



## SPORTS BETTING AND ADVERTISING: A STUDY OF THEIR INFLUENCE ON YOUNG SPANIARDS

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### KEYWORDS

*Advertising*  
*Sports betting*  
*Teenagers*  
*Influence*  
*Gambling*

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this paper is to analyse the advertising strategies used by four betting companies (Bet365, William Hill, Codere and Sportium) to promote this type of activity and to study their level of influence among young audiences. The tool used for this research was the content analysis of the advertising messages of these four brands and their main strategies applied in television and digital media. On the other hand, we analysed the behaviour of young audiences when confronted with this type of advertising, with the aim of verifying the effectiveness and level of influence when making sports bets.*

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Received: 07/ 01 / 2024

Accepted: 02/ 03 / 2024

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the world of sports betting has experienced significant growth, from a one-off activity to a daily and normalised activity for many. According to the data collected in the Yearbook of Gambling in Spain in 2022, published by the Gaming Business Council, in 2021 €9,134 million was spent on real gambling (amount played minus winnings). Spending on face-to-face entertainment gaming fell by almost 20% compared to 2019, and online gaming fell compared to 2020, but continued the growth trend of recent years, growing by 12.0% compared to 2019. Gambling was one of the economic activities that suffered the greatest decline due to the impact of COVID19 and is one of the slowest to recover in all downturns, especially in the entertainment sector. Nevertheless, sports betting is a market that has continued to grow in our country, and all indications are that it will continue to grow, as it has not yet reached the point of maturity of its market and continues to attract new customers, both face-to-face and digital. According to the latest report on the online gaming sector by the Directorate General for the Regulation of Gaming, published in 2021, the online gaming sector had a gaming margin of €749 million in 2019, an increase of 7.15% compared to 2018. Specifically, the sector with the highest growth was sports betting. And in terms of the profile of online gamblers, 84.35% of people who play or bet via this non-face-to-face format in Spain are aged between 18 and 45, with a higher proportion of men (83.52%) than women (16.48%) (Sales Triguero & Cloquell Lozano, 2021).

These data reflect the interest that exists today in sports betting, not only in Spain, but also worldwide. This trend has been fuelled to a large extent by the advertising and promotional activities carried out by the various sports betting companies in order to make themselves known and grow exponentially. This activity, which a priori seems harmless, can cause serious problems in terms of gambling addiction for certain sectors of the population, especially young people, who are more sensitive to this type of message issued by gambling companies (Derevensky & Gilbeau, 2015).

Spain is currently experiencing a moment of real expansion of gambling as an economic and social activity (Jiménez et al., 2013), especially since the emergence and development of new forms of online gambling. The economic context of sports betting has grown spectacularly in relation to its potential to generate resources, both for the government and for the various sports organisations associated with it. Without forgetting some of the negative aspects of sports betting, the main reason for this increase in demand lies in the complementary nature of sports consumption and participation in sports betting, a link that is even more pronounced in countries such as Spain, where football is a social phenomenon as well as a sporting one (Forrest & Simmons, 2003).

Advertising by bookmakers has increased exponentially in recent years, both in traditional media and especially in digital media (Carbonell & Montiel, 2013). It is now difficult not to see or hear these messages on television, in the press, on the radio, on the internet and, above all, at sporting events in the form of sponsorship. The problem with this type of advertising is the lack of regulation, and sports betting brands have not been well managed from the beginning, they have not had any type of control or restriction as in the case of alcohol and tobacco, as they are also products and services that can cause health problems (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002). Gambling advertising is one of the factors that interacts with others in the development of gambling and can generate addictions and, therefore, problems related to mental health (Binde, 2014). In this sense, the fact that gambling has become another form of entertainment and leisure among minors and is one of the most popular activities among this group, like playing sports, listening to music and watching films (Wiebe & Falkowsky-Ham, 2003), is a worrying reality, as adolescents are more vulnerable to the negative consequences of gambling than adults (Volberg et al., 2010).

In this context, and in view of the near future growth of this activity, a new, stricter regulation of advertising is essential, defining in detail the scope of action of the advertisements broadcast by these companies in relation to gambling, with the aim of protecting the most vulnerable sectors of the population, especially the young. The main objective of this research is to analyse the context of the promotion of sports betting among young people by studying, on the one hand, the type of advertising messages used by the advertising brands in this sector and their main strategies. On the other hand, to understand how these messages influence the behaviour of young Spaniards, in order to identify the stimuli that could lead an individual to suffer from gambling problems.

### **1.1. Influence of Advertising on Pathological Gambling Generated by Sports Betting**

At this point it is necessary to understand what pathological gambling is, what the phenomenon known as pathological gambling is and how this health problem can be generated in a person. Pathological gambling is a leisure activity in which, at least initially, bets are placed and chance is involved in some way (Domínguez, 2007). It involves a loss of control, emotional dependence, tolerance and serious interference in daily life, with difficulties on the part of the affected person in everyday activities, such as money management, debts and lying, without yet showing the content of pathological gambling (Echeburúa et al., 2014). In this sense, we can say that a gambling activity has become addictive or pathological when psychological dependence and harmful effects appear. This is why we speak of behavioural addiction, similar to addiction to certain substances (Sales Triguero & Cloquell Lozano, 2021).

Gambling and gambling advertising is one of the factors that interact with others in the development of gambling as a problem (Binde, 2014). Among the social variables that influence gambling addiction, the following are particularly important (Carpio, 2009): peer pressure, advertising pressure, high social permissiveness towards gambling, easy access to gambling, affordable bets, short time between bet and outcome, and devices that facilitate the illusion of control. When these two controversial issues - advertising and gambling - come together, it is not surprising that gambling advertising is no less controversial. The negative view is that gambling advertising is largely misleading, unethical and harmful to society because it encourages many people, including young people, to start gambling and to gamble excessively. It is therefore necessary to restrict this type of advertising, as it encourages participation in gambling without conscious control by the user, leading to negative health consequences. Proof of this is that less than two years after its legalisation in Spain, gambling (especially online gambling) is already the second most common cause of pathological gambling among patients undergoing treatment (Petry, 2006; Ofcom, 2013).

Gambling in the online environment is a very popular activity among adolescents (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012). In this sense, online gambling has become one of the most popular forms of gambling among young people. One of the factors influencing this phenomenon is the explosion of information and communication technologies (ICT) in contemporary society (Megías, 2020). Teenagers' leisure activities include many different types of online games, the success and importance of which have become widespread in recent years (Kopp, 2015). Among them, gambling is prominent (Splevins et al., 2010). For many children, gambling is a means of escaping parental control and maintaining an equal relationship with other adolescents (Muñoz, 2008). Adolescence is a developmental stage in which people are particularly vulnerable (Domínguez, 2007). Adolescents are more vulnerable to the negative consequences of gambling than adults, and prevalence rates are particularly high compared with adults (Valentine 2008). In Spain, where gambling is less socially accepted than in other countries, the percentage of children and adolescents aged 12-20 who gamble on the internet is around 18% (Carbonell & Montiel, 2013).

Adolescents engage in online gambling for a variety of reasons, such as forgetting problems, winning, compensating for the lack of social relationships, and the illusion of control (CIA, 2017). Young people constitute a highly vulnerable and at-risk population when it comes to gambling (Derevensky & Gilbeau, 2015). Their vulnerability to developing addictive behaviours is increased by the early initiation of gambling, the proliferation of sports betting shops and the inclusion of betting advertisements in live sports events broadcast through sponsorship (Palomar, 2013). Rather than promoting the initiation of gambling among non-gamblers, these advertisements appear to serve the function of maintaining and reinforcing existing gambling habits, beliefs and behaviours (Gupta & Derevensky, 2008). Pathological gambling is growing more than ever because the fabric surrounding the sector has managed to change the context of gambling and seduce young people by making this activity a social fad and social networks collaborate by creating communities (Ordóñez, 2018).

## **2. Methodology**

The aim of this study is to examine whether the strategies used in sports betting advertising campaigns, both in traditional and digital media, have an impact on the consumption of this type of service by young people. To this end, we will analyse the advertising messages of four of the most

important international and national sports betting companies (Bet365, William Hill, Sportium and Codere).

The main objective is to study the content of the messages and the means used in order to determine which elements influence the population to gamble, without taking into account the problems that can arise from the abuse of this activity. We start from the hypothesis that the increase in advertising for bookmakers in the media, especially on television and in digital media, has led to an increase in gambling addiction among the young population, based on the premise of making quick and easy money, as promoted by these messages.

The methodology used consists of two phases. The first phase is content analysis, a research technique that aims to be objective, systematic and quantitative. It is objective because the procedures can be used by other researchers, systematic because it follows research guidelines and quantitative in the sense that the information can be coded numerically. What distinguishes it from other techniques is that it inherently combines the observation and production of data with their subsequent interpretation and analysis (Losada & López, 2003).

The content analysis will be quantitative-qualitative in nature. Quantitative research is based on the explanatory paradigm, which prefers to use quantifiable information to describe or attempt to explain phenomena through classificatory elements, thus obtaining an overall view (Castro et al., 2015). On the other hand, the qualitative method, which is more interpretative and subjective in nature, makes it possible to construct generalisations that allow us to understand the common aspects of many people in the process of appropriating the social and cultural reality in which they develop their existence. Qualitative content analysis should not be limited to interpreting the manifest content of the material analysed, but should also delve into its latent content and the social context in which the message is developed (Yin, 2009).

In the case of this project, although there is a lot of quantitative work, since measurable and objective variables are analysed, there are also traces of a qualitative study, since a series of interpretative variables are analysed, where the messages that can incite action are studied. This content analysis is carried out by means of tables containing a series of variables that examine the message used in each of the audiovisual pieces in the selected sample. These variables are the following: use of famous characters, use of colour, promotional activators (hooks) and responsible gambling. The first of these allows us to find out whether the sports betting advertisements make use of the presence of a famous person, with national or international weight, who could even be consolidated as an important figure in the configuration of public opinion or a current mass leader, due to their charisma, work, repercussions, etc. In many cases, the use of this type of variable conveys a positive message about what is being communicated, reinforcing the activity to be promoted by generating social aspirations in relation to this celebrity. The second variable, related to colour, influences the perception of the ad in the eyes of the viewer. The combination of bright and dynamic colours in the piece makes the message more attractive, thus increasing attention to it. Regarding the variable of promotional activators (hooks), we refer to those messages that attract attention through the discourse of the final benefit or reward and that are characterised by increasing the ease of obtaining the prize. They are not false messages, but they hide an important piece of information that must be taken into account in order to understand the message as a whole, and which is usually presented in small print at the end of the ad and of short duration. Examples are phrases such as "easy money", "welcome bonus of x amount of euros", "free money to bet", etc. In short, messages that attract the recipient by the opportunities they offer and that encourage him to start the activity being promoted. Finally, the "responsible gambling" variable, which is based on informing the recipient of the consequences of misusing this activity and which is part of the corporate social responsibility of companies. In this sense, it will be studied in which part of the advertisement it appears and in what form (written, oral, both ways and when it is not shown).

With regard to the second phase of the methodology, the survey was used, defined as a technique that uses a set of standardised research procedures through which a set of data is collected and analysed from a representative sample of a larger population or universe whose characteristics are to be explored, described, predicted and/or explained (De Rada, 2012). The questionnaire is a quantitative technique that consists of surveying a sample of subjects that is representative of a population. The advantages of this method of data collection are that it allows information to be obtained from almost any group and it facilitates the standardisation of the data, i.e. it can be

computerised and statistically analysed (Castro et al., 2015). The survey was administered via the Internet using the Google Forms platform, and the specific software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used for data mining.

The questionnaire consisted of a total of 17 closed and multiple-choice questions, divided into four thematic blocks. The advantage of this type of questionnaire is that the closed questions require less effort on the part of the respondent and therefore less time to complete, as well as allowing for easy coding and analysis of the data. As far as the content of the questionnaire is concerned, it consists of a first block of three questions to get to know the profile of the respondent and to be able to classify them according to their gender and age, and a third filter question that requires knowledge of the existence of sports betting in order to continue with the survey. The next block consists of four closed multiple-choice questions that address issues related to betting habits. The third block focuses on the influence of brand advertising and consists of six questions. Finally, the last block of four questions is dedicated to the respondents' opinion on the context of sports betting.

The reason for choosing these two research methods is that they are adapted to the objectives to be achieved. In quantitative-qualitative research, the aim is to analyse a series of pieces and, starting from a set of variables that have been previously identified and are the same in all cases, to obtain specific and objective data relating to the problem to which we are trying to respond. Once this more objective part has been covered, the survey moves on to a more qualitative prism. In this case, a series of questions are formulated for the subjects to answer in order to obtain data that explain a series of behaviours related to sports betting advertising.

## ***2.2. Target Population and Sample***

In selecting the sample of case studies, four sports betting companies were chosen. The choice of these four case studies is not a matter of preference, but rather an attempt to open up the range of possibilities as much as possible, covering the most international prism with bookmakers such as Bet365 and William Hill, two of the most important in the betting and gambling market, and also a more national prism with the bookmakers Sportium and Codere, although the four case studies operate both nationally and internationally. Bet365, a UK-based gambling company, has established itself as one of the leading companies in the online gambling sector. William Hill, also based in the UK, is one of the largest in the country and a pioneer in online sports betting. On the other hand, we have the national case of Sportium. This company is made up of the companies CIRSA and the Ladbrokes Coral Group, which is active in face-to-face sports betting in Spain. Finally, in the case of Codere, it is also a Spanish multinational, but it is a reference in the private gambling sector.

The sample of respondents consists of a total of 1857 people aged between 18 and 25. In this study, the sample is made up of 58% males and 42% females. The profile of the sample is mainly made up of students from different levels of education, as the questionnaire was sent out through schools.

## **3. Main results**

### ***3.1. Results of the Content Analysis of Bet365, Sportium and Codere's Advertising Campaigns***

For each of the advertising brands, two advertising campaigns were analysed between 2012 and 2018. With regard to the Bet365 brand, it is worth highlighting the use of celebrities as protagonists in the campaigns: in September 2012 Roberto Álamo and in September 2017 José Coronado, both Spanish and with public relevance in the eyes of the audience. The appearance of these two characters is not left to chance but is a marketing operation designed to make the brand better known through their presence and to improve its image. The values of the celebrities are transferred to Bet365 and the betting activity is perceived in a positive way. As for the colours, they are used to highlight odds in the first ad and specific betting actions in the second. A combination of bold colours that contrast with each other and with the background images is not seen as striking, but rather the same tones are used with darker backgrounds to highlight the messages. In the case of the hooks, it can be seen that they are used in both adverts, but in different ways. In the first case, the space of the ad is fixed, the main character does not change the scene, but what changes is what surrounds him, giving dynamism to the

content, and the hooks appear with the multiple bets and odds that surround the character. It shows in detail the types of bets that can be placed during a sporting event, such as goals, wins, corners and yellow cards.

In the second ad, the promotional trigger is the same, maximised by the mobile phone text of the protagonist, who appears in various scenarios showing the possibility of betting anytime, anywhere. This action is reinforced by the messages that the famous actor addresses directly to the audience: "You can find us anywhere in the world" and "We are everywhere and we see everything". These messages manifest the ease of betting and encourage action. Finally, with regard to the "responsible gambling" variable, one of the most important to take into account for these companies whose business is gambling, we see that in both cases it appears, but for short periods of time and in an unclear way. In the first case, it appears at the end of the ad, at the bottom of the screen, and lasts just over two seconds. This message is accompanied, in the centre of the screen and in a large format, by the campaign's logo, which is more striking for its proportions and dynamism. The second ad is similar, with the difference that the "responsible gambling" variable appears in the middle of the ad, also in the lower part of the screen, with a duration of about four seconds and with images of people celebrating success, making it difficult for the receiver to pay attention to the specific message. In neither case does the celebrity in question convey the information to gamble responsibly.

With regard to the William Hill campaigns corresponding to November 2016 and September 2018, it can be seen that the first variable is not fulfilled, as no famous character appears in either piece. However, there is a greater presence of eye-catching colours to attract attention and which are superimposed to highlight the accompanying messages. Yellow is used to emphasise the main idea of the advertisement, which is the possibility of collecting a bet "whenever you want", a colour and a creative idea that is maintained for almost the entire duration of the piece. When it comes to the payout, other colours are used with great dynamism and effect to make the content even more eye-catching.

In the second ad, blue and intense yellow are combined and superimposed to highlight the messages of the piece, giving each phrase a remarkable visual presence and reinforcing the main message. In terms of activators, two can be identified: The first is "collect now", which alludes to the idea that the advertisement is trying to convey: "collect my bet", which is the claim of this piece. The 'collect' tab appears throughout the ad, accompanied by a voice-over stating that 'with William Hill you can place a bet and collect it whenever you want'. This hook is accompanied by background imagery showing a group of friends in the stands, one of them looking at his mobile phone to see when he will make more money by collecting the bet. In the end, the opposing team scores, and while the crowd is mourning, the individual in question is satisfied because he has managed to close the bet early and collect the money from the bet. In this way, an everyday situation of a group of friends is shown as an example of the reward that can be obtained through the action of betting and in an immediate way. The second hook of the advert appears at the end of the piece when the 'welcome bonus' appears. In a large, brightly coloured format, it states that you will receive up to €150 on your first bet. There are no terms and conditions at this point, but the terms and conditions of the welcome bonus appear throughout the play in a reduced size at the bottom of the play. Reading these terms and conditions is difficult, as the images in the advert and the presentation of the bonus requirements mean that the eye does not linger on this section and cannot read the whole of it.

Finally, in terms of 'responsible gambling', the two adverts are similar in this respect. They both place this information at the end of the advert for three seconds and at the bottom of the screen in a smaller size than the brand name. In neither case is this information quoted to the audience by the narrator, it is only reported visually.

In the case of Codere's March and September 2018 campaigns, both advertisements use celebrities as protagonists, both from television series (Malviviendo) and football players (Real Madrid), both recognised by young audiences as idols that encourage participation in the activity of betting. The presence of players from this football club is due to the fact that it is an official sponsor of the brand. As for the second variable, in the case of Codere, it has nuances. The combinations of these in the audiovisual pieces aim to attract attention by highlighting ideas, characters and promotions, thus provoking greater dynamism and visual rhythm.

As far as the activators are concerned, the use of a song to accompany the image, whose lyrics relate to the reward obtained, reinforces the message to be conveyed. It is also reinforced by the final text of

the piece: "get up to €350 to bet". There is no further information about this hook, only the terms and conditions of this advance are shown on the bottom flap, in a reduced size. In the second campaign, this piece is part of a set of five pieces made by Codere, whose theme of "talent show" was the same for all of them, but in each piece, there was information about a different hook, such as the triple bonus or the payout of the bet.

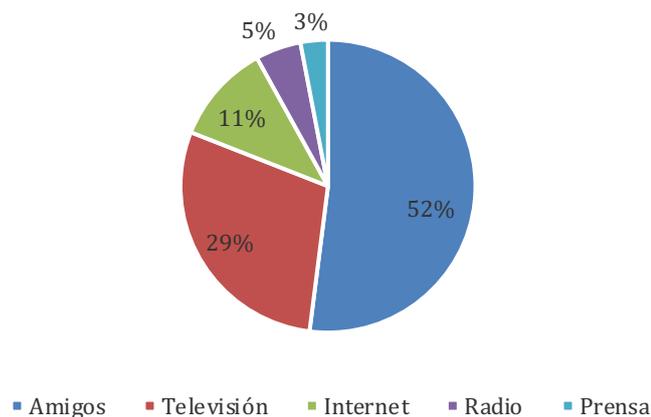
Finally, with regard to the variable "responsible gambling", it can be seen that both spots inform about it in the same format and for the same duration, but both in an inadequate way, since this message appears in a very small size among other types of larger information, which makes it difficult to visualise.

Finally, in the two Sportium pieces from August 2017 and 2018, celebrities are not used as a claim. In these pieces, the brand uses the message to make the recipient feel like the main protagonist of the action. In the first ad, the story told highlights the values of passion, struggle and leadership associated with the Sportium brand. To this end, the bold colours help to reinforce the message as well as the promotional hook. In the second ad, the message is more focused on highlighting the basic characteristics of the brand, using eye-catching colours to encourage the activity of betting. In both pieces, the promotional triggers are very present and in the last part: "We'll double your first deposit up to €200. Bet now! In addition, and unlike the rest of the cases studied, these hooks appear with a summary of the terms and conditions immediately below, albeit in a reduced size. All the activators reinforce the idea of the betting action in an attractive, dynamic and simple way. Finally, the "responsible gambling" hook appears in both ads and in a similar way to the cases already analysed: it also appears at the end, in a reduced size and accompanied by other ideas that distort its reading.

### 3.2. Survey Results

Most respondents (98%) are aware of sports betting and 85% admit to having bet in the past. Of these, 55% have bet sporadically (once a month), 20% say they bet very frequently (twice or more per week), 6% occasionally (once every two weeks) and 4% more frequently (once a week). Of the 15% who have never gambled, 14% say they would be willing to do so at least once. There is therefore a high willingness to gamble even among those who have never gambled. Regarding the medium through which they learned about sports betting, it is worth noting that most of them did so through their friends, followed by television and the Internet, as shown in the following graph:

Figure 1. Main source of sports betting knowledge

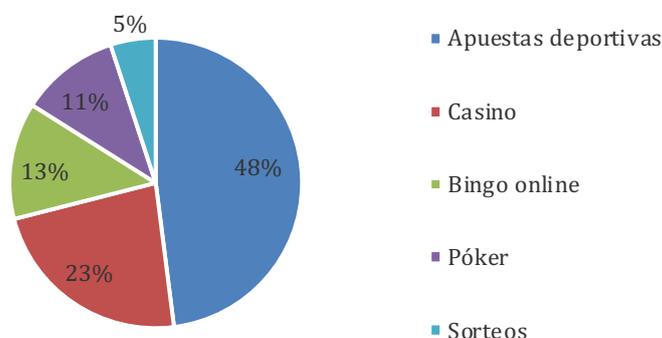


Source: Authors' own elaboration. 2024

The strong influence of friendships on this social group can be observed, as well as the fact that television remains a reference point for young people, despite the fact that they spend a large part of their leisure time on the Internet. The main reason for this is that sports betting is closely linked to the medium of television, as competitions, especially football matches, are broadcast either pay-per-view or free-to-air.

In terms of the type of gambling they are most likely to bet on, sports betting (48%) and casino (23%) are the most commonly cited, followed by online bingo (13%), poker (11%) and competitions (6%). The majority of respondents say that their preferred way of betting, or the way they would be willing to bet, is via their mobile phone (63%) and digital media (32%), with only 5% betting on a physical medium.

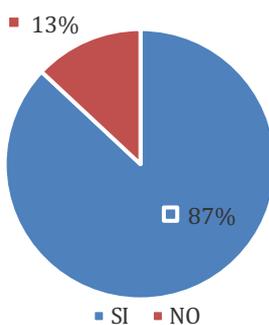
**Figure 2.** Type of game where they tend to bet the most.



Source: Authors' own elaboration. 2024

In terms of the influence of advertising on betting, most respondents said that they had seen a lot of betting advertising compared to previous years (98%), particularly on television (72%) and the internet (26%). Ninety-five per cent of respondents reported an excess of advertising from sports bookmakers. It is interesting to note that the majority of respondents admit to having become interested in betting after having seen betting-related advertising (87%), and only 13% consider that it was not due to any advertising stimulus. Of the brands analysed, Codere is the best known and remembered (43%), followed by Bet365 (38%), Sportium (19%) and finally William Hill (11%).

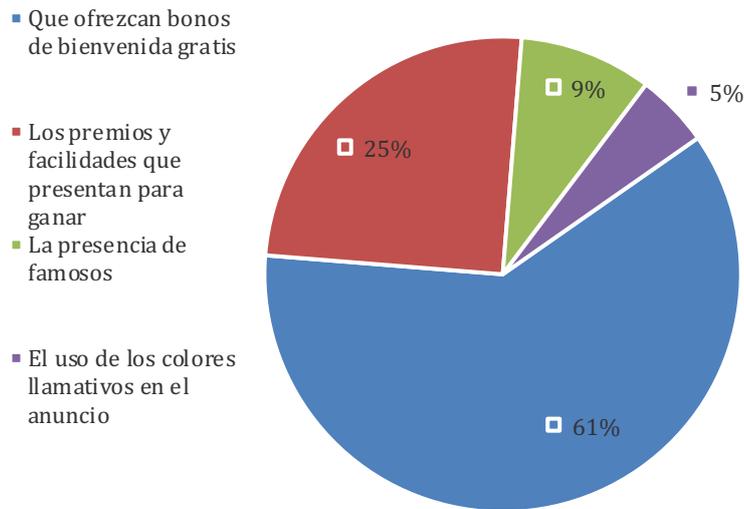
**Figure 3.** After viewing a sports betting advertisement, did you bet or were you interested in betting?



Source: Authors' own elaboration. 2024

Among the advertising elements and techniques that most capture their attention in sportsbook advertising, promotional triggers (such as welcome bonuses) are the most memorable and therefore the most effective in initiating betting activity. Prizes and the facilities offered to obtain them are also effective, while the presence of celebrities and the use of bright colours have much less influence, as can be seen in the following graph:

**Figure 4.** Most effective elements of sports betting advertising



Source: Authors' own elaboration. 2024

With regard to the last variable in the analysis, "responsible gambling", 92% of respondents do not recall any message relating to responsible gambling being mentioned in the advert, and only 8% recall having heard or read about it in the advert. Therefore, this variable goes completely unnoticed by the viewers of the advertisement.

Finally, with regard to the last set of questions aimed at finding out what the respondents think about the situation regarding sports betting, the majority (95%) are aware that the excessive advertising presence of bookmakers in the various media has led to much more betting than in the past, especially among young people, and to a greater addiction to gambling. Respondents are very concerned about this activity as they consider gambling addiction to be just one addiction among others (58%), such as alcohol (29%) and tobacco (13%). The majority (92%) believe that it is necessary to regulate sports betting advertising, as there is more advertising than five years ago.

Finally, when asked about the future of sports betting in the digital medium, most respondents (88%) believe that the number of bets placed in this medium will increase due to its immediacy and ease of use, while only 12% state that there will be no significant changes compared to the current situation.

#### 4. Discussion and Main Conclusions

Firstly, we must point out the limitations of our research, as we are aware of the small number of campaigns analysed and the difficulty of obtaining a large sample when carrying out the surveys. Nevertheless, we believe that the level of response obtained is significant and allows us to understand the complexity of the issue addressed in our study, which we will discuss in more detail in the conclusion below.

The results obtained in this research confirm the initial hypothesis, since on the one hand there is an increase in the advertising of bookmakers in the media, which has led to an increase in gambling addiction among young people. Sports betting advertising has a strong influence on this public and can lead to gambling problems, which is why it is considered essential to strengthen the current advertising regulations.

The data obtained from the qualitative analysis of the advertisements of the four bookmakers (Bet365, William Hill, Sportium and Codere), as well as from the surveys, show that the presence of promotional triggers in the advertisements ("hooks") is the main attraction that influences the behaviour of the audience, as well as the ease of obtaining the prize expressed in the advertising

message. Welcome bonuses, credit-based promotional gifts for first bets and the ease of winning money in a simple way are the most effective techniques in this type of advertising. On the other hand, the presence of celebrities as protagonists is less relevant and therefore less effective. However, along with the use of eye-catching colours, it helps to make the ad more attractive to the recipient.

The greater presence and visibility of advertising in recent years, not only in traditional media (television) but also in digital media, has led to a revival of gambling among the population, especially among young people. As a result, the number of people who gamble has increased compared to a few years ago, as has the number of people who suffer from gambling-related problems. According to the data collected in the survey, most respondents have increased their gambling activity, especially in sports betting, but also in other games such as casino, online bingo, poker and lotteries. The frequency of gambling has also increased, with the majority repeating the activity once they have tried it. The mobile phone is the preferred means of betting among young people, as it is an essential element in their lives and also allows them to place bets easily and instantly.

The respondents acknowledge the existence of a significant increase in the advertising of sports betting and call for the existence of a regulation on sports betting. Therefore, it is necessary to renew the current regulation in force in Spain, which, according to the Official State Gazette, dates back to 2011. Given the increase in gambling addiction among young people (Hernán Ruiz, 2015), stronger regulation is needed, like that of tobacco or alcohol, to limit the excessive amount of advertising in the media and, in turn, for advertising messages to duly inform about the possible consequences of abusing this activity. Responsible gambling recommendations should be part of the social responsibility of sports betting companies, so that at least the recipient has every opportunity to be informed.

Sports betting generates gambling problems, especially among young people, who are more sensitive to this type of stimulus for reasons related to economic dependence, personality development, acceptance in social groups, etc. (Jiménez et al., 2013).

The future of this activity is more difficult to control, which is why there is an urgent need for the competent authorities to impose sufficiently strong regulation, at a level comparable to that of the various European authorities, in order to curb this growth and the gambling problems that more and more people, especially young people, are suffering from.

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