

Introduction

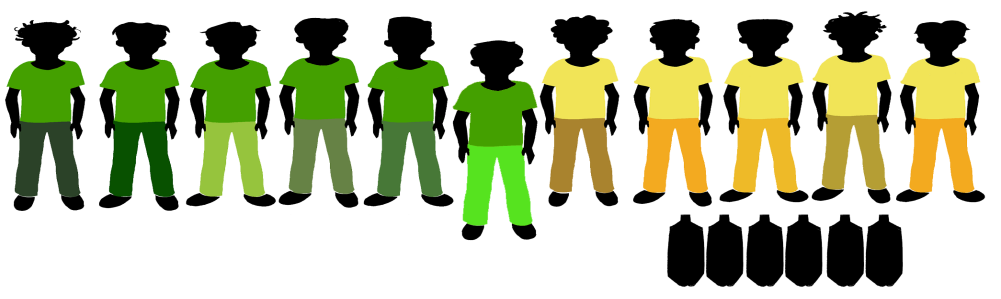
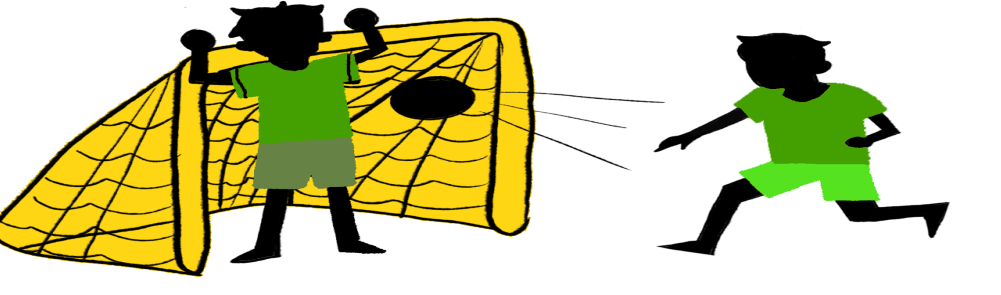
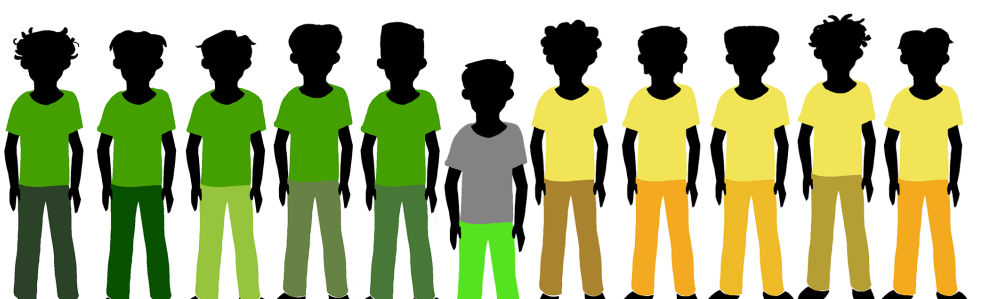
Research on moral obligations in childhood has shown that children ages 8 to 13 years believe it is a moral obligation to help the out-group in high need conditions (Sierksma, Thijs, & Verkuyten, 2014). Children feel a moral requirement to offer help in high need situations, independent of group membership. What is less documented is children’s sense of moral obligation to the out-group in contexts of varying need and disloyalty (Nesdale, Maass, Durken, & Griffiths, 2005). This study adds to the understanding of various intergroup contexts in which children weigh moral obligation of being loyal to ones group.

Participants

- 37 children
- M<sub>age</sub>=13.27 years; SD=2.22
- 68% female

Methods & Measures

- Participants were surveyed and randomly assigned to one of three conditions (e.g., physical harm, psychological harm, and social conventional harm).
- Each condition included two levels of disloyalty (e.g., low level of disloyalty and high level of disloyalty).
- Participants responded to two questions about the importance of helping their in-group/out-group (“How important is it that X try to get more water for your/the other group?”) using a Likert-type scale (1 = really not important, 6 = really important).

Survey Conditions		
	Story A: Low Disloyalty	Story B: High Disloyalty
1. Physical Harm Condition 	X gives 2 bottles to the other group and 4 bottles to your group. <a href="#">Question: How important is it that X try to get more water for your/the other group?</a>	X gives 6 bottles to the other group and 0 bottles to your group. <a href="#">Questions: How important is it that X try to get more water for your/the other group?</a>
2. Psychological Harm Condition 	X intentionally passes the soccer ball to the other team. <a href="#">Question: How important is it that X try to win the game for your/the other team?</a>	X intentionally scores a goal for the other team. <a href="#">Question: How important is it that X try to win the game for your/the other team?</a>
3. Social Conventional Harm 	X is not supporting your group by not wearing your teams shirt (grey). <a href="#">Question: How important is it that X try to support your/the other group</a>	X is not supporting your group by wearing the other teams shirt color (yellow or green). <a href="#">Question: How important is it that X try to support your/the other group?</a>

Results

1. Participants evaluated helping the in-group as more important than helping out-group in both the low level ( $F(1, 34)=13.47p<.05 \eta^2=.28$ ) and high level ( $F(1, 34)=63.41 p< .001 \eta^2=.65$ ) disloyalty stories.
2. An Evaluation X Harm type Interaction effect ( $F(1, 34)=16.96p<.01 \eta^2=.33$ ) indicates that participants evaluated helping the in-group as more important than helping the out-group primarily in the psychological harm ( $p<.01$ ) and physical harm ( $p<.01$ ) conditions but less so in the social conventional condition ( $p<.05$ ). See Figure 1.

Discussion

Findings show that overall participants thought it was more important to help the in-group than the out-group, irrespective of the level of disloyalty. The results suggest that participants in the high level of disloyalty story found it most important to help the in-group than the out-group in the physical harm condition. These findings add to the growing literature on intergroup attitudes in childhood and how children develop an understanding of morality in group contexts.

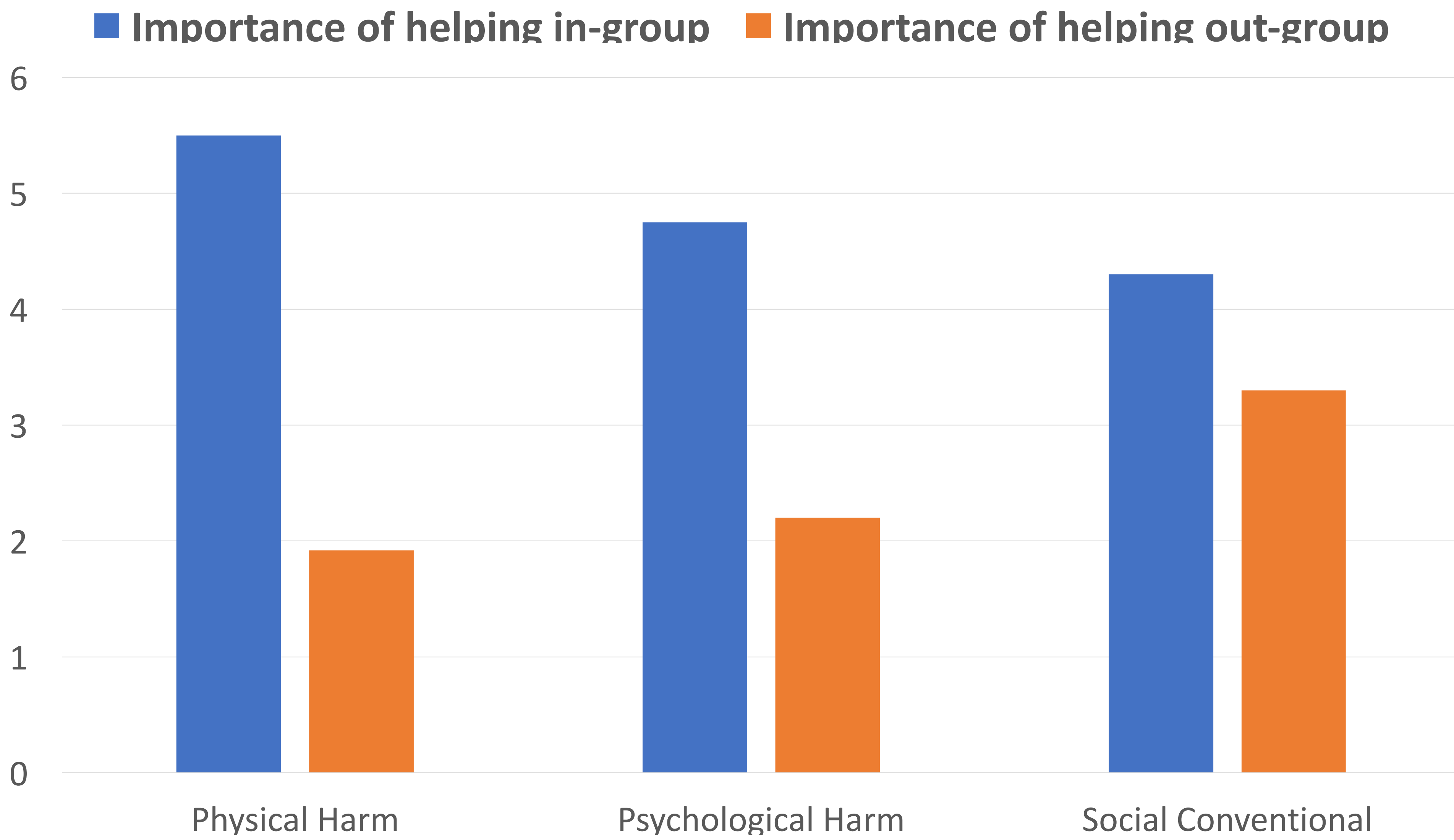


Figure 1. Evaluating the importance of helping the in-group and out-group for the three conditions on a 6-point Likert-type scale.

References

Nesdale, D., Maass, A., Durkin, K., & Griffiths, J. 2005. Group norms, threat, and children’s racial prejudice. *Child Development* 76(3) 652-663.

Sierksma, J., Thijs, J., & Verkuyten, M. 2014. Children’s intergroup helping: the role of empathy and peer group norms. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 126 369-383.