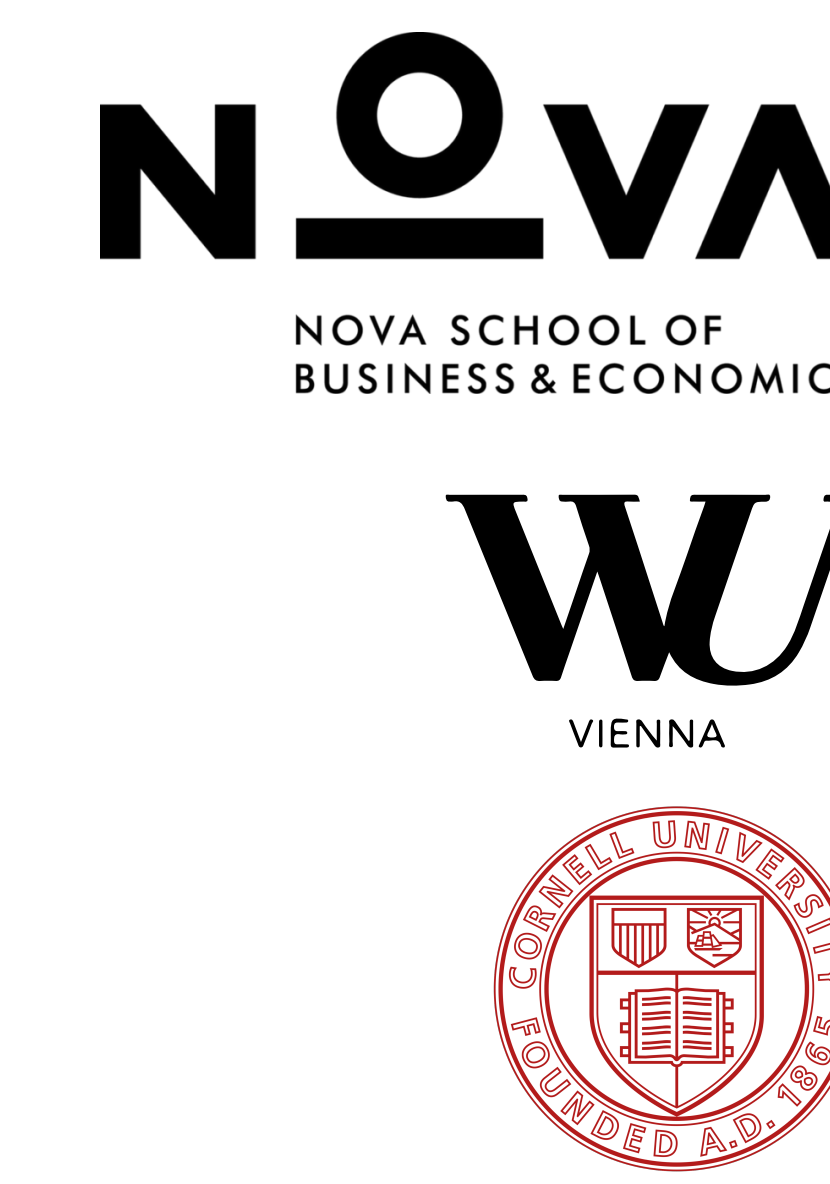
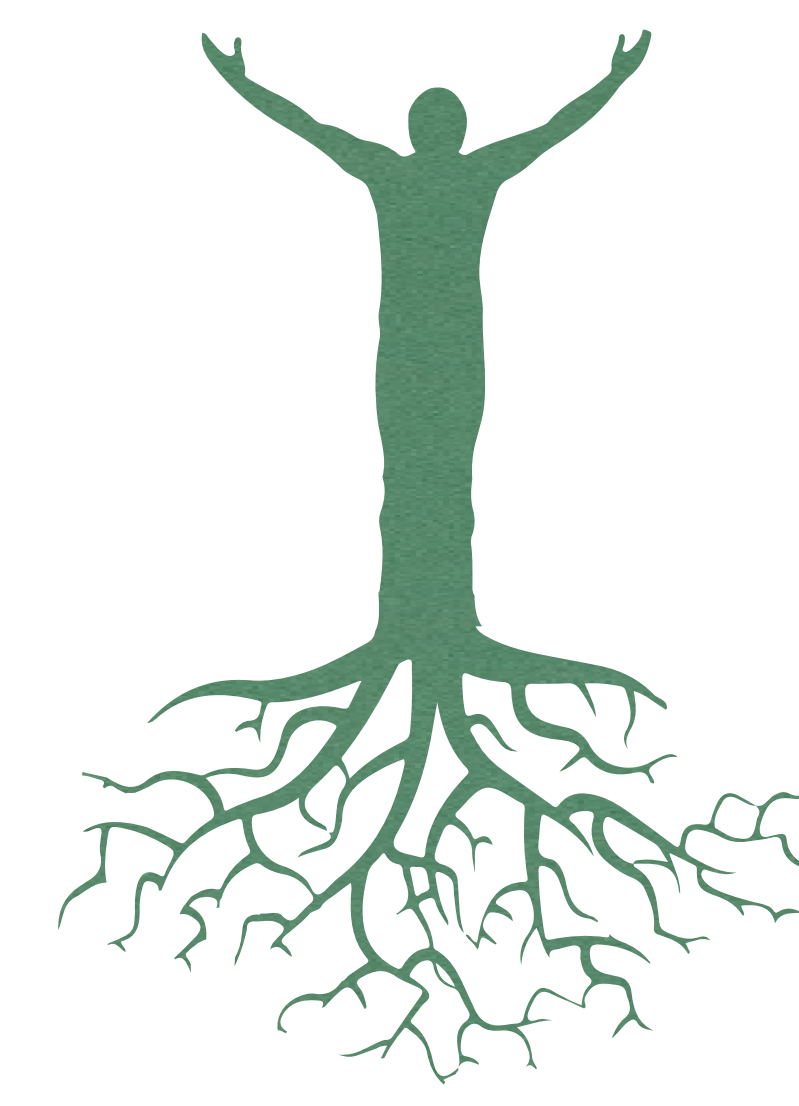


SPREADING ROOTS:

How Making Things Yourself Increases Groundedness and Improves Mental Health



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MAIN FINDINGS

- Engaging in **DIY activities** (e.g., cooking) **increases groundedness**, defined as deep emotional connectedness to one's social, physical, and historical environment (**People, Place, Past**).
- In turn, **groundedness decreases anxiety**, a main dimension of mental health.
- Conversely, situational anxiety is associated with an increased need for groundedness, which predicts DIY engagement.



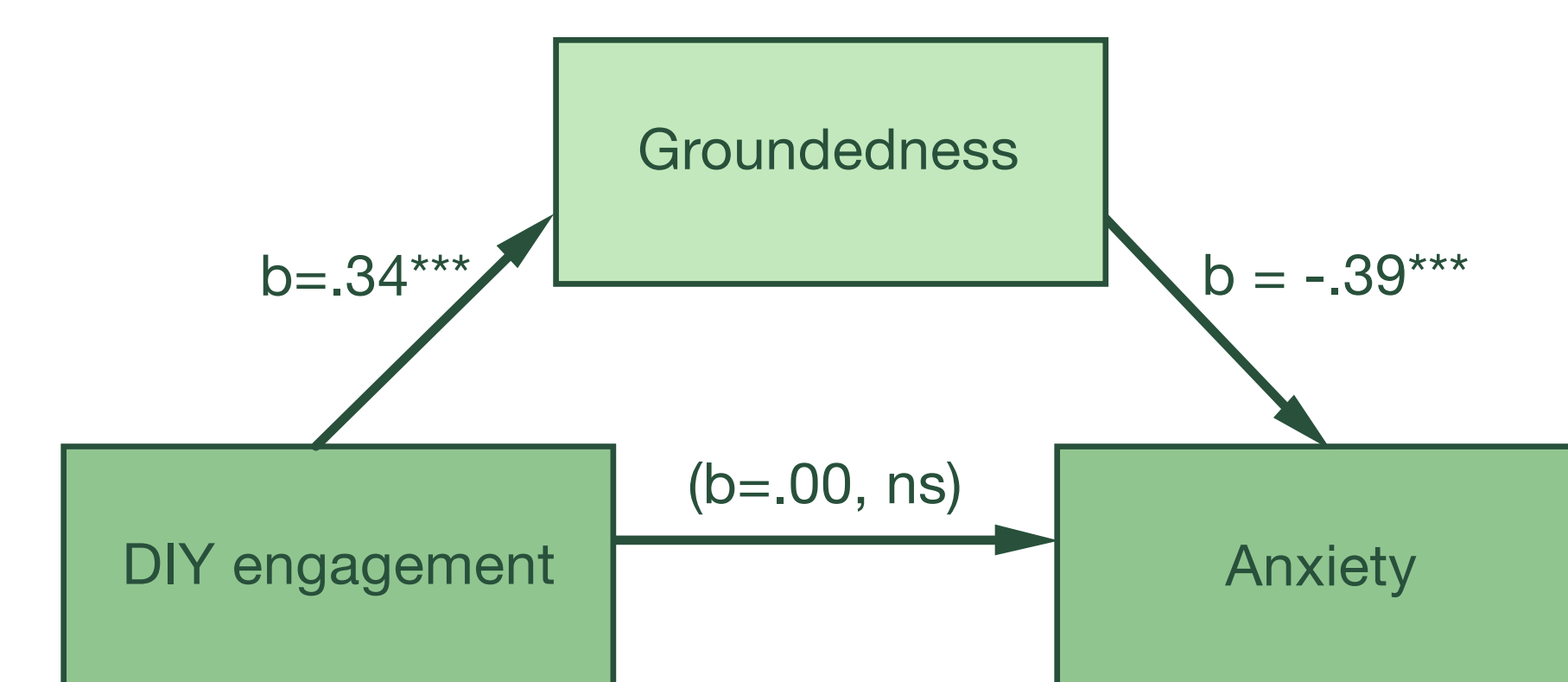
METHODS

- Study 1** - we show the association between DIY, groundedness and mental health: participants who engage more in DIY report increased groundedness and reduced anxiety.
 - Study 2a** - individuals who felt more anxious during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced higher need to feel grounded (situational need for groundedness), and engaged more in DIY activities.
 - Studies 2b** - individuals who have a higher dispositional
- need for groundedness engage more in DIY.
- Study 3** - we experimentally test the causal link between DIY and groundedness.
 - Study 4** - we show the causal chain between DIY, groundedness and mental health: after inducing worry into all participants, we find that those who engaged in DIY, compared to those who did not, reported decreased anxiety - an effect mediated by groundedness.

STUDY 1 DIY AND REDUCED ANXIETY

REPRESENTATIVE US SAMPLE (n=881)

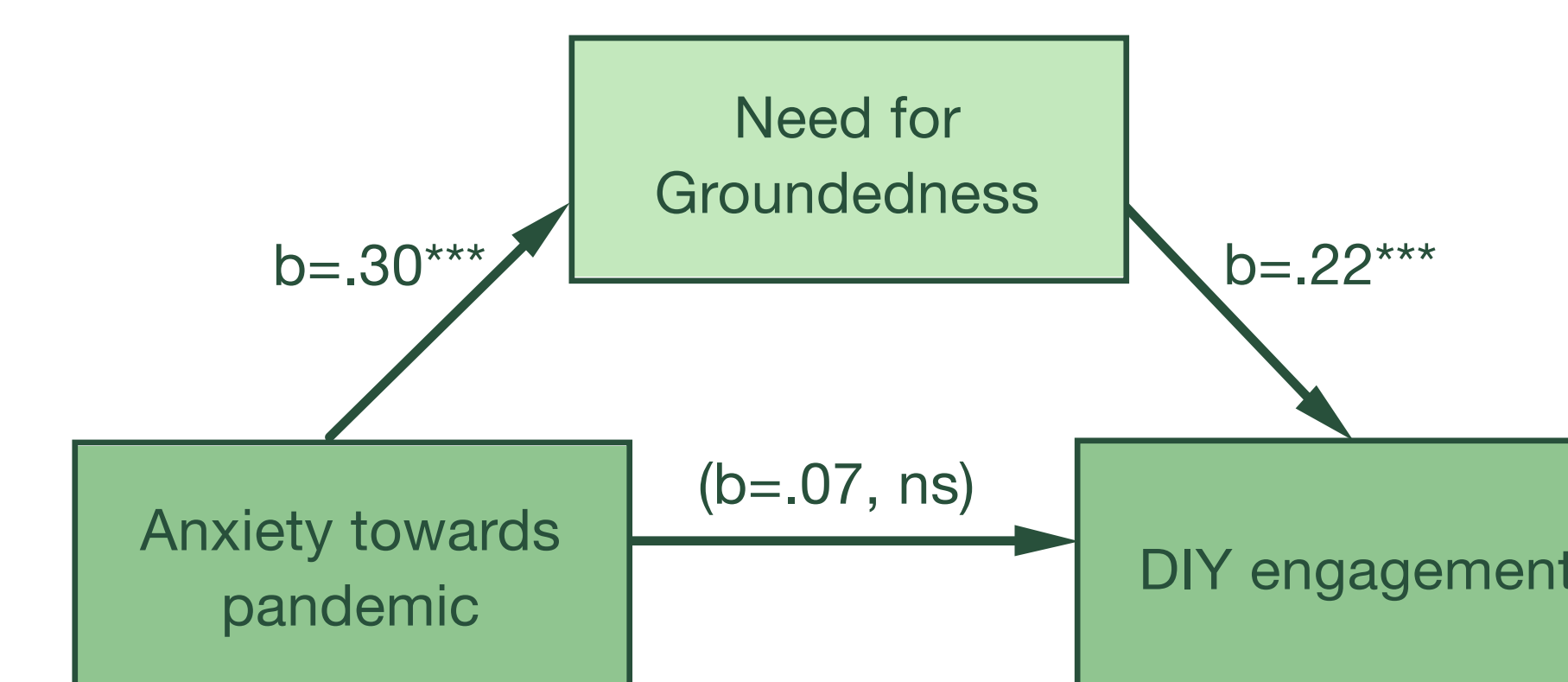
Procedure: With a representative US sample, we collected participants' engagement in several DIY activities, feelings of groundedness and anxiety.



STUDY 2a SITUATIONAL ANXIETY AND DIY ENGAGEMENT

REPRESENTATIVE NATIONAL EU PANEL (n=522)

Procedure: We show the link between DIY, groundedness and mental health, during a period of high anxiety (the COVID-19 pandemic) by collecting participants' level of anxiety towards the pandemic, and, 2 weeks later, their engagement in DIY activities and need for groundedness.



STUDY 2b DISPOSITIONAL NEED FOR GROUNDEDNESS AND DIY

(n=253)

Procedure: We collected participants' dispositional need for groundedness, and then DIY engagement.

Results: Dispositional need for groundedness predicted engagement in DIY activities, $b = .22$, $t(251) = 4.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$.

We also ruled out need for accomplishment and need for competence as alternative explanations.

STUDY 3 DIY INCREASES GROUNDEDNESS (CAUSAL)

(n=293)

Procedure: Participants in the treatment condition prepared apple juice themselves, while participants in the control condition received the same apple juice ready made. Afterwards, we collected feelings of groundedness.

Results: We found a main effect of **DIY on feelings of groundedness** ($F(1,291) = 10.38$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$): participants felt significantly **more grounded** in the **DIY** condition than in the control condition ($M_{DIY}=4.74$, $M_{Control}=4.25$).

STUDY 4 DIY DECREASES ANXIETY (CAUSAL)

(n=182)

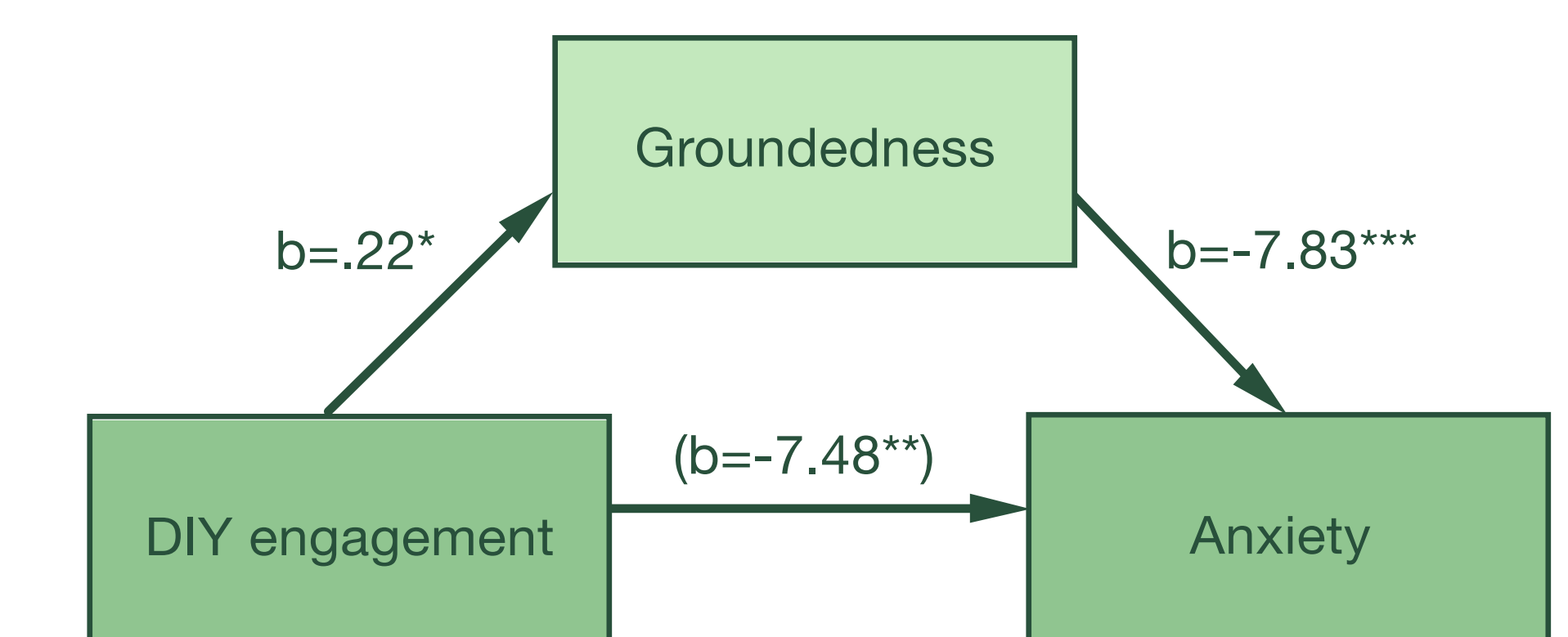
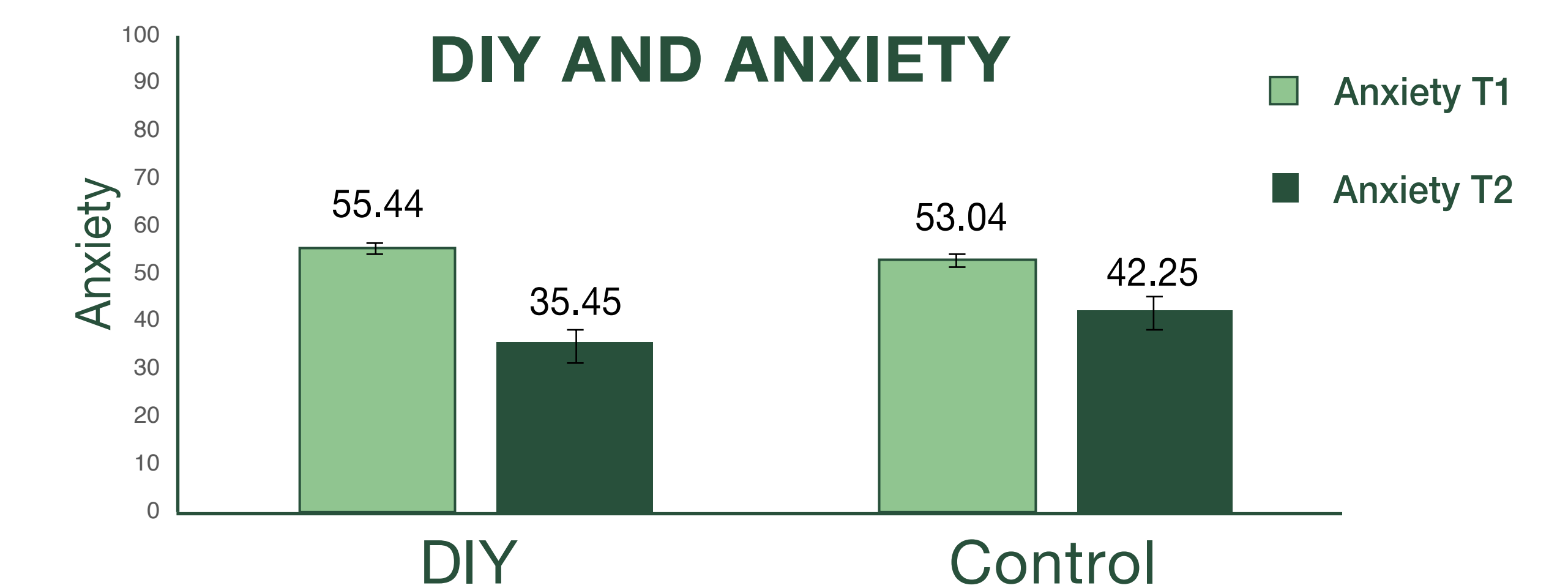
Procedure: All participants were exposed to a worry induction (Krahé et al., 2016), and then their feelings of groundedness and levels of anxiety were measured (time 1). Afterwards, participants in the treatment condition created a herbal tea infusion themselves, while participants in the control condition received the same herbal tea infusion ready-made. Finally, we measured feelings of groundedness and levels of anxiety again (time 2).

Results:

We found a main effect of **DIY on anxiety** ($F(1,180) = 14.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$): anxiety decreased significantly more in the DIY condition than in the control condition ($M_{DIY} = -20.0$, $M_{Control} = -10.8$).

We also found a main effect of **DIY on groundedness** ($F(1,180) = 5.189$, $p = .024$, $\eta^2 = .03$), with participants in the DIY condition showing a greater increase in groundedness compared to those in the control condition ($M_{DIY} = 0.46$, $M_{Control} = 0.24$).

We found an indirect effect of **DIY on anxiety through groundedness** ($b = -1.7188$, $SE = 0.8666$, $CI_{95\%} [-4.1937, -.1422]$).



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