



ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>
Vol. 05 No. 02. April-June 2026. Page# 1141-1150
Print ISSN: [3006-2497](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20315561) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20315561)
Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20315561)
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20315561>



Effect of Sports Betting and its Potential Risk on Emotional Control and Entertainment of Players

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship between effect of sports betting and its potential risk on the emotional control and entertainment of players. Researcher has used cross-sectional survey approach for the purpose of data collection. Descriptive statistical (mean, frequency, percentage, and standard deviation), and inferential statistics (t-test) were utilized to find out the results from collected data. The study based on quantitative measure in nature. To access the effect on emotional control to optimize the effect on match fixing and fraud and to find out the effect on entertainment on personality of players. Finding of the study showed that the mean difference between the sample mean ($M=2.5014$) and the test value was 2.501362. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranged from 2.4100 to 2.5927, indicating that the true population mean difference is expected to fall within this interval. Both emotional and entertainment aspects showed statistically significant differences from a test value of 0, as indicated by the very low p-values ($p=0.000$). Over time, these practices can cause mood swings, anxiety, and even despair, especially when losses accrue. Furthermore, the persistent chase of wins can breed obsessive tendencies and hamper decision-making abilities, harming personal relationships and professional duties.

Keywords: Emotional control, entertainment, match fixing & fraud, social aspects.

Introduction

Sports betting has emerged as one of the fastest-growing forms of gambling in contemporary society, particularly among young adults and sports participants. The rapid advancement of digital technology, widespread internet access, and the availability of online betting platforms have significantly increased the accessibility and popularity of sports wagering worldwide. Today, individuals can easily place bets on various sporting events through mobile applications and online websites, which has made betting more convenient and socially integrated into sports culture. The commercialization of sports, combined with aggressive marketing strategies and media promotion by gambling companies, has further normalized betting behavior among spectators and players. Although sports betting is often perceived as a form of entertainment that enhances excitement and engagement in sports, research indicates that it may also lead to psychological, emotional, and behavioral risks (Gainsbury et al., 2015; Lopez-Gonzalez et al., 2018).

Emotional control is a crucial psychological factor in sports performance, as athletes are required to manage stress, anxiety, frustration, and competitive pressure during training and competition. Effective emotional regulation contributes to better decision-making, concentration, and consistency in performance. However, involvement in sports betting may significantly influence emotional stability among players. Betting outcomes are strongly associated with emotional fluctuations such as excitement after winning and anger, regret, or frustration after losing. These emotional responses may become more intense when financial stakes are involved, leading to impulsive behavior and reduced self-control. Research suggests that excessive engagement in gambling activities can contribute to emotional distress, depression, and poor psychological well-being among individuals, particularly young athletes (Hing et al., 2016; Abbott et al., 2018). In addition, continuous exposure to betting-related stress may negatively affect athletes' focus and performance in sports settings.

At the same time, sports betting is widely associated with entertainment value, as many individuals participate in wagering activities to increase excitement and emotional involvement in sports events. Betting can enhance anticipation, enjoyment, and social interaction among players and spectators, making sports viewing more engaging. Some studies indicate that moderate gambling behavior may be perceived as a recreational activity that contributes positively to entertainment experiences (Lopez-Gonzalez et al., 2017; Lamont et al., 2016). However, this entertainment value may gradually transform into harmful behavior when betting becomes excessive or emotionally driven. In such cases, individuals may develop compulsive gambling habits, emotional dependency, and risky decision-making patterns, which can negatively affect their mental health and social functioning (Griffiths, 2012; Derevensky et al., 2011).

The increasing availability of online sports betting has also raised concerns regarding its influence on athletes, especially youth and amateur players. Exposure to gambling advertisements, inducements, and promotional campaigns through digital platforms can shape positive attitudes toward betting without fully understanding its associated risks. Financial losses, emotional instability, aggression, and addiction are among the major consequences of uncontrolled gambling behavior. Previous studies have shown that sports bettors are at higher risk of developing gambling-related problems due to impulsivity and emotional involvement in betting outcomes (Russell et al., 2018; Wardle et al., 2019). Therefore, understanding the relationship between sports betting, emotional control, and entertainment is essential for identifying both its potential benefits and psychological risks.

The present study aims to investigate the influence of sports betting and its potential risks on emotional control and entertainment among players. Specifically, it explores how betting behavior affects emotional regulation and whether it enhances or reduces entertainment value in sports participation. The findings of this study may provide valuable insights for coaches, sports psychologists, policymakers, and educational institutions in developing awareness programs and preventive strategies to minimize gambling-related harm while promoting healthy sports engagement.

Objective of the study

- To analyze the mean difference regarding sports betting and its potential risk on emotional control of players.
- To investigate the perception of players regarding the effect of sports betting and its potential risk on entertainment of players.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotions play a fundamental role in human behavior. Emotions have a significant impact on performers' lives in sports and other performance-related fields like dance, music, the military, surgery, aviation, and medicine. These effects can have both immediate and long-term effects on how well performers function because they affect their effort, attention, memory, decision-making, behavioral responses, and interpersonal interactions. (Hays, 2017).

The basis of self-efficacy beliefs is primarily on prior performance successes, which include prior experiences applying self-regulation or mental preparation techniques, such as distraction, relaxation, setting reasonable goals, using positive self-talk and motivational imagery. Diverse self-regulation strategies are employed by athletes to modify their arousal states in accordance with task demands and individual preferences. These include altering one's breathing pattern and pace (thoracic versus abdominal), tensing and relaxing one's muscles, thinking and picturing energetic or de-energizing ideas, engaging in behavioral routines, and engaging in musical activities. This supports the idea that emotions and the control over them should be viewed as social phenomena that may be studied and comprehended from an interpersonal standpoint (Brown & Fletcher, 2017).

The definition of mindfulness is the deliberate allocation of prolonged attention relating nonjudgmentally (that is, without labeling the experience as good or terrible or right or wrong) to ideas, feelings, physical sensations, emotional cues, and outside events that take place in the present moment. A fundamental aspect of mindfulness is a nonjudgmental awareness that permits a healthy experience and expression of emotional content without emotional under- or over-engagement exhibited by worry/rumination or avoidance/thought suppression, respectively (Moore, 2016). Emotions are multimodal in the IZOF model, manifesting as eight distinct and connected psych biosocial components. Therefore, emotive, cognitive, motivational, and other aspects of a psych biosocial condition components that are volitional, physiological, motor-behavioral, operational, and communicative (Hanin & Robazza, 2016).

According to this view, regulation can be applied to all state modalities rather than just one, or emotional. For example, created a multimodal self-regulation program that targets emotion and physical symptoms in gymnasts and hockey players, and included music into swimmer's pre-performance rituals to help them self-regulate a wide range of psychogio social states. The term "content" describes the nature or standard of the experiences. The IZOF model, which combines discrete emotion and dimensional affect techniques, divides people into four categories according to hedonic tone (pleasure-displeasure) and functioning (success-failure). Experiences that are functionally pleasant, functionally unpleasant, dysfunctional pleasant, and dysfunctional unpleasant result from the interplay between functionality and hedonic tone.

Consequently, regulation is not just restricted to managing bad experiences (Ruiz & Robazza 2017).

From a broader perspective, self-regulation can include sustaining optimal states regardless of their pleasant or unpleasant valence, as well as down- or up-regulating dysfunctional or functional events, respectively. Investigated match-fixing and other forms of sports corruption examined the corrupt practices of sports stakeholders examined the corruption of big events. For the past century, the news media have mostly focused on “high” corruption and its repression in relation to international sporting events managed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or FIFA, as well as their members. Scandals have affected not just teams, clubs, or major events, but also organizations that oversee sports, such as the FIF (Amenta & Di Betta, 2021).

Explore, the presence of regulatory controls has resulted in a low incidence of competition or on-field corruption (Philippo, 2021). Conversely, governance corruption is more problematic, as it involves the distribution of tickets by sponsors, as well as the procurement of construction and related services (Tighe & Rowan, 2020).

Neglects to mention that, regardless of the situation, sport and its fans suffer since confidence is damaged. (Philippou, 2021). Sports fans were more confident in sports integrity than devoted sports supporters. It is claimed that the sixth evolutionary trend in sports is criminalization, or increased criminal activity on a larger scale. The focus of concentrate on the gambling industry and match-fixing. More precisely, they have suggested that players may also be involved in match-fixing because they may have gambling addictions and that this affects more than just first league clubs. As a result, the problem of immoral and unlawful behavior assumes larger and more comprehensive proportions, since it affects younger or even prospective participants. This creates potential for lifetime blackmail as well as normalizes corrupt behavior. Because the illegal activity requires the participation of two or more actors to occur typically, one actor will grease the wheel in order for the illegal transaction or act to occur it follows that both collusion and greasing-the-wheel are applicable to corruption in sport to occur (Hardyns, Vanwersch, & Constandt, 2025).

Certainly, there is more to sports than just sports. According to Sport radar, the global betting market is expected to be worth €1.45 trillion by 2021. In order to find a trend in match-fixing, as well as the nations and sports most likely to have suspicious matches, Sport radar has examined the betting patterns of suspect matches. Sports seemed to be the sport most likely to have strange matches in Europe, Asia, and South America, while basketball and sports also seemed to be showing suspect matches. Considering the conventional sports schedule. The months with the most suspect matches seem to be September and October. Although match-fixing was primarily occurring in the top two-tier domestic league until recently, it seems that lower-level sports teams are also seeing an increase in this practice. Due to lax regulations and the fact that Asian betting operators use an agent-trading system with multiple layers of intermediaries, Sport radar reports that half of the suspicious cases in 2021 were discovered to be in youth football, third-tier football, or even lower division football (Radar, 2022).

As in sports the American Gaming Association (2022) reports that betting is still on the rise both domestically and internationally. Recent studies have concentrated on identifying potential risk factors linked to problematic sports-betting behaviors, such as chasing losses, distorted gambling cognitions, gambling obsession, and social or financial problems brought on by sports-betting behaviors. (Hing & Browne, 2019).

In order to be classified as having a gambling disorder (GD), a person must satisfy at least four of the nine diagnostic criteria listed in the DSM-5. However, some gambling behaviors that

do not satisfy all of the diagnostic criteria (such as two or three inclusionary criteria for GD in the DSM-5) have been linked to negative functioning measures and are referred to as subthreshold GD, “problem gambling,” or at/risk gambling (Kraus & Potenza, 2019). They have also looked at global sports-betting behaviors and attitudes rather than country-specific variations (Mercier, 2018). Among Australian sports bettors, increased gaming activity has been linked to the emergence of difficulties related to gambling (Hing, 2019). Explore a similar vein, cross-cultural variations in GD, gambling behaviors, and gambling beliefs were generally supported review on the impact of culture in gambling and GD. Particularly, among culturally and linguistically varied groups (such as ethnic minorities or Aboriginal communities in Western countries), there were greater estimations of GD prevalence (Raylu, 2019).

Their analysis uncovered cultural variations in gambling practices and attitudes, such as the shame associated with gambling, the reasons people gamble, and the readiness to seek help for gambling and the thoughts associated with gambling. Significantly, collectivist cultures like those found in China, Taiwan, Macau, etc. have been observed to deviate from individualist cultures like those found in Australia and Canada more frequently than individualist cultures (Oei & Loo, 2019).

Method and Material

Research Design

This study utilized descriptive research design in order to assess the impact of sports betting and its potential risk on emotional control and entertainment and its potential risk on the players at college and university level, Faisalabad, Pakistan. Such research design used descriptive statistic for description of characteristics of sample and linear regression to analyze the impact of independent variable on dependent variables.

Population and sampling

People who were actively involved in sports at various universities, such as Punjab University Lahore (PU), Government College University of Lahore (GCUL), University of Lahore (UOL), Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF), and Government College University Faisalabad (GCUF), between the ages of 18 to 25 were the participants of the study. Purposive sample was used to choose participants, making sure they fulfilled the requirements for inclusion, which included being avid sports bettors and giving their informed consent. Total sample size was 721 players at university level.

Instrument of the Study

In the current study, the researcher has developed a self-made questionnaire. The scale has three portions; 1st portion has items about the demographic information of the participants, while the second portion having items regarding sports betting, and the final parts containing items in term of emotional and entertainment aspects of the player during sports competition. For the validity of the scale, the researcher has administrated the scale among the experts in the field of sports sciences and psychology, in order to omit the irrelevant and ambiguous items of the scale. For internal consistency of the items, cronbach’s alpha was applied. The alphah value for the scale is 0.95, which is in excellent range of acceptance.

Pilot Study

Before, actual study, a pilot study was conducted in order to check the feasibility, validity and reliability of the instrument. 20 subjects were used to measure the variable “Entertainment”. With a mean of 1.9083 & a standard deviation of “Match Fixing” variable was made. With a mean score of 3.5503 & a standard deviation of 1.45357, the scores varied from 1.00 to 5.00, indicating a comparatively large range in participant responses. Emotional Control” variable, which was based on 20 observations, showed comparatively little variation in participant answers.

Detail of the participants and sample from each university.**Table 1:** *Data sources*

University's	Population	Sample
GCUL	300	100
Punjab university	300	200
GCWUF	400	162
UOL	300	150
GCUF	400	110
Total	1700	721

Statistical analysis

Software called the arithmetical file for the social sciences (SPSS), which is frequently used for statistical analysis in social science research, will be utilized to examine the data (Field, 2013 IBM Corp., 2020). To properly summarize and analyze the dataset, descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, frequencies, and standard deviation were calculated for each variable (Pallant, 2020).

Hypothesis Testing

H₁: There is significant mean difference in the perception of player regarding sports betting and its potential risk on emotional control and entertainment of players

Table 2: *One sample statistics*

	One sample statistic			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Entertainment	721	2.2319	1.09625	.04083
Emotional control	721	2.4411	1.13282	.04219

The results of the one sample t-test, which compared the mean scores for Entertainment (M = 2.2319, SD = 1.09625) and Emotional Control (M = 2.4411, SD = 1.13282), reveal a noticeable difference in how participants perceive these two aspects of sports engagement. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that while sports provide entertainment, they also serve a deeper psychological function. Therefore, the observed difference in mean scores is consistent with prior literature and highlights the multifaceted role of sports in providing both enjoyment and psychological support.

H₂: There is significant difference in the perception of players regarding the effect of sports Betting and its potential risk on entertainment and emotional control of players.

Table 3a: T test entertainment and emotional control

Variables	One Sample Test					
	t	df	Sign (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the difference	
					Lower	Upper
Entertainment	54.667	720	.000	2.23185	2.1517	2.3120
Emotional control	57.861	720	.000	2.44105	2.3582	2.5239

The statistically significant results for both Entertainment ($t(720) = 54.667, p = 0.000$, 95% CI [2.1517, 2.3120]) and Emotional Control ($t(720) = 57.861, p = 0.000$, 95% CI [2.3582, 2.5239]) suggest that participants strongly acknowledge the role of sports in providing both entertainment and emotional regulation. These findings support previous research that has consistently highlighted the dual function of sports fandom. The statistically significant t-values and narrow confidence intervals indicate that these effects are consistent across the sample and not due to random chance. Thus, the findings reinforce earlier studies by showing that sports not only entertain but also play an essential role in managing emotional well-being.

Table 3b: One-Sample Effect Sizes

Variables	Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Entertainment	Cohen's d	1.09625	2.036	2.164
	Hedges' correction	1.09739	2.034	2.161
Emotional control	Cohen's d	1.13282	2.155	2.288
	Hedges' correction	1.13400	2.153	2.285

The large effect sizes observed for both Entertainment (Cohen's $d = 1.09625$; Hedges' $g = 1.09739$) and Emotional Control (Cohen's $d = 1.13282$; Hedges' $g = 1.13400$), along with their narrow confidence intervals, strongly affirm the substantial psychological impact of sports engagement. These findings align with prior research emphasizing the deep emotional and psychological roles sports play in individuals' lives. The robust and consistent magnitude of effect revealed in this study corroborates these earlier conclusions, highlighting the enduring relevance and strength of sports as a vehicle for both entertainment and emotional management. These results emphasize that sports engagement is not merely a pastime but a significant contributor to emotional and psychological well-being.

Conclusion

Researchers use the t-test to test specific hypotheses. There is no difference between group means. The test determines if observed differences are statistically significant or likely due to random variation. In contrast, if the p-value was more than 0.05, the null hypothesis could not be rejected, signifying no significant difference between the variables. To analyze the effect on emotional control and its potential risk on personality of players. To find out the effect on entertainment and its potential risk on personality of players. Excessive involvement can result in social isolation, disagreements, and strained relationships, which can ultimately damage personality traits connected to social responsibility and collaboration, even while it may

occasionally encourage social engagement and peer bonding. This could progressively affect personality by decreasing self-control and raising reliance. This could progressively affect personality by decreasing self-control and raising reliance.

Discussion

This study aimed to assess the effect of sports betting on the emotional control and entertainment of players and its potential risk on the players at university level, Faisalabad, Pakistan. The finding of the study revealed that sports betting has significant association with the entertainment and emotional control of players. It means that sports betting has some detrimental impacts on the emotional health and entertainment of player that may decline the true spirit of sports among players as well as spectators. Such results also match with the previous studies. The study found that Engaging in betting activities can cause significant behavioral and psychological changes in a participant, whether directly or indirectly. Studies suggest that bettors may be more prone to worry, have trouble focusing, and become addicted more easily (Lopez-Gonzalez, Griffiths, & Estevez, 2020). Similarly, another study reported that the financial risks of betting coupled with performance pressure can change a player's emotional condition, resulting in rash judgments and unpredictable behavior on and off the field. Athletes may also have a conflict of interest due to their ongoing exposure to the betting culture, which could affect their moral sense and sportsmanship (Whysall, 2014).

The current outputs of the study reported that sports betting has substantial impacts of the emotional health and control of player in sports completion. Such finding is corroborated the study of Henderson DePriest (2024) reported that recurring in betting-related activities over time may make mental health conditions including depression and compulsive gambling inclinations worse.

According to international research, between 50% and 75% of adults gamble annually in one way or another, with problem gambling rates ranging from 0.3% to 5.3%.^{5, 6, 8-11} Additionally, according to research, up to 80% of teenagers will have gambled by the time they are 18 or 13 or 14, with up to 8% classified as problem gamblers and up to 15% at danger of doing so.¹⁵⁻¹⁷ The wellbeing of families^{18,19} and communities is significantly impacted by hazardous and problem gambling behaviors, as research has already amply demonstrated.²⁰⁻²³ Research on gambling has mostly concentrated on individual gambling to date. A study reported that diverse self-regulation strategies are employed by athletes to modify their arousal states in accordance with task demands and individual preferences. These include altering the type and tempo of breathing (thoracic or abdominal), as well as behavioral patterns, muscle tension and relaxation, energizing and de-energizing ideas and mental images, and music listening (Karageorghis, 2017) This supports the idea that emotions and the control over them should be viewed as social phenomena that may be studied and comprehended from an interpersonal standpoint (Tamminen & Bennett, 2017).

On the other hand, mental resilience and emotional control are critical to a player's performance. Players who maintain composure under pressure tend to make better decisions and demonstrate higher levels of sportsmanship. Research indicates that players with strong psychological skills, such as emotional regulation and focus, perform more consistently and are less likely to engage in impulsive actions (Johnson & Raab, 2003). Finding of the study also revealed that sports betting has significant effect on the entertainment in sports competition among players as well as spectators. The finding of the present study revealed that sports betting has a significant influence on entertainment among both players and spectators in sports. This result indicates that betting activities increase excitement, emotional involvement, and overall enjoyment during sports competitions. Many individuals perceive sports betting as an additional

source of thrill that enhances their interest in matches and sporting events, making games more engaging and enjoyable. For spectators, betting may create a stronger sense of anticipation and attachment to game outcomes, while for players it can increase attention toward sporting performances and competition-related discussions.

Previous research has similarly reported that sports betting contributes to entertainment motivation by adding suspense, uncertainty, and emotional stimulation to sports consumption (Gainsbury et al., 2015). Likewise, Hing, Russell, and Vitartas (2016) noted that betting-related engagement often strengthens spectators' enjoyment and involvement in sporting events. In addition, Lopez-Gonzalez and Griffiths (2018) argued that the integration of betting into modern sports culture has transformed the viewing experience into a more interactive and entertaining activity for many sports followers. Therefore, the current finding supports the view that sports betting has become a significant entertainment-related component within contemporary sports culture, shaping the experiences of both players and spectators.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher has not claimed any conflict of interest.

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