



RESEARCH STUDY ON GAMBLING PATTERNS AMONG WOMEN

On 9 August 2020, South Africa celebrated National Women’s Day. This day is dedicated to the struggle of women for freedom and equal rights, and it commemorates an historic march by 20 000 women to the Union Buildings in 1956.

In the context of this auspicious event, the NGB reflects on gambling patterns amongst women in South Africa and UK.

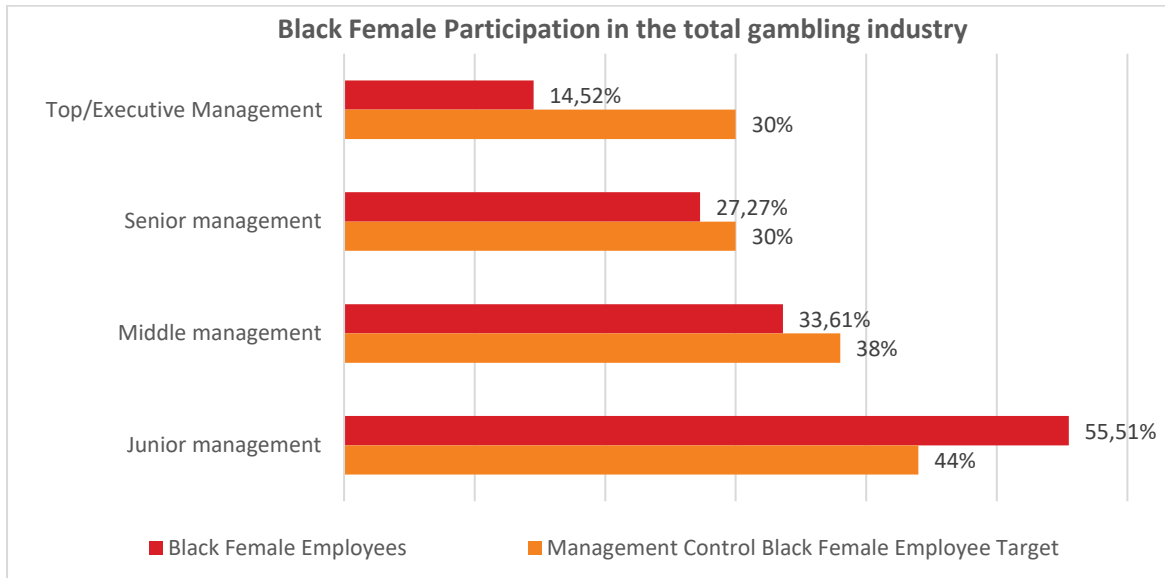
South African Gambling and participation of Women

The NGB usually conducts research studies to establish the socio-economic impact of gambling in South Africa. The latest of those studies, 2017, reveals that almost a third (30.6%) of the respondents to the research gambled and the most participated mode of gambling are lotteries, followed by casino gambling, betting, bingo and LPM. Illegal gambling is also rampant with fafi being the most popular. Although the gender distribution in the 18 years and older South African population is 47.2% males and 52.4% females, (Stats SA 2015), the gender distribution within the sample population for the study was slightly biased towards males (52.3% males and 47.7% females). The study confirms that males are disproportionately more inclined to gamble than females, particularly with regard to their participation in horse/sports betting, LPMs and unlicensed gambling. Females however are more involved in casino, lucky draws, scratch cards and bingo. Problem gambling was also found to be more prevalent amongst males than females.

Mode	Male	Female
National Lottery	53.9%	46.1%
Lucky Draws	48.9%	51.1%
Scratch Cards	45.6%	54.4%
Horse/ Sports betting	76.5%	23.5%
Casinos	48.0%	52.0%
LPMs	56.5%	43.5%
Bingo	32.4%	67.6%
All unregulated/unlicensed gambling	52.3%	47.7%

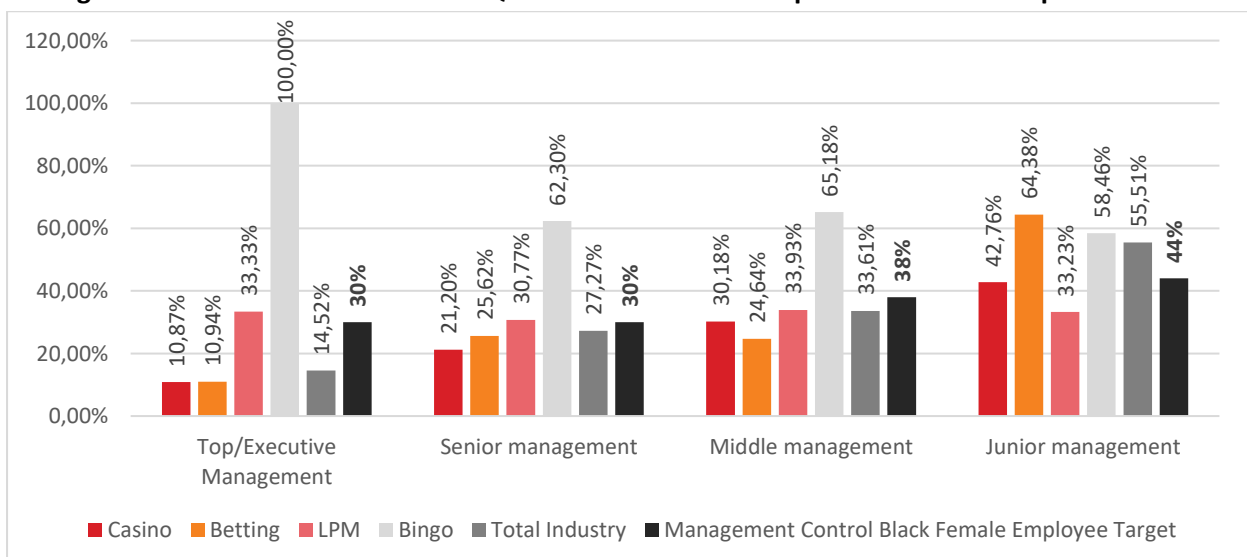
The NGB also pursued a research study in FY2019/20 on the current status in the South African gambling industry in terms of Transformation (B-BBEE, inclusive of growth (continuous improvement in sector of gambling mode productivity), shareholding and employment. The main aim of the research was to determine or reflect the current status in terms of economic growth, transformation and economic participation of Historically Disadvantaged Individuals (HDI’s) and women in the South

African gambling industry (excluding National Lottery). Looking at the transformation of the gambling industry, black female participation still falls behind. The targets specifically in terms of employment equity when it comes to management control show transformation gaps for Black Female Employee Participation with regards Top/Executive Management (-15.48%), Senior Management (-2.73%) and Middle Management (-4.39%).



This is more apparent in the casino and betting sectors and suggests that there is scope for ongoing transformation in the Top/Executive and Senior Managerial Occupation level in terms of Black Female participation. The LPM and Bingo sectors are however more transformed in terms of Black Female participation at managerial level.

Management Control Scorecard Status Quo: Black Female Participation – Sector Comparison



The NGB has noted a research report that has been released in the United Kingdom (UK), that delves into the gambling patterns of women. On 15 July 2020, GambleAware, an independent UK-based grant-making charity, published the findings of research it commissioned to better understand the

experiences of women and gambling. The report, titled ***“Women in Focus: a secondary data analysis of the Gambling Treatment and Support Study”*** by Briony Gunstone and Kate Gosschalk, is the first of its kind to include any quantitative data on women and gambling specifically.

The research report indicated that 35% of female gamblers who experienced high levels of harm come from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, scoring 8+ on the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). This categorised them as being at ‘high risk’ of harm from gambling.

The pattern is less in male BAME gamblers, with 29% topping the male problem gaming index.

The poll of around 7,500 women in England, Scotland and Wales found that BAME women are also more prone to experiencing harm (negative consequences) as a result of someone else’s gambling.

Marc Etches, The Chief Executive Officer of GambleAware, was quoted as saying - *“This research indicates that women, particularly in the capacity as an affected other, experience gambling harms in different ways to men and this report is an important first step in understanding those differences.”*

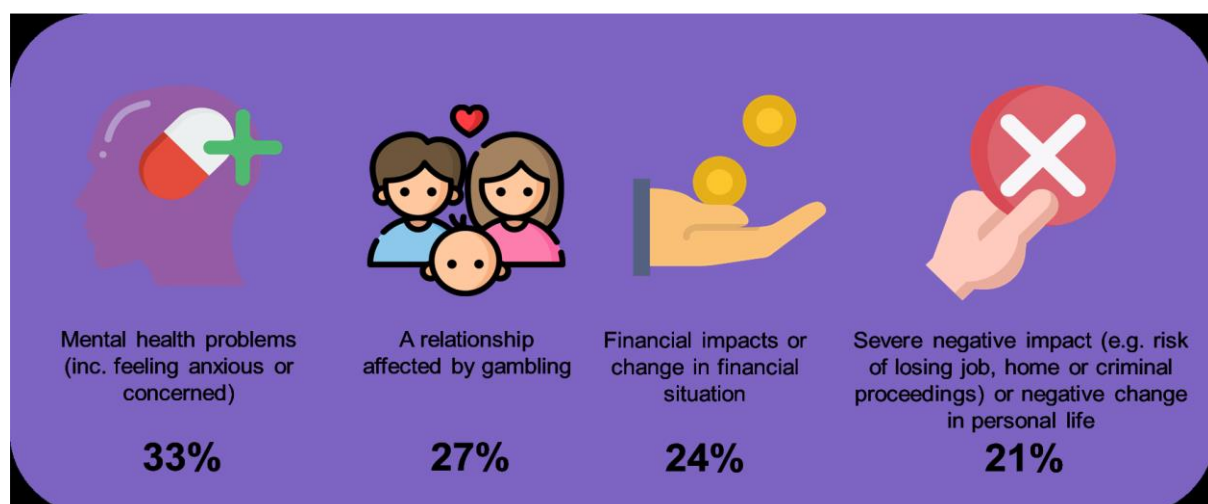
He further stated that - *“This research was commissioned to help treatment providers, such as those operating via the National Gambling Treatment Service, address any barriers people may face when it comes to accessing help and support for their gambling and it is essential that services are flexible and meet the needs of individuals.”*

According to the study, a key factor in female gamblers not seeking out treatment for problem gambling was perceived stigma.

Two in five women (39%) said that feelings of embarrassment and fear of people finding out served as barriers preventing them from seeking help.

However, over a quarter (27%) of respondents said that having the option of self-referral and knowing easily accessible support was available over the telephone – either online or face to face – would be a motivating factor to seek help.

Female gamblers who have sought treatment, support or advice tended to be motivated to do so by mental health problems, including feelings of anxiety or concern over their gambling (33%), the gambling affecting their relationships or family (27%) or financial impacts or a change in their financial situation (24%). Notably, a fifth (21%) were motivated by severe negative impacts from their gambling (such as the risk of losing their job or home, or the threat of criminal proceedings), or by a negative change in their personal life such as bereavement or relationship breakdown.



Anna Hemmings, the Chief Executive of problem gambling funding body, GamCare, said - *“This report has highlighted not only the challenges that need to be overcome, but also the opportunities available to service providers to help increase take-up of treatment and support to help reduce and prevent gambling harms among women.*

“Across our treatment network, in line with the National Gambling Treatment Service, we are working with women to better understand the barriers they may face when it comes to seeking advice or help for their gambling, or experience as an affected other, so that we can continue to ensure they have access the services they need, regardless of their gender or background.”

The research found that more than a third (35%) of female gamblers, who experience high levels of harm and have a PGSI score of 8+, are from a BAME (Black and/or Minority Ethnic) background, compared to 12% of the overall female gambling population. This same pattern is also seen amongst male gamblers, with 29% of men who experience harm from gambling coming from a BAME background, compared to 12% of men overall.

When looking specifically at ‘affected others’ (those who experience harm as a result of someone else’s gambling) it was found that eight percent of women fit into this category and 16% of these are from a BAME background. Researchers also found that women are more negatively impacted by the gambling of a close family member than men.

For example, 35% of women, compared to just 9% of men, are negatively affected by the gambling of a spouse or partner, and 88% of women, in comparison to 75% of men, are negatively impacted by the gambling of a parent. Contrastingly, men are more likely to be affected by the gambling of a friend or flatmate than women, with 33% of men citing this, compared to just 9% of women.

When looking specifically at treatment and support for women gamblers, researchers found that a higher proportion of women than men cited stigma as a reason for not receiving treatment. As mentioned, two in five (39%) female gamblers said feeling embarrassed or not wanting people to find out about their gambling was a key barrier to accessing treatment, support or advice to help cut down on their gambling, compared to just over one in five (22%) male gamblers. However, knowing that support and treatment would be confidential is particularly important for female problem gamblers, with one in five (20%) saying this would motivate them to seek help.

This report has thus provided clear evidence of the ways in which the profile of female gamblers differs from male gamblers, in addition to their treatment, support and advice needs.

For female gamblers, stigma (e.g. feeling embarrassed, not wanting people to find out) is a key barrier to accessing treatment, support or advice to cut down their gambling and even more so for problem gamblers (PGSI score 8+).

It is noted that this research is one of the first in-depth studies into affected others. As highlighted, the parties that women were most likely to be affected by – their spouse / partner and mother / father – were also those whose gambling problem has the greatest impact. Half (52%) of female affected others that are affected by the gambling problem of a spouse or partner reported a severe negative impact, likely due to the close and intense nature of this relationship.

Given the severity of impact that many female affected others face, the report acknowledges that further research exploring the treatment and support needs of this group is needed and would be welcomed.

Conclusion

As we pause to reflect on women in society during this important month, it is hoped that this article will inspire deeper engagement on the way women participate in and are affected by the gambling industry in South Africa. In terms of participation, much more still needs to be done to transform the industry to become more representative of the national gender demographics, but there has been visible progress, largely due to the results of a governmental agenda to break down barriers and open doors for women to be able to participate on equal footing with male counterparts in the business world.

As punters, we have information that alludes to the gambling patterns of women compared to men in the country, but the UK research strongly suggests a need for us to ask similar questions of our own society. Are South African women more vulnerable to gambling addiction than men? Do they feel more pressure to not seek help due to societal stigma? Is there a difference in the gambling experience of women based on race? We can and should ask such questions, as the answers will enable us to ensure that the gambling environment that we regulate is safe, healthy and supportive to women. With freedom and equality come risks, and if we are to succeed in our commitment to empowering women, then we must be equally up to the task of mitigating the risks that will come with the freedoms for which we fight.