

# Online Gambling Among Adolescents: How Does Socioeconomic Status Influence Gambling Behavior Among Developing Adolescents?

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The rising prevalence of internet and network devices brought a new form of access to gambling to adolescents across different socio-economic statuses (SES). Unlike conventional in-person gambling, online gambling enabled adolescents to easily evade parental intervention and law enforcement, leading to problematic gambling behavior—defined by its illegality and addictive nature. Adolescents, whose mental faculties are still developing, are particularly vulnerable to these temptations and subsequent social and financial impairments, which may affect family, friends, and credit standings. Although there has been an extensive evaluation of the association between personal background and conventional gambling practices, the studies particularly focused on addressing online gambling habits are relatively few. Using open-ended interviews, this study aims to explore the development of problematic online gambling behavior among high SES adolescents. Our results revealed that students' abundant allowances were key drivers for continued gambling activities. In addition, a significant decline in academic performance was shown as a result of a problematic, addictive attachment to gambling sites.

**Keywords:** Addiction, Adolescent, Gambling, Socioeconomic status

## Introduction

The rising ubiquity of online gambling is an outcome of extensive global connectivity through the internet<sup>1</sup>. Several key developments, including the emergence of affordable personal devices, robust internet infrastructure, and, fundamentally, the widespread availability of electricity, enabled users to become aware of online gambling through advertisements and to access gambling sites as a result<sup>1</sup>. Although there has been a rising perception that online gambling is merely a type of leisure activity, its addictive nature often puts individuals at financial and social risk<sup>2</sup>.

Recently, online gambling has become a perfect supplement to conventional in-person gambling with numerous advantages for participants. It has eased the risk of detection from local law enforcement and eliminated spatial limitations, making it far more accessible than previous forms of gambling for both pre-existing gamblers and novices<sup>3</sup>. Users are no longer required to visit the gambling house or validate their identity to participate<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, several concerns have emerged. The fact that users can bet anywhere they are without spatial limitation may augment the frequency of their betting<sup>4</sup>. The other concern is that underage individuals might gamble without the necessary responsibility, financial means, or awareness of the risks. As expected, there has been a notable surge in online gambling rates among adolescents in recent times, despite ongoing efforts in preventative education<sup>5</sup>.

It has been reported that difficulties in cultural belonging are related to problem gambling<sup>6</sup>. In addition, although not many studies have investigated the prevalence of gambling and problem gambling among various cultural groups, there is evidence that certain cultural groups are more likely to start gambling and develop into problem gambling<sup>7</sup>.

Adolescents are one of the social groups that are considered most susceptible to external enticement. They are in a stage of brain development where impulse control and decision-making are still maturing, which makes them more prone to risky behaviors and easily swayed by immediate rewards and intuitive entertainment<sup>8</sup>. In addition, their lack of life experiences and understanding of the outcome of their decision also blur their wariness against risky activities<sup>8</sup>. In this case, adolescents are often unaware of both the negative consequences of problematic gambling addiction<sup>9</sup> and their inability to moderate the frequency of engagement or suppress impetuous decisions<sup>10</sup>. Given this, it is important to take into account detailed factors associated with their involvement in online gambling, as these factors may significantly affect their stances within their family, friends, and financial credibility.

It is not only the adolescents' psychological state that makes them susceptible to external enticements, but also the social networks—not the apps, but the informal and formal relationships individuals have—they are embedded in, which can influence their behavior<sup>11</sup>. Direct peer encouragement to participate in gambling and normalization of gambling activity among peers

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or family are prominent examples of social networks that foster adolescent gambling behavior. Understanding the impact of social networks on their gambling behavior, it is important to explore how their social circumstances are determined. One important factor that constructs their social circumstance is the SES they are tied to. The shared behavioral tendencies and interactions within socioeconomic groups—such as peers, family, and the neighborhood—have a significant influence on the initiation, maintenance, and cease of their behavior, whether positive or negative.

Past research has focused upon the unique susceptibility of low SES individuals to negative life events and comparatively less research has been done on the unique risks that may differentially influence high SES individuals<sup>12</sup>. Gambling offers one area in which high SES individuals, particularly adolescents, experience greater negative outcomes as a result of their access to disposable material resources. Adolescents' SES, identified by both their own perception and statistical generalization, in this study, is considered an environmental factor that may elucidate their tendency of initiation, ongoing behavior, and reaction to outcomes. Understanding high SES adolescents initiate, continue, and discontinue online gambling can help to create feasible preventative measures to address the expanding ubiquity of problematic gambling behavior.

To better understand the impact of high SES on adolescent's online gambling activity, in-person interviews were conducted with three Korean high school students from high SES backgrounds who have been engaged in online gambling for a considerable period. Their narrative account, which includes the circumstances of their involvement in online gambling and perceived outcomes, was collected and analyzed to aid our understanding.

## Literature Review

Previous studies assessing the general patterns of addictive behaviors or substance use have revealed that the initiation and maintenance of such behaviors are largely influenced by social external risk factors that foster an inherent desire to engage in the activities. It has been well documented that individuals involved in a community where problematic conduct is prevalent and acceptable are highly likely to face a detrimental peer influence<sup>13</sup>. As illustrated by addictive behaviors in marijuana use, individuals who regularly engage in addictive activity tend to learn from others to perceive the activity as pleasurable, even when the activity itself is not biologically addictive<sup>14</sup>. Such a phenomenon was manifest in the influence of peer relations on the odds of alcohol addiction among youth. A study showed that “the more open peer attitudes toward alcohol, the more likely adolescents are to increase the frequency of alcohol use”<sup>15</sup>. Acknowledging that social relationship plays a significant role in determining the scope of addiction, this study will focus on iden-

tifying different forms of social relationships in the narratives of adolescents and their potential influence on the exposure to addictive behavior and their maintenance in activities.

A long line of literature has documented that the life circumstances faced by low and high SES individuals lead to fundamentally different risk profiles for a variety of issues. Health has been a fruitful area of study, revealing that low SES individuals having a health condition are less likely to receive opportune regimens than those of high SES, since they struggle to afford costly exercise equipment and diet essential for the treatment plan<sup>16</sup>. Key to this area of literature is the finding that “resources such as knowledge, money, power, prestige, and beneficial social connections can be used no matter what the risk and protective factors are in a given circumstance” to develop a visible difference in health level between two SES groups<sup>17</sup>. While substantial efforts have been made to assist the low SES sector following numerous studies, the influence of high SES on individuals' life events has been largely overlooked by researchers. Exploring high SES may later encourage the development of the strategies specifically tailored to high SES individuals, contributing to the comprehensive support for all sectors of society. Building on these findings regarding the distinction between SES groups, this paper will first assess adolescents' SES based on their self-recognition and then examine the relationship between this status and their online gambling behavior patterns.

Apart from being deprived of necessary resources due to SES, one's behavior or to be placed in certain circumstances is largely determined by social connections at both personal and community levels. In other words, individuals' life circumstances and behavior patterns are likely a reflection of what they perceive and interact with within their community. Though a fundamentally different phenomenon, past studies of suicide among peer groups are instructive in the case of gambling. Among several risk factors associated with increasing odds of adolescents' suicidal thoughts, exposure to peers' suicide attempts exhibited a significantly greater influence compared to other risk factors, such as the existence of a gun in the home, fewer activities with parents, and high frequency in becoming drunk or high<sup>18</sup>. In addition, the non-biological transmission of health conditions is a well-documented phenomenon in the study of health and social networks, which reveals that “illness, disability, health behaviors, health care use, and death in one person are associated with similar outcomes in numerous others to whom that person is tied”<sup>19</sup>. Shared behavior is an important concern in understanding the spread of online gambling behavior within a group of adolescents, and should not be overlooked throughout this study.

It is essential to explore the unique gambling behaviors of adolescents, which differ from what we regard as typical gambling activities in older age groups. Extensive studies have examined how youth are characterized in their online gambling

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activities. Among adolescents, “significantly higher rates of online gambling were found in boys than in girls”, and online gambling was associated with various risky behaviors or practices, including “greater presence in social networking sites and higher smartphone use at school”<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, adolescents who are involved in online gambling display distinct characteristics from those who are engaged in offline gambling. A study indicated, “Compared to slot machine participants, online sports betting participants were younger, more frequently single and had a university education level; they were also more frequently non-smokers and had fewer psychiatric comorbidities than slot machine gamblers”<sup>21</sup>. This paper will explore whether the patterns highlighted by these studies are also evident in the narrative gambling behaviors of adolescents. In particular, it will examine the influences that lead to declines in academic performance among youth addicted to gambling.

Along with peer influence, gambling advertisements played a significant role in reshaping gambling behavior and experiences for both existing players and novices. Studies have revealed that ads with eye-catching features effectively captivate individuals, as “advertisements were effective in prompting existing gamblers to shift to the Internet to access their current gambling activities”<sup>22</sup>. Cautioning the direct technique and intrusive impact of advertisement, a study revealed that “over half of the analyzed advertisements relied on a tangible marketing technique, the activity button”, which “offers an easy, immediate means of adding the app to one’s game platform”<sup>23</sup>. Taken together, the initiation of gambling is often a result of a direct promotion of gambling platforms. Therefore, it is crucial to understand its impact and implement prevention methods to minimize exposure to such promotions.

Delving into the specific understanding of its destructive consequences, the financial loss associated with online gambling is often linked to the winning streaks, either intentionally designed by gambling sites or which occur at random. Online gamblers usually experience a single big win or an illusion of multiple minor wins, which leads the players to believe they are more successful in their betting than they are. A study revealed that “players were less likely to stop and tended to increase the stake after a win”<sup>24</sup>. The future behavior of those who experienced a big win was noticeably different from those who did not. Research has shown, “Compared to matched controls, cluster big winners placed more bets, staked more money, and experienced greater net loss”<sup>25</sup>.

Recent analysis highlights significant factors influencing the success of gambling treatment interventions. A study revealed differences in the odds of successful gambling treatment by gender and age, demonstrating that “females have 1.11 times the odds of having a successful treatment outcome compared to males” and that “Older gamblers are significantly more likely to complete treatment successfully as compared to younger gamblers”<sup>26</sup>. Considering such findings, it becomes essential to

develop a gambling treatment program to address the specific needs of different demographic groups. In the case of this study, a suitable treatment program specifically for adolescents should be designed to address the unique challenges and risk factors they are facing.

## Methodology

Between July and August of 2024, I interviewed three teenage high school students in Korea as part of this study to explore their experience with online gambling. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. I chose qualitative interviews to obtain a rich explanation for the way in which students initiate, maintain, and cease their gambling activity, which quantitative surveys addressing a large-scale population might overlook. Participants were directly recruited through personal contact. This approach relied on reaching out to potential participants in person, ensuring a more personalized and engaged interview process. This method was used in order to establish initial trust and to induce voluntary response, which is important for studies that require detailed narratives and integrity in responding.

All information about the respondents was directly collected through one-on-one interviews, where a completely private environment was ensured to prevent any potential dissemination of the data. Throughout the interview, after obtaining consent from the interviewees, the audio recording captured the conversation between interviewer and interviewee to preclude any loss or distortion of information that may occur during note-taking. Respondents were asked to share their personal narratives regarding their online gambling behavior. Particularly, some of the questions included how they initiated gambling activities, how they were able to continue their betting, and whether they made any effort to cease their engagement in gambling. The responses from the participants were manually translated from Korean to English while preserving the original meaning and nuance in their tone.

Respondents’ identifiable personal information is kept confidential throughout this paper to safeguard their privacy and protection from any potential stigma or unwanted legal action. Basic information about the respondents, such as gender, approximate age range, and nationality—provided within their consent and general consideration—will be included in the pseudonym assignment section of this paper.

As mentioned above, the use of constructed pseudonyms on the participants’ identification facilitates readers’ comprehension and prevents participants’ personal information from being exposed to unexpected disclosures. Participant A was assigned the pseudonym “Alex”, Participant B was assigned the pseudonym “John”, and Participant C was assigned the pseudonym “Ryan”. To analyze the collected data, I conducted iterative readings of the completed interviews with the primary research question in mind, particularly focusing on their self-

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assessment of SES, surrounding factors that contributed to their involvement in online gambling, and their own perception of their gambling habits.

The data collection in this study solely relied on the oral explanation of students, and any methods other than self-report, such as statistical analysis and third-party explanation, were not adopted. SES on this basis is the reported self-assessment of respondents, relative to their peers.

## Results

Following the iterative analysis of respondents' experiences, a unique and consistent gambling behavior among individuals of high SES was identified. The analysis placed its focus on four distinct stages of students' gambling involvement, organized in chronological order: initiation, maintenance, perceived consequences, and coping mechanisms and intervention. For all stages, students' involvement in online gambling was shown to have an association with peer relationships and parents' economic ability. In short, peer encouragement played a significant role in the early phase of engagement, and the abundance of allowance reshaped students' attitudes towards online gambling and overall betting patterns.

### Relationship between SES and gambling initiation

The students first dived into the realm of online gambling through the influence of peers who have already been involved in online gambling activity. Specifically, they receive a direct suggestion that includes a positive attitude towards the outcome of online gambling, rather than merely perceiving the presence of online gambling habits among their peers. The description of the peers consisting of a scope of the potential monetary benefits and the details of the gambling activities they're involved in, such as the name of the site and the type of game, directly ignites students' interest. John, who started gambling in the 8th grade due to a friend's suggestion, explains his first experience in starting online gambling, where he *"got a call from a friend who said that if I followed their instructions, I could multiply my money several times. Without much thought, I went straight to a gambling site. I started off with a game called Powerball, just like my friend told me about."*

However, such initial bets on the gambling site didn't necessarily imply that they would become so-called online gamblers with regular, immersed engagement. There are several subsequent personal motivations that led them to start engaging in problematic gambling, which is regarded as the second stage of the initiation of gambling. After being convinced by peers that they might possibly win money from the website, students set personal goals for more luxurious spending. According to Alex's account, *"I thought I would be able to often eat out with friends, play billiards, and go to PC rooms."* Similarly, in the

case of John, the desire for luxurious spending was shown in his willingness to purchase a particular object, instead of a general expenditure. In response to the question asking the purpose of initialization, John says *"I started it because I wanted to buy high-end clothing from a brand called Moose Knuckles."* One observation about their pursuit of financial incentives is that they sought extra benefits beyond their regular allowance, indicating that they weren't driven by desperation for necessities. Alex highlights that *"I didn't think I lacked allowance, but I started Toto[online gambling] to spend money more comfortably"*.

Other common risk factors for the initialization of online gambling, including exposure to gambling advertisements, mental health problems associated with anxiety or depression, or normalization of gambling activity in a family environment were not found. Particularly, gambling advertisements were shown to have little to no effect in triggering gambling initiation among students, even though they were exposed to them multiple times during their internet experiences. Upholding this conclusion, Ryan explicitly states *"I started because of my friend's suggestion, not because of any influence from online advertisements."* Taken together, the primary factor that first sparked their interest in online gambling was the direct suggestion from peers, and their initial access to gambling sites subsequently developed into regular engagement fueled by their personal desire for financial gain.

### Maintenance of Gambling behaviors and patterns related to SES

Students begin to actively bet money on online gambling while experiencing the numerous cycles of winning and losing, which later develop problematic, addictive, and patterned behavior. Specifically, students are driven by the memory of the instant, overwhelming joy that they've experienced while winning, which leads them to believe that they would be able to easily recover from the loss and even achieve further gains. At the same time, the significant loss didn't cease their gambling activity but rather served as an encouragement that rendered a sense of hope and a challenging spirit against the intricate mechanism of online gambling. Ryan accounted for the effect of notable initial gain on his subsequent involvement in online gambling, explaining that *"At first, I won 100,000 KRW from 30,000 KRW, so I gradually increased my betting amounts. But eventually, I started losing too much money. Because I won at first, I kept believing I could at least get back to even."*

Mere excitement and thrill derived from the act of betting money itself also played a significant role in drawing them into the cycle of gambling activity. Regardless of winning or losing, they were stimulated by the fact that real money was being involved and that that money was undergoing fluctuations in value distinct from their typical financial experiences. Alex recalls his last gambling experience in middle school, explaining

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that *"In Powerball, there is a lot of tension because the results come out one by one, creating suspense. I remember being absorbed by the tension and receiving the result, and the result was better than I expected."*

One prominent aspect, shown to be consistent across all three respondents, that enabled continuous and regular engagement was the profusion in the amount of allowance by their parents. Their main source of betting money, the allowance, is presented in two distinct forms: Regular allowance for their daily spending and on-demand allowance as a supplement to the regular one. Both forms of allowance were used by the students as a gambling bankroll, and particularly, students were shown to have no struggle requesting on-demand allowance. Ryan shares his source of starting funds for gambling, explaining that *"I also borrowed money from friends, but most of my betting money came from my parents. They regularly give me allowance and even give me extra if I need it. I get about 500,000 KRW a month."* According to the report, a monthly allowance of over 100,000 KRW is considered relatively high among South Korean high school students<sup>27</sup>. Participants in this study who received a monthly allowance of over 500,000 KRW were classified as belonging to a high SES. Interestingly, no parental intervention was found during the request. Parents were completely unaware of their involvement in gambling activity, and they did not ask their children the details of how the on-demand allowance would further be used. As Ryan noted, *"Since my dad runs a business, he would just give me money whenever I asked for it, and he never asked me what I spent it on."* Furthermore, the abundance of allowance significantly dulled their sensation for pecuniary loss, leading them to perceive that the amount of money they lost was inconsequential and less destructive. Ryan mentioned, *"My parents kept giving me money, so I didn't have any financial problems. Looking back, it wasn't even that much money."* In conclusion, with the precipitating demand for gain and insensitivity for loss, students became further engaged, in terms of frequency, amount of bettings, and total time spent on websites.

### **Perceived Consequences and Impact of Gambling Relative to SES**

Students acknowledged the negative chronic impact of online gambling, especially on their social relationships with peers and their long-term academic success, but they explained that online gambling did not affect their financial position to any degree. Once they lose all the money on hand, they'd borrow money from peers, not to cover their living expenses but to use that money to reinvest and nullify the previous loss on gambling. The social-relational problem with the lender occurs when the student delays the payback, or even permanently refuses to pay off the money they borrowed. As Ryan remarked, *"I borrowed money from a friend for gambling, and kept delaying the repayment, which made me drift apart from that friend."* Interestingly,

borrowing money from peers with high SES doesn't take much time or effort, similar to the process of earning allowance from their parents. Peers lent money without asking how it would be used or when it would be repaid. Ryan mentioned, *"They used to lend me up to 100,000 KRW without asking any questions."*

In terms of academic success, excessive time commitment towards gambling, as well as the constant psychological detachment from schoolwork, negatively affected their academic performance. Though no statistical analysis was involved to demonstrate the deterioration in academic performance, the consistency in students' oral self-assessment suggests their overall decline in school grades. As Alex noted, *"I used to play Toto at study cafes, which negatively affected my studies. If I had spent that time studying instead, my life could have been different."*

### **Coping Mechanisms and Interventions by SES**

The decline in interest as a result of a repeating loss was a primary reason why students ceased their gambling activity. As the students begin to recognize that the occasional wins wouldn't offset the constant, long-term loss, they voluntarily lessen the frequency and the amount of betting. It is important to note that students were not appalled by the significant amount of instant loss or intimidated by the potential financial damage, but instead began to question the qualification of online gambling as an effective means to earn money. As Ryan mentioned, *"As I kept gambling, I continued to lose money, and eventually, I lost interest in gambling itself"*. Students lacked active parental intervention during their gambling activity due to various factors, including their parent's employment overseas, the normalization of gambling within the family, and parental indifference to their child's spending. John stated, *"I got caught gambling in my room, and my mom said, 'Just make sure you do it in moderation and don't let it become a problem'"*.

Students positively assessed their self-control ability and therefore supposed that assistance from others was not necessary to cease their gambling activity. In other words, they held a consistent belief that they would not be addicted to gambling at a serious level, unlike some of their peers who have developed more destructive gambling patterns in the absence of self-control. Alex stated, *"I never asked for that kind of help. I consider myself to have a certain level of self-control. Compared to my friends, I didn't put in that much money either."*

### **Discussion**

Many reports highlight that gambling is a multibillion-dollar industry in which many individuals regularly participate, with some viewing it as a way to escape stress. However, it is also noted that maladaptive coping mechanisms during adolescence and young adulthood—critical periods when the risk of developing problem gambling is highest—often emerge in the early

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stages of gambling disorder. These maladaptive strategies may hinder the implementation of effective stress-coping approaches, such as solution-focused coping strategies<sup>28</sup>

South Korea has drawn global attention by being the first country to allocate national funding to address internet addiction, establishing projects for its prevention and intervention. In contrast, the United States and European countries primarily rely on universities and research institutions to conduct studies and explore treatment methods, while in Japan, private hospitals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play the most active roles in tackling the issue<sup>29</sup>. It can be explained that the Korean government was concerned about the seriousness that online gambling could have on society. Korean parents frequently experience family conflicts due to their children's use of the internet and smartphones, expressing expectations for the government to take proactive measures against internet addiction<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, various approaches to student gambling analysis are needed, and this study describes the personal analysis and background of individual adolescent online gambling behavior that have not been reported so far. High SES adolescents' experiences with online gambling are unique because of their access to a number of valued resources. In terms of the maintenance of gambling activity, the ample allowance given by their parents offered the students funds for initial bets and recovery from previous losses. Not only providing money for betting, it also allowed students to believe that the gambling losses would not cause notable financial damage. Consequent to perceiving less potential risk in case of loss, students furthered their engagement in online gambling by increasing the frequency and amount of betting. Another aspect of their gambling experience associated with their high SES was the lack of parental intervention or effort to cease involvement. Parents were particularly indifferent to the spending patterns of their children and rarely attempted to coordinate their expenditure, supposedly due to their financial ease. To what extent should schools and parents intervene to prevent online gambling addiction in adolescents? It is reported that paternal hostility/aggression and neglect/indifference are key determinants of online gambling behavior<sup>30</sup>. Family dynamics play a critical role in the development of online gambling disorder. In this study, it is likely that parental neglect affected the initiation and persistence of gambling behavior among adolescents from high socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds.

On the other hand, studies on the relationship between parenting style and online gambling addiction show that parenting, characterized by the use of engaging and accepting practices (authoritative and self-indulgent parenting), can act as a protective factor for internet addiction and online gambling addiction. On the contrary, authoritarian parenting, characterized by the use of strictness and imposition practices, can act as a risk factor for internet addiction and online gambling addiction<sup>31</sup>. In this study, students' voluntary cease of the activity due to a mere decline in interest showed their lack of concern or past experience

about any significant financial damage. This can also be seen as a result of their high SES background. It cannot be ruled out that, in the process of quitting online gambling, the participants' belief in their ability to stop gambling may be a positive effect stemming from differences in parenting styles.

Nevertheless, flexible interventions for parental interest and intervention in children are needed to guide high SES students' correct perception of online gambling, which can be made possible through research-based efficient education programs.

## Implications

The analysis of student's gambling behavior may be used to support suggestions on possible gambling prevention methods and post-gambling intervention. Since unintentional parental financial support and lack of intervention heighten students' online gambling involvement, reshaping parental involvement may significantly alleviate problematic gambling habits among high SES adolescents. Specifically, parents may actively keep track of their children's expenditure history or oversee the general online activities more meticulously to prevent their children from developing addictive, problematic gambling behaviors. However, it is crucial to note that prioritizing the prevention of children's exposure to the online gambling environment, through education and awareness, can be more effective in terms of time and cost. It is reported that one of the key elements not to forget in school-based prevention is the education of teachers, who later say that they hold the key to motivating students to participate, ultimately achieving the goal of intervention itself. It also advises that socio-emotional education competencies should always be included<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, school programs don't require expensive and elusive materials, but they only need professionals who can communicate the causality of the problems they face, and they also report that subjects risk addiction and make efforts to carry out real-world preventive programs with skills and goals tailored to their needs based on evidence, not facilities<sup>32</sup>. Therefore schools can hold short-term training sessions by school teachers or public health professionals to share their expertise with students. In the United States, various social problems such as violence, ADHD, behavioral problems, learning disabilities, and depression are prevalent. To prevent this, a large budget has been invested in various programs and campaigns at the community level, but the expected results have not been sufficiently achieved. To address this issue, concepts such as "evidence-based kernels" and "behavioral vaccines" have been proposed. Kernels and behavioral vaccines are powerful tools that can maximize long-term preventive effects through small behavioral changes<sup>33</sup>.

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## Limitations

Despite the valuable insight gained from this study, there exist a few limitations. One is that the data collection and conclusion of this study relied on a relatively few number of responses. Therefore, the analysis of data of such a small sample size may not be sufficient to draw a comprehensive conclusion that accounts for the gambling behavior of the broader population in our society. In addition, The data used for the analysis was self-reported by developing adolescents, which may imply a potential recall bias or lack of accountability in providing honest responses. This concern particularly needs careful attention, since adolescents may be more susceptible to such potential variables. The study exclusively explored the influence of high SES on adolescent gambling behavior without including that of low SES, which can lead to a lack of comparison between different SES groups. Further research that comprehensively explores various SES levels could strengthen the results by clarifying the uniqueness of each SES group.

## Suggestion for future research

Many previous research on online gambling among adolescents put emphasis on exploring the general patterns in their online gambling activity and several risk factors associated with the exposure, but few of them delved into its interplay with SES. Given, an extension of this study, which may adopt a larger population sample and create a statistical analysis by collecting data on academic performance, allowance amount, and time spent gambling, as well as a standardized integrated measure of gambling behavior, addiction severity, and socioeconomic status, can further the understanding of adolescent gambling behavior and possibly be utilized to design new prevention methods and remedies, ultimately providing a comprehensive picture. Additionally, collecting data from different regions, other than Korea, may add a broader perspective and enhance the generalizability of the findings. In addition, exploring the reasons from the perspective of parents regarding their indifference to gambling, may be able to derive practical solutions regarding prevention and treatment through different ways of approaching the causes of the problem. Finally, as this study only addressed adolescents with high SES, exploring the unique characteristics of low SES adolescents can result in novel insights, by developing a comparison between two different SES.

## Conclusion

Previous research on SES has placed its focus on identifying many risk factors associated with low SES and less privileged sectors of society, but only a few of them attempted to explore those of high SES. Even existed, their analysis relied on the response of the masses and lacked a narrative that enables robust

and meticulous account for their behavior and decisions.

After analyzing the responses from 3 Korean adolescents with high SES in regard to their online gambling habits, our study revealed several significant common risky factors and unique perceptions, ranging from the initiation of activity to the coping mechanism and termination.

Among high SES students, direct encouragement from peers was found to be the primary route to access online gambling sites, and students settled their position on these online gambling sites by developing a pursuit of more luxurious expenditure, whether for general spending or a specific costly object. Exposure to gambling advertisements, mental health problems associated with anxiety or depression, or normalization of gambling activity in a family environment did not engender their inherent desire for gambling participation.

The stimulus memory of instant financial gain from previous wins served as an impetus for continuing their online gambling activity. As well as the financial benefit from wins, mere excitement, and thrill, regardless of win or loss, also significantly supported their maintenance in gambling activity. Most importantly, the substantial parental allowance given to high SES students, both in forms of regular and on-demand, established a more active engagement in online gambling, by not only providing a solid bankroll for initial bets and recovery from losses but also dulling their sensation for pecuniary losses subsequently. During their gambling activity, no active parental involvement in intent to cease students' engagement was found, which was shown in the indifference to the details of the child's allowance spending.

As a result of problematic gambling habits, students reported that they perceive a negative impact of online gambling on their social relationships with peers and long-term academic success. Specifically, in terms of academic success, excessive time commitment towards gambling, as well as the constant psychological detachment from schoolwork resulted in a decline in school grades. However, no serious financial damage affecting their economic standing was found, mainly due to an abundance of allowance that enabled an immediate recovery from losses at any level.

The decline in interest from repeating loss was a primary factor that led students to cease their gambling activity. In addition, students positively assessed their self-control ability and supposed that assistance from others was not necessary to overcome their gambling habits.

The analysis of student's gambling behavior suggests possible gambling prevention methods and post-gambling intervention. This study notes that participants' environmental analysis is consistent with both their parents' indifference and non-intervention during their online gambling. By increasing parental involvement, problematic gambling habits among high SES students can be alleviated. First of all, parents can monitor their children's spending habits and general online activities to help pre-

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vent them from initiating gambling. Secondly, schools can implement short-term training sessions by well-educated teachers and public health professionals with expertise in gambling and addiction overall. Finally, as examples of "evidence-based kernels" and "behavioral vaccines", by encouraging praise for the positive behavior of parents and teachers in the community, and spreading it to the community using constructive discipline, after-school programs, and table-talk, we can form a better on-line gambling prevention culture and present effective solutions.

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