



## Problematic Gambling Behavior in a Sample of Gamblers: The Role of Alexithymia, Dissociation Features, and External Locus of Control

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### Abstract

Gambling disorder is a severe condition that significantly compromises the lives of those affected. In light of this clinical relevance, the literature on the antecedents of this form of addiction is constant and continually evolving. Consistently with this framework, the present research aimed at investigating the role of some risk factors in gambling disorder, with a specific focus on alexithymia, dissociation, and locus of control. The research involved a sample of 290 participants (183 males and 107 females; *Age*=34.43, *SD*=14.65) who practice gambling at least occasionally. They completed an online survey including the South Oaks Gambling Screen, Twenty-Items Toronto Alexithymia Scale, Dissociative Experience Scale-II, and Locus of Control of Behavior. ANOVA and a moderated-mediation model were implemented to analyse the collected data. Results showed that 19.0% of the participants were At Risk and Problem Gamblers, while 27.6% fell into the category of Problematic Gamblers. Problematic Gamblers showed significantly higher levels of alexithymia, dissociation, and external locus of control. Moreover, a significant association between alexithymia and the severity of problematic gambling behaviour was found and was significantly mediated by absorption (a dissociation feature). Furthermore, the external locus of control significantly moderated this indirect effect. The role of gender as a covariate was also investigated. Such findings may offer further insights into the field of clinical research on gambling disorder and may provide useful information for effective clinical practice.

**Keywords** Absorption · Alexithymia · Behavioural addictions · Dissociation · Gambling disorder · Locus of control

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# Gamblers And Gambling Behavior Volume 3

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