

Review of: "Gambling Prevalence and Factors Associated with Gambling Participation among University Students in Uganda"

Sabrina Molinaro¹

¹ Italian National Research Council

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

In general, I appreciated the topic of the present manuscript. As highlighted by the authors, there is a lack of literature concerning gambling involvement among Ugandan university students; in keeping with this, the present study may add new information and data about that. I really appreciated the socio-cultural frame on which your study is built, it confers a strong added value to the work. Regarding the use of a novel more inclusive theory that aims at assessing the overall psychosocial problems in university students, I think it is the right choice mainly when facing the assessment of gambling drivers. Overall, the study points out some interesting results about this specific age range; however, I think that English, statistical analysis, and the take-home message of the study may be improved. My detailed comments on each section are below:

Abstract

Please, insert the median age or age range of the sample.

Introduction

I think the introduction is well-structured and the division into sub-sections makes for very smooth reading. In general, I think you may improve your English; an example of a sentence to be restructured in English is the following one:

"Prevalence of Gambling among College Students" la frase: "Akinloyan (2022), indicated that 67.5% of the students at Crawford University, Ogun State (Southwestern Nigeria) who ever gambled, similarly, Koross (2016) reported 78%, among Kenyan university students, 32.3–50% of students found in Macau studies (e.g., Kam et al., 2017; Wu et al. 2015) ever gambled"

Please, better explain the meaning of indigenous gaming and specify the sentence *pre-dating the recent gambling forms*"

I also have a question for you; in outlining the research questions, did you include antisocial behaviors in psychosocial functioning? Please, specify

Moreover, I think you also may put more stress on the added value of your study before describing the objectives. if I understand you correctly, regarding your topic, there is a lack in the literature on studies conducted on university students (*"Studies in Uganda on gambling mainly draw on the general population including youth and adults and rarely focus on*

university students”). In keeping with this, I think you should better emphasise the strength of your work.

Finally, considering that you conducted a cross-sectional study, when describing the research questions (e.g. *Do different student demographic characteristics predict students' participation in gambling?*), I would not talk about predictors but about associations.

Materials and methods

You were very precise in describing your sample however, I suggest you insert gender and age distribution. Moreover, I'd also emphasise the number of excluded questionnaires “*for providing insufficient/incomplete data for analysis*” by specifying the threshold percentage of the questionnaire completion considered valid to be included in the sample. In keeping with this, I'd also suggest reporting the number of excluded questionnaires using numerical characters to uniform the sentence with the one written to describe the sample (“*A total of 1101 randomly selected students*”).

When describing the procedure, I think it would be interesting to specify potential elements that may or may not have facilitated the filling in of the questionnaire (e.g. giving instructions before filling in).

If the antisocial behaviours items are included in the USEPP scale, why did you create a section apart (c) to describe it? Because in this way it looks like that when you used the psychosocial functioning scale, which originally contains the antisocial behavior construct, you took out the items related to that construct. If you provide the Cronbach score it is ok, but it is better to specify that in considering the psychosocial functioning as an independent variable, you didn't include antisocial behaviours items. Could you provide an explanation for considering antisocial behaviours as independent from the psychosocial functioning scale?

The presence of only one question with respect to gambling (the main topic of the study) could invalidate the prevalence of the phenomenon itself. For example, students may have misunderstood the question, and so on. Based on that, I wanted to ask if there is a box describing gambling before asking for gambling participation in the questionnaire. If yes, I would specify it in the text considering that it could be an element able to eliminate (at least partially) response bias.

In dichotomizing as a dependent variable a single item contained in the USEPP scale, it is important to make sure to take this item out of the scale when considering its items, in the different constructs, as independent variables. This would eliminate the risk of collinearity between variables that would be high if, on the contrary, the dichotomized item taken as the dependent variable is left within the items of the scale that is considered as the independent variable.

Concerning statistical analysis, you rightly conducted a bivariate analysis. If I well understood, you conducted univariate analyses without controlling for age and gender. Considering that your sample is very unbalanced, I propose to conduct the analysis by controlling for the variables mentioned above. Even better would be conducting the statistical analysis by performing a saturated model (multivariate model) considering that it is much more robust and richer in information.

Furthermore, not including in the model the independent variables together risk leading to an underestimation of the global effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

One more (and lastly) thing about the methodology. It is unclear whether or not the study sample is representative of Ugandan university students. Either way, it should be specified.

Results

Please, change the term “relationship” with “association”.

Discussion

The discussion is full of information and rightly gives references to previous literature findings; it is well provided with details on odds ratios and confidence intervals. However, considering the amount of results observed, I suggest giving more interpretation to what emerged. Although the developmental period considered most sensitive is adolescence, early adulthood also needs to be studied and explored in depth (some authors have even included early adulthood in the adolescence time framework). You have the data and the right sample to expand the literature in this respect; I think it is worth stressing your results.

Limitations and future research

(if true) Please, refer that the sample is not representative.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, I think it is necessary to specify better your take-home message by improving your conclusions. Moreover, I suggest not talking about predictors but about associations.