

Gambling behavior of young adults: A basis for an intervention program

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to determine the level of gambling behavior of young adults. It also looked into the possible causes and factors that contribute to the development of gambling behavior. The descriptive method was used as the research design. The South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) and a checklist were used to assess the level of gambling behavior and to know the possible factors respectively. Responses were obtained from a total of one hundred fourteen (114) males and seventy-five (75) females. The data were treated and analyzed using relative frequency and chi-square. The results of the study showed that the majority of the respondents were males in the age bracket of 21-25 years old, unemployed and had a monthly income or allowance of PhP 1,000-5,000. Moreover, most of the respondents were college students and college graduates. As assessed by SOGS, 84 or 45% were Non-Problem Gamblers, while 82 or 43% were Probable Pathological Gamblers. Twenty-three (23) or 12% were In-Transition Gamblers. The factors that greatly contribute to the development of gambling behavior are attributed to financial, family and conduct problems, early big win and problems with alcohol or other drugs, gambling or overspending. The profiles showed significant difference on their level of gambling behavior when grouped according to age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income or allowance and occupation. However they were not found to have any difference in their level of gambling behavior when grouped according to civil status. An intervention program that includes information dissemination, seminars about problem gambling, cognitive behavioral therapy, and others was proposed to help the young adults to minimize their gambling activity.

Keywords: gambling behavior, gambling, young adult

1. INTRODUCTION

Gambling is an ancient form of recreation. There is archaeological and historical evidence of gambling in many ancient civilizations including those of the Egyptians, Chinese, Hindus,

Persians, Hebrews and Huns [1-3]. Gambling has also been widely documented in prehistoric cultures as well as among indigenous tribal people [4]. From these accounts, it is realized that gambling emerged independently in a number of different societies. Moreover,

gambling innovations and practices have been widely transported across geographical and cultural boundaries.

For most gamblers, gambling is just fun. If they win, great. If they lose it is not a major catastrophe. They go on to another activity. However, for some young adults, the attraction to gambling is much stronger [5]. They start to gamble more than they meant to and lose more than they can afford. Their inability to control their behavior is a sign of problem gambling.

Problem gambling is a general term referring to all individuals who have any problem associated with their gambling, including those who were diagnosed as pathological gamblers. It is not defined by how often someone gambles or how much money the person loses. Rather, it is whether or not the individual's life is disrupted by gambling, namely, if gambling takes precedence over other activities and the individual experiences adverse consequences because of gambling. Additional signs may include frequent gambling activities and increased absence from work or school [6].

Philippines has become the gambling lord's paradise and the richest these lords, albeit legal and government-owned is the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR). The most beautiful part of Metro Manila is about to turn into the Las Vegas of the Orient. According to the latest administrative data from PAGCOR [7], Philippine gambling industry GGR grew by 5.2 percent to reach US\$3.5 billion in 2017 from US\$3.3 billion (2016).

Five out of ten Filipinos say that the earnings of legal gambling industry come from poor people.

Almost two-third people say that they have engaged in gambling for the past twelve months. About 64% Filipino gambling participation is roughly the same as the 66% Americans participation. According to Stoletenberg *et al.* (2007), men and women have different levels of gambling involvement, with men having higher levels of engagement and problems than women [8]. Men gambled more frequently and had higher chances of loss and win as compared to women [9]. The estimated number of gamblers came to 15.6 million men and 10.9 million women, or 26.5 million in all, out of a projected population of 50.4 million adults in 2005 [10].

The researchers conducted this kind of study in order to determine the level of gambling behavior of young adults; to know the profile of the respondents and the reasons or causes why they spend time in gambling and find the relationship of the profile and level of gambling; in order to propose an intervention program to alleviate gambling behavior.

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

2.1. Research Design

The purpose of the study is to determine the relationship of socio-demographic profile and level of gambling behavior among young adults in Barangay Danglayan, San Pascual Batangas. The researchers used the descriptive method as a design for the investigation to gather information about the present and existing conditions [11].

2.2. Participants

The researchers employ it to know whether some factors greatly contribute to the development of gambling behavior of the respondents. The respondents of the study were young adults with ages 18-35 years old from Barangay Danglayan, San Pascual Batangas.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

The instruments used by the researchers were; the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) by Leisure and Blume, 1987 (revised by Stinchfield, 2002), to assess the level of gambling behavior; a self-made questionnaire to know the profile of the respondents and to know the cause/reasons that contribute to the development of gambling behavior.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondent's profiles by sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, and monthly income or allowance were gathered and analyzed to accurately describe the respondents. It can be gleaned from Table 1 that 41 percent of the total respondents belong to the age bracket of 21-25. This was followed by 21 percent of the respondents ranging from 26-30. Respondents with an age bracket of 31-35 equal to 20 percent and only 18 percent were in the range of less than 20.

Respondents were in their early up to the mid-twenties. This is the stage where individuals are already taking on civic responsibility, getting started in occupation, finding a congenial social group, selecting a mate, learning to live with marriage life, starting a family, and rearing children based on Havighurst Developmental Tasks.

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents in terms of their age

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
20 and below	35	18
21-25 years old	77	41
26-30 years old	39	21
31-35 years old	38	20
Total	189	100

The results showed that there were 114 males which represents 60 percent of the total number of respondents, in comparison to 75 females or 40 percent (table 2).

As shown in Table 3, out of 189 respondents, 94 or 50 percent of the respondents were single. Respondents who were married have a frequency of 77 or 41 percent. Ten of the respondents were separated from their husband/wife. The respondents who were widows/ers comprised least of the respondents with 4 percent or eight of the total population.

Most were single because respondents were still studying in a college or have no job to support a family's needs. Some focused on career or vocation.

The majority of 90 percent of the respondents were in college. This was followed by 73 or 39 percent of the respondents who were in high school while elementary graduates got the least percentage of 14 percent of the sample (table 4).

Since education is free at the primary and

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	114	60
Female	75	40
Total	189	100

Table 3. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of their Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	94	50
Married	77	41
Widow/ Widower	8	4
Separated	10	5
Total	189	100

secondary levels, most of the respondents were more likely to enter elementary and high school. Respondents from this barangay claimed that they value and treasure education. The National Statistics Office (2005) claimed that in the results of the 2003 Functional Literacy among regions, NCR has the highest basic literacy rate followed by Region 1 and Region IVA with 94 percent each. About 91.6 percent of Filipinos 10 to 64 years old were functionally literate in 2019, according to the results of the 2019 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS). This translates to around 73.0 million out of 79.7 million in the same age group who are considered literate on a functional level [12].

Table 5 revealed that 62 percent of young adults were employed. Next in rank which was equivalent to 20 percent of the total number of respondents were students. Lastly, 18 percent were unemployed.

Table 4. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of their Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	26	14
High School	73	39
College	90	47
Total	189	100

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents in terms of their Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	117	62
Unemployed	34	18
Others	38	20
Total	189	100

The respondents wanted to earn money to enable them to support their basic wants and needs [13]. Those who were unemployed claimed that they do not have the opportunity for work and gambling is the easiest method to earn money.

Out of 189 respondents, 41 percent have a monthly income/allowance of PhP 1,000-5,000. Respondents who earned PhP 6,000 -10,000 have a frequency of 40 or 21 percent. This was followed by 16 percent respondents who have no monthly income/allowance. 9 percent of the respondents earned PhP 16,000-20,000, 15 percent earn 26,000 and above (table 6).

The results implied that most of the young adults were still studying in a college or do not

Table 6. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of their Monthly Income/Allowance

Monthly Income/ Allowance	Frequency	Percentage
1,000 - 5,000	79	41
6,000-10,000	40	21
11,000-15,000	8	4
16,000-20,000	16	9
21,000-25,000	1	1
25,000 and above	15	8
No allowance /Income	30	16
Total	189	100

Gambling Behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Level 1 (Non-problem Gambling)	84	45
Level 2 (In-transition Gambling)	23	12
Level 3 (Probable Pathological Gambling)	82	43
Total	189	100

Profile Variables	p-values	Chi-square Values	Decision	Verbal interpretation
Age	.000	26.07	Reject Ho	Highly Significant
Sex	.000	55.16	Reject Ho	Highly Significant
Civil Status	.23	8.15	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	.012	12.85	Reject Ho	Significant
Monthly Income/Allowance	.009	13.54	Reject Ho	Highly Significant
Occupation	.007	27.15	Reject Ho	Highly Significant

have a high paying jobs. According to the PSA (2005), unemployed Filipinos deal with their problem by resorting to prayer, gambling, and looking for overseas work [14]. As of 2020, the average monthly salary in the Philippines was approximately 45 thousand Philippine pesos [15].

It can be gleaned in Table 7 that most of the respondents were at Level 1 or Non-problem gambling with the frequency of 84 or 45 percent of the total population. Non-problem gamblers are those who gamble recreationally and do not experience any signs or symptoms of the gambling-related disorder. According to respondents, they usually gamble for recreation, sociability, or entertainment. For them, gambling is a distraction or a form of recreation. Their gambling does not interfere with their obligations. They experience the occasional playing of cards or mahjong and casual involvement in lottery or jueteng. Twenty-three

(23) of the respondents or 12 percent are in the falls on Level 2 or In-transition Gambling. They experience subclinical symptoms or display signs of gambling problems, they may be progressing either toward more serious symptoms (i.e. progression) or away from these symptoms (i.e. recovery). Respondents claimed that they are more likely to invest more of their time in gambling. For them gambling is a major source of relaxation and entertainment, they place gambling second in importance to family and vocation. Although manifestations are clear, respondents claim that they can still maintain control over their gambling activities.

The respondents under Level 3 or probable pathological gambling compose 43 percent or 83 out of 189 respondents. These respondents lost control over their gambling, gambling is important in their lives, they are preoccupied with gambling, and they are restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop their

Table 9. Factors that contribute to the Development of Gambling Behavior

Factors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Financial problems, family problems and conduct problems	110	58	1
Early big win	102	54	2
Problems with alcohol and other drugs, and overspending	90	48	3
Few interest or hobbies or feel their lives lack direction	77	41	4.5
Easy access to their preferred form of gambling	77	41	4.5
Often feel bored or lonely	76	40	6
Recent loss or change (job, death, retirement)	74	39	7.5
influence of peer groups	74	39	7.5
Problems and suffering that leads to depression	71	38	9
Parent who also has/had problems with gambling	66	35	10

gambling. As they continue to gamble, their families, friends, and employers are negatively affected. Probable pathological gamblers engage in activities such as forgery, stealing, lying, or embezzling which go against their moral standards.

The computed chi-square values of 26.07, 55.16, 13.54 and 37.15 were all found to be highly significant at a 0.01 level of significance. This indicated a significant difference in the respondents' level of gambling behavior based on their age, sex, occupation and income. While the computed chi-square value of 12.85 was found to be significant at a 0.05 level of significance.

This indicated a significant difference in the respondents' level of gambling behavior based on their educational attainment. But the respondents' level of gambling behavior was found to be independent of their civil status at a 0.05 level of significance (table 8).

Based on the results, the majority of the respondents belong to the age bracket of 21-25, and gambling at this age was at risk. Some

adolescent males generally begin gambling at a younger age, especially given that many forms of gambling take place at male-dominated events such as sporting events. Hurlock (1997) revealed that interest in games of strategy and games of chance, which begin during adolescence, increases during adulthood [16]. According to NCRG (n.d.), between 2 and 7 percent of young people experience a gambling addiction, compared to about 1 percent of adults [17]. An estimated 6 to 15 percent of youth have gambling problems that are less severe, while 2 to 3 percent of adults fall into that category. World gambling statistics show that around 26% of the population gamble. That means around 1.6 billion people worldwide gamble and 4.2 billion gambles at least once every year [18].

In terms of gender and gambling behavior, it was evident that gender was related to gambling behavior. Women enjoy bingo, while men like poker, although these games are by no means limited to members of one sex or social class. The results revealed that males are more prone than females of the same age to develop pathological gambling. According to Ladd and

Petry (2002), men are more likely than women to have gambling problems [19]. In terms of engagement in or frequency of gambling, men (69 %) gambled twice as much as women (36 %) [20]. There also were significant gender differences with problem gambling with 20.1 % of male gamblers having gambling problems compared to 7.8 % of the female gamblers. Men's impulsivity level in addition to aggression probably contributes to the act of gambling.

In terms of civil status and gambling behavior, no significant differences were found. The people of the same age, whether married or single, separated or widowed. This result was supported by the study of Moore (2012) that civil status did not significantly correlate with problem gambling [21]. Similarly, results in show that age and marital status are not significantly correlated [22-23].

The educational attainment and the level of gambling have significant differences between variables. The results revealed that college undergraduates and graduates were more likely to develop gambling because of peer influence and the tendency to strive to produce higher amounts of money.

The monthly income or allowance and gambling behavior showed highly significant results. The respondents who have lower income were more likely to develop gambling behavior because of their desire to have more money to provide for their basic needs. In terms of employment, unemployed respondents are more at risk to develop problem gambling. They believe that gambling is the easiest and fastest way of producing money.

The factors that contribute to the development of gambling behavior include financial problems, family problems and conduct problems; early big win; problems with alcohol and other drugs, and overspending; few interests or hobbies or feel their lives lack direction, and; Easy access to their preferred form of gambling; often feel bored or lonely; recent loss or change (job, death, retirement) and; the influence of peer groups; problems and suffering that leads to depression; and parent who also has/had problems with gambling; ranked 1 to 10 respectively (table 9).

Other factors include; early age onset of gambling; status; belief that their luck will change (gamblers' fallacy); history of delinquency; inability to cope; antisocial behavior; and mental health problems.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

- a. Majority of the respondents were males in the age bracket of 21-25 years old. Respondents were unemployed and had a monthly income/allowance of 1,000 to 5,000. Most of the respondents were college or college graduates
- b. The young adults engage in gambling
- c. The respondents' profile differs on their age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income /allowance and occupation.
- d. The top 3 factors that may contribute to the development of gambling behavior were; Financial problems, family problems and conduct problems; Early big wins; and

Problems with alcohol and other drugs, and overspending

- e. The proposed intervention program may help minimize problems caused by gambling

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6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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