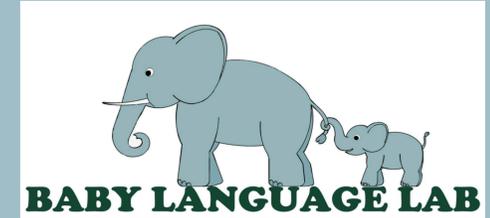




Social Preferences of Infants in a Third-Party Helping or Hindering Task

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BACKGROUND

Original study by Hamlin, Wynn and Bloom (2007)

- researched topic of social evaluation and morality focused on infants 6-10 months old.
- Results showed infants were inclined to play with shapes that helped others, compared to those that hindered.

Replication Studies

- Studies, ages ranging from 3 months to 5 years old, had same or similar findings to original study (Hamlin 2015; Hamlin & Wynn 2011; Hamlin, Wynn & Bloom 2010; Van de Vondervoort & Hamlin, 2017).
- Labs independent of Hamlin have had mixed results, finding no significant difference between infants' choice of helper and hinderer (Salvadori et al., 2015)

HYPOTHESES

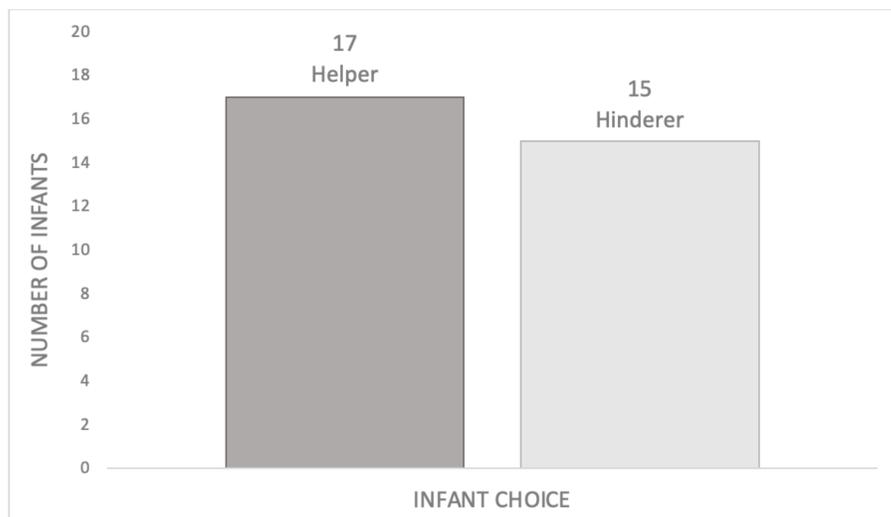
1. Infants will prefer nice helper shape, over mean hinderer shape
2. Older infants will be significantly more likely to prefer nice helper shape than younger group of infants, as they have more social experience

PARTICIPANTS

- N = 28 participants (11 boys, 17 girls)
- Mean age: 243 days old (range of 154 days, standard deviation of 36.6).

Exclusion Criteria:

- Infant cognitive or learning delays
- Hearing or sight impairments.
- Infants 5.5-10.5 months old



METHODOLOGY

VIDEO PHASE

- **Calibration Trials:**
Rainbow circles popped up around screen to catch infant's attention. Designed so experimenter can see range of infant's eyesight.
- **Elmo Video:**
Played before each video to catch infant's attention
- **Helper Hinder/Videos:**
Shapes helping or hindering a neutral shape's progress getting up a hill. In between these three videos, there were up to 30 seconds where video paused. If infant looked away for > two seconds, next video began to play.

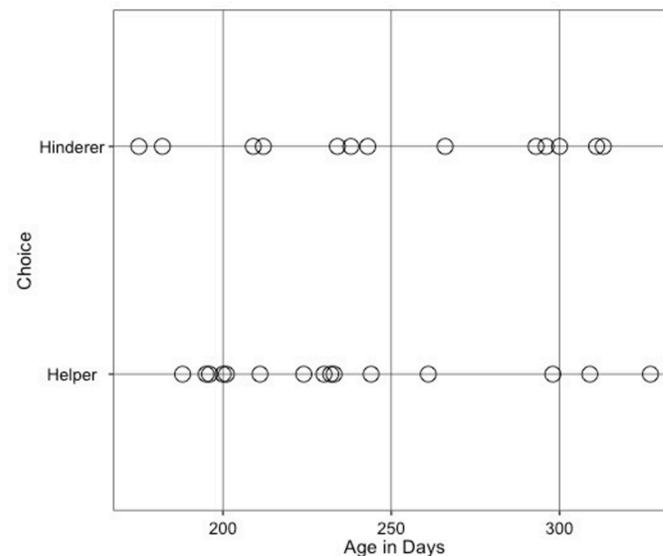
The infant continued to watch helper/hinderer videos, with pauses between each video, until successfully habituated (decreased looking time by half since first 3 videos), failed the experiment (stopped watching or started crying) or watched the maximum number of trials (14).

CHOICE PHASE

- Baby was presented with each shape attached to a board
- Baby was asked "Which one do you like?"
- First look *and* touch was considered the chosen shape.

Note:

- Caregiver held baby in front of screen or board
- Parents had eyes closed to prevent bias.



RESULTS

Binomial test of significance found no significant difference between shapes infants chose to play with. Although, slightly more than half of the infants chose to play with the nice shape over the mean shape (15 of 28 infants, $p = .5357143$). Figure 1.

Simple logistic regression found no significant difference between infant age groups when picking the nice over the mean shape ($p = .353$). Figure 2.

CONCLUSIONS

Suggest infants do not understand morals or have strong enough social preferences to implement them when decision-making.

Limitation:

- data collection ended early due to COVID-19, resulting in sample size that may not have had sufficient power to detect a significant difference

Implications:

- Adds to limited and controversial literature on social preference in the first year of life
- Adds to theories on morality and social predilections

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