

research snapshot

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Is religious belief related to gambling fallacies?

What this research is about

Gambling fallacies are false beliefs about the nature of gambling. Gambling fallacies can involve supernatural thinking (e.g., belief in luck) or an incorrect understanding of statistics. Religious belief is similar to some aspects of gambling fallacies, as it typically includes supernatural thinking. Gambling fallacies and religious belief both include a belief in an external force that can affect our world. This is known as metaphysical belief. Researchers have wondered whether there is a relationship between gambling fallacies and religious belief. Some research has found that religious belief is a risk factor for gambling fallacies. In contrast, other research has found that religious belief acts to protect against the development of gambling-related problems.

However, religious belief is multifaceted. Researchers have speculated that the metaphysical aspect of religious belief is connected to gambling fallacies. To examine this idea further, the researchers of this study used a measure called the Rohrbaugh-Jessor Religiosity Scale (RJRS). It assesses religious belief on four domains, one of which is metaphysical belief. The researchers hypothesized that the metaphysical belief domain of the RJRS would be positively related to gambling fallacies.

What the researchers did

The researchers used data from two Canadian longitudinal studies: The Quinte Longitudinal Study (QLS) and the Leisure, Lifestyle and Lifecycle Project (LLLP). The QLS involved 4121 people aged 17 to 80 years old who were living in the Quinte region of Ontario, Canada. Participants were followed over a 5-year period from 2006 to 2011. The LLLP involved

What you need to know

Researchers have found a relationship between gambling fallacies and religious belief. Gambling fallacies refer to incorrect beliefs about the nature of gambling, such as the belief in luck. Some aspects of religious belief also contain elements of supernatural thinking. Some studies have found that increased religious belief is related to increased gambling fallacies. Other studies have found that religious belief is protective with respect to gambling-related harm. The researchers in this study used a multi-faceted measure of religious belief. The domains of this measure that were related to more supernatural thinking, such as believing in God, were associated with greater endorsement of gambling fallacies. One domain of this measure that examined the practice of religion, such as attending religious services, was associated with less endorsement of gambling fallacies.

1372 people aged 17 to 65 years old who were living in Alberta, Canada. The LLLP occurred from 2006 to 2014. For this study, the researchers analyzed data collected during the first year of the QLS and data collected during the third and fourth years of the LLLP.

These datasets used the RJRS and a measure of gambling fallacies called the Gambling Fallacies Measure (GFM). The four domains of religious belief that the RJRS measures are ritual, consequential, ideological, and experiential. Ritual refers to attending religious services and practicing one's religion. Consequential refers to incorporating religious

teachings into one's life. Ideological belief is the belief in God, and was used in this study to measure metaphysical belief. Experiential is the experience of religion internally, such as deriving comfort from one's religion. The GFM measures gambling fallacies.

The researchers looked at the relationship between RJRS and GFM scores by analyzing how scores on the RJRS predicted scores on the GFM. This is one way of looking at how two measures are associated with each other. If one variable predicts another variable, it means that a change in one variable is associated with a change in the other.

What the researchers found

The researchers found relationships between the ritual, ideological, and experiential domains of the RJRS and the GFM. The ideological domain was positively associated with the GFM. Participants who scored higher on the ideological domain tended to also score higher on the GFM. The same relationship was found for the experiential domain and the GFM. The ritual domain was negatively associated with the GFM. Participants who scored higher on the ritual domain tended to score lower on the GFM. The consequential domain of the RJRS was not associated with the GFM.

The researchers have two important takeaways from their results. First, the two domains of religious belief that are related to metaphysical belief (ideological and experiential) are associated with greater gambling fallacies. Second, the ritual domain, which is not related to metaphysical belief, is associated with less endorsement of gambling fallacies.

How you can use this research

This study has important information for gambling researchers. The authors of this study showed that it is important to consider different aspects of religion and how they relate to gambling fallacies. There has been contrasting research about the role of religious belief in gambling fallacies. This study provides evidence that metaphysical aspects of religious belief are associated with greater gambling fallacies. Other aspects of religious belief, such as attending religious

services, may serve as protective factors against gambling fallacies and gambling harm.

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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