Effectiveness of Indirect Goal Priming on Children's Honesty

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Background

- Studies have explored different verbal and environmental techniques to promote children's honesty (Lee et al, 2004; Zhao et al., 2021)
- None of studies examined individual differences of accepting these honesty promoting techniques.
- Question: Are children with an intuitive thinking style more likely to accept verbal priming and adjust their honest behaviour?
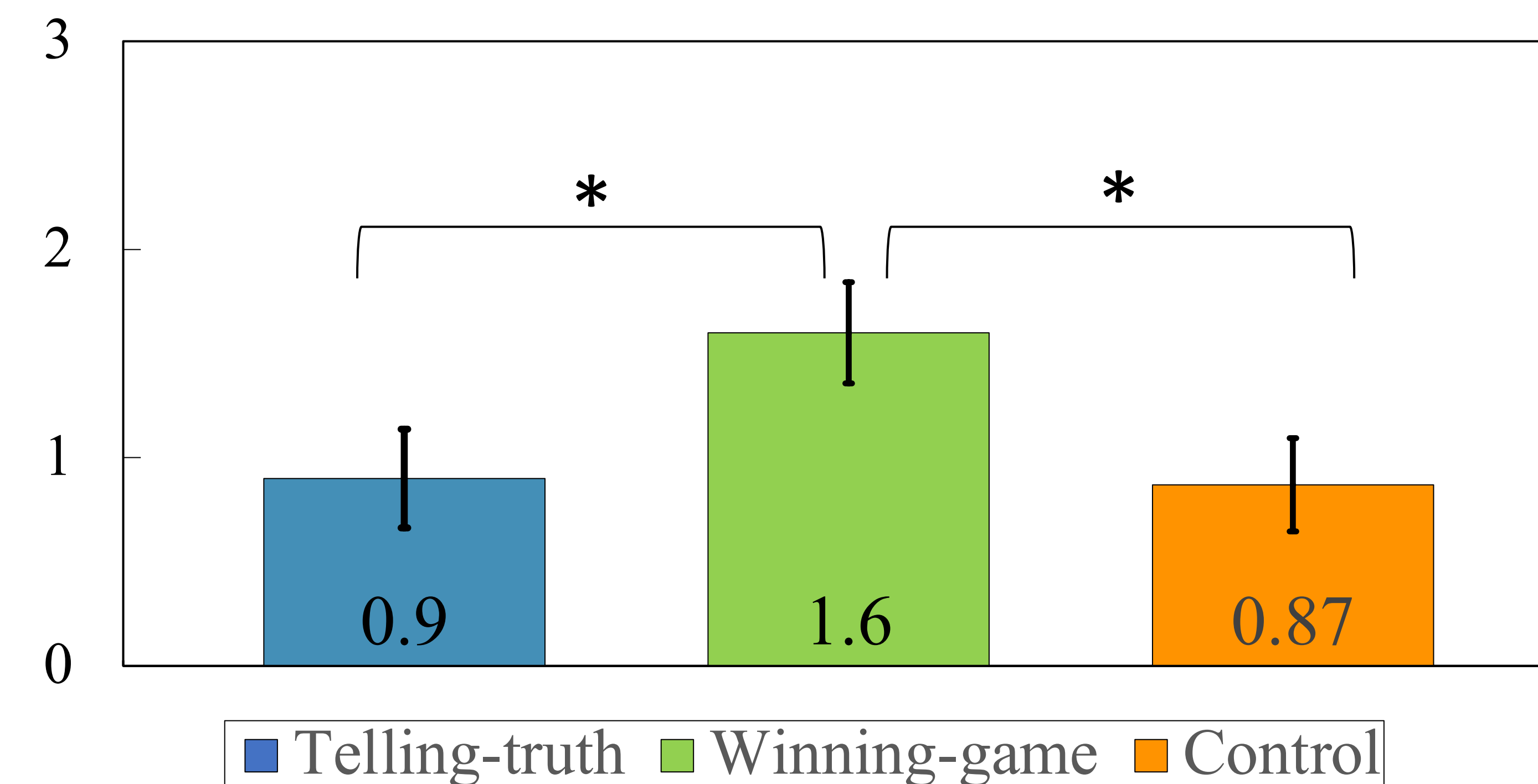
Lying Paradigm (zoom)
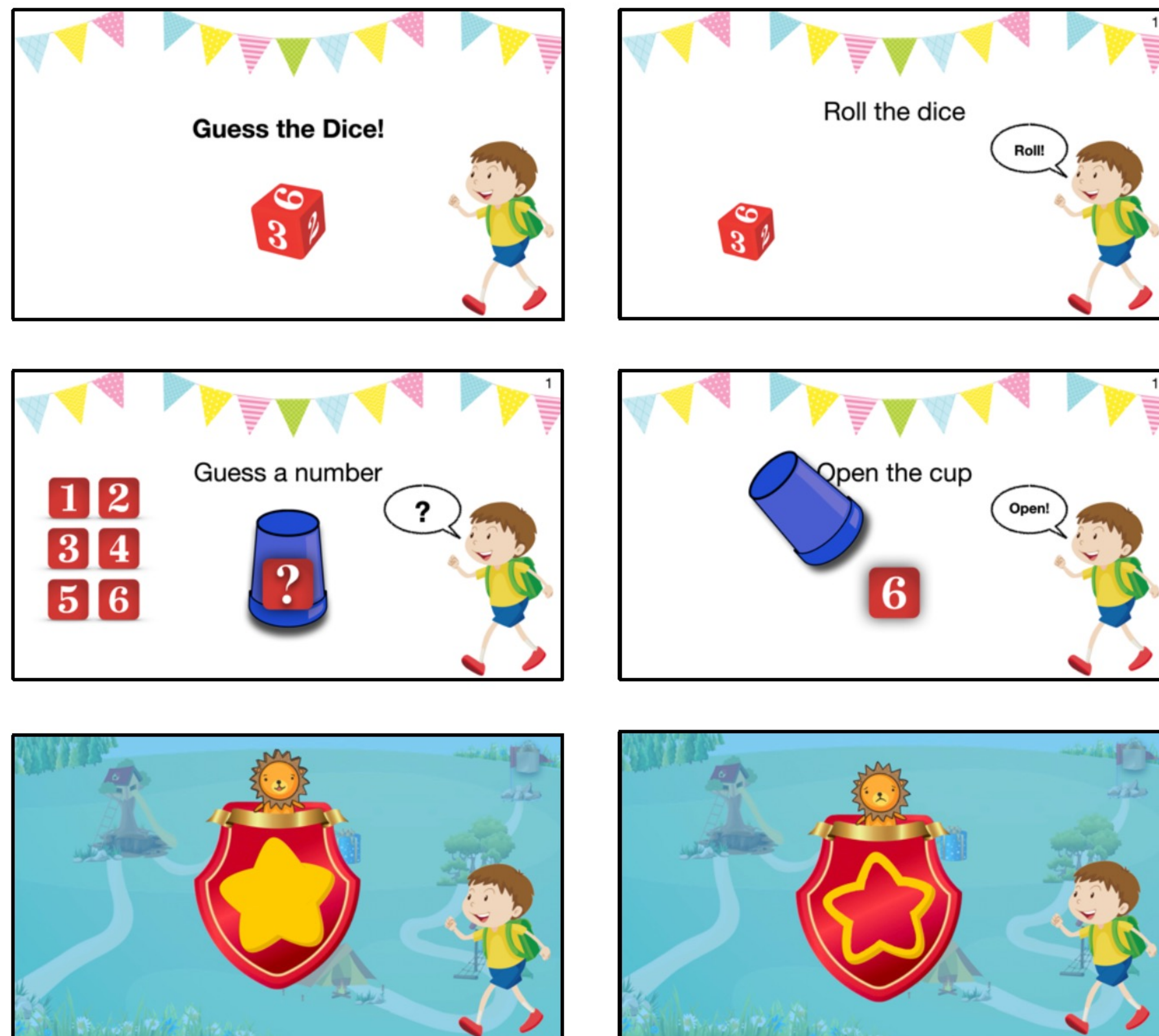
Study 1 (pre-registered)

- **Participants**

  Ninety 5- and 6-year-old Singaporean children

- **Research design**

  Telling-truth condition: *Why should a good child tell the truth?*

  Winning-game condition: *Why should a good child win the game?*

  Control condition: *Why should a good child like to read?*

- **Secondary measures**

  Cognitive Reflection Test, Stroop, Backward Digit Span

- **Results**

Figure 1: Lying Frequency by Condition

Hierarchical linear regression results showed lying frequency was significantly positively associated with children's intuitive thinking style in the Winning-game condition (B =.50, p = .002), but not in the other conditions.

Study 2 (pre-registered)

- **Participants**

  One hundred thirty-eight 5- and 6-year-old Singaporean children

- **Research design**

  Telling-truth condition: *Is it better to tell the truth or to tell lies?*

  Winning-game condition: *Is it better to win or to lose?*

  Control condition: *Is it better to draw or to read?*

- **Secondary measures**

  Cognitive Reflection Test, Stroop

- **Results**

Figure 2: Lying Frequency by Condition
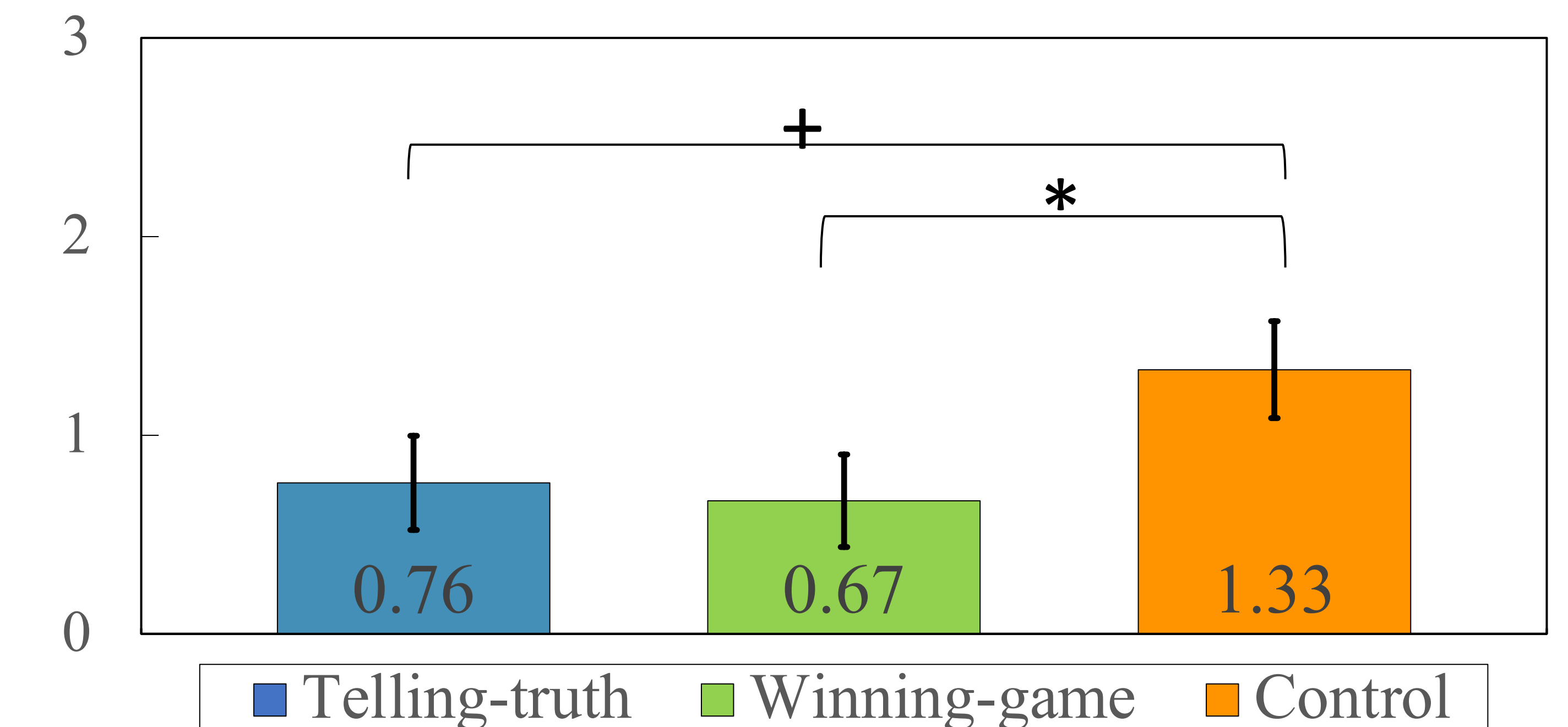
Intuitive thinking style predicted lying frequency negatively in the Telling-truth condition (B = -.31, p = .031), but not the other conditions.

Conclusion

- Indirect goal priming can alter children's honesty
- Intuitive thinking style can predict the effectiveness of this priming.