



Social cognition in relation to bullying behaviour in upper primary school

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Introduction

- › Bullying happens in almost every class
- › Roles for children involved in bullying:
 - bully, victim, victim & bully, outsider
- › Individual characteristic pattern:
- › **Bullies:** aggressive reaction pattern, more favourable view of violence, strong need to dominate and feel powerful, feel little empathy for victims, **social cognition low or high?**
- › **Victims:** low self-esteem, anxious submissive reaction pattern, over-protective parents, are physical weaker than the bully, **social cognition?**



Social cognition

- › Piaget's Social theory (1954-1985)
 - Development of social decentralisation and perspective-taking.
 - *'Deducing of perceptions, emotions, intentions and thoughts of others and considering this in one's behavior towards the other'*.
 - Understanding of how to deal with your own feelings and emotions and those of others.



Questions

- › 1) Is the social cognition related to the role of students in bullying incidents?
- › 2) Has the Dynamic model or Social network intervention program affected the social cognition of Dutch grade 5 students?



Study design

- › Experiment: randomisation of Dutch primary schools

- › **Group 1:** Dynamic model intervention
 - 13 schools, 219 students

- › **Group 2:** Control
 - 15 schools, 314 students

- › **Group 3:** Social Network intervention
 - 16 schools, 339 students

Duration intervention period: $\frac{1}{2}$ school year



Social cognition test

Originally a video test (Westerhof, Jansen, & van der Werf, 1993)

- Chronbach's $\alpha = .76$

Construct of the social cognition test:

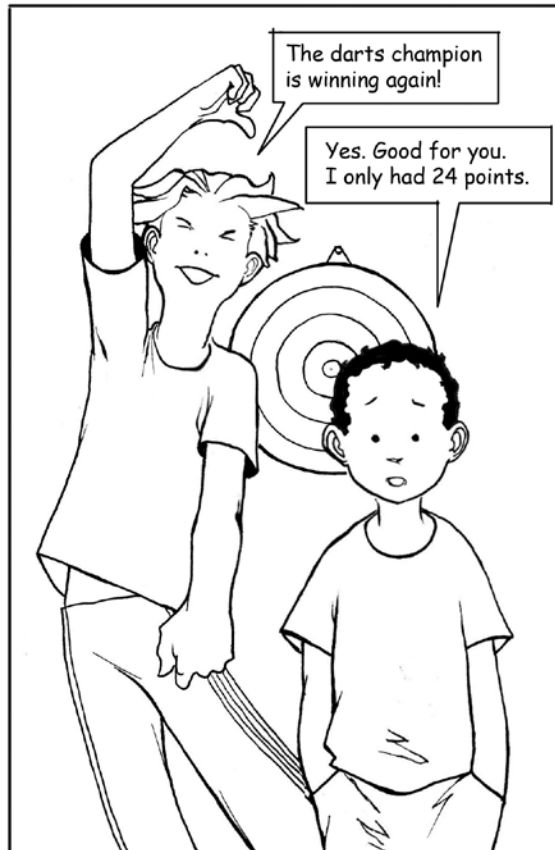
- > 5 developmental levels:
 - comparing, perspective taking, relating, coordinating and coping
- > 3 emotional content domains:
 - feelings, thoughts and intentions

Picture story test:

- Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and the Netherlands
- 6 picture story's about social situations
- 90 items



Example: Hugo and Charles are playing darts





Social cognition test

Question 20. How does Hugo feel?

(Hugo is the boy who is losing all the time)



- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Hugo is angry because Charles was cheating | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Hugo is sad because he is losing from Charles all the time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Hugo is angry because he does not like to lose | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- > Recoding responses: 0 (low) - 2 (high social cognitive)
- > Chronbach's $\alpha = .88$
- > 2177 students



Bullying:

- › Revised Olweus (1996) questionnaire
 - role in bullying incidents: 1 item
 - Tendency to be bullied (scale A): 9 items
 - Tendency to bully (scale B): 9 items

Quality of School life:

- 6 items, e.g. *'I like being at school'; 'Teachers in my school want students to do their best'*
- Responses: 1=*'I don't agree at all'* to 5=*'I agree completely'*



Results 1

Pre intervention	Victim 14%	Bully 3%	Bully & victim 3%	Outsider 79%
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Post intervention	Victim 13%	Bully 3%	Bully & victim 1%	Outsider 82%
Tendency to be bullied	2.27	1.25	2.39	1.13
Tendency to bully	1.25	1.75	1.72	1.07
Quality of school life	3.88	3.85	3.55	4.25

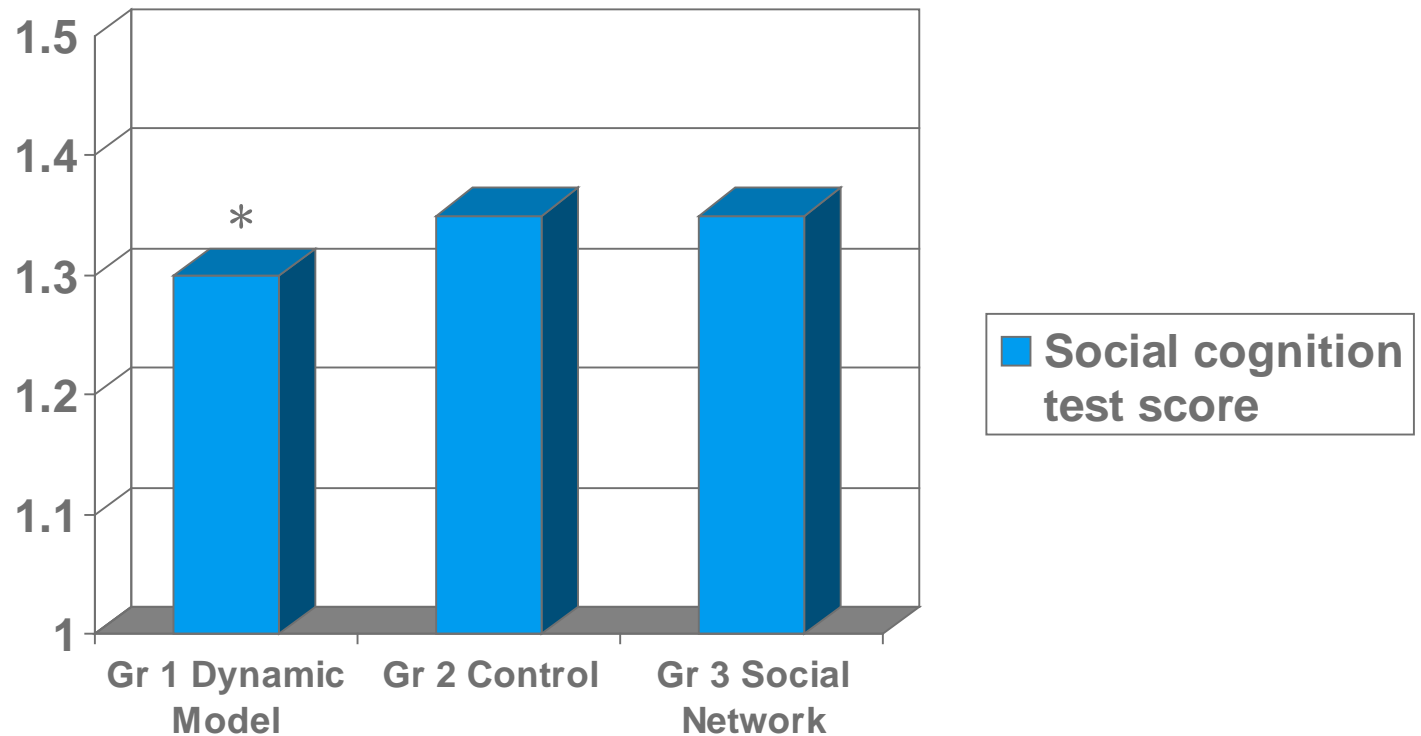


Results 2: Social cognition





Results 3: Social cognition





Social cognition – Multi level analysis

	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	.135 (.0.73)	.224 (.105)
Boys	-.201 (.069)	-.200 (.069)
Ethnic minority	-.284 (.096)	-.270 (.096)
Group 1 Dynamic Model	--	-.282 (.148)
Group 3 Social network	--	-.038 (.136)
<i>Variance at student level</i>	<i>.893 (.046)</i>	<i>.892 (.046)</i>
<i>Variance at school level</i>	<i>.095 (.033)</i>	<i>.084 (.030)</i>
R2 student level	3.1%	4.3%
Deviance (Model fit)	2218	2214



Conclusions & discussion 1

- › Outsiders and victims had a similar social cognition score.
- › The social cognition of bully and bully-victim was lower than that of outsiders or victims.
- › *Social cognition test may be a new instrument for the identification of students with high risk of being or becoming a bully in upper primary school.*
- › *Social cognition test may be used as a measure for interventions at the individual level that aim to improve the student's social cognition?*



Conclusions & discussion 2

- › The Daphne intervention program or Social network intervention program has *not* affected the social cognition of the Dutch grade 5 students.
- › *Results of Greece, Belgium, Cyprus?*
- › *Differences in matrix of development level by content domains?*



Thank you for your attention!

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