

Aim

This research hopes to observe an interaction between eye cues and subsequent punishment behaviour.

Method

- Through the use of "z-Tree" (Zurich Toolbox for Readymade Economic Experiments - a software for experimental economics) a Public Goods Game (PGG) was implemented.
- In which there were two conditions – "eyes" as an experimental condition, "flowers" as a control.
- Participants (N=36) completed the game in groups of three and were paid for their time by being given a cash sum dependent on their score in the game.

Introduction

- Previous research has found that individuals are more cooperative when they are being observed. ²
- Also, exposure to eye cues makes people behave cooperatively even when they are in anonymous situations. ⁴
- Studies also show that people act cooperatively and are willing to punish free riders (i.e., people who are less cooperative than others). ^{1,3}
- Non-punishers benefit when free riders are punished, making punishment a "group-beneficial" act. ¹

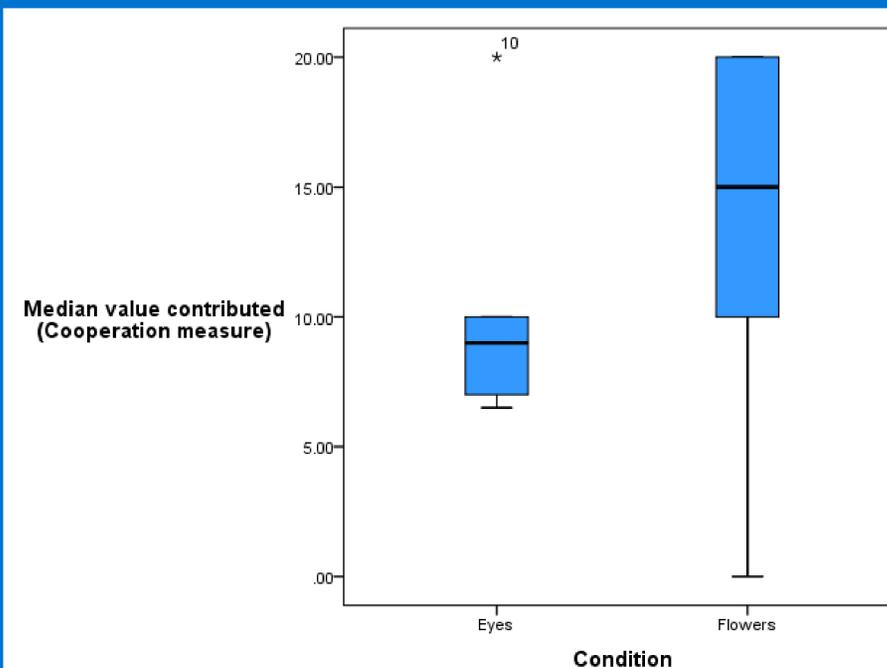


Figure 1. Boxplot displaying cooperation behaviour

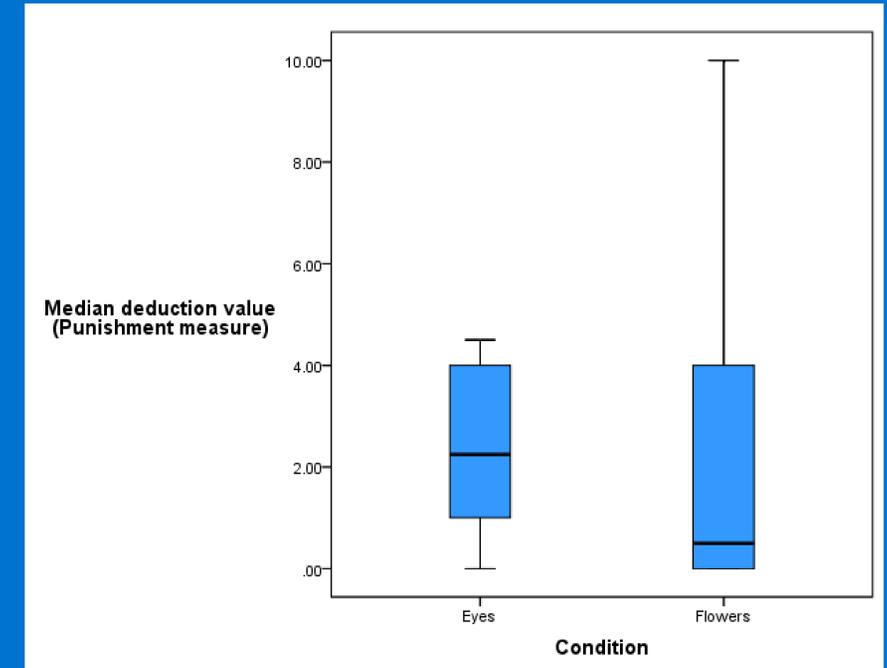


Figure 2. Boxplot displaying punishment behaviour

Results and Discussion

- Unfortunately, significant results were not found in this study.
- Having said this, there was a non-significant difference between the punishment behaviour (as measured by the median deduction value) between the two conditions - as shown in figure 2 with the 'eyes' condition.
- Also, a significant ($p = .008$) effect of the group as a measure of cooperation (median value contributed) was observed. Thus, our findings were influenced more by which group a particular participant was in as opposed to which condition.
- Hence, it could be argued there remains some support that eyes may influence punishment behaviour.

References

1. Barclay, P. (2006). Reputational benefits for altruistic punishment. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 27(5), 325-344
2. Bateson, M., Nettle, D., & Roberts, G. (2006). Cues of being watched enhance cooperation in a real-world setting. *Biology letters*, 2(3), 412-414.
3. Roberts, G. (2013). When Punishment Pays. *PloS one*, 8(3), e57378.
4. Sparks, A., & Barclay, P. (2013). Eye images increase generosity, but not for long: the limited effect of a false cue. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 34(5), 317-322.

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