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Mindfulness as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Social Media Engagement and Depression

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Mindfulness as a Mediator in the Relationship between Social Media Engagement and Depression

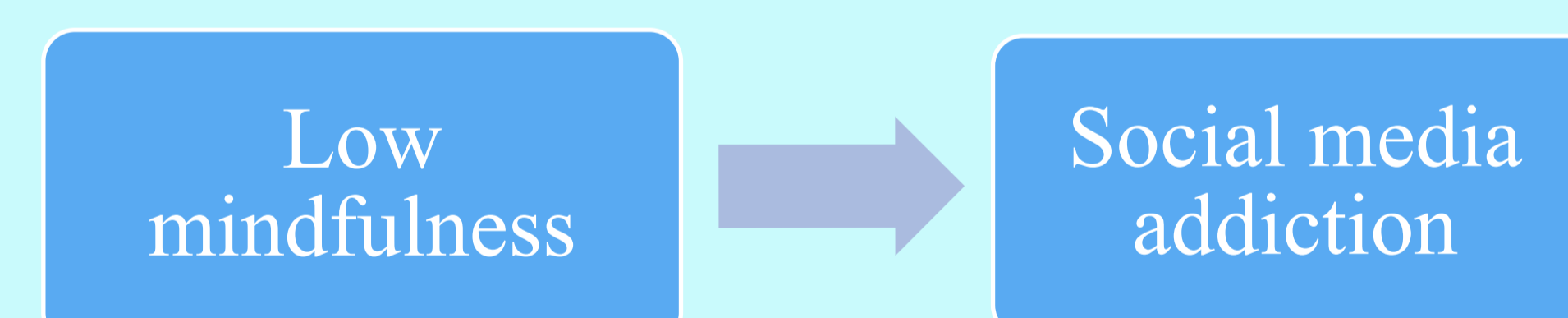
Amelia Jones, Megan Hook, Purnaja Podduturi Haley McKeen, Emily Beitzell, & Dr. Miriam Liss

Background

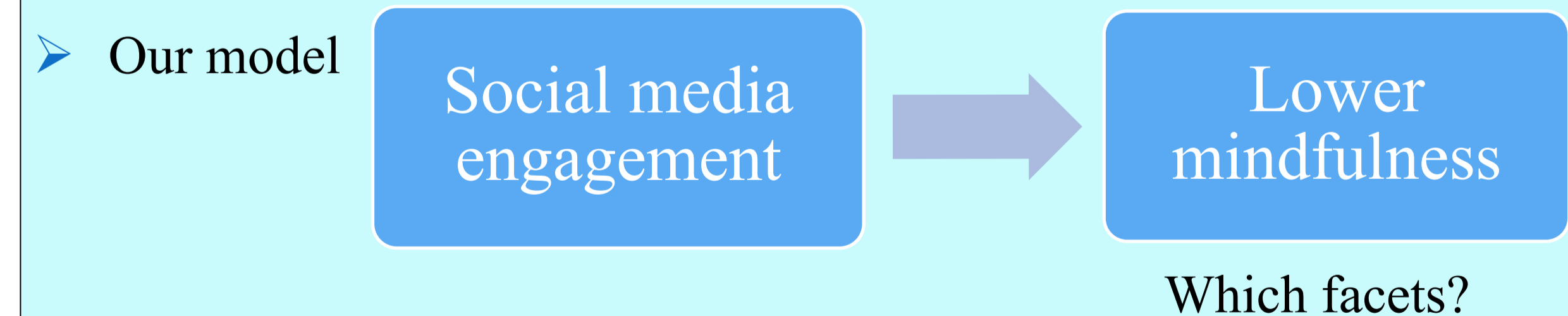
- The relationship between social media use and negative life outcomes has been mixed (Lin et al., 2016; Seabrook et al., 2016).
 - Levels of depression varied based on the quality of social media interaction, and people's mindset while engaging on social media (Davila et al., 2012); Seabrook et al., 2016).
- People use social media for:
 - Behavioral reasons (to relax)
 - Cognitive reasons (to feel connected)
 - Affective reasons (to feel happier on social media).
- Other mechanisms by which social media use may lead to depression includes fear of missing out (FOMO), and social comparison (Dempsey et al., 2019; Reer et al., 2019).



- Mindfulness = non-judgmental awareness of the present moment (Keng et al., 2011).
 - There are five facets of mindfulness: awareness, non-react, describe, observe, and non-judge (Baer et al., 2006).
- Mindfulness has been linked to lower levels of depression (Kircaburun et al., 2019).
- Mindful awareness lowered compulsive social media use through increasing self-esteem and decreasing social anxiety (Apal'oza, 2019).
- Other research



E.g., Apal'oza, 2019



Method

Participants

- N = 371; 292 females (78.7%), 69 males (18.6%), 8 other (2.2%), and 2 unspecified (.5%).
- Age = 19.33, SD = 1.589, range: 17-24.
- Participants primarily identified as White (71.7%), heterosexual (71.2%), and middle class (50.4%).

Procedure

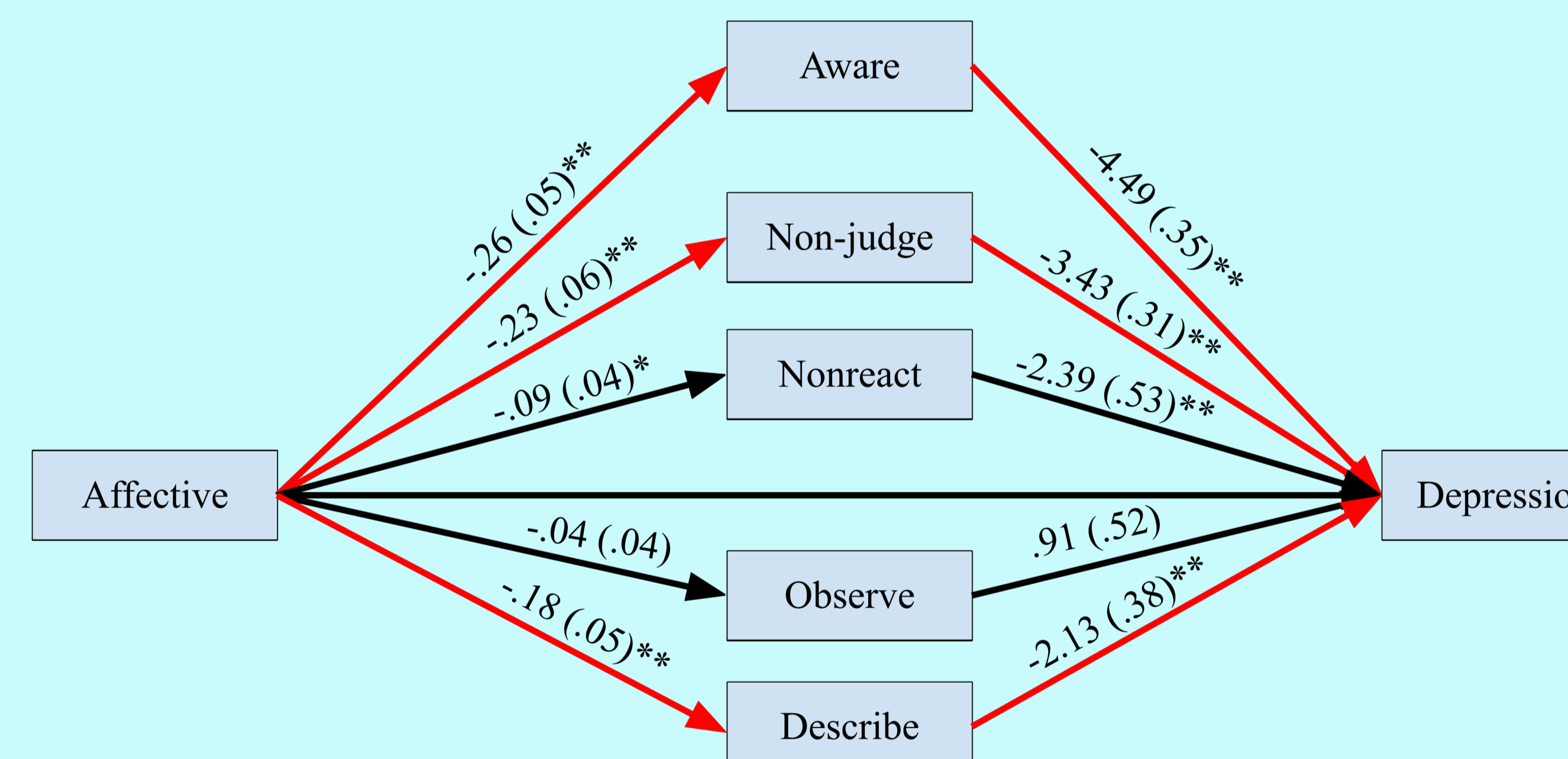
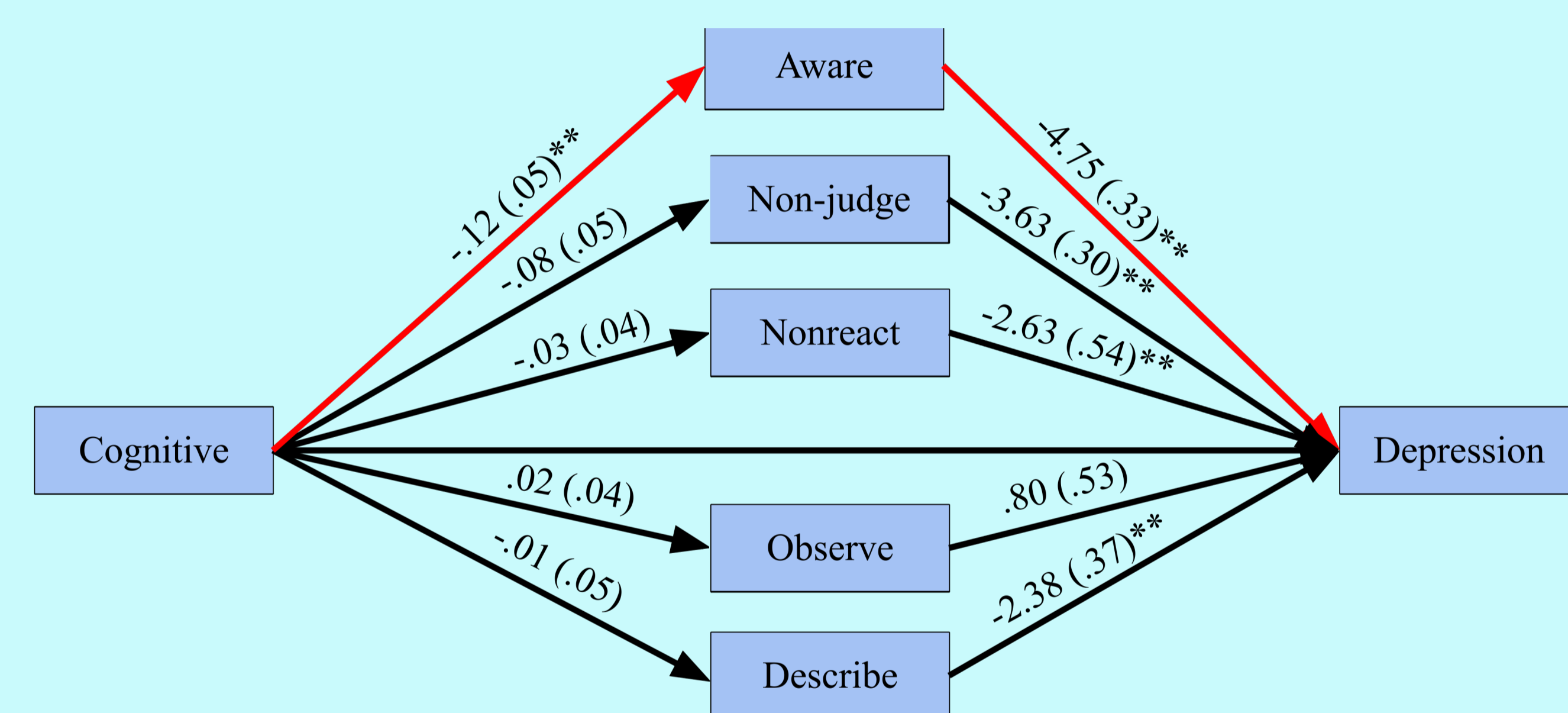
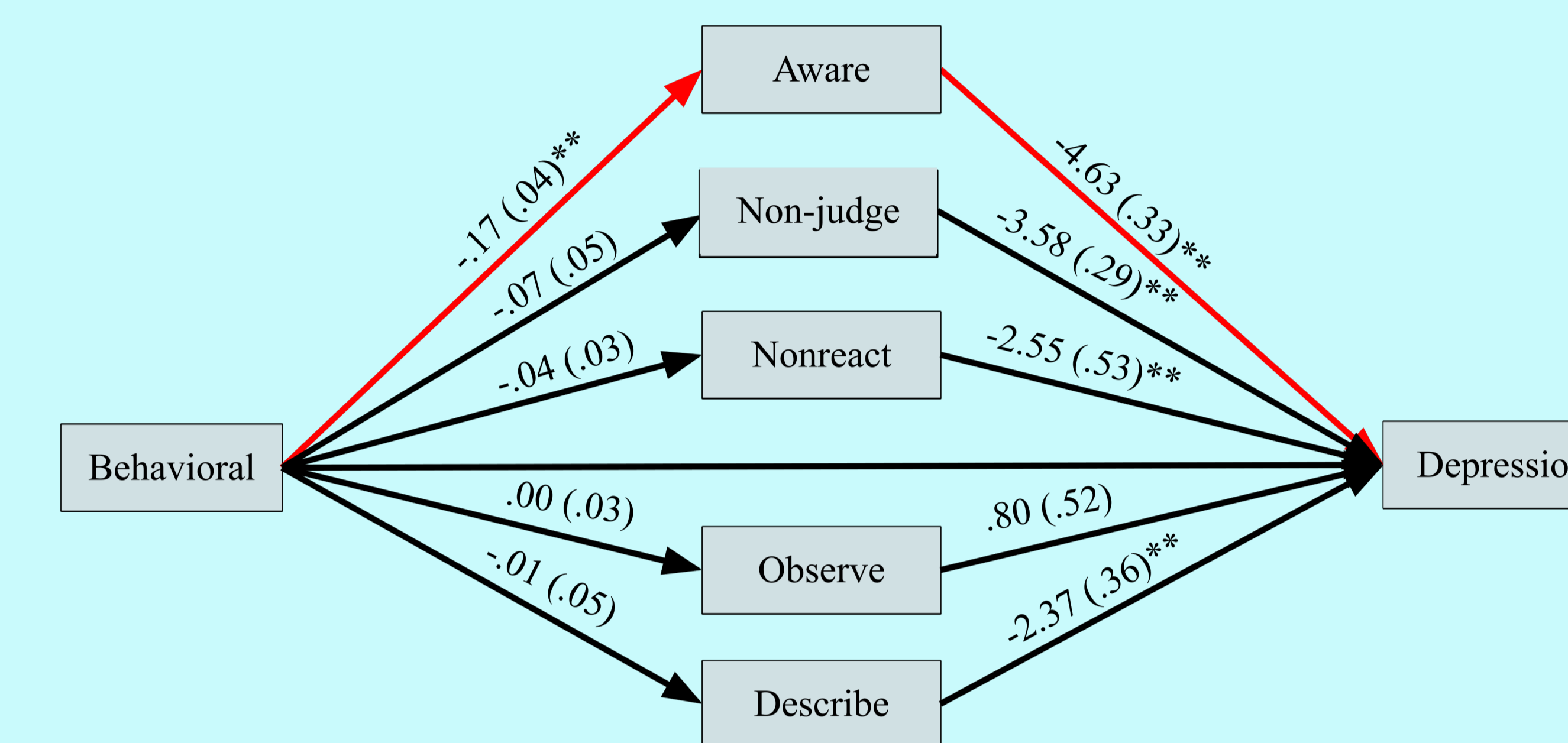
- Recruited from a general psychology pool and social media
 - Facebook, Reddit, and Instagram
- Online survey

Measures

- Social Media Engagement Scale for Adolescents (SMESA; Ni et al. 2020) ($\alpha = .88$)
 - Behavioral subscale ($\alpha = .87$)
 - Cognitive subscale ($\alpha = .71$)
 - Affective subscale ($\alpha = .81$)
- Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006) ($\alpha = .89$)
 - Awareness ($\alpha = .87$)
 - Non-react ($\alpha = .76$)
 - Describe ($\alpha = .71$)
 - Observe ($\alpha = .90$)
 - Non-judge ($\alpha = .91$)
- Patient Health Questionnaire (Kroenke et al., 2009) ($\alpha = .90$) measure for depression

Results

Mediation analyses - PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2018).



	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Behavioral		
Aware	.0610	.1829
Non-judge	-.0145	.0889
Nonreact	-.0087	.0463
Observe	-.0098	.0112
Describe	-.0301	.0358
Cognitive		
Aware	.0245	.1542
Non-judge	-.0141	.0961
Nonreact	-.0171	.0434
Observe	-.0078	.0138
Describe	-.0324	.0377
Affective		
Aware	.0981	.2115
Non-judge	.0510	.1543
Nonreact	.0016	.0583
Observe	-.0185	.0049
Describe	.0197	.0851

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Hypotheses

Social media engagement



Discussion

- Despite how people may engage in social media, a lack of awareness may lead to depression.
- Affective social media engagement may harm how a person reacts to their emotions or how they judge themselves, which may increase depression.
 - More difficult for the individual to appropriately describe their emotions, similar alexithymia. Alexithymia has also been linked to depression (Honkalampi et al., 2000).

Limitations: Largely homogenous, mostly white females and unknown whether participants came from social media or participant pool. Future research may use a more diverse sample, as well as investigate the role of describe further.

Implications: Implementation of Mindfulness Based Interventions to teach how to engage in social media mindfully and positively.