

Sisal

Profiling Problem Gamblers in Italy

(a behavioral, psychological and socio-demographic perspective)

EASG - 2024

Objective

At Sisal, our **approach to a safer gambling goes beyond the traditional PGSI scale.**

We asked ourselves an important question:

“ Are all problematic players similar to each other? ”

This question became the driving force behind our **research objective**: to answer this crucial question and **enhance our understanding of problematic gaming behaviors**, in order to **devise targeted risk mitigation strategies** (e.g. nudging activities).

The scientific approach

In 2022, Sisal introduced an innovative approach based on a **socio-behavioural and psychological scale** with a significant contribution to develop new insights to investigate.

This new scientific approach was developed in collaboration with Cattolica University - Research Unit in Economic Psychology.



A **cluster analysis** has been conducted in order to segment players identified as problem gamblers by **distinguishing specific behavioural, psychosocial and socio-demographic profiles**.

From the results of the **cluster analysis**, it is possible to concretely **define targeted risk mitigation strategies** (e.g. nudging interventions). A scientific article on this topic has been published in collaboration with Università Cattolica.

Research design

Methods

Online questionnaire

Timing

December 2021 – January 2022

Population

Sisal Online Customer Base

Sample Size

11.968 respondents



2,3% problem gamblers
(based on the PGSI score)

Methodology

To identify subgroups (= clusters) with similar profiles:

- A series of **scientific scales**, internationally validated by the scientific community, were selected to perform a cluster analysis:
 - ✓ PGSI
 - ✓ 6 factors of the Modified Gambling Motivation Scale
 - ✓ Sensation Seeking
 - ✓ Emotional state
 - ✓ Perceived severity of gambling
 - ✓ Behavioural measures

- All variables were standardized to assure comparability;
- A k-means cluster analysis was carried out;
- A series of ANOVAs and Chi-square tests was subsequently performed to confront clusters with additional variables, such as demographics, types of games, risk factors.

Measures



PGSI

To classify the player into 4 categories based on the level of risk propensity towards problem gambling (Ferris & Wynne, 2001; Barbaranelli et al., 2013).



Modified Gambling Motivation Scale

To explore the motivational profile of gamblers (distinguishing six major motivations behind gambling) (Shinaprayoon et al., 2018).



Sensation Seeking Scale

To assess individual tendency to look for novel, intense and always new sensations.



Emotional State

To investigate the emotional state experienced by players before and after the gambling activity.



Perceived severity of gambling

To evaluate respondents' awareness of the potential serious consequences of problem gambling.



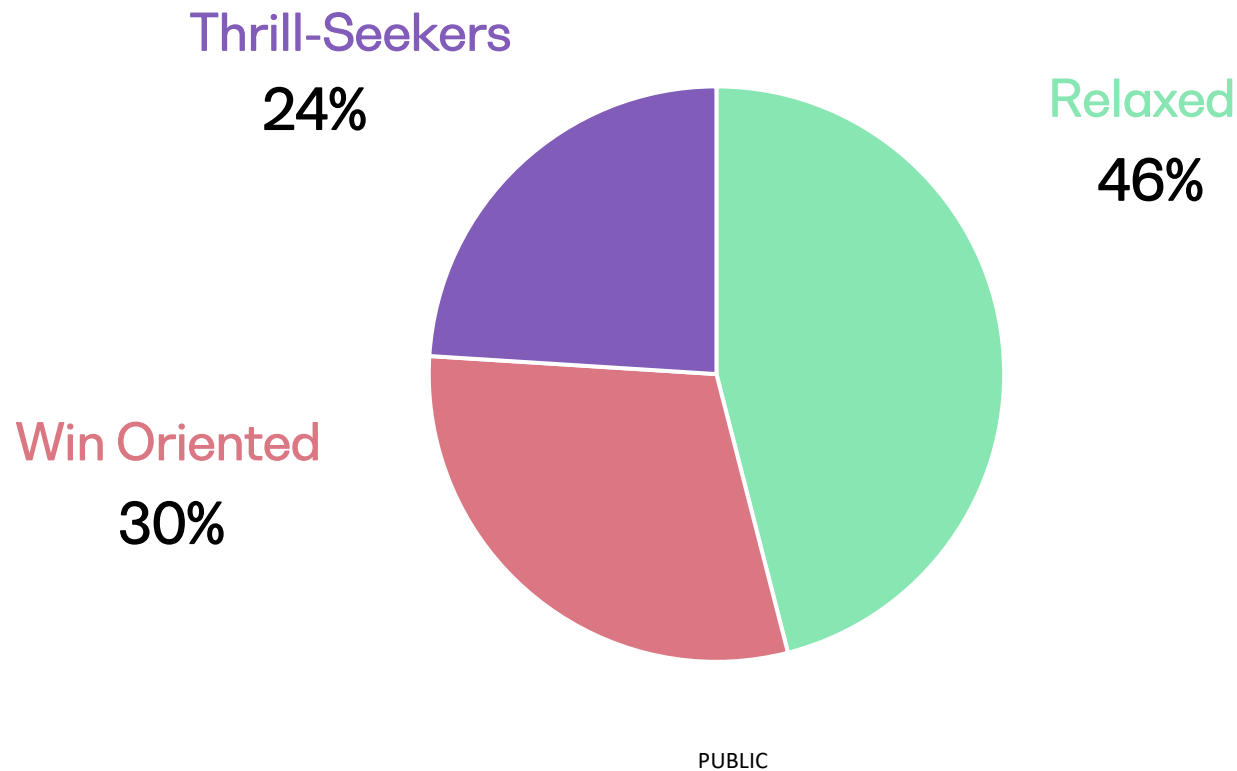
Behavioural measures (self-reported)

To evaluate the number of games played, the frequency of gambling and the amount of money spent on gambling.

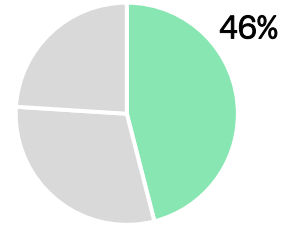
Results

The research has led to the identification of **three clusters of problematic players**, shedding light on the heterogeneity of players with a high level of risk.

Each group shares common characteristics in terms of behavioral patterns and psychological profiles.



1st Cluster – Relaxed



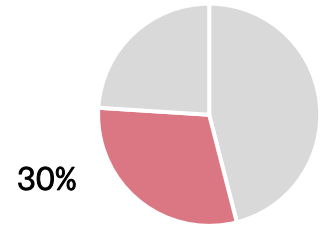
Features

- Lower PGSI score
- The ‘social/reputational’ aspect of gambling is the least important
- The **emotional state** changes for the better after playing
- **Relaxing effect** of gambling
- Composed in particular by **older players**
- No distinctive features in terms of education and profession

Intervention

Purely behavioural interventions (such as pop-up messages, self-imposed limits and feedback) may not be effective: **new gambling habits and attitudinal shift should be instead promoted.**

2nd Cluster – Win Oriented



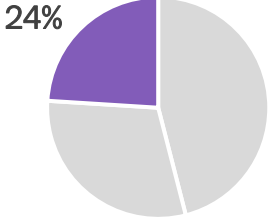
Features

- Intermediate PGSI score
- Strong awareness of severity of gambling
- Driven by the chance of winning BUT benefits are not well recognized
- Worsening of emotional state after playing
- High bet amounts and diversification of played games
- Composed in particular by slot players
- Higher alcohol consumption
- Difficulties in saving money and lower socioeconomic status

Intervention

Feedback addressing both the worsening of their mood and their losses might be efficient, as well as **pop-up messages** on the possibility to **self-impose monetary limits**.

3rd Cluster – Thrill-Seekers



Features

- Highest PGSI score
- Low awareness of severity of gambling
- Gambling as a sensation-seeking activity
- Variety of psychological drivers (intellectual stimulation, prospective win, reputational aspects)
- Positive emotional state (both before and after gambling)
- Highest socioeconomic status and saving skills

Intervention

Informative messages could challenge their low awareness of the severity of problem gambling.

Pop-ups might highlight time limits, while social feedback should be strongly avoided.

Applying Research Findings

The results of the cluster analysis have allowed us to gain a **deep psychological-behavioral understanding** of our players. This research allows us to adopt **precise and targeted measures** to enhance both player management, **improving our prevention and protection actions** to better safeguard the players.



Player Management Procedure

The research is helping us define an online player management procedure with tailored actions, taking into account the characteristics of the players, ensuring a more effective and targeted approach.



Targeted communication

Thanks to the research's results, we can define more effective communication actions. Communications can now be targeted and adapted according to the players' category, improving interaction and engagement.



A.D.A.

The research contributes to fuel the ADA algorithm, which automatically identifies problematic players and estimate their gambling risk through data science tools. The applied methodology led to the acquisition of a patent.

Sisal

Thank you