



Sport & Minority Girls: Implications for Self-Esteem, Victimization, and Violence



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Sport & moral development

- Plato's *Republic*
 - - Personal excellence, goodness, and virtue
 - Integration of sport & academic pursuits
 - Key to utopian society
- English public schools (mid-19th century)
 - Sport as social control
 - “Schoolboys”
 - Drunkenness, bullying , poaching

Mercer, PA (1926-27)



Elizabeth, IN (1937-38)



Sport & moral development

- American education (1954)
 - American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation resolution
 - “sound programs of health, physical education and recreation can help lessen delinquency”

Pro-sport constructs (External)

- *Differential association* theory
 - Criminality learned via social process
 - Socialization experiences
 - Favorable messages about delinquency
 - Acceptance of behaviors
 - Sutherland, Cressey, & Luckenbill, 1992
 - Modeling of behaviors
 - McCarthy, 1996
- *Social control* theory
 - Counter normative behaviors result from disrupted social bonds to society
 - Hirschi, 1969

Pro-sport constructs (External)

- *Peer cluster theory*
 - Peers are primary socialization agents (school-aged)
 - Oetting & Beauvais, 1987a, 1987b
 - Bonds formed with similar peers
 - Attitudes and behavior modeled and reinforced

Pro-sport constructs (Psychological)

- *Health belief model*
 - People engage in negative (health-related) behaviors when there is:
 - No/less concern about outcomes
 - The belief that there are few benefits garnered from abstinence
 - Janz & Becker, 1984
- *Sport protection hypothesis*
 - Sport produces psychological outcomes which are positive and protective
 - Self-concept, self-confidence, self-esteem
 - Fasting, Brackenridge, & Sundgot-Borgen, 2003

As a deterrent, sport should:

- Abate antisocial & produce prosocial behavior
- Encourage youth to follow prosocial norms
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Social status
- Reduce associations with delinquent peers
 - Links to negative socialization

As a deterrent, sport should:

- Provide prosocial peer context
 - Bonding; prosocial “buy in”
 - Modeling
- Develop positive psychological outcomes
 - Mediators/moderators
- Encourage healthy behaviors
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Group belonging
 - Physical health

Sport as purveyor of delinquency

- *Facilitation hypothesis*
 - Enhanced social status yields belief in acceptability of counter-normative actions
 - Overly enhanced self-esteem (narcissism)
 - “Above the law”
 - Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Sabo, & Farrell, 2007
 - Emotional spillover
 - Tolerance and perpetration of aggression
 - Especially when deemed as defensive
 - Bloom and Smith, 1996

Sport as purveyor of delinquency

- *Positive deviance*
 - Overconformity to sport ethic
 - Hughes & Coakley, 1991
 - Emphasis on action, which separates from “others”
 - Feelings of superiority
 - Normal rules do not apply
 - Psychological “high” from action
 - To be an athlete is to do
 - Conformity is a team strength
 - Carried into delinquent acts with peers
 - Strengthening of bonds
 - Protection of “family”
 - Individual sacrifice for group welfare

Sports Participating Females: An Overlooked Group

- Sports were initially “created [for] and shaped by men, without regard to the existence and experience of women”
 - Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983, p. 17
- Impact of Title IX
 - More than the creation of sporting opportunities within educational settings
 - Success?
 - Female athletes who are racial/ethnic minorities
 - Coaches who are female
 - Pushback

Sports participating females: An overlooked group

- Who plays?
 - 1 in 27 (1972) to 1 in 3 (today)
 - Women's Sports Foundation, 2008
 - 3.2 million (42 % of high school athletes)
 - National Federation of State High School Associations, 2010
 - Access linked to socioeconomic status
 - Intertwined with race/ethnicity
 - Johnston, Delva, & O'Malley, 2007

Myopic research

- Historical emphasis on:
 - Whites, males, college aged
 - Sport as prevention; character enhancement
 - Urban-dwellers
 - Sport as corrective to environmental and lifestyle deficits
 - Coakley, 2002
- Why shift focus?
 - More and younger girls/women participating
 - Racial/ethnic minority under-representation

Myopic research

- Why shift focus?
 - Examination of rural needed
 - 1/5 of U.S. population lives in rural locations
 - Non-metropolitan area, small urban cluster
 - Adjacent county not the same size
 - 1/3 under age 18
 - 30% of African-Americans
 - 25% of Hispanics
 - Eroding of rural mythos
 - Increase in problems once viewed as “urban”
 - Violence, victimization, alcohol/drug use



A Compendium of Sports Participation Studies

Common themes

- Instrumentation (secondary data)
 - Original project examined adolescent substance use
 - National dataset (60+ communities)
 - Community Drug and Alcohol Survey (CDAS)
 - American Drug and Alcohol Survey (ADAS), Prevention Planning Survey (PPS)
 - Oetting & Beauvais, 1990; Oetting, Beauvais, Edwards, & Waters, 1984
 - Anonymous self-report, paper-and-pencil
 - Alcohol and drug use
 - Risk and protective factors
 - Negative affect, family and peer relationships, school environment, victimization, violence, etc...
 - Likert scales

Common themes

- Definition of rural
 - Metropolitan Proximity Index
 - Labao, 1990
 - Non-metropolitan areas with a main population center containing 2,500-9,999
 - Not adjacent to a county of the same size
- Definition of sports participation
 - Formalized and structured, informal
 - School, community
- High school aged females (range 14-18)
 - $M = 15.96$ ($SD = 1.21$)



Study I:

Self-esteem, school adjustment, & substance use

Method study I

- Participants:
 - Rural & urban African American girls ($n=1976$)
- Variables of study
 - Play, no play; Rural, urban
 - Self-esteem
 - Social acceptance
 - Others like me
 - Competence
 - I am able to do things well
 - Self-confidence
 - I am good with others

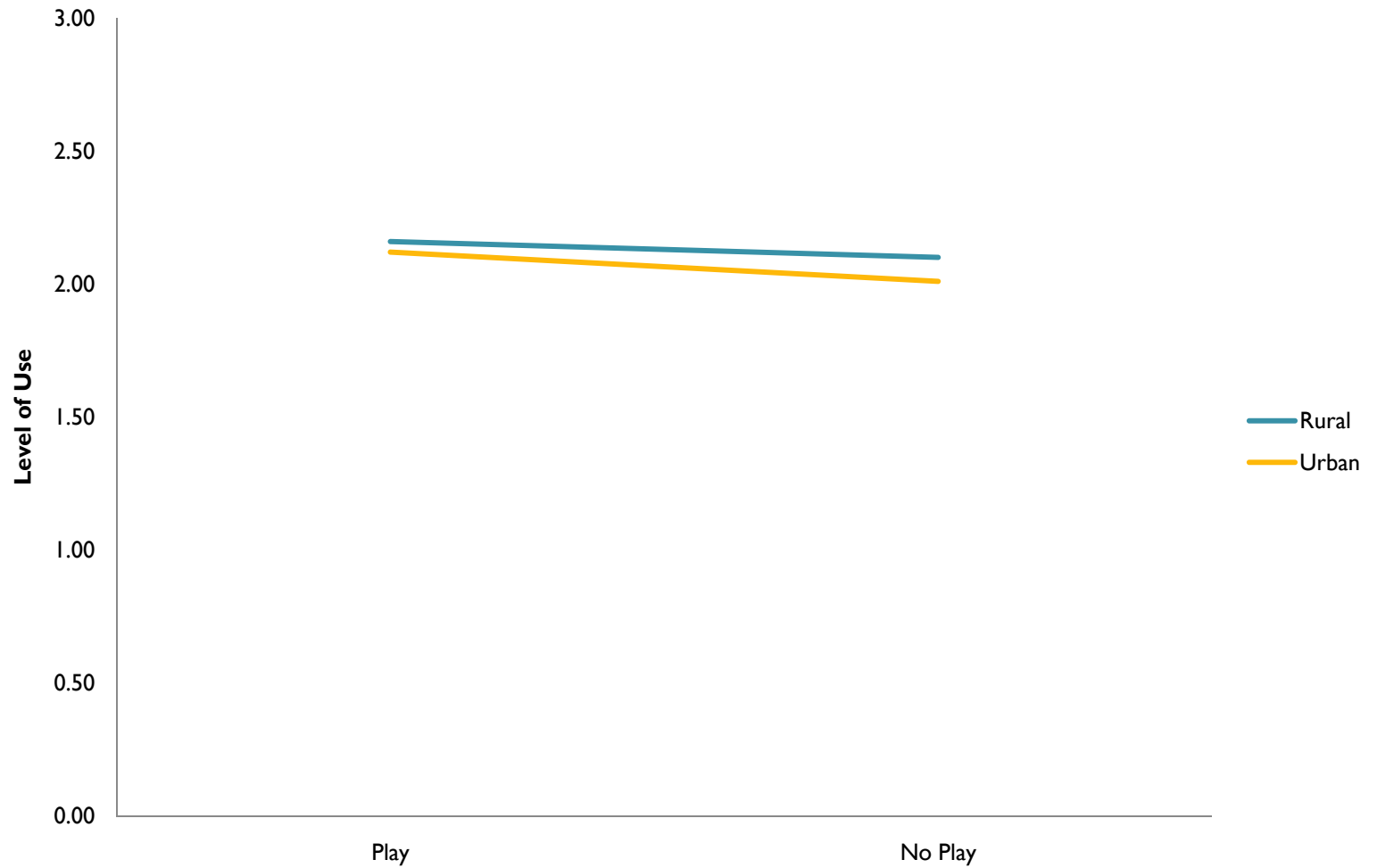
Method study I

- Variables of study
 - School adjustment
 - Attitudes toward teachers, school
 - School performance
 - Peer substance use
 - Alcohol, marijuana, other
 - Own substance use
 - Alcohol, marijuana, other
- MANOVA

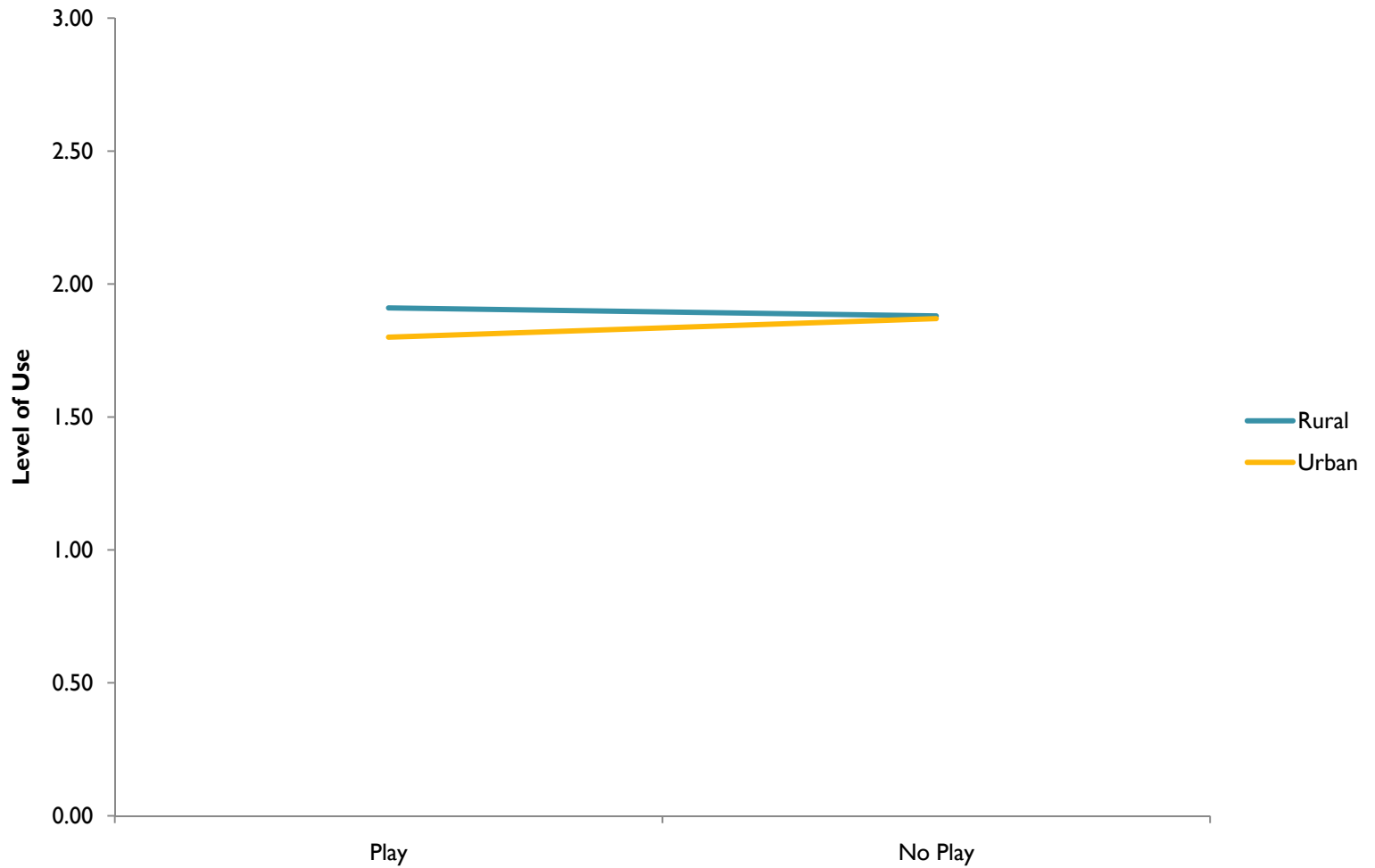
Findings study I

- Sports participants reported higher
 - Social acceptance, competence
 - School adjustment
 - Attitudes toward teachers and school
 - School performance
- Sport by location interactions noted on peer use

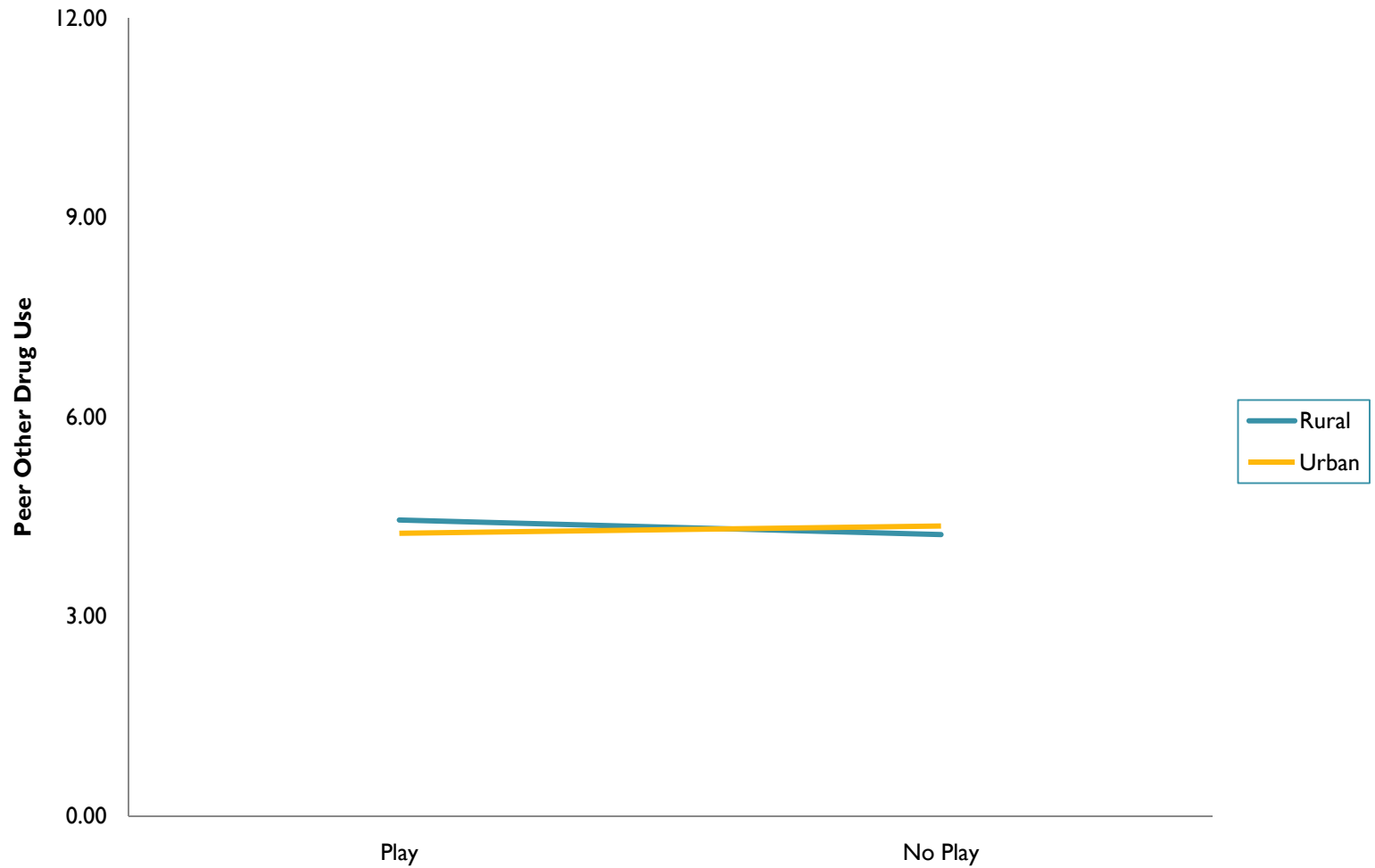
Peer alcohol use



Peer marijuana use



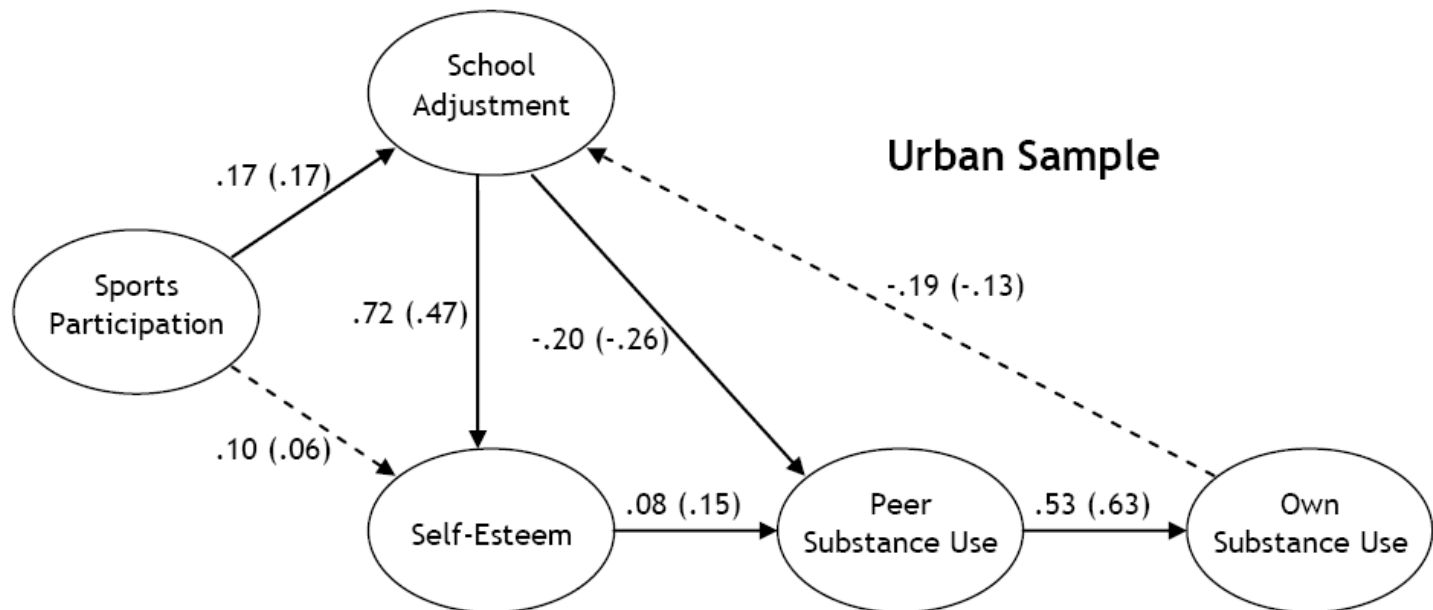
Peer other drug use



Findings study I

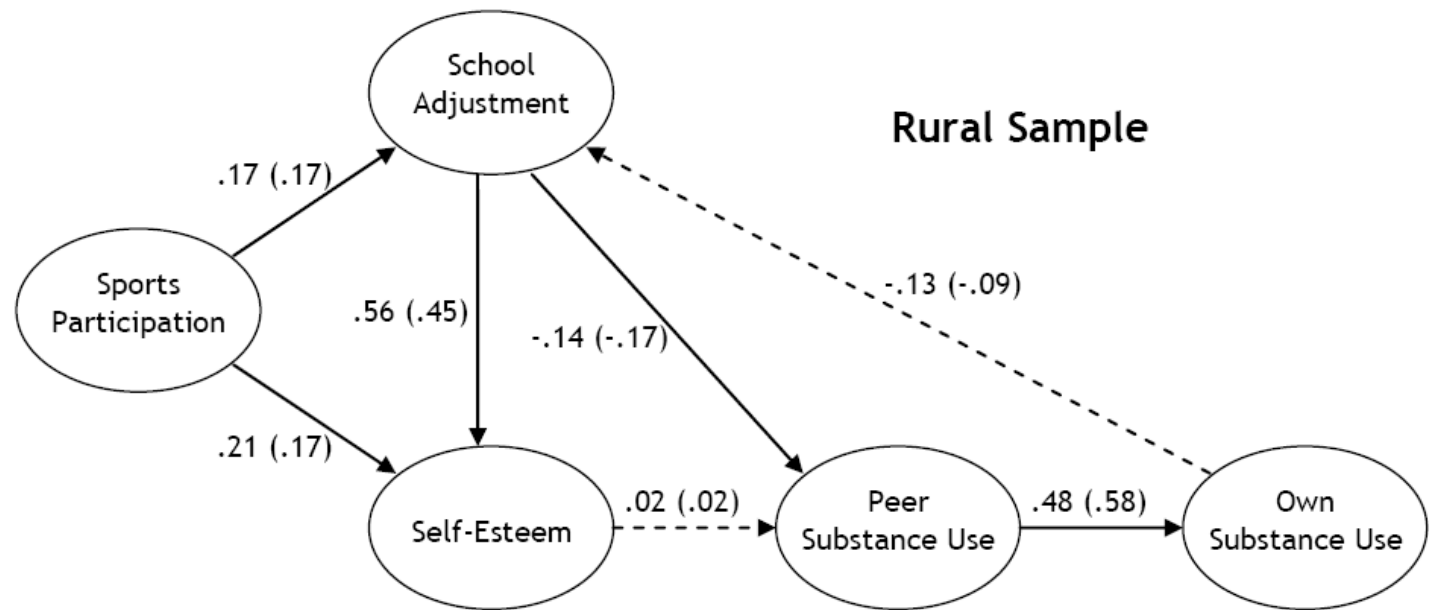
- *No differences between groups for own substance use*
- Model testing (SEM)
 - Comparison of rural and urban samples

Model with urban sample

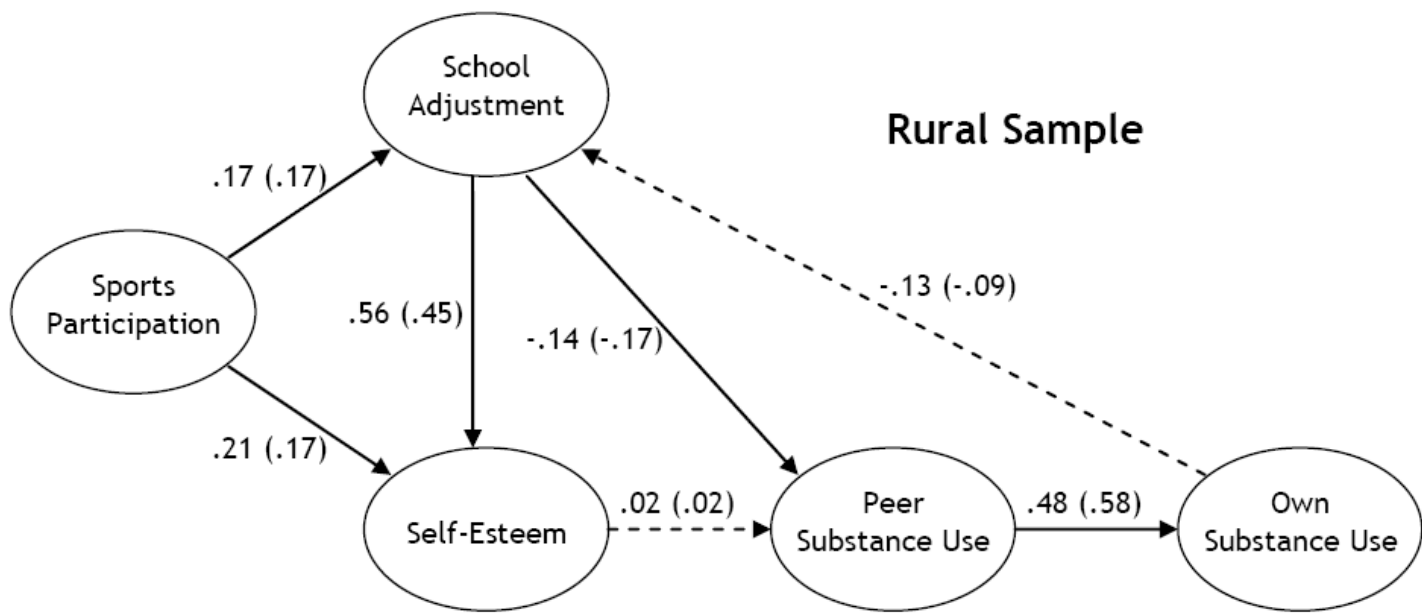
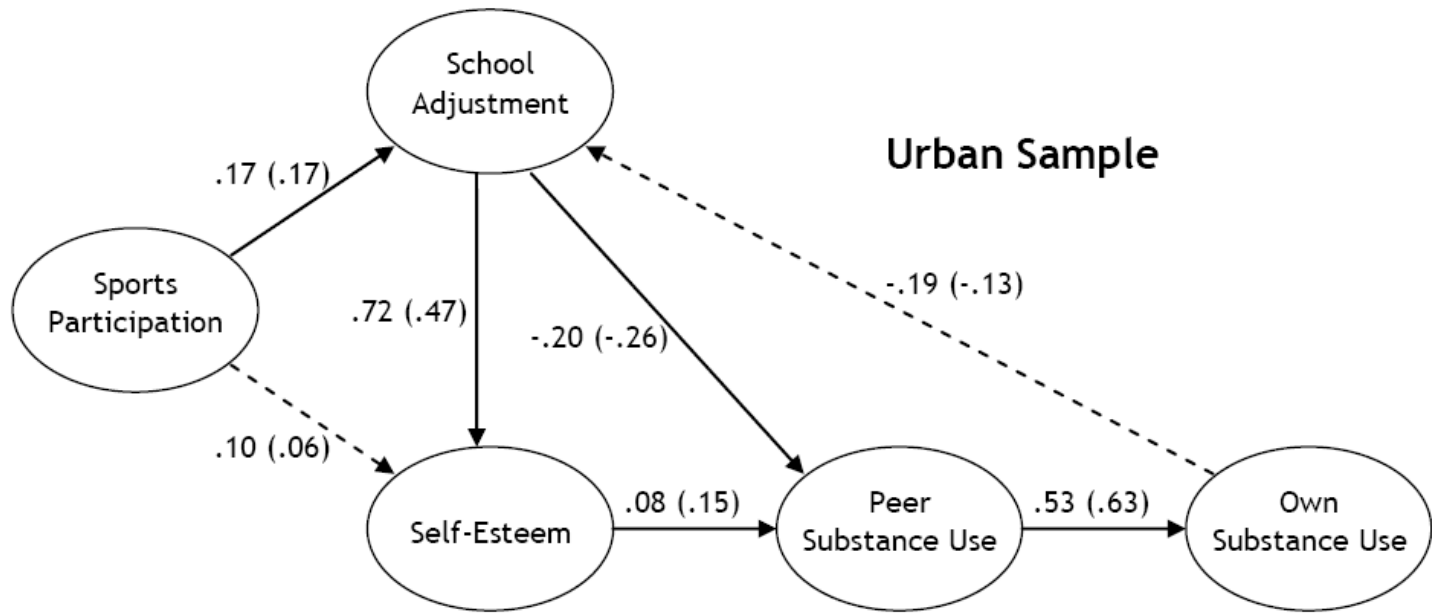


Fit indices: $\chi^2(70) = 228.58$ ($p < .05$), GFI = .97, TLI = .93, CFI = .94, and RMSEA = .049 ($p = .540$)

Model with rural sample



Fit indices: $\chi^2(70) = 362.80$ ($p < .05$), GFI = .95, TLI = .87, CFI = .90, and RMSEA = .063 ($p = .000$)





Study 2:

Violence & victimization

Method study 2

- Participants:
 - Rural girls (African American, Hispanic, White) ($n=4520$)
- Variables of study
 - Play, no play
 - Violence
 - Own (e.g., assault someone)
 - Reactive (in response to anger)
 - Verbal, (e.g., yell things) physical (e.g., hit others), indirect (e.g., destroy objects)
 - Victimization
 - General, sexual assault, domestic partner (IPV)

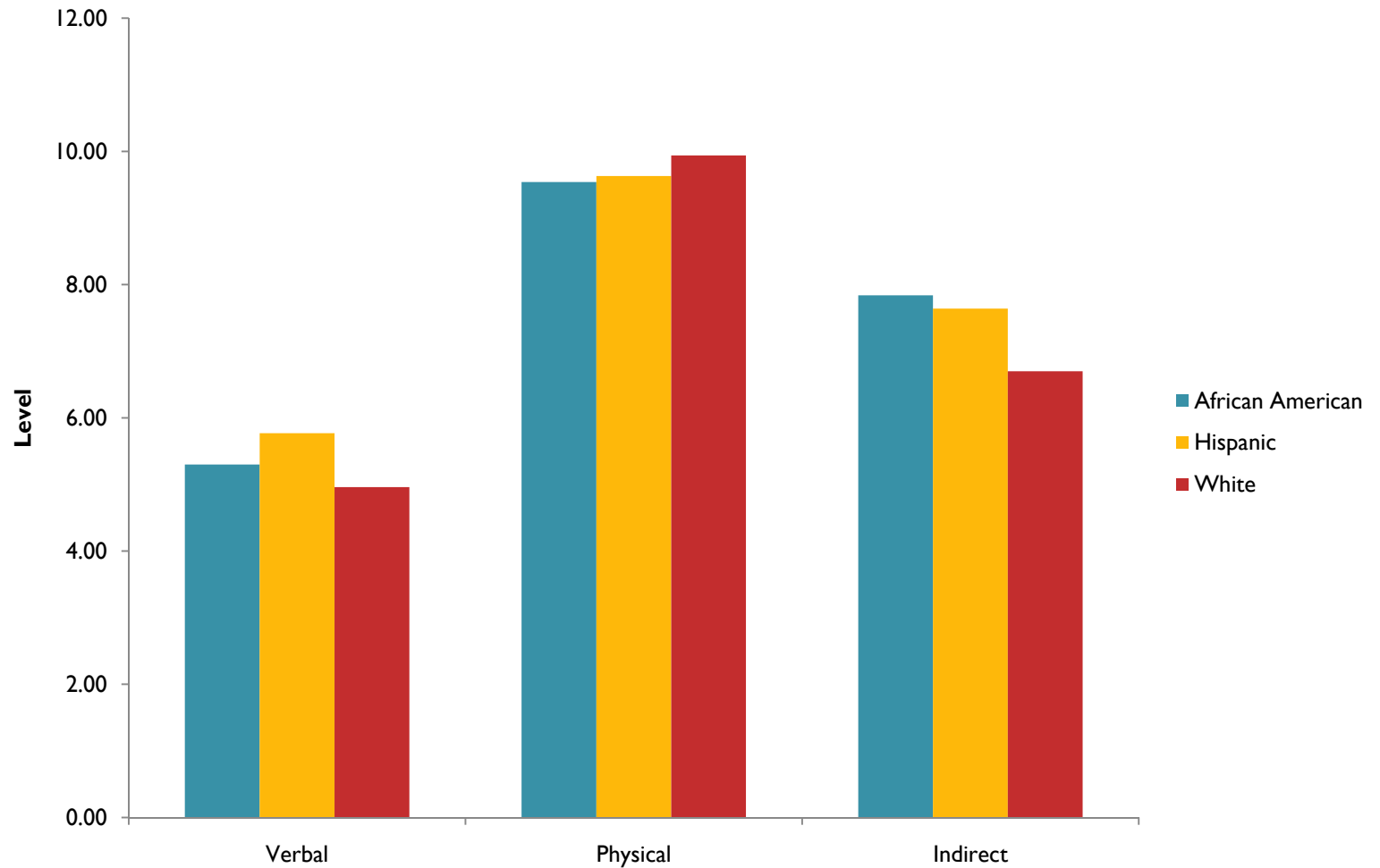
Findings study 2

- Own violence and victimization
 - Logistic regression
 - Race/ethnicity
 - African American & Hispanics
 - More violence
 - More general victimization
 - Less sexual assault
 - Less domestic partner violence
 - Sports participants
 - 25% less likely to engage in violence
 - 27% less likely to report general victimization
 - 30% less likely to report sexual assault
 - *No differences in report of domestic partner violence*

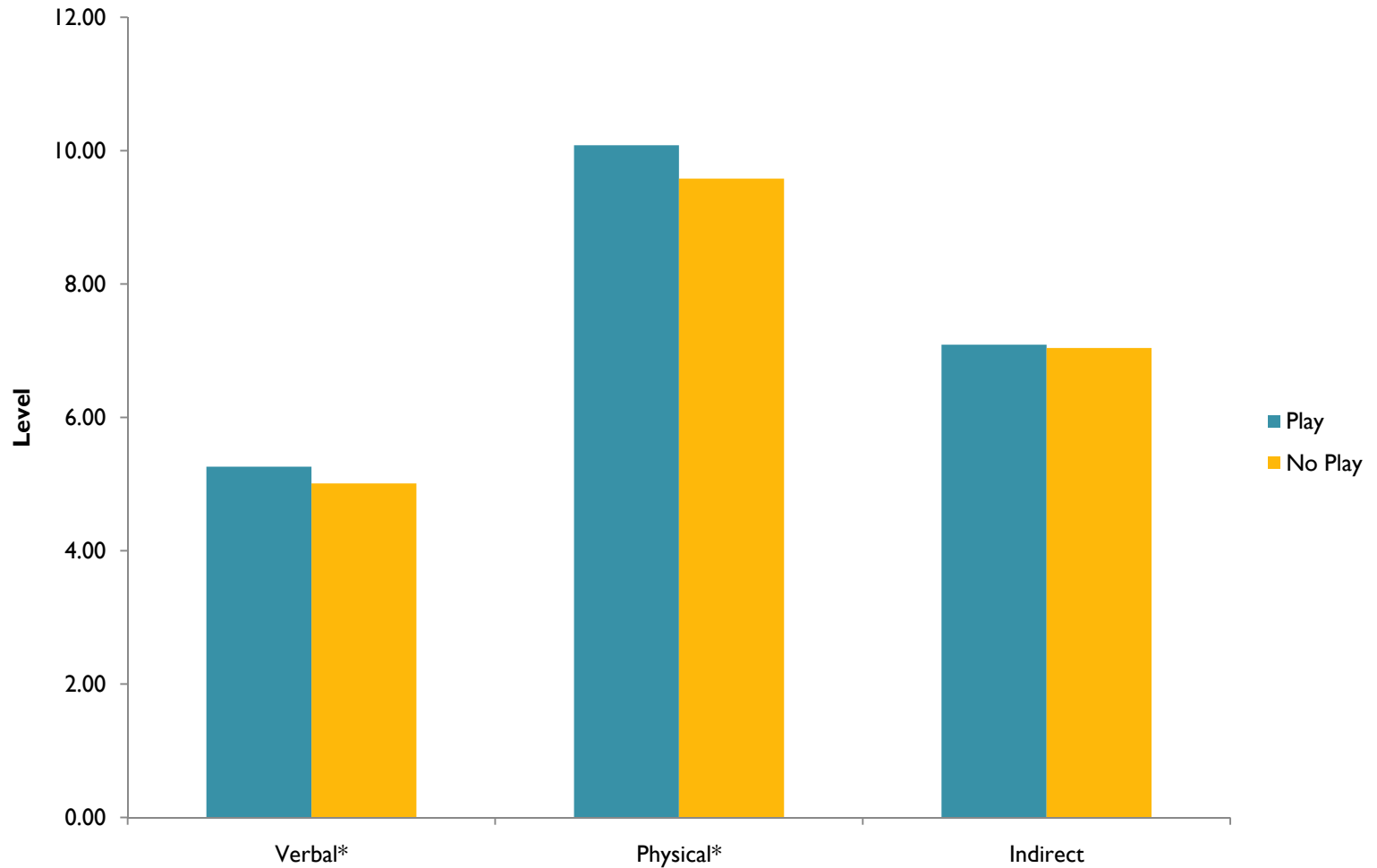
Findings study 2

- Reactive violence
 - MANOVA
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Sports participation

Race/ethnicity & reactive violence



Sports participation & reactive violence





Study 3:

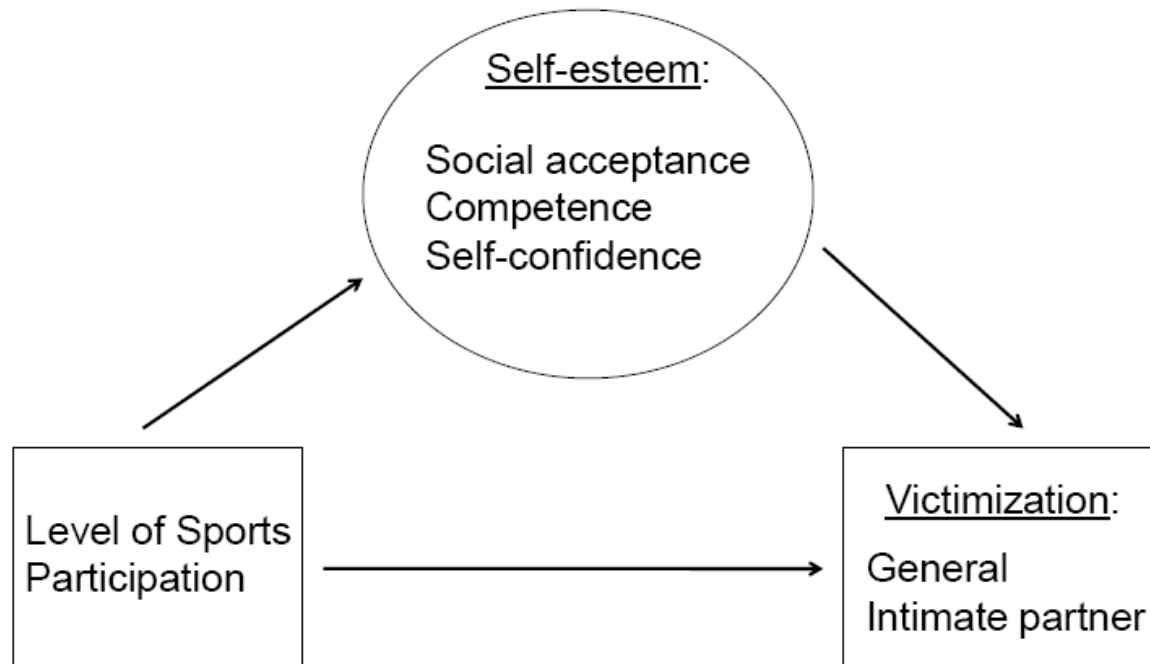
Multi-dimensional self-esteem as a mediator of the relationship between sports participation and victimization

Method study 3

- Participants:
 - African American girls ($n=2162$)
- Variables of study
 - Level of sport involvement
 - Continuum of *no involvement* to *informal* to multiple *formalized/structured* experiences (i.e., school and community)
 - Self-esteem
 - Social acceptance, competence, self-confidence
 - Victimization
 - General, sexual assault, domestic partner (IPV)

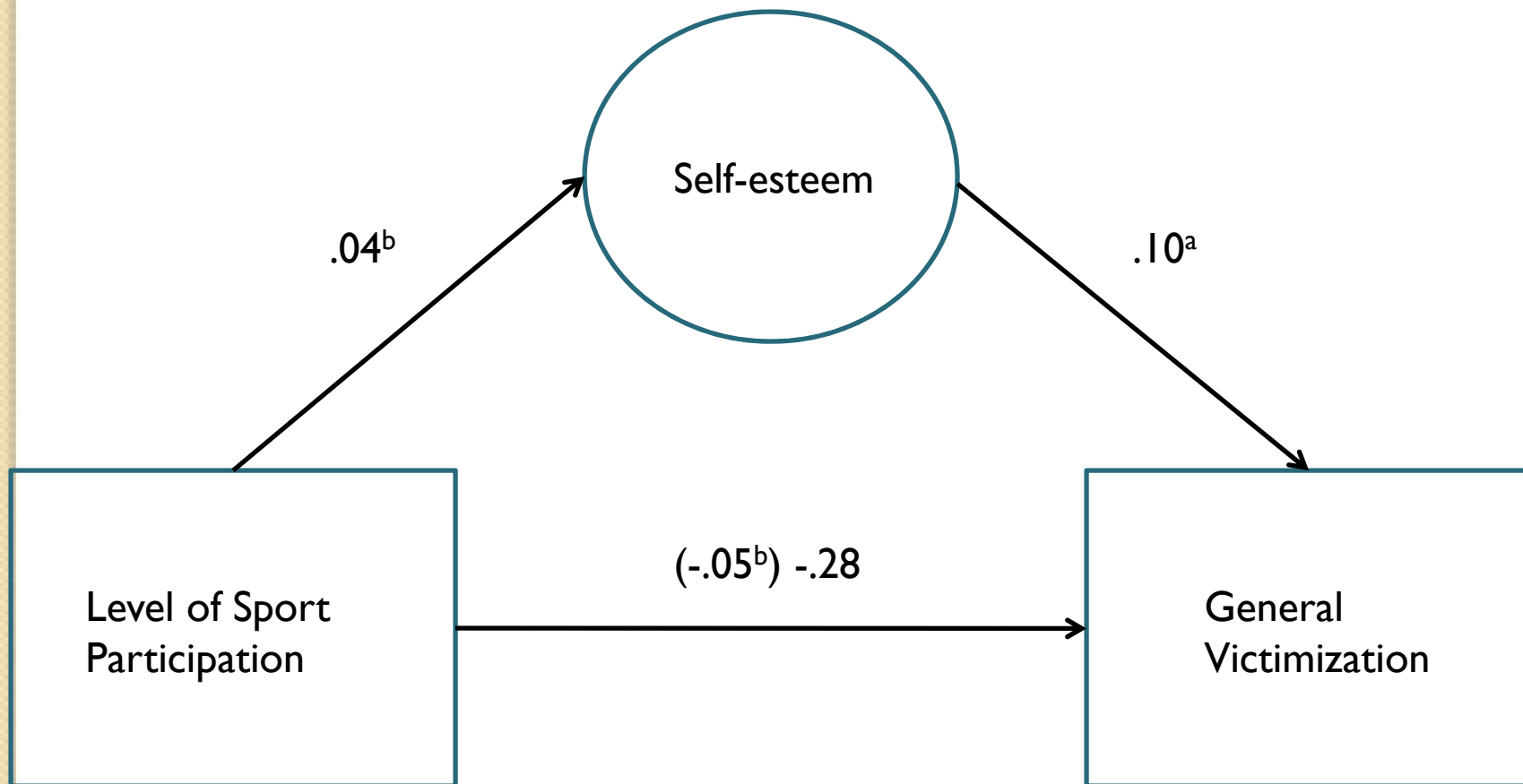
Method study 3

- Sport protection hypothesis
 - Sport produces psychological outcomes which are positive and protective



Findings study 3

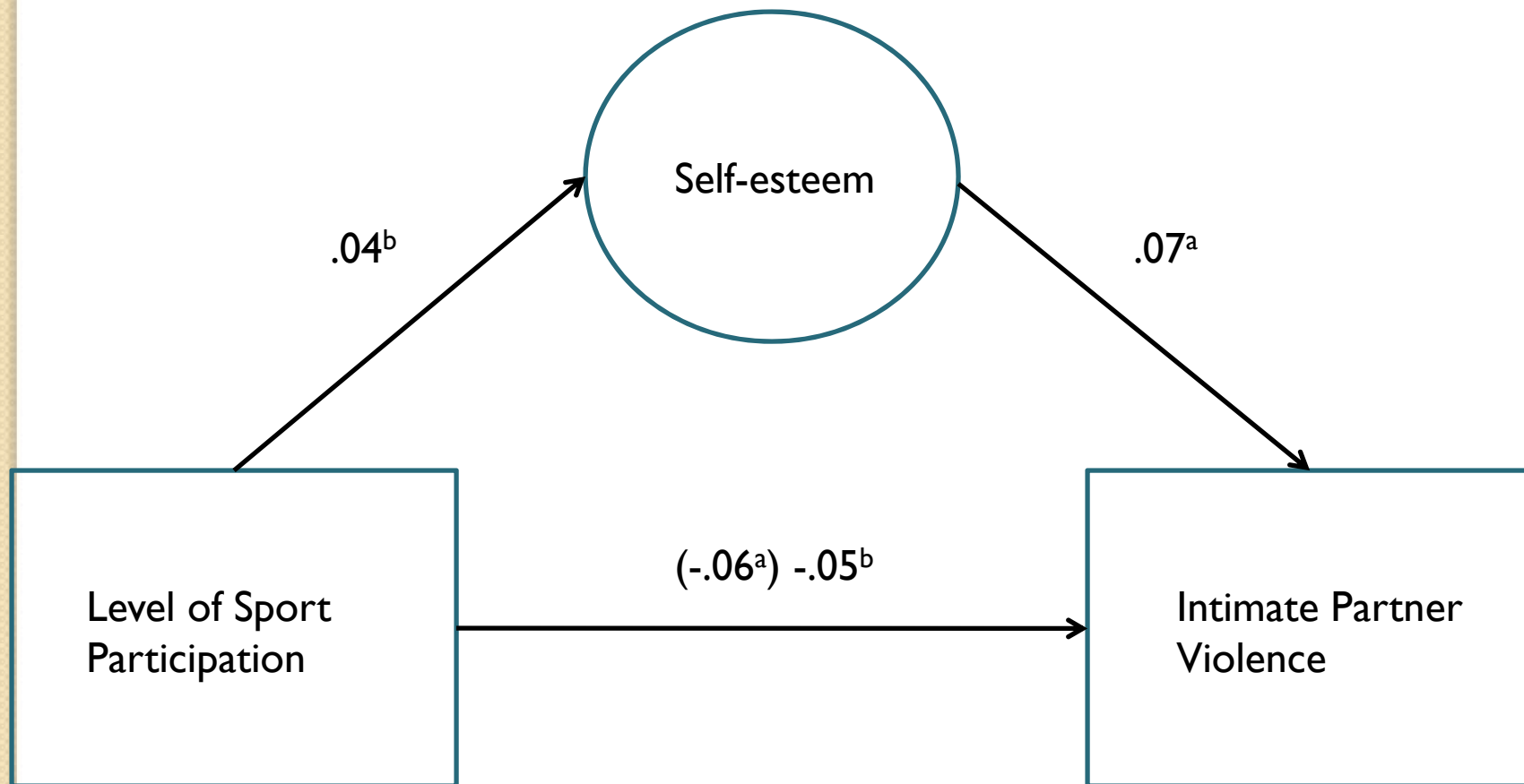
- Overall self-esteem and general victimization



^a $p < .001$; ^b $p < .05$

Findings study 3

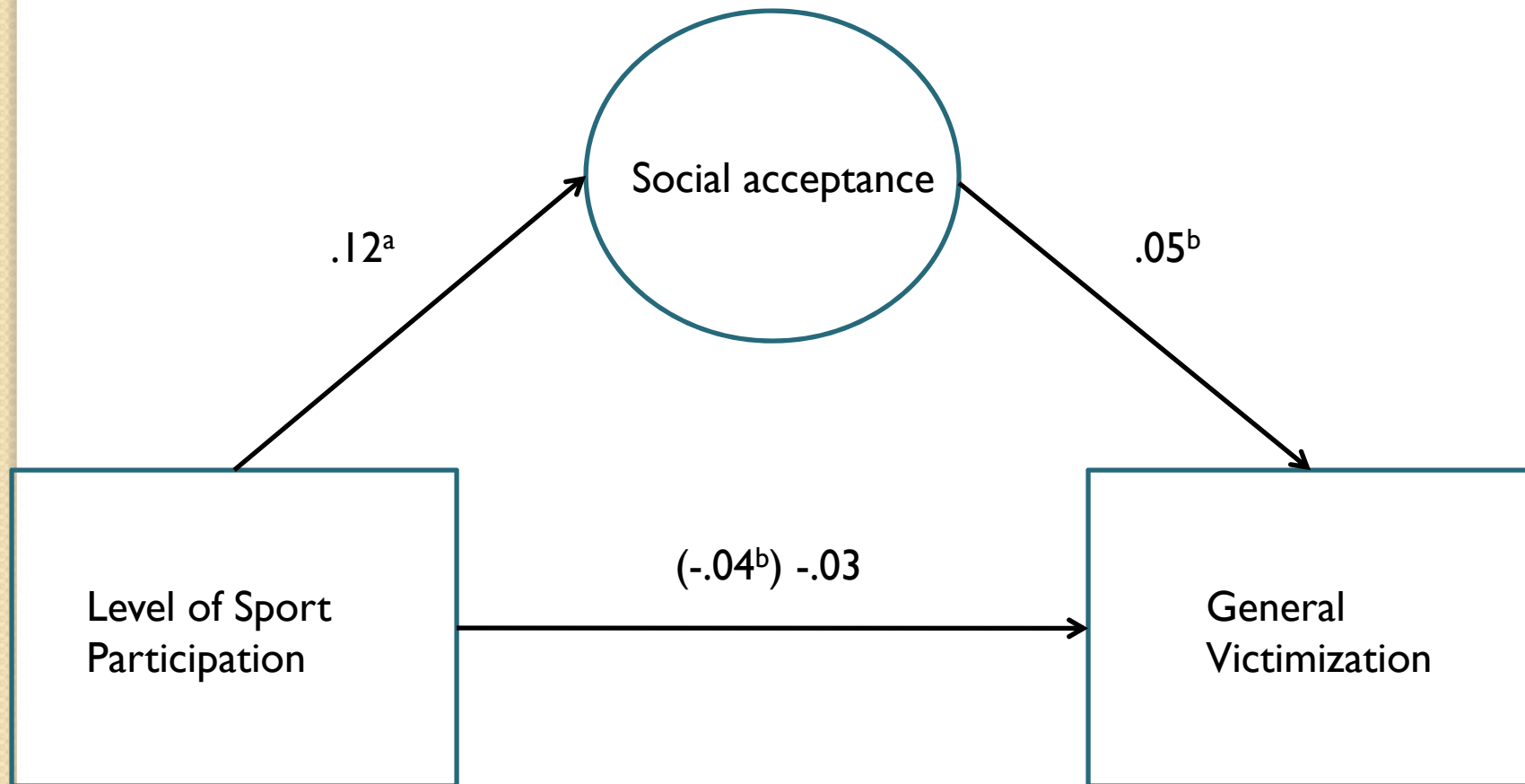
- Overall self-esteem and intimate partner violence



^a $p < .001$; ^b $p < .05$

Findings study 3

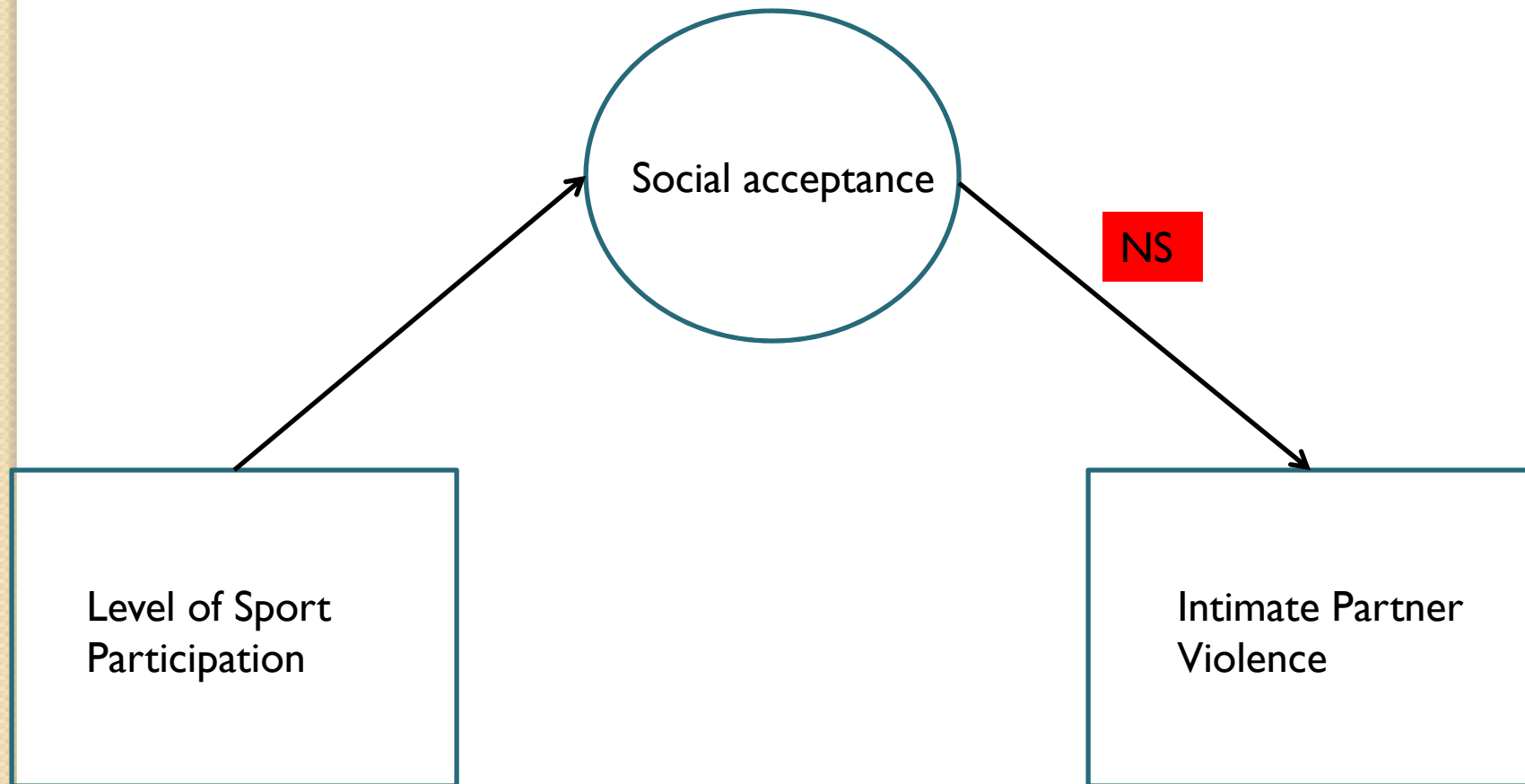
- Social acceptance and general victimization



^a $p < .001$; ^b $p < .05$

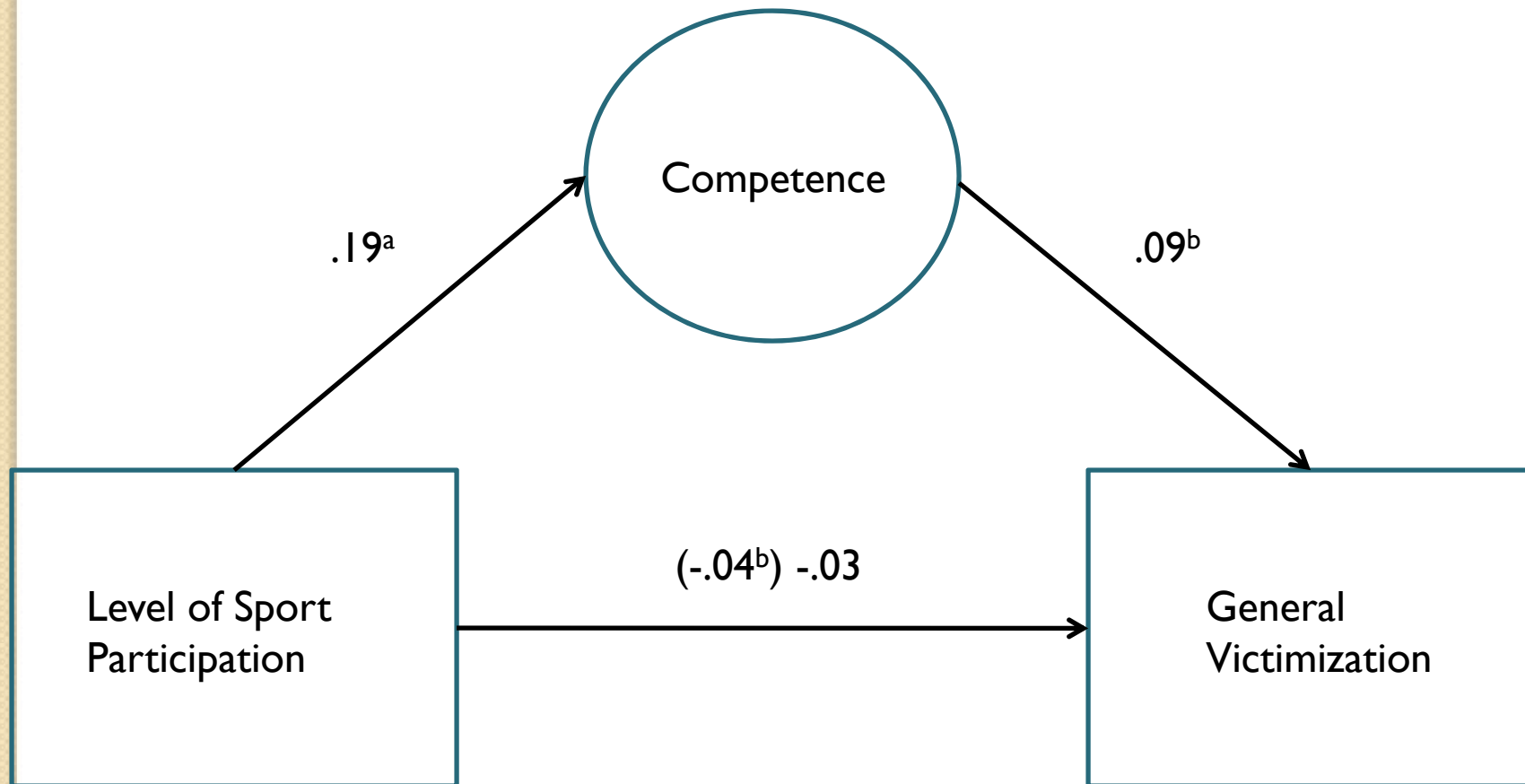
Findings study 3

- Social acceptance and intimate partner violence



Findings study 3

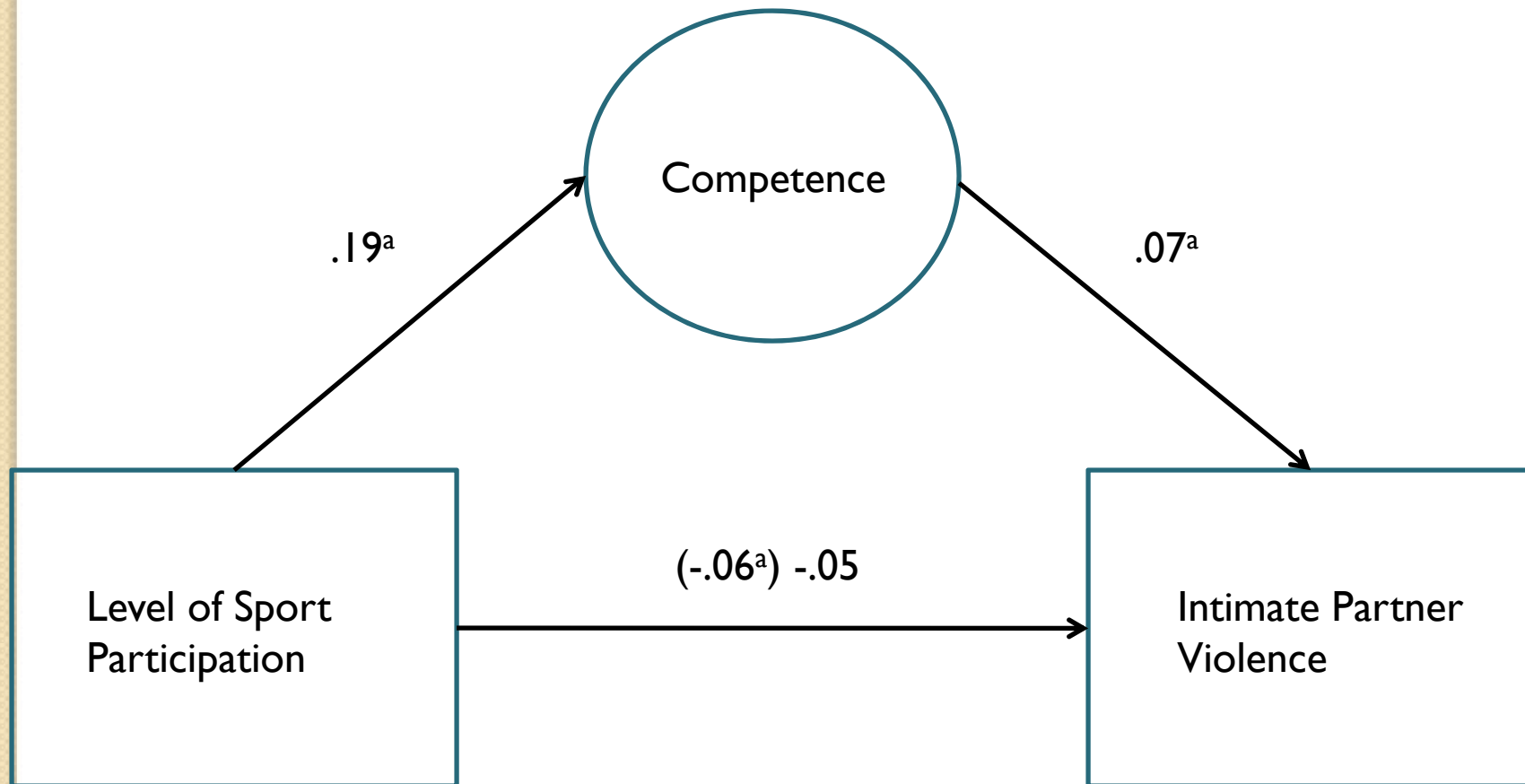
- Competence and general victimization



^a $p < .001$; ^b $p < .05$

Findings study 3

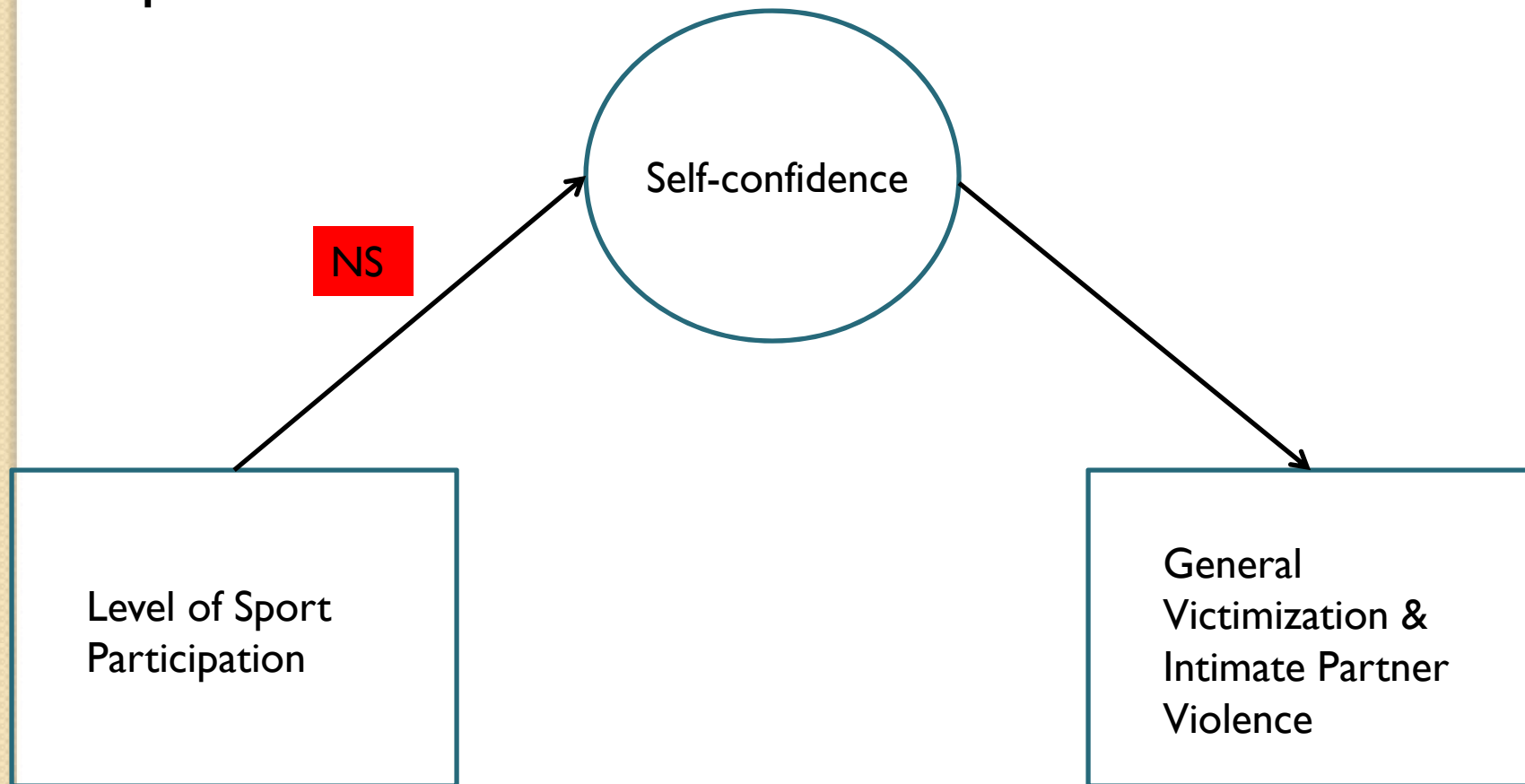
- Competence and general victimization



^a $p < .001$; ^b $p < .05$

Findings study 3

- Self-confidence, general victimization and intimate partner violence



Summary of noted themes

- How protective is sports participation?
 - Own & peer drug use
 - No consistent protection for either
 - Variable by substance
 - Variable by location
 - Rural tolerance?
 - Fewer mutually exclusive peer groups
 - Own & peer delinquency
 - Own curtailed?
 - Delinquent peer associations = protection
 - Gang paper (Taylor et al., 2010)

Summary of noted themes

- How protective is sports participation?
 - Own violence
 - Differential outcomes based on type
 - General (less) vs. indirect (more)
 - School Adjustment
 - Enhanced social status?
 - Connectedness to school
 - Victimization
 - Impact general and sexual assault, not IPV
 - Male hegemony, especially in rural locations?
 - Female athletes are still female

Summary of noted themes

- How protective is sports participation?
 - Self-esteem
 - Yes, but delicious complexities exist
 - Social acceptance, competence may be impacted
 - Self-confidence?
 - Conflicting gender roles and links to context, cultural messages?
 - On field vs. off
- Race/ethnicity interactions and complexities
- Impact of rurality on these relationships

Limitations

- Secondary data
 - General measurement issues
 - Proxy measures vs. traditional instrumentation
- Sport variables (limited)
 - Type of sport
 - Team vs. individual
 - (Stereotypical) masculine/feminine
 - Meaning of participation
 - Other motivations
 - Social, physical health, scholarship opportunity
- Small effect sizes
 - Low incidence rates; range restriction

Limitations

- Cross-sectional data
 - Causality?

Future work

- The meaning of sport participation
 - Qualitative
- Role of specific nuances of sport itself
 - High contact vs. low
 - Team vs. individual
 - Impact of masculinity/femininity of sport (and participant)
 - Links to self-concept
- Other mediators/moderators and impact on psychological and behavioral outcomes

Future work

- Continuing to investigate the validity of the sports protection theory
 - Increase complexity of models
- Does the benefit of sports “show up” more strongly later in life?
- Environmental influences on these processes and outcomes

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