Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

'Homies' (wijkgerichte op media gebaseerde identiteiten met empowermentstrategieën): Empowerment van jongeren via mobiele sociale netwerken met leeftijdgenoten die fungeren als motivatoren

'Homies' (neighborhood oriented media-based identities with empowering strategies): Empowerment of children via mobile social networking peers that function as motivators
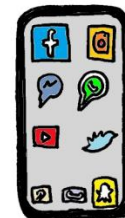
Julia Kneer
Jeroen Jansz

Erasmus University Rotterdam

The Basic Idea

- Cultural diversity in cities, schools etc.

- Role models

  - Who are role models?

  - Teachers overwhelmed?

  - Parents overwhelmed?

- Media usage of youngsters – mobile communication

- Role of media

  - Wellbeing

  - Social interaction

Sponsors and Collaborations

- NWO, SURF project
  - Funding
- Vodafone Ziggo
  - Sponsors mobile phones and contracts
- Nederlands Jeugdinstituut
  - Supports and consults
- peer2peer
  - Invented methods to train children to peer up with other children
  - Intensive training
- Bouwkeet
  - Makerspace for phase II

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Study I

Peer2Peer

Kneer, J., van Eldik, A., Jansz, J., Eischeid, S., & Usta, M. (2019). [With a little help from my friends: Peer coaching for refugee adolescents and the role of social media.](#) *Media and Communication, 7*(2), 264- 274.

Methods

- First data collection
  - Survey including questions for self-esteem, peer loneliness, leisure time activities, social media use, school integration & motivation, peer norms concerning schools, social anxiety, life satisfaction
- Sample – children of a Peer2Peer project and control group
  - 16 buddies, 14 peers (from Syria), 15 control buddies, and 12 control peers (most from Syria)
  - Age between 13 - 18 years (M = 14.09, SD = 1.65)
  - 61.7% of the sample were female

- Training of buddies
- Matching with their peers
- Weekly diaries of four homies send via WhatsApp

- Second data collection after 14 weeks
  - Same survey
  - Same children

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Methods: Procedure Media Diaries

- 4 buddies were handed mobile phones as well as sim cards
- Questions every week via WhatsApp
  - Did you have contact with your peer this week?
  - In case you did not have contact, what was the reason?
  - How do you think your peer is doing?
  - How are you doing as buddy? How do you feel in your role
  - Did something special happen this week? If so, what happened?

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Results: Media Diaries

- Hanging out
  - 32 times meeting up face-to-face public or private, 20 were in a public location, 8 were in a private place: e.g., buddy's home (6 times) or the peer's home (2 times), 4 meetings were not specified
- Development of Friendship
  - Some buddies felt a little awkward or unsure what to do but often they reported an increase in feelings of friendship.
    - "It's become less awkward between us, so communication has become easier and the atmosphere has improved." [buddy#2]
    - "I have the feeling that we [have become] really good friends." [buddy#1]
  - Relationships with peers improved, which in most cases resulted in the development of friendship
- Peer's Well-Being
  - One important topic was peers' need for help and their responses to it
    - "I think he is doing better, he is better at answering than before, and he takes initiative to ask more questions." [buddy#3]
    - "I asked her if I could help her with something, but [she said] I didn't have to." [buddy#2]
  - Buddies sometimes initiated the support themselves.
  - One buddy arranged a job for his peer

Results: Media Diaries

- Buddy's Experience

  - Buddies reported only a few times on feeling bad

  - Many reported feeling good about their peer's improvements and the establishment of friendship

  - In those cases, the buddy expressed a sense of pride which seems to partly come from their sense of responsibility

  - Responsibility also seemed a burden in some cases

  - Some felt guilty for not being able to meet up often enough, others wanted to offer help but did not know how or were declined.

    - "I have the feeling that I should do more for [the relationship with the peer], take the lead a little more." [buddy#3]

  - Overcoming these issues seemed to strengthen pride even more

    - "I think my peer is doing well, because she keeps saying that she feels like meeting up. I, as a buddy, feel good, [and] because she says she wants to meet up, I look forward to it more and more as well." [buddy#2]

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Results: Media Diaries

- Communication & Conflicts
  - Cultural differences
  - Buddies expressed language or miscommunication
  - "I think [he has] improved in asking stuff, although I have the feeling that the language barrier is bigger than I anticipated. I had to teach him how to work at a different station [at work], and I had to explain 500 times before he did it right. He said he understood, but this wasn't the case. [buddy#3]"
  - Buddies indicated that the communication skills of the peers improved
  - Some specific situations caused conflict, e.g. leaving a social event
    - "He left rather quickly and I didn't feel like he was having a good time. I felt quite bad about him having a bad time, but I didn't really know what I should have done differently or what I should do about it now. [buddy#4]"
  - Later on this buddy reported that there was a lack of communication that caused the conflict and it was resolved quickly afterwards
  - Solving such conflicts contributed to intensifying their relationship

Results: Regression analysis for Second Survey

- Idea: To what extend do new special social media that is meant for 'hanging out' compared to spending time with friends face to face predict social variables?
    - Regression analyses for the project group and the control group were conducted with friends and snapchat usage as predictors for social variables (emotional support, social distraction, affectionate support and peer loneliness)
    - No significant results for any regression analyses for the control group

criteria	$F(2, 27)$	R^2	friends β	Snapchat β
Emotional support	12.15***	.48***	.07	.65***
Social distraction	4.48*	.27*	.30	.31
Affectionate support	6.41**	.33**	.32	.36*
Peer loneliness	4.13*	.24*	-.26	-.33

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, $p < .001$.

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Discussion

- Buddies feel high social support
    - Motivation to join and 'give to others'.
- Life satisfaction for buddies reduces
    - Life satisfaction is still high for all groups
    - Might be due to responsibility feelings
    - Being proud vs. being overwhelmed
- Lower self-esteem and higher peer loneliness for peers disappears
- Social media is supporting development of friendships
- Snapchat usage predicts experience of emotional and affectionate support
    - Conflicts – that are solved – help communication and understanding
    - Friendships develop
    - Social support from 'locals' of high importance for migration (Oppedal, 2011; Podsiadlowski, Vauclair, & Spiess, 2013)

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Problem

- Original plan: repeat this study in Germany
- No German schools wanted to participate ☹
- Instead, empowerment became more and more interesting

To what extent does empowerment through intervention programs influence well-being?

Study II:

Development of an Empowerment Scale

Empowerment Definition

- Does not really exist
- Interdisciplinary theories
- Complicated
- Most research on females, racism, etc.

- Most agree on:
  - Process
  - Giving power to …
  - Afterwards: Decision making, self-esteem, independent working attitude, etc.

- OUR IDEA: closely linked to Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory

- Autonomy
- Competence
- Social Connectedness

- Found in MANY studies (normal life, school, media use, motivations etc.)

- Process of *increasing* these three can be seen as empowerment

- IMPACT on:
  - Well-being in general
  - Self efficacy
  - Integration in society / cultural openness

Data Collection - Frequencies

- Valid data: N = 294
- Gender: 49.3 % female, 40.1% male, 10.5 % did not answer
- Migrant background: 14.3 % without, 69.0 % with, 16.7 % did not know or did not answer
- Age: 11.33 years on average (SD = 1.32), most were 11 years old

- None of these variables had any impact on any outcome variable
  - Only age on life satisfaction if other variables were not taken into account
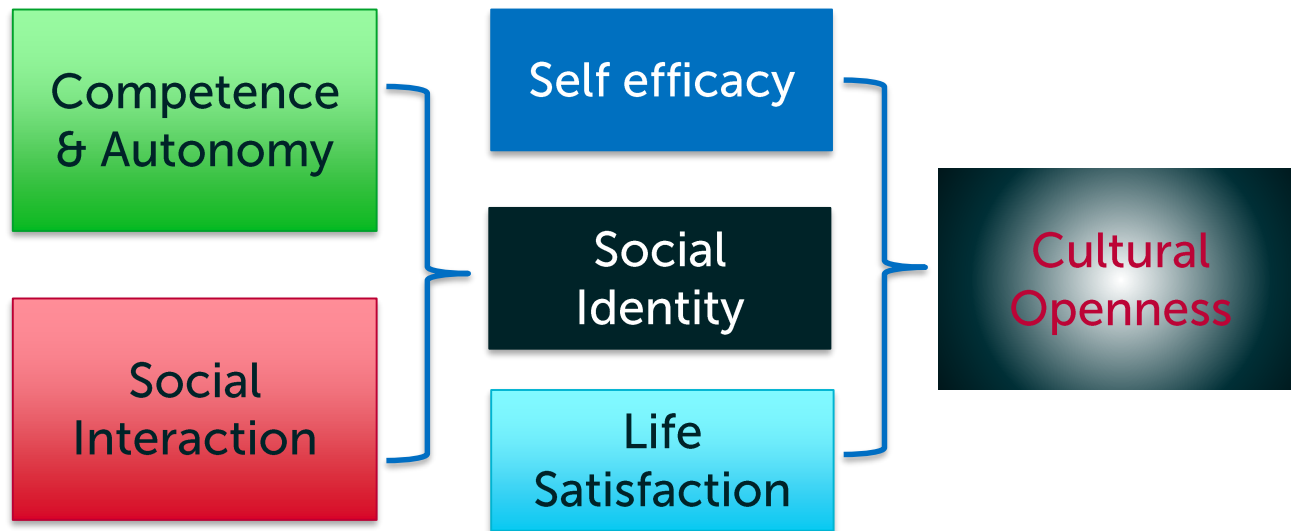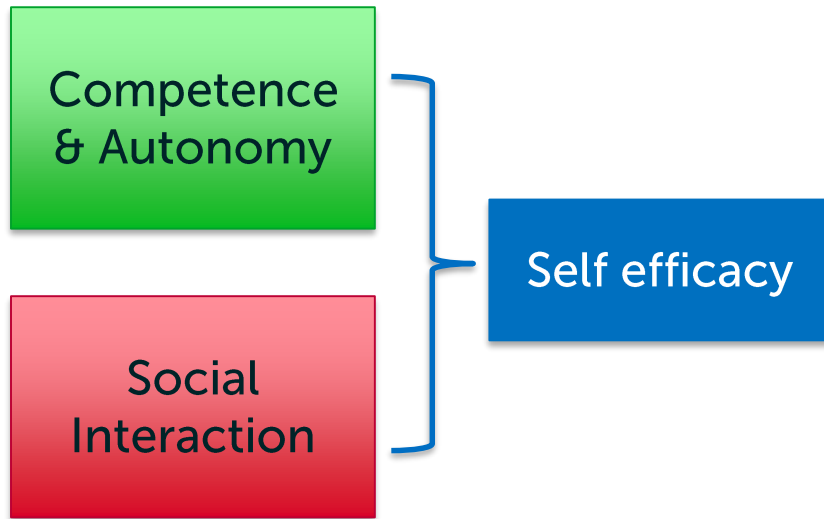 - Thus, not important

Data Preparation

- Empowerment Scale
  - Expected: 3 subscales (subcategories)
    - Competence (2 items)
    - Autonomy (2 items)
    - Social Interaction (4 items)
  - Found: 2 subscales
    - Combination of competence and autonomy
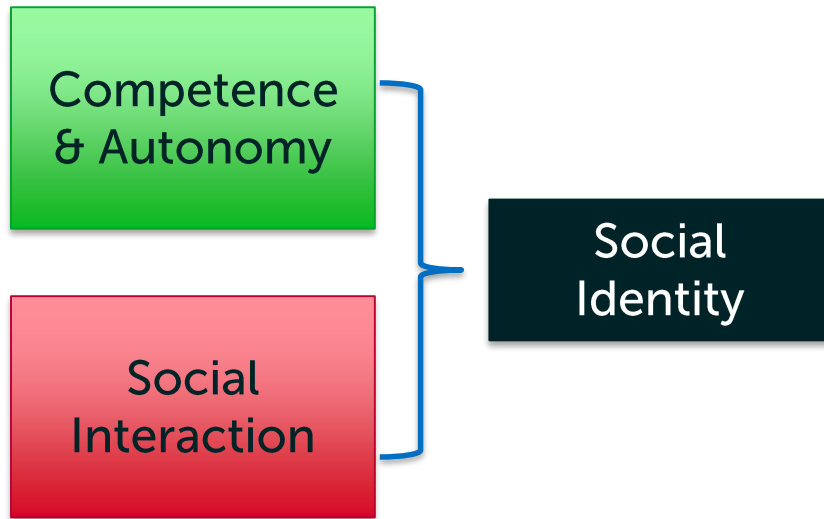   - Social interaction

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Relationships between concepts

Competence & Autonomy

Social Interaction

Self efficacy

Social Identity

Life Satisfaction

Cultural Openness

Self efficacy

```
Competence
& Autonomy  ┐
            ├──  Self efficacy
Social      ┘
Interaction
```

	ß
Competence & autonomy	.41***
Social interaction	.14*
R^2	.24***

*$p < .050$, ** $p < .010$, *** $p < .001$,

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Social Identity

Competence & Autonomy

Social Interaction

Social Identity

	ß
Competence & autonomy	.47***
Social interaction	.42***
R^2	.56***

*$p < .050$, ** $p < .010$, *** $p < .001$,

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Life Satisfaction
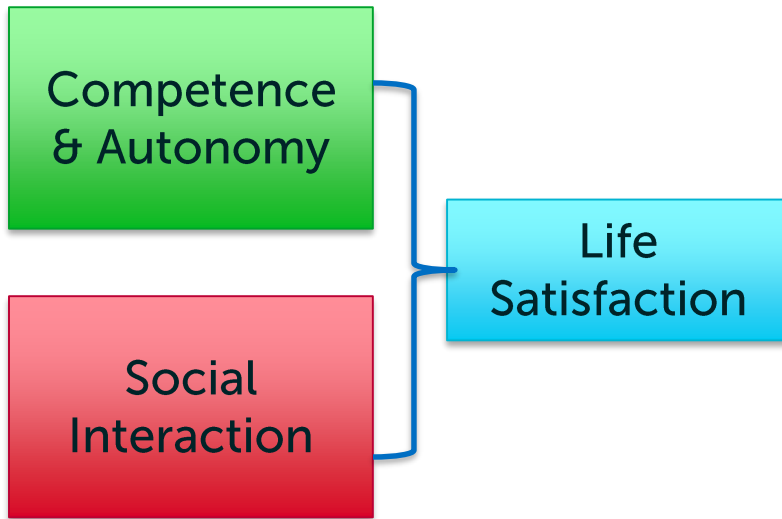
	ß
Competence & autonomy	.24***
Social interaction	.24***
R^2	.17***

* p < .050, ** p < .010, *** p < .001,

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Cultural Openness
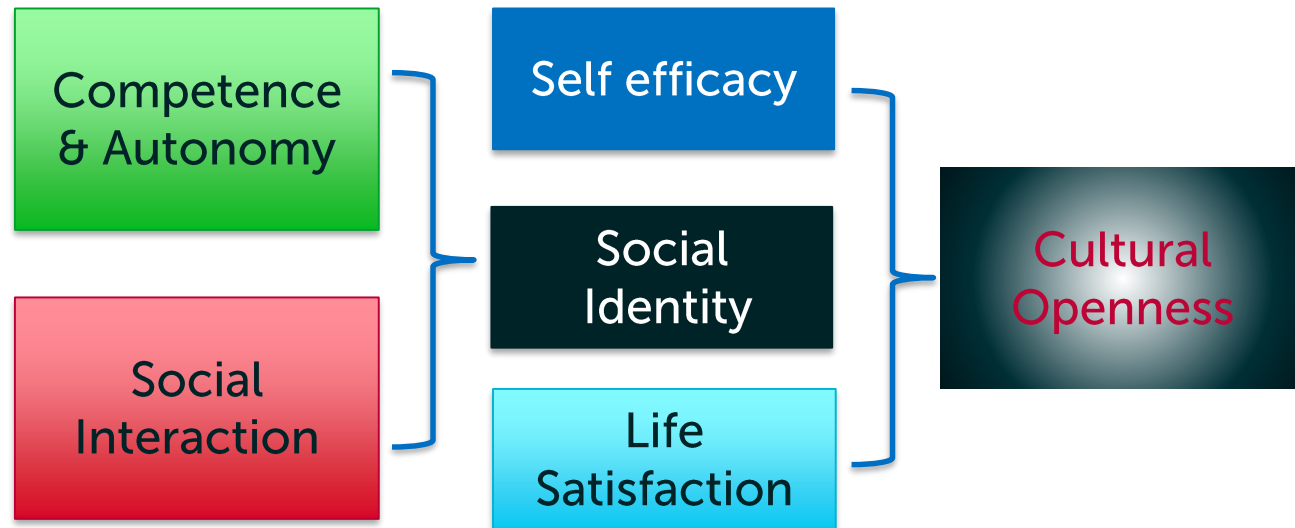
	ß
Competence & autonomy	.10
Social interaction	.06
Self efficacy	.28***
Social identity	.26***
Life Satisfaction	.18**
R^2	.49**

* p < .050, ** p < .010, *** p < .001,

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Discussion: Empowerment as concept

- Empowerment
    - Is a process, not an outcome
    - Has 2 subdimensions
        - Autonomy & competence
        - Social interaction
    - Influences social identity, life satisfaction, and self efficacy directly
    - Self efficacy and social identity and life satisfaction are mediators for cultural openness

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture

Next / Last steps...

- Publish findings
- Publish EPICA (Empowerment through Interventions for Children and Adolescents) as open source
- Use EPICA in future studies

Thanks!

Any Questions?