

# PRIMARY GAMBLING MOTIVES AMONG INDIVIDUALS WHO PARTICIPATE IN SPECULATIVE FINANCIAL MARKET ACTIVITIES

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## INTRODUCTION

- Speculative financial market activities (SFMA) are short-term, high-risk financial instruments (e.g., day trading, penny stocks, shorting stocks).
- SFMAs share similarities with gambling (Arthur et al., 2016). For example:
  - The outcomes of SFMAs are chance-based.
  - SFMAs involve staking money on events of an unknown outcome with a high risk of loss.
- Past research has shown those who engage in SFMAs display greater problem gambling severity levels (Arthur et al., 2015; 2017).
- Currently, however, motivations for gambling among those who engage in SFMAs, and mechanisms that may underlie their risk for problem gambling are not well understood.

## METHODS

- Using the Alberta Gambling Research Institute National Project Online Panel dataset,  $N = 9,652$  current (i.e., past 12-month) gamblers were identified as speculative gamblers (SGs;  $n = 1,165$ ) or non-speculative gamblers (NSGs;  $n = 8,487$ ), based on whether they had or had not engaged in SFMAs within the past 12 months, respectively.
- Participants answered questions about the types of SFMAs they had engaged in, identified their single, primary motive for gambling, and completed the Problem Gambling Severity Index, and the Gambling Fallacies Measure.
- Seven types of SFMA involvement were identified: (i) day trading, (ii) penny stocks, (iii) shorting stocks, (iv) options, (v) futures, (vi) financial index betting, and (vii) other.
- Six primary motives were identified: (i) financial, (ii) enhancement, (iii) social, (iv), coping, (v) skill building, and (vi) other.
- Statistical analyses: Chi-square tests of independence and Mann-Whitney U-tests.

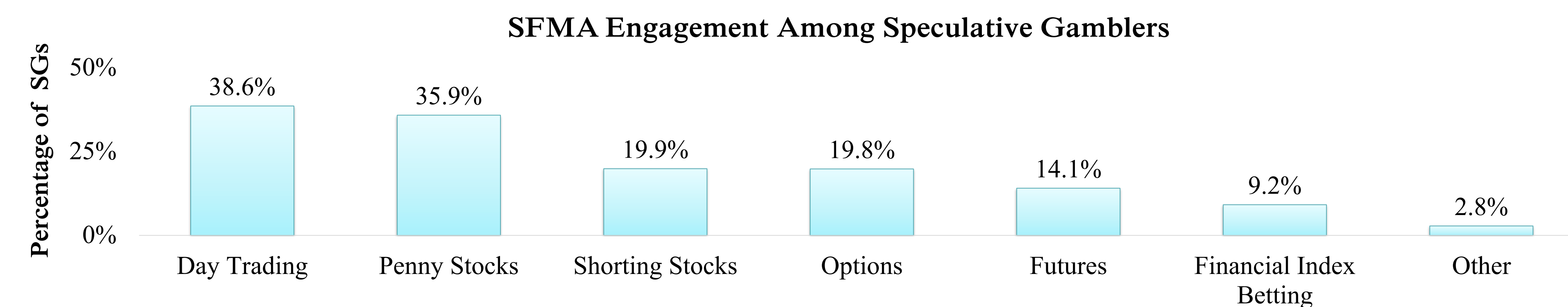
## QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESES

- **Q1:** Will NSGs and SGs differ in their primary motives for gambling?
- **Q2:** Will NSGs and SGs differ in their endorsement of gambling fallacies?
- **H1:** Relative to NSGs, SGs will exhibit greater problem gambling severity.

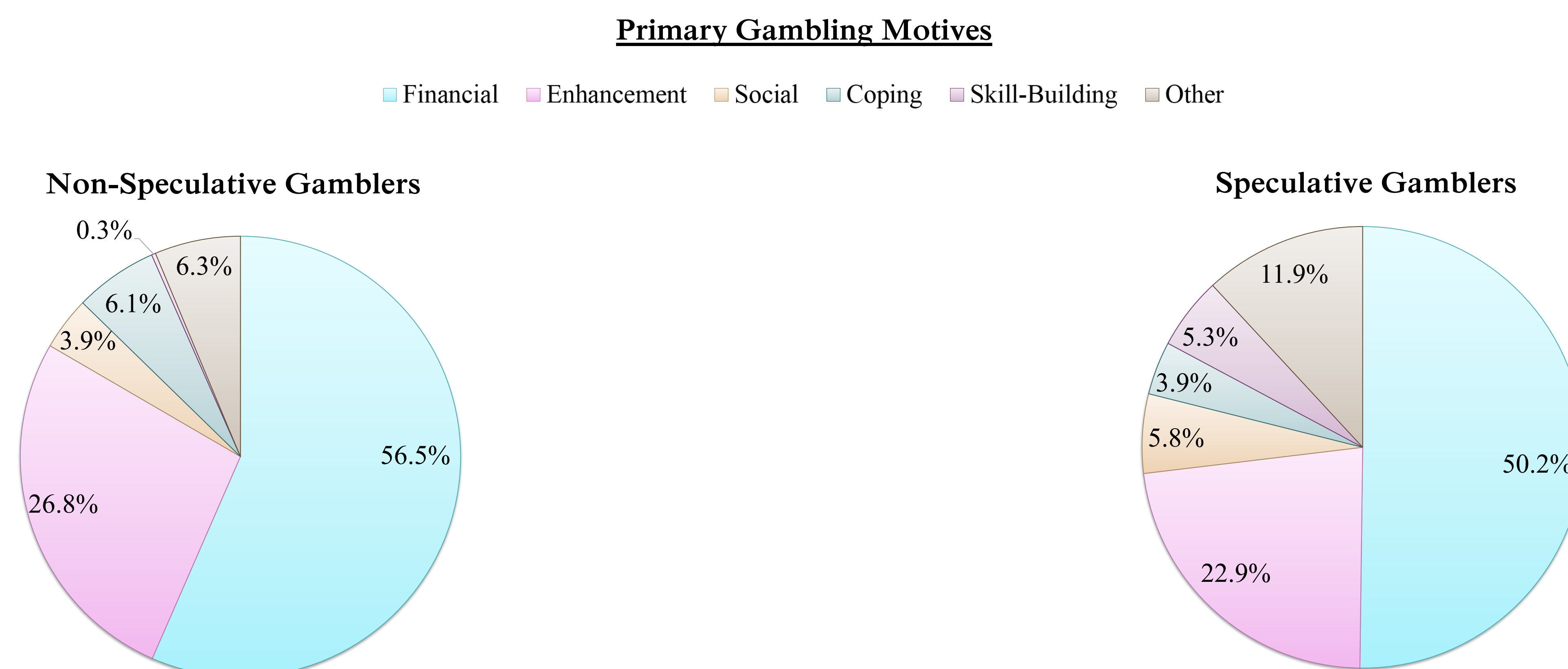
## PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

- Mean age:  $52.2 \pm 15.4$  years.
- Gender distribution: 53% female; 47% male.

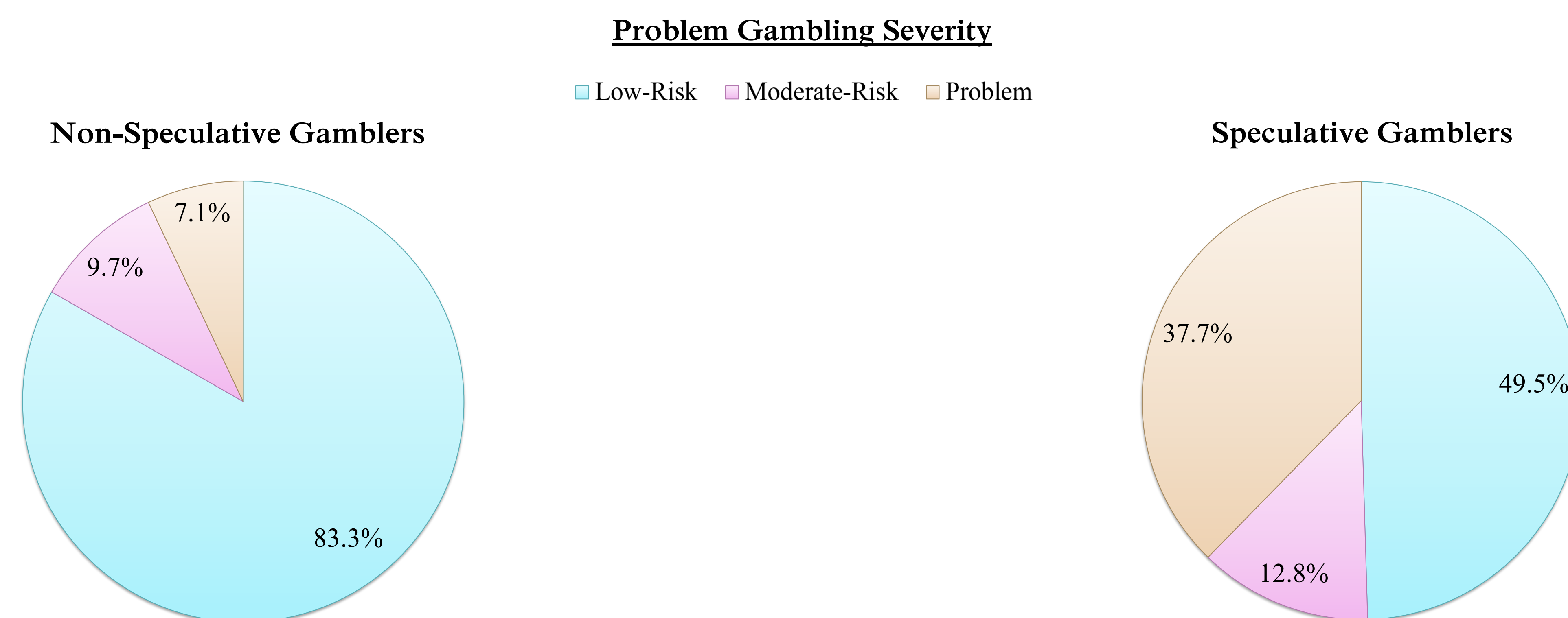
## RESULTS: SFMA ENGAGEMENT, PRIMARY GAMBLING MOTIVES, & PROBLEM GAMBLING SEVERITY



**Figure 1.** Percentage of SGs who engage in each type of SFMA. 26.7% of SGs engaged in more than one type of SFMA. 'Other' SFMAs include cryptocurrency and contract for differences (CFD) trading.



**Figure 2.** Proportions of endorsed primary gambling motives among NSGs and SGs. 'Other' motives include gambling on special occasions and playing out of habit.  $\chi^2(5) = 345.66, p < .001, V = .19$ .



**Figure 3.** Proportions of low-risk, moderate-risk, and problem gamblers among NSGs and SGs.  $\chi^2(2) = 1049.21, p < .001, V = .33$ .

## RESULTS: GAMBLING FALLACIES



**Figure 4.** Median Gambling Fallacies Measure score by gambler type.  $U = 3,239,476.50, p < .001, r = 0.20$ .

## SUMMARY & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- In support of our hypothesis (H1), and in line with previous research findings, SGs reported greater problem gambling severity.
- Compared to NSGs, SGs were significantly more likely to endorse social, and skill-building motives, and less likely to endorse enhancement, coping, and financial motives for gambling (Q1).
- SGs scored lower on the Gambling Fallacies Measure (Q2), suggesting they exhibit less resistance to beliefs in fallacies related to understanding how gambling actually works.
  - Greater endorsement of skill-building motives may be explained by a preference among SGs for skill-based forms of gambling (Arthur et al., 2015).
  - Endorsement of gambling fallacies has been associated with a preference for skill-based forms of gambling (Toneatto et al., 1997) and problem gambling (Leonard et al., 2021). These factors may underlie SGs' increased propensity for problem gambling.
- These findings suggest the development of prevention strategies for problem gambling that target people who might view SFMAs as a less harmful form of gambling, or not at all as gambling may be warranted.
- Although significant differences were revealed, SGs' gambling motives may have been masked by their engagement in multiple forms of gambling. Future research should compare NSGs to individuals whose only form of gambling engagement is SFMAs in order to better elucidate which gambling motives influence SGs' proneness to problem gambling.

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