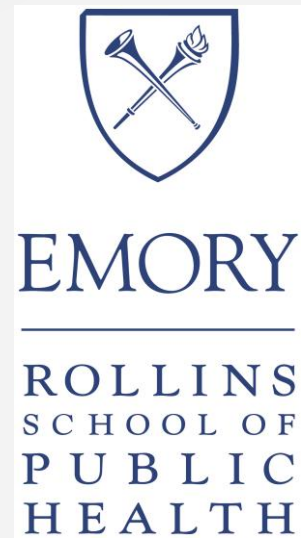


# Women's Empowerment: Pathways to Child Nutrition

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**Empowerment** – a process through which individuals gain the ability to utilize assets and make choices that enable them to achieve their goals

Women's empowerment underpins achievement of SDG 5



# Aims

- ▶ Develop a theoretically grounded, cross-contextually invariant measure of women's empowerment
- ▶ Identify domains of empowerment that are important for maternal and child nutrition across contexts

# Approach

- ▶ **Analysis of DHS data** to identify relevant domains of empowerment
  - ▶ Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Uganda
  - ▶ Items based on theory and availability in DHS
    - ▶ Enabling assets – 9 items
    - ▶ Instrumental agency – 5 items
    - ▶ Intrinsic / attitudinal agency – 8 items
  - ▶ Exploratory / Confirmatory Factor Analysis (EFA/CFA) to construct and test domains and invariance across contexts



**Assets**



**Agency**



**Achievements**

**Human/Social  
Assets**

**Human/Social Assets**  
Age at first sex  
Age at first cohabitation  
Age at first birth

Assets



Agency



Achievements

Human/Social  
Assets



Beliefs &  
Attitudes

**Gendered Attitudes and Beliefs (BA)**

Extent to which one agrees that wife-beating is justified under the following conditions:

- Wife goes without telling her husband
- Wife neglects the children
- Wife argues with her husband
- Wife burns the food
- Wife refuses to have sex with her husband

Assets



Agency



Achievements

Human/Social Assets

Beliefs & Attitudes

Decisions

**Household Decision Making (DEC)**  
Extent to which woman makes or both husband and wife makes decisions on household activities:

- Use of women's earnings
- Women's healthcare seeking
- Large Household Purchases
- Visits to family and/or friends



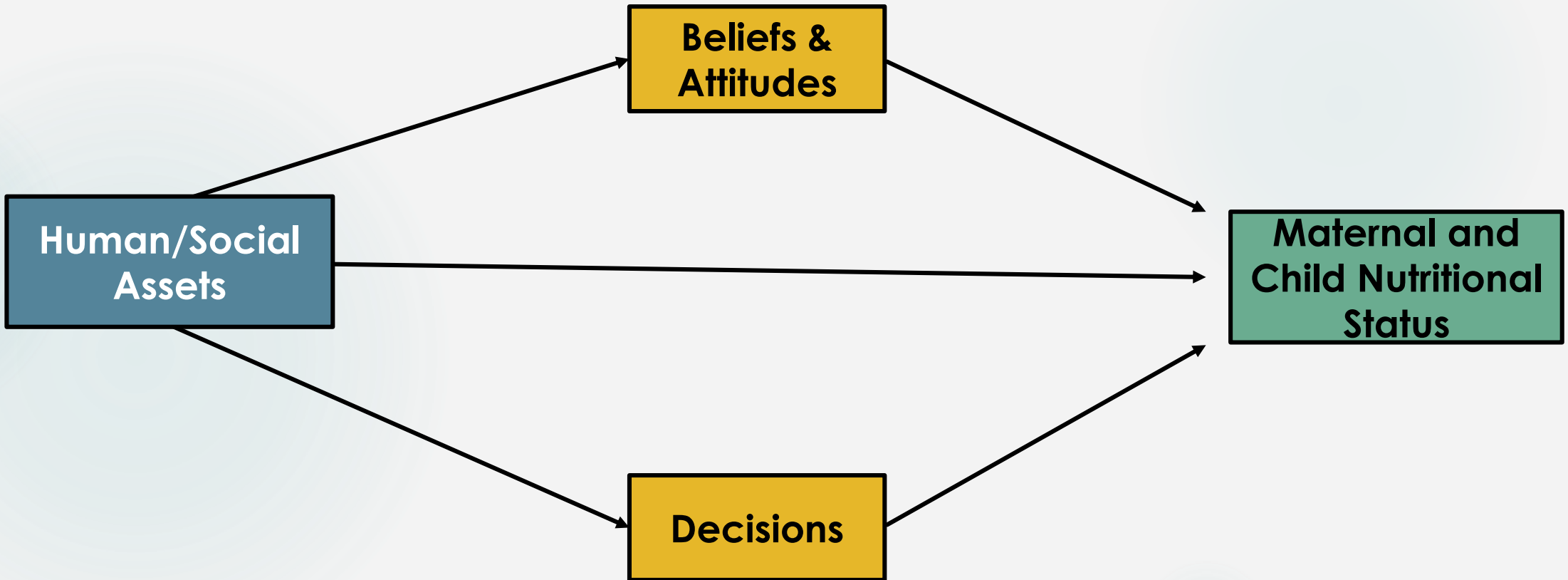
**Assets**



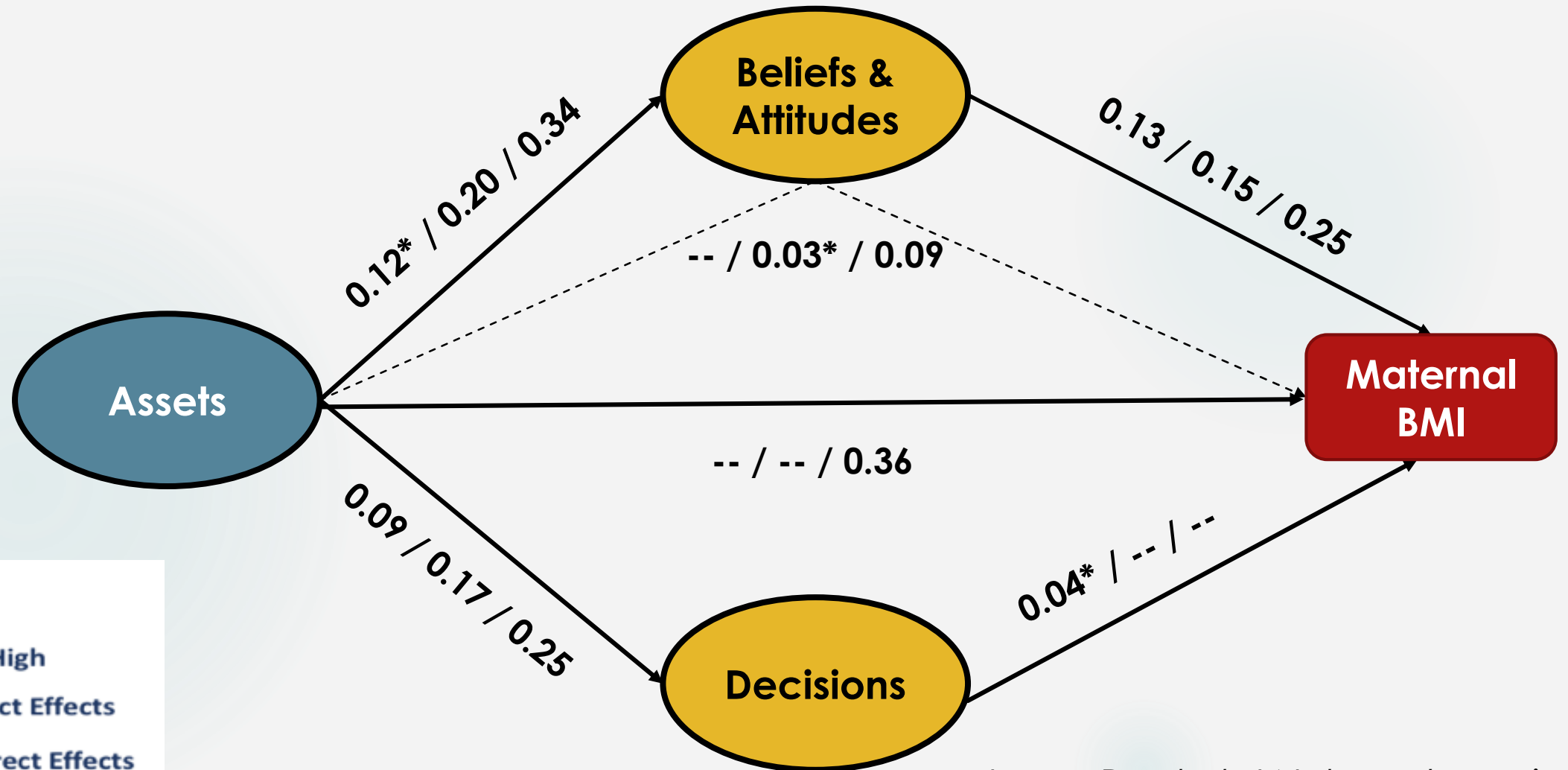
**Agency**



**Achievements**



Previous research indicates strong direct and indirect associations between empowerment domains with maternal BMI that strengthened with wealth tertile



p<.01; \*p<.05

Low / Middle / High

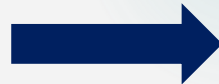
—————▶ Direct Effects

.....▶ Indirect Effects

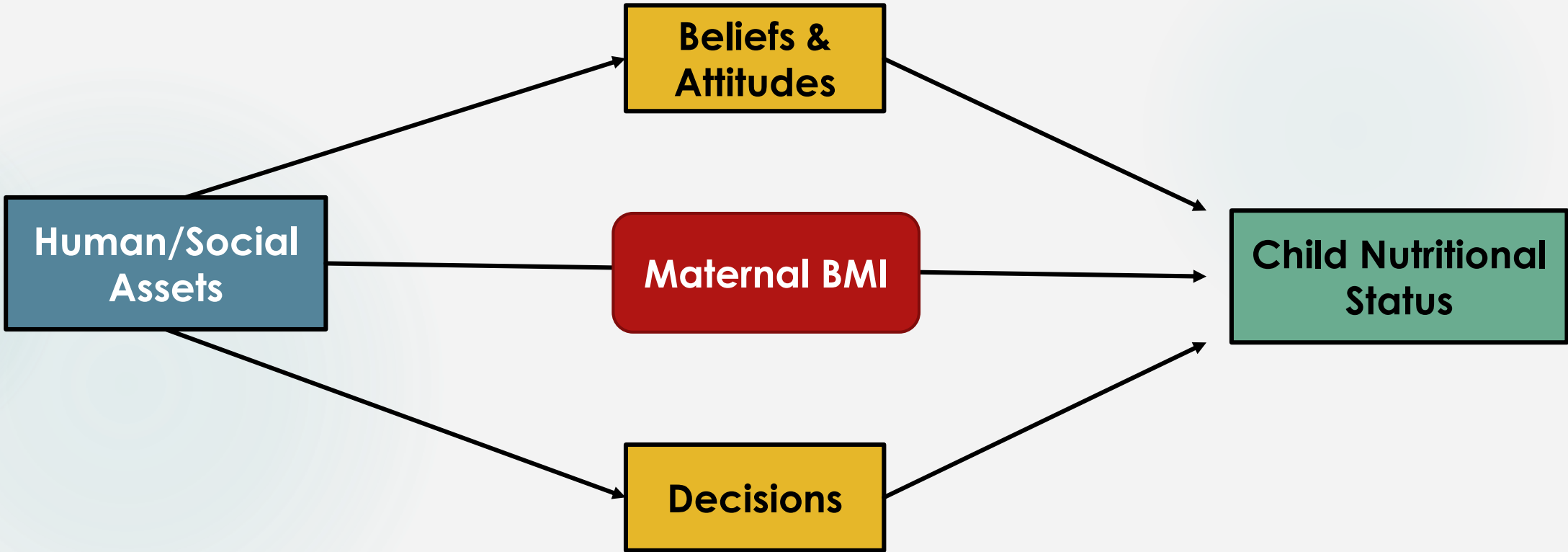
**Assets**



**Agency**



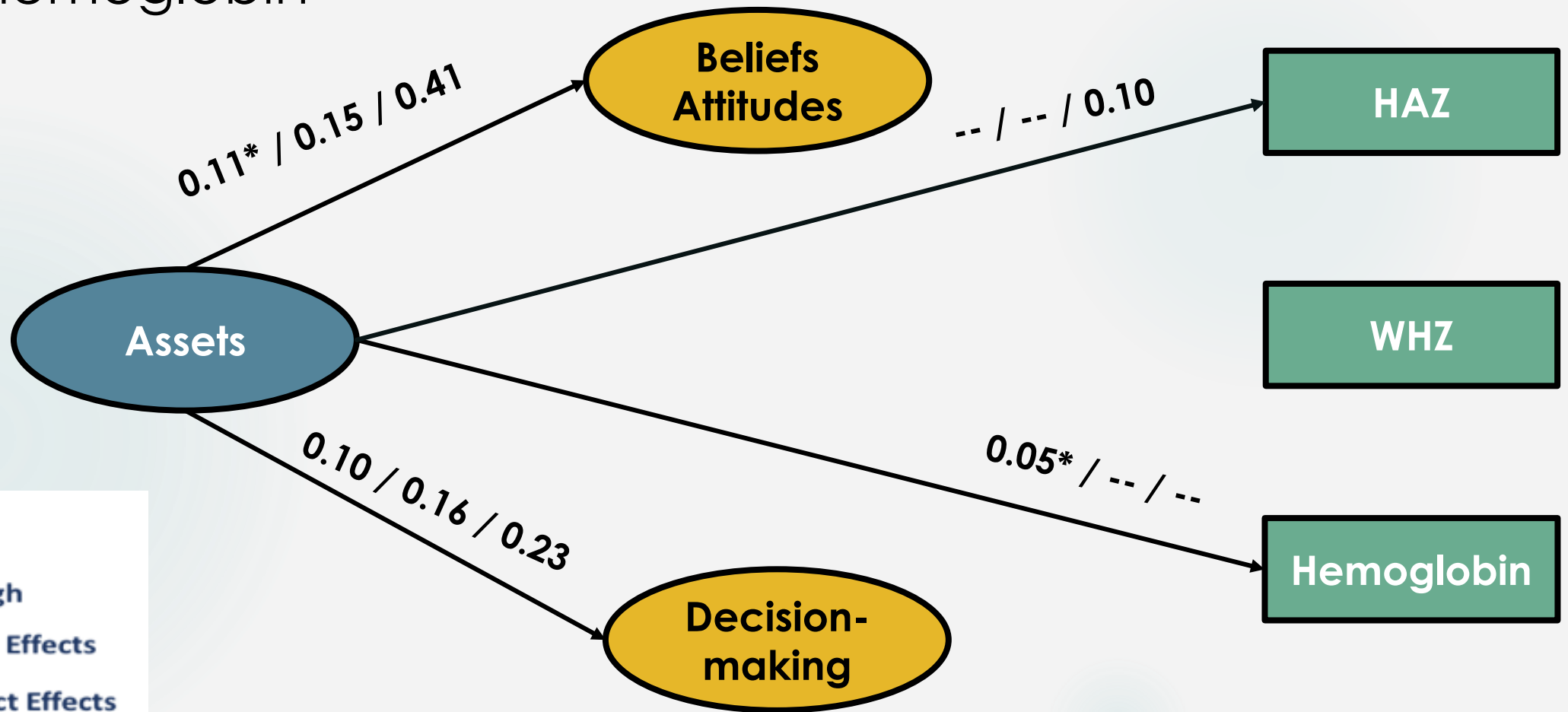
**Achievements**



**WEALTH**

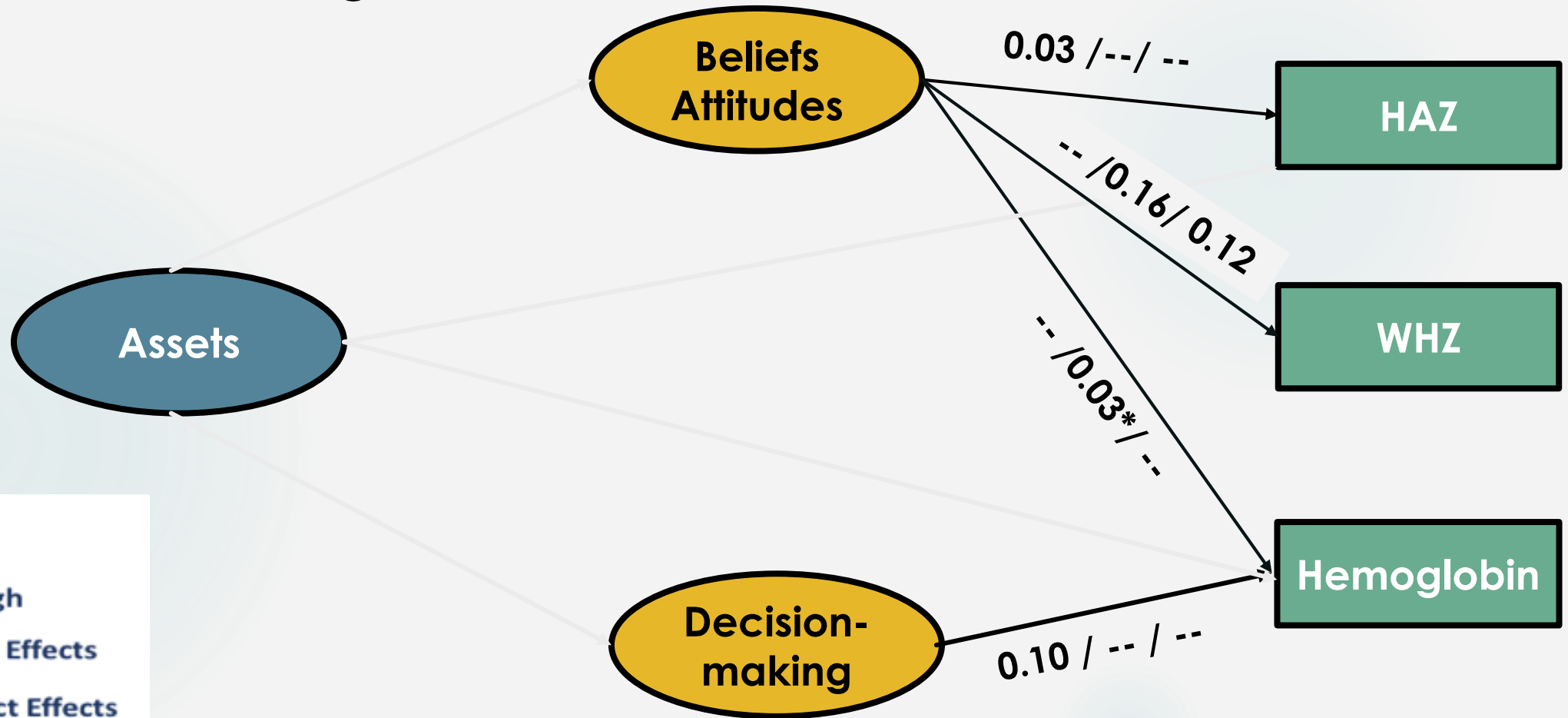
\* The direct association between human/social assets, beliefs and decision-making strengthens with wealth.

\* Human and social assets is directly associated with HAZ and hemoglobin

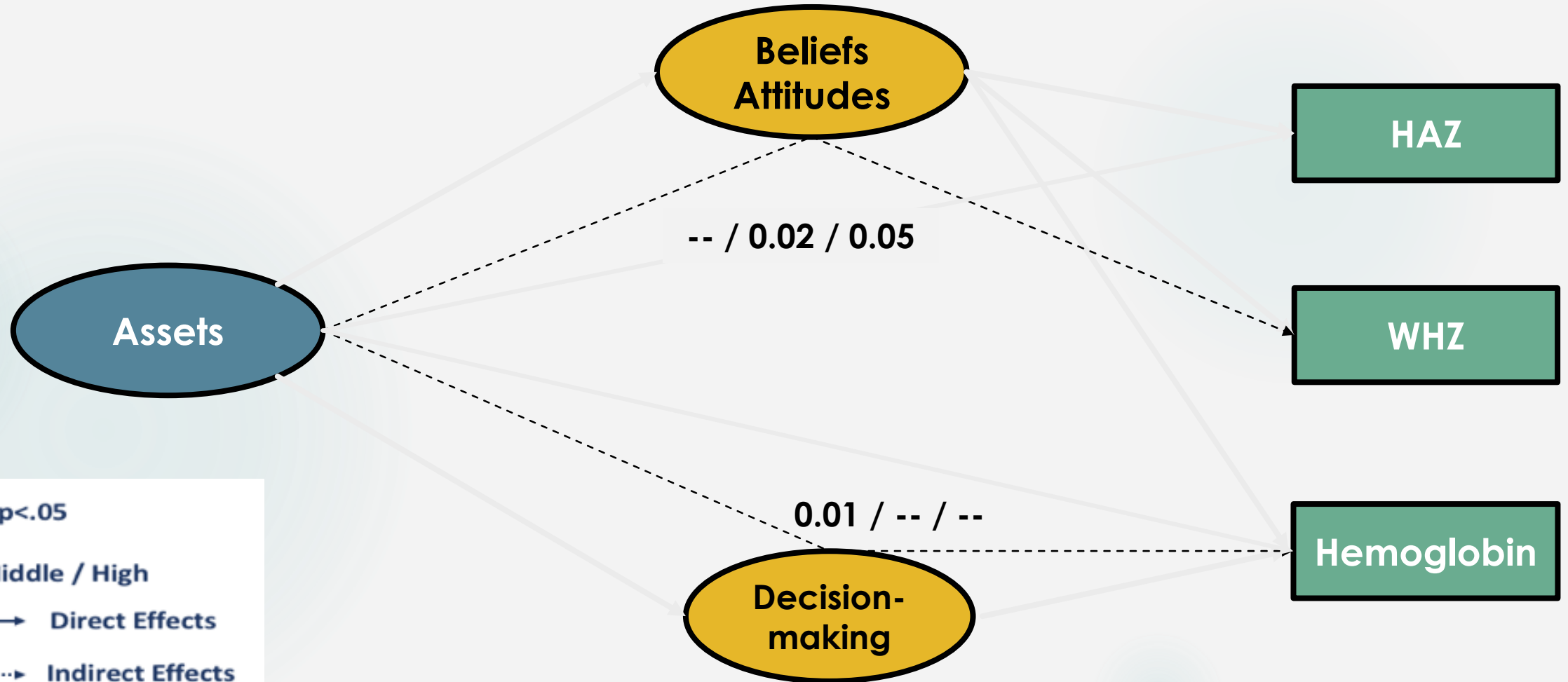


Beliefs and attitudes domain directly associated with HAZ and WHZ

Decision-making and beliefs / attitudes directly associated with hemoglobin

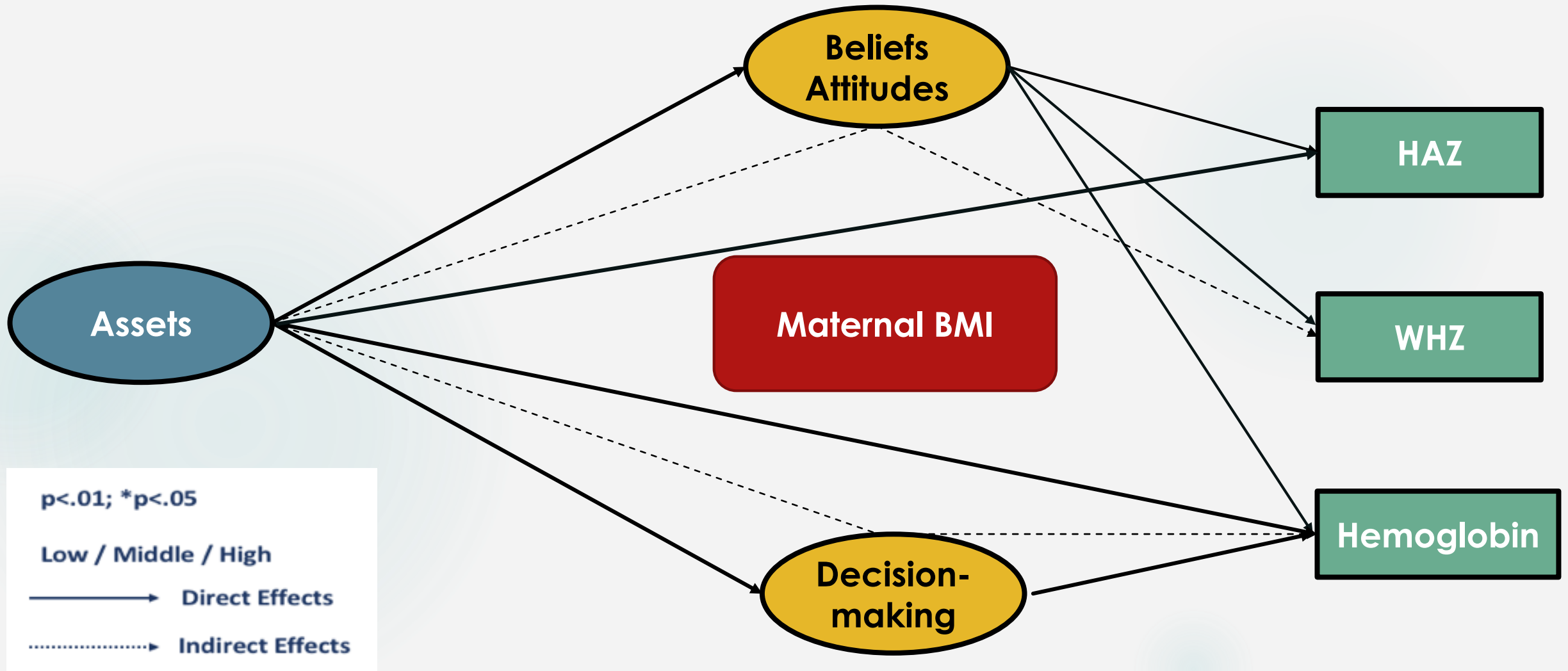


Assets indirectly associated with WHZ and hemoglobin via beliefs / attitudes and decision-making, respectively



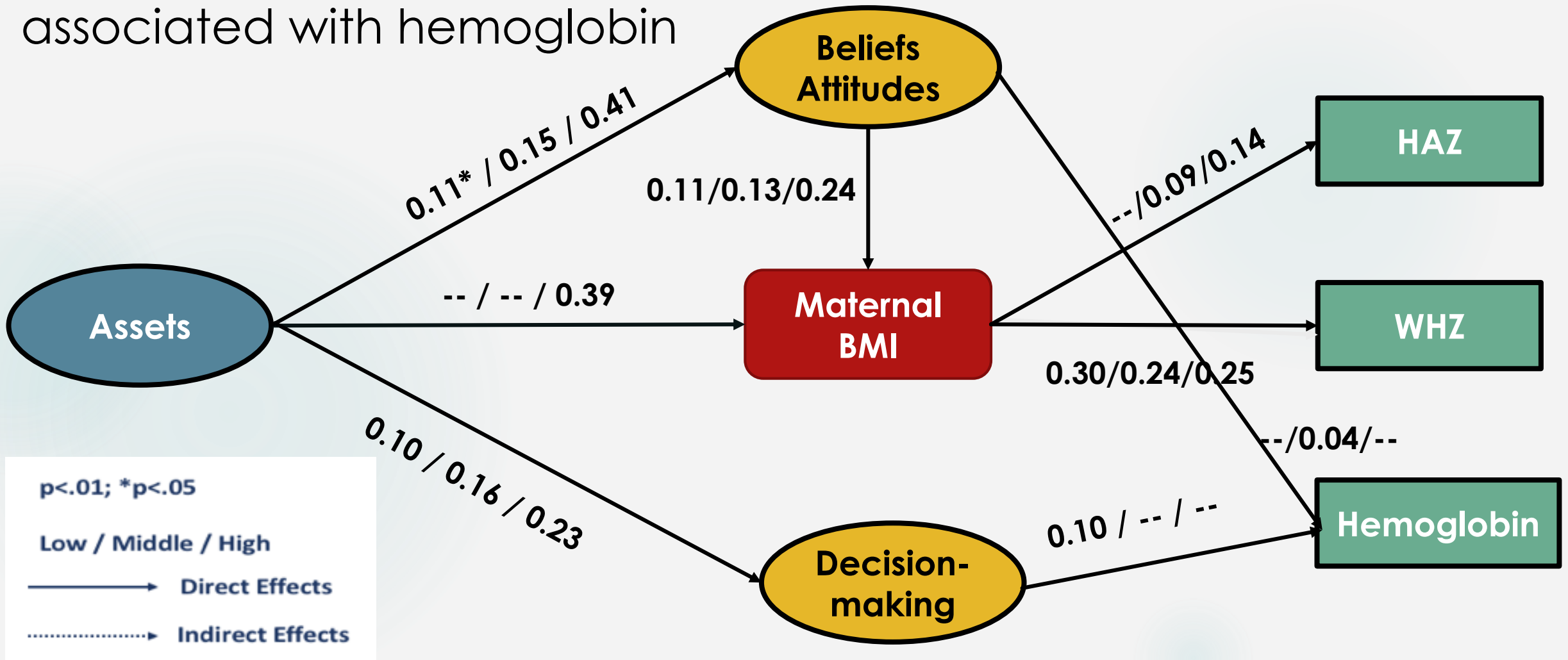
**p<.01; \*p<.05**  
**Low / Middle / High**  
—————▶ **Direct Effects**  
.....▶ **Indirect Effects**

# What is the contribution of maternal BMI to the empowerment – child nutrition relationship?



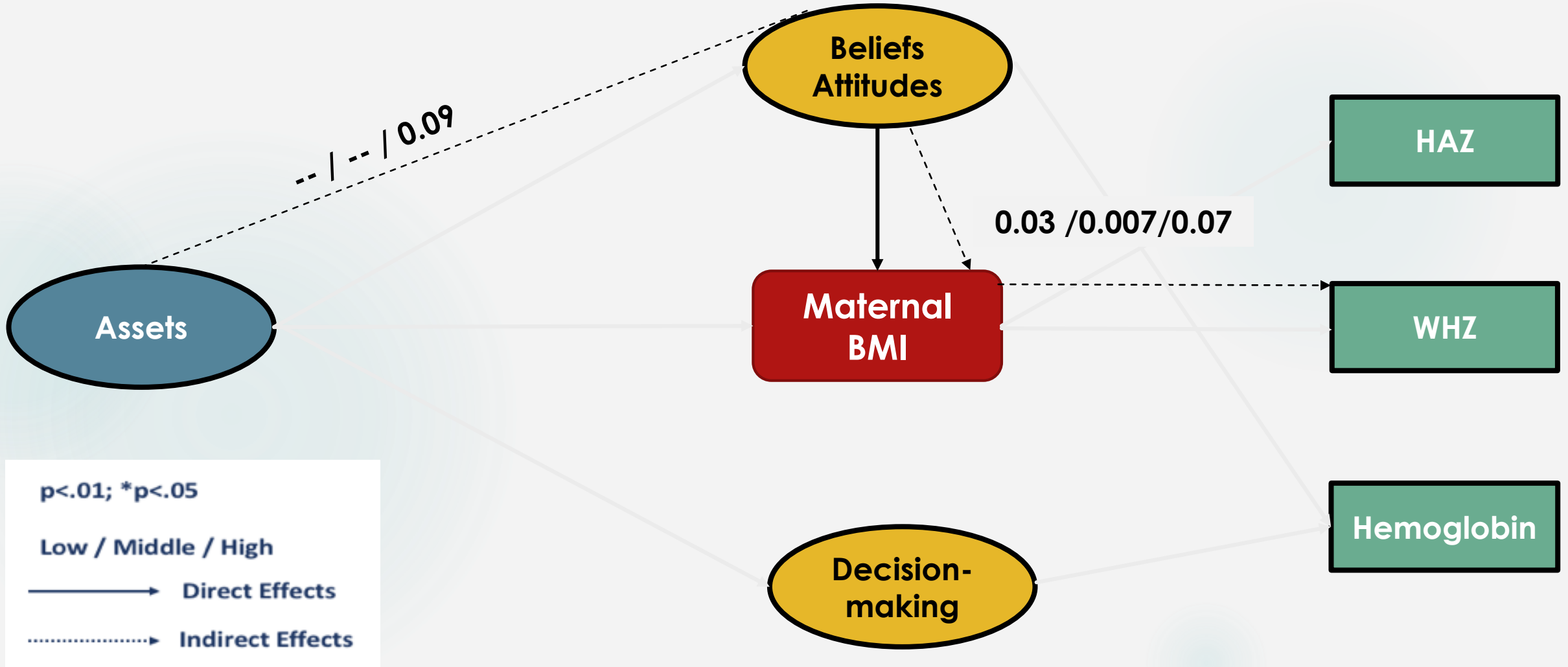
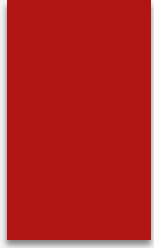
Maternal nutrition directly associated with HAZ and WHZ but not hemoglobin

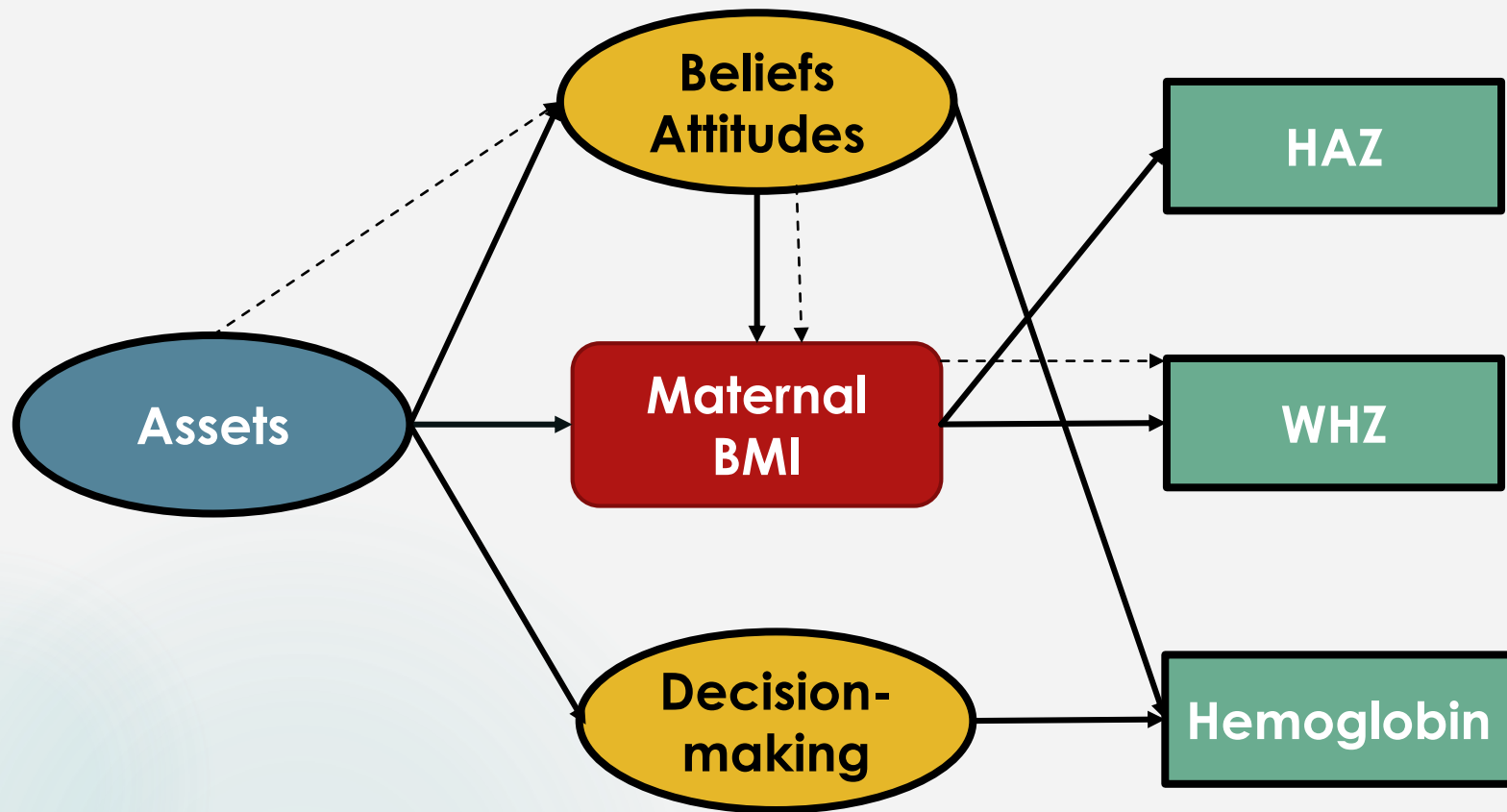
Beliefs / attitudes and decision making each directly associated with hemoglobin





Assets indirectly associated with WHZ but not HAZ or Hemoglobin via beliefs and attitudes and maternal BMI





1. Beliefs about IPV and decision-making each directly associated with child hemoglobin and did not function through maternal BMI
2. For HAZ/WHZ, empowerment functioned through maternal BMI
3. Household wealth modified the relationship between women's empowerment, maternal BMI and child nutrition but no consistent trend emerged



Photocredit: Stand for the Vulnerable, ADI Women's Empowerment Project, Oromia Ethiopia

# Monitoring our Progress -

## Where are we now with measuring women's empowerment and where do we need to go?

### Past Efforts

Inconsistent definitions and applications

Education as proxy

Simple summative measures of various items

### Current State

Women's empowerment in agriculture index (WEAI)

Women's Empowerment in Livestock Index (WELI)

SWPER (DHS derived)

National measures (ie. Gender Parity Index)

### Future Needs

Grounded in relevant theoretical frameworks

Cross-cultural applications

Low response burden

Associated with nutrition indicators