



Peer Pressure and Betting Advertisements as Predictors Of Sports Betting Among Undergraduates At Chrisland University, Abeokuta, Nigeria

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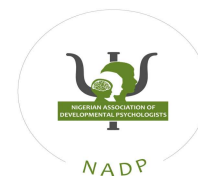
Abstract

Sports betting a form of gambling that involves making predictions about athletic events and placing a wager in the hopes of earning a certain amount of money is increasing in Nigeria. This study investigated the predictive validity of age, gender, peer pressure, and betting advertisements on sports betting behaviours among undergraduates at Chrisland University, Abeokuta. A correlational survey was conducted involving 271 undergraduates recruited through respondent-driven sampling and administered a structured questionnaire. Participants were mostly 18 – 20 years and 44.3% were females. Approximately 46% of participants began engaging in sports betting between 15 – 17 years and 42.1% had engaged in sport betting within one month. The most preferred betting platform was Sporty bet. Age and gender jointly influenced sports betting. Peer pressure significantly predicted sports betting among female participants. Betting advertisement significantly predicted sports betting among participants aged 15 – 17 years. Peer pressure and betting advertisement significantly jointly predicted sports betting. Peer pressure, and betting advertisement influence sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates. The university should conduct regular educational programs promoting responsible gambling among students.

Keywords: Gambling, Sports betting, Betting advertisements, University Students.

Introduction

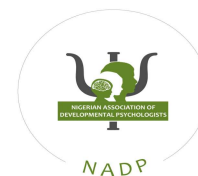
Gambling is defined as betting or wagering for money or for materials for a case which has an unknown outcome with an opportunity to earn cash or material (Lungu, 2020). Gambling entails risking something valuable with the hope of acquiring something of more value in return. There are various types of gambling such as lotteries, casino, bingo, card games, poker, sports betting, dice, horse-racing and many more. This study examined sports betting. The National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) was established by the National Lottery Act of 2005 to oversee lottery and gaming activities in Nigeria. The commission has authorized the following lottery and gaming businesses: USSD lotteries, sports lotteries, internet lotteries,



charitable lotteries, lottery concierge services, online lotteries, promotional lotteries, and SMS lotteries. Sports betting falls under sports lottery by default.

The number of gambling establishments in Nigeria has increased over time and due to its ease of access, sports betting is the most popular (Mustapha & Enilolobo, 2019). Sports betting, according to the NLRC, is any activity that involves making predictions about athletic events and placing a wager in the hopes of earning a certain amount of money. Typically, sports bettors make predictions about the results of games and adjust their wagers to reflect the stakes. Should the forecast prove accurate, the wager will be paid with predetermined profits. Sport betting has long existed in Nigeria (Oyetunji-Alamede, et al, 2019). It was previously regarded as an antisocial activity and aggressively condemned by the church, which preached against the pursuit of rapid profit (Oyetunji-Alamede, et al, 2019). Under an effort to raise tax income, the Nigerian government legalized some types of gambling under Chapter 22, Section 236 of the Criminal Code Act in the late 1990s. The public now views betting more favorably, especially among young people.

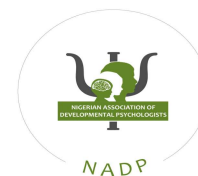
Sport betting has made a homey figurative nest in Nigeria, home to millions of fervently ardent football enthusiasts (Akinsolotu, et al., 2019). About 60 million Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 40 wager on sports every day, with some betting organizations recording up to N20 million in income each month, according to a report by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN, 2019). The report also revealed that about 60 million young Nigerians spend three thousand naira on sport betting activities on average every day to change their life (Ifeduba, Enwefah, & Atunrase, 2020). Online sports betting is a recent development in Nigeria. Opportunities to engage in online gambling services have grown dramatically with the advent of internet services and smart phones in the country. According to the Nigeria Communication Commission revealed that 97 million people in the country use the internet, accounting for almost half of the population. Betting companies leverage on this information to expand their business by setting up sustainable online platforms for betting services. Sports betting companies have attempted, with varying degrees



of success, to jump on and take market shares in Nigeria, which has grown into a booming sector (Akinlosotu, Imandojemu & Aina, 2019). Websites are set up to allow gamblers to register personal accounts for this reason. The online platforms enable users to perform a variety of transactions, such as making bets, depositing money into an online wallet, and transferring wins to their bank accounts (Akinlosotu, Imandojemu & Aina, 2019). The ability to bet from home and with "virtual money" has increased the availability, frequency, and lack of control over betting (Aragay et al., 2021). However, online sport betting features makes it more harmful and addictive than other forms of gambling, and betting in person. Online gambling sites offer greater convenience, comfort, and anonymity than other offsite platforms. Gamblers can play via computer or mobile device at different sites (such as work or home or school), and they are permanently accessible from any location with an internet connection (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Sports betting has emerged as a popular activity among university students in Nigeria (Oyedeji, 2019). In recent years, the typical Nigerian youth's daily activity includes betting. A study conducted in Lagos, Nigeria, indicated that one in two young people had placed a bet on sports in the six months before to the survey, and the most prevalent reason given for gambling was to supplement their low-income level (Mustapha & Enilolobo, 2019). According to Opoku and Yeboah (2021), students gamble on sports to make money and have fun. However, sports betting has been found to increase levels of depression, anxiety and might lead to problem gambling (Sambo, 2018). This upsurge in betting activities among young adults in Nigeria necessitates understanding factors predicting it especially among university students.

Peer pressure and betting advertisements has been reported to influence engagement in sport betting. Studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between young people's gambling habits and those of their peers, especially regarding the start and severity of problem gambling (Oyetunji-Alemade, Ogunbiyi, & Omole, 2019). Adolescents are more likely than adults to be influenced by peers and



to take risks on the basis that they desire peer approval which is gained through displays of bravery and risk-taking. According to Sanscartier, Edgerton, and Keough (2020), one of the main factors influencing university students in Canada who bet is peer pressure. Kam et al. (2018) reported that the top three motivations for gambling among Macau university students was peer pressure. Macharia (2018) discovered that classmates in Kenyan colleges were the ones who first introduced students to betting. According to Catherine, et al (2019), teenage at-risk problem gambling is more closely linked to peer gambling. They found that students with peers who gambled were 1.64 times more likely to fit the classification of an at-risk problem gambler than those without gambling peers. Oyetunji-Alemede, Ogunbiyi, and Omole (2019), noted that 44% of adolescents reported that the gambling behaviours of their peers led to the initiation of their gambling.

Betting advertisements has also been reported to influence engagement in sports betting. Betting advertisements includes promotional strategies such as celebrity endorsements, online pop-ups on websites, broadcast advertising on television and radio, direct and third-party email and SMS, and loyalty programs to draw in more clients. For sports betting companies to make up for fierce competition, low price elasticity, and a lack of product distinctiveness, marketing is essential. Betting companies develop smartphone apps for sports betting, stream live coverage of athletic events, and advertise sports betting on smartphones. These betting apps have features like better odds, money-back guarantees, betting advice, credit offers, and bonuses. However, these betting promotional activities have been reported to increase engagement in sports betting especially young people (Aondowase et al, 2023).

Betting advertisements have been reported to be associated with early initiation and rising rates of sport betting in Nigeria (Ejiga, Omirigwe, & Nelson, 2021; Olaore & Kuye, 2019; Olaore, et al., 2021). Betting companies employ aggressive advertising and rebranding as tools to appeal to the youth demographic and target market to generate short- and long-term patronage (Olaore & Kuye, 2019; Olaore, et

al., 2021). Advertisements of sports betting normalize the activity and encourage young people to participate. Opinions about sports betting vary by gender, with young men generally having more favourable views than women (Chiu and Storm 2010; Stinchfield 2000; Wood and Griffiths 2004). However, research indicates that a growing number of young women are participating in "closet" gambling activities such as web-based lotteries (Ahaibwe et al., 2016; Louw 2018; Salonen et al., 2018). Older guys who are aware of sports betting and who have acquaintances who bet have good attitudes regarding the activity (Ayandele, Popoola & Obosi, 2020). Older students have also been reported to bet more frequently than younger ones (Stinchfield 2000; Williams et al. 2006).

Few studies have examined the influence of betting advertisements on sport betting among university students in Nigeria. The few studies that exist were conducted among federal university students, and/or with mostly male participants only. Differences exist in university experience between students in public and private universities. Private universities are mostly residential for students, and do not commute to and fro campus like their counterparts in public universities. This limits their exposure to betting advertisements in the built environment through billboards and betting centres. Students in private universities mostly engage in sport betting virtually and might be exposed to a different type of betting advertisement. Studies are yet to examine the influence of peer pressure virtual betting advertisement on sports betting among a cross population of male and female adolescents in private universities in the country. These gaps require investigation and raise the following objectives and research questions.

Objectives of the study

- 1 To assess the influence of peer pressure and gender on sports betting.
- 2 To examine the influence of betting advertisements and age on sports betting
- 3 To assess the joint influence of peer pressure and betting advertisements on sports betting



- 4 To examine the influence of socio-demographic factors (age and gender) on sport betting.

Method

Research Design

A correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The dependent variable was Sport betting while the independent variables were peer pressure and betting advertisements.

Research setting

The study was carried out in the school cafeteria, classrooms and student sitting areas and 3 undergraduate halls of residence in Chrisland University, Abeokuta. Chrisland University has 3 halls of residence for undergraduate students with a total capacity of 1,374 students. The 3 halls of residence include Mrs. Emily Aig Imoukhuede hostel for females on campus, Victory Life Bible Church hostel (VLBC) for females off-campus and Professor Nwosu hall for males on campus. The university has four Colleges which run 29 undergraduate degree programs namely College of arts, management and social sciences (CAMASS), College of natural and applied sciences (CONAS), College of basic medical sciences (COBAMS) and College of Law (COLAW).

Participants

The population comprised undergraduates at Chrisland University Abeokuta.

Sample size calculation.

Kish (1965) formula was employed in determining the sample size for the study, using a sport betting prevalence rate of 23% based on cross sectional study conducted by Aguocha (2020). According to Kish’s Formula

$$N = \left(\frac{Z_{ab}}{pq} \right)^2$$

$$\frac{b}{d^2}$$

N = Number of samples

q = 1 - p

Z_{a/b} = Z Scores corresponding to a one-sided test = 1.96

p = Estimated population proportion (prevalence) assuming 23% (Aguocha, 2020).

d = Acceptable margin of error at 5% (standard value of 0.05)

$$N = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.23 \times 0.88}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{3.842 \times 0.2}{.0025}$$

$$N = 307$$

Although a total of 300 Chrisland University undergraduates participated in the study. However, only data from 271 participants were accurately completed and included in the final analysis.

Sampling Technique and Procedure

Respondent driven sampling was utilized in selecting participants to partake in the study. The decision to employ respondent-driven sampling in recruiting participants to take part in the cross-sectional study was based on the target population being classified as hard to reach. Respondent-driven sampling entails identifying one member of the target sample using the convenience sampling approach. These initial members of the target population were referred to as the 'first recruits' or 'locators', who then referred the student researcher (E.K) to potential participants who were likely to fit the target population's requirements (Chrisland University



undergraduates who indulge in sports betting). The first recruits were contacted and notified about the study. Individuals who agreed to participate in the study were recruited. This procedure was then repeated for each additional individual referred by other recruiters. Each additional individual was given the study information and screening questions to ensure their eligibility for participation in the study. Only individuals who met the inclusion criteria were given an informed consent sheet and eventually participated in the study.

Inclusion criteria

1. Participants must be Chrisland University undergraduates.
2. Participants must be aged 15-23 years.
3. Individuals who engage in sports betting.
4. Individuals who are not receiving treatment for sports betting.
5. Individuals who are willing to read and sign the informed consent form.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Participants who are not Chrisland University undergraduates.
2. Participants who are not aged between 15-23 years.
3. Individuals who do not engage in sports betting.
4. Individuals who are already receiving treatment for sports betting.
5. Individuals who are not willing to read and sign the informed consent form.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants for the cross-sectional survey were recruited from all the halls of residence (2 female and 1 male hostel) and Colleges (CAMASS, CONAS, COBAMS and COLAW) at Chrisland University. The respondent-driven sampling technique discussed earlier was employed in recruiting participants who participated in the cross-sectional survey. After recruiting the participants who met the inclusion

criteria, informed consent sheets were handed out to each participant to complete before a structured questionnaire was given to them to complete.

Instruments

Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire-Revised

Peer Pressure Scale Questionnaire-Revised (PPSQ-R) was developed by Saini and Singh (2016) to measure peer pressure susceptibility among adolescents. PPSQ-R is a 29-item self-report scale that assesses peer influence in everyday life situations. The questionnaire consists of 25 items scored using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The scale consists of five subscale and a high score on each subscale indicates higher peer pressure in that subscale. The score of each item is added to form the total score. Individuals scoring up to 55 are identified as experiencing low peer pressure. Individuals who score 56 to 72 experience moderate levels of peer pressure, while those who obtain a score greater than 72 experience a high level of peer pressure.

Attitude toward Advertising Scale (AAS) Questionnaire:

The Attitude toward Advertising Scale (AAS) developed by Sadasivan (2019) is a commonly used self-report questionnaire that measures an individual's attitudes toward advertising. It has 10 items which measure attitude towards various types of advertising. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8 are positively worded and are scored as follows: 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 3, 4 = 4, 5 = 5, 6 = 6, 7 = 7. Items 3, 5, 9, and 10 are negatively worded and are reverse scored as follows: 1 = 7, 2 = 6, 3 = 5, 4 = 4, 5 = 3, 6 = 2, 7 = 1. The scores on the 10 items are summed up to obtain a total score, which can range from 10 to 70. Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes toward advertising. Reversed scoring items: Items 3, 5, 9, and 10 are negatively worded and are reverse scored to ensure that respondents are paying attention to the questions and not simply agreeing with everything.

Gambling Symptom Assessment Scale (G-SAS)

The Gambling Symptom Assessment Scale (G-SAS; Kim et al., 2009) is a 12-item self-rated scale designed to assess gambling symptom severity and change during treatment. The G-SAS asks for symptoms that pertain to 3 domains--urges, thoughts, and gambling behavior. Each item has a score ranging from 0 to 4 (adjective anchors for 0 and 4 vary for each item). The total score ranges from 0 to 48: extreme=41–48, severe=31–40, moderate=21–30, and mild=8–20.

Statistical analysis

Data was analyzed using IBM-SPSS v.23. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using linear regression two-way ANOVA, hypothesis 3 was analyzed using multiple regression while hypothesis 4 was analyzed using two-way ANOVA.

Result

Prevalence and patterns of sport betting

Participants' sport betting practice was categorized and is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of participants' sport betting engagement

		Gender			
		Male		Female	
		N	%	N	%
First time engagement with Sports betting	13-17 Years	125	46.1	72	26.6
	18-21 years	26	9.6	48	17.7
Preferred sport betting platform	Sportybet	94	34.7	70	25.8
	Bet9ja	25	9.2	23	8.5
	1xbet	17	6.3	18	6.6
	Others	15	5.5	9	3.3

The result in Table 1 shows that among participants, males (46.1%) had the highest prevalence of first-time engagement with sport betting between 13 – 17 years, while the highest prevalence of first-time engagements with sports betting among 18 – 21-year-olds were reported among females (17.7%). The most preferred sport betting



platform among male (34.7%) and female (25.8%) participants was Sportybet (34.7%).

Hypothesis one which stated that peer pressure will significantly predict sport betting behaviors among female Chrisland University Students than their male counterparts was tested using linear regression and the result presented in table 2 below. The result shows that peer pressure significantly predicted sports betting among female Chrisland University undergraduates ($F_{(1, 119)} = 7.16, R^2 = .06, p < .05$) than their male counterparts ($F_{(1, 150)} = .05, R^2 = .00, p > .05$). A close appraisal of the variance reveals that peer pressure accounted for a significant 6% variance in sports betting among female participants ($\beta = .24, t = 2.68, p < .05$). This result implies that a unit SD increase in peer pressure increases sports betting by .24 among female Chrisland University undergraduates. Therefore, this hypothesis was confirmed.

Table 2: Summary Table of Linear Regression showing peer pressure as predictor of sports betting based on gender.

Predictor	Gender	B	t	P	R	R ²	F	P
Peer pressure	Male	-.02	-.21	>.05	.02	.00	.05	>.05
	Female	.24	2.68	<.05	.24	.06	7.16	<.05

Hypothesis two which stated that betting advertisements will significantly predict sport betting among Chrisland University students aged 15 – 17 years than their counterparts aged 18 – 20 years and 21 – 23 years was analyzed using linear regression and the result presented in Table 3. The result shows that betting advertisement significantly predicted sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates aged 15 – 17 years ($F_{(1, 77)} = 7.16, R^2 = .06, p < .05$) than their counterparts aged 21 – 23 years ($F_{(1, 66)} = .09, R^2 = .00, p > .05$).

Table 3: Summary Table of Linear Regression showing betting advertisement as predictor of sports betting based on gender.

Predictor	Age	B	t	P	R	R ²	F	P
Betting advertisement	15 – 17 years	.25	2.21	< .05	.25	.06	4.88	< .05
	18 – 20 years	.24	2.29	< .05	.20	.04	5.22	< .05
	21 – 23 years	.04	.30	> .05	.00	.00	.09	> .05

A close appraisal of the variance reveals that sports betting accounted for a significant 6% variance in sports betting among participants aged 15 – 17 years old ($\beta = .25$, $t = 2.21$, $p < .05$). This result implies that a unit SD increase in betting advertisement increases sports betting by .25 among Chrisland University undergraduates aged 15 – 17 years old. The result also shows that betting advertisement significantly predicted sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates aged 18 – 20 years old ($F_{(1, 125)} = 5.22$, $R^2 = .04$, $p < .05$). A close appraisal of the variance reveals that sports betting accounted for a significant 4% variance in sports betting among participants aged 18 – 20 years old ($\beta = .24$, $t = 2.29$, $p < .05$). This result implies that a unit SD increase in betting advertisement increases sports betting by .24 among Chrisland University undergraduates aged 18 – 20 years old. Based on the findings that betting advertisement predicted sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates aged 15 – 17 years old than their counterparts aged 21 – 23 years old but not those aged 18 – 20 years old, the hypothesis is partially confirmed

Hypothesis three which stated that peer pressure and betting advertisements will jointly predict sport betting behaviors among Chrisland University undergraduates was tested using multiple regression and the result presented in table 4 below. The result in table 4 shows that peer pressure and betting advertisement significantly, jointly predicted sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates ($F_{(2, 270)} = 4.62$, $R^2 = .03$, $p < .05$).

Table 4: Summary Table of Multiple Regression showing peer pressure and betting advertisement as predictors of sports betting.



Predictor	B	T	P	R	R ²	F	P
Peer pressure	.15	2.49	< .05				
Betting advertisement	.08	1.23	>.05	.18	.03	4.62	< .05

A close appraisal of the variance reveals that peer pressure and betting advertising jointly accounted for a significant 15% variance in sports betting among participants. This result implies that a unit SD increase in peer pressure and betting advertising jointly increases sports betting by .15 among Chrisland University undergraduates. An assessment of the independent influence of peer pressure and betting advertisement show that only peer pressure ($\beta = .15, t = 2.49, p < .05$) significantly independently predicted sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates, while betting advertisement ($\beta = .08, p > .05$) was not a significant independent predictor of sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates. However, based on the result of the joint prediction of peer pressure and betting advertisement on sports betting, the hypothesis was confirmed.

Hypothesis four, which stated age and gender, will jointly influence sports betting among Chrisland University Students was tested using ANOVA and the result presented in Table 5. The results show that there was no statistically significant main effect of age on sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates [$F_{(2, 271)} = 1.41, p > .05, \eta = .01$]. This implies no significant difference in sports betting among participants aged 15 – 17 years, 18 – 20 years, 21 – 23 years. There was no statistically significant main effect of gender on sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates [$F_{(1, 271)} = 3.88, p > .05, \eta = .00$]. This implies no significant difference in sports betting among male and female participants. However, there was a statistically significant interaction effect between age and gender on sports betting among Chrisland University undergraduates [$F_{(2, 271)} = 3.36, p < .05, \eta = .03$]. This implies a significant difference in sports betting among participants male and female participants aged 15 – 17 years, 18 – 20 years, and 21 – 23 years old. The interaction

between age and gender accounted for 3.0% increase observed in sports betting among the participants.

Table 5: Summary of Two-Way ANOVA showing main and interaction effect of age and gender on sports betting.

Source	SS	Df	MF	F	P	η_p^2
Age	104.71	2	52.35	1.41	>.05	.01
Gender	3.88	1	3.88	.11	>.05	.00
Age and Gender	248.23	2	124.12	3.36	<.05	.03
Error	9795.77	265	36.97			
Total	228965.00	271				

Discussion

The study investigated the predictive validity of age, gender, peer pressure and betting advertisements on sport betting among Chrisland University undergraduates. Key findings indicate that peer pressure and betting advertisement significantly influenced students' engagement in sports betting. The findings also highlight the role of socio-demographic factors, revealing variations in betting behaviours based on age and gender. Among participants aged 13-17 years, 46.1% of males and 26.6% of females reported first-time engagement in sports betting. The significant percentage of young males engaging in sports betting for the first time raises concerns about early exposure to gambling behaviors. This finding suggests a need for preventive measures targeting younger individuals to mitigate the risks associated with early betting engagement. Sportybet was the most preferred platform among both males (34.7%) and females (25.8%), followed by Bet9ja and

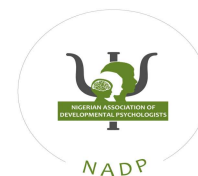
1xbet. The preference for specific betting platforms may be influenced by marketing strategies, peer recommendations, and the perceived reliability of these platforms. Understanding these preferences can help in designing targeted interventions and responsible gambling campaigns.

Both age and gender significantly influenced sports betting engagement, with females aged 21-23 showing higher engagement than their male counterparts in the same age group. This finding is in contrast with existing literature by Hanss et al. (2014), who found that men are more likely than women to have positive attitudes toward gambling. However, recent research indicates that a growing number of young women are participating in "closet" gambling activities such as web-based lotteries (Ahaibwe et al. 2016; Louw 2017; Salonen et al. 2017). The findings are consistent with international research highlighting the influence of age, gender, peer pressure, and advertising on sports betting among youth. In Australia, Moore et al. (2013) found that male gender, financial stress, and frequent betting on sports significantly predicted problem gambling among university students, with international students particularly vulnerable due to cultural and legal differences in gambling exposure. Similarly, Botha (2025) reported a 57% surge in sports betting among young Australian men, driven largely by aggressive online advertising and app-based accessibility. Traditional views on gambling often suggest that it is more male dominated. However, as societal norms evolve, young women, particularly those in the 21-23 age group, may be increasingly engaging in activities like sports

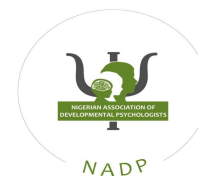
betting, possibly as a form of social empowerment or equality. This shift might not yet be significant enough, but it could be an emerging trend.

Peer pressure significantly predicted sports betting among female participants while it did not have a significant effect on male participants. Specifically, peer pressure accounted for a 24% variance in sports betting behaviors among females. The significant impact of peer pressure on female students suggests that social influences play a crucial role in their engagement with sports betting. This finding is contrary to the finding that males are more inclined to gamble than women because women do not always go to betting centers and as such, they do not trust people to engage in such a risky act in their absence (Mwesigwa, 2018). Abdusalam et al., (2020) argue that young people often begin gambling amongst friends before they start participating in regulated forms of gambling. Therefore, having friends who gamble makes betting less likely to be perceived as a high-risk activity. The reality that some parents find it extremely difficult to meet up with basic necessities of life has turned some females to sport betting to augment the essential facilities that could not be provided by their parents (Abdusalam et al., 2020).

Betting advertisements had a significant predictive effect on sports betting behaviors among younger students, particularly those aged 15-17. This highlights the effectiveness of marketing strategies in promoting gambling behaviors. This demographic is particularly vulnerable to advertising, which can shape their perceptions and normalize betting activities. Saawuan et al., (2023) reported that youths in Makurdi metropolis perceived sports betting advertisements as part of

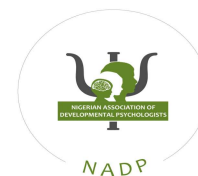


sports which has no harmful influence on them thereby justifying their regular participation in sports betting activities. In the United States, Staley (2023) and Rowley (2023) documented widespread use of sports betting apps among college students, with peer influence and promotional offers contributing to risky gambling behaviors—especially among young men. Moreover, the impact of betting advertisements on adolescents aged 15–17 in our study echoes concerns raised in Canadian and UK studies about the vulnerability of youth to targeted gambling marketing (Bitanihirwe et al., 2022). Modern betting advertisements often emphasize the ease and accessibility of placing bets through online platforms and mobile apps. The convenience of betting anytime, anywhere can lower the barriers to entry, making it more likely that individuals will engage in sports betting. This is especially relevant for young adults who are tech-savvy and spend considerable time on their devices. This demographic is still in the process of forming their identities and decision-making patterns, making them more vulnerable to persuasive messages. The significant effect of betting advertisements on this group may reflect their heightened responsiveness to marketing strategies compared to other groups. While the study’s findings align with existing literature on gender and age-related differences in sports betting behavior, it is important to interpret the results with caution due to the relatively small effect sizes observed. These modest associations nonetheless offer valuable insights for policy and practice. Specifically, targeted interventions such as peer-led education programs, age-restricted advertising regulations, and campus-based awareness campaigns could help mitigate early



exposure and social normalization of sports betting among university students. Policymakers and educational institutions should consider these findings as part of a broader strategy to address youth gambling, recognizing that even small behavioral predictors can have cumulative impacts over time. We also recommend stricter enforcement of gambling advertising regulations. Future research could explore the specific types of advertisements that resonate with younger audiences and how these messages can be countered with responsible gambling education.

Peer pressure and betting advertisements significantly, jointly predicted sports betting behaviors among the participants. Peer pressure had a significant independent effect, while betting advertisements did not show a significant independent effect. The significant joint prediction of sports betting behaviors by peer pressure and betting advertisements suggests that these two factors interact in influencing students' gambling activities. This finding highlights the importance of considering multiple social and environmental influences when examining gambling behaviors. Peer pressure emerged as a significant independent predictor, indicating that social influences are crucial in shaping students' decisions to engage in sports betting. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the role of social dynamics in gambling behaviors, particularly among young adults. The ubiquity of sports betting advertisements and the pressure from peers have been found to be the cardinal determinants to the surge of sports betting activities among youths in Makurdi metropolis (Saawuan et al., 2023). Although betting advertisements did not independently predict sports betting, their presence in conjunction with peer



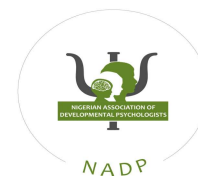
pressure suggests that marketing strategies may still play a role in reinforcing the behaviors encouraged by social circles. This could imply that while advertisements alone may not be sufficient to drive betting behavior, they can amplify the effects of peer influences. Future research could further explore the mechanisms through which peer pressure and advertising interact, potentially identifying specific contexts or conditions under which these influences are most pronounced. Understanding these dynamics could inform more effective strategies for reducing risky gambling behaviors among university students.

Conclusion

The study provides significant insights into the influence of peer pressure, betting advertisements and sociodemographic factors (age and gender) on sports betting behaviors among undergraduates at Chrisland University. The findings reveal that these social and media factors play a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors towards gambling. The findings suggest the need for concerted effort from educational institutions, regulatory bodies, and the community to create a safer and more informed environment for young adults navigating the complexities of sports betting.

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