The Gambling Outcome Expectancies Scale (GOES) identifies changes in gambling motivations and behaviour over time

What this research is about

The Gambling Outcome Expectancies Scale (GOES) is a survey used to assess expected outcomes from gambling. Expected outcomes are peoples’ reasons, or motivations, to gamble. These reasons may include gambling for excitement, escape from problems, boost their ego, socialisation, and money. Past research has found the GOES to be a reliable tool in identifying peoples’ diverse reasons for gambling. The GOES can also be used to assess gambling frequency and gambling problems. However, there is a lack of research on how gambling motivations may change and shape gambling behaviour over time. Thus, the present study used the GOES to investigate whether, and how, motivations for gambling might change over time. It also examined whether they might help explain gambling behaviour over time.

What the researcher did

Participants were 893 Australian adults who completed the GOES in a previous research study (baseline). These participants completed the GOES a second time at 12 months later. The GOES captured participants’ motivations for gambling. Participants also completed a series of survey questions about their gambling problems and gambling frequency. Before evaluating gambling motivations and behaviours, the researchers performed a statistical test to ensure that the items on the GOES could be compared across the 12-month time period.

What the researcher found

The GOES displayed temporal stability. This meant that participants’ responses on the GOES could be meaningfully compared across the 12-month time period.

What you need to know

The Gambling Outcome Expectancies Scale (GOES) is a tool used to assess people’s diverse motivations to gamble. It can also be used to assess gambling frequency and gambling problems. The present study used the GOES to examine whether changes in gambling motivations were related to changes in gambling behaviour over time in a study with Australian gamblers. Participants were followed-up for a 12-month period. The GOES was found to have temporal stability. This meant that participants’ responses on the GOES could be meaningfully compared across different time periods. Being motivated by social, escape, or monetary reasons predicted an increase in gambling frequency over time. Being motivated by excitement, escape, or to boost one’s ego predicted the development of gambling problems.

Participants’ motivations for gambling at baseline explained differences in gambling behaviour at 12 months later. Gambling to socialise or escape predicted more frequent gambling at 12 months later. Gambling for excitement or escape predicted more gambling problems at 12 months later.

Participants whose motivations changed such that gambling became a way to socialise, relax, and win money gambled more frequently over time. Participants who became motivated to gamble as a way to experience excitement, escape, and enhance their ego developed more gambling problems over time. Thus, the motivations for gambling changed and shaped gambling behaviour over time.
How you can use this research

To reduce gambling problems, prevention and treatment programs should encourage gamblers to engage in other types of activities as a way to seek excitement, relax, and feel better about themselves. Future research should increase the length of the follow-up period to examine whether changes in motivations lead to changes in problem gambling severity.

About the Researcher

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Citation


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Gambling Outcome Expectancies Scale (GOES), motivations, motives, temporal stability of GOES, problem gambling

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