



Time Limits And Loss Limits: Effectiveness In Reducing Problem Gambling Among Online Players

¹Георги Иванов

¹Център за изследване на отговорния хазарт, София, България

Abstract: The rise of popularity of online gambling is raising concerns about problem gambling behaviours. This study reviews the effectiveness of time and loss limits on gambling behaviour. The results based on available literature suggest that such tools can reduce gambling-related harm and encourage safer gambling, especially among high-volume gamblers. However, effectiveness varies based on gambling modality and personal preference of the player. Future research should focus on long-term evaluation of self-limiting tools combined with broader responsible gambling initiatives.

Index Terms - responsible gambling, self-limiting, problem gambling, time limit, loss limit

I. INTRODUCTION

Online gambling platforms are easily available and gain increasing popularity which causes a growing concern about potential gambling-related problems among its users. Researchers identified several key factors that lead to these issues which include the use of digital money, lenient regulation, lack of age verification and ease of access. (Hing et al., 2014) Various strategies have been proposed to help gamblers maintain control, such as self-limiting features that allow players to set loss and time limits. (Nelson et al., 2008)

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the effectiveness of time and loss limits in preventing problem gambling among online casino players.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study will explore the effectiveness of time and loss limits in reducing problem gambling among online players by conducting a systematic review of the scientific literature. The review will focus on papers that have explored the application of self-exclusion tools and the conditions that affect their usage.

The search for relevant literature will be conducted using academic databases including PubMed, PsycINFO, and Embase, using keywords such as "online gambling," "self-limiting," "time limits," "loss limits," and "problem gambling."

The findings from the included studies will be critically analysed in relation to the research methods employed, the subject samples, and the transferability of the results to the assessment of effectiveness of time and loss limits.

III. FINDINGS

In recent years, the use of time and loss limits for problem gambling among online casino players has garnered significant attention. Over the past few years, numerous studies have been carried out on time and loss limits and the results show that they can be useful, albeit limited tool in managing gambling-related harm.

One of the primary strategies employed by online gambling operators is the implementation of voluntary play time and loss limits. Auer and Griffiths examined 5,000 Austrian online gamblers and found that voluntary deposit limits affected the gambling behavior of the participants, particularly for the most frequent gamblers. It was observed that those who set the deposit limits showed a high level of reduction in the monetary spending which indicates that such measures can be helpful in preventing gambling related problems. (Auer & Griffiths, 2022) This aligns with findings from Hing et al., who reported that many gamblers advocate for formal limits on deposit amounts and session losses. This indicates a demand for structured interventions to help maintain control over gambling activities. (Hing et al., 2014) In the same manner, Pluta determined that deposit limits, loss limits and wager limits were well received by the gamblers at the popular cryptocurrency casino as responsible gambling tools. (Pluta, 2025)

Louderback et al. have also proposed and tested the feasibility of lower-risk online gambling limits based on real bettors' data. The framework included specific limits on gambling days, monthly wagering amounts and loss thresholds. Their research highlights the importance of establishing clear and evidence-based limits that will guide players towards safer gambling practices. Specific limits were established that are associated with increased likelihood of experiencing gambling-related problems. (Louderback et al., 2021) This is further supported by the randomized controlled trial of Ivanova et al., who determined that deposit limit reminders helped in reducing the gambling frequency confirming the notion that proactive measures can lead to healthier gambling behaviors. (Ivanova et al., 2019)

In their study, Jönsson et al. found that the effectiveness of limit setting differs for different types of gamblers. It appears that various forms of gambling have different reactions to loss and time limits. The research also revealed that the most favorable outcome was noticed for casino and lottery products, while time limits were particularly useful for poker players. (Jönsson et al., 2020) This variability further supports the need for tailored interventions that are specific to the behavior and preferences of the various types of online gamblers.

Beyond the use of voluntary limits, the role of personalized feedback interventions has also been examined. Cunningham et al. carried out a randomized controlled trial to examine the potential of personalized feedback in reducing gambling frequency. The results of their study show that interventions that use normative feedback as a component can be useful in encouraging responsible gambling behaviors. (Cunningham et al., 2012) This approach aligns with the broader trend of utilizing technology and data analysis to help gamblers gain understanding of their behaviors and thereby exercise some control over them.

However, there are still some challenges that exist when it comes to the reliability and effectiveness of such approaches. As noted by Wall et al. though the self-help programs and natural recovery strategies can improve the gambling severity in the worst, the implementation of the conceptual framework of the limits needs to be combined with the support and education for the best effect. (Wall et al., 2021) In addition, the biopsychosocial model of problem gambling, which postulates that there are many variables that influence gambling behaviours, shows that limits may not be enough to tackle the issues that are characteristic of gambling addiction. (Shaw et al., 2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected gambling behaviours, and studies have shown that gambling frequency and rates of problem gambling increased during lockdowns. For example, in their study, Shaw et al. suggested several variables which can be used to predict gambling behaviour on the internet during the pandemic, therefore, new approaches are required to address the new challenges. (Shaw et al., 2021) This is especially important during the pandemic when new forms of gambling appear and the ways to gamble become available. This further highlights the need for ongoing monitoring and refinement of responsible gambling practices to address new patterns and issues.

Moreover, cryptocurrency gambling sites are often lacking some of the responsible gambling tools that are available in regular online casinos which only adds to the problems in regulating this fast growing sector. (Gainsbury, 2015) (Pluta, 2025)

Therefore, it is important to note that the provision of time and loss limits is an essential part of the responsible gambling policies. Research has also shown that these measures are effective, especially if the client is provided with feedback and intervention based on his/her preferences. However, it is important that the

research should be ongoing so that the strategies can be updated to meet new gambling behaviours and social ecologies.

IV. DISCUSSION

The literature on the effectiveness of time and loss limits as a way of reducing problem gambling highlights the many complexities of attempting to reduce gambling related harm through self limiting.

Research shows that the use of voluntary deposit limits, loss limits and time limits can have a positive effect on gambling behaviors. Especially for players with the highest level of gambling. Auer and Griffiths' study of Austrian online gamblers found that setting deposit limits resulted in a substantial decrease in monetary spending, and Louderback et al. identified certain thresholds for lower risk online gambling.

These results are in accordance with the gambling communities who support the ability to set limits on their gambling activities, as reported by Hing et al and Pluta.

V. CONCLUSION

The studies on time and loss limits as a responsible gambling tool reveal that they are effective in preventing problem gambling. These measures are most effective when combined with the use of personalized feedback and responsible gambling interventions. The implementation of these limits is a significant part of the responsible gambling strategy, but the evaluation and adaptation are needed to reflect the changing gambling behaviours and environment. A good example is the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Currie et al., 2008) (Auer & Griffiths, 2019) (Broda et al., 2008) (Hing et al., 2014)

Future work should also include long-term research to examine the effects of limit setting interventions to enhance the current evidence. Research should also be conducted on the feasibility of combining these measures with other harm reduction strategies, including voluntary exclusion programs and personalized feedback.

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