



The effect of envy and task interdependence on helping decisions in teams

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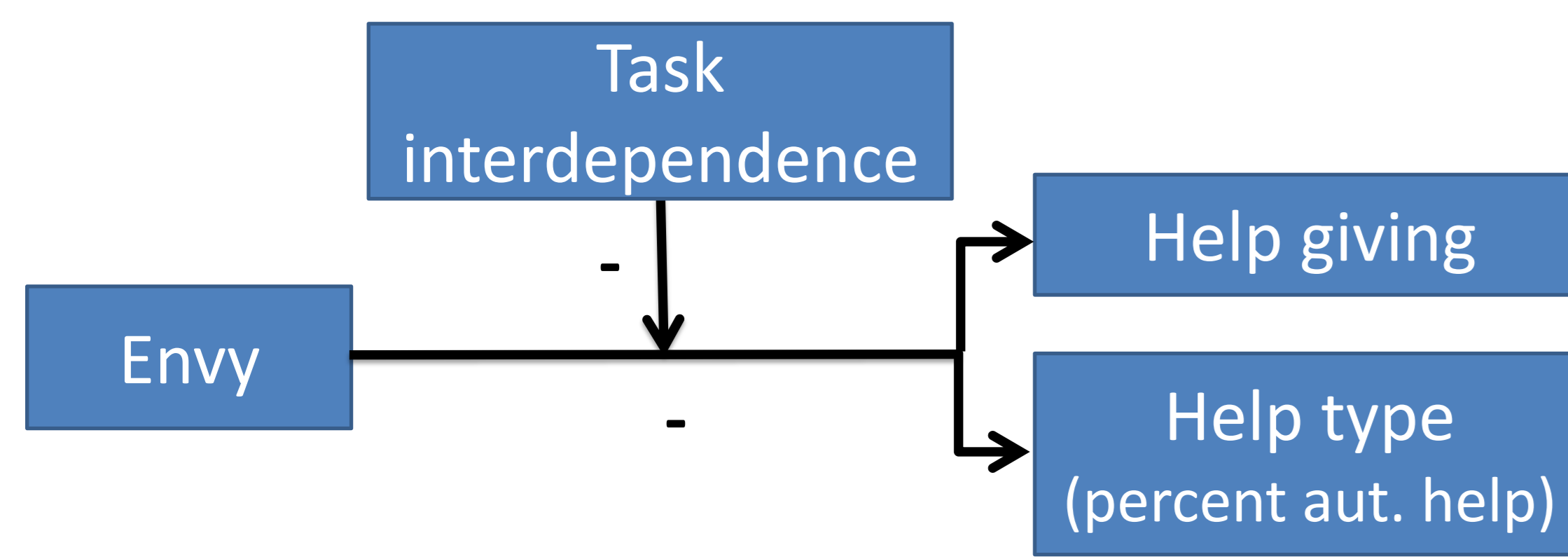
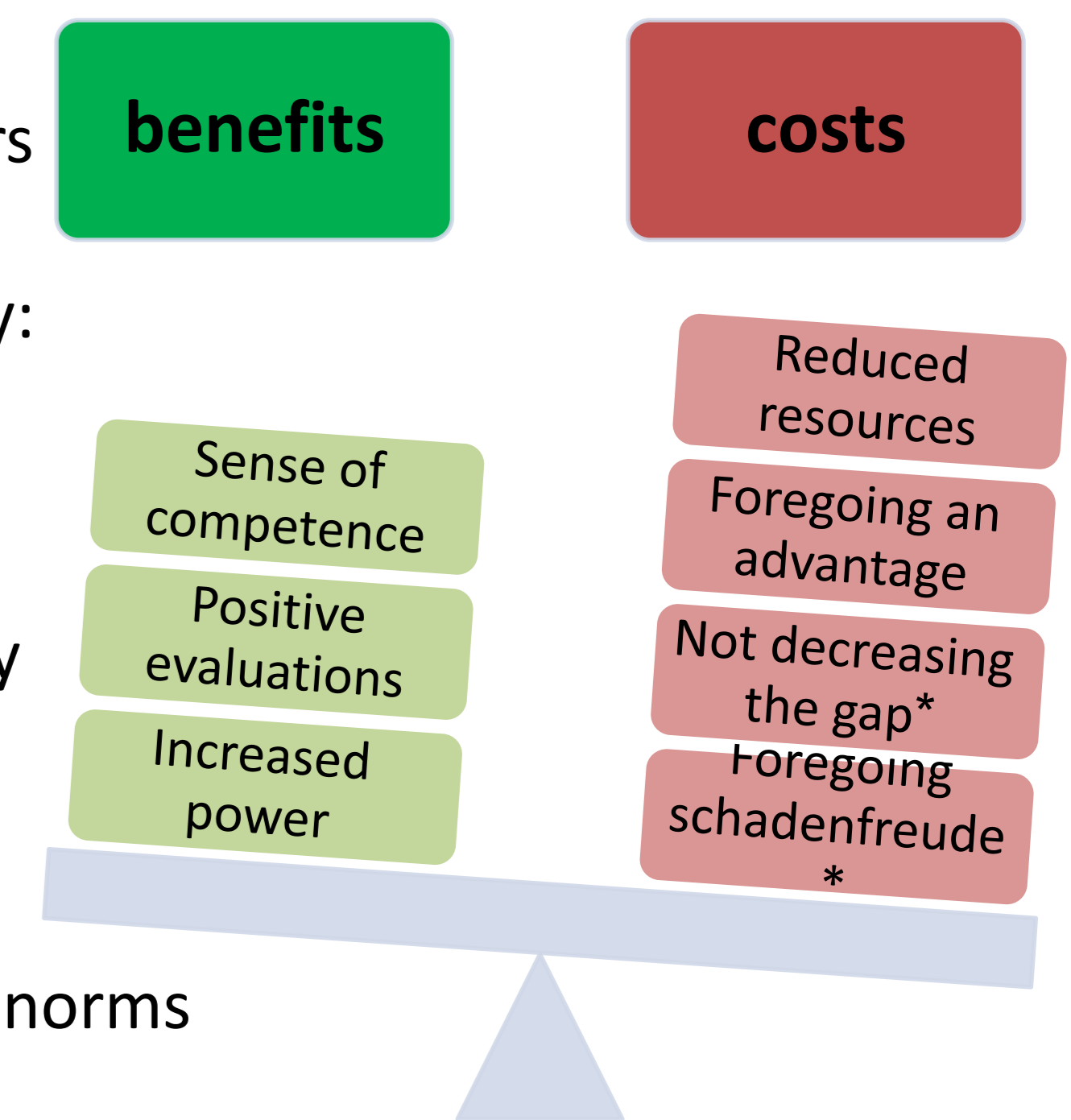
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Abstract

We test effects of envy on helping decisions, and explore the moderating role of task interdependence. In two experiments we find that consistent with a cost-benefit account, people are less likely to provide help, particularly autonomous help, to their envied teammates, and that these effects are less apparent when task interdependence is high (vs. low). Moreover, schadenfreude mediates the effect of task interdependence on helping.

Theoretical Background & Hypotheses

- Upward social comparisons often trigger malicious envy which leads to destructive interpersonal intentions & behaviors toward the envied person^{2,4,7}. Here we explore the understudied effects of envy on helping decisions.
- When envious team members decide whether to help envied peers, they perform a cost benefit analysis. Consequently:



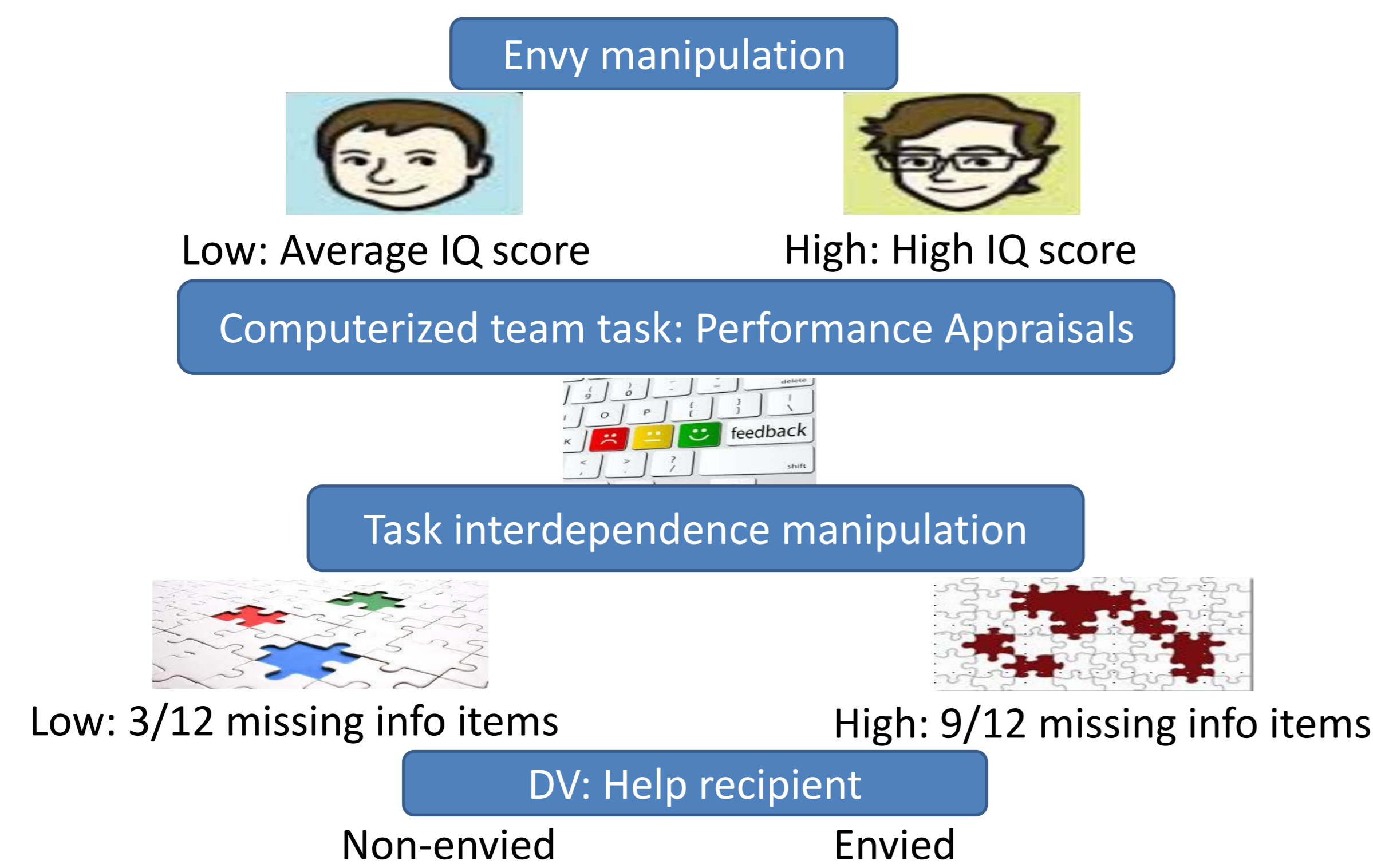
H1: They are less likely to provide help to envied peers.

H2: When helping envied others, they are likely to provide dependent help^{1,5}, which consists of immediate solutions only and increases the recipients' dependency, rather than autonomous help^{1,5}, which entails providing tools that enable recipients to solve problems independently.

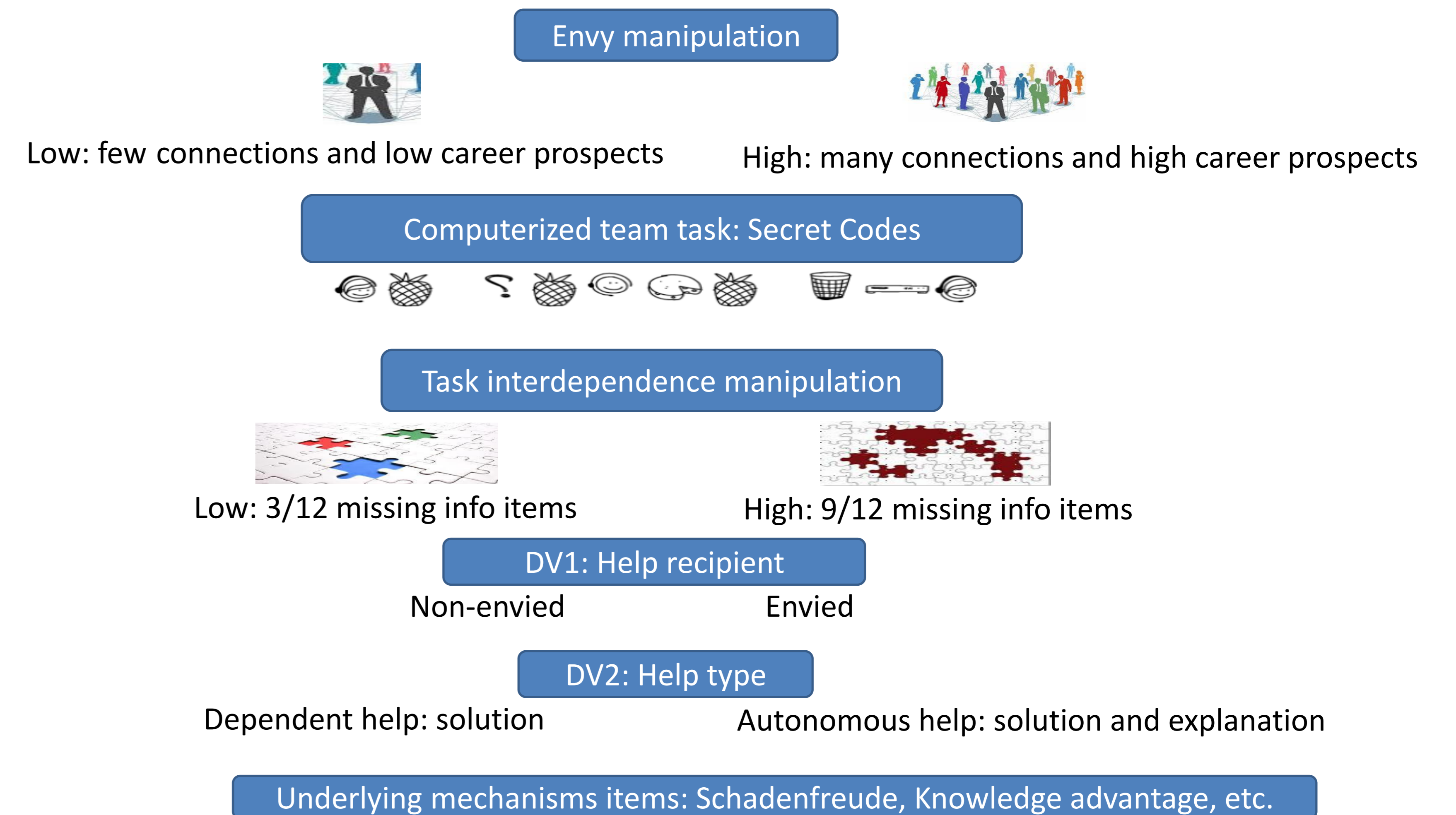
H3: These effects will be moderated by task interdependence due to additional benefits associated with complying with norms of cooperation when task interdependence is high⁸.

Method

Experiment 1



Experiment 2

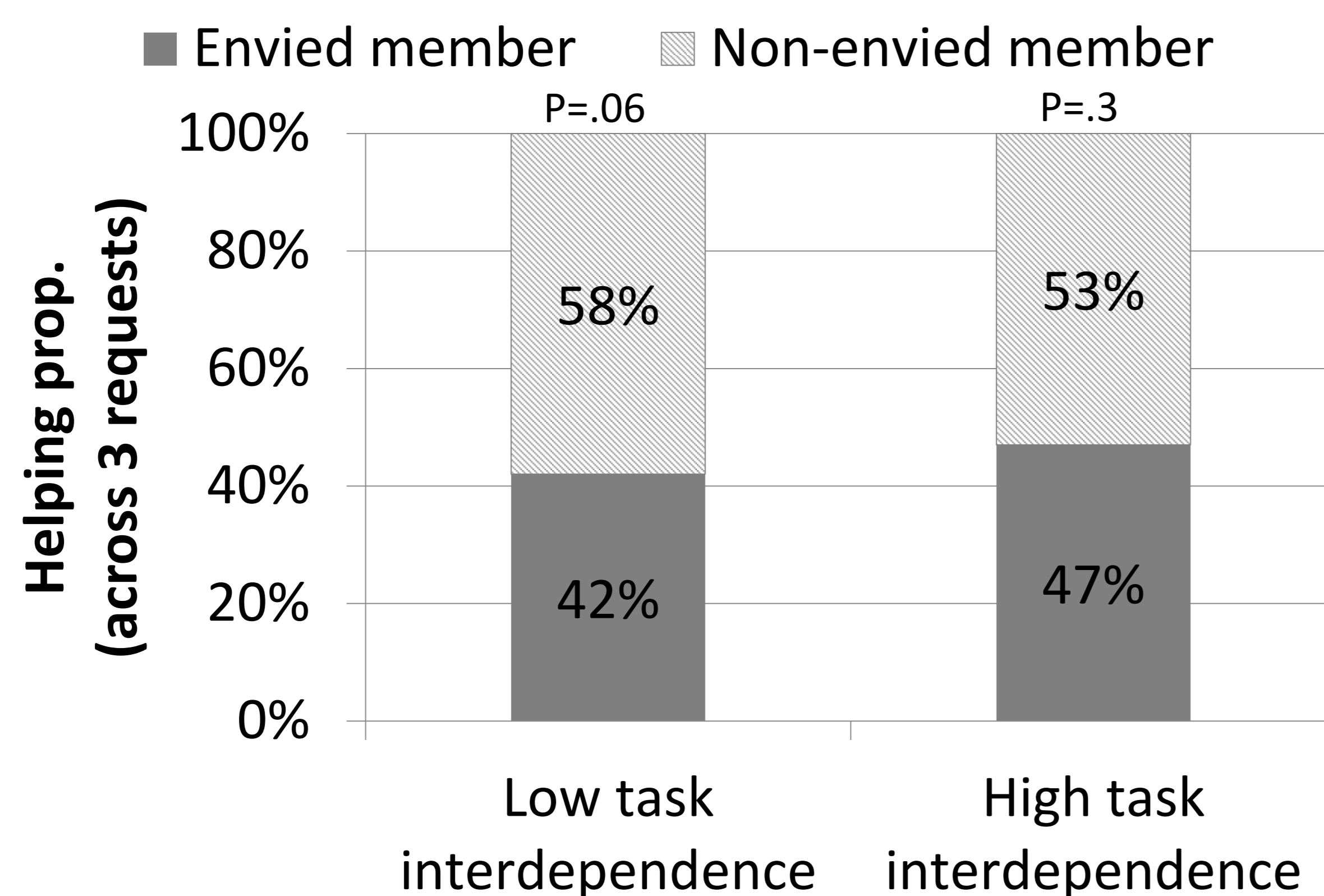


Results and Discussion

Experiment 1

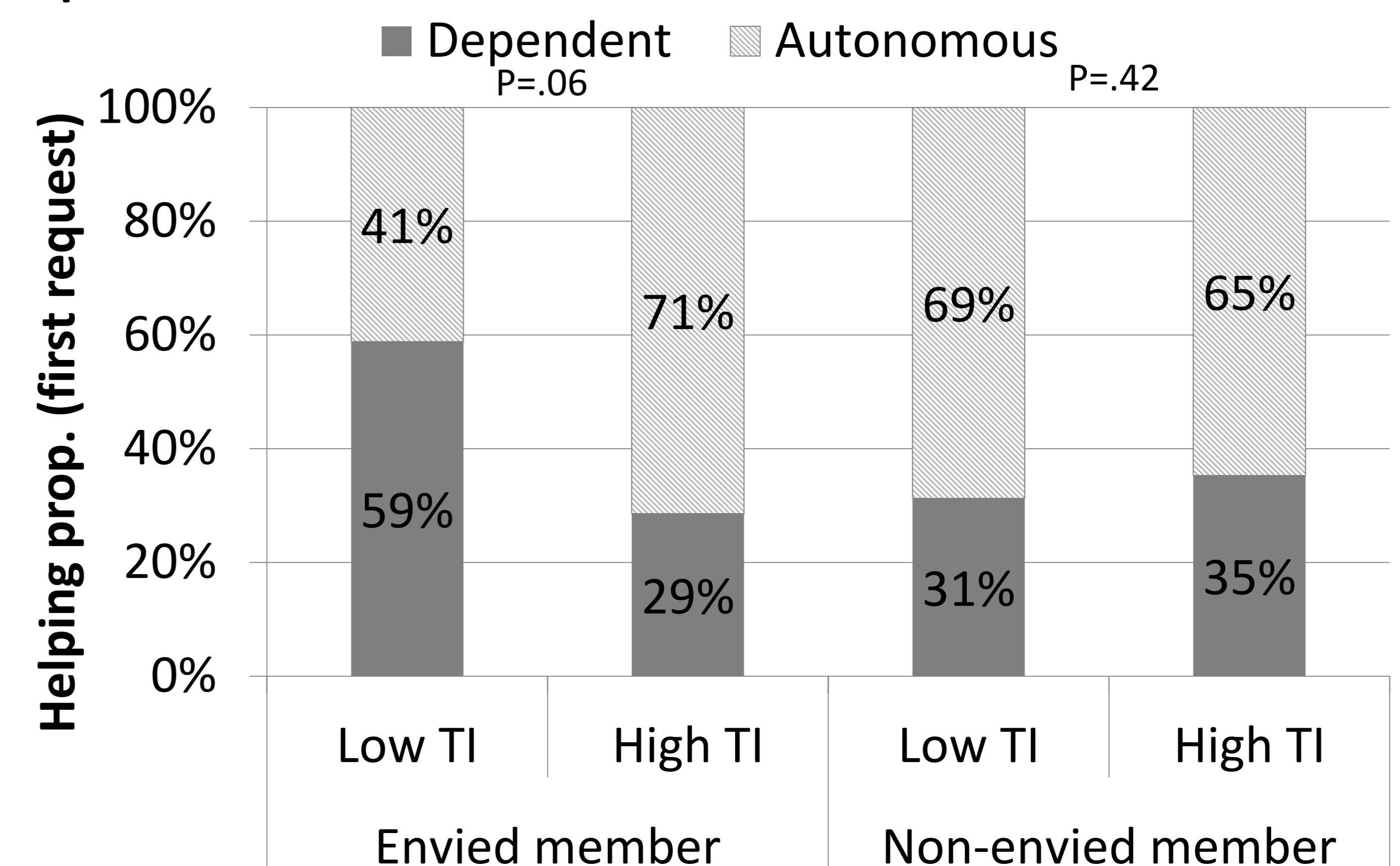
Proportions of help provided to the envied vs. non-envied peer, as a function of task interdependence

- In the first help request, p's provided less help to the envied (35%, n=23), vs. non-envied (65%, n=43) peer, $X^2(1, N=66)=6.01, p<.05$ (no sig. effect of task interdependence)
- Across the first three help requests, overall p's provided less help to the envied peer (n=84, 44% vs. n=106, 56%), but particularly when task interdependence was low (vs. high)



Experiment 2

Proportions of autonomous vs. dependent help provided, as a function of help recipient and task interdependence



- Overall, p's provided less help to the envied (37%, n=38 vs. 63%, n=65), $X^2(1, N=103)=7.08, p<.01$
- When task interdependence was low (vs. high), p's provided less autonomous help to envied peer
- Schadenfreude mediates the effect of task interdependence on help recipient

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