



Short Communication

Validation of the reasons for gambling questionnaire (RGQ) in a British population survey

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The RGQ is a valid scale to assess gambling motives among the general population.
- The five subscales of the RGQ were confirmed among gender and age subgroups.
- Mixed-mode gamblers had higher scores for enhancement, recreation and money motives.
- Mixed-mode gambler males reported higher enhancement and recreation motives.
- Mixed-mode gamblers aged 16–34 years reported higher enhancement, recreation and money motives.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The aims of the study are to validate and further psychometrically test the five-dimensional structure of the Reasons for Gambling Questionnaire (RGQ), and to test the differences between different types of gamblers (i.e., offline gamblers who gambled in-person only vs. mixed-mode gamblers who gambled both online and offline) on the five dimensions of the RGQ.

Methods: Data from the 2010 British Gambling Prevalence Survey (BGPS) were used. The analyzed data comprised 5677 individuals (52.7% female; mean age = 47.64 years; SD = 17.82). Confirmatory factor analysis and independent-sample t-tests were applied.

Results: The five-dimensional structure of the RGQ was confirmed in the general sample and among gender and age subgroups. Furthermore, mixed-mode gamblers (MMGs) who gambled both online and offline had higher scores for enhancement, recreation and money motives than offline gamblers that gambled in-person only (IPGs). In addition among males, there was a significant difference in the scores for enhancement and recreation motives across MMGs and IPGs. Among past-year gamblers aged 16–34 years, MMGs had higher scores for enhancement, recreational and monetary motives than IPGs while among past-year gamblers aged 35–55 years, MMGs had higher scores for enhancement and recreational motives than IPGs.

Conclusions: The results are consistent with a previous test of the RGQ and the findings indicate that the RGQ is a valid instrument to assess gambling motives among the general population.

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1. Introduction

The most recent British Gambling Prevalence Survey (BGPS) published in 2011 showed that problem gambling in Great Britain had risen from 0.6% to 0.9% (i.e., a 50% increase) compared to the previous BGPS published in 2007 (Wardle, Moody, Griffiths, Orford, & Volberg, 2011a; Wardle et al., 2011b) using the DSM-IV criteria American Psychiatric Association (APA) (1994). One of the most important aims of the survey was to examine reasons for gambling that, in turn, shape

gambling behavior. In order to develop prevention programs aimed at promoting responsible gambling, researchers need to have a sound knowledge based on empirical evidence of the reasons as to why people participate in gambling. This is important for any research that aims to uncover determinants of varying levels of gambling involvement (Binde, 2009).

Studies suggest that motives for gambling are an important proximal factor related to problematic gambling among young people and adults (e.g., Griffiths, 2011; Stewart, Zack, Collins, & Klein, 2008). Despite the existence of some psychometric instruments developed to assess gambling motives and related constructs – such as the Gambling Motivation Scale (GMS: Chantal, Vallerand, & Vallieres, 1994) and the Gambling Motives Questionnaire (GMQ: Stewart & Zack, 2008) – the

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Reasons for Gambling Questionnaire (RGQ; Wardle et al., 2011b) was the first standardized measure of gambling motives to be included in a large-scale national prevalence survey. The 15-item RGQ was specifically designed to reflect broad motivations for gambling evident among gamblers in general, after determining that the available scales (i.e., GMS and GMQ) had some gaps in the range of motives identified in previous studies. For example, the GMQ fails to capture motives related to money, because items are derived from the alcohol literature (Dechant & Ellery, 2011). While people generally do not drink alcohol for monetary gain, winning money has frequently been reported among the primary reasons for gambling (e.g., Hodgins, 2008). Based on these considerations, Wardle et al. (2011b) developed the RGQ to measure the five gambling motives implied: social motives (e.g., because it is something that is engaged in with friends and family), monetary motives (e.g., for the chance of winning large amounts of money), enhancement motives (e.g., for the excitement), recreational motives (e.g., to fill time), and coping motives (e.g., to relieve tension). Thus, the RGQ has a number of distinct advantages in that it: (i) can be applied to the general population (including those with gambling problems), (ii) includes a wide range of gambling motives, (iii) can measure general gambling motives, rather than relative to a specific gambling activity (Wardle et al., 2011b).

To date, the RGQ has been developed and analyzed in the large-scale BGPS population study (Wardle et al., 2011b) and was also employed in the second Social and Economic Impact Study (SEIS) of Gambling in Tasmania study conducted in 2011 in Australia (Francis, Dowling, Jackson, Christensen, and Wardle 2014). In the Australian study, the most commonly endorsed reasons for gambling were for fun, for the chance of winning big money, because it is something to do with friends and family, to be sociable, and for the excitement. The objectives of this study were to test, validate, and further psychometrically analyze the RGQ in the same sample that was used in the original BGPS study (Wardle et al., 2011b). The first aim was to confirm the five dimensional structures (i.e., social, monetary, enhancement, recreation, and coping) and other measurement properties such as model fit, item loadings, and internal consistencies. The second aim was to demonstrate whether the RGQ performs as well across gender (male vs. female) and age band (i.e., 16–34 years, 35–55 years and 55+ years). The third aim was to demonstrate concurrent validity by testing the differences between different types of gamblers (more specifically, those who gamble in person only gamblers [i.e., offline] vs. those who gamble both in person and online [mixed-mode]) on the five dimensions of the RGQ. This is because Wardle et al. (2011b) found that the reasons for gambling vary significantly between different groups of gamblers (problem gamblers, regular gamblers).

In addition, previous studies have shown that online gamblers and non-online gamblers display different motivations to gambling related to the online specific characteristics (e.g. privacy, greater variety of games) (Gainsbury, Wood, Russell, Hing, & Blaszczynski, 2012; McCormack & Griffiths, 2012; Parke & Griffiths, 2011). Considering the motivations for gambling evident among gamblers in general, Lloyd et al. (2010) demonstrated that among internet gamblers, gambling to regulate mood, gambling for monetary motives, and gambling for enjoyment were higher in individuals at a heightened risk of problematic gambling. In a more recent study, Dowling, Lorains, and Jackson (2015) found that reasons for gambling among internet gamblers were more likely to be for a challenge, for positive feelings, for fun and/or excitement, or to relieve boredom compared non-internet gamblers. Thus in this study, it was hypothesized that mixed-mode gamblers (those who gambled both online and offline), were more likely to gamble for enhancement, coping, and money reasons, than those who gambled offline only.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Data were extracted from the 2010 British Gambling Prevalence Survey and further methodological details are provided in the originally published study (Wardle et al., 2011b). A total of 7756 individuals participated in the BGPS. In order to specifically address gambling motives, the 2039 individuals (26.29%) who had not gambled in the 12 months prior to participating in the survey were excluded from analysis, in addition to 40 individuals (0.5%) that were excluded because they failed to answer more than one question related to gambling motives. The analyzed data therefore comprised 5677 individuals (52.7% female). The mean age of the final sample was 47.64 years ($SD = 17.82$).

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Gambling motives

All participants who had gambled in the 12 months prior to participating in the survey were administered the RGQ (Wardle et al., 2011b). All 15 items of the RGQ are statements concerning the frequency of gambling for five distinct dimensions (i.e., enhancement, recreation, social, coping and monetary). Participants were asked to consider all the times they had gambled in the past 12 months and to indicate how often they had gambled for each given motive. Items were answered on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “never” (coded as 1) to “always” (coded as 4).

2.2.2. Gambling participation

Participants were required to indicate whether they had taken part in any of 16 different gambling activities for money in the previous 12 months. Of these 16 activities, nine could be gaged in both online and offline. For activities where different modes of participation were available, participants were asked to report whether they had undertaken the activity in-person (i.e., offline), online, or both. Consistent with a previous categorization using BGPS data (i.e., Wardle et al., 2011a) gamblers were considered ‘offline gamblers’ when they reported gambling in-person only and ‘mixed-mode gamblers’ when they reported gambling both online and offline for at least one activity in the past year.

2.3. Analysis

First, given the a priori knowledge of a factor structure¹, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using robust weighted least squares for ordinal items (e.g., Likert-type scales) was used to test the structure of the RGQ. The R program (R Core Team, 2013) was used with the “lavaan” library (Rosseel, 2012). To evaluate the overall model fit, the following were considered: goodness of fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) [90% confidence interval (CI)]. Cronbach’s alpha (and CIs) assessed internal consistencies of the dimensions. To determine the equivalence of factor structure in different subgroups, a multi-group CFA was also performed to examine measurement invariance of the RGQ across gender (males vs. females), and age (i.e., the age band groups 16–34 years, 35–55 years, and 55+ years). A hierarchical approach was taken by successively constraining model parameters and comparing changes in model fit (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). Three models (i.e., configural, metric, and scalar) were estimated and are considered prerequisites for meaningful cross-group comparisons based on factor scales. The use of $\Delta\chi^2$ values has been criticized because of their sensitivity to sample size (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). For this reason, testing for

¹ In the original analysis of the RGQ, a final principal component factor analysis was performed on 14 items. The item “because I’m worried about not winning if I don’t play” was not included in this analysis. Further details are provided in the original published study (Wardle et al., 2011b).

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