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## Effects of Betting Elements on Self Management of Amateur Golfers Paper

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### Abstract

*This study aimed to investigate the effects of the golf-addiction tendencies of golf betting participants on their self-management practices. About 450 survey questionnaires (data sheets) were completed by and collected from adults aged 20 years and above with at least 3 years of golfing experience who reside in the Seoul and Gyeongin area in South Korea. The data were analyzed, and the results revealed that, depending on the golfers' history of betting participation, there were significant differences in golf addiction tendencies and self-management behavior between the two participant groups (betting vs. non-betting). Across all factors relating to golf addiction, the tendencies of wagering participants were found to be higher than those of non-participants. In terms of training-related self-management behavior, betting participants still showed higher tendencies than non-betting golfers, indicating that wagering in golfing could promote competitiveness in the game and increase the players' dependence on golfing. Compared with other sports, golf can be intensely addictive, and, thus, golfing might be subject to gambling-like factors. Future studies should clarify the difference between wagering and gambling and, in particular, between golf betting and golf gambling. Follow-up studies could further investigate the proper, socially acceptable levels of betting.*

**[Keywords]** Golf, Gambling, Addiction, Wagering, Self-Management

### 1. Introduction

Of all sports, golf may be the most unique. Golf entails some challenges, such as making a swing (an unnatural act in and of itself) more natural, as well as variables that can lead to varying degrees of fun and results (scores). Most sports/games have elements of competition. Golf, however, embodies not only a competitive characteristic but a degree of gambling as well, which makes the sport extremely peculiar. Many people who enjoy golf put various efforts into improving their performance. On the flip side of such dedication, a considerable measure of motivation is expected to be inspired when, frequently, golfers want to win a bet (wagering) while engaging in rounds with other players. Although

many golfers enjoy their rounds for the purpose of promoting their health or social relationships with others, it is equally true that countless numbers of rounds are played with the aim to wager money (golf bet). Moreover, it would not be an overstatement to say that such golf betting is the core characteristic of Korean amateur golfing culture[1]. Any golfer may engage in golf bets at least once, which, in most cases, take the form of paying for the winners' meals or gratuity for caddies[2]. Wagering has been reported to help improve performance by increasing the entertainment element of games, enhancing the concentration during rounds, and motivating golfers to practice more[3]. Despite the merits, golf bets also have extremely negative characteristics in that players participate not for sportsmanship but solely to win the money,

thereby altering the winning spirit to one of gambling. Golf bets are addictive in nature, just like doing drugs, drinking, Internet activities, gambling, and so on. Cho Hyun-ik, Kim Yong-jun, and So Yeong-ho (2006)[4] reported that, the more the nature of golf tournaments resembles gambling, the more the tendency of golf addiction increases in players because of the intense excitation and emotional gratification that gambling can offer. The findings indicate that, for those participating in golf as a form of gambling, such participation goes beyond wholesome aims, such as promoting health, enjoying leisure activities, and pursuing hobbies, and enters the realm of gambling, which bears a strong addictive appeal. That said, unlike typical characteristics shown in gambling addicts, golf betting addiction tendency can be seen as a positive kind of addiction in that the drive helps individuals increase their psychological and physical vitality and improve their well-being and physical functioning, thereby complementing daily living[5]. In some studies, however, the phenomenon of gambling tendencies manifested to a certain degree in golfing might spread to individual as well social problems[6][7][8][9]. Hence, the addictive nature found in gambling-oriented golfing has the same characteristics as typical gambling activities and is thus considered a variable that has an important bearing on golf-bet participation[4]. If appropriate, the betting element in golfing could increase the level of focus and fun in players and could help improve their concentration during long hours of rounds through appropriate levels of tension. Many researchers report that self-management skills are essential for golfers, because they help the players control or adjust their emotions and maintain calm to decrease their scores while adjusting to the various discrepancies of clubs, other players, and the milieu for many hours at one stretch[10]. Given the demands, golfers' self-management is extremely important, and good performance on rounds requires efforts on the part of players. Furthermore, self-management helps golfers accomplish a match between their intentions and goals, which will bring about far better scores, helping to improve individual players'

golfing techniques and emotional skills exceeding those of their opponents, helping to maintain concentration for a long time. Orlick and Partington (1988)[11] reported that, when comparing outstanding golfers to those not performing well, the former were found to extremely excel in focus for success, effective training skills based on established goals, emotional preparation for simulation games, extremely meticulous tournament-preparing strategies, and contingency planning against uncertain situations during tournaments. Previous studies[1][4][12][13][14][15][16] mostly regard golf bets as a gambling activity, thus stressing only the negative aspects. Hence, it was difficult for the present research to locate an objective perspective on the emotional effects of wagering during golf. The present study identified a necessity to research the roles of betting as a leisure activity during rounds, analyze the emotional effects, and objectively understand golfing and golf bets. Accordingly, this study compared and analyzed the exercise addiction tendencies found in golf-bet participants and non-participants, respectively, and aimed to explain the addictive tendencies in golf bets and the relationships between betting (wagering) in leisurely pursued golfing and the sub-factors for self-management.

## 2. Measurement Tools

The research tool used for this study was a series of structured survey questionnaires. The questions were roughly divided into demographic-statistical characteristics, self-management, exercise addiction, and leisure satisfaction. The validity of the questions was already verified through previous studies. Specifically, the questionnaire consists of 3 questions for personal characteristics, 23 for self-management, 37 for exercise addiction, and 21 for leisure satisfaction. For each question item, a 5-point Likert rating scale was utilized. For measuring the validity and reliability for each measuring tool, exploratory factor and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  analyses were performed. Exploratory factor analysis used principle component analysis as the factor extraction model, varimax rotation was utilized as

the rotation method, and only those factors with eigenvalue 1.0 or above were extracted.

### **2.1. Betting and golf addiction**

The questionnaire used for this study regarding golf betting and golf addiction was a modified and complemented version of the Korean-style betting and exercise addiction questionnaire developed by Cho Yong-gyu (2007)[17] in consideration of the study purpose. The questionnaire consists of a total of 35 questions and 5 factors. For exercise addiction type analysis, factor analysis was conducted, identifying 5 constituting factors. Factor 1 refers to emotional attachment, Factor 2 to lack of control, Factor 3 to withdrawal, Factor 4 to golf urge, and Factor 5 to golf dependence. For reliability tests, the results were .917 for emotional attachment, .823 for lack of control, .834 for withdrawal, .775 for golf urge, and .735 for golf dependence.

### **2.2. Self-management**

The self-management questionnaire used for this study was based on one designed by Hur Jeong-hun (2002)[18] for athletes' self-management comprising a total of 25 items and 4 factors. The Hur version was modified and complemented for the purpose of this study. The sub-factors for self-management were physical care, mental care, training and management, and interpersonal management. For self-management type analysis, factor analysis was designed with 4 factors. Factors 1 through 4 were designated as mental care, interpersonal management, physical care, and training and management, in that order. Results of reliability were .775 (F 1), .736 (F 2), .683 (F 3), and .644 (F 4), in the same order.

### **2.3. Data processing**

Conducting this study, the data sheets containing the participants' responses to the questionnaire items were collected and reviewed for screening purposes. Any data sheets with incomplete or unreliable responses were excluded from analysis, as were any outliers. The input data were then processed using SPSS WIN 18.0 for the purpose of data analysis. The statistical methods

adopted for data analysis were reliability and factor analyses. Furthermore, t-test was carried out to verify the difference. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were performed to examine relationships between variables, in particular stepwise regression. For all significance levels,  $\alpha$  was set at  $<.05$ .

## **3. Results**

### **3.1. Golf addiction depending on golf-betting participation**

Results of the verification of differences in golf addiction depending on the participation history of golfers who engage in wagering were found to be statistically significant for all factors. Across factors, the differences were all larger in golf-betting participants with wagering participants showing higher levels of emotional attachment while non-participants showed the highest levels of golf urge. All of the mentioned participants showed the lowest levels for lack of control.

### **3.2. Golf addiction depending on golf-betting participation**

According to the results of the verification of differences in self-management depending on the participants' golf-betting engagement history, significant statistical differences were found in interpersonal management ( $t = -1.170$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and training and management ( $t = 1.141$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The former had a higher percentage of golfers who did not participate in wagering whereas training and management had a higher percentage of betters than non-betters.

### **3.3. Relationship between golf addiction and self-management**

Results of verification of betting participants' golf addiction and self-management factors showed that, for golf addiction, there were statistically significant positive correlations between emotional attachment and golf dependence, golf urge, withdrawal, training, lack of control, social leisure, environmental psychology, mental care, physiology and physical, physical care, and interpersonal

management, in that order. Significant positive correlations were found between lack of control and withdrawal, golf dependence, golf urge, and social leisure, in that order. There was significant negative correlation with interpersonal relationship and significant positive correlations between withdrawal and golf dependence, golf urge, social leisure, physiology and physical, environmental psychology, and training, in that order. For golf urge, significant positive correlations were found with social leisure, environmental psychology, physiology and physical, mental care, golf dependence, interpersonal management, and training, in that order; significant positive correlation was found between golf dependence and training. For self-management, there were statistically significant positive correlations found with mental care in the order of interpersonal management, physiology and physical, environmental psychology, social leisure, training, and physical care; significant positive correlations were found with interpersonal management in the order of physiology and physical, environmental psychology, social leisure, and training. With physical care, significant positive correlations were found in the order of environmental psychology, physiology and physical, social leisure, and training, and, with training, significant positive correlations were found in the order of physiology and physical, social leisure, and environmental psychology.

#### **3.4. Effects of golf addiction on self-management with non-betting golfers**

According to the results of analysis on the effects of non-betting participants' golf addiction on their self-management, in terms of the non-participants' self-management sub-factor mental care, lack of control ( $\beta = -.424$ ), emotional attachment ( $\beta = .489$ ), and withdrawal ( $\beta = -.211$ ) accounted for about 35.7% of the total mental-care variance; for interpersonal management, golf urge ( $\beta = .146$ ), lack of control ( $\beta = -.250$ ), and golf dependence ( $\beta = .259$ ) together accounted for about 15.7% of the total interpersonal-management variance; for physical care, withdrawal ( $\beta = -.378$ ), emotional attachment ( $\beta = .269$ ), and golf urge ( $\beta = -.274$ ) together accounted

for approximately 28.5% of the total physical-care variance; and, for training and management, emotional attachment ( $\beta = .476$ ), lack of control ( $\beta = -.375$ ), and golf dependence ( $\beta = .293$ ) together accounted for around 38.0% for the total training-and-management variance.

## **4. Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the characteristics of golf-betting behavior on the players' golf addiction tendencies and self-management. Depending on the players' history of participating in golf betting (yes vs. no), for all factors, golf addiction was found to be higher in betting participants than in non-participants. The finding matched the results reported by the study of Choi Han-bin (2009)[19], in which players of competitive sports showed higher dependence tendencies for exercise addiction than players of conquest sports. In the study by Yu Gi-seong (2007)[20], the same results were found that those playing sports that require win-lose outcomes, competition, or concentration for victory exhibited strong exercise-addiction behavior. Of note, the stronger the tenacity for winning, the stronger the dependent addiction tendencies; hence, golf betting could have increased the competitive element of golf tournaments against the leisure activity characteristic, turning golf into a more competitive sport-type activity. Compared with other sports, golf could take on a particularly strong aspect of competitiveness due to frequent betting practices, and the betting participants could have shown higher tendencies than did the non-participants. Furthermore, in terms of the self-management factor and, in particular, the training and management factor, wagering participants showed higher tendencies than non-participants. The finding is similar to that reported by Sohn Seok-jeong (2005)[3], who found betting helps strengthen competition and improve performance, and at least partially similar to the results of the study by Hong Hee-seon (2009)[21], in which, the better the players, the higher their self-management tendencies.

The foregoing could be similar to the research findings reported by Rosenthal (1992)[22], who discovered that, in cases of minor leisure-minded gambling, participants could, regardless of winning or losing, enjoy themselves without overindulging in the gambling or accompanying dysfunction. According to the results of golfers' golf addiction and self-management, emotional attachment (golf addiction) and golf urge (golf addiction) were found to have a partial correlation with self-management; lack of control (golf addiction) showed a negative correlation with self-management; and, especially for the interpersonal factor, a direct correlation was found. The finding of this study—i.e., the stronger the golf addiction tendency, the greater focus the players place on their training—shares some similarities with the findings of Choi Han-bin (2009)[19], who reported that a continued participation in sports did have direct influences on exercise addiction. However, exercise addiction is like two sides of the same coin, having both positive and negative effects. Hence, researchers who study the exercise addiction phenomenon should not ignore the fact that the addictive behavior found in golf betting participants might be positive at first but difficult to control and, if taken to the extreme, could show compulsive behavior patterns controlled by unpleasant pressure that is against one's own willpower [8]. In sum, for betting elements to offer some measure of emotional gratification and positive sports-activity experience in golf participants, an appropriate level of wagering is necessary.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of golf-betting participants' golf addiction on their self-management and leisure satisfaction. To that end, the study recruited adults aged 20 years and above from the Seoul and Gyeongin area and analyzed 450 survey questionnaires (data sheets) and obtained the following results. First, depending on the golf players' golf betting history, there were differences between golf addiction and self-management. Across all factors

relating to golf addiction, the tendencies of betting participants were found to be higher than those for non-participants, indicating that betting further strengthened the competitive nature of golf rounds, thus increasing the players' dependence on golf. Among the self-management-related factors, training and management showed higher tendencies in betting participants than in non-participants, and wagering was found to help improve the players' performance and increase their sense of immersion. The golf-addicted tendencies in wagering participants were found to have positive effects on the participants' self-management, while in non-participants, the same tendencies at least partially influenced the non-participants' self-management. The study drew a conclusion that the psychological effects of golf betting on the players' behavior during rounds are manifested in many aspects. It would be necessary for future studies to offer proper academic definitions of wagering (betting) and gambling. Regarding golf betting (gambling-like golfing), vagueness in concepts still prevails; hence, golf betting itself is viewed by some as ethically negative. Future research should clarify the concept of wagering vs. gambling as well as golf betting vs. golf gambling. Furthermore, it would be necessary for studies to investigate various psychological effects of golf betting and further systematize the characteristics of betting.

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