

RESEARCH OF SPORTS BETTING HABITS AMONG AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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Abstract

Gambling in different forms is present in the life of many people, thanks to the fact that it is an opportunity for consumers to improve their financial situation as well as the joy of the game. Sports betting involves some kind of excitement, which encourages people to play in the hope of luck. Based on this, our research analysed the sports betting habits of athletes at different levels and PE teachers and also their opinions about sports betting. During the research, we conducted a questionnaire study among hobby athletes, PE teachers, coaches, and licensed athletes (n=65). The results of the study indicated that most of the respondents (95%) had tried gambling at least once. Furthermore, we also found that lower-level athletes spend proportionally more on gambling than higher-level athletes. Our results highlighted that amateur or hobby athletes spend more time, energy, and also money to gambling. An interesting result is that 46% of sports bettors have felt that they have gone too far with their bets, so it is not surprising that almost half of the sports bettors experienced a problem that had negative consequences. This proved that it is very easy to become addicted to sports betting and it is also significantly dangerous due to the development of addiction. Based on the answers received during the research, it can also be concluded that, according to the significant majority of the respondents, gambling has a negative effect on the individuals rather than a positive one.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, gambling is a part of every adult's life in one form or another, whether it is a lottery ticket, a lottery or a bet on any sport. Since, who has not scraped down a lottery ticket in the hope of winning the coveted jackpot of millions of forints. That is why, it is a fact that the prospect of winning money is so appealing to the masses. Several national studies have shown that more than half of the Hungarian population has already played some forms of gambling (Albert, 2017). The popularity of gambling is also shown by the fact that roughly a quarter of the population has had a period in their lives when they gambled on a weekly basis. This suggests that the number of people who make it a daily routine in their lives is high.

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In Hungary, gambling activities are regulated by Act XXXIV. of 1991, which, - with a few exceptions- are organised by the 100% state-owned Szerencsejáték Zrt. According to the regulation, since 2012, slot machines in Hungary can only be operated in casinos (hvg.hu) and no young people under the age of 18 are allowed to engage in gambling activities.

One of the most popular forms of gambling is sports betting, where you can predict the future outcome or outcome of a sporting event. In Hungary, sports betting was regulated after the World War II. In the year of 1947, betting on horserace was the most popular form of gambling, and in 1948 during the London Olympics, sports betting system was completely transformed according to the Western model. However, horseraces in Kincsem Park are still open to everyone (sportfogadasonline.com). In the history of the game, there was a short intermission during the Revolution of 1956 and War of Independence, when sports betting could not be made for two months, but after that anyone can indulge in their passion for gambling again. 1964 is also an important date in Hungarian history of the game, as it was the last Toto draw where the results of 12 games had to be predicted, and after that the 13+1 form is still a part of sports betting.

There is a wide range of sports betting options, as you can bet on anything – goals, penalty cards, corners, and goal scorers. It is also possible to make long-term bets aimed at predicting the final winner of a particular sports event.

Online sports betting is a regulated activity in Hungary. There are two categories among websites. The first are those that have an official state license and are not taxed on these winnings, but only Tippmixpro is included. The second category that owns a foreign license. In this situation, the winnings are taxable (kaszinomagyar.com). The operation of these sports betting sites is simple.

Szerencsejáték Zrt. launched Tippmix in 1997, which was expanded with Góltotó in 1999. Unlike Totó, you can bet not only on football matches, but also on any other sport, so it has been popular since the beginning. In the beginning, bets could be placed once a week on 120 betting events, but it was expanded. By 2006, it was possible to place bets twice a week on 200 events each time, and online betting was also introduced. In 2013, the Tippmixpro game was launched, offering live sports betting and many other combination betting options for players (maradjonjatek.hu).

As a result of the development of technology, the popularity of online sports betting has increased (sportfogasonline.com), since online betting has a wide range of offers. Getting involved in online sports betting is becoming easier and easier, so it is not surprising that sports betting with real money is becoming more and more popular not only in Hungary, but all over the world. Here, money can be moved and risked with clicks, which makes the player's job even easier. Some of the players play for fun and do not want to risk a lot of money, but at the same time, there are also players who practice sports betting at a professional level and risk large amounts of money on various events (kaszino24.hu). Gambling has both positive and negative effects, as we know, it can cause addiction and many problems, both on an individual and social levels (nyugat.hu).

2 Material and methods

In accordance with the purpose of the research, both primary and secondary researches were carried out. With the help of a questionnaire, we wanted to assess which types of gambling people of different sexes prefer and how they do gambling if they play something. We were also curious to whether sports levels influence the amount of money spent on sports betting and gambling, as well as the motivation for betting of the interviewed people. We also examined those leagues that the interviewed people like to bet on, moreover we studied whether respondents have ever felt that sports betting leads to addiction. In addition to the players of the DEAC futsal and NB3 teams, players of the women's Újfehértó Sports Club, DVSC Schaeffler women's handball and Nyírvásvári '16 FC teams also participated in the questionnaire study.

The paper-based questionnaires were completed by 65 people. In terms of gender distribution, 32.3% of respondents were women, 67.7% were men, and some of them were over 18 years of age. Most respondents (49%) were in the 18-25 age group. A quarter of the respondents were between 26-30, 31-40 years old in 17% and those over 40 in 9%. In terms of the highest level of education, 5-5% of the respondents had completed 8 classes or vocational qualifications, and 61% of the

respondents had a high school diploma. Nearly a third of respondents have a college, university or PhD degree. Based on the level of sports, the respondents were divided into 5 categories: at hobby level, athletes (14%), athletes in one of the National Championships (52%), athletes at the county level (17%), coaches (8%) and physical education teachers (9%).

Respondents gave their monthly net income between predetermined values on a scale, from which the respondents' average net income was calculated.

3 Results

There are many types of gambling, the scope of which expands from time to time. It is popular because there are always forms and options that meet the different needs of costumers. At the beginning of our study, we first sought to answer the question of what types of gambling people of different genders and ages prefer the most. The results showed that 95% of respondents had gambled at least once in their lives. The proportion of those who had not tried any type of gambling was low (5%). Respondents are most likely making sports bets (57%), with lottery tickets rated 18%. Lottery, Keno, Puttó, Kenó, Luxor, Euro Jackpot and horse racing were chosen by 16% of respondents. Only 3% of respondents said they went to a casino and some respondents (6%) did not play any gambling. The answers to these questions revealed that sports betting is the most popular and favourite within gambling. Interestingly, all of those who nominated lottery tickets were women (16%). From this we concluded that lottery ticket purchases are prevalent among women and that this type of gambling is most popular among women. Among those who indicated sports betting, men accounted for a significant majority (95%), while women accounted for 5% (Figure 1). Based on the results, it can be concluded that sports betting is most preferred and chosen by men from among gambling.

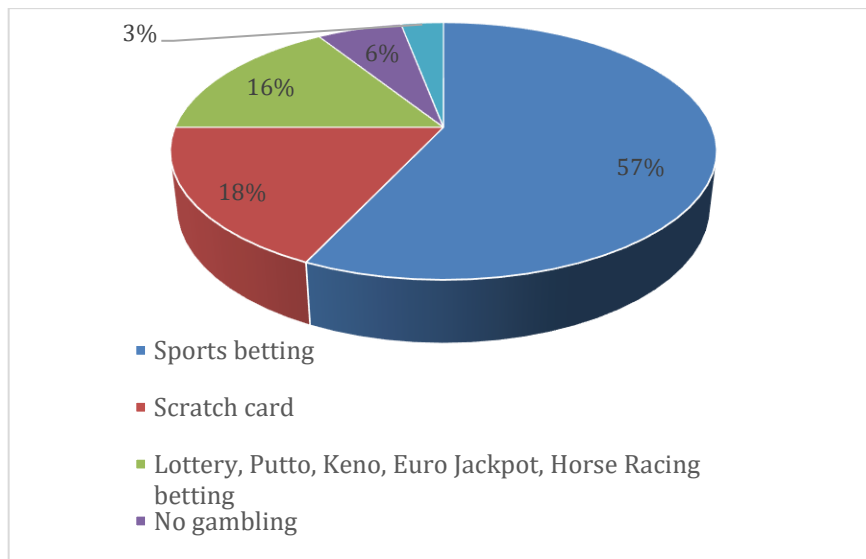


Figure 1: Distribution by preferred type of gambling (n=65)

Source: Own source, 2024

The results showed many interesting things about sports betting habits. 6% of the respondents bet almost every day, 4% bet more than once a week, 17% receive almost only on weekends. 8% of those surveyed play only once a week. The proportion of people who bet on special events was higher (43%). 22% of those who completed the questionnaire do not usually make sports bets at all. This shows that in the sample examined, from a sports betting point of view, the most popular event is when there are high-profile events because these are the ones that most people bet on. There are many reasons for this, such as their favorite teams playing or perhaps an international competition

where sports enthusiasts and sportslovers can cheer for their country. The other group consisted of bettors who bet almost only on weekends, which may be due to the fact that people have more time on weekends and that there are more sporting events to bet on on weekends. Only 4% of sports bettors bets several times a week (Figure 2).

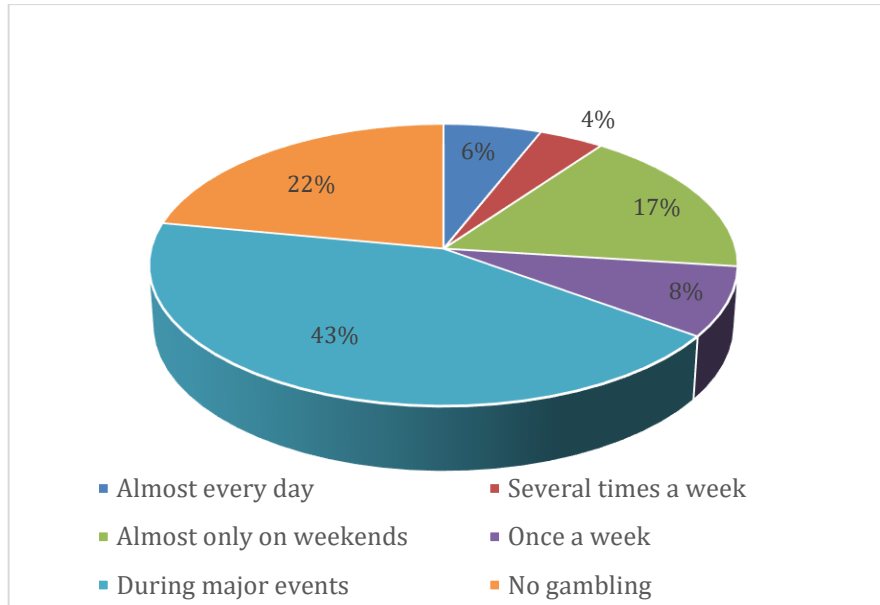


Figure 2: Frequency of sports betting (n=65)

Source: Own source, 2024

We were curious to know how our respondents engage in gambling if they participate in any form of it. The results showed that a quarter of the respondents play online, while 40% prefer paper-based betting, like Tippmix. 14% of those who completed the questionnaire bets both online and Tippmix system. Ont the other hand, 21% of the respondents do not engage in sports betting at all. These findings indicate that paper-based Tippmix is more popular among the questionnaire respondents, making it the most preferred option compared to online betting (Figure 3).

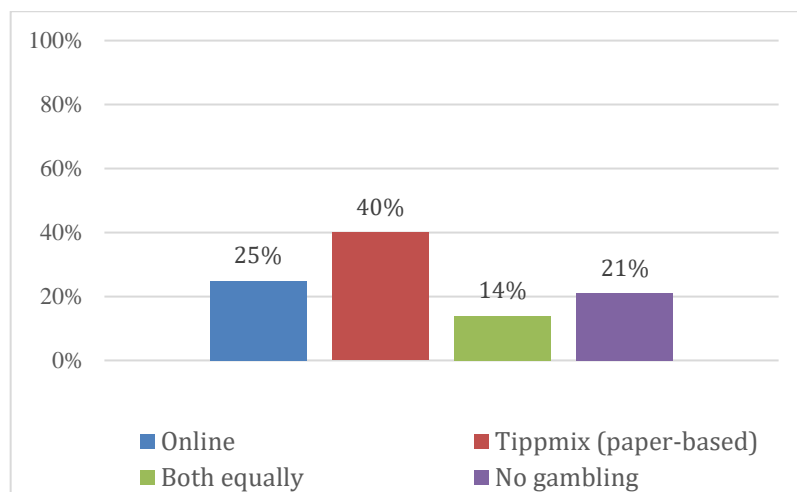


Figure 3: The respondent's types of betting (n=65)

Source: Own source, 2024

We examined whether the level of sports affects the amount of money spent on gambling and sports betting. To answer this question, respondents were divided into two groups to find out what characterizes the gambling habits of athletes at different levels and whether there are differences between them. We wanted to draw conclusions primarily in relation to material goods.

One group consisted of Athletes in the National Championship Divisions I, II, III, while the other group consisted of athletes of the lower level -county championships- and hobby level athletes. Based on the answers provided, we calculated that respondents competing in the first, second or third division of the National Championship have a maximum net income of HUF 10,600,000 per month. They spend a maximum of HUF 206,000 on sports betting, i.e. an average of 2% of their salary. Furthermore, they spend a maximum of HUF 380,000 on gambling that is not sports betting, i.e. on average 3.6% of their salary. In contrast, the maximum net income earned per month for athletes participating in the County Championship or at hobby level is HUF 6,800,000. They spend a maximum of HUF 710,000 on sports betting, i.e. an average of 10.4% of their salary. Furthermore, they spend a maximum of HUF 180,000 on gambling that is not sports betting, i.e. an average of 2.6% of their salary. In total, athletes in the National Championships spend on average up to 5.5% of their salary on gambling, while those competing in County Championships and hobby level spend on average up to 13% of their salary on various types of gambling. Based on this, it can be concluded that the proportion of athletes at the amateur level spend more than twice as much money on gambling as athletes at the more professional levels. The difference was particularly large in sports betting on different events, where athletes at County Championship and hobby level spend five times as much as those competing in the higher divisions of the National Championship (Figure 4).

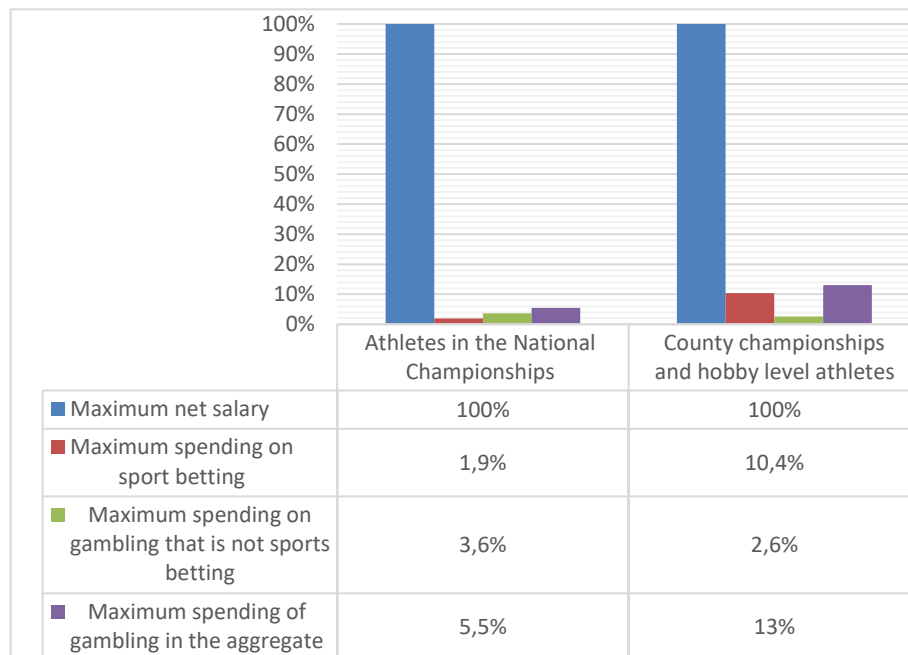


Figure 4: Percentage distribution of money spent on gambling by level of sports participation (n=65)

Source: Own source, 2024

Sports betting in particular always has a reason behind it since bettors have different incentives. Individuals begin betting for a variety of reasons, most frequently because they find the game to be

enjoyable, which motivates them to play. Studies on sports and sports games (Kinczel et al., 2022; Balogh et al., 2019) as well as game theory research (Molnár-Müller, 2024) demonstrate that competition, heightened excitement, increased adrenaline, and challenges are important drivers of different gaming activities (Hőnyi et al., 2021; Boda et al., 2018).

This also applies to sports betting, when bettors experience high levels of excitement, particularly when they stake their own money in the hopes that winners will boost their income and improve their financial circumstances. The findings revealed that while 25% of respondents gambled solely for the enjoyment of the game, over half (54%) of respondents bet with the intention of making a profit. Twenty-one percent said they never gambled. This suggests that the majority of sports bettors do so more for financial gain than for enjoyment. It's interesting to note that twice as many sports bettors do so for financial gain as for enjoyment, indicating that they are prepared to risk their own funds in the hopes of winning. Additionally, the results showed that people who wager for financial gain spend three times as much as those who wager for enjoyment. More specifically, those who gamble for enjoyment wager no more than 9,000 HUF, but profit-driven bettors average up to 27,000 HUF. This highlights a significant difference in the purpose of sports betting.

We also found it fascinating to evaluate which leagues our respondents prefer to wager on. Our main goal was to find out which top leagues in each country are most well-liked by the respondents. Our main question was focused on leagues that we thought were the most well-liked and watched by a large audience. The response choices included the top football leagues in Spain, France, England, Germany, Hungary, and Italy, as well as the choice to say that you had no interest in placing football wagers. The majority (60%) selected the Premier League, England's top-tier league. The OTP Bank Liga, the most well-known elite league in Hungary, was selected by 28% of respondents, followed by La Liga (20%), the Bundesliga (11%), Serie A (9%), and only 2% for Ligue 1. Consequently, it is evident that the top-tier Spanish, German, Italian, and French leagues are less popular than the Premier League or OTP Bank Liga. 21% of respondents never place any sports wagers at all, while 25% of respondents never wager on football games. The Premier League, the highest division of English football, is the most well-liked among respondents, according to the findings. This is perhaps because the league includes both elite teams that are extremely well-liked by football fans and a number of teams with lengthy histories and sizable fan bases. We think that the emotional and identity-related ties Hungarian respondents have to their national league contribute to the popularity of Hungary's top football league, the OTP Bank Liga, which is placed second.

We also looked at whether sports bettors thought regular betting could result in addiction and whether they had ever bet too much. An intriguing discovery was that 37% of respondents had felt they were overdoing it with betting, while a similar proportion (42%) reported never feeling this way. At least 15% of respondents admitted to having overindulged in betting at least once, and 18% admitted to doing so on occasion. Just 4% of respondents thought they had bet too much on many occasions.

It would be tough to locate someone who is not familiar with at least one type of gambling given how commonplace it has grown. Gambling is a popular past time, but it contains a lot of risks, especially if one is a habitual bettor with a strong desire to make excessive profits. It is no accident that gambling is only legal for individuals over the age of 18, as responsible gaming requires a certain amount of maturity. Numerous benefits and drawbacks are known to be connected to various types of gaming. One advantage is that in the absence of significant experience, a person's life can change dramatically and quickly by winning large sums. On the negative side, we must highlight the addiction potential where the gambler can also lose vast amounts of money in a short time.

In this study, we measured a considerable disparity in respondents' opinions: 12% thought gambling had a primarily good impact on people, whereas the majority (88%) thought it had a mostly

negative impact. We consider this findings to be not surprising. Experiences have shown that it is relatively simple to develop a gambling addiction since the possibility of earning enormous sums of money can have a negative impact on people's personalities and reveal their flaws. Many view gambling as an escape, believing that by winning huge sums of money, they may trade in their miserable and impoverished life for a better one.

4 Results and Conclusions

The great majority of respondents (95%) to my research question indicated that they had attempted at least one type of gambling, which lends credence to the idea that the majority of adults engage in some sorts of gambling. In studying the sums spent on gambling and sports betting, the results suggested that county-level and hobby-level athletes spend more than twice as much money on gambling compared to athletes that play in one of the National Leagues. I also looked into how often and how athletes's wager throughout a given week. The study's findings indicate that the majority of participants wager on significant occurrences. Additionally, a few respondents stated that they mostly wager on sports on the weekends. This may be because there are typically more sporting events on weekends, and they find it difficult to find the time to wager during the workweek. In terms of betting strategy, the findings showed that most of the participants preferred "Tippmix"-style games that are played on paper. Examining the motivations behind betting, the findings revealed that over twice as many sports gamblers were driven largely by financial gain as by a love of the activity. The average monthly expenditure on sports betting for profit is three times higher for profit-driven bettors than for enjoyment of the sport. The English and Hungarian premier leagues are the most often gambled upon leagues by the respondents. About 50% of those who answered the poll said they had overdone their sports betting at some point, whilst a similar percentage said they had never felt that way. The overwhelming majority of respondents think that gambling has more detrimental than beneficial effects on people, which is an intriguing conclusion. This outcome is probably because sports betting, like all gambling, is ultimately very unprofitable and has very little possibility of success.

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