

MOTIVES MODERATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GAMBLER TYPE AND PROBLEM GAMBLING SEVERITY

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INTRODUCTION

- Comparisons of online and offline gamblers consistently indicate that online gamblers are more likely to experience problem gambling¹.
- Although several studies show that online gamblers are more likely to engage in problematic play, there is a paucity of research examining why online gamblers are at greater risk of experiencing problems.
- Previous studies show that enhancement, social, coping, and financial motives are associated with problem gambling severity².
- Previous research also shows that online and offline gamblers differ in terms of the motives they are most likely to endorse³.
- It is possible that motives play a role in online gamblers' heightened problem gambling risk.
- The goal of this study was to examine whether enhancement, social, coping, and financial motives moderate the relationship between gambler type (i.e., online vs. offline) and problem gambling severity.

METHODS

Participants

- $N = 494$ young adults who had gambled online to any degree ($n = 208$) and exclusively offline ($n = 286$) in the past three-months were recruited from universities in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario.

Measures

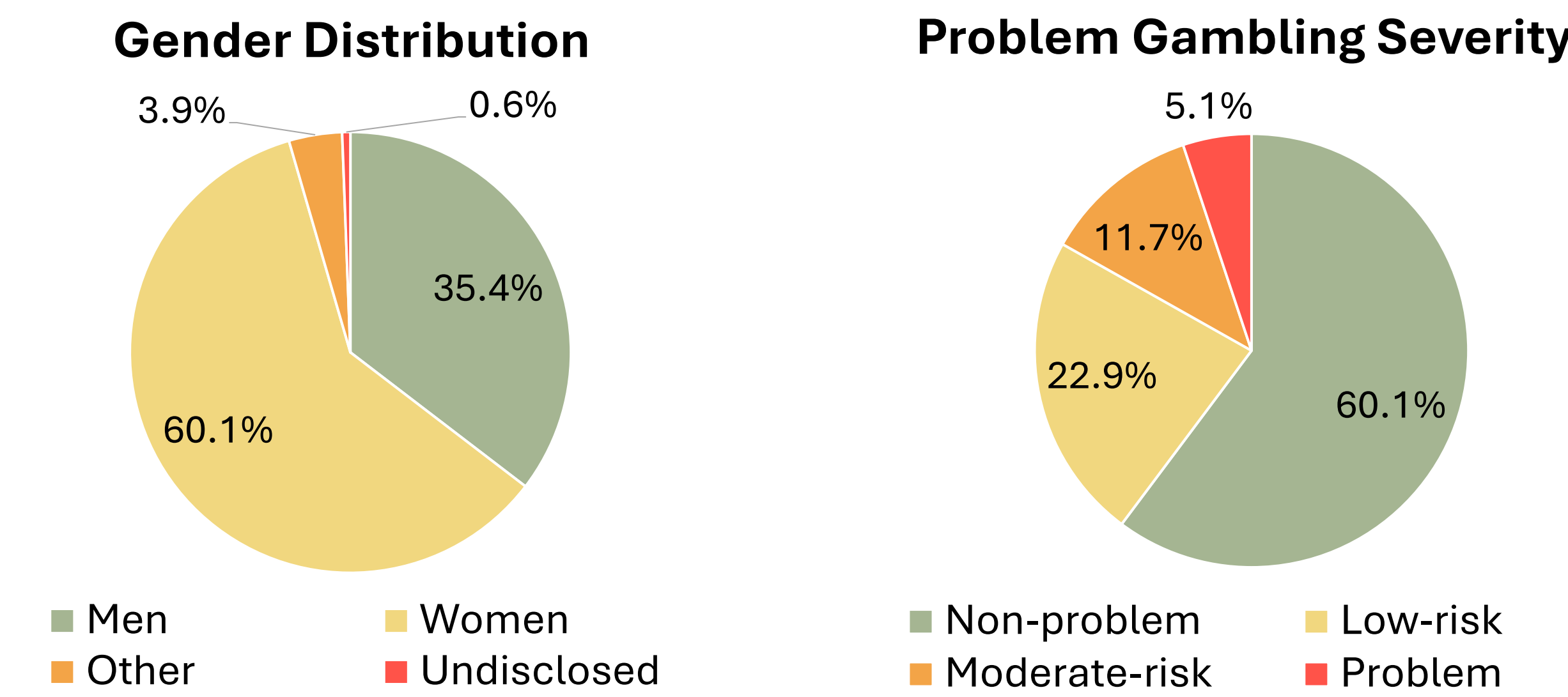
- Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI).
- Gambling Motives Questionnaire – Financial (GMQ-F).

Statistical Analyses

- Independent samples t-tests.
- Moderated linear regressions using Hayes' PROCESS macro.
 - GMQ-F scores range from 1.00 to 4.00 and were centered around a value of 1.00 prior to analyses, making 1.00 = 0.00 and 4.00 = 3.00.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- Mean age = 23.12 ± 6.27 years



RESULTS

*** = $p < .001$ | d = Cohen's d | $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W}$ = conditional effect of gambler type (X) on problem gambling severity (Y) at values of the moderator (W)

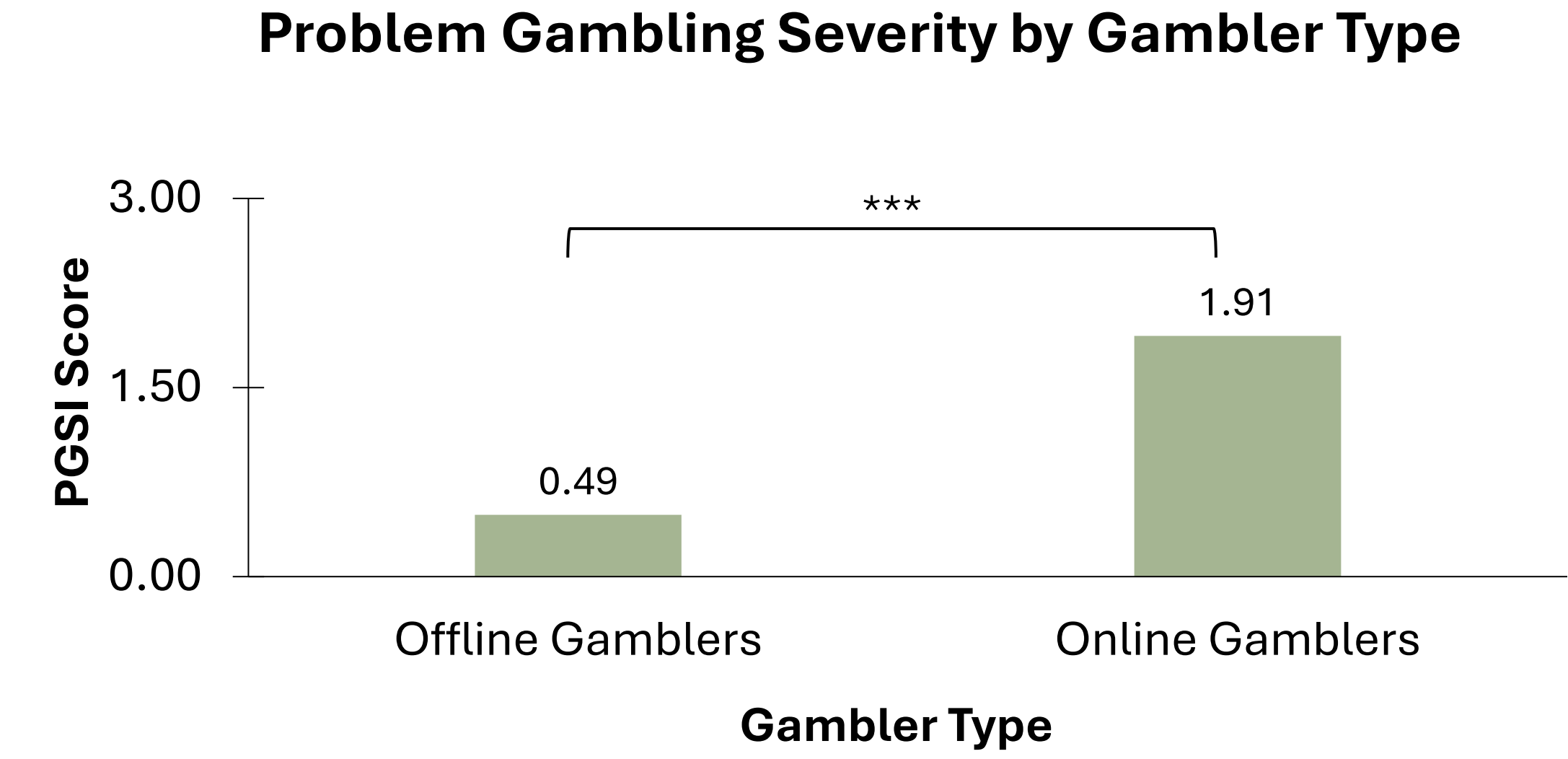


Figure 1. $t(479) = -8.19, p < .001, d = 0.76$.

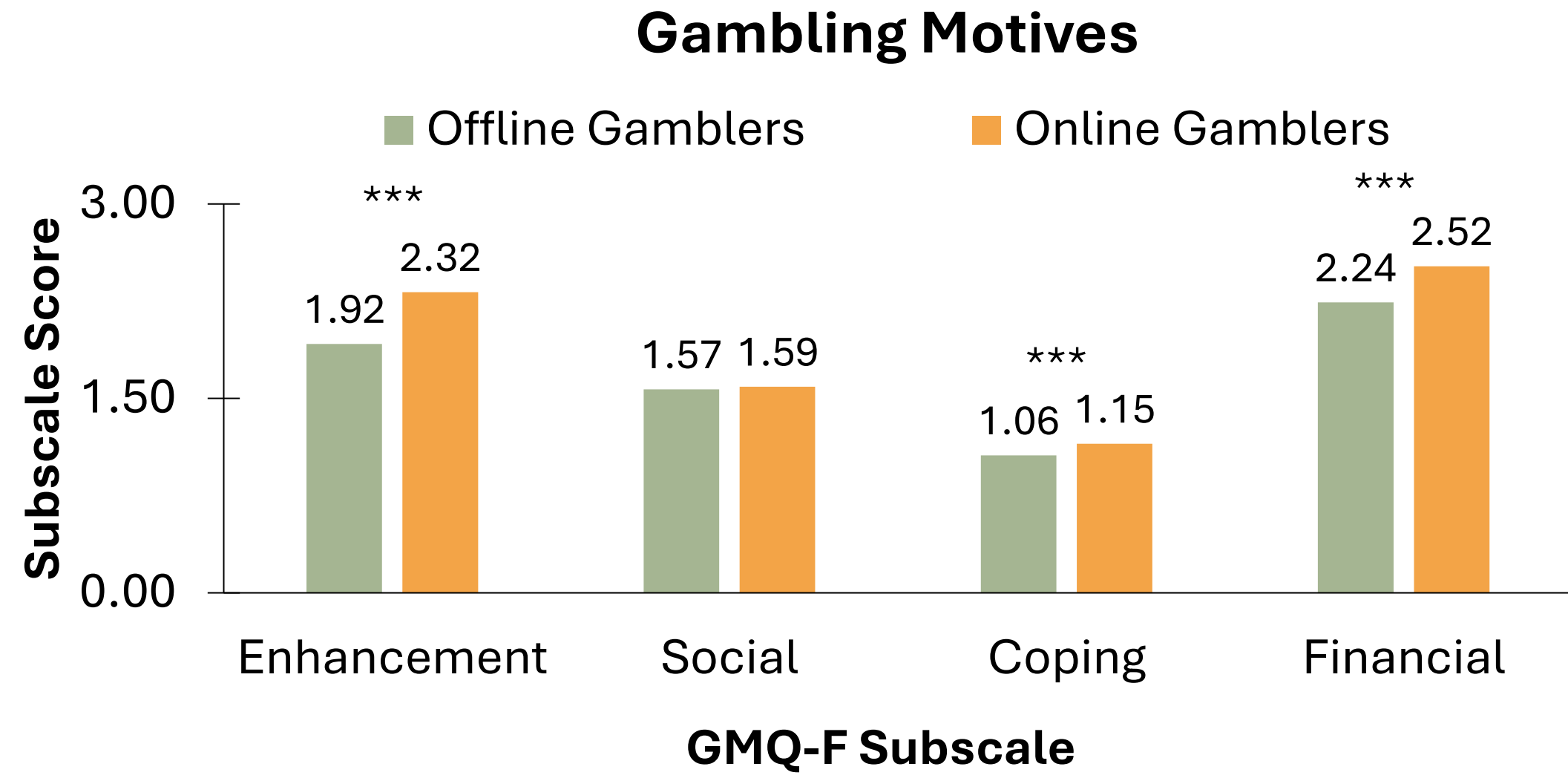


Figure 2. Enhancement: $t(492) = -5.49, p < .001, d = 0.78$; Social: $t(486) = -0.40, p = .345, d = 0.04$; Coping: $t(478) = -4.04, p < .001, d = 0.37$; Financial: $t(492) = -3.32, p < .001, d = 0.30$.

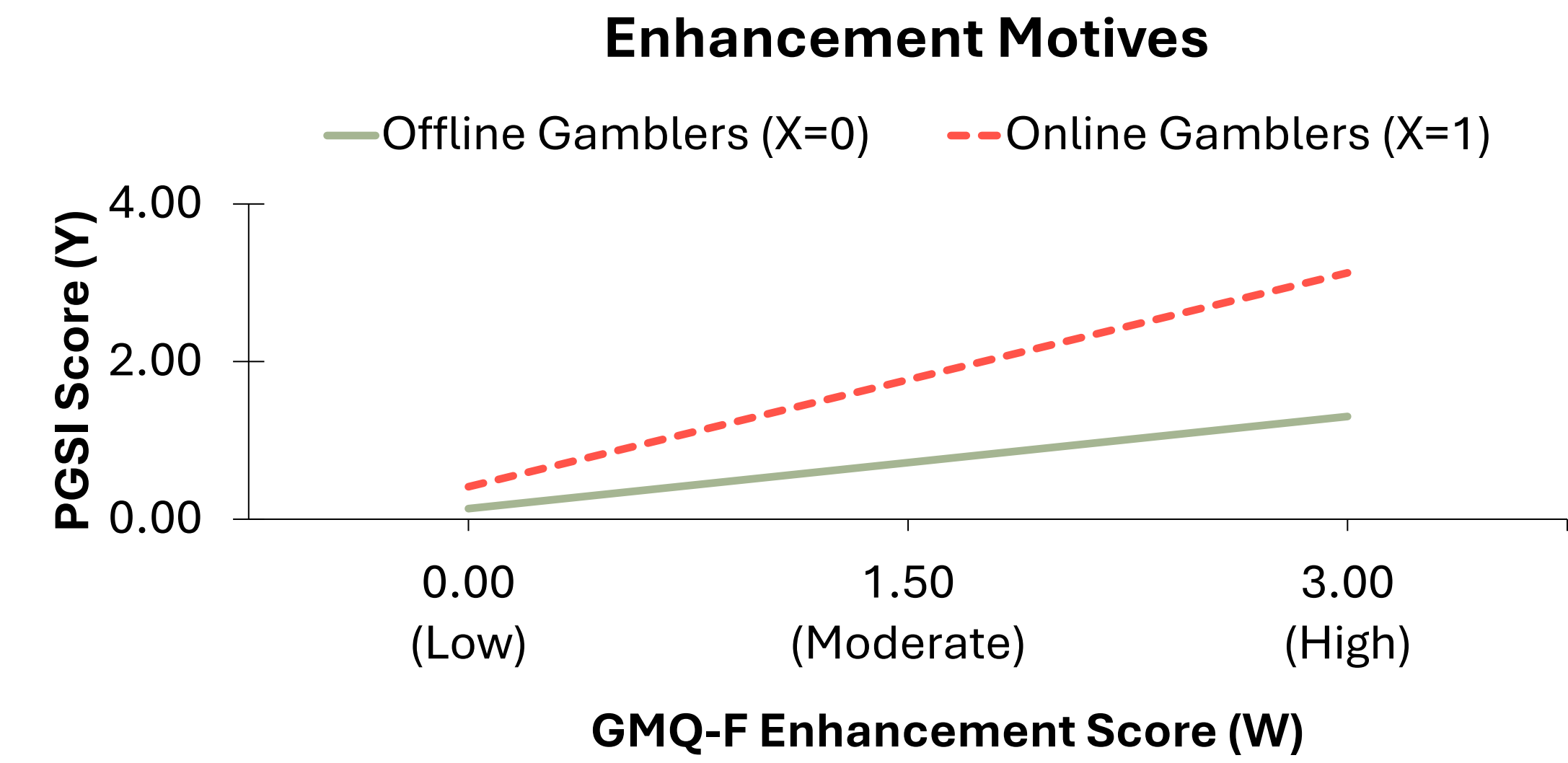


Figure 3. $\hat{Y} = 0.13 + 0.28X + 0.39W + 0.52XW, R^2 = 0.20$
• $X \times W$ Interaction = 0.52, $p = .008$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 0.00} = 0.28, p = 0.278$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 1.50} = 1.05, p < .001$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 3.00} = 1.82, p < .001$

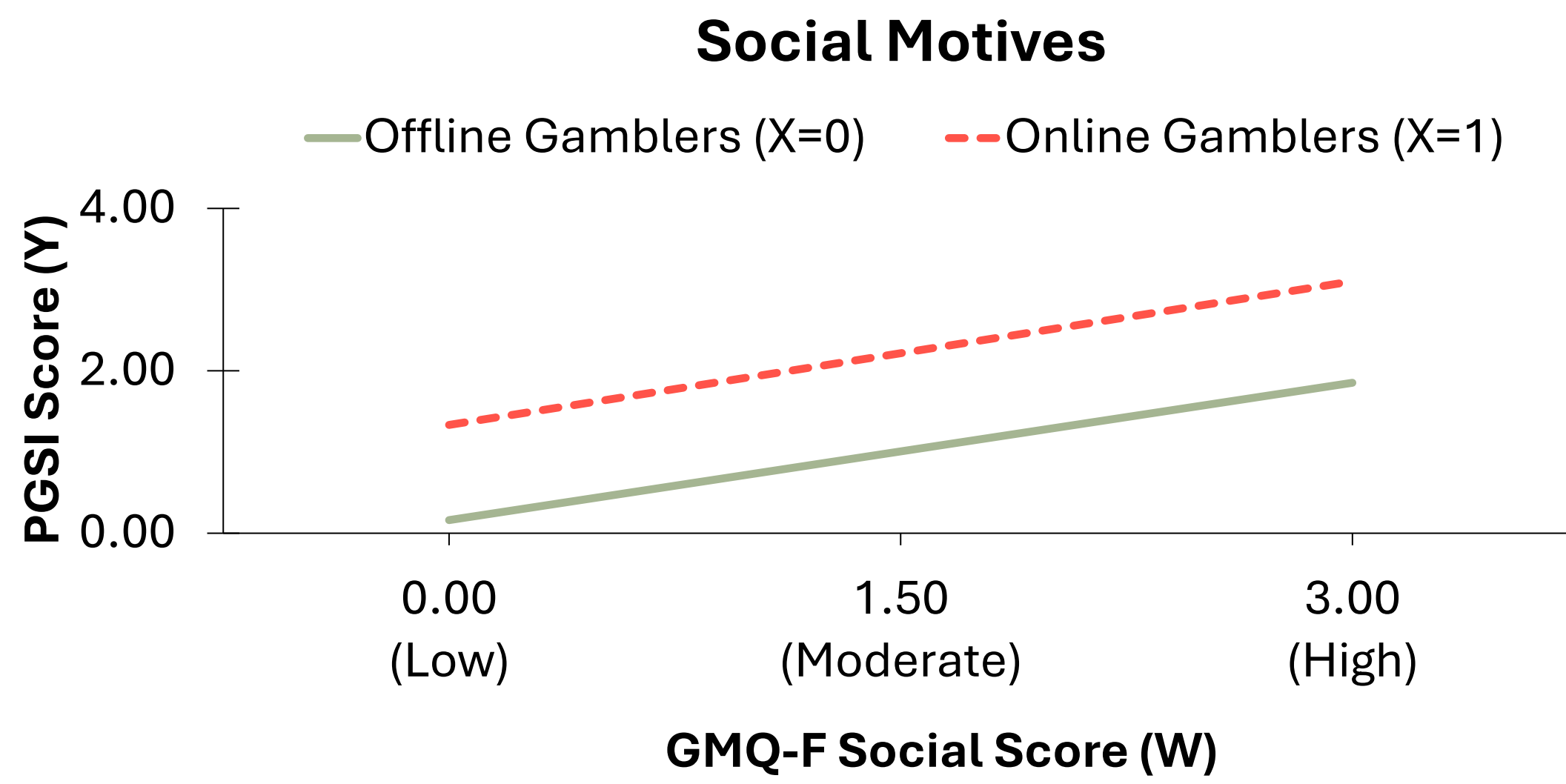


Figure 4. $\hat{Y} = 0.16 + 1.17X + 0.56W + 0.03XW, R^2 = 0.14$
• $X \times W$ Interaction = 0.03, $p = .927$

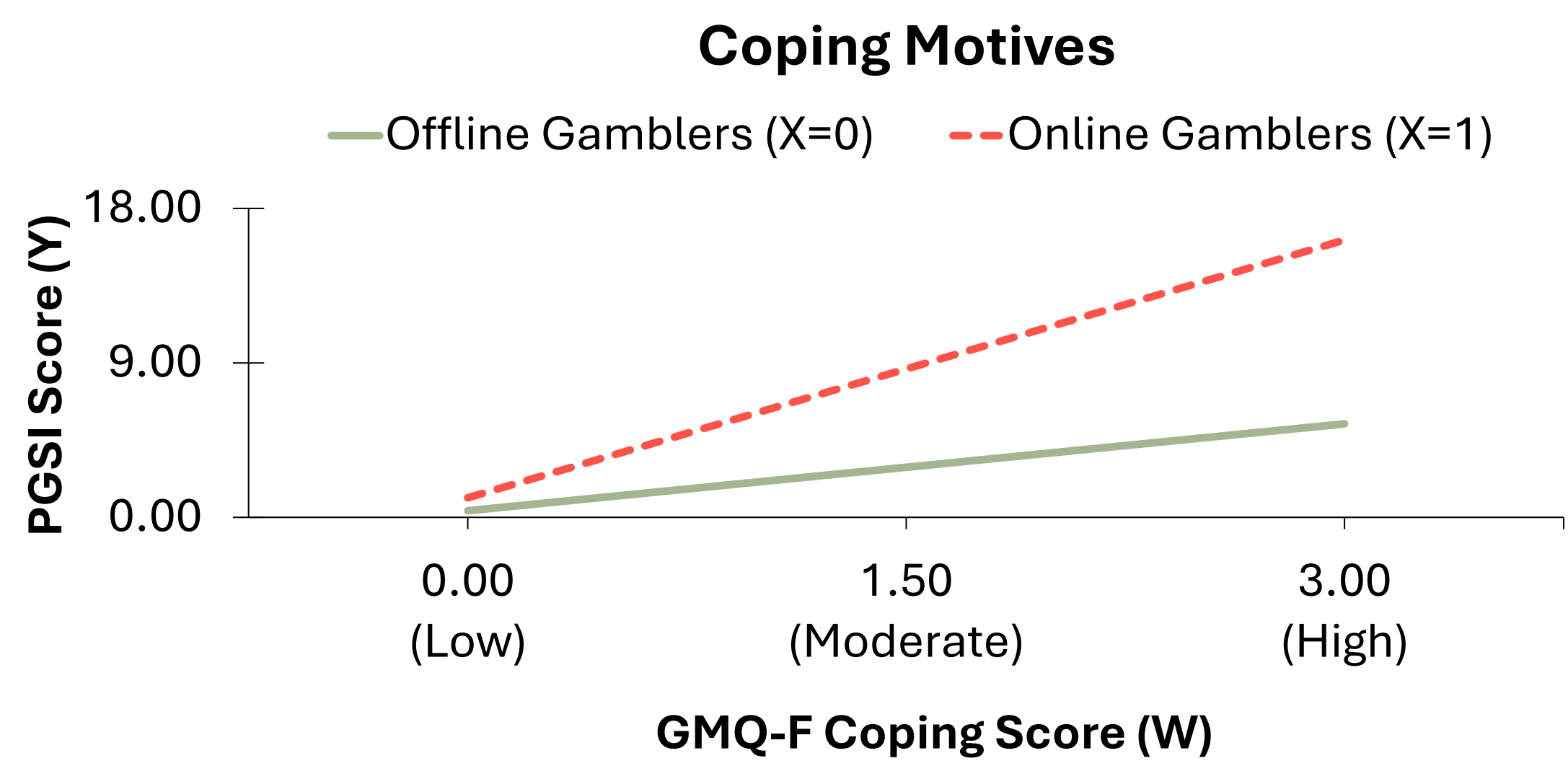


Figure 5. $\hat{Y} = 0.38 + 0.76X + 1.69W + 3.32XW, R^2 = 0.28$
• $X \times W$ Interaction = 3.32, $p < .001$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 0.00} = 0.85, p < .001$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 1.50} = 2.35, p < .001$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 3.00} = 3.84, p < .001$

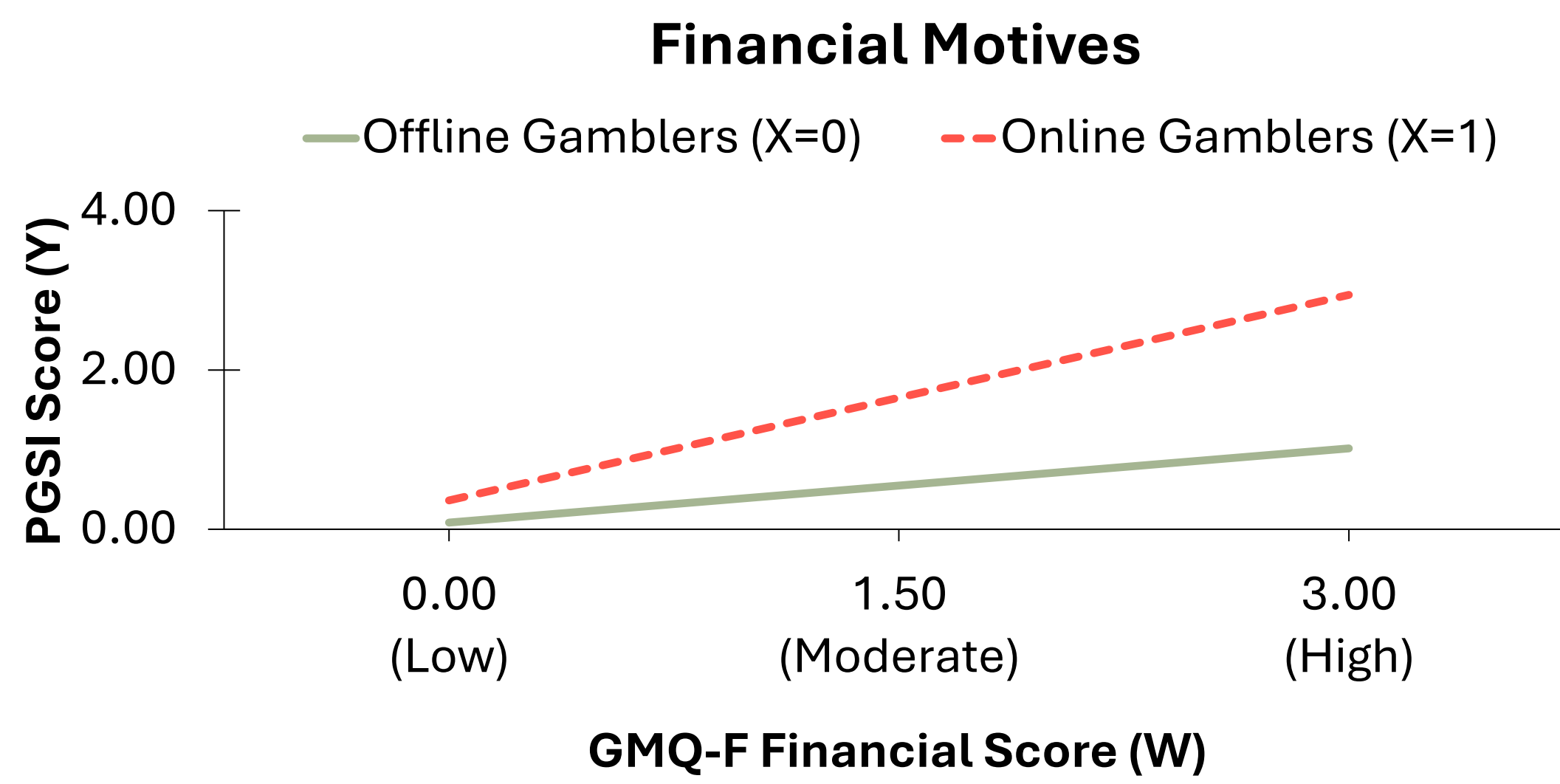


Figure 6. $\hat{Y} = 0.08 + 0.28X + 0.31W + 0.55XW, R^2 = 0.21$
• $X \times W$ Interaction = 0.55, $p = .001$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 0.00} = 0.28, p = .279$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 1.50} = 1.10, p < .001$
• $\theta_{X \rightarrow Y | W = 3.00} = 1.93, p < .001$

SUMMARY

Findings

- Figure 1:** In-line with previous research findings¹, online gamblers reported worse problem gambling severity scores than offline gamblers.
 - Figure 2:** Online gamblers endorsed enhancement, coping, and financial motives to a higher degree than offline gamblers. A statistically significant difference was not found for social motives. The results for social and coping motives are in-line with previous research findings³.
 - Figures 3-6:** Enhancement, coping, and financial motives moderated the relationship between gambler type and problem gambling severity. Social motives did not moderate this relationship.
- Specifically, online gamblers reported worse problem gambling severity scores than offline gamblers when:
- Enhancement motive scores were moderate and high.
 - Coping motive scores were low, moderate, and high.
 - Financial motive scores were moderate and high.
- Coping motives had the strongest impact on problem gambling severity.

Implications

- Enhancement, coping, and financial motives appear to be important risk factors for problem gambling amongst online gamblers.
- Findings from this study support suggestions made by Goldstein et al.³, indicating that online and offline gamblers may require different approaches for problem gambling prevention and treatment.
- For example, findings from this study offer preliminary evidence suggesting that a focus of problem gambling prevention and intervention efforts targeted toward online gamblers could include helping players develop adaptive coping strategies and realistic expectations about the likelihood of winning money.
- Enhancement motives are associated with substance use, impulsivity, and gambling-related cognitive distortions^{2,4}. Interventions that target enhancement motives may need to address how they interact with other addictive behaviours, and cognitive and psychological factors.

Limitations and Future Directions

- This study relied on a convenience sample of university students. Future studies can improve on the generalizability of findings by recruiting representative and community-based samples.

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