

## PREDISPOSING FACTORS OF SPORT GAMBLING AMONG YOUTHS IN TARABA STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined sport gambling among youths in Taraba State. The specific objectives of the study were to examine various sports betting youths patronize in Taraba State, find out how often youths take bet on various sports in Taraba State, identify factors that predispose youths into sports gambling in Taraba State and the consequences of sports gambling among youths in Taraba State. The study covered two hundred (200) youths drawn from selected 4 local government of Taraba State namely: Jalingo, Zing, Wukari, and Takum. A survey design was adopted where questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Data collected was analyzed with frequency count and percentages (%). The study revealed that peer pressure, poverty and get rich quick syndrome are the causes of sport gambling among youths with resultant effects of criminal activities, stealing and borrowing of money. The study recommends, among others, the inculcation of moral values by families, religious organization and all relevant authorities on the effect and dangers of sport gambling.*

**Keywords:** Youth, Sports Betting, Gambling. Taraba State.

## **Introduction**

A sport gambling is, at its simplest, placing a financial wager on the outcome of a sporting match, as well as on events that occur within the larger match or fixture. The growth of sports betting and gambling promotion during sporting events is a relatively recent phenomenon. The Nigerian gambling and gaming industry has grown astronomically in the last two years. This exceptional growth can be attributed to the large population especially the number of youths, increased access to digital telephones, successful internet penetration and increased access to internet-enabled devices [which includes, telephones, iPad and other portable devices (Bates & Bet, 2018).

Many adolescents, youth, young adult, educated and non-educated Nigerians are involve in one form of sport gambling or the other to the extent that it has become part of mainstream economy and it is a significant source of revenue to governments and private enterprise. Sport gambling also encompasses a source of harm and concern to some Nigerians due to its negative impact on individuals, families and communities. While most people handle sport gambling in a controlled way, many get addicted (Temitope, 2019a).

The sports gambling industry has been able to leverage on Nigeria's huge football culture. Some of the big leagues, such as the English Premier league, and the Spanish La Liga, have millions of fans in the country; sport gambling provides Nigerians the opportunity to earn from what they love. Betting houses can now be spotted in most street across Nigeria, new ones are propping up daily, with subscribers in store and online daily (Ifeduba & Itetegbe, 2020).

Sport gambling has taken a new turn in Nigeria and other nations. In Nigeria, the most popular sport gambling being patronized include: Naira Bet, Bet 9ja, Sure Bet, Winners Golden Bet, 1960 Bet, Merry Bet, Bet Colony, Stakers Den while the foreign betting games include but are not limited to: Bet 360, Bet 365, 1x Bet, 24H Bet, 368 Bet, Apollo Bet, Bet-at-Home. Typically all the aforementioned betting companies create an open platform for interested persons to predict the outcome of a game – Football, Basketball, Car race, Hockey, Dog race, Virtual among others. Fans that predict correctly are rewarded and those whose predictions were wrong lose their monies. This is fast becoming the order in Nigeria, as fans that are “fans enough” go a step further to “stake” on the higher level of fandom and expertise in the football understanding (Jamiu, 2019).

Sport gambling in Nigeria is consequently organized around major European leagues. These major European Leagues are mostly in order of popularity among the Nigerian fans: English Premiership, Spanish La Liga, Italian Seria A and German Bundesliga. English Premier Clubs gain the greatest number of fans, Spanish La Liga is in the second place, and the Italian Seria A in the third. The most widely supported clubs, in order of the number of fans, are: Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Barcelona, Real Madrid and Liverpool (Tade, 2014; Ifeduba, 2011; Omobowale, 2009). It must, however, be noted that the “wide fan base” of the clubs is not rigid in Nigeria, but fluid, depending on the overall performance of the clubs over time (Aguocha & George, 2020a).

Business Monitor International (BMI) research forecasts 182 million mobile subscribers in 2021, from the current 153 million. The expectation is that as the number of internet

subscribers increase, so will the number of gaming users. According to a recent investigation, roughly “60 million Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 40 are involved in active sports betting. On average, these punters spend around 3,000 Naira (about \$15) every day on bets”. Accordingly, almost 2 billion naira is spent on sports betting daily in Nigeria, which is nearly 730 billion Naira a year!(Bates & Bet, 2018).

The rate at which youths are engaging in various forms of sport betting is increasing daily. Hardly would one find any cluster of youths that are not ruminating or getting involved in sport betting activities in this current dispensation. Times that are supposed to be invested into profitable and precious activities are wasted on argument and speculations on sport results and related activities as observed by the researcher. The reasons for sport gambling among youths are fun, opportunity to win money, and excitement of sport betting. In addition to these motivations, some adolescents feel that sport betting is a way to socialize, make friends, relax, relieve boredom, feel older, escape daily problems, alleviate depression, and deal with loneliness (Anthropologica, 2015).

Also, financial strain experienced by individuals could be a determining factor that precipitates sport gambling among people. This could be as a result of unemployment, bad governance, economy recession and lots other factors. So in order to survive, many people see sport betting as a means to end(Flack & Morris, 2017).

Although, recent studies have been conducted on sport betting in Nigeria ( (Aguocha & George, 2020b; Ayandele et al., 2020; Ifeduba & Itetegbe, 2020; Lungu, 2020; Olaore et al., 2020; Onebunne & Nnaemeka, n.d.)), all the studies examined sport betting, gambling behaviour of youths and the proliferation of football betting among youths mostly in the southern part of the country leading to dearth of knowledge in sport betting in Northern Nigeria especially Taraba State. Also, many of the studies were mere theoretical discussion papers as opposed to empirical research which did not collect data from any specific local government or state hence, a knowledge gap exists on sport betting among youths in a state like Taraba. Consequently, this study will be undertaken to fill this gap by investigating sport betting among Nigerian youths in Taraba State.

### **Research Objectives**

The broad objective of the study is to examine the predisposing factors of sport gambling among youths in Taraba State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the various sports youths take bet on in Taraba State
2. Find out how often youths take bet on various sports in Taraba State
3. Identify factors that predispose the youths into sports gambling in Taraba State
4. To find out the consequences of sports gambling among youths in Taraba State

### **Empirical Review**

A study conducted to evaluate the effects of sports gambling behaviour in Dunukofia Local Government area of Anambra state where a descriptive survey research design was used. It was discovered that sports gambling have a lot of adverse effects on minors. Based on these findings, everyone has to stand up against this cankerworm, before it destroys the whole state (Onebunne & Nnaemeka, n.d.)

Zakariya et al., (1999) in a study to understand the causative factors behind gambling in Ilorin metropolis, using the purposive sampling technique. The findings indicated a significant relationship between peer influence and engagement in gambling. The findings also revealed a significant relationship between gender and engagement in gambling. Following this, the study recommends that the government arrange therapies for gambling addicts to help them with their ordeal.

Similarly, in another study, a direct link between technology advancement, promises of winning big coupled with bonuses while unemployment was not significant to youth involvement in betting games. The study also showed that playing betting games provides another source of income to the youth, who are already engaged in one form of work or another. Finally, youth involvement in betting games has created awareness regarding different sports in the world, while contributing to Nigeria's economy (Olaore et al., 2020).

A study aimed to investigate the patterns and prevalence of gambling behavior among youths in the South-West Nigeria. 320 participants were involved in the study. Four hypotheses were tested and result shows that there is a significant difference in the gambling behaviour of youth in Oyo and Ekiti State, Nigeria also the research showed that there is a significant relationship between financial strain and gambling behaviour. Also, there is a significant relationship between personality and gambling. Furthermore, it was revealed that there is a relationship between depression and gambling behaviour. Findings were discussed in line with extant literature and recommendations were made (Temitope, 2019a).

Ifeduba & Itetegbe, (2020) examined the viewership of English Premier League and how it influences the gambling behaviour of Nigerians. Survey research design was triangulated with interviews and website observation. Findings indicate that gambling is on the increase and there is a significant relationship between gambling behaviour and perceived viewership of football games as the literature suggests. However, the results also indicate that gambling advertisements in the media influence gambling behaviour. It is, therefore, recommended that access to league matches featuring sport betting and gambling advertisements should be regulated to curb the escalating incidence of gambling and its damaging effects on the social, economic, psychological and moral health of the society.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The social learning model of gambling proposes that gambling as a form of behaviour that is highly subjected to reinforcement and reward. the theory propose that as individual engage in gambling and such gambling brings high return in term of money, such individual is motivated and reinforce to participate more in the is behaviour. This reinforcement tends to strengthen the relationship between gambling and outcome of such gambling (reward) (Lungu, 2020).

The theory posits that this reinforcement create a sense of physiological arousal which serves as motivation or enforcement for an individual to engage in gambling in other to gain more profit. In other words, as level for return from gambling is encouraging, such individual are engage more in gambling and may eventually experience gambling addiction at the end. The theory suggests a strong association between reward and gambling predisposes individual in more gambling related activities (Ransome, 2017).

## Methodology

The study was carried out in Taraba State which is in Nigeria. The state covers a land mass of 59,400km<sup>2</sup> with 16 (sixteen) local government areas. Taraba State lies between latitude 6° 30' and 9° 36' North and longitude 9° 10' and 11°50' East. It is bounded on the North by Bauchi State and Gombe State in the North-East. It is bounded on the East by Adamawa State and by Plateau State in the North-West. It is further bounded by Benue State in the West and shares an international boundary with the Republic of Cameroon to the south and south-west. Taraba State has a population figure of 2,300,736 people. The study area is heterogeneous in ethnic composition. Taraba State is home to a number of betting shops. They can be found scattered all over the city. These shops are mostly used by prospective gamblers without access to internet facilities.

The study employed multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques in the selection of respondents. Four local government areas out of the 16 local government areas of Taraba State were purposively selected owing to their prominence in terms of sport gambling they include; Jalingo, Zing, Wukari and Takum. The study adopted the purposive sampling technique in the selection of respondents. This is to ensure that the respondents have adequate knowledge on the topic. Hence, a sample size of 200 respondents was drawn. Following this, copies of questionnaire were distributed to the selected respondents. There was 100% return of the questionnaire distributed; the analysis was consequently based on this.

## Presentation of Results

**Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

| Variable          | Category      | Frequency  | Percentage |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Age               | 18-25         | 70         | 35%        |
|                   | 26-33         | 58         | 29%        |
|                   | 34-41         | 41         | 20.5%      |
|                   | 42-49         | 19         | 9.5%       |
|                   | 50+           | 12         | 6%         |
|                   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Sex               | Male          | 157        | 78.5%      |
|                   | Female        | 43         | 21.5%      |
|                   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Religion          | Christianity  | 119        | 59.5%      |
|                   | Islam         | 69         | 34.5%      |
|                   | Traditional   | 12         | 6%         |
|                   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Educational level | None          | 12         | 6%         |
|                   | Primary       | 17         | 8.5%       |
|                   | Secondary     | 94         | 47%        |
|                   | Tertiary      | 77         | 38.5%      |
|                   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Occupation        | Student       | 72         | 36%        |
|                   | Artisan       | 38         | 19%        |
|                   | Trader        | 19         | 9.5%       |
|                   | Civil Servant | 41         | 20.5%      |
|                   | Farmer        | 30         | 15%        |

|  |              |            |            |
|--|--------------|------------|------------|
|  | <b>Total</b> | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |
|--|--------------|------------|------------|

**Source: Field Survey 2020**

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents include Age and sex distribution, Religion affiliation, Educational Qualification and Occupation. These socio-demographic variables are shown in Table 1.

The age distribution of the respondents reveals that 35% were within the age category of 18-25, 29% falls within 26-33 age category, 20.5% were within 34-41 years while 9.5% were within age bracket of 42-49 years and only 6% falls within 50 years and above.

Concerning the gender distribution of the respondents, the result shows that there were more male respondents with 78.5% than their female counterparts who were 21.5%.

Furthermore, the result on the Religious affiliation of the respondents reveals that 59.5% of the respondents are Christians, 34.5 are Muslims while 6 are traditionalist.

In the same vein, the study indicates that 6% of the respondents have no formal education, 8.5% have primary education, and 47% have secondary education while 38.5% have tertiary education.

Additionally, occupation of the respondents indicates that 36% of the respondents are students, 19% are Artisan, 9.5% are traders, and 20.5% are civil servants while 15% are farmers.

**Table 2: Respondents view on Types of Sport Gambling**

| <b>Sport Bet</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Bet9ja           | 116              | 58%               |
| Bet king         | 52               | 26%               |
| Super bet        | 3                | 1.5%              |
| Naira bet        | 11               | 5.5%              |
| Bet way          | 6                | 3%                |
| Sure bet         | 7                | 3.5%              |
| Bet 360          | 5                | 2.5%              |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b>        |

**Source: Fieldwork 2020**

Tables 2 above showed that majority of the respondent 58% do take part in sport gambling with Bet9ja. 26% bet with bet king, 1.5% make use of Super bet, 5.5% take bet with Naira bet, 3% make use of Bet way, 3.5% uses sure bet while 2.5% make use of Bet 360. This indicates that majority of the respondents in this study do participate in sport gambling through Bet9ja, Bet King and Naira Bet. Therefore they are the three most popular sport betting companies that youths do patronize in Taraba State.

**Table 3: Respondents view on Factors Responsible for Sport Gambling**

| <b>Factors</b>                               | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Peer influence</b>                        |                  |                   |
| Strongly Agreed                              | 57               | 28.5%             |
| Agreed                                       | 79               | 39.5%             |
| Strongly Disagreed                           | 41               | 20.5%             |
| Disagreed                                    | 23               | 11.5%             |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b>        |
| <b>Joblessness</b>                           |                  |                   |
| Strongly Agreed                              | 51               | 25.5%             |
| Agreed                                       | 67               | 33.5%             |
| Strongly Disagreed                           | 48               | 24%               |
| Disagreed                                    | 34               | 17%               |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b>        |
| <b>Poverty/lack of money</b>                 |                  |                   |
| Strongly Agreed                              | 46               | 23%               |
| Agreed                                       | 89               | 44.5%             |
| Strongly Disagreed                           | 39               | 19.5%             |
| Disagreed                                    | 26               | 13%               |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b>        |
| <b>Parental support for financial growth</b> |                  |                   |
| Strongly Agreed                              | 45               | 22.5%             |
| Agreed                                       | 17               | 8.5%              |
| Strongly Disagreed                           | 67               | 33.5%             |
| Disagreed                                    | 71               | 35.5%             |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b>        |
| <b>Get Rich quick syndrome/ income</b>       |                  |                   |
| Strongly Agreed                              | 61               | 30.5%             |
| Agreed                                       | 73               | 36.5%             |
| Strongly Disagreed                           | 31               | 15.5%             |
| Disagreed                                    | 35               | 17.5%             |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b>        |
| <b>Interest in gambling/hobby</b>            |                  |                   |
| Strongly Agreed                              | 46               | 23%               |
| Agreed                                       | 40               | 20%               |
| Strongly Disagreed                           | 51               | 25.5%             |
| Disagreed                                    | 63               | 31.5%             |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>200</b>       | <b>100</b>        |

**Source: Fieldwork 2020**

The table 3 above shows Respondents views on factors associated with sport gambling in Taraba State.

According to the table, 28.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that peer influence is one of the factors influencing sport gambling, 39.5% of the respondents also agreed with the same view, while 20.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 11.5% also disagreed with peer influence as one of the factors influencing sport gambling. Fortunately the highest percentage of the respondents supported that peer influence is one of the factors that do influences sport gambling.

According to same table, 25.5 % of the respondents strongly agreed that Joblessness also influences sport gambling, 33.5% of the same respondents agreed with the view, but 24% strongly disagreed while 17% of the respondents also disagreed with. This implies that joblessness is one of the factors influencing sport gambling.

On whether poverty/lack of money is one of the factors influencing sport gambling, the table shows that 23% of the respondents strongly agreed and share same view with 44.5% who also agreed. However, 19.5% strongly disagreed that poverty/lack of money influences sport gambling and were supported by 13% who also disagreed. This shows that Poverty/lack of money is one of the factors influencing sport gambling.

Furthermore, the survey also show that 22.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that parental support for financial growth is one of the factors influencing sport gambling, 8.5% of the same respondents agreed while on the contrary, 33.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with parental support for financial growth as one of the factors influencing sport gambling and were supported by, 35.5% of the respondents who also disagreed. Unfortunately, highest population of respondents disagreed parental support for financial growth is one of the factors influencing sport gambling. This implies that parental support for financial growth is not a factor influencing sport gambling.

The table equally shows that 30.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that get rich quick syndrome and income is one of the factors associated with sport gambling, 36.5% of the respondents also agreed, in another vein, 15.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that get rich quick syndrome is one of the factors influencing sport gambling while 17.5% of the respondents also disagreed. This implies that get rich quick syndrome and income do influences sport gambling.

The table also indicates that 23% of the respondents strongly agreed that Interest in gambling and hobby is one of the factors influencing sport gambling, they were supported by 20% who also agreed, on the contrary however, 25.5% strongly disagreed that interest in gambling and hobby is one of the factors influencing sport gambling and were equally supported by 31.5% of the respondents who equally disagreed. This implies that interest in gambling and hobby is not one of the factors influencing sport gambling.

**Table 5: Respondents view on Consequences of Sport Gambling**

| CONSEQUENCES                        | FREQUENCY  | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Borrowing money                     | 43         | 21.5%      |
| Frustration                         | 32         | 16%        |
| Criminal activities/stealing        | 46         | 23%        |
| Anxiety/ Depression                 | 37         | 18.5%      |
| Careless spending on sport gambling | 27         | 13.5%      |
| Chasing losses                      | 15         | 7.5%       |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Field work 2020**

Table 5 above indicates respondents view on consequences of sport gambling, 21.5% of the respondents are of the view that borrowing of money is one of the consequences of sport gambling, 16% are of the opinion that Frustration is a consequence, 23% also opined that sport gambling leads to criminal activities and stealing. Furthermore 18.5% of the respondents indicate Anxiety and depression, 13.5 also indicates careless spending on sport gambling while 7.5% indicates chasing losses as consequences of sport betting.

**Table 5: Respondents view on how to Ameliorate Sport Gambling**

| RECOMMENDATION                                                | FREQUENCY  | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Proper education on the effects and disadvantages of gambling | 75         | 37.5%      |
| Learning the principles of financial empowerment              | 25         | 12.5%      |
| Seek counseling if one cannot do without gambling             | 29         | 14.5%      |
| Learn trade and skills for financial gains and income         | 61         | 30.5%      |
| Regulation of sport gambling by the Government                | 10         | 5%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                  | <b>200</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source: Field work, 2020**

37.5% of the respondents recommended that sport gambling can be ameliorated through proper education on the effects and disadvantages of gambling, 12.5% recommended learning the principles of financial empowerment, 14.5% suggests seeking counselling if one cannot do without gambling, 30% recommends learning trade and skills for financial gains and income while 5% of the respondents recommended regulation of sport of gambling by the government.

## Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to find out the predisposing Factors of sport gambling in Taraba State. The study revealed that the common sport gambling companies in Taraba state include Bet9ja, Bet King, Naira bet, Sure-bet and Bet360. This finding is in consistent with the findings of (Bates & Bet, 2018; Jamiu, 2019) which also revealed that Bet9ja, Naira bet and Bet king are the major sport gambling companies. A similar study by ((Onebunne & Nnaemeka, n.d.) also identified Bet9ja, Naira bet , bet360 and Bet king as the major sport gambling companies being patronize by sport gamblers.

The study also find out that the predisposing factors of sport gambling includes; peer influence, joblessness, poverty/lack of money and get rich quick syndrome. This findings corroborate with the findings of ((Jamiu, 2019; Lungu, 2020; Zakariya et al., 1999). In a similar vein the findings is also in consonance with (Temitope, 2019b, 2019a) where peer influence, lack of money and joblessness were identified as some of the predisposing factors associated with sport gambling.

The study further found that gambling has some consequences which include: leading to stealing and criminal activities, borrowing of money, frustration, depression and anxiety among others. This is in accordance with the findings of (Olaore et al., 2020) Similar studies (Ayandele et al., 2020; Ifeduba & Itetegbe, 2020) also agreed with the findings that Depression and anxiety, frustration and criminal activities are some of the consequences of sport gambling.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Majority of the respondents reported that they engage in such activities as a result of peer influence and poverty as well as get rich quick syndrome, however it has serious effects on the individuals such as criminal activities and stealing, borrowing of money and frustration. The followings are recommended therefore based on the findings of the study

1. Organization of programs geared towards the prevention of gambling. To achieve this, talks can be organized in which people are enlightened on the dangers of gambling.
2. There should be skill acquisition and empowerment of the youths to make them self-reliant
3. Employment opportunities should also be created to discourage the rate at which people gamble
4. Inculcation of moral values by the family, religious organization and all relevant authorities on the effect and dangers of sport gambling.

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