

BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE

Attitudes Towards Gambling and Gambling Reform in Australia



Authors and Acknowledgements

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Institute for Health and Social Science Research

– Australian Health and Social Science study (AHSS)

– CQU Population Research Laboratory (PRL)



Attitudes Towards Gambling

- The need to assess public attitudes towards gambling
 - Original UK context of the ATGS
- The need to evaluate the ATGS in an Australian context
 - Differences in policy and population
- What does the ATGS tell us about attitudes among Australians?
 - Validity of the scale
 - Utility of the scale

Design and Method

- Partial replication of original UK study
 - Orford, Griffiths, Wardle, Sproston & Erens (2009)
- 1794 Australian adult AHSS members (52.8% female) recruited by CATI
- Survey items:
 - ATGS
 - Attitudes towards Legislative Change
 - Experiences with Gambling (CPGI)
 - Demographics

Attitudes Towards Gambling Scale

- 14 items
 - “Gambling should be discouraged”
 - “Gambling is a harmless form of entertainment”
- Items selected to be independent of specific forms of gambling, cohorts, and policy issues
 - Correlations between 0.5 - 0.7
- Range 14 - 70
 - Higher scores associated with more positive attitudes towards gambling

Attitudes Towards Legislative Change

- Attitudes Towards The Poker Machine Harm Reduction (\$1 Bets and Other Measures) Bill 2012
 - 6 items
 - Range 6 – 24 (higher scores in favour of reforms)
- Attitudes Towards The Interactive Gambling and Broadcasting Amendment (Online Transactions and Other Measures) Bill 2011
 - 15 items
 - Range 15 – 60 (higher scores in favour of reforms)
- Experiences with Gambling
 - Questions adapted from the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (PGSI)
 - Frequency, type of gambling, risk indicators

Validity of ATGS

- Internal Reliability
 - Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$ (14 items)
 - Item correlations 0.2 – 0.6 (all sig at $< .001$)
- Principle Components Analysis
 - Produced two factors
 - First factor accounted for 39.5% of variance
 - Second factor accounted for 9.05% of variance
 - Factors appear to reflect method with positively worded items loading onto first factor and negatively worded items loading onto second factor
- Conclusion – ATGS constitutes a satisfactory attitude scale for use with an Australian population

Attitudes Among Australian Population

- Mean ATGS score = 32.5 ($SD = 8.5$)
 - Attitudes generally moderately negative (mid-point = 42)
 - UK population $M = 35.25$, $SD = 8.52$
- Mean Attitudes Towards Harm Reduction 18.4 ($SD = 3.5$)
 - Moderately positive (Range 6 – 24, mid-point = 15)
 - ATGS accounts for 22.1% of variance ($R^2 = .22$, $F(1, 1792) = 508.84$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.47$)
- Mean Attitudes Towards Reforms = 49.7 ($SD = 6.8$)
 - Moderately positive (Range 15 – 60, mid-point = 37.5)
 - ATGS accounts for 25.3% of variance ($R^2 = .25$, $F(1, 890) = 303.29$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.51$)

Gambling Experiences and the ATGS

Variable	B Value
Frequency of Gambling (by type)	
Lottery Tickets	.137**
Instant Scratch-it Tickets	.112**
Horse or Dog Racing	.129**
Sports Tipping	.054*
Cards, darts, pool etc.	.053*
Sports through a bookie	.059*
Time since most recent gambling	.418**
Gambling Risk Factors	-.063*
Age of first gambling experience	-.143**
Age of first gambling with peers or immediate family	-.129**

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

Demographics and the ATGS

Variable	<i>F Value*</i>	Direction (more positive)
Preferred form of gambling	10.94	Pokies and sports betting
Sex (M/F)	6.36	Male
Highest Level of Education	1.48	No response
Current Employment Status	1.86	Unemployed, home duties, no response
Personal Income	2.5	70,000 - 150,000 p.a.
State of Residence	4.39	Queensland, SA

No Significant effects of:

- Age, Marital status, Country of birth, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status, Total family income

Summary and Conclusions

- The Attitudes Towards Gambling Scale
 - valid measure of attitudes towards gambling among an Australian population
 - useful predictor of attitudes towards other gambling related issues
 - should be supplemented by other, modality specific measures
- Comparisons between UK and Australian populations
 - Australian population more homogenous than UK
 - Social class barriers less influential
- Attitudes among the Australian population
 - Generally negative towards gambling, positive towards reform
 - More positive among regular poker machine players, unemployed, frequent and recent gamblers, those who started young and males (however, still fall on the negative end of the scale)