A Thematic Analysis of Young Adults' Perspectives of Gambling and its Representation on Media

Tanya A. Rajmangal

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Student No. U1326868

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Abstract

The impact of technology has been a key interest in gambling literature. Quantitative research studies appear to be prominent in the gambling field identifying positive correlations between positive attitudes towards gambling and problem gambling. Given the increased coverage of gambling in the media and the advances in technology, young people are more exposed to the behaviour. Young adults at the age of 18 are legal to gamble anywhere, it would be important for us to understand how they perceive gambling in order to shape support services for young people with problem gambling.

This study aims to shed light on young adults' perspectives of gambling and its representation in the media using a qualitative design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 10 participants between 18-25 years of age as they were deemed as young adults. Thematic analysis (TA) was used to analysis the transcripts. The analysis revealed three main themes; 'Temptation', 'Stay Away' and 'What Would Others Think?'. Each theme consisted of four subthemes which illustrates how the participants perceived gambling and the factors that contributed to their perspective and understanding.

The research findings illustrated that society and the media play a vital role in providing the participants with details of gambling. Participants all appeared to be enticed by advertisements and chances of winning in gambling but displayed ambivalence due to the consequences and stereotypes in gambling. There appeared to be evidence of a dilemmatic element in regard to gambling which was understood as the participants battling with common-sense.

The research highlights a need to raise awareness of the consequences of gambling amongst young people and shape support services to acknowledge the

tensions that gambling clients may face. The limitations of the study, implications for

Counselling psychologists and recommendations for future research are presented.

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Introduction to the Thesis

The gambling industry has seen significant changes in the last 15 years due to the increased availability of internet gambling (Gainsbury, 2015). Technology has always played a role in gambling however, the use of applications on mobile phones has made it accessible to anyone at any time (Griffiths, 2011). Furthermore, the increased prevalence of gambling advertisements ensures that there is an increased exposure to youths, which has been found to influence early gambling experiences (Korn, Hurson & Reynolds, 2005). There has been a considerable amount of research on correlations between gambling advertisements and attitudes, using quantitative designs; however, there appears to be little research exploring how gambling is perceived, especially amongst young adults who are at the legal age to gamble in the United Kingdom. The main aim of this study is to explore young adults' perceptions of gambling and perceptions of media representations of gambling. The first chapter provides a review of the literature, presents the rationale for the current study and outlines the aims and its relevance to Counselling Psychology.

The researcher positioned herself philosophical standpoints as associated with a critical realist approach where she acknowledges her interest in subjectivity. The methodology chosen in this study was Thematic Analysis (TA). The data analysis involved one-to-one semi-structured interviews with ten participants aged 18–25 years. Chapter two discusses the researcher's epistemological position, chosen method of analysis, and provides details on the procedure of the study.

From analysis of transcripts, three main themes were identified, each with four subthemes. 'Temptation' was characterised by enticement, enjoyment, fun, and life experience. 'Stay away' consisted of participants' descriptions of disgust, wealth, fear, and alienation. The final theme, 'What would others think?', comprises: media tells us, stigma, apps alleviate shame, and peer influence. The analysis chapter presents each

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theme and its subsequent subtheme, along with quotes from the transcripts. There appeared to be existing literature that supported these findings which is discussed in more detail.

The final chapter discusses the findings in relation to existing literature, and outlines the contribution to counselling psychology, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. Lastly, the researcher reflexive comments are presented.

The thesis followed the APA 6th edition, apart from the page numbers, which followed University of East London (UEL) guidelines.

Chapter One

Literature Review

This chapter provides a review and critical appraisal of the existing literature on gambling in order to provide a background and context of the research and to outline existing knowledge relevant to the research questions. Furthermore, this review discusses the developments in gambling and psychological problems associated with gambling, along with theories of problem gambling. Literature on youth gambling and the overlap with gaming is presented. Following the review of literature, the research questions, aims and relevance to counselling psychology are outlined.

1.1 Young people and Mental Health

The emotional wellbeing of children and young people is equally important as their physical health (Public Health England, 2016). The Mental Health Foundation (1999) describes children and young people who are mentally healthy as having the ability to develop psychologically, intellectually, emotionally, creatively, and spiritually in a positive and fulfilling manner. They should also enjoy mutually satisfying personal relationships, have empathy, use and enjoy solitude, play and learn, develop a sense of right and wrong and have the ability to resolve problem and setbacks in their lives (MHF, 1999). Good mental Health in young people allows them to develop the resilience to cope with life and grow into mentally healthy adults (MHF, 1999).

Young people's mental health problems are common and have long-lasting consequences. Research has identified that one in ten of Britain's 5 – 16 year olds suffer a clinically impairing disorder (Green et al, 2005) commonly including depression, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) and conduct disorders. Depressive disorders within adolescence have been associated with a number of negative outcomes such as academic difficulties, difficulties with interpersonal

relationships, physical health, substance misuse, smoking and suicide (Fergusson, Woodward & Horwood, 2000; Weissman, et al, 1999). It has been noted that depressive disorders are more prevalent in girls (Hyde, Mezulis & Abramson, 2008) and young people in deprived areas (Yoshikawa, Aber & Beardslee, 2012). The England Public Health (2016) statistics reported that about 67,600 young people in England are seriously depressed and each year 150,000 attend A&E following self-harm. One in seven 15 year olds reported low life satisfaction in 2014 – 2015 (England Public Health, 2016). Studies have found that young people can be predisposed to suicide if they experience stressful life events, childhood maltreatment and/or sexual abuse, interpersonal and familial difficulties, parental divorce, maladaptive parenting, psychiatric disorders, substance abuse and family history of suicide (Gould et al, 2003; Kelly et al, 2002; Nower et al, 2004)

Anxiety disorders in adolescence are associated with increased rates of anxiety and also depression in early adulthood (Creswell, Waite, Cooper, 2014). It has also been linked later in life with major depression, substance misuse, underachievement in education, early parenthood and suicide (Woodward & Fergusson, 2001). Anxiety and depressive disorders are often co-occurring with gambling problems in youth (Arbinaga, 2000; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998). For youth and adults gambling can result in significant psychological distress (Nower, et al, 2004) affecting their overall mental health. Gambling problems have been associated with various mental health disorders including depression, anxiety, substance misuse, ADHD and suicide. Adolescent gambling has also been linked to severe gambling problems later on in life (Burge et al, 2004). This is discussed further throughout.

1.2 Gambling

Aasved (2002, p. 3) argued that according to most definitions, gambling means "risking something of value on the unknown outcome of some future event". Wildman (1997, p. 1) suggested that gambling is "a conscious, deliberate effort to stake valuables, usually but not always currency". It is usually associated with poker games, casinos, or bets on competitive events such as horse racing or football (Aasved, 2002). However, there are also gambling opportunities in the stock market, real estate, and business ventures (Aasved, 2002). According to the Gambling Commission (2007), gambling now includes the buying of lottery tickets. There is a spectrum of gambling comprising of social, recreational, or professional, where gambling does not result in any significant problems (Petry, Stinson & Grant, 2005), all the way to problem gambling (Bowden-Jones & George, 2015). There has been a growing concern over the increasing gambling problem in youths. Statistics from the Gambling Commission (2016) show that in the UK, 16% of 11–15 year olds from a sample of 2,411 had gambled in the previous week. 8% of the sample gambled on commercial premises and 8% played games for money with peers. Research in the US and Canada identified that approximately 80% of adolescents have participated in some form of gambling during their lifetime (Shaffer & Hall, 1996).

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of gambling outlets that have opened in the UK. The Gambling Commission's (2014) research shows that in March 2010, bingo clubs had, on average, 18,069 gaming machines, whereas in March 2014 there were, on average, 47,788 machines. During this period, total casino attendance increased. London-based casinos have seen the biggest growth in customer numbers, increasing from 3.58 million from April 2009–March 2010, to 6.47 million from April 2013–March 2014 (Gambling Commission, 2014). The most recent UK gambling industry statistics in 2016 show that between April 2015 and March 2016, the regulated

UK gambling industry generated a gross gambling yield (GGY) of £13.6bn, an increase of 20.8% compared to the previous year. Between these dates, statistics identify that the majority of gambling was remote betting, bingo, and casino (Gambling Commission, 2016). Remote gambling is defined as gambling in which persons participate by the use of remote communication; typically via the internet (accessed via computers, tablets, and smartphones), telephone, or television.

There has been considerable research into the influence of the decision making of whether to gamble or not. A model that provides an insight into the decision making process in addictive behaviours is the expectancy theory (Jones, Corbin & Fromme, 2001). This draws on social learning theories, and proposes that an individual's choice to engage in a behaviour is influenced by their expectations of the reinforcing or punishing effects (Bandura, 1977). Li, Tse & Chong (2015) supported this assertion and suggested that positive and negative perceptions of gambling and gambling expectancies (Spurrier & Blaszczynski, 2014) are important factors that motivate people, particularly youths, to gamble. Expectancies are considered as a more conscious type of information processing compared to behavioural attitudes that are more unconscious (Gerrard et al, 2008). Expectancies are primarily formed through social influence and observations prior to engagement with any gambling. It can be modified through personal experience and further social influence and observational learning. The expectancies learnt, influence the expectations of the outcome of gambling and as a result increases or decreases the engagement of the behaviour (Chan, Zane & Wong, 2015). Studies have identified that gambling outcome expectancies are associated with increased and problem gambling (Shead & Hodgins, 2009; St-Pierre et al, 2014; Stewart, Stewart, Yi & Ellery, 2015; Wickwire, Whelan & Meyers, 2010). Positive expectancies have been identified as enjoyment/ arousal, self- enhancement and monetary gain. Whereas negative expectancies consist of over-involvement and

negative emotional impact (Gillespie, Derevensky & Gupta, 2007). Although gambling can be a leisure and nominal behaviour (Powell et al., 1999), it can also be a source of considerable harm to individuals, due to the negative impact on the gambler themselves, their families, and communities (Blaszczynski et al., 2011; Reith, 2006). This will be looked at in more detail below.

1.3 Psychological Problems associated with Gambling

Over the last two decades, there has been an unprecedented explosion of commercial gambling; this has developed an increasing interest into the impact of gambling on psychological health and mental wellbeing (Zangeneh, Blaszczynski & Turner, 2008). Gambling can give rise to different types and levels of harm, ranging from personal, social, and vocational, to financial and legal difficulties (Rickwood et al., 2010). Arguments related to gambling as an addiction and terminologies used will firstly be presented.

According to the American Psychiatric Association's fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), gambling problems are an indicated mental illness. The DSM-5 has provided a diagnostic criterion for a Gambling Disorder (originally classified as pathological gambling), which is defined as "persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behaviour leading to clinically significant impairment or distress" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This disorder varies from mild to pathological. The DSM-5 reclassified the term 'pathological gambling', which was categorised in the "impulse control disorders not elsewhere classified", as 'gambling disorder' in the category "substance related and addictive disorders". This was in order to reflect research findings that a gambling disorder is similar to substance-related disorders in clinical expression, brain origin, comorbidity, physiology, and treatment (Yau & Potenza, 2015). The concept of whether

gambling can be included under the term addiction, has been under much debate as theories of addiction have been based upon chemical and physiological body elements rather than behavioural addiction (Yau & Potenza, 2015). A number of common components of addiction have been identified (Brown, 1993; Griffiths, 1996). Firstly, 'salience', where the activity is dominating their life, thinking and their social life deteriorates due to cognitive distortions. 'Conflict' arises in life which may be personal or with others and the person builds up a 'tolerance' which increases engagement of the behaviour. 'Withdrawal', when the activity is stopped or reduced is common which results in 'mood modification'. Commonly, there is a tendency for 'relapse' which means reverting to previous behaviours.

The term "pathological gambling" is often used interchangeably with "problem gambling" in the gambling research literature (Griffiths, 2006; Horch & Hodgins, 2013; McCormack, 2011; Rigbye, 2013). There have also been other terms used such as 'addictive', 'compulsive', 'disordered' and 'at-risk' which are employed to reflect different severities (Griffiths, 2007). However, Delfabbro (2008) has made a clear distinction between the terms 'pathological' and 'problem'. According to Delfabbro (2008), the term "pathological", though favoured by early researchers in the field (Custer & Milt, 1985), carries a medical connotation. It conveys the opinion that problem or excessive gambling involves a biological or hereditary origin. Within this context, the term "problem gambling" would then be considered a result of maladaptive brain functioning that culminates in the decrease in impulse control of behaviour – in this case, the control of gambling (Delfabbro, 2008). Griffiths (2014, p. 6) stated that in Great Britain, "the term 'problem gambling' has been used by many researchers, bodies, and organisations, to describe gambling that compromises, disrupts or damages family, employment, personal, or recreational pursuits". He argued that these terms need to be considered along a continuum where gambling addiction would be at the extreme end of

the scale, as problem gamblers do not display all the classic indicators of an addiction, for example, withdrawal (Griffiths, 2005). For the purpose of this thesis, terminology will be used in accordance with the literature being discussed and problem gambling will be used at any other time to refer to gambling that has caused disruption to the person's life, in line with Griffiths' (2014) statement.

Research has identified a range of risk factors and comorbidities associated with problem gambling. An array of psychosocial and psychological difficulties is often associated with a diagnosis of pathological gambling (Thomsen et al., 2009). A national telephone survey in 2008 on problem gambling and comorbid disorders found that approximately 75% of all pathological gamblers also had problems with alcohol (Carlbring & Smit, 2008). Research has also identified that problem gamblers reported intimate relationship and family difficulties due to the neglect and disengagement with peers (Rickwood et al., 2010). For those in treatment for pathological gambling, it was found that 40–60% of problem gamblers in treatment samples experience clinical depression (Battersby & Tolchard, 1996; MacCallum, Blaszczynski, Joukhador & Bettie, 1999), display suicidal ideation (Battersby & Tolchard, 1996; Sullivan, Abbott, McAvoy & Arroll, 1994), or have significant levels of anxiety (Battersby & Tolchard, 1996). Nower et al. (2004) aimed to compare the relationship of suicidality, depression, and gambling severity in youths with three separate adolescent samples. They found that problem and pathological gamblers reported significantly higher rates of depression than non-gamblers and social gamblers. Blaszczynski and Farrell (1998) additionally found that if comorbid depressive symptoms were present, the risk of completed suicide increased.

Research has also taken into consideration the impact of a gambling problem on the families of a gambler. Wenzel, Oren and Bakken (2008) found that considerable consequences were reported with almost two thirds of close significant others reporting

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family conflicts, and almost half of the close significant others indicating worsening of the family's financial situation. Research on the spouses of problem gamblers found that as well as financial worries (Bergh & Kuhlhorn, 1994), they also reported similar emotional states as the gambler themselves, such as depressive symptoms (Poirier-Arbour et al., 2014), self-blame, and emotional stress (Blaszczynski & Farrell., 1998; Dickson-Swift et al., 2005). Suicide attempts by spouses were reported as triple that of the general population (Lorenz & Yaffee, 1988). Evidently, there are high rates of separation or divorce (Potenza et al, 2002). In two qualitative studies conducted by Patford (2008, 2009), both male and female partners of gamblers (current or previous) were interviewed to explore their experiences. The overall themes included financial conflicts, diminished quality of life with partner, relationship tension and loss of trust, and effects on children. Furthermore, Franklin and Thomas (1989) reported that children of the gamblers often feel responsible for the emotional atmosphere at home, and are often conflicted between which role to take on, including the role of the peacemaker, serving as a scapegoat, or taking on blame. Moreover, problem gamblers themselves reported elevated levels of problem gambling by their parents (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997). In addressing the parents of a young gambler, Moody (1989) found that parents tend to self-blame; the father distances himself and the mother attempts to move closer to the gambler. This shows that a gambling problem does not only have an impact on the individual themselves but also those who are close around them.

Surveys have shown that those with gambling problems often do not seek help (Griffiths, 2001; Slutske, 2006; Suurvali et al., 2009). Research has identified a number of reasons that influence this, including problem gamblers wanting to solve the problem alone (McMillen et al, 2004), shame/embarrassment/stigma (Evans & Delfabbro, 2005; Gainsbury et al, 2014), reluctance to admit their problem, and issues related to treatment (Evans & Delfabbro, 2005; Ladouceur, Lachance &Fournier, 2009; Suurvali et al.,

2009). Hing et al (2016) conducted a study which confirmed that people with gambling problems are socially stigmatized, they attract negative stereo types, experience social distancing, status loss and discrimination. This finding has been similarly found in other studies (Dhillion et al, 2013; Horch & Hodgins, 2013). It has been also noted that there is a fear of being labelled as a "problem gambler" as these negative stereotypes hides good qualities and the individual begins to stigmatise themselves (Hing et al, 2016). Research related to stigma in problem gambling and mental illness have stressed the need to increased public contact with those groups in order to reduce stigma and increase support. Researchers have consistently reported that few young people seek treatment for problem gambling (Chevalier & Griffiths, 2004; Gupta & Derevensky, 2000; Rigby, 2014) indicating that the rates are lower than adult gamblers seeking treatment (Rickwood et al, 2007).

With increased exposure and availability of various forms of gambling, more young people are surrendering to the temptation and pressure to engage in these activities as a form of entertainment (Jacobs, 2000). Researchers have argued that those who begin gambling in childhood are more likely to later develop gambling problems (Griffiths, 1995; Ide-Smith & Lea, 1988; Shaffer & Hall, 2001).

Problem gambling in adolescence has been identified to lead to adverse outcomes similar to adults, such as relationship strain, delinquent and criminal behaviour, depression, and even suicide (Derevensky & Gupta, 2004; Feigelman et al., 2006) as well as increased risks of alcohol and substance misuse (Hardoon et al., 2002; Huang et al., 2007). Poor ability to cope with emotions such as stress, anger, and anxiety (Slutske et al., 2005) has also been noted. An early study by Lesieur (1991) supported this notion, as in a college sample of pathological gamblers, it was found that they were more likely to binge drink, smoke cigarettes and use marijuana than social or non-gamblers. More recently, gambling has been found in youths to increase levels of

truancy (Valentine, 2016) and impaired academic performance (Yani-de-Soriano et al., 2012). Some studies suggest that youths of a lower socio-economic status gamble more frequently than those of higher socio-economic status (Messerlian et al., 2007; Turchi & Derevensky, 2006). Auger et al. (2010), additionally, found that amongst youths of low socio-economic status, impulsivity is a key risk factor for gambling onset. Problem rates amongst youths have been found to be higher than those generally identified among adults (Derevensky et al, 2003; Petry, 2005; Shaffer & Hall, 1997). Valentine (2016, p. 41) argued that families may go to great lengths to support their children, or young people, who may have a gambling problem, including "paying off their debts" (Valentine, 2016, p. 41). Arguably, this implies that gambling problems can go unrecognised by not only the wider community, but by the young person themselves (Valentine, 2016). Life stress has also been associated with erroneous gambling cognitions and has been identified as a risk factor for adolescent problem gambling behaviour (Tang & Oei, 2011). As well as trait anxiety, tendency to take part in risky activities and ineffective coping styles (Dickson & Derevensky, 2006). Furthermore, problematic and pathological gambling have been associated with a means to escape problems, reduce depression, a way to cope with loneliness, to relax and as a way to socialize (Gillespie et al, 2007b).

An individual's system is important to consider in their behaviour and perceptions. Families and peers have been strongly associated as a risk factor in young people's development of a gambling problems (McCombe & Sebiston, 2010). Parental and peer modelling have been found to be positively correlated with adolescents' participation in gambling (Magoon & Ingersoll, 2006). Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al (2004) found that peers may influence the engagement with risky behaviours. Research has identified that adolescents usually share the same social norms which are seen as socially acceptable and have a powerful effect on an individual's behaviour (Berkowitz,

2003). Pitt et al (2017) found that children's families, especially their parents, were a key factor in shaping their gambling attitudes and behaviours, similar to previous studies (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Thomas, 2014). Children are more likely to want to try gambling if they believe that their parents gamble (Magoon & Ingersoll, 2006). Research has also identified that children's first formal introduction or contact with gambling are often via parents or other family members (Jacobs, 2005; Reith & Dobbie, 2011). Furthermore, the research presented suggests that family and systems tend to share similar behaviours, it could be argued that as they share similar behaviours they have similar values and perceptions. Bowen's (1974) family systems theory views families as tensely emotionally connected. He asserts that family members affect each other's thoughts, feelings and actions. A change in one members functioning is reciprocated by other members. Drawing on Bowen's (1974) theory, it could be argued that family members may also influence each other's perceptions and behaviours. This could also be related to their perceptions of gambling.

Research has identified that outcome expectancies is a significant predictor of adolescent risk-taking behaviour (Barnes et al, 2009; Dunn et al, 2000; Wahl et al 2005). Research on gambling expectancies have produced similar findings to that of alcohol and drug research (Simmons et al, 2016). Wickwire et al (2010) found that adolescent's positive expectancies were related to more frequent and problematic gambling behaviour. Gillespie et al (2007) supported this finding and additionally found that young males' expectancies about enjoyment, money and possible social consequence of excessive gambling, were related to reports of symptoms of problem gambling. Simmons et al (2016) similarly found that in a sample of African-American adolescent's males gambled more frequently and problematically than females and also had more positive expectancies of the outcome of gambling. Psychological theories have attempted to understand problem gambling and provide appropriate treatment.

1.4 Psychological Perspectives of Problem Gambling

Psychoanalytic perspective. The psychodynamic perspective seeks to understand pathological gambling through motivational forces that derive from unconscious mental processes (Wong, 1989). Gambling is seen as "a symptom of, or an expression of, an underlying psychological condition" (Myrseth, 2011, p. 22), however, theorists have proposed different views. Some psychoanalysts maintain the view that gambling has been seen to fill a void of pleasure, excitement, and promise of gain, which stems from the absence of love and attention from parents (Simmel, 1921). Van Hattenberg (1914) suggested that gambling was a form of self-punishment that recompenses the individual's guilt, this leads to a cycle of losses and gains. Stekel (1924) asserted that compulsive gambling was similar to alcohol abuse, where both are induced due to a need to escape and regress to childhood. Freud (1945) similarly proposed that gamblers gamble to lose, "as losing is a means of self-inflicted punishment to atone for guilt over the compulsion to masturbate, which in time is related to unresolved Oedipal conflict" (Raylu & Oei, 2002, p. 1038).

There is extensive literature on psychoanalytic explanations for pathological gambling. In summary, the three major aspects include gambling being "an unconscious substitute for pre-genital libidinal and aggressive outlets associated with Oedipal conflicts", a desire "for punishment in reaction to the guilt", and a means for recurrent "re-enactments, but not resolutions, of the conflict" (Allcock, 1986, p. 262). The psychodynamic model has been praised for the in-depth focus on internal processes (Raylu & Oei, 2002). However, as it relates to unconscious processes, it has been criticized for being untestable (Lesieur & Custer, 1984). Additionally, it overlooks factors related to the individual's environment or social factors.

Psychoanalysis has been thought to be a helpful treatment for pathological gamblers as it aims to resolve interpersonal conflicts within therapy, and subsequently,

a reduction in gambling behaviour would follow (Fong, 2005). Bergler (1957) reported using psychoanalysis to treat 60 pathological gamblers with an abstinence rate of 75%. However, it was not specified as to the types of gamblers treated or the specific psychoanalysis techniques used. Psychodynamic psychotherapy for pathological gamblers focuses on identifying the meaning behind ongoing gambling and resolving conflicts that may have led to it, as well as focusing on reducing guilt and shame (Fong, 2005). Similar to other addictive disorders, pathological gamblers employ immature defences, such as denial, rationalisation, or rejection (Fong, 2005). In a review of literature on psychodynamic psychotherapy for gambling, it has been concluded that short term treatment focusing on core issues is essential for the gambler's need to avoid or escape intolerable effects, and longer therapies are needed to modify coping styles and defences (Rosenthal, 2008).

   Biological perspective. In contrast to the psychodynamic model, the biological model assumes that problematic gambling is caused by a biological predisposition. This predisposition can give rise to gambling related problems, such as difficulty to control impulses (Ladouceur et al., 2002). The biological perspective asserts that pathological gambling stems from altered activity in different regions or biochemical dysfunctions (Greck et al., 2010). Research has suggested that excitement produced from gambling is central to problem gambling, and is associated with the physiological measures of arousal (Moodie & Finnigan, 2005; Wulfert et al., 2005). Excitement levels in pathological gambling may also be related to dopamine levels (Linnet et al., 2010), which are associated with reinforcement of behaviour. Dopamine has been linked to drug addiction (Volkow et al., 1997) as well as pathological gambling (Holden, 2001). A study by Greck et al. (2010) on pathological gamblers found a 'double deficit' function of dopamine, where the maladaptive gambling was reinforced by the release of dopamine, which increased excitement or reduced inhibition of risky decision-making,

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they suggested it could do both. Other neurotransmitter systems that have been found to be associated with pathological gambling are norepinephrine and serotonin. Research has identified that norepinephrine could be associated with excitement and arousal (Roy et al, 1989) and low levels of serotonin have been found to be responsible for gambling and other impulsive behaviour (Blanco et al, 2009; Comings et al, 1996).

The positioning of the biological perspective assumes that the gambler is either pathological or not. This view does not allow for difference between types of gambling behaviour patterns, and those who have a gambling problem and those who don't. A criticism of this model is the labelling of the gambler as 'sick', where single relapses could develop a sense of hopelessness, and this therefore increases the likelihood of a full-blown relapse (Rosecrance, 1986). Research has, however, supported the biological model as findings identify that addictions run in families (e.g. Agrawal & Lynskey, 2008). Evidence from twin studies demonstrates the importance of hereditary factors in the development of pathological gambling. Slutske et al (2010) suggested that genetics accounted for nearly half of the variance for problem gambling between men and women with no evidence indicating shared environmental influences. Xian et al (2008) also found that after controlling for genetic and shared environment influences, in a sample of 1,354 twins, symptoms of problem gambling were associated with cognitive distortions. However, genetic studies do not provide evidence for predisposition of gambling problem genes but rather describe a range of genes that may be responsible for a propensity towards experiencing impulse control disorders (Orford et al, 2003).

Several medications have been studied as treatment of pathological gambling, including opioid antagonists, serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs), and mood stabilisers (Grant & Kim, 2007). However, there is currently no medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration for treatment of pathological gambling (Fong, 2005; Grant & Kim, 2006; Zangeneh, Blaszczynski & Turner, 2008). Amongst youths, antidepressants

and mood stabilisers are commonly incorporated into psychological treatment to help with depression, anxiety and impulsivity (Bowden-Jones & George, 2015). The most consistent evidence for the efficacy of a pharmacotherapy for problem gambling has been reported for naltrexone which has been approved for drug and alcohol dependence (Anton, 2008). Naltrexone is an opioid antagonist, and can be helpful following detoxification in enabling a person to maintain abstinence (DoH, 2009). The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines have suggested that naltrexone can be used for young people where they are supported by a community and substance misuse specialists (Department of Health, 2009). Naltrexone has been subscribed to young people, and considered for adolescence if provided under supervision (DoH, 2009). Lahti, et al, (2006) conducted a pilot study using naltrexone as a treatment for pathological gambling. Results indicated that participant's obsessive-compulsive gambling and depressive symptoms had significantly decreased. Similarly, a 12-week double-blind placebo- controlled trail, naltrexone was effective in reducing the frequency and intensity of gambling urges and also the behaviour (Kim et al, 2001).

Behavioural perspective. The behavioural model of pathological gambling holds the view that gambling is a learned maladaptive behaviour, which is developed and maintained through classical and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning involves creating an association with an existing stimulus (Pavlov, 1927), and operant conditioning uses reinforcement and punishment to create associations with consequences (Skinner, 1938). Reinforcements may be financial (winning money), physiological (the thrill of gambling), psychological (increased self-esteem) or psychosocial (the social meaning of the activity) (Griffiths, 1999).

According to Skinner and other behaviourists, the strongest and most compelling reward sequence for shaping behaviour and maintaining gambling behaviour is a variable-ratio schedule (Ferster & Skinner, 1957). This is where the

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response is reinforced after a number of unpredictable responses. In most gambling cases, the monetary pay-out may always be the same, but the reward of a win is random and unpredictable; whether the gambler has a win or a loss, they hold the view that the next bet could always be a win.

It has been argued that addictive behaviours are strongly associated with situational cues, whether the behaviour is intended to induce positive states or reduce negative states (Sharpe & Tarrier, 1993). The gambling environment becomes associated with feelings of excitement through classical conditioning, this is then reinforced further through a combination of financial rewards and increased autonomic arousal (Sharpe & Tarrier, 1993). Aasved (2002) provided a clear example of a situational cue, where an overeater may be triggered to overeat by the smell of certain foods. These behaviours may not only be triggered by the environment, but also by internally-felt cues; for example, a substance user may understand any change in physiological arousal as a craving, tension, boredom, or feelings of anxiety (Aasved, 2002). In regards to gambling, an example of an external cue may be the spinning of a roulette wheel, the sound or sight of chips, or the shuffle of cards. These cues induce internal states of arousal, which reinforce the response to gambling (Nower et al, 2004).

In agreement with classical and operant conditioning, Bandura (1977) developed the 'social learning theory', which suggests that people learn how to behave by observing and mimicking others. This implies that children learn acceptable (or non-acceptable) behaviours from their parents, siblings, peers, and other significant people in their lives. In relation to gambling, Walker (2008) stated that even the simplest and most straight forward games would require some form of teaching and learning. He suggested that the novice gambler will have to learn how to play a simple game, such as the slot machines, and also learn the social rules that may apply. This may include learning how to convert credits to money. Gambling research has supported this theory,

as significant relationships have been identified between adolescent gambling behaviour and parent gambling behaviour (e.g. Browne & Brown, 1994). Children may learn about the excitement of gambling through vicarious reinforcement, as they watch the positive reactions from their parents (Walker, 2008). It has been suggested that there is a potential for the media to vicariously reinforce gambling behaviour, as attention is usually drawn to big lottery winners rather than the millions of losses (Abrams & Kushner, 2004). Gupta and Derevensky (1997) noted that 81% of children aged 9–14 gambled with members of their family. The social learning theory also provides the perspective that youths who learn to gamble and become recognised as a gambler or risk-taker gain social recognition, which can often lead to a higher status amongst peers (Smith & Abt, 1984). The social learning theory has been praised for including the entire population of gamblers, and not distinguishing between problematic and non-problematic gambling (Thrasher et al., 2011). However, it minimises the individual's motivation, emotions, and perceptions (Brown, 1987). Given the increase in gambling exposure and the rates of people who gamble, social learning theory can arguably help to explain the increase in youth gambling (Li, Tse & Chong, 2014).

Behaviour therapies for pathological gambling are based on the principles of classical and operant conditioning. Behaviour is reshaped by changing the individuals' learned responses and reducing arousal (Fong, 2005). Methods attempting to change the behaviour may include aversion therapy (Barker and Miller, 1966), imaginal desensitisation (McConaghy et al., 1988) and in-vivo exposure with response prevention (Fong, 2005).

Cognitive perspective. According to the cognitive perspective, the problem gambler continues to play because they possess distorted beliefs about gambling that cause them to over-estimate their chances of winning (Ladouceur & Walker, 1996).

Gamblers develop an illusion of control and assume a greater chance of winning; their cognitive distortions contribute to erroneous perceptions of gambling events.

Raylu and Oei (2004) developed a scale to measure cognitions that are related to gambling. The Gambling Related Cognitions Scale (GRCS) comprises five categories of gambling related cognitions, which are as follows: 1) Illusion of control, which includes superstitious behaviours, for example "I have specific rituals and behaviours that increase my chances of winning"; 2) Prediction control, which is a belief in the ability to predict the outcome of gambling, for example "if I keep changing my numbers, I have less chance of winning than if I keep the same numbers every time"; 3) Interpretive bias involves reframing the outcomes of gambling in order to justify continuing to gamble despite monetary losses. This includes attributing wins to dispositional influences, and losses to situational influences, for example, "relating my losses to probability makes me continue gambling"; 4) The gambling expectancies category involves specific thoughts about the benefits of gambling, for example, "gambling makes the future brighter"; 5) the perceived inability to stop the behaviour of gambling, for example, "I can't function without gambling". The five categories are a mixture of irrational beliefs and affective bases for gambling. Raylu and Oei (2004) reported that scores on the Gambling Related Cognitions Scale (GRCS) were significantly related to measures of gambling motivation and gambling problems.

There have been several studies identifying cognitive distortions in problematic or pathological gambling, such as skill misperception, illusion of control, skewed temporal orientation, superstitious beliefs, selective memory, and interpretative biases (Ladouceur et al., 2002; Ladouceur & Walker, 1996). Steenbergh et al. (2004) found that the level of cognitive distortion was related to the severity of the problematic gambling, and the level of cognitive distortion varied with their gaming preference. This study, therefore, shows a relationship between cognitive distortion and problem

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gambling, but due to the cross-sectional design, conclusions cannot be made about a direct cause and effect (Myrseth, 2011). It therefore appears unclear whether gamblers develop a gambling problem due to initial high levels for cognitive distortions, or if excessive gambling causes increased cognitive distortions (Myrseth, 2011). What seems to be clear, however, is that money motivation and gambling-related cognitions were the only significant independent predictors of gambling severity amongst involvement, motivation, impulsivity, and cognitions (Marmurek, Switzer & D'Alvise, 2014).

The cognitive treatment for pathological gambling comprises four major components: education of gambling, developing awareness and identification of cognitive errors, challenging the validity of irrational cognitions, and restructuring cognitive distortions (Hodgins & Petry, 2004; Ledgerwood & Petry, 2006).

Cognitive-behavioural perspective. Some cognitive psychologists felt that purely behavioural explanations are inadequate. Sharpe and Tarrier (1993) combined behavioural approaches with cognitive perspectives of the gamblers' erroneous perceptions, producing the cognitive-behaviour model. This evolved the treatment of problem gambling, as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) has shown high levels of effectiveness (Okuda et al., 2009). The cognitive component of CBT deals with identifying cognitive distortions, erroneous perceptions, and false expectations of gambling, whilst using behavioural management techniques, such as limiting access to money or increasing the degree of difficulty to gamble (Fong, 2005). CBT is intended to stop gambling behaviour by supporting the client to acquire specific skills using exercises that are introduced in each therapy session. It also includes homework tasks to facilitate practise and reinforcement of skills between sessions. Treatment aims to provide an overall framework to facilitate lifestyle changes and restructure the environment to increase reinforcement from non-gambling behaviours (Okuda et al., 2009).

Sylvain et al. (1997) assessed the benefits of cognitive and cognitive-behavioural treatment. They randomly assigned forty pathological gamblers to either a cognitive-behavioural group or a waiting list condition, where it was found that those in the cognitive-behavioural group had greater reductions in gambling problems. Petry et al. (2006) further investigated the efficacy of CBT, where those in treatment for pathological gambling had significantly reduced gambling related problems six months later.

Sociological perspective. The sociological perspective of gambling attempts to explain gambling as a functional purpose for society. Problem gambling is seen as a result of a social condition, so gambling then becomes the function of helping individuals adjust to the demands of society (Aasved, 2003). For example, according to Devereux (1968), gambling fulfils three vital functions in society. Firstly, gambling is seen as "fitting in nicely as the society's safety valve, as it gives frustrated persons opportunities in a capitalist world, such as decision making, risk-taking and the potential of winning a large sum of money in a short time" (Chan, 2011, p. 79). The second function is that gambling provides hope for those who don't have comfortable and secure earnings. Last, Devereux argues that gambling helps maintain and preserve the social system (Aasved, 2003), as it has the possibility of easing (or even ending) the frustration of low paid workers.

1.5 Recent Developments in Gambling

In recent years, the introduction of new technology has changed the nature of many forms of gambling, and provides new interactive modes. As access to the internet expanded to workplaces and private residences in the early to mid 1990s, gamblers in western societies were introduced to a new realm of gambling opportunities (Wood & Williams, 2007). Land-based traditional forms of gambling appeared in electronic

formats via the internet and have now become accessible to anyone with an internet connection (Gainsbury et al., 2015). Along with the use of the internet, technology innovation has introduced an entirely new way of engaging in gambling activity and has disrupted the gambling markets (Gainsbury et al., 2016). Gambling games can now be downloaded via applications on computers, tablets, mobile phones, and interactive television. Portable technology, such as mobile phones and tablets, makes it accessible anywhere at any time. It is now easier than ever before to gamble, with a huge number of online betting sites and game sites enabling people to gamble 24 hours a day. "Great Britain arguably has one of the most diverse and accessible commercial gambling markets in the world" (Bowden-Jones & George, 2015, p. 2), with over £7 billion spent every year (Gambling Addiction, 2010). The Gambling Commission's most recent statistics (2016) identify that online gambling accounts for 33% of gambling in Britain, and generated £4.5 billion between April 2015 and March 2016.

Griffiths (1999) argued that technology has always played a role in gambling behaviour, as it provides new market opportunities and will continue to do so, not only through the use of internet gambling, but also in the shape of more technologically advanced slot machines, video lottery terminals (VLTs), interactive television (i-TV) gambling, and telephone wagering (Griffiths, 2005). The Gambling Commission (2016) statistics show that the use of mobile phones or tablets to gamble has increased to 43% in 2016, compared to 10% in 2015, and 78% of respondents felt that there are too many opportunities to gamble nowadays.

As research in the gambling field developed, some researchers suggested that internet gambling is fundamentally more dangerous than land-based opportunities (Gray, LaPlante & Shaffer, 2012). Yani-de-Soriano et al. (2012) collected convenience samples and behaviour self-reports from internet gamblers. In their sample of UK college students, it was found that 60% who reported internet gambling in the past

month would meet the criteria for at-risk or pathological gambling. This is in line with Petry (2006) who, similarly, found that 66% of regular gamblers were categorised as probable pathological gamblers. Griffiths (2003) suggested a number of factors that make online activities, like internet gambling, potentially seductive. These factors include anonymity, convenience, escape, dissociation/immersion, accessibility, event frequency, interactivity, disinhibition, simulation, and associability. Some of the main variables that may account for acquisition and maintenance of online gambling are outlined below. Accessibility allows gambling to take place anywhere. Prevalence of behaviours has been found to strongly correlate with increased access (George et al, 2016; James et al, 2016; Gainsbury, 2015; Storer, 2009). This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Anonymity of the internet allows individuals to engage privately without fear of stigma (Griffiths, 2003). It may also provide the user with a greater sense of perceived control, tone, and nature of the online experience. Parke and Griffiths (2007) stated that the anonymity of the internet may reduce social barriers; furthermore, Griffiths, Kuss & King (2012) suggested that the mood modification of the online experience can provide emotional or mental escape, which further reinforces gambling behaviour. The feelings of escape are facilitated by dissociation and immersion. This can include losing track of time, feeling as if you are someone else, and being in a trance-like state. Online technology is seen as reducing the fundamentally social nature of gambling to an activity that is asocial (McCormack & Griffiths, 2012). It has been found that those with a gambling problem are more likely to be gambling alone (Shek & Lee, 2010). Griffiths (2003) argued that as gambling becomes more accessible online, gambling problems may increase, as it loses its social nature. A mode of technology that has received considerable attention with access to gambling is mobile phones.

Mobile gambling. Within online gambling, the remote gambling platform (via smartphones and tablets) is growing rapidly, with the number of users increasing from 64 million in 2013 to a predicted 164 million by 2018 (Epstein, 2013). The online gambling company, Betfair, claims that the number of bets it received from mobiles grew by 122% between 2010 and 2011 (Dredge, 2011). Mobile gambling makes the opportunity to gamble accessible anywhere, even if in transit (Griffiths, 2011). Much research has suggested that greater accessibility is related to increased gambling, increased money spent on gambling and increased rates of problem gambling (Engel et al., 2013; Griffiths, 2001).

According to Gainsbury et al. (2016, p. 2) "mobile gambling customers differ from other internet gamblers, and have been found to have longer and more frequent sessions, greater average bet size, and generate a higher gross margin than gamblers using a computer". Use of a mobile phone to gamble also allows for online gambling companies to promote and send advertisements directly to mobile phones that are possibly being used to bet with (Drakeford & Hudson Smith, 2015). Griffiths (2011) suggested that mobile gambling is a research area of increasing interest, due to its implications regarding the physiological impact and the way gambling is perceived. Despite the extent to which mobile phones, tablets, and other devices have impacted gambling, there has only been one study conducted on the use of different devices and their relationship with gambling problems. Gainsbury et al. (2016) found that those who preferred to gamble online via computers had lower rates of gambling problems compared to those using mobile and supplementary devices (for example, applications and tablets). However, when the individual's life circumstance was considered such as their age, marital and occupational status, their gambling preference changed. For example, for those over 50 years of age were more likely to gamble online if they were single, and less likely if they are working. In another study with a group of young men,

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mobile gambling led them to gamble when they wouldn't normally (Deans et al, 2016). The authors reported that the combination of land based and online access created a risk-prompting setting (Deans et al, 2016). Accessibility to mobile phones for gambling remains a concern amongst healthcare practitioners (James et al, 2016; Gainsbury et al 2015).

Social media, gambling and gaming. Social media has been defined as "websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile phone" (Cambridge University Press, 2008). It has been argued that due to the relatively new nature of social media, it requires further research to increase understanding of the psychological processes associated with its use (Brett-Taylor, 2013). However, there is a rising concern amongst clinicians who work with young people, parents, and wider society, regarding the risks associated with the role social media plays in young people's lives (Pantic, 2014).

Social media has been used by many companies as a way of marketing their products (Oyza & Edwin, 2015). This includes promotion of tobacco, alcohol, and junk food (Dunlop et al., 2015). "Marketing often attempts to elicit emotive responses, such as triggering memories of pleasant or exciting times, while also attempting to evoke consumer loyalty" (Gainsbury, et al., 2016, p. 126). The impact of marketing on online gambling is particularly important due to the continuous availability (Hing et al., 2014). It was found that internet gamblers were more likely to gamble more in response to gambling promotions (Hing et al., 2014). In the UK, it has been found that 68% of 18–24 year olds have been prompted to gamble by adverts and posts on social media (Gambling Commission, 2016).

Young people, including adolescents, have the highest use of the internet and social media, and research found that 72% of them use the internet more than once a day (Raco, 2014). Facebook, recorded its highest ever number of users of 1.94 billion

worldwide in the first quarter of 2017 (Statista, 2017), making it the most popular social network site. There has been concern over gambling content in Facebook games, as the gambling industry uses some Facebook groups to recruit consumers through ads and promotional publicities (Downs, 2010). Researchers have raised concern as some gambling game developers are also developing Facebook games and may include some similar content. Gainsbury et al. (2014) suggested that this may make it difficult to differentiate gambling games from regular online games. Jacques et al. (2016) explored the presence of gambling content in Facebook games. It was found that 54% of games had some form of gambling content present, most of these relating to slot machines. Exposure to gambling content on Facebook games could contribute to familiarisation with gambling. On the other hand, in a later study, Gainsbury et al (2015) found that social media had no impact on the way or extent to which adults gambled. Only 1 in 10 participants indicated that gambling content on social media increased how much they gambled. Furthermore, they found that a greater proportion reported a decreased desire to gamble and a decrease in the amount they participated. This finding suggests that the impact of gambling content may not only increase gambling behaviour, but may reduce interest (Gainsbury et al., 2015). This study, however, was conducted on adults, and therefore may be related to a developmental difference between youths and adults. Further research will be needed to explain this in more depth.

Psychological research suggests that there are increasing opportunities to participate in digital gambling and gambling-themed games and activities (Gainsbury et al, 2014; King et al., 2015). Griffiths et al (2008) identify a diverse range of what they term 'gambling like' activities, which are increasingly apparent on smartphone devices and social networking sites, as well as in video gaming technologies. These simulate the experience of gambling by allowing players to play without spending any money, and with rewards in the form of achievement points and 'trophies' (King, Delfabbro &

Griffiths, 2010). This has been identified as similar to gambling, due to the fact "that some gambling activities, such as electronic gambling machines, are already intentionally referred to and publicly promoted as 'gaming' by the gambling industry, a discursive shift toward emphasising the 'entertainment' component of gambling" (King et al., 2015, p. 125). Forrest et al. (2009) compiled data from a survey of 8,598 British adolescents. It was identified that over a quarter of the participants played a game in "money-free mode". Moreover, they found that gambling for virtual currency had a strong correlation with gambling for real money, and it was also an important predictor of problem gambling. In another study, 19.4% of adult participants reported that gambling was a result of social games that did not include spending money (Gainsbury et al., 2016).

In a review of the relationship between gambling and gaming, King et al. (2015) concluded that gambling products, including gambling themes, are being integrated into games, and operators are also encouraging customers to engage in both gambling and gaming activities; they referred to this as convergence. Converging has been particularly noticeable on 'social casino games' on social media (Gainsbury et al, 2016; Hollingshead et al, 2016). To identify the distinctive and overlapping characteristics, King et al. (2016, p.216) developed a typology of the features, which state that gaming is "principally defined by its interactivity, predominantly skill-based play, and contextual indicators of progression and success", whereas gambling is defined by "betting and wagering mechanics, predominantly chance-determined outcomes, and monetisation features that involve risk and pay-out to the player" (King et al., 2015, p. 216). The element of financial pay-out was viewed as particularly important to the concept of gambling. This overlap seems concerning as young people may not know whether they are participating in gambling or not and additionally it arguably introduces them to how gambling works.

There appears to be an ongoing debate in the UK as to whether regulations similar to gambling should be put on social gaming (Valentine, 2016). The most recent legislation is the Gambling Act 2005, which aims to regulate commercial gambling and protect minors from online gambling in Great Britain. Operators must not make sites attractive for children, they should carry out random credit card checks to verify age, they should have in place warnings, and verification of age must take place when entering the site (Gambling Act, 2005). Although request of credit card details makes payments difficult for minors, an increasing number of young people have access to credit or debit cards (Valentine, 2016). Nevertheless, some restrictions have been put into place, it has been argued that further regulations need to be added, as these are not enough to protect young people (Carran, 2015), and do not recognise the impact this has for problem gambling in their adult life (Valentine, 2016).

Impact of accessibility. Most research has suggested that accessibility of gambling increases the level of participation, which can potentially lead to excessive gambling and gambling problems (Engel et al., 2013; Welte et al., 2006). Blaszczynski and Nower (2002) proposed a theoretical model that illustrates the importance of accessibility in problem gambling. This model sees the role of accessibility in the causation of problem gambling. They proposed that ecological factors, especially availability and accessibility, are the initial stimulators that facilitate the behavioural conditioning of players' arousal and cognitive schemas. Non-ecological factors, such as substance misuse and psychiatric diagnosis, are considered to be facilitated by availability and accessibility within this model. This consequently leads to habituation and loss-chasing, which eventually results in pathological and problem gambling.

Research on the proximity of gambling has identified an increase in gambling participation and overall expenditure from those living closer to a gambling venue (Sévigny et al., 2008). Welte et al. (2015) found that individuals living within ten miles

of a casino had substantially higher levels of a gambling problem than those living outside that radius. The possibility that problem gamblers may relocate near a casino was considered, rather than the fact that they develop problems due to the close proximity. These findings suggest a concern with the proximity and accessibility of gambling on the development of a gambling problem, and are consistent with Blaszczynski and Nower's (2002) model.

The ability to gamble over mobile phones has arguably increased the access to gambling. Wood and Williams (2007) found that 73.8% of internet gamblers preferred internet gambling to land based due to the ease of accessibility. Gainsbury et al (2012) study similarly found that gamblers perceived '24-hour availability' and 'not leaving the house' as the biggest factors that make internet gambling accessible. Drakeford and Hudson Smith (2015) conducted qualitative research to understand accessibility of mobile gambling and the impact it has on gambling behaviour. The results indicated that mobile gambling is equally as accessible as computer gambling, but more accessible in terms of 'proximity', 'ease of use', 'a social place', and 'part of a wider social experience'. The results also suggested terrestrial venues as being socially unacceptable to the sample age of 21–35 years, indicating a possible reason for internet gamblers being younger (Dowling, Lorains & Jackson, 2015).

As well as gambling being accessible through mobile phones, there appears to be an increase in gambling displayed in the media, especially through advertisements (Binde, 2014; Zangeneh et al 2008). This in hindsight, increases gambling exposure. Previous research has therefore identified relationships between accessibility and increased gambling behaviour. Given the developments in gambling technology, arguably there is a concern for young people who are more exposed and potentially influenced by gambling.

1.6 Media and Gambling

Gambling advertising has been perceived, to a large extent, as being deceptive, unethical, and causing harm to society, as it incites excessive gambling (Binde, 2014). Research has been conducted on the influence of the media on other psychological problems such as body image (Groesz, Levine & Murnen, 2002), where it has been found that the ideal weight projected by the media is correlated with decreased body satisfaction in females. The media has been criticised for glorifying addictive behaviours (Sussman, 2017) such as drinking excessive alcohol and gambling in movies (Fischer et al., 2011). A longitudinal study examined exposure to alcohol-related media at the age of 15–18, and measured alcohol consumption at 18 years of age. Among men, there was a consistent positive relationship, so much so that those who had recalled more alcohol advertisements at the age of 15 drank large quantities of beer at 18 (Connolly et al., 2006). Advertising has been said to be a process of attracting attention to raise interest, creating a desire for the product and promoting customers to purchase (Russell, 1921). Promotions are often used in conjunction with advertisements, but are only a short term offer to attract attention by use of immediate incentives. These strategies aim to increase consumption by attracting new customers, maintaining existing customers or aim to gain a greater segment of the market (Hing et al, 2014). The volume and expenditure of gambling advertising has escalated at a similar rate to the growth of participation of internet gambling (Hing et al, 2014; Friend & Ladd, 2009; Derevensky et al, 2010). Yet, there appears to be a general lack of empirical evidence that advertising influences gambling participation (Hanss et al, 2015; Griffiths, 2010; Derevensky et al, 2010; Messerlian & Derevensky, 2006). Nevertheless, some researchers have attempted to shed light on this issue. It has been suggested that media representations of gambling represent opportunities to gain wealth, and, subject to the potential size of the prize, to change one's lifestyle (Griffiths, 2010; Korn et al, 2005).

The prospect of winning large prizes (expectancies of reward) generates excitement by allowing participants to dream and fantasise about the impact that such a windfall would have on their work, finances, leisure, and capacity to support immediate family members (Rickwood et al., 2010). Hollingshead et al. (2007) found that use of bright flashy colours and symbols of winning in gambling advertisements are perceived as stimulating and exciting. However, Hanns et al (2015) argued that from this finding it cannot be implied that behaviour is influenced by advertising messages. In a later study, Derevensky et al. (2010) found that amongst a sample of youths aged 12–19, gambling advertisements served the function of maintaining established gambling habits rather than enticing new gamblers. Furthermore, Grant and Kim (2001) reported that in a sample of problem gamblers seeking treatment, 46% self-reported television, radio, and billboard advertisements as triggering an urge to gamble. From these findings, it can be speculated that gambling advertisements could potentially contribute to the maintenance or development of gambling. This argument has been support by Hing et al (2014) who conducted qualitative study and found that the general population of gamblers had a higher intention to gamble following gambling incentives from advertisements. Similarly, gamblers seeking treatment reported that the advertisements provoked urges to gamble, and appeared to target those who had taken steps to reduce or stop gambling. Another qualitative study by Binde (2009) explored the impact of gambling advertising on problem gambling. Twenty-five Swedish gamblers from self-help services and treatment centres who met the criteria for pathological gambling took part in the research. There were four parts to the process: first, they were asked about development and progression of their problem; second, they were asked to describe self-perceived impact of gambling advertisements. This was followed by showing them images of gambling adverts, and finally, they were asked to describe their attitude towards the advertisements. Results found that the more severe the problem, the larger the self-

perceived negative impact of gambling adverts tended to be. Binde (2009) stated that the "study reported that gambling advertising has a tangible negative impact on their problems; however, none of them judged advertising to be a major cause of the problems" (p. 549). Binde's (2009) results also found that advertising had strengthened the motivation to not gamble with two participants who had recently stopped gambling. It was described that advertising caused them to reflect on their gambling habit and reminded them of the risks.

Participants in a study by Skinner et al. (2004) reported that dares, betting, and gambling were social activities that are frequently used to relieve boredom and establish roles in their social networks. In contrast to this social element, Quinlan, Goldstein and Stewart (2013), found that motives for gambling were positively correlated with gambling alone. Kristiansen & Jensen (2014) stated that in a sample of students aged 11–17, the most frequently reported reasons for gambling were: to win money, to socialise with family and friends, and to have fun. The authors suggested that at-risk gambling behaviour patterns may be a part of normal adolescent life where gambling serves a purpose of recreation and leisure.

Korn et al's (2005) study used an inductive qualitative content analysis to examine the possible impact of gambling advertisements of youths knowledges, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour intensions. The results yielded five main messages about gambling; Gambling is fun and exciting, this was often centred around friends and social use; advertisements promoted the sense that there is a large financial payout; it promoted that games allowed an escape from daily pressures and gambling was seen as a form of entertainment. Lastly, the advertisements implied a high chance of winning that were also seen as unrealistic. They found that overall, adverts were intended to put across an appeal. These included the appeal of excitement, sophisticated lifestyle choices, possible wealth, happiness, material gain, freedom and in some cases, behaving

in a socially responsible way. Korn et al (2005) noted that some participants viewed gambling as an enjoyable activity and some participants reported it as "part of [their] social fabric" (Korn et al., 2005, p. 17). They reported that there was a strong sense of the participants' personal rights to choose how they spend their time and money. Overall, it was identified that young people generally viewed gambling as acceptable and not a problem if it is done responsibly. The authors concluded the main factors that appear to motivate youths to gamble were financial gain, fun and excitement, lifestyle or status attainment, socialising, peer pressure, or addiction. On the other hand, Fam et al (2008) found that participants were disappointment with gambling advertising as gambling is seen as lazy and a non-productive way to pass time.

      In addition to advertisements, the media umbrella comprises of movies and television shows. Movies often reflect history, culture and social norms (Strinati, 2004) and can often provide insight into people's psychology and fantasies (Chan & Ohtsuka, 2010). Additionally, movies have been noted for altering social views on behaviour through social learning (Turner et al, 2007). Interestingly, Chan and Ohtsuka (2010) found that movies reflect the changes in social attitudes towards gambling. Gambling has been portrayed in movies as glamourous and an exciting lifestyle choice (Monaghan & Derevensky, 2008). Tuner et al (2007) reviewed sixty-five western movies from the past 20 years to understand the depiction of gambling conveyed to audiences. The themes they produced were; pathological gamblers, magic skills, miraculous endings, gamblers as suckers, gamblers as cheaters, organized crime, stealing from a casinos and symbolic background. Turner et al (2007) concluded that gambling was often portrayed negatively and argued that it may encourage irresponsible gambling. Un & Lam (2016) also found that Chinese movies portrayed gambling as a positive activity which implied that movies present distorted images which could encourage more participation. Moreover, Monaghan & Derevensky (2008) argued that movies confuse the concepts of

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gambling as on one hand it is depicted by glamour and excitement and on the other hand suggests that casinos are operated by criminals. They further highlight the concern that the depiction of media has on children and adolescents. There has been significant attempt to limit exposure of violent or sexual behaviour on TV however, few guidelines to protect youth from the depiction of gambling in the media (Monaghan & Derevensky, 2008). Researchers have highlighted that youth problem gambling remains a serious concern (King et al, 2015; Edgerton et al, 2015) as the entertainment industry potentially allows gambling to be seen as a harmless, recreational, entertaining and socially acceptable activity (Gainsbury et al, 2014; Griffiths, 2011; Downs, 2010; Monaghan & Derevensky, 2008).

Although minors are largely restricted from regulated gambling, the greater incidents of problem gambling amongst youths than adults, suggests that the perception of gambling as a harmless entertainment activity is inaccurate (Monaghan & Derevensky, 2008). The idea that gambling is seen as harmless has been supported by research findings that parents and carers purchase lottery tickets for their children as gifts (Halpern-Felsher et al., 2004). While gambling is intended as a recreational activity, which is played in a responsible manner by the majority (Monaghan & Derevensky, 2008), the acceptance of gambling as a form of entertainment vastly underestimates the level of risk that could potentially be involved (Monaghan & Derevensky, 2008).

1.7 Rationale for the Current Study

It is clear from the review of literature, that there is a general concern regarding the impact of accessible gambling on society. Research has identified that accessibility and advances in technology influence gambling behaviour in young people and adults (Drakeford et al, 2015; Gainsbury et al, 2014; Griffiths, 2011). There has been a

substantial amount of quantitative research indicating correlations between availability and increases in gambling behaviour (Drakesford & Hudson-Smith, 2015; George et al, 2016; Gainsbury, 2012; James et al, 2016; Petry, 2006; Yani-de-soriano et al, 2012). Furthermore, studies have begun to explore how gambling is being portrayed in the media. Nevertheless, what appears to be limited amongst the literature is qualitative research of how gambling is being perceived especially on the media. There appears to be extensive research on adult gambling and growing body of research on youths with problem gambling. Most research is conducted in countries such as Sweden (Binde, 2010), Australia (Rickwood et al., 2010) and the United States of America (Lee, Lemanski & Jun, 2008). It will be valuable to have research from the UK, as gambling laws, regulations, and popularity vary across countries. In the UK, the legal gambling age is 18, and therefore they have opened access to all types of gambling. This research intends to explore how a general population of young adults in the UK perceives gambling and how its represented on the media.

Researchers have raised the concern of social media providing opportunities to learn about gambling through gaming (Hollingshead et al, 2016). It has been argued that there is an overlap between gambling and gaming which allows young people to gamble without using money (Wohl et al 2017), thus introducing them to the concept of gambling (King et al, 2016). This research will ask, 'How do young people perceive gambling', 'How do young people perceive online gambling sites?' and 'What do young people understand of the terms 'gambling' and 'gaming'?'.

1.8 Aims of the Study and Relevance to Counselling Psychology

This study aims to explore young adults' perceptions of gambling using a qualitative design. Rafalin (2010, p. 41) puts forward the view that "counselling psychology defines itself as being concerned with the individual's subjective

experience, appreciating the complexity of difference and a focus upon wellbeing". It appears that much previous research within the area of gambling has been dominated by statistical analysis to determine a relationship. Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative methodologies are open-ended and flexible, to generate the emergence of new information, allowing the participants' meanings to be heard (Willig, 2013). Qualitative research highlights "human experience in its richness" (Ashworth, 2003, p. 4) and investigates "in depth into the complexities and processes" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 46). Participants have the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail than is typically the case with quantitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The Division of Counselling Psychology within the British Psychological Society (2006) states within its professional practice guidelines that the phenomenological models of practice and inquiry of counselling psychology seek "to engage with the subjectivity and intersubjectivity, values and beliefs", and "to know empathically and to respect first person accounts as valid in their own term". Therefore, within counselling psychology, it is essential to have research that is subjective without assuming an automatic, one way of experiencing; moreover, this provides a rationale that qualitative research in gambling is needed.

In line with the main aim of the research, this study is aimed at exploring the influence of the media on young adults' perceptions of gambling. This includes participants' statements of how they perceive gambling media. This study also aims to shed light on how young adults understand gambling, and the differences between gambling and gaming. Counselling Psychologists work with those who have a gambling problem and having this understanding will enhance their learning and knowledge of this client group and could potentially be supplementary information that those providing treatment could consider. This research has the potential to inform services

that work with young people and can add to the evidence that is available in order to

further inform policy, training and treatment protocols.

Chapter 2

Methodology

This chapter presents the chosen methodology alongside the philosophical underpinnings and will then provide details on how the study was conducted including the stages of ethical approval, decisions in participant sampling, recruitment, data collection and the analysis process. The steps taken to ensure creditability will also be outlined.

2.1 Research Design

Qualitative design. The present study endeavours to answer research questions that lie within a qualitative paradigm. Qualitative methods allow participants the freedom to elucidate their ideas and respond to questions in their own words (Barker et al, 2002) and captures the voice of specific groups (Carroll & Rothe, 2010). Qualitative research has been deemed useful in identifying various responses that may result from an individual's experience (Alderfer & Sood, 2016) and is concerned with the way in which people make sense of their world and experience events (Willig, 2008). Furthermore, qualitative methodologies complement the ethos of counselling psychology where the focus lies within individuals' subjectivity (British Psychological Society, 2005).

Epistemology. Literature suggests that within qualitative research paradigms there are different ontological beliefs and epistemological positions that the researcher should be explicit about (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). A paradigm is defined as a "set of interrelated assumptions about the social world, which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world" (Filstead, 1979, p. 34). Accordingly, ontological questions ask about the nature of reality, while epistemological questions ask about the relationship between the enquirer and the

known (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Ponterotto (2005) identifies four major paradigms within counselling psychology, which have been adopted from Guba and Lincoln's (1994) schemes: positivism, postpositivism, constructivism-interpretivism, and critical-ideological. Each paradigm adopts different views on ontology, epistemology and, therefore, methodology.

A researcher can move between different positions. However, within each research project it is important to state a position that essentially communicates the underlying assumptions and beliefs guiding the research (Hays & Wood, 2011; Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). It appears that the majority of previous research discussed in gambling literature adopts a positivist paradigm. Positivism is grounded on a hypothetico-deductive method, which relies on quantitative methods to verify a hypothesis through statistical testing, and views reality as universal, objective, and quantifiable (Ponterotto, 2005). This research adopts a critical realist position, which aims to provide an alternative philosophy to positivism in the social sciences (Bhasker, 1975). Critical realist epistemological beliefs accept that there are stable and enduring aspects of reality that exist independently of human conceptualisation (Fade, 2004), whilst also recognising the socially embedded and fallible nature of scientific enquiry (Bhasker, 1975). Ontology exists on a continuum between realism and relativism; critical realists accommodate aspects of both and therefore are positioned in the middle (Willig, 2008). Moreover, the differences attached to individuals' meaning of their experiences are considered valuable regarding their experience of reality (Ponterotto, 2005). Within critical realism, reality is viewed as complex, and recognises the role of both agentic and structural factors. Agentic is the way individuals are seen as atomized, positing a voluntarist approach to human action, and structural factors are essentially the influence of social/economic/political contexts where action occurs (Maxwell, 1996). Critical realism adopts three domains of reality: the real, the empirical, and the actual,

and it is asserted that these cannot be thought of in isolation (Bhasker, 1975). Consistent with theoretical underpinnings of counselling psychology, which emphasises empowerment of research participants (British Psychological Society, 2005), critical realists attempt to promote a collaborative relationship in an active role with research participants (Robson, 2002).

In considering an epistemological position, I considered my views as an individual and as a psychological researcher. I take on the position that reality may have an aspect of being socially defined but how we perceive this reality is different for everyone (Bhaskar, 1975). This view is in line with the way in which I view therapeutic practice, where I am interested in understanding the subjective experience of each client's world. This research accepts that there is a social reality of gambling that can be experienced by the participants, however the way in which each participant experience gambling will be different. In line with critical realist ideas, I endeavoured to explore the participants subjective perception of their experience of the gambling world. The positions on which I reflect sit within a qualitative research design. Alongside consideration of the research questions, the method chosen for this study is Thematic Analysis.

2.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) is widely used in qualitative research to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process is a search for themes that are important to the description of the phenomenon and its relation to social issues (Daly, Kellehear & Gliksman, 1997). Braun and Clarke (2006) state that TA is a foundational method for any qualitative analysis, and that it provides the researcher with core skills that will be useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis, as many of them are essentially thematic. TA is widely used in

psychological research and is recognised as a method in its own right (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed six phases of thematic analysis that can be seen in table 1.

Thematic analysis is a flexible method that can encompass different epistemological positions as it is not wed into any pre-existing theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Although these positions are flexible, it is suggested that they are made clear within the research, as the research epistemology guides what can be said about the data, and informs how meaning is theorised (Willig, 2012). Thematic analysis, from the critical realist position, "acknowledges the ways in which individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, whilst retaining focus on the material and other limits of reality" (Priya & Dalal, 2015, p. 211). Thematic analysis therefore allows for a social and psychological interpretation across the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

When using thematic analysis, there are a number of choices that the researcher must reflect on, which Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss. First, it is suggested that the researcher must make a decision on what counts as a theme. Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight the importance of researcher judgement and retaining flexibility in this decision. It was deemed appropriate that a theme will be considered if it appears to capture something important in relation to the research questions. The researcher must decide on the approach they are going to take to identify themes or patterns within the data. This can be done in an inductive or bottom-up method, which means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton, 1990). In this case, data has been specifically collected for the research process, and may have little relationship with the questions asked of the participants. This method is not driven by theoretical interest of the researcher, and the data is not coded with any analytical preconceptions. In contrast, a theoretical or deductive or top-down approach can be used, in which the

thematic analysis is driven by the researcher's theoretical framework. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that the researcher should make a decision on the level in which the themes are to be identified. This can be done at a semantic level, in which the "themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (p. 13). Thematic analysis can also take place at a latent level, which starts to "identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (p. 13). A latent level of analysis was adopted in this study.

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended that thematic analysis is a useful method when investigating an area that may be under-researched, or if the research involves the views of participants that are not known. It also seeks to understand meanings that people give to their social reality (Schutz, 1962). A particular value of thematic analysis is the flexibility of the method to identify constructs (Lawrence, 2012). TA was therefore deemed as beneficial for the aims of this study.

Braun and Clarke provided a six phase process for carrying out thematic analysis (table 1). The first phase involves becoming familiar with data through transcribing, reading, and repeated reading of the data. It is important that the researcher immerses themselves in the data so that they become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. Once the researcher is familiar with the data, initial codes can be identified. Boyatzis (1998) describes a code as "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be accessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (p. 63). Phase three involves sorting the codes into potential themes. As the researcher begins the process, an initial thematic map may be helpful to sort the codes into themes. Once a set of main themes have been devised, phase four involves refining the themes and subthemes. The thematic map is revisited to check if it reflects

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the data set. At one level, Braun and Clarke suggest reviewing the coded extracts by re-reading and considering if they appear in a coherent pattern. Level two involves this similar process where the research considers the validity of the themes in relation to the data set. This produces a final idea of the different themes and how they fit together. The final phase involves identifying the 'essence' of each theme and what aspects of the data it captures. Each theme can then be named to give the reader an awareness of what the theme is about.

Table 1: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of process
1. Familiarising self with the data	Transcribing data; reading and re-reading the data and noting ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Coding for interesting features of the data, systematically across the data set
3. Searching for patterns and themes	Reviewing codes and beginning to collate these into potential themes across the data set
4. Reviewing themes	Checking whether the data supports the themes i.e. at the level of the coded extracts and across the data set; generating an initial map of themes
5. Defining and naming themes	Refining the thematic map in relation to specific themes and how these link to tell a story; generating clear definition and names of themes
6. Writing the analysis	Selecting vivid extracts to illustrate themes; analysing these in relation to the research questions

2.3 Participants

Qualitative research aims to "provide an in-depth understanding of the world as seen through the eyes of the people being studied" (Wilmot, 2005, p. 1). Ten participants, between the ages of 18 and 25, were purposively recruited to take part in

this study, which fits well with Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestion for the number of participants for a doctoral research.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria. The aim of the study was to explore general perceptions of gambling; therefore, the participants were not required to have any direct gambling experience but must be between 18 – 25 years of age. However, those with a diagnosis of a gambling problem were excluded from the research in order to protect their health and wellbeing. It was essential for all participants to be fluent English speakers to ensure that information was not lost through translation.

Of the ten participants, four were male and six females. A demographics table including gender and age can be seen below (table 2). For the purpose of anonymity, participants have been given pseudonyms. Demographics for ethnicity and participation in gambling were not assessed. It was noticed that most of the females in the study were not gamblers and most of the males did gamble. Research on gender difference in youth gambling has been limited and has yielded mixed results (Weidberg et al, 2018). One study found that males experience more gambling problems but females tend to begin gambling at a younger age (Kaminer, Burleson, Jadamec, 2002; Weidberg et al, 2018). Stinchfield (2002) found that males tended to gamble more on the lottery and in casinos compared to females, whereas Desai et al (2005) found no gender differences in casino gambling. Despite this mixed result, potential factors underlying gender difference in gambling have been identified. Psychological factors such as gambling for managing depression is typically reported in females whereas males gamble as a form of self-enhancement (Petry, Stinson & Grant, 2005). Social environment, such as peer and parental gambling has also been found to affect genders differently (Donati, et al, 2013). Given that previous research has identified gender differences in gambling, this could possibly have impacted the data by generating results more related to a female perception of those who do not gamble. As it has been identified that males and females

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may be interested in different modes of gambling, the participants may be responding to the gambling mode that interests them. The limitation of gender is further addressed in the discussion section.

The decision for the age range was based on previous research. The term 'young people' has been used in literature as an umbrella term to relate to anyone under the age of 24 years (Rigbye, 2013; Skelton & Valentine, 1998). Studies using young adults have used ranges such as 18–24 (e.g. Cullen et al, 2011) or 18–35 (e.g. Petry, 2002). People are generally considered an adult at the age of 18, which is also in line with the legal age in UK when all gambling opportunities can be accessed. This was therefore implemented as the minimum age for all participants. It was decided to use the maximum age of 25 to ensure the age range is not too broad to lose depth, as it has been found that different age groups have different perspectives (Gruhn et al, 2016; Scott et al, 2013; Elder, 1979). Consistent with previous research (King et al, 2017; Meyer, 2016; Cullen et al, 2011; Pasanella & Willingham, 1968), 18–25 is considered in this study as a young adult.

Table 2: Participant details

Name	Gender	Age
Tina	F	24
Anna	F	21
James	M	22
Anaya	F	25
Alice	F	19
Khadija	F	18
Francis	M	20
Jason	M	21
Kayla	F	23
Luke	M	25

2.4 Recruitment

Advertisements (Appendix A) were displayed at the Stratford Campus of the University of East London (UEL). It was intended for advertisements to be placed on online gambling forums to recruit participants who may be interested in discussing the topic; however, advertisements were not accepted by the forum administrators, in order to protect their customers from communication away from the security of the forum. Snowballing then became the main source of recruitment, which entailed identifying respondents who then referred on to other respondents (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

Participants expressed interest in the study by sending an email to the researcher. Once their email was received, they were sent an information sheet (Appendix B), which outlined the purpose of the research, the criteria required to take part, information on what the process would entail, confidentiality, and participants' rights. Participants were given time to digest the purpose of the research and reflect on their suitability. An

opportunity was given to ask any questions before the interviews were arranged. Once the criteria were met and verbal consent was given, a time was arranged to meet at UEL. Participants then signed a formal consent form preceding their interview (Appendix C). Face-to face or Skype interviews were offered. Six participants were seen face-to-face and four via Skype. Those who were seen via Skype were sent a consent form via email, which they signed and sent back to the researcher prior to the interview taking place.

2.5 Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was granted by the University of East London Ethics Committee in September 2015 (Appendix D). All of the research and work undertaken adhered strictly to the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2006), and was carried out by the researcher as part of their Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology.

The BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct state that "researchers should ensure that every person from whom data are gathered for the purposes of research consents freely to the process on the basis of adequate information". In accordance, detailed information was sent to all participants, including information on the procedure of the study, protection of their data, protection of selves, and their right to withdraw. Information was also reiterated preceding the interview. Once any questions were answered and the participants were happy, consent forms were signed.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, signed consent forms and participants' details were kept separately from the digital recordings, transcribed materials, and demographic details, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). All information was kept in locked filing cabinets and any identifiable material within the transcripts was anonymised. Interviews were transcribed solely by the researcher. Participants were

informed that only the researcher, supervisors, and examiners have access to the transcribed material. Data will only be accessed via a password on a computer and will be kept for three years after the study has finished, with the view of a possibility to develop the research in the future.

It was considered that due to the topic of the research, participants may become emotionally distressed if they had a prior difficult experience with gambling themselves, or if there was an issue with a family member or a friend. A plan was set in place to be mindful of potential indicators of participant distress during the interview, and to offer the participant the opportunity to stop the interview at any point. Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw or take a break from the study, and were provided with information on where they could access support. At no point during this study did interviews have to be paused or terminated. Consideration was taken for participants' disclosure; in these cases, the research would be stopped and the participant would be informed and encouraged to access support. Support service information was provided to all participants as part of the debrief procedure (Appendix E).

To ensure the researcher's safety, face-to-face interviews took place at the University of East London. Interview times and arrangements were passed on to the research supervisor, who ensured that there was a member of staff present in the building during interviews. Once the interviews were completed and participants had left the UEL campus, the prescribed staff were informed.

2.6 Data collection

Qualitative interviews aim to provide an insight into a phenomenon, as they allow the respondents to reflect and reason (Folkestad, 2008). In line with this, a semi-structured interview schedule was deemed the most appropriate, to allow the

participants to respond using their own words and meanings (Willig, 2008). Semi-structured interviews offer topics and questions to the interviewee, but are carefully designed to elicit the interviewee's ideas and opinions on the topic of interest, as opposed to leading the interviewee toward preconceived choices (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). It is recommended that interview schedules include a relatively small number of open-ended and non-leading questions to best enable the interviewer to elicit an account that is not heavily shaped by the question, but can generate detailed responses that answer the research questions (Hugh-Jones, 2010; Willig, 2008). The semi-structured interview (Appendix F) therefore consisted of seven questions, which were intended to be open-ended and not leading. To elaborate on participants' answers, questions were followed up by prompts or probes, which assisted the participants to give examples and expand on their explanations (Leech, 2002).

When designing the interview schedule, the researcher considered the use of visual aids and images, also known as photo-elicitation (Clark-Ibanez, 1994). This is defined as "the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview" (Harper, 2002, p. 14). Images generally function as a catalyst to encourage a verbal narrative from respondents, which communicates the topic acutely more than words alone (Felstead et al., 2004). The use of a visual stimulus has been known to open floodgates to information, leading to insights (Morrison et al., 2002) on the topic being discussed, and has especially been found to increase engagement of young people in the research process (Didkowsky, Ungar & Liebenberg, 2010). It was decided the images would be beneficial integrated into the interview process (Comi, Bischof & Eppler, 2013) as a means of engagement and elicitation of depth of the topic. Four online images were used of the home page of internet gambling websites and gambling applications found on smartphones or tablets (Appendix G). To ensure that these images did not impact the participants' initial perceptions of gambling, they were asked about their understandings

of gambling prior to being shown the images. The images were then presented and the participants were asked about their thoughts. The images were a very helpful tool in facilitating accounts from the participants and focusing them to the topic.

A pilot study was conducted initially to determine if the interview questions generated discussion and relevant information, and to ensure the questions were not leading. Following the interview, the recording was transcribed, and a preliminary analysis was carried out. As the researcher was a novice in qualitative research, this was a key learning curve in the process of qualitative interviewing. It was apparent from the transcription that there was a lack of exploration of the participant's account. The interview questions were appropriate and focused but required the use of more prompts from the researcher. The researcher recalled that nerves in her first interview resulted in a 'freeze moment' when the participant provided a brief answer. This was a vital learning process in being a qualitative psychological researcher, which highlighted the importance of the value of prompts in semi-structured interviews. Following this, a list of prompts was noted at the bottom of the interview schedule for the researcher to refer to; this is known as planned prompts (McCracken, 1988). This built the researcher's confidence and skills in interviewing, and resulted in the other interviews being more explorative, which enhanced the depth and richness of the data.

2.7 Data analysis

The analysis followed the six phases of Thematic Analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), as seen in table 1. The first phase of analysis consisted of reading and transcribing each interview; a verbatim account with punctuation was adopted to retain the sense of what the participants conveyed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It has been argued that this phase was the key stage in becoming familiar with the data (Bird,

2005). The transcripts included all words, laughter and pauses in the interview (Appendix H). No specific transcription tool (for example, Jefferson, 2004) was used.

During phase two and inductive, a bottom-up approach was used to code the data. The transcripts were read through in detail and interesting codes were noted at the side of the transcript (Appendix I). As the transcripts were being coded, key features began to become noticeable, and similarities and differences across the data became apparent. Braun and Clarke's (2013) skill of reading and interpreting the data through the theoretical lens, known as 'analytic sensibility', was held in mind by the researcher throughout the process of thematic analysis. It also refers to the ability to produce insights into the meaning of the data beyond the surface; to recognise patterns or meaning that links to broader psychological, social, or theoretical concerns. When engaging with the data, the researcher noticed that there were dilemmatic elements across the participants' talk. They appeared to use linguistic features such as metaphors to convey their perception of gambling. Drawing from social construction ideas on the constructive nature of language, language is seen as conveying an argument or particular viewpoint (Billig, 1991). Therefore, to encompass language, linguistic elements were incorporated into the coding. Smith (2008) suggests that researchers can attend to linguistic features such as use of pronouns, laughter, pauses, functional aspects of language, tone, repetition, and metaphor. The linguistic elements were seen as constructive to the participants' perspectives.

Extracts of data were highlighted and noted on post-it notes and clustered according to their similarity, which eventually created themes (Appendix J) in phase three. The themes were named according to the perceived meaning and representation of the codes. The analysis of the data was a recursive process, where there was a back and forth movement throughout all six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As the analysis moved into phase 4, five main themes were identified (Appendix

K). At this stage, the themes and subthemes were not finalised and there were some overlaps. After taking some time away from the data, it was revisited with a fresh mind, where five themes collapsed into three main themes with four subthemes each. It was important during the collapsing of themes that the participants' stories were not lost; therefore, there was a constant revisiting of the transcripts and initial codes to ensure credibility.

It can be noted that although the use of images during the interviews were helpful to generate data, as discussed previously, it appeared that the participants were providing perceptions mainly of how they view the advertisements. It could be possible that the images may have primed the participants to express their views only on those media images presented. This resulted in the participants accounts being based on their positive and negative perceptions of only those media representations. The participants appeared to stick with their thoughts on those images therefore dismissing any other discussions on media representations that they may have come across. Limitations and consideration of priming in future research is addressed in the discussion.

2.8 Credibility of the research process

The rapid evolution of qualitative methods in psychological research has led to debates about their quality and validity (Yardley, 2008). Yardley (2008) produced a framework that sets out four core recommendations for evaluating qualitative research: 'sensitivity to context', 'commitment and rigour', 'transparency and coherence', and 'impact and importance'. These principles are recognised and applied in this research. A researcher can show sensitivity to context in a number of ways, which include showing an awareness of the existing literature in the topic being studied, or from research that has employed similar methods. This has been demonstrated through the critical evaluation of the literature in the introduction and through the engagement of theoretical

concepts discussed in relation to the data. Throughout this study, the researcher took into consideration how her position as a psychological researcher could influence the balance of power in the interviewing process. Commitment and rigor has been maintained during the analysis process through the degree of attentiveness and sensitivity towards the data and continued care with each case. Transparency and coherence can be shown through a detailed description of each stage of the research and the decision made where each argument is presented, and the degree of fit between the research and the underlying theoretical assumptions of the approach implemented. Transparency was ensured through continuous reflexivity towards the research process. According to some researchers, being transparent about the nature of the researcher's personal views through reflexivity is an important way that qualitative research achieves validity (Lawrence, 2012; Willig, 2008). The impact and importance of the study is demonstrated through whether the research reported interesting, useful, or important findings.

Chapter 3

Findings

This chapter presents the findings produced by the analysis, highlighting how participants understand and talk about gambling. The analysis suggests that there are three distinct themes that seem to reflect the participants' perceptions. These are: 'Temptation', 'Stay away' and 'What would others think?'. Each theme, and its subthemes, are subsequently described using quotes from across the interviews with the participants.

3.1 Overview of the Main Themes

Participants described being lured and enticed by portrayals of winning in gambling advertisements. This seems to have created a thrill that tempted the participants to gamble. The impact of social groups appeared to be enhancing the temptation to participate in gambling activities. Participants also described negative feelings, which make them want to stay away from gambling. Their avoidance was found to be related to the fear of negative consequences that can arise. These negative perspectives were identified to have stemmed from the way media portrays gambling and associated negative stereotypes in their immediate social environment. The role of society's perceptions was acknowledged by the participants as having an influence on the type of gambling they may participate in or avoid. Analysis suggests that the media and the immediate social environment seem to have played the main role in shaping young people's perceptions. The three main themes derived from the analysis are 'Temptation', 'Stay away', and 'What would others think?' (Figure 1).
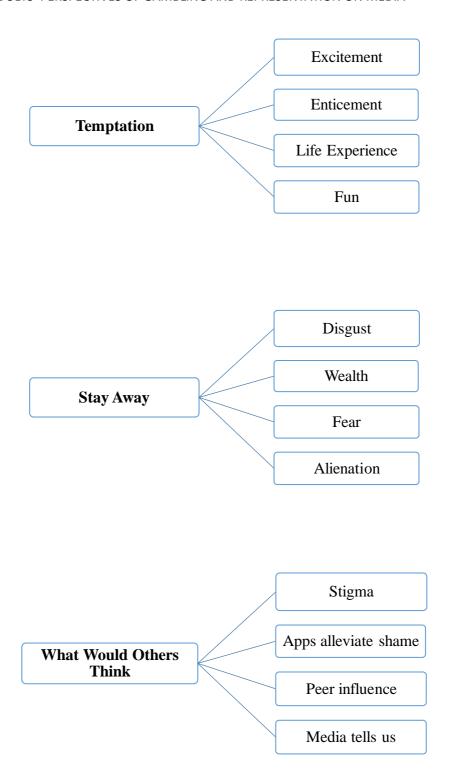
Figure 1. Final thematic map

Theme 1: Temptation

Participants discussed gambling as attractive and endearing. They described it as something that lures them in, which creates an element of excitement. For example, in the extract below, Luke shows how gambling websites tempt him to play.

Luke: *Actually ... I think it makes it look really fun ... like they've got ... got these characters that look like they are having a good time* [laughs] *and erm ... it's kind of like they are saying 'look at us, come and join us, win lots of money'* [laughs]. *And err ... They have the £30 large bang in the middle so it does catch your eye. You kind of put two and two together and think yeah I'll play this one* [laughs].
(Lines 78–83)

Luke's extract identifies the temptation to gamble from the enticing elements of the cartoon characters appearing to have fun and winning money. The images seem to suggest a carefree social life that is enjoyable and possibly enticing for Luke. He also draws on explicit connections to wealth and its benefits. The combination of the fun and of winning a lot of money appears to be appealing to Luke, which tempts him to play. Luke's laughter could further imply feelings of excitement and enjoyment, which suggest that the advertisement elicits positive feelings.

Jason, below, also refers to the financial incentives that make gambling exciting. It is evident that, for Jason, a reward tempts him to bet more money and compensates the risk of losing. Jason's use of the words 'definitely' and 'obviously' implies that he perceives financial gain as a sure win that he would not hesitate to question. He also appears to possibly validate his reason, as he refers to it as 'great fun'.

Jason: *Yeah definitely* [sees the benefits in gambling] *completely, because obviously I could win a lot of money and therefore like you could put £5 on and win loads back. To be fair the risk versus the reward are... like I would definitely put more down. It can be great fun!*

(Lines 63–66)

In contrast to Jason's immediate certainty of the positive rewards of gambling, James describes below his temptation to gamble, through what appears to be a process of decision making. James initially notices the variety of choices presented, which appear to give the impression that winning is possible; however, he questions the truth in them. This tempting element of incentives from gambling advertisements shows that James is in a dilemma between his concern of whether the advertisements are truthful and his acceptance that the incentives are good enough for him to join. Despite not being completely convinced, it is evident that James gives into the temptation to join.

James: *I think they are on to something ... they have given people lots of options and from what I can see it looks like pretty good options ... erm yeah some of them kind of give you the impression that you are guaranteed a win ... I don't think that's true* [laughs] *but I think they've got a good concept ... I probably would try one of these ones because the outcome looks good.*

(Lines 121–126)

Excitement. Across the data, participants noted the excitement that gambling arouses and how this leads to a decision to play. All participants perceived gambling as exciting when thinking about the possibility of a monetary gain. Participants described

their temptation to gamble through the excitement of a "hope to gain" and feeling of luck.

> James: *Oh you know what ... it was fantastic... that feeling you get is just brilliant. Like... when you feel lucky it's good to just go with that and place the bet that you feel is right. There are some days where I do just feel good and feel lucky so I make a bet on a match or horse or something like that.*
> (Lines 30–33)

It is evident in James's extract that gambling creates feelings of excitement. James's description identifies excitement and impulsivity to bet. It could be argued that gambling is creating an adrenaline rush of excitement for James, which he perceives as feeling lucky. This rush and feeling of luck seems to drive his spontaneity to place a bet. Gambling, therefore, becomes tempting. Similarly, with Kelly below, having won in the past and having at times considered herself as lucky, this seems to be adding to the excitement of possible future wins, thus making gambling tempting.

> Kelly: *Erm... yeah I have bet a couple of times but it's not something... I will only do it if I feel lucky enough or if I feel like ... because we've been playing a certain way I feel like I'm more likely to win with money back.*
> (Lines 23–25)

Jason also appears to be talking about his excitement, which he describes as a 'buzz', and similarly to James's extract above, Jason's 'buzz' could suggest a rush of excitement. After he gambles, he experiences positive feelings from excitement, which continue to make gambling appealing. He describes this feeling in contrast to a loss

where he appears to feel deflated. Winning in gambling appears to create excitement, which reinforces and strengthens the temptation to play due to the experience of positive feelings.

Jason: *Yeah definitely because you get a buzz* (line 127).

When you know you've won that's great ... it's.. yeah... the losses are shit... After I win... after I lose I'm just like ah no, I need to think through this. But if I've won I'm like... let's go.

(Lines 129–133)

Enticement. Enticement is related to feelings of being attracted and drawn in, making participants tempted to gamble. This perception of gambling was primarily drawn from advertisements. It was evident that all participants were enticed by at least one of the images presented during the interview.

Anna: *So I think the first one and the last one were a little bit more catchy I guess. Erm, yeah they make it look more like, more gamey than kind of betting, I mean it is a betting game but it looks more like a game with some weird characters or something.* (Lines 103–106)

Well the first one is kind of like these cartoon characters on the side that makes it look more like a game I think and the way they're dressed as well, they're kind of dressed a bit wacky too. And the last one because you've got the mini table there and little poker chips, that's probably why it looks more gamey, I think definitely the first one looks the most like a game just because of the characters. (Lines 109–114)

It kind of makes it look a little bit interesting to be honest because they are quite quirky. Erm so it does in that way ... it catches, it's a little bit enticing you know... compared to like the second one where you've just got two guys playing football, erm, which is a bit, it's more kind of a normal image. So that one I suppose is less intriguing to me. So I think the first one grabs my interest a little bit more.

(Lines 120–125)

Anna describes her appeal to the images in the advertisement. Anna's talk suggests that the cartoon images and nature of the advertisement put across a fun and playful environment. This is reinforced by her description of the images as "wacky" and "quirky". She also refers to the advertisement as being "more gamey" suggesting its light-hearted nature. Interestingly, the use of these words can arguably be suggested as a description of a safe environment. Moreover, it could imply an image of safety related to less involvement of risk. This is further supported as Anna makes a contrast and identifies little interest in what seems to be a "normal image" of men playing football. Therefore, the image creates a perception of a safe environment that makes gambling enticing to Anna and tempts her to gamble. This is further demonstrated in Tina's extract below.

Tina: *So, the first image is what I class as kind of like, less kind of gambling addiction. It's more playful, more like 'hey you can play' even though it is, it's kind of more playful, whereas the second one ... err ... is more for a dedicated gambler I think.*

(Lines 49–52)

Tina provides a description of being lured and enticed by the playful images. Her reference of others as more suited to a "dedicated gambler" enforces the understanding that playfulness in the advertisements makes it more like a game and provides a safe environment, which possibly minimises any associated risk.

Below, Alice also demonstrates an element of enticement from the animation.

Alice: *The cartoons appeal to me more, but in general, because it says Ladbrokes, you know it's a betting company and I just... it's not something I would do.*
(Lines 153–154)

I prefer like the colouring to the green ... it's full of smiling people, so it's more appealing, the advertising... it just makes it look easy. Sign up, get £30 and join now...
(Lines 161–163)

It looks like something I would play to be fair... like, I don't think I would pay for it straight away but I would probably like... try a free version and if I like that then... Maybe play it.
(Lines 170–171)

Alice initially seems to be sceptical to play the game as it is associated with the betting company "Ladbrokes". She evidently associates betting companies with something negative that she would not want to participate in. Later, she shows her enticement to the images that portray the game as "easy". Despite her initial scepticism,

she gives in to the temptation and shows willingness to try out the game. From this description, it appears that the images also enticed Alice and increased her temptation to gamble.

It has been identified in previous extracts that the monetary incentives provided by the gambling industry appear to make games more enticing. Jason's extract below provides evidence that these incentives enticed him to his first experience of gambling. Jason appears to be convinced that he will be financially rewarded in some way.

Jason: *They all encourage you to start ... they've all got bonuses... like 100% to £200 ... like a 100% deposit up to £200 I guess that's something that lured me to some sites... I went to... I started using Paddy Power because whatever you put, whatever deposit you put they double, erm... which is great you get like free bets and stuff ... I don't know... It's encouraging.*
(Lines 98–102)

Life experience. Participants seem to suggest that gambling involves excitement and risk, which appears to be valuable to life experience; this therefore makes gambling tempting. This is demonstrated by Tara in the extract below.

Tara: *It could be a detrimental behaviour and another way is that some people need to take a bit of a risk when it comes to life in general, when people are overly cautious, don't take any risk whatsoever so don't experience life ... (line 18 – 21)*
Say you're at the top of a diving board, you're there, it's a risk to jump off, but you could hurt yourself but you could be exhilarated and feel like you've

achieved something after you've done, after you've jumped off the balancing

board or the diving board.

(Lines 24–27)

Tara's extract evidences her perception of a risk as valuable to experiencing life. Her use of a metaphor creates a seemingly tempting image to "jump" into something exciting, such as diving into a swimming pool. Her expression of "say you're at the top of a diving board, you're there" suggests the build-up to the event with possible feelings of nervousness as well as excitement. In relation to gambling, this could be understood as the wait before finding out the outcome of a bet. Using the word "exhilarated" evidences her perception that there could be a positive outcome. This extract shows that Tara relates gambling to a thrill-seeking activity that could be experienced in order to have a well-rounded and not overly cautious life. Moreover, having this perception makes gambling tempting.

James: *I do think that people should take a chance ... obviously there's no need to bet your house and that but a fiver here and there wouldn't make too much of a difference ... and if you win it's an even better pay out. I mean living a little is ok* (laughs).

(Line 79 – 82)

James's extract identifies that he believes in taking small risks or chances in life. He seems to imply that betting small amounts of money is more acceptable compared to larger bets that could possibly be harmful. His laughter and suggestion for others to live a little demonstrates his somewhat care-free and relaxed perception of gambling and its value for others to experience life.

Participants appeared to talk about gambling as a life experience in different ways. Below, Luke talks about gambling as a way in which his peers can be spontaneous. From his extracts, it is evident that being spontaneous means that they are experiencing life and taking chances that are not too harmful.

Luke: *I think amongst my mates it is our way of being a bit spontaneous… or like… enjoying taking chances knowing that it's not going to kill us* (laughs).
(Line 58 – 60)

Kelly also describes herself and partner as cautious people who gamble as a way they can relax and not worry. It appears that Kelly perceives her gambling behaviour as a casual, fun experience. It could be interpreted that it is valuable to her life experience to not be overly cautious and enjoy life.

Kelly: *We don't do something that ... say ... has the potential to be harmful. I think we are both cautious like that but at the same time ... having a little bet or game here and there is just our way of ... having fun I guess and maybe ... like... we don't take it seriously because it's not big money.*
(Line 49 – 52)

Fun. Participants described a fun and social environment associated with gambling and its tempting nature. They described elements of excitement and pleasure, as well as describing an element of competition amongst a group, which enhances the temptation to place a bet. Francis's extract below describes the fun environment with peers.

> Francis: *Erm if I'm with them in like an environment where we are all watching the game then like if I see them do it then I could probably be tempted. Especially if like there's a few drinks flying around and we're a bit ... what's the word... erm ... susceptible to err ... yeah*
>
> (Lines 55–58)

> *Erm... I don't know... I guess there's a bit of a thrill really and also I guess you can just like showboat on things if you've won and it's like a happy environment, whereas if you are kind of sitting at home watching a sport, it's a bit like unnecessary I feel like.*
>
> (Lines 64–67)

Francis describes a social event with friends, and makes reference to alcohol making him more "susceptible". It appears that there is a playful and fun environment within his peer group that makes gambling more appealing compared to other settings where he may be alone. It could be assumed that the relaxed nature of the environment makes him more tempted to take part in activities such as gambling. Moreover, it can be interpreted that the fun environment makes gambling seem safer and less risky than gambling alone.

Jason's extract does not explicitly describe a fun environment, but clearly demonstrates how gambling elevates his boredom and also adds to the excitement within a group. He describes gambling related conversations amongst friends, where it appears that placing a bet would introduce an element of fun, and also excitement, into the discussion. Placing a bet when he's at home also appears to alleviate his boredom. It is therefore evident that for Jason, gambling is perceived as a behaviour that will produce a feeling of enjoyment.

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Jason: *Yeah like to be honest... I don't mind* [betting] *anywhere really. Like, if I'm with my mates then yeah... sometimes we'll be chatting about a match that's coming up and all have different views so it's like ... why not bet on it? Or if I'm home and I'm bored then I might check out what events are on and sometimes put a little bit down.*

(Lines 47–51)

Similarly, with James, gambling is described as an activity that adds an element of fun and light-heartedness.

James: *We have a good laugh over it... if we* [him and his friends] *are together it's a laugh when we all make a bet and see who wins ... especially in football matches... that's the best time to do that. Whoever loses will usually have to buy the next round of drinks.*
Line 49 - 52

The analysis suggests that participants talk about gambling as something that can be tempting to participate in. Another common way that gambling was described by participants is that gambling is associated with negative consequences. This perception made participants want to stay away from gambling.

3.3 Stay away

It was evident across the data that the participants perceived gambling as a behaviour that holds negative consequences and outcomes that should be kept away from. The extent to which the participants perceived gambling as a behaviour that

should be avoided was evident in their constructs of disgust, wealth, alienation, and fear.

Kayla: *I really don't think it's something that appeals to me. I'm far from interested and hardly see the point. All I hear is about people losing and some getting into debt and family problems. I mean... I know people do win but I just can't understand why they would chance losing so much money. I would perhaps... do something like the lottery. I would only do it every so often but... that I feel like... there's not so much money being put down... losing a pound or two is reasonable. Anything more than that is a no go from me.*

(Lines 167–174)

Kayla's extracts evidence her feelings of wanting to stay away from gambling, which appears to stem from hearing about others' loss of money. Although Kayla appears at the start to have a strong opinion not to gamble, she seems to perceive the lottery as acceptable since there is a smaller loss. Kayla draws from discourses of debt and family problems in gambling to construct gambling as something negative and risky that should be avoided.

Luke: *I have got one friend, actually he's more of an acquaintance ... and he always goes to the casino and puts down like fifty quid. I mean that's great if you have that money and know that you are going to win it back... but in reality are you? I... I... think losing money will worry me, because... I'm not like him who will be happy to lose. I mean... he's not happy to lose but he can handle it. I can't because I'll be kicking myself knowing I could have spent it more wisely. Losing is really what puts me off.*

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(Lines 23–30)

It is evident that Luke perceives gambling as dangerous due to the uncertainty of a financial loss or gain. He openly questions this in the interview by asking "are you?". Luke could possibly be looking for reassurance in order to confirm his ideas of gambling. It seems that Luke compares his financial circumstances with a "friend"; it appears that Luke identifies himself as somebody who cannot afford to lose. His description of "kicking himself" implies that losing money in gambling will significantly impact him financially. This uncertainty and chance of losing appears to make Luke want to stay away from gambling.

Disgust. Participants' accounts of staying away from gambling included the observation that gambling industries are untrustworthy and disgusting, as they attempt to lure and entice people. As well as noticing positive features of gambling advertisements, participants would describe these incentives as deceitful and destructive to vulnerable people in society. These perceptions led to participants' description of disgust towards the gambling industry. Some participants demonstrated disgust after the gambling images were shown. This is evident in Tara's extract below.

Tara: *People that are predisposed to be a bit more influenced by things like that and people that have that kind of personality that, I don't know, not to say they're like a crow and they see something shiny and they want to grab it but there's people that are excited by things like that and think 'yes!' When they see an advert 'I should have that' ... (line 85 – 89)*

I've got a sales background so I'm used to helping people market and helping people with their brand development. So, these are tips and tricks that you are

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actually taught in upselling, and in general in sales this is what you are taught. So you are aware that it catches people's attention and that's how it works ...

(line 96 – 100)

I think it's disgusting and I think you lose a bit of your soul because sometimes you're told to sell something and you don't believe in it.

(Lines 102–103)

Tara shares her experience of working in the marketing industry. Her description implies that she perceives marketing as deceiving and spiteful. Tara uses a metaphor, "like a crow and they see something shiny and they want to grab it", which appears to be an attempt to describe her perception of people's nature to want or get excited by something that has been advertised. It appears that Tara believes the marketing industry has the ability to take advantage of this, and therefore entice gamblers through exciting advertisements and incentives. Her description of "losing a bit of your soul" puts across an image of her going against her moral values and beliefs. It appears that Tara has been told to sell or advertise something that she does not believe in. In relation to gambling, it could be understood that gamblers are tricked to play through the use of marketing strategies. Tara's description of her negative experience in marketing appears to have resulted in her feeling "disgusted" at marketing industries.

In the extract below, Kayla similarly expresses feelings of aversion towards gambling.

Kayla: *It's actually really bad ... that it can be so easy to gamble anywhere and you don't really have to make an effort to do it. Like people are always on their phones now... so being able to gamble on apps is just putting it in front of people's face. When you think about it... it's a serious issue for some people.*

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(Lines 118–121)

I feel terrible ... like ... not for me but like for people who need to gamble and for people that lose their money. I feel sorry for them but I'm thinking if it's always there it's so easy.

(Lines 123–125)

Kayla talks about the accessibility of gambling as negative. She describes it being put "in front of people's face", which gives the impression of her being bombarded by gambling advertising. She appears to be processing this impact on those who may have a gambling problem, which results in her feeling angry and, later on, evidently disappointed. It could be argued that Kayla is also disgusted at the gambling market and industry as it impacts those with a gambling problem. This perception of the gambling market results in participants wanting to avoid gambling themselves.

Tina: *It's dangerous isn't it? It's a bit wrong. It is a bit wrong. With everyone in debt, it entices people to come in to potentially get into more debt, I don't agree with it but it's the world we live in right?*

(Lines 81–83)

It seems that Tina is processing her thoughts around the danger of incentives. She appears to ask for clarity as she says "isn't it?" to the researcher. Repetition of the words "it's a bit wrong" emphasises a connection between her feelings towards gambling and the realisation of gambling incentives as dangerous. Despite these strong emotions, Tina shows acceptance through her words "it's the world we live in right?". Tina's low tone of voice and pause further suggests her disappointment and possible

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disgust towards gambling marketing. Moreover, her language and demeanour gives the impression that Tina feels helpless and must accept that the world is not always good.

Wealth. Analysis suggested that participants perceived gambling as an activity associated with wealth. It was seen as more acceptable for those with money to gamble. They also described people who attend casinos as wealthy individuals who associate within the casino network. Participants talked about this world being different from theirs, and therefore depicted that they should stay away from gambling.

Anna: *I don't know if I would do it myself, err ... I suppose if you were someone who's kind of very wealthy and you've got connections and it's not so risky, but I think if you're just an ordinary person like myself, it does kind of ... warning signals pop up a little bit when I think about it. It's not something I would never do but it's just(..) I would be a little bit wary about it because I think it could go quite wrong and you could find yourself getting in too deep into it and you could potentially get addicted. So I think from that perspective it's not something that I probably want to do.*

(Lines 39 –46)

Anna describes gambling as an activity that would be suitable for people of wealth and those who also have "connections" within the gambling field. She constructs herself as an "ordinary person", which, arguably, suggests a divide between herself and the world of gambling. When discussing wealth and gambling, Anna uses words such as "warning signals", "wary", "wrong", "too deep", and "get addicted". These words identify that she constructs gambling as a negative and harmful behaviour, which makes her apprehensive. Anna's description suggests that she perceives gambling as very

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separate from her, in a world that appears to be too dangerous for her. This therefore means that she should stay away from gambling.

This divide between wealthy and non-wealthy is also evident in Luke's extract, as he describes the differences in the ways in which people of wealth spend money. He compares the way he may spend money to those who gamble in a casino, which suggests that he clearly positions a distinction from them. Luke appears to hold the perception that wealthy people have the assets to afford to lose money in gambling, which he does not identify with. Within Luke's account, he refers to wealthy people as "they", which further suggests the distinction from himself. Furthermore, this evidences Luke's reason to stay away from gambling.

Luke: *It's kind of like... those people who have money can do what they want really they can go into casinos every Saturday night and would have no issue if they lost some money because I guess for them it's like a night out drinking. The money that we would spend on a drink, for them is money that they can put down.*
(Line 50 - 54)

Kayla: *I do know one person from home he did ... he got into gambling at casinos and spent his whole student loan on it, yeah ... that's just one person and I think all the others thought ... well we can't... if they're earning I can understand if they want to do it and if they are earning a good amount and they can afford to lose £100 then that's fair enough but... I think it's a dangerous thing to get into if you are young or a student because it can just easily take your money away very quickly can't it?*
(Lines 28–34)

Kayla also seems to perceive that gambling is more acceptable for those for who "can afford to lose" money. She talks about a group of people who say that they can't afford to gamble. As she refers to the group as "we", it can be assumed that Kayla also identifies herself as part of that group. She refers to the financial danger of students and young people gambling, which are two groups Kayla falls into. Therefore, it can be suggested that as Kayla doesn't assert herself as wealthy, she stays away from gambling.

Fear. Another aspect that displays participants' position that gambling needs to be avoided is the fear participants expressed regarding losing money, and the impact this potentially has on themselves and their families. This fear was generally associated with a gambling addiction, which seems to further reinforce that gambling is something they should stay away from.

Tara: *A lot of them are trapped in their own behaviour and it's affected their life detrimentally, to the point that they can't function normally because they're so obsessed and absorbed in the next thrill and the next 'I could win', and they're convinced the next time they do it they are going to make a massive windfall. There's no guarantee! It's like they're high off the rush and it can be just as detrimental as drinking or smoking or taking drugs.*
(Lines 37–42)

Tara describes those who gamble as being possibly "trapped" and unable to function, which demonstrates her perception of the severity of the negative consequences of gambling. It is apparent that she associates the dangers of gambling

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with the dangers of substance misuse. This highlights the level of risk that Tara perceives gambling to have, which clearly indicates that she should avoid such behaviour. During the interview, Tara said this in a strong and passionate tone, which further reinforced her fear associated with gambling.

> Kayla: *Erm… I think it can be a bad habit* [gambling] *but if the person is able to control themselves and know when to stop then I guess it's a choice that they can do ... I can see how it can be addictive and stuff.*
> (Lines 41–43)

> *Erm... I see it more as a loss because I think you are more likely to lose than win. If you are really smart and lucky and stuff then obviously it's a different story but I just... I would have no idea what I'm doing.*
> (Lines 74–76)

Kayla appears to be fearful about gambling due to the risk of losing money and the chance that the games are noticeably addictive. She mentions the individual being "able to control" their "habit". Firstly, her use of the word "habit" suggests that she sees it as an addictive behaviour and possibly something that somebody cannot change. She also links this with the ability to control, which suggests that she sees it as something that can become uncontrollable. Kayla's perception of the uncertainty of the outcome in gambling arguably leads her to be fearful.

Alienation. Participants appeared to perceive gambling as a behaviour that takes you away from the world. This was identified around their descriptions of loneliness, secrecy, and withdrawal.

Tara: *They're very obsessed and I feel like they're missing out on life because they're spending so much time in their own head and too much time in the game. And they're missing out on life and they're going to wake up and realise hold on, wait, is all that time wasted? I could have done something that I could have achieved something.*

(Lines 176–180)

...they spend so much time locked in their rooms; I have no idea what they're doing. Apart from telling me they're playing a game or I've got this new game, I have no idea what they're doing.

(Lines 182–183)

So if people can secretly have an addiction or a gambling addiction, no one would have a clue because it's on your phone. People could think you are just fiddling on your phone or on Facebook, you're on social media. But really they could be ... they're playing gambling games.

(Lines 187–190)

Tara's description of her siblings who play games on their phones suggests a disconnect with real life. She uses the words such as "missing out on life", which demonstrates her perception that they are taken away from life and the world, which is potentially affecting their life development. She states that "they spend so much time locked in their rooms" where "no one would have a clue" what they are doing. This further identifies that, as well as gambling and gaming alienating people, there is also a chance for people to alienate themselves with accessible gambling and gaming

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opportunities. Tara's description appears to be around the use of a mobile phone, which suggests that access to these games on technology eliminates the social interaction.

> Kelly: *... as soon as it interrupts your daily routine...or if it interrupts work or... if it ... Like shows breaking down in relationships and you know the person is withdrawn from day to day, erm, socialising on their phone or continuously being in the bookies ... so yeah I'll say that'll be an addiction and when it's gone too far.*
> (Lines 56–60)

Kelly describes gambling as damaging to relationships, which results in alienation. She uses the word "withdrawal", which suggests a total disconnect from life and portrays the gambler as struggling to keep away from the gambling world.

> Luke: *I think it's something that can really take you away. I don't know how to describe it ... but you see people who don't talk to friends or even family anymore because they are so stuck in this... This... trap, I guess... that's probably the best way I can think to describe it.*
> (Lines 66–70)

Luke also highlights that an individual can become alienated from family and friends. He describes it as a "trap", which suggests that someone who is heavily involved in gambling cannot get out, therefore implying that the consequences of gambling alienate the individual.

James: *The apps are good if you want to gamble, but it means that it's easy again. Like... you don't have to go anywhere and if you want to bet you can. It's kind of like another social media app... like people are always on their phones, constantly. Gambling on your phone just means that you can do it quietly without anybody knowing. I wouldn't do it regularly because ... I feel that we are always on our phones ... and if I was to start gambling a lot on my phone it would potentially be addictive, which means my life is spent on my phone (laughs).*

(Lines 66–72)

James's extract identifies that the accessibility of gambling contributes to gambling in secrecy. Secrecy is evident as James states it "just means that you can do it quietly without anybody knowing". He talks about gambling apps in reference to "other social media apps", which suggests that since apps are commonly accessed, others do not question when gambling apps are accessed, further highlighting the element of secrecy. James points out the potential of gambling being addictive through use of mobile phones; therefore, he avoids it.

This theme of 'stay away' encompasses participants' views that gambling can potentially have negative consequences and needs to be avoided. Participants tend to talk about gambling as a behaviour that holds a high level of risk, which they do not want to be part of. Participants' constructs of 'stay away' identify their fear and concerns with those who gamble, and the potential consequences that could arise. Much of the participants' perceptions have been derived from the media and what they see in society. The next theme of 'What would others think?' highlights this in further detail.

3.4 What would others think?

Participants emphasised the role of society and stereotypes on their perceptions and gambling behaviour. The analysis suggests that the views of others contribute to the way participants perceive gambling and those who gamble. It appears that the media and society has reinforced negative stereotypes which seems to have an influence on the participants' perspectives as they worry about how they may be seen. The following extracts show how participants consider the perception of their social groups in gambling.

Kayla: *I think they* [friends] *might find it weird if I was to gamble because ... like... it's not the norm.*
 (Lines 50–51)

Luke: *I'm not sure how my closest friends will feel about going to a casino every night. They more like a bit of casual fun. I feel like if I was to go to casinos and things like that I would probably have a very different group of friends; my mates won't enjoy anything like that.*
(Lines 29–33)

Kayla's extract clearly identifies that gambling is not an activity that her friends would regularly do; therefore, she would be seen as "weird", evidencing her consideration of how she would be perceived by peers. It could be suggested that Kayla would not want to be seen as different from her social group, and therefore would, arguably, not participate in gambling. Luke's extract further provides evidence to this idea, as he suggests that he would have a "different group of friends" if he was to go to casinos for fun. Both these extracts highlight that the views of social groups are taken

into consideration when deciding if to gamble. Both Kayla and Luke provide evidence that the participants consider what others will think of them.

James's extract below provides evidence of the assumptions made about the perceptions of those in a casino environment, and how this impacts his behaviour.

James: *I don't think casinos are my thing. I mean ... I have been once or twice but to be honest I find it a bit ... pretentious and ... that's not me, I don't like that. Similar with betting shops, I think that's weird... I wouldn't want to be seen in one of those* [laughs] ... *It's just the way in which people are seen, I'm not a hard gambler and don't want people to think I am. I like it every so often for a bit of fun but that's it.*
(Lines 43–49)

James's extract illustrates the discomfort from attending a casino or betting shop; it highlights that he is concerned with the image society may have of him if he were to be seen in a betting shop. James states that he's not a "hard gambler", which is evidence that he assumes that he may be perceived that way if he attends a casino or betting shop. This identifies that James is concerned with how others will perceive him in that environment, which arguably may evolve from his own stereotypes of those in a casino.

Stigma. Participants were able to put across their concerns of what others think through the discussion of stigmas. Participants described images of those who they identify as a gambler. This image appears to have a negative portrayal, which participants reflected on in relation to how they would be seen in society if they were to gamble.

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Francis: *Yeah, I kind of imagine just like seedy old guys kind of sitting in there and betting on horses all day... it's not really a good image when you are walking past it. And yeah there's just a... when I went there it was just a bit depressing... but that was my view on it.*
(Lines 163–166)

Francis's extract is a response to someone who he thinks attends a betting shop. Francis's use of the words "seedy old guys" and his description of them "sitting there all day", suggests that he also holds a negative portrayal of those who attend a betting shop. The latter also gives the impression of someone who may be unproductive and not be working. It could be assumed that his description means the individual is also lonely or potentially a failure. He refers to his experience of it being "depressing", which highlights his perception of a gloomy and morbid environment. These descriptions appear to be Francis's stigmas of a gambler, which he is concerned of being seen as.

Kayla: *I feel like... people who do those things actually have nothing else to do. Like... they spend a lot of time gambling so I feel like they have money to waste, and then when they get in debt it's an issue... I mean if you gamble regularly there's a chance that you will end up in debt. Those people that gamble are just impulsive and I guess they can't control themselves.*
(Lines 43–48)

Similarly to Francis, Kayla's stigma also appears to be around someone who has failed in life. Kayla refers to them having "nothing to do", further highlighting a perception of someone who doesn't have much in life apart from gambling.

These constructs of those who gamble appear to create discomfort for young people to go into a betting shop, as they believe there is a negative stigma. Due to the participants' similar constructs of an old man in a betting shop, it could be understood that this is a shared social image. Moreover, young adults avoid attending betting shops because others may hold this negative image of them.

Alice: *I don't think I ... want to be seen in that way ... Like as a gambler... I think ... I don't see it as a positive message. It sounds so bad... it's not even like I've had a bad experience with a gambler or anything, it's just the way that I feel. I personally... don't want to be associated with that kind of stuff.*

(Line 112 – 116)

From Alice's extract, it appears that she holds negative stigmas towards gambling, which she doesn't want to be associated with. It is evident that she is concerned about how others will perceive her if she was to gamble. As she states that she has not "had a bad experience with a gambler", it can be argued that she holds a negative image that can be assumed to have been shaped from society or the media. This further results in Alice's concern about what others will think of her.

Apps escape shame. The analysis suggests that access to mobile applications alleviates the discomfort from attending betting shops and casinos. Participants who gambled would usually do so via apps for ease of access and comfort.

For example, Francis, in the previous theme, provided a description of someone in a betting shop as a failure. In the extract below, he goes on to describe his discomfort as "intense" as he is inexperienced. The word "intense" implies that there was a pressure for him to do well in a betting shop. However, having apps means that he doesn't have to experience that discomfort. Being able to gamble "in the comfort of

your environment" arguably suggests that gambling in a safe environment means that there will be no judgement.

> Francis: *Yeah... it just feels a bit intense going in there especially like if I'm not that experienced in betting ... I don't really know what I'm doing... it's a lot easier to just like have your app in the comfort of your environment and just have a look yourself.*
> (Lines 168–171)

This description of "intensity" was also captured in Jason's extract below. His repetition of "I don't like the intensity" highlights his discomfort of a betting shop. It is evident that his discomfort comes from others in the environment, where he possibly feels as if he is being judged. Having mobile applications for gambling clearly allows Jason to gamble without being watched or judged by others; therefore relieving his feelings of shame.

> Jason: *I don't like the intensity ... I don't like the intensity ... people watching you, people enquiring; obviously it's like my own private business if it's on my phone.*
> (Lines 43–45)

Further to this, Alice also talks about the discomfort of attending a betting shop. She also refers to it as being "more of a game" at home, which arguably suggests that Alice also feels safer gambling in an environment that she is comfortable in. She talked about feeling as if she wouldn't "belong" in a betting shop or casino, arguably highlighting the way that access to apps allows her to gamble without social judgement.

Alice: *Well... a lot of it is online now, so... You like... especially... because our generation it's easy and you can do it from home and it's more of a game. I wouldn't want to go into a betting shop where there's loads of middle-aged guys, that doesn't appeal to me but if I was interested in gambling I would much rather do it from my phone or computer in the comfort of your own home.*
(Lines 121–125)

If I went into a betting shop, I would feel uncomfortable as if I don't really belong there. Erm also with a casino... I feel like I wouldn't know what I'm doing and I'm out my depth. I guess it's just judgement from other people whether it's like... what are you doing here or what are you betting or like you don't belong here I guess...
(Lines 217–221)

Peer influence. The analysis suggests that the participants tend to follow their peers in taking part in gambling, and would be more likely to gamble if this was common in their immediate social group or family environment. Participants who do not gamble regularly also described being influenced if the majority of their peers would try.

Anna: *If you're in a casino or if you're with a bunch of friends and they're like 'oh let's play this game'... then I think it's a little bit harder to not get involved compared to if you're just sitting at home on the computer and you see an ad, you know ... I think I definitely feel a lot less compelled if I'm at home and I just see an ad ... if I was with a group of friends and they're like 'oh let's play'... a*

bit of like the peer pressure element involved ... I'm not saying because there are other people... you might think ... like, oh it might kind of be a bit more fun that way you know...yeah.

(Lines 371–379)

Anna illustrates that there is an element of feeling coerced to gamble in a social situation. Anna describes not being interested in gambling alone, but perceives gambling as a different experience if it's with friends. Anna's description of it being "harder to not get involved" suggests that there is a pressure to be involved in an activity if peers are keen to participate. It could also be seen that Anna may not want to be left out of an activity that could potentially be fun. Moreover, it could be argued that if Anna was not to get involved, she may be perceived in a negative way by her peers. This further highlights the pressure from peers and the concern of what others will think.

Francis's extract, below, is evident that within his peer circle they encourage each other to gamble, and appears to demonstrate an element of competition. Francis's extract evidenced that there is an influence from peers to participate in gambling.

Francis: *Er... well... if you're in an environment with a load of guys you kind of... you guess you will want to show off and be... motivated by each other and carry on playing... just a dangerous environment really.*

(Lines 182–184)

Kelly's extract below identifies that her boyfriend's account provided an opportunity to gamble. It appears that she places bets from her boyfriend's account. It

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could be assumed that she was influenced by her boyfriend to gamble as he has an account and it's an activity that they do together.

Kelly: *Yeah sometimes we bet together erm... I mean usually when I've bet it's through his account and I'm like... 'ah I'll put the bet on for' you so… yeah*
(Lines 44–45)

Media tells us. Participants have emphasised the role the media plays in creating either positive or negative stereotypes of how gambling is seen by others. From the analysis, it is evident that the young adults' perception is derived from the media, which includes movies, TV shows, and social media. The following extracts by Anna highlight the role of the media**.**

Anna: *Erm, it might sound a bit silly but it's mainly through media, mostly what I've seen on television to be honest, I think that's primarily where I have made that kind of association, because otherwise I don't really have much err, knowledge of ... well in terms of what gambling is, I don't remember specifically learning about it in school or anything, I think it's mostly through media that I've created this, erm, definition in my head I think.*
(Lines 24–29)

I think just like episodes of shows like Friends when they're in casinos and they play things like Blackjack and stuff ... erm I think there was also this, there was a film that I saw a long time ago. I think it was called, like, 21 or something.
(Lines 31–34)

I think probably the ones where it's kind of, they've shown it in a ... obviously I haven't watched that many gambling movies but the few that I have watched I think when they've portrayed it in a negative way, that's when... you start to think, oh this is kind of a dangerous thing. But if it's like an episode of Friends or some kind of TV show where they're just betting in a casino or something and nothing really that bad happens, then I don't really tend to think that much of it. I think it's just when you see it going wrong and you see people racking up large amounts of debt then I think erm you start to think it could all go wrong very quickly.

(Lines 73–80)

Anna's extracts vividly capture the notion of media defining young people's perceptions. Anna talks about gambling that she has seen in the media that has contributed to her understanding. She talks about gambling in a comedy, which she understands as a fun social experience, where she doesn't think or hold a strong opinion. Her reference to a movie that appears to have a negative portrayal of gambling clearly impacts her perception of gambling. Anna's description is similar to the view she has held throughout the interview: that a one-off game with friends is less harmful than gambling on a frequent or solo basis. This highlights the way that the media appears to inform participants' understandings of gambling.

As well as TV, ideas are also communicated through social media.

Alice: *Because I don't think the risk is worth it, you hear more about people losing than you do winning, in my view anyway but occasionally you'll get people placing a bet then put a Facebook status. 'Oh won 40 quid at the horses'*

or something like that ... but like, I don't know, I don't really hear about people

winning.

(Lines 83–87)

Alice talks about hearing more of the negative outcomes of gambling compared to the positive. It can be suggested from her extract that people may post about their winnings from gambling on Facebook; however, it can be assumed that they do not post about their losses. Although in this case, it has not directly impacted Alice's decision, it can be argued that the messages communicated through social media contribute to the perceptions and ideas that participants have of gambling.

Tara discusses gambling advertisements through the use of social media as an 'invasion of privacy'.

Tara: *It's been used as a facilitating tool to bring about people's agendas and*

there's people in war-torn countries that don't have a penny to their name that

have smartphones nowadays. So if there's one way to access the masses and

they use it to their utmost. Even the other day when it comes to things like

advertising, like, Facebook, and because they own WhatsApp they have given

WhatsApp access to your browsing data so it can tell Facebook what you like

and advertise towards you accordingly, that's an invasion of your privacy and

it's gearing towards, say someone has a problem and they look at things and it's

just showing you constantly 'oh buy this buy this' and you're trying not to.

(Lines 207–213

It is evident that Tara's experience of the media and the way in which they reach the masses has been seen as intrusive and vindictive. This tells us that the media is

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constantly attempting to communicate messages to society in order to gain consumers. These messages, whether positive or negative, shape young people's perceptions of how society views gambling, and ultimately influence their decision to gamble.

This theme has demonstrated the role that society and the media plays in shaping and influencing young adults' perception of gambling. It provides young adults with ideas of how those who gamble may be perceived in different contexts. This perception has been shown to influence the method that is taken to gamble.

3.5 Summary and preliminary discussion

The current study aimed to explore the accounts of young adults' perceptions of gambling and their view of its representation in the media. It endeavoured to gain an understanding of how young adults perceive and understand gambling today. The analysis indicated that gambling is perceived as an activity that is tempting, whilst at the same time an activity of risk and negative consequences. On the one hand, participants described gambling advertisements as luring and enticing, which made them feel intrigued and excited about the outcome. Incentives in the advertisements played a big role in tempting young adults to participate. This is in line with previous research such as studied by Lee et al (2008), Binde (2009) and Hing et al (2016) who argued that gambling advertisements attracts society to gamble. On the other hand, the analysis suggested that young adults have a sense of ambivalence towards gambling, as they fear the negative consequences. When reflecting on the temptation and incentives of the advertisements, participants began to see the advertisements as 'disgusting' and 'deceiving', as they may be harmful to vulnerable individuals. This negative perception of gambling has been similarly found in studies by Wickwire (2010), however this research adds more insight into the participants accounts of avoiding gambling. Participants also expressed the role of society and their peers in their decision making to

gamble, and also in the way in which they gamble. It appeared that the view of others and the media's portrayal has an influence in shaping their perception of gambling. Previous research has identified that the media holds stereotype portrayals which influence young people (e.g. Barnes, 2007; Binde, 2009; Korn, 2005). Overall, the findings add further insight and knowledge into the perspectives of gambling and complement existing gambling literature. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

3.6 Reflection on the process of analysis

The analysis phase evoked my anxieties around not being experienced conducting qualitative research. At times, I questioned whether I would do the data justice and if my interviewing skills were sufficient to have gathered in-depth data. During the interviews, a couple of the participants responded timidly with short answers. This required me to be very active in using probes to encourage them to expand their accounts. In leaving those interviews, I jumped to the assumption that the data may not be rich enough. However, during the first phase of analysis I noticed that the data had more depth than what I anticipated. During the transcription phase which involved me listening very carefully to the tapes, facilitated my understanding and engagement with the data. This was also essential in developing codes that were connected to the accounts.

Phase three and four of analysis involved the clustering of codes and developing themes. Early in this stage, I felt overwhelmed of codes and somewhat struggled to see the themes clearly. I grouped the variety of codes into similarities that I could see and left codes that I struggled to fit in to the side. I then took some time away from the data and came back with a clearer mind. Revisiting the data with a fresh mind allowed me to see the themes and missing codes which I couldn't before. Developing an initial

thematic map at this point facilitated the development of the main themes and identified

the overlaps between themes. I was then able to group the themes further to create the

final thematic map.

Chapter 4

Discussion

This chapter discusses each theme in relation to the existing literature. The clinical implications are outlined and the relevance of findings to counselling psychology is discussed. This is followed by a consideration of the limitations of this study and directions for future research.

4.1 Discussion of findings

Participants talked about a temptation to gamble, especially in connection to advertisements, websites and incentives that seem to provide possible chances of winning. This excitement was also produced from the enticement of advertisements, as the images gave participants a feeling of luck and a high chance of winning. Previous literature has ascertained that excitement is one of the common reasons for why people gamble (Walker, 1992). Boyd (1982) described excitement as the "gambler's drug". Previous studies have also linked excitement to the expectancy of winning money (Wulfert, 2008). In this study, the excitement of expectancy to win was present following exposure to gambling advertisements. Feeling excited and enticed by gambling advertisements are in line with Lee, Lemanski and Jun's (2008) findings, which suggest a positive relationship between media gambling exposure and attitudes towards gambling. This could be understood through cognitive theory, according to which, gamblers play due to distorted beliefs and over-estimation of their chances of winning (Ladouceur & Walker, 1996). Drawing on cognitive theory and findings from the study, it could be argued that the distorted beliefs are strongly facilitated by what is portrayed in gambling advertisements and online websites. The advertisements portray that winning in gambling is highly possible, which appears to create excitement; hence the findings of positive attitudes towards gambling advertisements (Lee et al., 2008).

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As well as excitement from advertisements, participants also described being enticed. They specifically talked about monetary incentives as attractive and appealing, which contributed to their decision to play or not. Research has stressed the concern that the continued enticement of adverts could potentially increase the rates of gamblers and essentially problem gambling rates (Binde, 2009; Grant & Kim, 2001). Incentives appeared to entice participants, where they tempt gamblers to continue gambling, and those who do not usually gamble, to try. Furthermore, participants were enticed by the playful nature and entertainment of the advertisements, which made gambling tempting. This, therefore supports the assertion that gambling advertisements intend to appeal to audiences (Hing et al., 2016). The features that seemed apparent in this study are similar to those found by Korn et al. (2005), where participants were attracted to the idea of possible wealth, happiness, and material gain. These features appear to be evident in participants' perceptions of gambling, which suggests that gambling advertisements are achieving their aim to entice and gather customers. However, the implication of this is that it could draw in gamblers and potentially entice those who are recovering from a gambling problem, as found in the study by Hing et al (2016).

Participants expressed gambling as a fun experience, especially with peers and social groups. Fun, along with financial gain and enjoyment, has been found as a key expectancy in gambling (St-Pierre et al., 2014), suggesting that participants anticipate a fun experience. Fun, furthermore, has been identified as a significant feature that motivates youths to gamble (Korn et al., 2005) and as a social activity that alleviates boredom (Mercer & Eastwood, 2010; Nower & Blaszczynski, 2006; Skinner et al., 2004). Participants in this study also expressed gambling as a means to relieve boredom and have fun instead. Supporting research acknowledges fun as a gambling expectancy (Stewart et al, 2015). Interestingly, when discussing gambling as fun, it appeared that the male participants found the element of competition amongst friends as being fun.

Studies have identified that women respond less favourably to competition than men (Wong et al., 2012); however, gender was not considered in the selection process. In order to explore this further, additional research will need to be conducted on gender differences.

Participants spoke about gambling as something that contributes to their experiences in life. They talked about not being too cautious and taking chances reflecting Kristiansen and Jensen's (2014) findings that at-risk gambling patterns could be a normal part of adolescent life. This is further supported by Korn (2005), who found that gambling in young people is seen as merely a form of entertainment with no risks attached. Researchers have stressed that exposure to gambling has normalised the behaviour (Gainsbury et al., 2015; King at al., 2014; Lamont et al., 2011; Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999), which arguably results in the participants perceiving gambling as an enjoyable activity that contributes to their life experiences.

This temptation, that is evident in the data and the literature, can pose a risk to young people developing problematic gambling behaviour. With gambling being accessible (Griffiths, 2011) and frequently participated by young people (Derevensky & Gupta, 2004), there appears to be a threat that it could be seen as merely entertainment, and become embedded in general behaviour (Kristiansen & Jenson, 2014). Recently, the Gambling Industry Code for Social Responsible Advertising (Industry Group for Responsible Gambling, 2015) was updated in order for the media to not intentionally target those under the age of 18 through the style and context of their advertisements. Updates have included the restriction of advertisements after 9pm if it includes a sign-up offer, a socially responsible gambling message and clear indication of age restriction. However, those over the age of 18, likewise the participants in this study, are still exposed to the tempting nature of gambling.

Apart from the enticing and tempting elements, participants also spoke about the need to stay away from gambling. Participants in this study picked up on the consequences that could arise, identifying that gambling could become an addictive behaviour leading them to avoid gambling. This study found that participants perceived the gambling industry, specifically marketing, as disgusting as they attempt to draw in people to a behaviour that could eventually become harmful and addictive. This is in line with findings by Fam et al (2009) who found that in China gambling advertisements were seen as being "offending" as the behaviour is seen as lazy and a non-productive way to pass time. It is noted that there is a difference in the cultural context and the role culture plays in the perception of gambling is out of the scope of this research. However, it identifies that there appears to be a negative perception of how gambling is perceived.

Participants seem to have differentiated casino gambling from other forms of gambling; they connected it with wealth and appeared to distance themselves from such a status. The model of casino gambling based on Tversky and Kahneman's (1992) cumulative prospect theory posits that "people evaluate risk using a value function that is defined over gains and losses" (Barberis, 2012, p. 2). This is known as loss aversion and suggests that people are more sensitive to losses than to gains. It can therefore be assumed that participants perceive casinos as holding more risk, and arguably believe there is more chance that they could lose. This finding could reflect how young people view the difference between casinos and sports betting which provides an insight into what is perceived as risky. In order to protect young people from developing problematic gambling, it could be suggested that research and education could focus on the perception of risk in gambling. A deeper understanding will be beneficial to inform and shape support services.

Participants reported feeling afraid that gambling could become problematic and potentially addictive. Fear could conceivably be related to avoidance behaviour. Research has suggested that avoidance of fearful stimuli is associated with anxiety (Dymond & Roche, 2009; Pittig et al., 2014). It could be argued that the participants' worry of losing money to gambling makes them feel anxious, which in turn makes them perceive gambling as something they should stay away from. Furthermore, identify over-involvement as a negative expectancy (Gillespie et al, 2007; Wickwire et al, 2010) which influences gambling behaviour. Fear complements existing literature on gambling expectancies as it provides evidence that the participants feared over-involvement that could lead to negative consequences, such as addiction. This negative expectancy made participants feel as if they should stay away from gambling.

Although being social was a factor that contributed to fun in gambling, at other points in the data participants perceived gambling as alienating. Participants expressed that gambling is an activity that can be done in secrecy with minimal interaction with others. They also associated alienation with people who gamble regularly and often with those who have an addiction. This was also talked about by one participant in relation to gaming. One participant also expressed gaming being similar to gambling as it means that you are always in the game and "missing out on life". It could be argued that the element of alienation is apparent in gambling and gaming activities. Research has suggested that solo gamblers tend to be more frequent and heavy betters (Bernhard, Dickens & Shapiro, 2007). It was also noted by the participants that gambling via mobile applications contribute to the alienating element which is in line with Griffiths (2001), who found that mobile gambling reduces sociability. The participants in this study perceived alienation as a consequence of gambling and therefore used it as a reason to avoid the activity. However, this evidence highlights that mobile gambling can arguably contribute to the development of excessive gambling. To protect people

from gambling excessively gambling companies could possiblyy put in restrictions on the mobile applications.

Research has found that the media informs society (Binde, 2009) and repeats stereotypical portrayals (Barnes, 1997). This study has identified that the media sends messages about gambling behaviour through shows and movies on TV. Participants would refer to what they have seen on TV and media, which contributes to their understanding and perceptions of gambling. In line with previous research (Un & Lam, 2016), participants suggested that if TV portrays gambling as fun, it makes them more inclined to participate. This could be understood by Ohtsuka and Chan's (2014) assertion that movies provide an insight into the psychologies and fantasies of ordinary people. However, participants did not only reflect on gambling shown in a positive light, but also expressed that it demonstrated the negative consequences of excessive gambling. Participants expressed TV as a way of learning about the social values of gambling and the consequences that can arise. Two participants in particular talked about an episode of a popular TV soap that showed the impact gambling could have on a young person. This appeared to cement with them and contributed to their understanding of gambling, especially problem gambling. Across the participants it appeared that the negative portrayals of gambling in movies stuck with them more than the positive. This resulted in the participants reflecting on how they would be perceived by others if they were to gamble excessively. In contrast to previous research suggesting the media creates positive attitudes (Korn et al, 2005) and irresponsible gambling (Un & Lam, 2016), negative portrayals of gambling appeared to make participants ambivalent. They described different types of stigma that revolved around those who go to betting shops and who develop a problem from gambling either on TV or in real life.

A recent study on stigma found that problem gamblers experience public, perceived, and self stigma (Hing, Russell & Gainsbury, 2016). The descriptions of

stigma that the participants shared all appeared to be related solely to those who have a gambling problem. Based on stigma descriptions by Hing et al. (2016), it appears that the participants were drawing on stereotypes produced from public stigmas. Stereotypes are viewed as structures of social knowledge that are learnt by the majority of a social group (Judd & Park, 1996). Hamilton and Sherman (1994) claimed that stereotypes are "efficient" because people quickly generate impressions and expectations of individuals who belong to a stereotype group. Within this study, a representation of gamblers that appeared to be consistent amongst the majority of the participants was the perception that those who attend betting shops are "old guys" who have nothing to do, have lost their life to gambling and are possible failures. It appeared that participants saw those who attend a betting shop as similar to previous studies that found problem gamblers are perceived as a bad character, perilous, non-recoverable, disruptive (Hing et al., 2016), and lazy (Miller & Thomas, 2017). This view made participants cautious of attending a betting shop, as they felt that they would also be perceived by society in a negative light. Similarly, to the findings of Hing et al (2016) participants seemed to fear being stigmatized as a gambler. It appears that the participants' perceptions were produced from either what they had seen or from the media's emphasis of the extreme negative consequences of gambling, parallel to the finding from Miller and Thomas (2017). This study supports the assertion that media plays a vital role for individuals to acquire knowledge and develop expectations for society, self-behaviour, and beliefs (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008). This contributes to existing literature by demonstrating how society and the media have an influence on the way in which gambling is perceived; this in turn made the participants cautious of their gambling behaviours.

Participants described that they were able to minimise the discomfort they had experienced in attending land-based gambling outlets through the use of mobile phones

or tablets to gamble. Previous research has suggested that online access to gambling provides anonymity (Griffiths, 2003); it can therefore be suggested that mobile gambling allowed the participants to gambling anonymously, which allows them to avoid the impact of negative stereotyping. Although technology has acted as a means for gambling without judgement, it also means that it can be done without others knowing (Valentine, 2016). Participants in this study seemed to be pleased with the access to gambling on mobile phones. Quinlan et al (2013) support this in a study with young adults, which found that gambling motives were positively correlated with gambling alone. Thus, it can be argued that it could potentially contribute to the development of excessive, or even problem gambling.

Influence of peers within social circles was apparent in the analysis. Participants expressed an inclination to gamble if it was an activity carried out within their social groups. Similarly, Hardoon and Derevensky (2001) noted that 44% of adolescents reported that the gambling behaviours of their peers led to the initiation of their gambling. Deans et al. (2017) also found that young men experienced a social pressure to fit in with their friends who bet on sports. Research has identified that peers are the most influential in situations of uncertainty; peers appear to demonstrate the value of social norms. One participant spoke about the concern of how they may have been seen by their peers if they were the only one who did not participate in gambling when everyone else did. This supports findings that peers have an influence on gambling behaviour (Tang & Oei, 2011; Magoon & Ingersoll, 2006; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al, 2004). Perhaps, campaigns could include encouraging young people to support each other in making their own decisions and not being pressured into the majority. This especially includes activities that may involve risk. Recently, there has been advertisements on television suggesting not to succumb the pressure of sexual relationships unwillingly, this could be similarly done with gambling.

Across the data, there appears to be a running element of contradiction and dilemma. Participants seemed to perceive gambling as enticing and tempting, yet at the same time dangerous and to be avoided. Billig (1991) asserted that when people speak or specifically give opinions on a topic, they are thinking and arguing the debates within themselves; they are essentially debating what is common sense. Billig et al (1988) argued that maxims and values that individuals hold can often be in conflict with one other. Common sense comprises such conflicting elements; it is said to possess a dilemmatic quality. Drawing on Billig et al's (1988) ideas on ideological dilemmas, this contradiction in participants' views could possibly be understood as a conflict of common sense. From the analysis, it appears that participants are conflicted between the psychological and social. Firstly, the psychological element is related to feelings of being enticed and attracted, which make gambling tempting. This seems to be related to internal desires to win money and be a part of something that seems exciting. The contradictions appear to be related to debates on whether gambling is socially acceptable. It seems to stem from ideals and depictions created between peers, social groups and from the media whilst considering whether it is worth the risk. This indicates that gambling holds a dilemmatic element that could potentially contribute to the participation of the behaviour and development of over-involvement in gambling. It could also be especially concerning for those with a gambling problem aiming for recovery. This information could be vital to informing support services of the struggle that their clients experience and to educate them and the communities of the dilemmatic elements in gambling. Counselling psychologist could play a vital role in this.

4.2 Implications for Counselling Psychology

This research provides evidence that gambling is an activity that is tempting. The participants expressed gambling as a fun activity that is used for entertainment

purposes; however, the ease and accessibility raise concerns of excessive gambling behaviour. Psychologists and researchers have stressed the consequence of gambling becoming normalised (Kristiansen & Jensen, 2014), and continue to have a growing concern of the development of gambling and the impact it may have. Research has identified that there are mental health issues associated with gambling (Zangeneh et al, 2008; Gillespie, 2008; Reith, 2006), and with the development of technology, problem gambling amongst young people has continued to be an area of interest. The discussion suggests that there is a need for more education on gambling. Counselling psychologists could play a crucial role in reaching this population. Young people have been identified as a group that is the most influenced by peers (Brown, 2004; Chassin et al, 2004; Steinberg & Monahan, 2007) and arguably follow popular society trends (Sandford & Rich, 2006). With the rise of problem gambling in this group, it will be valuable to educate and raise awareness of gambling. In terms of targeting young people, a focus for counselling psychologists could lie within the education sector. The government has highlighted the crucial role of schools in supporting young people to improve their mental health and wellbeing (Department of Education, 2016). The Health and Care Profession Council's (HCPC) standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists (HCPC, 2015) encourage teaching and education of mental health. It is therefore within the scope and skills of counselling psychologists to provide training and psychoeducation to students, staff, and parents. Furthermore, education around actual gambling and virtual gambling and gaming could be beneficial in raising young people's awareness of the consequences these games could have. Young people have been noted as not seeking support in gambling due to stigma and shame (Gainsbury et al., 2014); education on gambling could also include information on seeking support. Increasing young people's awareness will potentially promote responsible gambling behaviour. Providing psychoeducation to the wider community – such as in schools –

will be beneficial as an initial attempt to raise awareness of problem gambling, and potentially reduce its rates in young people.

Counselling psychologists work with those with problem gambling as well as their families, delivering treatment and psychoeducation. It could potentially be helpful for practitioners in treatment or psychoeducation groups to explore and unpack dilemmas around gambling that clients face. Educating counselling psychologists and other practitioners on the social and psychological dilemmas of gambling, could arguably allow the professionals to take an empathic approach to working with gambling clients, as they can acknowledge that gambling is something that is tempting but is causing them considerable harm. Empathy is a feature in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2017) guidelines quality statement and has been found to be a key factor in the therapeutic alliance (Imel, Hubbard, Rutter, & Simon, 2013) which promotes positive treatment outcome (Crits-Christoph et al., 2011). Practitioners could then use this therapeutically making dilemmas explicit with clients and increasing their awareness of what they may be exposed to. Increasing clients' awareness is a goal of therapeutic treatment in cognitive behavioural therapy (Rockville, 1999), and has been found to be the key to therapeutic change in psychodynamic therapies (Leiper & Maltby, 2004).

This study has highlighted that there is a need for regulation of gambling advertisements and warnings on gambling websites. The Gambling Act (2005) has taken measures to ensure that youths are not accessing gambling websites. However, it could take further steps to raise awareness of excessive gambling via the websites themselves. They could potentially put up warning information each time a consumer logs on, and gambling companies could track their use of the website. The consumer may wish to put a cap on their account, which means they will no longer be able to play after spending their specified amount. These are suggestions that need to be taken into

consideration to minimise problem gambling. Involvement of consumers and recovery problem gamblers in the planning and development of policies may provide a powerful tool for vocalising their viewpoints and moving towards change. Counselling psychologists have access to clients who may want change and could act as an advocate for policy recommendations.

4.3 Limitations

A limitation of the study is the consideration of demographics. Research has found that there are demographic factors such as gender (For example, McCormack et al, 2014; Wenzal & Dahl, 2009) or culture (for example, Simmons et al, 2016; Delfabbaro, 2012) that may influence gambling behaviours. The researcher noticed that there appeared to be gender difference in the participants' dialogue; however, it was not considered, as gender was not accounted for in the demographics. Additionally, all the participants were from a UK western culture suggesting that the sample was homogenous.

Despite the rationale provided for the 18 – 25-year-old age range, the researcher noted that there were differences between the responses of the younger (18-year-old) participants and the older (25-year-olds). Research has suggested that there are many developmental changes in young adulthood (Duffy et al, 2017) and an 18-year-old will not be the same at 25 years (Simpson, 2008). Arguably a more focused group of participants, specifying a particular age, may have yielded more insightful findings.

The data collection involved semi-structured one-to-one interviews with participants. It is possible that another method, such as focus groups, may have been more beneficial to gather data, and would arguably allow participants to freely talk in an environment that is comfortable and perhaps more natural to them. Focus groups in young people have been found to be particularly helpful in research with young people

(Bagnoli & Clark, 2010; McKee, Watson & Dore, 2014; Gibson, 2007). With

facilitation from the researcher, participants often build on each other's responses,

creating more candid answers (Leung & Savithri, 2009). Focus groups have been

suggested to provide a space for participants where they can define their own ideas and

opinions through dialogue and debate with others (Kitzinger, 1994). There is, therefore,

a potential for discussion over issues that are unanticipated by the researcher (Skop,

2006). Researchers have argued that the collective experience of focus groups has the

ability to empower participants to take control of the research process, and bring issues

that are of interest in a language and framework that makes sense to them. This,

therefore, may have provided more in-depth and rich data around their perceptions of

gambling.

The final limitation is the use of images during the data collection. As reflected

on previously, using the media images focused the interview on hose particular adverts

rather than on the participants perceptions of gambling in general. Using specific

images possibly dismissed any media representations of gambling that may have been

important, meaningful or influential to the participants. Not using image in the future

may allow for a more general discussion for the participant to explore aspects that are

important to them. It is also important to note that the images chosen may not have

reflected the interests of young people today. Considering their ages of 18 – 25, there is

a chance that websites such as Ladbrooks may not be popular amongst their age group.

If this is to be considered in future research, images that are age group specific will need

to be considered.

4.4 Recommendations for Future Research

An interesting finding was that participants expressed that they gain much of

their understanding of gambling from the media, especially television shows and

movies. This had an influence on the gambling actions they chose. From a review of literature, there appears to be limited research on the way gambling is portrayed on television programmes and movies (Un & Lam, 2016). Further research could use a discourse analysis on how current movies and TV programs portray gambling. It could involve a discursive analysis of media constructs through linguistic and visual means.

The current study used a qualitative design to explore participations. To build on the findings from this study, further research could conduct a quantitative study on young adults' perspectives. The quantitative component could include The Gambling Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (GABS) (Breen & Zuckerman, 1999). This is used to assess general attitudes towards gambling and focuses on cognitive factors. The scale includes 35 items where respondents report on a scale from the extent they strongly disagree to strongly agree. High scores indicate more positive gambling attitudes and beliefs. A quantitative component will allow for more participants and generalizability of the results.

Lastly, research in the future may want to consider interviewing counselling psychologists who work with gamblers. This will be a qualitative enquiry using Interpretive Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) to explore their experience of working with young people who have gambling problems. Interview questions could explore how counselling psychologists may work with the role of media influence on their clients and this tension between temptation and staying away. This study could arguably add further insight into the findings from this study and understand how counselling psychologist work with these issues. It could begin to raise awareness amongst professionals of this dilemmatic element of gambling and move towards incorporating it in problem gambling interventions.

4.5 Conclusion

This study has contributed to existing literature in gambling and provided qualitative inquiry on young adults' perspective on gambling. This study was able to conclude that amongst the participants, gambling is seen as an activity that is tempting which stems from it being portrayed as exiting and fun whilst at the same time it holds many consequences and should be kept away from. Social circles and the media has evidently contributed to the participant's understandings and played a vital role in shaping their perspectives and participation. This study has highlighted the role of a battle of common sense in the decision to gamble. This dilemma could be an important element that challenges problem gamblers to overcome their difficulty. There is a potential for these findings to contribute to shaping psychoeducation and interventions for young people and training professionals to consider gamblers dilemmas in an empathic approach.

4.6 Reflexivity

My interest stems from my experience of being a family support worker prior to embarking on the Counselling Psychology training. During this time, I was working very closely with children and families in a school where I previously was employed as a Teaching Assistant and a Family Support Worker for many years. Due to my roles, I developed very good relationships with students and their families. As a Family Support Worker, I supported a family who experienced considerable difficulties when the father was in financial debt due to gambling. He later started drinking alcohol as an escape from family and financial pressures. Supporting the children and spouse of the gambler was a challenging experience where I first witnessed the damage that gambling can do. This case was something that always stuck with me and sparked my interest in working with addictions. As a trainee counselling psychologist, I had a placement in a substance misuse service. This work provided me with an invaluable experience to understand the world of those with an addiction. When choosing a topic for the thesis, I engaged in conversations with peers and colleagues and found that gambling always appeared at the forefront. I began to notice, new gambling outlets and advertisements that would come on TV and I began to think about how this impacts those with a gambling problem. This drove my interest in the research project.

I had personal views about gambling and attempted to bracket these assumptions and ideas in order to not influence the research. I personally had always experienced gambling as a leisurely fun activity that I would enjoy with friends on the odd occasion with no harmful consequences. As I learnt more about gambling and the effects it could have on society I become more concerned about the availability and access to these games. From watching regular TV, I noticed the extensive gambling advertisements which I found frustrating. Through reflection I attempted to bracket my assumptions that the media is bombarding and encouraging, young people in particular, to gamble

irresponsibly. From walking around the area where I worked in an addiction service, I started to notice the increasing number of betting shops and felt somewhat disgusted that there were so many in very close proximity of each other. It brought up questions around how this effected the community and especially those who have a gambling problem. Having experience of working with young people, I am often exposed to discussions around the influence of general media on their mental health. In relation to gambling, I felt that this was an important topic to explore. Despite my attempt to bracket my feelings, it is possible that my disgust could have manifested in the data analysis; I could have unconsciously wanted to represent the negative aspects of the increased access to gambling. Participants extracts at times were in line with my feelings of disgust and it could be possible that I felt this was important as it was aligned with my opinions. To ensure that my feelings of disgust did not influence the description of the participants disgust, I shared extracts and themes with colleagues and my supervisor to ensure credibility.

Various moments this contradicted or was similar to the participant's view. It is possible that my own assumptions may have influenced the wording of questions or the elements I found relevant to pick up on and explore further through prompts. During the interviews I attempted to remain open and curious about participants' dialogues. Throughout this thesis, I kept a journal which I would write notes in after each interview. This allowed me to process emotions or thoughts that arose which was beneficial in gaining insight into my feelings about each interview and my journey as a researcher. It was important that my assumptions and feelings towards gambling did not influence the research process, as discussed previously bracketing my assumptions through reflections were beneficial. It was helpful to reflect prior to interviews in order to check in with how I was feeling and my position with the research at that point. This was beneficial in grounding me and cleared my mind in preparation for the interview.

During the early stages of the interview process, I became aware of my feelings to want to make the participants feel comfortable and open to talk. I felt that this was somewhat part of my thoughts around them being 'young' and noticing that they were often nervous at the start. On the other hand, I believe that the urge to make them comfortable was due to my keen desire and passion for working with young people. This instinct to possibly 'protect' young people is a part of me that I have recognized from my years of working with children and adolescents in different roles. In my current role as a Trainee Counselling Psychologist in a school, I am passionate about working with issues that young people of this day and age are faced with; gambling is also a feature that comes under this umbrella. This trait is part of me that has been highlighted on various occasions throughout the training and also stands at the very forefront of my research. To bracket this, I had to remind myself of my role as a psychological researcher. This meant, that I had to distinguish between my skills as researcher and a therapist. Although I had various roles working with young people, this was new. In order to let my protective nature, stop me from exploring the participants' talk, I had to recognize what I would like get the most out of the interviews. This benefited the research as I used appropriate probes and questioning to answer my questions which subsequently enhanced my skills as a researcher.

This further led me to think about a possible power imbalance that could take place between myself and the participants since I viewed them as 'young' and considered that they may have seen me as an 'expert' or 'professional'. This has been discussed as possibly occurring if the researcher was thought of as having more, or different, knowledge than the participant (Taylor, 2001). This along with my personal views could mean that responses will be compliant with what the participants may expect me to think. In order to refrain from this, I aimed to remain in a curious position which allowed me to be 'with' and attend to each participant' story.

It was noticed that a few participants who enjoy gambling on a regular basis, would attempt to make it clear and explicit that their gambling behaviour is not problematic. They appeared slightly worried that they would be judged for gambling. Although it was not suspected, it could be possible that the participants were aware of my position as a trainee psychologist and didn't want me to think that they had a gambling problem. This could have influenced the extent to which they expressed their enjoyment and fun with the games. In the future, it may be beneficial at the start to reiterate the purpose of the research and reassure the participants that they will not be judged for what they express. This may ensure that participants feel immediately comfortable to express their experiences.

Conducting this research at times felt challenging due to my lack of experience conducting qualitative research. I felt that it would be a challenge that will help me develop as a Counselling Psychologist and researcher. Initially using personal therapy as a tool to reflect on these anxieties alleviate the pressure and focus on what the data was telling me. This grounded me and allowed me to look at the data with a clear mind. I then used peer-supervision with other trainee Counselling Psychologists to talk about the data and share ideas of the clarity of themes and subthemes. This was beneficial as I was able to connect with others on a research level and became more confident in my skills as a researcher. It brought many discussions and debates around methodology which constantly provided me with an opportunity to evaluate my choices and decisions. This study has challenged and developed me personally and as a psychological researcher. I feel that I have established a new passion and interest in conducting research that contributes to the field of Counselling Psychology in particular.

After completion of this research, there are a few things that I would do differently if this study is to be done again. Firstly, I would reconsider the use of

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images; rather than showing the participants media images I would possibly ask about their general perceptions of the gambling media where they would have the opportunity to freely express their opinions from what they have seen and been exposed to. This would allow for exploration of their natural perceptions and opinions of gambling that is specifically relevant to them. Secondly, I would make the research gender specific, which will allow for an in-depth analysis of a genders perception of gambling. This also mean that the discussion could be based around games that are aimed at females or males specifically. Lastly, using a focus group as a form of data collection could be essential to gather the groups perceptions from an environment that may allow them to express and debate more freely with other participants.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Advertisement

Are you between ages 18-25?
Would you like to express your views on gambling and the growing technology?

My name is Tanya Rajmangal, I am a Trainee Counselling Psychologist at the University of East London. I am currently conducting a study exploring young adult's perceptions of gambling and new technology. This study aims to understand your perceptions and provide support services with information to minimize problem gambling amongst young adults.

I am seeking to interview those who are willing to discuss this topic. The interview will be approximately one hour and arranged at a time convenient to you.

Note: Your personal information will be anonymous and all information is kept as confidential. You will be provided with further information once contact with the researcher has been made.

If you are interested and would like further information, please contact me via email on **U1326868@uel.ac.uk**.

u1326868@uel.ac.uk u1326868@uel.ac.uk u1326868@uel.ac.uk u1326868@uel.ac.uk   u1326868@uel.ac.uk
Tanya   Tanya   Tanya   Tanya   Tanya

Appendix B: Participant information Sheet

Information for Participants

The Principle Investigator
Miss Tanya Rajmangal
U1326868@uel.ac.uk

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in the research study. This study is being conducted as part of my Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at the University of East London. Before you decide to participate it is important that you understand the purpose of the research and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully before you decide to participate.

Project Title

A Thematic Analysis of Young Adults Perception of New Technology in Gambling

What is the purpose of the study?

Gambling has been known to lead to the development of personal, social and psychological problems. Previous research has identified significant correlation relationships between young people and gambling. It has also been identified that internet gambling has a negative impact on young people and can lead to potential problematic gambling.

This study seeks to explore the experiences of young adults and aims to understand how they perceive the growing accessibility and advances in technology for gambling.

Who can take part?

- If you are between ages 18-25
- An English speaker
- Interested in voicing your perception of new technology in gambling
- You do not have a gambling problem

What will happen if I take part?

If you are interested in taking part and feel that you fulfil the requirements, you will be invited into the University of East London. You will meet with the researcher and have the opportunity to answer any questions face-to-face. You will then be asked to sign a consent form, which provides consent to be interviewed, voice recorded and the transcribed data to be used for the purpose of the study. The interview will take place at the University of East London at a time convenient for you and will last approximately one hour. Your interview will be made anonymous and kept in confidence of the researcher. All interviews are one-to-one with the researcher. The results of the study will be written up and submitted as the Doctoral Thesis for the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology.

Location

The interviews will take place at a time convenient for you at the University of East London, School of Psychology, Stratford Campus, Water Lane, E15 4LZ.

Confidentiality of the data

All personal information you provide will be made anonymous from the research; this means your name will not be associated with the data. Any consent forms that you have signed are kept separate and in a safe locked cabinet with only the researchers access. Your audio recording will be kept confidential and only be used for the purpose of the research. Once the study has been completed and the Thesis marked, all consent forms and audio material will be destroyed. Data will only be accessed via a password on a computer, and will be kept after the study has finished with the view of a possibility to develop the research further in the future (e.g., for publication).

Disclaimer

If at any time during the process you feel as if you cannot continue, you have the right to raise this and withdraw at anytime without reason. You are not obliged to take part and therefore have the choice of withdrawing at any point. If you decide to withdraw, your personal details and any interview material would be erased and will not be used or included in any part of the study.

It is not perceived that taking part in the study will have any risks. The advantages are that you will be able to provide information that will potentially raise awareness and understanding of gambling amongst young adults. It could also provide information to those working to support young people who suffer from a gambling problem. There is a lack of research for young adults and this would provide knowledge of their perceptions of gambling.

If you have any further questions or feel ready to take part please contact Tanya Rajmangal on:
U1326868@uel.ac.uk

Appendix C: Participant consent form

Consent to participate in a research study
A Thematic Analysis of Young Adults Perception of New Technology in Gambling

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher(s) involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

Participant's Signature

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Researcher's Signature

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………..…….

Appendix D: Ethical Approval from University of East London Ethics Committee

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION   For research involving human participants BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Rachel Tribe

SUPERVISOR: Kendra Gilbert

COURSE: Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology

STUDENT: Tanya Rajmangal

TITLE OF PROPOSED STUDY: 'A Thematic Analysis of Young Adults Perspectives of the Influences of New Technology for Gambling'

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED <u>BEFORE</u> THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is <u>not</u> required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made <u>before</u> the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY
(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

Approved

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

There are some typos which will require correcting, for example on one occasion, the typing of pilot

Major amendments required *(for reviewer):*

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

If the proposed research could expose the <u>researcher</u> to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

	HIGH
	MEDIUM
x	LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any): *The researcher needs to ensure that they contact someone before or after each interview*

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*:　　　　Prof Rachel Tribe

Date: 21.3.16

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments *(for students)*:

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature)*:
Student number:

Date:

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

PLEASE NOTE:

*For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's insurance and indemnity policy, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

*For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's insurance and indemnity policy, travel approval from UEL (not the School of Psychology) must be gained if a researcher intends to travel overseas to collect data, even if this involves the researcher travelling to his/her home country to conduct the research. Application details can be found here: http://www.uel.ac.uk/gradschool/ethics/fieldwork/

Appendix E: Participant debriefing sheet

Debriefing information

A Thematic Analysis of Young Adults Perception of New Technology in Gambling

Thank you for taking part in this study.
Once your data has been transcribed and analysed, it will be used for the purpose of a Doctorate research thesis. You will have the opportunity to receive feedback of the analysis if you are interested.

Please see below for any further support:

- Gamble Aware (for confidential support and advice) – www.gambleaware.co.uk - tel: 0808 8020 133 8 am to midnight, 7 days a week

- Gam Care (for counselling) – gamcare.org.uk – tel: 0808 8020 133

- National Problem Gambling Clinic - http://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/cnwl-national-problem-gambling-clinic/

- Gamblers Anonymous (access to support groups in the UK) - http://www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Thank you again for your contributions to this research.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Rajmangal
Trainee Counselling Psychologist,
University of East London

<u>Appendix F: Interview schedule</u>

- What would you define as gambling?
  How did you come to that definition?

- How do you feel towards gambling?
  What makes you feel that way? Why?
  How is gambling perceived amongst your peers? How does that influence you? Why do you think that you circle never got involved in gambling?

- What do you think of the images I have just shown you? - images
  Can you tell me any positives or negatives about the images?

- What do you think about the difference between the terms 'gambling' and 'gaming'?.
  Where did you get that understanding from?

- How do you feel new technology has contributed to gambling amongst people your age?
  Do you have any experience of using a tablet, smartphone or computer for gambling? Can you tell me about this? How did you first get involved with this?

- Is there anything else that has come up for you from our discussion? Is there anything that has been missed that you would like to include?

- What prompted you to take part in this study?
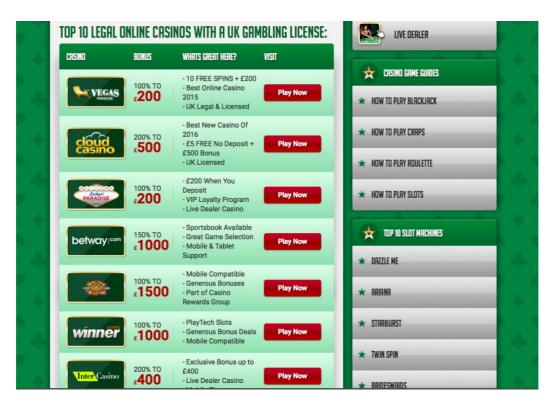- What do you think about what we have discussed today?

More prompts
What makes you say that?
Where did you learn that?
Why do you say that?
How did you come to that conclusion?

Appendix G: Images shown to participants

Craps - Best Casino Betting Game [12+]

Roll the dice a change the game for ever.

Craps comes with a deadly combination of centuries-old game, great 2D animations, your superb mobile device and great programming.

Drop the dice and let it roll your luck on the table. If your are lucky to get a come-out roll of 7 or 11 it is "natural", and the Pass line wins.

Go for the kill.

Game Feature:

• Simple and easy to learn interface
• Very addictive casino game
• Game layout and game play stimulates real casino craps

What's New in Version 1.2
* New Chips Added: Now Play with a higher bet value
* New Tables: Now play across various table and have more FUN!!

£1.49

Offers In-App Purchases

Appendix H: Examples interview transcript

55 Err… if im with them in like an environment where we are all watching the

56 game then like… if I see them do it then I could probably be tempted.

57 Especially if like there's a few drinks flying around and were a bit … what's the

58 word… erm… susceptible to err… yeah….

59 Do you think there's a difference when you are placing a bet with your mates

60 compared to if you were to do it home alone?

61 Yeah … I'd probably be really unlikely to do it home but like in an environment

62 where you're with all of your mates I'd probably do it more

63 What is it about doing with your mates that's more exciting?

64 Erm.. I dont know.. I guess there's a bit of a thrill really and also I guess you

65 can just like show boat on things if you've won and its lie like a happy

12 not really sure what games they play and stuff but they have like a couple of

13 them have gone in with like £100 and come back with £600 and a couple of

14 them have gone in with £100 kept it going and lost it all. So I know sort of what

15 goes on but I'm not … I don't understand it much…. Like if I went to a casino

16 I'd be rubbish (laughs)

17 So your definition of gambling and what u understand from it ... where do you

18 think you got that understanding from?

19 I'm not really sure… I just… I've never been one to gamble. I've bought a

20 couple of scratch cards but that's about it… I don't know. It's never appealed to

21 me that's why I've never thought about it I guess.

Appendix I: Examples of interview transcript with hand written codes, phase 2.

Erm.... It kind of makes it look a little bit interesting to be honest because they are quite quirky. Erma so it does in that day it catches, it's little bit enticing you know... compared to like the second one where you've just got two guys playing football, arm, which is a bit, its more kind of a normal image. So that one I suppose is less intriguing to me. So I think the first one grabs my interest a little bit more, erm... so yeah.

[margin note: fun in game makes it enticing]
[margin note: real life images are less intriguing]

So you've obviously spoken a lot about the images that you've seen, I was just wondering did you pick up on any of the writing or text?

Yeah on the last one, I thought it was interesting because it describes it as very addictive... it says 'very addictive casino game' which I thought is pretty funny as in... I have no experience in advertising of anything but I just thought that's ... I don't know if that's ... necessarily a selling point because I think maybe the addictive nature off it can be.. could be a bit off putting to some people because they might not want something that's goanna be addictive necessarily. Erm... so I thought that was a bit wired that they put that in there... but I guess when they are trying to say is its really good that you are just going to want to keep playing it sort of thing... but yeah, that's sort of stood out to me a bit.

[margin note: two sided?]
[margin note: addiction in games as 'really good'.]

Would you class that... this is an addictive casino game as a positive in the advertisement or a negative?

For me it's a negative erm because I don't want to be kind of.... I don't want to be getting into something that I know from the get go is going to be addictive, so for me it's not... I know we all play games and sometimes we get a bit addicted like candy crush and things like that, but I had no idea... I usually don't anticipate that happening when I get into these games so I think the fact that they've put it in there for me it's just a little bit like... if it's really addictive or

[margin note: change ↓ discussion of addiction created fear]
[margin note: no anticipation of addiction in games.]

Erma... I don't know.. maybe it's like... the gambling industries' way of kind of spreading its net kind of thing to kind of you know. get more people involved. Because you might haem some people who are just interested in playing regular games... and if you type in gaming and something with gambling or betting comes up then you might be like ... oh ok I wasn't exposed to this before but now I am so I might just try it like it's another type of game sort of thing... so I think it's arm ... I think it's a fairly kind of clever way of them trying to slip it in sneakily to people who don't necessarily gamble.

gaming could make it enticing to gamble.

it exposes novice to gamble.
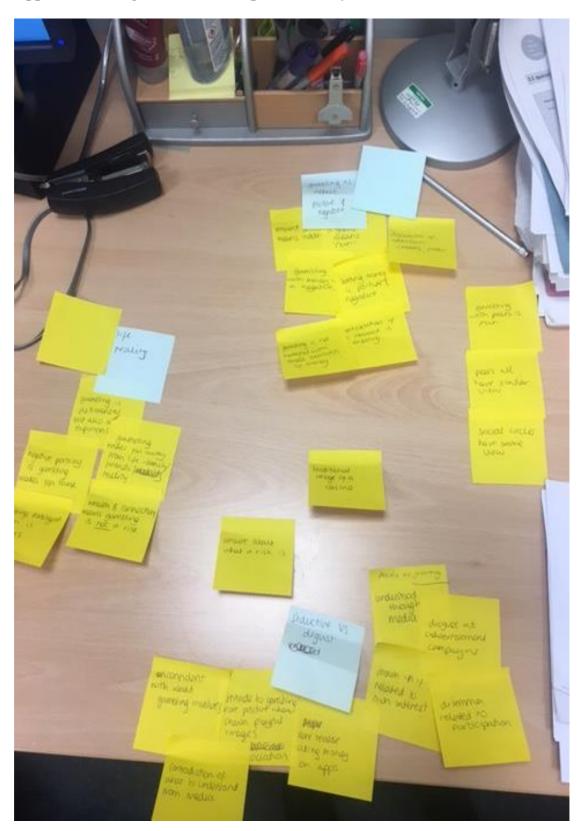
How does that make you feel by saying that?

Erm... as in... for me its ok because I know I would look at it and be like. it's a game but it's still gambling but I suppose it's a bit cheeky I think to do that especially for someone who's a bit more vulnerable who does know or might not understand the full extent of what type of game it is. they might get into it casually so I think it's a little bit unfair in that respect. But for me it's not so bad because I kind of... vie got that distinction in my head between playing a regular game and a gambling game.

attract those who do not fully understand.

Ok.... How do you feel that technology has contributed to gambling amongst people your age?

Err.... I guess mostly through the internet. because the inter has grown and developed so quickly over the last few years and there's all of these betting and gambling sites so I guess through that .... Again it's like they reaching more and more people and kind of ... just a wider pool of people now that might be getting into it whereas... obviously I guess before it was more just going into like. William hill... those kinds of betting shops or like casinos or that type pf thing but now... because there's speeding to the internet... the possibilities for the gambling industry is so there's so much more. because basically everyone

accessed by all

easy to access

no need to go into betting shops or casinos.

Appendix J: Image from the third phase of analysis

Appendix K: Thematic map of phase 4 themes

Media as grooming

Accessibility   image   providing a definition

Seductive vs disgust

Enticement through advertisements   Disgust at advertisements

Dilemma to participate

Gambling as affect

Reward excitement   addiction means fun   addiction creates fear

Acceptability in society

social circles have same view   apps take away shame   Stigma

Reality of life

Wealth means no risk   gambling as life experience   takes you away from reality