



Perceived Importance Moderates Harm Reduction Via Protective Behavioral Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

- 54.9% of full-time students reported consuming alcohol in past month (NSDUH, 2018).
- 36.9% of college drinkers reported binge drinking (NSDUH, 2018).
- College drinking accounts for 1,519 deaths and 97,000 sexual assaults annually (Hingson et al., 2017).
- PBS reduces number of alcohol related problems (Martens et al., 2005).
- When PBS are used by college drinkers, negative outcomes are reduced (Pearson, 2013).
- Study examines if perceived importance of PBS moderates its effectiveness for reducing alcohol-related problems.
- Hypothesized that reduction in problems when using PBS would be weaker for those with lower perceived importance.

METHOD

Participants

- $N = 526$ undergraduates ages of 18 to 24
- Mean age = 19.85 ($SD = 1.65$)
- Part of a larger alcohol intervention study
- Consumed ≥ 1 alcoholic drink in past 2 weeks

Materials

Daily Drinking Questionnaire (Collins et al., 1985)

- Typical quantity of alcohol consumed (37 items)

PBS-SQ (Sugarman & Carey, 2007)

- Assesses PBS use
- 3 subscales (21 items total): SWD, Alternatives, & Avoidance
- From 1 (None) to 12 (More than 10 times)

YAACQ (Read et al., 2006)

- Assessed alcohol-related problems in past 30 days
- Total scores (48 items)

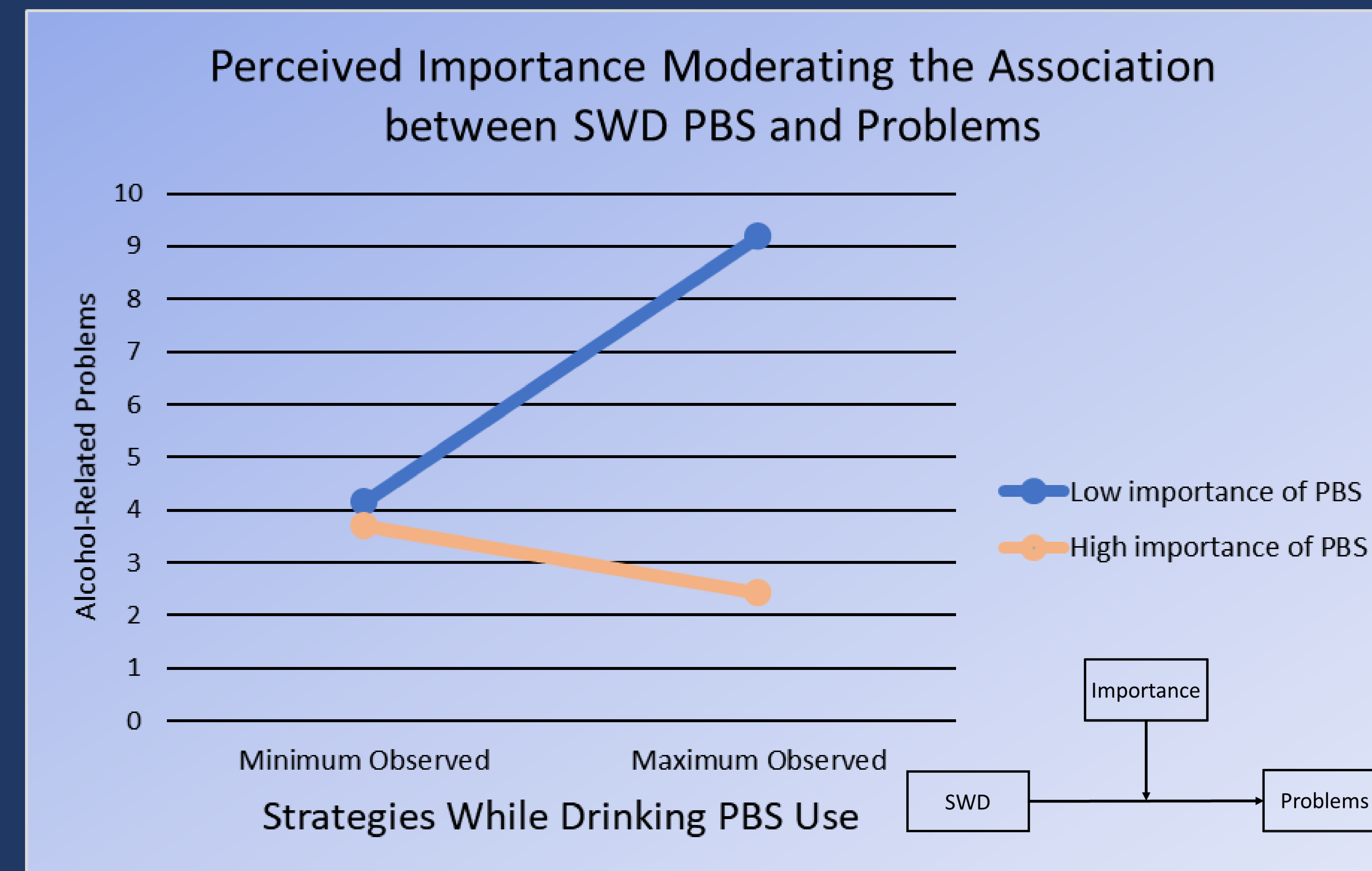
Importance of PBS Use (Created by Researchers)

- "When drinking alcohol, people should take steps to make sure they stay in control of themselves."
- From 1 (Not at all Agree) to 5 (Completely Agree)

Procedure

- Recruited undergraduate Psychology students
- Online survey completed in lab (pre-intervention)
- Linear multiple regressions were used to assess moderation of associations between PBS use and alcohol-related problems

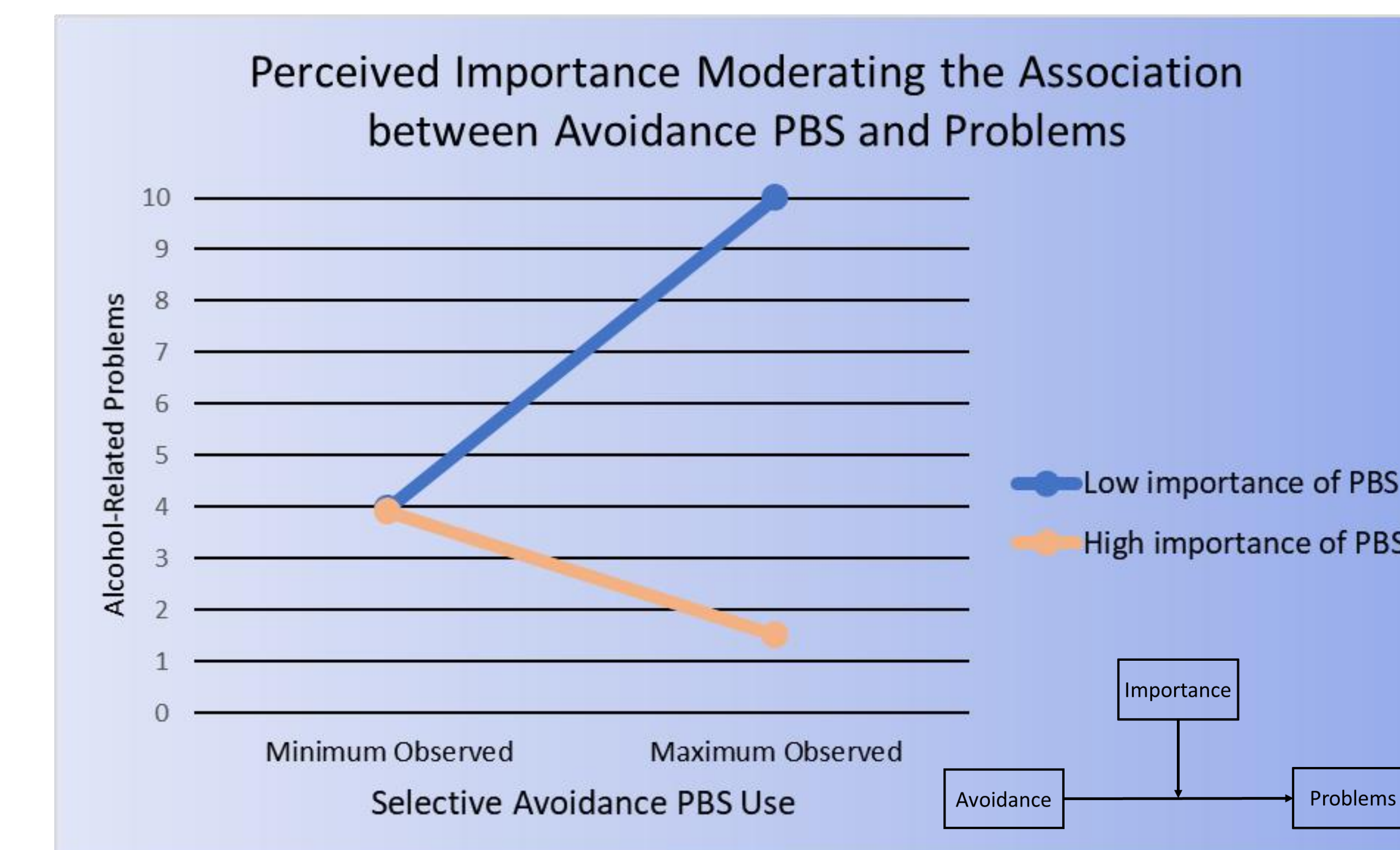
Perceived importance of PBS served as a *protective factor* against alcohol related problems.



RESULTS

All results controlled for reported quantity of alcohol consumed.

- Importance of PBS moderated the association between 'selective avoidance' PBS and problems, $B = -0.03$, $p = .011$.
- Among those who valued PBS, using more selective avoidance strategies was associated with fewer problems.
- Importance of PBS also moderated the association between 'strategies-while-drinking' (SWD) PBS and problems, $B = -0.03$, $p = .014$.
- Among those who valued PBS, using more SWD was associated with fewer problems.
- Importance of PBS did not significantly moderate the association between using 'alternatives to drinking' PBS and problems, $B = 0.01$, $p = .501$.



DISCUSSION

- Belief in the importance of using PBS emerged as a protective factor for two out of the three PBS subscales (SWD and selective avoidance).
- Future research should examine if perceived importance of PBS can be increased among students.
- College administrators may want to target those who do not value PBS for alcohol harm reduction interventions.
- Promoting importance of PBS use could be an effective addition to drinking interventions and educational campaigns

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