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Sports Betting and College Students

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ABSTRACT

This research paper named *Sports Betting and College Students* analyzes the affects that mobile sports betting is having on college students. Mobile sports betting is a relatively new research topic, and therefore there has not been a lot of research at this point into how it affects college students. To find out how mobile sports betting affects students on college campuses and to learn more about the growth of this activity, 166 students were surveyed on the campus of the Pennsylvania State University in University Park, PA. Students were asked questions about many different aspects of their relationship with mobile sports betting including, the frequency of their participation, the amount of people who they personally know that participate in the activity, how they originally learned about mobile sports betting, what their thoughts are on the activity and their experiences with it both positive and negative. The results showed overall that there is a high participation and awareness of mobile sports betting among college students at Penn State. The results also showed that the students mainly had a positive view of mobile sports betting and enjoyed participating in the activity in groups. Lastly, the results showed that most students are using mobile sports betting responsibly, while a smaller percentage have experienced issues with it. What was learned most from this study is that mobile sports betting is a rapidly growing industry and has a strong presence on college campuses. It is the hope that this study will encourage others to conduct research on the effects of mobile sports betting on college campuses so that we can learn more about this area going forward.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Mobile sports betting is a topic that has been in the news a lot in recent years starting with its legalization in a 2018 Supreme Court case. The legalization of mobile sports betting opened the door to a whole new type of betting and a new form of entertainment for many people. Along with that comes a whole host of ways that these new freedoms can impact people. One group that this is having an especially strong impact on is younger Americans who are the most tech savvy and the most prone to become involved with mobile sports betting at a high level. College campuses are a place where young people can be found in large groups, and understanding the effect that this has on them is something that has not been explored to a high level at this point. With the amount of opportunities that there are on college campuses for students to come together for all types of activities including sports, it will be interesting to examine how they use this technology and how it is affecting them every day.

From previous research on the topic, we know generally that mobile sports betting has been increasing in popularity over the years and at a rapid pace in recent years, especially since the 2018 Supreme Court case where the *Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 (PASPA)* was overturned. Research on sports betting in the United States has major focuses on the amount of money spent on wagering, and on gambling problems and addictions. In the United States, it is estimated that between \$50-\$150 billion is illegally bet on sports every year (Hanano, 2018) and that Nevada only brought in \$4.8 billion in legal wagers in 2017, the year before the overturning of PASPA (Marchi 2020). An article from late 2022 claims that an

average of 80 billion was spent on mobile sports betting during 2022 which is an extremely large number (Bridge 2022). This number shows that the increase in legal sports bets since 2018 is substantial. It is clear from this data that the legalization of mobile sports betting opened the door to an untapped market that will lead to much more money being spent on legal sports betting. We can also learn from previous research that mobile sports betting causes gambling problems for many. Somewhere between 1% and 2% of the U.S. adult population, or 2 to 4 million adults, will experience a gambling disorder in their lifetime furthermore another 3% to 5%, or 5 to 9 million people, will, at some point in their lives, report a subclinical problem, which means that some symptoms of a gambling disorder are present but that a psychiatric diagnosis is not warranted (Welte, Barnes, Tidwell, Hoffman & Wieczorek, 2014). Because of the fact that this data is from before the widespread legalization of mobile sports betting nationwide in 2018, it can be assumed that these numbers will likely grow.

While some of the previous research mentioned is more generalized since it was written before the widespread legalization of mobile sports betting, or right as it was legalized, the onset of mobile sports betting through the United States will contribute to it majorly going forward. The fact that there is so much money spent per year on sports betting whether it be legal or illegal, and the fact that there are people that experience problem gaming, means that these factors will continue to play a part in sports betting overall and mobile sports betting in particular.

Although there has been a large amount of research conducted on sports betting as a whole through the years, not much has been conducted recently on how mobile sports betting which is now legal in many states, is affecting students on college campuses. There has been some research conducted on how it affects the mental health and behavior of students, and this

research includes a study from 2016 about Kenyan university students by R. Koross and another from 2007 study about internet gambling and college students by N.M.,Petry & J. Weinstock. The findings of the first study concluded that gambling has an influence on students' behavior and performance, since losing time spent on school can influence performance (Koross, 2016). The study also states that it is through the gambling behavior of lost school time, that leads to students not attending classes and it also mentions that at Kenyan universities, students spend more hours gambling than reading and attending to schoolwork. The findings of the second study found that almost two-thirds (61.6%) of regular Internet gamblers were pathological gamblers and that internet gambling frequency was significantly associated with poor mental health (N.M.,Petry & J. Weinstock, 2007). These two studies are somewhat dated and a bit irrelevant, considering that the first study is research done at a university outside the US and the other is over ten years old, but these studies do offer some good insight into what a lot of early mobile sports betting research looked like before the Supreme Court ruling in 2018. With all that said there is still a general lack of research that has been conducted about how mobile sports betting affects college students as a whole, especially since the Supreme Court ruling in 2018 that made it so widespread. As discussed in the articles referenced above including (Koross, 2016) and (N.M.,Petry & J. Weinstock, 2007), a major chunk of the research into mobile sports betting when it comes to younger people focuses on problem gaming and the mental health issues that come along with it and although that is a very important topic to research and discuss, there are many other important parts of mobile sports betting that we can look at including, how much students use it, what their thoughts are on it and how it affects their relationships with others.

Research was done to answer several questions about students' use of mobile sports betting from their participation, their daily use, if their friends and family participate, how their family

feels about their participation, and how it affects their studies. These questions will help to answer the principal research objectives of this study which include, what prevalence does mobile sports betting have among college students, what motivates students' participation in mobile sports betting, and what affect does mobile sports betting have on their relationships with their friends and family as well as their studies in school. Answering these principal research objectives will give us a better understanding of how mobile sports betting affects college students as a whole.

If we want to understand more about how students' use of mobile sports betting affects them aside from problem gaming and mental health, we need to understand other factors about mobile sports betting when it comes to students, which include participation frequency, positive and negative benefits, and their opinions and thoughts on the activity overall. Although previous research that was discussed earlier does not mention it much, there are many positive factors that mobile sports betting can have on students. Students, overall, experienced a significant decrease in their social-psychological well-being during the pandemic on college campuses (Nyunt, McMillen, Oplt, Beckham, 2021), and since then we have seen social interaction and relationships making a slow comeback. Since it is common for college students to gather to watch sports, and the fact that college sports are a large part of the social aspect of college (Shope, 2023), there is a strong likelihood that these gatherings will lead to them participating in mobile sports betting together, leading to more social interaction. An important part of this study will be looking at how mobile sports betting leads to social interaction and the building of social relationships and it is important to investigate how this will factor into the effect that mobile sports betting has on college students.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

To understand sports betting more clearly, the history of the activity must be discussed in detail. Betting on sports has been a practice of many for decades although for most of its history in the United States this type of betting was conducted behind closed doors and through organized crime syndicates and bookies. In 1949 Nevada became the first state to legalize sports betting but sports betting never spread much outside the state and its spread was banned in 1992 when Congress passed the *Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 (PASPA)* which prohibited future expansion of sports betting in states (Matheson 2021). Nevada was able to continue sports betting in their jurisdiction due to a grandfather clause but in 2011 about twenty years after the PASPA ban was put in place, states began to challenge this ban starting with Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey in 2011 and it was put on the ballot for voters (Matheson 2021). Once the ballot initiative passed, the Governor and the State of New Jersey entered a slew of legal battles with major sports leagues including the NFL, MLB, NBA and the NHL, and the battles became so heated that the Supreme Court took up the case in 2018 and ruled that the PASPA law that had banned sports betting was unconstitutional (Matheson 2021). From 1949 until 2018 people who wanted to bet on sports had to travel to Nevada, with this state having this advantage and monopoly for over half a century, and this court case marked the end of that era.

- **Legalization**

The landmark court case in 2018 *Philip D. Murphy, Governor of New Jersey, v. National Collegiate Athletic Association*, asked the question, is the US federal government allowed to control state lawmaking (Ballotopedia). The outcome of this case changed the course of how

states make laws overall, but more importantly it allowed the state of New Jersey to legalize sports betting (Ballotopedia), with several states such as Pennsylvania and Mississippi not long after. Many US states such as Pennsylvania and New Jersey have legalized sports betting in recent years, opening the door to many more gambling options for people. According to recent reports, since the Supreme Court ruling that allowed sports gambling to take place in 2018, legal sports gambling has quadrupled in the US with online gambling taking off (Sergent 2021).

- **Spread across states / In person retail vs mobile**

To understand the laws that allow sports betting in more detail it is important to examine how each state handles the Supreme Court ruling. The American Gaming Association (AGA, 2023) has created an interactive map that describes where each state stands as of 2023 including its legalization status, types of betting allowed, and other policies concerned with each state. There are currently thirty-five states plus Washington DC in the union that allow sports betting whether it be in person/retail betting, mobile betting, or both. Twenty-four states plus Washington DC allow both in person/retail betting and mobile betting. Ten states only allow in person/retail betting and one state only allows mobile betting.

Beginning with Nevada as discussed previously, this state was the only one in the nation to allow sports betting due to a grandfather clause before the legalization in 2018 and has allowed sports betting to take place since 1949 (Matheson 2021). After the 2018 legalization, the first state to make its own law allowing sports betting was Delaware in May of 2018. New Jersey followed suit a month later in June 2018 and was the second state to adopt sports betting. Delaware and New Jersey have notable prohibitions on sports gambling which include no betting allowed on games involving in-state college teams, and specifically for NJ no betting is allowed on collegiate events held within the state. Prohibitions such as this are set by each state

individually. The ninth state to legalize which was New York, is important because sports betting in New York has been an interesting case since the beginning. In most situations one would assume that because of New York City and its large population, the state of New York would be one of the first to legalize sports betting, but although they allow in-person betting as of 2019 the state took until 2022 to launch mobile betting. Tennessee is unique in the fact that only mobile betting is allowed and in person/retail is not. There are four current states that are on deck for sports betting where legislation has passed, and it is legal but not yet operational. These states include Florida, North Carolina, Vermont, and Maine.

There are many caveats for each state that go beyond in person/retail vs mobile, and these are extremely confusing to keep track of. Each state has different policies and procedures when it comes to passing laws and the ways that those laws are implemented. Some examples of these caveats include what types of games are allowed to be bet on, where betting is allowed and not allowed, operating license requirements, age limits to bet, and much more. There is no argument that sports betting is a fast-growing form of entertainment and that there is much more growth yet to be seen.

- **Move online**

In-person versus mobile is a factor that is decided by each individual state with some states allowing both and others allowing one or the other. Widespread sports betting was legalized in 2018, and less than two years later the world was dealing with the worst pandemic of the century and many sportsbooks in racetracks, casinos and hotels had to be shut down indefinitely. This left the only major way to place sports bets being through mobile sports betting with the use of websites and apps. Mobile sports betting was already quickly growing before the onset of the pandemic, but the pandemic forced the growth of it to happen faster. For the early months of the

pandemic there was not much to bet on since all major leagues had shut down sports but as sports came back betting was available again while many sportsbook facilities remained closed so mobile sports betting was the only option available. In the years since COVID mobile sports betting has continued to grow and gets larger every year.

Since the legalization of mobile sports betting many people from all age groups have contributed to its growth, but a major part of its growth is among youth. Mobile sports betting advertising is targeted at males, ages 18-28, who account for the largest increase in online gaming (Dunlop & Ballantyne, 2021). Additionally, younger populations especially males in the 18-28 age range have a high level of technical proficiency, and online gambling is, essentially, another type of online game that can be played on their phones or other smart device (James et al., 2017; Ganzálvez- Valles et al., 2021). The likely reason for this is because mobile sports betting firms position their product as being an activity that is engaged in “by tech-savvy young men living a glamorous high-stakes lifestyle (Hing et al., 2017, p. 1052).

According to research from a university in Kenya, college students are participating in mobile sports betting at a very high rate using their computers and mobile devices (Koross 2016). A study from an American university revealed that out of 1,356 students that were asked 6.3% gambled online weekly (Petry and Weinstock 2007). Although this would be considered a low percentage in many other contexts, this should be taken note of since this is not a huge number of students and of them over six percent participated weekly. Something else to note is that this study took place in 2007 before the widespread legalization of mobile sports betting in the United States, so the numbers are most likely much higher now in 2023 than there were over fifteen years ago.

Some more recent research shows that the numbers of eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds participating in mobile sports betting has risen significantly. In a study commissioned by the NCAA and conducted by Opinion Diagnostics, a survey taken in April of 2023 shows that out of 3,527 eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds, 58% having engaged in at least one sports betting activity. The significance of these numbers is astounding considering that only five years ago widespread mobile sports betting was not legal nationwide. This percentage speaks to the rapid growth of this activity throughout the United States since 2018 (Heath, Opinion Diagnostics, 2023).

- **How often are students betting and what leads them to do so?**

Sports is a universal language, and at its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs, or economic status is (A.Rajan, C.Premkumar, 2013). It is clear that many students gamble because it is something that they can do with their friends to connect and have fun. Social gamblers which is the category that most college student gamblers fall into has two categories, casual and serious. Casual social gamblers usually gamble for relaxation, fun or as a social event, while serious social gamblers always put their family and job before gambling and are always in control of their betting (Koross 2016).

- **Problem gaming who is most susceptible and why, known effects on personal / professional / education etc.**

The study discussed previously by Petry and Weinstock said that of the 6.3% of surveyed students that participate in mobile sports betting about a third of them can be considered as probable pathological gamblers which means that these students may have an addiction to gambling (Petry and Weinstock 2007). Another study showed that out of 105 online gamblers 20

were said to be problem gamblers (Griffiths and Barnes 2008). This study also showed that males were more likely than females to be problem gamblers overall.

Previous studies have suggested that gambling has various effects on students' behaviors. It's very difficult to pinpoint exact effects on behavior since every person gambles in a different way and the gambling itself affects them in different ways. While the majority of gamblers will indulge without getting hooked, a small number will suffer from the worst of gambling addiction and will get so addicted that they cease to exist as functional human beings (Koross 2016). Consistent with prior studies, the results of another study found that for most college students gambling provides a benign entertainment diversion with only minor amounts of time or money being lost to the activity (Williams, Connolly, 2006). Although most student gamblers don't experience much problem, there are however, a small minority of students that gamble excessively with large amounts of money, which may lead to more severe problems for some of these individuals (Lesieur, et al., 1991; Williams, 2006).

Lastly, being that mobile sports betting is so convenient and easy, being able to participate so frequently without much planning may be another issue for some gamblers. It has been observed over time that bookmakers promote mobile betting over other modes of gambling in their promotions and advertisements by emphasizing its ease of access, providing messages that emphasize the skills involved and that diminish the role of luck (Lopez- Gonzalez, Estévez, & Griffiths, 2017). Mobile sports betting, with its one-touch, easily accessible wagering options, allows for accelerated speed of play and more instantaneous and immediate gambling, all features that may be particularly attractive to those who are prone to impulsive responses to betting opportunities (Deans, Thomas, Daube, & Derevensky, 2016; Griffiths & Auer, 2013; Lopez-Gonzalez, Estévez, & Griffiths, 20018a).

Chapter 3

Current Research Development

Although there has been general research done on the topic of students participating in mobile sports betting there has not been any current specific research done on mobile sports betting and how it affects college students in particular. A major reason that this type of research has not been conducted to a large extent is because the widespread use of mobile sports betting only became legal in 2018. While past research is important it doesn't accurately convey the information about the state of mobile sports betting as it is used since its widespread legalization in 2018.

Since younger generations use technology at higher rates than older generations, seeing how college students use mobile sports betting not only tells us about how they use it and its effects on them, but also tells us this activity will be used going forward which can answer more general questions about the topic overall. Although this research is not focused on how the general population of people in the United States and beyond participate in mobile sports betting, the results of the research will give us good insight into how an important and growing population of mobile sports betting participants are using it, and how it is affecting them which will hopefully lead to more studies on this topic in the future.

A major objective of this study besides answering the objective questions presented, is to encourage more researchers and people as a whole to take an interest in this topic and learn more about it. The more that people pay attention to this topic, the more researchers will be inspired to conduct studies on it and educate more people on it.

The research being conducted is important because never in US history has there been a time when mobile sports betting was as legal or as widespread as it is right now. Something that is as

new as this is going to have a major impact on many people and it is important that its impacts are examined. Whenever something new becomes legal such as mobile sports betting, it can be expected to see many people take advantage of it, and in several cases younger people will be a part of this group that is exploring this newfound freedom. Being able to analyze their use of it and how it affects them is extremely important. Mobile sports betting can be a fun hobby but can also be quite dangerous if overused, and students are a population where many different uses will need to be observed.

When something becomes legal that has both good and bad side effects it is important to be aware of how those things are being used and affecting people. There are several things that are legal in the United States that if used the right way cause no issue, but if used the wrong way could have terrible outcomes, these things include vehicles, weapons, and many different types of drugs. Something else that we can now add to this list is mobile sports betting, since it is very safe when used right but when used the wrong way can have bad outcomes. When these types of things are legalized, there are always many people who support them and many who do not, but after that initial introduction period nobody hears much about them except for when something bad happens. The point of this study is to look at both sides of these arguments and take a neutral stance on them solely to learn the ways that mobile sports betting affects college students to larger degree.

Overall, there is a lot to learn about this topic and some of it we may not know for a long time, but when looking at a new area of research there are certain things that will be unknown and that's why it is important for this study to be conducted and to answer the principal research objectives which include, what prevalence does mobile sports betting have among college students, what motivates students participation in mobile sports betting, and what affect does

mobile sports betting have on their relationships with their friends and family as well as their studies in school.

Chapter 4

Research Methods & Analysis

- **Sample recruitment**

The sample was able to be recruited through the principal researcher talking with students on campus, speaking with classes, and posting QR codes in campus buildings during the months of March, April, and May 2023. The principal researcher had to experiment with the best ways to collect data and the first few days of data collection were difficult. An initial technique was sitting in the HUB Robeson Center on the campus of Penn State University and asking students to participate as they walked by. Most students were unresponsive, and either said no or completely ignored the request when asked as they walked by. This technique was tried for about two days and when no results were found, new techniques for collecting data needed to be explored. After discussions with advisors the principal researcher began talking with teachers about presenting this in front of classes which yielded much more success. Many teachers in the School of Hospitality Management and the Smeal College of Business were helpful in the process. The technique of sitting in a common area and asking for participants was tried a second time but in the Business Building on the campus of Penn State. Although this technique had failed the first time that it was attempted, it worked very well the second time. The students in the Business Building seemed much more willing to engage and speak with the principal researcher and participated at a high level. The QR code was also presented on the School of

Hospitality Management weekly update slides that are shown before all classes within the school which according to some professors worked very well among their students.

Since the same QR code was used for all the data collection it is difficult to pinpoint exact numbers of how many surveys were filled out using each technique, but it is known that speaking in front of classes in person yielded the highest rate of responsiveness and participation. The other techniques were helpful in getting the smaller numbers of responses in order to get closer to the desired number of responses. One technique that completely failed was having the QR code on the School of Hospitality Management announcement slides during summer classes since this did not yield a single response in a four-month period from May through August.

It is also important to understand that there were many other avenues that could have been explored when it came to data collection opportunities. Being that the time to collect data was limited due to several factors, including it being close to the end of the school year, and other educational obligations of the principal researcher, the data collection was somewhat limited and could have been more wide reaching if there had been more time and resources. This is not to say that the data that was collected was unimportant but is an analysis of the process and an explanation of how results could have been better had the circumstances been different.

The original goal was to reach 200 responses, but the study came 34 responses short and totaled 166 and of those responses 120 were useful. This was somewhat disappointing but since this study had open ended questions, there were some participants that skipped one or more questions which led to those responses having to be mostly skipped and discarded. Looking back on the study, presenting the questions in possibly a multiple-choice format would have most likely yielded more consistent results but at the same time having open ended questions did lead

to more freedom of response and allowed participants to say how they really felt about every question without being limited to certain responses.

- **Questions / Measures**

A total of thirteen questions were used as measures for this research. The questions assessed a number of areas surrounding this research topic. The goal of the questions was to explore the most important areas of why and how college students use mobile sports betting. These areas included participation, how family and friends feel about their participation, geographic location and if mobile sports betting is legal in the state that they live in, if they agree with its widespread legalization, how it has affected their studies in school, and the positive and negative effects that it has had on them overall. As discussed already, there have been many research articles written about specific parts of mobile sports betting and how it affects students, but most only discussed a certain area of this topic and did not discuss it in general including positive and negative effects, how it is used, knowledge of the topic, where students are from, and how they feel about the expansion of mobile sports betting generally. The questions that were asked were as follows.

- 1. Have you ever participated in mobile sports betting?**

The purpose of this question was to get a general understanding of the participants and how many had actively participated in mobile sports betting at least once. This study had no formal selection process for participants and no definite way of knowing if the participants had past experiences with mobile sports betting. Because of the fact that this information was not known, this question was necessary and served as a way to know how many of the participants had participated in mobile sports betting and how many had not.

2. If so, do you participate in mobile sports betting often?

The purpose of this question was to understand how often the participants use sports betting and how much a part of their life it is. Since the participants of the study were largely selected at random this question served as a helpful gauge in how familiar participants were with mobile sports betting and if they participated often, rarely, or somewhere in between.

3. Do you know many other people your age that participate in mobile sports betting?

The purpose of this question was to determine how mobile sports betting is involved with their lives outside their own participation. This question was important to ask since this study is focusing on a certain age demographic, and knowing how many other people in the same age range of the students who actively participate in mobile sports betting is very important.

4. How often do those that you know participate in mobile sports betting?

The purpose of this question was to get an understanding of the frequency of participation of people around them. The question was important to ask since knowing the frequencies of participation in mobile sports betting of those who the students are associated with brings to light important information about frequencies of participation on a larger scale.

5. If you participate in mobile sports betting, were you influenced by someone or did you discover it yourself?

The purpose of this question was to determine if the participants discovered mobile sports betting on their own or if they had been influenced to do it by others around them since this is an activity that is commonly participated in while in groups. Understanding if the students were influenced to participate in mobile sports betting by someone else is important in understanding the spread of this activity and the amount of people who encourage others to participate in it.

6. What state are you from and is mobile sports betting legal in your state and if so do you know anything about your state's stance when it comes to sports betting? (Most were from PA, NJ, NY, DE, MD area)

The purpose of this question was to get an understanding of where the students mostly lived and if the state that they are from has legalized mobile sports betting. Since not all states have legalized mobile sports betting or any type of sports betting at all for that matter at this point, it is important to see what the home state of the students is since this can be a determining factor in their participation and understanding of the activity overall.

7. Do you look at mobile sports betting as a pastime or as something that is part of an everyday routine?

The purpose of this question was to gain more insight into how the participants use mobile sports betting and how much a part of their daily life it is. Determining how large a role mobile sports betting plays in the life of the participants is important because this will show the type of impact the mobile sports betting has on students and their frequency of use.

8. How do those closest to you such as family and friends feel about your participation in mobile sports betting and how has it affected your relationships with them?

The purpose of this question was to gain more understanding into the role that mobile sports betting plays into participants' family and friends' lives. Since mobile sports betting can be a controversial topic and can sometimes lead to problems if used the wrong way, it is important to understand how this affects students' relationships with their families and friends and if their participation causes any changes in their relationships with them.

9. Do you agree with the expansion of mobile sports betting privileges that states in the US have been legalizing lately?

The purpose of this question was to get a reading on the participants' feelings on the expansion of mobile sports betting in the US and how they feel about it becoming such a major part of the gambling culture overall. Determining how students feel about the widespread expansion of mobile sports betting is important because this can be another major determining factor in their participation and frequency of use and can give insight into how mobile sports betting will be used going forward.

10. Do you see yourself participating in sports betting long term or is it temporary for you?

The purpose of this question was to get an understanding of the role students expect mobile sports betting to play in their lives going forward and how long they expect to be using it at the rate that they currently do. Determining how the students see their participation going forward is important because this will show us what the future of mobile sports betting will look like when it comes to this group of people being studied.

11. How does your participation in mobile sports betting affect your studies in school and do you feel that it has a positive or negative affect?

The purpose of this question was to get an understanding of how mobile sports betting affects students' studies and if their participation has an impact either positive or negative on that. Since this study is focused on students who are currently receiving their college education, it is important to get an understanding of how their participation in mobile sports betting which is an activity outside of their studies affects their studies. Understanding this will assist in

understanding how well they are able to manage their schoolwork and extracurricular activities such as mobile sports betting.

12. What are some positive experiences that you have had with mobile sports betting?

The purpose of this question was to determine the positive effect that mobile sports betting has had on the participants whether it be with their friends, family, or school. Learning the positive effects of mobile sports betting on students is important because the aim of this study is to learn all different types of effects that mobile sports betting has on students.

13. What are some negative experiences that you have had with mobile sports betting?

The purpose of this question was to determine the negative effects that mobile sports betting has had on the participants whether it be with their friends, family, or school. Learning the negative effects of mobile sports betting on students is important because the aim of this study is to learn all different types of effects that mobile sports betting has on students.

The results of most of these questions were mixed and some of the students surveyed did not answer the questions in the exact amount of detail that was expected by the principal researcher at the beginning. This was one of the issues experienced with having to conduct this research in an environment when students were mostly in a rush to get somewhere or about to start or end class. Overall, the questions yielded quality results that told a story of the role that mobile sports betting plays on a college campus. There were some questions that had similar themes and probably could have been combined into one question but since these were open ended questions the goal was to give people the opportunity to answer several questions about their participation in mobile sports betting, and since some people will read a certain question differently than

someone else, having some similar questions gives participants the opportunity to answer in different ways and explain the reasoning for their answer.

- **Analysis of categories and data interpretation**

After all surveys were finished being conducted the data was analyzed. This study collected qualitative data that was based on content that was provided as a written response to the questions and content analysis was used to in the process of interpreting the data. Every question had a certain range of answers that could have been chosen, response categories were created for each question and each response represented a possible answer to that question. For example, if question one had two common answers, then two response categories were created, one representing each answer, and in the response category was the number of responses that the specific answer choice had. If twelve people were to answer “yes” and ten were to answer “no” then one category would have twelve responses while the others would have ten. Different questions had different amounts of categories with some having up to five categories depending on the detail involved in answering the question and the possible responses. Being that these were written questions and not multiple choice, when making the response categories it was necessary to assume that some responses meant the same thing even when different words might have been used to describe it. Making relevant and educated assumptions was helpful in creating meaningful response category lists. There were also some responses that were extremely unique, out of line with the question, or were not relevant to the research, so those were left out from the response categories completely. The process of creating the response categories was certainly tedious but paid off when making data understandable when needing to explain it.

After all response categories were created, a pie chart was created for each question of the thirteen questions in the survey. The pie charts showed the percentages of each response for each of the questions. This was used to determine the amount of specific responses to each question. For example, if the question was a yes or no question about participation in mobile sports betting and “yes” received ninety percent while “no” received ten percent, that would mean that the answer yes was the majority answer and that a high amount of people had participated in the activity. These percentage results in turn would go toward answering the research questions.

Chapter 5

Results

The results showed that several students at Penn State University actively participate in mobile sports betting. The results of the data were interesting because almost every student that was surveyed either participated in mobile sports betting often or was well aware of it. The results showed some more interesting facts about people's understanding of what mobile sports betting is and their knowledge surrounding the topic. Some of the response categories in the question are not mutually exclusive, for example if a participant were to respond yes to something and another was to respond “a few times a week”, both of those responses could be in the “yes” category but they were separated in order to give more meaning to the data.

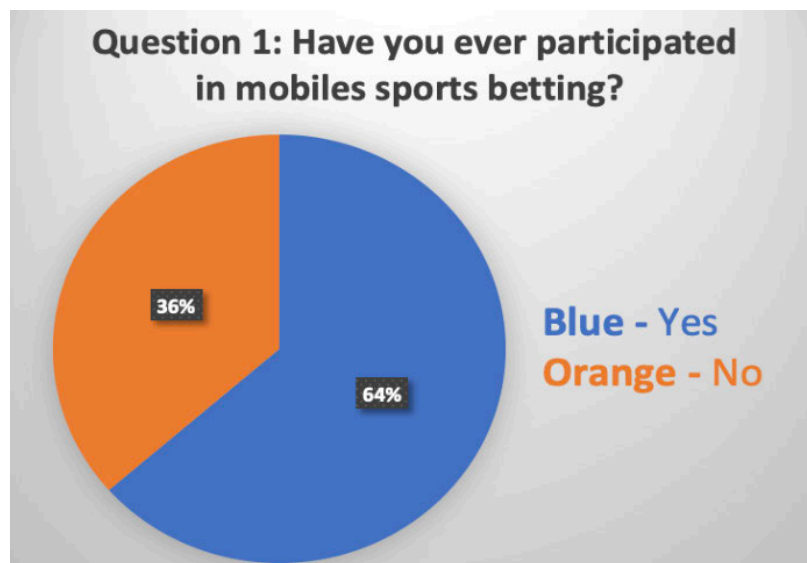


Figure 1 - Participation

Question one asked: have you ever participated in mobile sports betting? Response categories included Category 1 - Yes and Category 2 - No. Sixty four percent responded “yes”

while thirty six percent responded “no”. These results showed starting out that the data set had a strong majority of students who had participated in mobile sports betting. A majority being this large shows how prevalent this activity is on the campus of Penn State University.

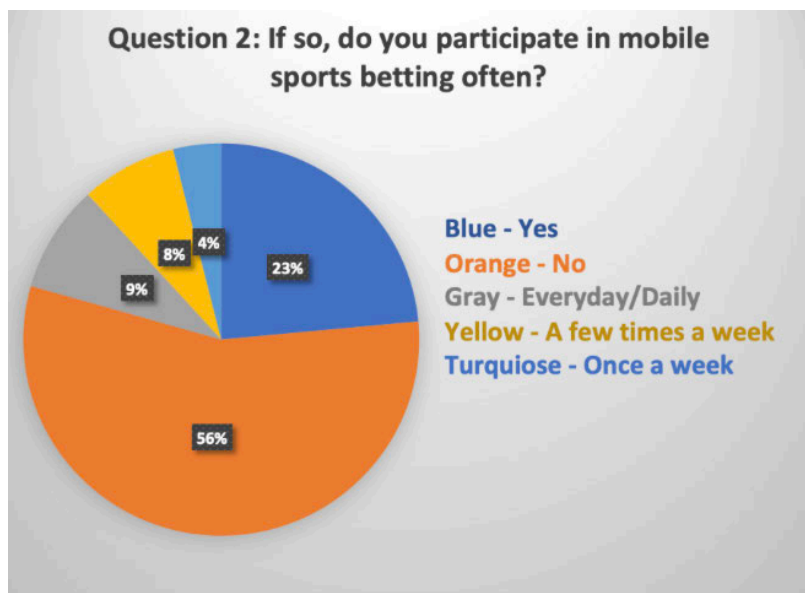


Figure 2 - Participation Frequency

Question two asked: If so, do you participate in mobile sports betting often? Response categories included Category 1 - Yes, Category 2 - No, Category 3 - Everyday/Daily, Category 4 - A few times a week, Category 5 - Once a week. A little over half of the participants responded “no” that they did not participate in sports betting often while the other half was a mix of “yes” (23%), “everyday/daily” (9%), “a few times a week” (8%), and “once a week” (4%). These results showed that although a large majority of students said that they had participated in the activity, it doesn't necessarily mean that all of them participate in it often and in fact 56% of those surveyed did not participate often and 44% claimed that they did. With the use of open-ended responses some of the categories are not mutually exclusive but the reason that these

bucket categories were made was to show the responses that had the highest amounts. This can be a bit confusing, but we can assume here that most people who wrote “yes “were in either categories 3, 4 or 5. What this shows is that mobile sports betting is wide reaching on the campus of Penn State and even though a majority may not participate in it every day, most have participated at some point.

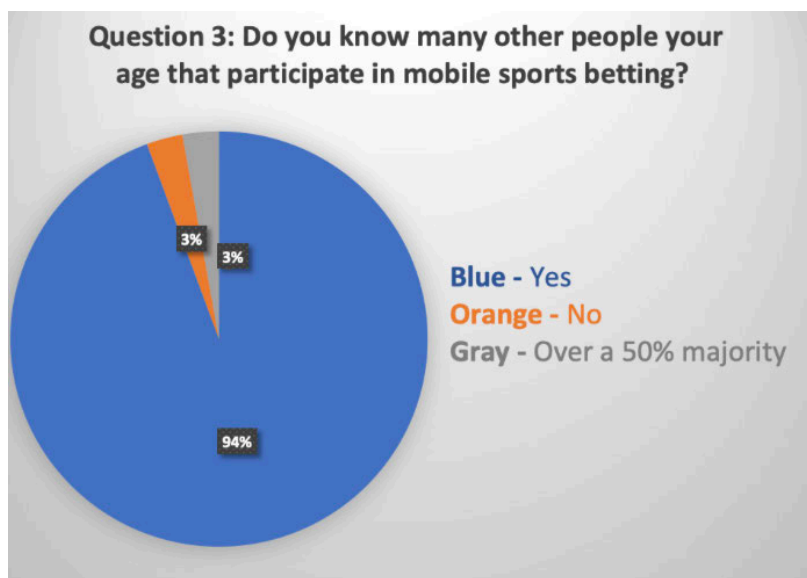


Figure 3 - Peer Participation

Question three asked: Do you know many other people your age that participate in mobile sports betting? Response categories included Category 1 - Yes, Category 2 - No, Category 3 - Over a 50% majority. An overwhelming majority of 94% said “yes” that they knew many other people their age that participated in mobile sports betting. 3% said “no” and another 3% said “over a 50% majority” of people they know their own age participate in mobile sports betting. These results may be slightly inaccurate because there were so many responses of “yes” and so little of “over a 50% majority” it brings the possibility that some of the participants in the study

may have just quickly wrote yes when answering this question and didn't think about the percentage of people that they knew that participate in mobile sports betting and there is a good chance that more than 3% of the respondents had over a 50% majority of people that they knew their own age that participated in mobile sports betting often. Either way the fact that 94% of respondents said that they know many other people their age that participate in mobile sports betting is proof enough that mobile sports betting has a major presence on the campus of Penn State University.

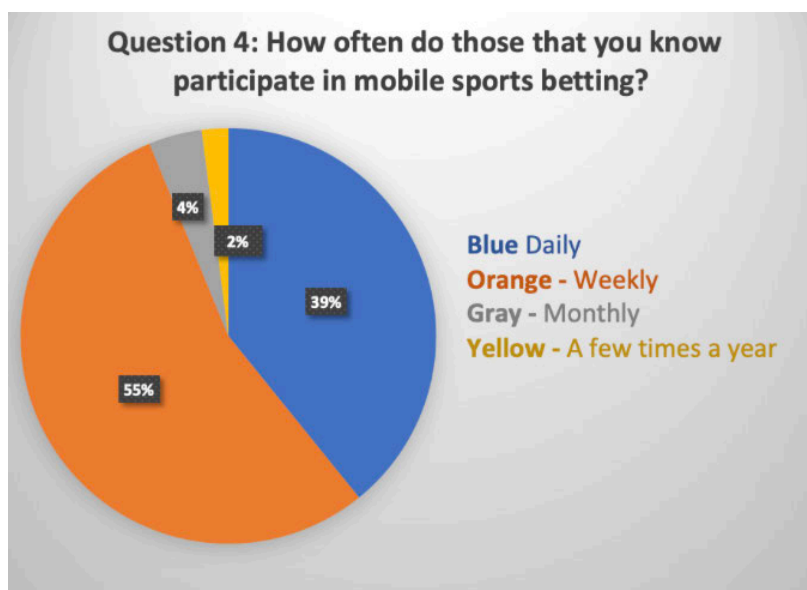


Figure 4 - Peer Participation Frequency

Question four asked: How often do those that you know participate in mobile sports betting? Response categories included Category 1 - Daily, Category 2 - Weekly, Category 3 - Monthly, Category 4 - A few times a year. A majority of 55% responded that there is “daily” participation among the people that they know that participate in mobile sports betting. 39% said that there is “weekly” participation among the people that they know, 4% said “monthly” and 2% said “a few times a year”. These percentages show the high rate of participation among students and once

again shows the strength of mobile sport betting in the college environment and that many of those that participate not only participate occasionally but are daily participants and this activity plays a major role in their lives.

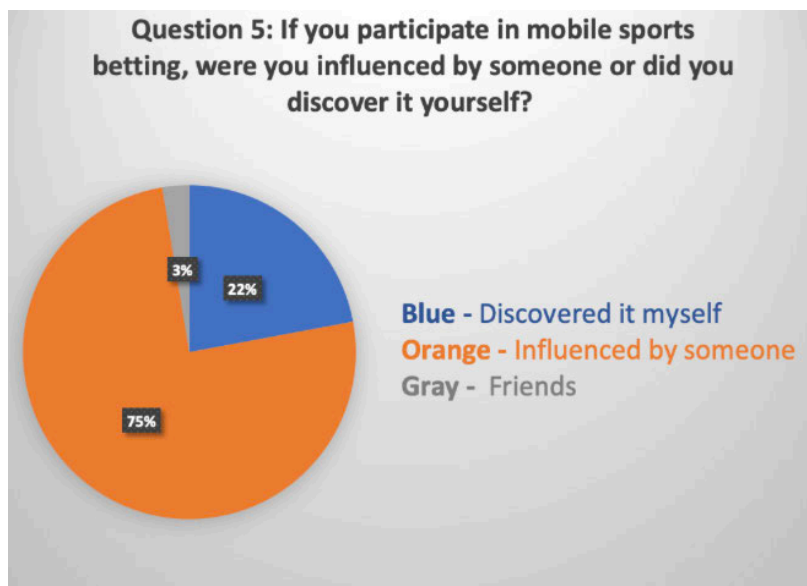


Figure 5 - Participation Influence

Question five asked: If you participate in mobile sports betting, were you influenced by someone else or did you discover it yourself? Response categories included Category 1 - Discovered it myself, Category 2 - Influenced by someone, Category 3 - Friends. A large majority of 75% responded that they were “influenced by someone” else. 22% reported that they “discovered it themselves” while 3% said that they were “influenced by friends”. Since those who were influenced by friends have the same meaning as influenced by someone else, we can assume that the percentage that were influenced is about 80%. What this shows is that mobile sports betting is something that others easily pickup from being around someone else who participates in it, and that it has a power in ways to draw people in.

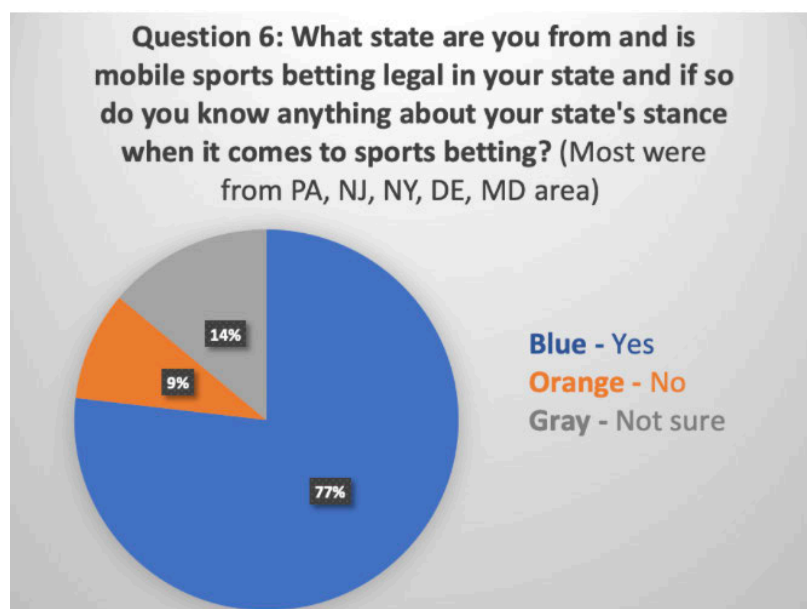


Figure 6 - Geographic Location / Legalization Status

Question six asked: What state are you from and is mobile sports betting legal in your state and if so, do you know anything about your state's stance when it comes to sports betting? Response categories included Category 1 - Yes, Category 2 - No, Category 3 - Not sure. A large majority of 77% said "yes", meaning that sports betting is legal in their state and that they know about their state stance on it. 9% said "no" and another 14% said that they were "not sure" of their state's stance on mobile sports betting. The one issue with this question looking back is that when students answered "yes" to this question they were probably answering yes more to the question of if it was legal in their state and less about if they knew their state's stance on it. This question possibly could have been divided up for better results. Either way the main result that was expected of this question was to understand the amount of students that live in a state with legalized mobile sports betting and how much they know about it. After reviewing the answers of the respondents, it was found that those who said both "yes" and "no" were nearly 100% accurate in knowing their states stance on mobile sports betting. What this shows is that students

are very aware of their state's status on mobile sports betting whether it is legal or not in the states where they come from. This is most likely because of the fact that mobile sports betting is a very important topic right now that many people are aware of. Another simpler outcome that is shown in these results is that we can see that many of the states that these students were from had mobile sports betting legalized. Seeing that the majority of states that participants were from were on the East Coast and in the northeast, most people are very aware of mobile sports betting since the northeast led the way in introducing the legalization of mobile sports betting. The results of this question may have been different had this survey been taken at a university in a different part of the country but either way this shows how strong the awareness of mobile sports betting is among university students and explains why their use of it is so strong.

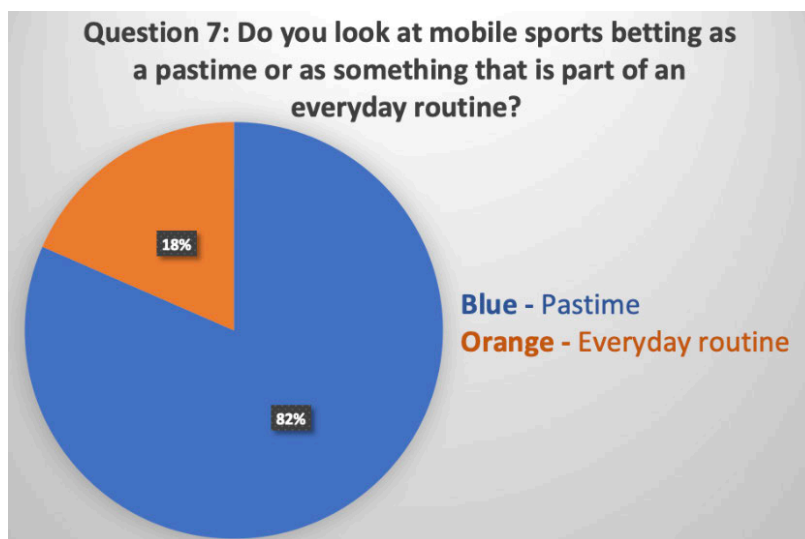


Figure 7 - Participation - Pastime vs Everyday Routine

Question seven asked: Do you look at mobile sports betting as a pastime or as something that is part of an everyday routine? Response categories included Category 1 - Pastime, Category 2 Everyday Routine. A large majority of 82% said that it was mostly a “pastime” for them while 18% said that it was an “everyday routine”. The word “pastime” used by many respondents here

could mean different things to different people. For example, a pastime to one person may mean they participate after work once a week, while for another, it could mean they participate every time they have a free moment during the day. If participants were more specific with their responses to this question, there would most likely be a higher percentage of those that participated as an everyday routine. What the results of this question prove most is that a majority of participants are responsible gamblers and that they are mostly participating as a pastime and are not addicted and participating uncontrollably.

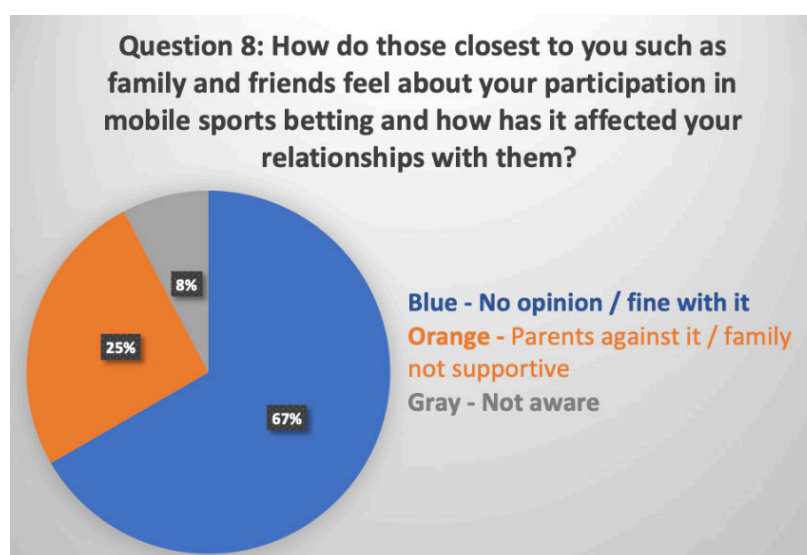


Figure 8 - Participation - Family / Friends Feelings / Relationships

Question eight asked: How do those closest to you such as family and friends feel about your participation in mobile sports betting and how has it affected your relationships with them?

Response categories included Category 1 - No opinion/fine with it, Category 2 - Family against it/parents not supportive, Category 3 - Not aware. A majority of 67% said that their family and friends either had “no opinion” or were “fine with them participating”, another 25% said that

family was “against it/parents not supportive”, and the last 8% claimed that people they were closest to were “not aware”. The 67% majority saying that there was no opinion or that family and friends were fine with their participation, showed that most participants have family that is overall okay with their participation in this activity which either means that participation is being conducted responsibly or possibly that these students have not made their family and friends aware of the details of their participation and the amount that participate. The majority of 67% also show that mobile sports betting is becoming an accepted activity by more people all the time. Although it is a minority, 25% still represents a significant portion of family and friends that are not supportive of participation in this activity. This most likely has to do with the fact that many parents in particular look at mobile sports betting as a risk for their children and something that can get out of control very quickly. Seeing that risk is consistently a major concern in mobile sports betting, it is easy to understand why there is a percentage of people who are not supportive of participation in this activity. For the 8% that claimed that those closest to them were unaware of their participation, this most likely has to do with students not telling their family and friends what they are doing when it comes to participation in mobile sports betting. There is a likely chance that this percentage is bigger since there are probably some participants that claimed that their family and friends were okay with their participation, when in fact they were not aware of their participation at all.

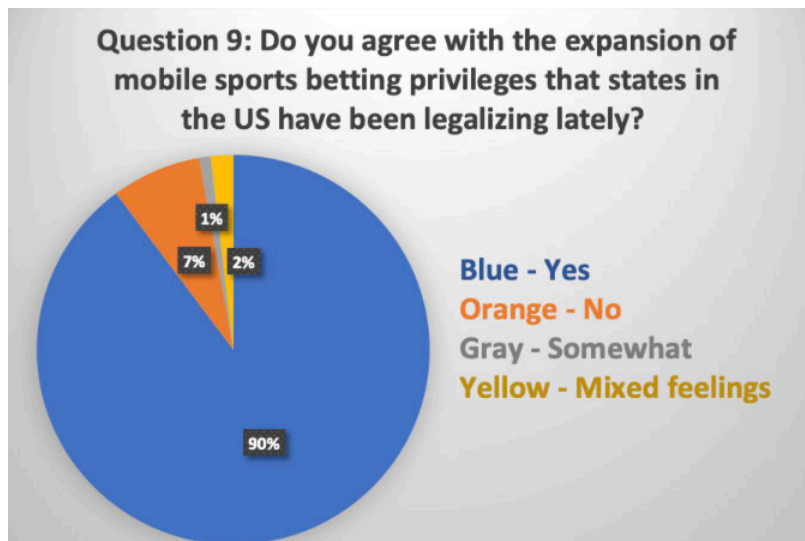


Figure 9 - Thoughts on Expansion

Question nine asked: Do you agree with the expansion of mobile sports betting privileges that states in the US have been legalizing lately? Response categories included Category 1 - Yes, Category 2 - No, Category 3 - Somewhat, Category 4 - Mixed feelings. A very strong majority of 90% said “yes” that they were in agreement with it and that they support legalization which makes sense since in the previous questions many participants responded that they were aware and participated in mobile sports betting often. This also shows how strong the support of mobile sports betting is among young people. Based on these responses, we can see that there won't be much opposition toward the legalization of this activity going forward. A small minority of 7% said “no” that they did not agree with it and did not support legalization which most likely correlates with the minority who were not major participants and did not know much about mobile sports betting. 1% said that they “somewhat” supported it while another 2% said that they had “mixed feelings”. The results to this question may be slightly biased in favor of those who support mobile sports betting since many of the study participants were mobile sports betting participants which most likely support the activity, hence their participation. There may have

been some people who chose not to participate in the study because they didn't agree with mobile sports betting, and if they had the results to this question may have been different. Overall, what we can take out of this is that most respondents had a very strong support of mobile sports betting and its legalization. Because this activity is growing so quickly it is understandable why there would be so much support, and percentages like this are very much expected at this point, so these results did not come at much surprise.

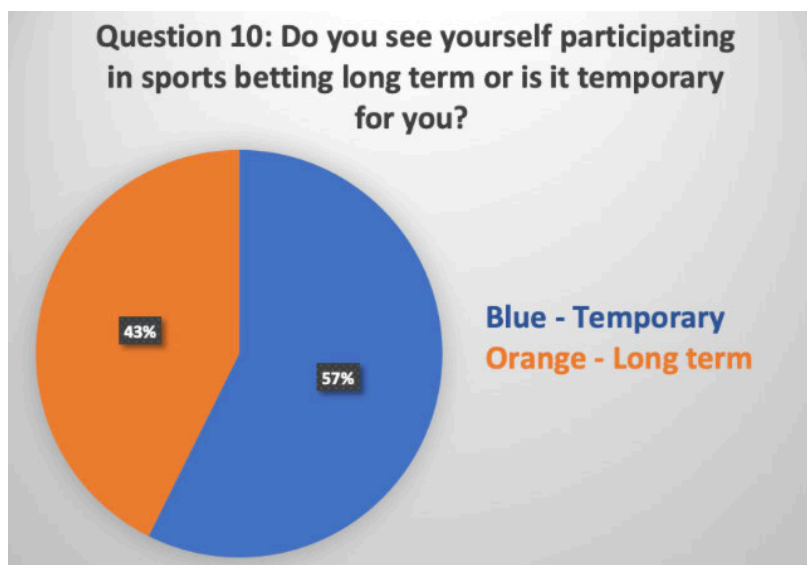


Figure 10 - Participation Temporary vs Long Term

Question ten asked: Do you see yourself participating in sports betting long term or is it temporary for you? Response categories included Category 1 - Temporary, and Category 2 - Long term. The results to this question did not yield strong majorities either way. There is a slight majority that responded "temporary" which makes sense considering that a lot of people do not want to admit that it is more than a temporary hobby for them and not a long-term activity. It was surprising to see the large percentage of people who considered it a long-term

activity even though it was a minority. 43% of respondents claiming that this is a “long term” activity is a very high number and shows what a major role mobile sports betting plays in many of these students' lives.

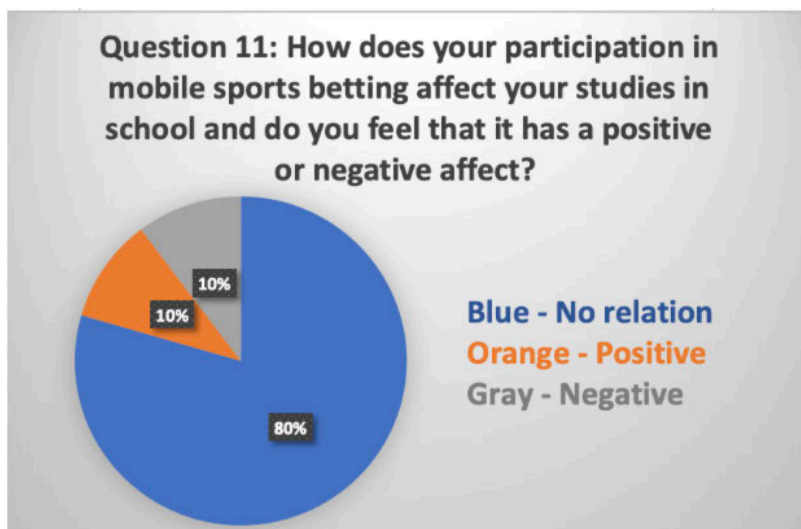


Figure 11 - Effect on School and Studies

Question eleven asked: How does your participation in mobile sports betting affect your studies in school and do you feel that it has a positive or negative effect? Response categories included Category 1 - No Relation, Category 2 - Positive, Category 3 - Negative. A large majority of 80% said that there was “no relation”, A minority of 10% said “positive” and another minority of 10% said “negative”. The large majority saying “no relation” is a good sign since it shows that most respondents are able to participate safely and responsibly with no major impacts on school or studies. The 10% who say it has caused negative experiences for them is cause for some concern, and this most likely has to do with overuse, minor addictions, and the fact that this is still a newer technology that people are learning about and getting adjusted to. This majority may be a bit misleading though since what different people consider to be “no relation” could

depend on the person and what they consider that to be. Overall, the strong majority claiming that there is no relation shows that most students surveyed are participating in mobile sports betting in a way that is responsible and does not have any major effects on them.

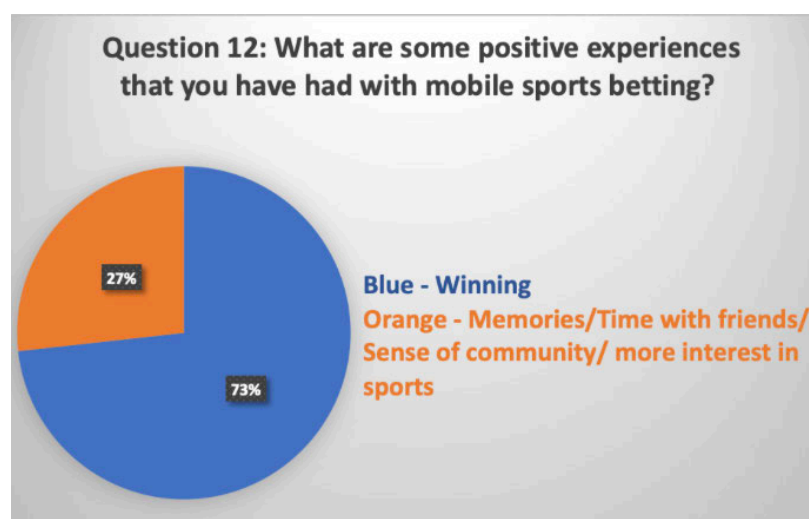


Figure 12 - Positive Experiences

Question twelve asked: What are some positive experiences that you had with mobile sports betting. Response categories included Category 1 - Winning, Category 2 - Memories/Time with friends/Sense of Community/More interest in sports. A large majority of 73% said that “winning” and a minority of 27% said “Memories/Time with friends/Sense of Community/More interest in sports”. An issue with this question was that most people were responding with “winning” and the participants didn’t seem to put the detail into answering the question that was expected. It was somewhat disappointing to not get to hear many other positive experiences, but this result can be somewhat expected since when people think of positive parts of gambling winning is definitely something that comes to mind.

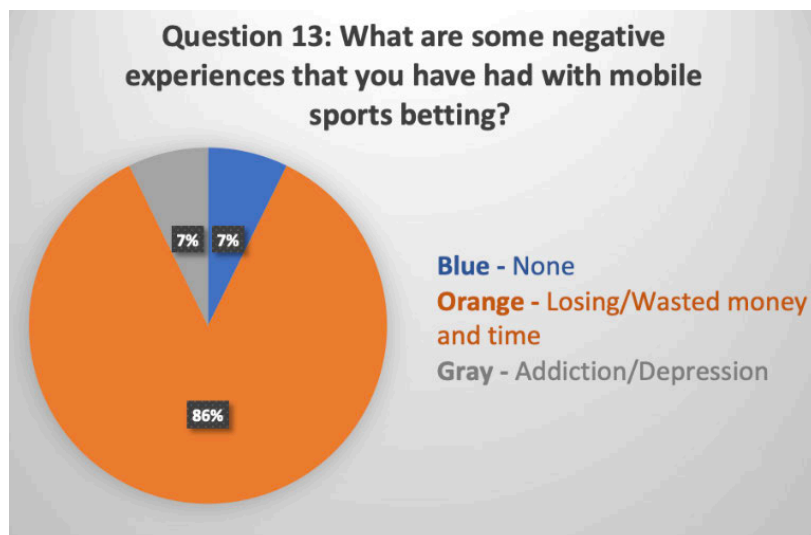


Figure 13 - Negative Experiences

Question thirteen asked: What are some negative experiences that you have had with mobile sports betting? Response categories included Category 1 - None, Category 2 - Losing/Wasted money and time, Category 3 - Addiction and Depression. A very large majority of 86% said that “losing/wasted money and time” was their most negative experience while 7% said there was “no negative effect” and another 7% said that their participation in mobile sports betting led to “addiction/depression”. It is not a surprise that most people said that “Losing/Wasted money and time” was the most negative experience that they had, since this is a major impact that mobile sports betting has on many people considering the fact that money is being bet on at a risk and there are high likelihoods in many cases that all the money will not be returned due to losses. It is a good thing that “addiction/depression” has such a small percentage because it shows that most participants are using mobile sports betting responsibly and with care but 7% still is a concerning statistic and it would be good if this percentage was a bit lower. Being that this is a new activity, it will still take some time for people to get used to it and to see percentages of problem rates drop.

Chapter 6

Implications/Discussion

Overall, this study and its results have shown that mobile sports betting is a very prevalent activity on a college campus such as Penn State University. Among those surveyed there was a very high amount of people who had either participated in or were aware of mobile sports betting. The results of the study also showed that there are many strong motivating factors that lead students to participate in mobile sports betting including, participation by others that they know, the positive outcomes of winning and the way that they can bond over it with friends. When it comes to the affect that mobile sports betting has on relationships and studies, the results showed overall that although extremely popular, that this activity is a hobby for most and not something that most are experiencing addiction with or any types of behavioral problems with. As discussed in the question result analysis, these questions were open ended and similar words and descriptions may have different meanings to different people, so we can't always trust peoples' responses fully and we must assume that some results may be slightly skewed due to the different ways that people interpret questions and their understanding and use of words. The best example of this is in the question about addiction and problems with mobile sports betting. Many people don't like to admit that they are experiencing a problem and will try to underestimate it. This is not to say that all people do this or even that most of the participants in this study did this, but we have to consider that there was a small faction of people who somewhat fibbed when it came to answering more difficult questions that may have made them have to think about a problem more than some others. Because of this we can assume that there are probably slightly higher numbers of students who have experienced some level of problem gaming then we saw in the results of the study, but overall, from this study we can see that the majority are not

experiencing problem gaming. What the results of this study show the most compared to past studies, is that mobile sports betting is becoming more a part of our culture and not as much of a problematic disruption. The study also shows the mobile sports betting is something that brings people together. Based on the results to question twelve in particular we see that 27% responded that some of their most positive experiences from mobile sports betting include “Memories/Time with friends/Sense of Community/More interest in sports” This makes sense because sports are something that brings people together, so we could infer that mobile sports betting would have these same effects. After coming out of the COVID pandemic over the past couple of years, it is very important that we find things that bring us together in order to rebuild social relationships that were lost during the time when we were all apart, and mobile sports betting is something that can certainly achieve this especially among college students.

There was no formal selection process and no specific groups that were chosen in advance to participate in this study, and the principal researcher did not pick certain people over others for this study based on previous participation in mobile sports betting or any other factors. What the results show is how even though the participants were selected unsystematically, there are such a large majority of students who have participated or if not at least are very aware of mobile sports betting. Although the results were satisfying in that many people had participated in and were aware of mobile sports betting, looking back there could have been more detail put into the question creation process. The questions and the way that they were presented did not yield the best quality responses and the recruitment process, survey, and the effort on the part of the participants all could have been better.

Although the study wasn't perfect the results are important because they show how mobile sports betting is rapidly expanding on college campuses. What this study has concluded is that

mobile sports betting has grown to be a major part of our society especially for college aged people. Just like other new innovations that have come out, at first, they are usually not understood, and many people are sometimes afraid of them, but after time people get used to these things and learn to accept them. It is shown from this study that mobile sports betting has become a part of our society at this point that is not participated in by all, but that is widely accepted by all.

- **Limitations**

Although this study had many good outcomes, there were several limitations in the research process. The main limitation was that this study was conducted on a single college campus and wasn't conducted across different college campuses, which would have diversified the results and made the sample much more varied. Penn State University is a large northeastern school with a largely high-income Caucasian population in a rural/suburban area and being able to take this study at another university that was different than Penn State, possibly one in an urban and highly populated area along with taking the study at Penn State would have given the study much better results to compare and analyze.

Another limitation of this study was that it was not done in a formal setting and time was quite limited. This study did not have a formal recruitment process and participants were not recruited in advance through any type of selection process or lottery. The recruitment process mainly consisted of a principal researcher speaking to classes after getting permission or sitting in a public gathering space on campus and asking students to participate. Although this recruitment process was quick and easy, it made the results of the study less useful since the time and attention put into the survey by participants was limited compared to if there had been a

formal recruitment process and if students had been selected and taken the survey with much more attention and focus.

A final limitation was that of the questions themselves. The questions asked in this study were a bit vague and didn't ask students for the amount of detail that was needed to get better quality data. Many of the questions where a longer response was expected simply became yes or no questions to several participants which was unfortunate since this was somewhat of a lost opportunity. The questions also would have worked better as multiple choice instead of open ended, and although it would have limited freedom in responses it would have made the data more consistent. The original idea for the study was that participants would have the opportunity to write their own specific detailed response, but with the way that the survey was given, that amount of detail didn't come to fruition in most participants' responses unfortunately, so having open ended led to many lost responses and wasted opportunities for more detail.

Chapter 7

Future Research

It is the hope that this study will lead to future research on the topic of mobile sports betting as it relates to college students, and if future research was to be conducted on this topic some recommendations would be for the question quality to be improved. The questions were weak in some respects and didn't get all the information that was needed out of the participants in some cases. Something else that could be improved is the recruitment process. The recruitment process should have been more thorough in this study, and participants should have been asked some pre questions before taking the survey that would have weeded out those who were not a good match for the study. The surveys should have also been given in an environment where participants could focus their full attention on them and where they were guaranteed to complete it.

The hope is that this study will open the door to more interest in this activity and its popularity among so many and hopefully more research into this topic overall. Some specific research topics that would be interesting to see come out of this study would be studies focusing on the normalization of betting practices and the social bonds that mobile sports betting has created not only among college students but among all people.

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ACADEMIC VITA

Zackary Kisciras

OBJECTIVE

To use my many years of hospitality experience to find a job and be successful in this fast-growing industry.

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University

School of Hospitality Management – Schreyer Honors College

Pursuing BS in Hospitality Administration/Management, Minor in Entrepreneurship, and Innovation.

Expected Graduation - December 2023 - [REDACTED]

EXPERIENCE

Food and Beverage Intern & Assistant Chef

Tomasello Winery – Cranford NJ.

May 2021 Present
(Seasonal)

- Worked with executive chef to prepare kitchen for service
- Created new food presentations and menu items
- Conducted daily food inventory and food safety checks in accordance with health guidelines
- Inspected kitchen equipment for proper operation and cleanliness on a daily basis

Food and Beverage Intern

Baltusrol Golf Club – Springfield NJ.

July 2020 - Feb 2021
(Seasonal)

- Prepared and cleaned dining room before and after service
- Bussed and cleared tables
- Assisted servers with tables
- Worked golf outings and managed concessions on the golf course

eCommerce Stockroom Associate

Penn State Berkey Creamery – University Park PA

Aug 2019 - Present
(School Year)

- Packed dairy shipments that shipped throughout the US
- Pulled and organized orders for shipment
- Managed and responded to customer issues and complaints
- Obtained a certification to operate a university vehicle

Food Service Associate

Jenkinson's South Inc. – Point Pleasant NJ

March 2016 – Present
(Seasonal)

- Managed an extremely busy boardwalk operation on a weekly basis
- Worked in an extremely fast paced environment
- Operated and gained valuable experience with POS systems
- Gained experience in short order cooking, stocking, and inventory

LEADERSHIP & INVOLVEMENT

- Penn State Hotel and Restaurant Society Board Member (Treasurer) (Spring 2022 – Fall 2022)
- THON Penn State IFC Panhellenic Dance Marathon (Ops Committee and Supply Master) (Fall 2021-Spring 2023)
- Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church (Mountainside NJ) Volunteer
- Penn State Catholic Campus Ministries Volunteer
- Golf Tournament Volunteer (Supply Distribution and Guest Services) PGA, PGA Tour, USGA

SKILLS

- Service Industry
- Food Service
- Large Event Operations

CERTIFICATIONS

ServSafe Certification
CHIA Certification
Ramp Training Certification