

knowledge snapshot



A review of the relationship between financial gambling motives, and gambling frequency and problem gambling

What this article is about

Money is an important aspect of the definition of gambling. Winning money is also the most frequent reason why people gamble. But, financial motivations to gamble have been generally overlooked in gambling research. Early research on why people gamble was based on motives for alcohol use. These motives included for social reasons, enhancement (e.g., for excitement), and coping with negative emotions. It was only later that financial motives for gambling were added. Even today, financial motives are thought to be secondary to the other motives.

Research on the relationship between financial motives suggests that financial motives are often linked to gambling involvement. But, the relationship between financial motives and problem gambling is mixed. Some studies suggest that financial motives are linked to problem gambling. Other studies do not find this link. In this article, the researchers reviewed studies on the links between financial motives and gambling frequency and problem gambling. They performed a meta-analysis on the results that had been reported. Meta-analysis is a statistical method that pools the results from many studies to draw conclusions on what is known about a topic.

What was done?

The researchers conducted a systematic search of the literature. The aim was to find studies that had looked at financial motives, and gambling frequency and problem gambling. The researchers identified studies through three sources. The first was to search databases for published studies. The second was to use their expert knowledge to identify studies. Third,

Why is this article important?

Winning money is the most common reason people report as to why they gamble. But, the role of financial motives in gambling research has often been overlooked. In this article, the researchers reviewed previous studies and performed a meta-analysis to summarize the relationship between financial motives and gambling frequency. They also summarized the relationship between financial motives and problem gambling. The researchers identified 44 studies, with the number of participants ranging between 22 and 5,666 participants. Financial motives were positively associated with both gambling frequency and problem gambling. These positive associations remained significant when controlling for other gambling motives. Studies that used the Gambling Motives Questionnaire-Financial and younger participants found a stronger relationship between financial motives and gambling frequency.

they requested studies through online communication with gambling researchers.

The search strategy identified 388 unique articles. Studies were included in the meta-analysis if they met the following criteria. First, they needed to be empirical research studies that collected data from participants. Second, they had to have measured financial motives. Third, studies had to include problem gambling, gambling frequency, or both. Lastly, studies had to be written in English or French.

Two researchers reviewed the articles to make sure they met the inclusion criteria. The researchers also

emailed the authors of the papers to obtain important data for the meta-analysis. In total, 44 studies provided data to be included in the review. The number of participants ranged from 22 to 5,666 participants across the studies. The researchers used meta-analysis to summarize the relationships between financial motives and gambling frequency as well as problem gambling. They also examined whether these relationships were influenced by other factors such as age, gender, geographical location, and the measure used to assess financial motives. The researchers also examined if the results were influenced by whether the study was published in an academic journal or not. Publication bias occurs when studies that report positive findings are more likely to be published than studies that report null results.

What you need to know

About half the included studies were published in North America. Most studies (83%) were published. The most common measures used were the Gambling Motives Questionnaire-Financial (GMQ-F) and the Problem Gambling Severity Index.

Financial motives were positively associated with gambling frequency. That is, people who gambled more frequently also reported greater financial motives. This relationship was moderate in effect size. Effect size tells the strength of the relationship. Larger effect sizes suggest that the results have practical significance in real life. This finding was not due to publication bias. Studies that used the GMQ-F found moderate-to-large effect sizes, whereas studies using other measures found small-to-moderate effect sizes. Studies with younger participants found a larger effect size for financial motives and gambling frequency than studies with older participants. When controlling for other motives, financial motives had a moderate relationship with gambling frequency.

Financial motives were positively associated with problem gambling. The relationship was moderate in effect size. The finding was not due to publication bias. Financial motives remained positively associated with problem gambling severity when controlling for other motives, with effect sizes ranging from small to moderate.

Who is it intended for?

This research is intended for researchers to further examine the relationship between financial motives and gambling. Financial institutions may want to screen people at risk of developing problem gambling.

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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