



Exploring the relationship between sports betting participation and problem gambling





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Introduction

- Sports betting has grown significantly in popularity across South Africa in recent years, raising both economic opportunities and social concerns. The proliferation of online betting platforms and increased visibility through advertising have made sports betting more accessible to a broader segment of the population. This study set out to examine not only whether engaging in sports betting contributes to or exacerbates problem gambling, but also to explore the wider context in which such behaviours occur.
- To gain a comprehensive understanding, the research delved into the various factors that may influence participation in sports betting. These include demographic variables such as gender, race, marital status, age group, education level, employment status, province, and district. Socio-economic factors like sources of income and overall economic status were also considered, recognising that financial circumstances might play a crucial role in betting behaviours. The impact of advertising, was likewise assessed as a potential driver of participation and risk
- Another core aim of the study was to determine how prevalent problem gambling is among those who participate in sports betting. By investigating the frequency of sports betting activities, the study sought to uncover any **correlations** between **frequent betting** and the emergence of problem gambling behaviours. Understanding these relationships is vital for informing strategies to promote responsible gambling and to develop targeted interventions aimed at those most at risk.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the prevalence of sports betting participation across different demographic groups, including gender, race, marital status, age group, education level, employment status, province, and district.
- To identify patterns and trends in sports betting behaviour, with particular focus on frequency of betting and levels of expenditure.
- To assess the correlation between sports betting participation and indicators of problem gambling
- To explore the socio-economic and psychological factors that may contribute to problem gambling among sports bettors.
- To determine the prevalence of problem gambling within the sports betting population and to establish whether there is a significant relationship between the frequency of sports betting and the occurrence of problem gambling.
- To provide evidence-based recommendations for interventions or policy measures that could help mitigate the risks of problem gambling associated with sports betting. These recommendations will be informed by the findings on demographic, behavioural, and socio-economic factors.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question:

- What is the prevalence of problem gambling among sports bettors in, and how is this risk influenced by the frequency and intensity of sports betting participation?

Secondary Research Questions:

- How does sports betting participation vary across different demographic groups in South Africa, including gender, race, marital status, age group, education level, employment status, province, and district?
- What patterns and trends can be identified in sports betting behaviour, particularly in relation to the frequency of betting and levels of expenditure?
- To what extent is there a correlation between the frequency or intensity of sports betting and recognised indicators of problem gambling?
- Which socio-economic and psychological factors (such as income sources, economic status, and the influence of advertising) are associated with an increased likelihood of developing problem gambling behaviours among sports bettors?
- What evidence-based interventions or policy measures could be recommended to mitigate the risks of problem gambling associated with sports betting?

Limitations of the study

- While the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between sports betting participation and problem gambling, several limitations must be acknowledged.
- Firstly, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, as participants might underreport or exaggerate their gambling activities due to social desirability or recall inaccuracies.
- Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the study restricts the ability to infer causality between sports betting and the development of problem gambling; longitudinal data would be necessary to establish temporal relationships.
- Additionally, the sample may not be fully representative of all demographic groups, particularly those with limited access to digital platforms or those from remote regions, potentially affecting the generalisability of the findings.
- Cultural and socio-economic factors unique to specific communities may also influence gambling behaviours in ways not fully captured by the research instruments.

Research Hypothesis

This study hypothesised that higher levels of sports betting participation are positively associated with an increased risk of problem gambling among individuals in South Africa.

Specifically, it is expected that individuals who engage more frequently and spend greater amounts on sports betting will exhibit a greater prevalence of recognised indicators of problem gambling. Furthermore, it is anticipated that certain socio-economic and psychological factors will moderate this relationship, with some demographic groups being more susceptible to developing problematic gambling behaviours than others.

Sections of the study

Section A: Demography

Demographic and Background Variables

Behavioural Variables

Social Influence and Approval

Motivational and Initiation Factors

Impact and Consequences

Sections of the study

Section B: Measuring sport betting participation and behaviour

Encompassed various aspects of sport betting engagement and involvement

Section C: Evaluated participants' perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported influence of sports betting advertising, and how advertising and accessibility may have shaped individual behaviours and societal attitudes towards sports betting.

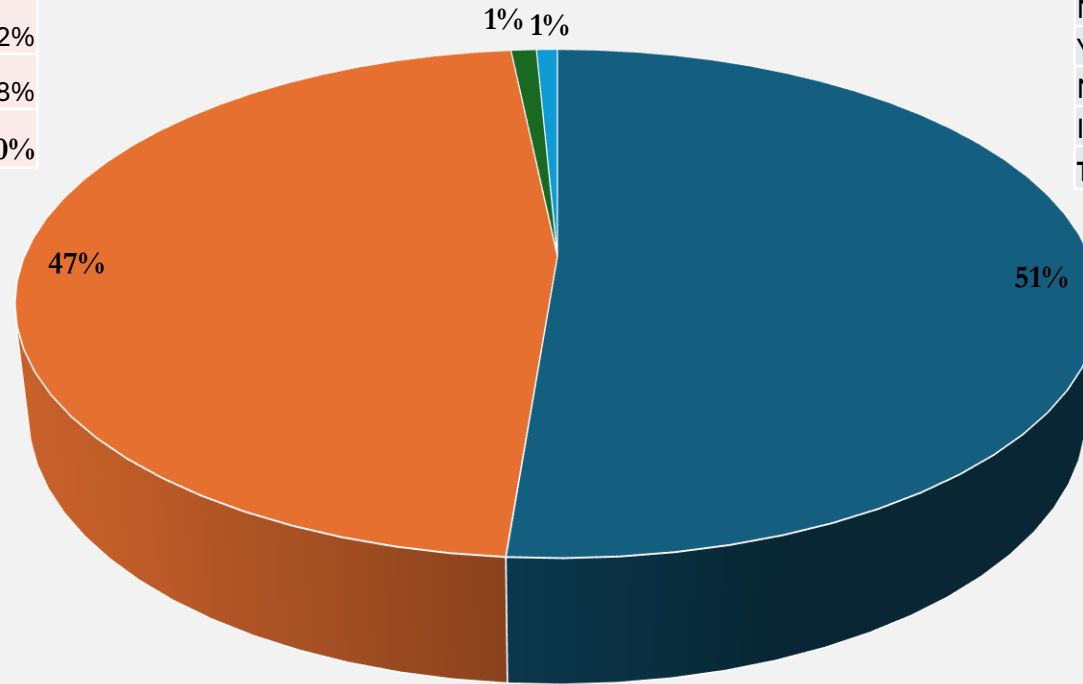
Section D: Problem Gambling Severity Index

Data Analysis

Section A: Demographics

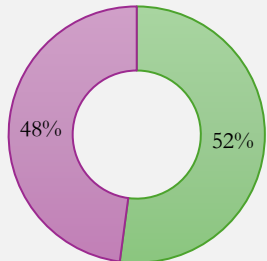
Total number of respondents

Respondents	Number	%
No	2612	51%
Yes	2400	47%
Not stated	46	1%
Incomplete	38	1%
Total	5096	100%



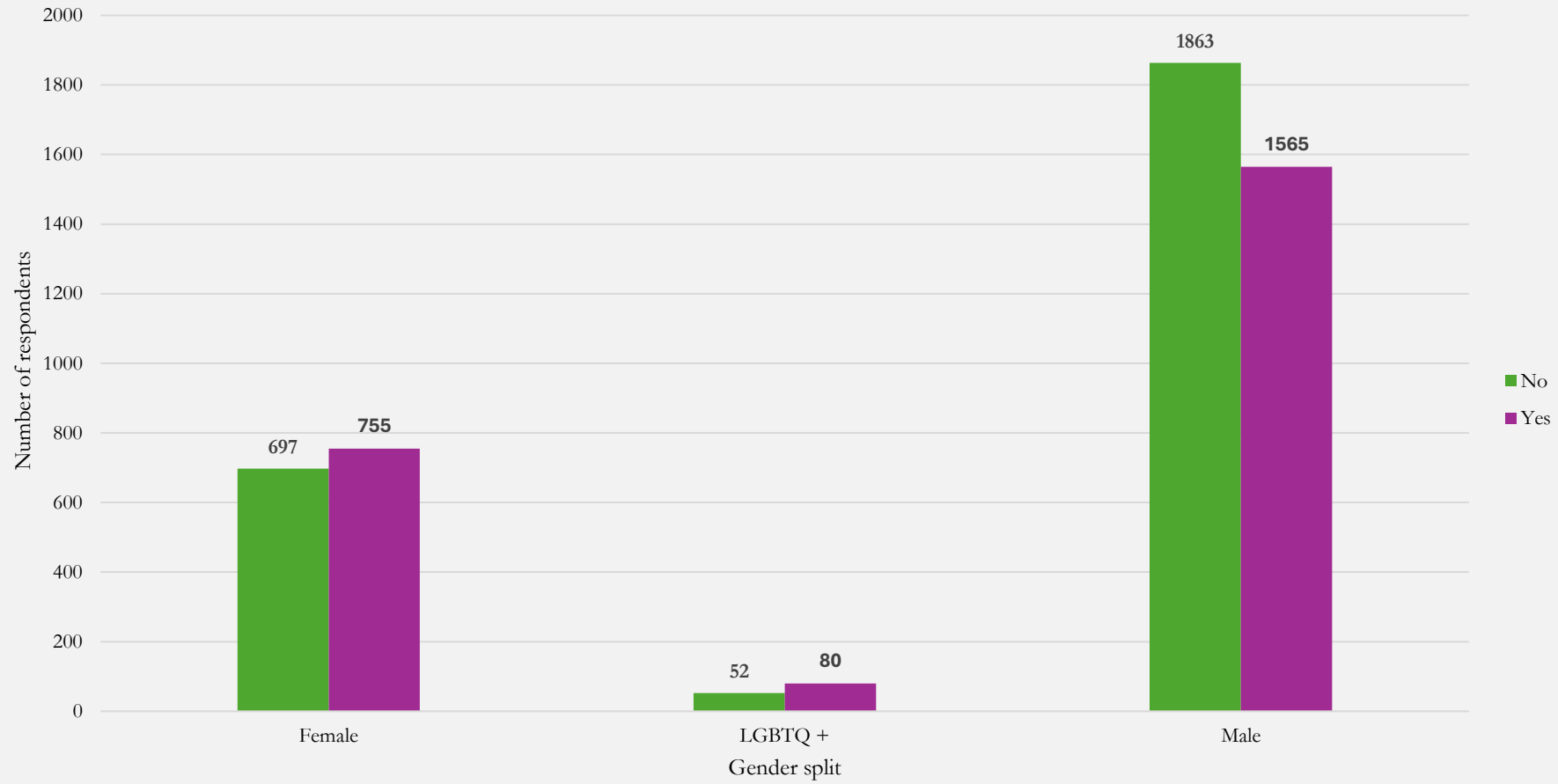
Sports betting participation	Number	%
No	2612	52%
Yes	2400	48%
Total	5012	100%

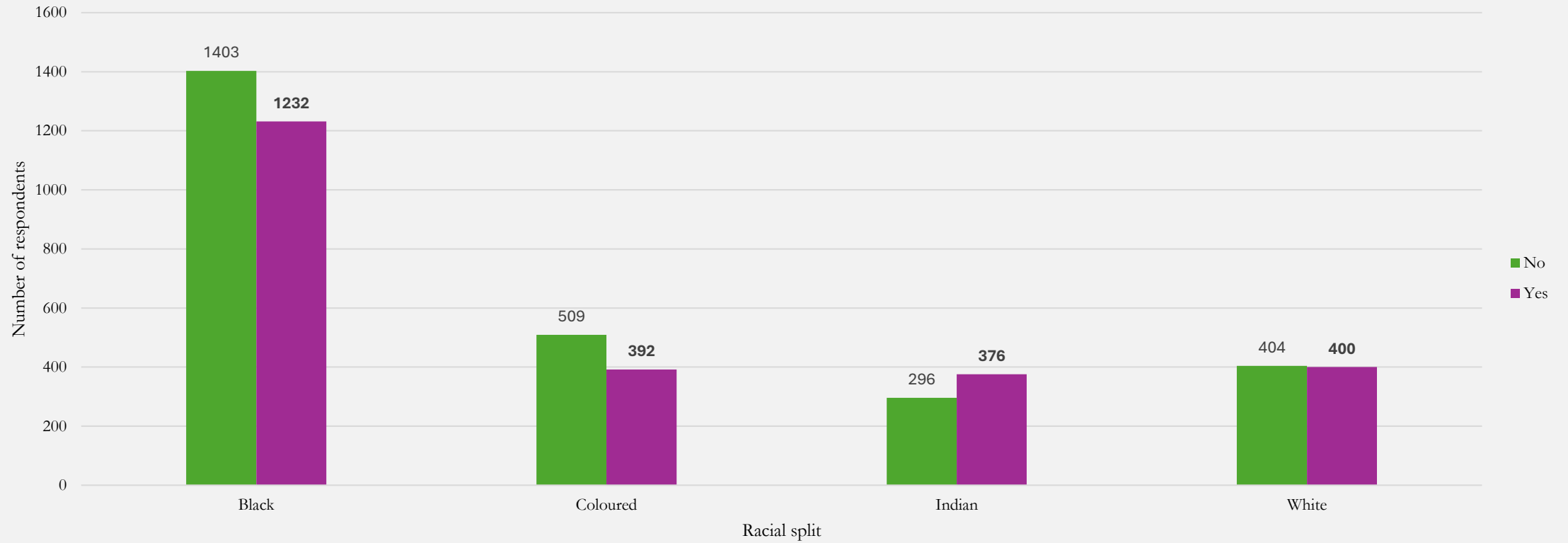
Sports betting participation



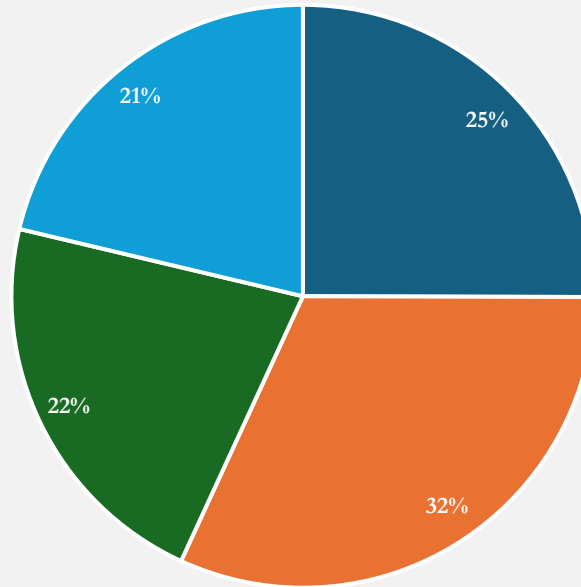
■ No ■ Yes

■ No ■ Yes ■ Not stated ■ Incomplete





Provincial distribution



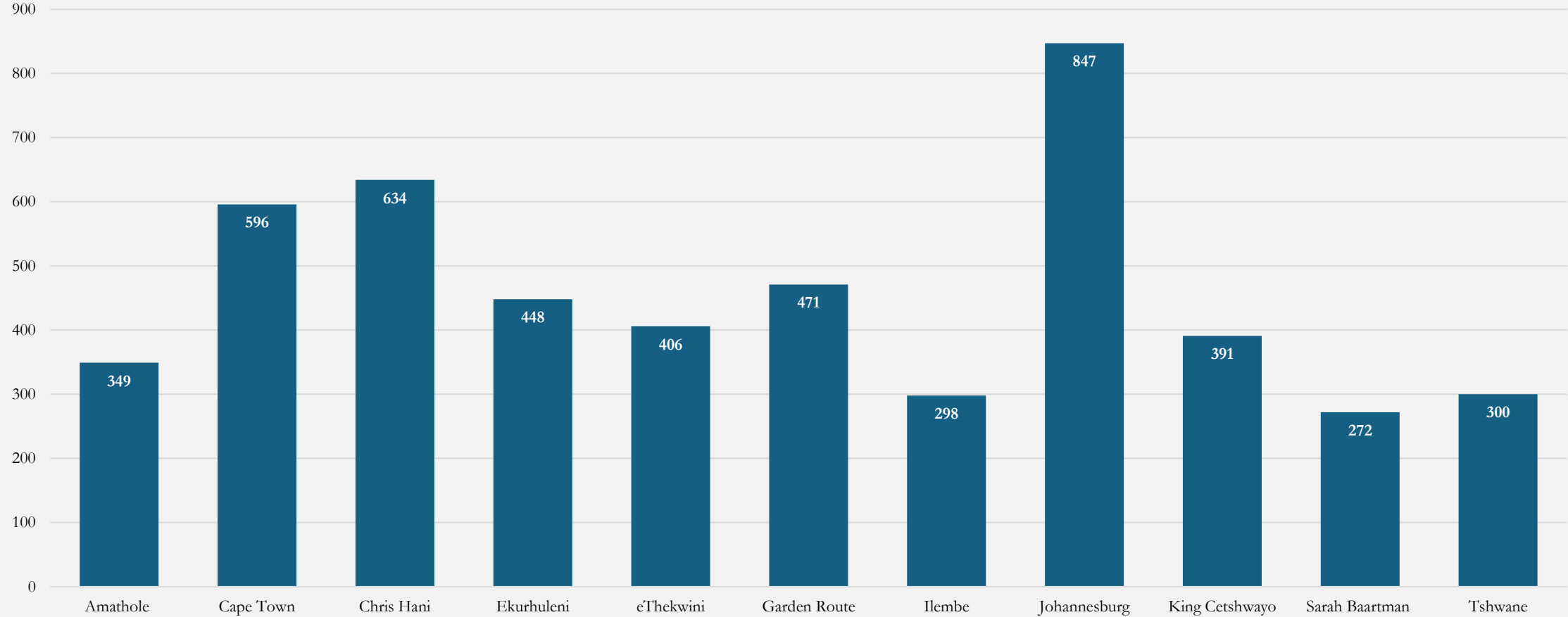
■ Eastern Cape

■ Gauteng

■ KwaZulu-Natal

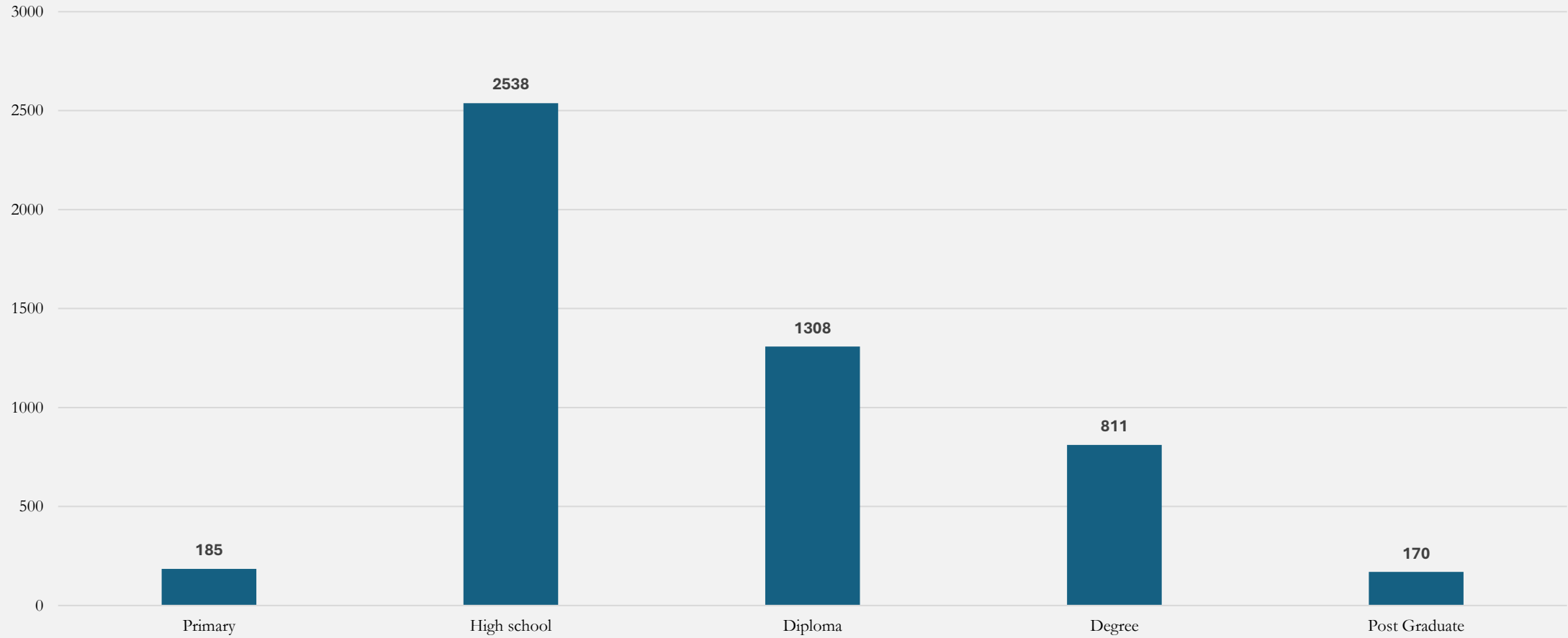
■ Western Cape

Distribution of participants by district municipality

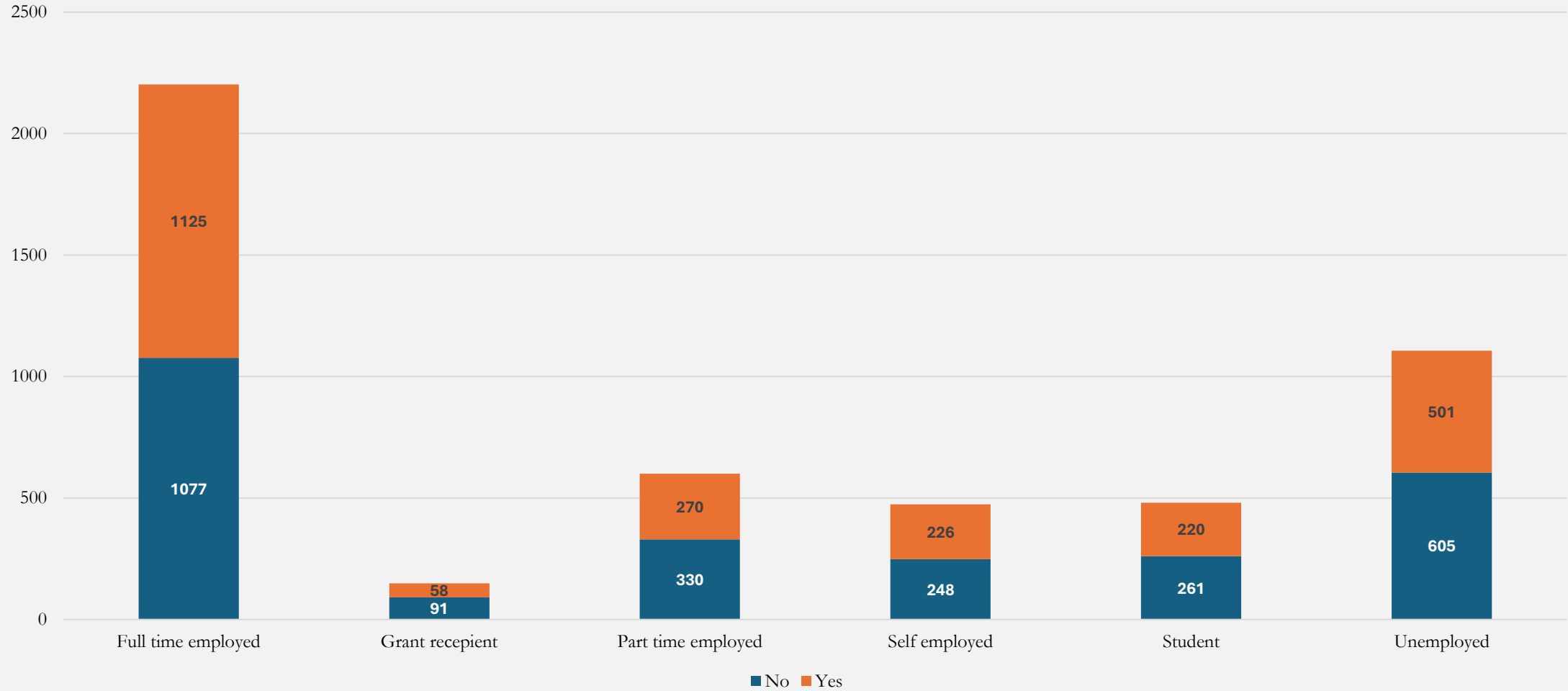




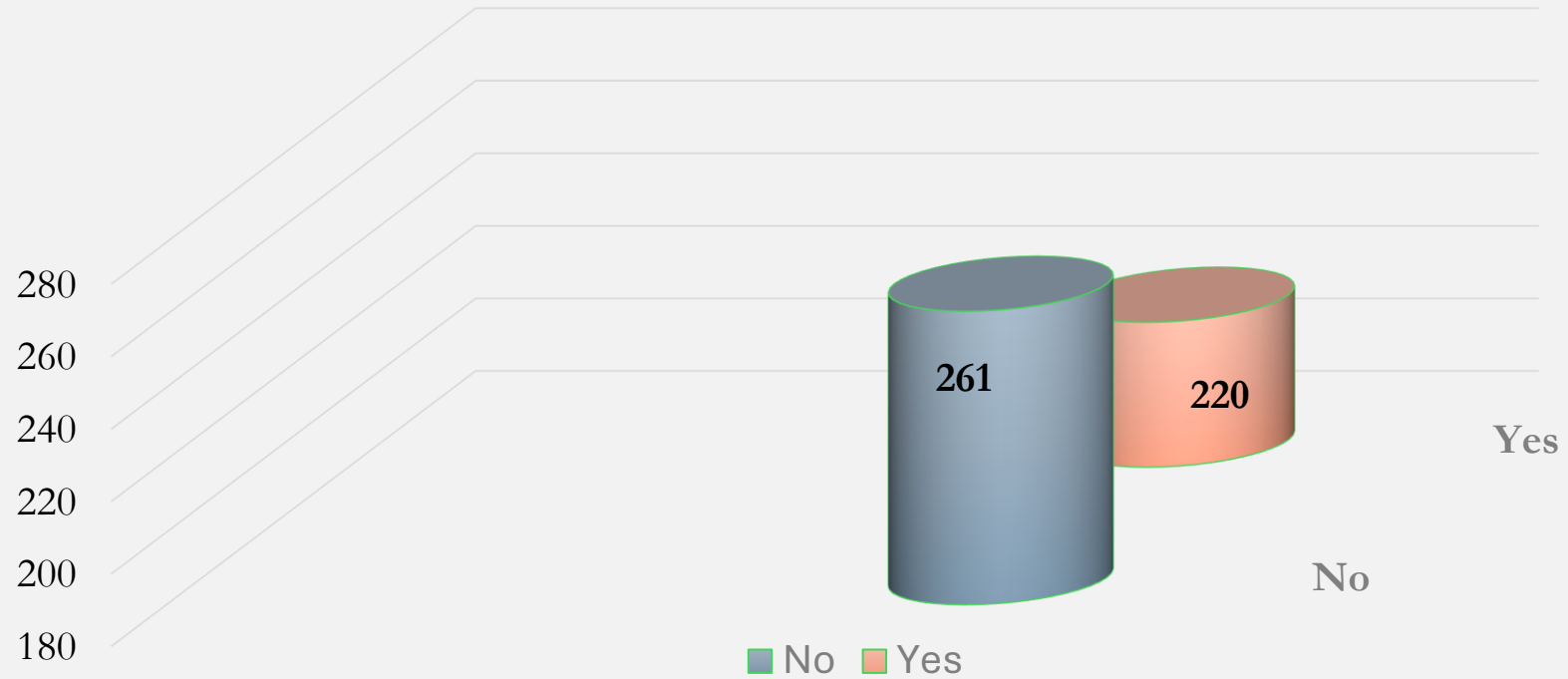
Distribution by level of education



Distribution of employment activity by sport betting participation

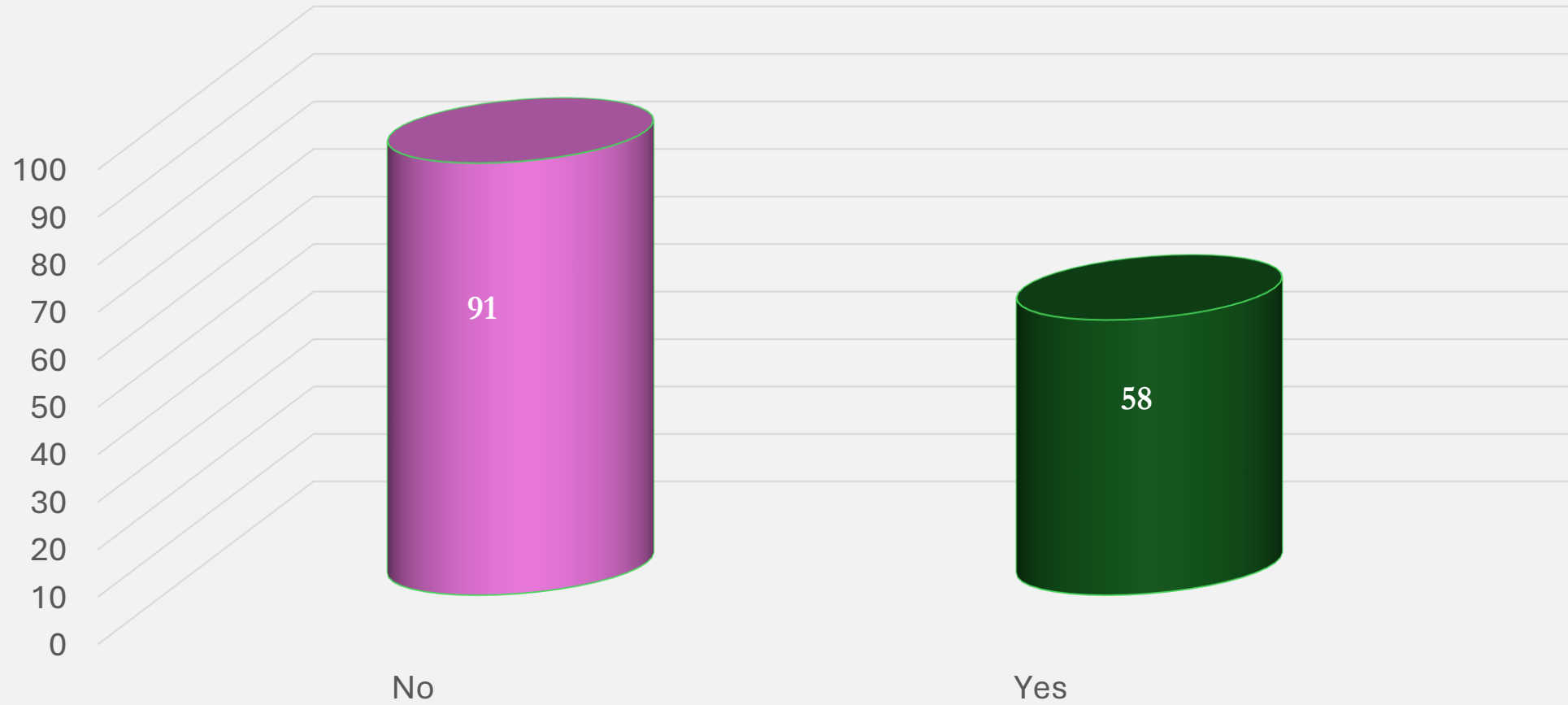


NSFAS





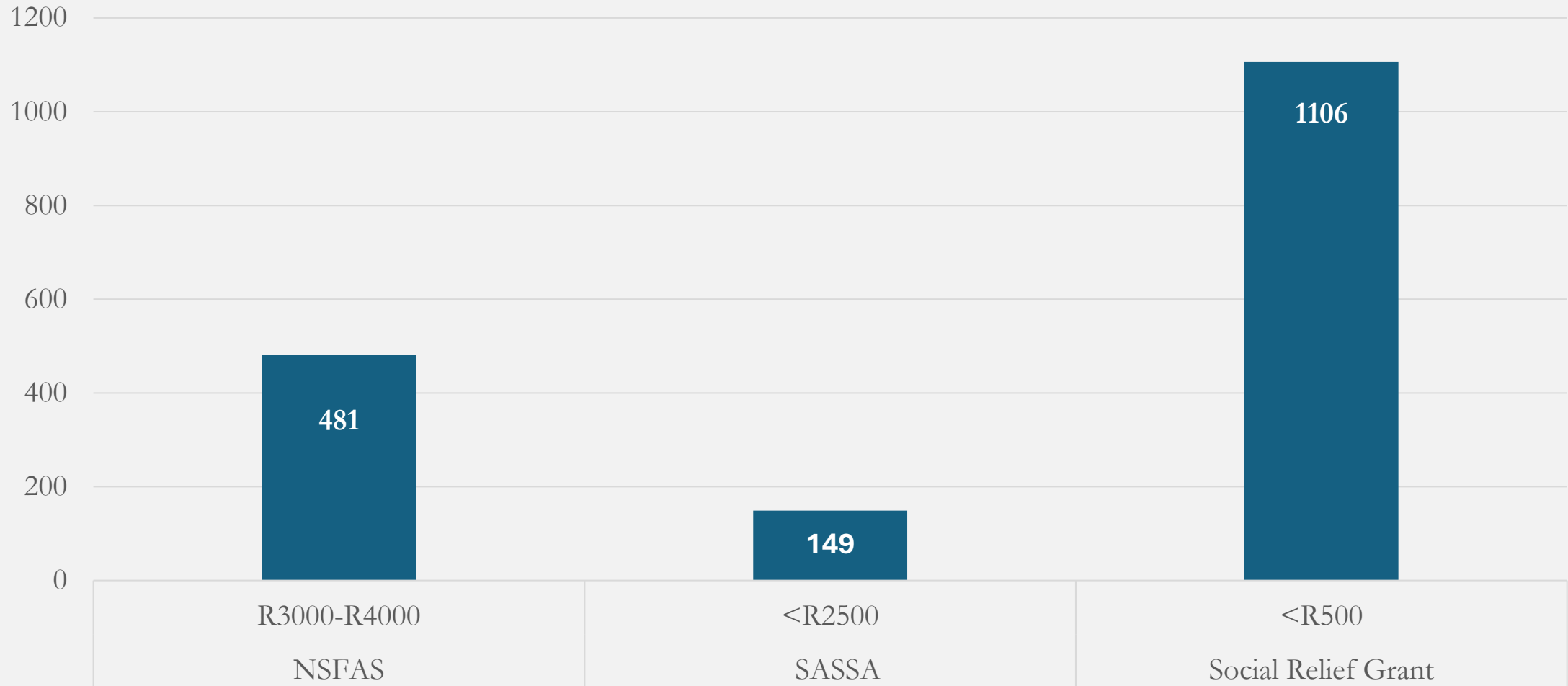
SASSA



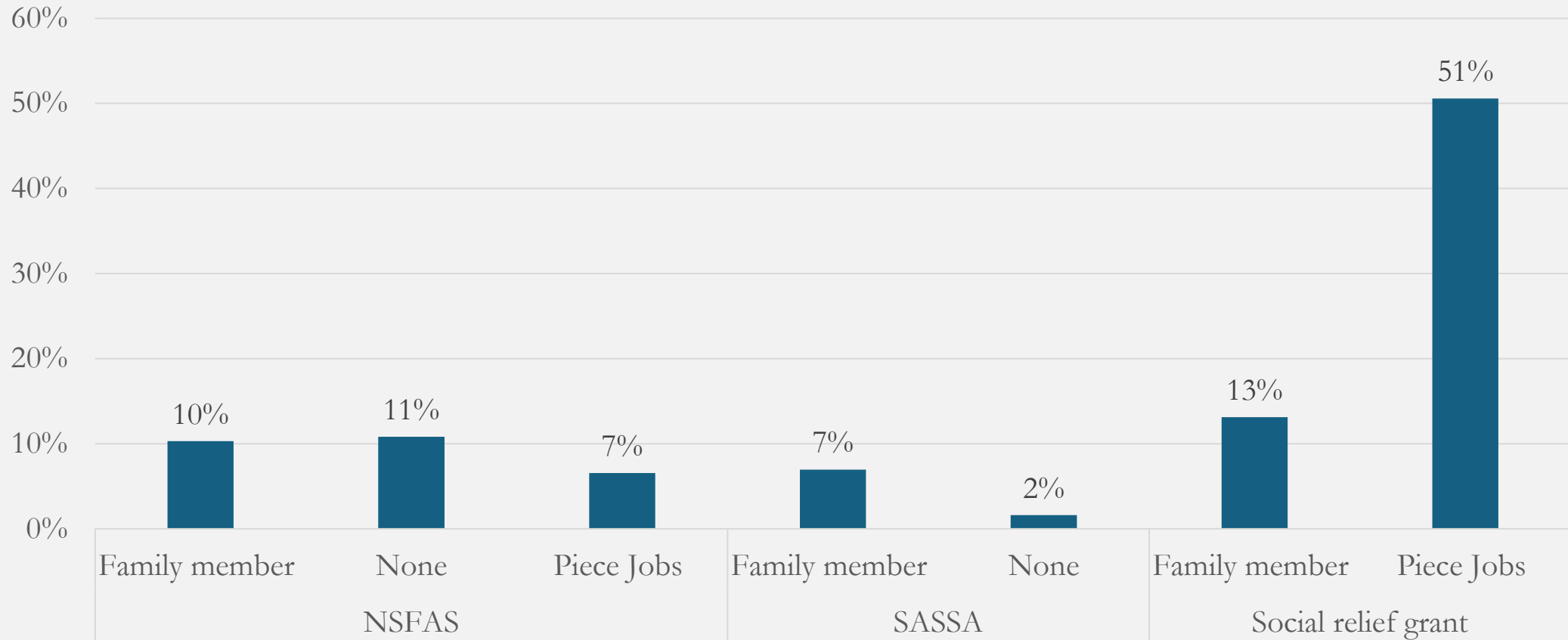
Social relief grant



Distribution of income of state funded individuals

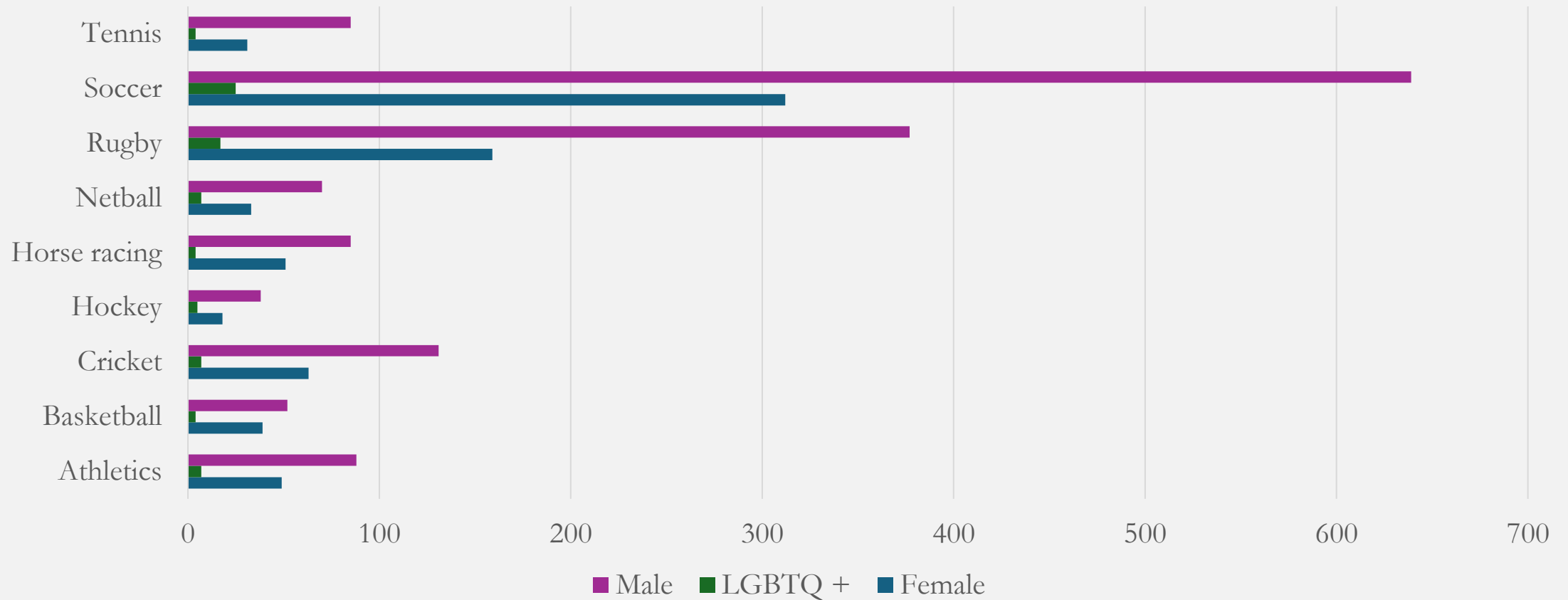


Additional Source of income

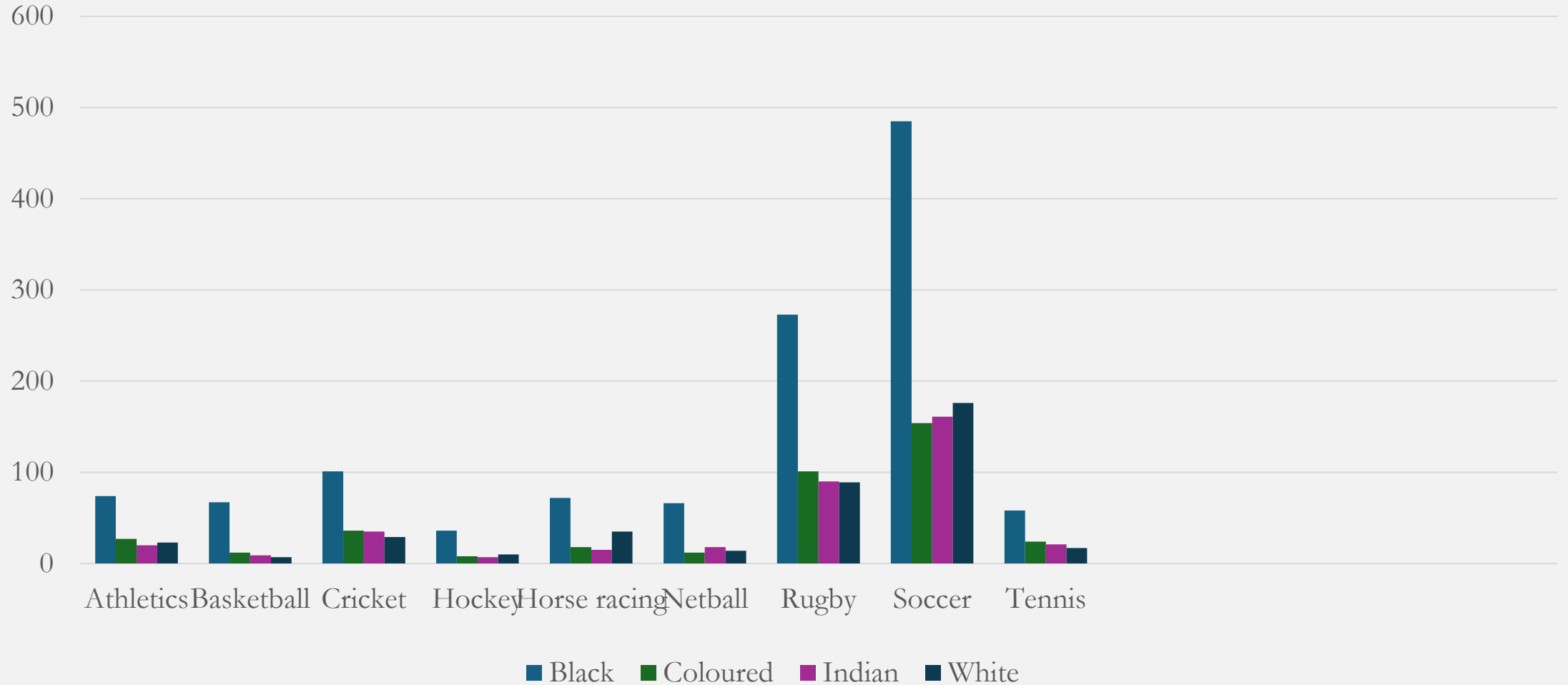


Sports betting participation

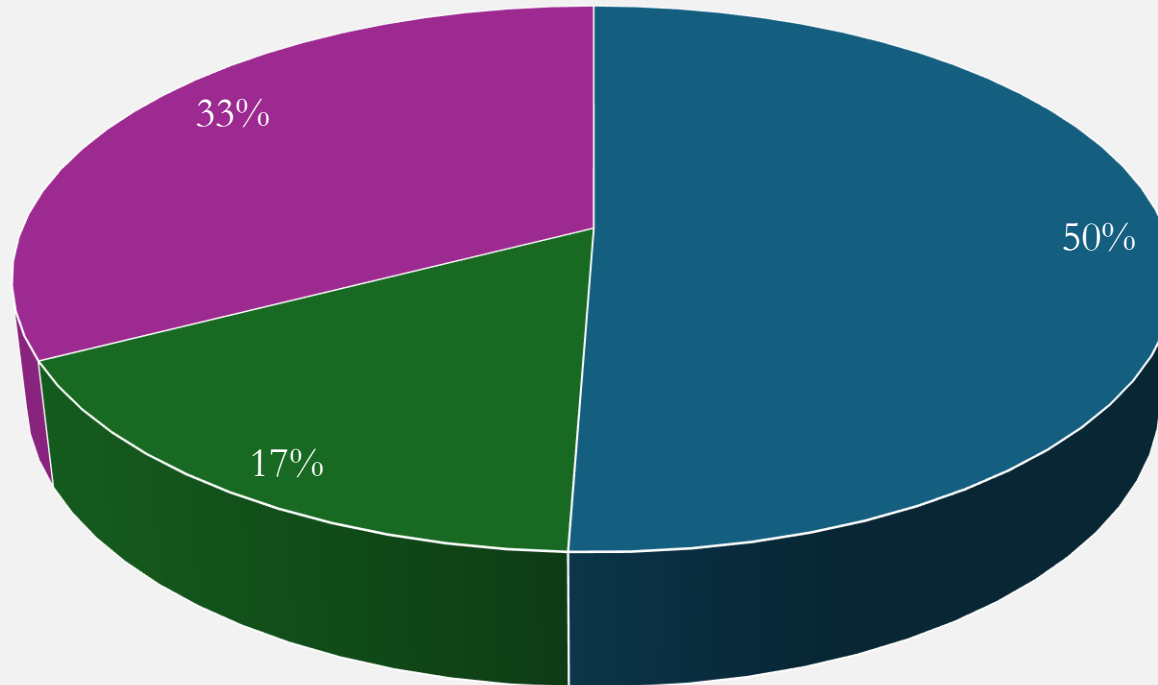
Category of favourite sport by gender



Categories of favourite sport by race



Favourite sport understanding competency levels

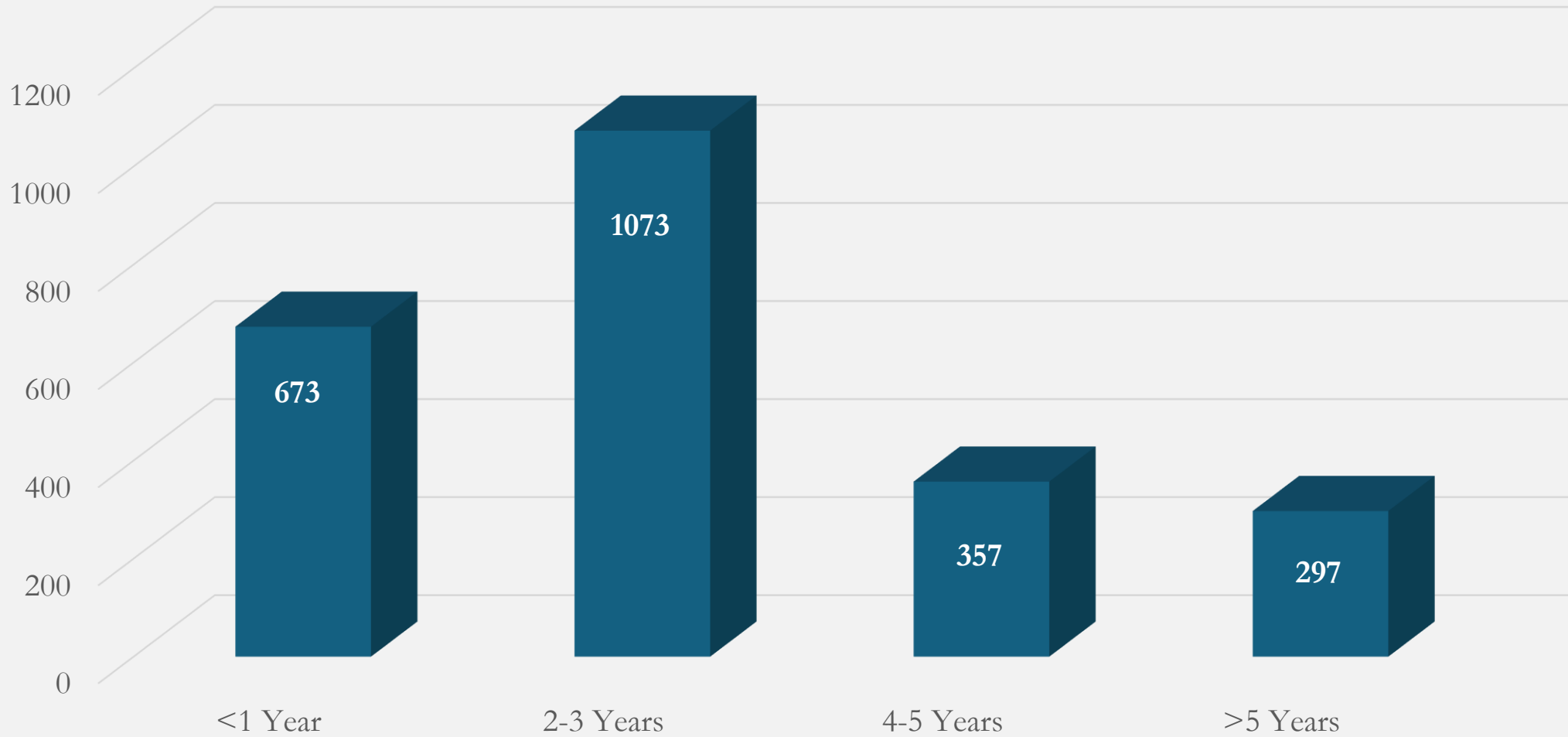


■ Advanced

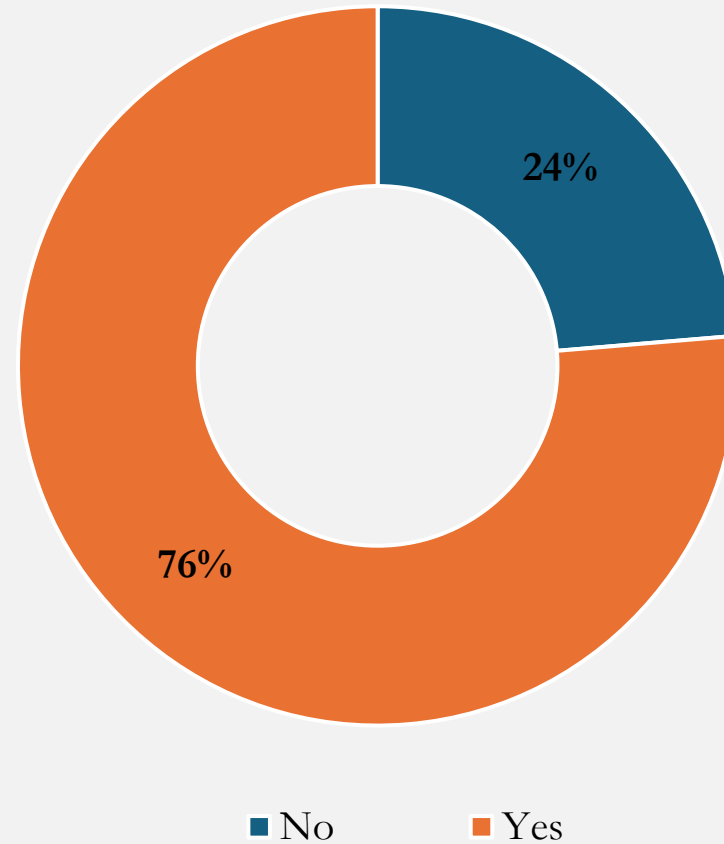
■ Fair

■ Good

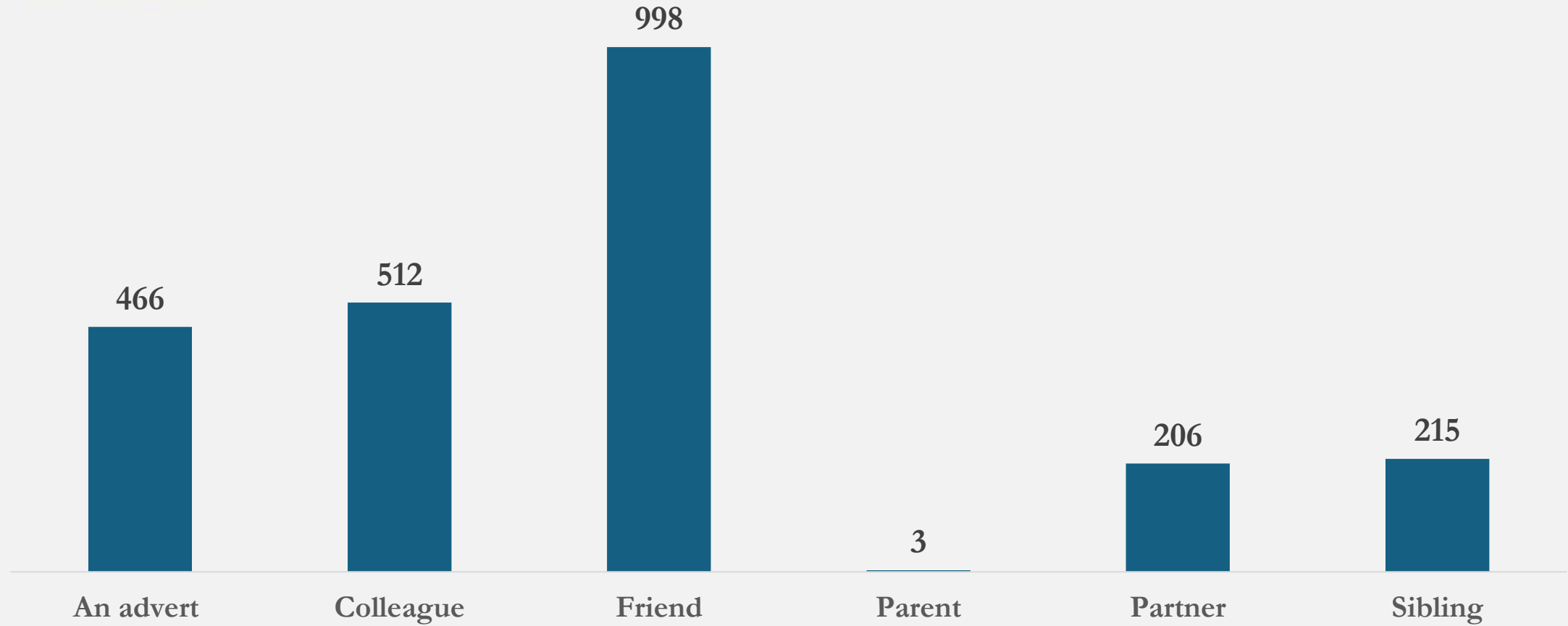
Number of years participating in sports betting



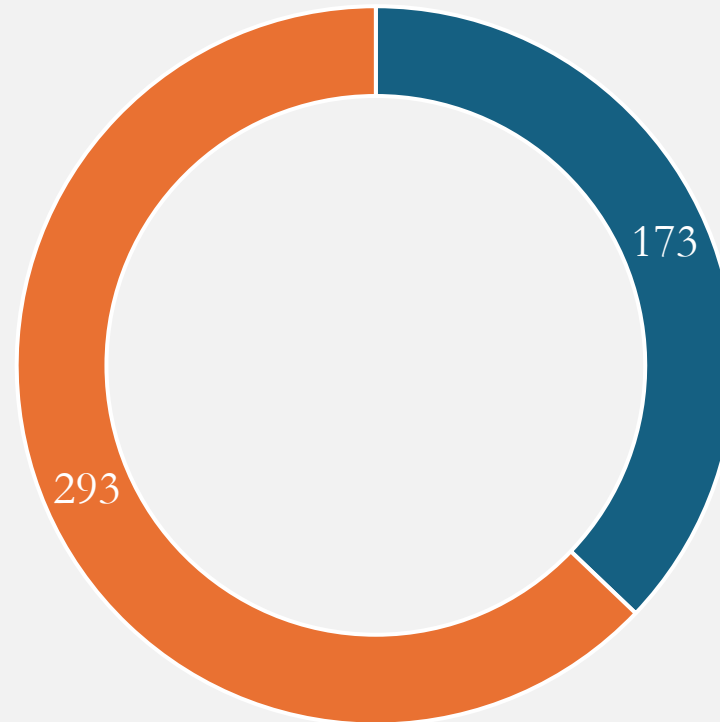
Anyone else in your life involved in sports betting



Introduction to sports betting



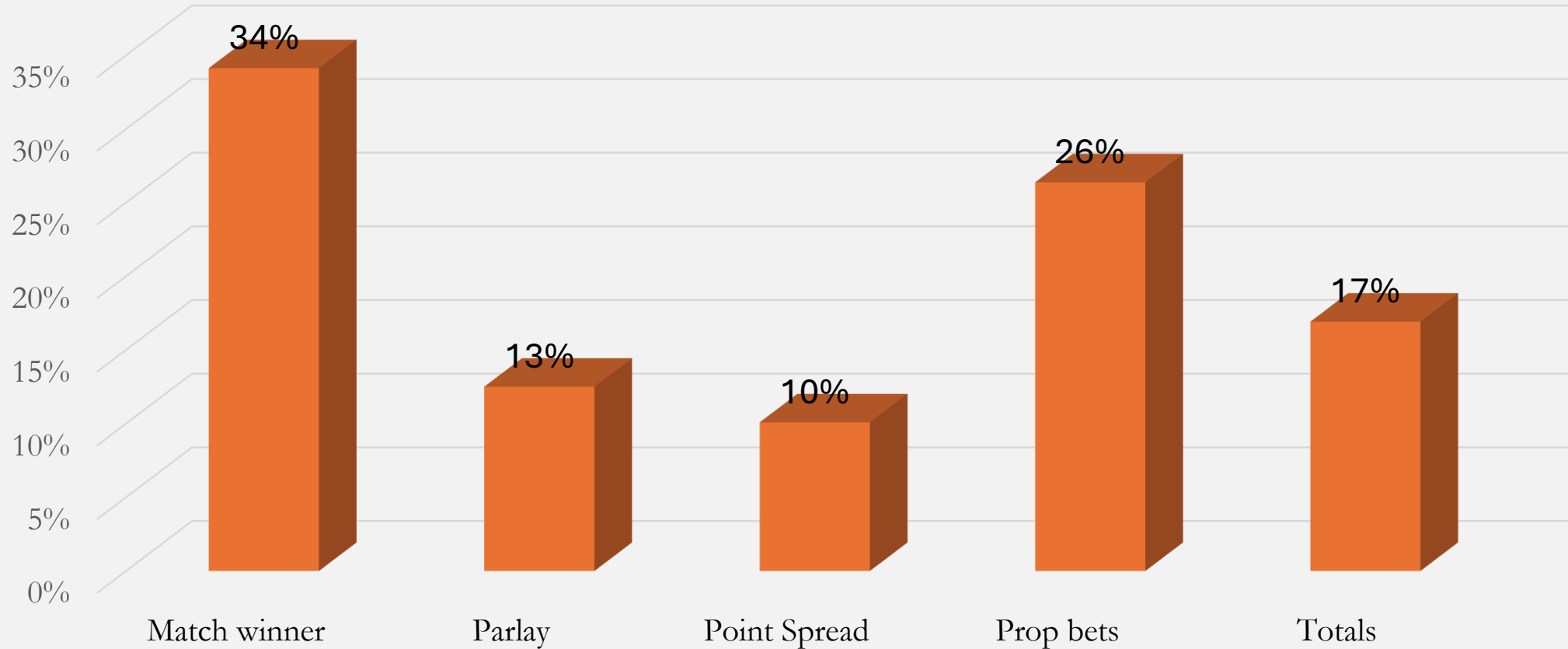
Angle of the advertisement



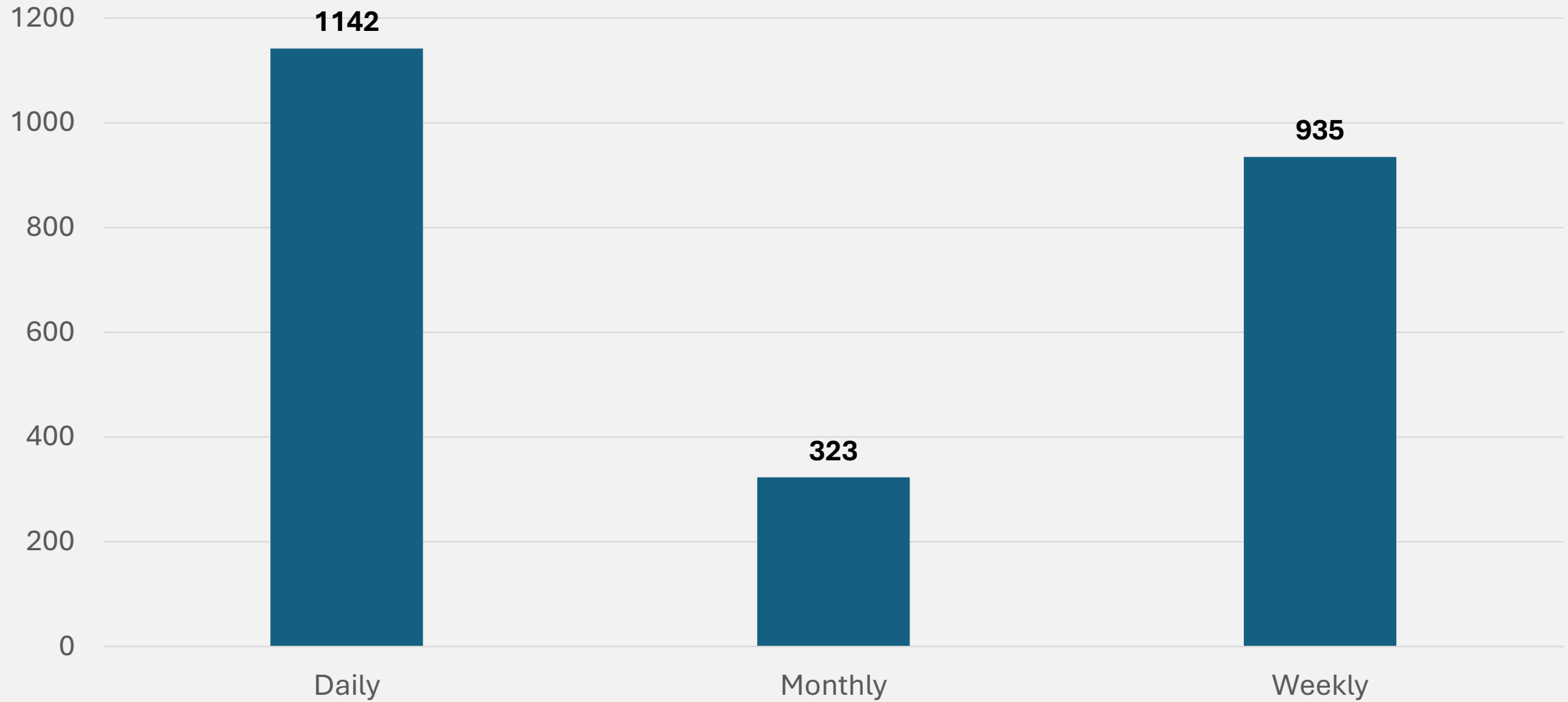
■ No ■ Yes

Gambling Participation and Expenditure

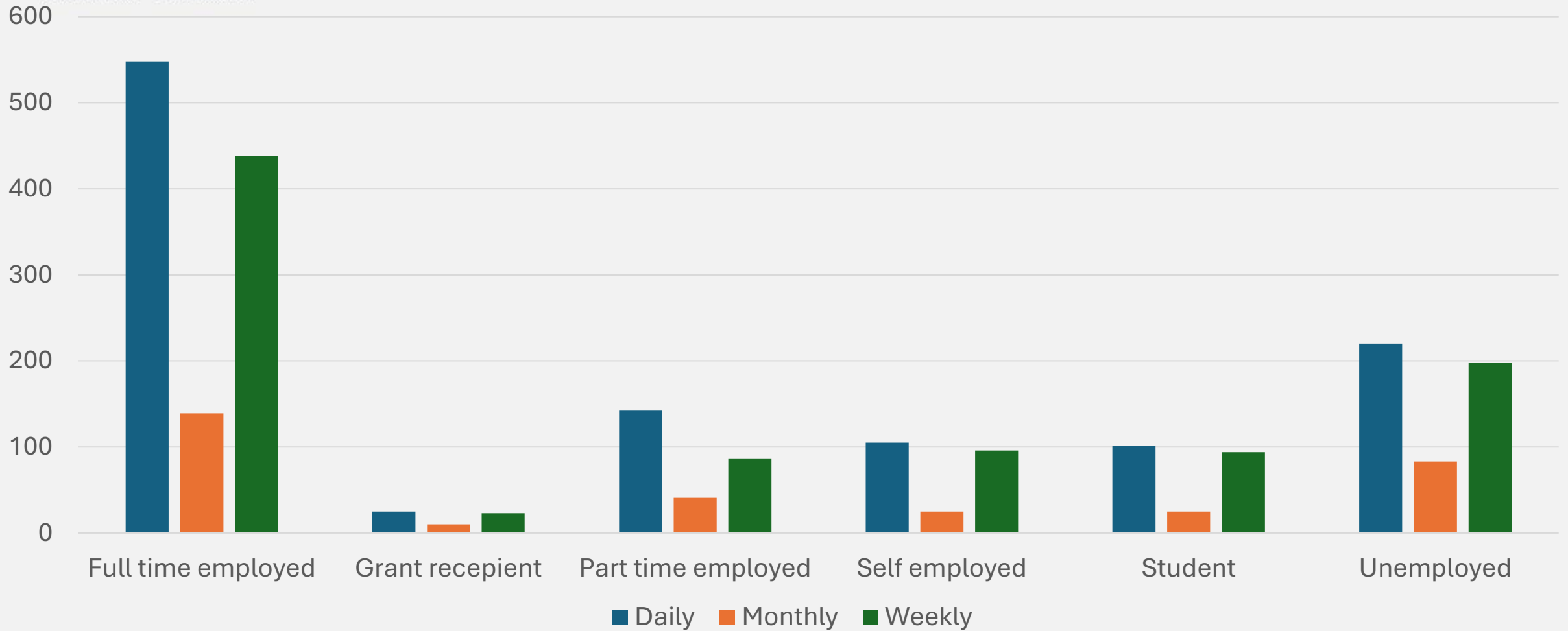
Types of bets mostly played



Betting Frequency



Betting frequency by employment distribution



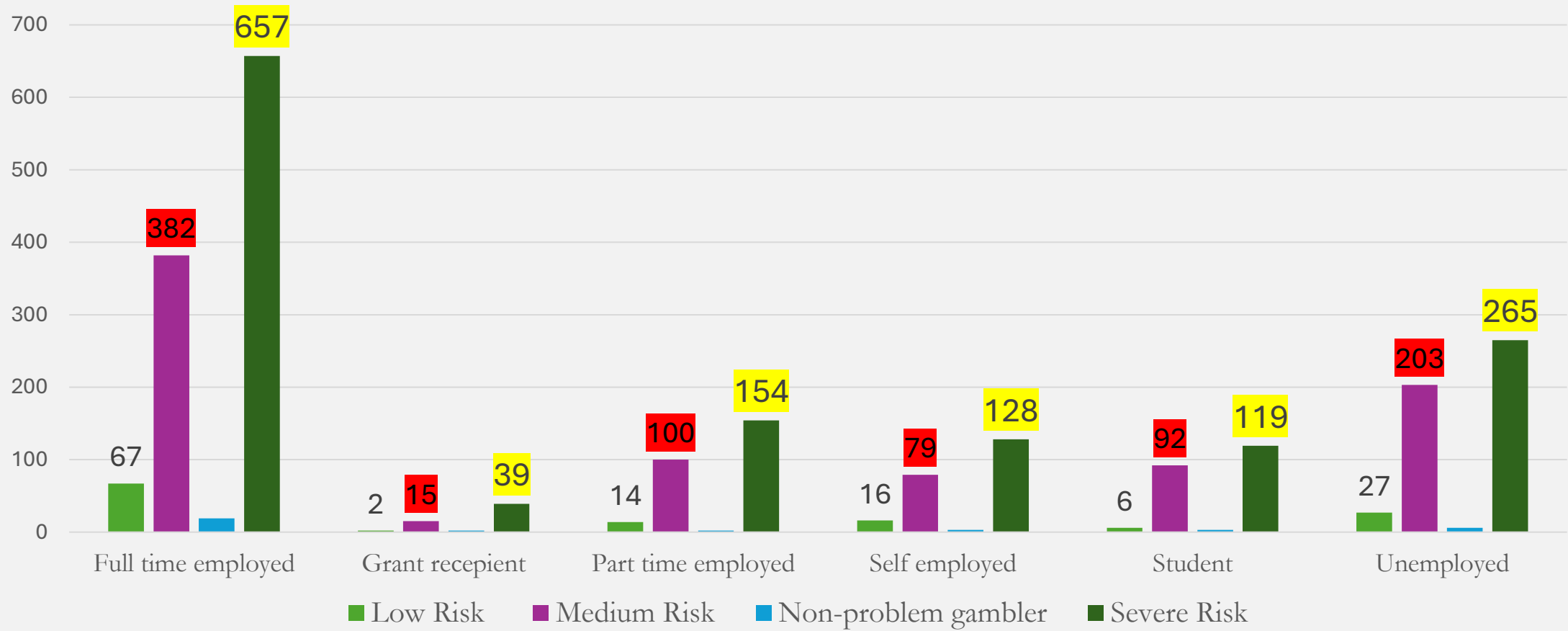
Problem Gambling Severity Index

- The Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) is a standardised tool used to measure the extent and severity of gambling-related issues among individuals. It works by presenting a series of questions that assess various behaviours and consequences associated with gambling, such as betting more than one can afford, chasing losses, borrowing money for gambling, and experiencing criticism or guilt due to gambling habits. Respondents' answers to these questions are scored, and the total score helps determine the level of risk or harm caused by their gambling ranging from non-problematic to potentially problematic or severe behaviour. The PGSI is widely used to screen for problem gambling and guide further support or intervention if needed.

Participants PGSI Scores



Employment status distribution





Province

