The Moderating Role of Technology Perceptions on the Relationship Between Sports Gambling Perceptions and Sports Gambling Behaviors

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Sports gambling has significant potential as a revenue driver for sport properties (Dwyer & Weiner, 2018). As a newly popular genre of sport gambling, Daily Fantasy Sports (DFS) has been a popular domain for gambling research due to its low-commitment, quick payout structure (Dwyer & Weiner, 2018). This work highlighted the antecedents of DFS participation, many of which were similar to those of sports gambling. Examples include impulsivity (Dwyer, Drayer, & Shapiro, 2019a), extrinsic motivation (Drayer, Dwyer, & Shapiro, 2019), intensity, competitiveness, locus of control, risk preference (Dwyer, Drayer, & Shapiro, 2019b), team identification, and viewership (Karg & McDonald, 2011).

However, this work has not explored how technology influences these relationships. Technology has enabled alternate modes of sport consumption and has been instrumental for the enrichment of fandom (Kim & Ko, 2019). Thus, scholarship in sport gambling would benefit from understanding how gamblers’ relationship with technology affects their gambling behavior.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) attempts to explain people’s intention to adopt a new technology (Davis et al., 1989). It is built on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), which states that one’s attitude regarding a behavior influences their intention to carry out that behavior, which is deterministic of actual behavior. Thus, it is posited that:

H1: Perceptions of sport gambling will positively influence sport gambling behavior

Technology has altered the way consumers interact with sectors including online retail (Vijayasarathy, 2004), banking (Akturan & Tezcan, 2012), and many others. Thus, the analysis posits that perceptions of technology can modify the relationship in H1. To assess this, three technology perceptions are utilized: (1) importance of technology to sport consumption (Importance), (2) positive feelings about technology’s role in society (Positivity), and (3) anxiety in the absence of technology (Dependence). Thus, H2 is provided below:

H2: The relationship described in H1 will be positively moderated by Importance (H2a), Positivity (H2b), and Dependence (H2c)

The analysis utilized a sample of 4,132 mobile sport application users, who were asked demographic, psychometric, and behavioral variables. The binary outcome was a single item asking whether the respondent currently places wagers on game outcomes. The independent variable was measured using a seven-item scale of sport gambling perceptions adapted from Voss et al (2011). The moderators were each three-item scales adapted from Rosen et al. (2013). Following prior work, the model included several demographic control variables.

Initial findings from the logistic regression reveal support for H1 - gambling amenableness increased the likelihood of gambling behavior \( (B = 1.33; \ z=27.19; p<.001) \). H2 was partially supported, as Dependence was the only moderator that generated a significant interaction \( (B=.124; \ z=3.43; p=.001) \). This finding is relevant because problem gamblers are typically impulsive (Dwyer et al., 2019), and technology provides a constant, easy-to-use access point to gambling behaviors. This finding can inform the discussion of problem gambling (Drayer et al., 2019), because Dependence may be an antecedent to problem gambling or an outcome of increased gambling behavior.

The presentation will discuss the implications for sport properties, who are incorporating gambling into their digital product portfolios.