

The Impact of Gambling Behavior on Social Relationships Among College Students

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has increased access to various online activities, including online gambling, which has become increasingly prevalent among university students. This study aims to examine the influence of gambling behavior on students' social relationships. The research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method, with data analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to 30 student respondents who had engaged in gambling activities, using a stratified sampling technique. The instrument used was the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) to measure gambling behavior, along with social relationship indicators covering social interaction, communication, and involvement in the social environment. The results showed that the average SOGS score of respondents was 8.667, which exceeds the threshold for problematic gambling. A total of 73.3% of respondents were categorized as probable pathological gamblers, 23.3% as having some problems, and 3.3% as having no problems. Overall, 96.7% of respondents experienced gambling-related issues at varying levels of severity. These findings indicate that gambling behavior has a negative impact on students' social relationships, as reflected in decreased quality of social interactions, the emergence of interpersonal conflicts, and a tendency toward social isolation. This study highlights the importance of intervention through guidance and counseling services, both preventive and curative, to help students manage gambling behavior and improve their social relationships and psychosocial well-being.

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Introduction

Advances in digital technology have brought about significant changes in various aspects of society, including behavioral patterns and recreational activities. The increasing accessibility of the internet via smartphones has fueled the rapid growth of various digital services, one of which is online gambling. Gambling activities, which were previously limited to specific locations, can now be widely accessed via digital platforms anytime and anywhere. This ease of access has led to the increasing prevalence of online gambling across various demographics, including among college students a group of highly active internet users (Nanda, Anggraini, & Aslami, 2025).

As a young generation in the transitional phase toward adulthood, students possess a high level of curiosity and a tendency to try new things. According to Zhu (2024), students are a group particularly vulnerable to various risky behaviors in the digital age due to their high intensity of internet use. This situation makes students more susceptible to exposure to various digital activities, including online gambling.

Gambling is essentially the act of risking something of value in the hope of gaining an immediate profit through a game whose outcome depends on luck. Although some people view this activity as entertainment, gambling has the potential to cause various negative consequences if done excessively. From a sociological perspective, gambling behavior is often categorized as a form of social pathology because it can cause various problems for both individuals and their surrounding communities (Praditya & Iqbal, 2023).

The phenomenon of online gambling in Indonesia also reveals alarming figures. Data from the Financial Transaction Reporting and Analysis Center indicates that the value of online gambling transactions in Indonesia in 2024 reached approximately Rp359 trillion. Although this figure decreased to around Rp155 trillion in 2025, the amount still demonstrates that online gambling remains a serious social issue in society. The agency also notes that millions of Indonesians are still

engaged in online gambling activities through various digital platforms. This situation indicates that online gambling has evolved into a widespread social phenomenon with the potential to impact various aspects of people's lives, including the social lives of young people such as college students.

The phenomenon of online gambling among college students is a serious concern because it not only impacts their economic or academic well-being but also affects their social lives. Nayottama (2024) explains that students' involvement in online gambling can affect their social relationships, such as reduced interaction with friends, the emergence of conflicts in friendships or family relationships, and a tendency to withdraw from social circles due to financial or psychological pressure.

Additionally, involvement in gambling can trigger various psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, and addiction. Individuals experiencing gambling addiction tend to have a strong urge to keep playing despite being aware of the negative consequences. This condition can cause individuals to focus more on gambling activities rather than healthy social interactions, thereby disrupting their social relationships with those around them (Zhu, 2024). The social impacts of gambling are not only felt by those directly involved but can also affect the quality of students' interpersonal relationships. Behavioral changes such as frequently borrowing money from friends, lying about financial circumstances, and neglecting academic responsibilities can lead to conflicts and erode trust within social relationships (Nayottama, 2024).

Healthy social relationships are a crucial aspect of college students' lives, as they play a role in supporting their psychological and academic development, as well as their emotional well-being. However, when students engage in excessive gambling behavior, these social relationships are at risk of being disrupted, which can negatively impact the quality of their social lives (Praditya & Iqbal, 2023). Given this phenomenon, gambling behavior among students warrants attention because its impact is not only individual but also social. Therefore, research on the influence of gambling behavior on social relationships among students is important. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how students' involvement in gambling affects their social relationships.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. A survey method is a research activity conducted by collecting data directly from respondents via a questionnaire to obtain information relevant to the issue under study. In this study, the data collected consists of numerical values that are then analyzed to determine the influence of gambling behavior on social relationships among college students. The survey method is used to collect, measure, and analyze data from a number of respondents representing a specific population. The data collected in this study includes information regarding gambling behavior and the state of students' social relationships. Through this method, the study can obtain a clear picture of the relationship between the two variables under investigation and determine the extent to which gambling behavior influences students' social relationships.

In this study, data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to student respondents. The research instrument was designed based on indicators of gambling behavior, such as the frequency and intensity of gambling, as well as indicators of social relationships, including social interaction, communication with peers, and involvement in social environments. By using this instrument, it is hoped that the data obtained will accurately reflect the actual conditions experienced by the respondents.

The population in this study consists of all students who have ever engaged in any form of gambling activity. The sample size for this study is 30 respondents, with the inclusion criterion being students who have ever participated in or been involved in gambling activities. Thus, the respondents who completed the questionnaire are individuals with direct experience related to the variables under study, ensuring that the data collected is more relevant to the research objectives. The sampling technique used is stratified sampling, which involves dividing the population into several groups based on specific characteristics, then randomly selecting samples from each of these groups to ensure the data obtained is more representative.

The stages of this study involve several steps. The first stage is problem identification, which involves determining the focus of the study regarding the influence of gambling behavior on students' social relationships. The second stage is the development of a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire. The third stage is the distribution of the questionnaire to eligible respondents, namely students who have gambled. The fourth stage is the processing and analysis of data using statistical techniques, both descriptive to characterize the data and inferential to determine the relationships

and influences between variables. The final stage is drawing conclusions based on the results of the analysis conducted.

Result and Discussion

A. Description of the Research Subjects

This study aims to examine the patterns of gambling behavior among college students using the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) developed by Lesieur and Blume (1987). Data collection was conducted through the distribution of an online questionnaire using Google Forms. All respondents were college students who reported having been involved in or engaged in gambling activities of any kind. A total of 30 respondents were successfully recruited for this study. Based on demographic data, the respondents in this study were predominantly male students. The gender distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Gender

No	Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Boy	25	83.3%
2	Girl	5	16.7%
	Total	30	100%

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were male, totaling 25 individuals (83.3%), while there were 5 female respondents (16.7%). All 30 respondents were individuals who had previously been engaged in gambling activities, thus meeting the study's inclusion criteria.

B. Result of Gambling Behavior Assessments

1. Descriptive Statistics of SOGS Scores

After scoring was performed in accordance with the SOGS guidelines, the total scores for each respondent were obtained. Descriptive statistics for the SOGS scores of all respondents are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Total SOGS Score

Descriptive Statistics	Value
Number of Respondents (N)	30
Mean (Average Score)	8.667
Median	7.000
Standard Deviation (SD)	4.992
Minimum Score	1
Maximum Score	19
Range	18

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Based on Table 2, the mean SOGS score for all respondents was 8.667 (SD = 4.992). This mean score is substantially above the threshold for the problem gambling category established by the SOGS instrument, which is a score of ≥ 5 for the "probable pathological gambler" category. The minimum score obtained was 1, while the maximum score reached 19 out of a possible maximum total score of 20. The median value of 7.000 indicates that half of the respondents had SOGS scores above 7, suggesting that problem gambling behavior is widespread among the respondents in this study.

2. Categorization of Gambling Behavior Levels

Based on the SOGS interpretation guidelines (Lesieur & Blume, 1987), each respondent's total score was categorized into three groups: (1) No Problem for scores of 0–2; (2) Some Problem for scores of 3–4; and (3) Probable Pathological Gambler for scores of ≥ 5 . The distribution of respondents' gambling behavior levels is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Distribution of Gambling Behavior Levels Based on SOGS Scores

No	Category	Score Range	n	%	Notes
1	No Problem	0 – 2	1	3.3%	
2	Some Problem	3 – 4	7	23.3%	
3	Probable Pathological Gambler	≥ 5	22	73.3%	Majority of respondents
	Total	-	30	100%	

Based on Table 3, the distribution of respondents' categorization shows that the majority—22 respondents (73.3%)—fall into the "Probable Pathological Gambler" category with a score of ≥ 5 . Seven respondents (23.3%) fall into the "Some Problem" category with a score range of 3–4, indicating early signs of problematic gambling behavior. Only 1 respondent (3.3%) was classified in the "No Problem" category with a score below 3. Overall, the results of the SOGS assessment indicate that of the 30 students who had engaged in gambling activities, 29 respondents (96.7%) experienced gambling problems of varying severity, with the largest proportion—73.3%—classified as probable pathological gamblers.

The results of the above study indicate that gambling behavior among college students is at an alarming level and has the potential to significantly impact the quality of their social relationships. Based on descriptive analysis, the mean SOGS score was 8.667 with a standard deviation of 4.992. This value is clearly above the threshold for the problematic gambling category (≥ 5), indicating that, in general, the respondents in this study have reached a level of unhealthy gambling behavior. The median of 7.000 further reinforces this finding, as it shows that half of the respondents have relatively high scores, even approaching the pathological category.

These high mean and median values indicate that gambling behavior among college students is not merely a recreational activity but has evolved into a risky and repetitive behavior. The fairly wide score range (1–19) also indicates variations in severity, but the dominance of high scores suggests that the majority of respondents are experiencing serious gambling-related problems. This variation demonstrates that, despite differences in intensity, a tendency toward problematic behavior remains a common pattern within the study group.

Furthermore, the categorization results show that 73.3% of respondents fall into the "probable pathological gambler" category, meaning they show strong indications of gambling addiction. This group is typically characterized by a loss of control over gambling behavior, an irresistible urge to gamble, and a tendency to continue gambling despite experiencing losses. A total of 23.3% of respondents fell into the "some problem" category, indicating early symptoms such as increased gambling frequency, uncontrolled spending, and the emergence of social conflicts. Meanwhile, only 3.3% of respondents were classified as having no problem. Thus, overall, 96.7% of respondents experienced gambling problems of varying severity.

These findings have strong implications for students' social relationships. High levels of gambling behavior tend to disrupt social interaction patterns, whether in the context of friendships, family, or the academic environment. Students involved in problem gambling often experience a decline in the quality of their interpersonal communication. They tend to be more withdrawn, defensive, or even manipulative in their interactions, especially when trying to hide their gambling activities. This situation can erode the trust of those around them, which is the primary foundation of healthy social relationships.

In addition, gambling behavior also has the potential to cause social conflict. Conflicts may arise due to financial issues, such as borrowing money from friends without the ability to repay it, or using funds that should be allocated for academic needs. In the long term, this situation can damage

friendships and create a negative stigma against the individual in question. Students known to have a gambling habit risk being shunned by their social circle, thereby narrowing their social network.

Another equally important impact is the emergence of a tendency toward social isolation. Individuals suffering from gambling addiction often withdraw from their social circles due to feelings of guilt, shame, or psychological pressure resulting from their losses. This isolation can exacerbate psychological conditions, such as increasing stress, anxiety, and even depression. In this context, social relationships—which should serve as a source of support—become disrupted or even disappear entirely. In the lives of college students, social relationships play a crucial role as a source of emotional, academic, and social support. When social relationships are disrupted, students lose one of the primary protective factors in coping with academic pressures and daily life. This can lead to a decline in academic motivation, engagement, and overall psychological well-being. Thus, gambling behavior affects not only individual aspects but also students' social and academic functioning.

Theoretically, these findings align with the psychosocial perspective, which posits that addictive behaviors including gambling tend to disrupt an individual's social functioning. Dependence on certain activities can lead individuals to neglect their social roles, reduce meaningful interactions, and experience dysfunction in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the higher the level of involvement in gambling, the greater the potential for disruptions in social relationships.

Based on the overall research findings, it can be concluded that there is a strong tendency for high levels of gambling behavior to negatively impact students' social relationships. The high proportion of respondents falling into the problem gambling category highlights the urgency of serious intervention. Therefore, comprehensive interventions are needed, particularly through guidance and counseling services at universities. Possible approaches include individual counseling to address addictive behavior, group counseling to enhance social support, and preventive education programs to raise students' awareness of the risks of gambling. With appropriate interventions, it is hoped that students will be able to control their gambling behavior, improve the quality of their social relationships, and enhance their overall psychosocial well-being.


Conclusion

Prior to Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that gambling behavior among college students is at a high level and tends to be problematic. This is indicated by the average South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) score of 8.667, which is above the threshold for problem gambling, as well as the fact that the majority of respondents fall into the category of probable pathological gamblers. Overall, 96.7% of respondents experienced gambling problems of varying severity. High levels of gambling behavior have been shown to have a negative impact on students' social relationships. These impacts include a decline in the quality of social interactions, disrupted communication with friends and family, the emergence of interpersonal conflicts, and a tendency toward social isolation. Furthermore, gambling behavior also has the potential to cause psychological problems that further worsen an individual's social condition.

Thus, the higher the level of student involvement in gambling, the greater the disruption to their social relationships. Therefore, serious intervention is needed through guidance and counseling services, both preventive and curative, to help students control their gambling behavior and improve the quality of their social relationships and psychosocial well-being.

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