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## Final Draft Research Paper

### **Abstract**

In the US and across the globe, the surge of sports betting has captured widespread attention, transforming the gambling landscape in recent years. While numerous studies have explored the factors contributing to this trend, limited research exists on this specific social media content encountered by gamblers and its influence on their betting behavior. This study aims to investigate the basketball sports industry and how Twitter influences the betting decisions and experiences of gamblers. Surveys were conducted with 13 bettors, aged 18 to 24, to explore their personal experiences with sports betting. Results showed that 53.8% of respondents engage with basketball content on Twitter daily, while 23.1% either engage a few times or never engage. Respondents indicated that Twitter discussions are somewhat helpful in making betting decisions, with participants frequently relying on player efficiency, health, and recent performance. Overall, the findings suggest that young adults heavily rely on Twitter for basketball betting decisions, highlighting the platform's significant role in influencing their behavior.

### **Introduction**

Gambling can be thought of as the root of a tree, branched out into sports betting, casino gambling, lottery, bingo, horse betting, and electronic gaming machines. Since the Supreme

Court struck down the Amateur Sports Protection Act in May 2018, 38 states have legalized various forms of sports betting. Because of its recent legalization, sports betting has rapidly gained popularity. This growth is driven by gambling companies collaborating with sports networks and leagues, increasing new memberships through advertisements, social media content, and emails. However, the specific ways these exposures, especially on social media, influence betting decisions remain unclear. This research paper explores how Twitter impacts the betting behavior of basketball fans aged 18-34, and what factors contribute to their own betting decisions and strategies. By examining survey data, this study seeks to uncover common thoughts, traits, and specific betting instances that bettors face, and how these experiences shape their decisions. Understanding the correlation can provide insight into whether this influence is genuinely significant or merely perceived.

### **Review of Related Literature**

A similar study in the United Kingdom explored the attitudes of sports bettors towards marketing techniques used by the gambling industry and the impact of advertising on sports betting behavior. The results indicated a common theme of temptation to gamble, described as enticing and unavoidable. Specifically, under the theme of enticement, participants reported that betting advertisements captured their attention and prompted them to think about gambling. For instance, Participant 8 noted, "...just the fact that there's an advert coming on advertising it, then obviously...encourages me to think about it" (Killick, 2020, 1). In addition to enticement, a response corresponding to theme of unavoidable was stated by Participant 15, who described his experience with gambling advertisements on social media, saying, "It's halfway through, you're watching a video...10, 15 seconds it pops up and yeah, it's annoying and a bit intrusive. I wish it

wasn't there” (Killick, 2020, 1). Attractive odds also played a significant role in enticing new members to start gambling, as participants felt they would win more because the odds seemed better, even though it wasn't a guarantee. Twitter's enhanced betting odds were among the most frequently tweeted forms of promotion. This demonstrates the various marketing strategies used by gambling companies to bombard new members with unavoidable promotions across social media sites.

Another study explored how sentiment bias from social media influences sports betting market prices in the NBA and NFL. Sentiment bias, in this context, refers to the impact of people's opinions and emotions on betting behavior. The main measure of sentiment bias was the number of Facebook “Likes” on a team's official pages and posts. The analysis showed that a popular NBA and NFL team with significantly more Facebook “Likes” than its opponent would be favored by about 0.5 points more, demonstrating the impact of social media popularity on point spreads. Additionally, U.S bookmakers offer higher prices to bettors with sentiment bias, meaning a favored home team must win by more points for a bet to be profitable (Feddersen, 2016, 1119). This allows bookmakers to adjust the prices and betting odds, making bets on popular teams less profitable due to the anticipation of multiple bets on that team.

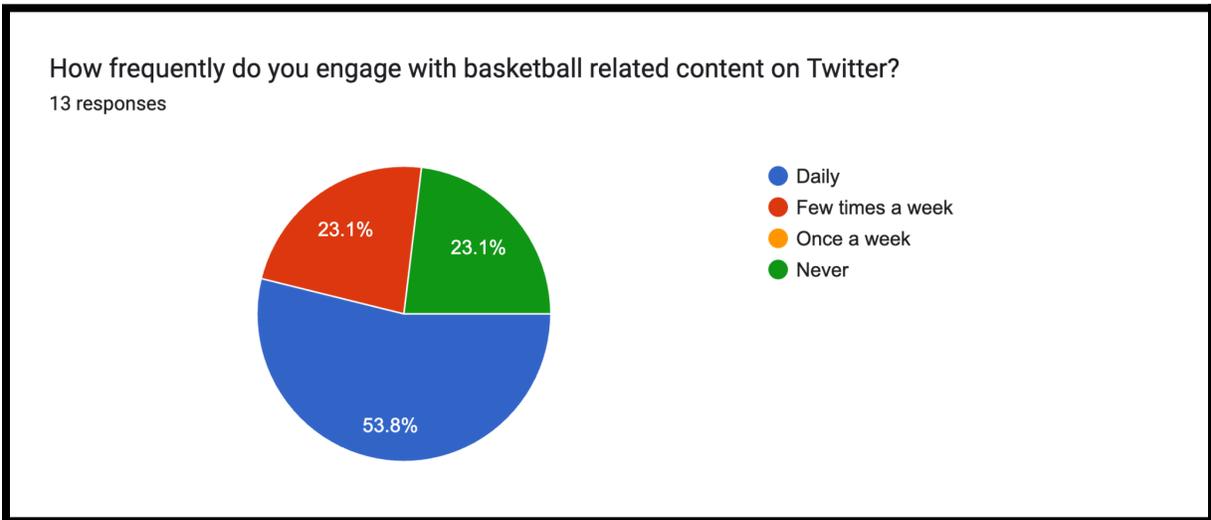
### **Methodology**

The research method for this study involved using a Google Forms survey distributed to active Twitter users and basketball betting app participants among UC Davis students. The survey format included a mix of open-ended questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Distribution methods included sharing on social media, in-person requests, and contacting personal friends at UC Davis involved in basketball sports betting. This approach ensured a

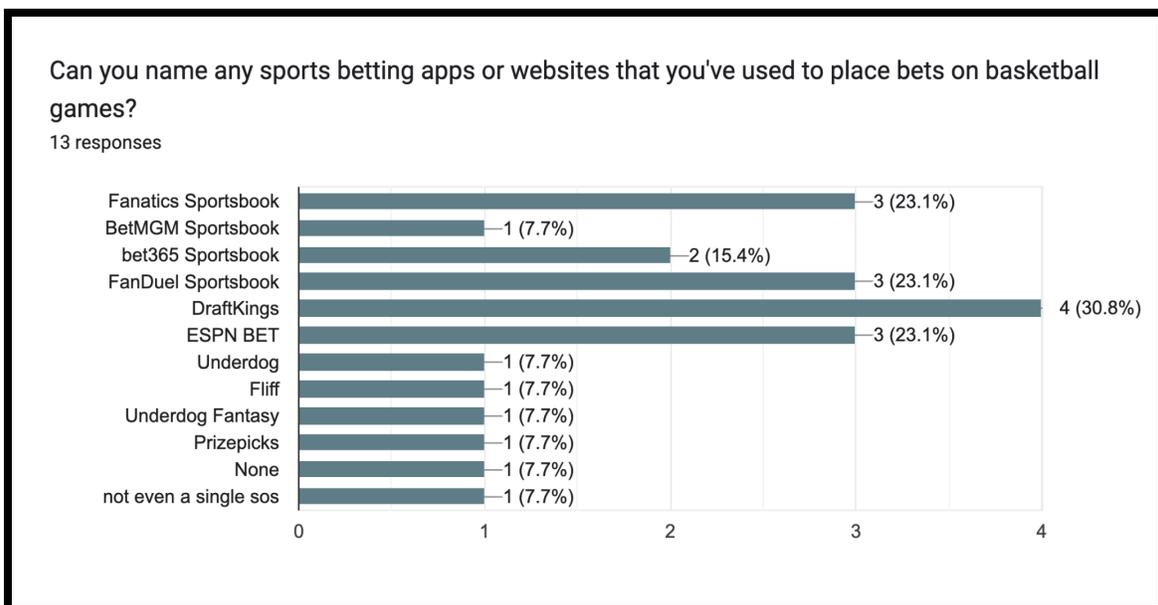
diverse range of perspectives. The survey gathered 13 anonymous responses, to protect participants' privacy. A detailed list of the survey questions can be found in *Appendix A*.

## Results

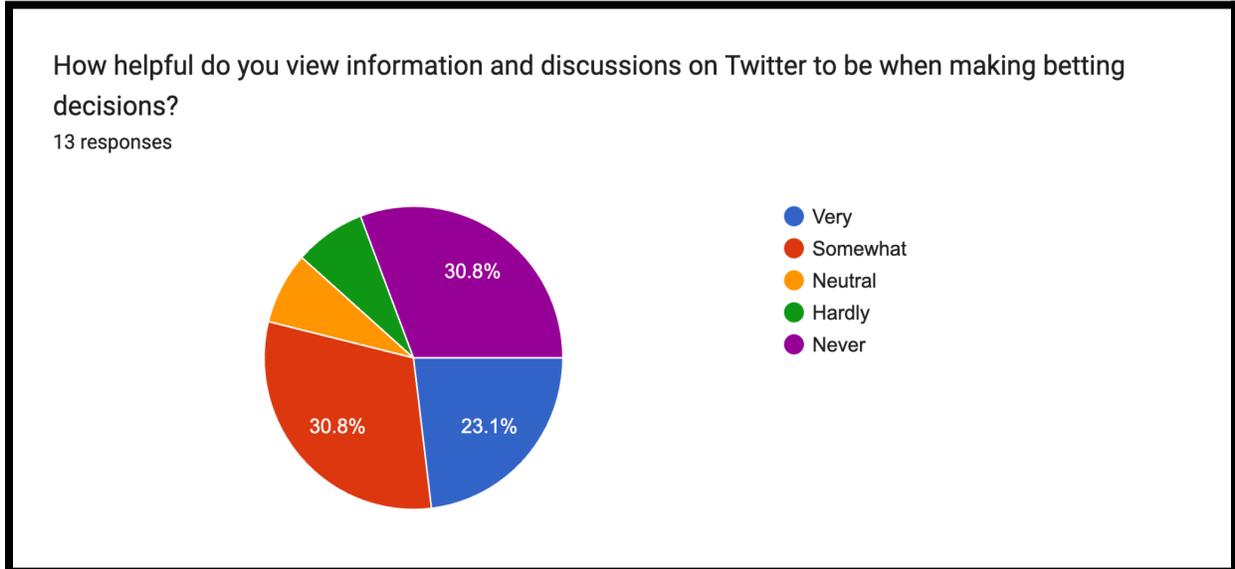
*Pie Chart illustrating frequency of engagement with basketball content on Twitter:*



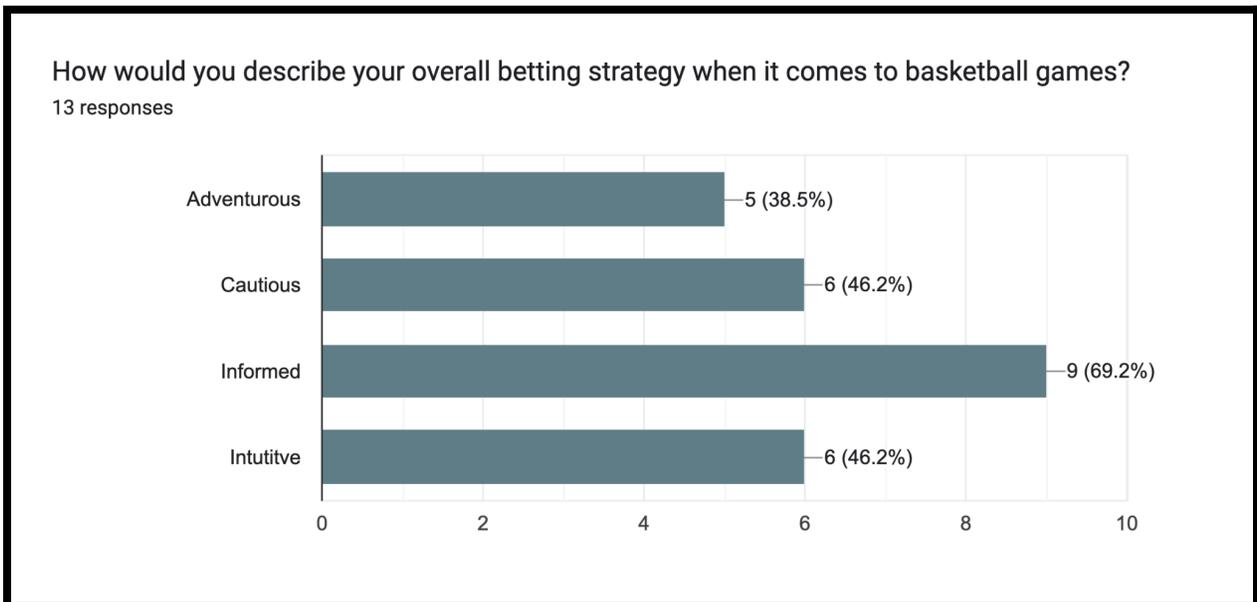
*Bar Chart displaying sport apps used by respondents for basketball betting:*



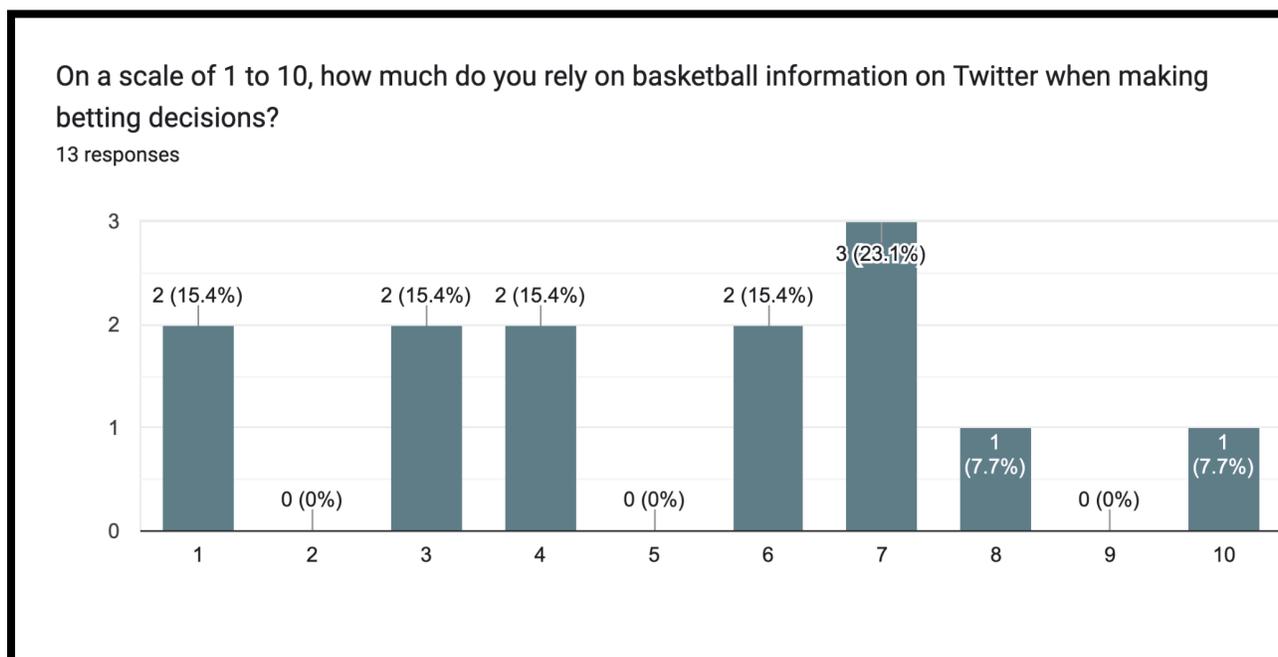
*Distribution of opinions on the helpfulness of Twitter information for betting decisions:*



*Bar chart showing traits associated with respondent's betting strategy:*



*Distribution of ratings on reliance on basketball information from Twitter for betting decisions:*



### Discussion

The responses from this Google Form survey provide significant insights into the behaviors and perspectives of young adult basketball bettors, as discussed earlier in this paper. All respondents were aged between 18 and 24, mainly full-time students, with two identifying as unemployed. Their engagement with basketball content on Twitter varied, focusing mostly with stats, sports highlights, player drama, and specific teams such as Milwaukee Bucks, Oklahoma City Thunder, Los Angeles Clippers, and Dallas Mavericks. DraftKings was the most popular sports website, with 30.8% of the votes. On average, each sports betting app received 2 votes. Regarding betting strategies, the most common number of votes received was 6, with *Cautious* and *Intuitive* each receiving this number, and *Informed* being the most popular with 9 votes (69.2%). When making betting decisions, respondents commonly considered team and player history, consistency, injuries, and overall health. Unique factors included personal favoritism, luck, and team

performance. Strategies to manage betting risks included setting aside a seasonal betting budget, using statistical insights from Twitter, and following NBA memes and betting pages.

Regarding the reliability of basketball information on Twitter, respondents rated it on average 6.09 on a scale from 1 to 10, indicating a moderate reliability for betting decisions. Views on the trustworthiness of Twitter opinions varied; one respondent viewed Twitter sources equally to other sources, stating “I rank the sources equally, at the end of day...I may as well read the sources, form some opinions and bet using sources and players state.” Another considered Twitter more trustworthy for sports news from tweets NBA Senior Analysts pages like Adrian Wojnarowski and Shams Charania. Instances where Twitter influenced betting decisions included reacting to player injuries, for example one respondent stated, “Rudy Gobert was ruled out, which I saw on Twitter, so I bet on Karl Anthony Towns points.”

When managing the balance between enjoying the basketball community on Twitter and betting risks, participants highlighted the importance of planning their betting budgets carefully, regardless of community influence. This aspect highlights a significant consideration that could be further investigated in future research. For example, exploring how individuals budget for betting - whether based on income, financial investment strategies, or other factors - could provide deeper insight into how Twitter influences betting behavior. Such exploration could provide a better understanding of the broader impacts of social media on gambling habits.

### **Conclusion**

Gambling is heavily influenced by platforms like Twitter, shaping how we bet on basketball. This study has shown that social media content, such as player stats and strategies discussed on Twitter, plays a big role in these decisions. These findings highlight how much

social media affects our choices, raising questions about personal control in gambling. Future research should explore these influences more to promote safer gambling practices. This understanding can help develop better policies for responsible gambling in today's age.

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## Appendix A: Survey Questions

The following questions were asked in the survey:

- 1) What is your current age?
- 2) What is your current employment status?
- 3) How frequently do you engage with basketball related content on Twitter?
- 4) Which specific basketball related topic do you most commonly interact with on Twitter?
- 5) Can you name any sports betting apps or websites that you've used to place bets on basketball games?
- 6) How helpful do you view information and discussions on Twitter to be when making betting decisions?
- 7) What factors do you consider most important when deciding whether to place a bet on a basketball game?
- 8) How would you describe your overall betting strategy when it comes to basketball games?
- 9) How do you manage the balance between the enjoyment of engaging with the basketball community on Twitter and the potential risks associated with betting?
- 10) Please describe a certain instance where a piece of information on Twitter (post, comment, message, etc.) influenced your betting decision?
- 11) On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you rely on basketball information on Twitter when making betting decisions?
- 12) How do you view the trustworthiness of opinions shared on Twitter in comparison to other sources such as blog posts, YouTube videos, and sports news articles?

13) How do the outcomes of your betting experiences on basketball games influence your future betting behavior? Please describe any instances where a betting outcome made you more or less likely to continue betting.