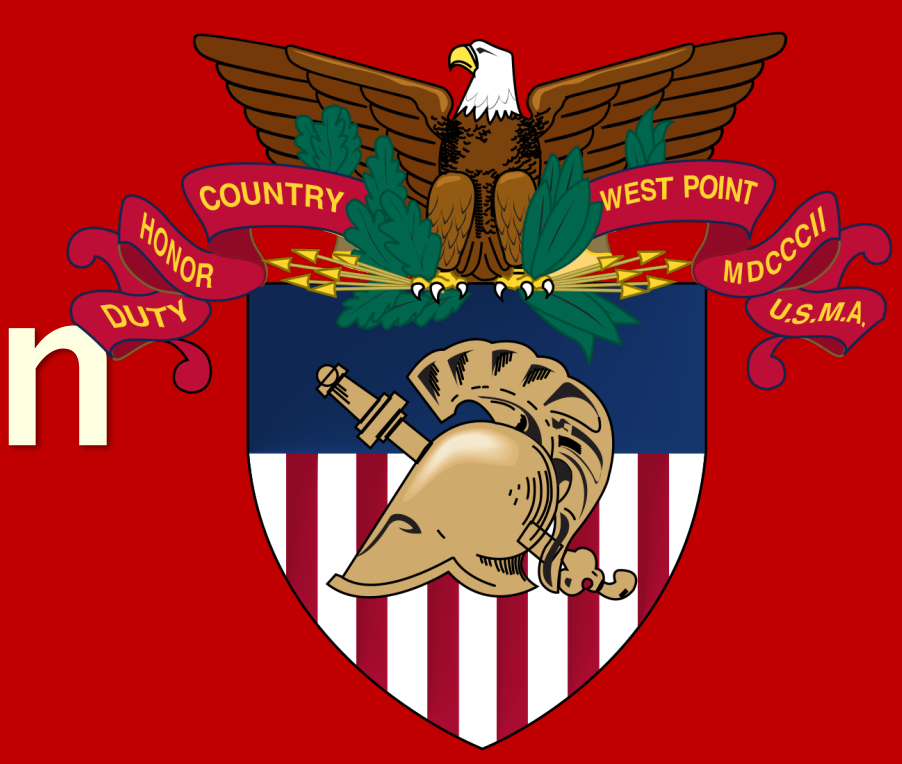




How Entitlement Impacts Abusive Leadership & Workplace Aggression

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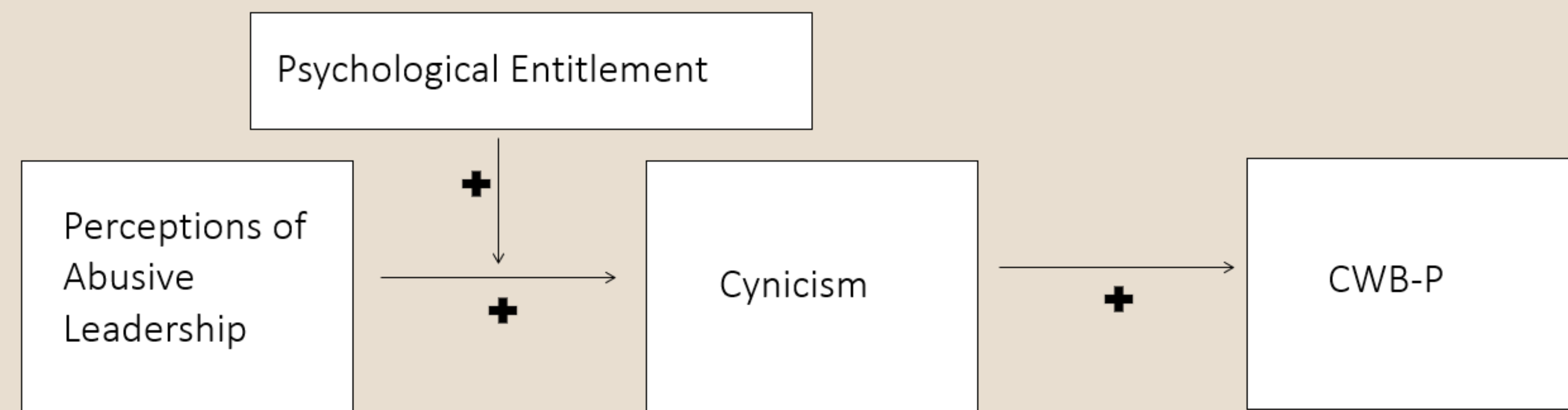
Background

Abusive supervision (15)
• Refers to subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in sustained hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors, excluding physical contact towards them
• Associated with detrimental consequences for followers such as decreased follower well-being (10), job performance and life satisfaction (11); and increased substance abuse (7), work-family conflict (5), and counterproductive work behaviors (16)

Organizational cynicism
• Holding negative attitudes towards an organization due to perceptions of mistrust, insecurity, obstructionism and disappointment- has been suggested as an important mechanism linking followers' perceptions of supervisor abuse and enacted behavior (4,13,18)
• Organizational cynicism is an outcome of emotional exhaustion at work and is a widely cited consequence of abusive supervision (12, 13)
• Individuals who have high cynicism engage in unprincipled actions and immoral attitudes (13)

Psychological entitlement
• Refers to the belief that an individual deserves special treatment over others regardless of their performance
• More entitled followers are more likely to perceive their leader as abusive regardless of the leader's behavior (8)
• Entitlement increased the magnitude of the relationship between perceptions of supervisory abusive and co-worker bullying; and were more likely to engage in coworker bullying as a result from perceptions of supervisory abuse (11)

Present Study



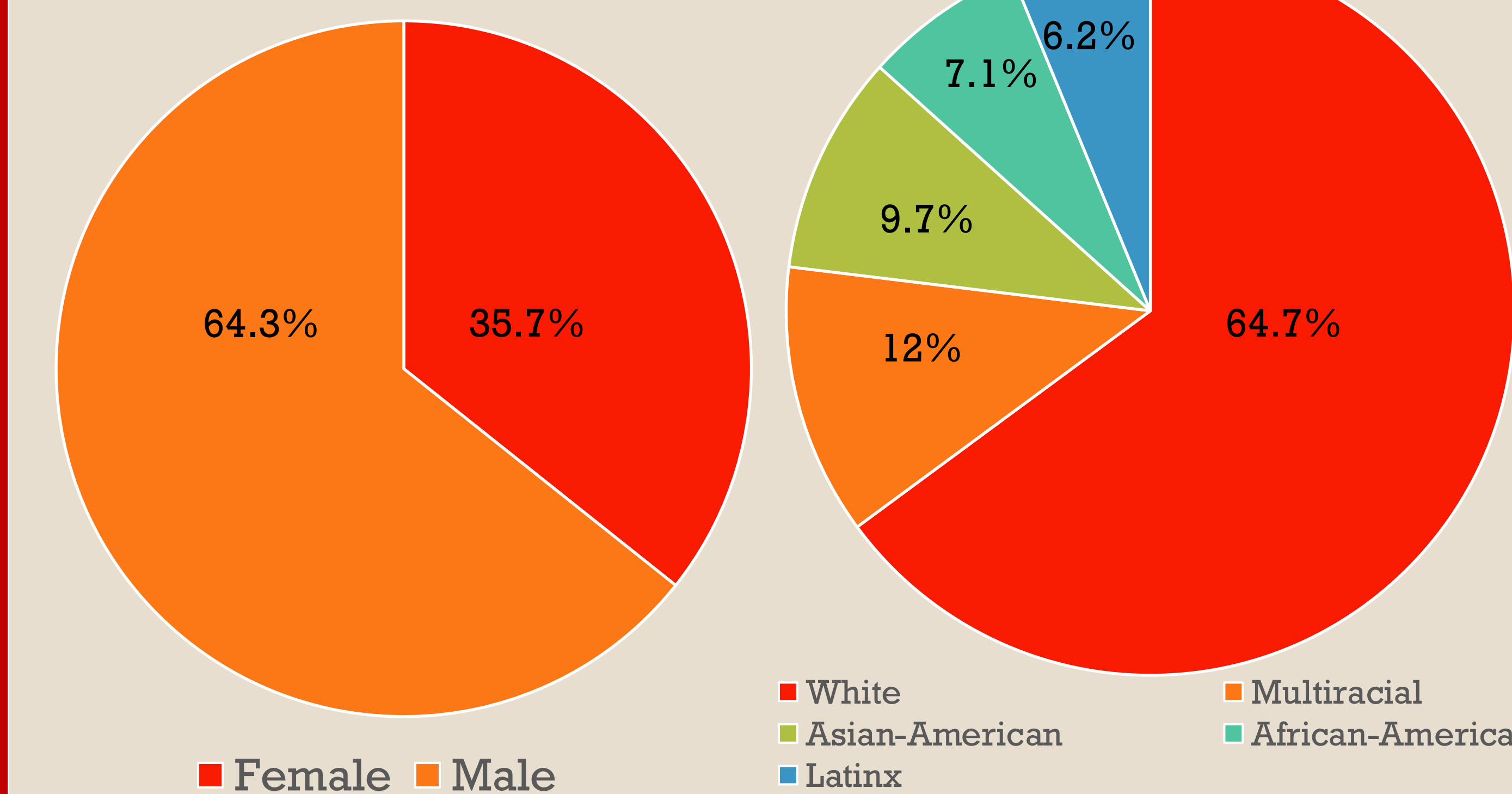
- H1:** Abusive leadership predicts increased cynicism and counterproductive work behavior
- H2:** Cynicism mediates the relationship between perceptions of high abusive leadership and CWB-P
- H3:** Entitlement moderates the relationship between perceptions of abusive leadership and cynicism such that the relationship is stronger for individuals high in psychological entitlement

Methods

Participants
• Consists of 2192 cadets/midshipman from the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) (N =1562), United States Military Academy (USMA) (n = 282), and United States Naval Academy (USNA) (n = 266)

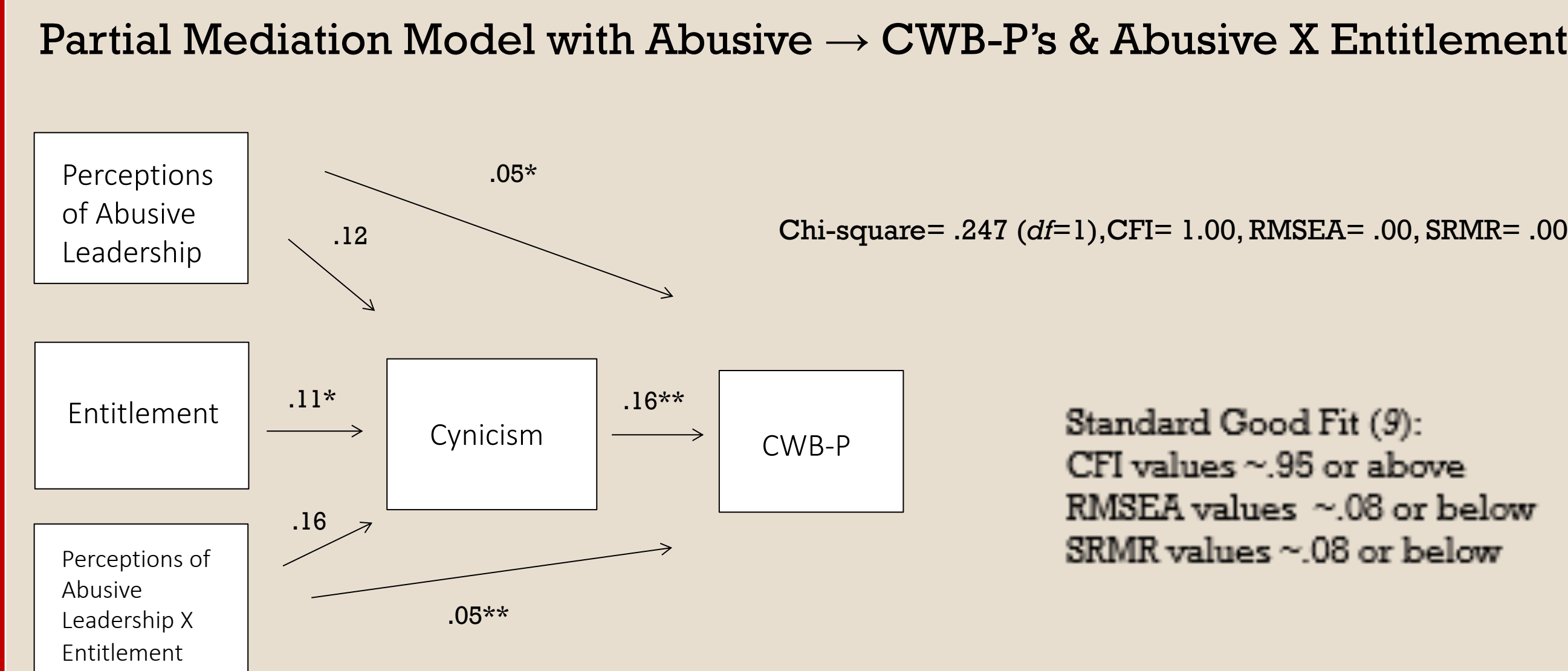
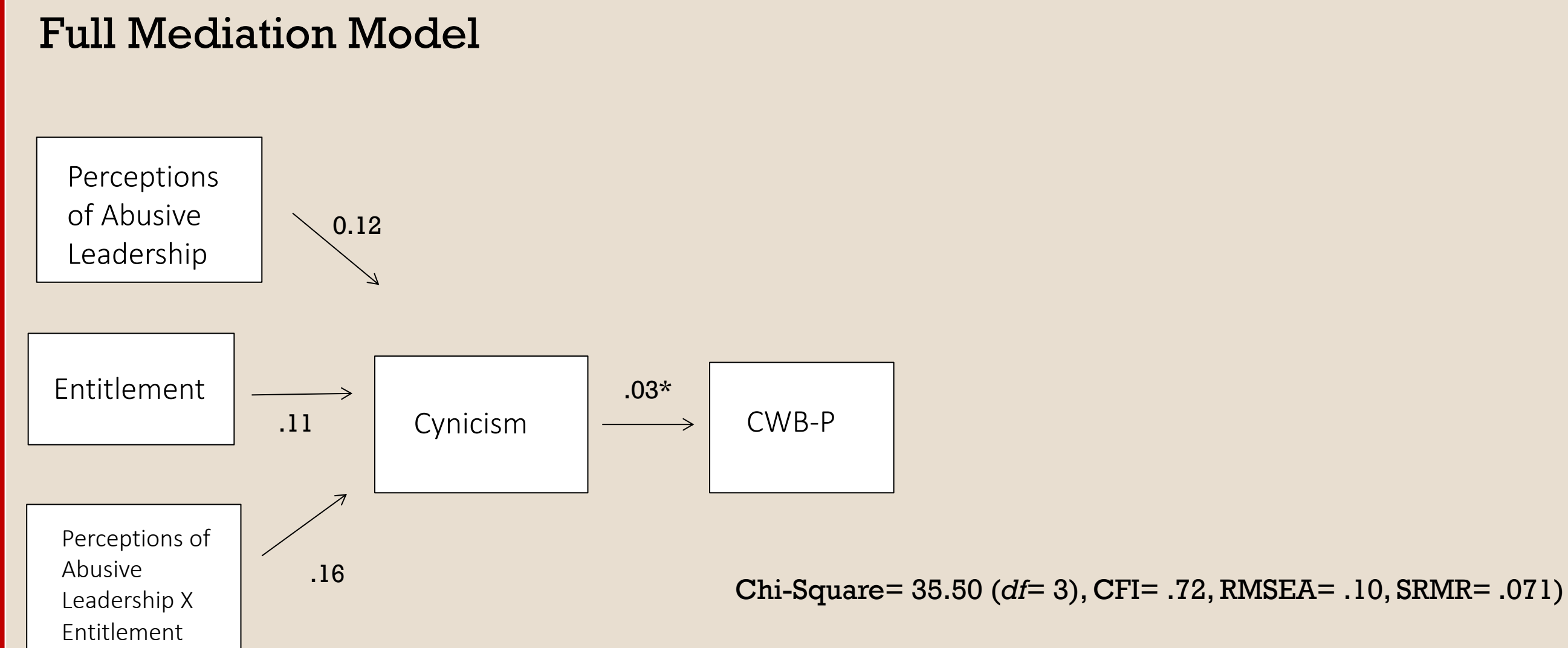
Measures
• Perceptions Abusive Leadership ($\alpha = .91$)
• Psychological Entitlement ($\alpha = .63$)
• Cynicism ($\alpha = .77$)
• Counterproductive Work behavior towards People ($\alpha = .75$)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis
• Item parceling was used to assess fit
• A four-factor solution where constructs loaded on their respective factors showed excellent fit to the data (CFI = .98, RMSEA = .03, SRMR = .03)
• Four-factor solution fit the data substantially better than a one-factor solution suggesting that each construct is significantly different from each other

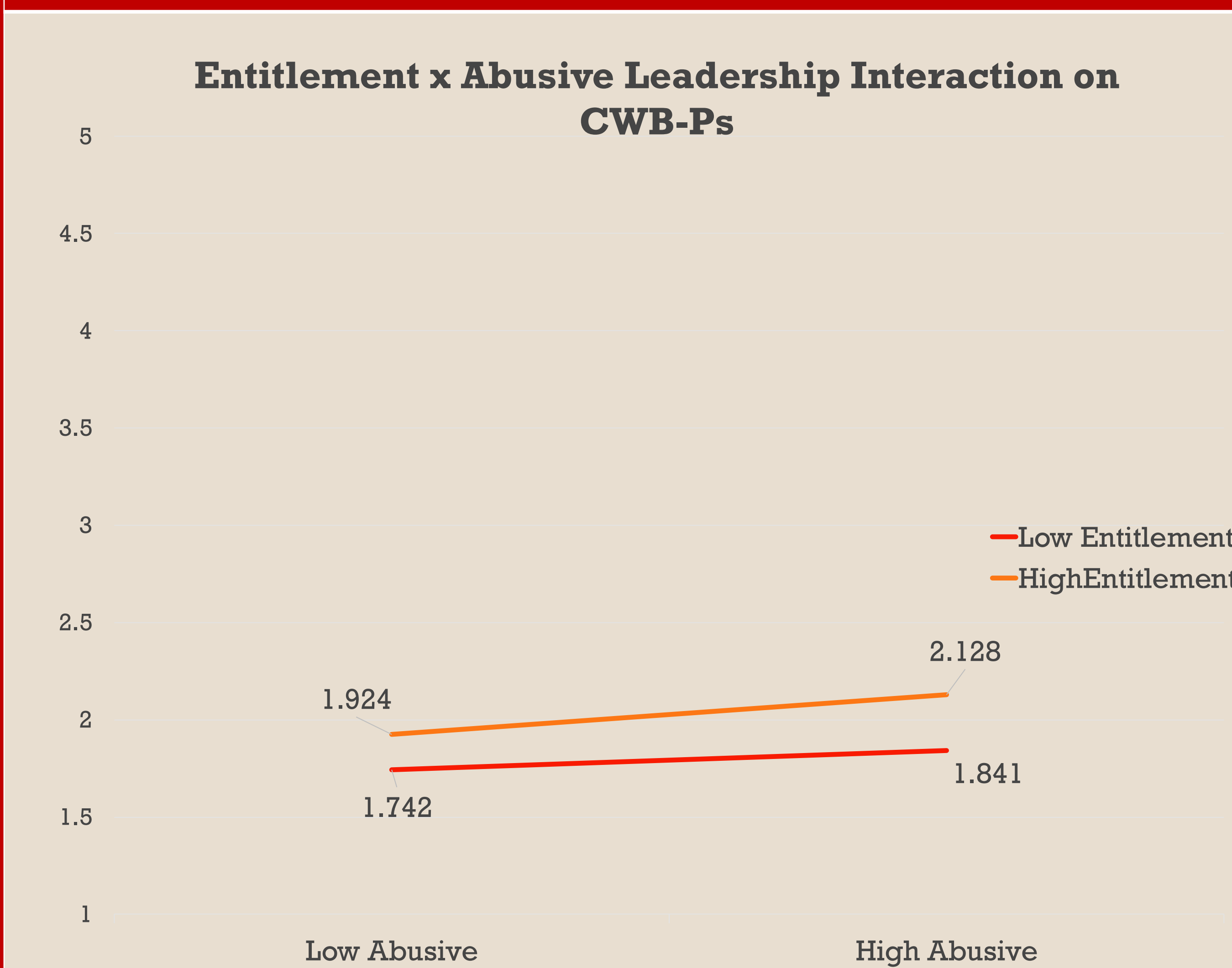


*Note: not all demographics of Academies are included

Structural Equation Model



Interaction Plot



- Median splits were used to plot the 2-way interaction between perceptions of abusive leadership and entitlement on CWB-P's
- Highly entitled individuals were more likely to engage in CWB-P's when they perceived their leader as abusive versus lower entitled individuals.

Results

- Structural Equation Modeling was used on Mplus software with maximum likelihood estimation
- Chi-square difference tests were used to justify improvement in fit
- Support for a partial mediation model was found since abusive x entitlement and abusive to CWB-P's (Chi-square= .247 (df=1), CFI =1.00, RMSEA= .00, SRMR= .001) had an excellent fit; especially compared to the full mediation model (Chi-square= 35.5 (df=3), CFI = .72, RMSEA= .10, SRMR= .071) and other partial mediation models which both had poor fit of the data.
- For the partial mediation model the paths between abusive leadership and CWB-P (Beta= .05, p<.05), entitlement and cynicism (Beta= .11, p<.05), cynicism and CWB-P (Beta=.16, p<.001), and perceptions of abusive leadership X entitlement and CWB-P (Beta= .08, p<.001) were supported. However, the path of perceptions of abusive leadership and cynicism (p<.05) and abusive leadership X entitlement and cynicism (p<.05) was not supported.
- A direct pathway of abusive leadership on CWB-P and interaction on CWB-P was found. Also, an indirect pathway was found that cynicism mediated the relationship between the entitlement and CWB-P.

Discussion & Future Directions

- Highly entitled individuals perceive leaders as more abusive and are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors toward other co-workers compared to low entitled individuals.
- Entitled individuals are more likely to be cynical which leads to abusive behavior towards co-workers.
- Entitled individuals may have self-inflated views or ego sensitivity that may increase perceptions of abusive leadership due to high expectations or in response to negative feedback. Aggression towards co-workers may serve as a coping mechanism to deal with an abusive supervisor or resolve ego

Future directions

- Examine how culture (e.g., low power vs. high power distance countries) impacts perceptions of abusive leadership
- Power distance may moderate the relationship between abusive leadership perceptions and cynicism, such that the relationship is weaker for individuals located in countries higher in power distance compared to countries lower in power distance
- Low power distance societies (e.g., United States, Western Europe countries) have shown that abusive supervision produces detrimental effects (1, 6, 14); whereas high power distance societies (e.g., Middle East, East Asia) display positive outcomes of abusive leadership (3, 1, 17)

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*The following research is a reflection of personal views and not of the Military.

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