

The Incorporation of the School Age Group of 16-18 Years Old in Gambling

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Abstract

The scientific research of this paper focuses on the involvement of the school age group 16-18 years old in sports betting games impacted by beliefs on luck and social groups. For the collection of data literature is utilized, questionnaires are distributed and also focus groups were conducted. The assumptions of the assignment are: a) The involvement of school age group 16-18 years in sports betting games are manners learned from their comrades, b) The school age group 16-18 years old attribute to fate the participation in sports betting games.

Over 64% of responses manifest that they have learned the rules from their companions. The revelations and questionnaire responses argue that over 45% of students in their classes play sports bets, and 34% think that the phenomena of sports betting depends on luck. The major part of this age group do not practice and believe in fortunate rituals or activities. The acquired data reflect that the extent of involvement of this age group is in substantial dimensions. We suggest that the decision-making bodies and service providers should develop strategies in order to reduce the phenomenon.

Key Words: sports betting, gambling, gamblers, pathological gaming, the illusion of control.

1. The current situation

Sports betting shops, casinos and gambling halls, widespread in every neighborhood, are the most obvious proofs for the speed of the gambling industry in Albania over the past years. According to the official data from the Ministry of Finance in 2010, the formal market of gambling was \$184 million and in only two years it increased by over 12 percent. The data indicate that presently every Albanian spends on average about 6570 leke per annum on gambling. But this is only the legal market gambling. The non public assessments, by the Ministry of Finance, indicate that the real gambling industry in Albania is about 2.5 times bigger by what the official figures show, it is at approximately \$ 500 million, or nearly 5 percent of National GDP.

1.1. What does betting implicate?

The term “the involvement in gambling” refers to the intensity of the engagement in gambling activities¹. The inclusion aggregates factors such as: number of attendance, amount of time that is spent, money being spent and the type of bet they play.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The history of gambling

Gambling is the most ancient form of entertainment. There are numerous manuscripts that indicate the presence of betting dice game at the time of the Egyptians, Indian or Chinese civilization. At around 4000 BC we come across the dice linked with gambling as evidence is proved by findings of the dice printed on one side OK.

2.2. Psychological theory

Devereux is based on the view that gambling is a deviation of social rules. He also argues that gambling has a positive social function, serves as a valve for the accumulating tensions and frustrations of routine. According to Devereux, these feelings are created as a result of a hierarchical capitalist system, where individuals are obligated to fulfill the

¹ Chantal Y. and Vallerand, R. J. and Vallieres E. F. (2001) *Motivation and Gambling Involvement*, pp. 755.

requirements of an industrial society in the service of output growth. In this situation the individual values and moral values are underestimated and its success isn't supported and in this case gambling serves as comfort and a relaxing place².

2.3. The social learning theory

The main doctrine of learning models shows that gambling behavior is guided by predictions. Making money causes rise of the emotional level and is inspired by another rewarding game (Dickerson, 1979, McConaghy, 1980). Gambling activities are reinforced behavior, they produce excitement and satisfaction³. Another important element of behavior theory is curiosity. Nearly 40 years ago psychologists thought that individuals are motivated to search novelty, surprise and complexity (Berlyne, 1996). One of the main factors for adolescent involvement in gambling is exploration, what is hidden behind it. Gambling zones serve as social and recreational environments therefore the interest grows (Fisher, 1995).

2.4. The cognitive theory

The wrong perceptual behavior is based on irrational beliefs, cognitive distortions and prejudices about the event, although the origin of irrational beliefs and perceptual schemes remains unknown. Besides these aspects, the characteristic structures of gambling promote the development of some wrong beliefs that overestimating hopes to win. Perceptual distortions associated with:

Delusions of control: are thoughts of people that random events are under their influence and believe that they can control them any time. Langer (1975) defined the illusion of control as a trend that increases the opportunities to win⁴. The possession of personal attributes promote the probability of the gambler to win, for ex; faith as a personal attribute, superstitions, performing rituals and praying to have the opportunities to win. Historically faith is considered as a gift from God to the one who wins (Griffiths, 2006). The term superstition is used to summarize irrational beliefs that may affect the believer's life. According to Vyse (1997), the

² Ibid, pp. 755-763.

³ Rickwood, D. and Blaszczynski, A. and Delfabbro, P. and Dowling, N. and Heading, K. (2010) *The Psychology of Gambling*, pp. 2-14.

⁴ Hardoon, K. and Derevensky, J. L. (2003) *Child and adolescent*, pp. 1-3, 6.

inaccuracy of human reason is the greatest source and only superstitious belief.

2.5. Models of Addiction

Despite being classified as an impulse control disorder, addiction model is currently theoretical dominant example of playing pathological explanation. Historically, the term "dependence" was limited to the use of drugs, characteristic of cases where the individual has strong concerns and irreversible need to consume the substance. Later this term was applied also to a wider range of factors such as behavioral addictions, including gambling addiction. DSM-IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) maintains a close connection between pathological gambling and addiction disorders because the diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling are made deliberately to likely criteria narcotic dependence (DSM-IV-R; APA, 2000)⁵.

2.6. Psychoanalytical perspective

There is no single comprehensive theory psychodynamic or psychoanalytic that has advanced to explain how pathologic gambling is developed.. Bergler, a psychoanalyst who actually treated many patients with pathological gambling expanded Freud's idea of emphasizing pathological gambler that plays to lose⁶.

3. Methodology

For realization of this scientific work are used combined methods for data collection. I used the literature of recent years, distributed questionnaires and conducted two focus groups. For the realization of this research 150 respondents were included. Of these, 112 participants were included in the study.

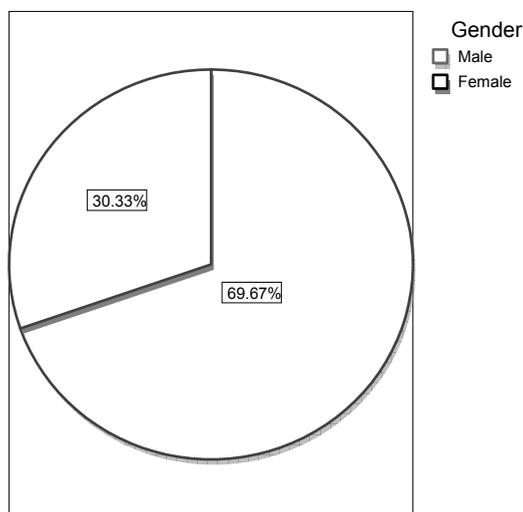
3.1. Distribution Female / Male

As seen in the figure based on gender participation, it is composed by 70% male and 30% female. The main reason why men make up the larger number is because they are more involved in sports betting games (Fig.2.1).

⁵ Kay, J. and Tasman, A . (2006) *Essentials of Psychiatry*", pp. 767, 772, ISBN: 0-470-01854-2.

⁶ Ibid, fq. 768.

Figure 1: Distribution female / male (in%)



Source: Author's own work

Questionnaire

For the design of the questionnaire we used several sources of information.

1. Literature based on scientific research and diagnostic manual of mental disorders DSM-IV. Web-site profiles in the phenomenon of gambling, such as anonymous gamblers⁷.
2. Consultations with operators who perform this activity with a focus on: forms of sports betting, jargon used in these games⁸.

4. Results

4.1. The period when they continued to play.

As seen in the table, regular users of the games in sports betting, have a commitment period of more than two years. Chronology of time is progressive, continuing from the less experienced, to those with more experience. Based on the frame variable, it results that users have knowledge about the phenomenon of sports betting games. The largest percentage with 69% resulting to play more than two years, less than one

⁷ Ibid, pp. 768.

⁸ www.gamblersanonymous.org

year are only 14%, and 17% responded that they have a period of about 2 years as sports betting user (Tab. 1.1).

Table 1: The period when they continued to play

Alternative	Frequency	Percent
>2 years	17	14
< 2 years	21	17
Others	84	69
Total	122	100.0

Source: Author's own work

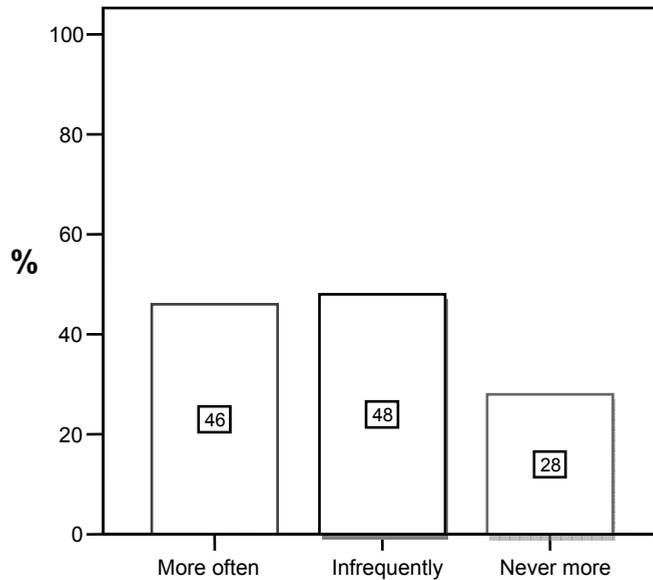
4.2. Where do they learn the rules of sports betting .

When ask the question on who and how gamblers have learned the ways and rules of sports betting we will find out that 64% of the relevance of social group, 8% of them have learned from family members. About 10% of respondents only saw their friends filling betting sports ticket and 18% responded by sports newspapers, the Internet and television. On the question whom are they accompanied by when playing sports betting ? 52% responded with school friends, 20% playing alone, 9% with their brothers. With parents about 6% and the rest responded that they were accompanied with neighborhood friends.

4.3. Discussion of betting with their friends

This question relates to the first hypothesis about the influence of peers and has a score of 37% about respondents sharing information about sports games betting. 40%, of respondents answered that they rarely discuss with their friends on the issue of gambling. 23% responded that they don't discuss the information or involvement in betting sports (Fig.3.5). According to Festinger'it (1954), when people are unsure about the quality and opinions, especially when the target information is hard to get, then they compare themselves with others. Seeing amateur players who earn large sums of money, many school students are stimulated to think that they have the appropriate skills,(Prince, 1984).

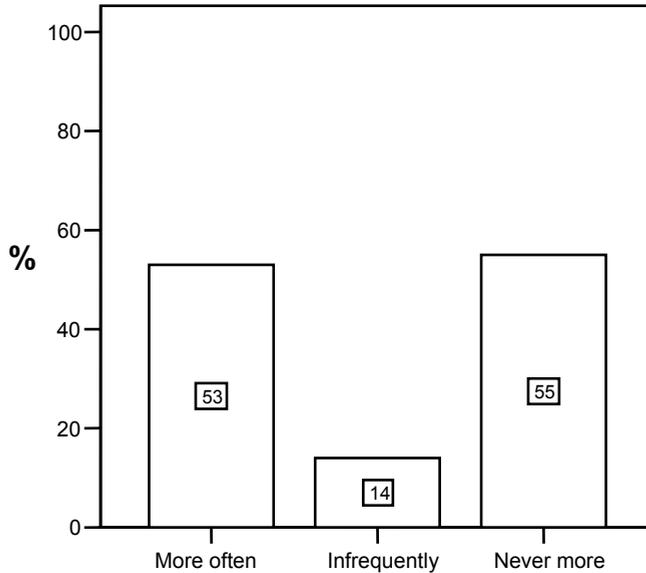
Figure 2: Discussion of betting with their friends



Source: Author's own work

4.4. The level of knowledge for the team that bet.

This question tries to tell if betting sports, is knowledge about the team or is coincidence. Here we have very similar answers between the first and third alternative. 43% have knowledge about the team. 45% have no knowledge about the bet. The question is related to the second hypothesis on the belief in luck as an influence in sports games betting (Fig.3.7).

Figure 3: The level of knowledge for the team that bet

Source: Author's own work

4.5. Belief in luck.

Based on question, do you believe that the profit or loss of the sports betting is a matter of luck, 34% of them responded that the profit from betting is fully subject to fate. A result of 26%, don't believe that bets are influenced by beliefs in luck and 40%, are of the opinion that rarely happens to be true (Tab.1.2).

Table 2: Belief in luck

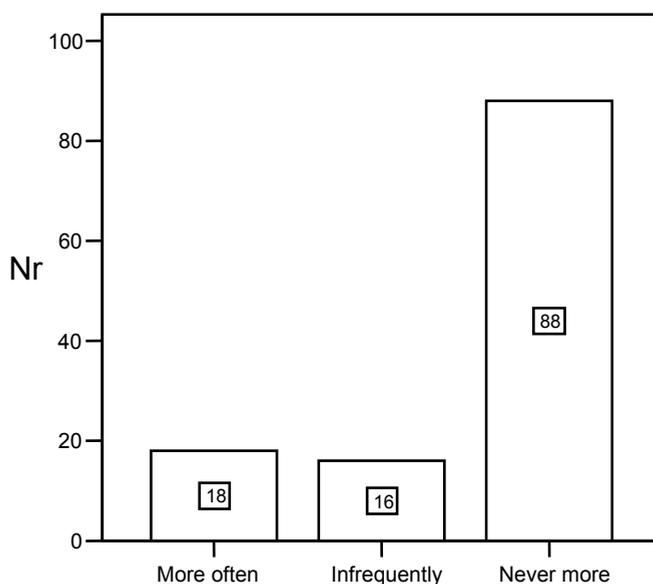
Alternative	Frequency	Percent
>2 years	42	34.4
< 2 years	48	39.3
Others	32	26.2
Total	122	100.0

Source: Author's own work

4.6. The impact of betting sports in school achievement.

The inclusion of adolescents in betting games has some negative effects including school. The study conducted by Derevensky and Gupta, discovered some symptoms and signs to schoolchildren such as unjustified absences, drop in school, selling school equipment and personal items, use of a specific jargon, lies, etc., (Dickson, Derevensky & Gupta, 2002)⁹. In the answers given by the students of secondary schools appears that involvement in betting games has a relatively small impact. Their answers are also related to discussions conducted by emphasizing that they do not spend much time on betting premises. At 72% of the responses it appears that participation in betting games has not affected school performance. Only 15% of those questioned noted that the use of gambling affects their school achievements (Fig.3.12).

Figure 4: The impact of sports betting on school achievement



Source: Author's own work

⁹ Hardoon, K. and Derevensky, J. L. (2003) *Child and adolescent*, pp. 1-3, 6.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this research, was the role of peers and the belief in luck as the primary factors that cause school age group 16-18 years old to be involved in betting games. The view of social learning theory emphasizes the fact that the gain served as positive amplifier, while the loss serves as a negative amplifier. Factors like curiosity, recreational and entertainment facilities that offer gambling, serve as the main stimulus. Cognitive theory concludes that gamblers are affected by misperceptions, superstition, belief in luck and prejudices about events. Gambling models see it as pathology. Psychoanalytic perspective adds the idea that individuals play because of lost of love from loved ones and rebellion from certain situations. Rebellion causes guilt and guilt creates the need for punishment. Bergler thought that the main characteristic of a gambler is aggressiveness, actually a desire for defeat and rejection (Lesieur and Rosenthal, 1991). Participation in betting games results in a significant percentage. The active users are males while females occupy a small percentage. The area is uncommon for women and so it is not frequented by women. The survey data show that 64% of respondents learned the rules of betting games from their social group. The responses reflected in questionnaire indicate that most of their colleagues and peers bet. . Focus group discussions resulted mostly in the need of closing sports betting facilities located near schools. Based on the information gathered we conclude that betting games is a phenomena encouraged by social group.

The amount of money that goes on sports betting is usually small for most participants. However it is on high frequency. Part which causes large amounts made it by wining bet and this made them play again. But those who play a lot of money are rare. According to Dickerson, earning money causes emotional level growth and serves as an incentive towards another game to win again (Dickerson, 1979, McConaghy, 1980). A part of gambling users often lose money when they bet, forced to sell personal items, steal, or borrow money, such features according to the diagnostic manual of mental disorders are classified as pathological gambling. The data collected in this study show a very low percentage of adolescent involvement in such activities that disturb the community or are accompanied in the police.

Results collected from the questionnaire show that 34% think that betting is a matter of luck Opinions that they are very close to victory, are the main incentives that encourage them to play again. Choosing the ticket,

the choice of days or performing certain rituals are not considered in this age group as actions which bring luck. Being in antisocial activities as a result of betting is not large in size from the data collected.

6. Recommendations

The increasing numbers of facilities that conduct this activity, media and the incomes from this activity, show that even teenagers are becoming gamblers. Gambling expenditure figures in our country are disturbing.

Primary recommendations

- Train school staff about the phenomenon of gambling, based on the psychological field.
- Given that the symptoms of this phenomenon are manifested less (less visible from the outside), it is important that schools' psychosocial services should increase the level of discussions and consultations with students and teaching staff.
- To organize free lessons on the theme of gambling phenomenon, the treatment of the effects arising from this phenomenon.
- To establish service centers and provide free treatment to students exhibiting pathological dependence of this phenomenon.
- Develop or add supplementary chapters in textbooks of social and economic profiles.
- Develop guidelines on the phenomenon of gambling.
- State authorities and schools to increase awareness-raising activities on the phenomenon.

Secondary recommendations

- To respect the law prohibiting people under the age of 18.
- Gambling premises should not be placed near schools.
- Designate specific areas where these activities will be conducted.
- The limited advertising in print and electronic.
- Schedules of facilities that conduct this activity be limited.
- Train employees of sports betting services

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