“Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger”: Negative Comparison on Facebook and Adolescents' Life Satisfaction Are Reciprocally Related

# Details

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## Sample

1,235 adolescents from 12- to 19- year-olds from 15 randomly selected Flemish high schools completed the questionnaires at both time points

# Abstract

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, offer adolescent users an ideal platform for
negative comparison (i.e., experiencing negative feelings from social comparison). Although
such negative comparison on Facebook has been associated with users’ well-being, the
reciprocal relations between the two remain unclear, particularly in an adolescent sample. To
examine this reciprocal process, a two-wave study among a representative sample of Flemish
adolescents was set up (NTime1 = 1,840). Data were analyzed using structural equation
modelling. Cross-lagged analyses indicated that negative comparison on Facebook predicted
decreases in life satisfaction over time. Conversely, lower scores on life satisfaction predicted
increases in negative comparison on Facebook. The discussion focuses on the understanding
of these findings, key limitations, directions for future research and implications for
prevention and intervention strategies.

# Outcome

"Negative comparison on Facebook and adolescents’ life satisfaction are reciprocally related over time. Negative online comparison decreased individuals’ well-being. SNS's reduce cues of computer-mediated communication and allows users to present themselves in their best possible way. With the rise of SNSs, adolescents are offered a new platform where they can easily present their best
possible self. As a result of this upward comparison on SNSs, people may compare themselves more negatively with others, which in turn may negatively affect adolescent users’ life satisfaction. This finding extends prior research, as negative comparison on Facebook
leads to similar negative outcomes for adolescents’ subjective well-being as negative comparison in an offline context. Furthermore, those who are already dissatisfied with their life (in an offline context) are more likely to use SNSs in a similar way, i.e., in a way in which they compare themselves with those who have a better life. Thus, the present study confirmed continuity in adolescents’ social behaviors, over time (i.e., six-month interval), and across different contexts (i.e., online-offline context).(Frison Eggermont, 2016, pp. 10-11)