

Examining the Influence of Cultural Values on Pathways to Strengthen Responsible Fatherhood Among Mexican-Origin Fathers

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Background

- Research among Mexican-origin families has documented the critical role cultural values play in influencing family relationships and parenting (Parke & Buriel, 2006).
- Understanding the promotive effects of cultural values is particularly relevant and necessary for Mexican-origin fathers who are at risk for exposure to multiple sociocultural contextual stressors, such as poverty and discrimination.
- According to the Family Stress Model (FSM), high levels of stress associated with economic disadvantage trigger parental psychological distress, which in turn undermines the use of positive parenting strategies (see Conger et al., 2010).

Research Questions:

- Are sociocultural contextual stressors associated with psychological distress? Does endorsement of cultural values moderate the association between cultural stressors and psychological distress?
- Is psychological distress inversely associated with fathers' parenting? Does endorsement of cultural values moderate the association between psychological distress and fathers' parenting?

Methods

Participants

- A community sample of self-identified Mexican-origin, biological fathers ($N=85$) of 3 to 6 year-old children were collected from a midsize city in southern Arizona.
- All fathers were living with the child's mother, and more than half (62%) were married.
- Fathers were on average 36 years old (range: 23-54 years old).
- Nearly half (49%) of all fathers were U.S.-born, and 41% completed the interview in Spanish.
- A little more than half of all fathers were employed full-time (58%).

Measures

Cultural Values

- Familismo (16 items; Knight et al., 2010): "It is always important to be united as a family."
- Respeto (8 items; Knight et al., 2010): "Children should never question their parents' decision."
- Caballerismo (10 items; Arciniega et al., 2008): "Men should respect their elders."

Sociocultural Contextual Stressors

- Economic Hardship (13 items; Conger et al., 1992): "Worked over time or taken a second job."
- Acculturative Stress (7 items; Rodriguez et al., 2002): "I don't feel accepted by Whites."
- Immigrant-Based Discrimination (5 items; Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2006): "I have thought that if I went to a social or government agency I would be deported."
- Ethnic-Based Discrimination (4 items; Finch et al., 2000): "People dislike you because you are Mexican."

Psychological Dysfunction

- Psychological Distress (20 items; Radloff, 1986; depressive symptomatology: "You felt sad"; 21 items; Beck et al., 1988; anxiety symptoms: "unable to relax")

Fathers' Parenting

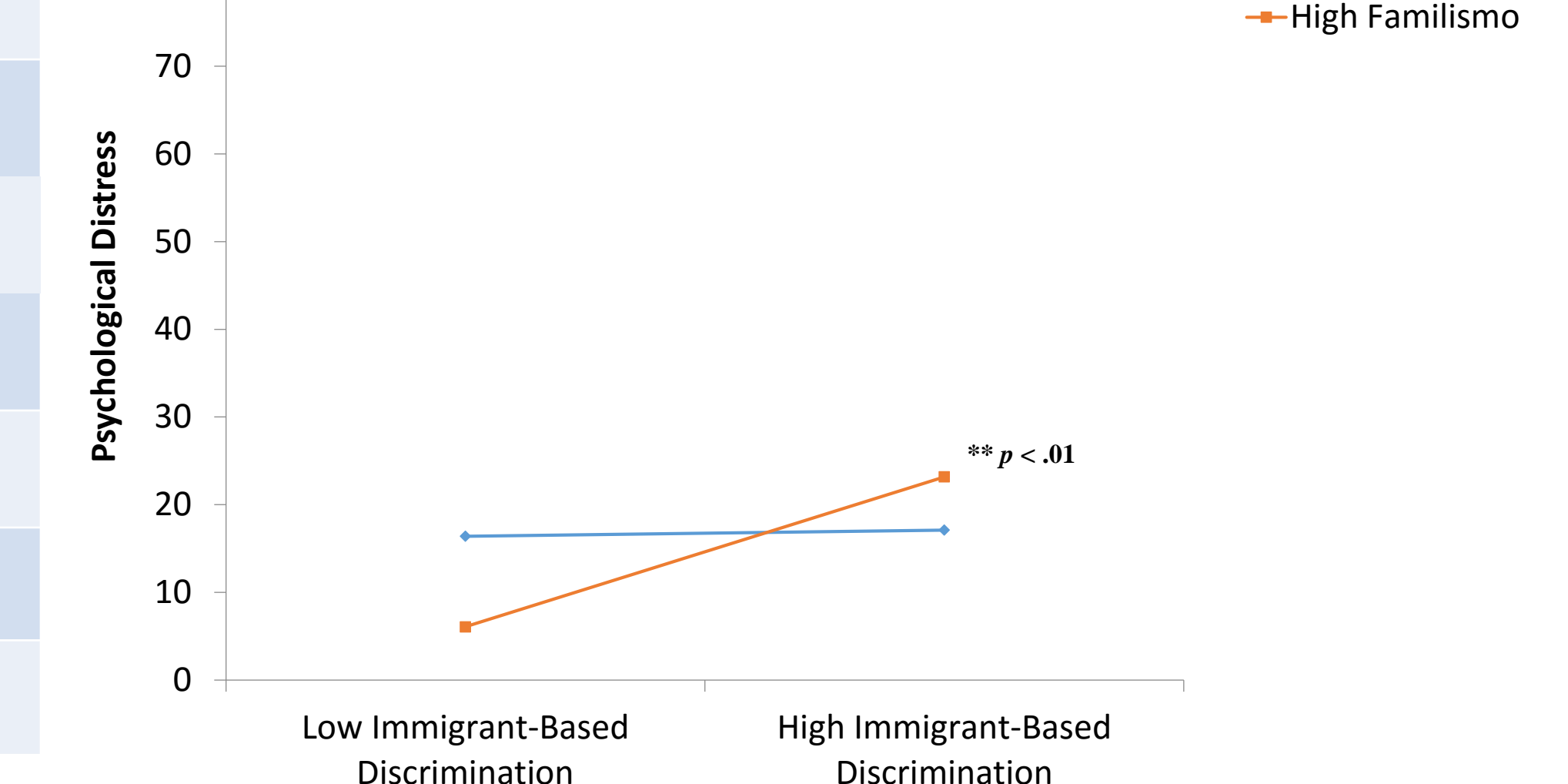
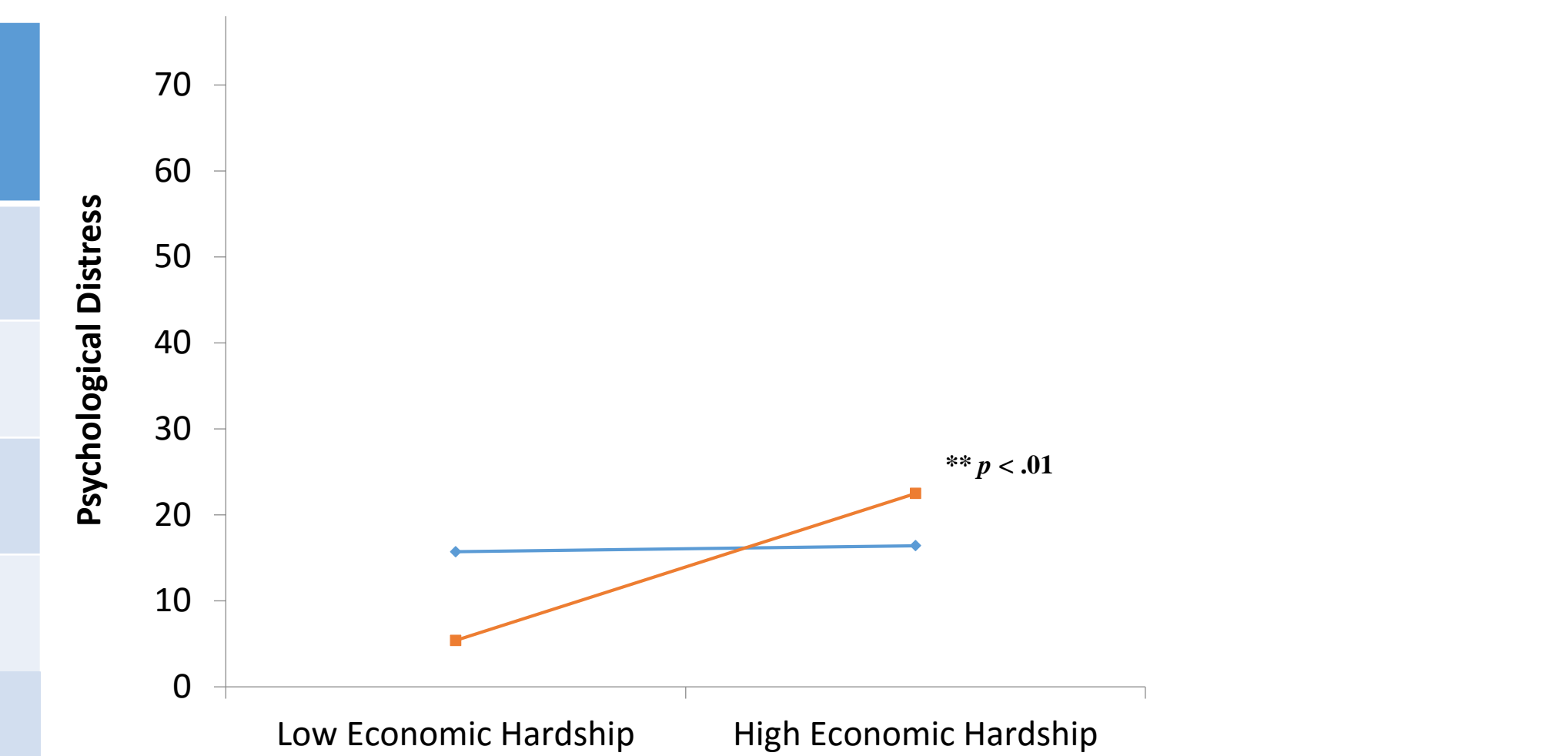
- Engagement (31 items; Frick, 1991): "How often do you have a friendly talk with your child?"
- Accessibility (12 items): "How many days a week do you put child to bed?"
- Co-parenting (16 items; Margolin et al., 2001): "How often do you tell a lot of things about child to mother?"



Results

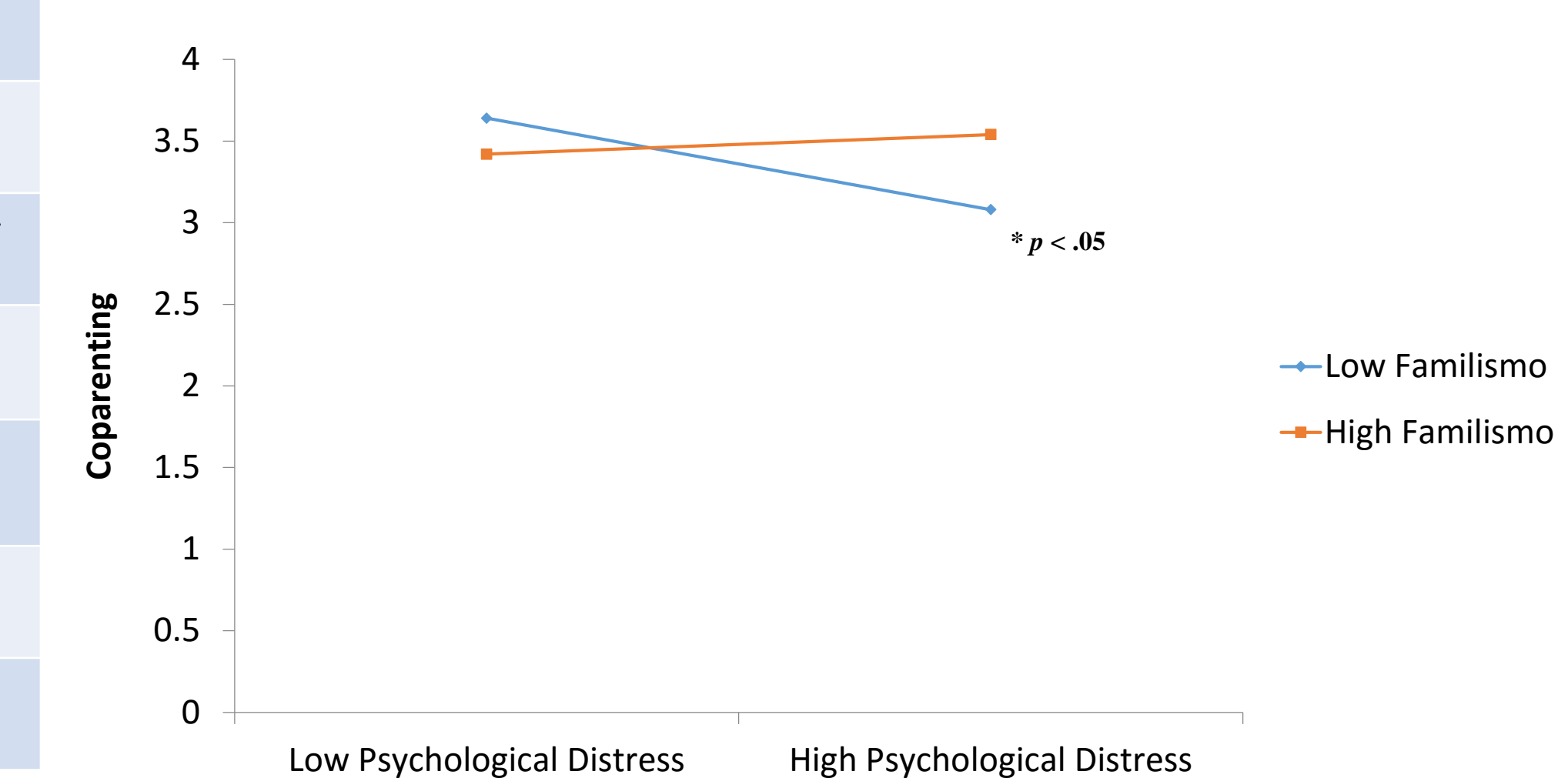
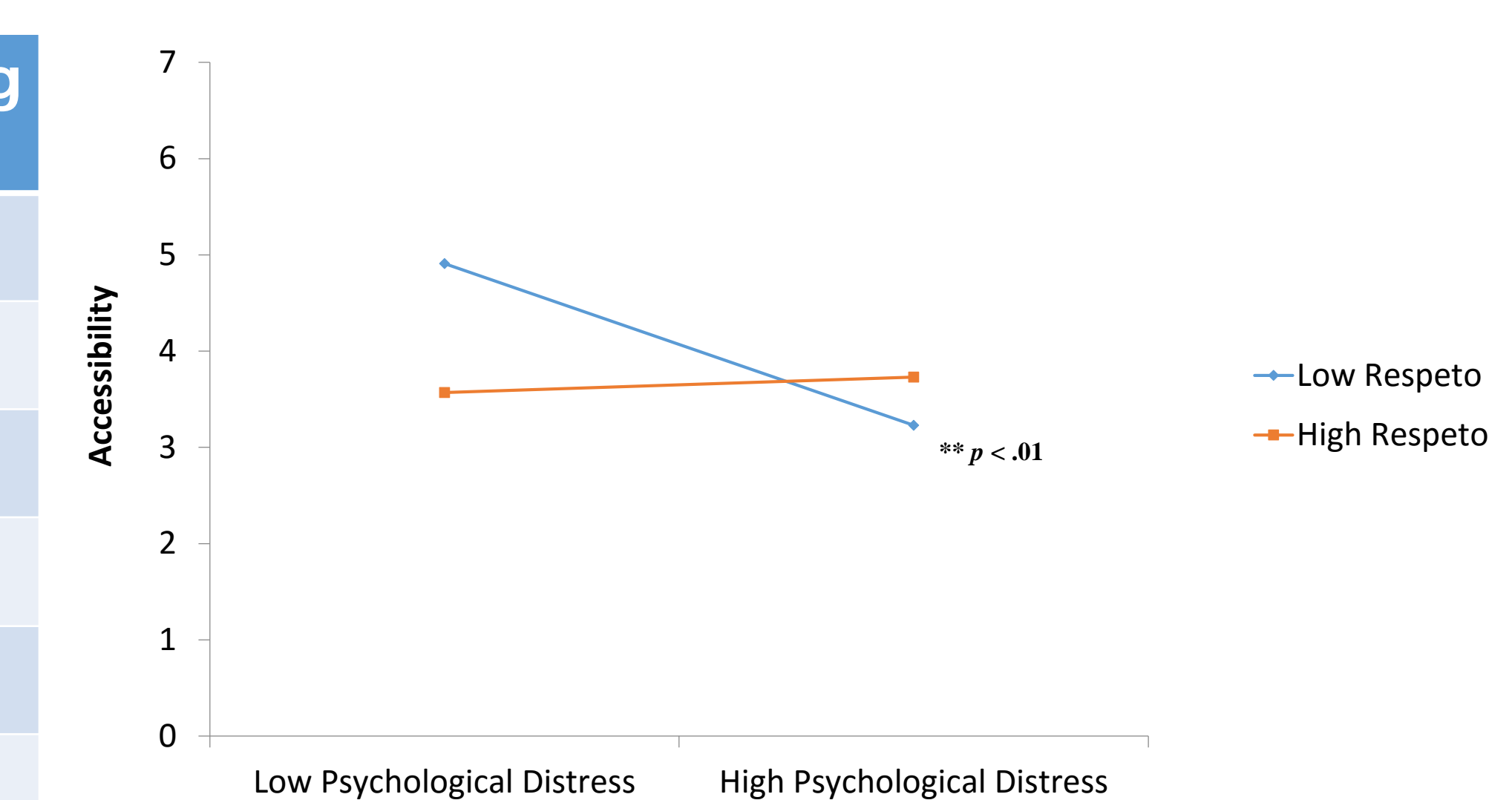
Summary of Regression Models Predicting Psychological Distress

Variables (Step 3)	Familismo β	Respeto β
U.S. born	.19	.15
Economic hardship	.22*	.28**
Acculturative stress	.14	.08
Ethnic discrimination	.10	.09
Immigrant discrimination	.29*	.36**
Familismo	-.07	-.10
Respeto	.18	.28*
Caballerismo	-.28**	-.26*
Cultural value x economic hardship	.19*	-.04
Cultural value x acculturative stress	.07	.16
Cultural value x ethnic discrimination	-.14	-.06
Cultural value x immigrant discrimination	.25*	.21*



Summary of Regression Models Predicting Fathers' Parenting

Variables (Step 3)	Engagement β	Accessibility β	Coparenting β
U.S. born	.14	.31**	-.04
Economic hardship	.16	.32**	.12
Acculturative stress	-.15	-.02	.04
Immigrant discrimination	-.12	-.12	-.09
Target child's age	-.05	-.16	.01
Psychological distress	-.11	-.33*	-.19
Familismo	.10	.34**	.10
Respeto	.05	-.18	-.14
Caballerismo	.28*	.27*	.66***
Familismo x psych. distress	-.23	-.15	.28*
Respeto x psych. distress	.32	.36*	-.21
Caballerismo x psych. distress	-.06	-.16	-.18
ΔR^2 (Adj. ΔR^2)	.04 (.15)	.05* (.37)	.07* (.44)



Conclusions and Implications

- Although endorsing cultural values may place Mexican-origin fathers at higher risk for psychological distress when exposed to cultural stressors, belief in these same values may protect fathers' parenting from the influence of psychological distress.
- FSM is a powerful approach to understanding the impact of stressors on family processes among Mexican-origin fathers.
- Culturally and ecologically-valid risks and adaptations increase the precision of the FSM.
- Fathering interventions with Mexican-origin fathers should consider cultural values in their program design and implementation.

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