

# Money, Gambling and Motivation

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Dechant, K. & Ellery, M. (2011). The effect of including a monetary motive item on the Gambling Motives Questionnaire. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 27, 331-344.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH IS ABOUT

Studying what motivates people to gamble is an important step to understand, prevent and treat problem gambling.

Previous research created the Gambling Motives Questionnaire (GMQ), based on a similar motivational model for drinking alcohol, and determined the GMQ to be a good measure of gambling motives among problem gamblers. This study applied the GMQ to moderate gamblers to determine if the questionnaire is a valid measure for this group. Additionally, the GMQ did not include any measure of financial motives, since financial motives do not apply to drinking. This study added a monetary motive item, "how often do you gamble to win money?" to the existing GMQ and analyzed whether or not this strengthened the validity of the questionnaire.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH DID

As part of a telephone survey of 1,202 adult Manitobans, a subsample of 839 was identified as gambling moderately. These moderate gamblers were asked the GMQ plus the monetary motive item, in addition to how often they gambled, the types of gambling they participated in and demographics including age, sex, region of residence, level of education, employment

status and household income. The GMQ was analyzed both with and without the monetary motive item. The results were analyzed based on the three different motive categories: enhancement of life, as a coping strategy, and for social reasons. The monetary item fell into the enhancement motives category.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH FOUND

The researchers found significant evidence that the addition of a monetary motive item improved the validity of the GMQ. Additionally, the motivations to gamble were different in the population of moderate gamblers, compared to earlier research that examined problem gamblers. Moderate gamblers tended to gamble for leisure, rather than to cope with stresses. However, the study also found that the GMQ may not be suitable for large population surveys, due to the strength of some of the items falling below acceptable levels. As a result, more studies need to be conducted before making definite conclusions.

## HOW YOU CAN USE THIS RESEARCH

The research indicates the need to explore the permanent inclusion of a monetary motive item into the GMQ, or the addition of a separate financial motive category with multiple monetary motive items. The research also indicates that

small changes to the GMQ may dramatically improve its strength and validity as a gambling research tool. Due to differences in motives between moderate gamblers and problem gamblers, the GMQ could be used to predict how the difference in motives leads to different levels of gambling involvement. The GMQ and the monetary motive items could also be used to analyze differences in gambling motivation between various demographics.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This study examined the motivation to gamble and added a monetary item to an existing motives questionnaire. Participants were moderate gamblers who completed a telephone interview. The inclusion of the monetary motive item led to a meaningful improvement in the questionnaire. The researchers also found that moderate gamblers tend to have different motives to gamble than problem gamblers.