

Spinning Religiously: A Study on the Predictive Power of Religiosity on Bahamian Online Gamblers' Motivation and Intensity

Christopher Saunders  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8377-4041>

Communication and Creative Arts

University of The Bahamas

<https://doi.org/10.15362/ijbs.v26i0.335>

Abstract

A survey of Bahamians explored the influence of the participant's self-reported levels of religiosity on gambling behaviour. The study also investigated Bahamians' motivations to participate in online games of chance. Results showed that religiosity was a significant predictor of motivations to not only attend these online games of chance but also the level in which these games were attended. The results are analysed in light of the uses and gratification paradigm while expanding the research into the connection of religiosity and gambling.

Introduction

Although visitors to The Bahamas have been allowed to legally gamble in hotel casinos for decades, Bahamians only gained the right to legally gamble in The Bahamas in 2014 with the passage of three pieces of legislation: the Gaming Act, the Gaming Regulations, and the Gaming House Operator Regulation (Gaming Board for The Bahamas, 2020). Previously, legislation specifically prohibited Bahamians from playing in any game of chance. In spite of its prohibition, Bahamians had a long history of participation in gambling activities. Before the advent of the internet, Bahamians would go to what are locally called "numbers men" on the street and make a wager with them. More recently, enterprising numbers men have formed companies and have computerized the process allowing for official printouts and even online wagering—even before the passage of legislation allowing Bahamian legal participation. With the addition of online wagering, Bahamians have been introduced to online slot machines. In many

instances, residents sit in what are euphemistically known locally as web cafes and play—or in the local parlance *spin*—much of the day. Users are not confined to these web cafes and are able to play on their phones or home computers as well. Bahamians, however, continue to be banned from playing in brick and mortar casinos as that is reserved for tourists or non-Bahamians.

Much of the debate surrounding the passage of the legalization of gaming for Bahamians had been from a religious standpoint; however, many believe, albeit anecdotally, those who gamble locally are religious, despite most United States-centric research indicating the inverse (Ellison & McFarland, 2011). Indeed, despite the recent legalization of gambling for Bahamians in The Bahamas, the debate over gambling and religion continues. However, there has been little to no research on the religiosity of the players and how that religiosity predicts the motivations of the players or the intensity and

passion of the players or to what level they are driven to play.

This current exploratory study ($N = 233$) aims at exploring not only the motivations of these players in an under-researched group but also how religiosity predicts these motivations and passions.

Islands in The Stream

In 2014, in an effort to fulfill a campaign promise, the governing Progressive Liberal Party held a non-binding referendum on the legalization of these web shops and allowing Bahamians to freely and legally participate. The Bahamas Christian Council—made up of leaders from many denominations—openly condemned the thought of allowing Bahamians to legally gamble. The referendum failed; voters soundly rejected allowing Bahamians to legally participate in gambling. Religious leaders then ramped up their rebuke of the government in the wake of the failed referendum as the government went ahead with the legalization of these web shops and allowing Bahamians to gamble legally. Three pastors, Lyall Bethel, Cedric Moss and Allan Lee, were unflinching in their attack:

Mr Prime Minister, we believe God has waited for you and your government to either abandon your reckless course of action or to store up His wrath against your unprincipled and immoral decision to ignore the voice of the people despite your solemn promise to heed it," they wrote. "However, you and your government have decided to store up God's wrath against yourselves. Accordingly, we state for the record that you have not gotten away with this heinous act; God will have the last say in this matter. We leave you to His righteous judgment, and judge He will. (Thompson, 2014, p. 1A)

It is with that in mind that this paper is guided to ask questions about the connection of religiosity to attendance of online gaming.

Theoretical Background — Uses and Gratification Paradigm

Researchers (Krcmar, 2017; Blumler, 1979, 2019) contend there is no theory that specifically names "uses and gratifications," while in reality there are "plenty of theories about uses and gratifications phenomena [may] well differ with each other over many issues" (Blumler, 1979, p. 11). Blumler adds that "the distinctive mission of uses and gratifications research is to get to grips with the nature of audience experience itself" (1979, p. 12). Despite these differences, Blumler (2019) finds three distinct features of the phenomenon: information-seeking, diversion, and a personal identity function. As Rubin (2009) explains, communication behaviours, including the selection and use of whatever media (online gaming, radio, television, etc.) are "goal-directed, purposive, and motivated" (p. 167). Furthermore, Deci and Ryan (2008) argue that motivations are intrinsically psychological and have two anticipated outcomes—either to "obtain a tangible reward or to avoid a punishment" (p. 184). This motivation, however, has differences in that some people utilize different media for different reasons and anticipate different outcomes.

Intrinsic motivation is grounded in self-determination theory developed by Ryan and Deci (2000), and they point out this type of motivation could be the driving force behind innovation in humans because it is "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). Sheldon, et al.'s (2001) study supported Ryan and Deci's (2000) position that the top psychological needs are

autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Passion Fuels Motivations

Researchers (Lalande et al., 2017; Deleuze et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003) have found passion has a significant influence on motivations, gambling motivations included. Vallerand et al. (2003) believed that passion “can fuel motivation, enhance well-being, and provide meaning in everyday life” (p. 756). However, the actual concept of passion has received little attention in research and those that do focus on the motivational qualities of the concept. For instance, Frijda et al. (1991) posited “passions are defined as high-priority goals with emotionally important outcomes” (p. 218). According to Frijda et al. (1991), individuals will spend large amounts of time and effort to reach their passionate goals. This passion can also help drive an entrepreneurial spirit and drive innovation among other outcomes (Schenkel et al., 2019). In short, passion is an affective response or “a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy” (Vallerand, 2003, p. 757). Vallerand et al. (2003) actually propose two types of passion: harmonious and obsessive.

Harmonious Passion. Vallerand et al. (2003) believe that some activities are so much a part of a person that it changes them from being an individual taking part in an activity to an essential member of a group. In their example, persons who enjoy running become runners, persons who enjoy reading become readers, and those who enjoy playing the guitar become guitar players. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 2008), these participants are looking for a reward of sorts such as “the hope of satisfying basic psychological needs of autonomy (a desire to feel a sense of personal initiative), competence (a desire to interact effectively with the environment), and relatedness”

(Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 757). In this paradigm, Bahamians who play online games of chance, or spin in the local vernacular, become spinners—they own the activity and feel a part of something larger or it has become “incorporated in the person’s identity to the extent that they are highly valued” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 757). This ownership leads to passion for this activity. This harmonious passion occurs when the participant is not compelled to perform the activity, but they are freely choosing to participate in the activity. The activity takes up a lot of the participants’ time, but it is not overpowering and “in harmony with other aspects of the person’s life” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p.757). This allows the user to exercise some control over the activity.

Obsessive Passion. Obsessive passion is opposite of harmonious passion. Individuals find this passion uncontrollable because they have made the activity such a part of them that they cannot help but be a part of the activity. They may even enjoy the activity, but because they cannot control their participation in the activity, the activity must run its course. The activity takes such a strong hold on their life it “eventually takes disproportionate space in the person’s identity and causes conflict with other activities in the person’s life” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 757); the user can no longer control the activity.

Motivation to gamble

Previous researchers (Back et al., 2011) developed five motivations towards gambling that fall into two broad categories of extrinsic motivation (e.g., escape, socialization, and winning) and intrinsic (e.g., challenge and excitement). These motivations are based on previous applications of the uses and gratification paradigm (Back et al., 2011; Marmurek, 2018; Mathieu et al., 2018; McGrath &

Thege, 2018). Intrinsic motivation is described as the motivation that leads to the expected outcome of enjoyment. In this relation, the expected outcome generally falls into two categories: the excitement of the games and experiencing the thrill of the challenge the games present. Extrinsic motivation, however, looks beyond the game itself and expected outcomes not associated specifically with the game but as a result of participating in the games. In this relation, the expected outcome generally falls into three categories: escape from normal activities, socializing with like-minded individuals, and winning money.

Religion and gambling

Most religious texts—The Bible included—do not specifically prohibit gambling. However, gambling “is seen as idolatrous and contrary to God’s omniscience. Relying on luck or fate is similar to worshiping pagan god” (Hoffmann, 2000, p. 490). Hoffmann does continue to point out that gambling puts a focus on material gain, violates a work ethic pushed by The Bible, and is habit-forming. Religious beliefs play a significant part in sculpting social behaviour (Fam et al., 2004), and researchers have found (Browne et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018) that religiosity can in some case predict gambling disorders.

It should be pointed out at this point the difference between religiosity, religious belief, and religious activity. This study embraces Pearce and Denton’s (2011) view of religiosity that embraces belief, activity, and the significance of the religion in that person’s life as opposed to a simple belief in a monotheistic or polytheistic religion or simple participation in these religions.

Continuing on with the connection between religion and gambling, there is support for an inverse relationship between religious participation frequency and the number of gambling games (bingo, lottery, track wagers, and casino games) a person

participated in (Beyerlein & Sallaz, 2017; Lam, 2006). One study (Lam, 2006), however, found that importance a person puts on personal faith did not have any statistical impact on participating in a gambling activity. Religiosity has also been found as a negative influence on problem gambling (Mutti-Packer et al., 2017), while at the same time, the study found that “the relationship between religiosity and problem gambling is complex and nuanced” (Conclusions, p. 10).

Nonetheless, it is clear that religiosity and religion has an impact on gambling. Taking all of that into account and relating it to a Bahamian population, this study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1 – *What motivates Bahamians to attend online games of chance?*

RQ2 – *Does religiosity predict any of the motivations to gamble in Bahamians?*

RQ3 – *Does religiosity predict any of the affective responses to gambling in Bahamians?*

Method

Study Design and Sample. To answer the study’s research questions, a cross-section survey was administered online, using SurveyMonkey.com™, between February 27 and March 17, 2017. A snowball sampling technique was used to recruit participants, where the survey link was posted to the Facebook accounts of one of the researchers, who has a list of 2154 Facebook friends from The Bahamas. A total of 233 self-reported gamblers took part in the survey and that resulted in a response rate of 10.81%. For some of the analyses, the sample size is dropped by a few cases, due to missing values on some of the variables because of incompleteness of the questionnaire.

The mean age of respondents was 31.87 years ($SD = 10.04$). This is in line with the broader population of The Bahamas; the Bahamas

Department of Statistics projected a median age for the country of 29 (2017, p. 11). About a third of respondents had attended some college (31.2%), and almost a third actually had a first college degree (31.2%). Almost a third of the respondents graduated high school (30.7%). Only a small portion had not completed high school (4.8%), and an even smaller percentage had an advanced degree (1.7%). It is impossible to compare this representation to the Bahamian population as a whole, as the Department of Statistics has not collected this type of information in a countrywide census.

Interestingly, survey respondents reported household incomes on average higher than the average Bahamian household, which the Bahamas Department of Statistics estimated in 2017 to be \$39,048 (p. 11). In the current study, almost half of the sample in the study reported household income in the range of \$75,000-\$99,999 (47.4%), while a third of the sample reported household incomes less than \$50,000 a year (30%), and another quarter (15.2%) reported household income between \$50,000 and \$74,999. The remainder reported incomes more than \$100,000.

Religion in The Bahamas. The Central Intelligence Agency (2016) reports diversity in religions in The Bahamas with the major denomination being Baptist at 34.9%, Anglican (Anglo-Catholic) making up 13.7% of the population, and Roman Catholic making up 12% of the population. The remaining denominations included Pentecostal at 8.9%, Seventh Day Adventist at 4.4%, Methodist at 3.6%, and Church of God at 1.9%. Respondents were asked to report their religious affiliation. The largest religious denomination reported was Baptist with 29.4%. Anglo-Catholic or Anglicans made up the second largest denomination

with 17.3%. Church of God and Church of God of Prophecy members made up the next two groups with 13.4% and 11.7%, respectively. Roman Catholic was the fifth largest denomination with 10.8%. Other reported denominations of Christianity include Non-denominational (5.2%), Methodist (4.3%), Seventh Day Adventist (3.9%) and Pentecostal (2.9%). Less than one percent of respondents indicated being members of the Jehovah's Witness faith or being of the Jewish faith. None of the respondents reported being members of Islam, Hinduism, Rastafarianism, or the Greek-Orthodox faiths.

Variables

Spinning Intensity. Ellison et al. (2007) devised the variable Intensity of Facebook Use which measures not just the time a user interacted with the social network site but also the emotional engagement with the online medium along with the level of integration in the user's daily life. This was essentially an affective measure towards the social networking site and has been adapted by other researchers for other media (Saunders et al., 2015). As the Facebook intensity measure was used to gauge an online interaction with a social network site, the current study adopted these measures within the context of the intensity to attend online games of chance. The six items measuring affective and cognitive attitudes toward Facebook were rated on a 7-point scale anchored by *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. A factor analysis showed that all items loaded satisfactorily on one factor with 69.57% of the variance explained—and were found to be reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.925$; see Table 1 for more details). Based on this, the six items were computed into one variable.

Table 1
Factor loadings, Reliability and Variance Explained for Affective Response Variables

Variable	Items	Loading	Cronbach's α
Spinning intensity	Spinning is a part of my everyday life	0.885	0.925
	I am proud to tell people that I spin	0.718	
	Spinning has become part of my daily routine	0.916	
	I feel out of touch when I haven't been spinning for a while	0.872	
	I feel I am part of the spinning community	0.843	
	I would be sorry if spinning was shut down	0.816	
	Variance explained: 69.57%		
Obsessive passion	I can't live without spinning	0.884	0.954
	I am emotionally dependent on spinning	0.932	
	I have a tough time controlling my need to spin	0.936	
	I have an almost obsessive feeling for spinning	0.921	
	The urge to spin is so strong, I cannot help myself from spinning	0.932	
Variance explained: 84.88%			
Harmonious passion	Spinning allows me to live memorable experiences	0.931	0.952
	Spinning is in harmony with other activities in my life	0.913	
	The new things that I discover when spinning allow me to appreciate it even more	0.906	
	Spinning reflects the qualities that I like about myself	0.903	
	Spinning allows me to live a variety of experiences	0.926	
Variance explained: 83.86%			
Religiosity	My faith involves all of my life.	0.561	0.776
	One should seek God's guidance when making every important decision.	0.633	
	In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine	0.671	
	It doesn't matter so much what I believe as long as I lead a moral life	0.528	
	Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs	0.782	
	Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.	0.670	
	My faith sometimes restricts my actions.	0.373	
	Nothing is as important to me as serving God as best I know how	0.656	
	I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.	0.619	
	My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.	0.552	
Variance explained: 42.19%			

Motivations to gamble. Drawing on Back, et al. (2011) previous research into motivations to gamble and affective responses to gambling, the researchers adopted those scales in a Bahamian context. The three

extrinsic motivations (escape, socialization, and winning) and two intrinsic motivations (challenge and excitement) were each measured with a separate battery of items rated on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by

strongly disagree and *strongly agree*. A factor analysis of each battery showed items loaded satisfactorily on one factor with between 67.48% and 79.75% of the variance

explained. They were also found to be sufficiently reliable. This is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Factor loadings, Reliability and Variance Explained for Gambling Motivation Variables

Variable	Items	Loading	Cronbach's α
EIM - Escape	I spin to release daily stress	0.883	0.936
	I spin to alleviate boredom	0.823	
	I spin to escape from everyday life	0.924	
	I spin to escape from overwork & responsibility	0.906	
	I spin to release tension	0.925	
	Variance explained: 79.75%		
EIM - Social	I spin to be with people who enjoy the same things I do	0.774	0.877
	I spin to be with friends	0.935	
	I spin because my friends spin as well	0.930	
	I spin to meet new people	0.867	
	Variance explained: 77.23%		
ECM - Winning	I spin to win money	0.842	0.790
	I spin to win back money that I've lost	0.820	
	I spin for a chance of hitting a jackpot	0.910	
	Variance explained: 73.66%		
IM - Challenge	I spin for the challenge	0.822	0.877
	I spin to get better at the game	0.902	
	I spin so that I can experience and achievement	0.828	
	I spin to learn more about the games	0.822	
	I spin to take risks	0.724	
	Variance explained: 67.48%		
IM - Excitement	I spin because the games are enjoyable	0.856	0.865
	I spin because the game offer excitement	0.915	
	I spin because the games are interesting to me	0.918	
	I spin because I am so curious	0.685	
	Variance explained: 72.09%		

Obsessive Passion. The five items measuring obsessive passion as an affective response to gambling was rated on a 7-point scale anchored by *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. A factor analysis showed all items loaded satisfactorily on one factor with 84.88% of the variance explained and were found to be reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.953$; see Table 1 for more details). Based on this, the five items were computed into one variable.

Harmonious Passion. The five items measuring harmonious passion as an affective response to gambling was rated on a 7-point scale anchored by *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. A factor analysis showed all items loaded satisfactorily on one factor with 83.86% of the variance explained and were found to be reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.95$; see Table 1 for more details). Based on this, the five items were computed into one variable.

Religiosity. For the study, the Hoge Intrinsic Religiosity Scale (1972), which measures religiosity with a battery of ten items, was used. Respondents were asked their agreement with ten items (three of which were reverse coded) on a 7-point scale anchored by *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. A factor analysis showed all items loaded satisfactorily on one factor with 42.19% of the variance explained and were found to be reliable (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.776$; see Table 1 for details). Based on this, the five items were computed into one variable.

Data Analysis

To answer the study’s first research question about what motivates Bahamians to participate in online games of chance, each motivation was ranked based on the means of each variable and then ranked according to this ranking. The second question was measured by five multiple regression

equations with the five gambling motivations as the dependent variable and religiosity as the independent variable. The third research question was explored by running three multiple regression equations with affective response (spinning intensity, obsessive passion, and harmonious passion) as the dependent variable and religiosity as the independent variable. In each regression equation for RQ2 and RQ3, socio-economic factors (gender, education, household income, and age) were controlled for by entering them as a first block of variables before entering the main independent variable. Correlations among variables is summed in Table 3, and a collinearity check was made for the variables. Even though many of the variables are very statistically correlated, variance inflation factor (*VIF*) values of between 1.087 and 5.063 were found for the variables—well under the threshold of a *VIF* = 10 suggested by scholars (Kutner et al., 2004).

Table 3
Correlation values for variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Age	1.000												
Gender	-.111	1.000											
Education	-.136*	.253***	1.000										
Income	-.038	.600***	.418***	1.000									
Spinning Intensity	-.090	.453***	.029	.278***	1.000								
Motivation – Escape	-.172**	.492***	.198**	.345***	.630***	1.000							
Motivation – Socialization	.104	-.118	.137*	.105	.055	.201**	1.000						
Motivation – Winning	-.111	.366***	.128	.217**	.409***	.515***	-.030	1.000					
Motivation – Challenge	-.235***	.421***	.127	.261***	.607***	.662***	.146*	.464***	1.000				
Motivation – Excitement	-.072	.395***	-.049	.303***	.412***	.543***	.182**	.322***	.612***	1.000			
Obsessive Passion	-.192**	.473***	.220**	.373***	.597***	.790***	.165*	.533***	.619***	.355**	1.000		
Harmonious Passion	-.265***	.544***	.284***	.352***	.660***	.810***	.130*	.507***	.664**	.463***	.851***	1.000	
Religiosity	-.159*	.373**	.127	.289***	.504***	.523***	-.164*	.422***	.435**	.281***	.448***	.527***	1.000

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Results

The study aimed at identifying motivations among Bahamians to engage in online games of chance, their level of religiosity, their affective response to these games, and the affect religiosity had on that affective response.

Motivations to Spin

Results showed the motivation to engage in online games of chance was most highly motivated by the prospect of winning money ($M = 6.52$, $SD = 0.90$) and escaping everyday activities ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.93$). The third and fourth ranked motivators were the excitement of gambling ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.65$) and overcoming the challenges the games presented ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.87$). The socialization aspect was very low in the ranking of motivation to engage in the games.

Religiosity Predicting Motivations

Results showed a statistically significant difference between the control variables (age, gender, household income, and level of education) and effect of religiosity on the motivational variables of escape, socialization, winning, challenge, and excitement. The regression equation with a statistically significant result was found for each variable as well, and the beta weights of each variable was statistically significant to some degree as well. In sum, it was found that as the reported level of religiosity increased, the subject was more likely to spin as a means of escape, as a means to win money, as a way to find a challenge, and as outlet for excitement. It was also found that as self-reported religiosity increased, the motivation to gamble as a means of socialization decreased. These results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Influence of religiosity and demographics on motivations to attend online games of chance by Bahamians

Predictors	Escape	Social	Winning	Challenge	Excitement
Age	-0.026*	0.012	-0.007	-0.038**	-0.010
Gender	1.490***	-0.947***	0.532***	1.339***	1.041***
Education	0.043	0.185	0.028	-0.037	-0.368**
Income	0.222	0.342***	0.019	0.119	0.274*
R ² Block 1	0.279***	0.132***	0.133***	0.220***	0.205***
Religiosity	0.763***	-0.221*	0.322***	0.606***	0.251*
R ² Block 2	0.101***	0.018*	0.095***	0.067***	0.015*
Total R ²	0.380***	0.150*	0.229***	0.287***	0.220*

Note: Entries are beta weights from the multiple regression equation.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Religiosity Predicting Obsessive Passion

Results showed a statistically significant difference between the control variables (age, gender, household income, and level of education) and effect of religiosity on the

variable obsessive passion ($R^2\Delta = 0.287$; $F(1,217) = 21.549$, $p < .001$). The regression equation with a statistically significant result was found ($F(5,217) = 21.755$, $p < .001$) with a total R² change of 0.334. A β variable for

religiosity was found at 0.558 ($p < .001$). This result indicated that as the level of reported religiosity increased the obsessive passion for gaming also increased.

Religiosity Predicting Harmonious Passion

Results showed a statistically significant difference between the control variables (age, gender, household income, and level of education) and effect of religiosity on the variable harmonious passion ($R^2\Delta = 0.366$; $F(1,217) = 31.529$, $p < .001$). The regression equation with a statistically significant result was found ($F(5,217) = 36.703$, $p < .001$) with a total R^2 change of 0.458. A beta variable for religiosity was found at 0.749 ($p < .001$). This result indicated that as the level of reported religiosity increased the harmonious passion for gaming also increased.

Religiosity Predicting Spinning Intensity

Results showed a statistically significant difference between the control variables (age, gender, household income, and level of education) and effect of religiosity on the variable harmonious passion ($R^2\Delta = 0.366$; $F(1,217) = 16.894$, $p < .001$). The regression equation with a statistically significant result was found ($F(5,217) = 22.284$, $p < .001$) with a total R^2 change of 0.458. A beta variable for religiosity was found at 0.640 ($p < .001$). This result indicated that as the level of reported religiosity increased the intensity for spinning also increased. The effect of religiosity on passion and intensity is summarized in Table 4.

Discussion

A set of interesting results explore the impact religiosity has on not only predicting the motivation for Bahamians to gamble but also the intensity and passion for which they attend these games of chance online. Even when controlling for the impact of socio-economic factors, religiosity seems to be a statistically reliable predictor for all of the

motivations for attending these online games of chance.

Many times gamblers are motivated to increase their winning (Back et al., 2011; Park et al., 2002), and the study's participants were no different in that the most prevalent motivation to attend these online games of chance was the prospect of winning money. The importance of winning money may not be a good sign for gamblers in the study as research (Back et al., 2010) has indicated when pathological gamblers win money it is more likely to lead to obsessive passion—or one that they have little control over because it has become so engrained in their daily routine. This means that if winning money is a major motivator for gamblers in The Bahamas, it has a high likelihood of leading to an obsession they have a hard time breaking.

Also, common sense would follow that because much of these online games are played not in actual casinos but rather at home or work on computers and mobile devices, the social aspect associated with brick and mortar casinos would not be a motivator for players. It should be pointed out though that gender played a role in this study with women being more inclined to be motivated by some sort of socialization aspect. Most of the literature includes a socialization aspect as a motivation to gamble because most of the research came before the proliferation of online gambling and focusses on casino gambling and sports betting in casinos (Lee et al., 2006; Neighbors et al., 2002; Nower & Blaszczynski, 2010) or horse betting (Chantal et al., 1995)—neither of which is a possibility for Bahamians in The Bahamas.

Religiosity was not the strongest predictor for the motivation of winning; more so the anticipation of escaping stress and daily routines were the stronger predictors. It may seem to follow that those who had strong

beliefs about religion also wanted escape their reality, but without an empirical connection, further research on this aspect could expand the knowledge base. Religiosity, however, was a strong and significant predictor of all of the affective responses to the gaming with the strong impact on harmonious passion. This seems counterintuitive as this variable measures how the activity is in keeping with the other aspects of the respondent's lives. If, as Hoffmann (2000) puts it, gambling is essentially contrary to the omniscience of God and flies in the face of biblical teaching and others depict "the gambler as sinful and depraved" (Binde, 2007, p.146), how then do respondents resolve that seeming inconsistency? This could be the basis for future studies among this population and religious gamblers, in general. Previous researchers (Abbott & Volberg, 2000) have indicated religious affiliation might play a role in the development of gambling and problem gambling and the connection between actual affiliation might be worthy of increased research. As Kim et al. (2018) hypothesized, "people who are religious may be more likely to believe that they can control the outcome (i.e., through an intervening higher power), despite the objective probability of success, which in turn may increase the risk of disordered gambling" (p. 406). This may very well be the case with Bahamian gamblers as they lean on their belief in a higher power of sorts to grant them success in their efforts.

Limitations

Despite our interesting findings, this study had some limitations. A cross-sectional survey was used to measure many of variables in the study, and so the study is hindered by the limitations of self-report measures. Second, the current study utilized a convenience sampling technique, which limits the generalizability of our findings to

the overall population. Also, this study focused solely on gambling behaviour in the paradigm of gambling intensity; future studies of this phenomenon could be expanded to include problem gambling as a variable to further understand how users—and more specifically Bahamian users—interact with online games of chance. As those in the sample seem highly motivated by the prospect of winning money, it could be assumed many may be problem gamblers as much research posits a connection between the two (Flack & Stevens, 2019; Mathieu et al., 2018) and future studies could explore these connections.

Theoretical Implications

The study helps better understand how media attendees—online gamblers included—consume media from a uses and gratifications approach. The media choice model (Duffy & Thorson, 2009) has been used previously to highlight how individual factors influence the type of communication needs and media choices of audience members. The role of religiosity as a predictor of gambling motivation and gambling intensity warrants further investigation. This phenomenon in a Bahamian paradigm compared to other cultures is also a possibility for further study. This study also presents some interesting findings that help support and expand theoretical applications to religion and gambling. This study seems to indicate that religiosity does have some importance to those who attend online games of chance—at least in this study of a Bahamian population. This seems to expand on the complex connection of religiosity and problem gambling indicated by Mutti-Packer et al. (2017); while at the same time contradicting Lam's 2006 study that showed little connection between personal faith and gambling activity as religiosity was a significant predictor of many of the motivations to gamble, gambling passion, and gambling (spinning) intensity.

The study also expands on the mainly United States-centric research that showed that those who gamble were not inclined to be religious (Ellison & McFarland, 2011). This may indicate that in The Bahamas population, residents are able to resolve the possible contradiction of religious beliefs and gambling. This phenomenon may be peculiar to The Bahamas, the Caribbean or Blacks—as The Bahamas is a predominately Black population—and this could be a possible avenue for further research. Further research could also segment the population by denomination to see if there is variance among those attributes.

In addition, the study provides support for the continued adaptation of Ellison et al. (2007) intensity of Facebook use for other media. And finally, this study could be the first that looks at religiosity as the predictor in gambling motivations in the under-studied group of Bahamians—an under researched

group when it comes to media attendance and motivation.

Conclusion

The current study offers a number of practical implications and moves commentary about religion and gambling from anecdotal to empirical. In the lead up to the country's non-binding referendum on the legalization of mini-casinos and locals being able to gamble, much of the coverage centred on the morality of gambling lead mainly by The Bahamas Christian Council. The leader of the Council Dr. Ranford Patterson, in the aftermath of the referendum, said that “the Church has always stood diametrically opposed to any form of gambling in this country” (Pyfrom, 2014). The church may seem to be opposed, but research is bearing out that those who are actually spinning and gambling may actually be embracing their God and spinning religiously.

References

- Abbott, M. W., & Volberg, R. A. (2000). *Taking the pulse on gambling and problem gambling in New Zealand: Phase One of the 1999 National Prevalence Survey*. New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs. [http://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/TakingthePulse.pdf/\\$file/TakingthePulse.pdf](http://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/TakingthePulse.pdf/$file/TakingthePulse.pdf)
- Back, K. J., Lee, C. K., & Stinchfield, R. (2011). Gambling motivation and passion: A comparison study of recreational and pathological gamblers. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 27(3), 355-370. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-010-9212-2>
- Bahamas Department of Statistics. (2017, May). *Labour force and household income survey*. https://www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/wcm/connect/f6787e9b-f3d2-45e6-b300-6f65ab444bf6/Labour+Force+Report+May_2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES
- Beyerlein, K., & Sallaz, J. J. (2017). Faith's wager: How religion deters gambling. *Social Science Research*, 62, 204-218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.07.007>
- Binde, P. (2007). Gambling and religion: Histories of concord and conflict. *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 20, 145-165. <http://jgi.camh.net/jgi/index.php/jgi/article/view/3769>
- Blumler, J. G. (1979). The role of theory in uses and gratifications studies. *Communication Research*, 6(9), 9-36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365027900600102>

- Blumler, J. G. (2019). Uses and gratifications research. *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*, 1-8.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118841570.iejs0032>
- Browne, M., Hing, N., Rockloff, M., Russell, A. M., Greer, N., Nicoll, F., & Smith, G. (2019). A multivariate evaluation of 25 proximal and distal risk-factors for gambling-related harm. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 8(4), 509.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm8040509>
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2016). *The world factbook*.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html>
- Chantal, Y., Vallerand, R. J., & Vallières, E. F. (1995). Motivation and gambling involvement. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 135(6), 755-763.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1995.9713978>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 49(3), 182-185.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012801>
- Deleuze, J., Long, J., Liu, T. Q., Maurage, P., & Billieux, J. (2018). Passion or addiction? Correlates of healthy versus problematic use of videogames in a sample of French-speaking regular players. *Addictive Behaviors*, 82, 114-121.
- Duffy, M. E., & Thorson, E. (2009). Emerging trends in the new media landscape. In J. Parker & E. Thorson (Eds.), *Health communication in the new media landscape* (pp. 93-116). Springer.
- Ellison, C. G., & McFarland, M. J. (2011). Religion and gambling among US adults: Exploring the role of traditions, beliefs, practices, and networks. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 50(1), 82-102.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2010.01553.x>
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook “friends”: Social capital and college students’ use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 12, 1143-1168.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x>
- Fam, K. S., Waller, D. S., & Erdogan, B. Z. (2004). The influence of religion on attitudes towards the advertising of controversial products. *European Journal of Marketing*, 38(5/6), 537-555.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560410529204>
- Flack, M., & Stevens, M. (2019). Gambling motivation: Comparisons across gender and preferred activity. *International Gambling Studies*, 19(1), 69-84.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14459795.2018.1505936>
- Frijda, N. H., Mesquita, B., Sonnemans, J., & Van Goozen, S. (1991). The duration of affective phenomena or emotions, sentiments, and passions. In K. T. Strongman (Ed.), *International review of studies on emotion* (pp. 187-225). Wiley.
- Gaming Board for The Bahamas. (2020). *About us: Gaming Board for The Bahamas*.
<https://www.gamingboardbahamas.com/about-us.html>

- Hoffmann, J. P. (2000). Religion and problem gambling in the US. *Review of Religious Research*, 41(4), 488-509.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-015-9532-3>
- Hoge, R. (1972). A validated intrinsic religious motivation scale. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 369-376.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1384677>
- Kim, H. S., Shifrin, A., Sztainert, T., & Wohl, M. J. (2018). Placing your faith on the betting floor: Religiosity predicts disordered gambling via gambling fallacies. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 7(2), 401-409.
<https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.7.2018.23>
- Krcmar, M. (2017). Uses and gratifications: Basic concepts. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0045>
- Kutner, M. H., Nachtsheim, C. J., & Neter, J. (2004). *Applied linear regression models*. McGraw-Hill.
- Lalande, D., Vallerand, R. J., Lafrenière, M. A. K., Verner-Filion, J., Laurent, F. A., Forest, J., & Paquet, Y. (2017). Obsessive passion: A compensatory response to unsatisfied needs. *Journal of Personality*, 85(2), 163-178.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12229>
- Lam, D. (2006). The influence of religiosity on gambling participation. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 22(3), 305-320.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-006-9018-4>
- 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.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.05.009>
- Marmurek, H. H. (2018). A dissociation of impulsivity and gambling cognition pathways to gambling urges via motivation. *Journal of Addiction and Clinical Research*, 2(1).
https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:EH_tPQ_QNxsJ:https://www.pulsus.com/scholarly-articles/a-dissociation-of-impulsivity-and-gambling-cognition-pathways-to-gambling-urges-via-motivation-4239.html+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=bs
- Mathieu, S., Barrault, S., Brunault, P., & Varescon, I. (2018). Gambling motives: Do they explain cognitive distortions in male poker gamblers? *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 34(1), 133-145.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-017-9700-8>
- McGrath, D. S., & Thege, B. K. (2018). The categorical stability of gambling motives among community-recruited gamblers: A longitudinal assessment. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 34(1), 21-38.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-017-9687-1>
- Mutti-Packer, S., Hodgins, D. C., Williams, R. J., & Thege, B. K. (2017). The protective role of religiosity against problem gambling: Findings from a five-year prospective study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 17(1), 356. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-017-1518-5>
- Neighbors, C., Lostutter, T. W., Crance, J. M., & Larimer, M. E. (2002). Exploring college student gambling motivation. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 18(4), 361-370.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1021065116500>

- Nower, L., & Blaszczynski, A. (2010). Gambling motivations, money-limiting strategies, and precommitment preferences of problem versus non-problem gamblers. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 26(3), 361-372. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-009-9170-8>
- Park, M. K., Yang, X., Lee, B. K., Jang, H. C., & Stokowski, P. A. (2002). Segmenting casino gamblers by involvement profiles: A Colorado example. *Tourism Management*, 23(1), 55-65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.05.009>
- Pearce, L., & Denton, M. L. (2011). *A faith of their own: Stability and change in the religiosity of America's adolescents*. Oxford University Press.
- Pyfrom, K. (2014, March 17). Christian Council disappointed in gaming decision. *The Bahama Journal*. <https://jonesbahamas.com/christian-council-disappointed-in-gaming-decision>
- Rubin, A. M. (2009). Uses and gratifications. In R. L. Nabi & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of media processes and effects* (pp. 149-159). Sage.
- 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. <https://www.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Saunders, C., Alhabash, S., & Frisby, C. M. (2015). "What are you talking about?": Differences in Twitter uses and gratification between Black and White Twitter users. In C. M. Frisby *How you see me, how you don't: Essays on stereotypes and representation of media and its effects on minorities, women, and adolescents*, (pp. 227-260). Tate Publishing and Enterprises.
- Schenkel, M. T., Farmer, S., & Maslyn, J. M. (2019). Process improvement in SMEs: The impact of harmonious passion for entrepreneurship, employee creative self-efficacy, and time spent innovating. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, 29(1), 64-77. <https://libjournals.mtsu.edu/index.php/jsbs/article/view/1153/959>
- Sheldon, K. M., Elliot, A. J., Kim, Y., & Kasser, T. (2001). What is satisfying about satisfying events? Testing 10 candidate psychological needs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80(2), 325. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.80.2.325>
- Thompson, T. (2014, September 29). 'Rebuke' for government for pastors. *The Tribune*. <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2014/sep/29/rebuke-government-pastors/>
- Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C., Léonard, M., Gagné, M., & Marsolais, J. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(4), 756. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.4.756>