

Abstract

We conducted a simple resource allocation game known as the ultimatum game (UG) with preschoolers to examine the role of the cognitive and emotional perspective-taking ability on the proposer's and responder's behavior in the UG. One-hundred and forty-six preschoolers played an UG, and completed a false belief task (Sally-Anne task) and Denham's affective perspective-taking test. Our results showed that the ability for cognitive perspective-taking has a significantly positive effect on the proposer's offer to the responder and negative effect on the responder's rejection behavior, while the ability of emotional perspective-taking did not have any effect on the proposer's or the responder's behavior. These results imply that the ability to anticipate the responder's beliefs plays an important role in the proposer's choice of a fair allocation in the UG, while the understanding of the responder's emotional states per se does not play a significant role in determining allocation or rejection behavior in the UG.

Keywords: fairness, theory of mind, ultimatum game, emotion, punishment