

Partners in crime: Gratitude increases corrupt collaboration

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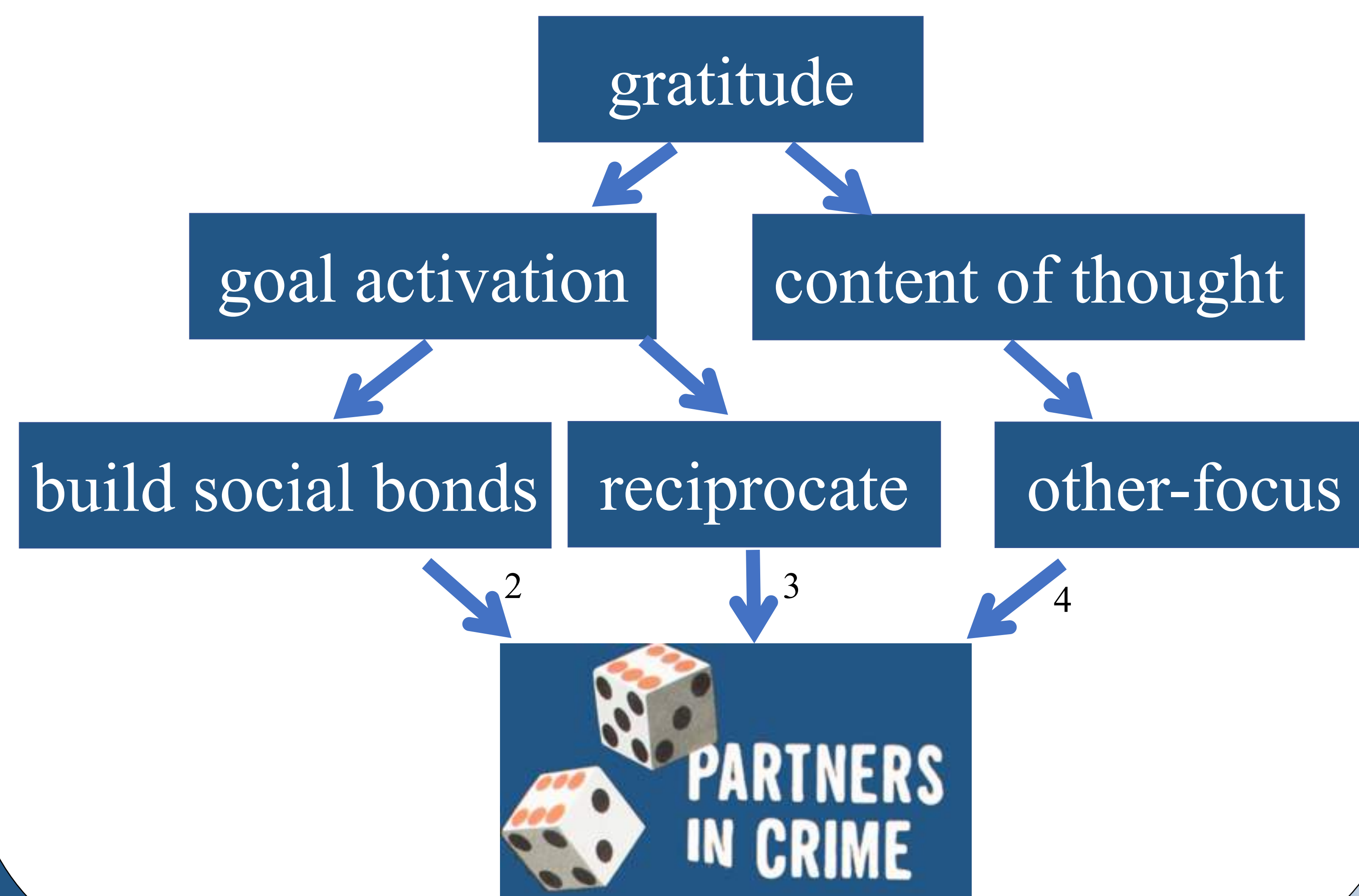
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Introduction

- Although gratitude has been shown to have many positive effects, its possible negative consequences have seldom been explored. Here we examine the effect of gratitude when decision makers must choose between competing moral sentiments—being honest versus benefiting a partner by lying, despite a financial cost to a third party (i.e., the experimenter).

Appraisal Tendency Framework¹

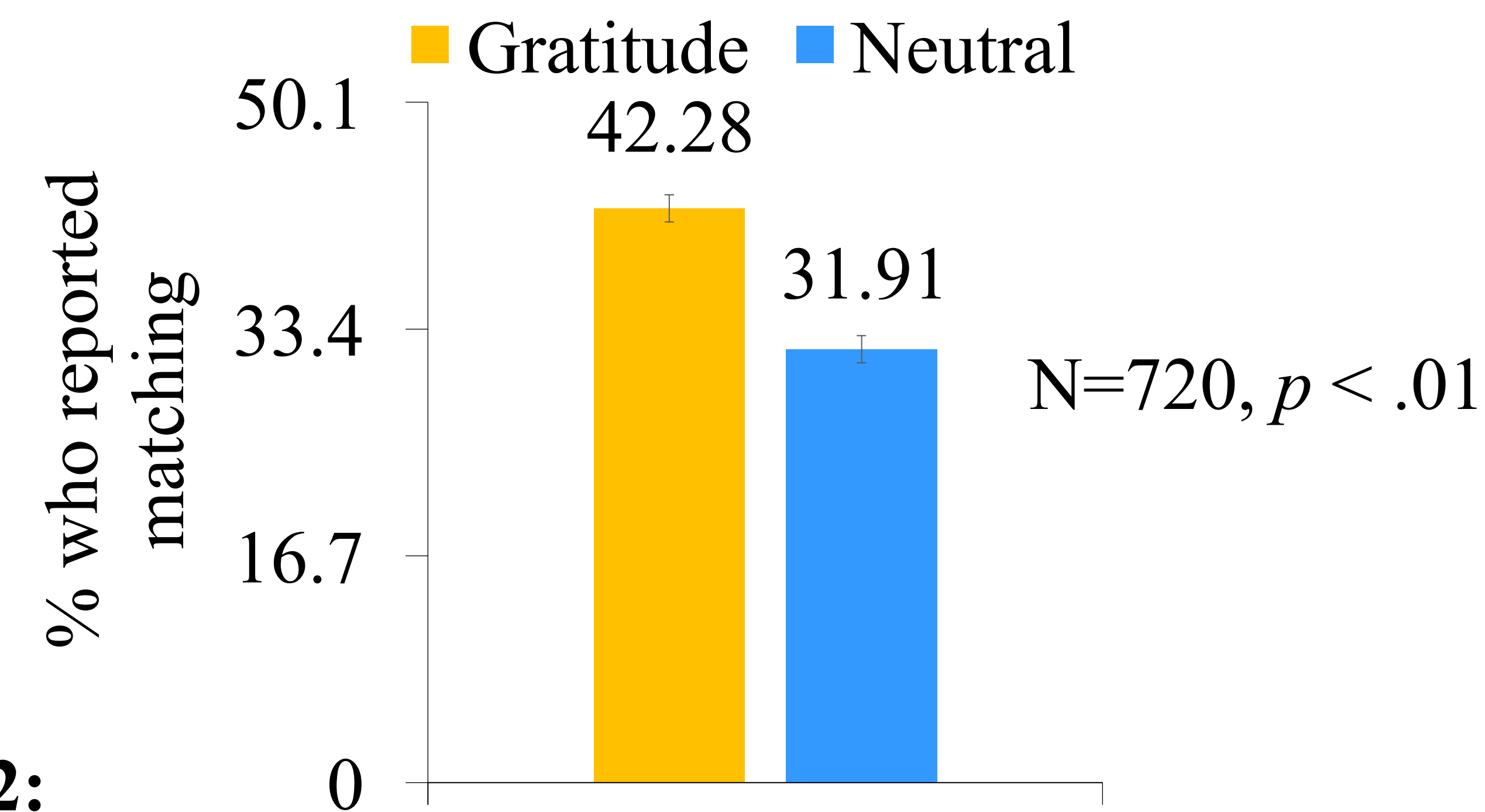


Studies 1 & 2: Integral gratitude

- Hypothesis: Integral gratitude will increase lying when lying benefits a partner, but not when lying benefits only oneself.
- Emotion induction: Participants receive a large portion of money in a resource distribution game
 - Neutral condition: receive money by chance
 - Gratitude condition: receive money by partner's generosity
- Outcome: Lying to match partner's number in a dyadic die-roll game

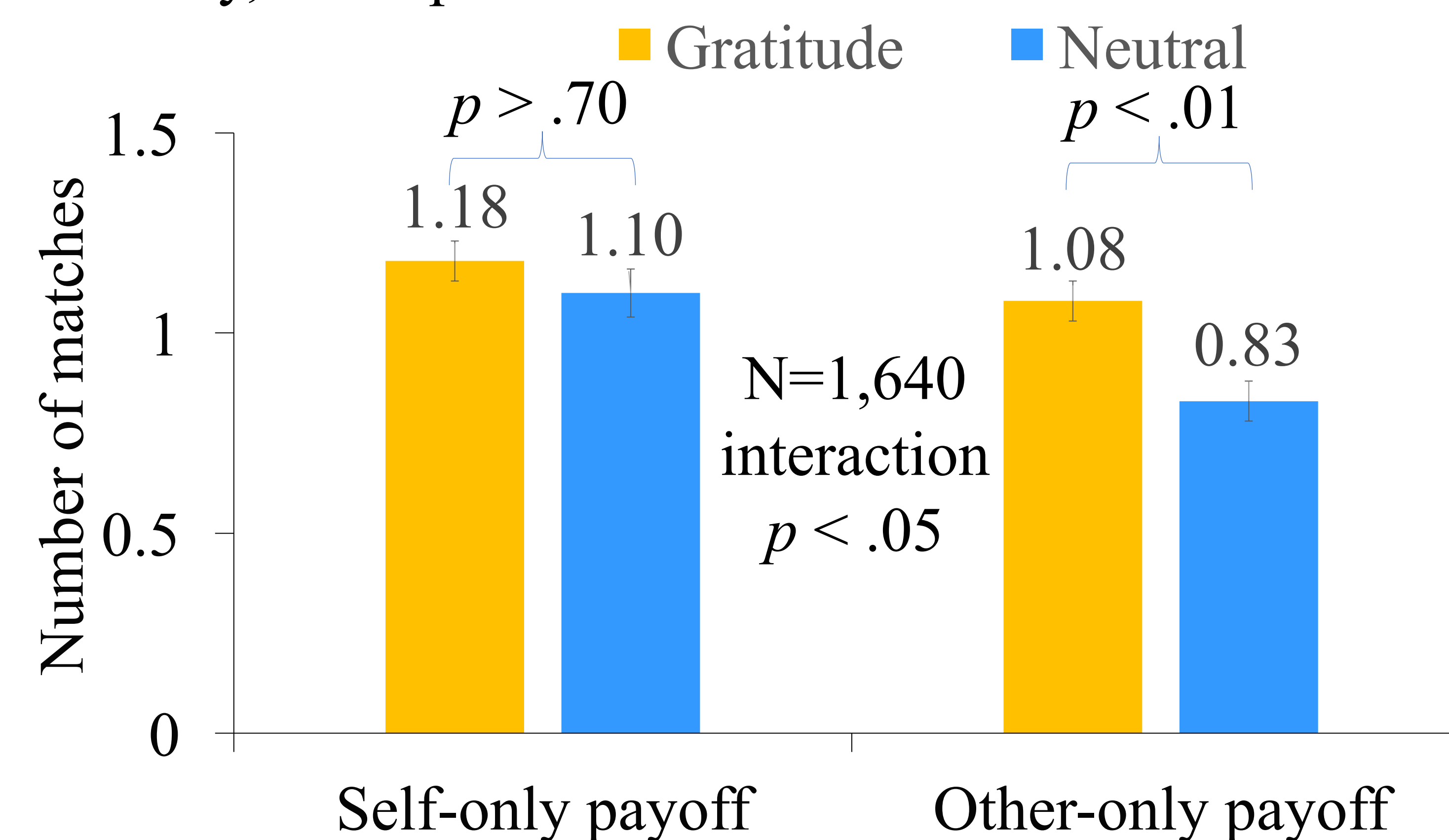
Study 1:

- If the participant matches their partner's number, their partner earns a bonus.
- They play the game for 1 round. Therefore, assuming honesty, the chance of matching is 16.7%.



Study 2:

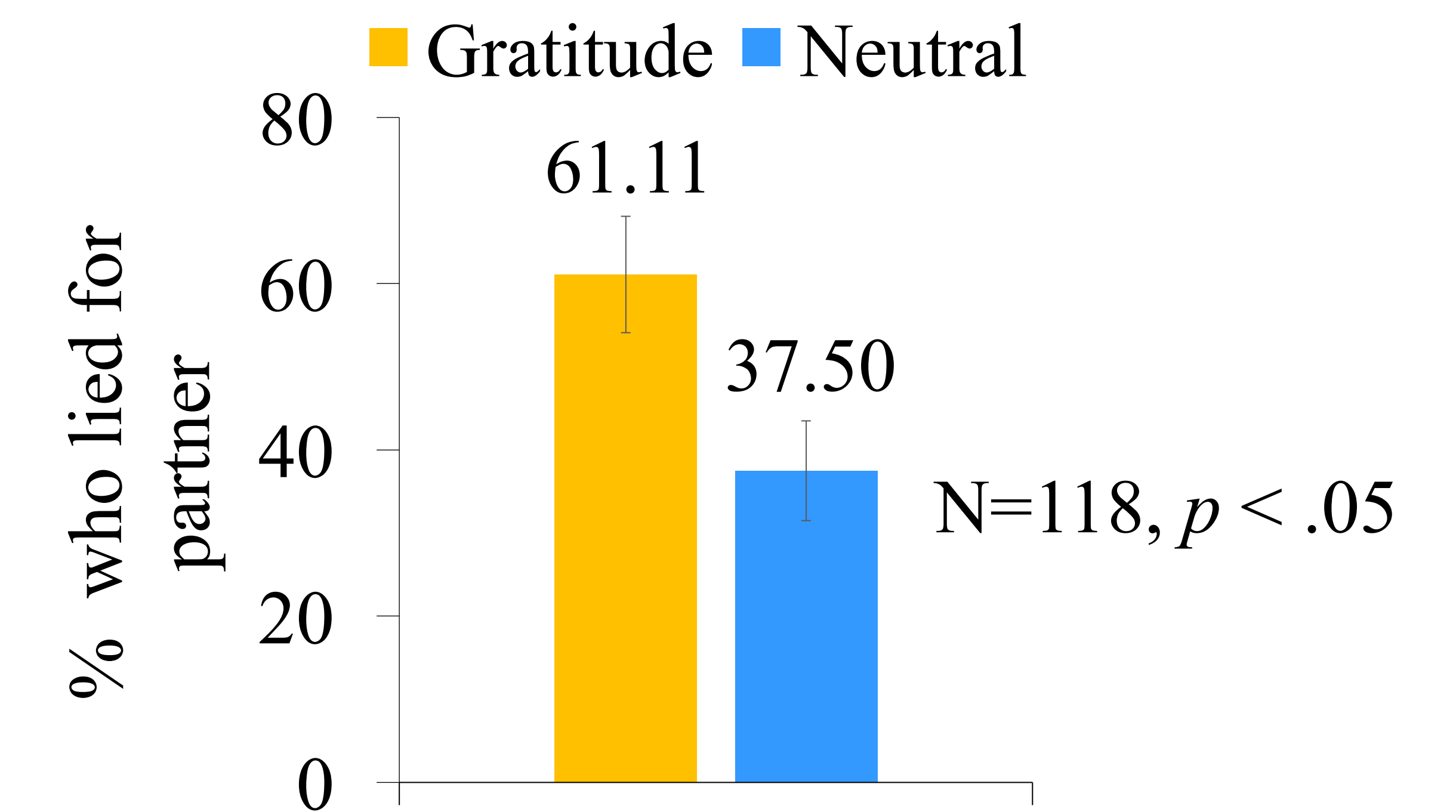
- If the participant matches their partner's number in the:
 - Other-only payoff condition: their partner earns a bonus
 - Self-only payoff condition: the participant earns a bonus
- They play the game for 3 rounds. Therefore, assuming honesty, the expected number of matches is 0.5.



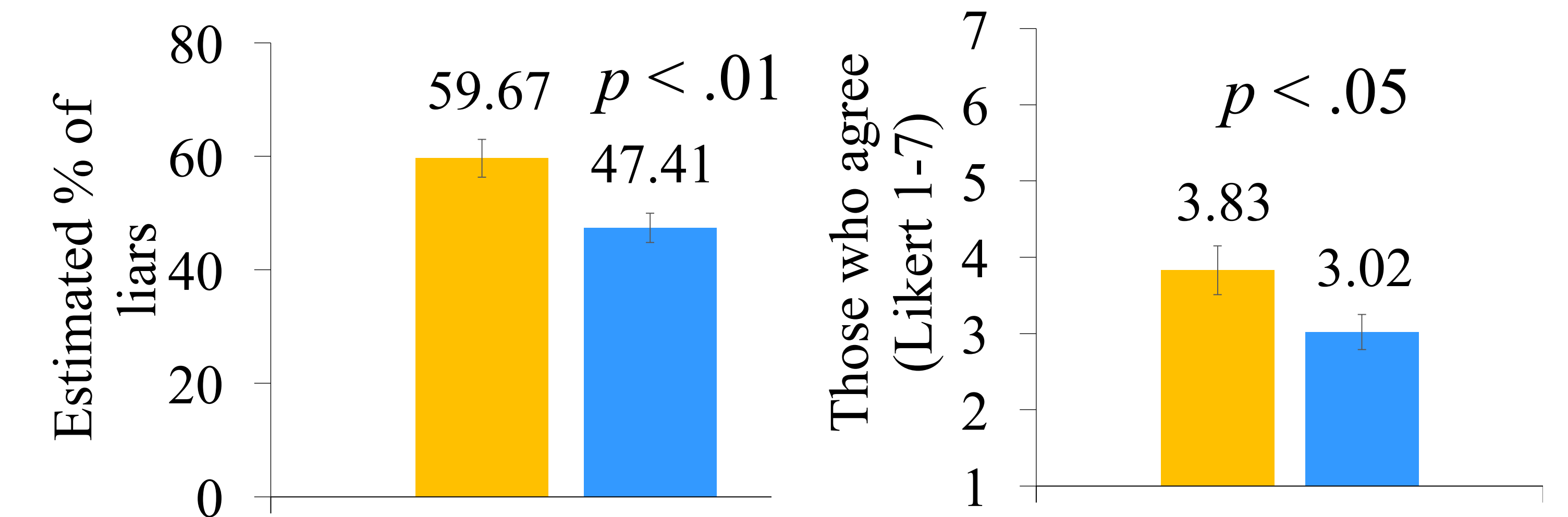
- Consistent with our hypothesis, integral gratitude increased lying when lying benefited a partner, but not when lying benefited only oneself. These results cannot be explained by a valence-based account, which would predict that general positive affect increases lying that benefits oneself.⁵
- These results were mediated by self-reported gratitude and by appraisals of other-focus.

Study 3: Incidental gratitude

- Hypothesis: Incidental gratitude will increase lying that benefits a partner.
- Emotion induction: Video clip + writing
- Outcome: Lying in a die-roll game for a partner to earn a bonus



Perceived descriptive norm Perceived injunctive norm



- Consistent with our hypothesis, incidental gratitude increased lying to benefit one's partner.

Conclusion and Discussion

- Both integral and incidental gratitude increase lying when lying benefits one's partner.
- These findings provide a nuanced view of gratitude as a moral emotion and highlight the subtle effects of gratitude in enabling exploitation and corruption.

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Comments/feedback welcome!
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