

Safer gambling awareness and training improves frontline workers' compliance

What this research is about

Safer gambling (SG) refers to policies and practices used by gambling operators to prevent and reduce gambling-related harms. These policies and practices include verifying age eligibility, identifying signs of risky gambling, reporting concerns, and providing SG information.

Frontline employees of gambling operators are trained in SG practices and are expected to enforce them in their work. However, this may be difficult for employees, as they need to balance sales targets with maintaining customer relations and following organizational rules for SG. If enforcing SG is difficult, employees may use moral disengagement to explain their non-compliance. Moral disengagement involves various ways that people use to justify unethical behaviour to themselves. On the other hand, internal communication about SG through organizational reports and SG training may boost employees' compliance.

To better understand what influences frontline employees in the gambling sector to comply with SG practices, the researchers examined the effects of internal communication and training on employees' judgement of SG and their compliance.

What the researchers did

The researchers recruited frontline retail workers of a sports lottery organization in Southwest China. This company has implemented SG policies in their chains since 2018. These policies include prohibiting sales to minors, discouraging excessive gambling, and assisting people who show signs of risky gambling. Shops were randomly selected from the

What you need to know

Safer gambling (SG) (formerly referred to as 'responsible gambling') policies and practices are used by operators to prevent and reduce gambling-related harms. Frontline employees play an important role in enforcing SG. However, they often have competing demands in their work, which can make it difficult to comply with SG policies.

In the current study, the researchers surveyed frontline retail workers at a Chinese sports lottery operator. Participants reported on their awareness of the operator's SG reports, SG training, judgement of SG, compliance with SG policies, and moral disengagement for not complying.

Greater SG training and awareness predicted more positive judgement of SG, which led to greater compliance. Moral disengagement led to lower compliance with SG policies, but SG training and awareness did not increase the likelihood of moral disengagement.

organization's outlet registry. All sales staff were invited to complete a survey in person.

Participants were asked to report the following:

- **Awareness of SG reports:** level of understanding of the organization's internal SG reports.
- **SG training:** frequency of SG training.
- **SG judgement:** positive view of the organization's SG policies.
- **SG compliance:** the extent to which employees follow SG policies.

- **Moral disengagement:** the extent to which employees justify not complying with SG policies.

Participants also reported demographic information, including gender, age, education, and how long they had worked at the organization.

The researchers hypothesized that awareness of SG reports and SG training would increase compliance, which could be explained by employees' judgement of SG. Additionally, they predicted that a negative relationship between awareness of SG reports/SG training and compliance could be explained by greater moral disengagement.

What the researchers found

Data came from 844 frontline employees. Just over half (51.5%) of the employees were female, with people aged 40–49 years being the most represented age group (39.5%). Most participants had a junior high or below (38.0%) or high school (42.3%) education. Half of participants (50.4%) had over five years of experience in the industry. Nearly three-quarters of participants (71.5%) had received SG training more than three times.

Awareness of SG reports and training frequency both predicted SG judgement. Employees who had received more training and were more knowledgeable of their organization's SG reports typically expressed more positive attitudes towards SG. More positive attitudes about SG predicted greater compliance with SG policies.

Employees with greater awareness and training were less likely to engage in moral disengagement. Those who engaged in moral disengagement were less likely to comply with SG policies.

Contrary to the researchers' predictions, greater SG awareness/training did not reduce SG compliance through moral disengagement. This suggests that greater SG training does not backfire and lead to reduced compliance. Instead, when the gambling operator communicates about SG policies and provides SG training, it sets rules and responsibilities, which can help employees better understand their requirements and prevent them from justifying non-compliance.

How you can use this research

The findings of this study suggest that SG training and frontline employees' awareness of their organization's SG policies and practices have a positive impact on SG compliance. Frontline workers can be an important part of promoting SG practices in gambling settings. Clear and frequent SG communication and training can help foster compliance.

About the researchers

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Citation

Li, Z., Chen, M., & Liu, L. (2026). Frontline employees and responsible gambling: How internal communication shapes compliance with RG rules. *Journal of Gambling Studies*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-026-10501-7>

Study Funding

This study was funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

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