Reasons for Limiting Gambling: A New Scale for Assessing the Psychological Dimensions of Controlled Gambling

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Over 75% of Canadians gamble and the majority do so in a controlled manner. Hence, most gamblers are able to limit their involvement in games of chance and prevent serious harm. Currently, there is a paucity of research and a lack of assessment tools on the reasons gamblers give for limiting their gambling. There are many similarities between alcohol and gambling such that research in the former is often used as a template for the latter. For example, both alcohol and gambling are:

- Legalized
- Government regulated
- Available in different forms and dosages
- Have the potential to cause harm

Adapted Scales: Items from the following two alcohol scales were adapted for gambling:

Reasons for Limiting Drinking Scale (Greenfield, Guydish & Temple 1989) - Developed scale by adapting 9 items from the Reasons for Not Drinking Scale and 13 items came from responses of a student committee. - Found that common reasons given for limiting drinking included self-control and external authorities (religion, parents, etc.).

Motives to Control Alcohol Quantity Scale (Trimmel & Kopke, 2006) - Developed scale by asking participants their reasons for not drinking after a certain quantity and for not drinking daily. - Motivational concepts were organized into 3 clusters: - Emotional concepts / fear of addiction - Physiological sensations / interaction with concrete plans - Cognitive concepts (plans, self-control, no desire, etc.)

Research on the psychological dimensions of controlled gambling has the potential to inform evidence-based responsible gambling strategies.

Objective: The aim of the present study was to develop a self-report measure of the reasons people identify for limiting how much they gamble.

Instrument: An initial list of approximately 80 items was adapted from the Reasons for Limiting Drinking Scale (Greenfield et al., 1989) and the Motives to Control Drinking Questionnaire (Trimmel et al., 2000).

Item refinement stage: Initial version of scale was emailed to 10 research experts across Canada (8 of whom responded). Reviewers were asked to rate appropriateness of each item, identify problematic items, and provide general feedback.

Questionnaire components: - 47 reasons for limiting gambling, each of which was rated on:  - How important is this reason to limiting your own gambling (very important, somewhat important, not important, not a reason at all). - How applicable is this reason to gambling (on a scale from 0-10). - An open-ended question asking participants for additional reasons - General demographics section - CPGI (Canadian Problem Gambling Index) – gambling participation and history. Administered online, via survey monkey.

Participants: - 494 undergraduate students from the University of Calgary. - Exclusion criteria: Must be 18-30 years of age, and have gambled at least once in the past 12 months.

Mean age: 20.3 years; 71% female

Factor Analysis:
- Maximum likelihood extraction using SPSS
- Direct oblimin rotation (variables assumed to be correlated).

Underlying Factor Structure: Best-fitting model was a 5-Factor model based on statistical criteria & subjective criteria (loading & ability to name factors).

Table 1. Factor Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Model</th>
<th>χ² (df)</th>
<th>Variance Explained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 - Factor</td>
<td>2068.97</td>
<td>27.43 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Factor</td>
<td>1744.67</td>
<td>30.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Factor</td>
<td>1482.82</td>
<td>33.39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Factor</td>
<td>1240.63</td>
<td>33.71 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 5-Factors (and examples of items loading on each factor):

Internal Emotional Conflict (Cronbach’s α = .85)
- My family or friends get upset when I gamble
- I want to prevent becoming addicted to gambling

External Pressure (α = .64)
- I can’t afford to gamble
- I don’t gamble when I have to work or go to school the next day

Recognition of Negative Psychological Impact (α = .85)
- I don’t gamble when I have to work or go to school the next day
- I want to prevent becoming addicted to gambling

Predictive Validity:
Does the number of reasons given for limiting gambling affect how much money and time is spent on gambling activities?

Expected Results: ⬆️ Total Reasons would lead to ⬆️ Time ⬆️ Money

Actual Results: Non-significant relationship

Table 2. Factor Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Ratings (Reasons)</th>
<th>Total Minutes (Time)</th>
<th>Total Dollars (Money)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r = .006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>r = .038, p = .44</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Subscale Correlation: Table 3. Money Subscale Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money Subscale</th>
<th>Total Dollars</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r = -.163, p = .001</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Significant negative correlation was in the intended direction:
- The more someone said that money was an important reason for limiting how much they gambled, the less money they were actually spending on gambling activities.

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