

Children *and* Family
Research Center

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



Social Support, Material Hardship, Personal Control and Neglectful Parenting

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Background and significance

- Known predictors of child neglect: poverty, social support/social isolation, the number of children at home, depression, substance abuse, etc.
- However, limited understanding of whether and how social support can prevent child neglect due to the study designs
- Need prospective studies using longitudinal data
- Implication for social support interventions
- Understanding of child neglect etiology

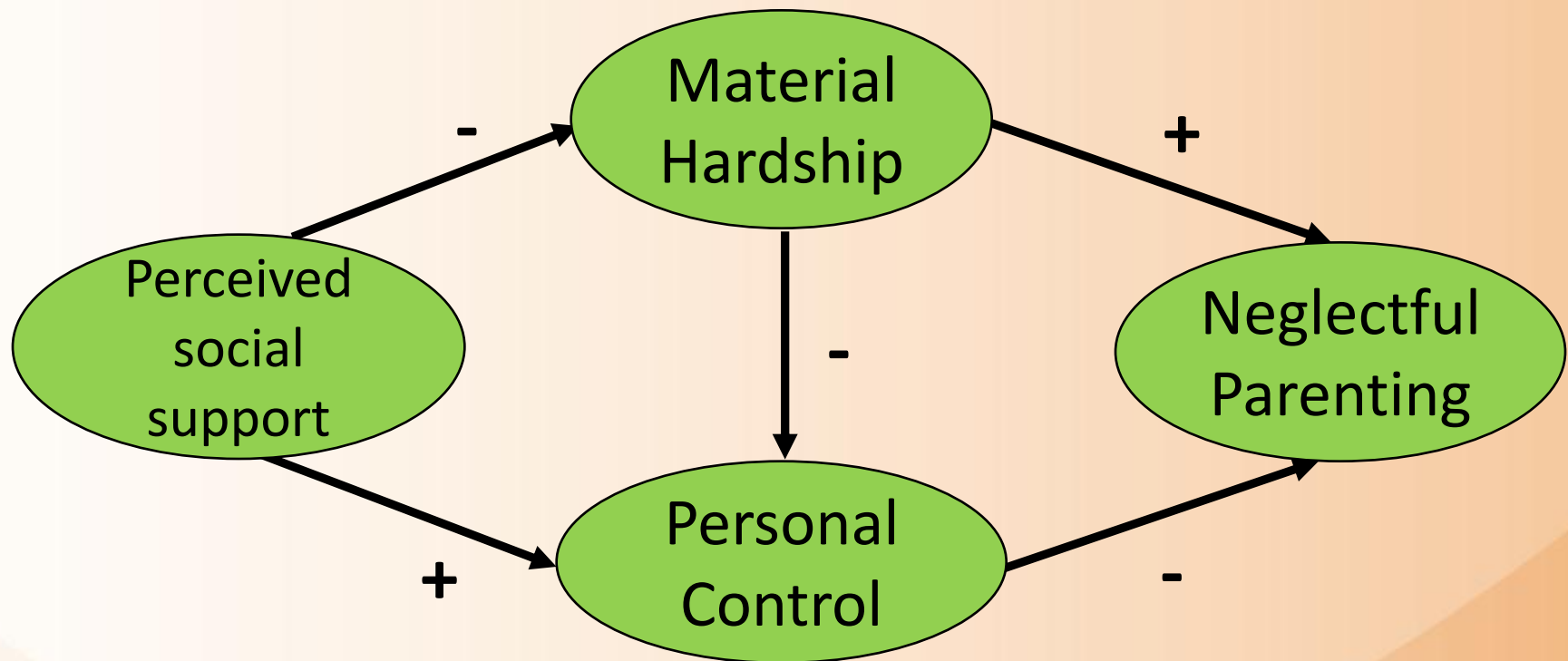


Background and significance

- Pathway model from social support to neglectful parenting
- Material hardship, more accurate predictor of financial difficulty than income based poverty
- Using social support to handle financial difficulties (Edin & Lein, 1997; Heflin et al. 2011)
- Social support and material hardship can affect caregivers' perception on their life situation according to the Double ABCX Model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983)
- Personal control and child neglect (Guterman, et al. 2009)



Process Model





Hypotheses

- H 1: As perceived social support increases, material hardship will decrease.
- H2: As perceived social support increases, personal control will increase.
- H3: As material hardship increases, personal control will decrease.
- H4: As material hardship increases, neglectful parenting will increase.
- H5: As personal control increases, neglectful parenting will decrease.



Methodologies



Participants

- A subgroup of mothers participating in Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing studies
- FFCW: mothers and fathers of 5,000 children born between 1998 and 2000 in 20 cities in the U.S..
- Three quarters of parents were unmarried at child birth; multiple waves for longitudinal data collection
- Interviews parents at birth and again children's ages 1, 3, and 5, plus in-home assessments of children and their home environments at ages 3 and 5.
- This study used data from all four waves
- White, Black and Hispanic mothers only (N=2,910)



Variables

- Neglectful parenting: mothers' responses to 5 items at children's age 5 (yes/no)
 - “Had to leave a child home alone”
 - “Were so caught up with your own problems that you were not able to show or tell your child that you loved him(her)”
 - “Were not able to make sure the child got the food he/she needed”
 - “Were not able to make sure your child got to a doctor or hospital when he/she needed it”
 - “Were so drunk or high and had a problem taking care of the child”



Variables

- Perceived social support: mothers' responses to four items at children's age 1 (yes/no)
 - “If you needed help during the next year, could you count on someone to loan you \$200?”
 - “Is there someone you could count on to provide you with a place to live?”
 - “Is there someone you could count on to help you with emergency child care?”
 - “Is there someone you could count on to co-sign for a bank loan with you for \$1,000?”



Variables

- Material Hardship: mothers' response to five items about problems due to financial difficulties at children's age 3 (yes/no)
 - “In the past 12 months, did you not pay the full amount of rent or mortgage payment?”
 - “Were you evicted from your home or apartment for not paying the rent or mortgage?”
 - “Did you not pay the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill?”
 - “Did you stay at a shelter, in an abandoned building, an automobile even for one night?”
 - “Was there anyone in your household who needed to see a doctor but couldn't because of the cost?”



Variables

- Personal control: mothers' responses to 5 items about mastery at children's age 3
- (1=strongly agree ~ 4= strongly disagree)
 - “I have little control over the things that happen to me.”
 - “There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.”
 - “There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life.”
 - “I often feel helpless in dealing with problems.”
 - “Sometimes, I feel that I'm being pushed around.”



Analysis

- Structural equation modeling with Mplus 6.0
- Estimator: Weighted least squared means and variables (WLSMV)
- First, confirmatory factor analysis for latent variables
- Second, testing structural model to estimate the model fit and coefficients for relationships among variables with two half-split samples.
- Third, subgroup analysis with three racial groups -- White, Black, and Hispanic.



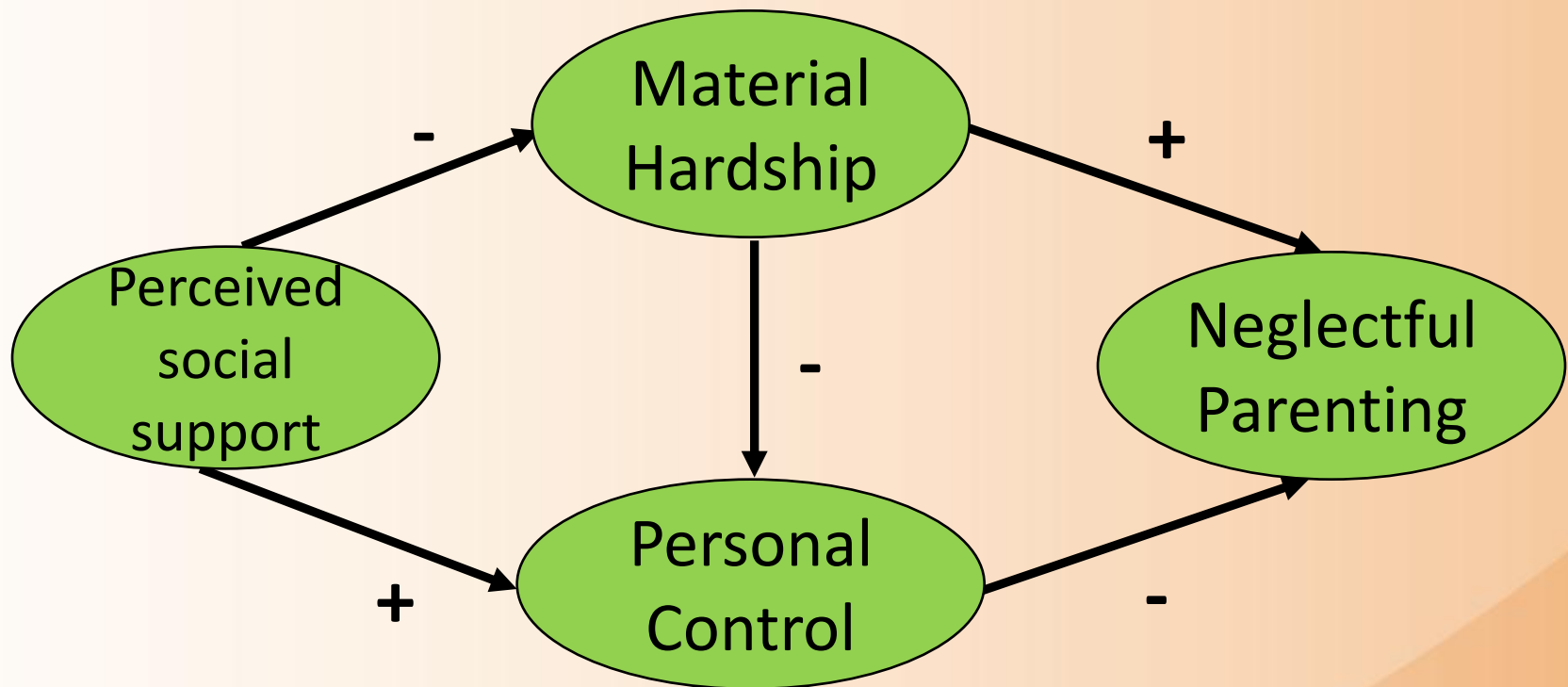
Findings

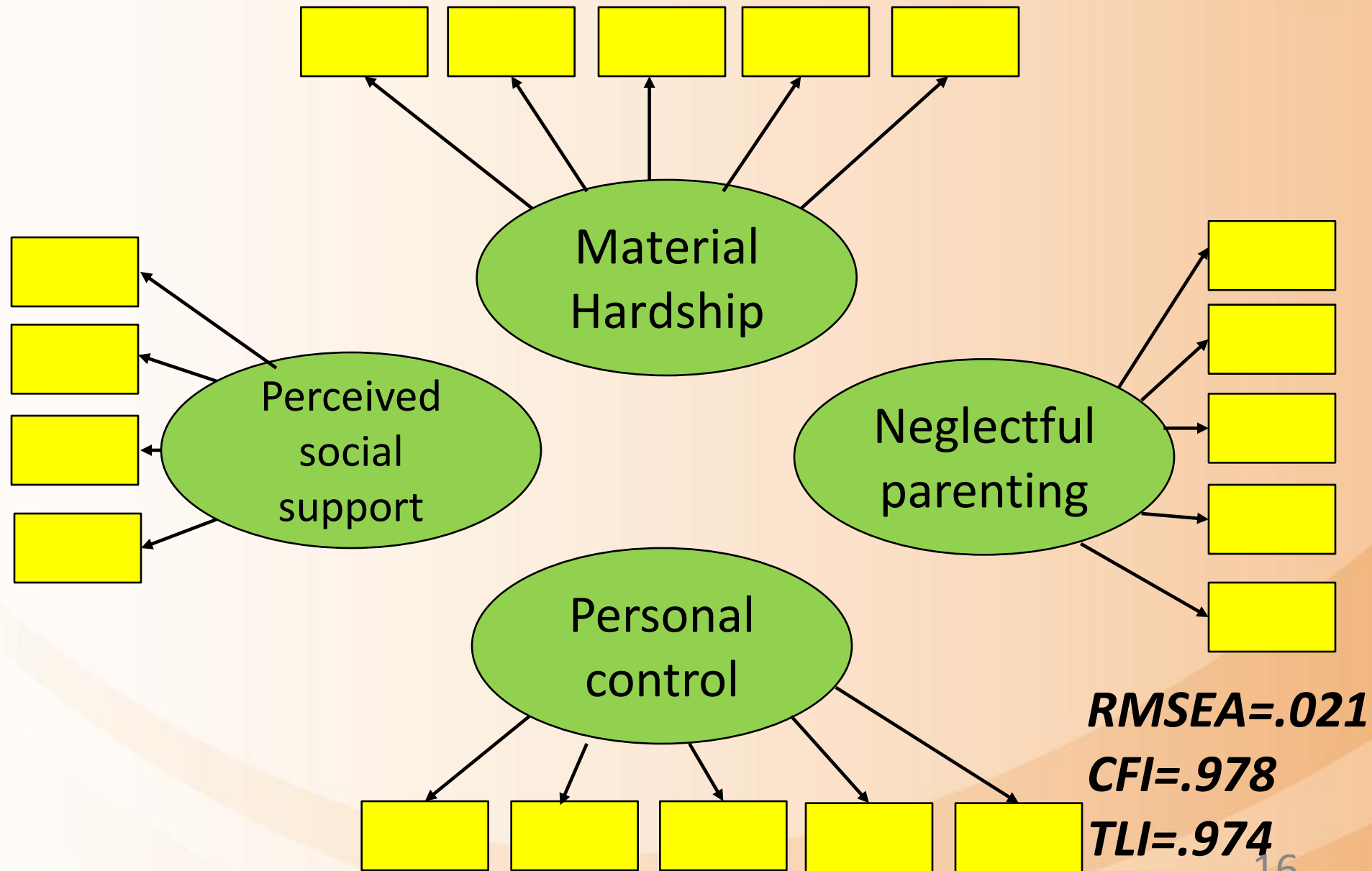
Descriptive Findings (N=2,910)

	% / mean (SD)	Range	n
<i>Mothers' age</i> at child's birth	25.0 (6.02)	15-43	2,909
<i>Ethnicity</i>			2,910
White	21.89%		
Black	52.58%		
Latino	25.53%		
<i>Married</i> at child age 1	28.35%		2,762
<i>Unmarried</i> at child age 1	71.65%		
<i>Married</i> at child age 3	30.89%		2,765
<i>Unmarried</i> at child age 3	69.11%		
<i>Income at child age 1</i>	\$ 30,401.24 (\$ 32,454.25)	0 – 400,000	2,765
<i>Income at child age 3</i>	\$ 33,278.71 (\$ 38,492.65)	0 – 720,000	2,767



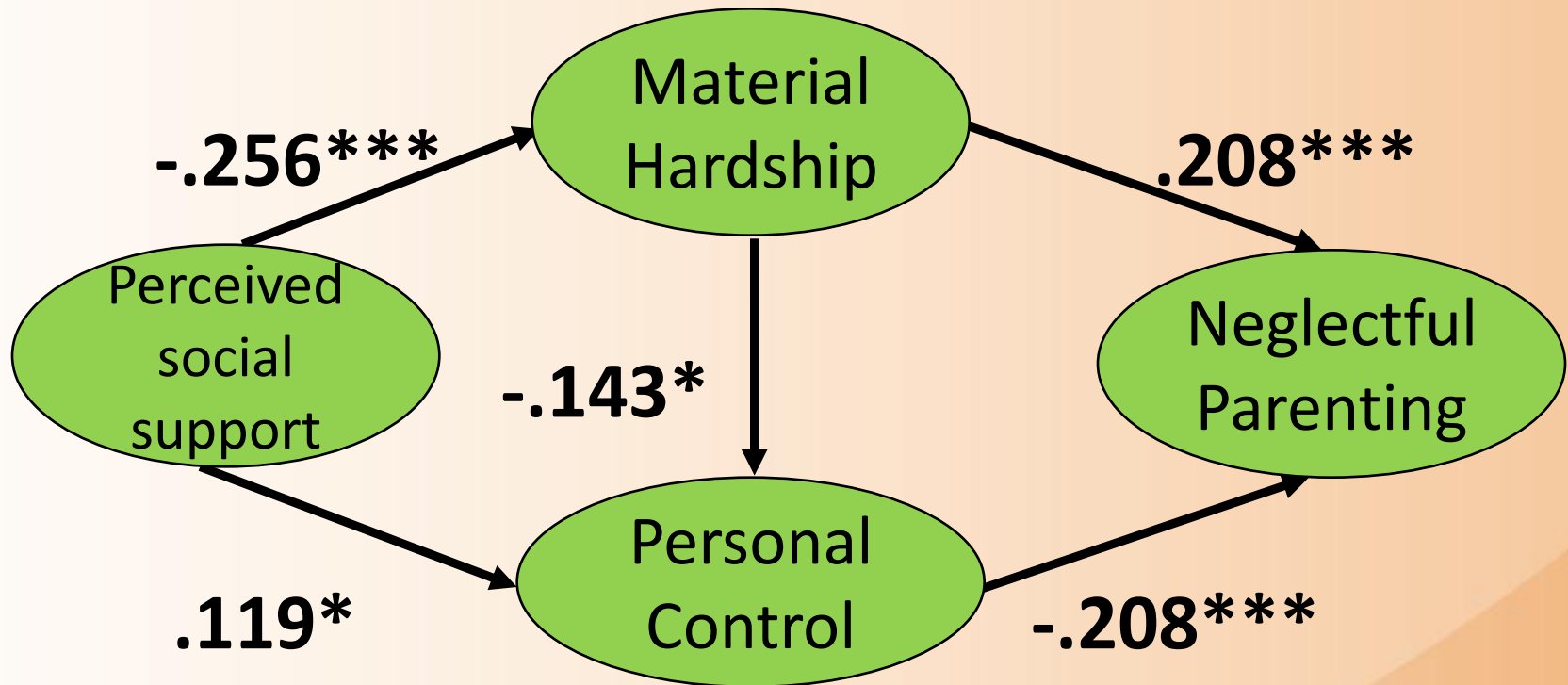
Process Model







Process Model



RMSEA=.020

CFI=.964

TLI=.958

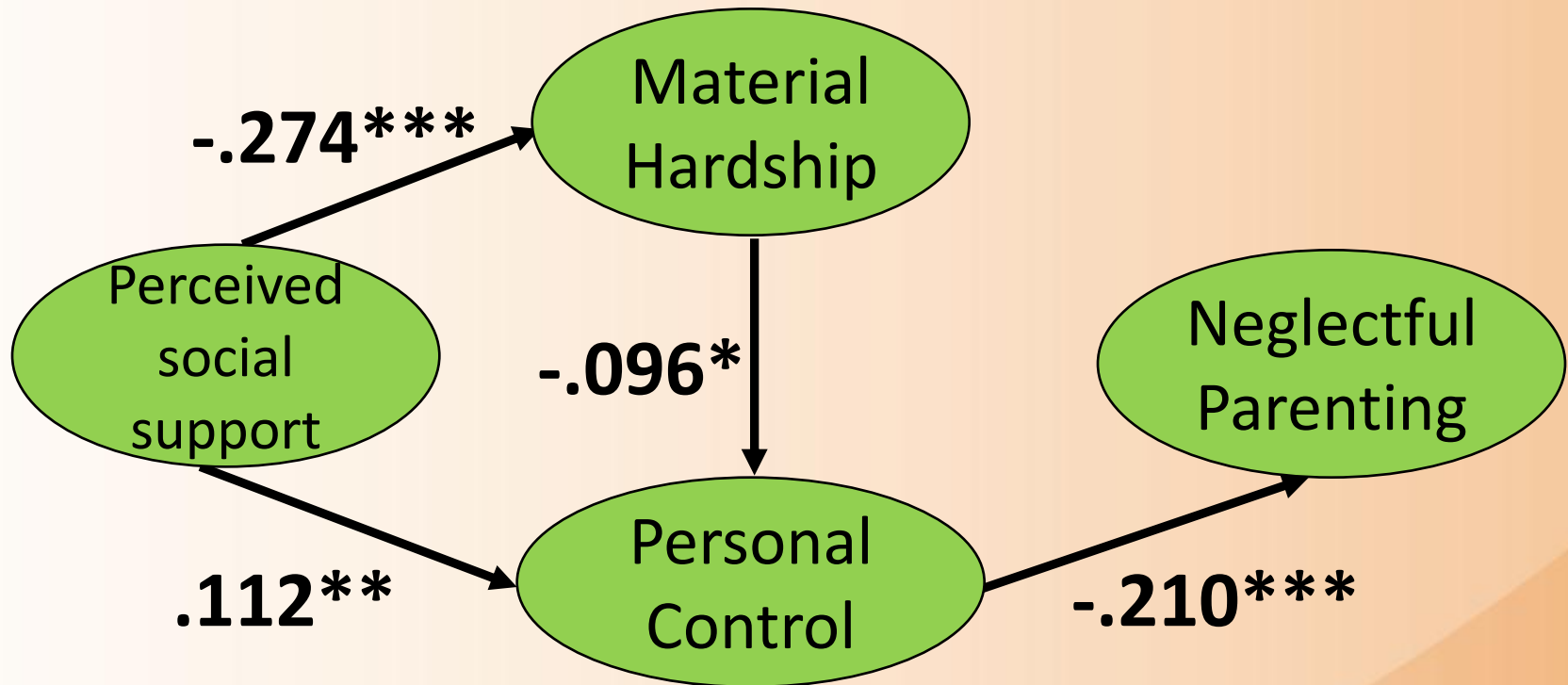


Summary of Findings

- H 1: As perceived social support increased, material hardship decreased.
- H2: As perceived social support increased, personal control increased.
- H3: As material hardship increased, personal control decreased.
- H4: As material hardship increased, neglectful parenting increased.
- H5: As personal control increased, neglectful parenting decreased.



Process Model (Black; n=1,530)



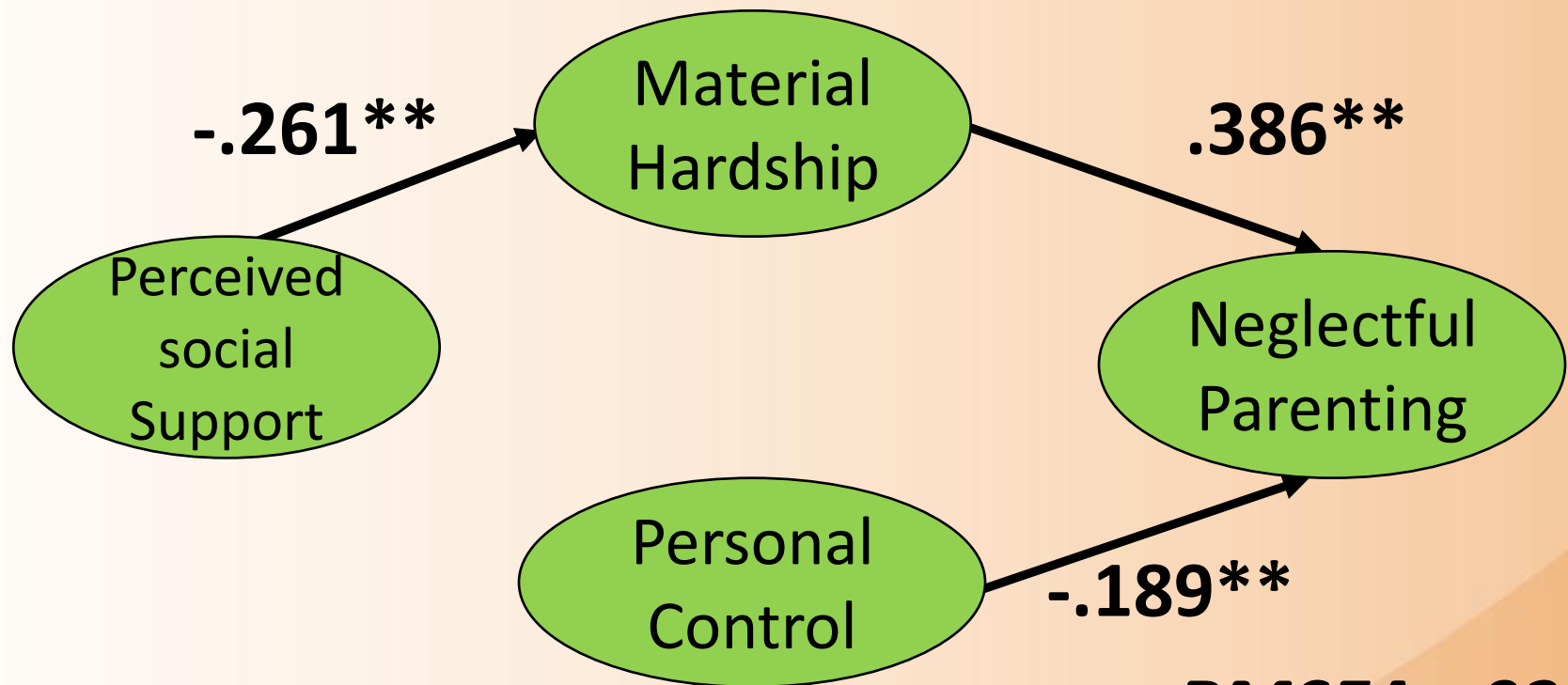
RMSEA=.020

CFI=.968

TLI=.963



Process Model (Hispanic; n=743)



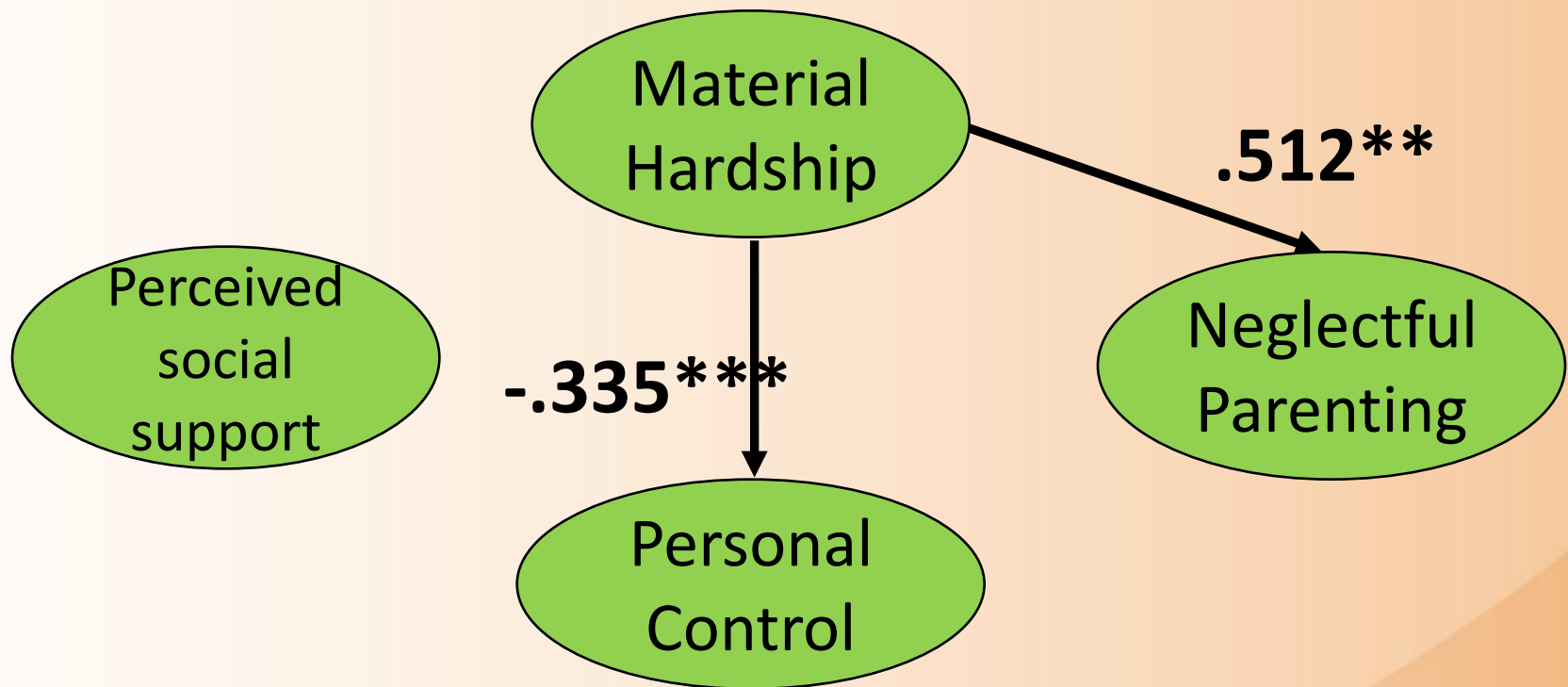
RMSEA=.026

CFI=.950

TLI=.943



Process Model (White: n=637)





Discussion

- Findings show the process of the impact of perceived social support on neglectful parenting
- Findings show the interaction between protective factors and risk factors of neglectful parenting
- Perceived social support might have led mothers to actually utilize concrete support and reduce material hardship.
- It seems that findings support the Double ABCX Model.
- Material hardship increased neglectful parenting like poverty



Implications

- Some current child neglect interventions have components of providing concrete supports or facilitating the development of social networks and social skills.
- Current and new programs can measure/target reduced of material hardship and increased personal control as (intermediate) outcomes.
- More attention to increase caregivers' personal control for child neglect prevention in addition to other risk factors
- Future studies on social support (received, different types)



Limitations

- Confounding variables not controlled.
- Any changes in the variables used in the model between the waves were not controlled or considered , meaning a threat to causality.
- Perceived social support was limited to concrete support.
- Lack of a consistent pathway model across different racial/ethnic groups.



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Thank you!!!

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Family Stress Theory

– Double ABCX Model

