

The Influence of Sexual Identity on Higher Education Outcomes

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PhD2B


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Road Map

- What is sexual identity?
- Developmental models
- Recent research
- Methods
- Statistics overview
- Building the model
- Implications for practice
- Questions/comments

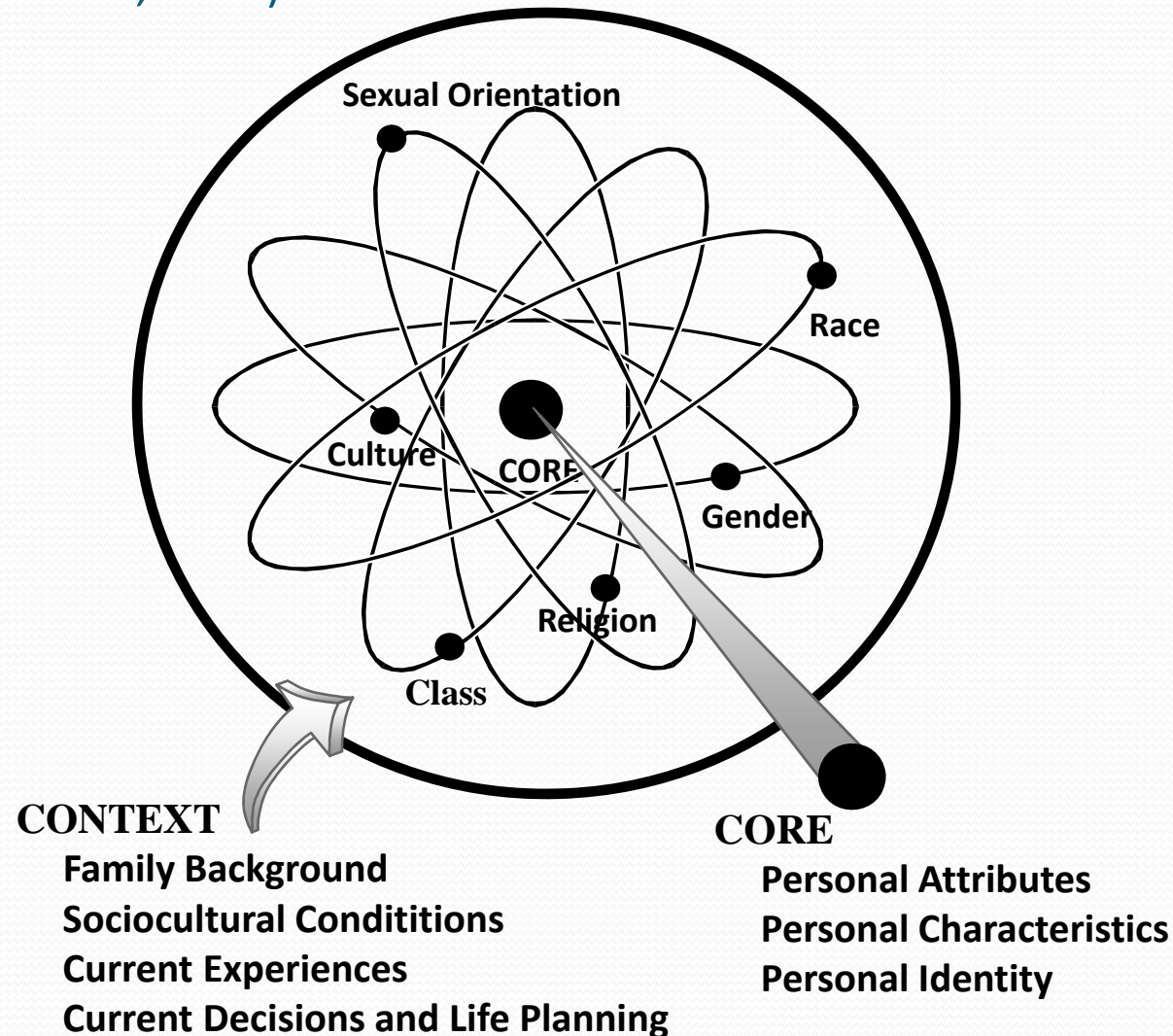


“Your identity is your single most important possession. It defines everything about you. It contains your entire life.”

– Dan Arsenault

Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

(Jones & McEwen, 2000)




$$A+B = I$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \bullet \text{ Sexual} & + & \bullet \text{ Sexual} \\ \bullet \text{ Attraction} & & \bullet \text{ Behavior} \\ \text{Age 11} & & \text{Age 15-16} \end{array} =$$

$$\begin{array}{c} \bullet \text{ Sexual} \\ \bullet \text{ Identity} \\ \text{Age 18} \end{array}$$

- How people identify themselves based on their sexual attractions and behaviors.



Why come out?

● Risks

- Becoming visible by coming out likely increases the chances of becoming the victim of prejudice, discrimination, or violence (Bohan, 1996; Otis & Skinner, 1996; Radkowsky & Siegel, 1997; Wills & Crawford, 2000).
- Those who come out to others...
 - Experience more physical and verbal abuse (Cato & Canetto, 2003);
 - Experience more depression and low self-esteem (DAugelli, et al, 2002);
 - Are more prone to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (McDaniel, 2001);
 - Report missing at least one entire day of high school in the past month because they felt unsafe (Anthanasios & Larrabee, 2003).



Why come out?

- **Benefits**

- Counteracts the shame of hiding
- Improves self-esteem from being oneself in relation to others
- Improves social relationships
- Changes society's attitudes

Cass' Model of Homosexual Identity Formation (1979)

“Identity...

CONFUSION”
COMPARISON”
TOLERANCE”
ACCEPTANCE”
PRIDE”
SYNTHESIS”





Pros and Cons of Cass' Model

How is this helpful?

- To understand a general process
- Identify common patterns
- Provides a common language
- Operationalizes an abstract concept

What's wrong with it?

- Doesn't account for individual experiences
- Neglects cohort effects
- Fails to acknowledge context
- Assumption that more advanced stages are better
- Emphasizes a public declaration of sexuality

An Inclusive Model of Lesbian/Gay Identity Formation

(Fassinger, 1998)

Individual

Sexual Identity Development

- **Phase 1:**
Awareness
- **Phase 2:**
Exploration
- **Phase 3:**
Deepening/Commitment
- **Phase 4:**
Internalization/Synthesis

Group Membership

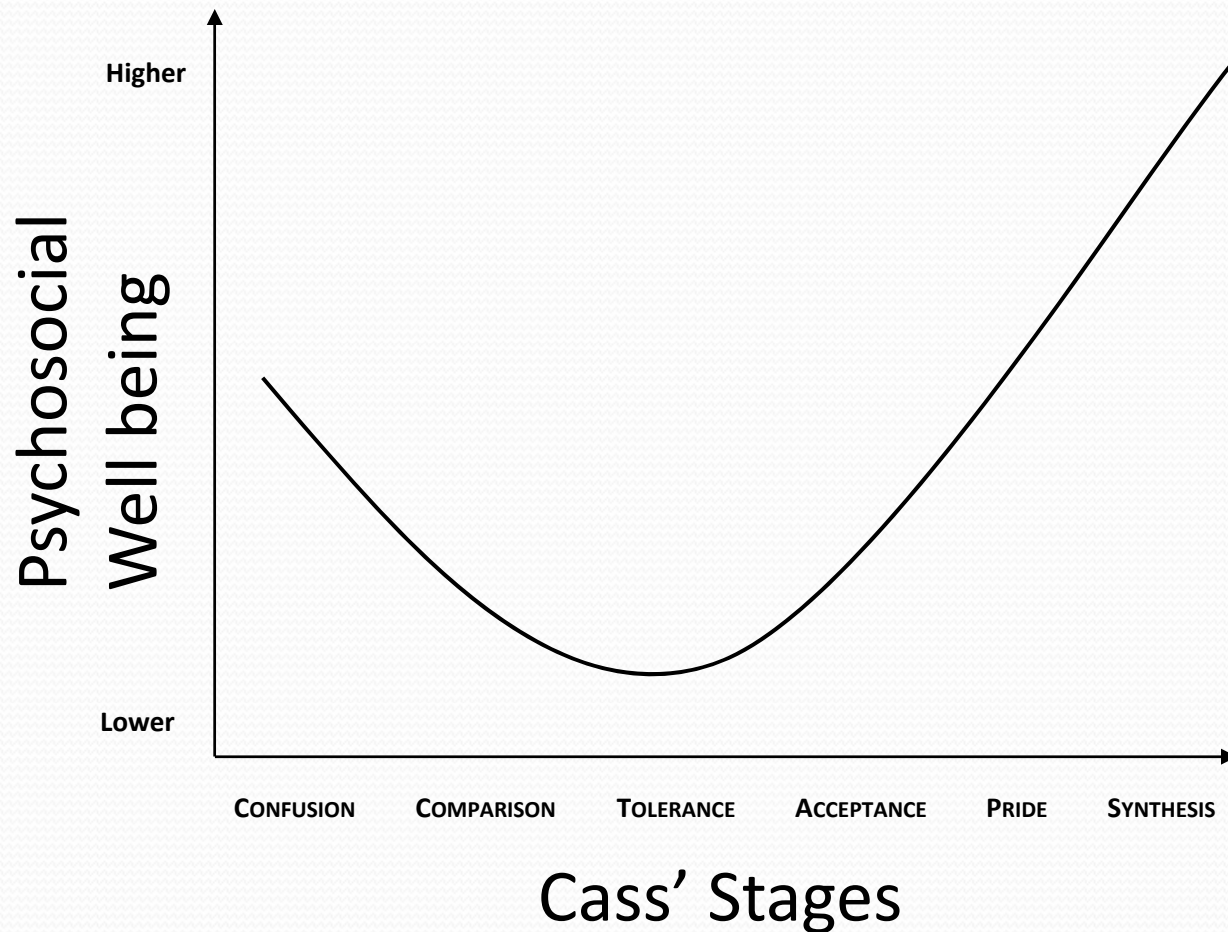
Sexual Identity Development

- **Phase 1:**
Awareness
- **Phase 2:**
Exploration
- **Phase 3:**
Deepening/Commitment
- **Phase 4:**
Internalization/Synthesis

D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Development

- Develop a personal lgb identity
- Exit heterosexual identity
- Develop a lgb social identity
- Become a lgb offspring
- Develop a lgb intimacy status
- Enter a lgb community

Changes in Psychosocial Well-Being During Stages of Gay Identity Development (Halpin & Allen, 2004).



Recent Findings Related to LGBQ College Students (Carpenter, 2009)

- Compared to heterosexual students...
 - Gay men have higher GPAs.
 - Gay men were more likely to report receiving social support from faculty or administrators.
 - Gay men placed more importance on being involved in their learning.
 - Bisexual females were less satisfied with their education.
 - Bisexual females spend less time on academic work.

Recent Findings Related to LGBQ College Students (Gonyea & Moore, 2007)

- Compared to heterosexual students...
 - LGBT students were about twice as likely to major in the humanities.
 - LGBT students were about half as likely to be a member of a social fraternity or sorority.
 - LGBT students are more likely to interact with faculty members.
 - Level of disclosure of sexual identity influences active and collaborative learning.



Research Question:

To what extent do psychological characteristics influence higher education outcomes for LGBTQ students?

Psychological Characteristics:

Level of Disclosure

Internalized Homophobia

Self-Esteem

Social Support

Higher Education Outcomes:

Peer Interactions

Faculty Interactions

SA Staff Interactions

Academic Development



Methods

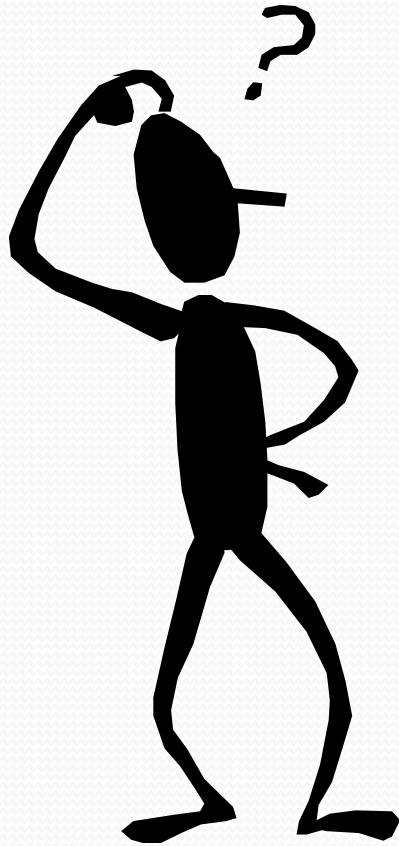
- Survey construction
 - Choosing and developing measures
- Participant recruitment
 - Thanks, Campus Pride!
- Sample description
 - Undergraduate and graduate students
 - Varying types of institutional and living environments
 - The option to self-identify gender and sexual identity
 - Total sample size (N = 1,125)



Data Analysis

- Structural equation modeling (SEM)
 - Confirmatory factor analysis
 - Preliminary regression analysis to construct path model
 - Full structural model with direct and indirect effects
- Analyzed by sexual identity group (gay/lesbian, bisexual, queer)

Overview of Statistics



- Variable types
- Correlation
- Regression
- Effect size
- Indirect effects

Variable Types

- Observed vs. Latent
- Measuring latent variables using an ordinal scale

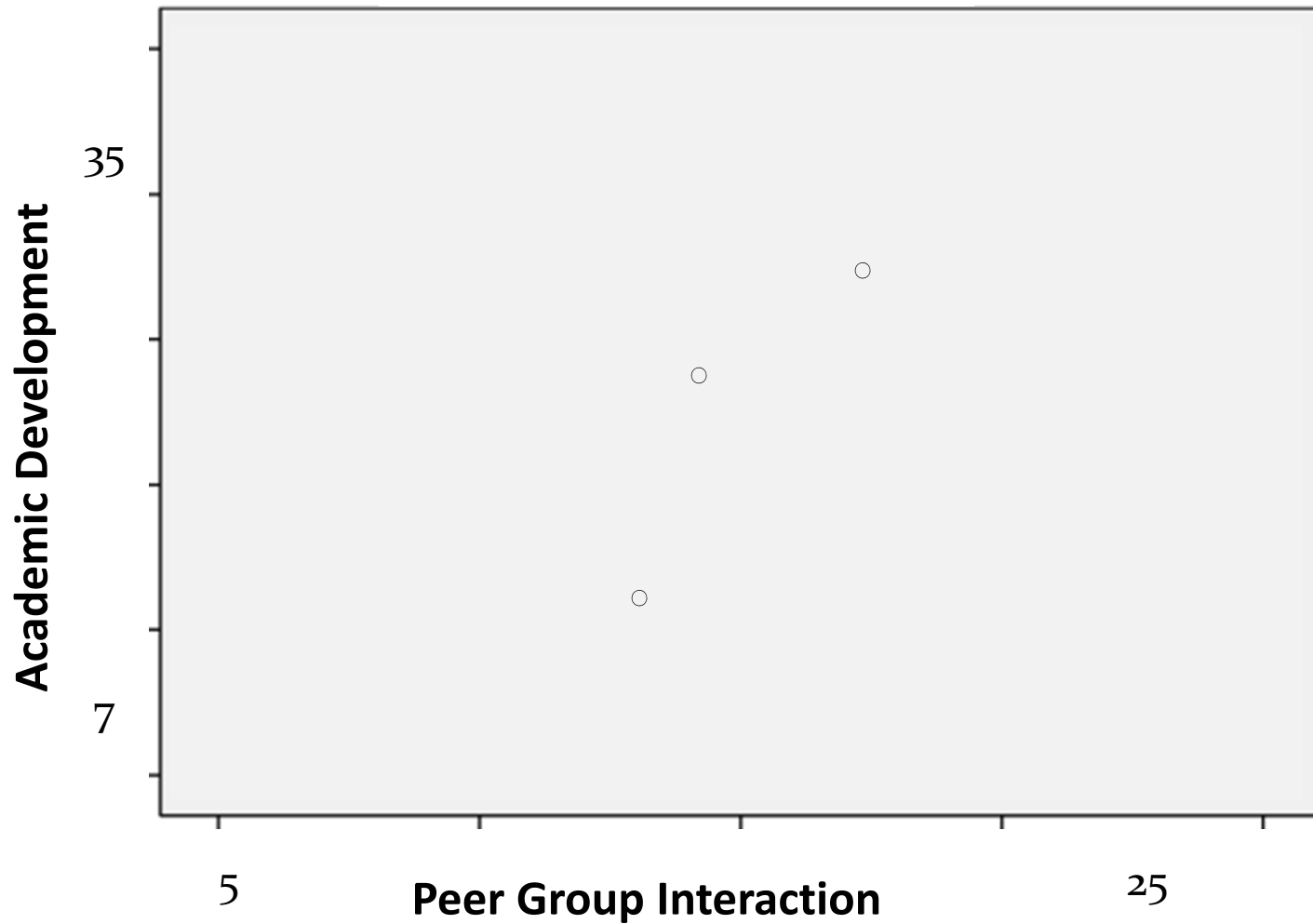
Psychological Characteristics:

Level of Disclosure
Internalized Homophobia
Self-Esteem
Social Support

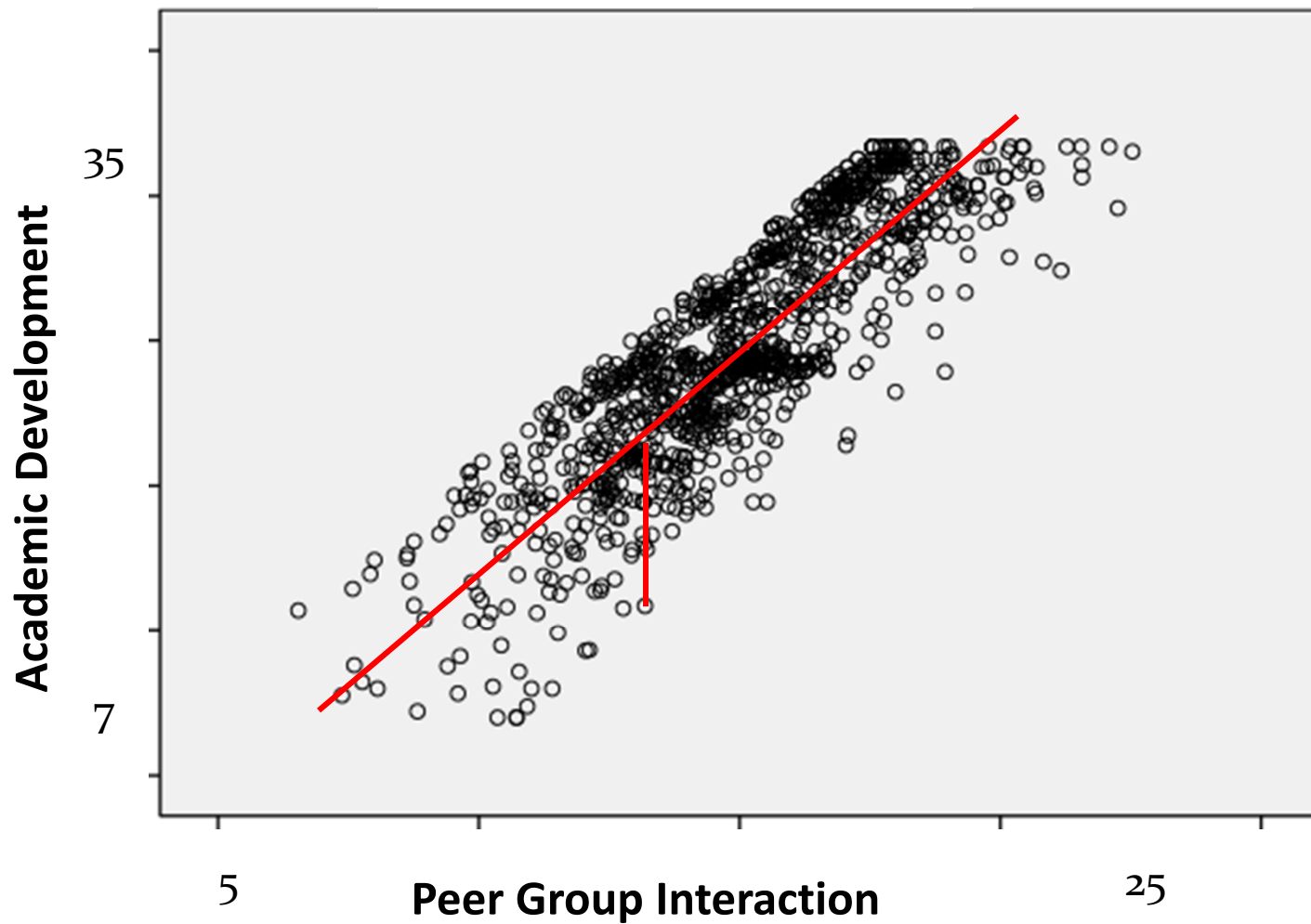
Higher Education Outcomes:

Peer Interactions
Faculty Interactions
SA Staff Interactions
Academic Development

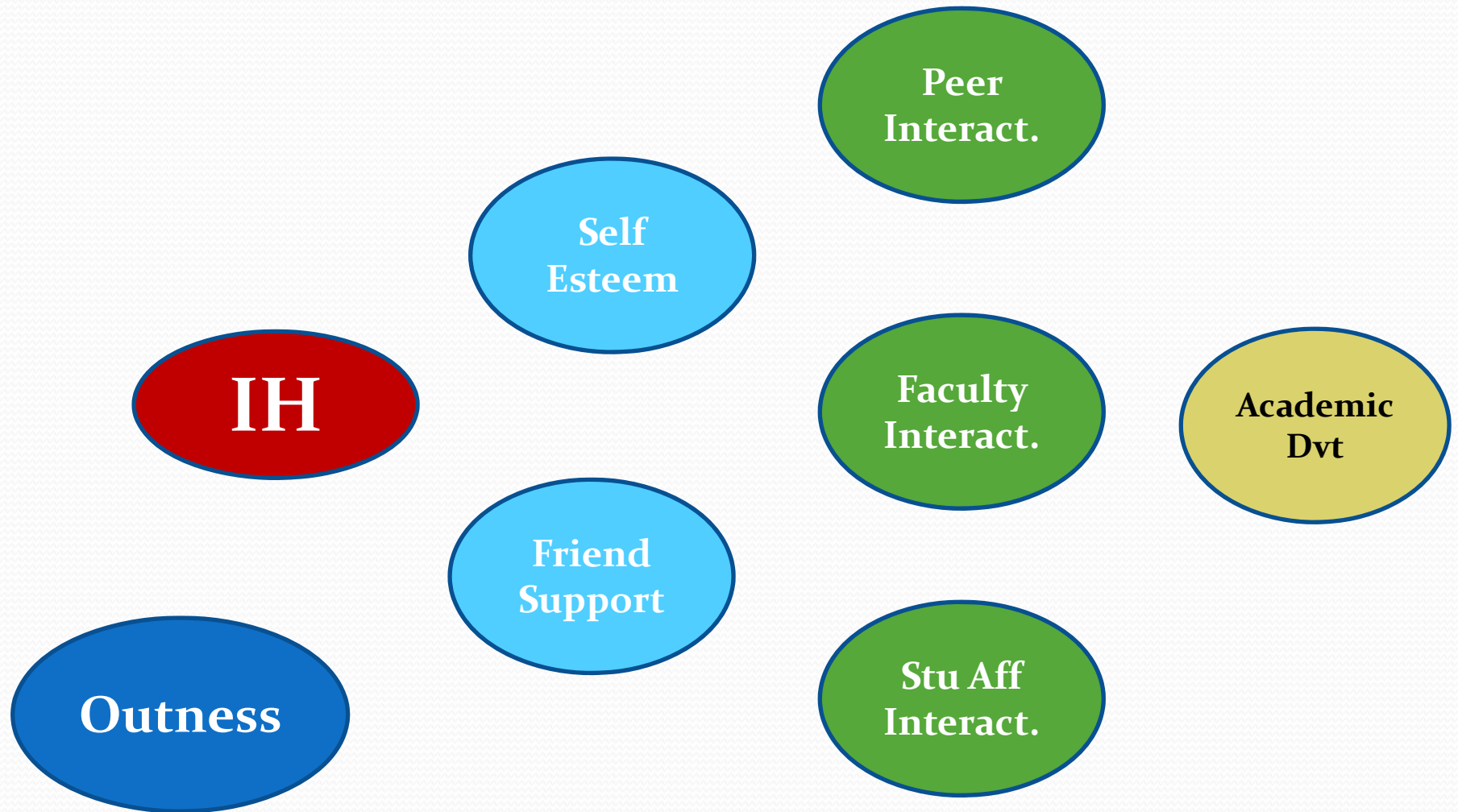
Plotting the data points



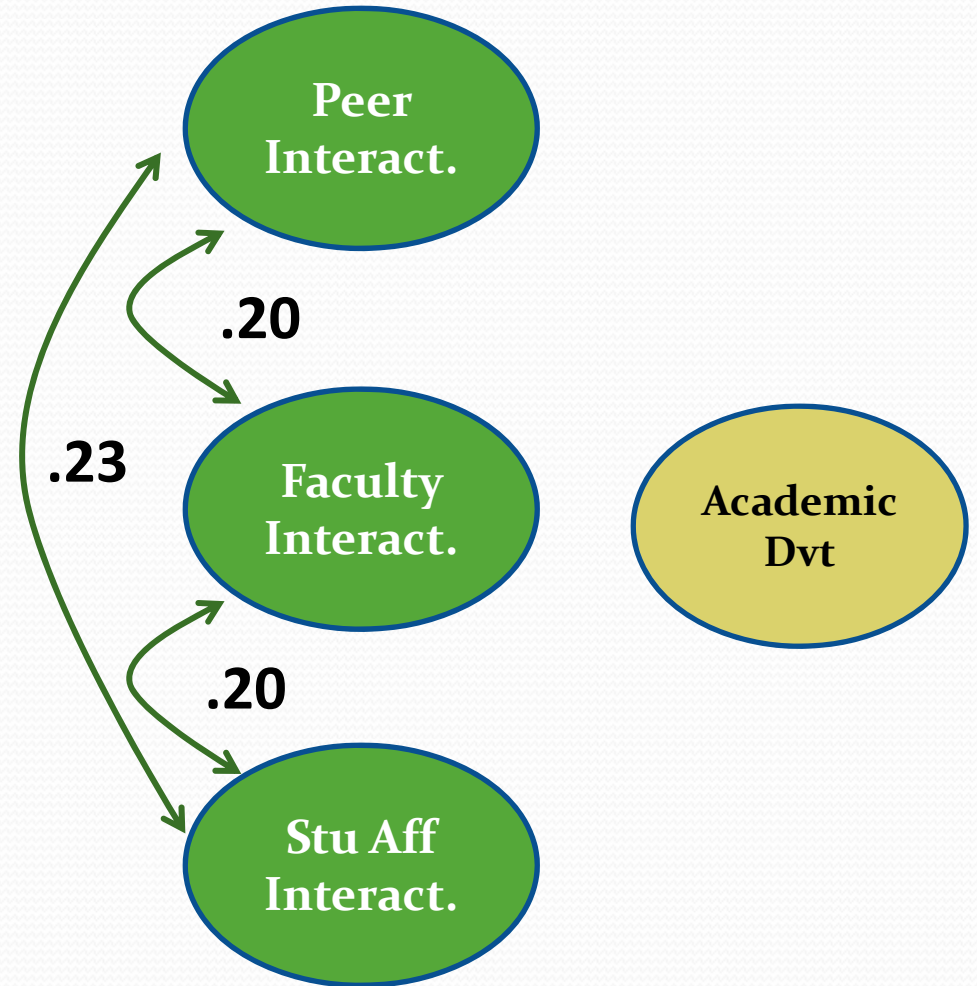
Correlation & Regression



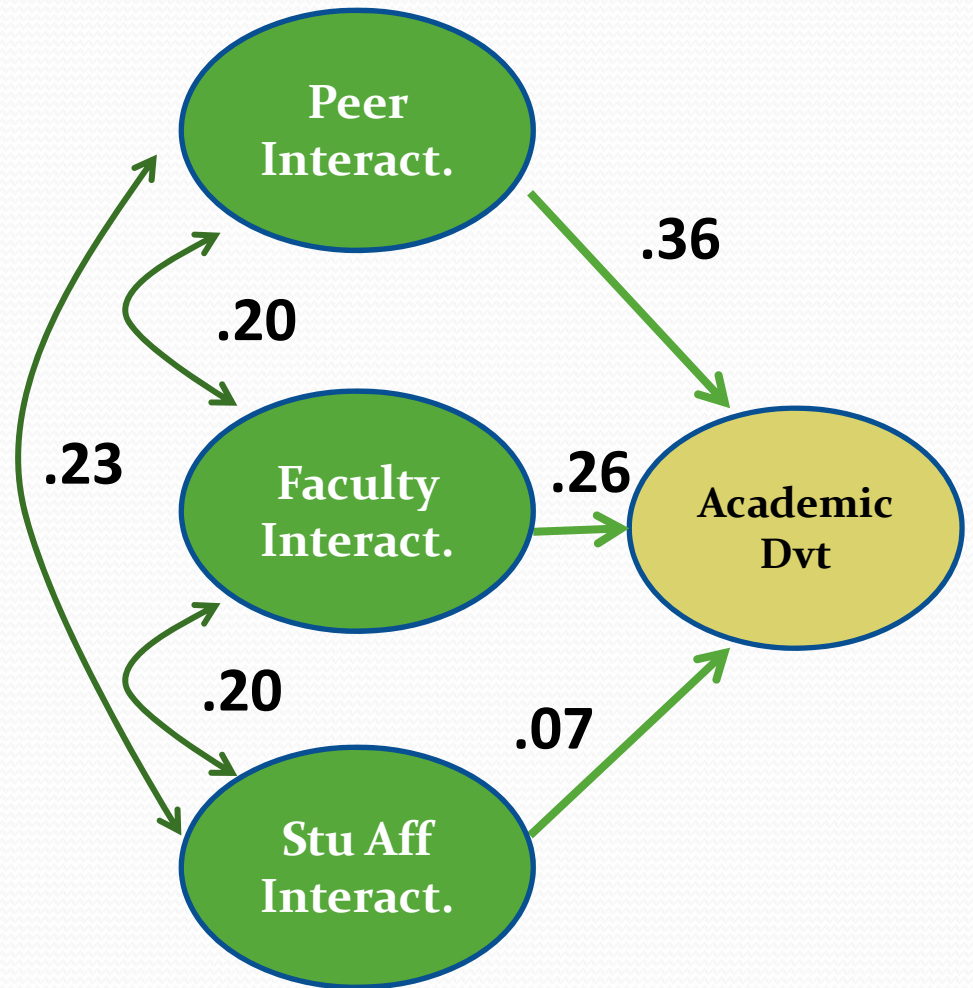
Building a model



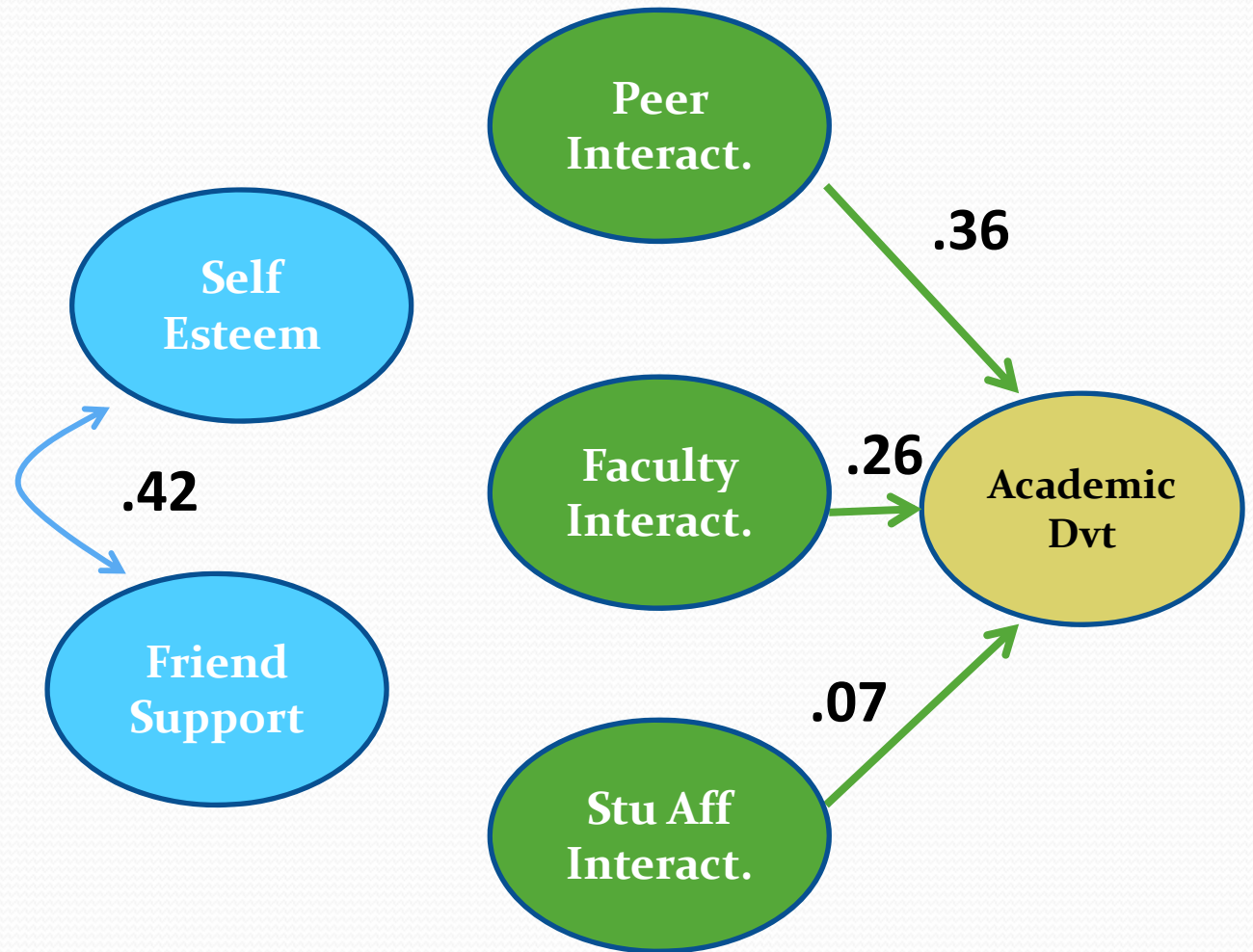
Higher Education Outcomes



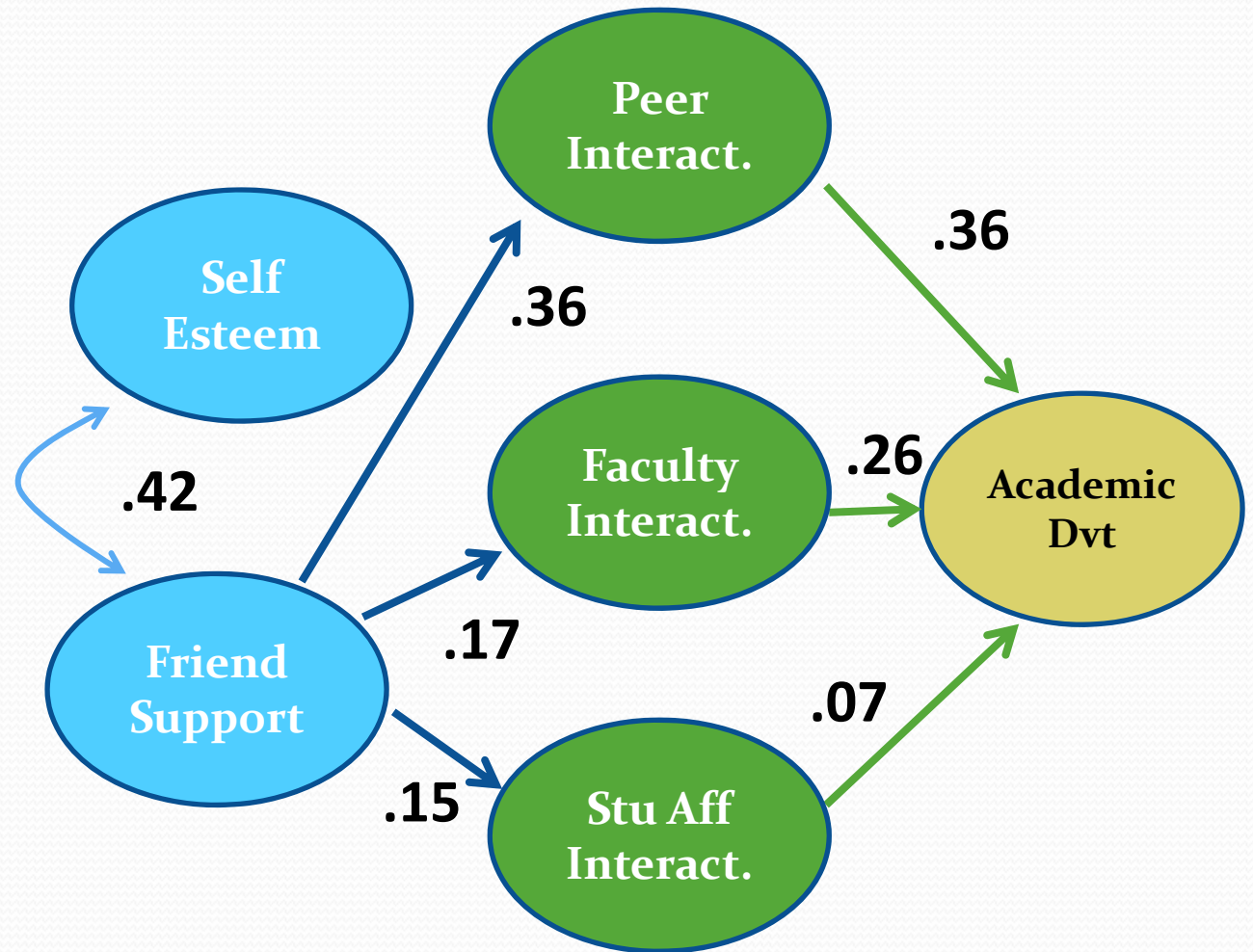
Higher Education Outcomes



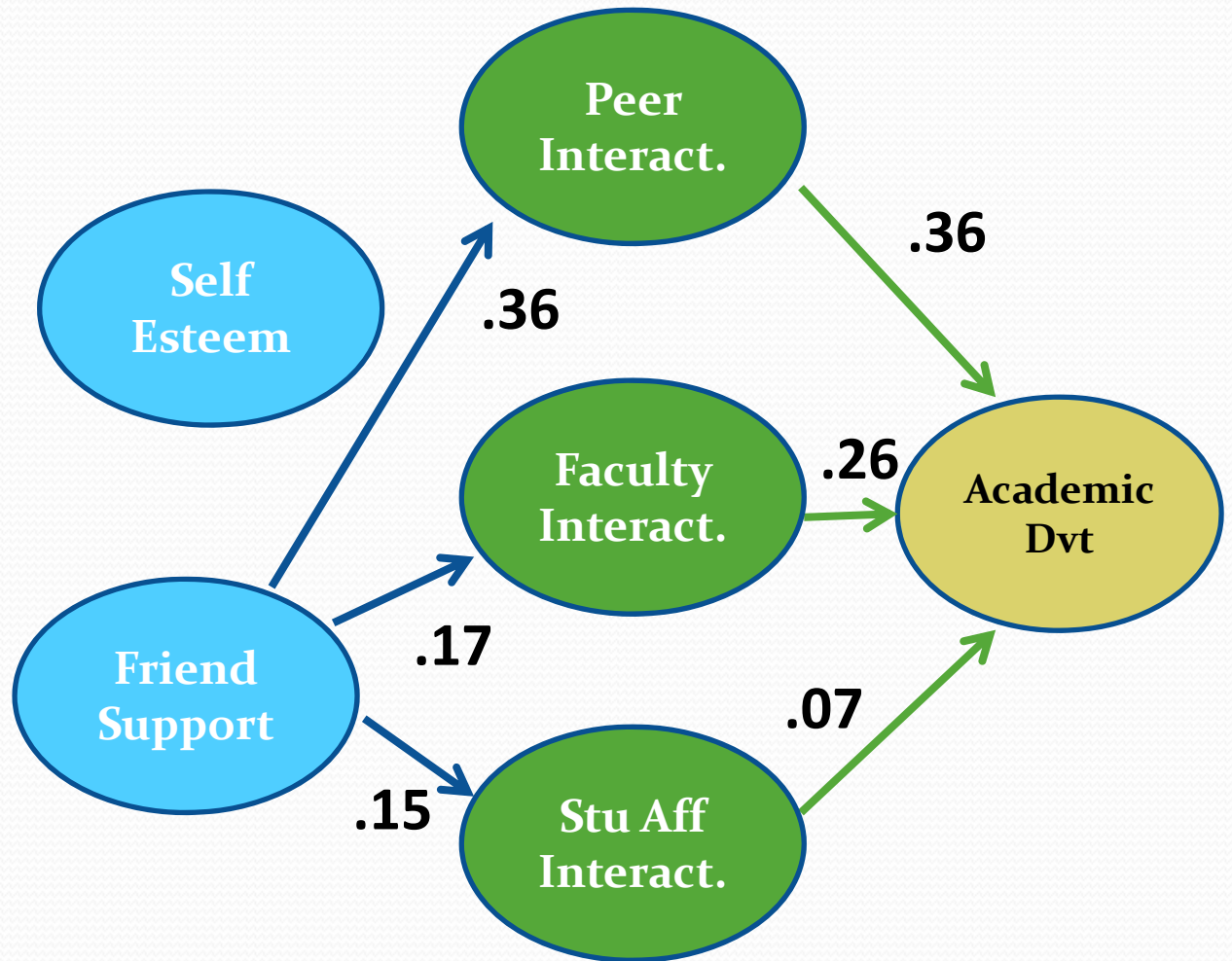
Psychological Characteristics



Psychological Characteristics



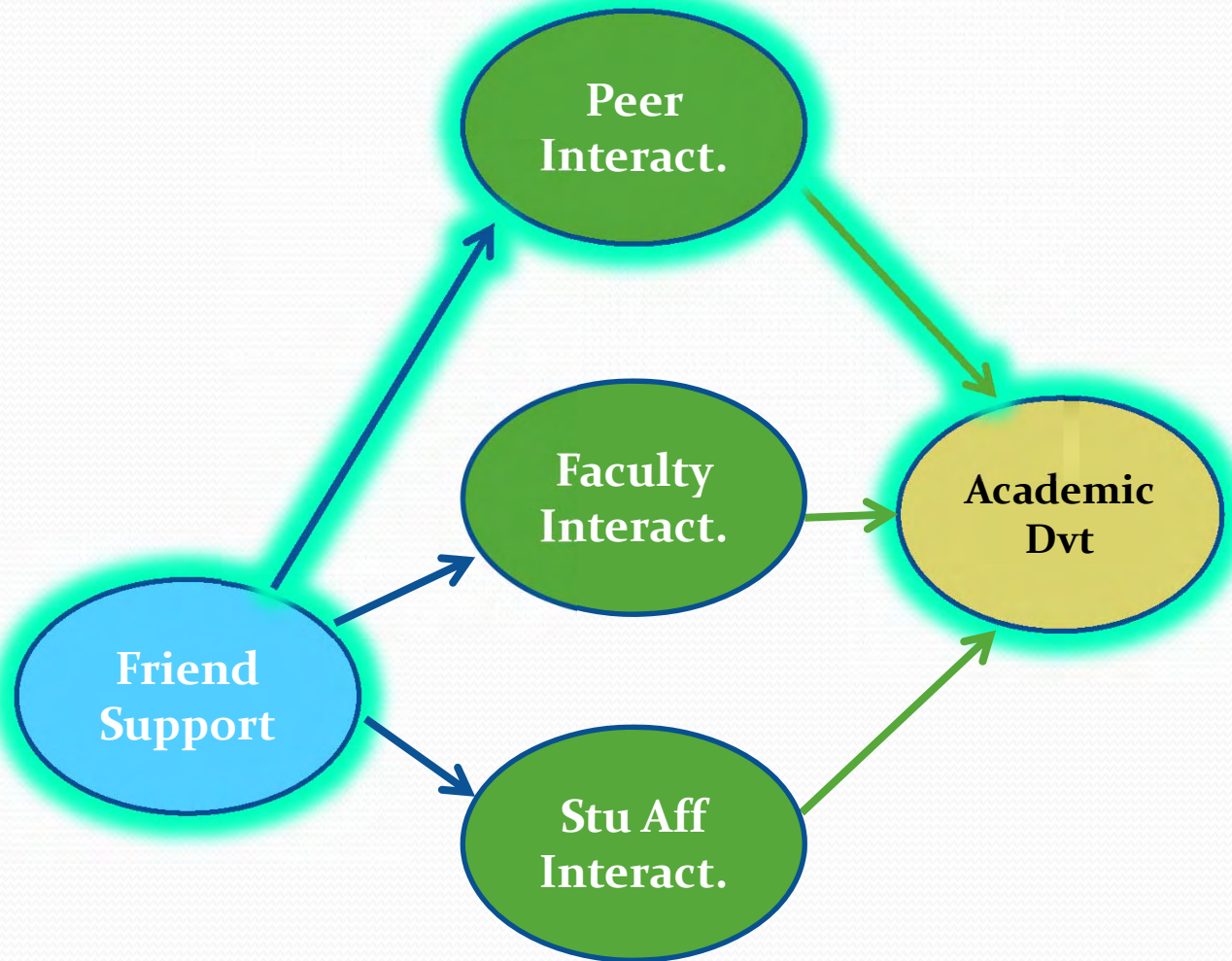
Psychological Characteristics



Indirect Effects

Specific
Indirect Effect

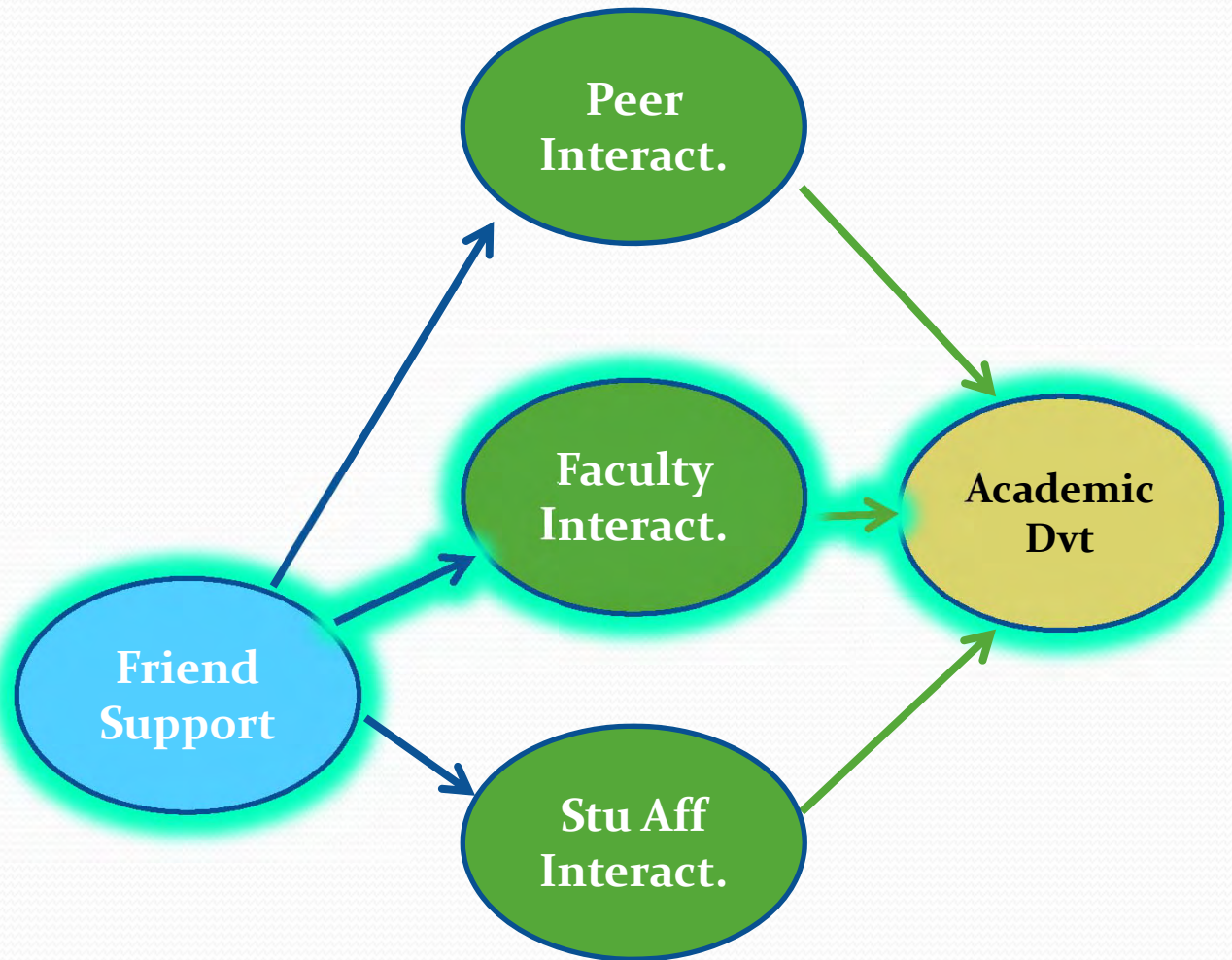
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Indirect Effects

Specific
Indirect Effect

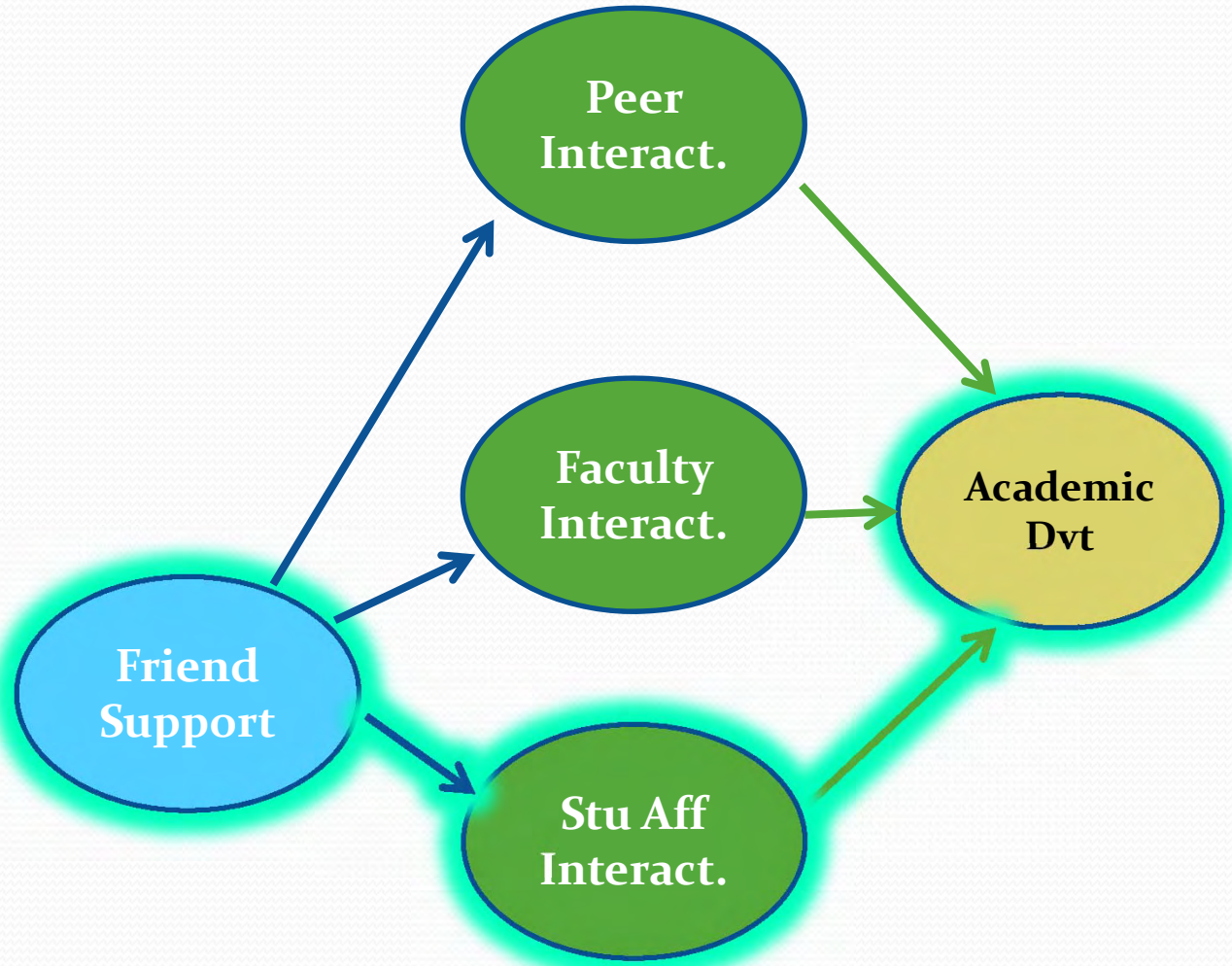
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Indirect Effects

Specific
Indirect Effect

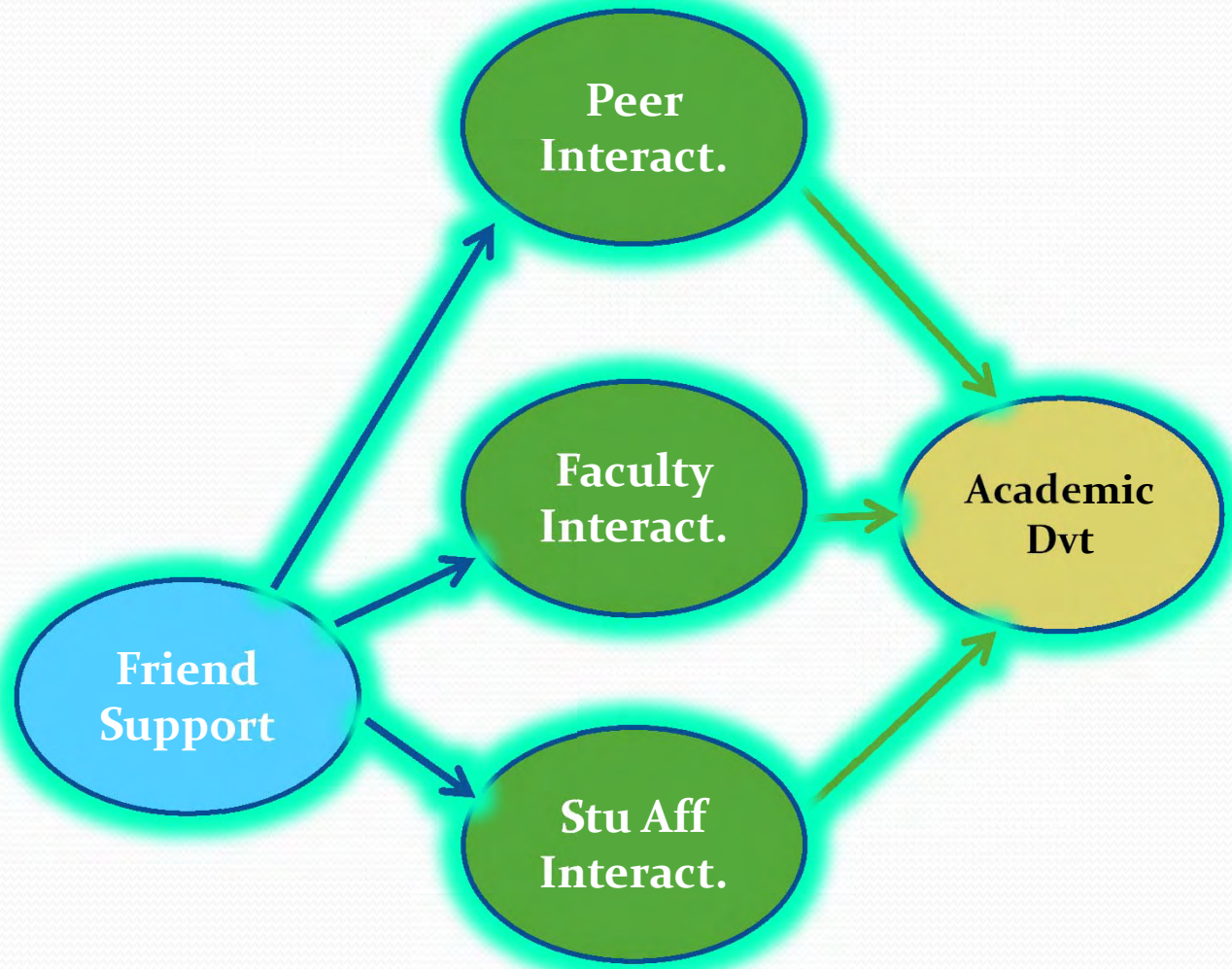
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Indirect Effects

Total
Indirect Effect

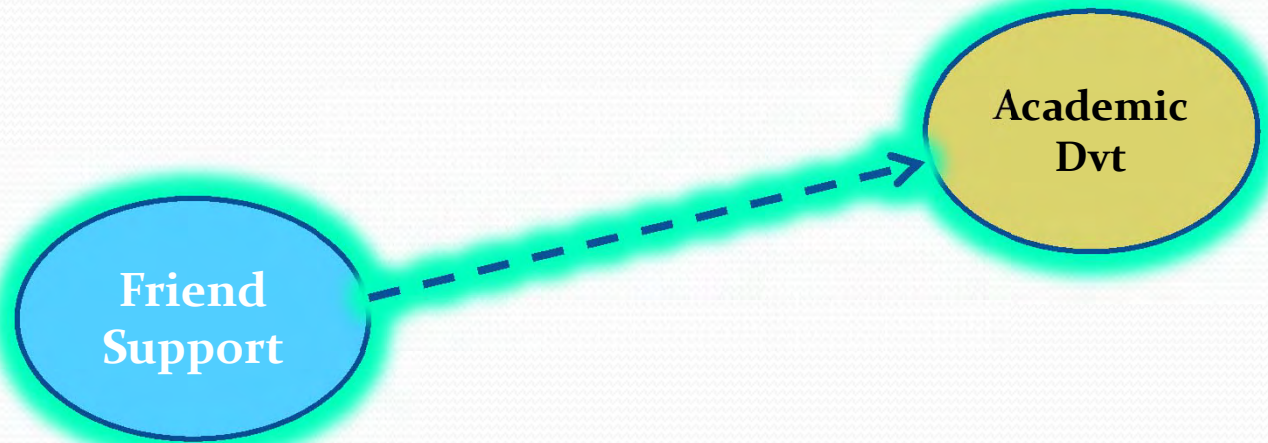
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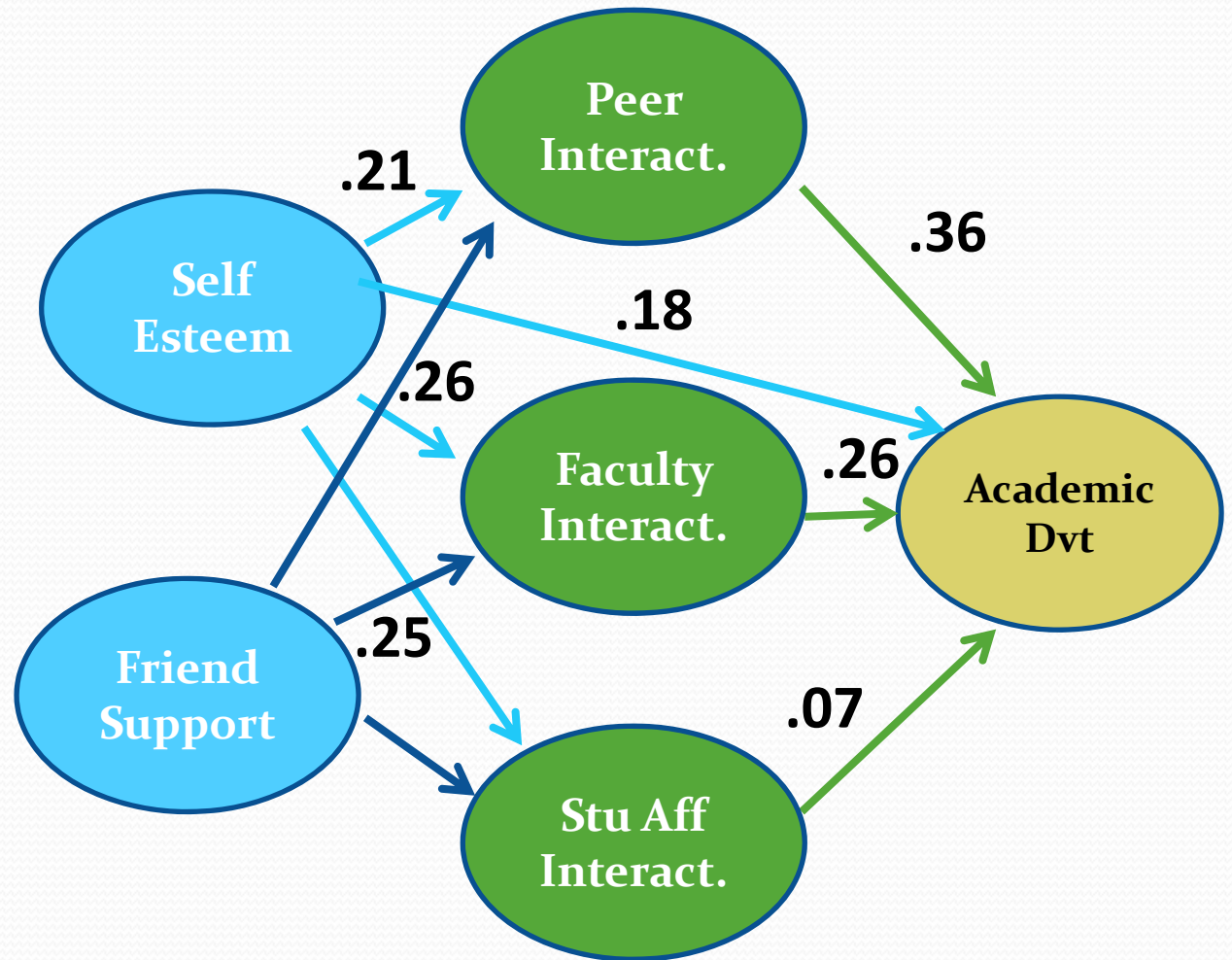
Indirect Effects

Total
Indirect Effect

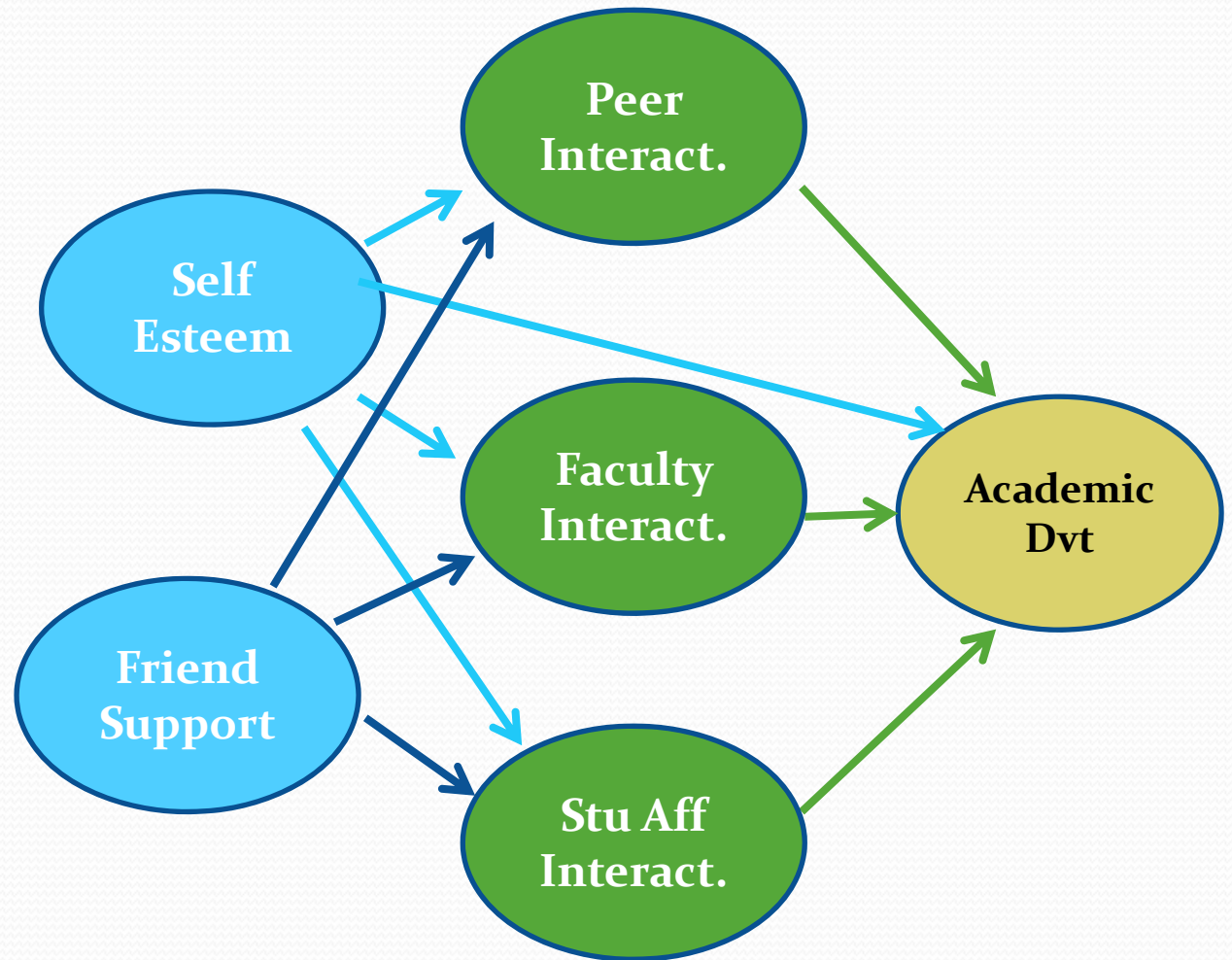
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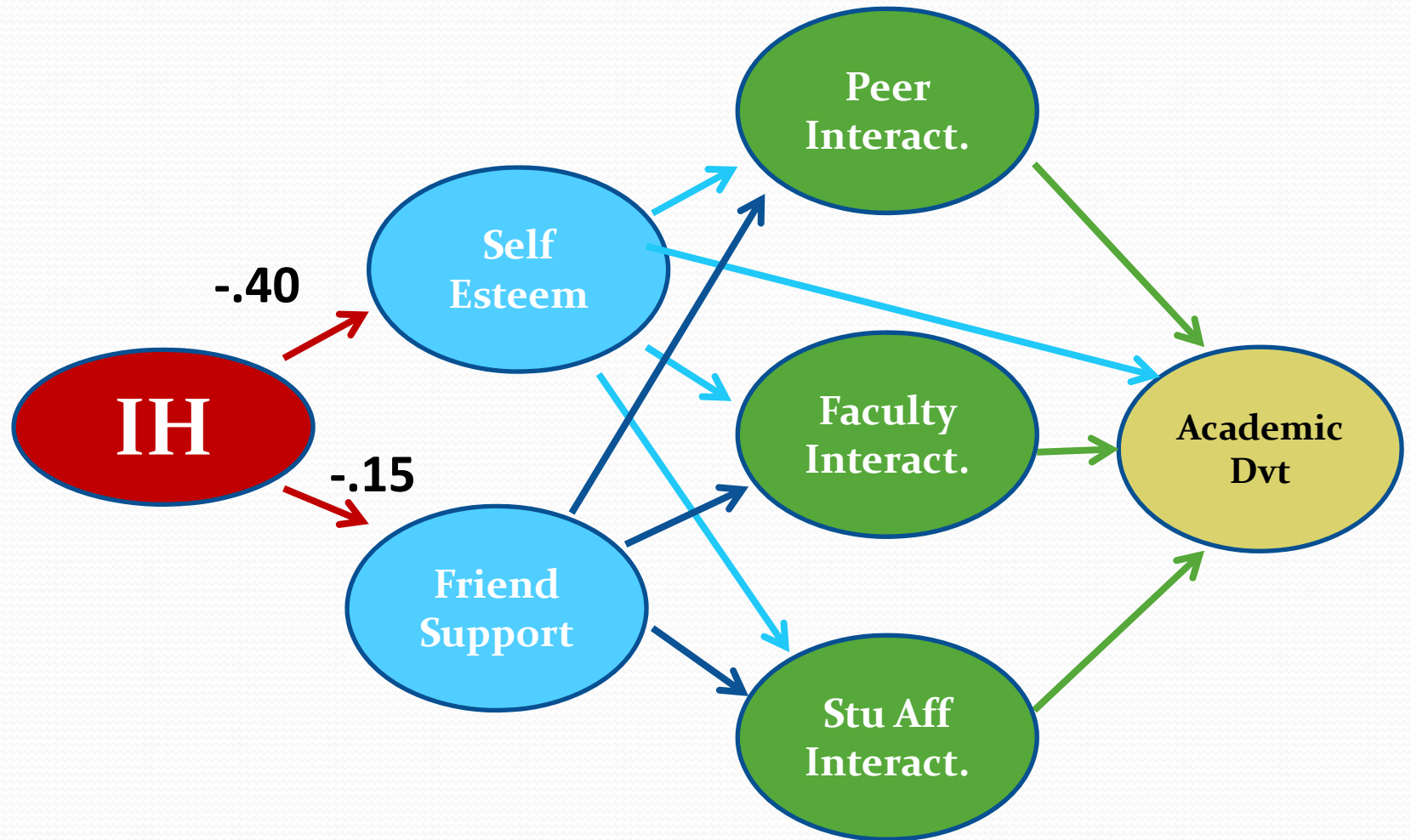
Psychological Characteristics



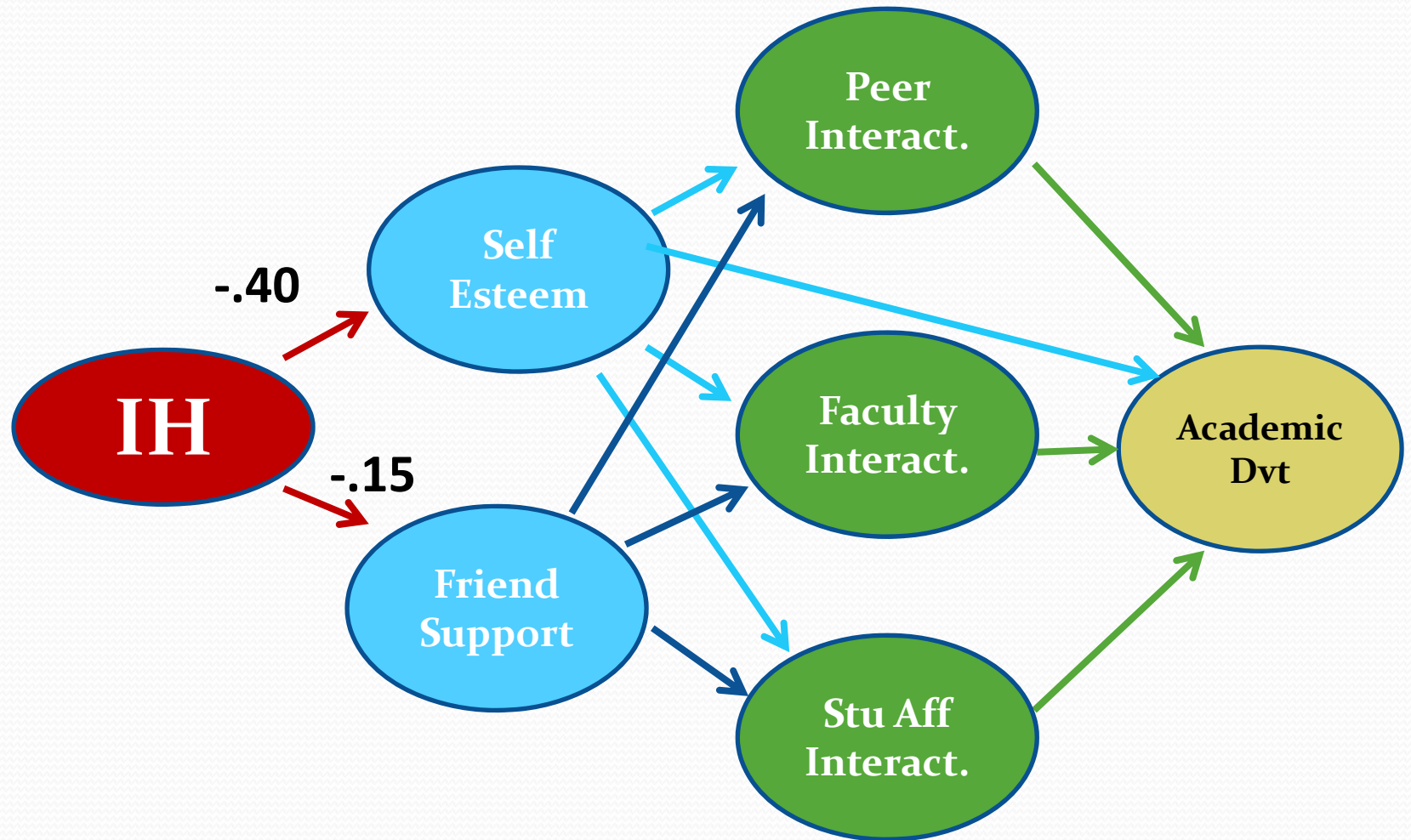
Psychological Characteristics



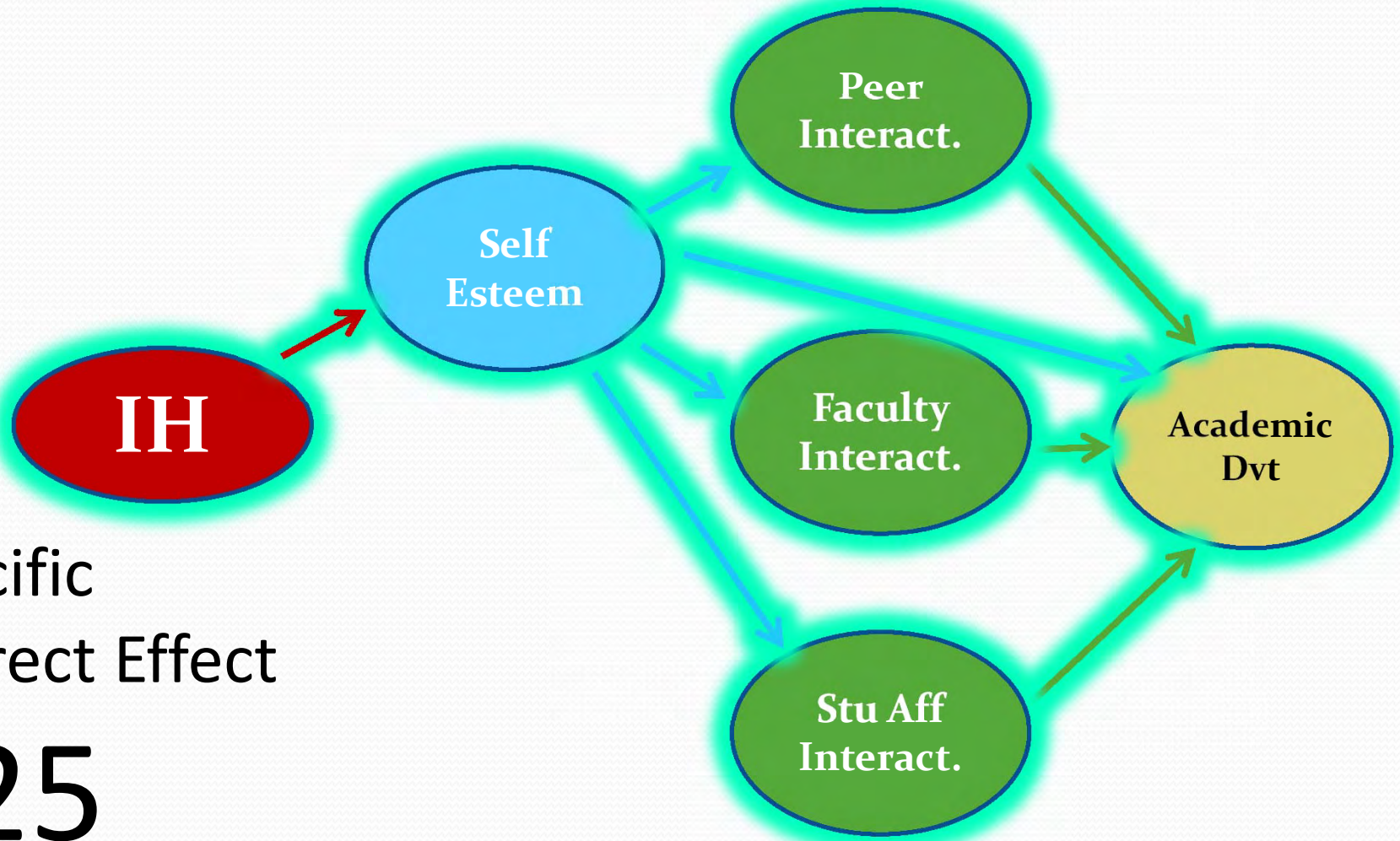
Internalized Homophobia



Internalized Homophobia



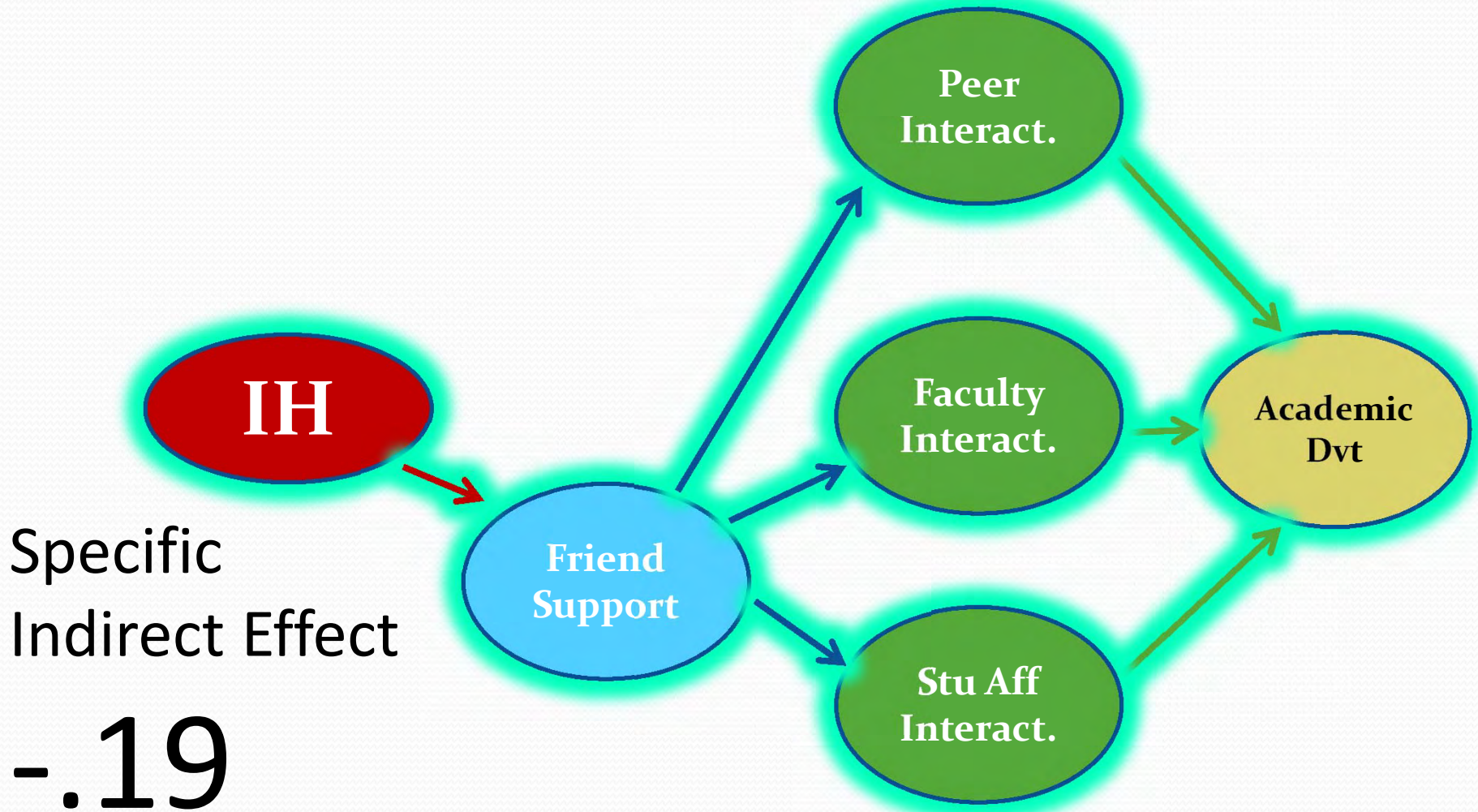
Indirect Effects



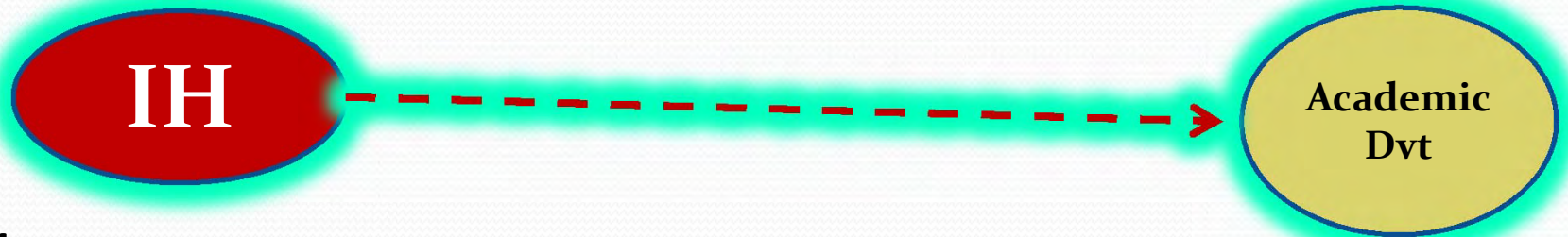
Specific
Indirect Effect

-.25

Indirect Effects



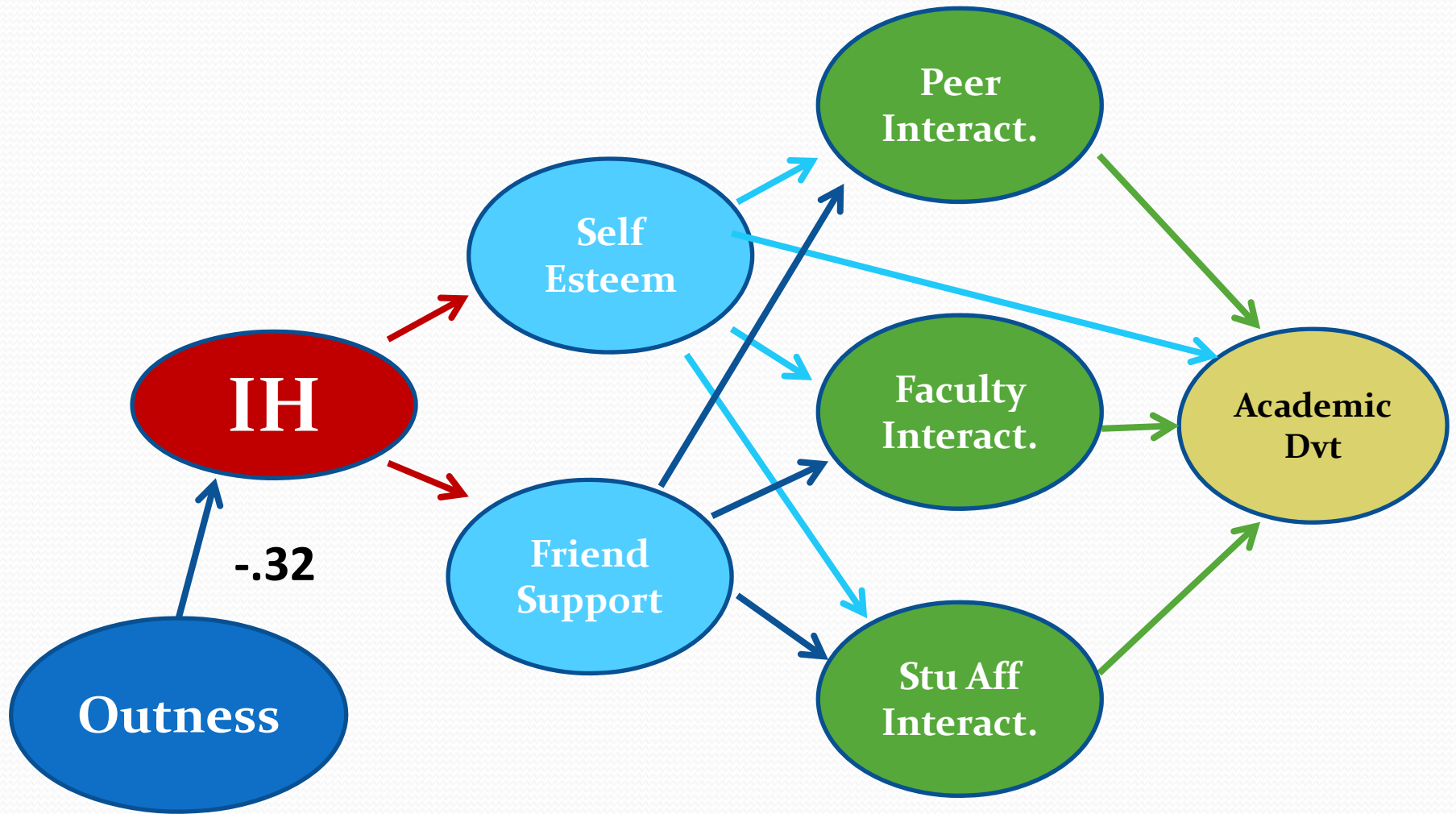
Indirect Effects



Total
Indirect Effect

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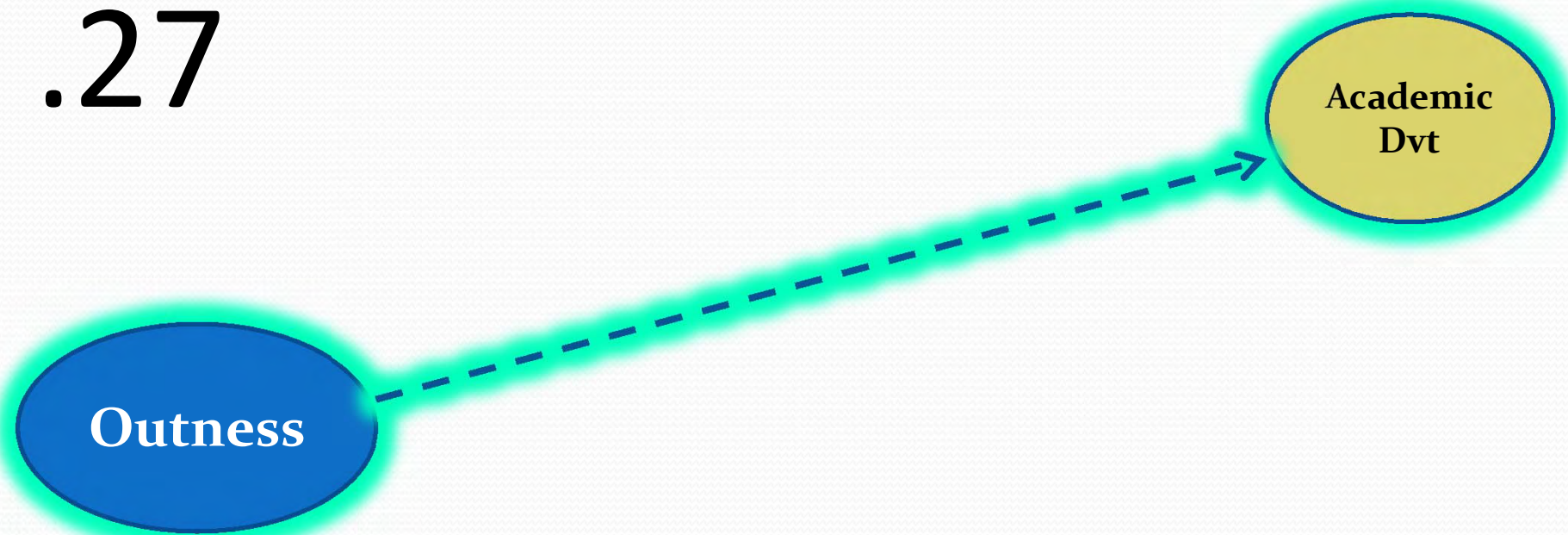
Outness



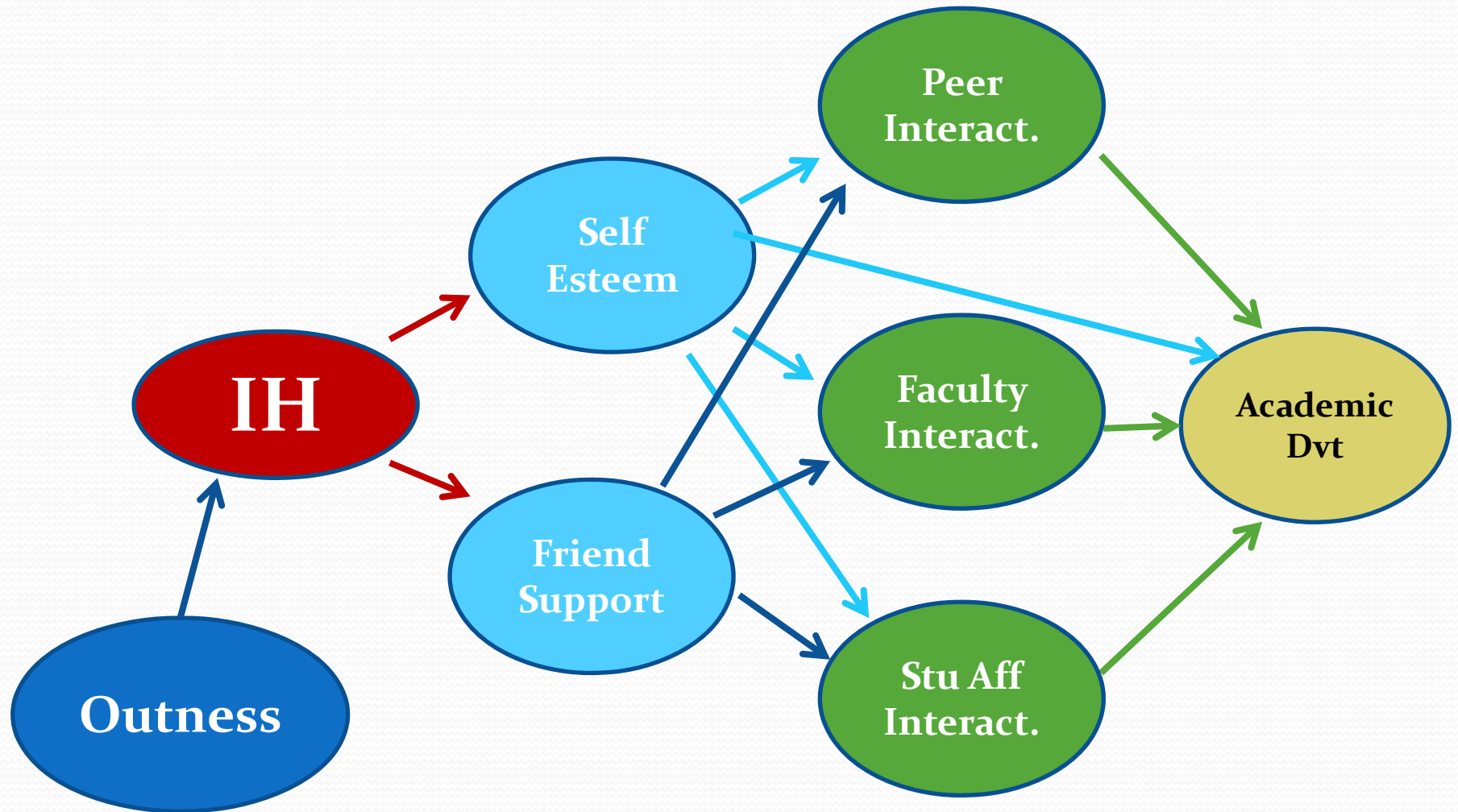
Indirect Effects

Total
Indirect Effect

.27



Model Recap



Total Indirect Effect of Internalized Homophobia to Academic Development by Sexual Identity Group

Gay/Lesbian

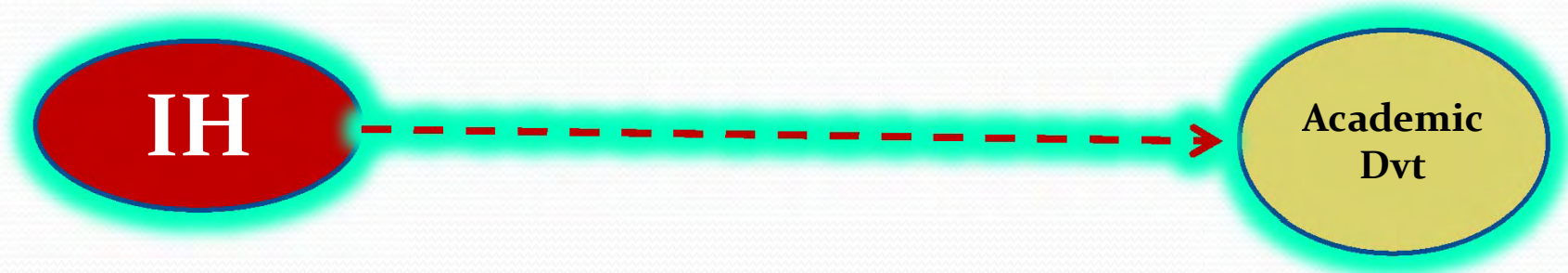
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Bisexual

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Queer

-.25



Total Indirect Effect of Outness to Academic Development by Sexual Identity Group

Gay/Lesbian

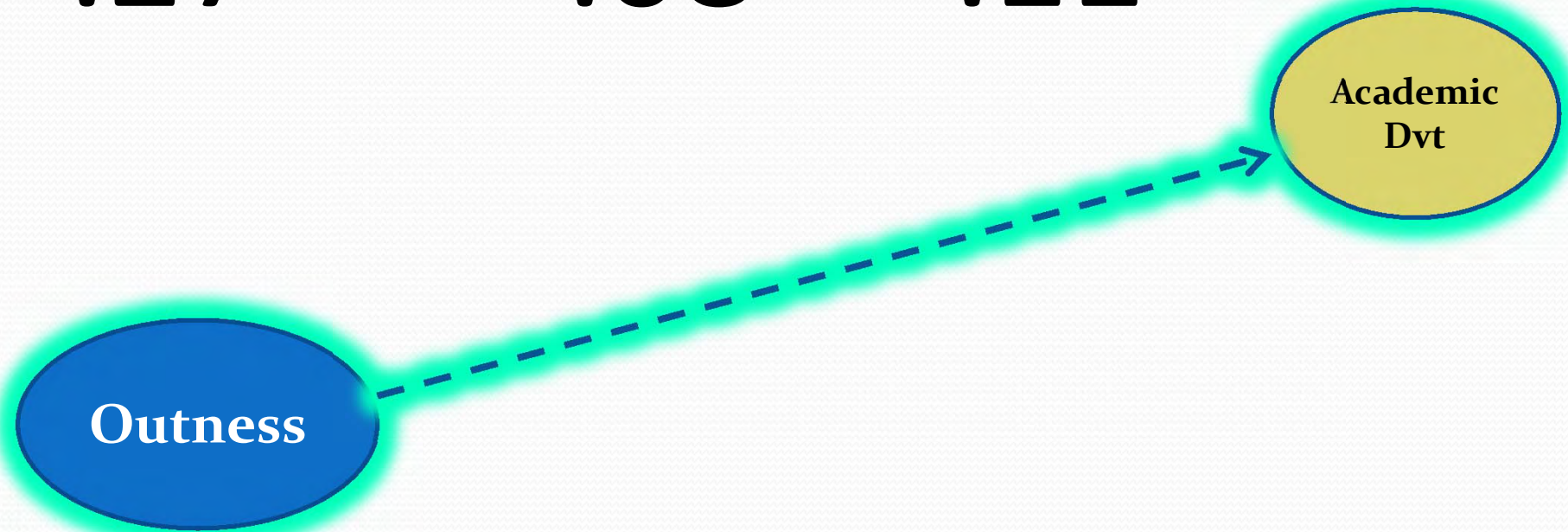
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Bisexual

.08

Queer

.11





Implications for Practice (Iconis, 2010)

- Examine our own biases, either conscious or unconscious
- BE PROACTIVE!
- Teach to Reduce Victimization
 - Interrupt homophobic harassment
 - Create a classroom climate that supports dialogue, debate and disagreement within a context of personal respect
 - Call prompt attention to both malicious and unintended homophobic remarks



Implications for Practice (Iconis, 2010)

- Increase Visibility of LGBT Issues
 - Support visible LGBT faculty and staff as role models for students
 - Incorporate LGBT material in the curriculum of “mainstream” courses
 - Support the development of LGB studies curricula
 - Encourage all students to research and write about issues affecting LGBT communities



Wrap-up

- What is sexual identity?
- Developmental models
- Recent research
- Methods
- Statistics overview
- Building the model
- Implications for practice
- Questions/comments

Questions or Comments



Remember, the only dumb question is the one that's not asked.

Slides can be downloaded from
www.kipswork.info