

Perception of Sport, Sports Betting, and Gambling from the Point of View of University Students – The Case of the Czech Republic

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BACKGROUND: University students are one of the population groups that may be affected by the issue of sports betting and gambling. **AIM:** The main aim of this paper was to discover the overall perception of university students in the Czech Republic of the issue of sports betting as one of the categories of gambling in the context of gender and biological age. **METHODS:** The bibliographic and citation database Web of Science, and the citation and reference database Scopus were used to analyse secondary data. Selected mathematical and statistical methods were used for the analysis of primary data and information. **SAMPLE:** The first research sample of respondents consisted of 391 university students in the Czech Republic who had experienced sports betting. The second sample comprised of 679 university students who had had no such previous experience. **RESULTS:** The results have concluded that there is a relationship

between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the gender, and the age of university students. Furthermore, it has been found that gender does not influence the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a potentially dangerous addiction, while the age of university students does have an effect on such perception. **CONCLUSIONS:** A quick and easy way of funds acquisition, obtained from sports betting, was determined to be the most common factor intrinsically motivating and appealing to university students in the Czech Republic to participate in sports betting.

Keywords | Czech Republic – Gambling – Sports – Sports Betting – University Students

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sport is an integral part of modern life in the 21st century. In recent years, various segments of the sports industry have experienced rapid growth worldwide, confirming the presence and significance of sports in the society. In some countries and regions, the sports industry is one of the main industries (Li et al., 2012).

As Li et al. (2012) further states, sport, the sports sector, and the sporting events themselves (sports matches, sports competitions, Sports or Olympic Games, etc.) have created a very lucrative, interesting, motivating and attractive environment, with betting markets, in return, creating an environment for betting thanks to the uncertainty of sports results, the high popularity of sport, as well as its unique dynamics. The professionalisation and commercialisation of sports has, to some extent, made sporting events more visible and attractive to consumers.

In this context, Koning and van Velzen (2009), Li et al. (2012) or Mao et al. (2015) claim that the relationship between sports and betting, which has been gradually strengthening, has made sports betting become one of the significant and widely discussed activities in the sports industry. However, it also brings certain risks, such as gambling and games of chance.

Today, sports betting is the fastest growing segment of the gambling industry worldwide and is increasingly becoming a significant part of sports and the sports industry (Li et al., 2012).

The issue of gambling and games of chance is a public health concern in many European countries (Molinaro et al., 2014; Volberg et al., 2010).

Collins (2003) perceives gambling and games of chance as a bet on something significant or valuable in the expectation of winning, where the outcome is dependent on the result of certain activities or events that are unknown to the participants at the time of the bet.

On the other hand, Ferentzy and Turner (2013) characterise gambling and games of chance as a type of human activity during which a risk of losing something of lesser importance or value (usually money) may occur during an exchange of a certain chance, risk and uncertainty. However, such an exchange in the future represents the acquisition of something more significant or valuable, usually financial resources.

Gambling and games of chance is a form of behaviour that has potential risks, negative consequences and impacts on human health, well-being, and crime-related behaviour of individuals, families and communities (Ayandele et al., 2020).

Appiah and Awuah (2016) or King et al., (2010) say that the development of gambling, games of chance and sports betting are becoming increasingly popular, receiving much attention from the media, the Internet and social media platforms, while becoming omnipresent and more socially acceptable, especially for young generations. It is also necessary to realise that gam-

bling, games of chance and sports betting have no geographical restrictions or limits due to the advancement of information and communication technologies.

In this context, Ahaibwe et al. (2016), Louw (2018), Salonen et al. (2017) or Scott and Barr (2013) claim that young women in particular are significantly involved in internet lotteries and other types of games of chance and gambling.

Generally, it can be stated that the issue of gambling, games of chance or sports betting associated with worrying, potential harmful effects concerns the younger generation, i.e., secondary school or university students (Wickwire et al., 2007).

Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003), Dowling et al. (2010), Karafil (2023) or Purdie et al. (2011) argue that young people engage in gambling and games of chance for a number of reasons. These reasons include: (a) young people like risk and feel excited about it; (b) want to make money quickly or obtain a valuable thing or object; (c) engage in gambling and games of chance because their friends, acquaintances or friends do so; (d) engage in gambling and games of chance out of boredom; (e) engage in gambling and games of chance to avoid the various problems they are dealing with; (f) to satisfy their desire to win and be successful.

Hardoon and Derevensky (2001) or Stinchfield (2000) add another reason why young people engage in gambling and games of chance. Many teenagers consider gambling, but also smoking, drugs or alcohol consumption as a rite of passage into adulthood.

In this context, Kalé (2011) and King et al., (2010) point out the significant influence of gambling and games of chance on children and subsequently on young adults and adults that the family where they grow up has on them. In families where gambling and games of chance are allowed or practiced, the children would often continue with this activity even in adulthood. Ultimately, we speak of addiction to sports betting or gambling.

Oyebisi et al. (2012) argue that the sports industry, sport itself and subsequent sports betting represent a popular form of gambling. Here, people predict the sports result and place bets on it with the expectation of winning the given prize. The higher the number of sports events (sports matches, sports competitions, races, Sports or Olympic Games, etc.) a person predicts, the higher the expected winning if their prediction is correct at the end of the sports event.

According to Ayandele et al. (2020), the prediction and the subsequent bet on the outcome of a sports match, sports competition, Sports or Olympic Games, constitute sports betting. In the long run, a positive perception and attitude toward sports betting may predict sports betting addiction and issues connected to gambling.

As further reported by Abbott et al. (2013) and also Lorains et al. (2011), gambling and games of chance are associated with significant health and psychosocial issues. The massive growth in popularity of gambling and games of chance over the past 20

years has brought its regulation to the forefront of social concerns of governments worldwide.

However, in order to establish effective regulation practices of undesired and dangerous gambling and games of chance, it is necessary to have enough information and extensive knowledge based on empirical evidence about the views of the general population on regulation of gambling and games of chance (Canale et al, 2016).

It can be stated that the selected empirical research thus presents gambling and its influence, or addiction to sports betting in the context of the following characteristics: (a) the relationship of sports betting to attitudes towards gambling and games of chance (Chiu & Storm, 2010; Stinchfield, 2000; Wood & Griffiths, 2004); (b) the relationship of sports betting to gender (Ayandele et al., 2020; Barnes et al., 2010; Hansse et al., 2014; Chiu & Storm, 2010; Moore et al., 2013; Salonen et al., 2017; Stinchfield, 2000; Wood & Griffiths, 2004); (c) the relationship of sports betting to biological age (Ayandele et al., 2020; Barnes et al., 2010; Govoni et al., 1996; Moore et al., 2013; Stinchfield, 2000; Wickwire et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2006); (d) the relationship of sports betting to geographic segmentation (Ayandele et al., 2020; Barnes et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2013); (e) the relationship of sports betting to awareness and knowledge of sports betting (Ayandele et al., 2020); (f) the relationship of sports betting to the environment of the individual, especially their friends and acquaintances who actively bet and/or gamble (Ayandele et al., 2020).

The topic of sports betting and gambling in relation to university students, where the aim was to map their attitudes, opinions, and behaviour, is dealt with among others by research by (a) Ayandele et al., (2020) who focused on South-West Nigeria; or by (b) Williams et al. (2006) who examined university students from southern Alberta.

The conditions for organising games of chance on the territory of the Czech Republic and the competence of administrative authorities in the field of gambling are regulated by the new act on games of chance (Gambling Act); the Act No. 186/2016 Coll., which replaced Act No. 202/1990 Coll., on lotteries and other similar games (Lotteries Act).

This research paper focuses on the sports industry and the related field of sports betting in the context of gambling and games of chance. The target group of the research are university students in the Czech Republic. Today, sport is not only a dynamic and turbulent industry, but is actively connected with various components of social and cultural life. The aim of the paper is to find out what is the overall perception of university students in the Czech Republic of the issue of sports betting as one of the categories of gambling, taking into account their gender and biological age. Furthermore, this article aims to partially investigate the factor that intrinsically most motivates and encourages them to participation in sports betting. The article is presented in a typical structure of first presenting the basic theoretical background relevant the research topic, followed by a chapter on the research objectives, methodology, and the research data. After this chapter, the research findings

are presented and debated through the comparison with other authors or research studies. The final chapter offers a paper summary presenting the research topic in the settings of the Czech Republic.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Sports and sports betting have always been closely and strongly linked. Traditionally, betting on sports is done by bookmakers, i.e., betting offices, which accept bets on certain sports events (sports matches, sports competitions, sports races, Sports or Olympic Games, etc.). These betting shops are to pay out the wagered amount if a certain outcome of a sporting event occurs (Koning & van Velzen, 2009).

Anastasovski and Nanev (2014) or Hing et al. (2015) define sports betting as betting on the final result or components of national or international sporting events in its most general form.

In this context, Mao et al. (2015) claim that due to the unpredictability of competition results, sporting events have always been an attractive space for betting on sports, gambling, and organising games of chance.

Li et al. (2012) also state that combining sports and gambling can on the one hand attract more sports fans and even non-fans to engage in gambling. On the other hand, it can help raise funds from sports betting for the public good to support sports programmes.

Over the past two decades, the regulation of gambling and games of chance has become a significant societal issue for numerous governments worldwide and has also become a significant factor in shaping public policy (McAllister, 2014).

As further stated in this context by Salonen et al. (2017), data and information on public attitudes towards gambling and participation in gambling are essential for an effective prevention of gambling-related issues.

On the other hand, Abbott and Cramer (1993), Hanss et al. (2014) and Vong (2009) claim that the public perception of gambling and games of chance is often not clear. On the one hand, people are usually aware that gambling and games of chance pose serious health risks to those susceptible to excessive gambling. On the other hand, it is also recognised that gambling and games of chance can have positive benefits for communities (for example by providing a source of income for sports clubs, or for humanitarian causes) and can serve as an enjoyable pastime for individuals.

According to Gainsbury et al. (2012), the balance of these negative and positive views is very likely to affect individuals' attitudes towards gambling and games of chance, and ultimately influence the individual's decision to engage in gambling or games of chance.

Appiah and Awuah (2016) argue that gambling and games of chance can be divided into four basic groups: (a) the first

group represents the exchange of funds or things of value (for example, slot machines, casino, and the like); (b) the second group focuses on future events (for example sport and sports betting, i.e., sports matches, races, Sports or Olympic Games, video games); (c) the third group is represented by lotteries (for example, raffle draws, lotteries); (d) the fourth group focuses on investment speculation, insurance and trading on the stock exchange.

Ayandele et al., (2020) define the term attitude as a predisposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively to a specific event, person, idea, situation or object. An attitude consists of three components: (a) behavioural, which represents the tendency to act when the person categorizes a certain situation; (b) cognitive, which is based on the specific information the person has; (c) affective, which is based on the person's emotional response.

Flack and Morris (2017) claim that sufficient knowledge about sports betting and the subjective norms of the group to which a person belongs can influence their attitudes, intentions, and intrinsic motives toward sports betting, gambling, and games of chance.

As Chiu and Storm (2010) and Wood and Griffiths (2004) add, a person's attitudes can clearly represent, explain and predict the extent to which a person will be affected by sports betting and gambling, and whether they can become addicted to sports betting or gambling.

Chiu and Storm (2010), Stinchfield (2000) or Wood and Griffiths (2004) further state that women and men differ significantly in their attitude, perception and approach towards gambling, games of chance and sports betting, with young men more likely to display more favourable and positive attitudes than women.

In this context, Karafil (2023) says that more positive and favourable attitudes towards gambling, games of chance and sports betting are, inter alia, related to factors that motivate individuals to participate in these activities. These factors include: (a) earning and obtaining money; (b) thrill seeking; (c) creating social ties and relationships with the environment that already operates gambling and sports betting; (d) gambling, games of chance and sports betting is a profession; (e) a way of spending free time; (f) gambling, games of chance and sports betting is done as a result of an addiction.

On the territory of the Czech Republic, the issue of gambling and games of chance are regulated by law, more specifically Act No. 186/2016 Coll., on games of chance (Gambling Act). This Act is effective from 1 January 2017 and regulates the following types of gambling (Act No. 186/2016 Coll., 2023): (a) lottery; (b) odds bet; (c) sweepstakes game; (d) bingo; (e) technical game; (f) live game such as roulette, card games (such as poker), card game tournaments and the like; (g) raffle; (h) small scale tournament.

3 METHODS

This research paper focuses on an activity conducted according to certain customs and rules, the results of which are specific, measurable and comparable with other participants in the same field. This activity is referred to as sport. Sport includes not only sports training, sports matches, sports competitions, races, and Sports or Olympic games and the like, but also sports betting, done as a pastime, or as internal motivation to gain quick and easy financial resources.

However, it is to be mentioned that sports betting, which consists of placing bets on the outcome of specific sports events (sports match, races, Sports or Olympic Games, etc.), falls under the category of gambling and games of chance. An addiction to sports betting or gambling can develop as a negative consequence of long-term sports betting or gambling. The fact that, among other things, gambling and games of chance are very attractive and interesting for university students is evidenced by an academic research review.

This research paper seeks to explore the perception, approach, decision-making, behaviour, opinions, attitudes and views of university students in the Czech Republic on the issue of gambling, games of chance and betting in the sports field.

The research focused on the perception of sports, sports betting and gambling from the point of view of university students in the Czech Republic presents only selected partial results that are part of the entire, large-scale research focused on the issue of sports betting.

It should be noted that the issue of sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, by university students represents a significant research gap in the Czech Republic. This research topic has not been sufficiently, comprehensively, thoroughly and empirically covered in the Czech Republic. There is a certain lack of Czech research in the field of gambling behaviour, gambling, games of chance or sports betting. Therefore, inspiration can still be drawn through foreign research and research studies, especially from Western countries.

Mao, Zhang and Connaughton (2015) further claim that although sports betting and sports lotteries are gradually becoming a prevalent phenomenon, it remains an under-researched area in the field of scientific research on sports and sports management.

Based on the interest of not only university students in sports betting and gambling, which can ultimately lead to addiction, the authors of the research article do not support, encourage or in any other way promote, and thus do not trivialize, the serious social issue of sports betting and gambling.

The main aim of this paper was to determine the overall perception of university students in the Czech Republic of the issue of sports betting as one of the categories of gambling in relation to their gender and biological age. The partial goal of this academic paper was to define the most common factor that internally motivates and encourages participation in sports betting.

Therefore, the research sample of respondents consisted only of university students in the Czech Republic who study full-time or in a combined form of study and at the time of the research (a) have experience with sports betting; (b) have no experience with sports betting; (c) have already participated in sports betting; (d) have not yet participated in sports betting; (e) have a negative opinion, attitude and approach to sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling. The entire large-scale research investigation carried out did not consider sports betting on specific sports events (sports match, sports race, etc.) held as part of the Summer or Winter Olympic Games.

The following research questions were formed to allow for a better understanding of the relationship between the variables and the defined research objectives.

Research question 1: is there a statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the gender of the respondents?

Research question 2: is there a statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the biological age of the respondents?

Research question 3: is there a statistically significant relationship between the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction, and the gender of the respondents?

Research question 4: is there a statistically significant relationship between the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction, and the biological age of the respondents?

Research question 5: what is the most common factor that intrinsically motivates and encourages respondents to participate in sports betting?

Primary research in the form of a quantitative research study was carried out through an anonymous, structured questionnaire survey. This anonymous structured survey was conducted online in the period between January 2023 and March 2023. Due to the relatively low number of respondents, the second round of the survey was conducted from mid-March 2023 to the end of July 2023. A pre-test was also conducted to ensure a correct understanding of the questions in the survey. This pre-test represented the zero stage of the questionnaire survey and was taken by a total of eight respondents with experience in sports betting. The pre-test was in paper form. After its implementation, the participants of the pre-test were politely asked to share the online questionnaire especially among their classmates at the university whom they know have experience with sports betting.

The quantitative research conducted through an anonymous structured questionnaire survey consisted of several parts: (a) determining perception, attitude, behaviour, opinions and views of the respondents on the issue of sports betting as one of the categories of gambling; (b) ascertaining respondents'

experience with sports betting; (c) ascertaining the amount of money invested in sports betting; (d) ascertaining the preferred type or form of sports betting; (e) ascertaining the frequency of sports betting; (f) ascertaining the time devoted to a given type or form of sports betting; (g) determining the most common factor that intrinsically motivates and encourages participation in sports betting; (h) identifying the most common sports activity for sports betting; (ch) ascertaining the frequency of sports betting; (i) identifying the most common type or form of sports betting; (j) obtaining segmentation characteristics of respondents (gender; biological age; type of university and faculty studied; full-time or combined form of study and other socio-economic, geographical and behavioural characteristics).

The attitude towards sports betting as one of the gambling categories was analysed on a three-point rating scale, namely **(a)** positive and favourable; **(b)** negative and unfavourable; **(c)** neutral.

The research sample of respondents in the primary research, in the form of quantitative research conducted through an anonymous structured questionnaire survey, consisted of two groups. The first sample of respondents consisted of university students in the Czech Republic who, at the time of the research, already had experience or participated in sports betting. This number represented a total of 391 respondents. In contrast, the second sample of respondents consisted of university students in the Czech Republic who, at the time of the research, had no experience or had not participated in sports betting. This group comprised of a total of 679 respondents. For the purposes of mathematical-statistical methods, both research samples of respondents were used in the research. The verification of the research questions defined above was performed through the Pearson's chi-square test. Pearson's chi-square test determines whether there is a relationship between selected statistical features.

Microsoft Excel 2013 spreadsheet and IBM SPSS Statistics 23 statistical software were used for the analysis and the subsequent processing of primary research data and information. In addition, standard scientific research methods such as synthesis, deduction and induction were used as part of the implementation of the extensive research focused on the issue of sports betting and gambling.

Participation in the conducted research focused on the issue of sports betting and gambling was voluntary, and all respondents were made aware that sports betting and gambling can have a negative effect on human health in the long term in the form of developing a certain type of addiction. The legislative norms on sports betting and gambling in the territory of the Czech Republic apply in the act on games of chance (Gambling Act), i.e., Act No. 186/2016 Coll., which replaced the older Act No. 202/1990 Coll., on lotteries and other similar games.

Table 1 | Structure of respondents

Gender	Absolute frequencies	Relative frequencies
Female	340	31.78%
Male	723	67.57%
Other	7	0.65%
Total	1,070	100.00%
Biological age	Absolute frequencies	Relative frequencies
18–22	357	33.36%
23–27	300	28.04%
28–32	232	21.68%
33–37	92	8.60%
38–42	34	3.18%
43–47	33	3.08%
48+	22	2.06%
Total	1,070	100.00%
Study form	Absolute frequencies	Relative frequencies
Full-time	704	65.79%
Combined	366	34.21%
Total	1,070	100.00%
Study programme	Absolute frequencies	Relative frequencies
Bachelor	669	62.52%
Master	378	35.33%
Doctoral	23	2.15%
Total	1,070	100.00%

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table (*Table 1*) presents the structure of the respondents, university students who took part in the research survey mapping their overall perception of the issue of sports betting as one of the categories of gambling.

Based on the table above (*Table 1*), it can be stated that 723 men (67.57%) and 340 women (31.78%) participated in the conducted research focused on the issue of sports betting and gambling among university students in the Czech Republic. Regarding biological age, the segment between 18 and 22 years of age had the largest representation (33.36%), on the contrary, the segment 48 years and older had the smallest representation (2.06%). Based on other criteria, it can be seen that full-time students accounted for 65.79% of the participants, and the bachelor's degree programme was represented by 669 students (62.52%).

Research question 1: is there a statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the gender of the respondents?

Pearson's chi-square test was used to verify and answer the research question 1. In considering this dependence, the ob-

tained primary research data showed that the p-value is lower than the standard defined level of significance (5%). It can therefore be concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the gender of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 2140.000$, $df = 4$, $p < .05$). The strength of the discovered dependence was also examined using Cramer's V. Its value was 1.000. It can therefore be argued that in this case it is a very strong relationship.

Research question 2: is there a statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the biological age of the respondents?

The result of the verification of the research question 2 using the Pearson's chi-square test shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the biological age of the respondents, as the p-value is equal to 0.000 ($\chi^2 = 55.314$, $df = 12$, $p < .05$). The strength of the detected dependence was further tested through Cramer's V and the discovered value was 0.161. In this case, it can be said that it is a weak relationship.

Table 2 | Possible intrinsically motivating and encouraging factors to participate in sports betting

Possible intrinsically motivating and encouraging factors to participate in sports betting	Absolute frequencies	Relative frequencies
quick and easy access to funds	358	91.56%
others	19	4.86%
spending free time	9	2.30%
thrill seeking	5	1.28%
Total	391	100.00%

Research question 3: is there a statistically significant relationship between the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction and the gender of the respondents?

In order to verify and answer the research question 3, Pearson’s chi-square was used. The p-value is equal to 0.217, which is higher than the standard defined level of significance (.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected at the 5% significance level. In this case, it can be concluded that the gender of the respondents has no influence on the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction ($\chi^2 = 3.052$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Research question 4: is there a statistically significant relationship between the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction and the biological age of the respondents?

The fourth research question was also verified through Pearson’s chi-square test. The result of this verification shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction and the biological age of the respondents, as the p-value is equal to 0.000 ($\chi^2 = 29.600$, $df = 6$, $p < .05$). The strength of this dependence was further tested using Cramer’s V. The value found was 0.275. In this case, it can be stated that this is a weak relationship.

Research question 5: what is the most common factor that intrinsically motivates and encourages respondents to participate in sports betting?

The conducted research focused on the issue of sports, sports betting and gambling from the point of view of university students in the Czech Republic also focused on finding out which is the most frequent factor that internally motivates and encourages participation in sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling. Based on the research review, the following possible factors were presented to the respondents: (a) thrill seeking; (b) quick and easy access to funds; (c) spending free time; (d) others. Respondents who, at the time of the research, already had experience or participated in sports betting, were instructed to mark only one of the listed intrinsically motivating and encouraging factors to participate in sports betting. The table

below (Table 2) presents the possible intrinsically motivating and encouraging factors to participate in sports betting.

According to the Table 2, the most frequent factor that internally motivates and encourages respondents to participate in sports betting is the quick and easy acquisition of financial resources (91.56%). Other factors include spending free time of university students in the Czech Republic (2.30%) or seeking excitement (1.28%). The respondents mentioned the following factors or reasons: participation in sports betting due to betting in the respondent’s surroundings or searching for various entertainment options and alternatives, as other possible intrinsically motivating factors for participation in sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling

This research article focuses on the perception of sports, sports betting and gambling from the perspective of university students in the Czech Republic.

The research findings of our research showed that there is a relationship between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and the participants’ gender; but also the biological age of university students. Furthermore, it was found that the gender of university students has no influence on the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction, while the biological age of university students is of an influence on this perception.

Canale et al. (2016) and Flack and Morris (2017) also looked into attitudes to games of chance gambling frequency and gambling issues and addictions beyond sports betting in their research. In this context, they revealed, among other things, the fact that people with positive and favourable attitudes towards games of chance, gambling or sports betting were much more likely to participate in various gambling activities and experience related issues.

Other empirical research on games of chance and gambling shows the fact that the general attitude of the public towards this issue is rather negative and unfavourable, such as in Great Britain (Orford et al., 2016), Finland (Salonen et al., 2014) or in Australia (McAllister, 2014).

Hans et al. (2014) conducted a research study in Norway with a sample of 2,055 respondents aged 17 years and also determined that males display more favourable and positive attitudes towards games of chance, gambling and sports betting than females. These findings also partially confirm our findings.

Furthermore, Salonen et al. (2017) based on their surveys in Finland in 2015 on a total sample of 4,515 respondents, and Salonen et al. (2014), based on their 2011 research on a sample of 4,484 respondents, claim that significantly higher positive and favourable attitudes towards gambling and games of chance, and a more active gambling behaviour was displayed by younger men (attitudes towards gambling became more positive between 2011 to 2015). These men also studied for 12 or more years and had a net income of more than EUR 2,000.

Research studies by Ahaibwe et al (2016), Louw (2018), Salonen et al. (2017) a Scott and Barr (2013), present interesting findings. These show an increase in the number of young women involved in online lotteries and other forms of games of chance and gambling.

Ayandele et al. (2020), conducted a research study in a large tertiary institution in South-West Nigeria and presented findings from their study on a sample of 749 students, where 42.9% were female. This fact also corresponds with our research, where men are more represented by gender in the field of sports betting and gambling. Their results further show that attitudes towards sports betting are positive among older men who have awareness and knowledge about sports betting and have friends in their social environment who are active in the field of sports betting and gambling. This fact again partially confirms the results of our research, where men also showed more positive attitudes towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling. The conclusion that follow from these findings is that a social group, whether close or distant, with which the university student comes into contact, is important for activities aimed at developing healthy attitudes towards sports betting and gambling, as well as preventing the development of addiction to sports betting and gambling.

Williams et al. (2006) conducted a research study of 585 university students in southern Alberta and found gambling and games of chance to be a harmless activity for the majority of students in their research study. In contrast, a significant minority of college students are heavy gamblers who experience very adverse consequences (a total of 7.5% of college students were classified as problem or pathological gamblers, a rate significantly higher than in the general adult population of Alberta).

The most common factor that internally motivates and encourages the respondents of our research to participate in sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, is the quick and easy acquisition of funds. Ahaibwe et al. (2010) or Scott and Barr (2013) in their research identify games of chance and gambling as the main and often the only source of income for young people in some African cities, to which they devote all their time and energy.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The 21st century sport is a global enterprise, the consequences of which reverberate far beyond the boundaries of pitches, stadiums and corporate offices. Elite sports, in particular, have such a significant economic impact that they have become dominant players in regional and national political economies, leading to trade deals and government policy changes in order to gain the right to host a global mega event – a sports match, sports competition, sports race, Sports or Olympic Games and the like (Nauright & Pope, 2017).

The research paper focused on the sports sector, especially the issue of sports betting and gambling. This issue is further researched among university students in the Czech Republic.

The fields of sports betting and gambling are already historically strongly interconnected. They also support and influence each other. In their own way, they push the sports phenomenon into the next dimension. The connection of these two areas presents a number of opportunities, but also threats. Globality, uniqueness, universality, attractiveness or financial gain rank among the main forms of opportunities. On the other hand, there are also threats related to games of chance and gambling that can lead to an undesired dangerous addiction.

The primary goal of this research paper was to determine the overall perception of sports, sports betting, gambling and games of chance by university students in the Czech Republic in relation to the participants' gender and biological age. The secondary goal of the article was to find the most common factor that internally motivates and encourages university students in the Czech Republic to participate in sports betting.

Five research questions were formulated as a result of considering the current theoretical background in the issue of sports, sports betting, gambling and games of chance.

The results of the research found that there is a statistically significant dependence between the attitude towards sports betting, as one of the categories of gambling, and not only the gender, but also the biological age of university students in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the conducted research determined that gender has no influence on the perception of sports betting as a gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction. On the other hand, the results showed that the biological age of university students does have an effect on the perception of sports betting as gambling with the possibility of developing a dangerous addiction. Quick and easy access to funds that can be obtained from sports betting was determined as the most common factor that intrinsically motivates and encourages university students in the Czech Republic to participate in sports betting.

This academic paper is aimed, among other things, at closing the gap in the academic knowledge on the issue by simultaneously examining how university students in the Czech Republic perceive sports betting and gambling, and how their overall perception of sports betting mutually influences and shapes their attitudes towards sports betting and gambling. The obtained findings and information are the main contribution, value and originality of this research paper.

The conducted research has certain research limitations, such as: (a) the duration of the research could have been longer; (b) the quantitative research through an anonymous structured questionnaire survey was conducted primarily online; (c) in addition to a quantitative research study, a qualitative research study on a selected research sample could have also been implemented; (d) the research sample of respondents was limited only to university students in the Czech Republic; (e) the number of respondents within the research sample could have been higher; (f) the conducted research took place only on the territory of the Czech Republic. Despite the obvious research limits and limitations, the paper brings new sources of data, facts and information, thus contributing to and enriching the topic of sports, sports betting, gambling and games of chance in the population segment of university students in the Czech Republic.

Authors' contributions: Conceptualization: JB, PS; Introduction and Theoretical background: JB, PS; Methodology and Results: JB, PS; Final edition: JB, PS. All the authors contributed to the article and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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