

Same meaning but different feelings: Different expressions influence satisfaction in social comparisons

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Abstract. This study examined how different expressions of social comparison affect satisfaction. In two experiments, participants were asked to compare their performance with others using different expressions. The results showed that the same meaning but different feelings of expressions influenced satisfaction. Specifically, upward comparisons using positive expressions led to higher satisfaction than upward comparisons using negative expressions. Conversely, downward comparisons using negative expressions led to higher satisfaction than downward comparisons using positive expressions. These findings suggest that the framing effect of expressions plays a significant role in social comparison satisfaction.

Key words: direction of comparison, framing effect, social comparison.

At the beginning of the 21st century, social comparison theory has become a central concept in social psychology. According to Festinger (1954), individuals evaluate their own abilities and opinions by comparing them with those of others. This process is influenced by the direction of comparison (upward or downward) and the framing of the comparison (positive or negative). Research has shown that upward comparisons generally lead to lower satisfaction, while downward comparisons lead to higher satisfaction. However, the framing of the comparison also plays a significant role. For example, upward comparisons using positive expressions (e.g., "I am better than...") can lead to higher satisfaction than upward comparisons using negative expressions (e.g., "I am worse than..."). Conversely, downward comparisons using negative expressions (e.g., "I am worse than...") can lead to higher satisfaction than downward comparisons using positive expressions (e.g., "I am better than..."). This study aims to explore the underlying mechanisms of these effects and how different expressions influence satisfaction in social comparisons.

Research has shown that the framing of social comparisons significantly influences satisfaction. For example, upward comparisons using positive expressions (e.g., "I am better than...") can lead to higher satisfaction than upward comparisons using negative expressions (e.g., "I am worse than..."). Conversely, downward comparisons using negative expressions (e.g., "I am worse than...") can lead to higher satisfaction than downward comparisons using positive expressions (e.g., "I am better than..."). This study aims to explore the underlying mechanisms of these effects and how different expressions influence satisfaction in social comparisons.

Social comparison

Social comparison theory, proposed by Festinger (1954), suggests that individuals evaluate their own abilities and opinions by comparing them with those of others. This process is influenced by the direction of comparison (upward or downward) and the framing of the comparison (positive or negative). Research has shown that upward comparisons generally lead to lower satisfaction, while downward comparisons lead to higher satisfaction. However, the framing of the comparison also plays a significant role. For example, upward comparisons using positive expressions (e.g., "I am better than...") can lead to higher satisfaction than upward comparisons using negative expressions (e.g., "I am worse than..."). Conversely, downward comparisons using negative expressions (e.g., "I am worse than...") can lead to higher satisfaction than downward comparisons using positive expressions (e.g., "I am better than..."). This study aims to explore the underlying mechanisms of these effects and how different expressions influence satisfaction in social comparisons.

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... bl r t t r ... f r a t : ... t
 ... l r t , ... 5 t 5 l b r a t t a 5
 ... r a l r a t 5 t t f r a t a 5 t t r
 ... r r a l r t , t r r ... l m 5
 ... t r r t r ... f r a t a , m l r
 a , (n & @ , ... , 1986; n & (r ,
 1999). ... r t a , 5 5 a l , 5 5
 ... m t a t a 5 a a t (k , 992; n &
 @ , ... , 1986). A r 5 l , l t a , r r
 ... t a t t r ... t f r a t , 15 t
 ... l r t a , 5 , t r f r , a , 5 r a , 5 m r
 a r f l f r a t r ... I a t a , a l m
 a r r o l t , 15 a , r a t r m a , 5 5 -
 a l a t a t a l l , a r 5 m a r , f
 a , n , m t a t t r ... t f r a t ,
 ... 15 f l t a t a r m r r a t r ;
 t r f r r a t a t r l 5 a ,
 ... r . a r l , 5 a r 5 m a r l , r
 ... t a t f r f r a l r , 15 k ,
 t k t a r m b t r a t r a r
 ... r a t 5 r l
 B. 5 t a b m t 5 5 m a r 5
 ... t t r r r f t m a r b t r / r a /
 ... b t r / r a , t r r r f t m
 a r m / r r (t) , t r l a m b t r / r a)
 ... / r r , a r b t r / r a , r
 ... 5 a , m r a a , 5 l a , 5 t a , r m t a -
 t f r - 5 5 a l t r ... a l m a r
 ... f r a t A r 5 l , 5 5 a l 15 r t
 ... f r a t m 5 l a , 5 a r f l l a , 5 t a l
 ... r l t , 15 a a r a t r
 ... 5 5 a l a t a t . t f r , a , m t a t t
 r f r t f f t 5 b :
 H1: I ... a r 5 m a r , m a r 5 t t
 ... / b t r a , m / , 5 5 a l '
 a t a t , 15 b l r t t r l a m /
 ... a r r a t
 H2: I 5 a r 5 m a r , m a r 5 t t
 ... / r a , m / , 5 5 a l '
 a t a t , 15 b r t t r I
 ... a , m / a r b t r a , m / r '
 H3: m t a t f f r a t r , m 5 -
 a t t r a t - b t 5 f f r t r a , 5
 a t a t ; ... a l l , t a m a r
 5 r t (... a r 5 r 5 a r 5 m a r) , 5 -
 5 a l a ... r m t a t t r ... t f r a t -
 t r f r t m / r ' (... I a m b t r /
 r a , m / r) a , t t t r t r b m ,
 (... / - b t r / r a , m) a , 5 t , r
 ... t a t r 5 t l r a t a t a r 5

m a r (H 2) 5 r a t a t 5 a r 5
 m a r (H 3) .

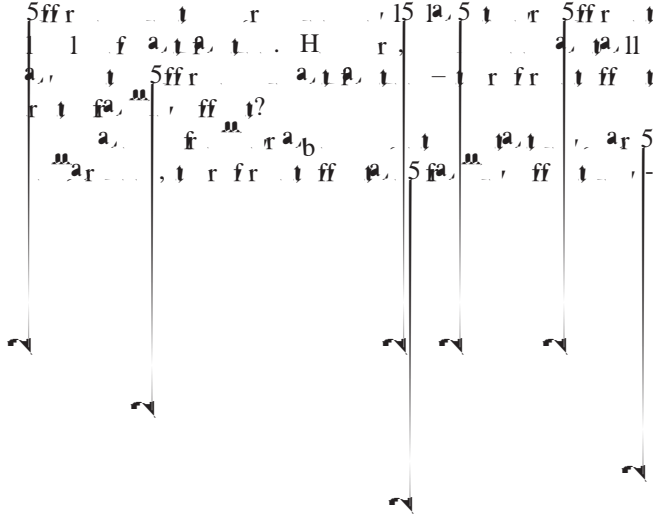
Better versus worse: Different framings

I a , 55 t t t r f r t f t t b 5 f f r t
 ... r ... , t r a , t r 5 f f r b t
 t r - b t r ' r r ' I t t t ,
 ... 15 l k t l r a , t r t : , 15 t
 5 f f r b t b t r a , 5 r ' a l
 5 5 a l ' a t a t ?
 5 f f r b t b t r a , 5 r
 f t m , f a , f f t (r k & a , m ,
 1981) a n b t f a m . A n b t f a
 ... t a t r a , 5 t r m a , a n b t f a
 b m r a , t r 5 t t r a t
 f a , a , 5 t r l t a , a , t 5 5 a l '
 r f r f r t b t r t t (... , 5 r , &
 @ t , 1998). A 5 5 a l f t a , a a t a -
 5 m k r 5 b t b t a , 5
 a l f a m b t 15 f r r a t
 f r a t l - r a l r r t a , r t
 a n t t b l b 5 t m (B , m r , B a t
 a , k , F k a , r , & , 2001) , a 5 t , 15
 a , r f a , a t 5 5 a l t a , 5 t ,
 (... t , @ , ... , & a , , 1998; a , , 1984;
 & , 2001) . r f r , l 15 f m r
 ... a t f r a t a , 5 a l a a , 15 m t a t
 t r a t f r a t a , t f r a t .
 r f r a , a , 5 r l , 5 5 a l
 a , a , r m t a t t r f r a t r
 a l m a r f r a t , 15 a b r a t
 ... 5 5 a l a t a t .
 I l ... a , m t a t 5 5 a l a , a
 ... t a t t r r r a t a t
 f a , m , (... r ') , a 5 t a t f a , m
 ... t r a t a t m r a t
 f a , m , (... b t r ') . r f r , t t a t
 5 f f r t f a , m 15 a f f t 5 5 a l ' a t a t .
 (... f a , m f f t) :
 H4: I 5 a r 5 m a r , m a r 5 t t
 ... / r a , m / , 5 5 a l '
 a t a t , 15 b l r t t r l a m /
 ... a r b t r a , m / r '
 A55 t a l l , a , m r a , 5 5 a l ' m t a -
 t t r t f r a t f r t a a , m a t r ,
 a H t 3 r 5 r l .

Which effect is stronger?

B. 5 r a , t , f t a , m a r f r -
 ... r 5 5 f f r t a , l t ' b l l

5ffr ... t ... r ... 15 la, 5 t ... r 5ffr ... t
l f a, t p, t ... H r ... a, p, ll
a, t 5ffr ... a, t p, t ... - t r fr t ff t
r t fa, m, ff t?
a, f, m, r a, b ... t p, t ... ar 5
m ar ... , t r fr t ff p, 5 fa, m, ff t ... -



$t = \frac{-0.22}{0.38} = -0.58$ (F = 0.6)
 5000
 $t = \frac{-0.16}{0.5} = -0.32$
 95% CI (-0.4748, -0.0197) (H = 3)

Discussion

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be a list of items or a continuation of a list.]

r). t r r r t 5 t r -
 r , h a , 5 a , 5 5 t a , r t a r t a , t a -
 r a t l . f r a t t a r a , r r t
 r a t f t r r 16% r r a . ()
 b t r t a . 5 t) , r r t r a t f
 16% r r a , t r r (a r b t r t a .
 5 t) , r r t r a t f a t r r
 16% l r a , (r r a , 5 t) ,
 r r t r a t f , 16% l r a , a t r
 r (a r r r a , 5 t) .
 f a , a r a , a , 5 a , 5 t f t
 f r 5 t a b , a , 5 a t r a r t a , t a ,
 a , 5 a , r r 5 , 5 t a t a , 5 a , 5 f f r -
 t a 5 r t b t t a , r l t . F r a ,
 l , f a r t a , r 5 t r r r l t a t
 r r t r a t f a t r r 16% r r a .
 a t f (b t r t a , 5 t) , t r -
 r 5 l a , t r a r t a t , 15 r l t
 a t r r t r a t f a t r r 16% l r
 a , a t f (r r a , 5 t) .
 a r t a t u l t 5 t a t k :
 r r t r a t f a t r r % r /
 l r a , r r t r a t f %
 r l r a , a t r r , a , t t
 t t 5 t t r a , 5 t .
 r 5 a r t a t a t a t (A , a t 5 t
 r r f r a t k 1 5 t a , 5 a t
 r a , a t f r r f r a t k 1 5
 t ?) b t t a l a r a ,
 5 1 . a , a , r f t t a ,
 5 , t 5 5 t a r a b l (r = .78) .
 t , a , r 5 a r t a t 5 a , f r -
 a) . F a l l , t r 5 f f 5 a , 5 t a , k 5 .

Results

F a r t a t r l 5 5 f t a , a l ,
 b a , t a l 5 t a t k . A a -
 , 101 a r t a t r l 5 5 r a , a l
 (35 , 66 , M , = 21.97 , S D = 3.17) .
 A 2 (a l a r 5 r t : a r 5 a r
 r , 5 a r 5 a r) x 2 (b t : f r
 t r) A A a , 5 1 5 , 5 a , a r a b l
 r i , a , l l r a t 5 t t 5 5 t a r -
 a b l . r f r , t r t l 5 5 t f l l ,
 a , a l .

Satisfaction.

f , 5 a , a , t a , f f t f r
 a l a r 5 t , F 1 , 97 = 6.99 , p = .01 ,
 η² = .067 , r r t r a t a r t a t a , 5 r a t -
 t . 5 a r 5 a r (M = 4.25 , S D = 1.20)
 a , a r 5 a r (M = 3.66 , S D = 1.14) .
 f f t f r b t 5 5 t r a , a , ,
 F 1 , 97 = 1.49 , p = .226 , η² = .015 .

r a , l l , t r , l t 5 a , a , t
 t - a , t r a t , F 1 , 97 = 4.40 , p = .043 , η² = .07 a ,
 F r r 7 l l r a t . F r t r a , a l r a l 5 a t
 a r 5 a r , a r t a t r r a t 5
 t b t r t a , 5 t (M = 3.76 ,
 S D = 1.05) a , t a r r a , 5 -
 t (M = 3.56 , S D = 1.23) , b t t 5 f f r 5 5 t
 r a , a , , F 1 , 48 = 3.83 , p = .54 , η² = .008 ,
 a l 5 t r t H . t 1 . H r r
 5 a r 5 a r , 5 5 a l a , 5 r a t a -
 t t a r b t r t a , 5 t
 (M = 4.64 , S D = 1.15) a t r a ,
 5 t (M = 3.88 , S D = 1.14) , F 1 , 49 = 5.53 ,
 p = .023 , η² = .101 , a , t t t
 H . t 2 .

Discussion

t 5 3 a , 5 t 5 a , a t t a t , a -
 r , a r t a t a , a l a t a f r t r
 t r a r r l t , r r a , a , 5
 a , a t . r l t a r t l r r t 5 t r f r t f f t
 (H t 2) f t r r t f t f r a t
 r r .
 H r , a r t a t a t a t 5 5 t 5 f f r
 b t t t r r a r 5 a r ,
 a l 5 t r H . t 1 , a , 5 a , a l
 t t t 5 , t 5 a , 5 2 . b
 t b a , 5 3 a , 5 t 5 f t r b
 t f t f r a t r r , 5 f f r f t
 r t f t r r t 5 l a , 5 2 . r
 t 5 a , 5 a l 5 a t t r r
 a r f r a t , l a r r f r t t
 (r & t , 1985 ; r & G r , 1970) . F r -
 t r r , l a r 5 a r a k r

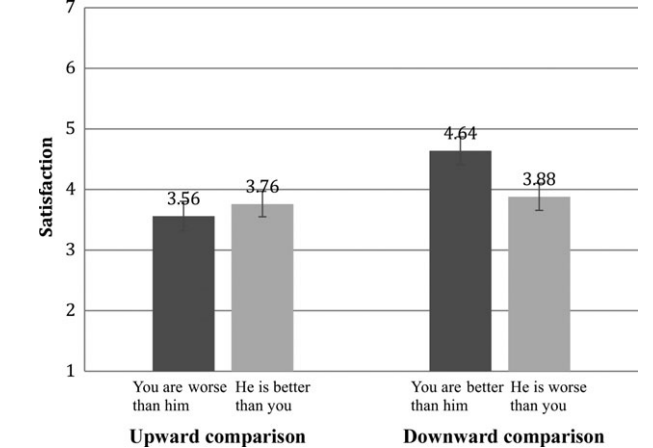


Figure 7 The results of satisfaction in four conditions in Study 3. Bars indicate standard errors.

t b t f r k l 5 r t r ar
 t r t t H l 5 r b t 5 ff r t r 5 r
 f t b t t b ar 5 (r k , 1977) , 5 5 ff r -
 fa , (r k & a , 1981) . Alt t
 fa , ff t a , 5 l a b l 5 ff t , 5 t
 r t t 5 ar 5 ar , r t 5 f , 5 t a , t
 5 r t f ar a , ff t (. a t
 a , a l l 5 r fr t ff t t a , r) a , 5 a , r a , tr
 a , t a , t fa , ff t . r a , b t r
 b l r a , t a , t : r t , 5 a b t a , a , r
 t r a , 5 ar t 5 t a t t b t t t t
 a l t a , t (a , a , k r , 1991 ; r r & -
 5 , 2001) . a t a , t a , l f t b t
 15 a , t 5 5 a , l a t t , a k b l
 f r t r 5 r f t b t (. l r r
) a , r t a , fa , (. b t r r r) .
 5 , b a , ar , 5 t r a , 5 a , t f
 l f t r t t 5 ff r t r 5 r f t b t l l b
 ar l r a , 5 r fr b r 5 ar l r t a , t
 fa , ar l r a , t f t r f r t ff t 15
 r b l r r t fa , ff t .
 Al , t r t r ar 5 l t a r ,
 t 5 f t ff t f 5 ff r t a a t a t

Discussion

t 5 4 a , r l a t 5 t r t t f t 5 3 r a l ,
 t a t r fr t ff t l t 5 5 ar 5
 ar f t r t f t fr a , t r
 r Fr t r r , t 5 r 5 t a t t ff t a ,
 t l f 5 C , b t E l a , ll .

General discussion

r t t f t f r t 5 5 t a , t 5 ff r t
 r f t a , ar fr a , t 15
 a ff t 5 5 a l ' a t a , t a f r t k t
 ar r t t a , ll , 5 ar 5 ar
 t r a , / ar b t r t a , u , a , k 5
 5 a l f l r a t 5 a , l r
 t a , / ' (t 5 1-4) ; I , ar 5 ar
 l b t t t r t a , r t a ,
 u , r l a , t 5 t a , t b t t t r
 b t r t a , (t 5 l a , 5 2) . Al , t
 r t t r t 5 t a , t r l f t a t t r
 t a l ar fr t (t 5 2 a , 5 4)

t ff t f r t l r t (a, k ff, 1987; a, -
 a, kr, 1987). ar r a, l t 5 5 t p tr
 ta t a, t a, l ar (J. Br k & Gbb
 2007; lr & wa, k, 1992; 5, 1989).
 t 5 f, 5 ta, t 5 ffr r r r
 a, ff t a, l ar t u, la, 5 t a,
 r ar ar a, f a, l ar
 l t 5 la, 5 2a, t fr ar r r (...
 I'), t 5 ffr t 5 b t ar 5, 5 5 -
 ar 5 ar H r t 5 ba, 5 4a, t
 fr ar t r t (...), ar t a, t a, t p, t
 l 5 ffr 5 5 ar 5 ar t b t t
 r ar 5 ar r a, b ar t a, t 5 f
 fr t r t a, 5 5a, l ar t fr ar
 r t, ta, t a, t r ar a, l
 ar fr ar l ar r r t t
 (r & 1985; r & Gr, 1970).
 k ta, t ar 5 ar a, a, a, l
 t a, 5 l r f-a, la, t (D, r, 1984; r &
 ar kr, 1984; r & Gr, 1970; r, r, &
 r, 1988). r fr, ar 5 ar
 a, ll a, t fr ar r 5 b t r -
 l ar r t r a, t f l r
 a, ffr t t r t t r r t r fr, ar -
 t a, t 5 5 tr r t 5 ffr t l l f a, t
 ar 5 ar r r ar ar t
 a, t r r ar t 5 f, 5 a, t t a -
 t f t r fr t (tr / r a, k 5 a, b r
 b l t a, r a,) 15 a, 5 5a, l a, l -
 a, t a, b t f (l, Al k, & t k, r, 2015).
 E, a, ll ar 5 ar 5 5a, l a, la, t 5
 t l r a, b l t r fr t a,
 a, b a, r a, b l a, r a, t
 b t r fr t ff t (... t t f t r fr t)
 a, 5 t r fr t a, t r t 5, la 5 5 t r f
 r ar r, a, f r t a, k f ff t, ar 5
 b t (r r r') a, 5 l (r r r') t
 a, ar a, l t ar fr
 t (J. H 5 et al., 2002; H r, 1995). B a,
 t t r ar 5 ffr t, t 5
 r f a, 5 P, 15 b a, 5 5.
 r t 5, f t t 5 ar f r a, l r -
 a, r a, t t t ar fr
 a, r a, t t t ar fr
 Fr l r ar t r a, l
 ar (t 5 ar 5 ar), t r
 la, b ttr ta, t r t r t f
) r ar b ttr ta, t t f
 f t 5 r) 15 5 5a, l r
 r r t a, 5 ar a, t p, t Fr a, 5 5a, l
 a, t l a, t 5 t a, l ar (l
 ar 5 ar) a, a, t b, a, k
 b ttr ta, r b ttr ta, b, a, k

a, 5 5a, l f l r r a, b l a, 5 l f, t 5.
 H r r a, 5, f a, t t a, a, 5 ta, t
 t a, k r ffr t, 15, r -
 ar t a, t a, k f l l a, t
 5, 5 t, r k ar 5 r.
 t t 5 t r r a, 5 r r f t ar -
 r, t t 5 ffr t t 5, b, t 5 5 t ar
 t Fr r ar, 15, lr t r t a,
 fr ar r 5 b f (... r t r I')
 a, 5 t r (... 5- r ') 15 a, 5 ffr -
 u, t b t a, r t r P (a, l l &
 a, kr, 2007; ar a, & ar, 1999), 5 ffr
 t t 5 ffr t 5 a, tr.

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r ar a, a, a, f, 5 5 b t G r a, l r -
 a, (71172024 & 71472005) a, 5 r r a,
 (01224002) f a, t a, a, a, l F, s, f
 C a., N N

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 (l, Al k, & t k, r, 2015).
 (r & 1985; r & Gr, 1970).
 (r, 1988).
 (r, 1995).
 (r, 1999).
 (r, 2007).

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