

Adolescent and Peer Social Identities and Academic Outcomes among Latino Youth: The Role of Concordance in Peer Relations

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Background

Latino Adolescent Friendships

- Latinos demonstrate significant disparities in academic achievement compared to other ethnic/racial groups (Child Trends, 2014).
- Latino adolescent friendships are important for academic outcomes (Delgado et al., 2016).
- Latinos place an increased value on interdependence that extends to relationships outside the family (Way et al., 2005).
- Social capital perspectives (Putnam, 2000) suggest that bonding ties, in which relationships between peers are characterized by **similarity or concordance** in aspects of social identity, may be particularly influential for adolescent development.
- Disentangling how particular aspects of identity around which adolescents coalesce may differentially influence their academic outcomes remains important.
 - For some students, the desire for learning may motivate them to seek out like-minded, academically-oriented peers.
 - Academically-oriented peers help to promote achievement through modeling, support, and reinforcement (Crosnoe, 2000).
 - Other adolescents may situate themselves in peer networks in which anti-establishment values are endorsed (Ream & Rumberger, 2008).

Research Aims

- Aim 1:** Our primary goal was to investigate how peers contribute to adolescents' academic outcomes by evaluating the concordance between adolescents and their peers in two salient social identity domains involving (1) culture (i.e., ethnic identity private and public regard) and (2) school (i.e., academic competence).
- Aim 2:** Explore whether relations between adolescents' endorsement of social identity domains, peer endorsement of social identity domains, and school performance varied by gender.
- Aim 3:** Explore whether relations between adolescents' endorsement of social identity domains, peer endorsement of social identity domains, and school performance varied by parents' nativity.

Method

Participants and Procedures

- Participants were 247 Latino adolescents (57% female, 86% US born) interviewed when they were in the 6th grade (Mage = 11.67 years, SD = .62).
- 51% of adolescents had mothers who were born in the U.S., 19% of adolescents had mothers who were foreign born and 29% of adolescents were not aware of their mothers' place of birth.
- Adolescents nominated up to 11 friends from their grade and we constructed composites of friends' levels of academic competence and ethnic identity public and private regard by taking an average of nominated friends' levels of respective social domains.

Measures

- Adolescents reported on their background information, academic competence (Geldhof et al., 2014), school connection (Geldhof et al., 2014), ethnic identity, public and private regard (Sellers et al., 1997), and educational expectations and grades.

Analytic Plan

- To address our study goals, we used path models that were estimated in Mplus 7.3 using FIML-R to account for missing data. All variables were centered prior to creating interaction terms.
- Significant interactions were probed using Aiken and West guidelines for simple slopes (1991).

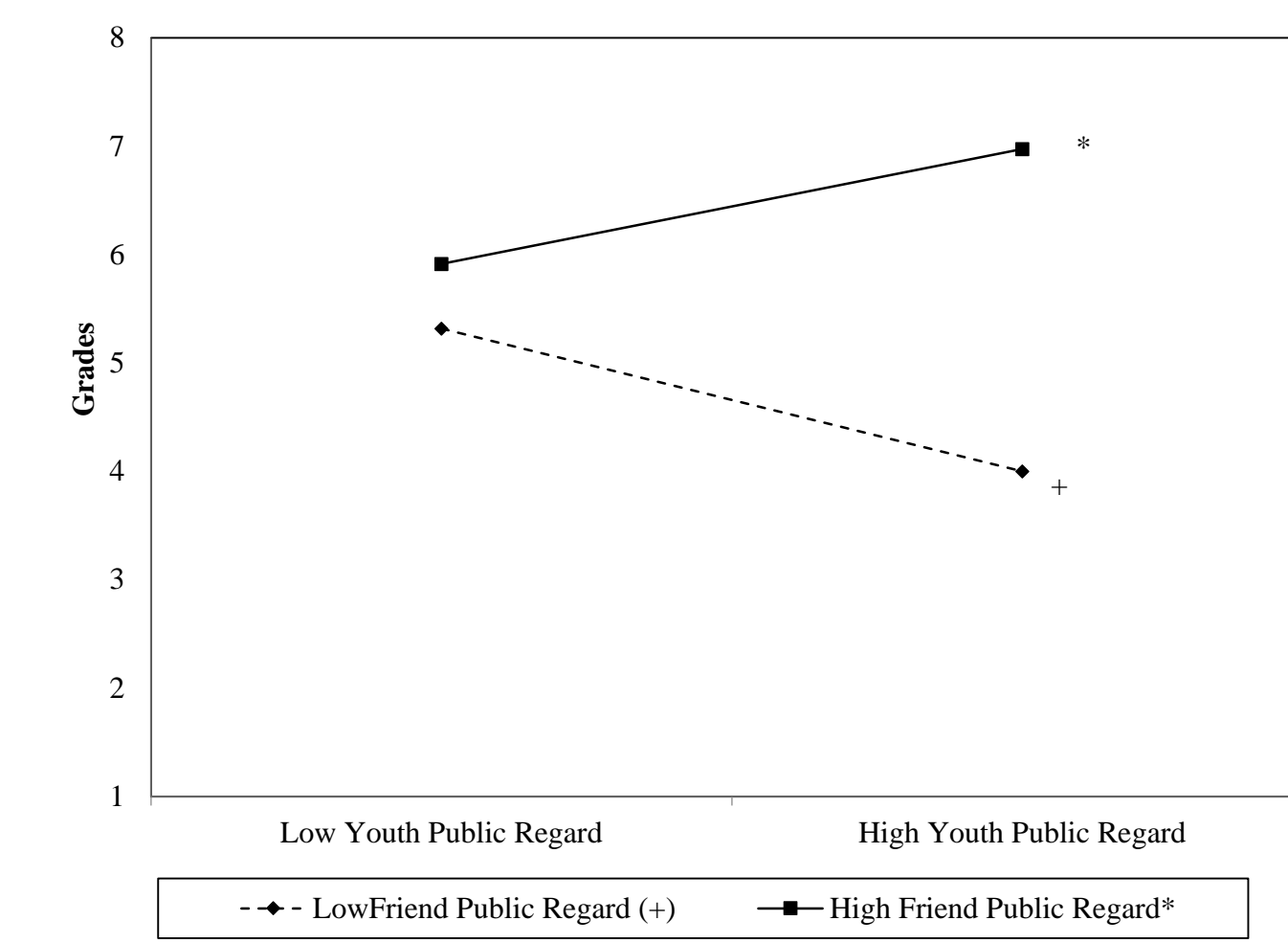
Results

Aim 1

There were significant results for models using ethnic identity private and public regard and academic competence, but these results were conditional on gender.

Aim 2: The Role of Gender

For Adolescent Girls ONLY: Significant Effects for Public Regard Concordance Models and for Private Regard Concordance Models

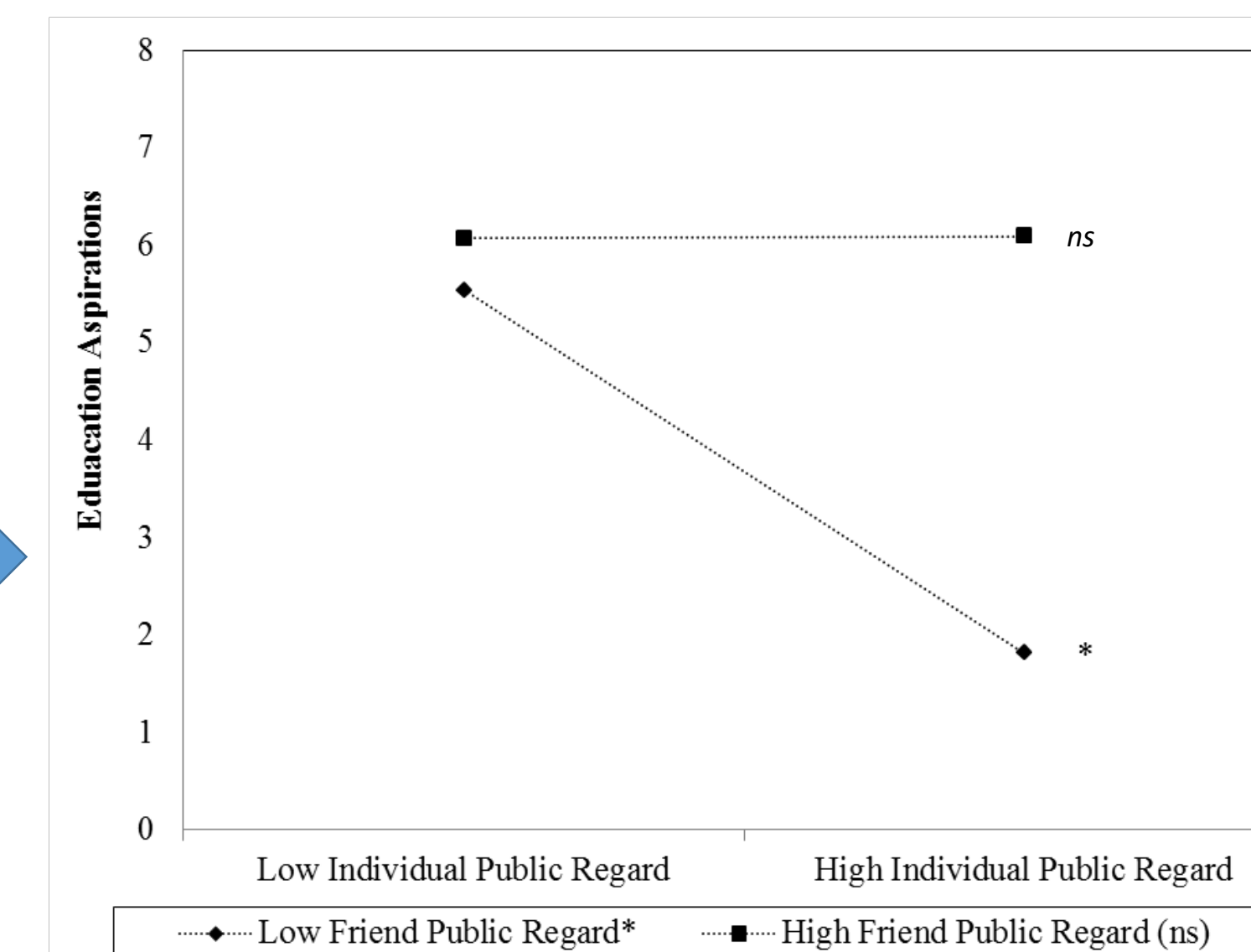


For adolescent girls, under conditions of low friend public regard, there was negative association (trend) between individual public regard and grades [t=-1.75, p=.08].

For adolescent girls, under conditions of high levels of friend public regard, there was a positive association between individual public regard and grades [t=2.14, p=.03].

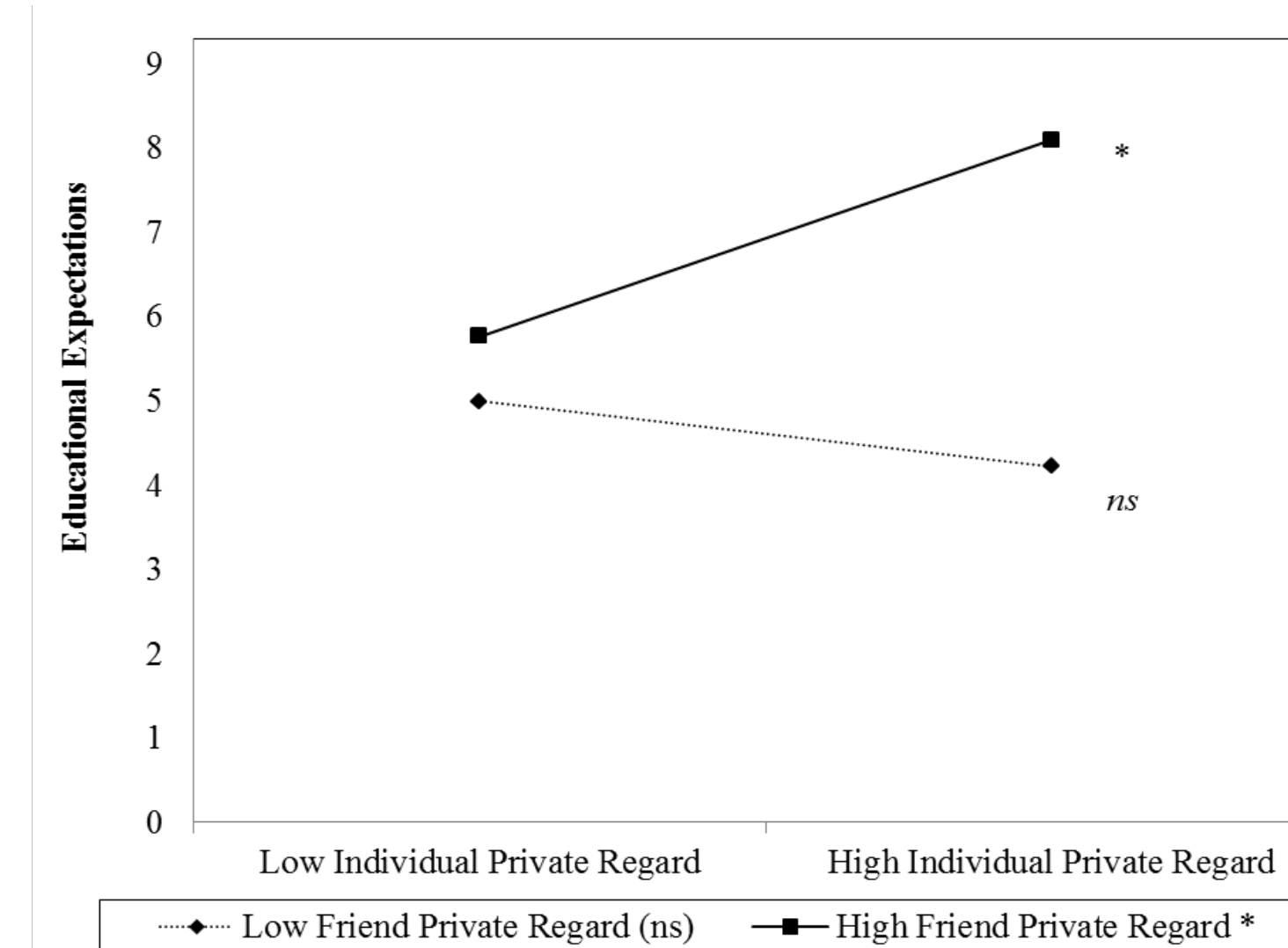
For adolescent girls, under conditions of low levels of friend public regard, there was a negative association between individual public regard and educational aspirations [t=-2.26, p=.03].

For adolescent girls, under conditions of high levels of friend public regard, there was no association between individual public regard and educational aspirations [t=-0.02, p=.98].

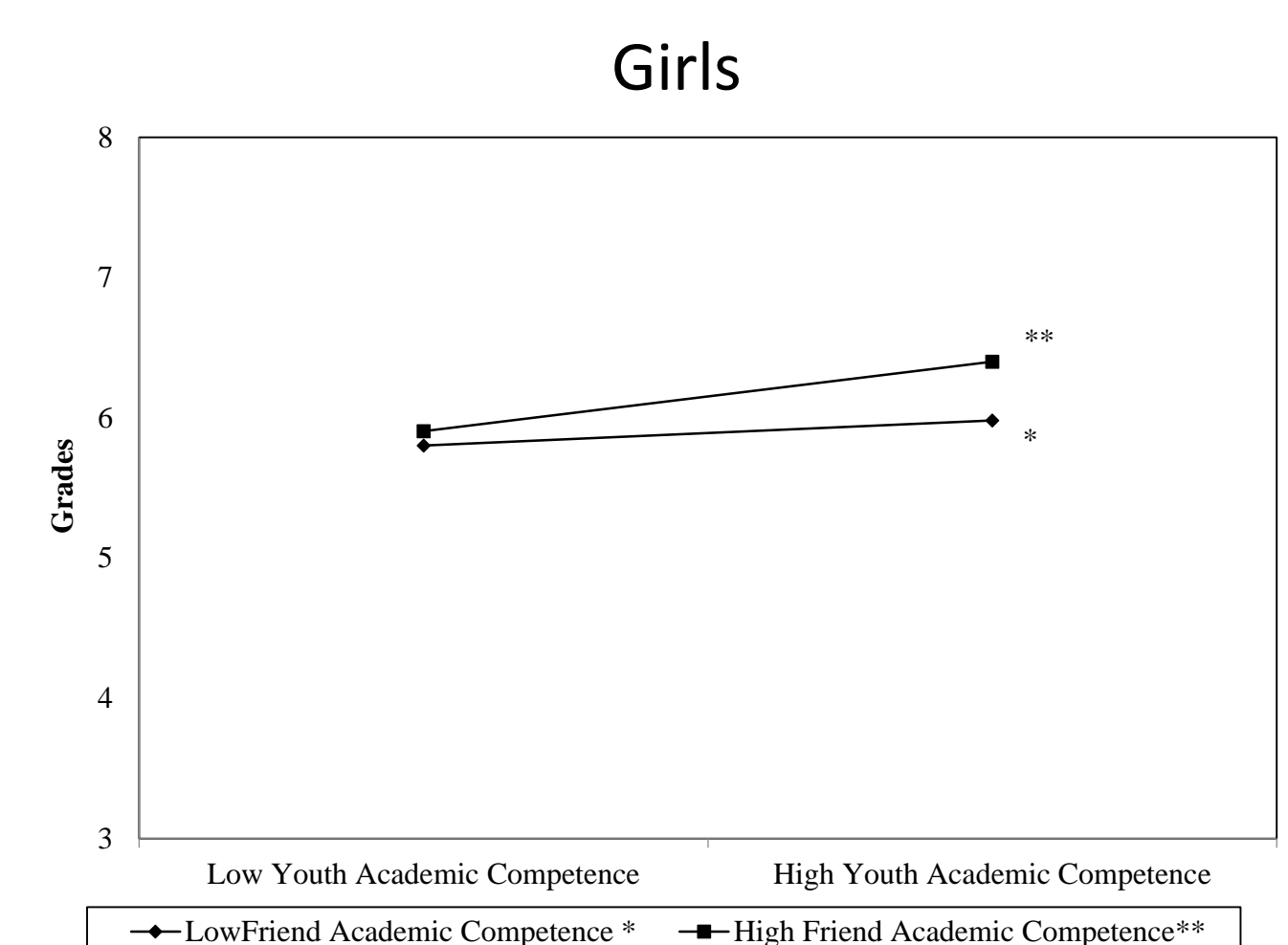


For adolescent girls, under conditions of low levels of friend private regard, there was no association between individual private regard and educational expectations [t=-0.75, p=.46].

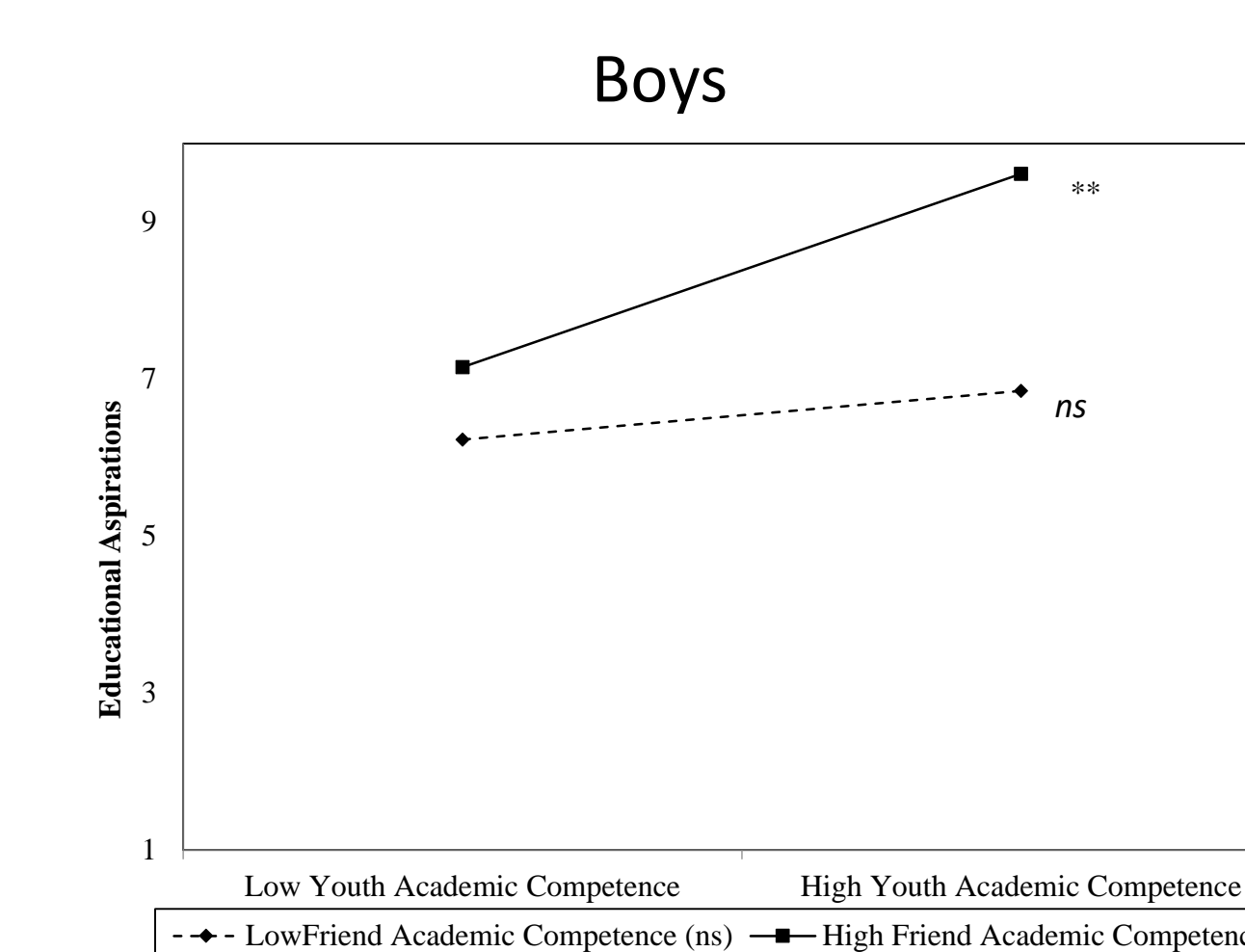
For adolescent girls, under conditions of high levels of friend private regard, there was a significant positive association between individual private regard and educational expectations [t=2.33 p=.02].



For Adolescent Girls and Boys: Significant effects for Academic Competence Concordance Models



For adolescent girls, under conditions of low friend academic competence, there was a positive association between academic competence and grades [t=1.97, p=.05], but the effect was more pronounced when adolescents were concordant with their friends [t=3.45, p=.001]. When adolescent girls had friends with high levels of academic competence, this led to a stronger association between their self-reported academic competence and grades.



For adolescent boys, under conditions of low friend academic competence, there was no association between academic competence and educational aspirations [t=0.94, p=.35], but when adolescent boys had friends with high levels of academic competence, there was a positive association between their self-reported academic competence and aspirations [t=3.45, p=.001].

Aim 3: The Role of Nativity

- Only one concordance model had significant effects by nativity, significant only at the trend level.
 - For adolescents of immigrant parents, under conditions of low friend academic competence, there was a negative trend-level association between individual academic competence and educational aspirations, but when adolescents of immigrant parents had friends with high levels of academic competence there was a positive trend-level association between their self-reported academic competence and aspirations. There were no significant results for adolescents of non-immigrant (US-born) parents.

Discussion

- Concordance between adolescents and their friends on the cultural domain was positively associated with academic outcomes for Latino adolescent girls.
 - Adolescent girls whose peers shared their public and private ethnic identities had more positive academic outcomes than adolescent girls whose peers reported public and private ethnic identities that were different to theirs.
 - Previous work using a multi-ethnic sample including Mexican adolescents indicates girls report more cultural socialization than boys (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008); therefore, the cultural domain might be more salient for Latino adolescent girls than for boys.
- Concordance between adolescents and their friends on the school domain was positively related to academic outcomes for Latino adolescent girls and boys.
 - For both girls and boys, concordance with their peers on academic competence led to more positive academic outcomes.
 - Aligns with research that suggests academically-oriented peers help to promote achievement through modeling, support, and reinforcement (Crosnoe, 2000).

Limitations/Future Directions

- The limited sample size may have impacted the lack of nativity findings as only 19% of adolescents had immigrant parents.
- The cross-sectional nature of the study precludes our ability to disentangle peer selection and socialization pathways that are likely to operate as a part of developmental cascade through which social identities (Santos et al., 2017) and academic outcomes (Gremmen et al., 2018) co-develop as a part of peer networks. The examination of these processes over time is a worthwhile direction for future research.

Acknowledgements

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