

Energization and Tension on the Intention-Behavior Relationship

Yifei Pei, under the mentorship of Paschal Sheeran, Ph.D.



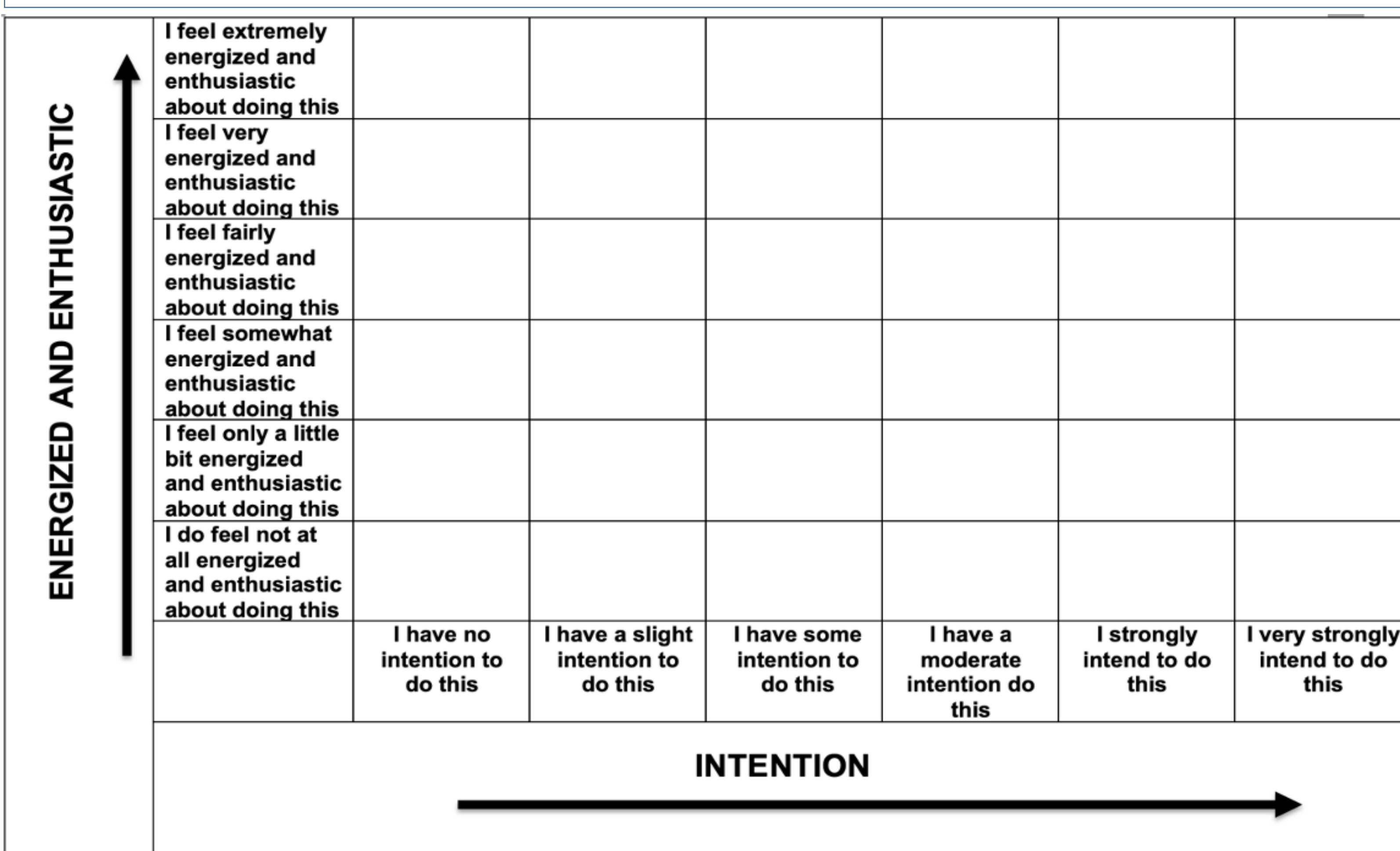
THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Background

1. People translate their intentions into actions only ~50% of the time
2. No existing literature on **psychological arousal** as a potential moderator

The Present Research

Explore the behavioral implications of energization and tension in I-B gap

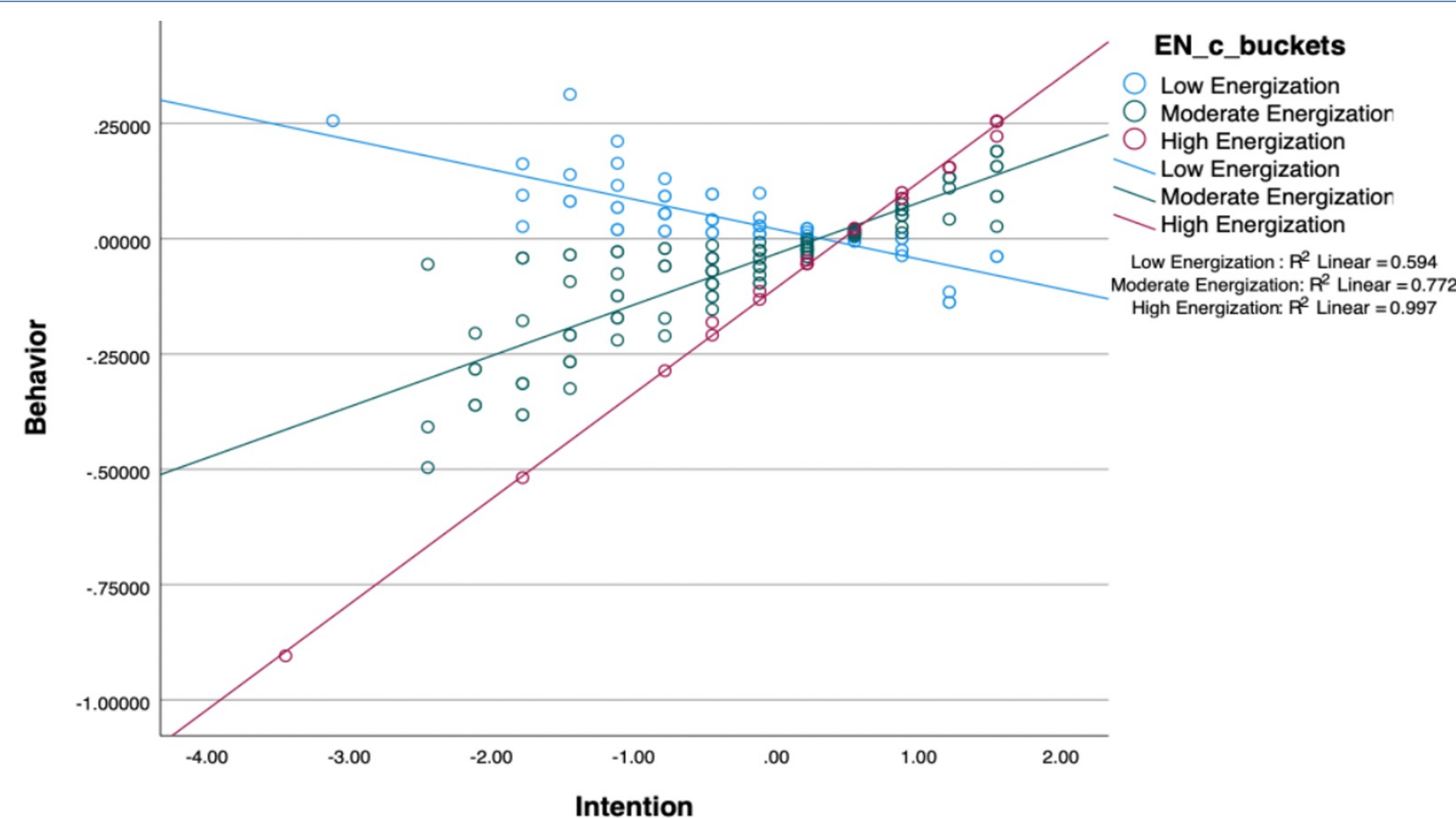


Study 2

- Longitudinal Study
- Examined the research question on *regular exercise*

Findings:

1. Energization is a **distinct factor** in motivation
2. Tension has a **negative main impact** on behavior
3. Energization **moderates** the I-B relationship

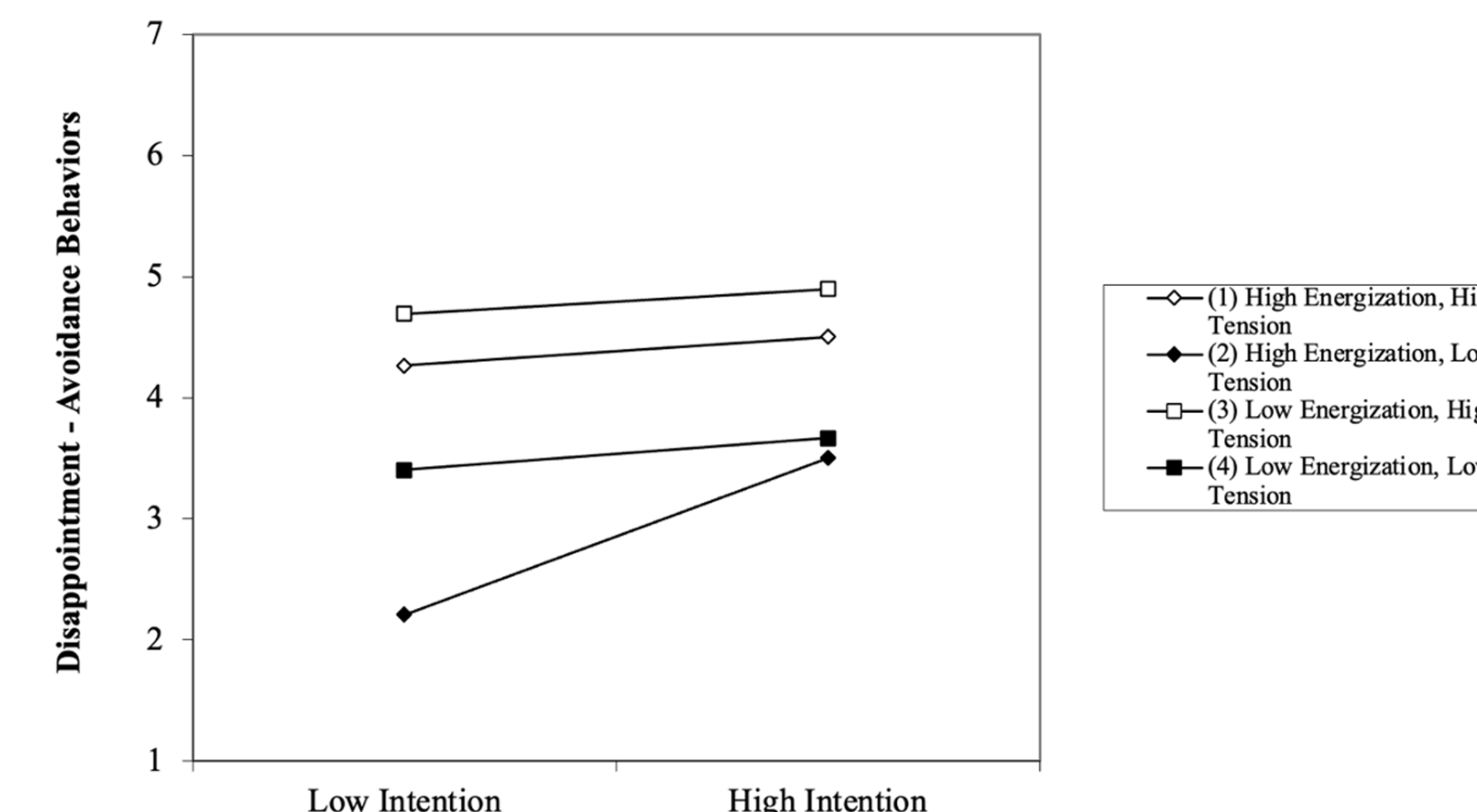
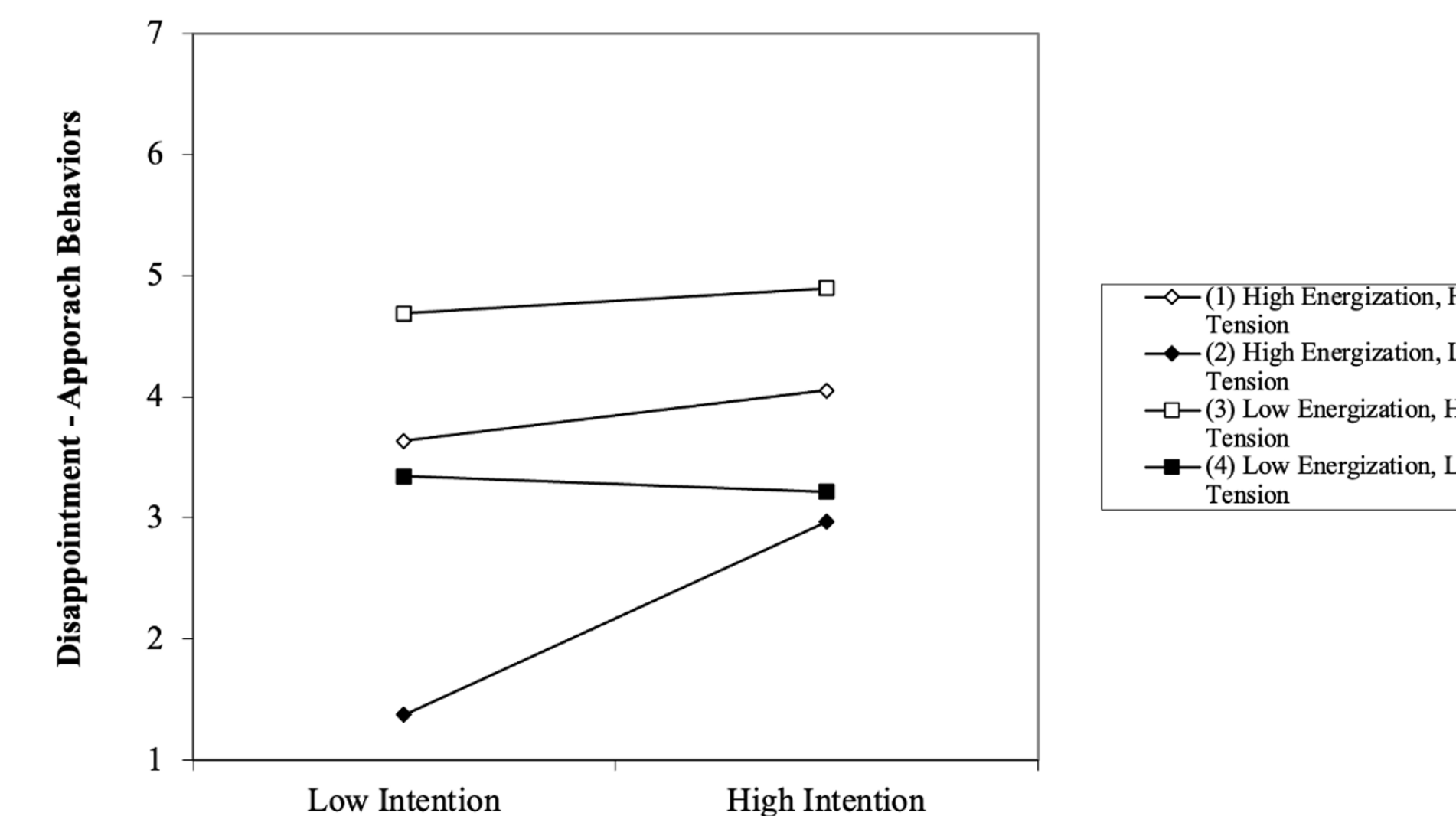
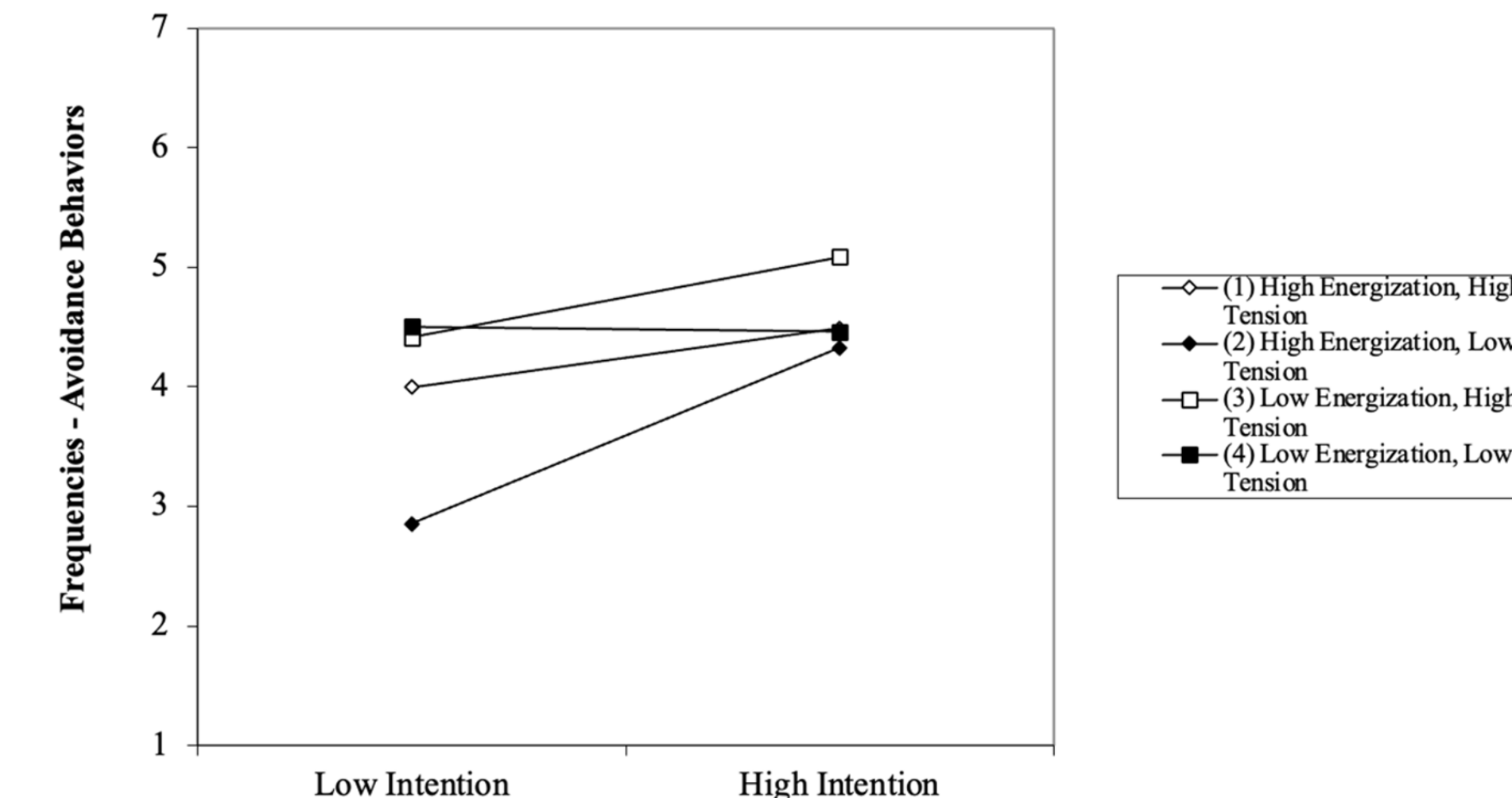
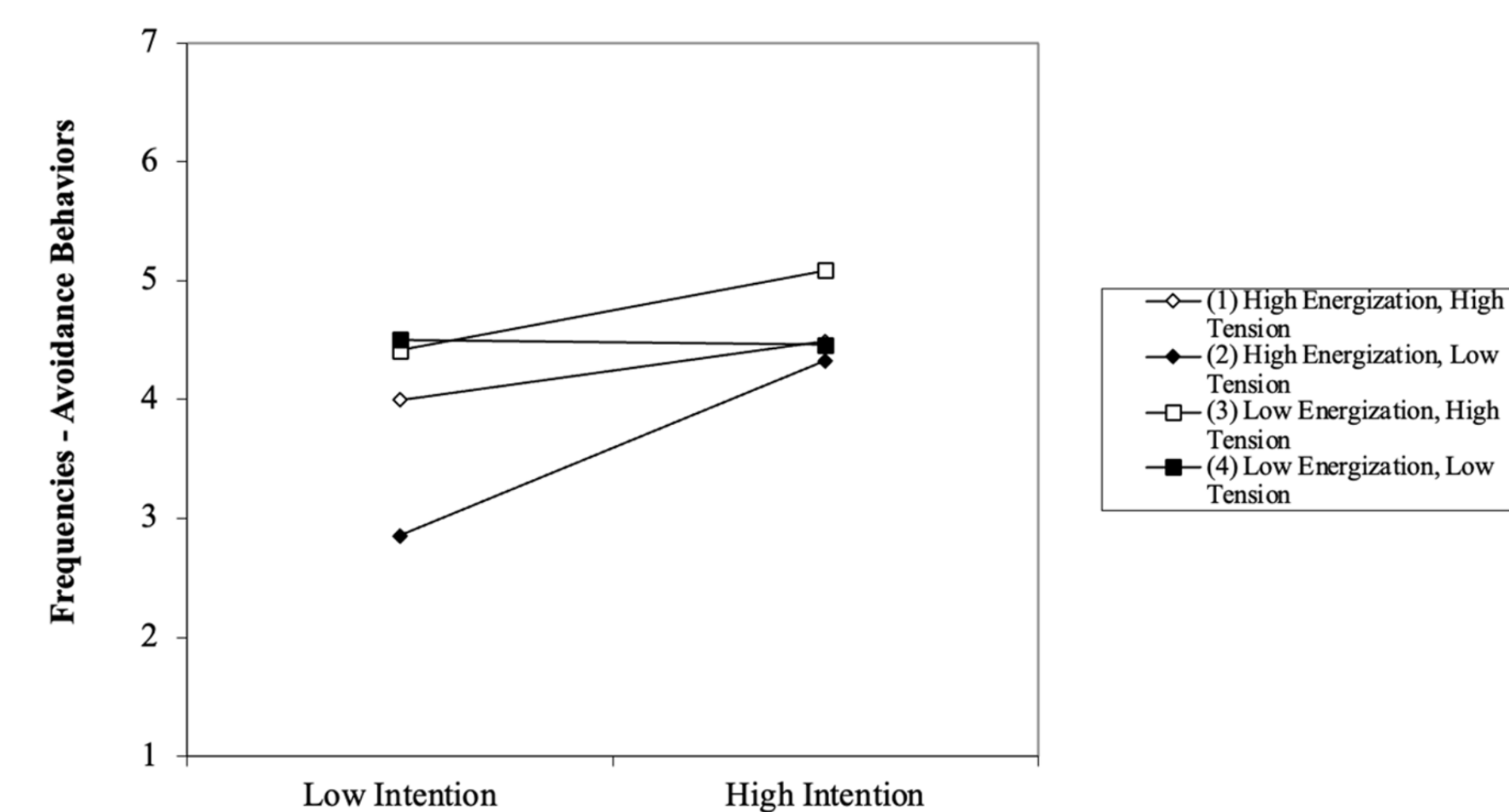


Study 1

- Cross-sectional study
- Examined intention, energization, and tension in 10 health behaviors

Findings:

1. The **distinct nature of energization**:
 - Not a reflection of general vitality
 - Not a function of intention
2. **Energization and tension are significant moderators of the I-B relation**
3. No approach vs avoidance distinction

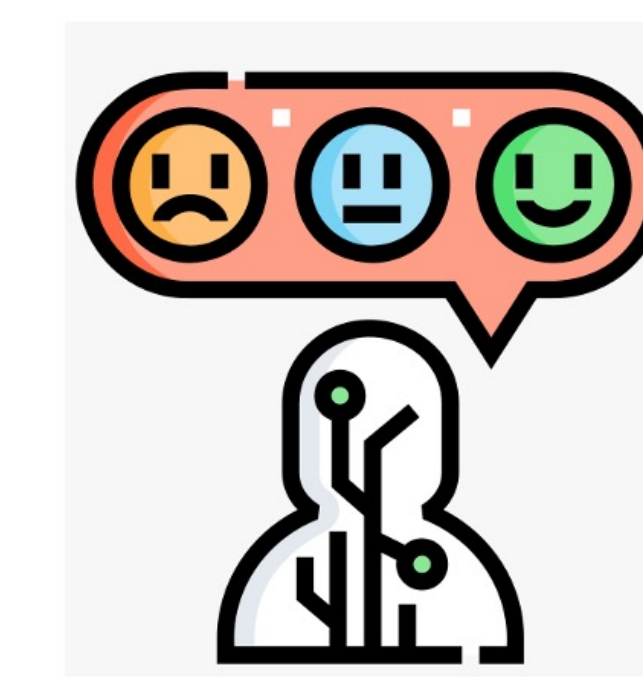


Discussion

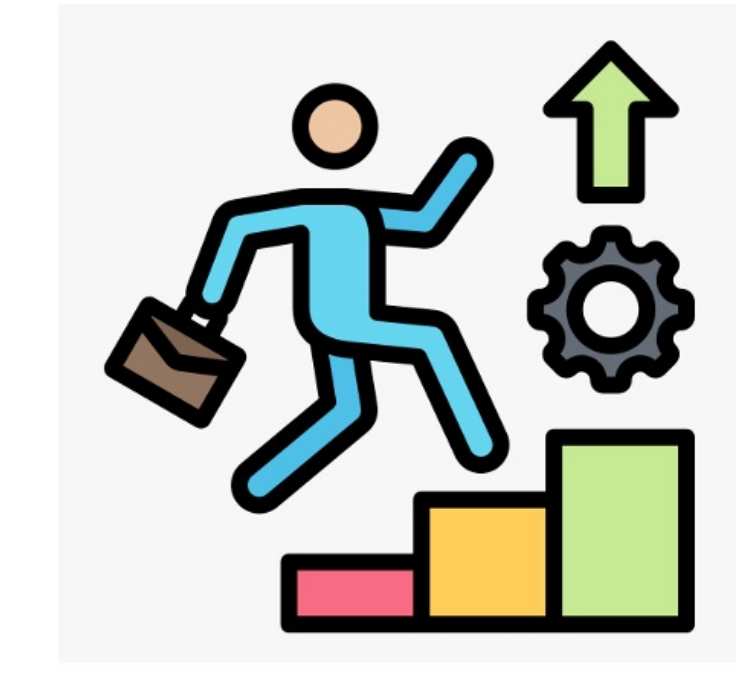
Main Takeaway

Feeling energized helps increase the consistency between intention and behavior, whereas tension hinders the behavior engagement.

Implications for Behavioral Interventions



Psychological arousal is important



Optimize goal-oriented behaviors



Direction for interventions

Provide Behavioral Contexts for

Theories of Challenge and Threat²



Cultivate a **“challenge”** mindset

Regulatory Focus Theory³



Develop a **“promotion”** focus

Acknowledgements

- I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Paschal Sheeran for his invaluable guidance in my thesis, and I am also thankful for the valuable feedback from Dr. Steven Buzinski, Dr. Patrick Harrison, and Michelle Yang.
- This study has been generously supported by Honors Summer Research Fellowship and two Lindquist Awards.

References

1. Sheeran, Paschal. (2002). Intention—Behavior Relations: A Conceptual and Empirical Review. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 12, 1-36.
2. Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, 52(12), 1280–1300.
3. Hase, A., O'Brien, J., Moore, L. J., & Freeman, P. (2019). The relationship between challenge and threat states and performance: A systematic review. *Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology*, 8(2), 123–144.