

# MEASURING CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS GAMBLING

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## ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to measure consumer attitudes towards gambling amongst various socio-demographic groups in Port Elizabeth. The study was based on past research and used a modified version of a questionnaire developed by various authors. The sample (N=355) was drawn, using a non-probability sampling technique from English, Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking respondents in the Port Elizabeth Uitenhage area. Fieldwork was carried out by students of Industrial Psychology at the University of Port Elizabeth. Results showed significant differences between socio-demographic groups regarding attitudes towards gambling. Cultural influences deduced from home language and religion seems to influence gambling attitudes in particular. These results have important implications for the gaming industry and welfare organisations.

## OPSOMMING

Die hoof doelstelling van hierdie studie was om verbruikerhoudings ten opsigte van dobbel onder verskeie sosio-demografiese groepe in Port Elizabeth te ondersoek. Die studie is gegrond op vorige navorsing in die veld en maak gebruik van 'n aangepaste vraelys, ontwikkel deur verskeie outeurs. 'n Nie-ewekansige steekproef (N=355) is getrek uit Engels, Afrikaans en Xhosa-sprekende respondente in die Port Elizabeth Uitenhage gebied. Veldwerk is uitgevoer deur Bedryfsielkunde studente van die Universiteit van Port Elizabeth. Bevindinge toon beduidende verskille tussen sosio-demografiese groepe ten opsigte van houdings oor dobbel. Kultuurinvloede afgelei uit taal en godsdiens blyk om dobbelhoudings te beïnvloed. Die resultate het belangrike implikasies vir die dobbelspelbedryf en welsynsorganisasies.

With the proliferation of gambling in South Africa's urban areas, the boom in casino gambling has become a billion Rand industry. This together with the National State Lottery means that more than half of the country's adult population is expected to gamble each week (Koenderman 2000). A recent survey conducted by AC Nielson for Business Day covering 2,488 households, revealed that fifty percent of those surveyed bought lottery tickets while seven percent of adults admitted to frequenting a casino. Only twenty percent of respondents earning more than R8,000 per month bought lottery tickets that supports the assertion by anti-Lotto lobbyists in the USA, that lotteries are a poor man's tax (Minton 2001).

Early research on gambling was primarily damning, concentrating on the negative impact of gambling on the quantity of work accomplished by the labour class (Veblen 1967). More recently, the motives underlying gambling have been studied with many social science disciplines such as sociology, psychoanalytic theory and the interdisciplinary study of play and leisure all contributing (Cotte, 1997). The various hypothesized motives for gambling can be categorized into three general groups, namely, economic, symbolic and hedonic. For economically motivated gamblers, money acts as an incentive. These gamblers value money they expect to win more highly than the money they have already lost. Symbolic motivated gamblers gain satisfaction from the risk element inherent in gambling. These people experience a thrill of taking a risk and gambling provides an escape from personal problems and relieves the boredom of their daily lives. Individuals gambling for hedonic reasons are motivated by pure pleasure seeking or play, novelty seeking, socialization with friends, excitement, self-esteem and positive personal reinforcement (Rousseau 2000).

Contemporary research on experiential consumption suggest that the modern consumer is constantly searching for pleasure leading to more and more unfulfilled wants and hence,

enjoyable frustration (Campbell, 1996). Based on Hirschman's (1984) theory of consumers either being cognitive experience seekers, sensory experience seekers or novelty seekers, one might suggest that recreational gamblers are similarly motivated by the search for new thoughts, new sensory experience, or by the search for any novel situation. Societal assumptions of the value of hard work and self-denial have given way to impulse pursuit of novelty, excitement and change through consumption. Oropesa (1995) suggests that one main reason for hedonic novelty-seeking is that modern progress has reduced many of the risks people experience daily, resulting in consumers' search for novel pleasurable stimulation and excitement. According to Chapple and Nofziger (2000), women interviewed in their study considered Bingo a tool to cure boredom, not simply a gambling activity by which they could win money.

For most experiential consumption, consumer motives would not appear to be economic. Chapple and Nofziger (2000) report that middle-aged women use Bingo playing as an opportunity to gather socially with friends. One woman stated that she and another participant split winnings among themselves because they play only for fun. Cotte (2000) concludes that recreational gambling can be risk-taking, thrill-seeking, frustrating and sometimes boring. People gamble for diverse, and sometimes complex reasons. However, despite attempts by researchers to prioritise gambling motives, most contemporary gambling literature focus on the dangers of compulsive or problem gambling caused by addiction.

## Recreational versus Compulsive gambling

Gambling in its broadest term is used to describe any form of lawful placement of wager or bet on the outcome of an uncertain event. Gambling induces an element of chance where a person risks anything of value in the hope of gaining profit (Henderson 2000).

Recreational gambling is described as harmless recreational fun performed by responsible consumers that does not affect their family or work life, nor does it get them into financial difficulty.

Sun International believes that for the majority of people a visit to the casino is a form of leisure and entertainment (Reinecke, 2000). Sun International's gaming director, Patrick Reinecke (2000) states that in developed societies only three percent of gamblers and potential gamblers are thought to be vulnerable to problem gambling.

Compulsive or problem gambling refers to gambling behaviour that in various degrees is uncontrollable with potential damaging effects on family, social and work life. Experts in the field of excessive gambling or gambling addiction (Orford, 1990, Collins and Barr 2000) agree on the following symptoms of compulsive or pathological gambling. For these individuals gambling are habitual, they are preoccupied with gambling to the extent that it absorbs and precludes all other interests. Compulsive gamblers are always optimistic; they cannot stop when winning, are restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling and often gamble to escape problems. Collins and Barr (2000) conducted a survey among a thousand people in the Western Cape and found that twenty five percent of the sample had dangerously false beliefs about their chances of winning money through gambling. These authors conclude that problem gambling should be treated as a mental disorder because a key feature of its addictive behaviour is that it is damaging, compulsive, obsessive, escapist and delusional.

Henderson (2000) investigated on-line gambling in Australia amongst 220 adults whom were betting on the Internet. The results of a pilot study suggest that on-line gambling may exaggerate the problems associated with pathological gambling by increasing accessibility for compulsive gamblers and introducing a steadily growing at-risk group such as frequent Internet users to this behaviour. The author found that eighty one percent of younger respondents (under 25 years) reported previous gambling behaviour while ninety one percent of the older group did so.

McNeilly and Burke (2000) conducted research amongst elderly consumers and found that active senior gamblers participate with greater frequency in a variety of gambling activities (bingo, casino visits, the lottery and card playing) than did non-active senior gamblers. Results suggest that the non-active gambling group of seniors limited their gambling to card playing. Research by Nicol (2000) also revealed a high percentage of elderly women in Canada who gamble in casinos. The author states that the excitement and safe environment that the casinos offer to seniors who are coping with retirement or a loss of a loved one are some of the main reasons for the threat that casinos pose to Canada's aging population of senior citizens.

The literature on problem gambling further indicates that problem gambling is not necessarily restricted to a particular age income or occupational group. Lorge (1999) reports on case studies conducted among sales personnel who became gambling addicts. The author provides reasons why salespeople are prone to gambling addictions and make suggestions for managers on how to deal with this problem.

#### **Gambling attitudes**

From the above brief overview it is apparent that the literature on gambling is biased to the dangers of compulsive gambling as a form of addictive consumption. These behaviours are believed to systematically distort and undermine an individuals' self worth, self-esteem and self-image generally (Joshi 2000). It is also estimated that a person living within eighty kilometres of a casino is seven times more likely to become a compulsive gambler (Henderson 2000). Since gambling has become legalized in South Africa through the National Gambling Amendment Act no 39 of 1999, casinos have relocated in cities and towns, making them more accessible to the general public. Despite this development little is known about the attitudes and perceptions of the broad public towards gambling, particularly since the opening of casinos in urban areas.

The main objective of this study was to investigate consumer attitudes towards gambling in Port Elizabeth since the opening of the Boardwalk casino complex. As this research is of an exploratory nature no specific hypotheses were set. A general design hypothesis were however formulated as follows:

*Attitudes and perceptions regarding gambling differ amongst socio-demographic groups in Port Elizabeth (Cotte,2000).*

## **METHOD**

A questionnaire was constructed based on items used in previous studies (Orford 1990, Collins and Barr 2000) as well as new items derived from the literature on gambling. All items used in the study related to attitudes and perceptions of gambling. A five point rating scale as suggested by Malhotra (1996) was used in the study.

Three areas from the literature were identified to examine gambling attitudes and perceptions. These were general attitudes towards gambling, gambling motives and ethical issues involved in gambling. Various authors (Koenderman 2000, Minton 2001, Nicol 2000) are concerned with the impact of gambling on poor, less educated population and senior citizens.

The questionnaire consisted of 30 items and concluded with measures of several demographic variables: home language, age, gender, education, household income per month, religion and residential area, were recorded. The frequency with which respondents participate in gambling activities was also gauged.

#### **Sample**

A multicultural non-probability convenience sample (N=355) was drawn from the Port Elizabeth metropole. The sample used quotas to include all the important sub-populations, based on income in the area. Respondents were selected from upper, middle and lower income groups residing in various suburban areas and townships in the region. They were representative of the three main languages, Afrikaans, English and Xhosa spoken in the province.

#### **Procedure**

Students of the University of Port Elizabeth carried out fieldwork. All the field-workers were properly briefed on sample selection and interview procedures. Households in various residential areas were chosen for interviewing. Only one respondent per household, either a husband or wife completed the questionnaire. Questionnaires were available in English and Afrikaans, as all people in the sampled region understand at least one of these languages.

Respondents were asked to rate each of the thirty items in the questionnaire on a five point Likert type scale ranging from agree completely to disagree completely. Respondents were informed that there was no right or wrong answer to each question and that the objective of the survey was merely to determine consumer's views on gambling.

#### **Data analysis**

The statistical package BMDP program 4M (Frane, Jenrich and Samson 1979) was used to perform exploratory factor analysis on the 30 items in the questionnaire. The method of principal component analysis was used with direct quartimin oblique rotations. Cronbach's coefficient alphas were calculated to determine the reliability of the derived summated factor scale scores. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation, frequency distribution and Pearson Product Moment correlations were calculated by means of BMDP programs 2D, 4F and 8D respectively. The statistics are reported in Table 2. The

BMDP program 1D was then used to calculate mean factor scores for the various socio-demographic variables. These results are shown in Table 3. The BMDP program 2V was subsequently used to perform analysis of variance (ANOVA) to investigate which of the socio-demographic variables are significantly related to the various factors. These results are shown in Table 4. To test the statistical significance of factor score differences between the various socio-demographic groups, one-way analysis of variance (BMDP program 7D) was performed. These results are also summarized in Table 3.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of the factor analysis performed on the item sample.

A five-factor solution emerged from the total item sample with factor loadings in excess of 0,41. Items relating to diverse opinions towards gambling loaded on a factor labelled *General Attitudes*. Items linked to causes of gambling loaded on three factors labelled *Economic Motives*; *Hedonic Motives* and *Symbolic Motives* while items relating to negative consequences of gambling loaded on a factor labelled *Problem Gambling*. The Cronbach's alphas for three of the factors were in the order of the recommended 0,70 criterion for reliability. The remaining two factors exceeded 0,60 which implies that the scales may be

used in an exploratory study. Forty three percent of the total variance was explained by the five factors.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and correlations for the sample. As can be seen from Table 2, *Economic Motives* obtained the highest mean factor score (60,6% of the respondents scored high on this factor) while *Problem Gambling* obtained the lowest mean factor score (83,9% scored low on this factor). Keeping in mind that the five point Likert scale categories are 1,0 to 2,6 Low; 2,6 to 3,4 Average; 3,4 to 5,0 High, Table 2 suggests high scores were obtained for *Economic Motives*; average scores for *Hedonic Motives* and *General Attitudes*; and low scores for *Symbolic Motives* and *Problem Gambling*. The result for *Problem Gambling* is disappointing as this is indicative of the public's indifference regarding the potential dangers of gambling.

Table 2 further shows that significant positive correlations exist between factors one, two, three and five (*Economic*, *Hedonic*, *Symbolic Motives* and *General Attitudes*). This implies that a positive attitude towards gambling corresponds with an agreement of the perceived benefits of gambling. Factor four (*Problem Gambling*) was significantly negatively correlated with factors one, two and five (*Economic Motives*, *Hedonic Motives* and *Problem Gambling*). This inverse relationship implies that respondents who are more aware of the dangers of gambling are less in agreement with the benefits of gambling.

**TABLE 1**  
**RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSES (N=355)**

No.	Item	Economic Motives	Hedonic Motives	Symbolic Motives	Problem Gambling	General Attitudes
19	Gambling is a quick way to make extra money.	0,805				
20	The chances of winning when gambling are good.	0,731				
22	The pay outs from gambling is worth the effort.	0,723				
24	Gambling is a means of gaining money to solve financial difficulties or pay back debts.	0,622				
12	Gambling is a social event as one makes new friends in the casino.		0,806			
11	Gambling is an exciting, enjoyable pastime.		0,680			
14	Visiting the casino for most people is simply a "night out" with spouse or friends.		0,676			
1	For the majority of people, a visit to the casino is a harmless recreational activity.		0,603			
13	Gambling for most people is a self esteem-enhancing activity.		0,415			
17	Many people regard gambling as an escape from personal problems and worries.			0,804		
16	For many people gambling relieves them from the boredom of their daily lives.			0,667		
15	Most people experience satisfaction from gambling due to the risk involved.			0,628		
18	Gambling is a thrill seeking game of testing your luck.			0,557		
25	The urge to gamble as a result of emotional distress can cause problem gambling.				0,702	
26	Gamblers who never learn lessons from losing can cause problems for their families.				0,694	
27	The Gambling Industry thrives on vulnerable people, exploiting greed and weakness.				0,694	
23	Gamblers who return as soon as possible to win back losses are in need of counselling.				0,676	
28	Gambling undermines the work ethic.				0,535	
21	Gamblers value the money they expect to win more highly than what they have lost.				0,499	
29	Gambling is not part of a religious lifestyle.				0,470	
4	Few persons get into financial difficulty as a result of gambling.					0,688
3	Gambling does not affect most people's family or work life.					0,657
2	Most people know how much money and time they can afford to spend on gambling.					0,600
5	Gambling generates money for the government to fund welfare organisations.					0,558
6	The Gaming Industry in South Africa creates many new employment opportunities.					0,546
30	Given the opportunity I will sign a petition prohibiting all forms of gambling.					-0,443
8	Gambling is too complicated and confusing for most people to become a problem area.					0,425
Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha		0,69	0,69	0,62	0,75	0,67

**TABLE 2**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATIONS**

Factor	N = 355		Frequency Distribution						Correlations				
	$\bar{X}$	SD	Low		Average		High		1	2	3	4	5
1 Economic Motives	3,63	0,99	65	18,3%	75	21,1%	215	60,6%	-	0,496**	0,191**	-0,387**	0,381**
2 Hedonic Motives	2,96	0,84	143	40,3%	112	31,5%	100	28,2%	0,496**	-	0,413**	-0,439**	0,449**
3 Symbolic Motives	2,54	0,83	216	60,8%	80	22,5%	59	16,6%	0,191**	0,413**	-	-0,077	0,167**
4 Problem Gambling	1,98	0,70	298	83,9%	41	11,5%	16	4,5%	-0,387**	-0,439**	-0,077	-	-0,240**
5 General Attitudes	3,21	0,66	72	20,3%	124	34,9%	159	44,8%	0,381**	0,449**	0,167**	-0,240**	-

\* p < 0,05 (r >= 0,104)

\*\* p < 0.01 (r >= 0,137)

**TABLE 3**  
**RESULTS BY GAMBLING, HOME LANGUAGE, AGE, GENDER, EDUCATION, INCOME, RELIGION AND RESIDENTIAL AREA**

	N	%	1. Economic Motives		2. Hedonic Motives		3. Symbolic Motives		4. Problem Gambling		5. General Attitudes	
			$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
<b>Gamble</b>												
Never	98	27,6%	3,87a	0,88	3,04a	0,88	2,61	0,89	1,91a	0,70	3,24	0,66
Seldom	167	47,0%	3,64	0,93	3,04b	0,81	2,57	0,81	1,93b	0,66	3,25	0,64
More	88	24,8%	3,34c	1,14	2,71c	0,81	2,43	0,79	2,18c	0,74	3,10	0,70
			ac		ac, bc				ac, bc			
<b>Home Language</b>												
English	184	51,8%	3,76a	0,98	3,07a	0,84	2,57	0,84	1,90	0,66	3,34a	0,63
Afrikaans	87	24,5%	3,57	1,02	3,00b	0,87	2,60	0,87	2,06	0,77	3,18b	0,63
Xhosa	67	18,9%	3,35c	0,95	2,64c	0,78	2,35	0,76	2,06	0,71	2,89c	0,62
			ac		ac, bc						ac, bc	
<b>Age</b>												
30-39	188	53,0%	3,57	0,94	2,99	0,81	2,55	0,78	1,96	0,71	3,22	0,63
40-49	100	28,2%	3,63	1,05	2,93	0,91	2,55	0,89	2,08	0,69	3,14	0,66
50+	65	18,3%	3,82	1,02	2,95	0,86	2,51	0,88	1,88	0,69	3,27	0,74
<b>Gender</b>												
Male	159	44,8%	3,56a	0,95	2,98	0,86	2,65	0,86	1,99	0,71	3,20	0,63
Female	196	55,2%	3,68b	1,01	2,95	0,84	2,45	0,80	1,97	0,69	3,22	0,68
			ab									
<b>Education</b>												
School	109	30,7%	3,64	1,02	3,05	0,90	2,64	0,89	1,89	0,66	3,30	0,71
College/Technikon	89	25,1%	3,59	1,06	2,95	0,89	2,42	0,83	2,06	0,80	3,23	0,59
University	156	43,9%	3,65	0,93	2,91	0,77	2,53	0,77	2,00	0,66	3,13	0,65
<b>Income</b>												
<=R1000	52	14,6%	3,42a	0,92	2,64a	0,81	2,40	0,76	2,18a	0,70	3,07	0,70
<=R3000	76	21,4%	3,31b	1,01	2,79b	0,86	2,51	0,77	2,07b	0,73	3,14	0,69
<=R5000	90	25,4%	3,58c	0,99	3,06c	0,87	2,53	0,86	2,06c	0,73	3,20	0,67
R5001+	136	38,3%	3,91d	0,92	3,12d	0,79	2,62	0,87	1,80d	0,62	3,31	0,61
			ad, bd		ac, ad, bd				ad, bd, cd			
<b>Religion</b>												
None	18	5,1%	3,10	0,80	2,99	0,77	2,58	0,71	2,37a	0,61	3,13	0,85
Other	47	13,2%	3,64	1,03	2,93	0,99	2,48	0,81	2,09	0,80	3,25	0,65
Christian	290	81,7%	3,66	0,98	2,97	0,83	2,55	0,84	1,94c	0,68	3,21	0,65
									ac			
<b>Area Race</b>												
White	206	58,0%	3,73	0,95	2,99	0,81	2,52	0,80	1,99	0,69	3,26	0,67
Mixed	74	20,8%	3,48	1,04	2,90	0,86	2,54	0,84	2,07	0,80	3,14	0,63
Coloured/Asian	42	11,8%	3,62	1,06	3,06	0,98	2,79	1,00	1,84	0,61	3,28	0,67
Black	33	9,3%	3,31	0,91	2,81	0,87	2,37	0,77	1,88	0,59	2,94	0,53
<b>Area Geographic</b>												
South	89	25,1%	3,65	1,03	2,92	0,75	2,49	0,86	2,11	0,69	3,28	0,65
Central	38	10,7%	3,66	0,98	2,92	0,87	2,56	0,79	2,08	0,74	3,14	0,67
South West	59	16,6%	3,74	0,89	3,05	0,85	2,58	0,76	1,85	0,66	3,29	0,64
West	40	11,3%	3,91	0,88	3,17	0,83	2,49	0,74	1,87	0,71	3,33	0,74
North	44	12,4%	3,57	1,07	3,02	0,98	2,77	0,99	1,83	0,61	3,24	0,67

North East	41	11,5%	3,38	0,91	2,83	0,87	2,36	0,73	1,91	0,62	2,89	0,59
Outside PE	44	12,4%	3,43	1,07	2,86	0,85	2,56	0,89	2,13	0,81	3,18	0,60
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>3,63</b>	<b>0,99</b>	<b>2,96</b>	<b>0,84</b>	<b>2,54</b>	<b>0,83</b>	<b>1,98</b>	<b>0,70</b>	<b>3,21</b>	<b>0,66</b>	

Significant Differences (post-hoc Scheffé tests) p<0.05 indicated by lower case letters

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics for demographic variables obtained from the sample. The results will be discussed by demographic variable.

**Participation in gambling** – Nearly half the sample (47,0%) indicated that they seldom gamble. It is interesting to note that those respondents who never gambled were most impressed with the economic, hedonic and symbolic motives for gambling, Also surprising is that those respondents who gambled more (at least monthly) were most aware of the problems relating to gambling and were also least positive about gambling in general.

**Home language** – The majority (51,8%) of the respondents were English speaking. Significant differences between the language groups were observed with regard to Economic Motives (English group more positive than the Xhosa group), Hedonic Motives and General Attitudes (English and Afrikaans groups more positive than the Xhosa group).

**Age** – Respondents were predominantly (53,0%) in their thirties.

observed except for *Problem Gambling* where it was interesting to note that Christians were least in agreement with the potential dangers relating to gambling.

**Residential Area** – The majority (58,0%) of the respondents were from suburbs that were reserved for whites during the apartheid era, with most (25,1%) coming from the affluent southern suburbs. No significant differences were observed based on residential area.

Table 4 shows which of the socio-demographic variables are significantly related to the identified factors. From Table 4 it can be seen that language is significantly related to *Economic Motives*, *Hedonic Motives* and *General Attitudes*. Gender is significantly related to *economic motives*. Religion is significantly related to *Economic Motives* and *Problem Gambling* while income is significantly related to *Economic* and *Hedonic Motives* as well as to *Problem Gambling*. The table also shows that education was not related to any of the factors.

**TABLE 4**  
**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TO DETERMINE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIO-BIOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND FACTORS**

	df	1 Economic Motives		2 Hedonic Motives		3 Symbolic Motives		4 Problem Gambling		5 General Attitudes	
		F	p	F	P	F	p	F	p	F	p
<b>Home Language</b>	2, 322	3,75	0,0247*	4,00	0,0191*	0,79	0,4537	2,84	0,0599	9,94	0,0001**
<b>Gender</b>	1, 322	4,37	0,0373*	1,30	0,2545	2,62	0,1063	1,41	0,2359	2,64	0,1052
<b>Education</b>	2, 322	0,31	0,7360	1,12	0,3262	1,39	0,2509	2,69	0,0693	2,43	0,0898
<b>Income</b>	3, 322	7,17	0,0001**	4,29	0,0055**	0,46	0,7095	5,26	0,0015**	1,52	0,2103
<b>Religion</b>	2, 322	3,87	0,0217*	0,19	0,8280	0,56	0,5706	5,62	0,0040**	0,29	0,7511

\* p < 0,05 ; \*\* p < 0,01

No significant differences between the age groups were observed with regard to any of the identified factors.

**Gender** – There were slightly more (55,2%) female than male respondents. The only significant differences between the gender groups related to Economic Motives (women were more positive than the men),

**Education** – The majority (69,0%) of the respondents indicated a tertiary education qualification. No significant differences between the education groups were observed for any of the identified factors.

**Income** – Respondents with an income in excess of R5,000 constituted the largest group (38,3%). Significant differences between the income groups were observed for *Economic Motives* (R5,000+ group were more positive than those earning R3,000 or less); *Hedonic Motives* (an increase in income corresponded with an increase in the perceived hedonic benefits of gambling); *Problem Gambling* (R5,000+ group were least in agreement with the potential dangers relating to gambling).

**Religion** – The vast majority (81,7%) of the respondents were Christians with very few (5,1%) indicating no religion. No significant differences between the religion groups were

The trends observed in tables 3 and 4 suggest the importance of demographic variables such as home language and religion (possible indicators of culture) when measuring consumer attitudes towards gambling. The results further suggest the importance of income and gender on gambling activities. Upper income respondents (R5,000+ per month) obtained the highest mean factor scores on *economic*, *hedonic* and *symbolic motives* for gambling while female respondents were more in agreement with the *Economic Motives* for gambling than their male counterparts.

**Hypothesis testing**

Based on the results obtained from this exploratory study the general design hypothesis stating that *attitudes and perceptions regarding gambling differ amongst socio-demographic groups in Port Elizabeth* can be accepted. Results from table 3 revealed significant differences between various language groups on general attitudes towards gambling. The table further portrays significant differences between language, gender, income and religion groups on specific identified factors of gambling. Non-religious groups were for instance significantly more concerned about problem gambling than were Christian respondents. Should language and religion be viewed as possible indicators of culture, the results may suggest that cultural differences do influence attitudes towards gambling.



## CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to investigate consumer attitudes towards gambling amongst various socio-demographic groups. The study was initiated by the opening of the Boardwalk casino complex in Port Elizabeth which resulted in gambling becoming a topical issue of debate in the local media and amongst the general public, especially those residents from the surrounding suburbs of the casino. The study was based on past research in the field and used a questionnaire that included items derived from the literature.

It was hypothesized that attitudes and perceptions regarding gambling may differ amongst socio-demographic groups in Port Elizabeth. The results showed significant differences between socio-demographic groups regarding attitudes towards gambling. Our results showed that English-speaking females in the upper income group were most in agreement about the economic reasons for gambling. These results support those of Nicol (2000) who found that a high percentage of gamblers in casinos in Canada were elderly women. The result that the majority (60,6%) of our sample scored high on economic reasons for gambling supports the findings of Collins and Barr (2000) that twenty five percent of respondents in the Western Cape had false beliefs about their chances of winning money through gambling.

The literature on problem gambling indicates that problem gambling is not necessarily restricted to a particular age, income or occupational group (Lorge, 1999; Reinecke, 2000). Results reflected in Table 3 however, suggest that Christians from the upper income group may be less aware of the dangers relating to gambling as they scored least on *Problem Gambling*. The results of the present study further suggest that cultural influences deduced from home language and religion may influence gambling attitudes. Table 4 indicated that home language was significantly related to economic and hedonic motives as well as to general attitudes, whilst religion was significantly related to economic motives and problem gambling.

A possible reason why Xhosa speaking respondents held less positive attitudes towards gambling than other groups and were more sceptical about the economic and hedonic motives for gambling (Table 3), could be due to their lack of experience with gambling as a form of entertainment. Furthermore, the perceived risk of losing money, may be greater amongst Xhosa speaking respondents as their disposable income may be lower than those of the other two groups.

The results discussed above have important implications for the gaming industry. Casinos should focus on gambling motives in their efforts to create awareness of the potential dangers of problem gambling. They should also abstain from targeting "high risk" problem gamblers such as elderly women or pensioners as these customers may damage the gaming industry's image of providing healthy recreational entertainment should they become compulsive gamblers.

In summary, the findings of this study, despite its limitations of a relatively small sample and a measuring instrument that needs refinement in terms of more reliable sub-scales, do point to the need for more empirical research in this area. Follow-up research may provide guidelines not only for social responsible marketing strategies for the gaming industry but also for welfare organisations and churches dealing with problem gamblers. The latter should be particularly concerned by the observation in table 3 that religious groups obtained the lowest mean factor

scores on *Problem Gambling* and the highest on *Economic motives* for gambling.

Recommendations for gaming boards are that they should pay more attention to awareness campaigns on responsible gambling and the potential dangers of addiction to gambling. NGO's (Non-Government Organisations), social agencies, and government departments should also increase their effort to promote a culture of responsible gambling in South Africa.

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