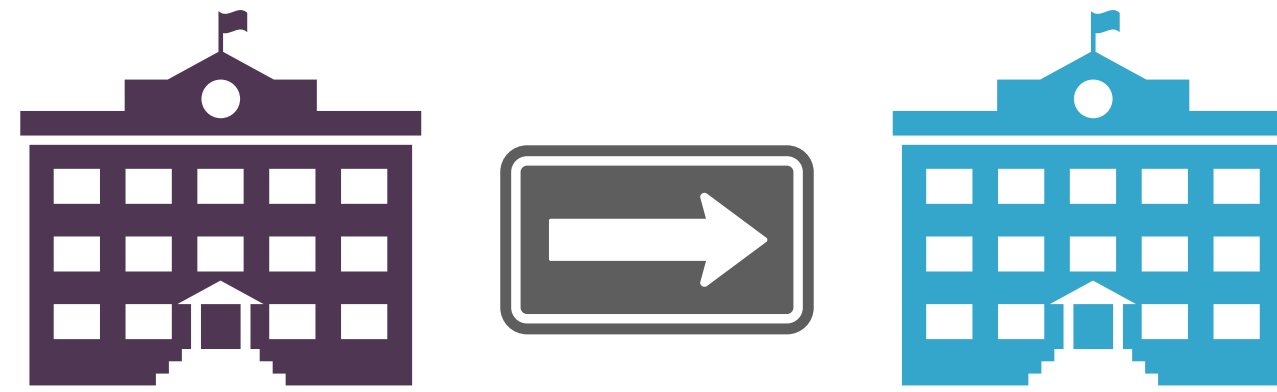
Setting & Design

Partnership



International and Colombian university

Partnership



International and Colombian university

Colombian setting

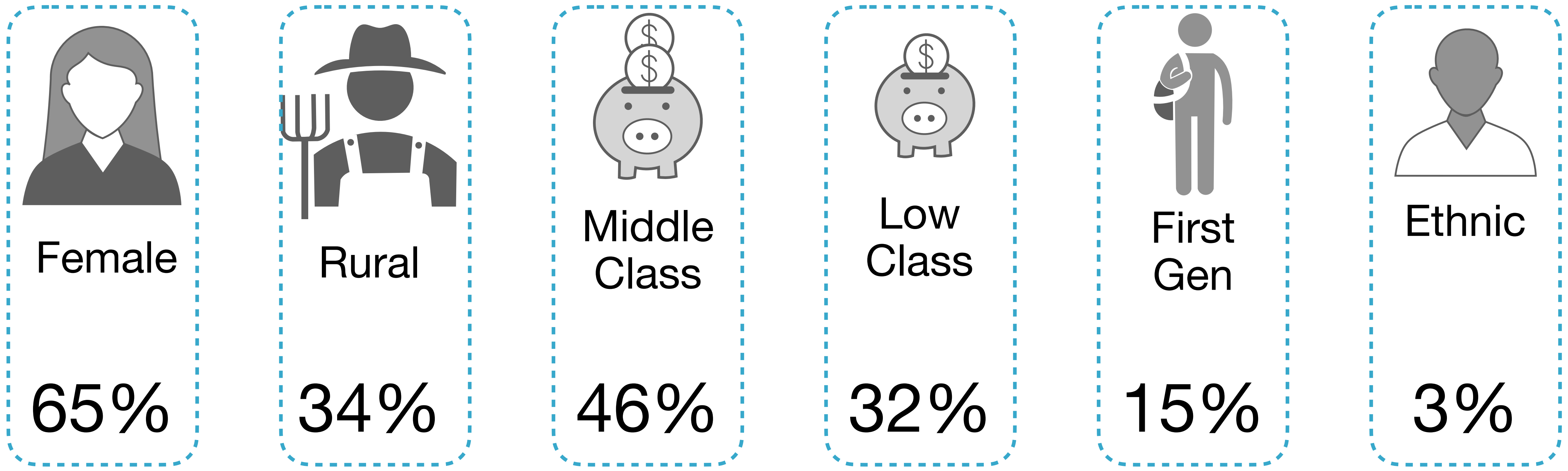
Social stratification system (central government): 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest).

Impacts socio-demographic composition of students at universities: public, private elite, private non-elite

Local partner is private non-elite: highest diversity levels among universities.

Selection of eligible participants

Local university indicated categories to be targeted



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- **International Program:** Self-efficacy skills (e.g., resilience, perseverance, etc)
- **Costs:** Free (ensured placement), 9 sessions, Pre-recorded, Online, Self-paced (*avoid peer interactions*), No pre-requisites
- **Benefits:** Valuable knowledge, Certificate (NYU), benefit for CV, lottery of 2 iPads

Message from office of international relations inviting students to the workshop

* Explain partnership, workshop, benefits

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1 Info to students

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You have been chosen among all students at the university because you can benefit from this program, as your cumulative GPA is [Student's GPA].

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* Explain partnership, workshop, benefits

1 Info to students

You have been chosen among all students at the university because you can benefit from this program, as your cumulative GPA is [Student's GPA].

and also because you fulfill one of the following requirements: being a woman, being of low-middle social class, belonging to an ethnic minority (indigenous or afro-descendant), being a first-generation student (neither of your parents has a college degree), or coming from a rural area (or not coming from any of the main cities in the country).



2

Info to endorsers

2

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PRE-DEFINED endorsement message faculty should send back

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PRE-DEFINED endorsement message faculty should send back

I, [Professor's name] endorse student [Student's name] to take part in the training program..., because he/she can benefit from this program, as his/her cumulative GPA is [Student's GPA].

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Info to endorsers

PRE-DEFINED endorsement message faculty should send back

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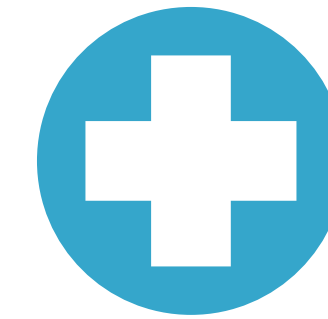
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Waves of the study - GPA is displayed



reward for merit

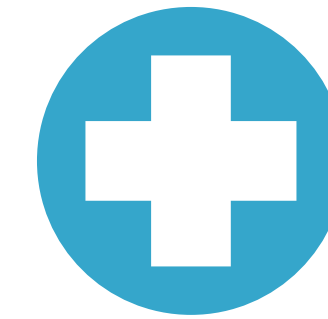
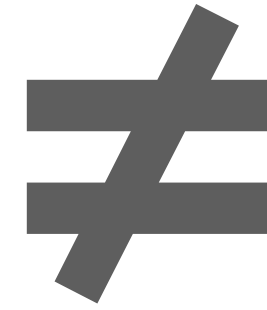


remedial for needs

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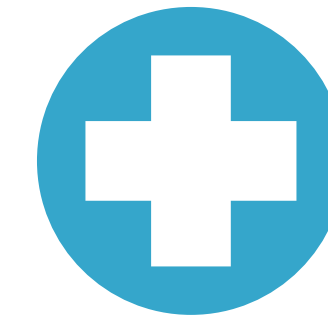
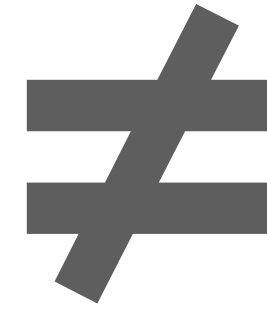


remedial for needs

Waves of the study - GPA is displayed



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remedial for needs

Outcome measures - *between treats*



TAKE-UP (*extensive margin*)



COMPLETION (*intensive margin*)

Treatments

3 conditions varying the disclosure of information about eligibility being identity-based to (i) the student, (ii) student and endorser, or (ii) none

	Treatments		
	PUBLIC INFO	PRIVATE INFO	NO INFO
Information is disclosed			
<i>To student</i>			
<i>To endorser</i>			

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<i>To endorser</i>	✓	X	X

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Invitations per wave			
<i>High performance</i>	n=864	n=864	n=833

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<i>Low performance</i>	n=776	n=757	n=737

Treatments

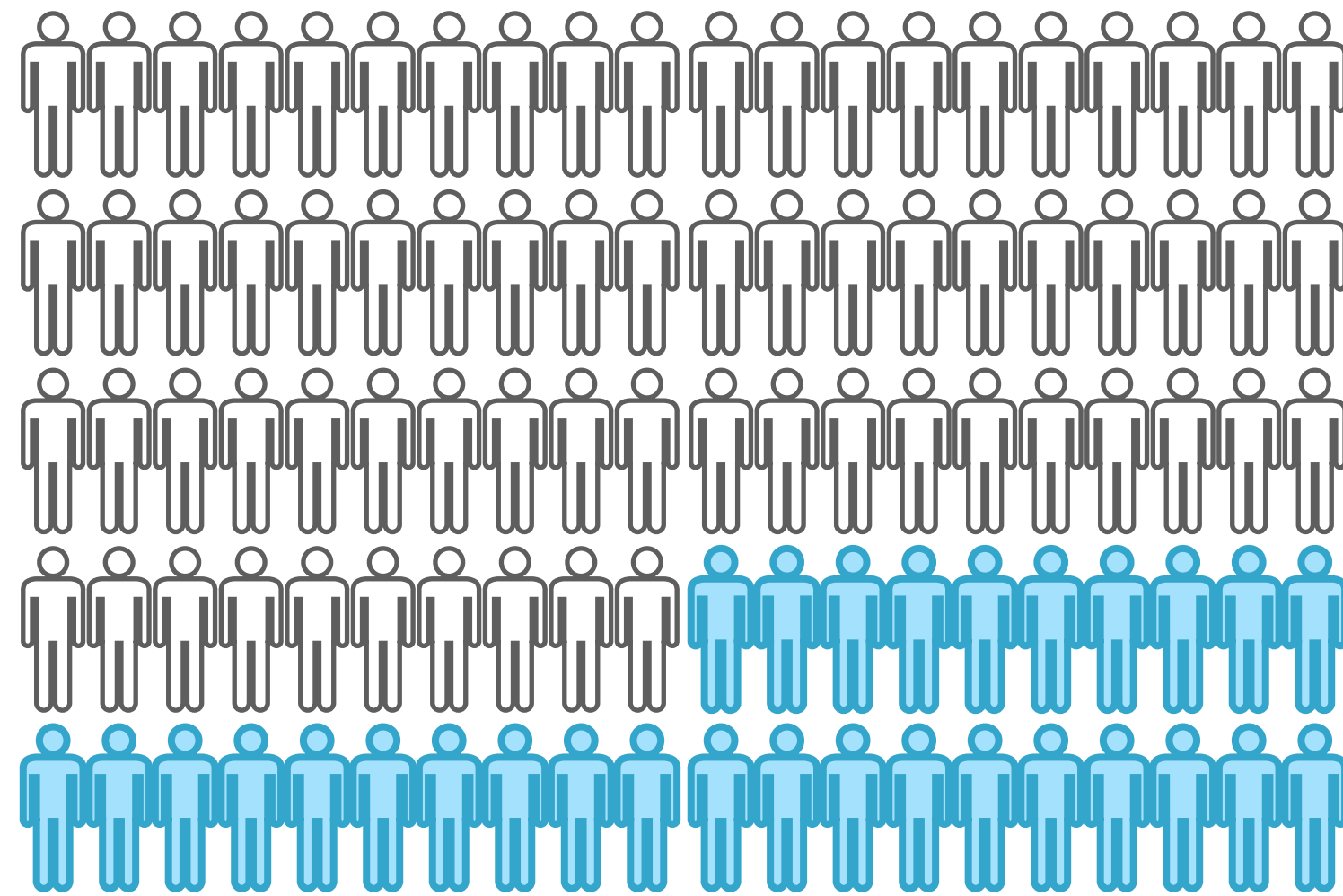
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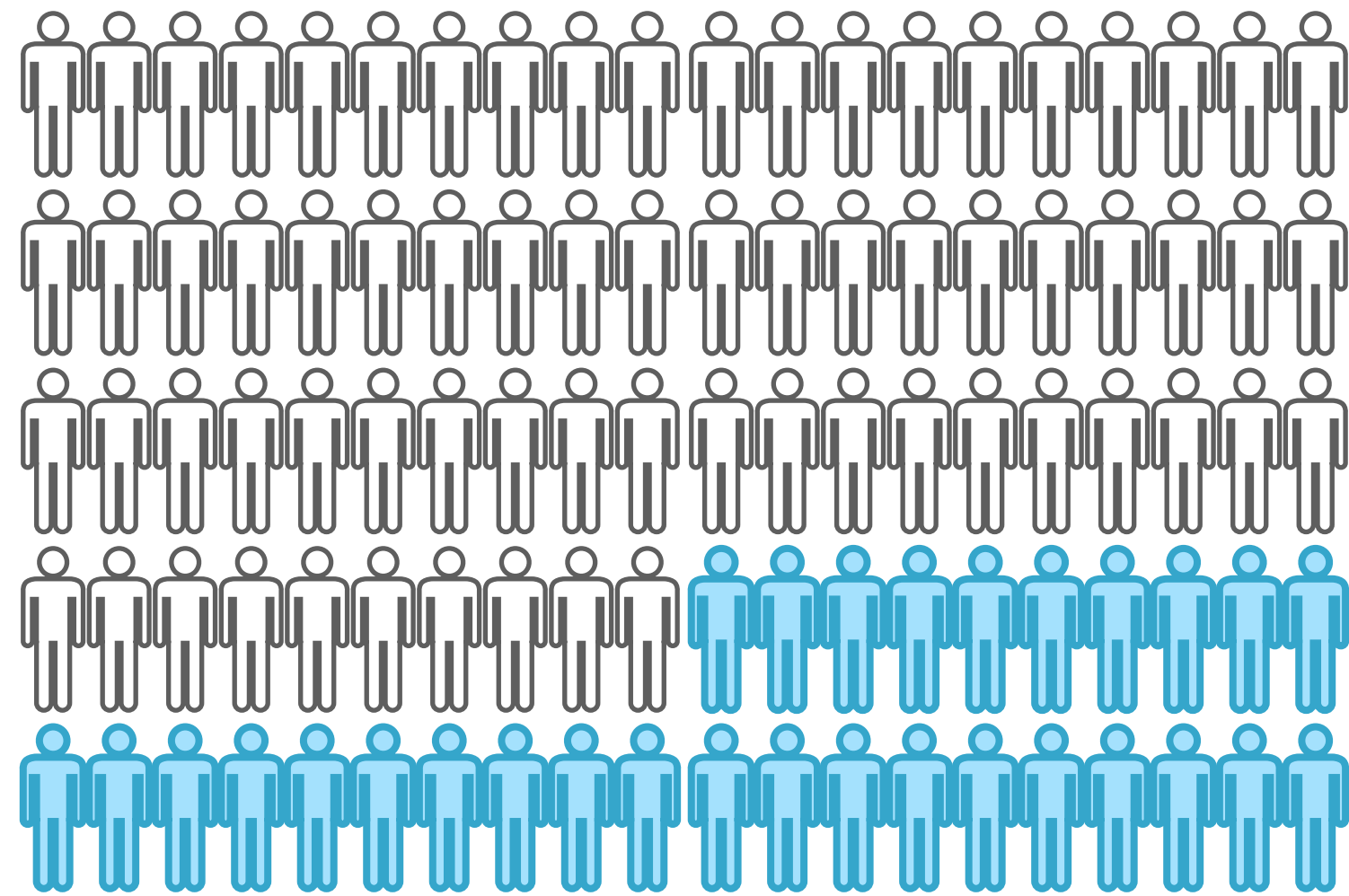
Main results

Take-up and completion of the program

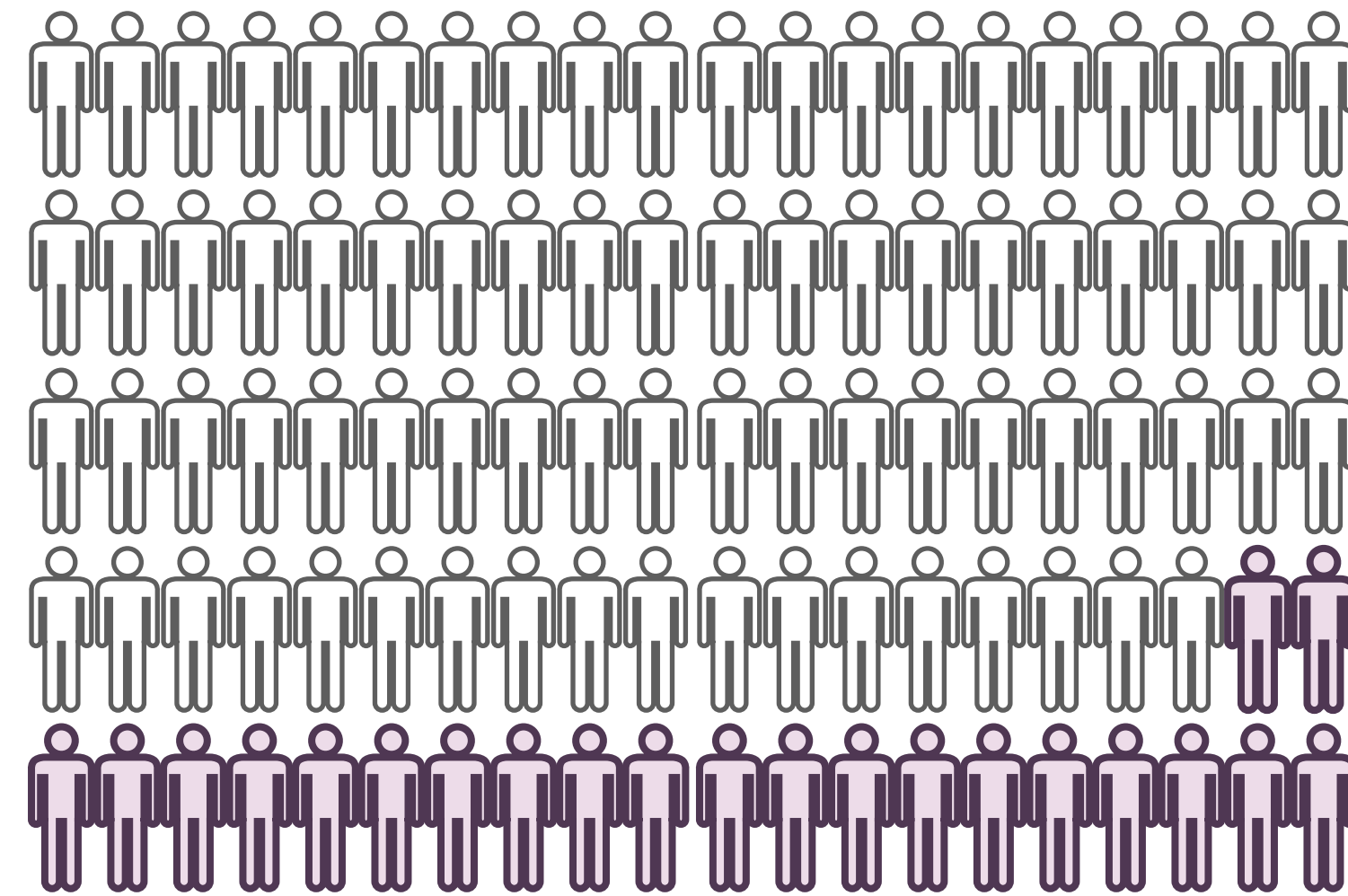


30% Take-up (1407)

Take-up and completion of the program

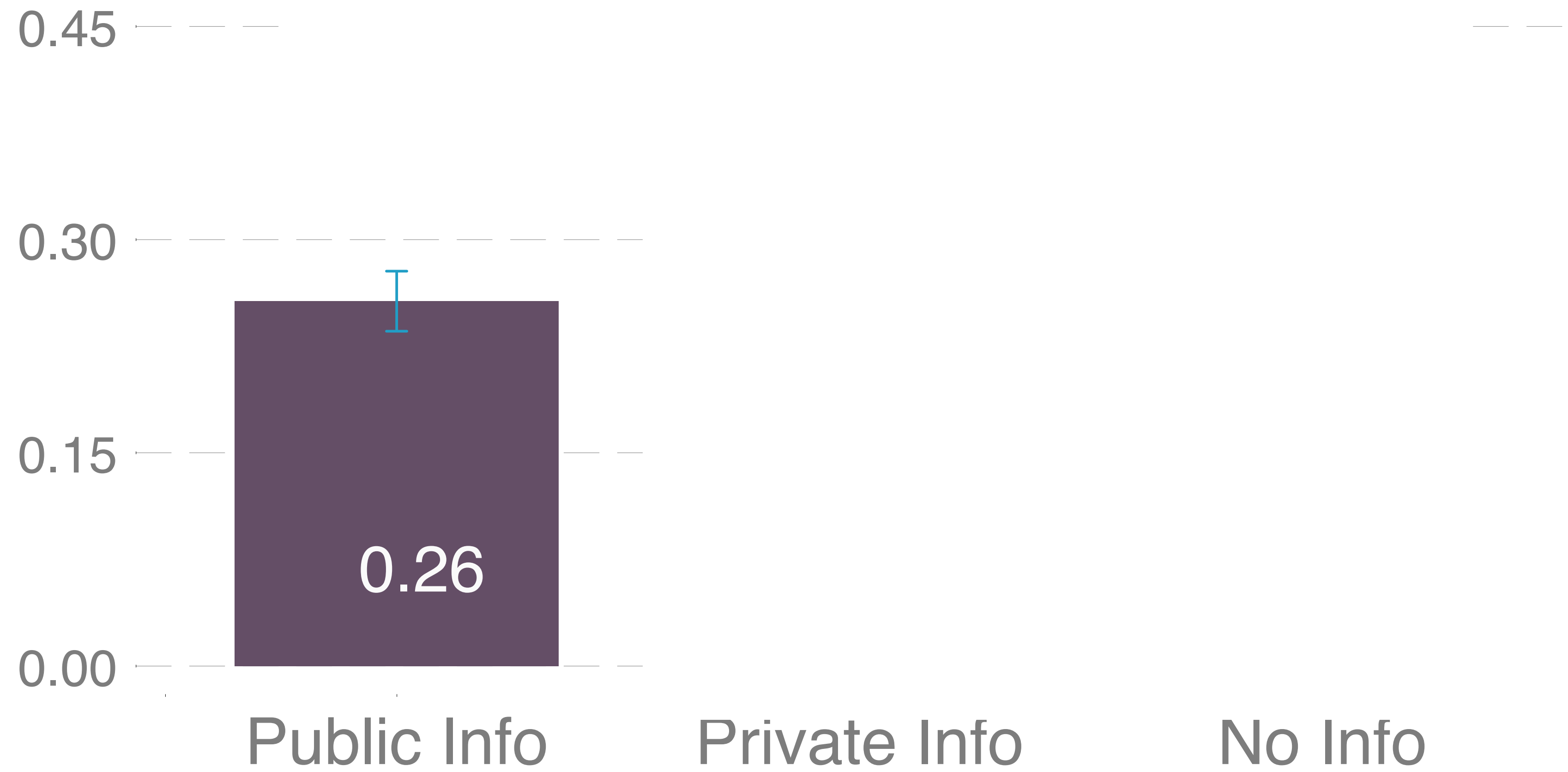


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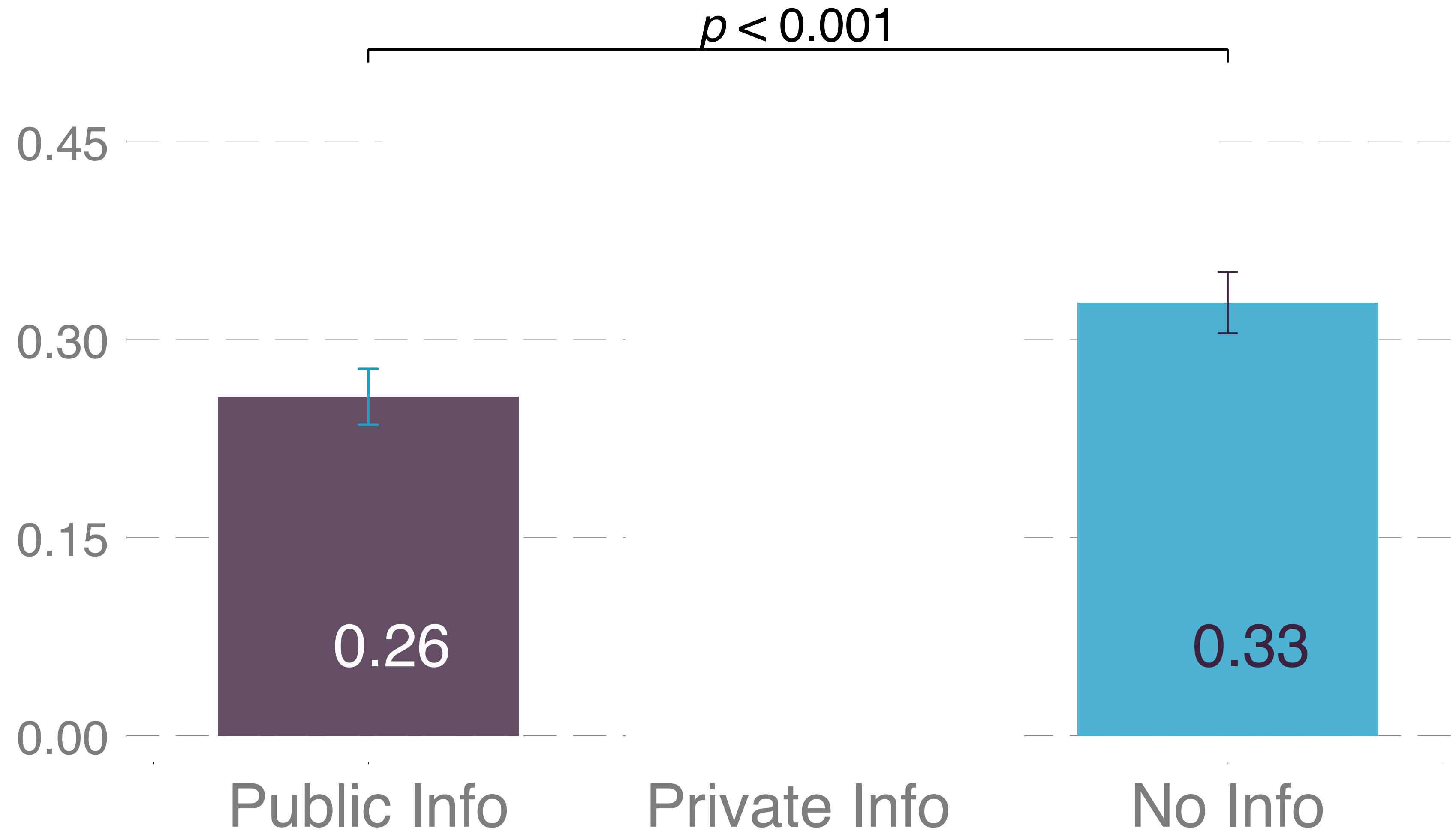


22% Complete (1066)

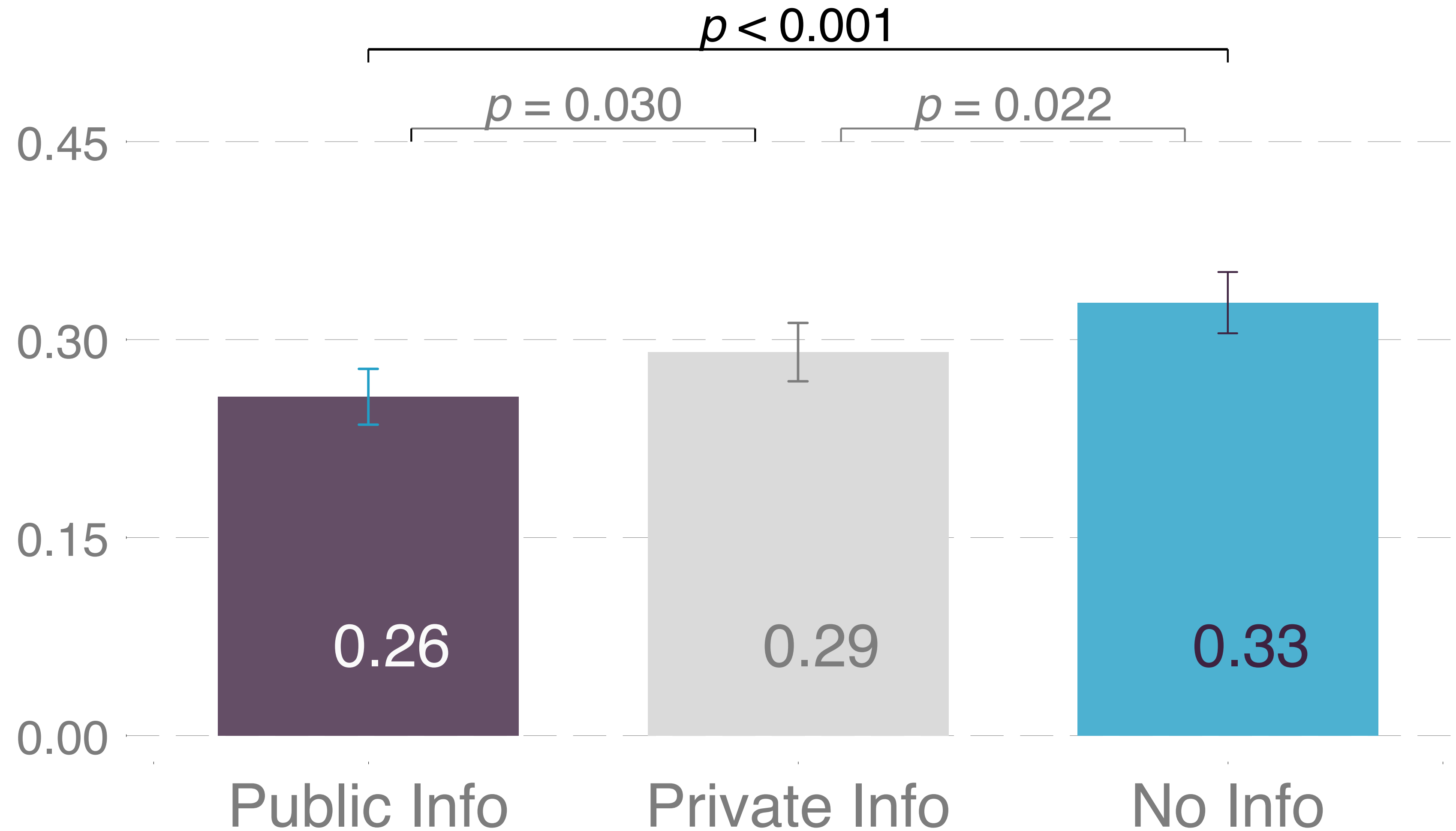
Impact of public targeting: negative on **take-up**



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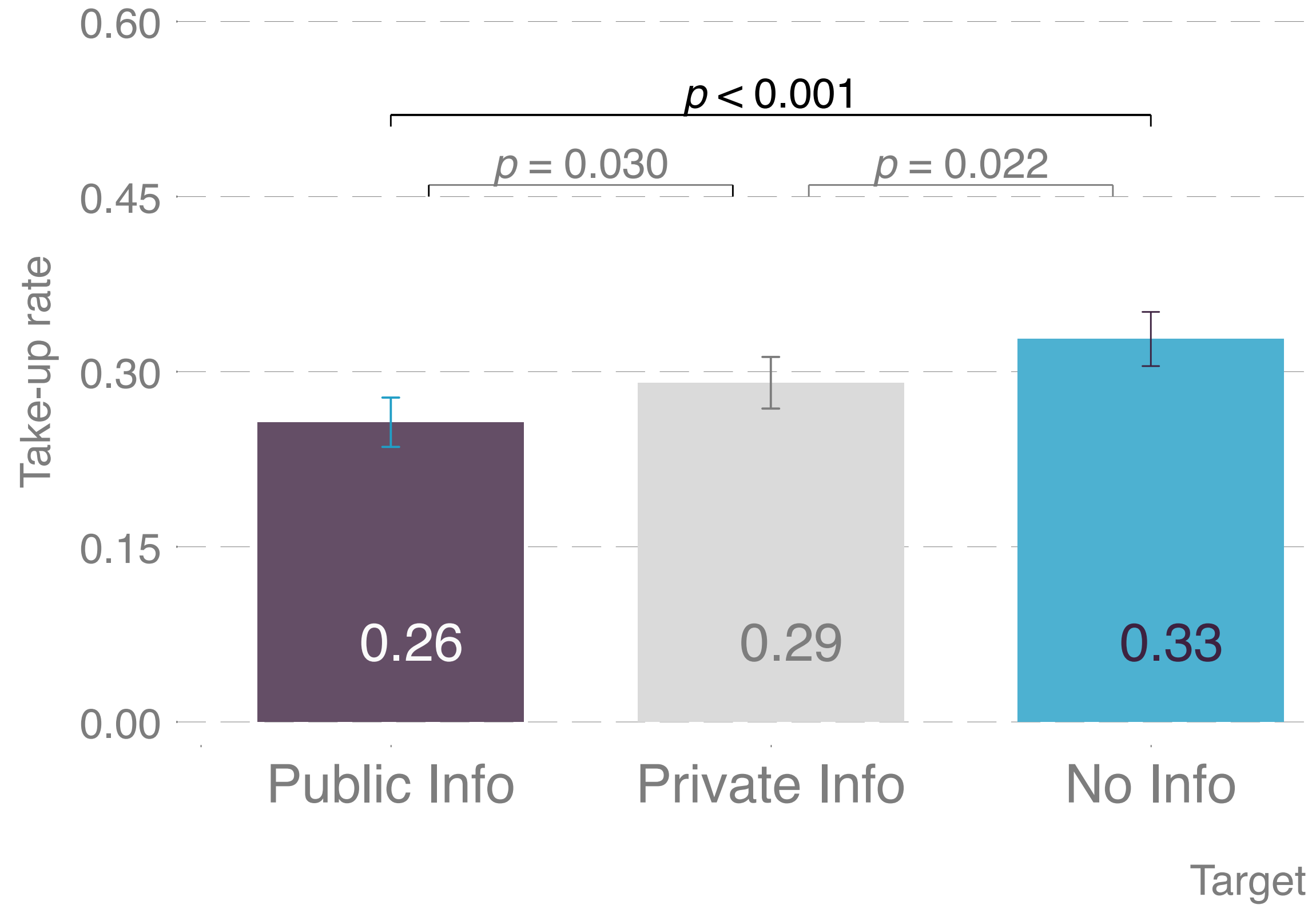


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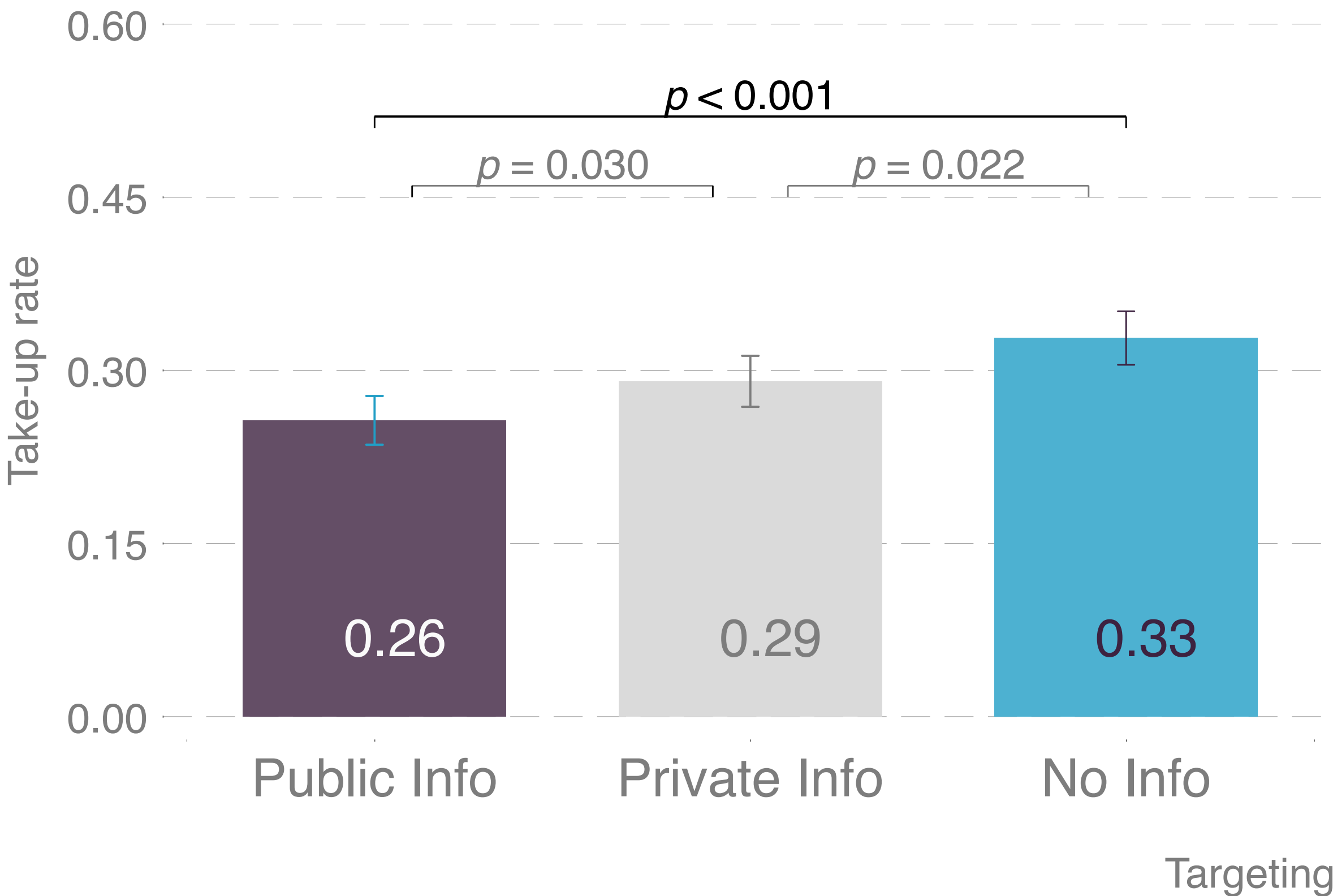
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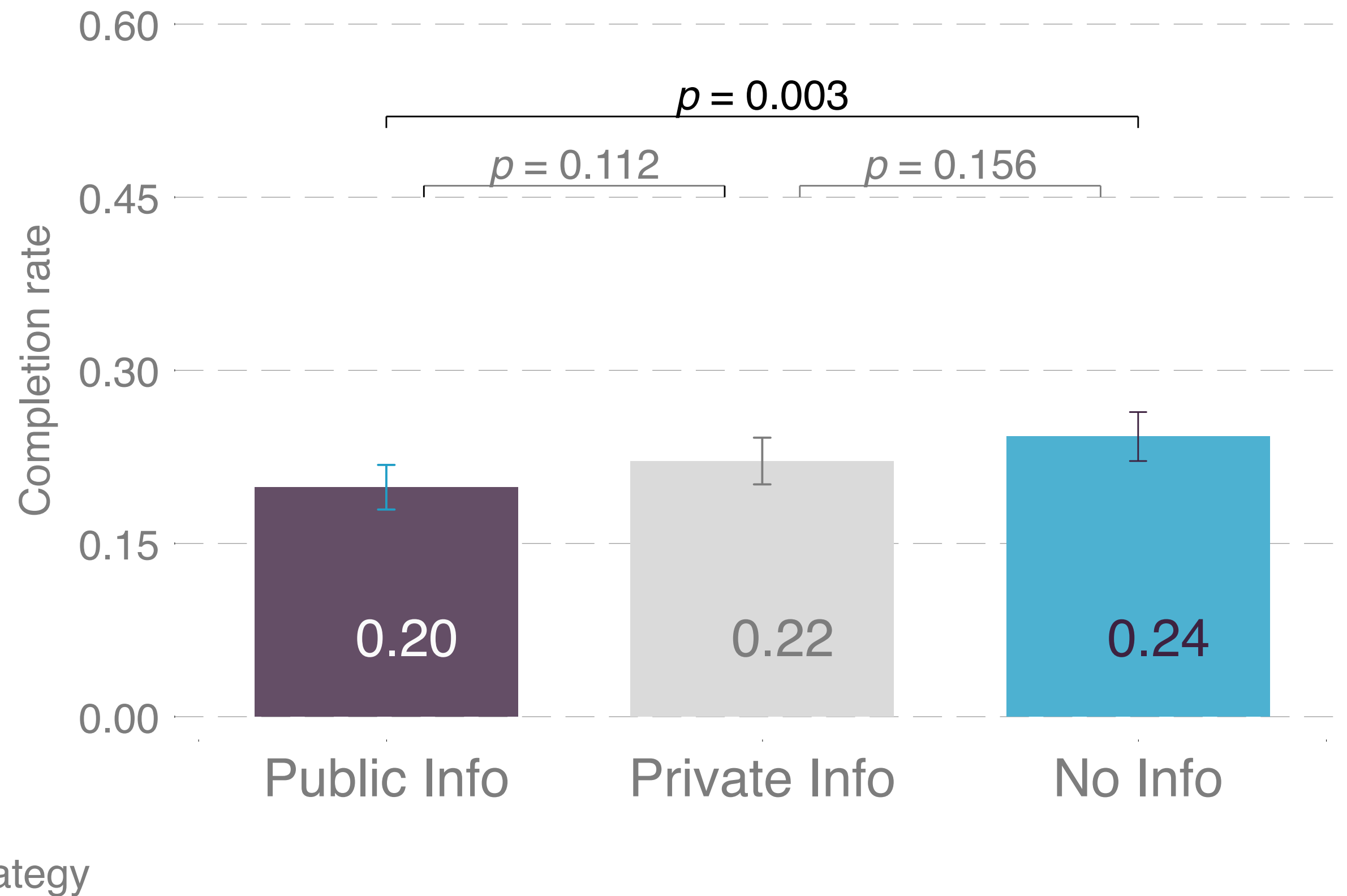


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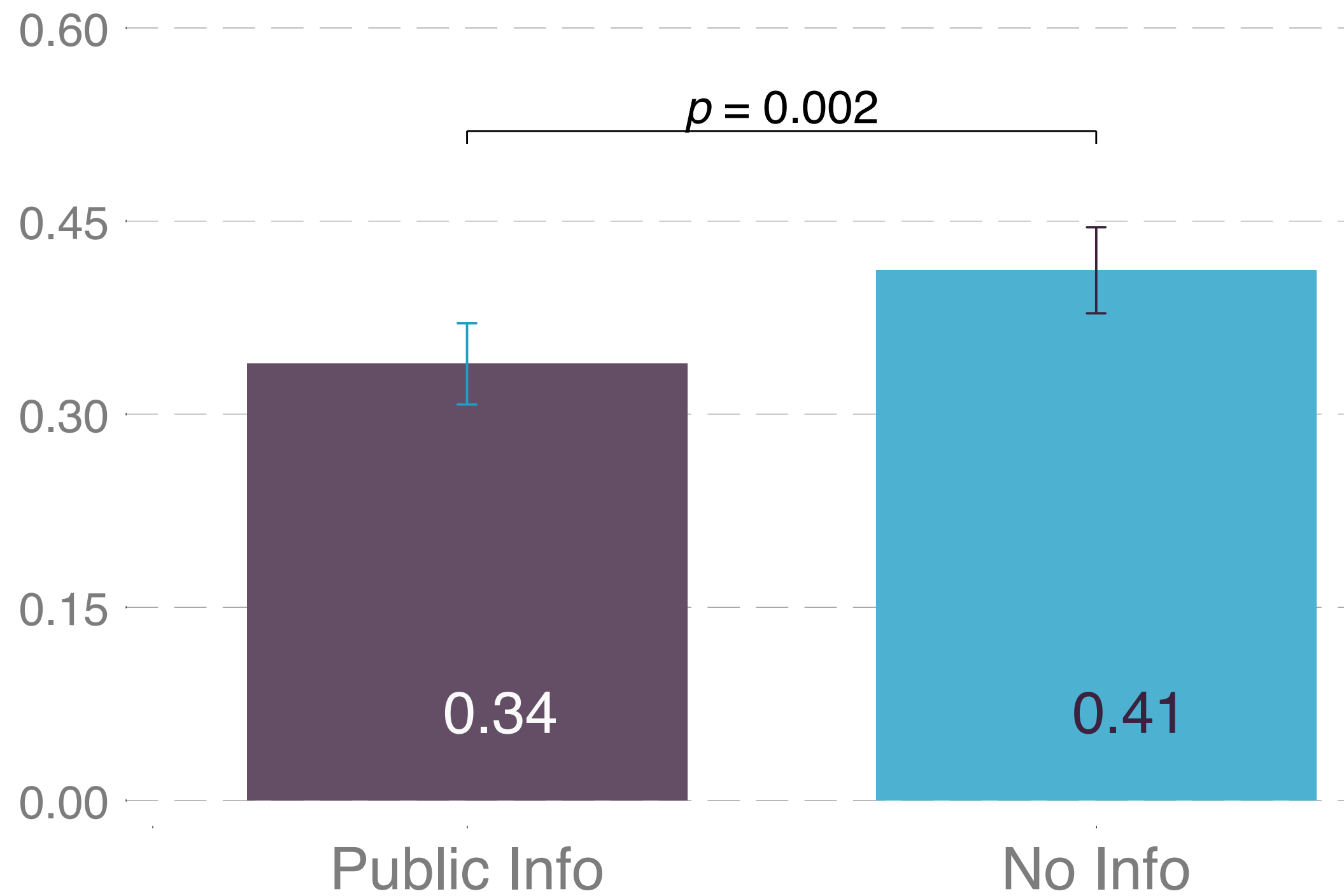


B. Completion

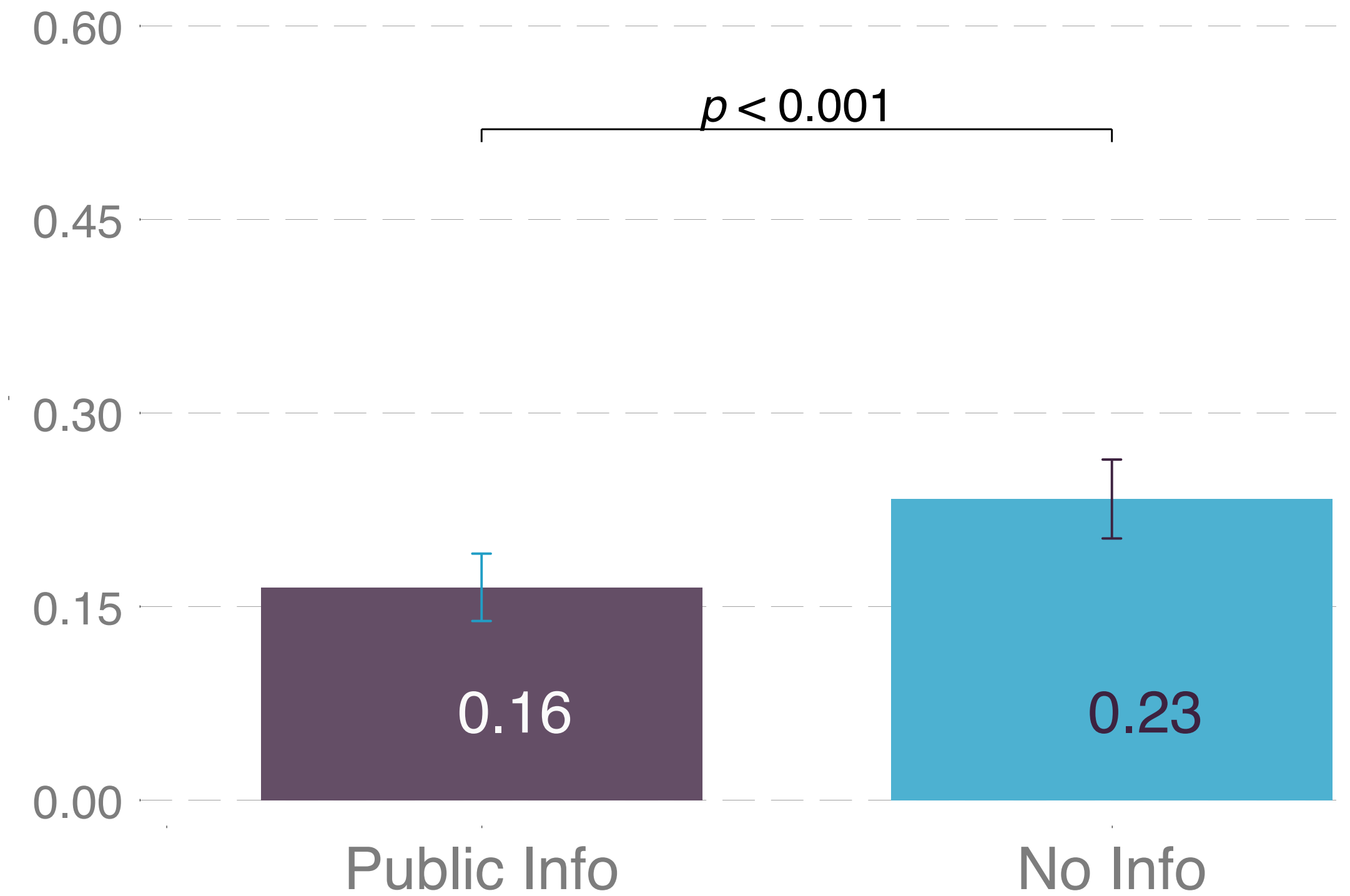


Negative effect across performance groups

High performers

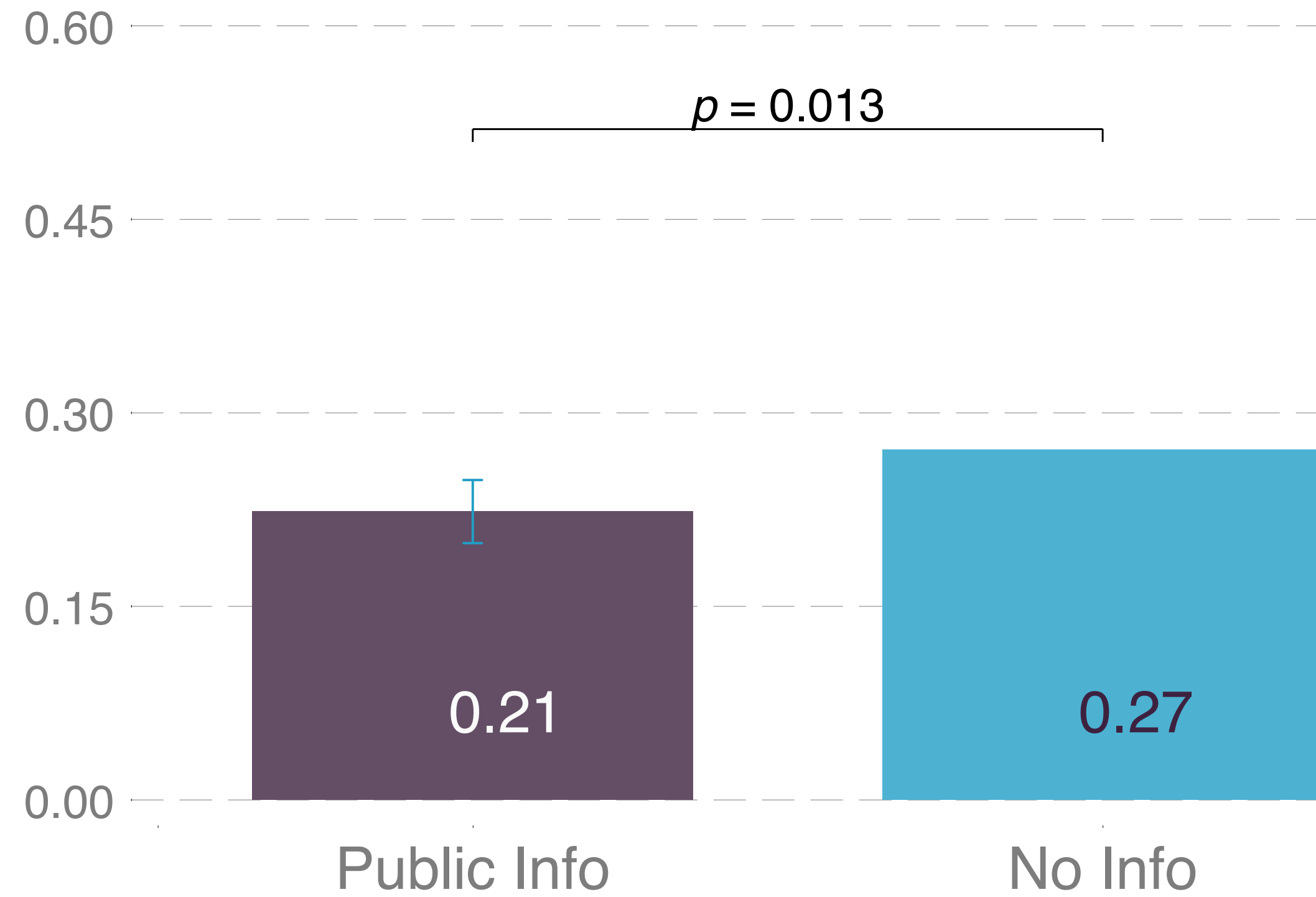


Low performers

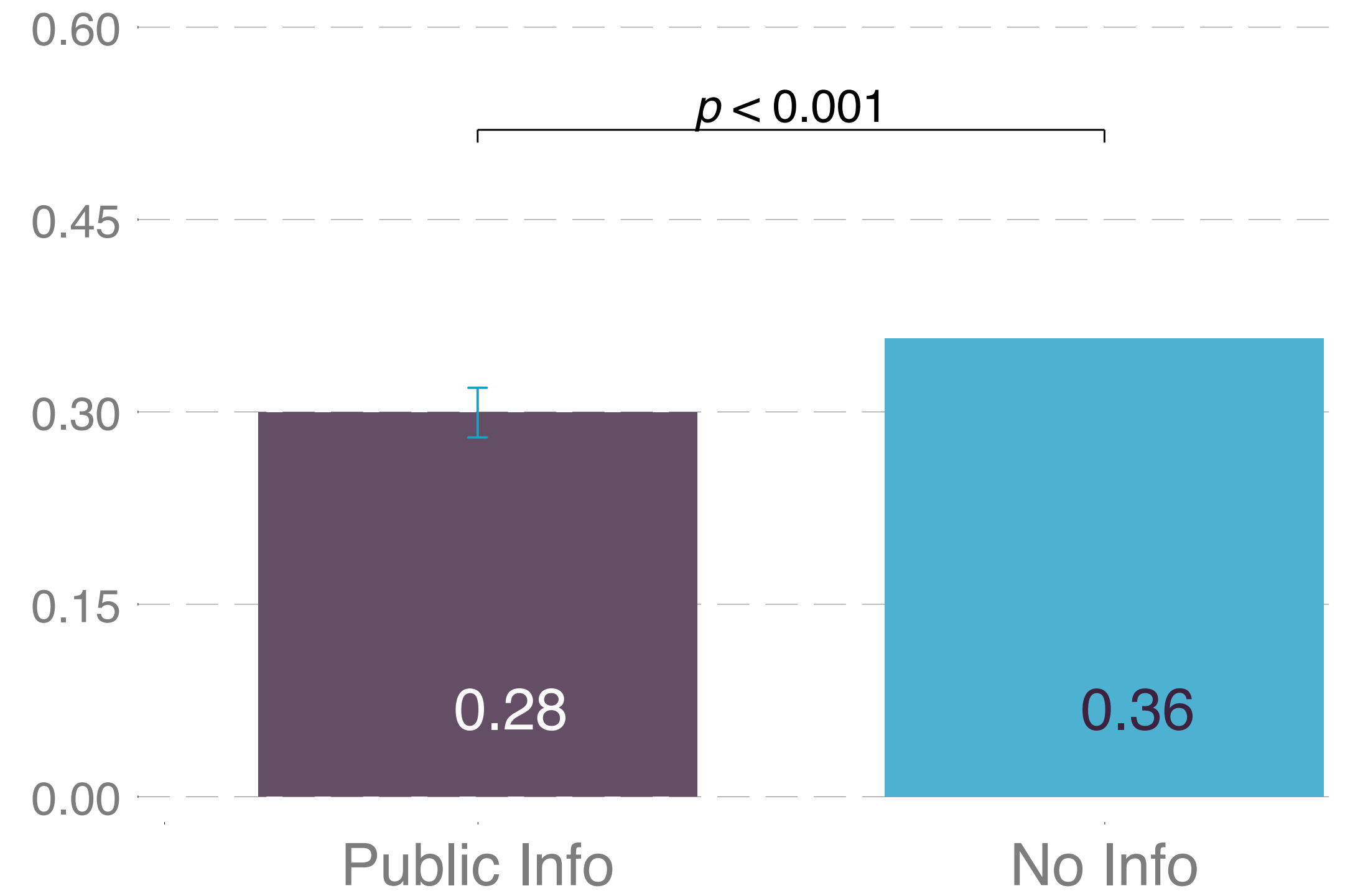


Negative effect across identity profiles: ID count

Single identity

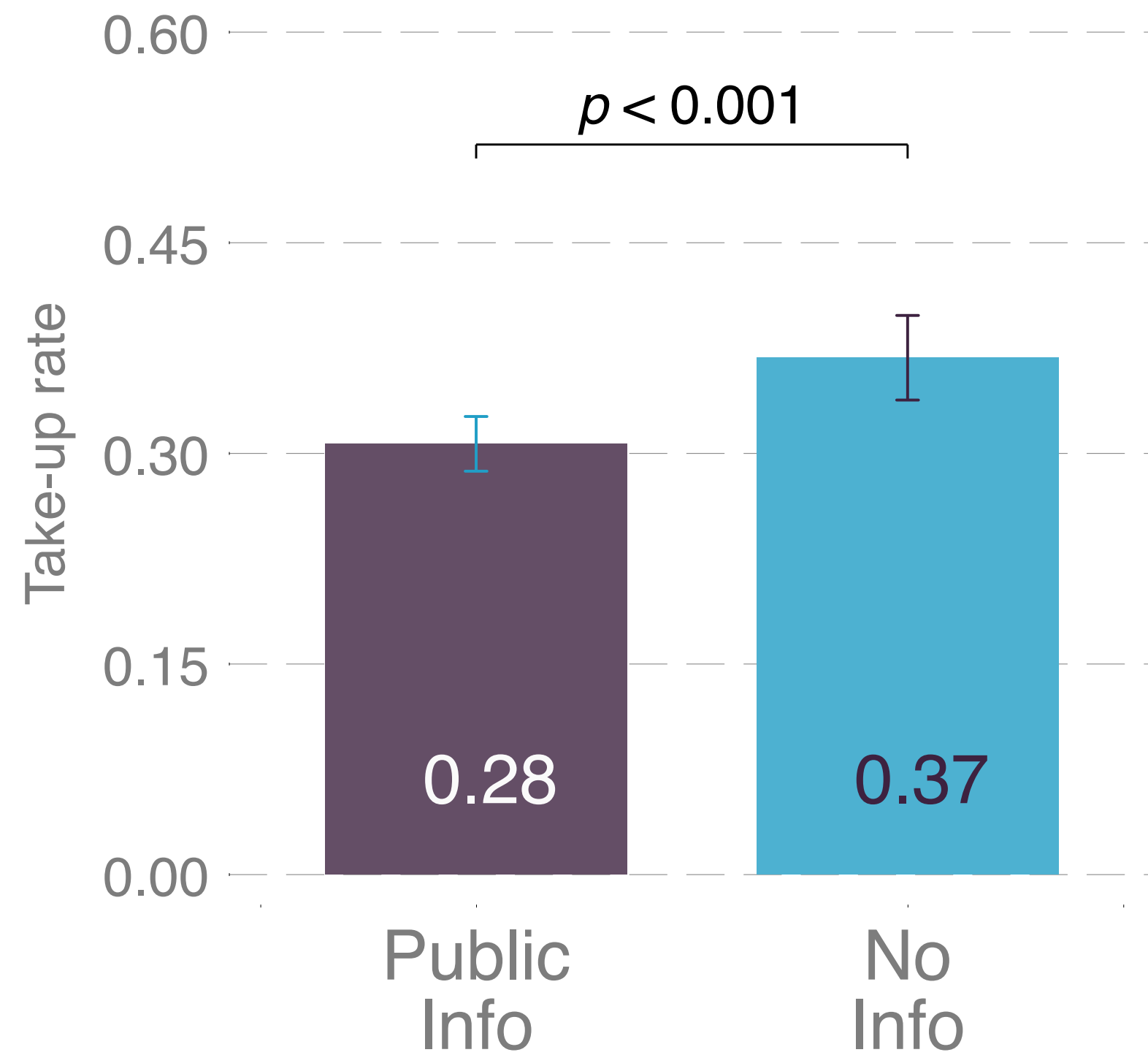


Multiple identities

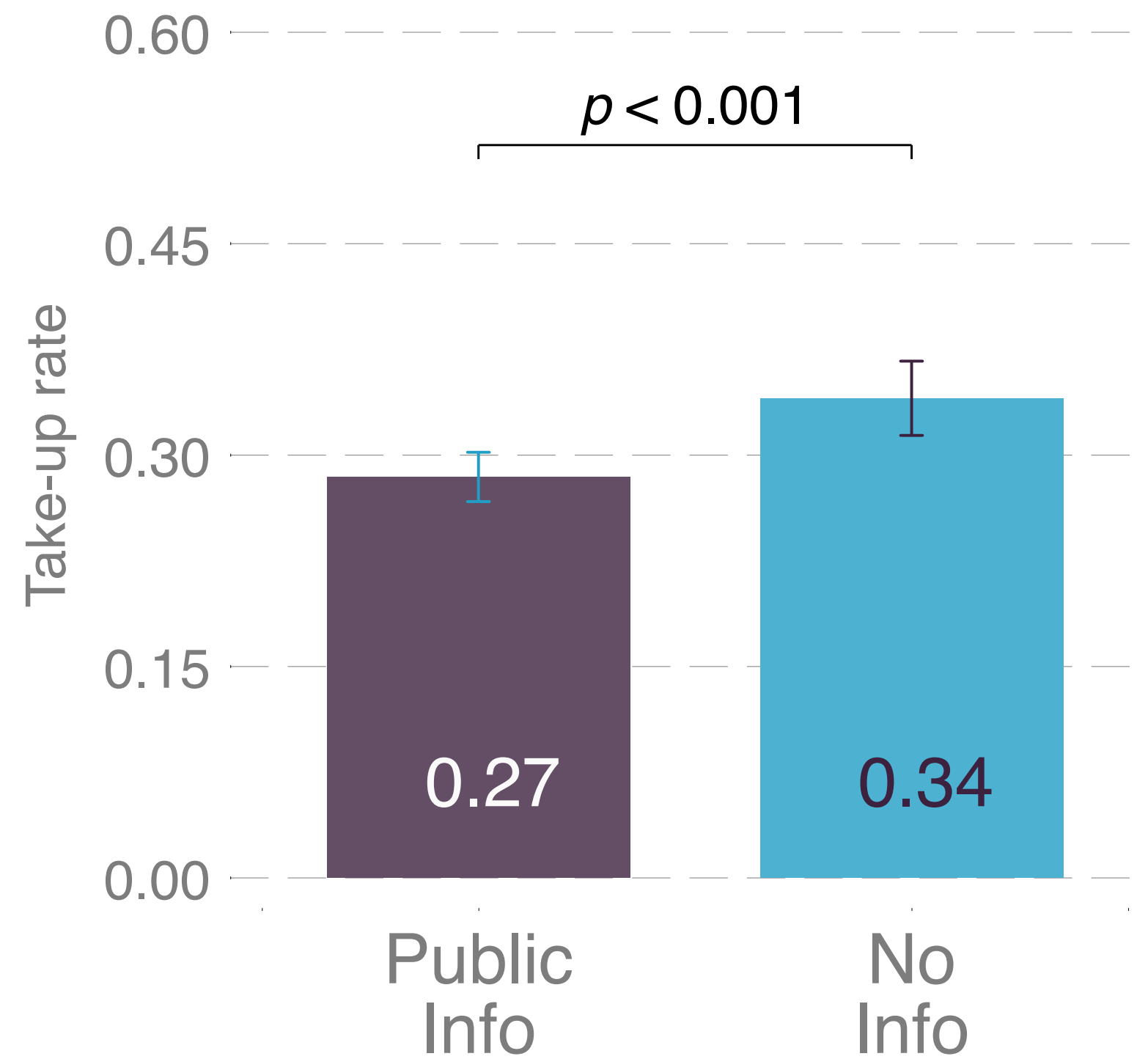


Negative effect across identity profiles: specific IDs

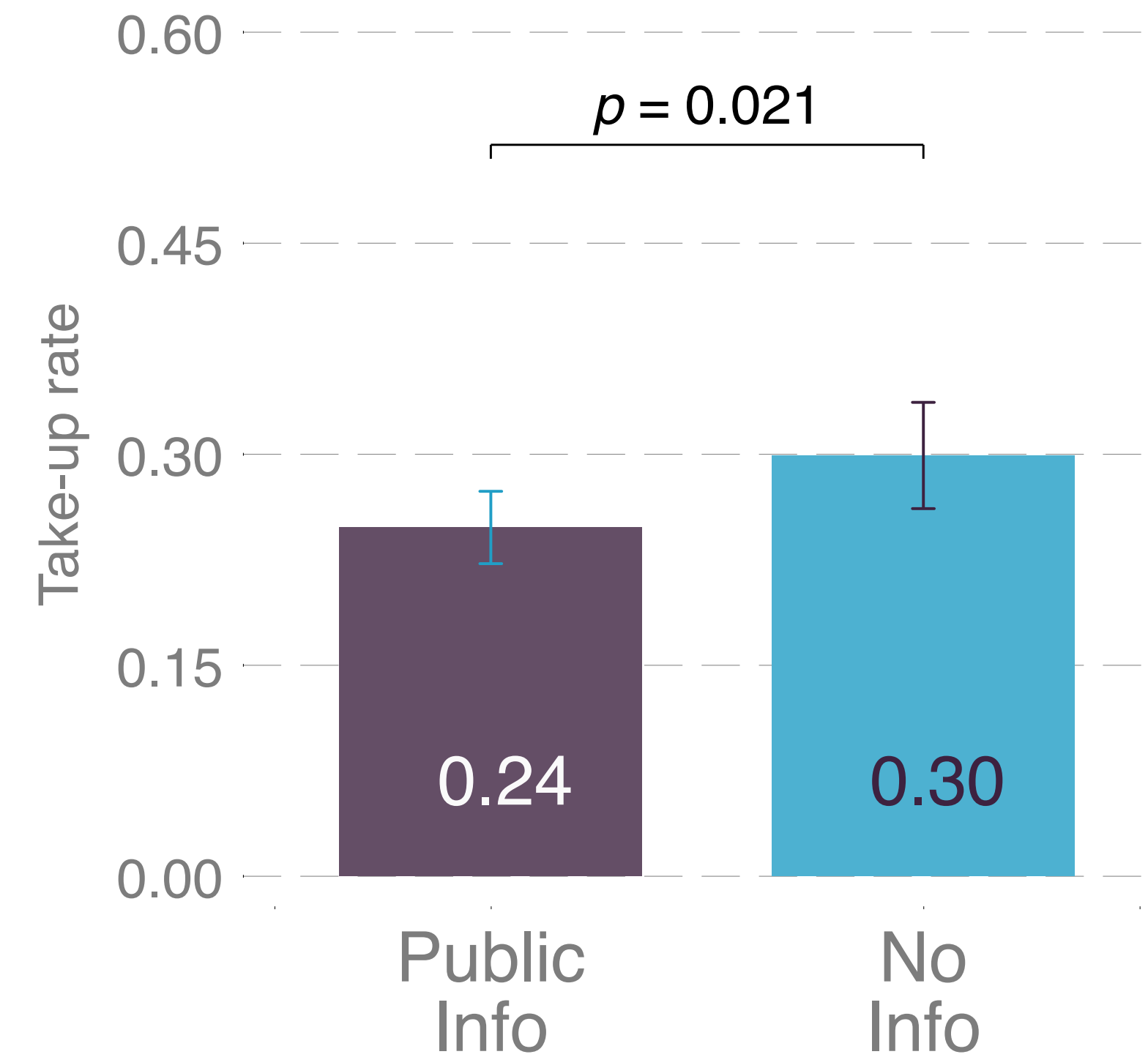
i. Female



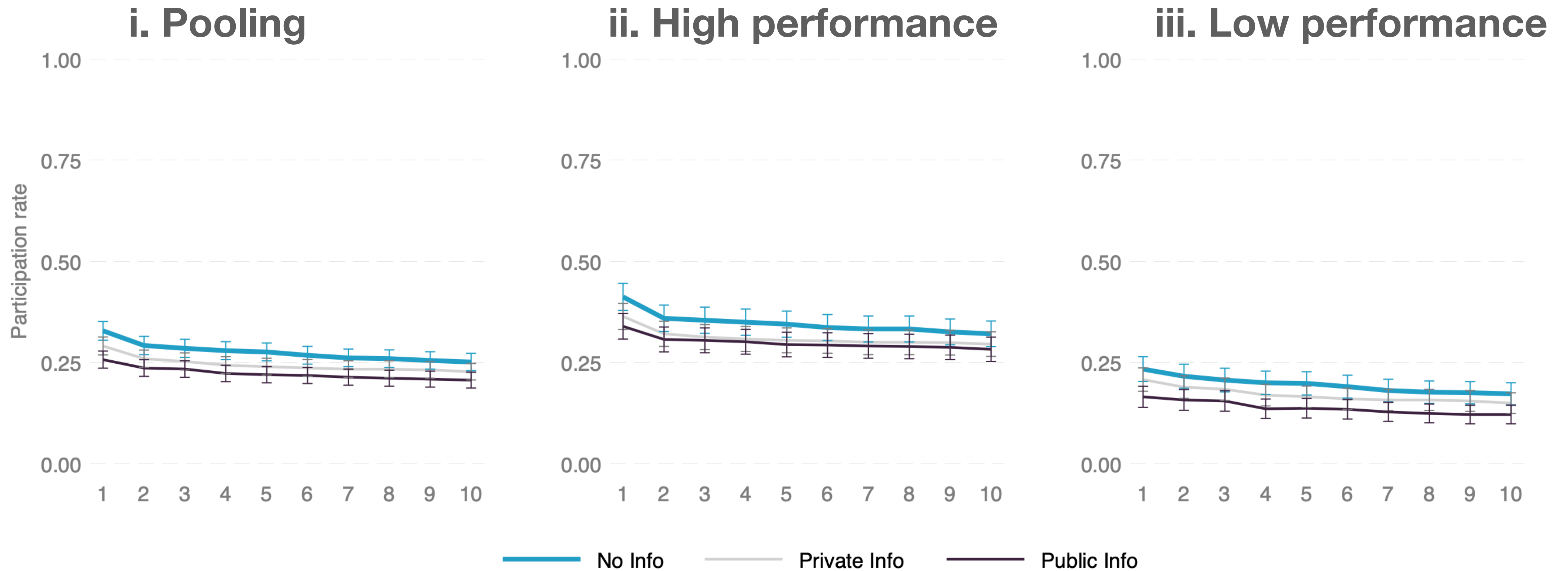
ii. Low-middle class



iii. Rural Origins

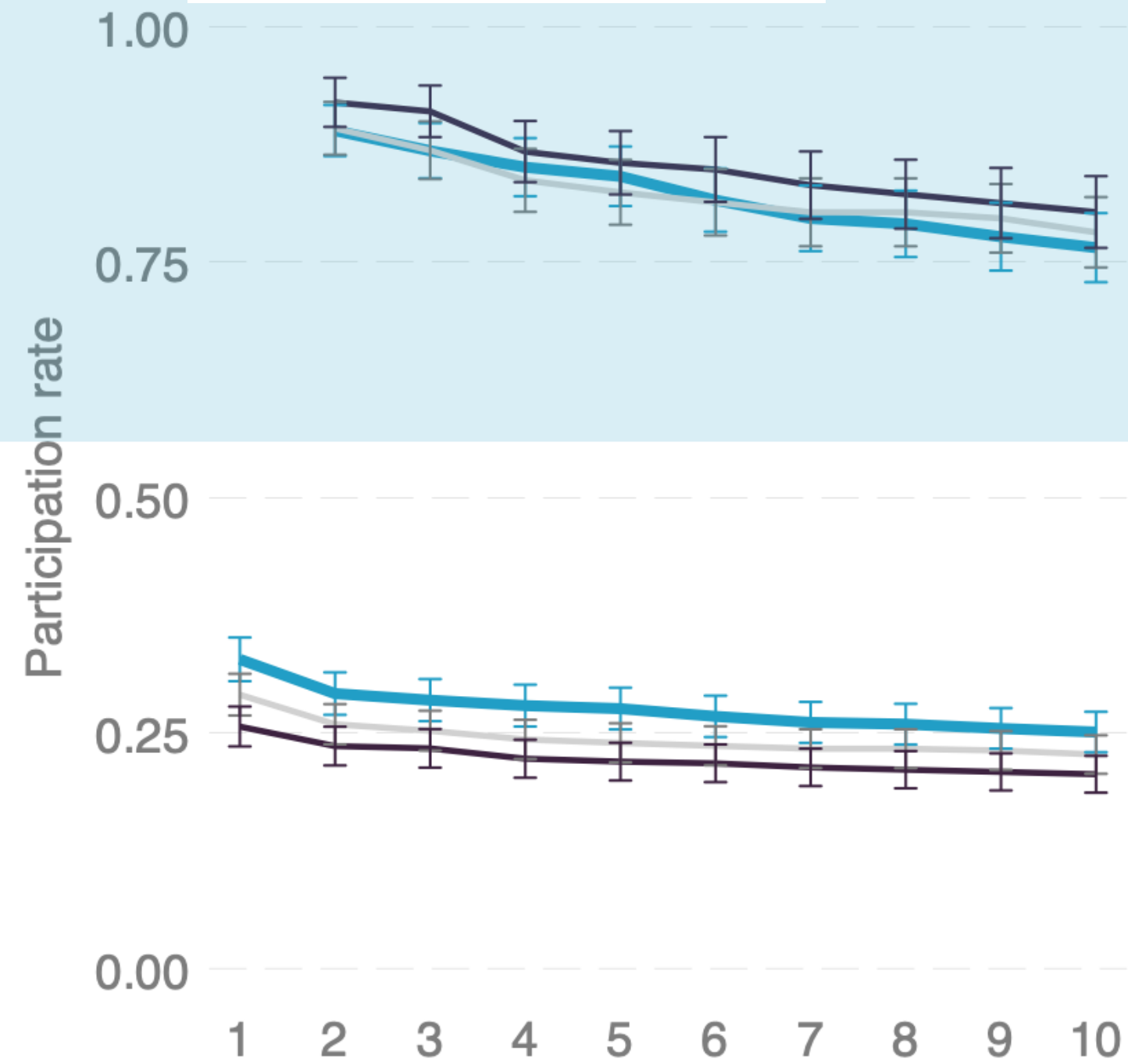


Program completion: unconditional steps

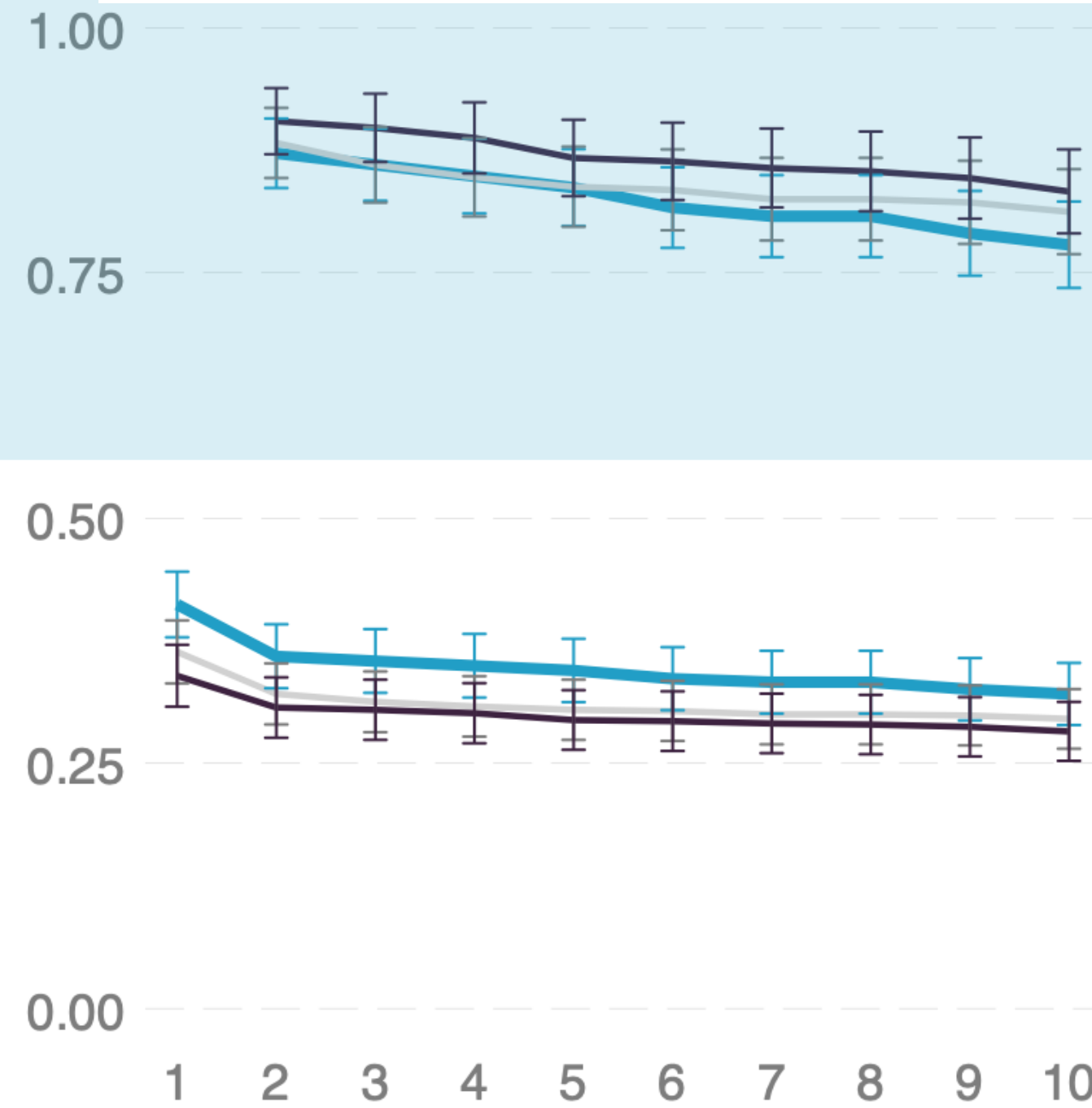


Program completion: conditional steps

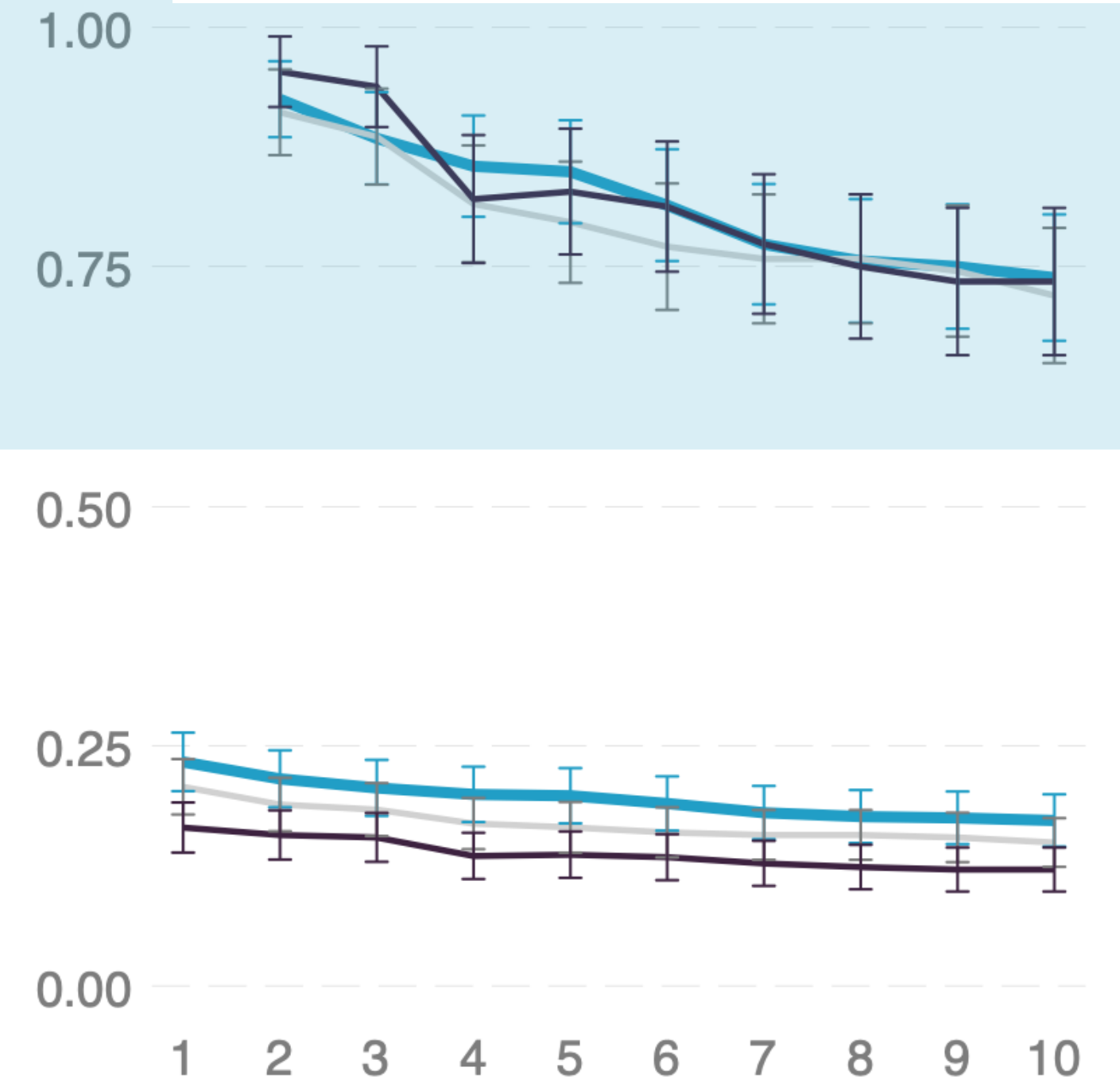
i. Pooling



ii. High performance



iii. Low performance



— No Info — Private Info — Public Info



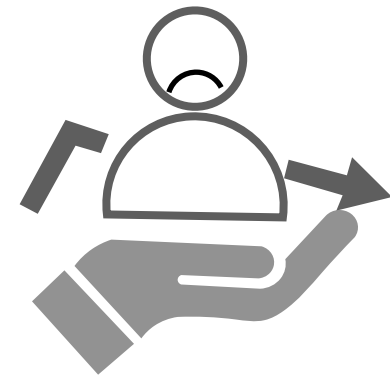
Potential mechanism

Potential mechanisms

Unintended consequences of public targeting

Potential mechanisms

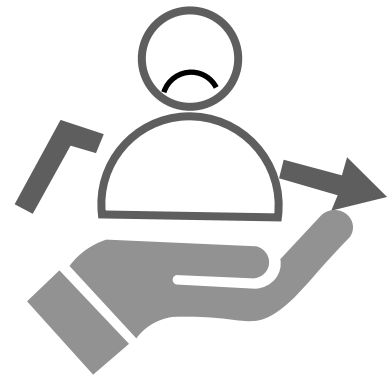
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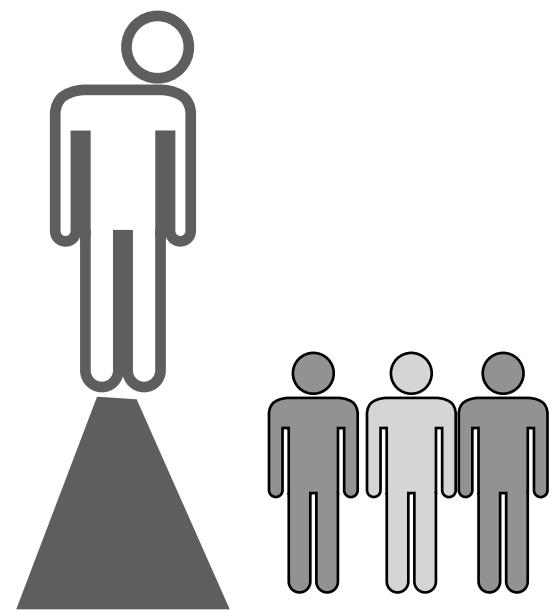
PROGRAM BENEFITS: Knowing the program is for certain social groups could create the belief that it is of low quality or benefit [Cronin et al., 2024; Roth et al., 2024]

Potential mechanisms

Unintended consequences of public targeting



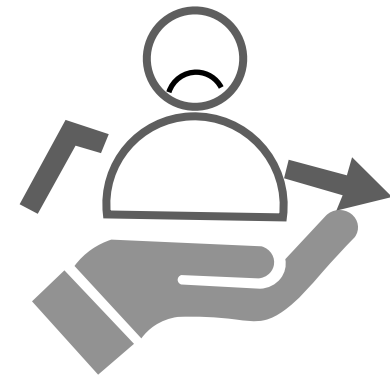
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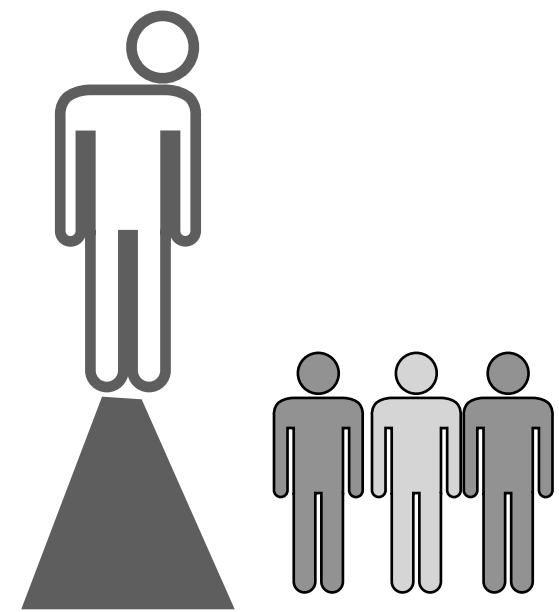
RETALIATION ENDORSER: Requesting an endorsement that reveals identity-based selection could trigger fear of retaliation, judgement or discrimination from the faculty endorser

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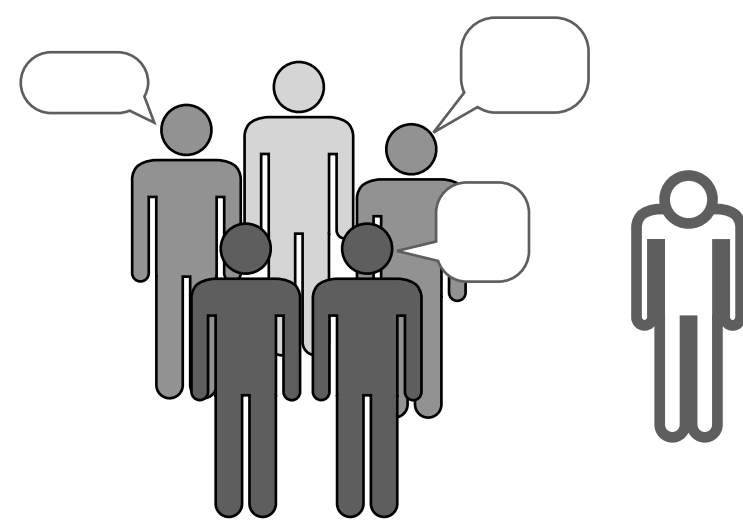


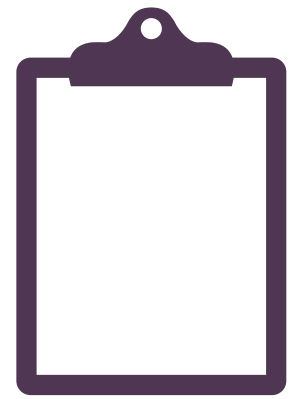
IMAGE CONCERNS: Being targeted because of group identities could trigger perceptions of pity (symbolic inclusion), attacks (stereotype threat) or judgement from others (discrimination) [Bursztyn & Jensen, 2017; Moffit, 1983]

3 Lab-in-the-field experiments

Testing effects of Info on multiple outcome measures (n=1113)

3 Lab-in-the-field experiments

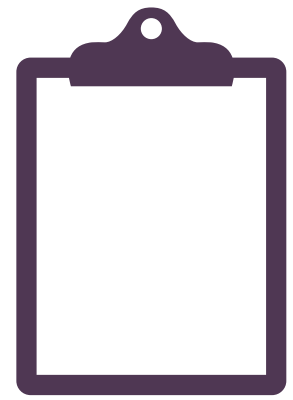
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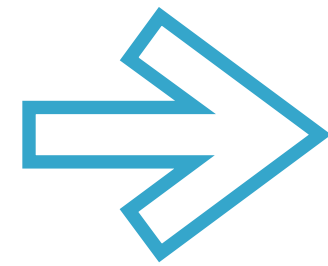
Online exp.

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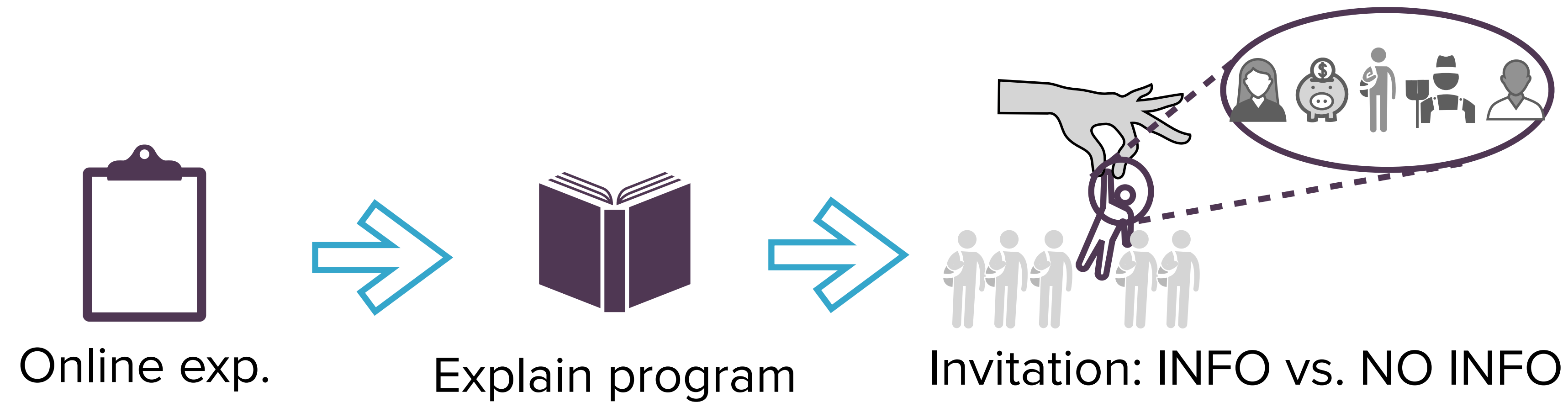
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Explain program

3 Lab-in-the-field experiments

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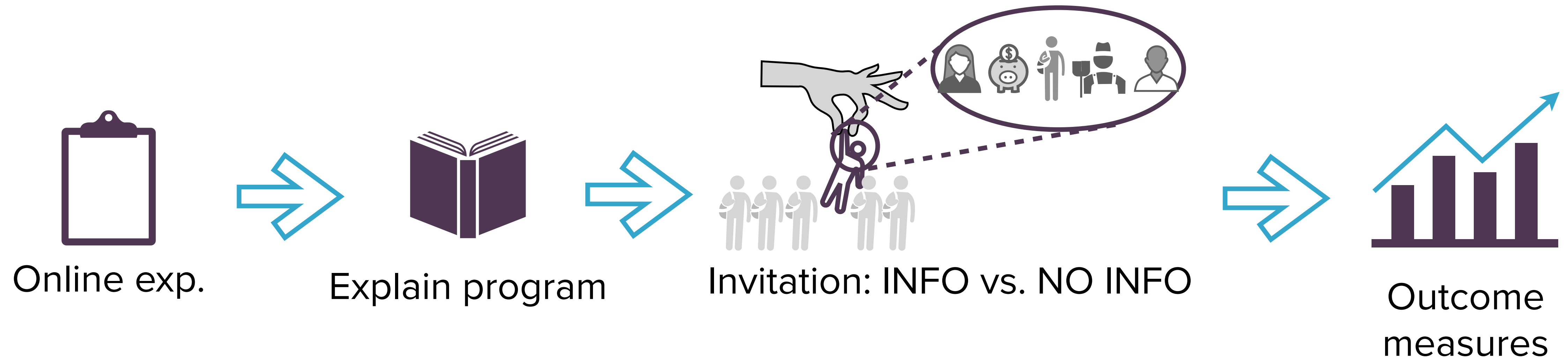
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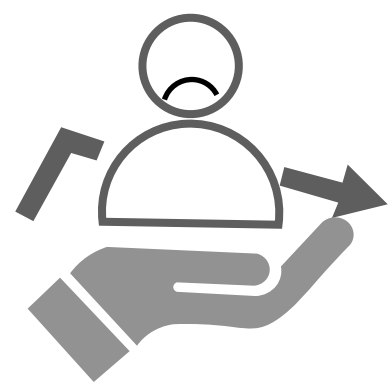


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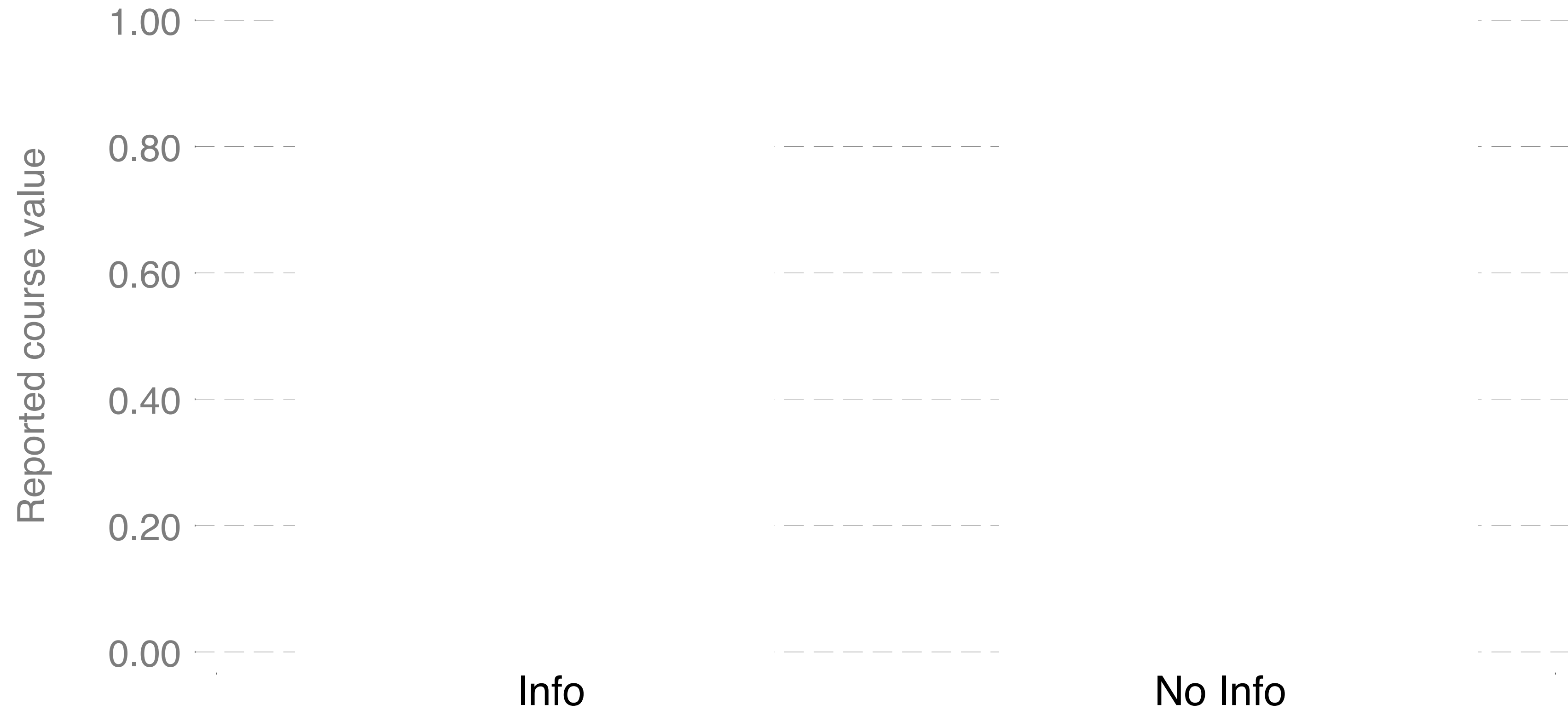


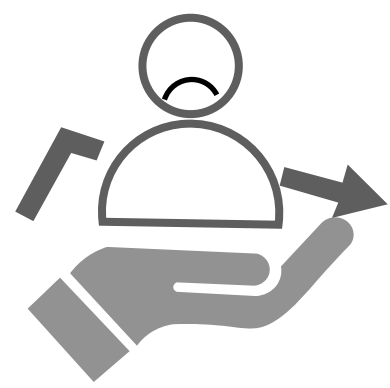
- 5 minutes
- Fixed pay 15 USD to 10 random participants



Anticipated program benefit (n=401)

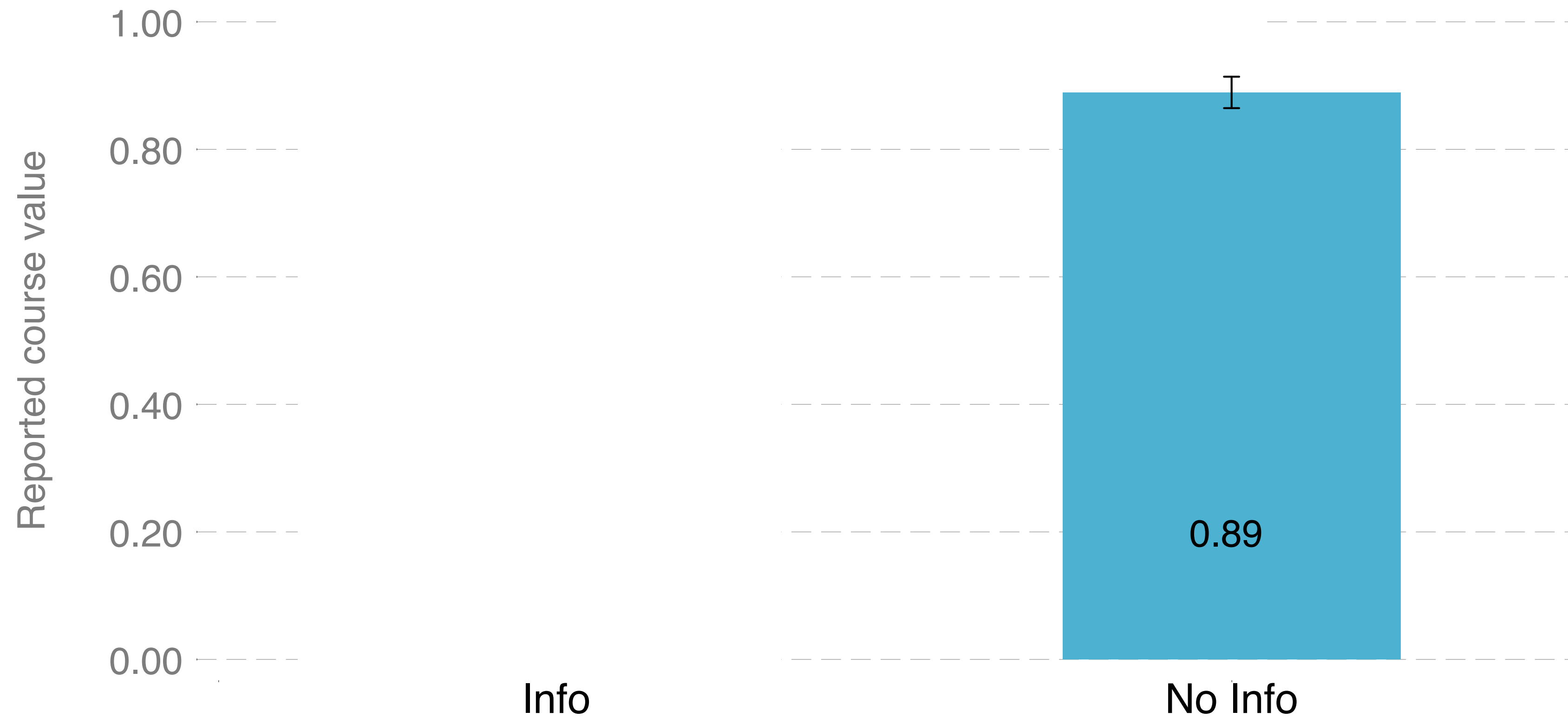
How much value, utility or benefit would the program have for you?

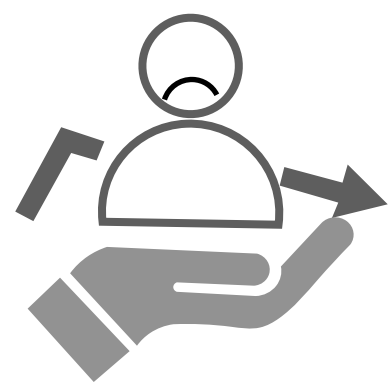




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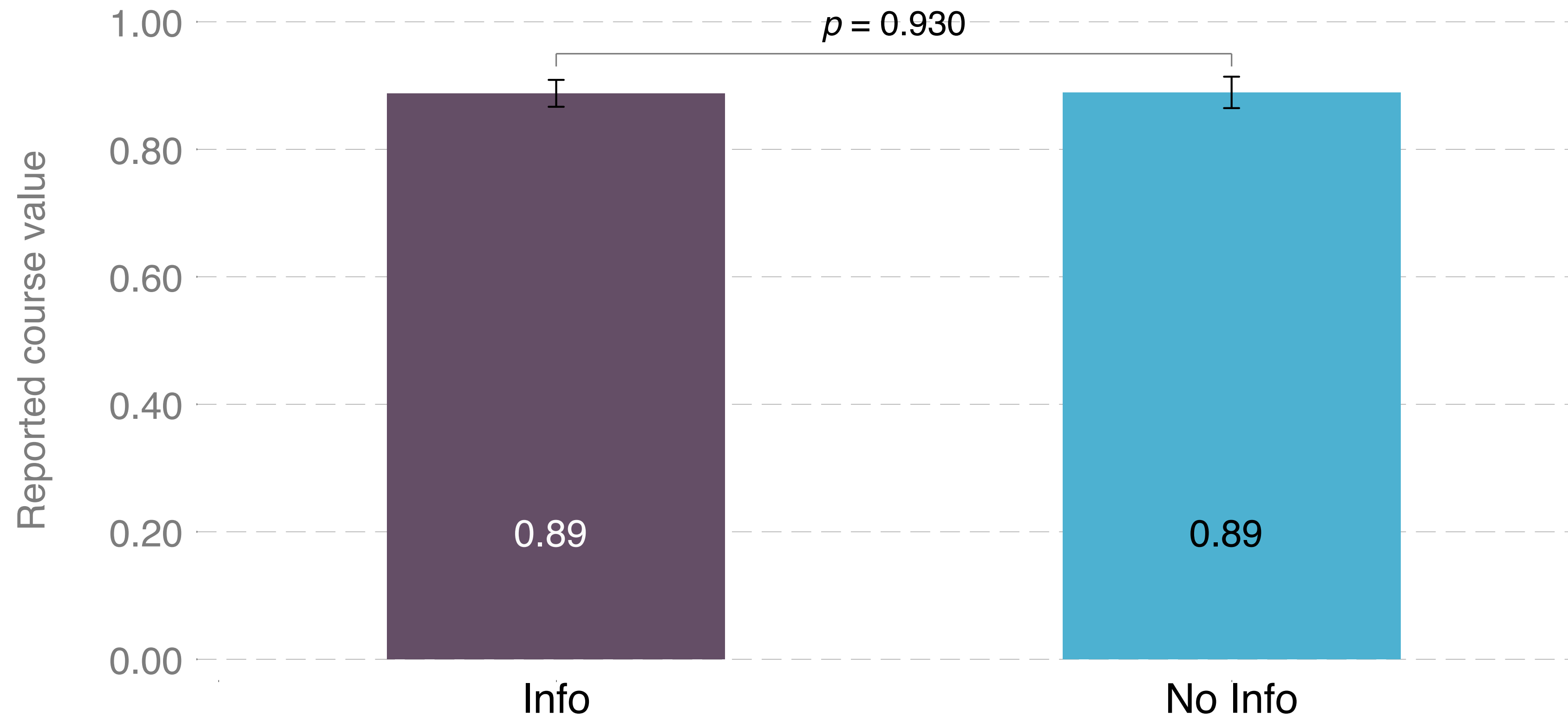
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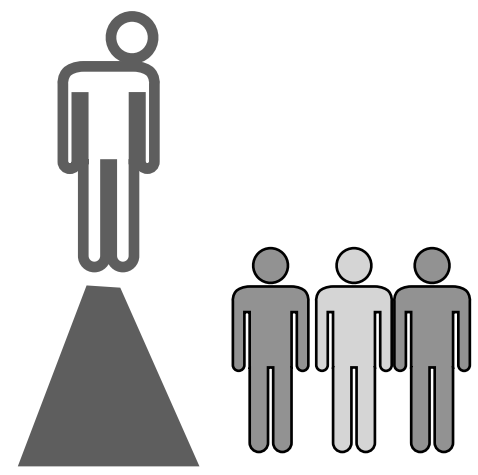


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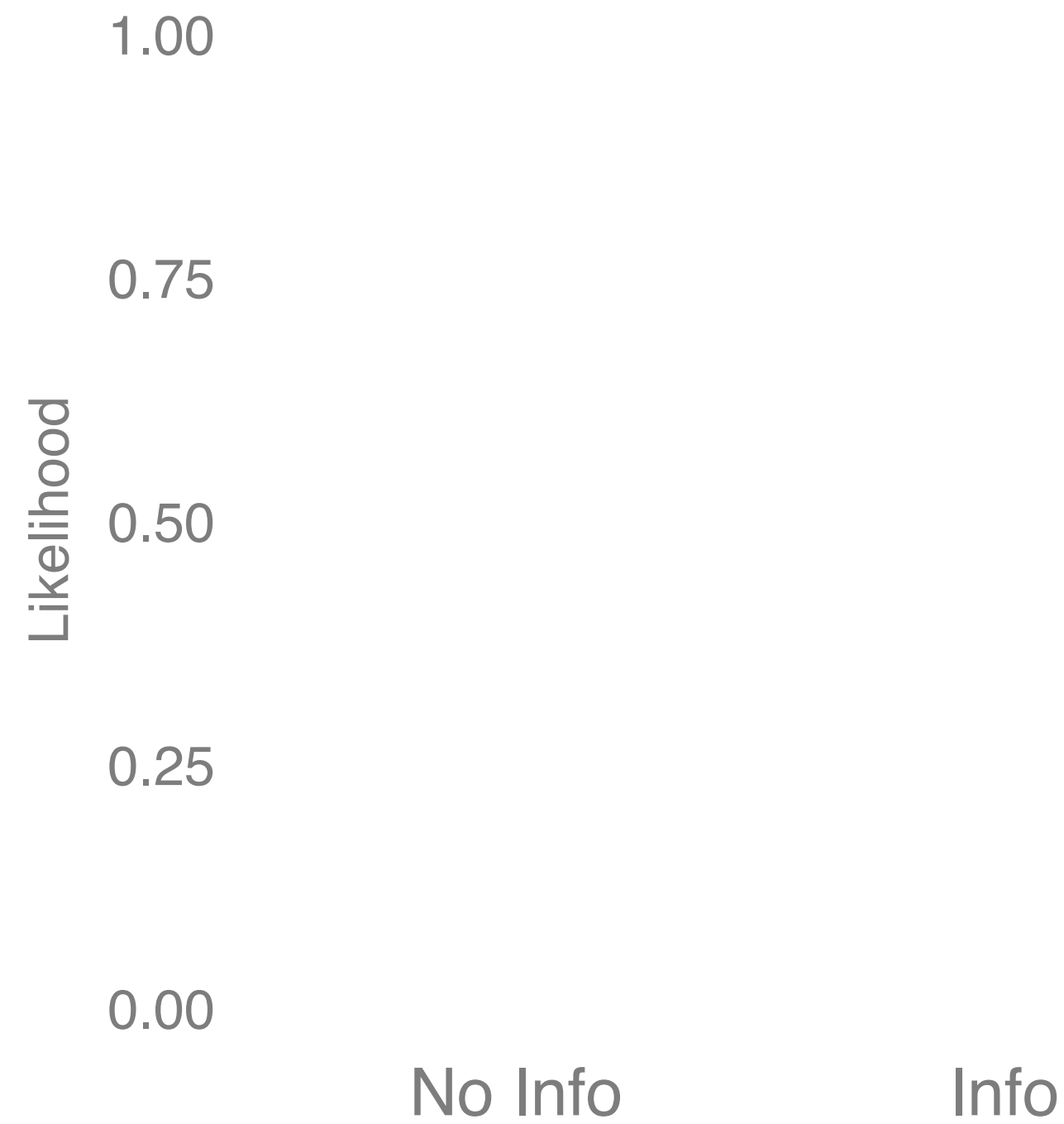


No effect of information on course valuation

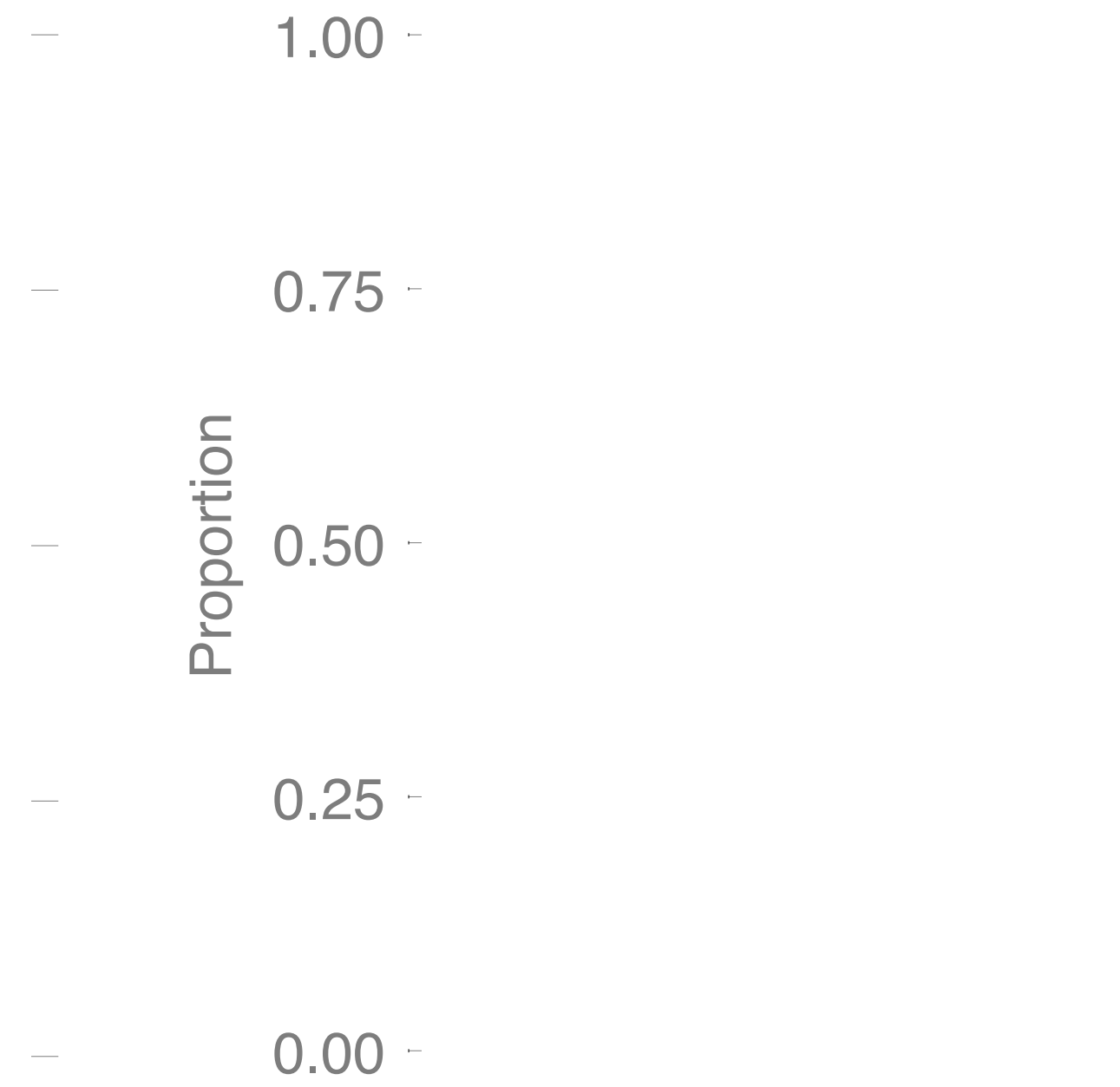


Retaliation from endorser (n=330)

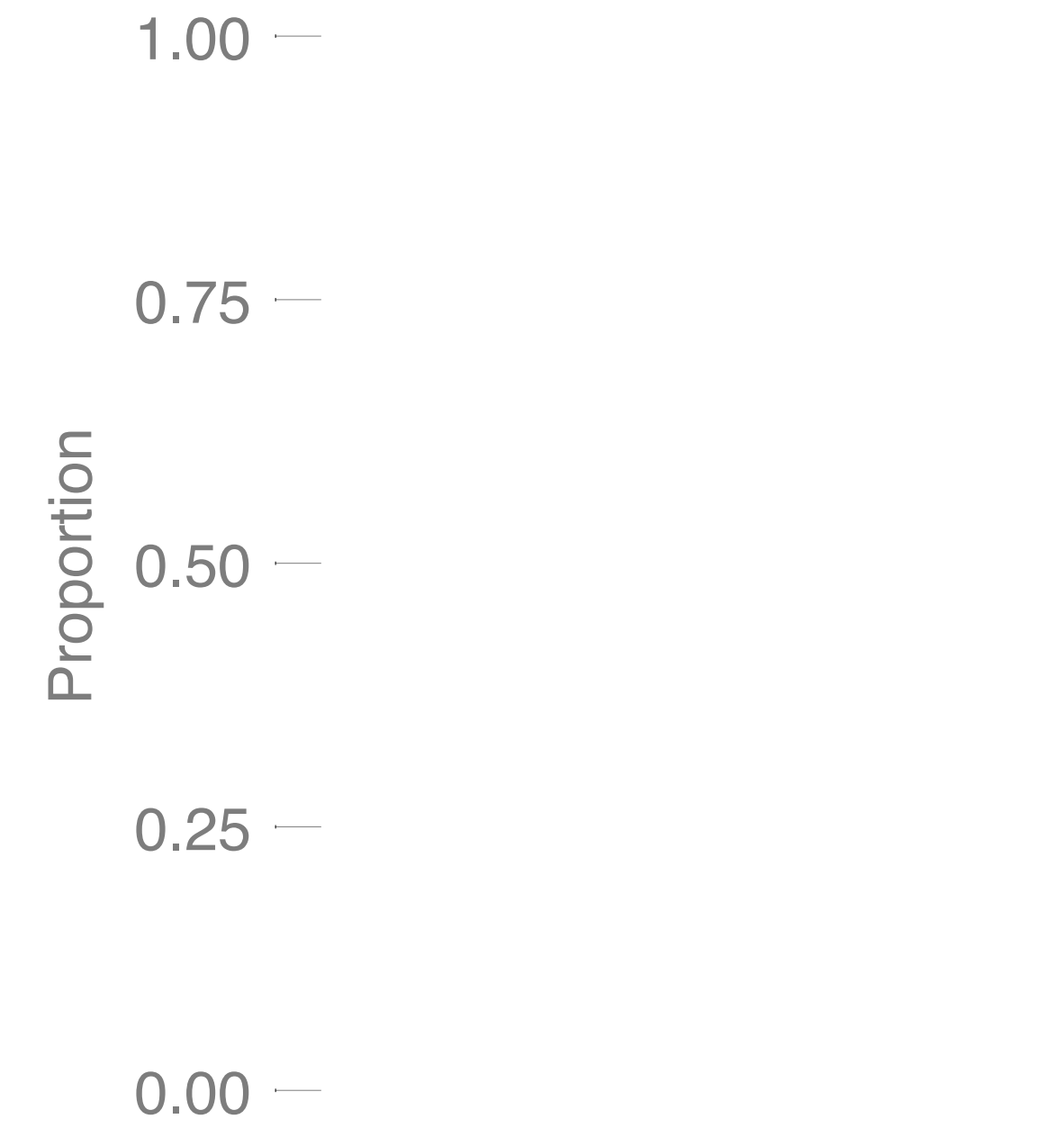
A. Endorsement

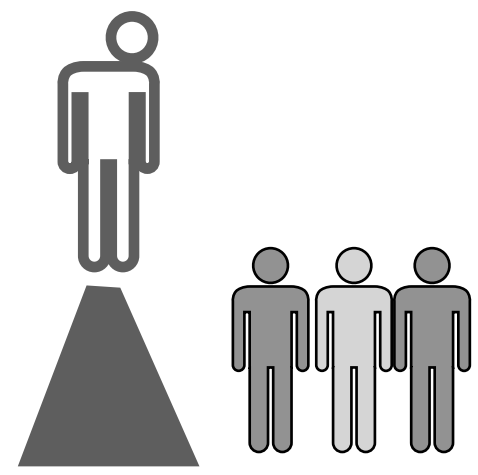


B. Judgement



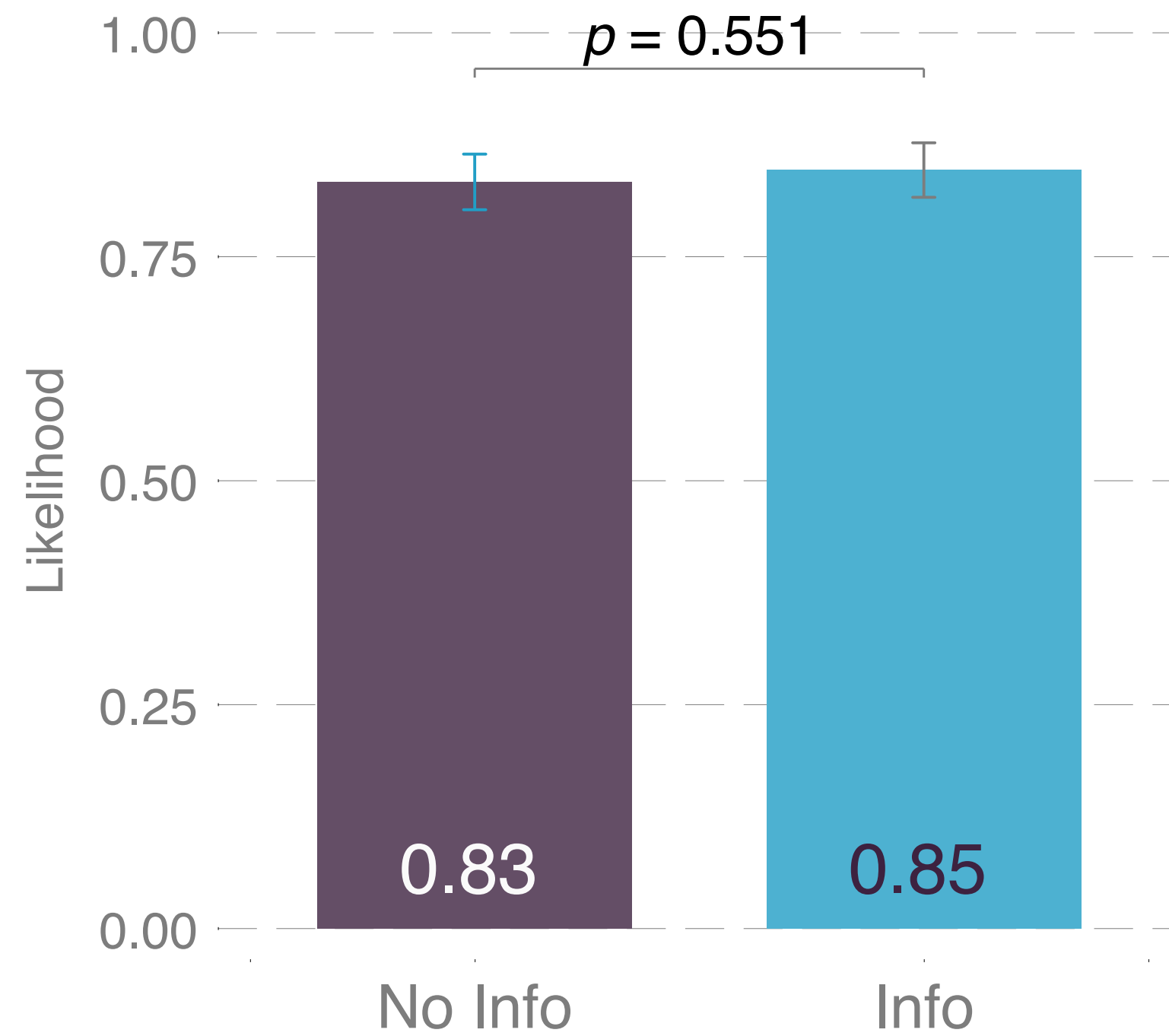
C. Retaliation





Retaliation from endorser (n=330)

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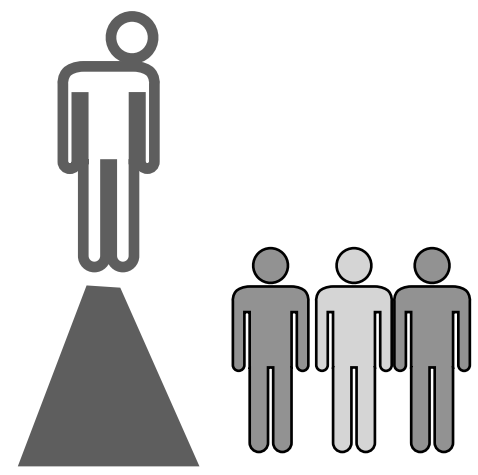


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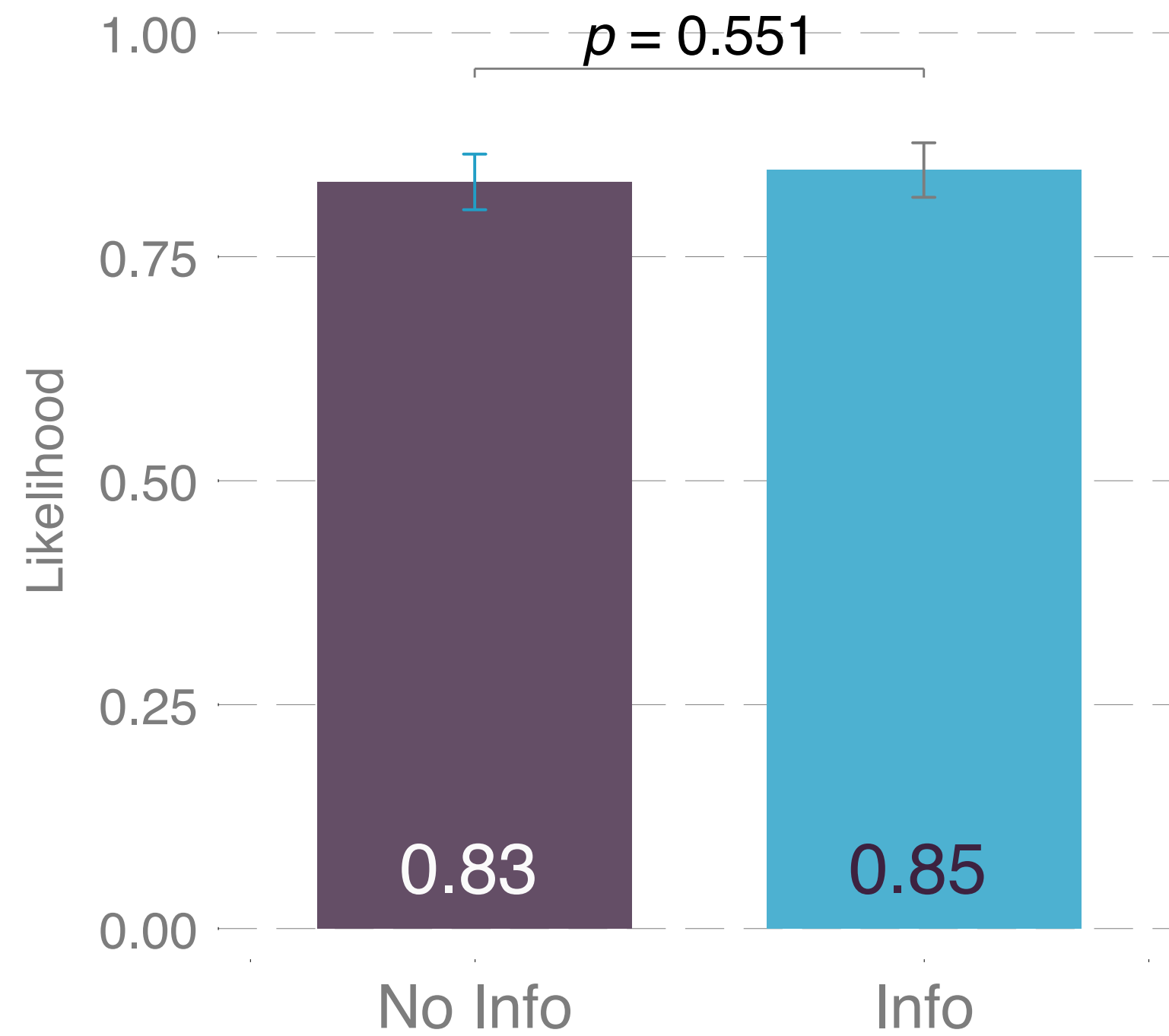
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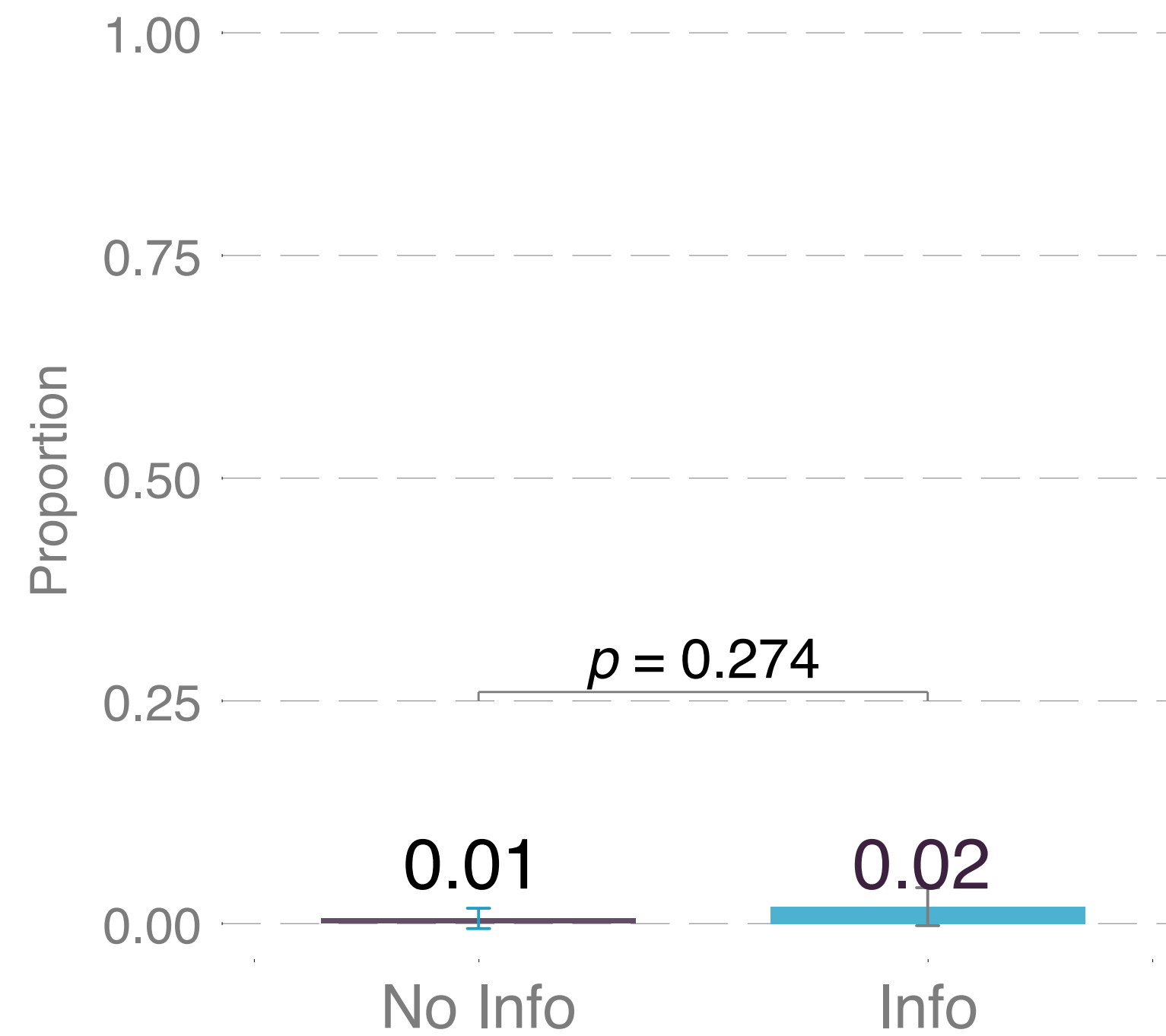


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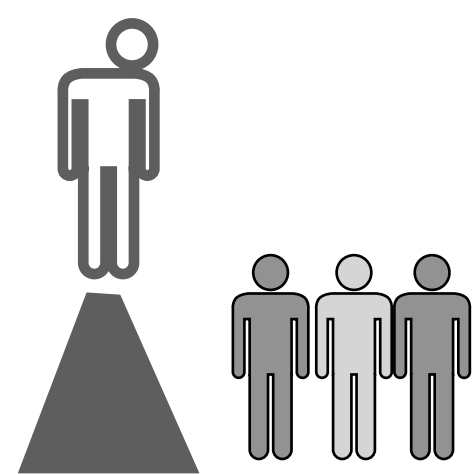


B. Judgement



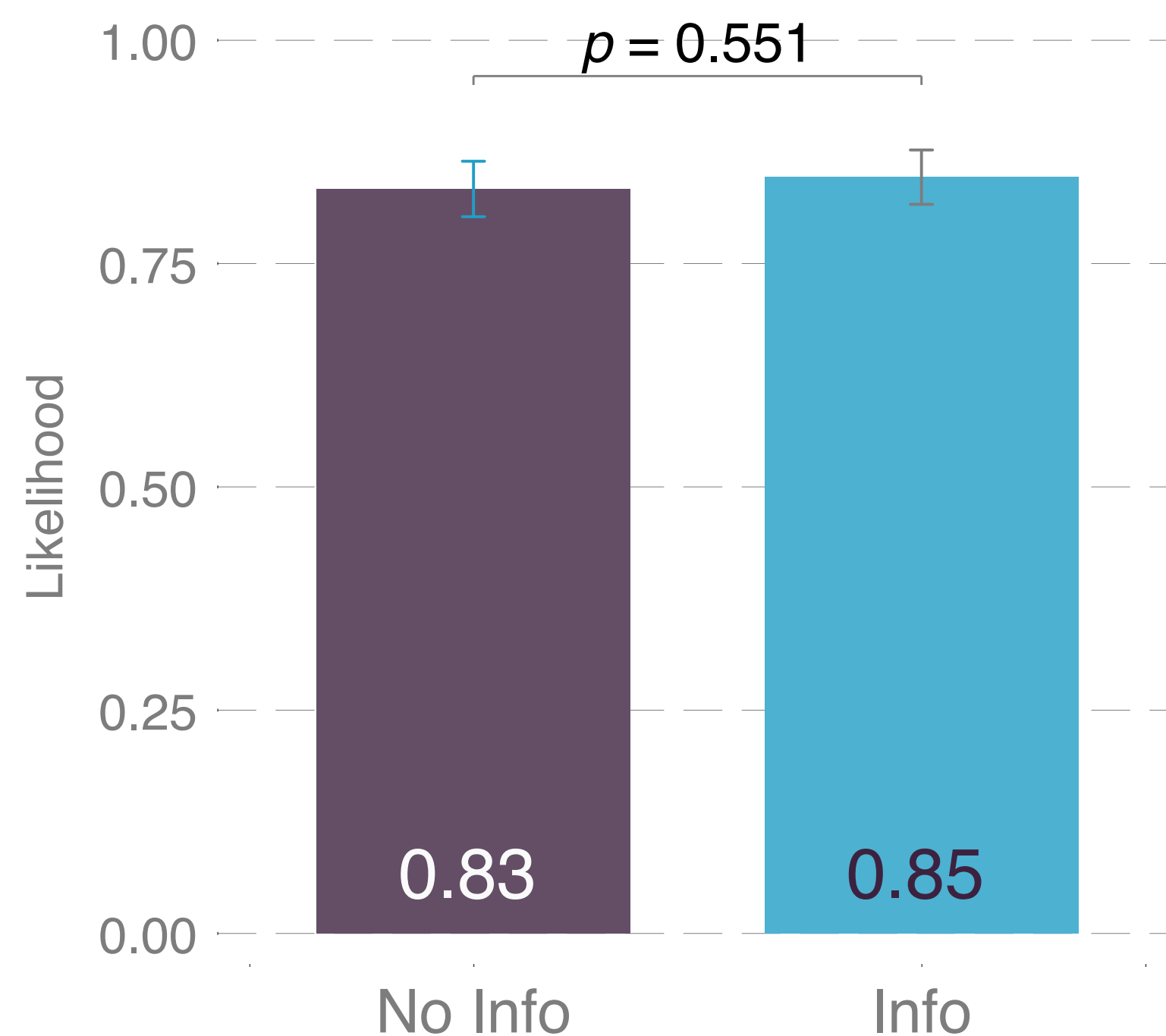
C. Retaliation



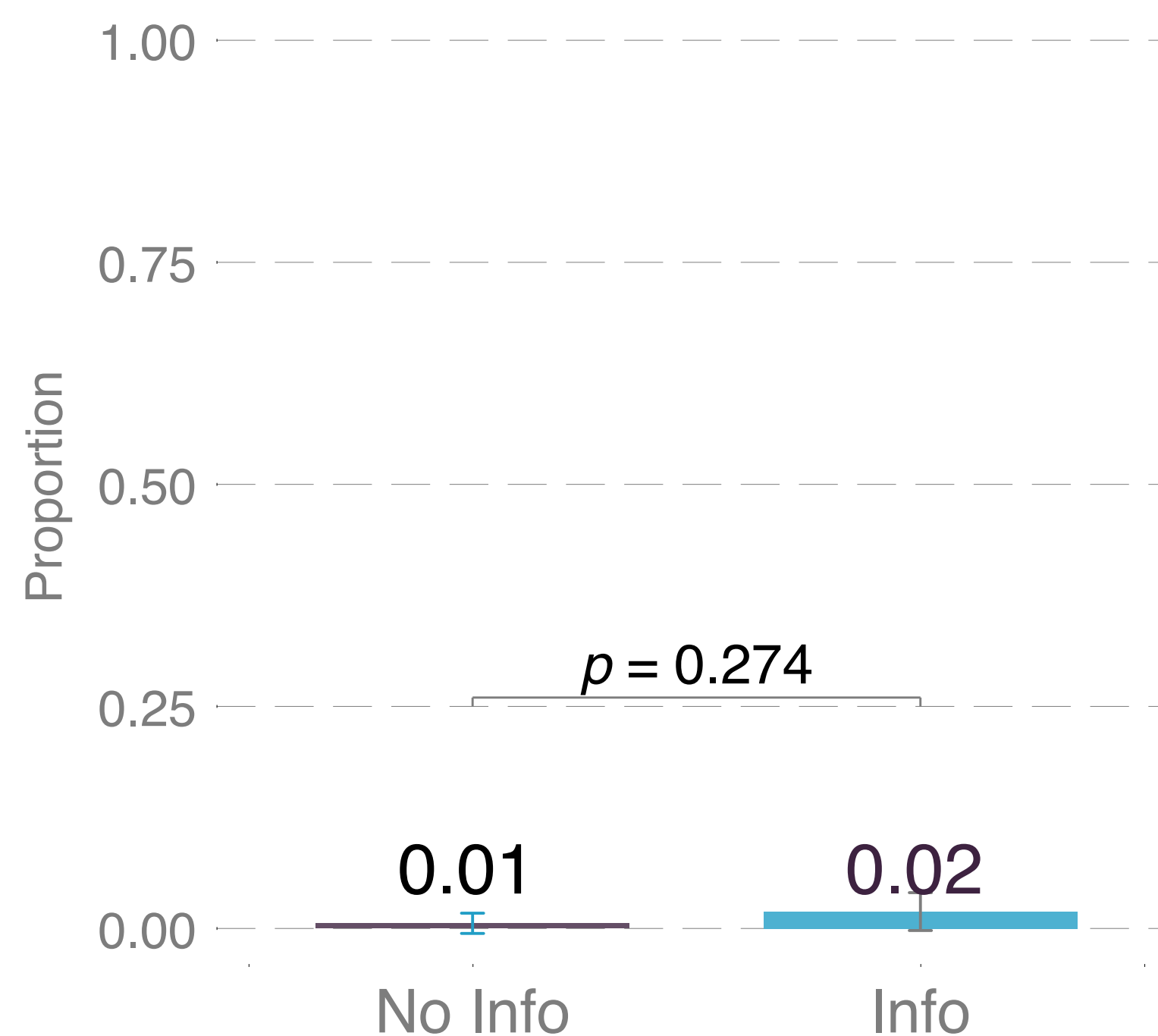


Retaliation from endorser (n=330)

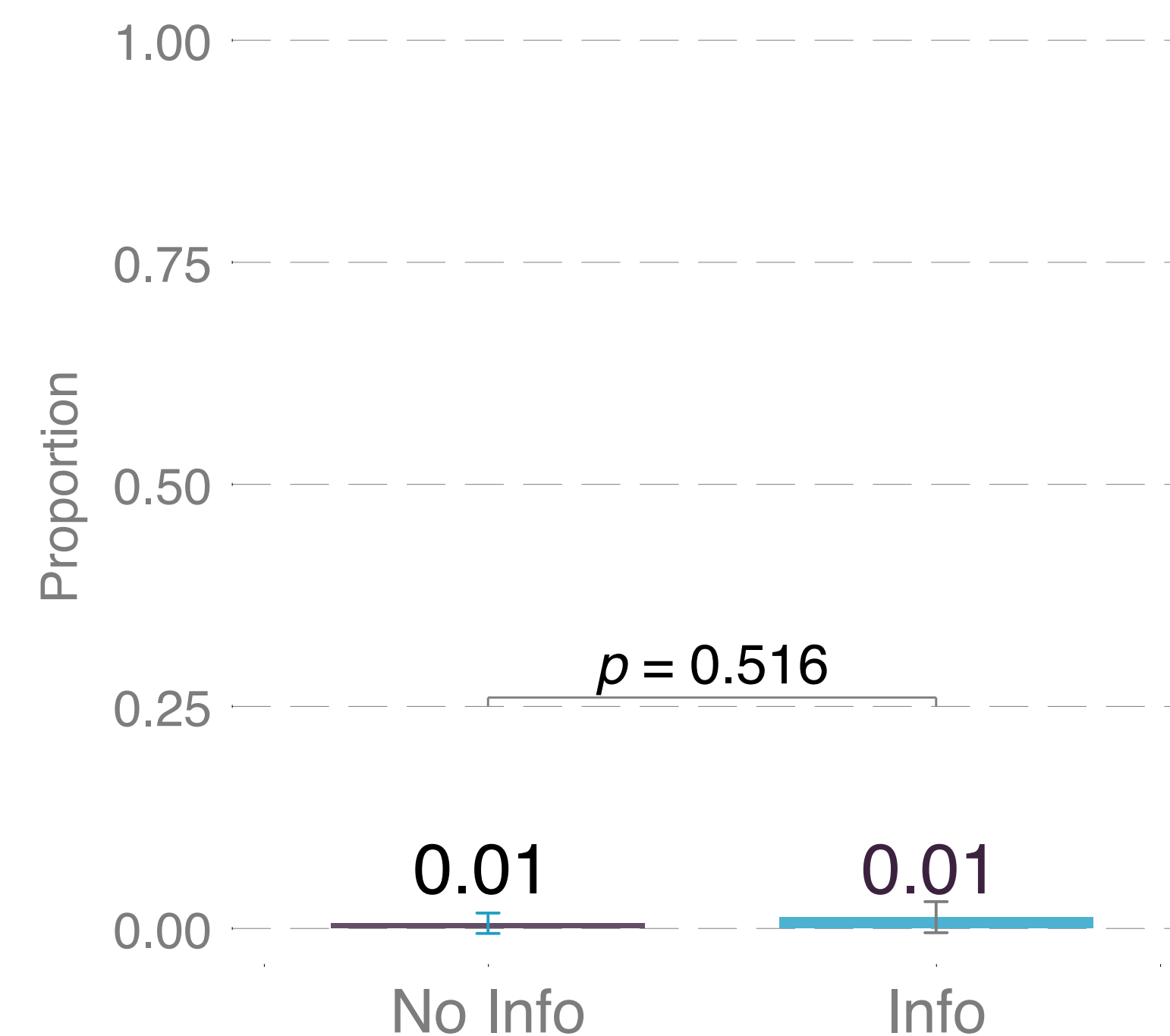
A. Endorsement



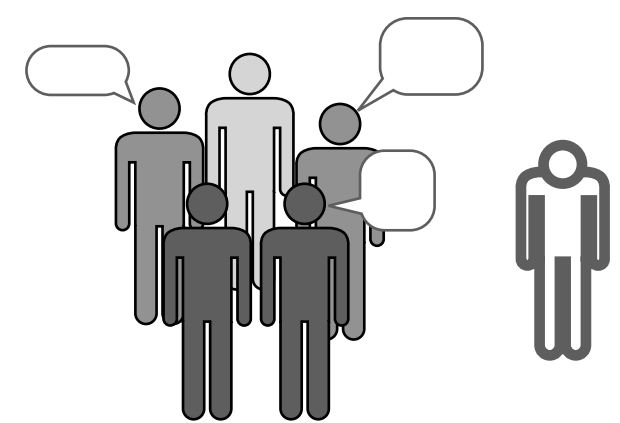
B. Judgement



C. Retaliation



No effect of information on expected retaliation from faculty endorser

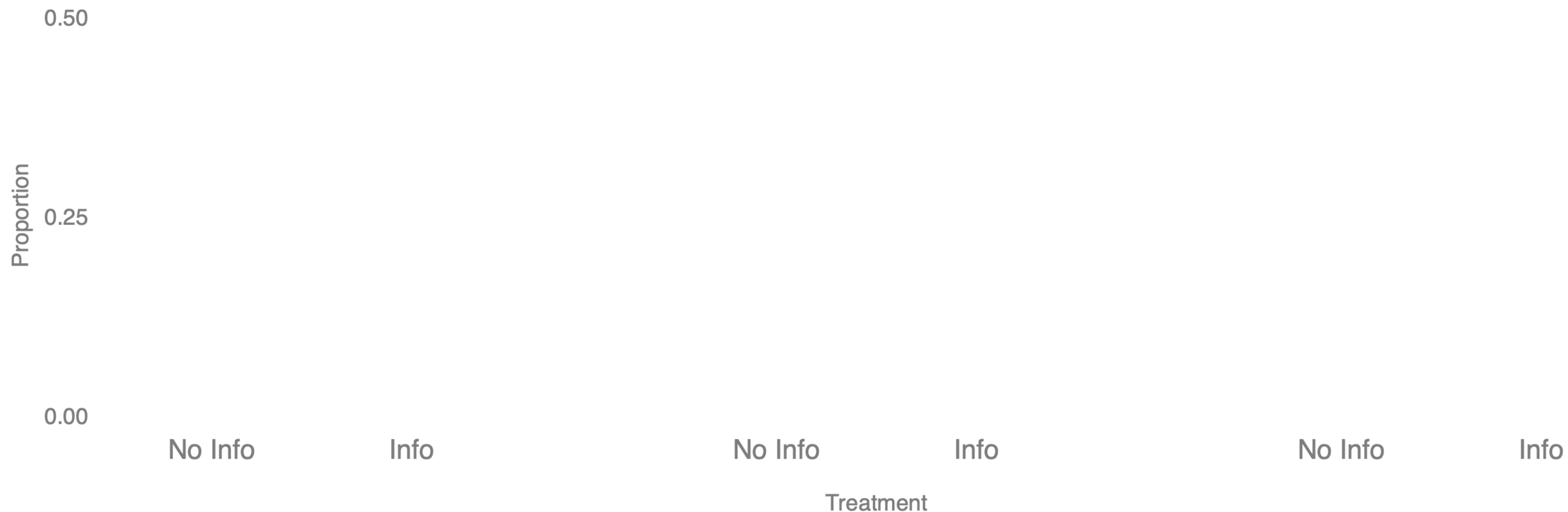


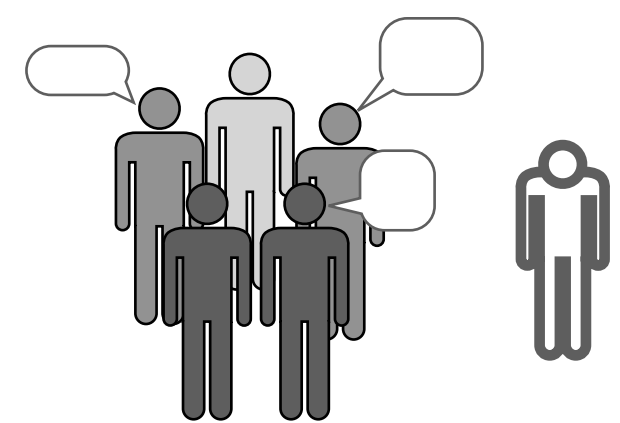
Costs induced by image concerns (n=382)

A. Pity

B. Threat

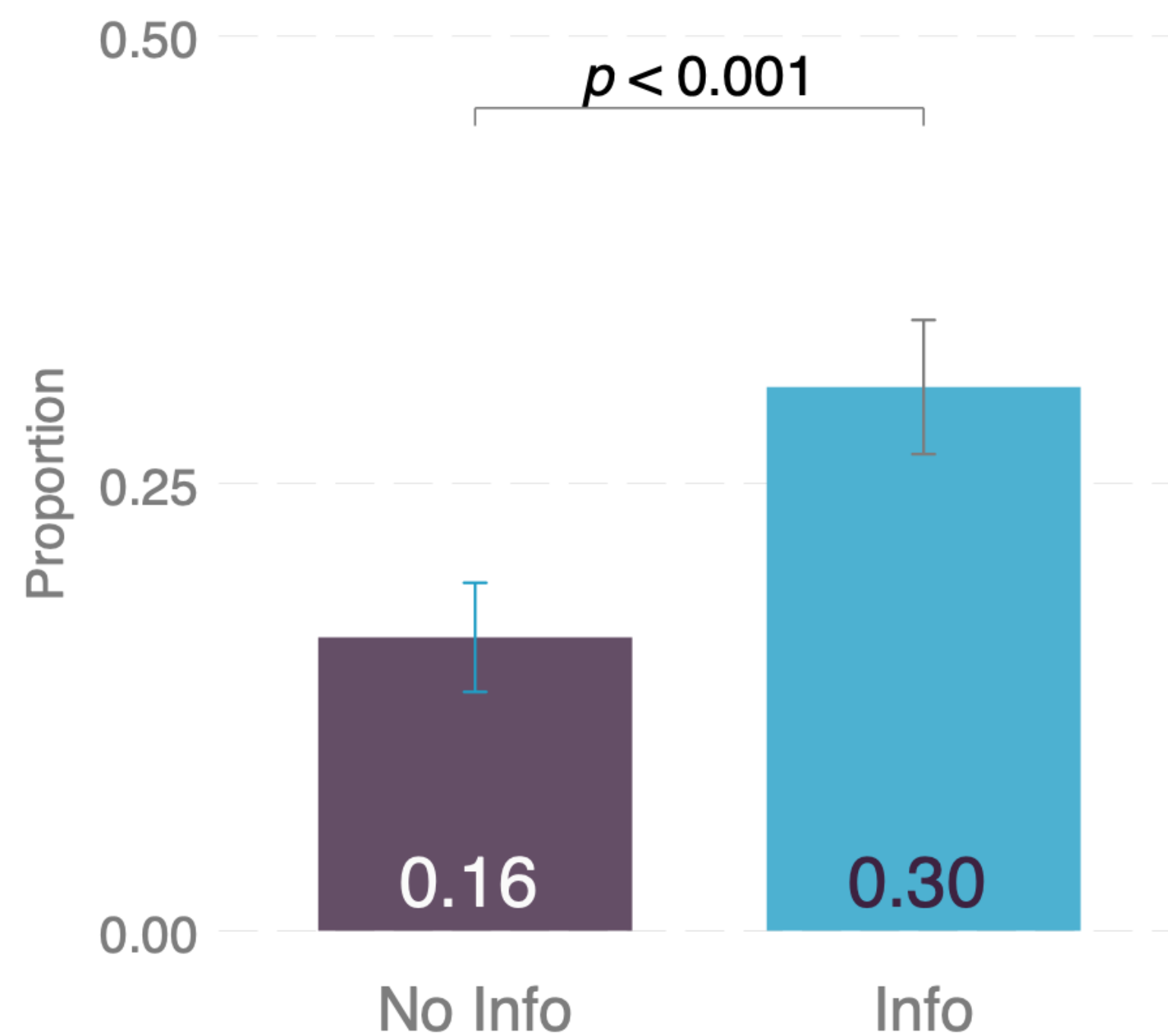
C. Judgement



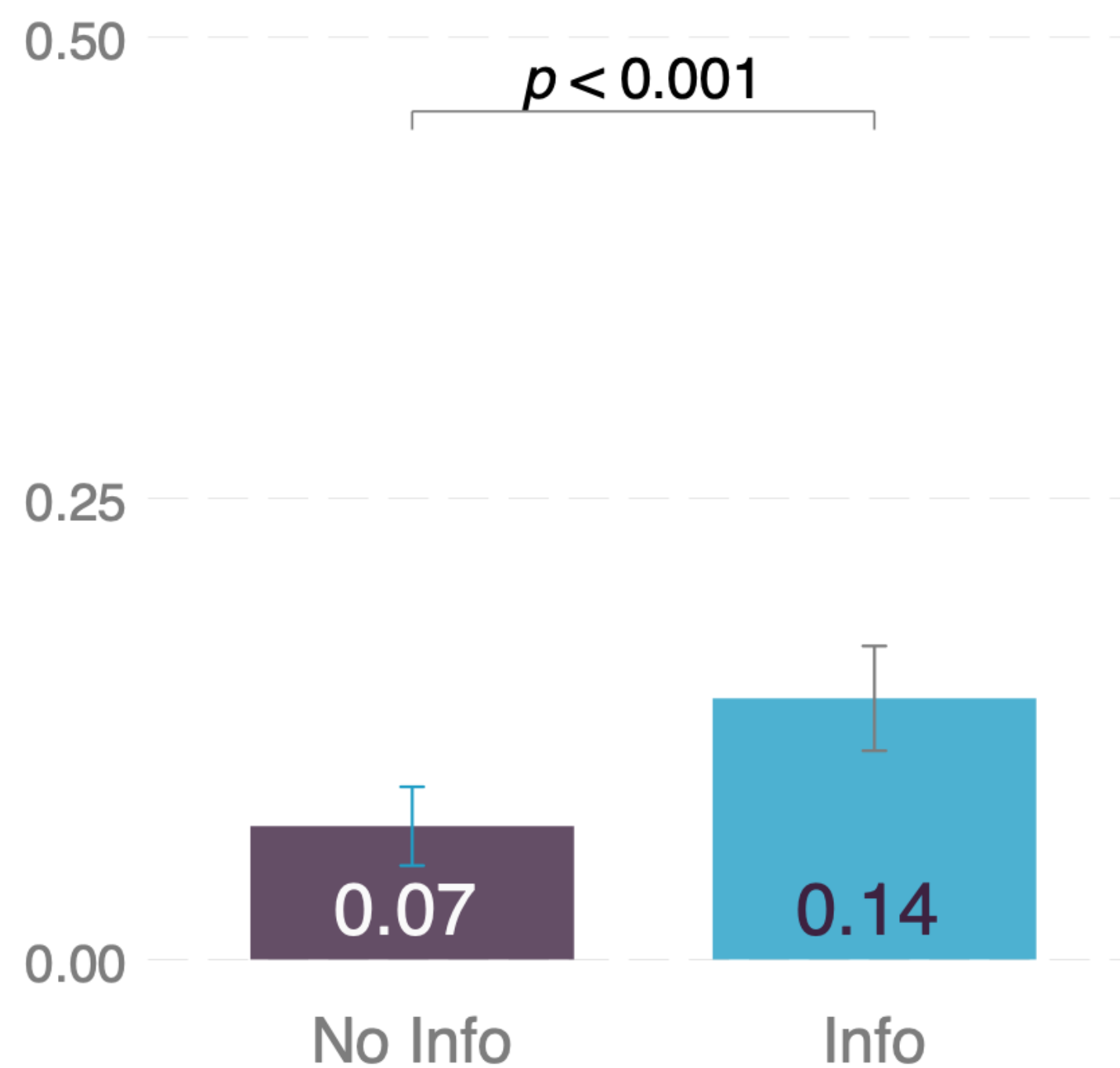


Costs induced by image concerns (n=382)

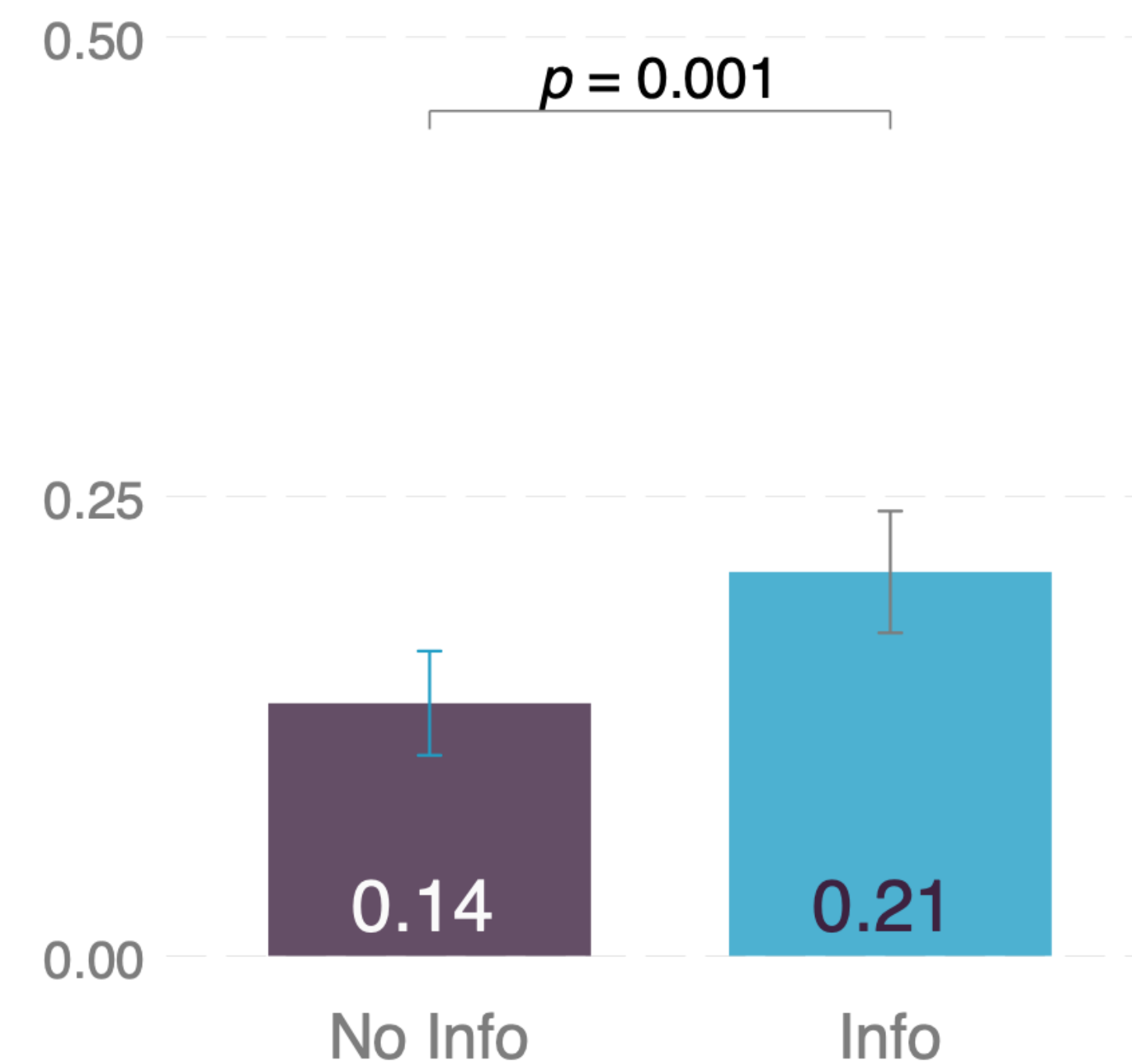
A. Pity



B. Threat



C. Judgement



Identity-based targeting triggers image concerns that appear to reduce program take-up



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Main result - *Behavioral outcome*

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Mechanisms

- Robust across performance settings: rewards vs. remedies
- Not due to identity profiles
- Not due to differences in valuation (perceived benefits) of the offer
- Not due to anticipated retaliation from endorsers

Policy implication

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- What about programs for which disclosure is required?
 - Current agenda: Using referrals to motivate take-up and reduce image costs