

research snapshot

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Gambling ads have a greater impact on people with lower social support

What this research is about

Gambling is common in France, with about 47% of people having gambled in the past year. Research shows that people who view tobacco ads are more likely to use tobacco. In the same way, it is possible that people who view gambling ads are more likely to gamble. However, few studies have looked at the impact of gambling ads on gambling behaviour.

Gambling ads may affect different people differently. For example, some people who view gambling ads may feel an urge to gamble, while others may not. This could be because of differences in their personality. For example, people who are more vulnerable to stress (i.e., higher neurotic traits) are more likely to experience problem gambling. It is also possible that they could be more influenced by gambling ads. People with lower social support are also more likely to experience problem gambling. This could be because people with better social support are better able to regulate their emotions. It is possible that the level of social support someone has could influence how gambling ads affect them.

This study looked for the links between personality traits, social support, and how people remember and respond to gambling ads.

What the researchers did

The researchers recruited participants through Facebook and online gambling forums. All participants were at least 18 years old and lived in France. All participants also had gambled at least once in the past year. There were 109 participants (71% were men).

Participants completed an online survey in early 2019. This survey asked participants for their age, gender,

What you need to know

Gambling ads may strongly influence some people to gamble, while barely affecting other people. However, few studies have tested what factors affect the influence of gambling ads. This study looked for the links between people's personality traits, social support, and how they remember and respond to gambling ads.

Adult participants in France completed an online survey about their gambling behaviour, social supports, and personality traits. They then viewed nine slogans from gambling ads from the previous year. Participants reported if they remembered the ads and if the ads influenced them to gamble.

Overall, participants who were more neurotic were more likely to engage in high-risk gambling. Additionally, participants with less social support remembered more gambling slogans and had higher intention to gamble after seeing gambling ads. So, people with lower social support may be more influenced by gambling ads.

and employment status. It also included measures of gambling, personality traits, and social support.

First, participants completed the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). The CPGI has 9 items that measure participants' level of gambling problems. The researchers used the CPGI scores to categorize participants as having non-risk, moderate-risk, or severe-risk gambling. Participants also reported how old they were when they started gambling.

Next, participants completed the Big Five Inventory for personality. This inventory has 45 items that

measure 5 dimensions of personality. One of these dimensions is neuroticism vs. emotional stability. People with higher neurotic traits are more prone to stress, worries, and mood swings. Participants also completed the Social Support Questionnaire – 6. This questionnaire asks participants about the number of people in their support network. It also asks them about the quality of their relationships with those close to them.

Finally, participants viewed 9 slogans from 3 different gambling operators. These slogans were from ads that could be seen online and in public spaces in France in 2018. The survey asked participants if they remembered the slogan, and if so, what gambling operator the slogan came from. It also asked them if they felt the urge to gamble after seeing the ad the slogan was from.

What the researchers found

The researchers examined the effects of personality and social support on gambling severity. Participants who were more neurotic were more likely to have severe-risk gambling than non-risk gambling. So, having a neurotic personality is linked to higher gambling risk. Additionally, participants with severe-risk gambling were more likely to feel an urge to gamble after viewing a gambling ad than those with non-risk gambling. They also reported higher intention to gamble after viewing gambling ads.

Participants with lower quality of social support were more likely to recognize the slogans from the gambling ads. Those with fewer people in their support network also reported higher intention to gamble after seeing gambling ads. So, lower social support is linked to increased recognition of gambling slogans and increased intention to gamble after seeing gambling ads.

Finally, participants who started gambling at younger ages recognized more gambling slogans. They also had higher intention to gamble after viewing a gambling ad.

How you can use this research

This research shows that people with different levels of social support remember and respond to gambling ads differently. Gambling harm prevention programs could focus on helping people increase their level of social support. This could help reduce their risk of problem gambling.

About the researchers

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Citation

Tessier, S., Romo, L., & Zerhouni, O. (2021). Impact of advertising campaigns among online gamblers: The role perceptions of social support and personality traits. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12, 599988. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.599988>

Study funding

No funding was declared.

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