**What this research is about**

Consumption communities are groups of people who all use the same brand, such as an Apple computer, or are interested in the same activity, such as running. It has been shown that people feel connected to each other when they share interests and experiences. It is not clear though what different types of consumption communities exist or how to identify them. The researchers wanted to identify the characteristics of a lifestyle consumption community and find out what types of behaviours were expressed in this group. They studied a community that was interested in a lifestyle which included regularly betting on sports, such as football and rugby. The community was made up of young adults between the ages of 18 and 30. They lived in Australia and did not show signs of obsessive gambling.

**What the researcher did**

The research team interviewed ten different groups of friends. From each group, the researchers selected one participant, called the ‘lead’ participant. These ‘leads’ were between 18 and 30 years of age, lived in Victoria, Australia, and had gambled at least once in the last year. Participants who had gambling problems were not included in the study. The research team asked the ‘lead’ participant to choose four friends that also met these criteria. Discussion groups were formed. The researchers asked participants a series of questions about their gambling behaviour and how culture influences sports betting. The conversations were recorded on a computer and were analyzed for key themes.

**What the researcher found**

Shared cultural values connected members of the lifestyle consumption community. Members reported that gambling on sports encouraged competition among one another and allowed them to share their passion for winning. However, the desire to win could cost members a lot of money and promote gambling problems. Community members created relationships with individuals who were loyal to the same sports team. Members may believe they have to gamble to demonstrate loyalty to the community. This may encourage gambling behaviour. Community members who showed skill by winning risky bets had status within the group. These individuals may think they are

**What you need to know**

A lifestyle consumption community is a group of individuals who share the same leisure or work interests. There is not a lot of research that explains the different types of consumption communities. The researchers investigated a consumption community in Australia that regularly bets on sports. They wanted to know how members behaved and socialized when they gambled. Competition and loyalty as well as shared intelligence and skill, made members feel like they belonged in the community. However, the desire to win and be loyal to the community may encourage problem gambling behaviour. Gamblers who believed they could control their odds of winning and had knowledge of the game could be at risk of experiencing gambling harms. Researchers could further study lifestyle consumption communities to determine if they influence the decisions of other individuals in society.

Conforming to a mainstream gambling lifestyle may lead to gambling problems.
able to control their chances of winning and take on larger bets. This behaviour may also lead to gambling problems. As well, members who felt they had a lot of knowledge about sports gambled more often because they thought they were going to win. Their knowledge gave them more power in the community. However, this knowledge may promote frequent and unsafe gambling behaviour.

**How you can use this research**

Researchers can use this information to investigate how sports betting applications may promote gambling behaviour. They could also further explore lifestyle consumption communities to determine if they influence the decisions of individuals who are not part of their community. Policy makers could also use this research to implement regulations that limit sports betting marketing strategies. For example, policy makers could restrict gambling organizations from targeting the ego and social needs of gamblers to encourage sports gambling behaviour.

**About the Researcher**

Dr. Ross Gordon is an Associate Professor in the Department of Marketing and Management at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Dr. Lauren Gurrieri is a researcher at Swinburne University of Technology in Australia, whose research focuses on the social and cultural components of consumption. Michael Chapman is a Project Assistant at the Centre for Health Initiatives at the University of Wollongong in Australia.

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Gambling, sports betting, lifestyle consumption community, at-risk consumers, Australia, transformative consumer research

**Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO)**

Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO) has partnered with the Knowledge Mobilization Unit at York University to produce Research Snapshots. GREO is an independent knowledge translation and exchange organization that aims to eliminate harm from gambling. Our goal is to support evidence-informed decision making in responsible gambling policies, standards and practices. The work we do is intended for researchers, policy makers, gambling regulators and operators, and treatment and prevention service providers.

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