

ABSTRACT

ASSESSING THE GENERALITY OF BEHAVIORAL EXPLANATIONS FOR GAMBLING: USING ILLUSION OF CONTROL AS AN EXEMPLAR

The illusion of control is a phenomenon whereby an individual believes he or she can exert control in a game of chance, despite the fact that the result is completely random. However, many of the studies investigating this phenomenon have used highly artificial gambling contexts and participants with no history of gambling behavior (i.e., undergraduates). This study replicated the procedures outlined by Dixon, Hayes, and Ebbs (1998) using experienced and inexperienced gamblers in a more natural gambling setting. Also visual inspection of patterns of responding revealed differences between some of the experienced players when compared to inexperienced players, and statistical analyses revealed no significant differences in the risk-taking and control-exerting behaviors between the experienced and inexperienced participants. More research is necessary to answer if there is any true difference in the behaviors of the two groups and if the findings would generalize to pathological gamblers.

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