

Does Twitter User Activity Promote Gambling-Related Content?

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Background

- Exposure to gambling advertisements on social media platforms is associated with increased gambling in individuals at-risk for problem gambling.
- More recently, the ethical responsibilities of social media platforms have been a topic of concern.
- These findings and ethical concerns bring into question whether social media platforms are sensitive to differences in user account activity (e.g., tweets, likes, accounts visited) when displaying advertisements and gambling-related content.
- The current study aimed to assess differences in gambling-related content on Twitter longitudinally.

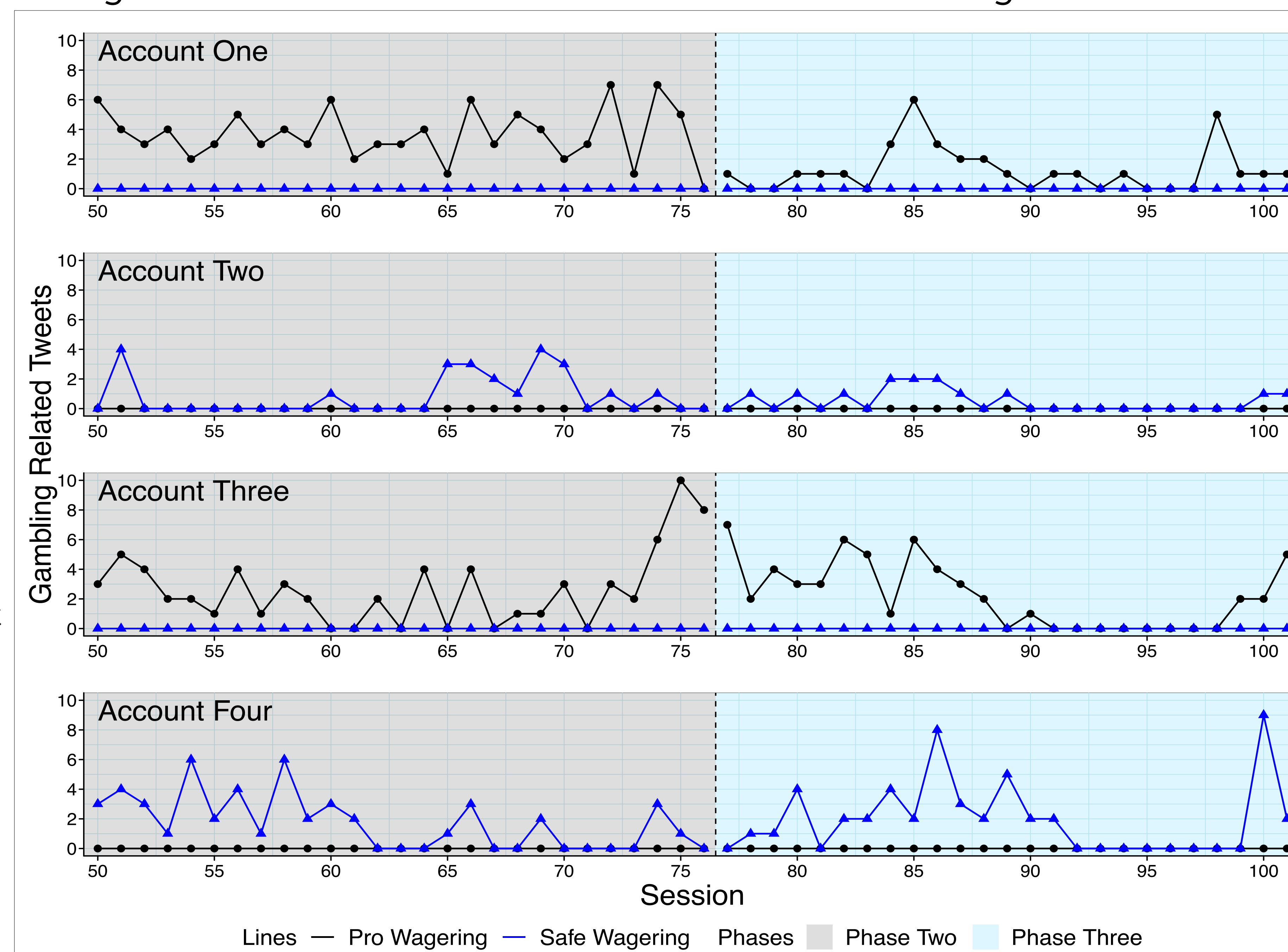
Method

- Four Twitter accounts were created and assigned to send out tweets containing pro- or safe-wagering-related messages.
- Using a 2x2 design, accounts were assigned to interact with Twitter profiles associated with gambling operators or responsible gambling (Fig. 1).
- Accounts were assessed daily for ad traffic and gambling-related content from January to March 2022.
- Three study phases involved changes in privacy settings, websites visited, and gambling-related tweets observed.
- Between-phase differences were examined using, Tau-U analyses.

Figure 1: Assigned Twitter Account

Gambling Status	Twitter accounts interacted with	
	Gambling Operator Account	Responsible Gambling Account
Pro-Wagering Tweets	Account 1	Account 2
Safe-Wagering Tweets	Account 3	Account 4

Figure 2: Phase Two and Three Differences in Gambling-related Tweets



Results

- No gambling ads were observed throughout the study.
- Gambling-related content observed was dependent on assigned account activity.

Between phase two vs. three differences.

- A significant difference in pro-gambling-related tweets was observed in account one (Tau-U = -.71, $p < .001$), such that there was a decrease in pro-gambling-related tweets. No difference was observed for pro-gambling-related tweets on account three (Fig. 2).
- No differences were found in safe-wagering-related tweets in accounts two and four (Fig. 2).

Discussion

- The type of gambling content displayed on Twitter depends on user activity.
- Findings highlight that individuals continue to hold the ability to curate their experiences online – subsequently placing responsibility for what is displayed on the user.
- Within the scope of ethical and responsible gambling practices, social media platforms should strive for user autonomy as was observed in the present study.
- Future studies should replicate these results with a larger sample size and assess if the current findings would translate across multiple social media platforms.



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