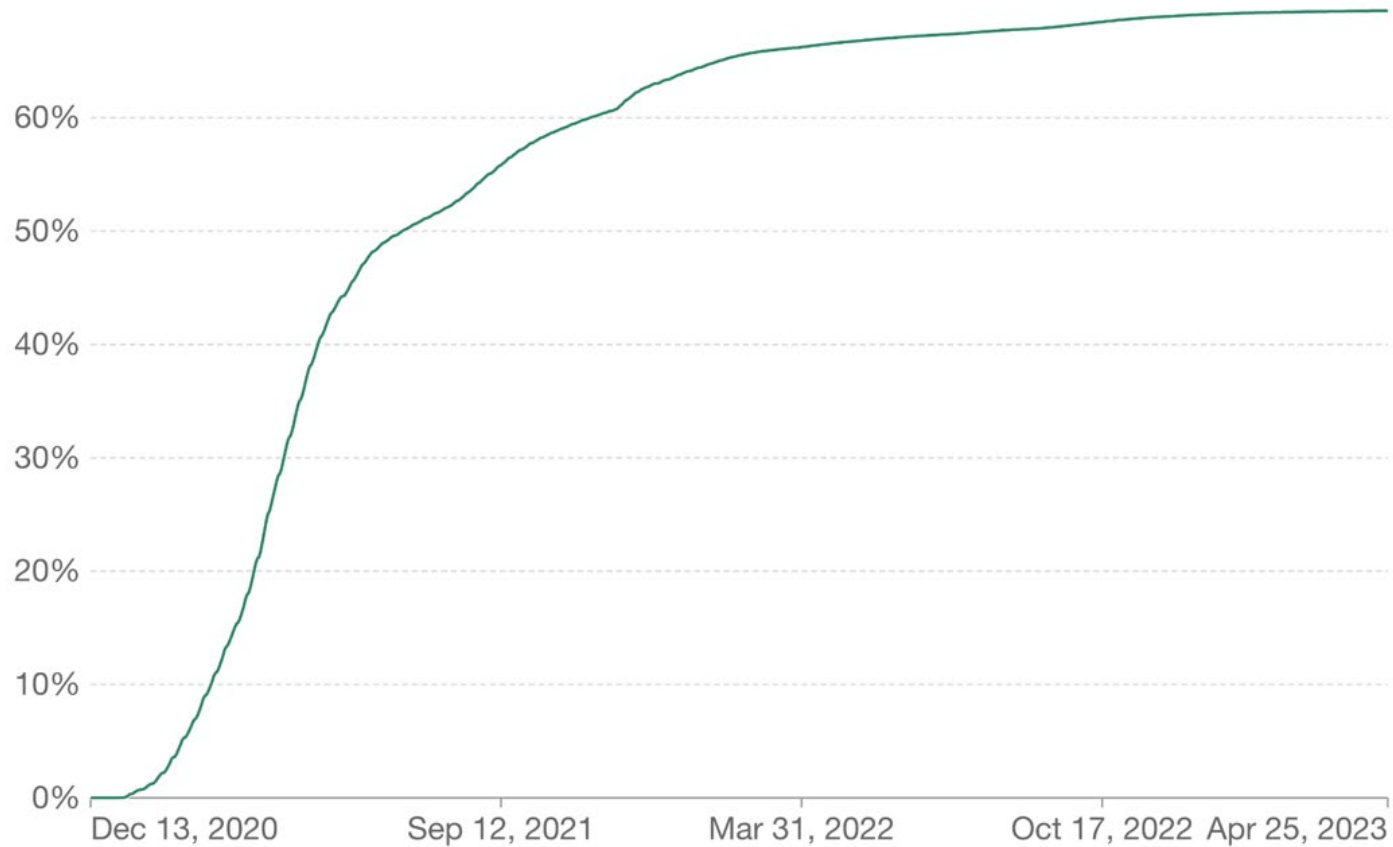


The Impact of Trump Rhetoric on
Attitudes Toward COVID-19
Vaccines and Vaccination Intention:
A Randomized Controlled Trial



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Vaccination rate has hit a plateau



Vaccination hesitancy

- One-fifth of Americans are not vaccinated – Why?
 - Safety?
 - Efficacy?
 - Commitment to a social identity (being Republican)?

Vaccination Rates – March 2023

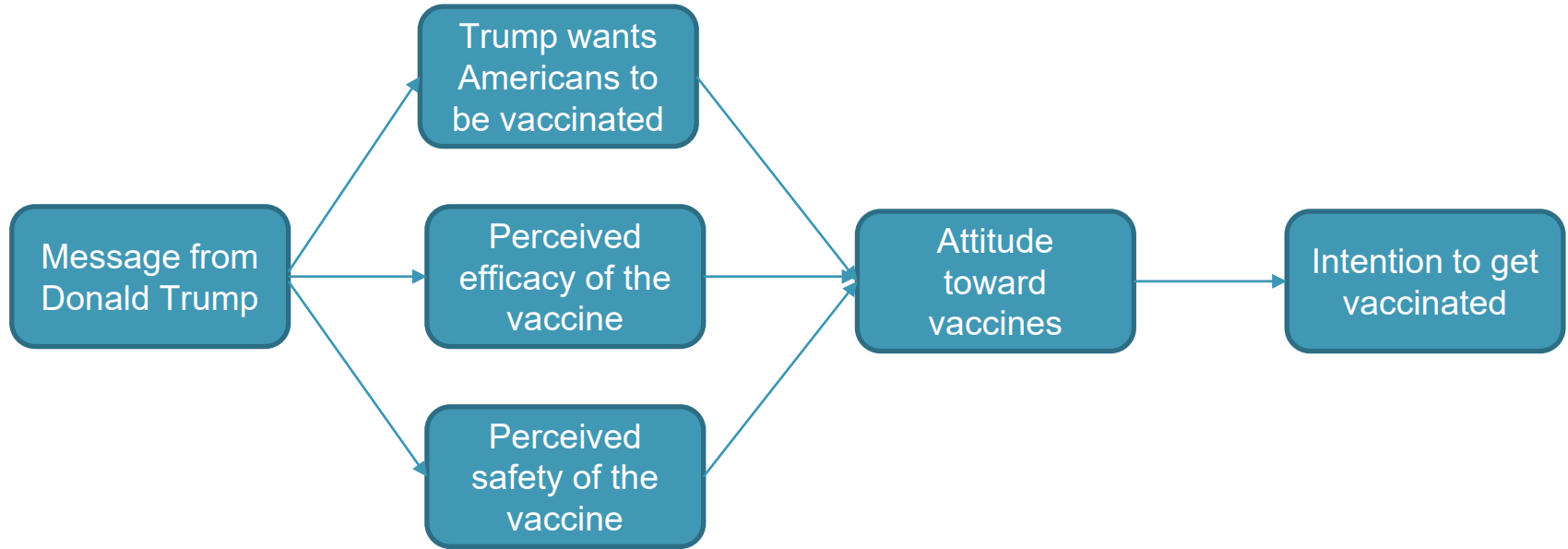
Democrats	91%
Independents	74%
Republicans	66%

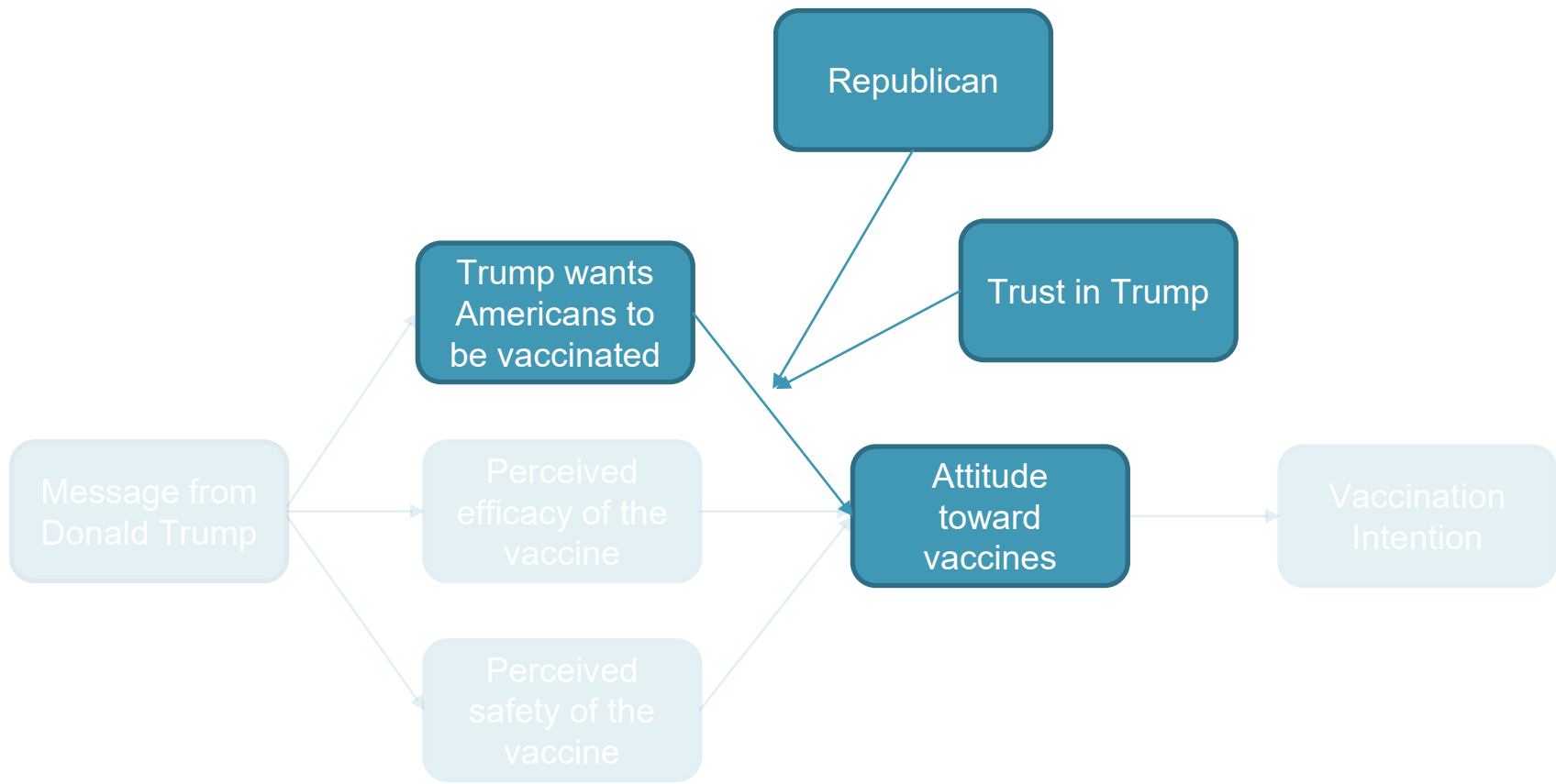
Definitely Will Not Get Vaccinated – March 2023

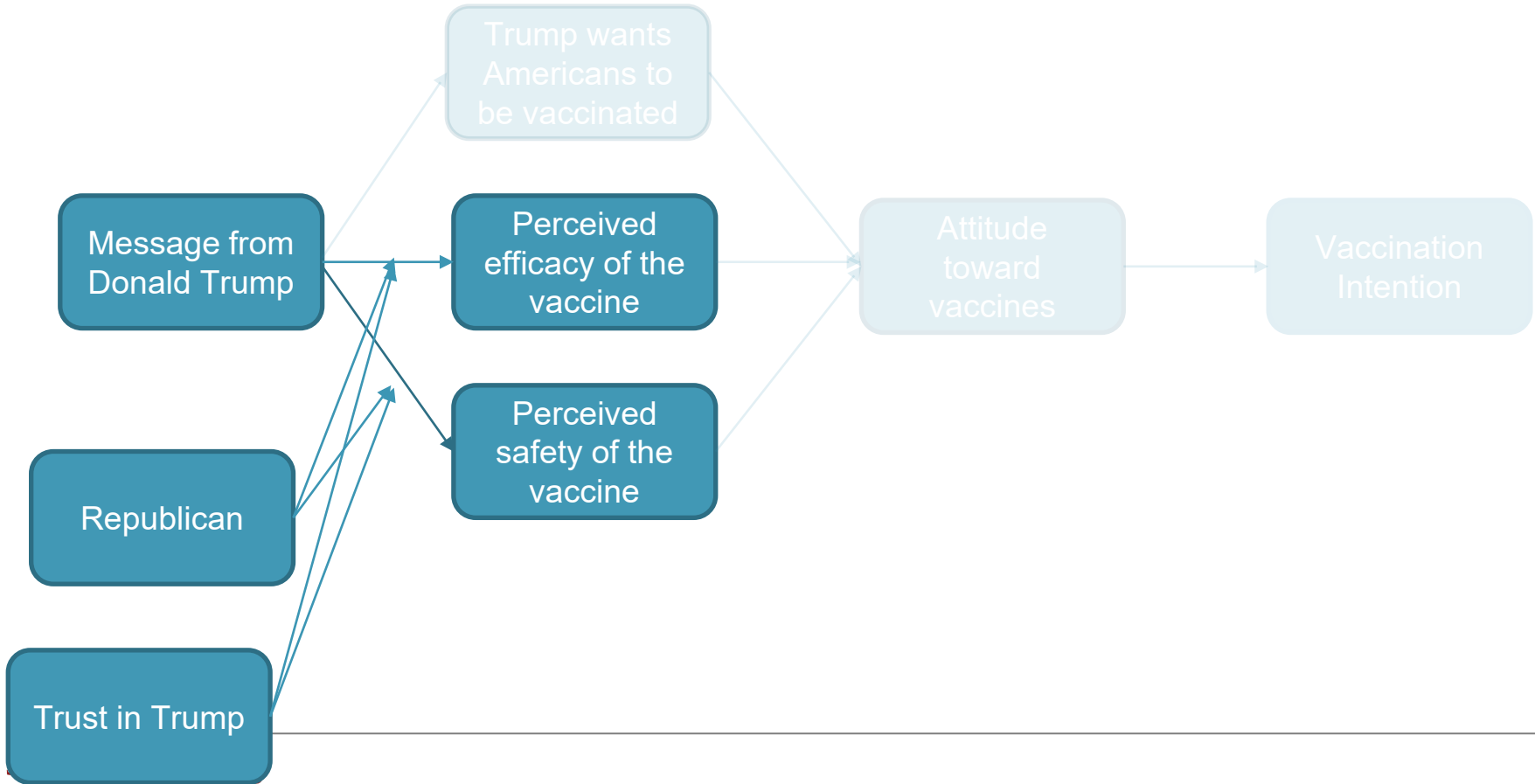
Democrats	8%
Independents	23%
Republicans	32%

Research rationale

- Might some Republicans be convinced to get vaccinated by a trusted source?
- Or is resistance to vaccination a cemented signal of commitment to the Republican Party?
- Trusted source: Donald Trump



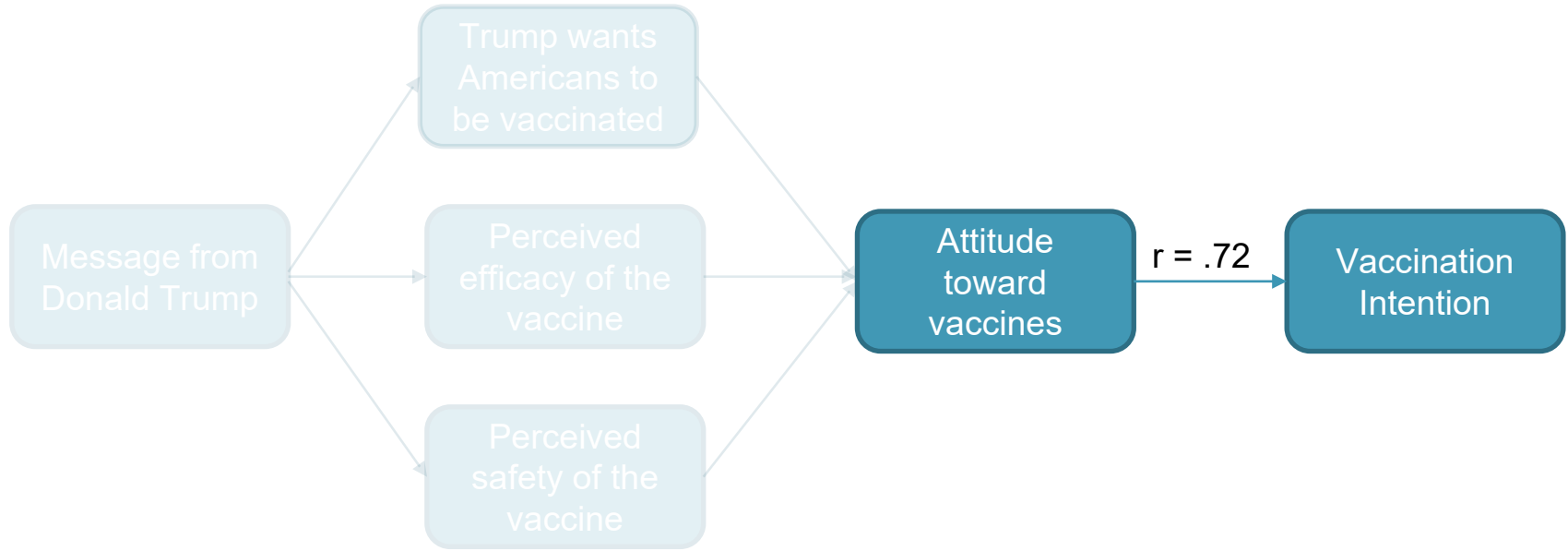


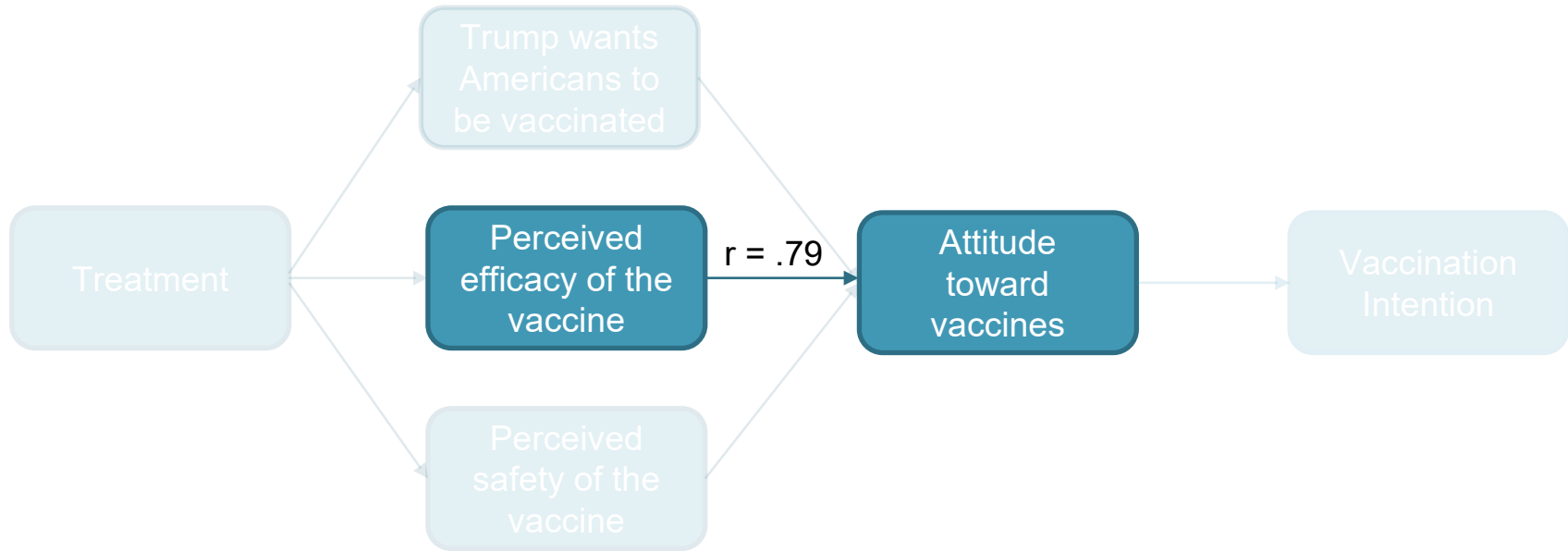


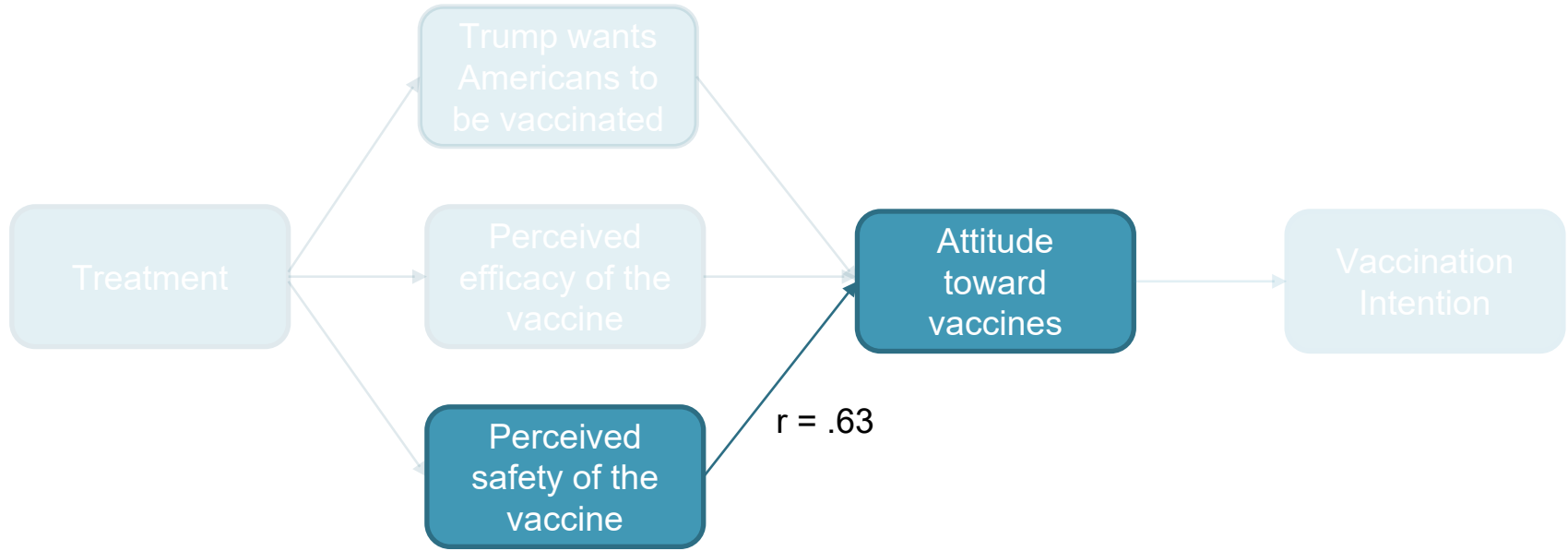
Data

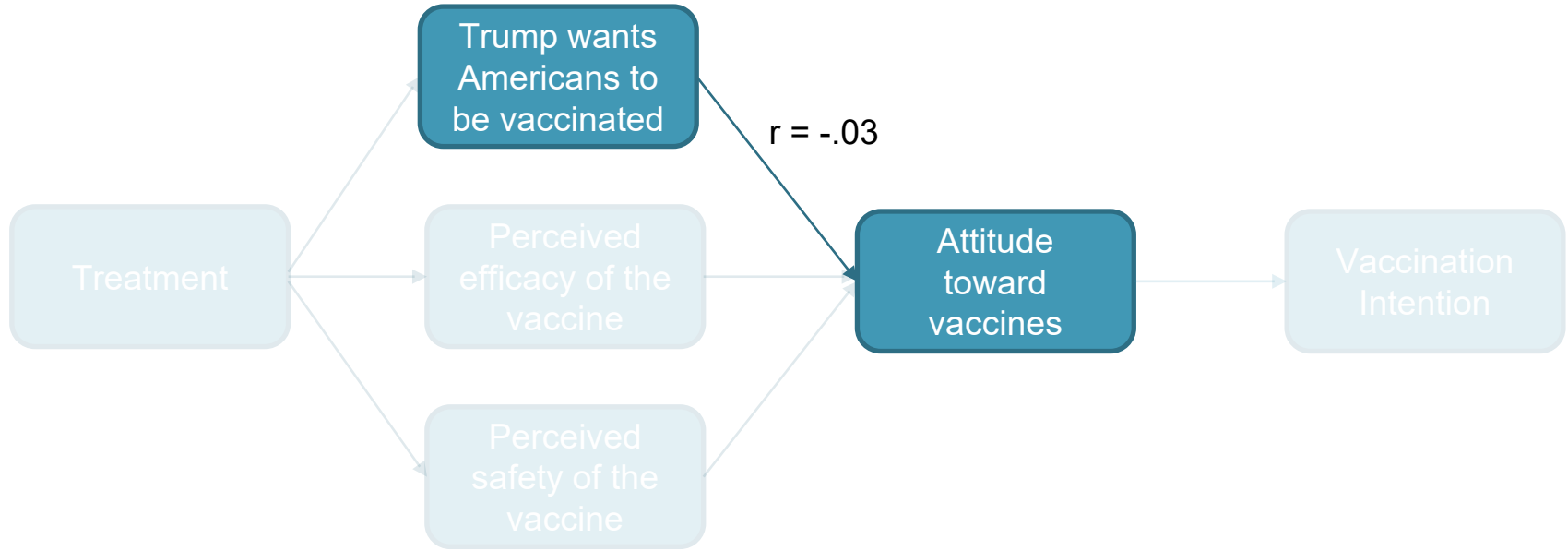
- Non-probability sample of American volunteers who are 18 years old or older (N = 1,609) - Dynata.
- Consented to participate in surveys online for payment.
- Data collection: September 7 to 14, 2022

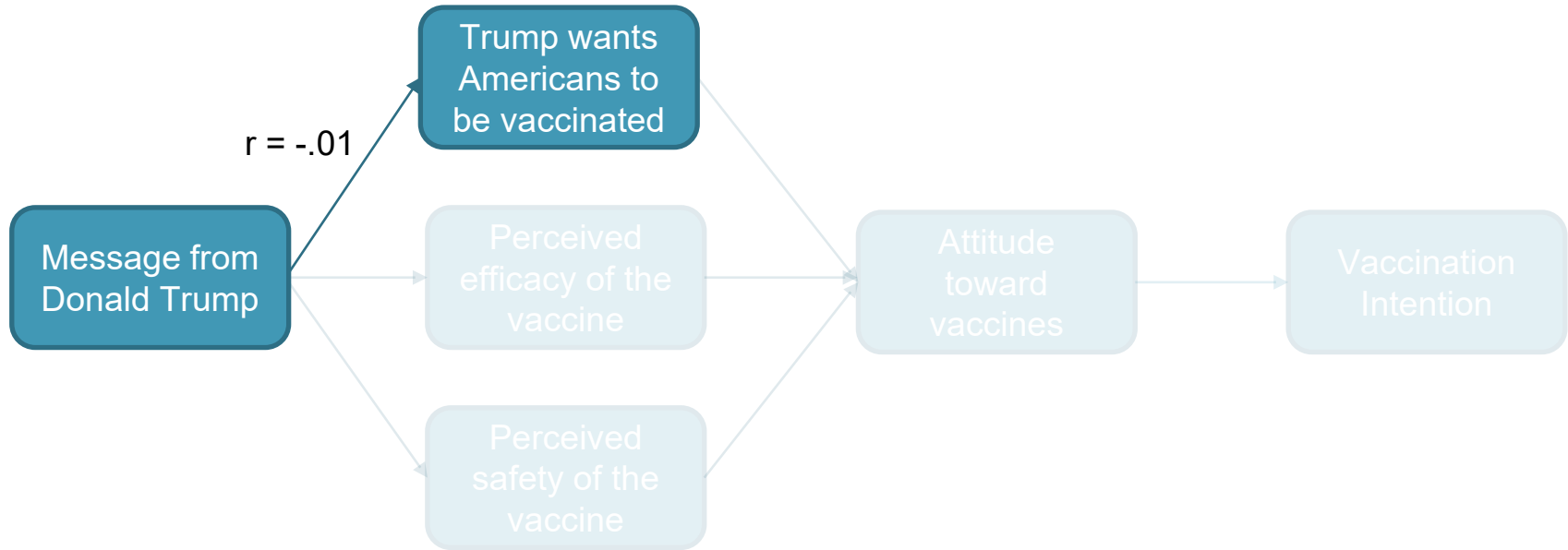


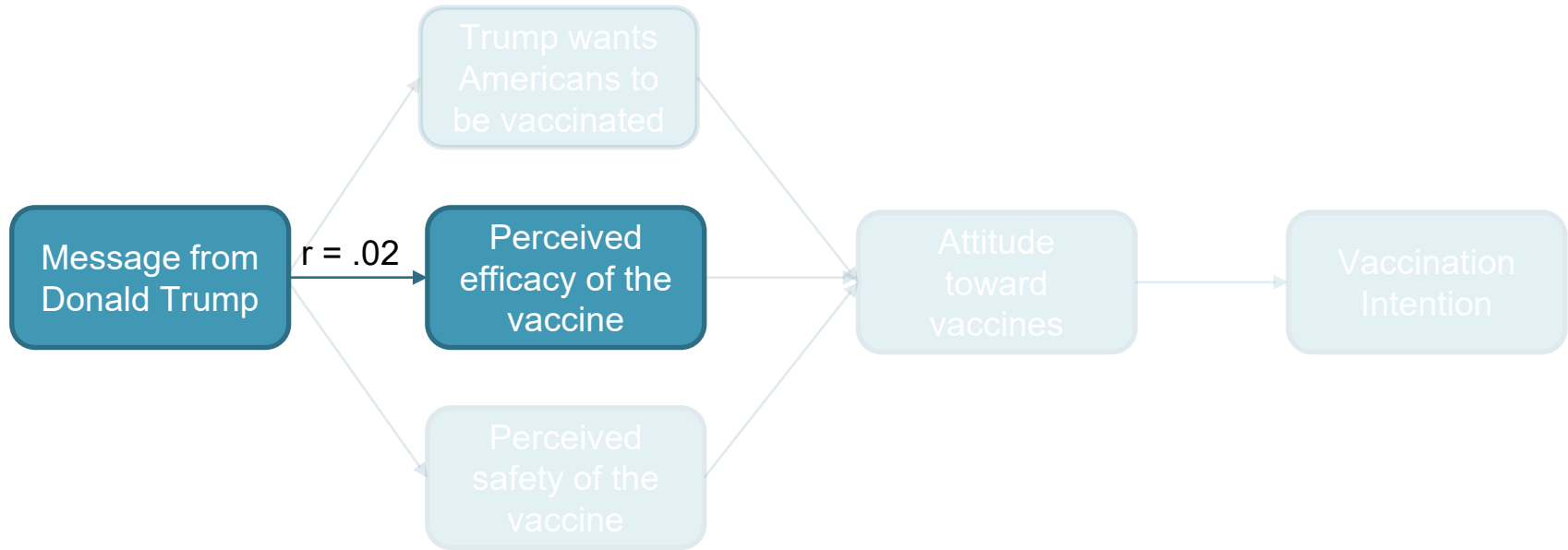


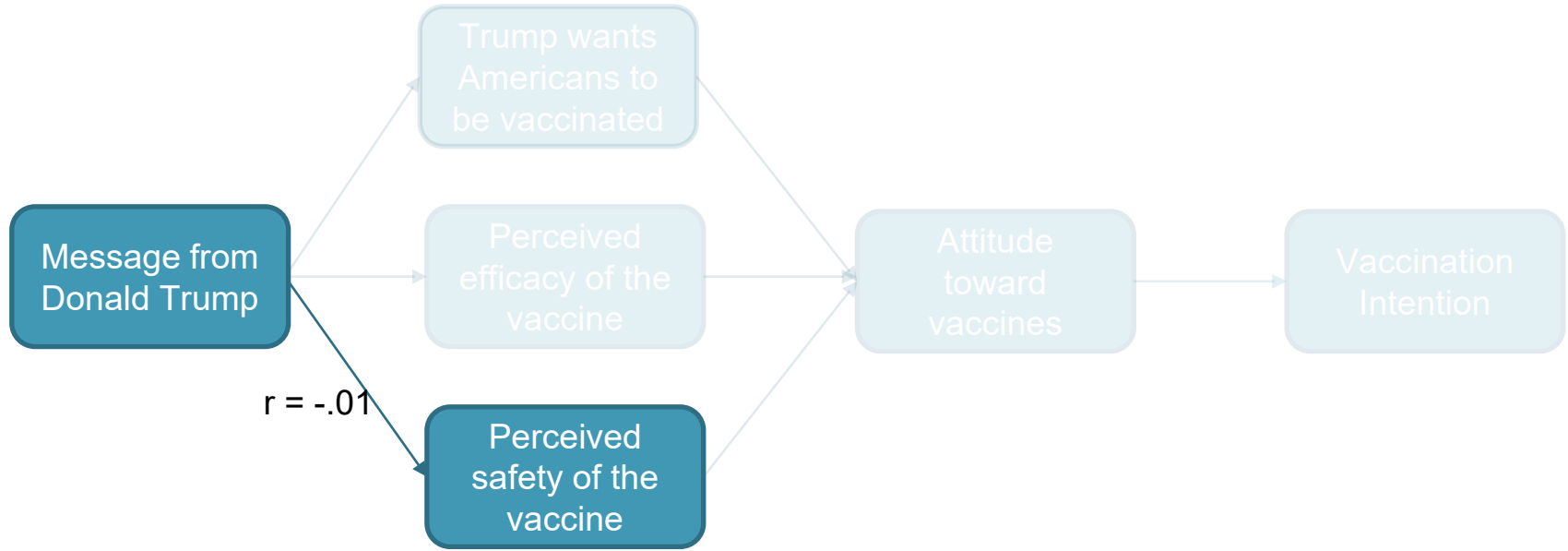












Moderation

- Party identification significantly moderated the relationship between vaccination attitude and the perception that Trump wants Americans to get vaccinated ($\beta = .23, p < .001$).
- Republicans: .37
- Democrats: -.11

Moderation

- Trust in Trump significantly moderated the relationship between vaccination attitude and the perception that Trump wants Americans to get vaccinated ($\beta = .37, p < .001$).
- High trust in Trump: .58
- Low trust in Trump: -.25

Moderation

- Party identification did not moderate the effect of the treatment on perceived efficacy ($\beta = -.03, p = .34$).

Moderation

- Trust in Trump moderated the effect of the treatment on perceived efficacy ($\beta = -.06$, $p = .07$).
- High trust in Trump = $-.1$
- Low trust in Trump = $.01$

Moderation

- Party identification did not moderate the effect of the treatment status on perceived safety ($\beta = .02, p = .45$).

Moderation

- Trust in Trump did not moderate the effect of the treatment on perceived safety (standardized $b = -.03$, $p = .29$).

Intentions, attitude, and perceptions of the vaccine: full sample

	Control	Treatment	Difference
Intention to get vaccinated	0.53	0.52	0.01
Getting vaccinated is a good idea	0.74	0.75	0.01
Efficacy: prevent COVID	0.56	0.56	0.00
Efficacy: prevent hospitalization	0.63	0.65	0.02
Safety	0.72	0.72	0.00

Perceptions of Trump: full sample

	Control	Treatment	Difference
Trust in Trump	0.32	0.35	0.03
Trump's honesty	0.37	0.38	0.01
Trump's understanding of the vaccine	0.41	0.43	0.02
How much credit should Trump get for creating the vaccine	0.35	0.39	0.04+
Trump wants Americans to get vaccinated	0.54	0.53	-0.01
Trump vaccine rhetoric consistency	0.53	0.50	-0.03

Voting intentions: full sample

	Control	Treatment	Difference
Intention to vote for Trump if he is the Republican nominee	0.35	0.40	0.05*
Intention to vote for Trump if he is an Independent candidate	0.32	0.37	0.05*

Mediation

- The effect of the video on voting intentions was fully mediated by giving him credit for creating the vaccine
 - ACME = 0.03
 - 95% confidence interval = 0.01, 0.06
 - $p = 0.03$

Perceptions of vaccines: Republicans

	Control	Treatment	Difference
Intention to get vaccinated	0.35	0.39	0.04
Getting vaccinated is a good idea	0.67	0.65	-0.02
Perceived safety	0.65	0.65	0.00
Perceived efficacy: infection prevention	0.49	0.43	-0.06
Perceived efficacy: hospitalization prevention	0.55	0.56	0.01

Perceptions of Trump: Republicans

	Control	Treatment	Difference
Trust in Trump	0.61	0.62	0.01
Trump's honesty	0.63	0.60	-0.03
Trump understands the vaccine	0.62	0.62	0.00
How much credit should Trump get for creating the vaccine	0.56	0.59	0.03
Trump vaccine rhetoric consistency	0.42	0.42	0.00
Trump wants vaccination	0.67	0.66	-0.01
Intention to vote for Trump as the Republican nominee	0.69	0.73	0.04
Intention to vote for Trump as an Independent candidate	0.63	0.64	0.01

Discussion

- The video did not make the public or Republicans more positive toward vaccines.
- Possible explanation
 - Loyalty to the Republican Party may be the cemented primary driving force of resistance to get vaccinated.