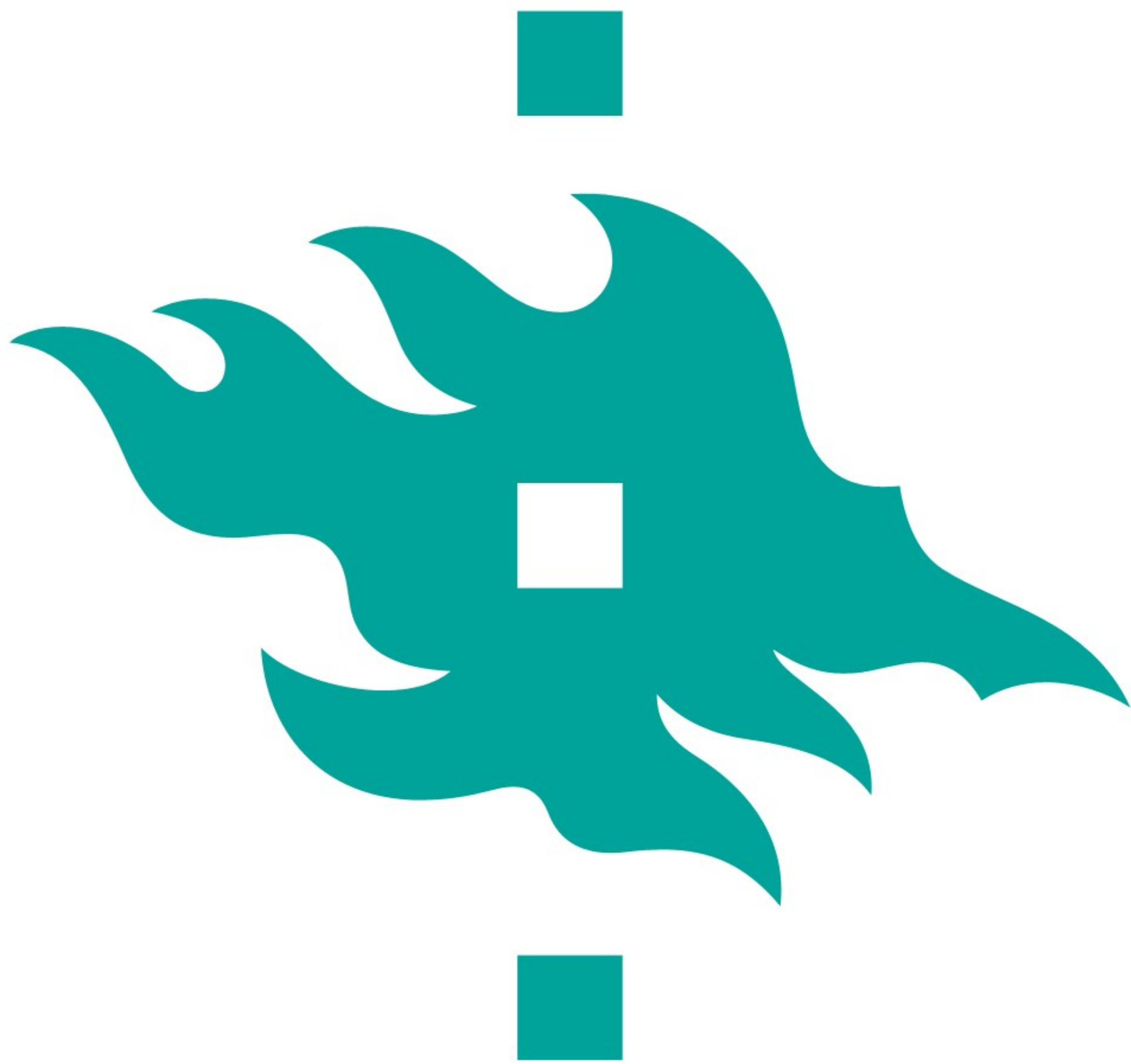




Maarit Malin¹
Minna Majuri¹
Kari Reijula¹
¹University of
Helsinki,
Faculty of
Medicine,
Finland

Fostering Intrinsic Motivation for Smoking Cessation: A Self Determination Theory Approach in Occupational Health

BACKGROUND

Sustained smoking cessation (SC) is fundamentally reliant on motivation. Occupational health services (OHS) are responsible for identifying early risks to work capacity and acknowledging the detrimental synergy between workplace exposures and smoking. In the development of occupational health practices, it is crucial to consider the needs of the users. Based on this foundation, our goal is to create an action model rooted in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and an operational framework to guide the delivery of services within the occupational health sector.

AIMS

The research focused on examining the presence of SDT participants' feedback regarding smoking cessation treatment and support (SCTS). The primary goal was to determine whether the SDT was present in and influenced in the participants' responses regarding SCTS. We were also interested in which basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, or relatedness—played the most crucial role in the context of SCTS.

METHODS

A qualitative study was conducted using a co-design workshop held in Finland in 2019 with 12 participants. The study used SDT-driven content analysis to assess group discussions and identify the impact of SDT in participants' feedback on SCTS. (Fig.1.)

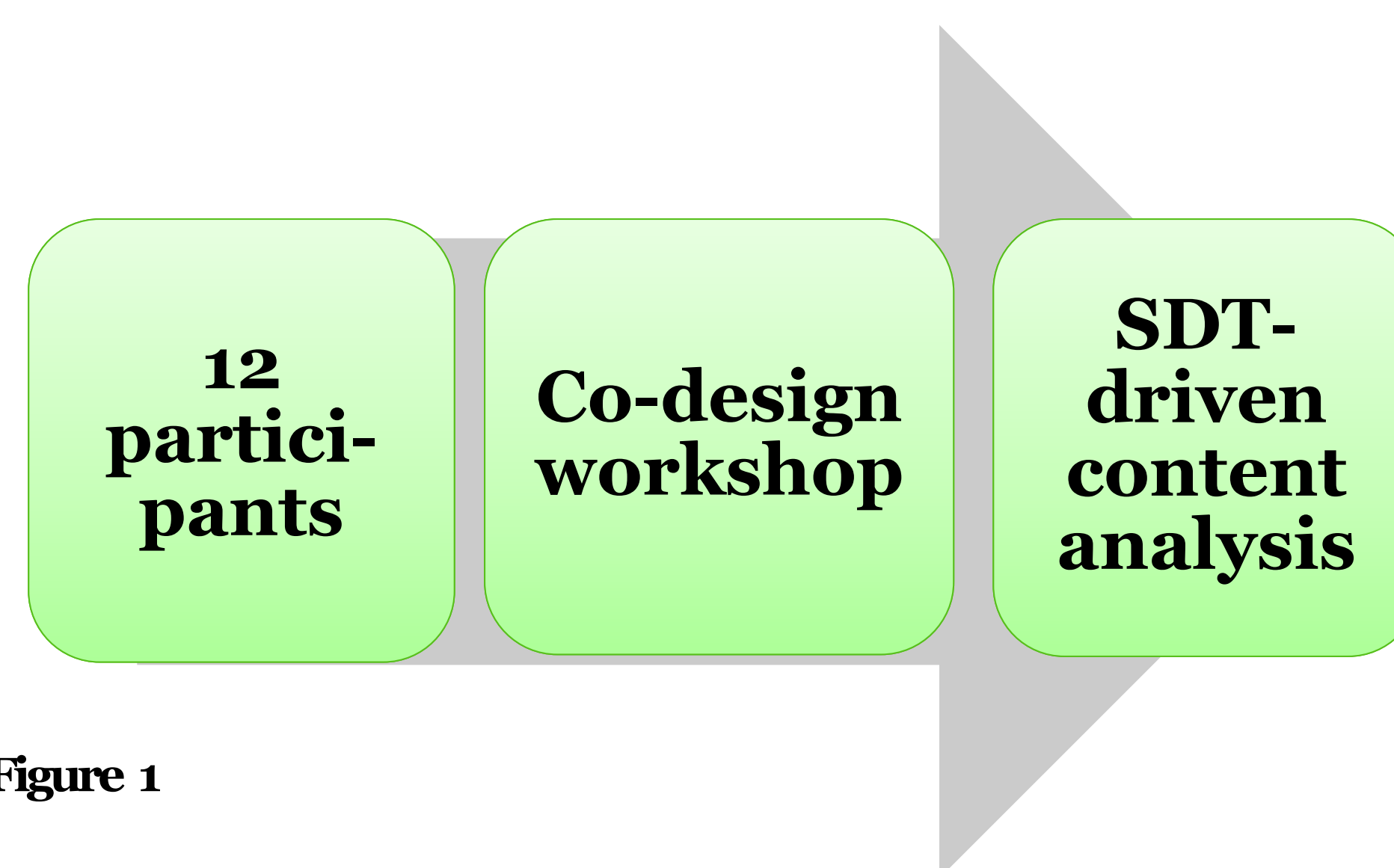


Figure 1

RESULTS

The study highlighted the importance of acknowledging individual differences and psychological needs for effective support in SCTS. We identified ten categories: Addiction, Aids and appliances, Characteristics, Collective quitting, Expert advice, Follow-up data, Personal experience, Rewards, Health political decision-making, Ways of quitting smoking. All were linked to basic psychological need. The desire for autonomy was the most common theme (41.2%) followed by competence (34.6%) and relatedness (24.2 %). (Fig.2.)

"It's quite clear that if you get all kinds of health benefits, you'll be more motivated to quit"

"Quitting in a team for the same reasons. You get clear feedback. I'm trying it, and I can do it."

CONCLUSION

OH and other health professionals should consider the unique needs and perspectives of those quitting smoking, fostering autonomy, boosting competence, and addressing social relatedness—all crucial elements for successful SCTS. Tailored strategies that consider individual differences and psychological needs may lead to more successful smoking cessation outcomes, offering valuable insights for developing personalized and effective approaches to support individuals in quitting smoking. When an intervention effectively enhances autonomous motivation, it results in a transformation in health behavior. The next goal is to create an operational model that systematically meets the fundamental psychological needs of occupational health clients, utilizing various tools, including the Perceived Competence Scale (PCS). (Fig. 3)

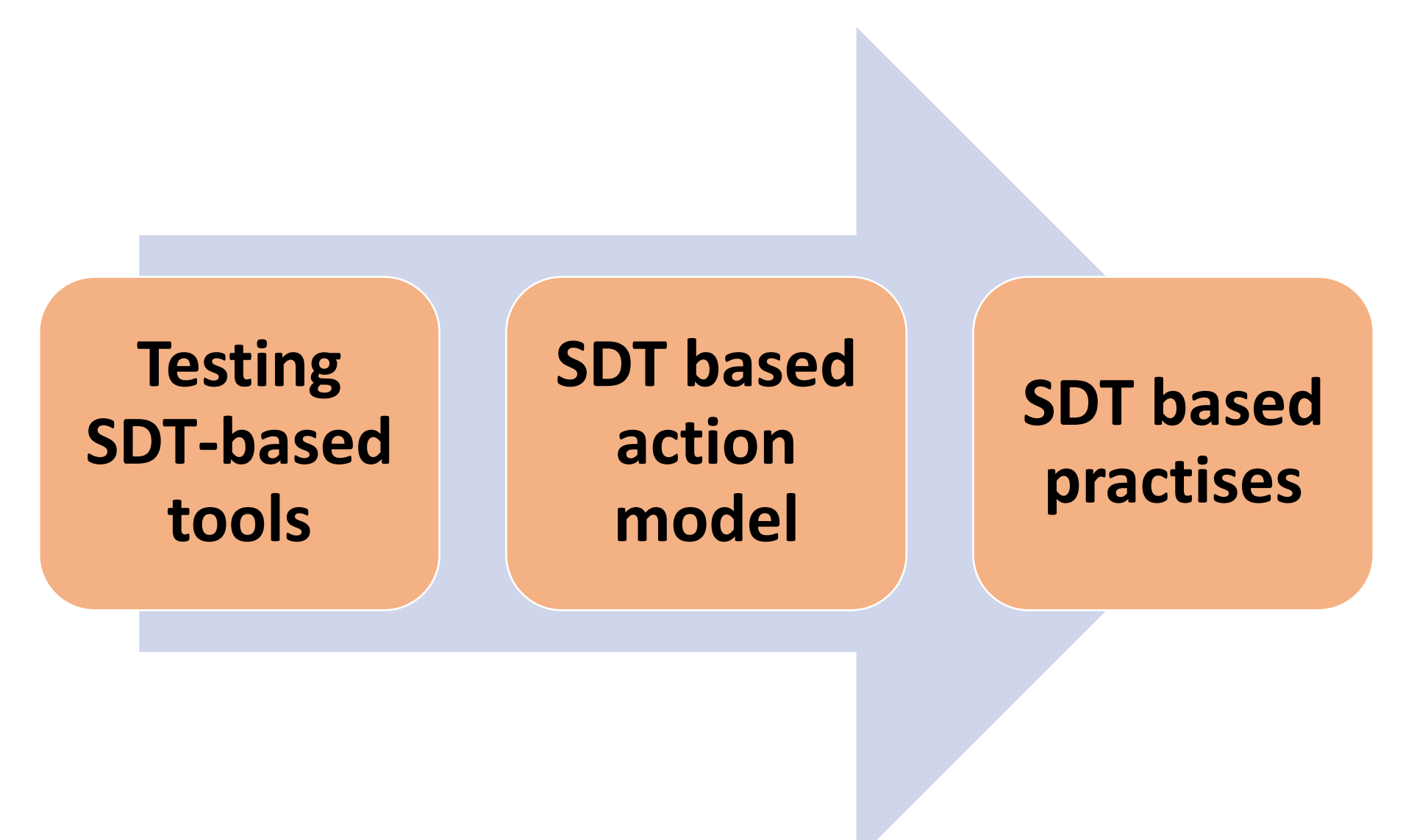


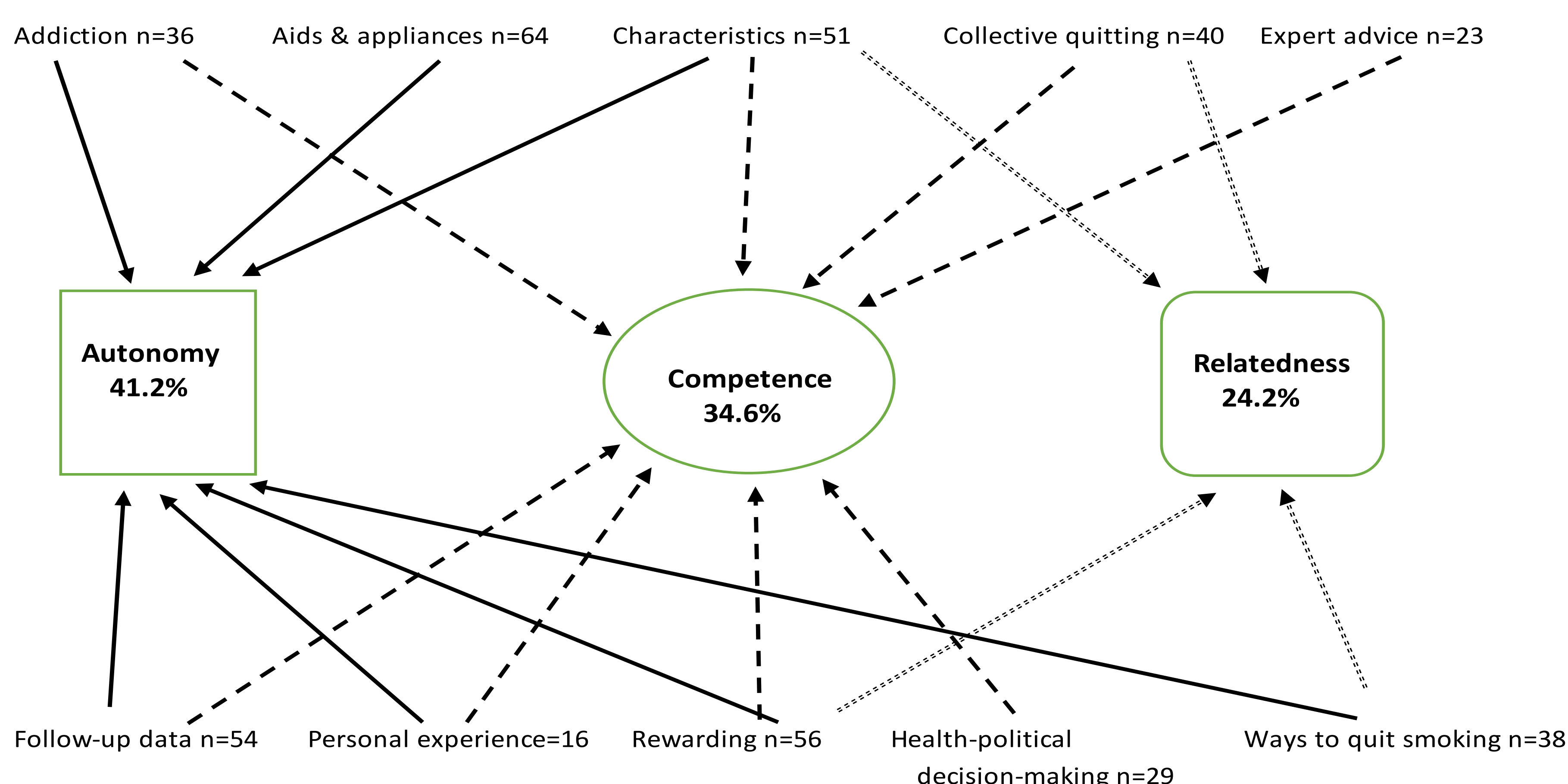
Figure 3

REFERENCES

- Malin M, Majuri M, Lahtinen V, Reijula K. Understanding perspectives on smoking cessation based on Self-Determination Theory: A qualitative study. *Tob Prev Cessat.* 2025 Dec 23;11. doi: 10.18332/tpc/211451. PMID: 41446285; PMCID: PMC12723527.
- Ryan RM, Deci EL. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions. *Contemp Educ Psychol.* 2000;25(1):54-67. doi:10.1006/ceps.1999.1020
- Sheeran P, Wright CE, Avishai A, Villegas ME, Rothman AJ, Klein WMP. Does increasing autonomous motivation or perceived competence lead to health behavior change? A meta-analysis. *Health Psychol Off J Div Health Psychol Am Psychol Assoc.* 2021;40(10):706-716. doi:10.1037/hea0001111
- Williams GC, Patrick H, Niemiec CP, Ryan RM, Deci EL, Lavigne HM. The smoker's health project: a self-determination theory intervention to facilitate maintenance of tobacco abstinence. *Contemp Clin Trials.* 2011;32(4):535-543. doi:10.1016/j.cct.2011.03.002

CONTACT: maarit.malin@helsinki.fi

Figure 2



Työsuojelurahasto
Arbetsarkyddsfonden
The Finnish Work Environment Fund