

High Illusion of Control Adolescents: A moderated mediation Analyses of the Effects of Forms of Counterfactual Thinking and Gender in Problem Gambling and Gaming

Abstract

Three studies (Study 1, $N = 322$ male adolescents, Study 2, $N = 401$ male and female adolescents, and Study 3, longitudinal, $N = 56$ male and female adolescents) analyzed the effects cognitive and psychographic variables in the relationships among illusion of control (IC), problem gambling and problem gaming. Moderated mediation analyses results using PROCESS macro in the three studies confirmed: (1) the positive mediating effect of upward CFT in the association between IC and problem gambling and problem gaming; (2) the negative mediating effect of downward CFT in the association between IC and problem gambling and problem gaming; and (3) the moderating effect of gender in confirmed mediations. The results highlighted that (1) high levels of IC act as risk factors for problem gambling and gaming that may be boosted by increased upward CFT, and (2) gender and downward CFR act as protective factors, highlighting the protective effect of downward CFT because it buffers the negative effects of IC on adolescent problem gambling and gaming; and (3) problem gambling and problem gaming appears to be similar in manifestation among Nigerian adolescents.

Keywords: Illusion of control, moderated-mediation model, counterfactual thinking, problem gambling/gaming, gender.

Implications statement

The finding lend support to the faulty cognition model of problem gambling and gaming, pioneered the moderated-mediation model of problem gambling/gaming correlates in sub-Saharan Africa, and highlight the need for cognitive-based problem gambling/gaming treatment plan focused on checkmating of faulty gambling/gaming cognitions as means of controlling problem gambling/gaming.

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