

POSTER

HOW DO CUTE BABY STIMULI AFFECT PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR VIA DONATIONS IN AN ETHOLOGICAL SETTING?

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ABSTRACT

Cuteness has been found to increase prosocial behaviors such as donation intentions (Shin & Mattila, 2021). These findings often attribute the prosocial effect of cuteness to baby schema features such as big eyes, round faces, and large foreheads, thought to elicit more empathetic emotions which increase prosocial behaviors (Glocker, 2009). However, these effects are often observed in laboratory settings, where the intent to donate may not necessarily translate to an actual donation (Yang et al., 2022). Research that has been conducted outside of the laboratory has focused far more on cute animal stimuli (Guéguen, 2013; Shin & Mattila, 2021; Wang et al., 2017), and does not necessarily extend to human infant stimuli. The current research seeks to fill this gap by asking the question: does infant cuteness increase monetary donations in an ethological context? Adapting the honesty box paradigm (Bateson et al., 2006), researchers installed a black donation box alongside a call for donations advertisement with a picture of either a baby, or the control stimuli (flowers) at a local grocery store. Prosocial behavior was examined via the amount donated when each stimulus was present. We hypothesize that the infant stimuli will significantly increase donations in comparison to the control stimuli. Data collection is currently ongoing (planned end date June 1st); results to be discussed.