

Gambling Passion: Review and Direction for Future Research

Yingni Liu ^{1,a*}, Yuanyi Yang ^{1,b}

¹ Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Macau University Science and Technology,
Macau

^a ynliu@must.edu.mo, ^b yangyuanyi1@gmail.com

*corresponding author

Keywords: Gambling Passion; Obsessive Passion; Harmonious Passion

Abstract: At present, there are not many studies on gambling passion, but it is an important psychological variable in the field of gaming research. This paper reviews and sorts out the related literature of gambling passion and illustrates its conceptual connotation and dimensional division; Furthermore, it systematically arranges and analyzes its independent variable and outcome variables. This will help to further explore the psychological mechanism of gamblers' gambling passion and propose future research directions based on previous studies.

1. Introduction

Gambling is popular all over the world, and more and more local gambling industry is legalized. It seems to become a common and popular entertainment. For example, in the "Gambling Participation in 2019: Behavior, Awareness and Attitudes", the Gaming Commission pointed out that in 2019, 47% of adults (over 16 years old) in the UK said they had participated in at least one type of gambling in the past four weeks^[1]. Apart from being influenced by different motives, individuals participating in gambling will also be driven by passion to invest time and resources. Passion is a psychological motivator^{[2][3]} and also a strong emotional attitude^[4], which has been applied to psychological research in the past. Morvannou et al. reviewed the literature of gambling passion and found that it is still an emerging topic in the field of gaming. The concept of gambling passion first appeared 17 years ago, and there are few studies on it^[5]. However, gambling passion is an important factor in gambling research. Thus, this paper reviews and sorts out the related literature of gambling passion and illustrates its conceptual connotation and dimensional division; Furthermore, it systematically organizes and analyses its independent variable and outcome variables. This will help to further explore the psychological mechanism of gamblers' gambling passion and propose future research directions based on previous studies.

2. The Concept and Dimension of Gambling Passion

The concept of gambling passion was first proposed by Vallerand et al., in 2001. They defined passion as "an individual's strong tendency to engage in activities that he or she considers important or enjoyable and to invest time and energy". Later, based on this concept, Rousseau et al., constructed the Gambling Passion Scale (GPS) to provide standards for following related research^{[6][8]}. The scale reflects the positive and negative effects of gambling activities^[7], and divides passion into harmonious passion and obsessive passion^[8].

Vallerand et al., (2003) divided gambling passion into two dimensions: harmonious passion and obsessive passion^[4]. Harmonious passion refers to people's internalized motivation to lead them to participate in activities they like or have strong impulses. People can manage their time and resources reasonably, and such passion will produce positive effects during and after activities^[4]. For example, a person can allocate time for gambling and other social activities well, and his gambling behavior does not affect his life. Some people can get some positive results from this passion, like reducing pressure^[9]. However, obsessive passion is the opposite. It is driven by an

irresistible driving force or pressure that drives people into activities. This kind of passion will have negative consequences during and after activities^[6]. For example, gamblers with obsessive passion can't help spending lots of time and energy on gambling, and are hard to control their impulse to continue gambling. In the end, it may also have some negative effects, like feeling guilty for lack of time to be with families^[6].

3. Independent variable of Gambling Passion

While studying the independent variables of gambling passion in the past, self-determination theory (SDT) was often used as the theoretical basis to explore the impact of gambling motivation on gambling passion^{[4][7]}. The self-determination theory is based on human motivation. When individuals are exposed to environmental factors that support their autonomy (like making choices according to their own will) or controlling environmental factors (like receiving pressure, threat, etc.), they will have different motivational orientations^{[10][11][12]}. The study of Vallerand et al., (2003) shows that there are significant correlations between different forms of gambling motivation and two kinds of gambling passion^{[4][7]}. For example, in gambling, gamblers will seek excitement, escape from daily life. To win money, they enjoy the adventure process, experience the sense of achievement^{[7][9][13][14]}, and meet personal needs^{[7][13][14]}. The above research shows that when an individual has the internal motivation of self-determination, it has a positive correlation with harmonious passion; When an individual has the external motivation of non self-determination, it has a positive correlation with obsessive passion. When gamblers make their own gambling decisions without interference from the outside, this kind of behavior is usually related to their willpower and recognition of behavior. Their gambling activities will not lead or affect their other lives, which can still be coordinated with other activities^{[4][7]}. The research results of Ki-Joon Back et al., (2011) and Choong-Ki Lee et al., (2013) show that external motivation has a strong positive effect on obsessive passion^{[7][13]}. Gamblers have an obsessive passion for gambling based on a certain motivational orientation under the control of environmental factors. For example, gamblers with obsessive passion will be active to gambling when they have pressure (such as, by peer pressure)^{[6][10]}. Sometimes, however, these pressures may be self imposed^{[6][11]}.

4. Outcome Variables of Gambling Passion

Considering the previous research on gambling passion, the research on its outcome variables is mainly to explore the relationship among gambling passion and problem gambling^{[5][9][15]}, gambling behavior^[5], personal emotions^{[9][16]}, and behavioral intention^{[7][9][17]}. However, there is still a lack of research on the relationship between gambling passion and actual gambling behavior. For problem gambling, research shows that there is no relationship between harmonious passion and problem gambling^{[5][9]}. Although harmonious passion is not a problem factor for problem gambling, it is not a factor that reduces problem gambling^[5]. Gamblers with problem gambling have a stronger obsessive passion than those without problem gambling. Meanwhile, the existence of obsessive passion will increase the occurrence of problem gambling, which is an important problem factor of problem gambling^[15]. For personal emotions, gamblers with harmonious passion will experience different gambling activities and feel happy, which can reduce pressure^{[9][16][17]}, and produce positive emotions^{[13][17]}. However, obsessive passion can have a negative effect on negative emotions. For example, in a non self-determination environment, gamblers have an obsessive passion, which will give them a kind of anxiety or restlessness^{[6][13]}. In terms of behavioral intention, it is not greatly influenced by harmonious passion. However, obsessive passion can have an obvious influence on behavioral intention, such as leading gamblers to participate in gambling activities for a long time^[7]. Currently, there are few studies on the relationship between gambling passion and gambling behavior, but there are still studies which shows that obsessive passion has an influence on gambling behavior^{[6][7]}.

5. The Prospect for Future Research

Gamblers are generally passionate about gambling. This psychological motivator is an important variable to discuss gambling psychology, gambling behavior, and gambling problems. However, the concept of gambling passion was proposed about 10 years ago. Till now, there are not many related studies and many phenomena have not been well explained. Thus, it can be used as a research direction for researchers in the future.

A person's behavioral pattern is influenced by many factors. Thus, while gambling passion affects gambler behavior or gambling problems, is it also affected by other factors? This is a question worth discussing. Merely focusing on passion but ignoring other possible factors will be too one-sided when understanding the concept of gambling passion^[5]. Siler (2010) proposed that the social factor is also the one that cannot be ignored^[18]. This paper holds that future research may also start from different perspectives like environmental factors, family, peers, media publicity factors and so on.

Ki-Joon Back et al., (2011) and Choong-Ki Lee et al., (2013) proposed that future research can start from actual gambling behavior (like gambling time, gambling costs, etc.)^{[7][13]}. Considering the previous literature on gambling passion, this paper also find that when studying the outcome variables of gambling passion, it only proves that gambling passion can affect gambling behavioral intention, but lacks the discussion on actual gambling behavior. Thus, understanding the actual gambling behavior caused by gambling passion is significant for further perfecting the gambling passion model.

References

- [1]Gambling Commission(2020). Gambling participation in 2019: behavior , awareness and attitudes. Retrieved from <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/PDF/survey-data/Gambling-participation-in-2019-behaviour-awareness-and-attitudes.pdf>
- [2]Curran, T., Hill, A., Appleton, P., Vallerand, R., & Standage, M. (2015). The psychology of passion: A meta-analytical review of a decade of research on intrapersonal outcomes. *Motivation and Emotion*, 39(5), 631–655.
- [3]Vallerand, R. J. (2015). *The psychology of passion*. New-York: Academic Press.
- [4]Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Latelle, C., Leonardo, M., et al. (2003).Les passions del'Ame: on obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(4), 756–767.
- [5]Adèle Morvannou, Magali Dufour, Eva Monson & élise Roy (2018)Passion for gambling: a scoping review, *International Gambling Studies*, 18:3, 460-476, DOI:10.1080/14459795.2018.1459777
- [6]Rousseau, F. L., Vallerand, R. J., Ratelle, C. F., & Provencher, P. J. (2002). Passion and gambling: on the validation of the gambling passion scale (GPS). *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 18(1), 45–66.
- [7]Back, K., Lee, C., & Stinchfield, R. (2011). Gambling motivation and passion: a comparison study of recreational and pathological gamblers. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 27(3), 355–370.
- [8]Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C.M., Koestner, R., & Gagné, M.(2001).Les passions de l'ame: On obsessive and harmonious passion. Manuscript in preparation, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada.
- [9]Lee, C., Chung, N., & Bernhard, B. J. (2013). Examining the structural relationships among gambling motivation, passion, and consequences of internet sports betting. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 30(4), 845–858.
- [10]Deci, E. L.,&Ryan, R. M.(1991). A motivational approach to self: Integration in personality. In R.Deinstbier(Ed.), *Nebraska symposium on motivation: Vol.38. Perspectives on*

motivation(pp.237-288). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

[11]Ryan,R.M.,&Deci,E.L.(2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*,55,68-78.

[12] Rodriguez, L. M., Neighbors, C., Rinker, D. V., & Tackett, J. L. (2015). Motivational profiles of gambling behavior: Self-determination theory, gambling motives, and gambling behavior. *Journal of gambling studies*, 31(4), 1597-1615.

[13]Lee, C., Back, K., Hodgins, D. C., & Lee, T. K. (2013). Examining antecedents and consequences of gambling passion: The case of gambling on horse races. *Psychiatry Investigation*, 10(4), 365–372.

[14]Lee, C. K., Lee, Y. K., Bernhard, B. J., & Yoon, Y. S. (2006). Segmenting casino gamblers by motivation: a cluster analysis of Korean gamblers. *Tourism Management*, 27(5), 856–866.

[15]Ratelle, C. F., Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G. A., Rousseau, F. L., & Provencher, P. P. (2004). When passion leads to problematic outcomes: a look at gambling. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 20(2), 105–119.

[16]Mageau, G. A., Vallerand, R. J., Rousseau, F. L., Ratelle, C. F., & Provencher, P. J. (2005). Passion and gambling: Investigating the divergent affective and cognitive consequences of gambling. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 35(1), 100–118.

[17]Lee, J., Chen, C., Song, H., & Lee, C. (2013). The role of responsible gambling strategy and gambling passion in the online gamblers' decision-making process: Revising the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 30(2), 403–422.

[18]Siler, K. (2010). Social and psychological challenges of poker. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 26(3),401–420.