

research snapshot

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Men of lower socioeconomic status may be more likely to gamble illegally on sports in Iran

What this research is about

Gambling is very common in sports. People can bet on sports in-person at sporting events, online using their cell phone or computer, on the telephone, or on paper. Gambling advertising encourages people to believe that sports gambling is an acceptable pastime. Gambling on sports is a crime in Iran. However, many people in Iran still gamble.

There are many different theories to explain why people gamble. One of these is called the General Strain Theory. The General Strain Theory suggests that certain types of strains or stresses in people's lives make them feel negative emotions. These negative emotions may make people more likely to commit crimes. There are three different types of strains. They include not achieving a goal, a lack of positive things in a person's environment, and a presence of negative things in a person's environment. There are also physical and subjective strains. Physical strains are situations that a group of people dislike. Subjective strains are situations that people dislike after they have experienced them themselves.

People who have more strains are more likely to feel that they have little control over their life. They may gamble to escape from the strains in their life and to regain control through possible winnings. Families who have lower incomes may have more strains and negative emotions. As a result, they may be more likely to gamble illegally. In this study, the researchers investigated whether the General Strain Theory explains why people in Iran gamble illegally on sports.

What the researchers did

The researchers visited locations such as cafes, coffee shops, and newsstands where people in Iran might

What you need to know

In this study, the researchers investigated whether the General Strain Theory explains why people in Iran gamble illegally on sports. The researchers visited locations such as cafes, coffee shops, and newsstands where people in Iran might gamble. The researchers became friends with people who gambled regularly on sports and distributed a survey to them. A total of 392 men completed the survey. The results suggested that people who had money problems and felt that they had little control over their life were more likely to have negative emotions and risky motivations. As a result, they were more likely to engage in risky activities such as illegal sports gambling. The results support the General Strain Theory. Future research can explore how a person's culture affects their gambling behaviour.

gamble. The researchers became friends with people who regularly gambled on sports. They distributed a survey to those individuals. A total of 392 men completed the survey.

The survey assessed the men's gambling behaviour by asking them how much time and money they spent on sports gambling in the past six months. It assessed them for money problems (a type of strain) by asking them if they had trouble paying for groceries, clothes, and other necessities in life. The survey assessed the men for subjective strain by asking them if they thought their money problems were unfair and if their money problems made them feel uncomfortable. The survey determined how much control these men thought they had over their friendships, relationships

with their partner and family, society, their body, and other people.

The survey determined whether the men had negative emotions such as anger, jealousy, shame, fear, or nervousness. It assessed whether the men had risky motivations to gamble including to make money, to reduce their problems, and to manage their life. The survey assessed the men's socioeconomic status by asking them how much money they earned in a year, how much education they had, and what their job was. It also collected their demographic information such as their age.

What the researchers found

The findings suggest that people who had money problems were more likely to feel subjective strain and thought that their situation was unfair. Subjective strain increased negative emotions such as anger, fear, and frustration. These negative emotions appeared to make people more likely to have risky motivations. Risky motivations then might make these people more likely to gamble illegally on sports.

People who had money problems were also more likely to feel that they had lost control over their life. This lack of control increased negative emotions such as anger, fear, and frustration. People might try to regain control by doing risky behaviours such as illegal sports gambling.

People of lower socioeconomic status were more likely to feel that their situation was unfair, to have negative emotions, and to have risky motivations. These findings suggest that people of lower socioeconomic status might be more likely to engage in risky activities such as illegal sports gambling.

The results of this study suggest that the General Strain Theory explains why people in Iran gamble illegally on sports.

How you can use this research

Prevention service providers can use this research to understand that people of lower socioeconomic status may be more likely to gamble illegally on sports. Researchers can use this research to explore

how a person's culture affects their gambling behaviour. More research is needed to determine whether the results in this study are also true for women who gamble.

About the researchers

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About Gambling Research Exchange (GREO)

Gambling Research Exchange (GREO) has partnered with the Knowledge Mobilization Unit at York University to produce Research Snapshots. GREO is an independent knowledge translation and exchange organization that aims to eliminate harm from gambling. Our goal is to support evidence-informed decision making in safer gambling policies, standards, and practices. The work we do is intended for researchers, policy makers, gambling regulators and operators, and treatment and prevention service providers.

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