



Gender Differences in the Temporal Relationship Between Youth Development Program Participation and Self-Competence in Adolescents

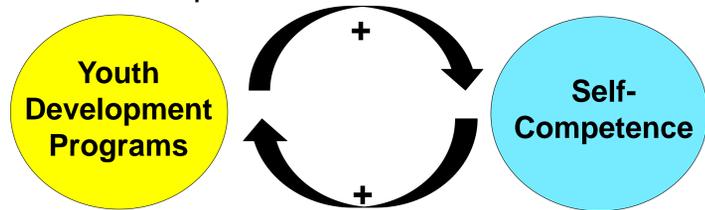


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Introduction and Methods

Background:

- ❖ According to relational developmental systems theories, ecological assets provided by youth development programs foster the development of self-competence (Lerner, Johnson, & Buckingham, 2015).
- ❖ Development of self-competence may promote positive contributions to the self, community, and society through involvement in youth programs (Lerner et al., 2015).
- ❖ The role of gender in these bidirectional relationships is unknown.



Objective: To examine gender differences in the bidirectional relationship between youth development program participation and self-competence among adolescents.

Participants:

- ❖ 1,022 adolescents (15-17 years) from the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States
- ❖ 53% girls; 51% non-Hispanic White

Procedures:

- ❖ Adolescents completed surveys during school in the spring of 2007 (T1) and the spring of 2008 (T2).

Methods and Results

Measures:

- ❖ Weekly participation in youth development programs

- Organized sports
- School clubs
- Volunteer work
- Religious activities



- ❖ Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA, Harter, 2012)

- Academic competence (α s = .77-.78)
- Athletic competence (α s = .87)
- Social competence (α s = .75-.77)
- Perceived physical appearance (α s = .88)



Unconstrained Model Fit: $\chi^2(6) = 9.12, p > .05$;
CFI = 1.00; TLI = .95; RMSEA = .02, 90% CI = .00, .04.

Figure 1. Standardized Path Coefficients for the Significant Paths in the Unconstrained Model for Girls.

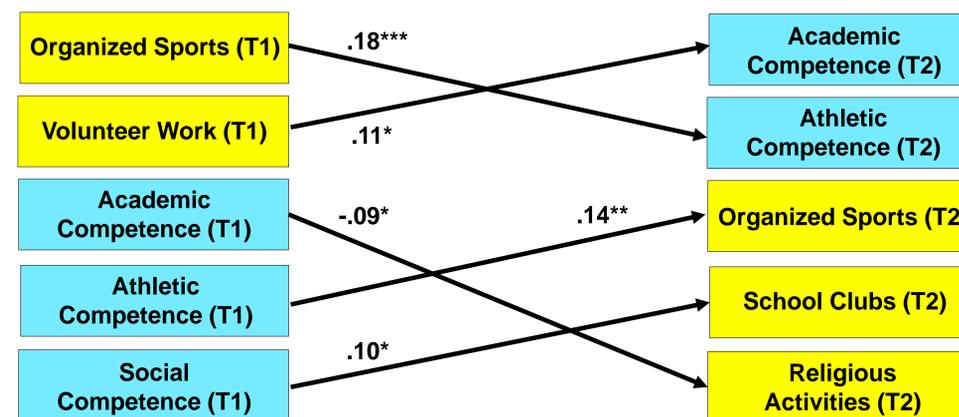
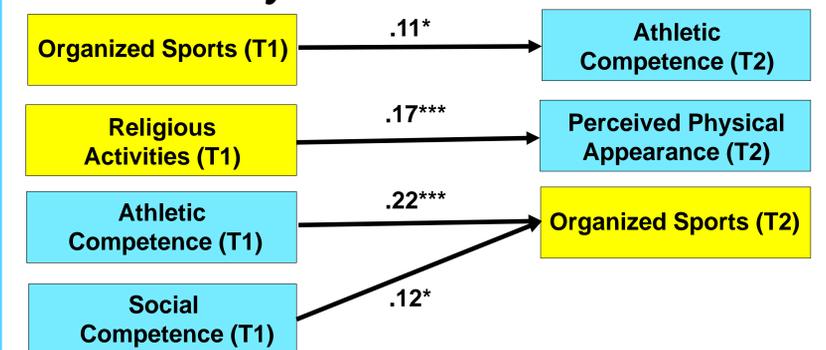


Figure 1 and 2 Notes: Analyses adjusted for age, race/ethnicity, and parent education attainment. For parsimony of presentation, the non-significant paths and all covariates and stability paths, covariances, and residuals are not shown. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Results and Discussion

Figure 2. Standardized Path Coefficients for Significant Paths in the Unconstrained Model for Boys.



Conclusions:

- ❖ A bidirectional, prospective relationship is apparent between sports participation and athletic competence for both girls and boys.
- ❖ Encouraging girls to be involved in volunteer work and boys in religious activities may foster distinct aspects of their self-competence.
- ❖ Fostering social competence may encourage greater participation in youth development programs, thereby promoting positive contributions to the self and the community.

Acknowledgements

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