

2025



AP[®] Research Academic Paper

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Sample E

- Scoring Guidelines**
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Academic Paper

5 Points

Score of 1	Score of 2	Score of 3	Score of 4	Score of 5
Report on Existing Knowledge	Report on Existing Knowledge with Simplistic Use of a Research Method	Ineffectual Argument for a New Understanding	Well-Supported, Articulate Argument Conveying a New Understanding	Rich Analysis of a New Understanding Addressing a Gap in the Research Base
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an overly broad topic of inquiry. • Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works. • Describes a search and report process. • Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry. • Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader. • Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or intext), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline specific style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a topic of inquiry with narrowing scope or focus, that is NOT carried through either in the method or in the overall line of reasoning. • Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works. • Describes a nonreplicable research method OR provides an oversimplified description of a method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry. • Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry. • Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader. • Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or intext), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline specific style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries the focus or scope of a topic of inquiry through the method AND overall line of reasoning, even though the focus or scope might still be narrowing. • Situates a topic of inquiry within relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives, although connections to some works may be unclear • Describes a reasonably replicable research method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry. • Conveys a new understanding or conclusion, with an underdeveloped line of reasoning OR insufficient evidence. • Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization. • Cites AND attributes sources, using a discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND intext), with few errors or inconsistencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion. • Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap. • Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry • Supports a new understanding or conclusion through a logically organized line of reasoning AND sufficient evidence. The limitations and/or implications, if present, of the new understanding or conclusion are oversimplified. • Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization. • Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND intext), with few to no errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion. • Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap. • Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry. • Justifies a new understanding or conclusion through a logical progression of inquiry choices, sufficient evidence, explanation of the limitations of the conclusion, and an explanation of the implications to the community of practice. • Enhances the communication of the student’s ideas through organization, use of design elements, conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and word precision, with few to no errors. • Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND intext), with few to no errors.

**To What Extent does Online Sports Gambling Advertising Influence SouthEastern
Michigan High School Students ages 16-18 in the U.S.?**

Word count: 4242

Introduction

In recent years sports betting has become increasingly prominent in the world of the sports media. This is especially true in the United States where the legalization of sports gambling has been expanding rapidly since 2018 due to the Supreme Court legalizing the use of online sports gambling services for the public. In addition sports betting advertising has grown into a large multimillion dollar industry. With many companies seeking to entice consumers through high quantities of television campaigns, digital ads, and sponsorships with major sports leagues. While these advertising efforts are expected of large industries they also raise significant concerns regarding their potential impact on gambling behavior, especially when looking among vulnerable populations such as adolescents and young adults. The aggressive marketing strategies used by sportsbooks and along with general lack of hard set in stone regulation, have led to raised questioning of the ethics and effectiveness of gambling advertising in changing and altering consumer attitudes and behaviors when it comes to sports gambling.

Literature Review

Search Strategies

Sources were found by searching and analyzing databases and other forms of credible research. Keywords used while researching were gambling advertising, influence, and regulation.

Government Regulation on Advertising

With the current growing concerns around sports betting advertising several researchers have called for stronger regulations on these ads to limit the exposure of vulnerable populations

to gambling ads. In Australia gambling advertising has been a topic of significant debate, offering valuable insight for other regions dealing with similar issues with the outbreak of online sports gambling media. Dietrich and Raj (2023) examined the legal regulation of sports and esports gambling advertising in Australia, their research highlighting significant gaps in the existing framework that allow gambling service providers to target young consumers. They propose many policy reforms including the introduction of a ban on gambling advertisements near schools, on public transport, and during breaks in live sporting events. These reforms aim to limit the enticement of young people into gambling and in addition to reduce the overall exposure to gambling advertising to vulnerable populations. Similarly, Hancock, Ralph, and Martino (2018) analyzed the corporate political activities of the gambling industry in Australia, this analysis revealed how the industry has used lobbying efforts to weaken regulatory measures. The research they conducted suggests that gambling companies often deploy corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies to improve public image and influence policymakers. These strategies ultimately in the end create an environment that is more favorable to the industry's advertising efforts. To counteract these influences the researchers recommend greater transparency in gambling industry lobbying efforts and stricter regulations on gambling advertising.

The Evolution of Gambling Advertising Regulations

The history of gambling regulation and advertising has gone through significant changes particularly in the United States. The U.S has experienced a large shift in gambling laws throughout its history. The passing of the professional and amateur sports protection act or (PASPA) in 1992 banned sports betting outside of Nevada. This stayed true and unchanging until 2018 where the U.S supreme court overturned PASPA, which then allowed individual states to

legalize sports betting under what the state believed best fit (Knowles, 2024). This ruling opened up the United States to a new wave of sports betting legislation and by 2023 nearly 70% of the United States had legalized sports betting (Schlachter, 2024). As a result sports betting ads have completely taken over media with major betting companies investing heavily in advertising to attract consumers. The lack of national regulations to control these ads has raised major concerns about potential negative impacts of this advertising and has raised the idea of new regulations in the United States consumers to protect U.S consumers.

The Growth of Sports Betting Advertising

As sports betting has become more common in the current day, advertising efforts have increased in response to this. Research conducted by the American gaming association (2024) indicates that the amount of money spent on advertising related to sports betting has been significant with many companies investing hundreds of millions of dollars annually to promote their services to the public. Although there has been a small decline in overall spending in recent years, sports betting advertising remains a very significant part of the current media landscape. This being particularly true on television during high-profile events like the Super Bowl (American Gaming Association, 2024). This rather large increase in advertising can be attributed to the highly competitive nature of the online sports gambling industry and as sportsbooks fight for their share in the rapidly growing market of sports betting. The ever increasing prevalence of gambling ads in sports broadcasts have raised concerns about the potential of the normalization of gambling behavior especially in younger viewers who may be susceptible to marketing messages and strategies. According to a study conducted by Lopez-Gonzalez, Guerrero-Solé, and Griffiths (2018), sports betting advertisements often depict betting behavior as a glamorous and socially acceptable practice. These often have a focus on a male dominated narrative and a

representation that concurs with traditional masculine patterns. These ads typically highlight and emphasize the excitement and potential rewards of gambling. Which can create extremely unrealistic expectations with viewers and could generate a perception of betting as a crucial part of sports culture in the current media.

The Psychological Impact of Gambling Advertising

The influence of gambling advertisements on consumers and their behavior is a key area of concern in the topic of online sports gambling. Killick and Griffiths (2021) conducted a systematic review of literature on the impact of sports betting advertising on gambling behavior. The findings suggest that exposure to gambling advertisements is correlated with an increased likelihood of engaging in sports betting and this being particularly so among high risk individuals. The study also highlighted that specific advertising strategies such as offering free bets or displaying large potential payouts elicited strong behavioral responses from viewers. This suggests that gambling ads not only encourage people in their initial participation in betting but also could contribute to the development of gambling problems among individuals in vulnerable populations. The findings of research from Hing et al. (2022) further support the link between advertising and gambling behavior mainly noting that the ease of access to online gambling platforms combined with the constant stream of promotional materials significantly alter the gambling experience for individuals. This study emphasized how industry changes such as the rise of mobile betting apps and the availability of instant betting options have made gambling more appealing and accessible to a more broad audience. This includes individuals who may have previously not been involved in online sports gambling gambling.

Impact on Youth and Vulnerable Populations

One of the main concerns regarding sports betting advertising is the potential impact on youth and younger populations. The pervasive nature of gambling advertisements in sports media exposes younger audiences to normalization of gambling behavior and can increase the likelihood of early gambling exposure. According to a report by Kindbridge Behavioral Health (2023), a large number of high school students in the U.S have reported gambling money with gambling ads contributing to the normalization of these behaviors. While gambling advertising regulations have been introduced in some regions to attempt to limit harm and experts argue that existing policies do not go enough in depth to protect young people from the effects of gambling exposure. The study highlighted that the lack of comprehensive advertising regulations has allowed gambling companies to target younger demographics with aggressive marketing campaigns thereby increasing the risk of addiction and other negative outcomes on these populations. Given that many of these advertisements are aired during large sports events that are popular with young audiences there is a clear need for a more protective measure to be put in place to prevent the targeting of vulnerable individuals to prevent the negative effects of gambling to take hold.

Gap in Research

Although there is pre existing studies and research conducted targeting a predominantly young audience there is still more to be studied and found over the topic of age concerns as a whole. This paper's purpose is to address a gap in research on this topic. This gap being the limited amount of research conducted on high school students who are 16-18. There have been studies highlighting the marketing campaigns and advertising strategies used by sports books but the purpose of this paper is to find out if these advertisements pose a significant influence on this age group. To analyze this proposed topic The guiding research question is To what extent does

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online sports gambling advertising influence highschool students ages 16-18 in the U.S. With this being said the overall goal of this research is to find a proof of advertising effectiveness in adolescents and then interpret if the influence is possibly too far past a reasonable state.

Methodology

This study explores the prevalence of online gambling advertisements in high school students. The goal of this study is to find a significant influence of online gambling advertising on high school students and also to bring attention to gambling ads on vulnerable groups. This is important because vulnerable groups need to be protected from aggressive and influential advertising campaigns that could lead to unhealthy behaviors that could pose as a detriment to the health of those who are affected. This study used a one part survey to collect data. This approach was used to gain quantitative data on the effects of online gambling ads. This study uses a survey based research design that is aimed at assessing the influence of online sports gambling advertising on southeastern Michigan high school students aged 16–18 in the United States. The overall approach uses electronic data collection through the distribution of QR codes. And also uses quantitative data analysis to address the targeted research question. A survey methodology was chosen to capture a small snapshot of the exposure and impact of online sports gambling advertising among the population targeted. This design allows for the collection of data pertaining to attitudes, perceptions, and reported behaviors related to sports betting advertising. The survey was developed through a multi step process that involved initial brainstorming sessions to generate relevant questions. Then was followed by refinement informed by existing literature and identified gaps in prior research. The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire composed of mainly close ended questions. The survey items were designed to Measure the frequency and context of exposure to online sports gambling advertisements in the

target population and also assess the perceived impact of these advertisements on attitudes toward gambling.

The questions were generated by brainstorming many possible items to capture a wide range of information relevant to advertising influence. Special attention was paid to ensure that the language and content were appropriate for a high school audience to prevent any distress or unethical practice. The survey was further refined to ensure clarity by drawing on established measures from previous studies in the field. Data was collected electronically to capture broad and efficient participation of possible respondents.

The process involved the following steps: QR Code Integration, The survey was made accessible via a dedicated platform (iConnects), where unique QR codes were generated. This method ensured that students could easily access the survey using their mobile devices with little to no instruction. Distribution: QR codes were distributed through school channels by collaborating with teachers. This approach not only streamlined the distribution process but also helped target the intended demographic. Response Collection: Students completed the survey during their own time and the electronic system automatically logged responses, this would ensure that data were captured in real time for analysis. Data Organization and Analysis Once the data was collected, data was systematically organized and cleaned to remove any incomplete or inconsistent responses. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using statistical software, where the following steps were performed: Descriptive statistics and basic measures were calculated to summarize the exposure levels to sports betting advertising and related attitudes. Analysis was also conducted through Statistical tests, such as chi-square tests and regression analyses that were applied to determine the significance of relationships between exposure to advertising and the reported influence on gambling behavior. Significance determination the analysis aimed to

assess whether observed patterns were statistically significant thereby providing evidence for the extent of advertising influence on the target population. Ethical considerations were a concern given the involvement of minors. The study followed strict ethical standards of Informed Consent, this being that Prior to participation students were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks in being involved. The anonymity and confidentiality was kept on all responses to protect participants privacy. Data was stored securely and access was limited to me and me only. The study targets high school students between the ages of 16 and 18 in south eastern high school students in the United States. Participants were recruited via school networks with the assistance of teachers who serve as ways to engage in contact with the targeted demographic. By focusing on this specific age group, the study aims to fill the gap in current research concerning the influence of sports betting advertisements on adolescent populations.

Results

Demographics

This study involved 107 participants who were the respondents of the survey described in the methodology section. In terms of age 40 were 16, 43 were 17, and 24 of the respondents were 18 years old. In the terms of gender 66 of the respondents were male while the other 37 were female. In addition the grade results show that 22 respondents were in 10th grade, 48 were in 11th and 37 of the respondents were in 12th. These results are showing the overall demographics of the respondents who participated in the study. This breakdown of the demographic groups found in this study helps provide context for interpreting the data and understanding how factors such as age, academic year, and gender may influence students' views and experiences related to online sports gambling. These demographics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Participants Demographic Summary

Demographic	Category	Count
Age	16 years	40
Age	17 years	43
Age	18 years	24
Gender	Male	66
Gender	female	36
Grade	10th	22
Grade	11th	48
Grade	12th	37

Chart 1 shows the responses to the question involving frequency from the survey distributed to gather data. When looking at respondents who believed that they very frequently viewed sports gambling ads these respondents represented 39.3 percent of the overall responses. respondents who answered occasionally represented 29 percent of the respondents. Those who answered rarely made up for 24.3 percent of respondents and 7.5 percent of respondents answered never to the frequency of viewing sports betting ads.

Chart 1: Frequency results

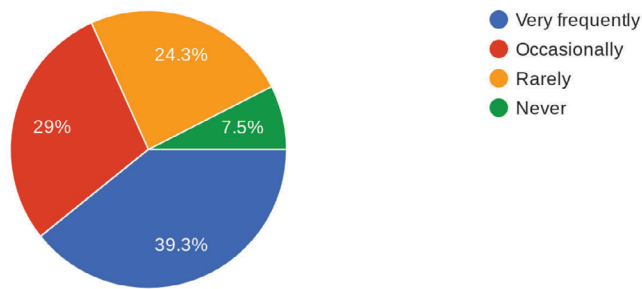


Chart 2 shows the results of the second question of the survey administered to gather data. Of all respondents 52.3 percent recorded that television ads were one of the most encountered forms of advertisement. Online ads were answered to be one of the most encountered forms of advertisement. Sponsored content was answered by 50.5 percent of respondents and radio ads were answered by 16.8 percent of the respondents. 2.7 percent of respondents answered a custom response which varied between each other.

Chart 2: Advertising form results

2. Which form of sports betting advertising do you encounter the most? More than one applicable
107 responses

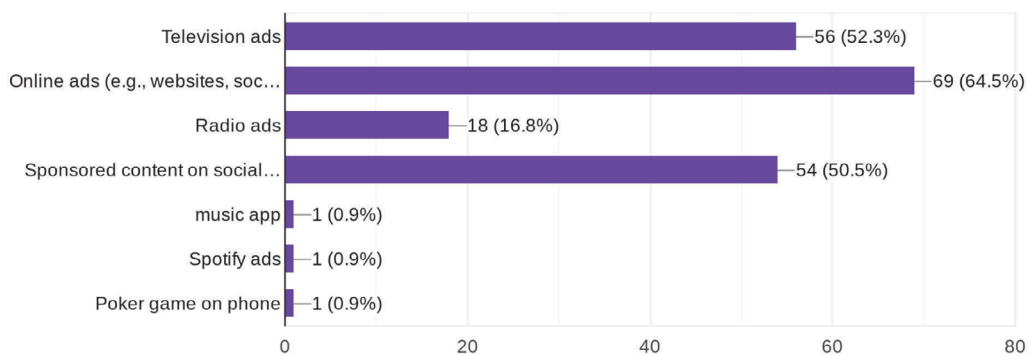


Chart 3 shows the results to the question relating to advertising targeting and the clarity to which online gambling ads target vulnerable populations. 40.2 percent of respondents

answered that they believed that online gambling ads were somewhat targeting vulnerable populations. 30.8 percent of respondents believed that online gambling ads were very clearly targeting vulnerable populations. Of respondents 19.6 percent believed that they were unsure of any targeting, and 9.3 percent of respondents believed that online gambling ads do not target vulnerable populations at all in any way.

Chart 3: Advertising Targeting results

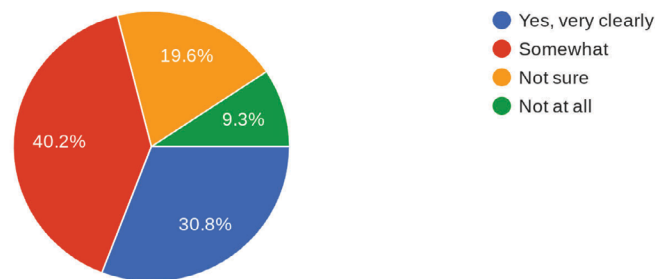


Chart 4 shows the results to the question relating to advertising and its role in influencing one's perception of sports events and or sports athletes. When looking at the results they show that 26.2 percent of respondents believe that sports gambling advertisements make them significantly view sports events differently. 38.3 percent of respondents answered that advertisements affected them in a way but not significantly. 23.4 percent of respondents answered that advertisements do not affect the way they perceive sports events and players. In addition 12.1 percent of respondents answered that they did not notice any change in their perception of sports events and athletes.

Chart 4: Perception results

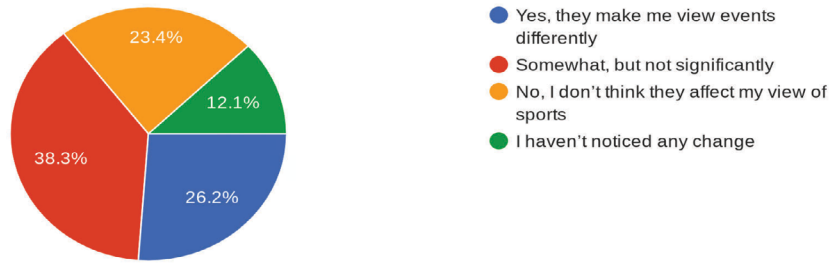


Chart 5 shows the responses to the question in the administered survey to the question relating to the compellingness of sports betting advertisements to make people want to place a bet. Of respondents 24.3 percent stated that they were compelled to place a bet after viewing a sports betting advertisement in many different instances. 38.3 percent of respondents stated they had felt compelled to place a bet after viewing an ad but only in a few instances. In addition 28 percent of respondents stated they had felt compelled to place a bet once or twice after viewing an advertisement. 21.5 percent of respondents stated that they have never been compelled to place a bet after viewing an advertisement.

Chart 5: Compelling Betting results

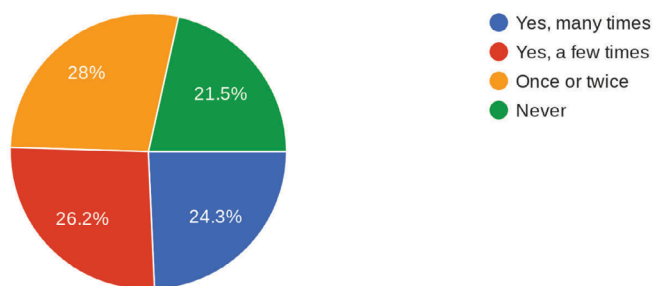
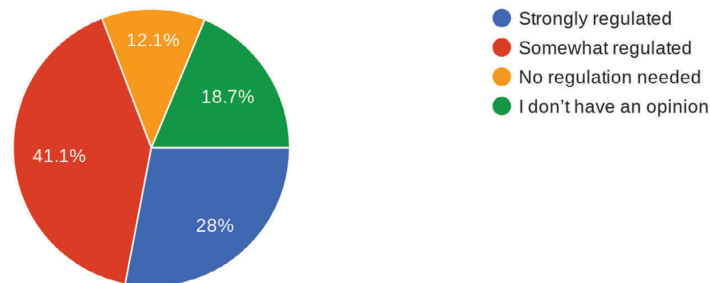


Chart 6 displays the results of the question pertaining to respondents' opinion on the regulation of online sports betting advertisements. 28 percent of respondents stated that online sports betting advertisements should be strongly regulated. 41.1 percent of respondents answered

that they believed that sports betting advertisements should be somewhat regulated. 12.1 percent of respondents answered that sports betting advertisements need no regulation at all, and in addition 18.7 percent of respondents stated that they had no opinion on the topic.

Chart 6: Opinion on Regulation results



Discussion

This study's goal was to find the extent to which sports betting advertisements have an influence on 16-18 year old high school students in the U.S.

Findings

After examining the results of the used research method, although the conclusion that all highschool students are significantly affected can not be shown, it can be concluded that sports betting advertisements influence the majority of high school students in a significant way. Some main key findings include but are not limited to the fact that of all responses shown in chart 6 69.1% of respondents believed that sports betting ads should be greater regulated in some way. This data point is showing that a decent majority of highschool students believe that sports betting advertisements should not be as lightly regulated. This is saying that high school students notice that there is a need for greater regulation. Another significant data point shown in chart 5 is that 78.5% of respondents stated that they felt compelled to place a bet at some point. This

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data is showing that a significant majority of high school students have felt compelled to place a bet after viewing an online sports betting advertisement. This means that online sports betting ads are at least majority effective in influencing high school students into betting on online gambling services and showing just how influential sports betting ads can be. In addition chart 1 shows that 68.3% of respondents believed that they at least occasionally viewed sports betting advertisements. This shows that of the majority of high school students surveyed that at the bare minimum they are seeing a few advertisements in a period of time. This shows just how abundant online sports betting ads are in high schoolers life today and backs up the point of compellingness and builds upon it. What this means is that the ads are compelling the majority to want to place a bet at some point and that these ads are abundant. Another key finding found in table 1 was that there was a significantly higher percentage of male respondents compared to females, that being 66.6% male and then 33.3% female respectively. This is showing that even though anyone can bet there's a more significant amount of males interested in sports betting. This means that while the survey was given to all genders, males were much more likely to answer the survey showing that even though some don't even notice they are being influenced by online gambling advertising as they are more engaged in the topic of online sports betting. Another important data point shown in chart 4 would be that 64.5% of respondents believe that their perception of sports events and athletes is at least somewhat affected by online sports betting advertisements. This shows that the majority of high school students have a change in their perception after viewing advertisements. This points meaning is that the majority of respondents have their perception influenced by advertisements showing that online sports betting ads are influential on the perception of sport events and athletes in at least some way. Lastly, another important data point found in chart 3 is that 71% of respondents believed that

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online sports betting advertisements are targeted towards vulnerable populations in some way. This means that sports betting ads in the opinion of respondents are targeting vulnerable populations. This builds upon the data point of regulation as, in the opinion of the majority of high school students, online sports betting advertisements are targeting vulnerable populations and need greater regulation. What this is saying is that online sports betting ads are targeting their most vulnerable and influenced group and with this being said there is a need for stricter regulation of these ads so this cannot happen.

Implications

The results of this study could be used as a piece of evidence and or a point of reference for a man or woman in congress seeking to change current laws on regulations of online gambling ads in America and could use this information to help build an argument in favor of stricter regulations on online gambling advertising this is also true at a community and state level. Another way this study's results could be used would be as a talking point for school and education policy makers that could be a reason for schools introducing preventive strategies or counseling resources if gambling is shown to affect academic performance and or could give a school the reason to introduce more methods of teaching the dangers of gambling to adolescents. In addition the results of this study could be used to inform parents and or ones community of an underlying problem with gambling advertising and could be used to raise attention and awareness to online gambling advertising. With prior research calling attention to the rising prevalence of online gambling advertising the results of this study could also be used to reinforce this idea and also could be used as evidence for future researchers exploring this topic.

Limitations

This study was conducted with the most diligence and attention as possible but with this statement there are still limits to the research conducted. One limitation to this study would be the inability to ensure genuine answers from all respondents or any for that matter. What this means is that although in the survey I administered I wished all respondents to answer truthfully and to answer seriously yet with that said I could not guarantee that all respondents would follow and respect that wish. Another limitation to this study would be sample size. This meant that I was limited to just how many participants I was able to survey. In addition another limitation to this study would be the under representation of both genders in this study. This meant that there was a clear under representation of the female gender in this study. Another limitation would be the quality of questions in the survey administered. This is saying that although the questions were generated with quality in mind there is no way to ensure that the questions used were the best they could have possibly been to answer my research question and gather the data used in this study.

Future research

As online sports gambling continues to grow in popularity the future research of this topic must examine the extreme evolving landscape of gambling advertising. A key area for further research in this topic involves the psychological side of how these advertisements influence behavior. For instance, understanding how features like celebrity endorsements, bonus offers, and emotionally targeted messaging affect decision making and how this could provide valuable insight into the topic of discussion. Another direction future research could head towards is long term studies that track exposure to sports gambling ads over time and their long-term effects on gambling attitudes, behaviors, and the potential risk of addiction. This research could hope to answer questions on the long term effects of gambling advertising. In

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addition another way that future research could be improved upon is by the use of open ended questions and or discussion questions. This would be beneficial as though my research only took advantage of close ended questions a future researcher could utilize open ended questions to gather =not only more data but could also improve upon the datas overall worth and value. In addition another category that future research could target is the specification of more demographics in research. This is saying that future research could target more demographics than age, gender and grade, and could instead target race, ethnicity, ect.

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Academic Paper

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses on AP Central*.

Sample: E

Score: 3

This paper earns a score of 3. The paper’s narrowing focus, advertising for sports betting and its influence on younger populations, is found in the literature review on pp. 2-6. The asserted gap in the research and subsequent research question/project goal is found pp. 6-7, “To what extent does online sports gambling advertising influence high school students ages 16-18 in the U.S. With this being said the overall goal of this research is to find a proof of advertising effectiveness in adolescents and then interpret if the influence is possibly too far past a reasonable state.” However, later on p. 7 the paper indicates that, “The goal of this study is to find a significant influence of online gambling advertising on high school students and also to bring attention to gambling ads on vulnerable groups.” This slight shift in focus is the reason for the still narrowing scope and reveals a questionable alignment between the research question and project goal.

The reasonably replicable method, a one-part survey, “aimed at assessing the influence of online sports gambling advertising on southeastern Michigan high school students aged 16–18 in the United States” is found on pp. 7-9. The method section does not provide survey questions, though they can be reasonably determined on pp. 10-14 with the figures. For example, on p. 10, one of the survey questions is included as part of the data: “Chart 1 shows the responses to the question involving frequency from the survey distributed to gather data.” Although the paper does provide graphs which indicate student generated data, there are few specific details of how the survey instrument was used to collect the data.

This paper does not earn a score of 2 as it offers a reasonably replicable method and a narrowing focus of the influence of sports gambling advertisements on teens in southeastern Michigan. Additionally, the paper moves beyond simplistic use of a research method due to the student generated data provided in the charts on pp. 10-14.

The paper does not earn a score of 4 due to the lack of defense or justification for the choices within the method section. The limitations and implications of the new understanding are underdeveloped and hyperbolic in nature as evidenced on p. 16, “The results of this study could be used as a piece of evidence and or a point of reference for a man or woman in congress seeking to change current laws on regulations of online gambling ads in America.”