

Original Article

Sports Betting Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Global Trends, Impacts, and Emerging Themes

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Abstract - This study attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the global research landscape on sports betting through a bibliometric analysis, complemented by a small exploratory survey. The study utilized a dataset of 933 peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus from 2000 to 2025. The analysis has been conducted using VOS viewer, which maps publication trends, co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence patterns, and thematic clusters. The findings reveal a substantial rise in sports betting research since 2015, largely driven by technological innovations, mobile platforms, and expanding legalization in several regions. Five dominant research themes were identified based on existing research, i.e., economic dynamics and market efficiency, psychological risks and problem gambling, regulatory frameworks and policy challenges, marketing influence and consumer behavior, and integrity, corruption, and emerging technologies. However, the bibliometric analysis highlights several research gaps, including limited contributions from developing regions, underexplored areas such as esports betting, cryptocurrency-driven gambling, and cross-border regulations, and a lack of integrated studies combining economic, psychological, and policy perspectives. To complement these findings, a small survey of 28 U.S.-based participants was conducted, revealing that most engage in betting casually, driven by curiosity, peer influence, and advertising, while some reported emotional stress and behavioral changes, aligning with bibliometric evidence on rising mental health concerns. The study offers practical implications for policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders by emphasizing the need for responsible regulation, stricter advertising controls, mental health interventions, and targeted research on emerging betting formats and vulnerable populations.

Keywords - Bibliometric Analysis, Emerging Trends, Gambling, Regulation, Sports Betting.

1. Introduction

Sports betting has seen massive growth over the past decade, becoming one of the fastest-expanding industries worldwide. What was once a niche activity that was mostly limited to casinos or specified rigs has now become deeply woven into everyday life for millions of people. This change is mainly due to the increasing availability of smartphones and internet access, along with the rise of betting apps and websites that make it incredibly easy to place bets at any time from nearly anywhere. This industry used to require a trip to a physical location, but can now be done in seconds from a phone, whether someone is sitting at home watching a game or even going to school or work. The convenience and constant accessibility of betting have added to its normalization into modern entertainment culture. According to recent data, the global online gambling market was valued at over 63 billion dollars in 2022, and projections show that it is on track to more than double, reaching an estimated 150 billion by 2030 [1]. These numbers reveal an increase in participation and a shift in how people relate to sports, money, and digital entertainment. Sports betting cannot be

seen as just a casual or underground activity. It has become a full-fledged industry that is molding fans' engagement with sports, how money flows through entertainment sectors, and how people interact socially and economically.

As this industry expands, it is pushing governments around the world to adapt and respond. A huge turning point was back in 2018, when the United States Supreme Court overturned a federal ban on sports betting and gave individual states the authority to legalize and regulate it on their own terms [2]. Since then, over thirty states have moved forward with legalization, each with its own rules, systems, and challenges. Other nations have gone through similar transformations. For example, in Kenya, the rapid rise of mobile sports betting created new economic opportunities, such as job creation and increased tax revenues. However, it also led to a spike in gambling addiction, especially among young people, and raised concerns about match-fixing and cheating within professional sports. In Spain, the physical expansion of betting shops has also had measurable social consequences.



One study found that students who attended schools located near newly opened betting shops performed worse on standardized tests, with the most significant declines happening in public schools and low-income communities [3]. These examples demonstrate that while sports betting can contribute to a country's economy through new revenue streams, it can also bring serious social and ethical issues that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.

Beyond national policies and economic trends, the impact of sports betting hits close to home, especially for young people. In recent years, gambling has become almost impossible to avoid for teenagers and young adults. During televised games, sports betting ads are frequent, often promoting flashy sign-up bonuses and easy wins. Influencers and celebrities sometimes partner with gambling platforms, making the act of betting seem trendy, exciting, and risk-free. Social media adds another layer of exposure where users casually share betting slips, post wins, and normalize the idea of gambling as a form of entertainment. Many young people now grow up seeing betting as part of the sports-watching experience. But the risks are real. A 2024 study published in *Psychiatry Research* found that frequent sports betting among young adults was linked to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and loneliness [4]. The study suggested that gambling might serve as a short-term escape but ultimately contributes to worsening mental health over time. In addition, research from Australia has shown that parents who gamble regularly are less likely to have honest conversations with their children about the dangers of gambling, which means that young people may enter adulthood without the tools or warnings necessary to make safe decisions. This creates a generational cycle where risky behavior is passed down or left unchecked, leading to long-term mental and emotional harm.

Athletes are also facing new pressures in this betting-driven era. As fans become financially invested in individual games or performances, the relationship between supporters and players can take a darker turn. Legal betting has increased the stakes not just for bettors but for the athletes themselves. In some cases, players receive hostile messages or threats after underperforming simply because someone lost a bet. The weight of public expectation can be intense, especially for younger or lesser-paid athletes who may not have the same support systems as professionals in more established leagues.

In certain parts of the world, such as Kenya, low wages and a lack of strong oversight have made athletes more vulnerable to bribery and match-fixing [5]. While the gambling industry has brought more attention and investment to sport, it has also altered the way athletes experience their careers, often adding stress, fear, and ethical dilemmas that did not exist before. The pressure to meet public expectations or to take shortcuts can damage not only a player's mental health but the integrity of the game itself.

There are also broader effects on families and communities, especially when it comes to financial well-being. A study analyzed how household financial behavior shifted in areas where betting had recently been legalized in the United States [6]. The findings were concerning. Families, especially those in lower-income brackets, reported increased reliance on credit cards, more frequent overdraft fees, and a noticeable drop in savings [7]. These patterns held true even when the bet amount was relatively small. Over time, even casual gambling took a toll on families already navigating tight budgets and economic uncertainty. For many, betting added another layer of instability, pulling resources away from essential needs and creating long-term financial stress [8]. It is not just about the risk of losing money. It is the ripple effects that those losses have on relationships, housing, and overall quality of life.

Despite growing interest in the subject, major gaps still exist in the current body of research. Much of what we know comes from international studies, particularly from Australia, Spain, and Kenya, where researchers have had more time and access to examine gambling's social and economic impacts [4]. However, in the United States, where sports betting is expanding rapidly and legal frameworks are still evolving, there remains a significant lack of comprehensive data, especially on the specific experiences of youth and athletes. Most studies focus on single issues such as addiction, economics, or advertising, but few take a holistic approach to understanding how all these factors interact. There is an urgent need for more local and intersectional research that can help guide public policy education efforts and community resources before the problem becomes even harder to manage. There is also a dearth of studies that discuss the overall research that has been conducted in this field. Such a study would provide an overall picture of different aspects related to the field of sports betting.

In light of the gap in research literature, this study aims to give a comprehensive overview of the global research landscape on sports betting through a bibliometric analysis, complemented by a small exploratory survey. The main objectives of the study are to map the growth and structure of academic work on sports betting across different regions and disciplines, to identify the dominant themes and emerging trends that have shaped the field over the past two decades, and to highlight critical research gaps that could be explored further, particularly in relation to underexplored regions and new betting formats. The study combines bibliometric analysis with survey-based insights to contribute to a more integrated understanding of sports betting as a global phenomenon and to inform future research, policy, and practice.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining a bibliometric analysis of global academic literature on

sports betting with an exploratory survey of U.S.-based individuals. The dual strategy allows for both a macro-level mapping of research developments and a micro-level glimpse into real-world perspectives and behaviors.

2.1. Bibliometric Approach

To examine the academic landscape of sports betting research, a structured search was conducted in the Scopus database. Scopus was chosen as the primary database for this bibliometric analysis due to its comprehensive coverage, high-quality indexing, and extensive metadata availability. The following Boolean query was used:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (sports AND (betting OR gambling)) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR

< 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “SOC”) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “PSYC”) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “ECON”) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “BUSI”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , “ar”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , “j”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , “final”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , “English”))

This search string was designed to retrieve peer-reviewed journal articles related to sports betting or gambling in the fields of social science, psychology, economics, and business, published between 2000 and 2025. A total of 2,080 documents were initially retrieved. The following filters were applied to refine the dataset:

Table 1. Inclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Inclusions	Number of results
Year Range	2000-2025	Filtered to 2030
Subject Areas	Social Sciences Psychology Economics/Econometrics/Finance Business/Management/Accounting	1355
Document Type	Journal articles only (“ar”)	1,012
Publication Stage	Final publication (“final”)	971
Source Type	Journals only (“j”)	970
Language	English	Final dataset: 933 articles

The dataset was exported and analyzed using VOS viewer to visualize co-authorship patterns, keyword co-occurrence networks, and thematic clusters. Threshold values were adapted to balance network clarity with thematic depth.

2.2. Primary Survey

To complement the bibliometric analysis, an exploratory online survey was conducted among 28 U.S.-based individuals. The data has been collected over a period of two months, April and May 2025. The survey included a mix of closed- and open-ended questions designed to capture self-reported behaviors, perceptions, and motivations related to sports betting. All the responses were treated strictly confidentially, and it was ensured that respondents’ identities remained anonymous. The survey data have been qualitatively analyzed.

3. Results and Findings from Bibliometric Analysis

3.1. Year-wise Distribution of Publications

Over the past two decades, there has been a noticeable rise in scholarly research on sports betting. Publication production stayed low between 2000 and 2010, averaging less than 20 papers annually. However, the number of publications started to increase gradually in 2012 and then quickly after 2015. This increase coincides with the growing acceptance of mobile platforms, the legalization of online

betting, and greater awareness of the risks associated with gambling. 2021 saw a peak of more than 90 publications. The decline in publications for the year 2025 could be because only a portion of that year’s publications would have been indexed, with many papers still undergoing review or awaiting database inclusion.

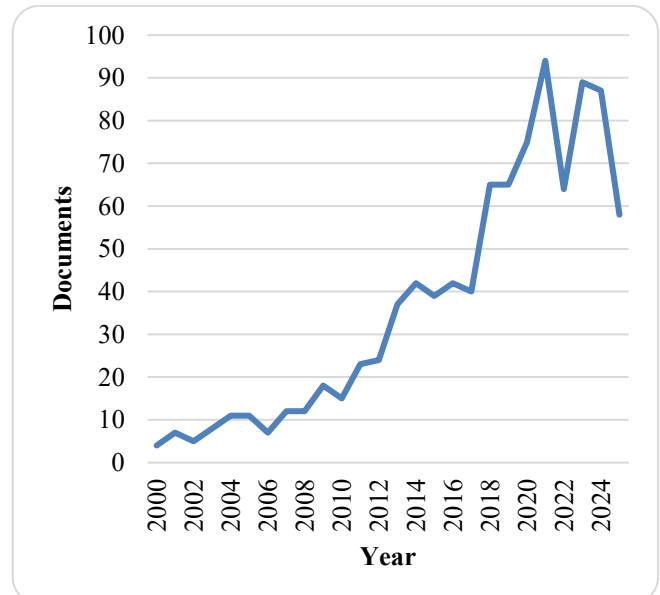


Fig. 1 Year-wise distribution of peer-reviewed journal articles on sports betting indexed in Scopus (2000–2025)

3.2. Geographic Concentration of Academic Output

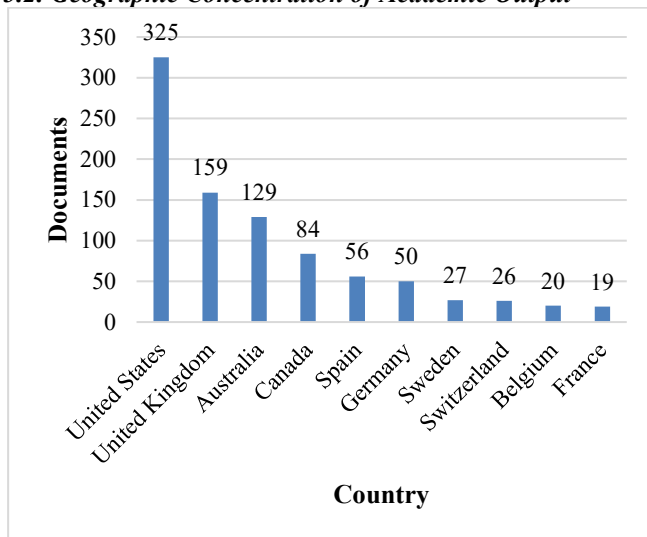


Fig. 2 Country-wise distribution of peer-reviewed journal articles on sports betting indexed in Scopus (2000–2025)

The discipline is currently dominated by the United States, with 320 publications, followed by the United Kingdom (156) and Australia (126). More than 60% of all indexed research on sports betting during this time period comes from these three nations combined. The early legalization of sports betting in certain areas and the robust institutional framework for behavioral and social science research are both reflected in this concentration. The results of the co-authorship analysis, which showed clear geographic collaboration clusters, are further supported by the importance of Western Europe (Germany, Spain, Switzerland) and Canada. South Asian, African, and Latin American nations, on the other hand, are underrepresented, indicating room for more study.

3.3. International Research Collaboration Patterns

Threshold values were adapted for each analysis to balance network clarity with thematic depth. Higher thresholds were used to identify dominant research areas, while lower ones captured emerging or peripheral themes.

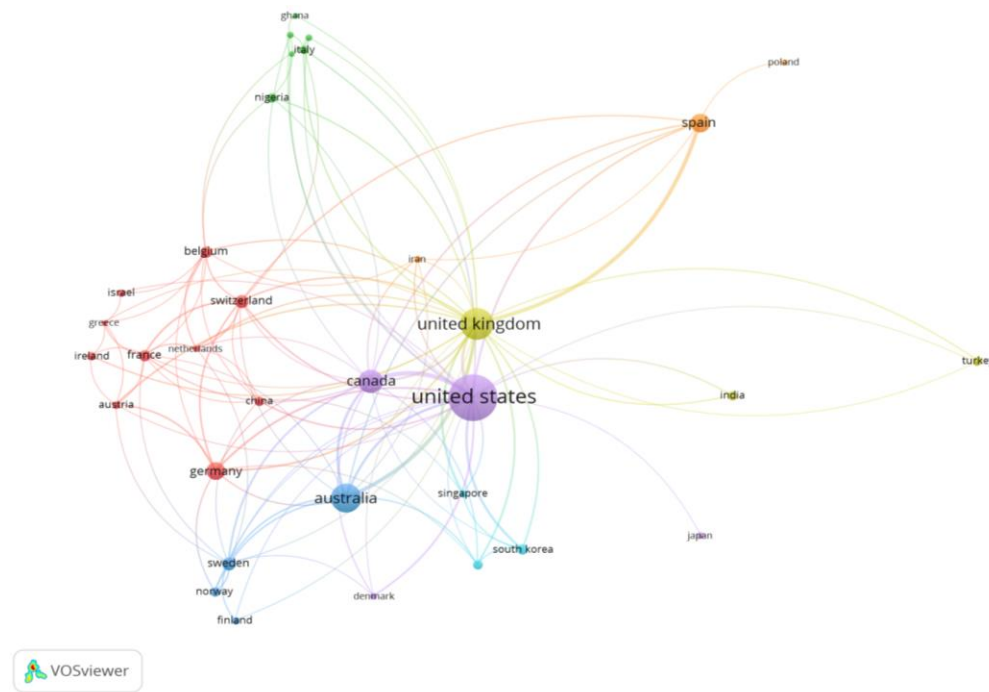


Fig. 3 Country Co-Authorship Network in Sports Betting Literature (2000–2025)

Looking at country co-authorship gives a better idea of which countries are leading the way in online sports betting research and how international teamwork is shaping the field. Using the VOS viewer, a co-authorship analysis was done with 34 countries, each having at least five published papers. The results showed that the U.S. and the U.K. are the main players when it comes to research partnerships, with the strongest collaboration links and most frequent co-authorships. The analysis also pointed out some key regional groups: one in Western Europe (Germany, France,

Switzerland), another connecting South Asia and the U.K. (India, U.K., Turkey), and a third linking Australia and Nordic countries. The network had 281 total link strengths across 119 connections, showing a fairly solid level of international collaboration. Some countries, like Nigeria, Iran, and Japan, showed up more on the edges of the network, hinting that they are newer or less involved in this research space. Overall, the findings show how developed countries are still leading global scientific partnerships, but more regions are slowly starting to get involved.

3.4. Influential Authors and Collaboration Networks

The threshold value has been taken as 4 to understand the influential authors in the field of sports betting and

gambling. Figure 4 below depicts the co-authorship networks based on the data collected through Scopus.

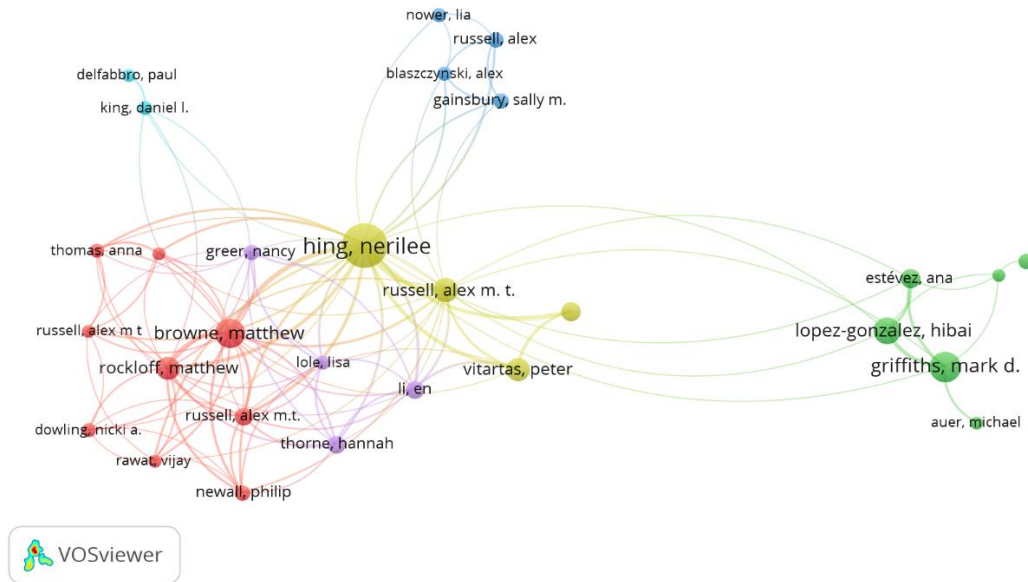


Fig. 4 Influential Authors and Collaboration Networks

The co-authorship network shows strong collaborative clusters, with Nerilee Hing, Matthew Browne, Alex M.T. Russell, and Mark D. Griffiths emerging as central figures. This is further supported by bibliometric indicators: Hing (44 publications, 1642 citations), Griffiths (23 publications, 851 citations), and Russell (27 publications, 793 citations) are among the most prolific and cited authors in the dataset. Interestingly, some authors like Vitartas (661 citations, avg. 55 per paper) and Shaffer (avg. 54 citations per paper),

though less prolific, exhibit high impact per publication. This dual analysis—combining network visualization and quantitative metrics—offers a comprehensive view of influential contributors shaping this research field.

3.5. Thematic Clustering of Sports Betting Research

Figure 4 represents the network map for the thematic clustering in sports betting literature. Each cluster has been discussed in detail below.

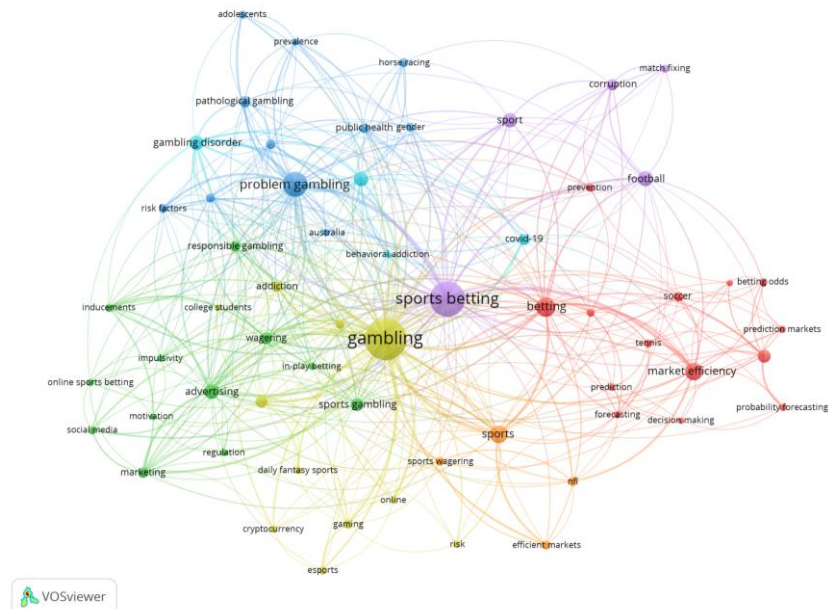


Fig. 5 Keyword Co-Occurrence Network Map Identifying Thematic Clusters in Sports Betting Literature (2000-2025)

3.5.1. Economic Dynamics and Market Efficiency

This theme captures literature that examines the economics of sports betting markets, including market efficiency, prediction strategies, and betting odds. Scholars have explored how betting markets reflect available information, with studies investigating forecasting models, probability assessments, and the role of technology like machine learning in improving decision-making accuracy. A 2024 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research titled *Gambling Away Stability* examined financial data from over 230,000 households in the United States [9]. After sports betting was legalized, these households showed lower savings, higher credit card use, and increased overdraft activity, particularly among low-income families. Other studies have reported declines in credit scores and rising debt following legalization.

However, these studies typically stop at the numbers. They do not explore the emotional toll that financial stress causes, such as anxiety, conflict within families, or the mental strain of trying to recover losses. Additionally, they often fail to identify which groups are most affected. Whether the most vulnerable populations include college students, single parents, or new bettors remains unclear. Policies and support systems may be poorly targeted without this level of detail.

A 2022 study by Ahi, Sinkovics, and Sinkovics called *E-commerce Policy and the Global Economy* looked at how governments can make online business fairer and more open to everyone [10]. It talked about improving internet access, creating better rules, and helping small businesses get online. However, the study mostly focuses on big-picture ideas and does not say much about how real people are affected. It does not investigate the daily problems small sellers or buyers face, like not trusting online systems, not knowing how to use the technology, or worrying about scams. It also does not clearly show which groups struggle the most, like older people, poor business owners, or people in rural areas.

Without this kind of detail, it is hard to make sure the policies help the people who need them most. A 2021 study by Brad Humphreys titled *Legalized Sports Betting, VLT Gambling, and State Gambling Revenues* looked at what happened in West Virginia when sports betting became legal in casinos. It found that for every dollar spent on sports betting, people spent about four dollars less on video lottery terminals [11].

This led to a big drop in tax money from those machines, and the new money from sports betting was not enough to make up for it. The study focused on state revenue and gambling numbers, but it did not talk about how this change affects real people. It did not look at whether people are gambling more often, changing their habits, or dealing with stress from switching games. It also did not say who is

most affected, like regular gamblers, younger players, or lower-income people. Without this kind of detail, it is hard to know if the new gambling rules are helping or hurting certain groups, or if the money the state is making is worth the cost to people's lives. A 2015 study by Hing, Russell, Vitartas, and Lamont titled *Demographic, Behavioural and Normative Risk Factors for Gambling Problems Amongst Sports Bettors* used an online survey of 639 Australian sports bettors to explore how behavior, social pressure, and demographics relate to gambling harm. They found that younger, single males with higher income and education who bet more often, spend more money, and feel pressure from advertising or friends are more likely to have gambling problems [12].

This fits into economic effects and market efficiency by showing how certain groups contribute more risk to the betting market. However, the study does not explain how these risky behaviors impact the overall betting market's efficiency, consumer welfare, or economic regulation. It also does not look at how changes like limiting ads or betting amounts could affect the economy or betting habits over time. Another 2013 study by Rebecca Cassidy, Andrea Pisac, and Claire Loussouarn titled *Qualitative Research in Gambling: Exploring the Production and Consumption of Risk* examines how gambling markets are shaped by cultural, social, and technological factors [13].

Drawing from disciplines like anthropology, sociology, and media studies, the book delves into topics such as the globalization of gambling, the role of advertising, and the intersection of gambling with other forms of speculation like financial derivatives. It highlights how gambling is increasingly integrated into digital platforms and virtual environments, making it more accessible and appealing to a wider audience. However, the book does not provide detailed economic analyses or data on market efficiency, consumer behavior, or the financial impacts of gambling regulations. While it offers valuable insights into the cultural and social dimensions of gambling, it leaves gaps in understanding the economic mechanisms and outcomes of gambling markets.

3.5.2. Psychological Risks and Problem Gambling

This cluster reflects research focused on gambling addiction, mental health implications, and behavioral disorders linked to sports betting. Studies in this domain often highlight the prevalence of problem gambling among vulnerable populations, particularly adolescents, and analyze the psychological underpinnings of impulsive or compulsive betting behavior.

Young people are especially impacted by the rise in legal sports betting. The 2024 study *Problem Gambling and Mental Health*, published in *Psychiatry Research*, surveyed 1,032 young adults and found a strong link between increased betting and higher levels of stress, sadness, and loneliness. A related study in *Economics Letters* examined

mental health survey data and found that after legalization, younger men reported improved mental well-being, while men in their thirties reported worse outcomes. Women experienced little change. These mixed results suggest that age and life circumstances influence how individuals respond to legal betting, though more research is needed to understand these patterns [4].

A 2023 study by Carol Richards called *Problem Gambling Among University Students* looked at gambling behavior in college students and how it affects their lives [14]. The study found that while many students gambled casually, a good number showed signs of risky behavior, like spending too much money, skipping classes, or feeling stressed about losses. It pointed out that students who gambled a lot often had other problems too, like anxiety, depression, or trouble with relationships. However, the study mostly focused on survey results and stats and did not really dig into what causes these issues or how students deal with them. It also did not say much about which students are most at risk, whether it is first-year students, student-athletes, or those already struggling with mental health.

Without that kind of info, schools and support programs might not know who really needs help or how to make resources easier to find and use. A 2023 study by Valenciano and his team called *Clinical Correlates of Sports Betting* looked at 54 research papers to determine who usually bets on sports and what kinds of problems they face [15]. They found that most sports bettors tend to be young guys who do not always think through their actions and often have other risky habits like drinking or gambling on other things. The study also showed that these bettors can have mental health struggles and addictive behaviors alongside their betting.

However, the research mostly used surveys where people reported on themselves, and it was based on short-term data, which means it does not really show how these issues start, change, or get worse over time. Plus, it did not look closely at how culture, different ages, or backgrounds might change the way sports betting affects people. Because of that, it is hard to know which groups need the most help or what kinds of programs would work best to stop people from getting in too deep. Without that kind of detail, prevention and treatment efforts might miss the mark and not support the people who struggle the most.

A 2022 study by Brevers, Vögele, and Billieux titled *The Evolving Landscape of Sports Betting: A Risk for Young People?* Looks at how online sports betting is affecting the mental health and behavior of young people. Using survey results and brain imaging research, the authors found that betting triggers parts of the brain linked to addiction and is tied to impulsive behavior, emotional struggles, and trouble in school. They also show how betting has become a regular part of watching sports, especially for young men, through

constant ads and social media [16]. Still, it does not show how these habits develop over time, whether betting causes harm or appears alongside other issues. It also does not dive into the roles of family, peer pressure, or income level. While the authors bring up important concerns, they do not offer many clear solutions or explain which prevention strategies work. A 2019 study by Russell, Hing, and Browne titled *Risk Factors for Gambling Problems Specifically Associated with Sports Betting* looked at over 1,100 Australian adults who regularly bet on sports [17].

The researchers found that the biggest warning signs of gambling harm were not just how often someone bet but why and how they did it. People who bet to make money, had strong urges to gamble, believed they could control the outcome, or struggled with self-control and alcohol, were more likely to face serious problems. The study helps show who might be at higher risk, but it has limits. It does not track how these problems grow over time or how things like culture, stress, or social pressure might play a role. It also does not explain what kind of help actually works for people already facing these issues. So, while the study gives a clearer picture of the risks, it leaves some important questions unanswered.

3.5.3. Regulatory and Institutional Perspectives

This theme encompasses the evolving regulatory landscape of online and offline sports betting, including the role of institutional frameworks, risk management, and legal governance. Topics include the regulation of fantasy sports, the legality of e-sports betting, and the broader intersection between gambling and internet-based platforms.

Governments face difficult decisions when regulating betting. On the one hand, the revenue can be substantial. In 2022, New York State earned more than seven hundred million dollars from mobile sports betting taxes. On the other side, there are growing public health concerns [18]. A 2021 study in the *Journal of Behavioral Addictions* found that once betting becomes legal, governments often delay or weaken protections for vulnerable groups. This is often due to concerns that regulations could lower tax revenue [19]. Similarly, a report from the United Kingdom Gambling Commission found that increased betting advertisements led to higher levels of underage betting and early signs of addiction [20].

In countries where betting remains illegal, users often turn to unregulated markets, which are harder to track and lack safety measures. A 2020 International Center for Sport Security report estimated that more than eighty percent of global betting occurs on these unregulated platforms, making them risky and impossible to tax [21]. A 2020 paper by Becky Harris called *Regulated Sports Betting: A Nevada Perspective* looked at how Nevada has been doing sports betting for over 70 years and what other states can learn from

it[22]. It talks about how Nevada made its own rules instead of waiting for the federal government, and how that helped keep things fair and safe. The paper also says that states should make their own rules because they know their people best, and that setting the right tax rates is important, so people do not go back to illegal betting. It also mentions that technology is super important for keeping betting safe and making sure everything is fair. However, the paper mostly focuses on the big picture and does not really talk about how these rules affect regular people, like whether they feel safe betting or if they have problems with it. It also does not say which groups might need more help or what kind of support they might need. Without that kind of info, it is hard to make sure the rules are helping the people who need it most.

A 2024 study by John T. Holden and Joanna Wall Tweedie titled *Sports Betting in Canada: Legal Perspectives from Two Years of Legal Single-Game Wagering* examined the state of legalized single-event sports betting in Canada, focusing on Ontario [23]. The study found that Ontario's decision to allow former gray-market operators to enter the regulated market created a competitive environment, attracting major international brands. However, this move also led to an increase in sports gambling advertisements, raising concerns among consumer advocates and addiction experts.

The study noted that the expansion of advertising and the rapid growth of the market have outpaced the development of responsible gambling programs. It also highlighted that while Ontario's approach has been considered an early success, ongoing regulatory attention and public health concerns are essential as the Canadian sports gambling market continues to evolve. A 2009 paper by Thomas Papadopoulos titled *The Evolution of the European Court of Justice's Case Law on Gambling and Sports Betting: An Internal Market Perspective* examines how the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has shaped the regulation of gambling within the EU's internal market [24].

The paper discusses key ECJ rulings, such as *Placanica*, which have allowed member states to regulate gambling services but only under strict conditions of necessity and proportionality. These decisions have led to a diverse regulatory landscape across EU countries, with some maintaining state monopolies and others adopting licensing systems.

However, the paper does not delve into the economic implications of these regulatory approaches or assess their efficiency in achieving public policy goals. It also lacks a detailed analysis of how these legal frameworks impact market competition and consumer protection. While the paper provides a comprehensive legal perspective, it leaves open questions regarding the economic effectiveness and consumer outcomes of the varying national gambling regulations.

3.5.4. Marketing Influence and Consumer Behavior

This theme explores how marketing, social media, inducements, and advertising campaigns shape user behavior and attitudes toward sports betting. Literature under this cluster investigates the psychological appeal of promotions and the ethical concerns around targeting susceptible individuals. In-play betting and consumer motivation are also central to this discussion.

Family influence also plays a role in shaping attitudes toward gambling. The 2024 Australian study *Parent Attitudes and Kids* surveyed 455 parents and found that those who gamble themselves are less likely to warn their children about the risks [25]. This suggests that children may grow up believing that betting is safe or normal. The issue is made worse by advertising. The study *Young People's Perceptions of Sports Betting Inducements* highlights how celebrity endorsements, promotional offers, and advertising during sports events influence younger audiences. One teenager in the study mentioned that seeing a favorite athlete in an ad makes gambling feel like a natural part of the game [26]. While this study discusses advertising, it does not fully explore the emotional manipulation these ads create or the impact of social media. Platforms like TikTok and YouTube often portray gambling as fun, glamorous, and rewarding, without showing the reality of losses or addiction. A 2023 report found that over forty percent of youth aged sixteen to seventeen had already placed bets using borrowed or fake credentials[27]. This shows a major enforcement gap that remains underexplored in academic research.

A 2017 study by Deans, Thomas, Derevensky, and Daube titled *The Influence of Marketing on the Sports Betting Attitudes and Consumption Behaviours of Young Men* explored how marketing affects young men's views and behaviors regarding sports betting. The study found that most participants encountered betting ads in places not specifically designed for gambling, like sports commentary or general media. This widespread exposure helped normalize betting, making it seem like a regular part of sports culture. The study also noted that promotional offers, like enhanced odds or free bets, made participants feel more in control and encouraged them to bet more often, sometimes even with multiple betting providers [28].

However, the study did not delve into how these marketing strategies might affect different groups of young men or how they could lead to gambling problems. Without this information, it is challenging to create effective strategies to prevent gambling harm among the most vulnerable individuals. A 2023 study by Wang and colleagues titled *Brand Knowledge, Similarity to Story Characters, and Perceived Brand Attitude* explored how consumers' understanding of a brand, their similarity to characters in brand stories, and their perception of the brand influence their attitudes toward the brand [29]. The study

found that when consumers felt a strong connection to the characters in a brand's story, especially if they saw themselves in those characters, they developed more positive attitudes toward the brand. Additionally, the study highlighted that consumers' knowledge of the brand significantly shaped their perceptions. However, the research primarily focused on the direct relationships between these factors and did not delve into how other variables, such as cultural differences or individual personality traits, might affect these relationships. Without considering these additional factors, the study's findings may not fully capture the complexity of consumer-brand interactions.

3.5.5. Integrity, Corruption, and Emerging Risks

This theme covers issues of corruption, match-fixing, and emerging technologies such as cryptocurrency in the context of sports betting. Research here addresses the threats to sport integrity posed by unregulated or illicit betting practices and examines how prevention frameworks can mitigate such risks.

While the experiences of sports fans are beginning to be studied, the experiences of athletes are often left out. Athletes are now under more pressure as people bet on their performance. In a 2022 interview, Premier League player Ivan Toney described receiving hateful messages after a missed shot, not from disappointed fans but from people who had lost money. For players in smaller leagues, who often earn less and have limited support, the pressure is even greater. These athletes may be more likely to experience mental health issues or feel tempted to manipulate games. The 2024 study *Mobile Betting in Kenya* looked at over 28,000 households and found that betting supported job growth and tax revenue, leading to addiction and match-fixing [30]. Yet, most research does not include the perspectives of athletes or offer solutions to protect their well-being.

A 2016 literature review by Reynald Lastra, Peter Bell, and Christine Bond called *Sports Betting-Motivated Corruption in Australia: An Under-Studied Phenomenon* dives into how gambling culture in Australia messes with the integrity of sports [31]. They point out that the rise of online betting and the involvement of international crime groups have made it easier for athletes and officials to get caught up in fixing games or matches. The study also highlights that some sports' lack of clear rules and oversight makes it harder to catch and prevent corruption.

However, the paper mostly talks about the big picture and does not really get into how these issues affect individual players or specific sports. It also does not say much about which groups are most at risk, like younger athletes or those in lower-tier leagues. Without this kind of info, it is tough to know how to make sure the right people are getting the help they need. A 2017 study by Christian Deutscher, Eugen

Dimant, and Brad Humphreys called *Match Fixing and Sports Betting in Football: Empirical Evidence from the German Bundesliga* looked at over 1,200 soccer matches from 2010 to 2015 to see if there were signs of match-fixing connected to betting [32]. They found that four referees had suspiciously high betting volumes on a betting exchange called Betfair, especially on bets predicting fewer than 2.5 goals in the games they officiated.

While the study did not prove match-fixing was happening, these unusual betting patterns raised serious questions. However, the research did not go into detail about which teams, players, or referees might be involved, or how match-fixing affects players, fans, or the sport's reputation. It also did not explore if certain groups, like lower-tier teams or younger players, are more vulnerable. Without that kind of info, it is tough to make rules or support systems that prevent match-fixing and protect the sport and its people.

A 2013 paper by Mulema Mukasa Richard titled *Impact of Sports Betting and Corruption: Reflections from Uganda* examines how sports betting has influenced corruption in Ugandan sports [33]. The paper discusses how lax regulation and governance in Uganda's sports sector have made it vulnerable to corruption, including match-fixing and financial misconduct. It highlights the role of international betting companies and the ease of setting up operations in Uganda due to less stringent licensing requirements.

The paper also addresses the socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and lack of education, that contribute to the prevalence of corruption in sports. However, the paper does not provide detailed statistical data or empirical evidence to quantify the extent of corruption linked to sports betting in Uganda. It also lacks a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of existing anti-corruption measures and regulations in curbing these issues. While the paper offers valuable insights into the problem, it leaves questions about the specific impacts and effectiveness of institutional regulations unanswered.

3.5.6. Behavioral Shifts and External Shocks

This theme highlights broader societal and behavioral changes in betting patterns, particularly in response to global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It also links to broader behavioral addiction frameworks and societal shifts in gambling participation.

Sports fans are also changing how they engage with games. According to the study, *The Gambling Behaviour and Attitudes to Sports Betting of Sports Fans*, many fans now view betting as part of the experience. Group chats, shared betting slips, and social media posts create peer pressure that encourages betting, especially among younger fans[34]. The study does not address how this group behavior impacts individual choices or long-term gambling habits. It also fails

to explore cultural changes, such as whether fans are now more focused on betting outcomes than team loyalty.

Furthermore, match-fixing and corruption, especially in lower-level sports where players may earn less, are serious risks that this research does not examine. A 2019 study by Adrian Parke and Jonathan Parke titled *Transformation of Sports Betting into a Rapid and Continuous Gambling Activity* examined how modern online sports betting has evolved and the impact of these changes on gambling behaviors [35]. The researchers conducted a grounded theory study using behavioral data and in-depth interviews with 19 online sports bettors who met the criteria for problem gambling.

They identified a core pattern, termed the “Online Sports Betting Loop,” which is facilitated by structural features such as live betting, cash out options, micro-event betting, and instant depositing. These features, combined with the immediate accessibility of online platforms and pervasive marketing, create an environment where bettors can engage in continuous gambling, often leading to harmful consequences. The study suggests that to mitigate these risks, there is a need to implement mechanisms that increase breaks in play and allow customers to restrict usage of features associated with disordered play, such as live betting.

A 2022 study by Hing et al., titled *How Structural Changes in Online Gambling Are Shaping the Contemporary Experiences and Behaviours of Online Gamblers*, examined how recent developments in online gambling have influenced the experiences and behaviours of Australian gamblers [36]. The study involved interviews with 19 long-term online gamblers and 10 individuals who had sought treatment for online gambling problems. Both groups reported increased ease and speed of online gambling, with 24/7 access and instant financial transactions facilitating more frequent and impulsive gambling. Participants also noted a proliferation of gambling advertising, particularly during televised sports events and on social media, which contributed to increased gambling opportunities.

Treatment-seeking participants reported negative effects from these changes, including increased gambling frequency, impulsivity, and loss-chasing behaviours. Despite the availability of harm minimisation tools, many participants reported limited uptake and effectiveness. The study concluded that industry changes have made online gambling easier, faster, and more heavily incentivised, which disproportionately affects individuals who are already harmed by gambling, highlighting the need for more effective harm reduction measures.

A 2018 review by Donald E. Nowak Jr. titled *Gambling Disorder in the College Student-Athlete Population* examines research from 1991 to the present regarding college student-athlete gambling addiction and disorder issues, with an

emphasis on prevalence rates, motivations, and comorbid disorders, as well as National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national studies and derivative research [37]. The study found that student-athletes, particularly males and those in high-profile sports like football and basketball, are more likely to experience gambling problems than non-athletes. Factors contributing to this include the availability of gambling opportunities, social acceptability, exposure to advertising, access to money, and the age-related tendency to engage in risky behaviors.

However, the review does not delve into the specific behavioral mechanisms that lead to gambling disorders in this population, such as impulsivity, sensation seeking, or the role of peer influence. Additionally, it lacks an in-depth analysis of how these behavioral issues interact with other factors like academic stress, performance pressure, or substance use. While the review highlights the prevalence and risk factors associated with gambling disorders among college student-athletes, it leaves gaps in understanding the underlying behavioral processes and the effectiveness of interventions targeting these issues.

3.6. Evolution of Research Focus in Sports Betting Literature (2000–2025)

Over the past twenty years, research on sports betting has changed a lot, shifting focus as technology and society have evolved. From 2000 to 2015, most studies were concerned with mental health and public safety. Researchers looked closely at issues like problem gambling and addiction, especially in young people and students who seemed to be most at risk. Then, between 2015 and 2020, the focus started to shift toward the business and legal side of sports betting.

Studies explored how the betting market works, how new laws and taxes affect it, and how digital platforms were starting to change how people place bets. From 2020 to 2025, the research became even more focused on technology and how it affects behavior. New topics like machine learning, social media, esports, and live betting began to appear more often. Researchers also started paying attention to how constant online access and real-time betting could lead to impulsive behavior or worsen mental health, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when more people were online.

At the same time, more studies began looking at how online ads and peer pressure influence younger people, such as college students, to try gambling. Finally, there is growing interest in newer areas like match-fixing, cryptocurrency, and esports betting. These areas have not been studied as much yet, but they are becoming more important as the betting world grows and changes. Overall, research is now looking at a wider range of issues, many of which are tied to how modern technology is shaping the way people gamble.

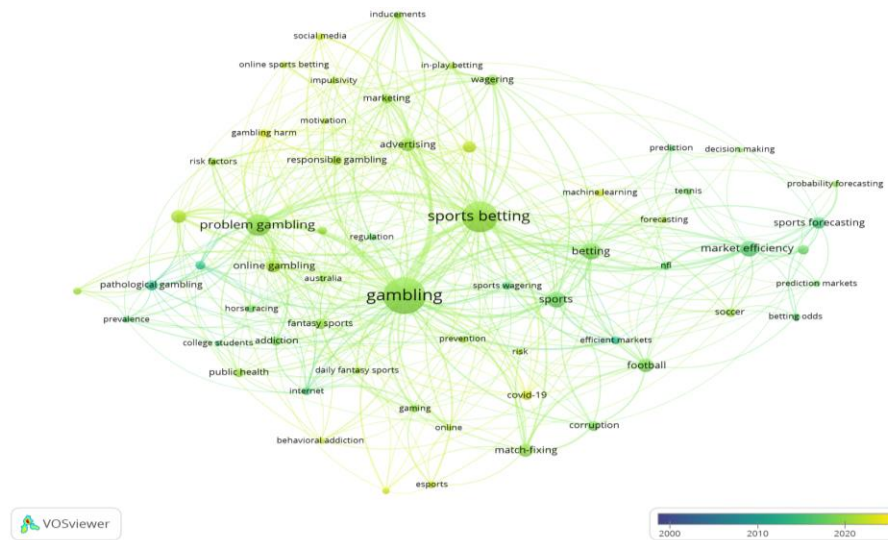


Fig. 6 Trend Analysis of Thematic Focus Areas in Sports Betting Research (2000–2025)

4. Research Gaps Identified from the Bibliometric Analysis

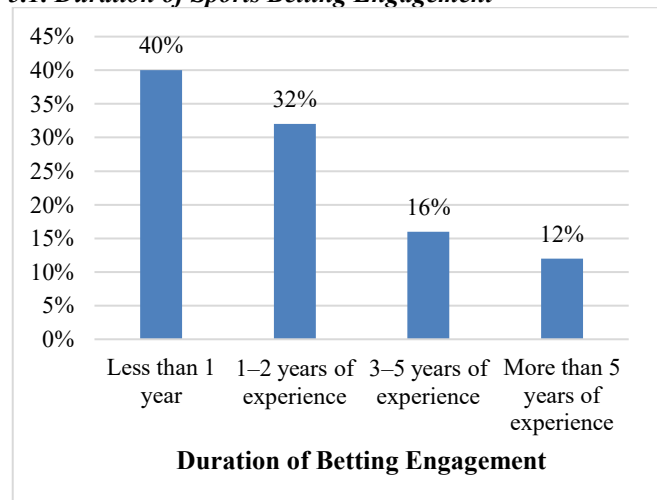
The bibliometric analysis of 933 Scopus journal articles (2000–2025) highlights several critical gaps in sports betting research. There is a prominent geographic imbalance, with over 60% of studies originating from the U.S., U.K., and Australia, leaving regions such as South Asia, Africa, and Latin America underrepresented. Emerging markets, including Southeast Asia, remain largely unexplored with their rapid adoption of mobile betting. Emerging betting formats such as esports, cryptocurrency-based gambling, and AI-driven prediction markets have also received limited attention, despite their growing economic, psychological, and social implications. Most research remains limited to examining economic, psychological, behavioral, or regulatory aspects independently. Only a few interdisciplinary studies explore the interactions among all the aspects together. Vulnerable populations, including youth, student-athletes, and low-income households, are disproportionately affected, yet subgroup differences, longitudinal impacts, and behavioral mechanisms such as impulsiveness, sensation-seeking, and peer influence remain underexplored. Similarly, the role of digital marketing and structural features of online platforms, which include live betting, instant deposits, cash-out options, and social media inducements in shaping continuous gambling and addictive behaviors is also insufficiently studied. The literature also neglects athlete perspectives and integrity risks. Athletes, particularly in lower-tier leagues, face severe pressure, mental health challenges, and potential involvement in match-fixing. However, the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks remains under-evaluated. Furthermore, although legalization and regulation are widely discussed, there is limited evaluation of policy effectiveness, including responsible gambling initiatives, cross-border regulation, advertising restrictions, and the broader economic and

behavioral impacts of different legal frameworks. Addressing these gaps requires an integrated, multidisciplinary research approach that considers economic, psychological, behavioral, technological, and policy dimensions. It should also expand geographic coverage, incorporate emerging betting formats, and include perspectives of both consumers and stakeholders, such as athletes. Such an approach is essential to inform effective regulation, promote responsible gambling, and mitigate negative impact across diverse populations.

5. Findings from Survey Data

This section presents the findings from the survey data. It discusses the betting engagement behaviour and habits among the respondents. The responses have been analysed qualitatively and represented in separate sections.

5.1. Duration of Sports Betting Engagement

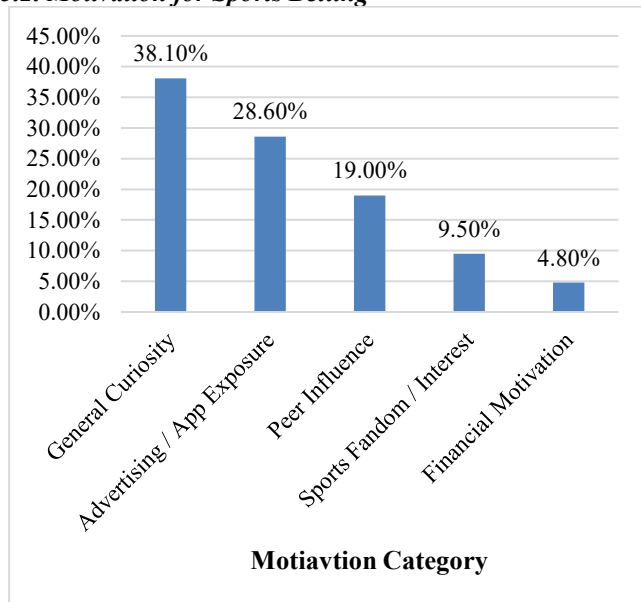


Source: Survey Data

Fig. 7: Duration of Sports Betting Engagement among Respondents

The chart highlights the clear trend that the majority of people participating in sports betting are fairly new to it. 40% of respondents said they have been betting for less than a year, and another 32% have been doing it for just 1 to 2 years. That means over 70% of participants are in the early stages of their sports betting experience. In contrast, only 16% have stuck with it for 3 to 5 years, and just 12% have been involved for more than 5 years. This sharp decline in longer-term engagement suggests that sports betting is a relatively new interest for most, likely fueled by recent changes in legislation, the rise of mobile apps, and increased visibility through advertising and social media. The data paints a picture of a growing trend that's bringing in a wave of new users, many of whom may still be figuring things out as they go. It also raises questions about whether this interest will be long-lasting or if many of these newcomers will eventually lose interest over time.

5.2. Motivation for Sports Betting



Source: Survey Data

Fig. 8 Self-Reported Motivation for Sports Betting among Respondents

This chart gives a clear picture of why people are getting into sports betting, and it is not necessarily for the reasons you might expect. The biggest motivation, by far, is general curiosity. About 38 percent of respondents said they started betting simply because they were curious. That suggests many people are treating it more like something to try out for fun rather than a serious pursuit.

Not far behind, 28.6 percent said they were influenced by advertising or app exposure, which shows just how effective all the promotions, pop-ups, and betting ads have become in grabbing people's attention. Peer influence also plays a big role, with 19 percent of people saying they got into betting because their friends or people around them were doing it. What stands out the most is how few people were

driven by a love for sports or the hope of making money. Only 9.5 percent said they were motivated by sports fandom, and just 4.8 percent were betting for financial reasons. So instead of betting being about passion for the game or the chance to win big, most people seem to be getting involved out of curiosity, social influence, or just because betting is becoming more visible and accessible in everyday life.

5.3. Frequency of Real-Money Betting

When asked how often they bet real money, most respondents said they either do not do it at all or only place wagers on rare occasions. Many people described betting just a few times a year, usually tied to big sporting events or moments when it feels more casual and social.

A smaller portion said they bet "seldom" or "rarely," again showing that it is more of an occasional hobby than a routine practice. Very few respondents mentioned betting regularly, such as weekly or monthly, and even then, the tone suggested it was not a heavy commitment. Overall, the responses point to real-money betting being something most people dabble in rather than rely on. It seems more like a side activity that adds excitement during certain moments, instead of a habit people keep up with consistently.

5.4. Perceived Likelihood of Winning

Confidence in winning was mixed, but the majority leaned toward being cautious or even doubtful about their chances. Quite a few people admitted they had very low expectations, with some putting their chances at "less than 20%" or describing them as "very unlikely." Others took a more optimistic but still grounded approach, saying their chances were about 50/50, suggesting they see betting as unpredictable but not impossible. A small minority expressed higher confidence, with one or two saying their odds were "pretty good" or around 60%. Even among those with stronger confidence, though, the sense was more about personal belief rather than any proven strategy. The overall pattern shows that most participants treat winning as a possibility, but not something they bank on.

5.5. Betting Intentions

Across the board, respondents made it clear that betting is mostly for fun, not a way to make a steady income. The overwhelming majority described it as entertainment, something that adds an extra layer of enjoyment to watching sports. A few people did note that money-making could be a bonus, but they were careful to frame it as secondary to fun rather than a main goal.

Only one or two responses hinted at betting being tied to financial motivations in a serious way. This suggests that most participants do not view sports betting as a reliable or strategic way to earn money. Instead, the financial side appears more like a side benefit, with the primary motivation being excitement, social connection, or curiosity.

5.6. Preferred Sports for Betting

When it comes to specific sports, football and basketball stood out as the most common choices among respondents. Cricket, soccer, and other sports like Formula 1, golf, and tennis were also mentioned, but they appeared less frequently. Some participants said they do not bet on any sports at all, while others said they only bet occasionally and only on select events like the Melbourne Cup or the Indy 500. This variety suggests that while the more popular sports dominate, a noticeable group still branches out into niche or seasonal events. Interestingly, a handful of respondents seemed to keep their betting tied closely to the sports they already follow, while others used it as a way to try out different games. Overall, the spread shows a mix of mainstream interests alongside smaller but still meaningful areas of focus.

5.7. Participation in International Betting

Responses to this question revealed a fairly even split. Some people said they only bet on sports within their own country, often noting that these were the games they knew best and felt most comfortable following. Others preferred or included international events, pointing to big global competitions like soccer or cricket as opportunities they did not want to miss. A few participants said they did both, mixing local and international betting depending on the sport or event. There were also respondents who did not bet at all, so the question did not really apply to them. Taken together, the answers suggest there is no single dominant pattern, with some bettors sticking close to home while others enjoy casting a wider net.

5.8. Willingness to Bet on Foreign Events

When asked if they would want to bet on sports in other countries, most participants said they would not be interested. This group's sense was that their interest lies in the teams and competitions they already know. That said, a smaller group of respondents did say yes, or at least that they might consider it, suggesting a curiosity about expanding their betting beyond local or familiar options. A few others admitted they had not thought much about it, leaving their answers at "maybe" or "do not know." What is clear is that while there is some appetite for international betting, it is not a widespread priority among this sample. Instead, it seems more like a niche interest for people who already follow global sports closely.

5.9. Emotional Impact of Betting Outcomes

The impact of betting outcomes on participants varied, but it was clear that results do not leave most people entirely unaffected. Several respondents admitted that outcomes could influence how they feel, with some saying they would naturally become biased toward the teams they bet on. Others said the impact was only occasional or light, describing betting as something that might shift their mood without dominating it. On the other side, there were

participants who said outcomes did not affect them much at all, framing betting as just a casual activity. What stands out is the divide: while some people can take wins and losses in stride, others acknowledge that results carry a noticeable emotional weight. This suggests betting is not just financial or recreational; it also has a psychological dimension.

5.10. Perception of Betting Culture

Most people agreed that sports betting has indeed created its own culture, though their reasons for saying so varied. Some pointed to the growing presence of betting around major sports, especially with boxing or global events, where betting hype is part of the atmosphere. Others mentioned the role of heavy advertising and promotions in normalizing betting and making it feel like a shared cultural activity. A smaller group said they were not sure or did not think so, but they were the minority. What comes across strongly is that betting is increasingly being seen as more than just an individual pastime. For many, it now represents a broader culture shaped by community, media, and the shared excitement of placing a wager.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the global research landscape on sports betting, combining a bibliometric analysis of 933 Scopus-indexed articles (2000–2025) with a small exploratory survey of 28 U.S.-based participants. The bibliometric analysis revealed five dominant themes: economic dynamics, psychological risks, regulatory frameworks, marketing influences, and integrity and corruption issues. Research in this field has increased rapidly since 2015, driven by technological innovations, mobile platforms, and expanding legalization. The research reveals a steady shift in focus over the past two decades. Early work highlighted the problem of gambling and addiction, while recent studies emphasize economics, advertising, and cultural change. However, the gap remains in developing regions, emerging areas such as sports and cryptocurrency gambling, and integrated studies understanding how specific groups are uniquely impacted in economic, psychological, and policy ways. Survey findings reflected these patterns, showing that most participants engage in sports betting casually, driven by curiosity, peer influence, or advertising rather than financial gain. While primarily recreational, respondents acknowledged emotional effects, including mood shifts and biases toward teams they bet on. Many also perceived betting as a growing cultural phenomenon, highlighting its social and psychological dimensions. These findings underscore sports betting as both an opportunity and a challenge. It drives engagement, revenue, and innovation, yet raises significant social, cultural, and mental health concerns. Addressing these issues requires multi-pronged strategies, including stricter advertising regulations, mental health interventions, and protections for teens.

Ethical Consideration

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Participants provided informed consent, and their data were

anonymized and stored securely. No personally identifiable information was used in the analysis, ensuring confidentiality and privacy throughout the study.

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