



Betting Addiction Predispositions of In-school Adolescents in Nigeria

Muhammed Shuaib Abolakale, Mustapha Mulikat Ladi Abdulqadir
and Akindotuni Opeyemi

Abstract

The upsurge of betting and gaming sites on the internet and numerous social networking sites for social activities predisposes adolescents and young adults globally to problem betting including Nigerian secondary school students. In this study, the focus is on the propensities of school-going adolescents becoming addicted as it has become a trend that could have consequences on their mental health and productivity. The study is survey research on a sample of 385 secondary school students and teachers in Owo, Ondo state Nigeria using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Betting Addiction Tendencies Questionnaire (BATQ)" and a structured interview was used to amass data for the study. The instrument possessed a reliability coefficient of 0.75 after being subjected to the test-retest method. Data were analyzed using percentage, thematic analysis and three-way ANOVA. The study revealed that 40% of the respondents have tendencies for betting addiction. The result further revealed that adolescents with tendencies of betting addiction were characterised with un-serious attitudes and would do anything to get the money to bet. Also, respondents do not differ in their views about betting addiction tendencies based on gender and age but a significant difference was found based on school type. This study implies that in school, adolescents are susceptible to a betting addiction if unguided. Therefore, Mental Health Counsellors should intensify their effort in providing preventive measures through organizing programmes that could assist in reducing risk factors for betting addiction.

Keywords: addiction, betting, counselling, in-school adolescent, mental health

Dr. Muhammed Shuaib Abolakale is a lecturer at the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. He is an Educational Guidance Counsellor with research interests in school and mental health counselling. Recent publications include: Mustapha, M.L.A., Muhammed, S.A., Muhammed, H. J. (2022). [Cyber bullying among undergraduates in a Nigerian university: occurrence and impact on their self-image](#). *KDU Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 4 (1): 39-51; and Muhammed S. A. (2022). Parental Monitoring as Correlation of Public School Pupils Motivation for Learning in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria. *Malaysian Journal of Psychology and Counselling (MOJPC)*. 9(1), 18-27. <http://mojc.um.edu.my/>

Dr. Mustapha Mulikat Ladi Abdulqadir is a senior lecturer at the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. She is an Educational Guidance Counsellor with research interest in school counselling. Recent publications include: Mustapha, M.L.A., Muhammed, S.A. & Muhammed, H.J. (2022). [Cyber bullying among undergraduates in a Nigerian university: occurrence and impact on their self-image](#). *KDU Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 4 (1): 39-51; and Mustapha, M.L.A., Ajokpaniovo, M., & Olaoye, F.E. (2022). Impact of Cyber Relational Addiction on Undergraduates' Interpersonal Relationship in Nigeria. *Jurnal Kajian Bimbingan Dan Konseling*, 7(1), 10–19. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um001v7i12022p10-19>

Akindotuni Opeyemi is a graduate student at the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. She is an Educational Guidance Counsellor with a research interest in school counselling.

Introduction

A broad range of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) has been harnessed by humans for diverse purposes. Of great significance in this regard is the adoption of various forms of information communication tools for entertainment purposes. Owing to this phenomenon, a plethora of new and emerging technologies have significantly facilitated the proliferation of various forms of leisure activities, especially among the adolescent population who are generally regarded as digital natives. For instance, betting is increasingly being resorted to among adolescents through multiple platforms, such as desktop computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones and betting on social networking sites and gaming sites. Betting has been part of human society for decades. However, there is no consensus among scholars on the exact definition of betting. For instance, betting has been defined as an act of placing money or any valuable item on the outcome of an event to gain money or other materials in return (Ofords, 2011). Thus, while the traditional modes of betting as lotteries, pools, gaming machines, casino table machines, bingos, card games, board games, games of personal skill and rolling of dice have been around for a while among adolescents in the Nigerian setting; online betting has grown exponentially in its rate of crystallization as a social phenomenon in contemporary times. Of particular importance in this direction, is the unprecedented increase in the pervasiveness of betting on the results of national and international football matches. Akanle and Olutayo (2011) noted that football or soccer betting is prevalent in Nigeria as a product of globalization. Betting addiction has been defined by Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) to entail the excessive or irresistible compulsion regarding gaming and betting that leads to impairment in psychosocial functioning. Betting addiction is also an addictive behaviour, which implies a person's inability to regulate his or her extent or degree of gaming and betting, thereby resulting in physical, psycho-social, school, and/or work problems (Mufleh, Al-Hersh, Al-Ababneh & Aldalalah, 2010; Akhter, 2013). The emergence and increased popularity among in-school adolescents come with concern and potential risk. Some of the reasons why betting has become prevalent in the views of these researchers, especially in Nigeria include; the lack of a strict and unmonitored system of gaming and betting makes it difficult for parents and even adolescents to see the potential risks which can increase the potential for students to get addicted. Secondly, the false and irrational belief that it is due to their skills, calculating prowess and ability to forecast and take risks to make them win in betting also gives them a false sense of security that they are not only betting but also developing some necessary skills that are needed in life. Lastly, the easy accessibility, affordability and uninterrupted access to the internet makes it difficult for an adolescent to curb their activities. As well, the popularity of betting among their peers also influences them to take up these worrisome activities just to have the we-feelings of belonging to the group.

Nevertheless, previous research has been carried out on gaming and betting addiction among adolescents and this research has shown that adolescents engage in gaming and betting as a means of surviving, elevating their boredom, and passing their leisure time. Also, studies have indicated that there are demographic differences in the betting tendencies of in-school adolescents. In this regard, gender, age and school type are increasingly being referred to as essential moderating variables in betting research. Based on the objective of the paper, the central research question is; what is the tendency rate of addicting to betting among in-school adolescents in Owo, Ondo State?

Given this, we put forward the hypotheses which were tested in the study, thus; there is no significant difference in the betting addiction tendencies of in-school adolescents in Owo, Ondo State based on gender, school type and age.

Literature Review

Age and Betting Addiction Tendencies

Age differences have been found in many behaviours and several perspectives and theories have been viewed in the relationship between age and betting addiction. Young people are known to be at risk of betting addiction because of cognitive immaturities, such as illusions of control over outcomes (Chambers & Potenza 2003) and having a poor understanding of statistical probability (Delfabbro et al., 2006). In the work of Delfabbro and Le Couteur (2011), they noted that about 70% of adolescents between the age of 13 and 17 bets at least once in a year. Similarly, it has been reported that betting is particularly popular among adolescents because it appeals to their need for attention, it provides them with an opportunity to escape negative feelings, and allows them to cope with stressful events. It also offers them a sense of adventure, entertainment, relaxation, resource accumulation, emotions, technological adoption and a host of others. Similarly, evidence relating to the influence of age on the gaming and addiction tendencies of in-school adolescents have shown that those who are younger are more likely to place themselves in harm's way by their very participation in particular types of activities such as gaming and betting. For instance, in Australia, the number of adolescents who report betting increases with age (Delfabbro, King, Lambos & Puglies, 2009).

Additionally, gamblers who began betting at a younger age were more likely to experience depression and substance use disorders than their gambling counterpart. Betting during adolescence has been associated with a wide range of negative psychological, social, and academic outcomes. For example, rate of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, delinquency and substance use have been reported to be significantly higher in adolescents who bet (Afifi et al., 2016; Barnes et al., 2009; Gori et al., 2015; Richard and Derevensky 2017; Welte et al., 2009; Yip et al., 2011). Rasanen et al. (2016) also found that delinquent behaviours are related to betting frequency.

Gender and Addiction Tendencies

Betting has typically been considered a predominantly male activity. However, recent prevalence surveys have shown greater numbers of females are now gambling. Comparisons of betting addiction in men versus women indicate that compulsive betting is more common among men than women. This disparity may exist because female compulsive betters usually begin at a later age. However, it is also worth noting that when women do start betting, they appear to become addicted to gambling more quickly.

Females generally have been reported to participate less in gaming and betting related activities when compared to their male counterparts. Wardle (2011) found that betting has been traditionally related to gender. This gender difference is also evident in youth gambling. Gender has also been reported as an important determinant of betting behaviour as gender difference exists in betting-related behaviour (Blinn-Pike, Worth and Jonkman, 2006). Specifically, findings in the literature indicate that male in-school adolescents are more likely to be addicted to betting than their female counterparts (Bakken et al., 2009; Goldstein et al., 2009; Derevensky et al., 2010). In a like manner, some studies have reported that male adolescents spend more time on betting activities than females (Chiu & Storm, 2010; King, Abrams & Wilkinson, 2010).

School Type and Betting Addiction Tendencies

Likewise, the studies have indicated that the betting activities of private school students and their public schools vary (Neighbors et al., 2007; Wickwire et al., 2008; Myrseth, Pallesen, Molde, Johnsen and Lorvik, 2009). Hence, an in-school adolescent would be considered to suffering from a betting addiction if the person, irrespective of differences in gender, age, and school type constantly engage in such activities till there are potential negative changes in the way the person attends to crucial life issues such as academics, wellbeing, interpersonal relationships and a host of others. Given the far-reaching consequences of betting addiction and the exponential increase in the spate of availability and accessibility of various betting mediums and avenues in Owo, there is no doubt that many in-school adolescents could be exposed to betting addiction, and as such, it is germane for stakeholders in the educational system to gain an insight into betting addiction tendencies among in-school adolescents in Owo, Ondo State. Thus, the present study seeks to investigate betting addiction tendencies among in-school adolescents in Owo, Ondo State.

Method

This study employed a descriptive survey method using a researcher designed questionnaire titled "Betting Addiction Tendency Scale" to obtain information from a representative sample of the population. A descriptive survey was chosen for this study because it will enable the researcher to collect a large amount of information as a sample of the population. The instruments were subjected to validity and reliability in other to determine this effectiveness and a reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained. The population of the study comprised all 10,430 in-school adolescents in Owo, Ondo State (Ondo State Ministry of Education, 2019). Using researcher advisor (2006), a sample size of 385 was recommended for the population of this magnitude; however, to cater to attrition, the researcher increased the sample size to 400. Hence, a total of 400 respondents were selected for the study. The study employed multi-stage sampling

procedures. This involves using more than two sampling techniques in the process of selecting the sample of the study. At stage one, the purposive sampling technique was used to select ten (10) secondary schools to capture both public and private secondary schools. At stage two, simple random sampling was used to select only the in-school adolescents in the senior secondary schools. This was done by identifying the students before distributing the instrument to them. The data obtained were analysed using percentages, mean and rank order analysis and Univariate Analysis of Variance.

Results

Table 1: Betting Tendencies across Genders

Gender		Frequency	Percent
Male	Low	47	23.0
	Moderate	62	30.4
	High	95	46.6
	Total	204	100.0
Female	Low	45	24.9
	Moderate	78	43.1
	High	58	32.0
	Total	181	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents betting addiction tendencies based on gender. The table reveals that male respondents 95 (46.6%) had high betting addiction tendencies as compared to female respondents 58 (32.0%) with high addiction tendencies. This indicates that male respondents had higher tendencies than female respondents in this study.

Table 2: Betting Tendencies across Age

Age		Frequency	Percent
10-14 years	Low	10	8.0
	moderate	52	41.6
	High	63	50.4
	Total	125	100.0
15 years and above	low	82	31.5
	moderate	88	33.8
	high	90	34.6
	Total	260	100.0

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents betting addiction based on age. The table reveals that 60 (50.4%) of the respondents between the ages of 10-14 years had high betting addiction tendencies while 90 (34.6%) of the respondents within the age bracket of 15 years of age and above recorded a high tendency score. This indicates that respondents who were 15 years of age and above respondents had higher tendencies than respondents within the age bracket 10-14 years.

Table 3: Betting Tendencies across School Type

School type		Frequency	Percent
Public	low	90	28.8
	moderate	113	36.1
	high	110	35.1
	Total	313	100.0
Private	low	2	2.8
	moderate	27	37.5
	high	43	59.7
	Total	72	100.0

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents based on school type. The table reveals that 110 (35.1%) of the respondents from public schools had high addiction tendencies as compared with 43 (59.7%) respondents from private schools. This indicates that respondents from private schools had higher tendencies

Table 4: Respondents' Tendencies of Betting Addiction

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Low	92	23.9
Average	140	36.4
High	153	39.7
Total	385	100

Table 4 indicates the respondents' tendency rate of betting addiction. The table shows that 92 (23.9%) of the respondents had a low tendency rate of betting addiction, 140 (36.4%) of the respondents had an average tendency rate of betting addiction while 153 (39.7%) of the respondents had a high tendency rate of betting addiction. This indicates that the majority of respondents had a high tendency of betting addiction.

Hypotheses Testing

Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using 3-way ANOVA statistical methods at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the betting addiction tendencies of in-school adolescents in Owo, Ondo State based on gender, school type and age

Table 5: 3-way Analysis of Variance showing differences in the Betting Addiction Tendencies of the Respondents Based on Gender, School Type and Age

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-Value	Crit. F-Value	Sig.
Corrected model.	2086.147 ^a	7	298.021	5.615		.000
Intercept	131507.758	1	131507.758	2477.564		.000
Gender	86.001683.068	1	86.001	1.620	3.84	.204
School Type	72.968	1	683.068	12.869	3.84	.000
Age	20010.959	1	72.968	1.375	3.84	.242
Error	309662.000	377	53.079			
Total	22097.106	385				
Corrected T.		384				

* p< .05

Table 5 shows the result of the two-way Analysis of Variance based on gender, school type and age. Based on gender, the calculated F-value is 86.001, while the critical F-value is 1.620 with 1 and 377 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value, the hypothesis is thus accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the betting addiction tendencies of in-school adolescents based on gender.

Likewise, the calculated F-value of school type is 12.869, while the critical F-value is 3.84 with 1 and 377 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated F-value is greater than the critical F-value, thus, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the betting addiction tendencies of in-school adolescents based on school type.

Also, the calculated F-value of age is 1.375 while the table F-value is 3.84 with 1 and 377 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value, thus, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the betting addiction tendencies of in-school adolescents based on age.

Discussion

The study revealed that the majority of respondents had a tendency to become addicted to betting. This could be as a result of the fact that betting is widely available through multiple platforms, such as television shows or programmes, betting centres, and social networking sites etc. and these have become widely accepted, socially desirable entertainment and leisure activities as well as another way of making extra cash among adolescents. This finding is in line with the study of Sammut (2010) who found high involvement of adolescents in betting and gambling which takes various forms in both regulated and non-regulated such as card games, peer sports, wagering, and sports betting.

Betting addiction tendencies of in-school adolescents in Owo, Ondo State does not differ across gender and ages. This implies that there was no significant difference in the addiction tendency of betting between male and female in-school adolescents irrespective of their age groups. This assertion negates the submission of Derevensky, Sklar, Gupta and Messerlian (2010) who asserted that male in-school adolescents are more addicted to gaming and gambling activities than their female counterparts. The finding of the study also negates the study of Delfabbro and Le Couteur (2011) who reported that about 70% of adolescents between the age of 13 and 17 bets more than adolescents who are 18 years and above at least ten times a year. This result is expected because both male and female students in the study locale have access to internet gaming and betting sites. These sites are easy to navigate and promises rewards for different stakes. Thus, female in-school adolescents are also engaging in betting addiction unlike what operated in the past where the majority of adolescents involved in betting activities are males in any locale.

Additionally, private and public school adolescents were different in their addiction tendencies to betting. The finding is in line with the submission of Bankole (2019) who found that there is a significant difference in the gambling behaviours among in-school adolescents in public and private schools. This could be attributed to the fact that the management, monitoring and supervision enjoyed by private school students in Nigeria from parent and school administrators are higher and far better than the public school students, hence the differences noted.

Conclusion

This study established that the rate of betting addiction tendencies for school adolescents is enormous as the majority of respondents (40 %) had a tendency rate of betting addiction. The tendency rate was higher in males than females, in private than public schools and among adolescents between ages of 10-14 years. The tendencies of in-school adolescents to be addicted to betting do not differ based on gender and age but differed significantly based on school type. Hence there is a serious implication for the promotion of mental health counselling in Nigerian secondary schools because overuse of the internet for catching fun, gaming and betting is on the increase among Nigerian youths.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. School Counsellors need to develop strategies for reducing betting addiction tendencies among students of different gender and age.
2. Association of professional counsellors in Nigeria should initiate collaboration with the Ministry of Education and national orientation agencies in the country to create enlightening programmes on constructive use of phones and the internet. This can help to turn phones among students from distracters of learning to enablers of learning.
3. School counsellors in Nigeria should advocate for a review of gambling regulations and legislation to include laws that prohibit school-going students from betting, since most students who bet are aged 10 years and above, meaning that they enjoy legal protection albeit being school students
4. Government should regulate the establishment of betting centres and the medium and rate at which the organization make their unsolicited adverts

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