Players may be more likely to gamble on online slot machine games if they think the games are fair

What this research is about

Internet gambling is a type of gambling activity that people play on online websites. Internet gambling is very popular, especially in Europe. It allows people to gamble anywhere and at any time of day.

Many people are recreational players who gamble for fun and can stop anytime. However, some people become addicted and develop problem gambling. Problem gambling is repetitive gambling behaviour that leads to negative consequences. This means that Internet gambling can be harmful for some people. There are also issues about whether online gambling operators treat players fairly. Few studies investigate how fair players think online gambling operators are, also known as perceived fairness.

In this study, the researchers explored how players’ perceived fairness, effort expectancy, and user experience affect their intention to gamble on online slot machines. Perceived fairness refers to whether players think the terms and conditions of the games are fair and reasonable and their expectations are met. Effort expectancy is the amount of effort players think it will take to become skilled at using an online gambling system. User experience is how well players know how to use an online gambling system based on how long they have been using it. Gambling intention refers to how likely players are to gamble.

What the researchers did

The researchers created a questionnaire for the study. They first tested the questionnaire with 30 people who played online casino games to make sure the questionnaire was easy to read and understand.

What you need to know

The researchers investigated how perceived fairness, effort expectancy, and user experience affect players’ intention to gamble on online slot machines. Participants were 255 active customers of an online gambling company. Participants completed an online questionnaire. Perceived fairness of online slot machine games was more important for participants who believed it would take them more effort to learn how to use the online gambling website. If participants believed it would take them a lot of effort to learn how to use the online gambling website, then they would be more likely to gamble when they had a stronger belief that they were being treated fairly. Participants who had more experience using the online gambling website paid less attention to how fair the online games looked to them. They also paid less attention to how much effort it would take them to use the website. Policy makers could use this research to introduce policies that ensure the fairness and transparency of online gambling games for players.

The researchers asked an online gambling company to distribute the questionnaire to its customers. The company forwarded the questionnaire to a randomly selected group of 2000 players, who were customers of its brand SlotsMillion.com. A total of 255 players completed the questionnaire. The players were at least 18 years of age and indicated that they were active players of online gambling.

The questionnaire asked for players’ demographic information such as age and gender. It assessed
players’ user experience by asking them how many years they had gambled online. The questionnaire assessed players’ perceived fairness of online slot machine games, effort expectancy, and gambling intention using questions from previous studies.

What the researchers found

The researchers found that higher perceived fairness resulted in a greater intention to gamble online. This means that the more participants believed they were being treated fairly by online slot machine games, the more likely they were to gamble online.

Effort expectancy made the relationship between perceived fairness and gambling intention stronger. This means that if participants believed it would take them a lot of effort to learn how to use the online gambling website, then they would be more likely to gamble when they had a stronger belief that they were being treated fairly by the online slot machine games.

More user experience made the relationship between perceived fairness and online gambling intention weaker. This means that the fairness of online slot machine games was less important for participants who had more online gambling experience in determining whether or not they would play online slot machines.

How you can use this research

This research provides insight to gambling operators on the importance of offering a fair online gambling experience for players. Gambling operators could also create websites that are easy for players to use and have good customer service. Policy makers could use this research to introduce policies that ensure the fairness and transparency of online gambling games for players. More research is needed to determine if perceived fairness affects the gambling intention of people who play other Internet gambling games, such as poker and sports betting.

About the researchers

Jirka Konietzny is affiliated with the Department of Business Administration, Technology and Social Sciences at Luleå University of Technology in Luleå, Sweden. Albert Caruana is affiliated with the Department of Corporate Communication at the University of Malta in Msida, Malta. For more information about this study, please contact Jirka Konietzny at jirka.konietzny@ltu.se.

Citation


Study funding

This study did not receive funding from external sources.

Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO)

Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (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 responsible 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.

Learn more about GREO by visiting greo.ca or emailing info@greo.ca.