

Nederlandse Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

De Westerse samenleving nodigt kinderen voortdurend uit om zich te vergelijken met anderen (Festinger, 1954; Kohn, 1992). Er wordt vaak aangenomen dat wanneer kinderen ontdekken dat ze iets beter kunnen dan anderen, ze zich beter voelen over zichzelf en een hogere zelfwaardering ontwikkelen (Dweck, 2006; Kohn, 1992). Hoewel zulke neerwaartse sociale vergelijkingen goed voelen, dragen ze ook een risico in zich: ze zouden een narcistische behoefte aan superioriteit kunnen aanwakkeren (Mirgain, 2005). Dit proefschrift toont aan dat sociale vergelijkingen inderdaad een schaduwzijde hebben, maar laat ook zien dat *temporele vergelijkingen* – jezelf vergelijken met jezelf, niet met anderen – kunnen bijdragen aan gevoelens van trots, verbondenheid en inzicht, zonder een narcistische behoefte aan superioriteit aan te wakkeren.

Er wordt gezegd: “Remember that there is nothing noble in being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self” (Sheldon, 1897, p. 61). Desondanks is onderzoek naar temporele vergelijkingen in de loop der jaren niet tot bloei gekomen, wellicht omdat wordt aangenomen dat mensen zulke vergelijkingen alleen maken wanneer ze niet de mogelijkheid hebben om sociale vergelijkingen te maken—zoals een kind dat zonder zijwieltjes leert fietsen zonder zich te kunnen vergelijken met leeftijdsgenoten (Goolsby & Chaplin, 1988; Wedell & Parducci, 2000). Dit gebrek aan onderzoek naar temporele vergelijkingen is betreurenswaardig, omdat sociale en temporele vergelijkingen essentiële informatie geven die kinderen gebruiken om zichzelf te evalueren en hun zelfbeeld op te bouwen (Albert, 1977; Festinger, 1954; Harter, 2012). In dit proefschrift heb ik sociale en temporele vergelijkingen onderzocht, om zo antwoord te krijgen op de vraag of temporele vergelijkingen kinderen en adolescenten dezelfde gunstige effecten hebben op kinderen als sociale vergelijkingen, maar zonder de eventuele ongewenste effecten van sociale vergelijkingen. Met drie empirische hoofdstukken, die elk gebruikmaken van anderen onderzoeksmethoden, heb ik getracht deze vraag te beantwoorden.

Samenvatting van de Belangrijkste Resultaten

Hoofdstuk 2 beschrijft een gerandomiseerd veldexperiment waarmee we de causale effecten van sociale en temporele vergelijkingen met elkaar vergeleken. Ten eerste verwachtten we dat neerwaartse sociale vergelijkingen niet alleen zouden leiden tot een gevoel van trots, maar ook tot de behoefte om superieur te zijn aan anderen. Ten tweede verwachtten we dat neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen eveneens zouden leiden tot trots, maar niet tot de behoefte om superieur te zijn aan anderen. We verwachtten dat het juist zou leiden tot de behoefte om jezelf te verbeteren (in plaats van superieur te zijn aan anderen), alsook tot gevoelens van vooruitgang en inzicht. We verzamelden gegevens in een grote steekproef kinderen ($N = 583$, $M_{leeftijd} = 11.65$, $SD = 1.92$), die we gerandomiseerd toewezen aan condities om sociale vergelijkingen, temporele vergelijkingen of geen vergelijkingen te maken. We ontdekten dat zowel neerwaartse sociale als neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen ervoor zorgden dat kinderen zich trots voelden, maar dat alleen neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen dit gevoel opriepen zonder te doen verlangen naar superioriteit en tegelijkertijd hen het gevoel gaf meer progressie en inzicht te hebben. De resultaten waren vergelijkbaar voor jeugdigen in de middel tot late kindertijd (8-10 jaar), vroege adolescentie (11-13 jaar) en middelbare adolescentie (14-16 jaar).

Hoofdstuk 3 beschrijft een dagboekstudie waarmee we onderzochten hoe vaak adolescenten dagelijks sociale en temporele vergelijkingen maken en dit samenhangt met hun emoties, behoeften en doelen. Adolescenten ($N = 389$, $M_{\text{leeftijd}} = 12.69$, $SD = 0.97$) vulden op vijf achtereenvolgende schooldagen een dagboek in over hun ervaringen die dag. We ontdekten dat de adolescenten meer temporele vergelijkingen maakten dan sociale vergelijkingen. Neerwaartse vergelijkingen gingen samen met gevoelens van trots, competentie en autonomie, terwijl opwaartse vergelijkingen samengingen met schaamte, ongeacht of deze vergelijkingen sociaal of temporeel waren. Echter, neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen—en dus niet sociale vergelijkinge—ging samen met gevoelens van verbondenheid en een behoefte aan zelfverbetering, in plaats van een behoefte aan superioriteit. Deze behoefte aan zelfverbetering medieerde gedeeltelijk de samenhang tussen neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen en gevoelens van verbondenheid. Dit suggereert dat neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen adolescenten aanmoedigt om te leren en zichzelf te verbeteren, en dat dit adolescenten in staat stelt betere, warmere relaties te smeden met anderen.

Hoofdstuk 4 beschrijft twee empirische studies bij adolescenten: een correlatieve studie (Studie 1; $N = 382$, $M_{\text{leeftijd}} = 12.46$, $SD = 1.23$) en een intensieve longitudinale studie (Studie 2; $N = 201$, $M_{\text{leeftijd}} = 12.69$, $SD = 0.97$). We hebben onderzocht of narcisme — een persoonlijkheidstrekk die wordt gekenmerkt gevoelens van superioriteit en een behoefte aan bewondering — samenhang met neerwaartse sociale vergelijkingen (Studie 1) en of narcisme in stand werd gehouden door neerwaartse sociale vergelijkingen (Studie 2). We zagen dat adolescenten met narcistische trekken meer neerwaartse sociale vergelijkingen maakten, en dat deze vergelijkingen hun narcistische trekken in stand hielden. Adolescenten met narcistische trekken maakten ook meer neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen, maar deze vergelijkingen hielden hun narcistische trekken niet in stand. Dit suggereert dat sociale—maar niet temporele—vergelijkingen een mechanisme zijn waarmee narcistische persoonlijkheidstrekken zichzelf in stand houden.

Conclusie

Dit proefschrift geeft inzicht in de effecten van sociale en temporele vergelijkingen op kinderen. Met een experiment, dagboekstudie, correlatieve studie en intensieve longitudinale studie heb ik aangetoond dat neerwaartse sociale vergelijkingen leiden tot gevoelens van trots, maar dat ze onbedoeld kunnen bijdragen aan een narcistische behoefte aan superioriteit. Dat geldt niet voor neerwaartse temporele vergelijkingen. Die leiden ook tot gevoelens van trots, maar kunnen daarnaast juist bijdragen aan gevoelens van verbondenheid, vooruitgang en inzicht, alsook een behoefte aan zelfverbetering. In lijn met deze bevindingen roepen we op tot interventies om te toetsen of het aanmoedigen van temporele vergelijkingen kan bijdragen aan een gezonde zelfbeeldontwikkeling bij kinderen. In toekomstig onderzoek zou onderzocht moeten worden of kinderen met narcistische trekken goed reageren op dergelijke interventies. Hoewel ze sterk geneigd zijn om sociale vergelijkingen te maken, zijn ze wel degelijk in staat om ook temporele vergelijkingen te maken. Dit suggereert dat temporele vergelijkingen een middel zijn waarmee interventies kunnen bijdragen aan een gezonder zelfbeeld van kinderen.

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About the Author

Çisem Gürel was born in Tekirdağ, Turkey. She lives in Almere with her husband, Tolga, and her adopted son Jerry, the German Shepherd (2019). She pursued a Bachelor's and Master's degree (High Honors, Dean's Honors), both in Psychological Counseling and Guidance, at Boğaziçi University (Turkey; 2004-2010). During and after her Master's studies, she worked as a full-time Psychological Counselor at a variety of multicultural schools and clinical institutions in Turkey (2010-2014) and gained experience in working with a wide-range of challenges in youth such as self-esteem issues, anxiety, depression, abuse, aggression, bullying, and with special needs (dyslexia, autism, ADHD). Working as a practitioner and research assistant at UNICEF, she rediscovered her passion for research. After being granted with the Amsterdam Excellence Scholarship (€50.000), she decided to quit her job and move to the Netherlands to study at the Research Master's in Child Development and Education. In the first year of the Research Master's, she worked as a research assistant at the Family Lab and Baby Lab of the UvA on social anxiety, shyness, and behavioral inhibition in children. In the second year of the Research Master's, Çisem collaborated with international schools in the Netherlands for conducting a field experiment to investigate how praise influences adolescents' motivation. In the same year, she got selected to join the Graduate Program of Yield Research Priority Area, a multidisciplinary research area on the bioecology of human development. Throughout the Research Master's, she followed the Amsterdam Excellence Track at the University of Amsterdam and graduated with Cum Laude (2014-2016). Toward the end of her Research Master's studies, she acquired multidisciplinary Yield Graduate Program Grant (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, NWO) to embark on a journey as a PhD researcher at the same institution. During her PhD studies, she acquired UvA 385 Grant and visited Stanford University, where she collaborated with Prof. Carol Dweck and the Dweck-Walton Lab. Additionally, she visited Southampton University, where she collaborated with Prof. Constantine Sedikides. She received another grant to join EARA Summer School in Belgium. During her PhD studies, she gained experience in teaching as a supervisor for bachelor's and master's theses and co-developed a course in Good Research Practices for bachelor's, master's, and PhD students (2016-2020). Çisem is now working at the Erasmus University Rotterdam as a Scientific Information Specialist. She teaches information literacy and academic skills to bachelor's, master's, and PhD students, develops teaching materials, and contributes to the (inter)national projects to raise awareness in open-science and -educational resources. Additionally, she is working as a master psychologist (SKJ registered).

Other Publications

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