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Research project “The development of adolescent goals in the context of social inequality” is funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT), grant agreement no. S-MIP-19-26

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## To master means to commit?

# Reciprocal links between educational identity and perceived school goal structures

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# IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT & SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

School is among the most important contexts for adolescent identity formation (Grotevant, 1987).

Identity studies focus on interpersonal and emotional factors at school:

- Need-supportive teacher behaviors (Madjar & Cohen-Malayev, 2013);
- Integration in a peer group, the use of active coping strategies, academic self-esteem (Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006);
- Emotional school burnout (Erentaitė et al., 2018).



What is the role of **competence-related school experiences** for adolescent identity formation?

# COMPETENCE-RELATED SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

## A broad range of experiences:

- Engagement in learning;
- Academic achievement;
- Feedback from teachers and peers;
- Interpersonal interactions & relationships around classwork, etc.

## Which are related to identity?

- Levels of achievement related to educational identity commitment (Pop et al., 2016);
- Behavioral school engagement related to optimal identity formation (Erentaitė et al., 2018);
- Seing sense in studies related to favorable aspects of identity (Rich & Schachter, 2012).



# SCHOOL GOAL STRUCTURES (SGS)

These are achievement goal-related messages made salient by the policies, practices, and communication strategies that teachers employ with students.

MASTERY GOAL STRUCTURE	PERFORMANCE GOAL STRUCTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on <b>competence development</b></li><li>• Standards <b>universal or based on student</b></li><li>• Students grouped based on <b>interest</b></li><li>• <b>Flexible</b> concept of abilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on <b>demonstration of competence</b></li><li>• Standards oriented towards <b>competition</b></li><li>• Students grouped based on <b>performance</b></li><li>• <b>Fixed</b> concept of abilities</li></ul>

(Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Bardach, et al., 2019; Park et al., 2018; Wolters, 2004)





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www.pexels.com

# IMPLICATIONS OF PERCEIVED SCHOOL GOAL STRUCTURES



## Students' perceptions of SGS:

(Park et al., 2018; Wolters, 2004)

- Activate their respective competence-related schemas & self-views on their qualities, abilities, competence, achievement;
- Shape their competence-related behaviors at school (e.g., task persistence, cheating).

## No findings on **educational identity**:

- a sense of who one is and where one wants to go regarding one's school, curriculum, academic track, & vocational profile (Christians et al., 2022)

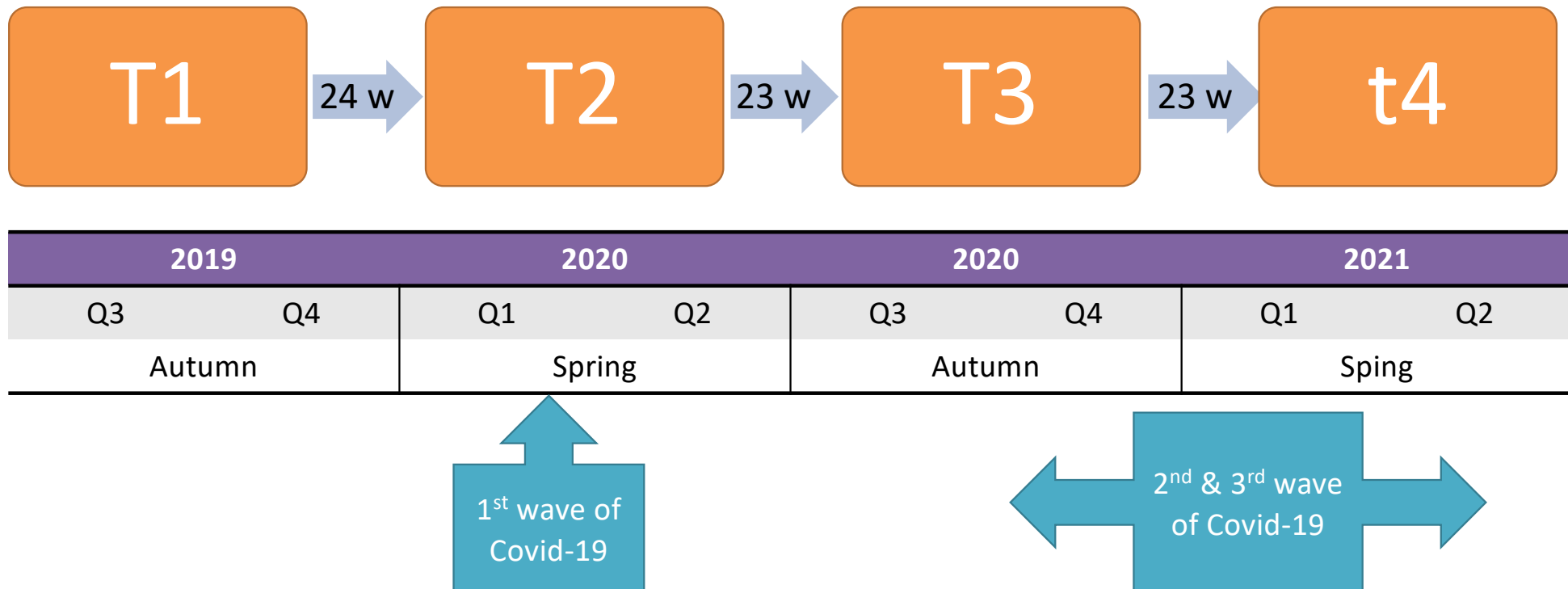
# RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESES

How are adolescent perceptions of school goal structures related to their educational identity formation over time?

1. Perceiving school interactions as supportive of mastery goals facilitates adolescent identity consolidation (e.g., predicts higher commitment and more in-depth identity exploration)
2. Perceiving school interactions as supportive of performance goals hinders identity consolidation (e.g., predicts lower commitment and less in-depth exploration)

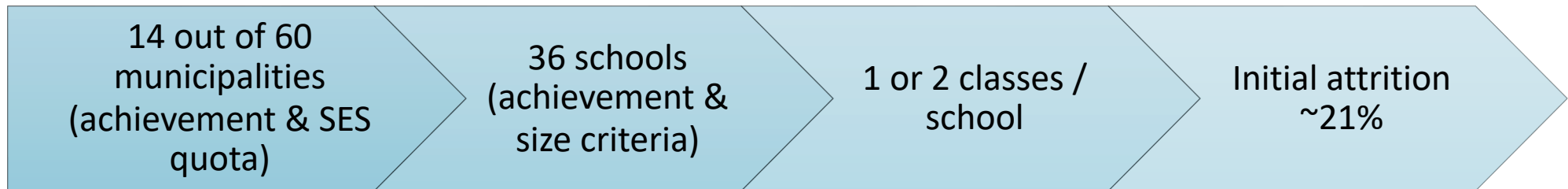
Reciprocal effects controlled for in the analyses.

# GOALS' LAB study (2019-2021)



# SAMPLE

## Multi-stage sampling



## 1268 adolescents in 9th grade at T1

- Age  $M_1 = 14.87$ ,  $SD_1 = 0.39$ ;
- Gender: 51,7 % girls;
- Low SES: 12,7 % (free meals at school);
- 92,8% of sample retained from T1 to T4.



# MEASURES

Perceived School Goal Structures Scale (Parks et al., 2018)	Educational Identity Processes Scale (EIPS) Post-transition version (Christians et al., 2022)
<p>Subscales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mastery goal structure (6 items, rho = .91)</li><li>• Performance goal structure (5 items, rho = .88)</li></ul>	<p>Subscales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identity commitment (4 items, rho = .85)</li><li>• Exploration in-depth (3 items, rho = .82)</li><li>• Reconsideration of commitments (3 items, rho = .79)</li></ul>

Longitudinal measurement invariance was supported for both instruments.

# ANALYSES

## Variable oriented:

Cross-lagged CLPM model with latent variables

Consistency of effects across T1-T4 supported

Type = COMPLEX (students nested in classes/ schools)

## Person-oriented:

Latent transition analyses (LTA)

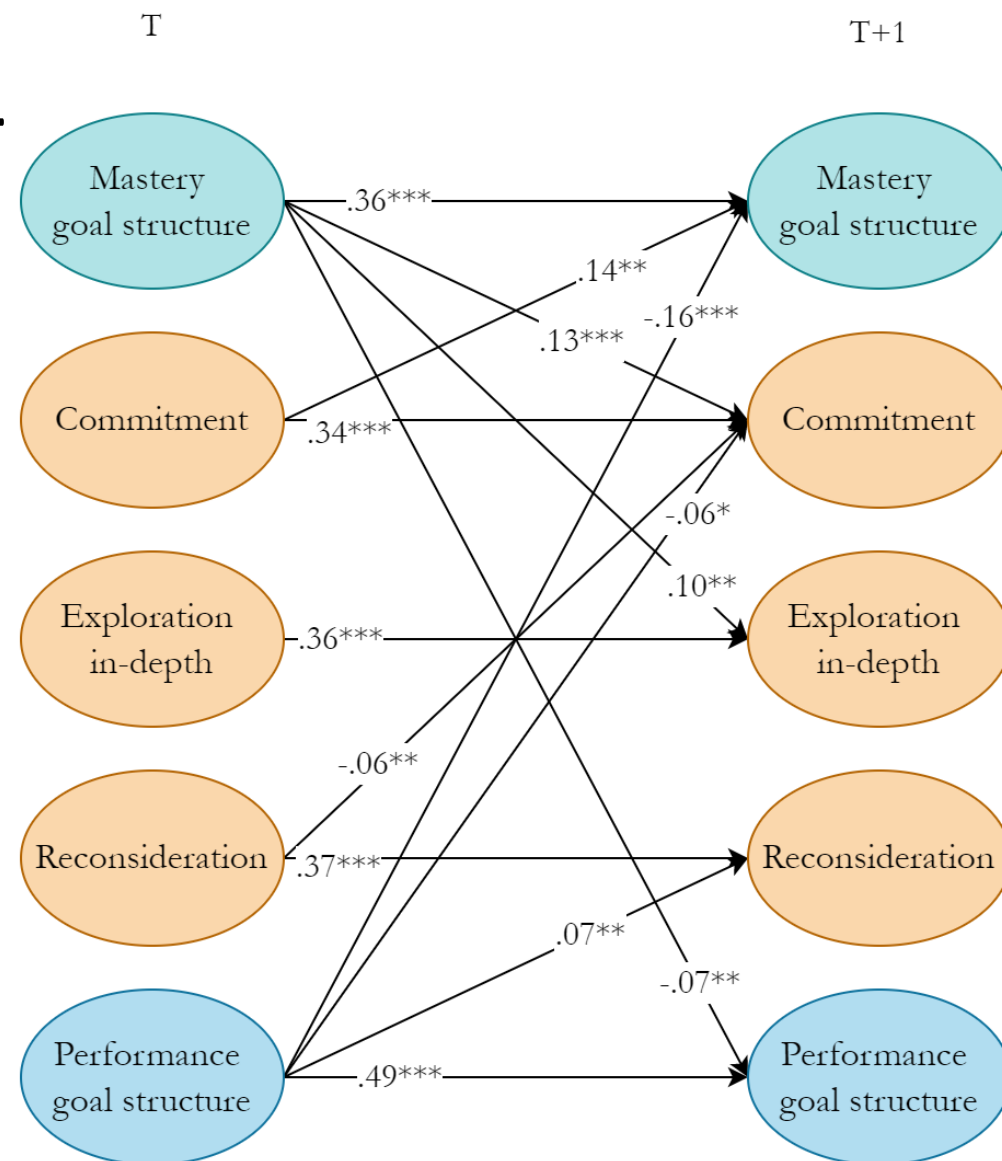
Similarity of configural, structural & dispersion similarity of profiles across T1-T4 was supported, distributional and transitional similarity not supported

Effects of covariates (SGS) on distributions and transitions were tested

## CROSS-LAGGED ASSOCIATIONS T1-T4

CLPM results indicate:

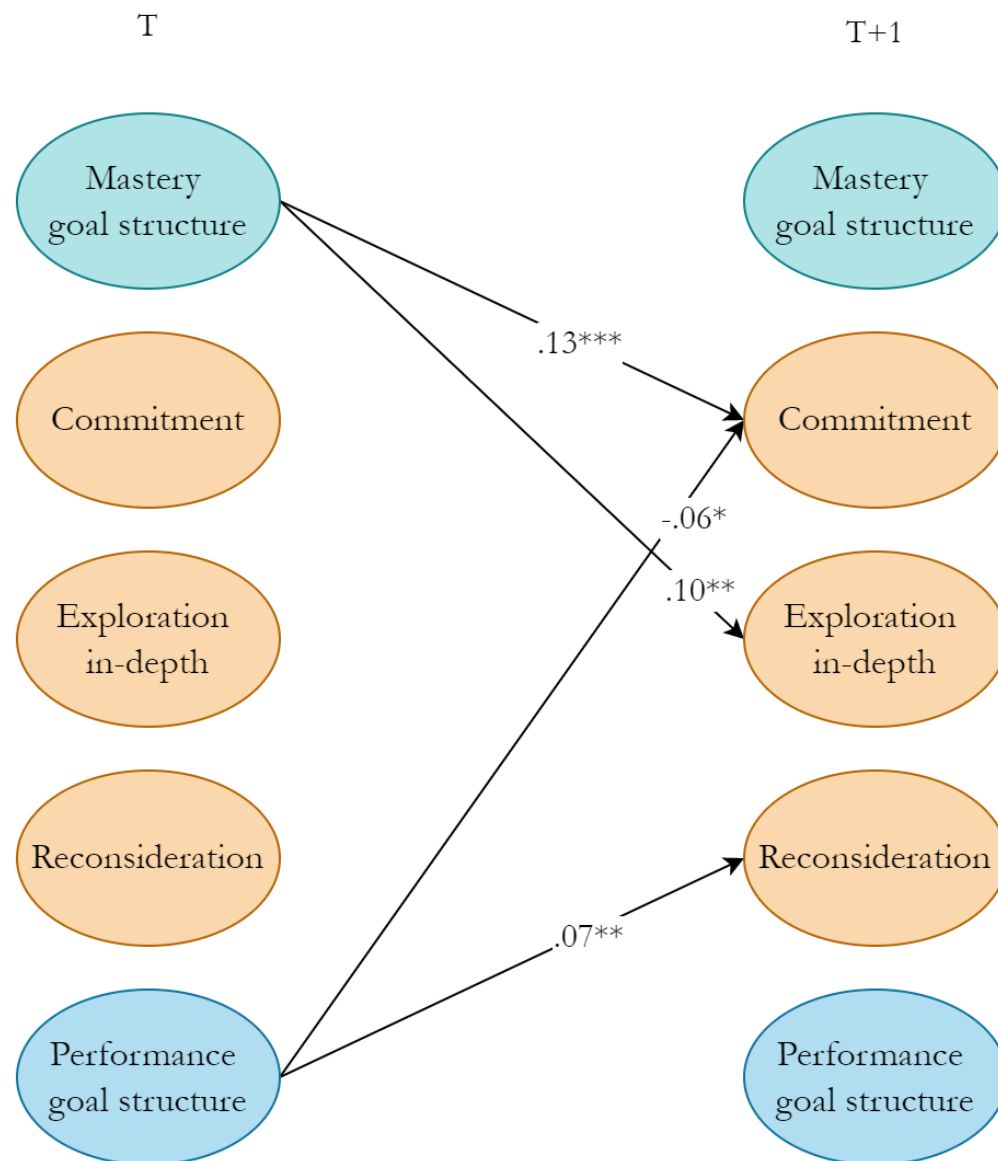
- Moderate stability of constructs over time
- Negative links between mastery and performance school goal structures over time
- Reconsideration of educational identity commitments negatively related to educational identity commitment over time



# CROSS-LAGGED ASSOCIATIONS T1-T4

## SGS effects on identity processes:

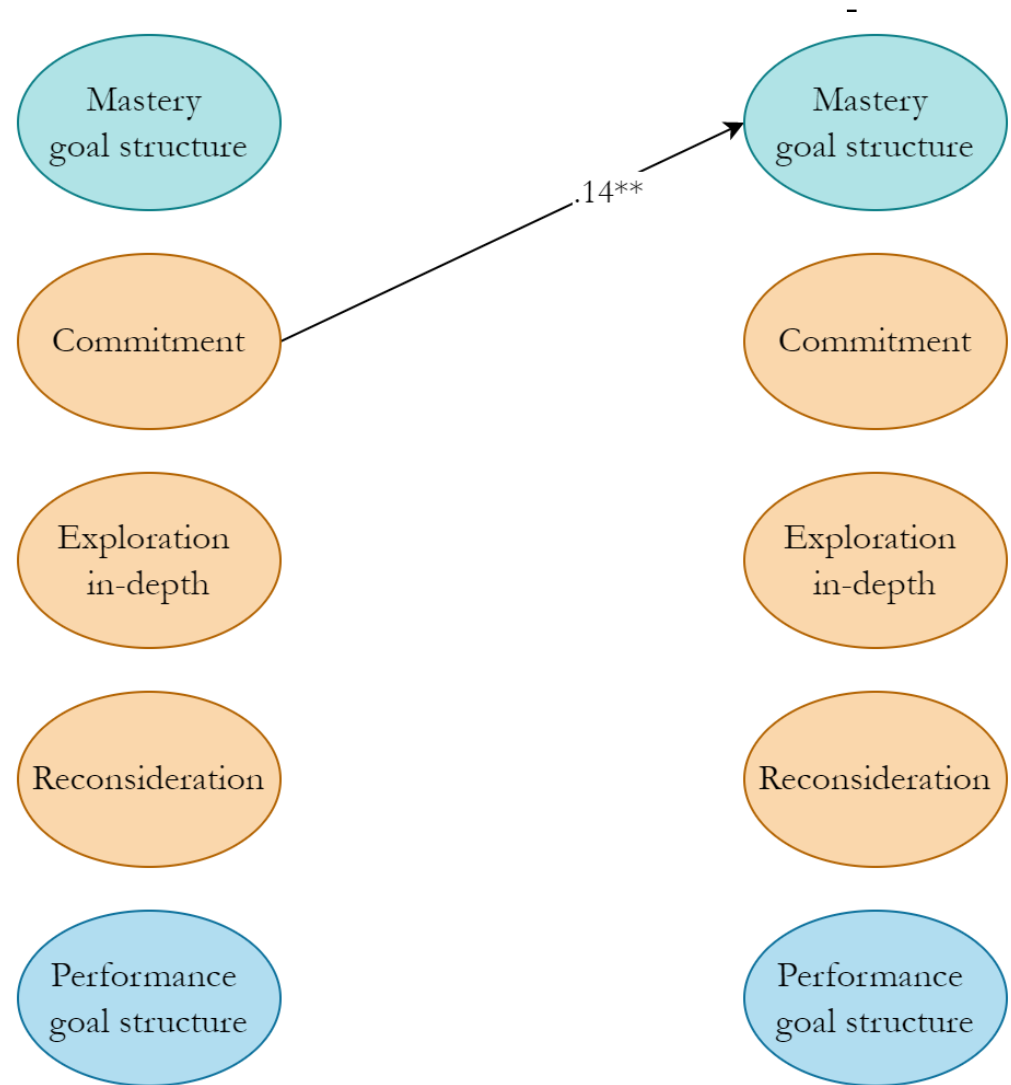
- Stronger perception of **mastery goal structures** at school is related to increase in educational identity commitment and in-depth exploration over time
- Stronger perception of **performance goal structures** is related to decrease in educational identity commitment and increase in reconsideration of commitments over time



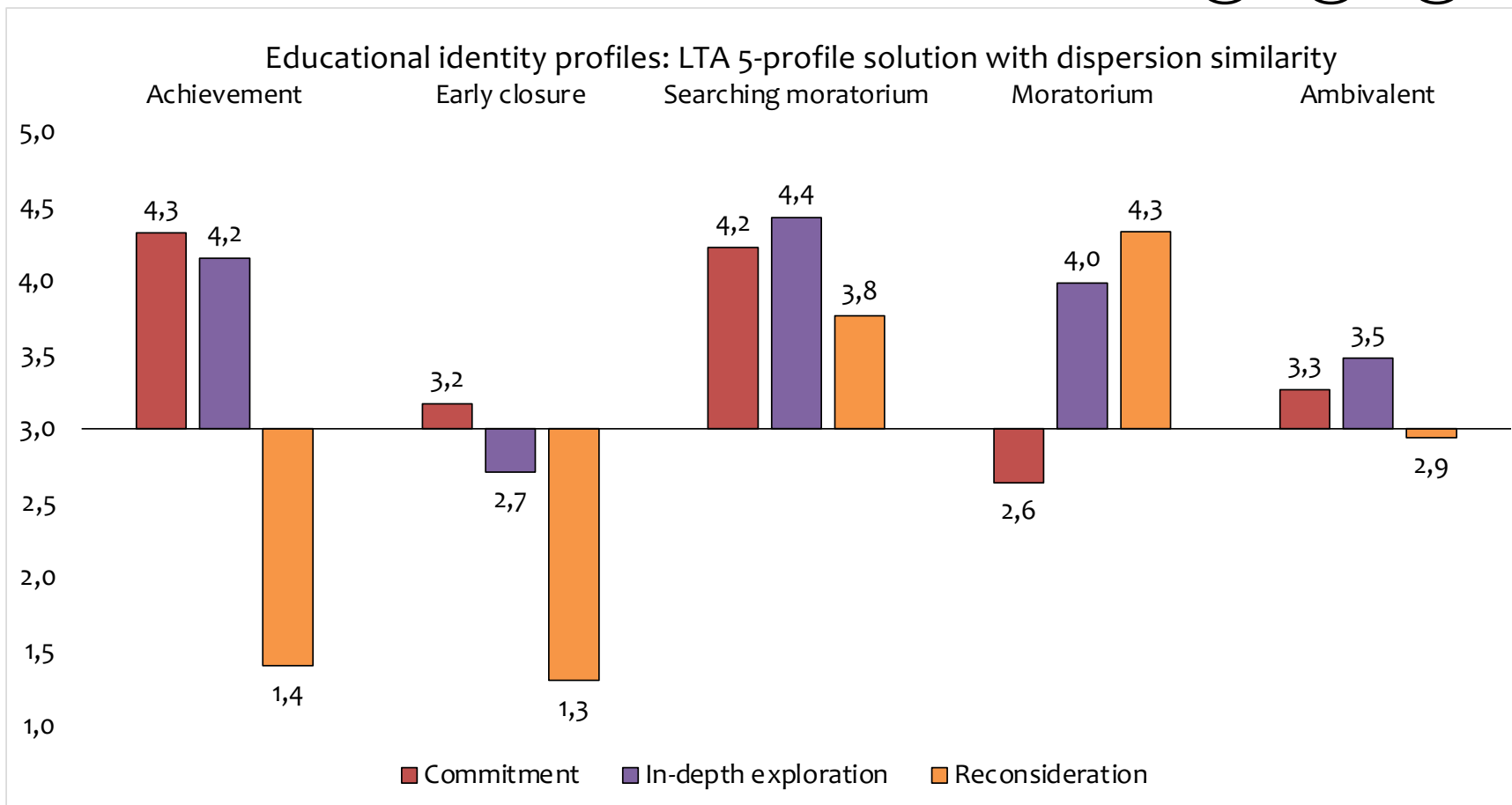
# CROSS-LAGGED ASSOCIATIONS T1-T4

The effects of identity processes on perceived school goal structures:

- Stronger **educational identity commitment** is related to increase in perceptions of mastery school goal structures over time



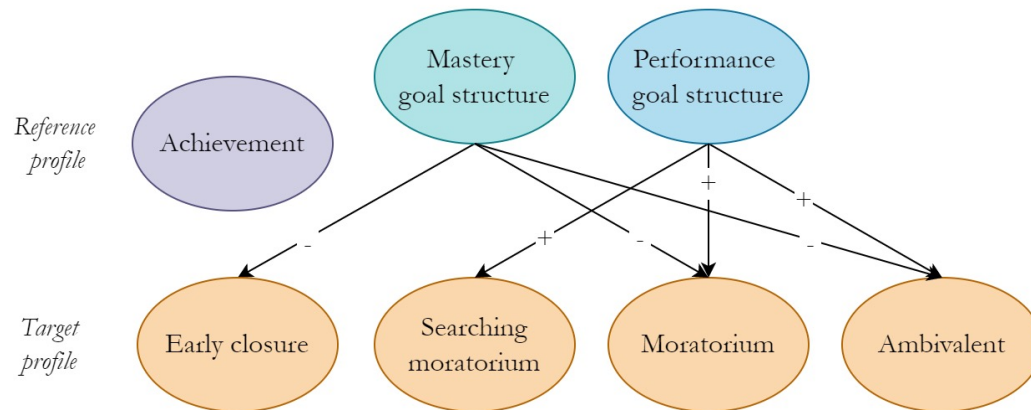
# EDUCATIONAL IDENTITY PROFILES





# LTA WITH COVARIATES EFFECTS (PERCEIVED SGS)

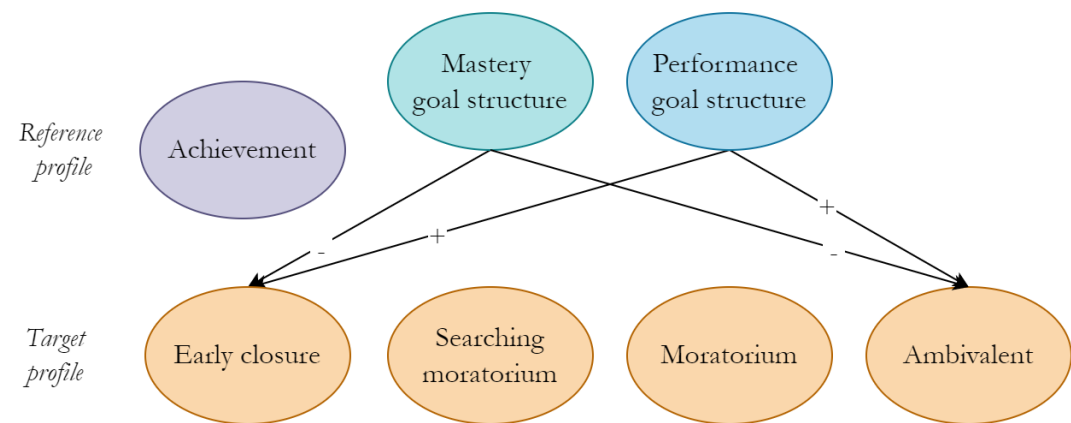
Concurrent effects of perceived SGS on distributions of adolescents across identity profiles



Those with stronger perceptions of mastery goal structures are less likely to be in early closure and profiles with low educational identity commitments;

Those with stronger perceptions of performance goal structures are more likely to be in profiles with high reconsideration of identity commitments.

Longitudinal effects of perceived SGS on the transitions across educational identity profiles

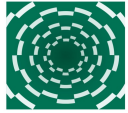


Those with stronger perceptions of mastery goal structures are less likely to transition to profiles with low exploration;

Those with stronger perceptions of performance goal structures are more likely to transition to profiles with low exploration.

## TO CONCLUDE:

- Perceiving school interactions as supportive of mastery goals facilitates educational identity consolidation & prevents low identity exploration over time;
- Perceiving school interactions as supportive of performance goals hinders educational identity consolidation & predicts low identity exploration over time (which may indicate a path towards educational identity stagnation).
- Structuring educational processes around mastery goals may prevent adolescent educational identity stagnation and facilitate identity consolidation over time
- In turn, higher consolidation of educational identity can fortify orientation towards mastery goal structures at school



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