

Impact of Gambling on the Mental and Social Wellbeing of Youths in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

Gambling has been associated with risky personality, risky decision-making, and pro-risk behaviour. Personality traits like sensation-seeking, impulsivity and low self-control have been associated with gambling behaviour. People with sensation-seeking traits prefer varied, stimulating experiences and a willingness to engage in risk-taking to obtain such experiences. Therefore, it can lead to poorer mental and social health. Therefore, the study examines the impact of Gambling on the mental and social well-being of youths in Ibadan, Oyo State. The study adopted a qualitative research design and a total of one hundred and fifty youths in Ibadan, Oyo State were selected using purposive and convenience sampling methods. Questionnaires comprised socio-demographics and scales on gambling, social health and mental health. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were adopted. The findings showed that the prevalence of gambling is high ($X=3.11 > 2.50$), there is a relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes ($X=2.58 > 2.50$), the impact of gambling on social health is low ($X=2.26 > 2.50$), there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and Mental health problems; $r(148) = .315, p < 0.05$ and there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and Social health; $r(148) = .282, p < 0.05$. It was recommended that counselling should be done for students who are already addicted to gambling and health education programmes on the reduction of mental health problems.

Keywords: Gambling, Mental Health, Social Wellbeing, Youths.

Introduction

Gambling dated as far back as the Palaeolithic period before written history Gambling and game of chance has been popular throughout history While the globalization of gambling has passed through a number of cycles, it's current status in most cultures as a socially acceptable form of entertainment suggests it's continued growth and expansion (Devereux, 2018). Gambling also known as betting or better still gaming is a major international commercial activity. It can be conducted with materials that have value but may or may not be real money. Gambling also known as gaming or betting comes in different dimension but they are characterized into 2 parts which are commercial gambling and casino table game. Commercial gambling includes lotteries, instant lotteries, number games (such as lotto and ken) sports betting, horse betting, poker and other card games while Casino table game includes craps, roulette, bingo and electronic gaming machines (EGM).

Gambling or betting means staking something of value with the consciousness of risk and hope of gain, on the outcome of a game, a contest, or an uncertain event whose result may be determined by chance or accident or have an unexpected result by reason of the bettor's miscalculation. Gambling is an act of playing a game or taking a risky action for money or a desired outcome. It is defined as staking of money on the outcome of a game event involving chance or skill (Hing, Russell, & Browne, 2017). Gambling also means the exchange of property (usually money but sometimes other property including slaves, ears and fingers) on the outcome of an event largely, if not solely determined by chance. It is also defined as wagering money or other belongings on chance activities or events with random or uncertain outcomes (Oyebode, 2021).

Gambling has been in existence in Nigeria but it was perceived as an antisocial activity and was frowned upon by the Catholic Church because it was seen as a quest to make quick wealth. In the late 1990's in Chapter 22 section 236 of the Criminal Code Act, the Nigerian government legalized certain forms of gambling in an attempt to generate tax revenue. Gambling has become progressively popular among youths. It has been debated over time that winnings fuelled by excessive desire, unemployment, economic hardship and poverty are the leading factors motivating youths to participate in gambling. Other less factors for gambling includes passion for sport, pure enjoyment and peer group influence. Some youths feel gambling is a way to socialize, make new friends, relax, relieve boredom, escape daily problems and deal with loneliness (Adebisi, & Obayelu, 2020).

The National lottery was legalised in Nigeria in 2005 under the National Lottery Act of 2005. The law differentiates between games of skill which are legal and game of chances which are illegal. Gambling in Nigeria is regulated by the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC). Nigeria is one of the many countries that gambling and particularly sports betting has overwhelmed. The Nigerian sports betting both online and offline {going to bet at a betting shop} and gaming has grown tremendously over the years. Data report from Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) in 2016 revealed that a leading betting shop in Nigeria makes an average of \$10 million dollar at the end of each month. Gambling shops can be spotted in almost every street in Nigeria and Ibadan in particular. The legal age for gambling is 18 years and above but gambling now can be done by almost everyone. Most gambling sites now have online gaming platform that can be accessed by anyone using a browsing phone thereby making gambling accessible to youths who are legally permitted to gamble and also to those who are not of the age to gamble.

Gambling has become an activity that most Nigerian youths and adolescent engage in due to the accessibility of available internet. The economic hardship in Nigeria is becoming unbearable thereby making it difficult for people to make ends meet. Unemployment and Underemployment is on the high rise, businesses are collapsing and depression keeps setting in thereby making people partake in risky behaviours and acts just to be able to survive. One of the risky act youths do to keep themselves busy and occupied is to get involved in gambling. Nigeria has witnessed some changes in gambling over the years which has resulted in more people participating in the activity. Nigerian youths adopt three

specific gambling types as a coping process to combat poverty and unemployment. Gambling has become a normal activity performed by youths to survive the situation and economic condition of the country.

Most importantly, the form of gambling and environment of which it is conducted is conducive to social interaction and this adds to its inherent enjoyment. Hotels, clubs, recreational location that offers wide range of entertainment option such as food, drinks, music and many more. In this situation, it is completely easy for gamblers to navigate their ways around each other, network, make new acquaintance, also to test their luck and skills in pleasant and safe surroundings leading to enhanced self-esteem and social integration.

In recent years, gambling has become an increasingly popular leisure activity among youths in Nigeria, particularly in urban areas such as Ibadan (Adebiyi & Obayelu, 2020). The most common form of gambling among the youth is sports betting. The growth of this industry can be attributed to several factors, including the proliferation of gambling establishments, the advent of online betting platforms, and the ease of access to gambling opportunities (Oyebode, 2021). These factors, combined with the allure of potentially winning large sums of money, have led to a surge in gambling participation among youths.

Gambling, however, is not without its risks. Previous research in other countries has established a link between gambling and various mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and addiction (Calado & Griffiths, 2016). Gambling can be addictive in the sense that some youths cannot go for a day without gambling. Addiction to gambling can be extremely dangerous. Some of the reasons people get addicted to gambling includes solitude, legal problems/imprisonment, health issues, traumatic conditions and job related stress. Furthermore, gambling has been shown to negatively impact social relationships and contribute to social isolation (Hing, Russell, & Browne, 2017). In Nigeria, and more specifically Ibadan, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the impact of gambling on the mental and social wellbeing of youths. As gambling continues to grow in popularity, understanding its potential consequences on youths' well-being becomes increasingly important.

Gambling has become widely viewed as a socially acceptable form of recreation (Stucki and Rihs-Middel, 2007). For many individuals, gambling is an enjoyable and harmless activity but for some other people it can be addictive and problematic with severe negative consequences (Meyer, Hayer and Griffiths, 2009). These consequences could include bankruptcy, loss of job, broken homes, substance and drug abuse, depression and addiction.

Gambling has become increasingly popular among youths in Nigeria most especially for youths in Ibadan, raising concerns about its potential impact on their mental and social wellbeing (Adekeye, Adeusi, & Chenube, 2019). Previous research has demonstrated that excessive gambling can lead to negative consequences, such as mental health issues, addiction, and impaired social relationships (Calado & Griffiths, 2016; Hing et al., 2017). Despite this, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the impact of gambling on the mental and social health of youths in Ibadan.

Most existing studies on gambling in Nigeria have focused on economic implications and participation patterns (Adebiyi & Obayelu, 2020; Oyeboode, 2021), leaving a gap in the literature regarding the potential psychological and social consequences of gambling. Understanding the effects of gambling on youths' well-being is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies to mitigate these negative outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to address the gap in the literature by investigating the impact of gambling on the mental and social health of youths in Ibadan, Nigeria. It aims to provide insights into the prevalence and patterns of gambling among this population and examine the relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes, as well as its influence on youths' social relationships and networks. This study examines how to better the understanding of youths on how to gamble responsibly and to also make an enlightenment on how gambling can affect the social life and mental state of youths in Ibadan.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan.
2. To determine the relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes among youths in Ibadan.
3. To examine the gambling impact the social health of youths in Ibadan.
4. To ascertain significant positive relationship between gambling and Mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders) among youths in Ibadan

Methodology

Research Design

The research methodology for this study employs a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing a survey method. This design is primarily motivated by the desire to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, subjective perceptions, and the social reality of youths in Ibadan about their engagement in gambling and its effects on their mental and social well-being.

The population for this study consists of youths within the age bracket of 18 to 35 residing in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria. The choice of Ibadan as the site for this study stems from its status as one of Nigeria's largest cities with a substantial and diverse youth population. It also stands as a representative example of urban cities in Nigeria where gambling has become an increasingly prevalent behaviour among young adults. However, the accessible population for this study depend on several practical factors, such as available time, resources, and accessibility to potential participants. Therefore, this study primarily focused on young adults in Ibadan that can be accessed through various settings including educational institutions, community centres, and youth organizations.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique for this study employed a combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods, which are non-probability sampling methods commonly used in qualitative research. In the first stage, purposive sampling was used to ensure the inclusion of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under study that is, young adults aged 18 to 35 who are involved in gambling activities in Ibadan. Purposive sampling is particularly useful when a specific subset of the population, possessing particular characteristics relevant to the research question, needs to be studied. In the second stage, convenience sampling was used to recruit participants who are readily available and participated willingly in the study. Given the challenges associated with accessing this population due to the somewhat private and sensitive nature of gambling activities, the flexibility of convenience sampling allows for the maximization of response rates. Given this, an estimated sample of about 60 to 80 participants will be aimed for. However, this was flexibly adjusted as needed to achieve data saturation.

Male are 123 (82.0%) while Females are 27 (18.0%). Respondents between the ages of 18 – 23 years are 14 (9.3%), respondents between the ages of 24 – 29 years are 103 (68.7%), respondents between the ages of 30 – 35 years are 30 (20.0%) and respondents between the ages of 36 – 40 years are 3 (2.0%). Respondents with SSCE are 10 (6.7%), respondents with NCE are 10 (6.7%), respondents with first degree are 108 (72.0%) and respondents with second degree are 22 (14.7%). Respondents that are Christians are 106 (70.7%), respondents that are Muslims are 39 (26.0%), while the remaining 5 (3.3%) are respondents belongs to other religious practice. Also, 116 (77.3%) of the respondents gambles for financial gains, 20 (13.3%) of the respondents gamble because of their love for the game and 14 (9.3%) of the respondents gambles for other reasons. Furthermore, 30 (20.0%) of the respondents gambles daily, 38 (25.3%) of the respondents gambles weekly, 20 (13.3%) of the respondents gambles monthly while 62 (41.3%) of the respondents gamble once in a while. Lastly, 5 (3.3%) of the respondents gambles lotto, 104 (69.3%) of the respondents gambles sport betting, 36 (24.0%) of the respondents, gambles with mobile gambling while 5 (3.3%) of the respondents gambles with land casino.

Research Instrument/Instrumentation

In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher, as the primary data collector, is also considered an instrument in qualitative research. The researcher's role includes distributing the questionnaires, ensuring ethical research practices, and later, analyzing the responses and interpreting the findings. It is essential that the researcher remains aware of their biases and assumptions throughout the research process to ensure the credibility of the study. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was designed based on an extensive review of the literature and previous research on the subject matter. This is to ensure that the questions in the questionnaire adequately reflect the various dimensions of the concepts being studied. Ensuring the reliability of the research instrument and the research process as a whole is crucial to provide trustworthy and meaningful results that can contribute to

the understanding of the impact of gambling on the mental and social health of youths in Ibadan.

Procedure for Data Analysis

This addresses the research question regarding the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan. The researcher calculates the count and percentage of respondents who reported engaging in gambling activities, which will provide an estimate of the prevalence. The chosen methods allow us to make statistically sound conclusions based on our data and provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of gambling on the mental and social health of youths in Ibadan. The analysis performed using statistical software such as SPSS or R to ensure accuracy and efficiency.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What is the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan?

Table 1: Showing frequency distribution on the level of Gambling Prevalence

SECTION B1: Items on Peer Influence as a factor of Gambling	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
Peers motivated you to participate in betting	15 10.0%	34 22.7%	58 38.7%	43 28.7%	2.86	.949
Youths hanging out with friends influences the interest of participating in betting as a sign of belonging	8 5.3%	37 24.7%	72 48.0%	33 22.0%	2.87	.816
Betting is a social activity which many youths want to be involved in by participating in it	-	24 16.0%	71 47.3%	55 36.7%	3.21	.698
Betting is common among the youths which provided a means of quick money	-	7 4.7%	59 39.3%	84 56.0%	3.51	.588
Weighted Mean = 3.11						

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution on the level of the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan. Betting is common among the youths which provided a means of quick money ($\bar{x} = 3.51$) was ranked the highest, followed in succession by Betting is a social activity which many youths want to be involved in by participating in it ($\bar{x} = 3.21$) followed by Youths hanging out with friends influences the interest of participating in betting as a sign of belonging ($\bar{x} = 2.87$) followed by Peers motivated you to participate in betting ($\bar{x} = 2.86$) respectively. The table shows the weighted mean of $3.11 < 2.50$ which is greater than

the standard mean of 2.50. This implies that the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan is high.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes among youths in Ibadan?

Table 2: Showing frequency distribution on the relationship between gambling and mental health

	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
I experience increase stress and anxiety due to my gambling activity	6 4.0%	33 22.0%	62 41.3%	49 32.7%	3.03	.843
I find it hard to control my urge to gamble	29 19.3%	55 36.7%	41 27.3%	25 16.7%	2.41	.984
I have felt depression due to losses incurred from gambling	32 21.3%	37 24.7%	58 38.7%	23 15.3%	2.48	.995
My sleep patterns are disrupted due to thoughts about gambling	28 18.7%	57 38.0%	42 28.0%	23 15.3%	2.40	.962
Weighted Mean = 2.58						

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution on the level of the relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes among youths in Ibadan. I experience increase stress and anxiety due to my gambling activity ($\bar{x} = 3.03$) was ranked the highest, followed in succession by I have felt depression due to losses incurred from gambling ($\bar{x} = 2.48$) followed by I find it hard to control my urge to gamble ($\bar{x} = 2.41$) followed by My sleep patterns are disrupted due to thoughts about gambling ($\bar{x} = 2.40$) respectively. The table shows the weighted mean of $2.58 < 2.50$ which is greater than the standard mean of 2.50. This implies that there is relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes among youths in Ibadan

Research Question 3

How does gambling impact the social health of youths in Ibadan?

Table 3: Showing frequency distribution on the level of Gambling Prevalence

	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
My relationships have been greatly affected negatively due to my gambling habits	21 14.0%	86 57.3%	34 22.7%	9 6.0%	2.21	.753
I have been isolated from social activities due to time spent on gambling	23 15.3%	84 56.0%	31 20.7%	12 8.0%	2.21	.799
My academic or work performance has declined due to time spent gambling	34 22.7%	82 54.7%	23 15.3%	11 7.3%	2.07	.820
I have lied to my friend and family about the extent of my gambling	21 14.0%	58 38.7%	35 23.3%	36 24.0%	2.57	1.006
Weighted Mean = 2.265						

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution on the level of How does gambling impact the social health of youths in Ibadan. I have lied to my friend and family about the extent of my gambling ($\bar{x} = 2.57$) was ranked the highest followed in succession by My relationships have been greatly affected negatively due to my gambling habits ($\bar{x} = 2.21$) followed by I have been isolated from social activities due to time spent on gambling ($\bar{x} = 2.21$) followed by My academic or work performance has declined due to time spent gambling ($\bar{x} = 2.07$) respectively. The table shows the weighted mean of 2.265 > 2.50 which is lesser than the standard mean of 2.50. This implies that the impact of gambling on the social health of youths in Ibadan is lows according to the study.

Hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between gambling and Mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders) among youths in Ibadan.

Table 4: showing PPMC summary on the significant gambling and Mental health problems

Predictors	N	Mean	SD	DF	r	Sig	P
Gambling	150	75.04	9.15	.148	.315	.000	<.05
Mental health problems		88.19	8.88				

Table 4 shows the significant gambling and Mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders) among youths in Ibadan. The Null hypotheses is rejected. The result revealed that there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and Mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders) among youths in Ibadan; $r_{(148)} = .315$, $p < 0.05$. Thus, gambling moderately has influence on Mental health problems among youths in Ibadan.

H2: There is a significant negative impact of gambling on the social health (e.g., social relationships, social roles, societal participation) of youths in Ibadan

Table 5: showing PPMC summary on the significant gambling and social health

Predictors	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig	P
Gambling	150	75.04	9.15	.148	.282	.000	<.05
Social health		57.04	8.12				

Table 5 shows the significant gambling and social health (e.g., social relationships, social roles, societal participation) among youths in Ibadan. The Null hypotheses is rejected. The result revealed that there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and social health (e.g., social relationships, social roles, societal participation) among youths in Ibadan; $r_{(148)} = .282$, $p < 0.05$. Thus, gambling weakly has influence on social health among youths in Ibadan.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings of the study on the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan. The result shows the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan is high. That is, youths in Ibadan have high gambling behaviour. Also, based on findings on the relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes among youths in Ibadan. The study shows that there is relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes among youths in Ibadan. This implies that gambling has high effects on mental health outcomes of youths in Ibadan. This is in line with the study of Cowlshaw et al. (2014) findings showed that individuals with gambling problems were more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders. These associations were particularly strong among youths, who may be more vulnerable to the negative consequences of gambling due to a lack of experience and emotional maturity. Adekeye, Adeusi, and Chenube (2019) findings suggested that factors like lower income, unemployment, and lower levels of education were associated with higher rates of gambling participation.

Furthermore, findings on how gambling impact the social health of youths in Ibadan shows that the impact of gambling on social health of youths in Ibadan is high. This implies that gambling is a potential and germane determinants of social health problems among youths in Ibadan. This is in accordance with the study of Dowling et al. (2016) findings revealed that problem gamblers experienced a range of social issues, including strained relationships with family and friends, reduced social networks, and societal alienation. Gambling can cause low self-esteem, stress, anxiety and depression if gambling becomes a problem. Gambling can become an addiction, just like drugs or alcohol, if you use it compulsively or feel out of control.

Moreso, the result revealed that there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders) among youths in Ibadan. Thus, gambling moderately has influence on Mental

health problems among youths in Ibadan. Lastly, the result revealed that there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and social health (e.g., social relationships, social roles, societal participation) among youths in Ibadan. Thus, gambling weakly has influence on social health among youths in Ibadan. This is in line with the study of Calado and Griffiths (2016) results indicated that the prevalence of problem gambling in this age group was higher than in the general population.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of Gambling on the mental and social wellbeing of youths in Ibadan, Oyo State. In line with the findings, this research work has established that, the weighted mean is higher than the standard mean. This implies that the prevalence of gambling among youths in Ibadan is high. Also, there is there is relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes among youths in Ibadan. Furthermore, the impact of gambling on social health of youths in Ibadan is high. Moreso, the result revealed that there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and Mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders) among youths in Ibadan. Lastly, the result revealed that there is a positive relationship in the significant between gambling and social health (e.g., social relationships, social roles, societal participation) among youths in Ibadan.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above the following recommendations have been made:

1. Counselling should be done for students who already addicted to gambling.
2. Health education programmes on the reductions of mental health problems.
3. Social workers must be encouraged to comply with these guidelines through regular continuing education programmes that can help youths work on their mental and social health problems.
4. Furthermore, society at large to devise ways of monitoring the young ones on gambling.
5. Government should lay down rules and regulation against gambling as this can reduce addiction.

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