



Effects of a consumption-focused mindfulness training – qualitative evaluation of an intervention

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Buddhism

One factor of the “Noble Eightfold Path”:
right (i) view, (ii) resolve, (iii) speech, (iv)
conduct, (v) livelihood, (vi) effort, (vii)
mindfulness and (viii) *samadhi*.

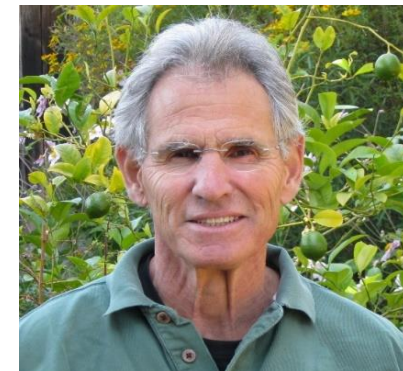
Being mindful to body, emotions,
consciousness and objects of mind



Modern/ Secular

“The awareness that emerges through paying
attention on purpose, in the present moment,
and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of
experience”

Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003)



Project definition:

“Mindfulness is the unbiased awareness that emerges through intentionally and continuously paying attention to momentary experience with an open, accepting, benevolent, and compassionate attitude.”

(Böhme et al., 2016)



DESIGNS
STUDIO

4 potential mechanisms:

(Rosenberg, 2004;
Grossman et al., 2004)

Disruption of
routines

Congruence of
attitude and
behavior

(Chatzisarantis and Hagger, 2007,
Ruffault et al. 2016)

(Leiberg, Klimecki & Singer, 2011)

Pro-social
Behavior

Materialism
and Wellbeing

(Brown & Kasser, 2005)

Fischer, Stanzus, Geiger, Grossman & Schrader (2017)

Exploring effects of a consumption-specific mindfulness based intervention (MBI) to:

1. Answer research questions:
 - i. Is there a relationship between mindfulness competency and sustainable consumption behavior? Does mindfulness training support more sustainable consumption behavior?
 - ii. Is there a relationship between mindfulness competency and the attitude-behavior-gap? Does mindfulness training decrease this gap?
2. Explore link to (the development of) ethical virtues
3. Capture unforeseen aspects and effects of the training

BiNKA- TRAINING*

➔ Multi-week classformat

➔ Weekly group meeting

➔ Daily individual practice

➔ „day of mindfulness“ (several hours)

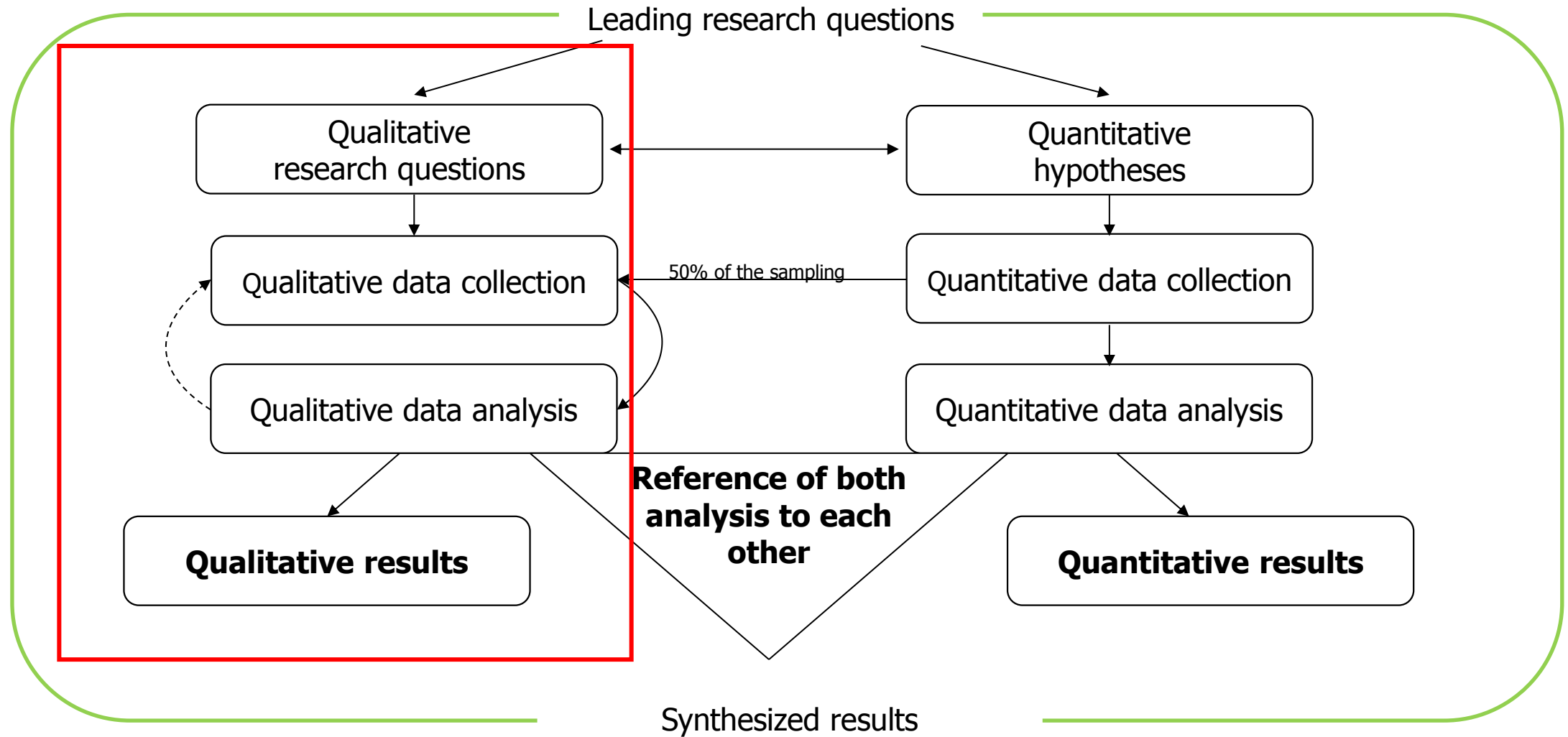
➔ Consistent relatedness to consumption

**The BiNKA – Training was jointly developed by the project team, executed in companies, schools and universities (practice partners) and finally analysed by the project team.*

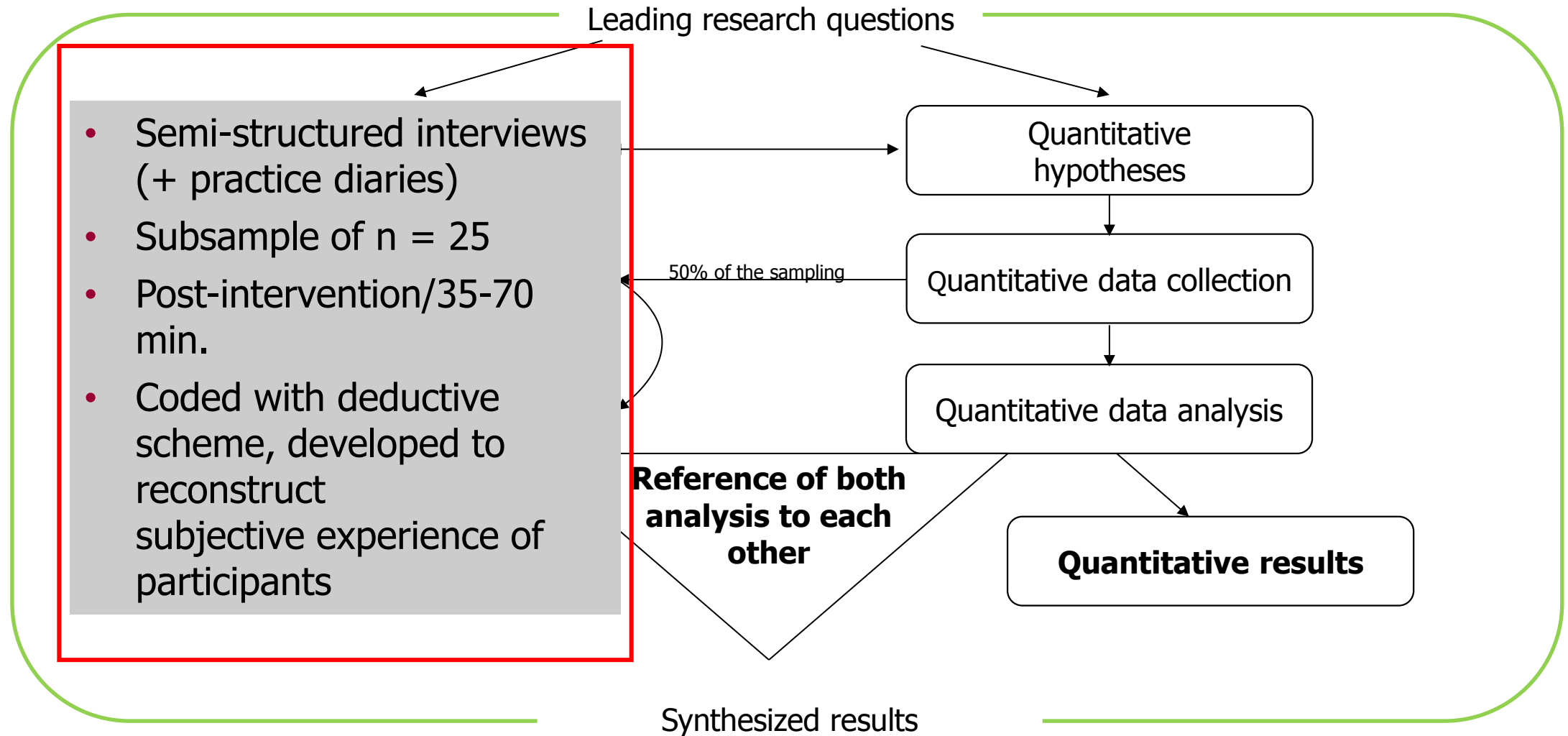
See Stanszus et al., 2017 for more details



Research design

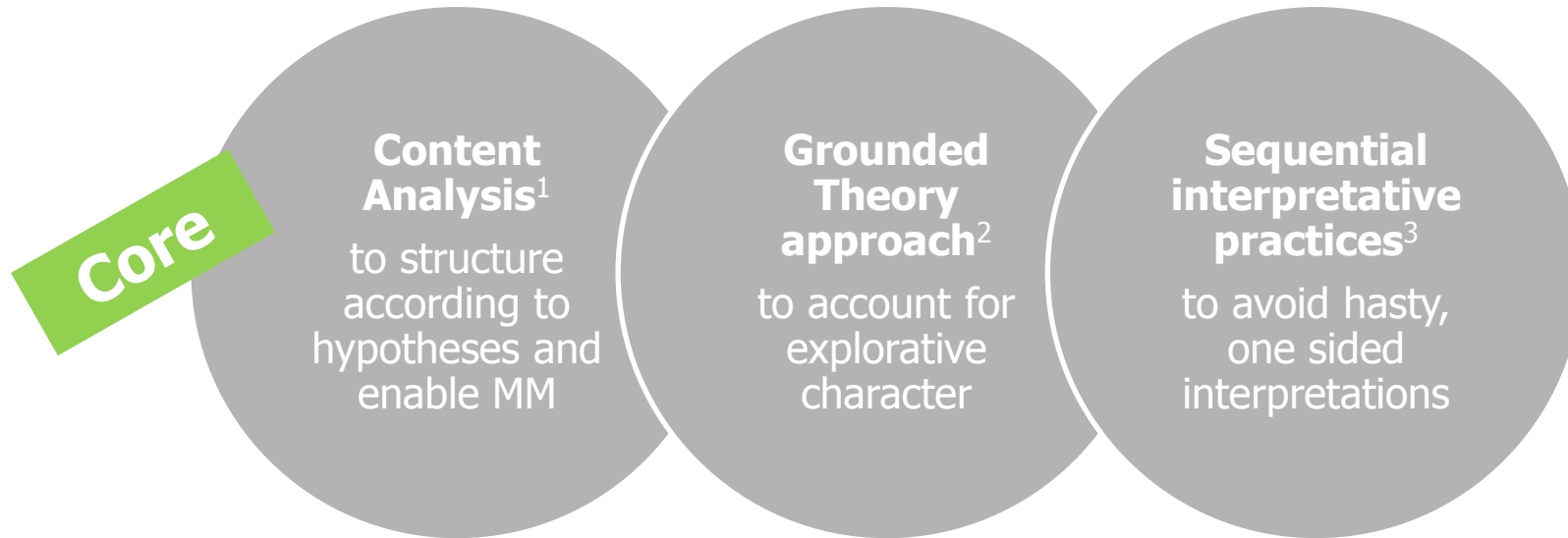


Research design



Analysis

- Three-parted research methodology specifically designed to address diverse epistemic interests:



¹ Kuckartz, 2012

² Charmaz, 2006

³ Schröder, 1994

Five effect categories were inductively generated from the data and used to structure the interview cases according to:

- (a) their relevance to the research questions and
- (b) the level of manifestation (not exclusive):

No.	Category	No. of cases
I.	Effects on consumption behavior	4
II.	Effects on consumption attitudes	6
III.	Other effects	9
IV.	Awareness-level based effects	3
V.	No effects	2

I. Effects on consumption behavior

1. Decrease in consumption impulses (e.g. meat, sugar)
2. More perceived control in handling consumption impulses (e.g. sugar in general, chocolate)
3. The development of sustainable consumption patterns in previously unreflected areas of consumption

KG3STU3:

"I didn't think much of organic products beforehand [...] I am a vegan, but ehm, I thought it was a rip-off, because it is always much more expensive and basically, its the same ingredients ect."

"But, ehm, recently, I have been thinking, ok, I will spend the 30 cents extra and buy the organic product instead."

II. Effects on consumption attitude

1. Increase in appreciation of consumer goods and their production
2. Clarification of the individuals' attitudes concerning SC

IG2STU8:

„When I thought about it [the food product] or thought about where it came from and what's in it, it seemed to be less important what I was choosing. Because then I've seen a value in each product, even in something as boring as a cheese sandwich or something. That's why it got more equal what I'm buying. Just a little more relaxed.”

III. Other effects

1. An (increased) connectedness to nature and people
2. Increase in non-reactivity to difficult or stressful feelings and social situations, based on a perceived heightened awareness for inner states and processes
3. Alongside this heightened awareness, better coping mechanisms in stressful and/or negatively perceived situations arose through
 - increased equanimity and patience,
 - improved ability to take others' perspectives and be compassionate and
 - increased self-compassion and self-care.
4. Different way of preparing and consuming food – “more mindful eating”

KG2STU17 (diary citation of meditation effects)

„In a clearer awareness, different perception of people: - more emphatic, more mindful.“

„Smiled at people more often: - nicer demenour happens „automatically.“

IG3STU4

"In stressful situations, e.g. on my bike during rush-hour traffic, I imagine that ultimately, all car drivers, just like me, want to be happy in their individual way...I observed, that that made my reactions to some extent more equanimeous and more patient."

IV. Awareness-level based effects

1. An increased awareness for (poor) working conditions of production of material goods as well as their origin (\neq increase in *appreciation* and resulting changes described in category 2)
2. Evolving awareness for individual behavioral habits and - previously unconscious - routines
3. Awareness for inner processes and states (thoughts, feelings, needs, senses) was developed in most, initiating a first process of "getting to know oneself" or broadening existing awareness

IV. Awareness-level based effects

IG2AN11

"To pay more attention to myself. To consider my behavior more. This conscious dealing with emotions. In situations with both positive and negative emotions. I find a little more joy in the positive moments and can handle the negative ones better."

IG2AN12

"What also changed, similarly to clothes, or was maybe reinforced, as its not something that is totally new to me, but has been reinforced again; Yes, where the products come from. Yes, that its kind of rubbish, actually. What they are stuffing into that [name] supermarket."

Conclusion & Limitations

- Promising albeit limited impulses in regards to research questions
- The observed development of ethical virtues (DEV, in process of typification) through the intervention needs further analysis, theoretically development of ethical qualities such as compassion associated with more sustainable consumer choices (Garcia-Ruiz & Rodriguez-Lluesma, 2014)
- Overall effects remain limited
 - Effects often typical for general mindfulness trainings, transfer to relationship with consumption rare, despite ESC element inclusion
 - Was grade of adaption not sufficient? Too implicit? Not relevant for participants?
 - Do consumption-related effects require a preceding desire to change one's personal relation to consumption?
- 2 cases showed no effects at all – need to compare and identify specific traits

Next steps?!

Further analysis & typification

Bringing to light answers to raised questions and better understand receptiveness of some and no-effect results or transference in others.

Thanks to the BiNKA-team!



<http://achtsamkeit-und-konsum.de/en/about-the-project/>



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