

Developmental psychologist Manon van Scheppingen receives Heineken Young Scientists Award 2024

— *In recognition of excellent research in the Social Sciences*



Manon van Scheppingen
Photo: Bram Belloni

Amsterdam, 25 June 2024 – Manon van Scheppingen (1988), a university lecturer in developmental psychology at Tilburg University, is the recipient of the Heineken Young Scientists Award in the Social Sciences. The jury praises the quality and impact of her research into the influence of major life events, such as having a child and getting married, on personality change in young adults. Today, thanks to Van Scheppingen’s research, we better understand the origins of differences in personality.

Charlene de Carvalho-Heineken established the Heineken Young Scientists Awards in 2010 to honour young scientific talent for their outstanding achievements. Since then, the prize has been awarded every two years to four highly promising young researchers affiliated with a Dutch university or research institute and who are working in one of the following domains: Medical/Biomedical Sciences, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. Each laureate receives an unrestricted cash prize of €15,000 as a reward.

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About the research

Manon van Scheppingen studies personalities, focussing on how people think, feel, and behave. Specifically, she investigates how personality develops during adulthood and the influence of significant life events, such as having a child, getting your first job, or moving in together.

For example, Van Scheppingen explored whether the transition to parenthood leads to a more mature personality, including more self-control and emotional stability. This proved not to be the case: on average, parents were found to develop no differently from their peers without

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children. Nevertheless, the study did show that parenthood can indeed bring about change. For instance, she observed that some new parents, particularly mothers, temporarily experience lower self-confidence. She plans to further investigate the causes of this phenomenon in the coming period.

Another of Van Scheppingen's discoveries is about romantic partners. Despite the common saying that opposites attract in romantic relationships, people still usually select a partner with similar personality traits. In the future, Van Scheppingen hopes to use her work to give more people insight into their own personalities, enabling them to apply this self-knowledge when making important life choices.

Jury honours social impact and multidisciplinary

The jury praises Van Scheppingen for her multidisciplinary expertise. She knows how to make an impact with her research by combining insights from developmental psychology, demography, and sociology. She effectively reaches a non-scientific audience, sharing her knowledge through media and public lectures. In addition, the jury appreciates Van Scheppingen for the way she manages to respond to social developments, such as with her research into the development of loneliness as a result of lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Heineken Prizes Laureates 2024

The Heineken Young Scientists Awards are part of the Heineken Prizes, Netherlands' most prestigious international science prizes. This year, the Heineken Prizes are dedicated to the prize with which it all began 60 years ago: the Dr H.P. Heineken Prize for Biochemistry and Biophysics. The awards ceremony will take place on Friday, 27 September 2024, at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. In addition to Van Scheppingen, the following laureates will receive prizes this year:

- **Econometrician Kevin ten Haaf** – Heineken Young Scientists Award in the Medical/Biomedical Sciences
- **Historian Lorena De Vita** – Heineken Young Scientists Award in the Humanities
- **Evolutionary biologist Casper van der Kooi** – Heineken Young Scientists Award in the Natural Sciences
- **Biochemist Ruedi Abersold** – Dr H.P. Heineken Prize for Biochemistry and Biophysics
- **Biochemist Matthias Mann** – Dr H.P. Heineken Prize for Biochemistry and Biophysics

In previous years, the Heineken Young Scientists Award in the Social Sciences was awarded to Liesbeth van Vliet (2022), Anna van Duijvenvoorde (2020), and Marie-José van Tol (2018), among others.

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About Manon van Scheppingen

Manon van Scheppingen (born 1988) studied remedial education at VU University Amsterdam. In 2018, she received her PhD in developmental psychology from Tilburg University. During her PhD, she researched how personality develops in the context of parenthood and romantic relationships. Following a postdoctoral position at the University of Amsterdam, she has been a university lecturer in the department of Developmental Psychology at Tilburg University since 2019.