greo. EVIDENCE INSIGHTS

Examining how dispositional greed is associated with gambling behaviours

What this research is about

Dispositional greed refers to being unsatisfied with one's current state along with the desire for more of what one wants. The target of greed can be money, status, or other things. Research has found that people who are greedy are more impulsive, have less self-control, and tend to take risks. The purpose of this study was to examine the link between dispositional greed and gambling behaviours.

What the researchers did

The researchers conducted two studies. In the first study, they used data from the Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences (LISS panel) in the Netherlands. The LISS panel is representative of the Dutch population. The researchers used data that were collected in 2013 and 2017. A total of 1,118 participants completed both surveys. The researchers considered the following measures:

- The 7-item Dispositional Greed Scale.

- The Material Values Scale, used to measure the importance placed on owning material things.

- Gambling participation in the past 12 months. The researchers summed up the number of gambling activities to indicate poly-gambling behaviour.

- The South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS), used to measure the severity of problem gambling.

Study 2 examined the link between greed and gambling behaviours using a larger sample. Participants were recruited through a crowdsourced research firm (Cint) as part of a larger project from the general population. The survey firm also identified potential participants who stated they had an interest in gambling. Participants had to be at least 18 years of age and live in England. Quotas based on U.K. census estimates for region, age, and gender were used. After data cleaning, the final sample was 4,783 participants. Study 2 included the following measures:

- The Dispositional Greed Scale (shortened version).

- The Abbreviated Barratt Impulsiveness Scale to measure the tendency to act on impulse.

- Gambling participation in the past 12 months.

- Amount spent on gambling in the past 2 weeks.

- Gambling types and frequency.

- The Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) to measure the severity of problem gambling.

- The Gambling-Related Cognition Scale (GRCS) to measure irrational gambling-related beliefs.

- Attitudes towards winning and losing, loss chasing, and financial motivations for gambling.

- The 5-item regret scale developed by Schwartz et al. (2002) and risk taking (assessed using one item).

What you need to know

The purpose of this study was to examine the link between dispositional greed and gambling behaviours. The researchers conducted two studies, including one with a sample of 1,118 adults in the Netherlands and one with a sample of 4,783 adults from England. Study 1 found that people with higher levels of dispositional greed were more likely to engage in multiple gambling activities. Study 2 found that dispositional greed was linked to irrational gambling-related beliefs, beyond what could be explained by a tendency to be impulsive. People with higher levels of greed had more severe problem gambling, were more focused on financial motivations for gambling, had greater confidence in winning, and were not as concerned with losses.

What the researchers found

Study 1: Almost two-thirds of participants (63.8%) had gambled in the past year. Only three scored higher than 1 on the SOGS, and no participant met the criteria for probable pathological gambling. Among people who gambled, higher levels of dispositional greed were linked to higher levels of materialism. Dispositional greed and materialism were both linked to poly-gambling behaviour. The researchers noted that the connection between dispositional greed and gambling behaviour remained strong even when taking into account materialism. Additionally, people who only played the lottery had lower levels of dispositional greed and materialism, compared to those who engaged in non-lottery gambling.

Study 2: Slightly over one-third of participants (67.1%) had gambled in the past year. Half of these participants reported engaging in at least four gambling activities. About 27.6% of participants scored 3 or higher on the PGSI, suggesting at least a moderate level of problem gambling. About 17.6% scored 8 or higher. Higher levels of dispositional greed were linked to poly-gambling, more frequent gambling, and higher scores on the PGSI.

People who endorsed more irrational gambling beliefs reported higher PGSI scores, poly-gambling behaviour, more frequent gambling, and higher amount of money spent. Those with higher levels of greed were more likely to have irrational gambling beliefs, expect more positive outcomes from gambling, and feel like they could not stop gambling. The link between greed and irrational gambling-related beliefs went beyond what could be explained by impulsiveness.

People with higher levels of greed were more confident that they would win more than others, were more likely to tell others about their wins and to chase losses, and were less concerned with losses. People with higher levels of greed showed higher risk-taking behaviour and were more likely to gamble because of a fear of missing out on a win rather than wanting to earn money. They were also more likely to have greater regret about the decisions they made.

How you can use this research

This study can inform interventions for people who experience negative consequences from gambling and/or dispositional greed.

About the researchers

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Citation

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About Greo Evidence Insights

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