

# research snapshot

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## A comparison of motives for onshore and offshore gambling in Finland

### What this research is about

Many countries regulate gambling to prevent and reduce gambling harms. Gambling operators who are licensed to operate in particular areas are called onshore gambling operators. But gambling operators who offer online gambling may be unregulated. These offshore gambling operators allow people to gamble online even though they do not have a valid license to offer gambling in a particular area. Offshore gambling operators may give people access to products that are not allowed where they live. Further, offshore gambling operators may not follow consumer protection regulations.

Previous research has found that people who gamble offshore are more likely to have problem gambling than those who gamble onshore. But little is known about the motive or reasons for people to gamble offshore. The purpose of this study was to compare the gambling motives of people in Finland who gamble onshore and offshore.

### What the researchers did

The researchers used data from the Finnish Gambling 2019 population survey. The Finnish Gambling 2019 population survey invited people living in mainland Finland to participate in the survey. Participants had to be between 15 and 74 years old. A total of 7,800 people were invited, and 3,994 participated in the survey. This represents a response rate of 51%. For the current study, the researchers used responses from 1,422 adult (18+ years) participants who gambled online in the past year.

The researchers categorized participants into whether they gambled onshore or offshore. This was based on participants' answers to questions that asked them

### What you need to know

The purpose of this study was to compare the gambling motives of people in Finland who gamble onshore and offshore. This study analyzed data from the Finnish Gambling 2019 population survey. The researchers only included responses from 1,422 adults (18+ years) who gambled online in the past year. Participants who gambled only on games provided by the state-owned monopoly gambling operator were labelled as 'onshore gambling.' Participants who also gambled on games offered by offshore gambling operators were labelled as 'offshore gambling.' About 85% of the participants gambled onshore. About 15% also gambled on offshore gambling sites.

Offshore gambling was more common among men and younger people. Participants who gambled offshore had higher problem gambling behaviour than people who only gambled onshore. People who gambled offshore were less likely to gamble for money or to support worthy causes. They were more likely to have multiple reasons to gamble. The top three reasons included (1) larger game supply and game features; (2) better benefits, bonuses, and usability of website; and (3) inner motivation (e.g., curiosity, time passing).

which types of games they gambled on. Participants who gambled only on games provided by the state-owned monopoly gambling operator Veikkaus Oy were labelled as 'onshore gambling.' Participants who also gambled using online games offered by offshore gambling operators were labelled as 'offshore gambling.' This study included responses from 1,208

people who gambled onshore and 214 who gambled offshore.

Participants were asked to choose a primary reason and then secondary reasons for their gambling using a list of answer options. The researchers categorized these responses into seven categories based on the Massachusetts Baseline Population Survey: (1) positive feeling; (2) money; (3) socializing; (4) supporting worthy causes; (5) escape from stress; (6) challenge (e.g., to improve skills); and (7) other.

Problem gambling severity was measured using the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). Participants were also asked how frequently they gambled and how much they spent. Participants who gambled offshore were asked their reasons for gambling on sites other than Veikkaus Oy.

#### What the researchers found

About 85% of the participants gambled onshore. About 15% also gambled on offshore gambling sites. Compared to those who gambled onshore only, people who gambled offshore were more likely to be men (83% among men vs. 17% among women) and younger. People who gambled offshore gambled more frequently than people who gambled onshore only. They also had higher PGSI scores (average PGSI score of 1.88 among people who gambled offshore vs. average PGSI score of 0.24 among people who gambled onshore). People who gambled offshore spent more each week on gambling than those who only gambled onshore (58€ vs 8.4€).

People who gambled offshore were less likely to gamble for money or to support worthy causes. They were more likely to have multiple reasons to gamble. The top reasons that people gambled offshore were:

- (1) A total of 164 participants (76%) gambled offshore because of *larger game supply and game features* (e.g., bigger payouts, faster-paced games).
- (2) A total of 72 (33%) participants gambled offshore because of *benefits, bonuses, and usability of website*.
- (3) A total of 40 (19%) participants stated they gambled offshore because of *inner motivation* (e.g., curiosity, time passing).

#### How you can use this research

Policy makers can use this study to support restricting offshore gambling and creating preventive programs.

#### About the researchers

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