

# Reexamining the Interpersonal Psychological Theory of Suicide:

## A Return to Theoretical Precision

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References

### Background:

- The ideation-to-action framework proposes that suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior are distinct psychological processes with their own risk factors
- Of the ideation-to-action framework of suicide death, the **Interpersonal Psychological Theory of Suicide (ITPS; Van Orden et al., 2010)** has received considerable empirical attention and support in its ability to predict burgeoning suicidal desire and intent
- Approaches to measure each construct within the ITS have gained theoretical precision. Changes include:
  - General hopelessness → **interpersonal hopelessness**
  - Fearlessness about death → **fearlessness about suicide**
  - Acquired capability → **capability**
- This study aims to test the ITS in its entirety as originally proposed by examining how its core constructs, assessed using the **most theoretically representative measures**, jointly predict **suicidal desire and suicidal intent**

### Methods:

- Young adult undergraduate participants (N = 450) will complete an online self-report battery.
- Two hierarchical multiple linear regression models will be used to examine the ITS constructs as predictors for suicidal desire and suicidal intent, respectively
  - Block 1 - Main effects: **perceived burdensomeness (PB), thwarted belongingness (TB), interpersonal hopelessness (IH), and capability (C)**
  - Block 2 - All two-way interaction terms among predictors
  - Block 3 - All three-way interaction terms
  - Block 4 - Four-way interaction term: **PB x TB x IH x C**
- Significant interactions will be further examined using simple slopes analyses

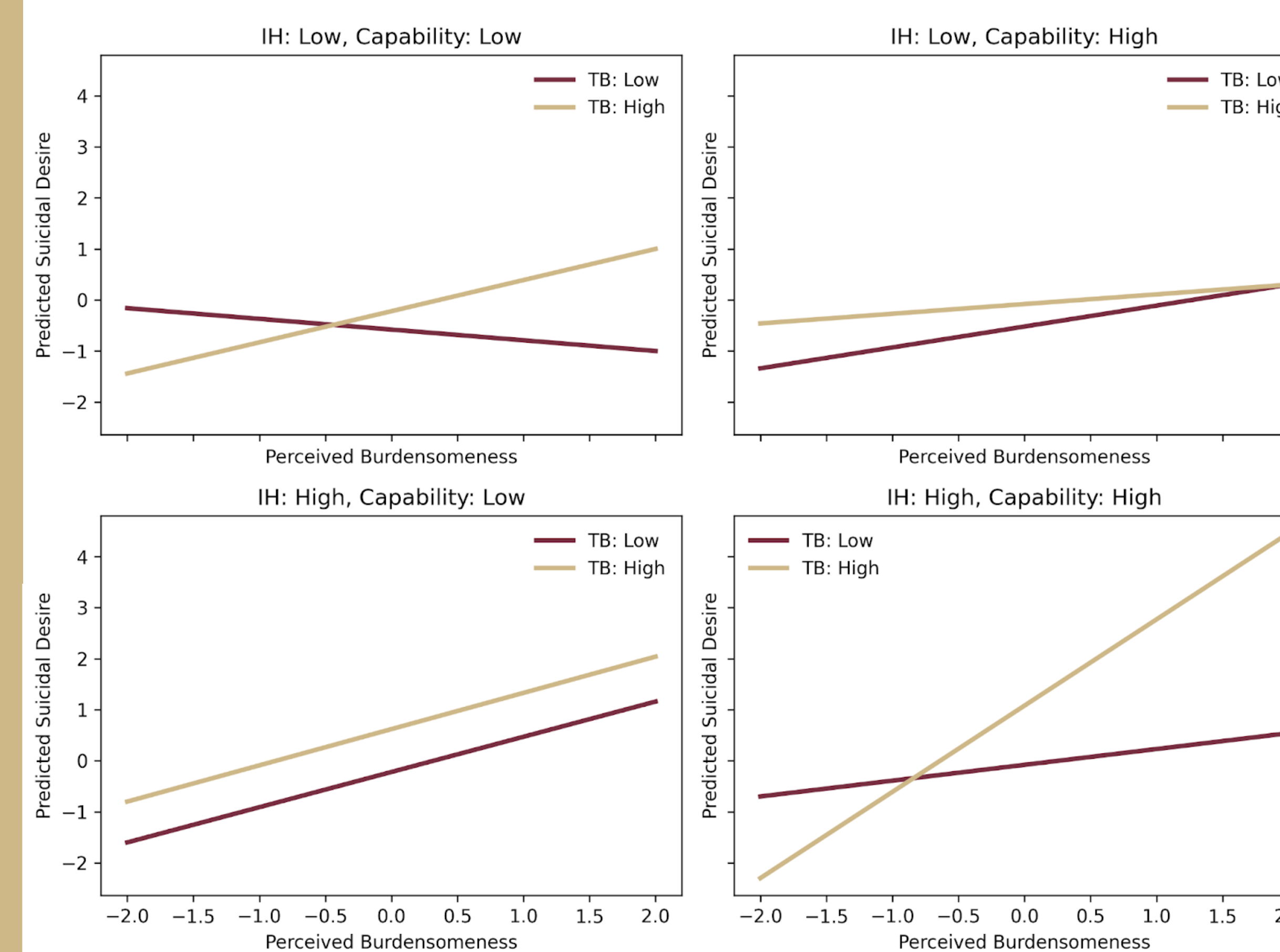
### Discussion:

- Examining the proposed constructs of the ITPS individually identifies **independent suicide risk factors**
- Examining the proposed constructs together evaluates the core claim of the ITPS: that suicidal desire and intent emerge from **interactions between unmet interpersonal needs and capability for suicidal self-injurious behavior**
- Differences in which interactions are significant clarify which combinations of constructs are most strongly associated with suicidal outcomes, therefore discerning which constructs may be the most effective targets for clinical intervention and risk reduction

### Predictions of Suicidal Desire

- PB will be most strongly associated with suicidal desire when TB and IH are high
- When TB and IH are low, the association between PB and suicidal desire will be weaker, with capability playing a smaller role

4 Way Interaction for Suicidal Desire



### Predictions of Suicidal Intent

- PB will be most strongly associated with suicidal intent when TB, IH, and capability are all high
- When capability is low, increases in interpersonal risk factors are expected to produce smaller increases in suicidal intent

4 Way Interaction for Suicidal Intent

