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INCIDENCE OF GAMBLING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN LAGOS MAINLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the incidence of gambling among secondary school students in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area. Four hypotheses were postulated. This study adopted adopt ex-post facto design to the incidence of gambling among secondary school students in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area. The population consisted of all the Public Secondary Schools in Lagos Mainland which comprised 29 public schools with a total population of 20,030 students. The sample for this study comprised two hundred (200) students which were drawn from the population of the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select eleven schools in the Local Government. Adolescents' Gambling Questionnaire (AGQ) and Students' Achievement Test in English Language were used to collect the data for this study. Face validity was employed to validate the instrument. A pilot study was conducted using the twenty of the instruments to SSSII students in Surulere Senior Secondary School in Surulere Local Government Area. The data will be inputted into SPSS version 23 and Cronbach reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained from the data. The analysis of data was done using t-test and Chi Square statistical tools. This study discovered that there is gender difference in gambling behaviour among secondary students, there is influence of peer group on gambling behaviour among secondary students, there is influence of gambling on the academic performance of secondary school students, and there is age difference in gambling among secondary school students. This study concluded that gender is a factor among adolescents who are engaged in gambling. That is, males are more involved in gambling activities in the school system compare to their female counterparts. In ramifications, peer group encourages adolescents who are involved in gambling activities to do so because of social benefits they derive from the group. This study recommended that the government should enact laws that would place a ban on gambling in the school system especially among the male gender. These laws should portray gambling as crime and criminal in the school system. This would make adolescents to desist from the act of gambling in the school system.

Keywords: *incidence, gambling, peer group, secondary school students*

Introduction

Gambling has been an integral part of human life for centuries and has experienced significant growth and complexity over the past twenty years (Omanchi, 2018). Today, gambling culture is increasingly seen as

legal, accessible, and broadly accepted, leading to widespread participation across various age groups and genders. This trend is particularly noticeable in several regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria (Bitanihirwe, Adebisi, Bunn, Ssewanyana, Darby & Kitchin, 2022).. As a global and cross-cultural activity, gambling generally involves wagering money or items of value on outcomes determined by chance. Bankole (2019). describes gambling as a well-established practice where individuals stake money or valuables on uncertain events or games. It is often framed as offering social and economic advantages, and the growing availability of gambling options has heightened awareness among youth. In Nigeria, issues related to gambling among young people have been exacerbated by rising unemployment, underemployment, and economic challenges. Additionally, the advent of online lotteries, sports betting, casino slots, and various virtual games has significantly altered participation levels.

Gambling is one of the most detrimental human vices, presenting the false promise of easy wealth while often leading to financial disaster. The odds are never in the player's favor, whether in poker, blackjack, or other games; the gambling industry thrives because the house always wins. Different forms of gambling addiction exist due to the activity's diverse nature, and recognizing these addictions can be challenging. An individual may develop a gambling addiction when they believe their financial issues can only be resolved by risking their limited funds in hopes of a big win. Unfortunately, this often results in a cycle where the gambler feels compelled to recover their losses, perpetuating the cycle until they seek help to overcome their addiction (Adewuya, Ola, Aloba, Mapayi and Oginni, 2006).. In Nigeria, online sports betting—especially football betting—has become particularly popular, with platforms such as Bet9ja, Baba Ijebu, BetKing, Nairabet, and the recently introduced Bettybingo heavily promoted across social media. Betting on football matches is a lucrative business, with stakes ranging from as low as 100 naira to over a million naira, depending on an individual's financial capacity (Adenugba, Akhuetie & Umeokoro, 2018).

Gambling inherently involves risk, and adolescence is a developmental stage marked by high rates of risk-taking behaviors. Research indicates that when presented with gambling opportunities, many adolescents are likely to participate. Today, increased availability of gambling coincides with a societal perception that it is normal and acceptable. Gambling extends beyond traditional venues like casinos to include activities such as purchasing lottery tickets or making informal bets, with online gambling emerging as a significant concern due to its solitary nature, lack of supervision, and easy accessibility. Adolescents, who are adept with technology, may engage in online gambling more than adults, complicating regulation efforts, especially given varying laws across countries ((Masaba, Sekakubo, Blaszczynski & Kukah, 2016).

Despite being illegal for those under 18 in many places, gambling remains popular

among adolescents, who often view it as a recreational activity without fully understanding the risks involved. The consequences of the current gambling landscape on youth are not well understood. During this critical period of development, adolescents are susceptible to addictive behaviors, including gambling, which is linked to various psychiatric issues such as anxiety, depression, and substance use. Furthermore, early gambling can lead to medical and psychiatric problems in adulthood (Burge et al., 2004). The rise in youth gambling problems globally has not been matched by an increase in research on adolescent gambling, highlighting the urgent need for more studies focused on this demographic.

Statement of the problem

Youth engagement in various forms of gambling is rapidly increasing, with few groups of young people untouched by gambling activities. This trend may be influenced by personality differences and financial strain stemming from unemployment, poor governance, and economic recession, leading many to view gambling as a survival strategy. Adolescence is marked by high-risk-taking behaviors, and current perceptions make gambling seem acceptable and normal. However, the effects of gambling on adolescents and the associated risk factors—such as having parents with gambling issues, early exposure to gambling, and impulsivity—are not well understood. Adolescents exhibit higher rates of problem and pathological gambling compared to adults, yet few seek help. Gambling often serves as a coping mechanism for negative emotions like anxiety and loneliness, leading to unhealthy distractions and potential addiction. The consequences can be severe, including financial ruin, job loss, family breakdown, and mental health issues. The widespread availability and promotion of gambling pose significant public health concerns, particularly among students. Gambling behavior is linked to risky personality traits such as sensation-seeking and impulsivity, leading to emotional, relational, and financial problems that can develop into diagnosable gambling disorders if unaddressed. Despite its prevalence and negative impacts, little action has been taken to manage gambling issues. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the extent of gambling among secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria, including their motivations and the influence of gambling on their development.

Purpose of the study

The broad purpose of this study is to examine the incidence of gambling among secondary school students in Lagos metropolis. However, the specific purposes of the study seeks to

i. Examine the prevalence of gambling among secondary school students
ii. To establish the influence of gambling on the academic performance of secondary students' behavior.
iii. To establish the influence of peer group in gambling among secondary school students.

iv. Examine the gender differences in gambling behavior among secondary school students.

Research Hypotheses

In accordance with the purpose of the study, the following hypotheses are postulated which are intended to be tested in the course of this study.

i. There is no gender difference in gambling behaviour among secondary students.
ii. There is no influence of peer groups on gambling behaviour among secondary students.
iii. There is no influence of gambling in the academic performance of secondary school students.
iv. There is no age difference in gambling among secondary school students.

Research Method

Research Design

The research design that was adopted to examine the incidence of gambling among secondary school students in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area will be an ex-post facto design. Akuezuilo and Agu (2003) stated that an ex-post-facto design is the research where a researcher carries out empirical inquiry but does not have direct control of the independent variables because their manifestation had already occurred. The researcher employed quantitative approach.

Population of the Study

Population refers to the subjects or respondents from which a researcher obtains information relevant to his study. Rudhumbu (2015) refers to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. It is the totality of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher and to whom the research results can be generalized. As such; a population consists of all the subjects you want to study. The population for this study comprised all the Public Secondary Schools in Lagos Mainland which comprise of 29 public schools with a total population of 20,030 students.

Sampling size and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study comprised two hundred (200) students which will be drawn from the population of the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select eleven schools in the Local Government. The simple random technique was used to first, select eleven (11) secondary schools in Mainland Local Government. Thereafter, students were selected from each of the 11 schools using proportional sampling technique earlier selected to give a total sample size of two hundred (200) respondents.

Method of Data Collection

In order to gain access to and cooperation from the respondents, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of Educational Foundations in the University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, introducing her and stating the purpose for her study. The researcher presented the letter to the heads of the selected schools who then granted her permission. Following the introduction, the researcher and her assistants administered

the questionnaire to the respondents and retrieved them immediately after completion in order to ensure maximum return rate. The questionnaires were administered in the selected schools of SS II students in Mainland Local Government Area in Lagos State. 200 copies of the questionnaire were administered which made up the sample of the study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument adapted for the collection of data was Adolescents' Gambling Questionnaire (AGQ) and Students' Achievement Test in English Language. The instrument for data collection has a four-point rating scale. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; section one consists of students' background information and sections two is made up of statements. Each item has four response options of: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD), and Disagreed (D).

Validity of the Instrument

Face validity was employed to validate the instrument, as such; the instrument will be by validated by the supervisor. The instrument was accompanied with the objectives of the study, research questions and the null hypotheses, to enable the supervisor determine whether the contents are in line with the objectives of the study. The supervisor was requested to examine the face and content validity of the instrument. The final copy of the questionnaire was produced putting the comments and suggestions from the supervisor into consideration.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of the instrument were used for trial- test. The 20 copies of the instruments were administered in SSSII students in Surulere Girls' Senior Secondary School in Surulere Local Government Area. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, Crouchback alpha was used to obtain the reliability coefficient from the data gathered from the questionnaires.

Table1: Reliability Statistics of all the Variables

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.78	0.615	11

The analysis of the reliability statistics table indicates that the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.78 which in the actual sense 78 percent indicating a very high reliability test of the instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha suggests that instrument is reliable and it could measure consistently the same result if use for the actual study. This result is in

consonance with benchmark stipulated by Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) which stated that if reliability coefficient is 0.60 and above, the instrument is deemed appropriate.

Method of Data Analysis

The statistical tools that were employed to analyse the data were t-test and Chi Square. The t-test was used to test hypothesis 1 and 4, while Chi Square statistical tool was used to test the hypothesis 2 and 3. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

Results and Discussions

Test of Hypotheses

Data generated were analyzed using t-test and Chi Square statistical tools via the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Decision rule: If P-value is less than 5% (0.05) significant level, the null hypothesis is rejected. However, P-value is greater than 5% (0.05) significant level, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis One: There is no gender difference in gambling behavior among secondary students.

Table 3: t-test table of gender difference in gambling behavior among secondary

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-test	P-Value	Sig
Male	56	15.76	2.10				
Female	144	16.09	1.93	189	1.03	0.01	0.05

The evaluation of table 3 shows that the p-value 0.03 is less than 5 percent or 0.05 levels of significance. This therefore implies that the null hypothesis that says that there is no gender difference in gambling behavior among secondary students is rejected, therefore, there is gender difference in gambling behavior among secondary students.

Hypothesis Two: There is no influence of peer group on gambling behavior among secondary students.

Table 4: Chi Square table of peer group and gambling behaviour

Variables	N	Mean	df	X^2-Cal	P-Value	L-Sign
Peer Group	200	15.37	187	201.29	0.04	0.05
Gambling Behaviour	200	53.05				

The evaluation of table 4 shows that the p-value 0.04 is less than 5 percent or 0.05 levels of significance. This therefore implies that the null hypothesis that says that there is no influence of peer group on gambling behavior among secondary students is rejected, therefore, there is influence of peer group on gambling behavior among secondary students.

Hypothesis Three: There is no influence of gambling on the academic performance of secondary school students.

Table 5: Chi Square table of gambling influence and Academic Performance

Variables	N	Mean	df	X^2-Cal	P-Value	L-Sign
Gambling Influence	200	14.25	238	306.90	0.001	0.05
Achievement Test	200	53.05				

The evaluation of table 5 shows that the p-value 0.001 is less than 5 percent or 0.05 levels of significance. This therefore implies that the null hypothesis that says that there is no influence of gambling on the academic performance of secondary school students is rejected, therefore, there is influence of gambling on the academic performance of secondary school students.

Hypothesis Four: There is no age difference in gambling among secondary school students.

Table 6: t-test table of age difference in gambling behavior among secondary

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-test	P-Value	Sig
Age	200	1.95	0.63				
Gambling Behaviour	200	15.33	2.32	199	1.03	0.00	0.05

The evaluation of table 6 shows that the p-value 0.00 is less than 5 percent or 0.05 levels of significance. This therefore implies that the null hypothesis that says that there is no age difference in gambling among secondary school students. is rejected, therefore, there is age difference in gambling among secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis reveals a significant gender difference in gambling behavior among secondary students, aligning with Bankole, Adebunmi, and Bankole (2019), who assert that gender is a key determinant in gambling behavior and addiction. Their research in Oyo and Ekiti States, Nigeria, shows that male youths engage in gambling more than females, highlighting that risk activities, including gambling, are predominantly male-oriented. Traditionally, gambling is associated with gender differences, with females generally participating less than males. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as Stark et al. (2012), which note that the prevalence of gambling in the general population ranges from 2.5% to 7%, with men displaying higher rates (6.79%) compared to women (3.26%). Similar patterns emerge from other studies, maintaining a male-to-female prevalence ratio of just under two to one. Although females represent a significant portion of problem gamblers, our understanding of male problem gamblers is more robust due to their higher numbers and greater representation in treatment and research samples. Historically, much of the literature on problem gambling has focused on male populations, leading to a bias that assumes findings for male gamblers apply equally to females.

The second hypothesis reveals that peer groups significantly influence gambling behavior among secondary students. This aligns with Adenugba, Akhuetie, and Umeokoro (2018), who emphasize that peers play a crucial role in youth gambling involvement. Many young people gamble to support their daily financial needs, often leading to financial issues where they borrow money from friends or family to

continue gambling. While some youths reported health challenges like malnutrition due to their gambling habits, many claimed they did not engage in crime or substance abuse. Supporting this, Savolainen et al. (2019) highlight that social identification—where an individual's identity is shaped by their connections to certain groups—can link social relationships to behaviors like gambling. This sense of belonging enhances self-esteem and influences decision-making, with some adolescents engaging in gambling for social acceptance and camaraderie. The findings also resonate with Oyetunji-Alemede, Ogunbiyi, and Omole (2019), who describe peer pressure as the influence exerted by friends to conform to group norms. Peer pressure becomes particularly strong during early adolescence, as individuals seek acceptance while navigating dependence on parents. This desire often leads to conformity, even at the expense of personal preferences. Similar to drinking behaviors, social learning models apply to gambling, where family and peers can inadvertently promote gambling behaviors, helping to normalize them.

The third hypothesis indicates that gambling negatively influences the academic performance of secondary school students. This finding aligns with Lungu (2020), who noted that students often prioritize gambling over their studies, spending significant time at betting spots with friends. Many even use their school funds for betting, leading to financial difficulties that impact their academic efforts. Additionally, this finding supports research by Seifried et al. (2009), which revealed that 39% of universities recognize gambling issues and have designated personnel to address them. Their study highlighted that 23% of college students gamble weekly, with variations across states—Texas reported the lowest (11%) and Nevada the highest (39%). At UNLV, 97% of males and 91% of females reported gambling at some point, with 7% wagering on sports weekly, predominantly males. Data from 120 U.S. colleges indicated that 42% of students gambled in the past year, with 52% of males and 33% of females participating. Ultimately, 81% of participants in their study had gambled in the last six months, which adversely affected their academic performance.

The fourth hypothesis reveals an age difference in gambling behavior among secondary school students, supporting the view of Bankole, Adebunmi, and Bankole (2019) that gambling is increasingly popular among Nigeria's youth, especially sports fans. A considerable 77% of Nigerians surveyed acknowledged the prevalence of betting in their areas, with even higher rates in the South-West (92%) and South-South (91%) regions. The most popular betting platforms include Bet9ja (64%), Nairabet (34%), Pool (22%), and Lotto (20%). Young Nigerians aged 18 to 35 represent the largest group of gamblers, often using gambling as a survival strategy, which raises concerns about potential compulsive gambling. Subramaniam et al. (2015) found that addicted bettors aged 18 to 25 lose an average of $30,000 annually, often using credit cards. The rise in gambling's popularity has been gradual, influenced by the growth of state lotteries, casinos, and

advancements in technology. Their study also showed that 48.9% of older adults have gambled at some point. Older gamblers tend to be male, married or widowed, with lower educational levels and incomes, and they frequently engage in activities like horse betting and lotteries. Interestingly, those aged 60 and older have significantly lower odds of pathological gambling compared to younger individuals, but higher rates of diabetes and hypertension.

Conclusion

On the basis of the forgoing findings, this study concluded that gender is a factor among adolescents who are engaged in gambling. That is, males are more involved in gambling activities in the school system compare to their female counterparts. In ramifications, peer group encourages adolescents who are involved in gambling activities to do so because of social benefits they derive from the group. Adolescents who are gambling across world have academic related problems across levels of study in the school system. The implication is that gambling has become a concern issue in the school system. Age among people who gamble difference as a result of the need for some who see gambling activities as means to quick money making in school system and in the society at large.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion reached in this study, the followings are the recommendations made:

1. The government should enact laws that would place a ban on gambling in the school system especially among the male gender. These laws should portray gambling as crime and criminal in the school system. This would make adolescents to desist from the act of gambling in the school system.
2. Educational planners, administrators, educators should organise orientation programmes to educate adolescents on the influence of wrong peer groups in the school system as they are capable of luring them into gambling activities.
3. The government and school owners should employ more counsellors in the school system that would educate the adolescents from time to time on the danger of gambling to their academic activities in the school system.
4. Special attention should be given to male students that are of such age and encourage them to run away from peer group who want to lure them into gambling activities or even report them to the school authority as age also shown as the determinant of gambling.

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