
A STUDY ON AWARENESS AND RISK PERCEPTION OF ONLINE GAMBLING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The marketing strategies play a crucial role in normalizing online gambling among youth. The results also highlight gender-based and usage-based differences in awareness and perception levels. The study concludes by emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive awareness programs, incorporation of digital literacy and behavioural risk education in academic curricula, and stricter regulatory measures to control misleading advertisements and underage access. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into student behaviour and offering practical recommendations for educators, policymakers. The proliferation of internet technologies and mobile applications has led to a significant rise in online gambling activities, particularly among young adults and college students. This study aims to examine the level of awareness and risk perception of online gambling among college students, with a focus on their understanding of its legal status, addictive nature, financial consequences, and psychological implications. The research adopts a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire administered to a diverse sample of college students from different academic backgrounds. The study investigates key dimensions such as students' familiarity with various online gambling platforms, frequency of engagement, motivations for participation, and sources of information. It also explores how demographic factors, peer influence, and exposure to digital advertisements contribute to shaping attitudes toward online gambling. The findings reveal that although a high proportion of students are aware of online gambling and its basic functioning, there exists a limited and often superficial understanding of its associated risks. Many respondents tend to perceive online gambling as a recreational or harmless activity, underestimating the potential for addiction, financial loss, academic disruption, and mental health issues such as stress and anxiety. Furthermore, the study identifies a discrepancy between awareness and risk perception, indicating that knowledge alone does not necessarily translate into cautious behaviour. Social influences, ease of access, and aggressive, and mental health professionals to mitigate the risks associated with online gambling.

Keywords: Online Gambling, Awareness, Financial Risk, Gambling Behaviour

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

The rapid advancement of digital technology and widespread internet accessibility have transformed various aspects of human life, including entertainment and leisure activities. One such emerging trend is online gambling, which has gained significant popularity in recent years, particularly among young adults and college students. Online gambling refers to betting or wagering activities conducted through internet-based platforms, including online casinos, sports betting sites, poker games, and mobile gaming applications. The convenience, anonymity, and 24/7 availability of these platforms have made them highly attractive to the younger population. College students represent a particularly vulnerable group due to their developmental stage, increased independence, and exposure to peer influence. The transition to college life often involves greater freedom, financial autonomy, and experimentation with new behaviours, which may increase the likelihood of engaging in risk-taking activities such as online gambling. Moreover, aggressive marketing strategies, social media promotions, and the gamification of betting platforms further contribute to normalizing gambling behaviour among youth. Despite its growing popularity, online gambling poses several significant risks. These include financial losses, academic disruption, mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as the potential development of behavioural addiction. Unlike traditional forms of gambling, online platforms provide easy access and instant rewards, which can intensify addictive tendencies and reduce users' perception of risk. Many students may engage in online gambling without fully understanding its long-term consequences or legal implications, particularly in regions where regulations are unclear or evolving. Awareness and risk perception are critical factors influencing individuals' behaviour toward potentially harmful activities. Awareness refers to the extent of knowledge individuals have about online gambling, including its nature, functioning, and associated consequences. Risk perception, on the other hand, involves how individuals interpret and evaluate the potential dangers associated with such activities. A gap between awareness and risk perception may lead to irresponsible behaviour, where individuals knowingly engage in risky activities without adequately recognizing their potential impact. In this context, the present study aims to examine the level of awareness and risk perception of online gambling among college students. It seeks to explore students' understanding of online gambling, their attitudes toward its risks, and the factors influencing their perceptions and behaviours. By identifying existing gaps and misconceptions, the study intends to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals to design effective awareness programs and preventive strategies. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of research on digital risk behaviours among youth and highlights the need for increased attention to the psychological, social, and economic implications of online gambling in the contemporary digital era.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To Know the level of awareness of online gambling among college students.

To Study the perception of risks associated with online gambling among college students.

To Identify the factors influencing students to participate in online gambling activities.

STATEMENT OF THE STUDY

The rapid growth of digital technology and easy access to the internet have significantly increased the popularity of online gambling platforms among young adults, particularly college students. With the widespread use of smartphones and online payment systems, students are increasingly exposed to various forms of online betting, gaming, and gambling activities. While these platforms are often perceived as a source of entertainment and quick financial gain, they also carry substantial risks, including financial loss, addiction, psychological distress, and negative impacts on academic performance. Despite its growing prevalence, there is limited awareness among college students regarding the potential dangers and legal implications associated with online gambling. Many students may underestimate the risks involved or lack adequate knowledge about responsible gambling behaviours. This gap in awareness can lead to risky decision-making and increased vulnerability to gambling-related harm. Therefore, this study aims to assess the level of awareness and risk perception of online gambling among college students. It seeks to understand how students perceive the risks associated with online gambling, identify factors influencing their attitudes and behaviours, and evaluate the extent of their knowledge about its consequences. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of targeted educational programs, preventive strategies, and policy interventions to promote responsible behaviour and reduce the adverse effects of online gambling among students.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to a specific group of college students, so results may not apply to all students everywhere.

It is based on self-reported data, which may include bias or inaccurate responses.

Time and resource constraints may have limited the sample size and depth of the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyse, and interpret data for a particular study.

1. Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to assess the level of awareness and risk perception of online gambling among college students. The design is suitable as it focuses on describing existing conditions, attitudes, and perceptions without manipulating any variables.

2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of respondents was selected from the target population using a convenience sampling method. The total sample size for the study was 200 students.

3. Data Collection Methods

The study uses both Primary and Secondary data.

- a) Primary Data: Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among college students.
- b) Secondary Data: Secondary data is gathered from Research articles and journals, Government reports and publications, Websites and online sources related to online gambling.

5. Tools for Data Analysis

Simple percentage analysis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study by Umuri et al. (2024) highlighted that students often lack adequate awareness of the risks associated with online gambling and digital financial activities. The research emphasized that educational interventions significantly improved students' understanding of the dangers and led to more cautious attitudes toward online gambling practices.

Wickwire et al. (2007) explored college students' perceptions of gambling and found that perceived availability, benefits, and risks significantly influence gambling behaviour. Students who perceived gambling as less risky were more likely to engage in such activities, indicating that risk perception plays a critical role in decision-making.

(Kalkan & Bhat, 2020 – Relationships of Problematic Internet Use, Online Gaming, and Online Gambling with Depression and Quality of Life Among College Students). The literature shows a dual role of internet technologies supporting academic and social development when used moderately but posing significant risks when usage becomes excessive. Online gaming and gambling are particularly concerning among college students, with strong associations to depression, loneliness, and diminished quality of life.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.1 Showing the Respondents Awareness of Online Gambling

S.NO	PARTICULARS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	AWARE	140	70%
2	NOT AWARE	60	30%
	TOTAL	200	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows that 140 respondents (70%) are aware of the online gambling and 60 respondents (30%) are not aware of the online gambling. Most students are aware of online gambling, showing that it is widely known among college students.

Table 1.2 Showing the Perception of Risks Associated with Online Gambling

S.NO	PARTICULARS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	high risk	110	55%
2	moderate risk	60	30%
3	low/no risk	30	15%
	TOTAL	200	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows, Out of 200 respondents, 110 students (55%) perceive online gambling as high risk, 60 (30%) as moderate risk, and 30 (15%) as low or no risk. Most students understand the risks involved, but a small group underestimates them, highlighting the need for better education on the dangers of online gambling.

Table 1.3 showing the Factors Influencing Participation in Online Gambling

S.NO	PARTICULARS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	peer influence	50	25%
2	Curiosity	40	20%
3	quick money	60	30%
4	easy access (mobile/internet)	30	15%
5	advertisements/offers	20	10%
	TOTAL	200	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows, Among the respondents, the main influencing factor is the desire to earn quick money (30%), followed by peer influence (25%), curiosity (20%), easy access (15%), and advertisements (10%). The findings show that financial motives and social influence are the key reasons students engage in online gambling. This suggests a need for guidance and awareness to help students make informed decisions.

CONCLUSION

The study on online gambling among college students reveals that a majority of respondents (70%) are aware of online gambling platforms, indicating its widespread presence and accessibility. Despite this high level of awareness, students' understanding of the associated risks varies, with many recognizing it as risky, while a smaller group underestimates its negative consequences. Overall, the findings suggest a need for increased awareness programs and educational initiatives to inform students about the potential dangers of online gambling. Encouraging responsible behavior and critical decision-making can help reduce the likelihood of students engaging in such risky activities.

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