

Sport betting addiction among young Nigerians: Is social media advertising subtly baiting youths to gamble?

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ABSTRACT

Social media has continued to be the definer of new culture in the contemporary society. As the spread of digital revolution continues to gain traction, new behaviour and accompanying challenges are bound to ensure, one of such social anomalies is the prevalence of online sport gambling. Youths, particularly have been noted to be regular patrons of sport gambling in Nigeria, resulting into worrisome endemic level of gambling addiction among the young population, especially in Nigeria. This study specifically aims to examine the influence of sport betting advertising on social media on youths' gambling addiction. The social norm theory was found to be appropriate for this work. A total of three research questions were formulated to be able to investigate this phenomenon. The study adopted survey design using online Google form to reach 385 respondents selected from Lagos. The analysis of data for this study was done using the SPSS packages and results were presented simple percentages and charts. The findings revealed that 80.5% of the respondents agreed that online sport betting has been popularised by social media advertising. Also, 96.6% of the total sample size, agreed that, many youths have become addicted, as they are urged to gamble due to the pervasive social media sport betting promotions. Among others, the study recommends that advertising on social media should reflect age restriction and warning messages about sport betting; policies and control measures be put in place to dictate ethical boundaries for online sport gambling.

Keywords: Betting, Gambling Addiction, Online Gambling, Online Advertising, Social Media, Sport Betting.

I. INTRODUCTION

Internet technologies have continued to revolutionize businesses and ways companies engage or communicate with their customers. More recently, brands and product promotions have shifted focus drastically from the use of conventional media to more digitally compliant and highly engaging platforms. Organizations and advertising professionals are beginning to utilize internet-based platforms and tools to reach a wide range and diverse audience, and with enormous possibilities of penetrating the market with highly intrusive and high-powered platforms enhanced to generate multimedia impulses.

Social media advertising as one of the new forms or ways of deploying cohesive and interactive messages through the use of social networks is currently holding sway for big and small businesses to maintain and sustain their marketing communication. The modern advertising vehicle and marketing strategies have come to embrace the use of social media platforms to buy attention with the singular goal of driving action (Appel et al., 2019). Through paid advertisements on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, and Pinterest brands are now targeting larger and previously impenetrable demography; with so much interactivity, personalisation and cost-effective way to achieve their advertising goals. Marketers can tailor their ads to reach people who are most likely to be interested in their products or services, thereby increasing the chances of conversion (Appel et al., 2019).

Social media has changed the way businesses market their products and services, with social media advertising becoming a powerful tool in any marketing strategy. With the numbers of subscribers reaching over 4 billion active social media users around the world and spending an average of 135 minutes spent online, every business, be it small or large is trying to maintain an online presence (Anchaliya, 2023; Vertex Marketing Agency Inc., 2020). Social media

advertising can be used to increase brand awareness, promote products or services, and generate leads (Anchaliya, 2023; Mikolajczyk et al., 2022).

As a result, online sports betting advertising has become a common feature on social media and other digital platforms. Betting companies now use social media to drive massive awareness and publicity for sport wagers and gambling across the world. The sporting and social media spheres are densely populated with such advertisements that involve both direct and indirect marketing strategies. In relation to the online environment, there is evidence to suggest the emergence of more interactive advertisements that prompt user engagement (Sambo, 2018).

Online sport betting has become a new trend and frequent content on social media, bringing all kinds of betting platforms in different sports closer to the youths. Sport betting as an emerging social trend has enjoyed significant popularity among the youths in the recent times. This is because, gambling is no longer confined to the gambling environment, but now enjoy the extensive publicity and promotion in the online media space. The liberalization of sport betting around the world has brought a huge market for gaming and sport betting companies, who now use various social media platforms to push aggressive awareness for their brands in order to make bettors patronize them (Hing et al., 2019).

Simply put, online sports betting involves placing bets on the outcome of sporting events through online platforms. The rise of smartphones and mobile apps have made it much easier for people to access online sports betting platforms, making it a convenient and accessible form of gambling (National Council of Problem Gambling, 2022).

One of the successful tactics employed by marketers is risk-lowering advertising. In parallel to the skill-enhancing strategies, online sport betting advertising seemingly diminishes the harmful consequences of excessive betting by presenting it as a risk-free activity. This narrative makes betting look like a safe environment where intelligent people possess the tools to succeed. In an attempt to lower the perceived risk inherently embedded in any betting activity, three major messages have been emphasized by advertisers: (i) betting is a perfectly normal activity; (ii) errors in betting predictions are not fatal; and that (iii) betting is a social activity (Lopez-Gonzalez, et al, 2017). Social media sport betting advertising has been frequently proposed as a significant mechanism for normalizing gambling.

Even though the rise of social media gambling and online sport betting among youths has continued to generate concerns, the online sports betting industry is a solid and rapidly growing sector of the global economy. Drawing on the wide influence of sport content in society and backed by nascent Internet regulatory frameworks, bookmakers appear to have succeeded in normalizing the action of wagering money on the outcome of a sporting competition (Parke et al., 2014). Largely, social media advertising of online sport betting represents gambling as a social activity for youth.

The sad reality is that, sport betting and online gambling constitute one of the most troubling social vices that has bedevilled the youth population in our contemporary time; causing mental and psychological issues, greed, social crimes, addiction and others. Also, the growth of gambling marketing and advertising, together with its deployments through various digital platforms, has resulted in concerns about potentially negative effects of marketing and advertising, especially upon children, young people, and vulnerable individuals (Ipsos MORI, 2020). The negative influence from exposure to sports betting advertising has been reported to be more common in problem gamblers (Hing et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2018). Moreover, problem gamblers have been identified as being more likely to place impulse bets in response to the promotion of sports betting, compared to non-problem gamblers (Hing et al., 2019).

Much has been said about social media advertising and its veracity in promoting online sport betting in the internet era. One sure claim is that bookmakers now take advantage of the social media platforms to deliver aggressive marketing communication and promote sport betting brands, specially designed for certain demography; mostly the youths. The rise of online advertising of sport gambling has hugely affected youths' attitudes and behaviour towards betting in recent times national (Council of Problem Gambling, 2022).

From the above assertions, studies have strongly established that that the content, frequency, and availability of gambling advertising may influence gambling behaviours and the likelihood of an individual experiencing gambling-related problems (Davies, 2018). Other research findings indicated that advertising can influence gambling attitudes, intentions, and behaviours (Hing et al., 2014). To further buttress this, Ipsos Mori (2020) conducted a quantitative survey with children and young adults in Great Britain (n = 1091; aged 11–24 years) and reported that gambling susceptibility was particularly prevalent amongst children who had higher brand awareness, greater exposure to advertising.

Amid these worries, scholarly works have showed the extent of the normalisation of betting in everyday sports media. Media sports websites have been found to be big affiliate partners of betting operators. Affiliation in online marketing means that if a reader is redirected by a banner from a sports site to a betting site to amass a high volume of affiliate traffic (Lopez-Gonzalez et al., 2017). Much work has been done online gambling, but this study specifically seeks to investigate the influence of social media sport betting promotions and how it fuels gambling addiction among the Nigerian youths

1.2 Research Questions

In view of these, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- i. How frequently do youths see online sport betting advertisements on social media?
- ii. Do the regular exposures to online sport betting ads influence youths to indulge in online gambling?
- iii. To what extent does the exposure to sport betting ads instigate youths' addiction to online sport betting?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 The Social Norm Theory

According to Social Norms Theory, an individual's beliefs of what is deemed normal or acceptable within their social group influence their behaviour. People generally comply to what they assume others are doing or approving of, even if their own internal opinions or behaviours differ. This misconception of standards, known as "pluralistic ignorance," can lead people to act in ways that contradict their own beliefs.

Social norms theory offers a framework for comprehending human behaviour that has significant implications for health promotion and prevention. It claims that our behaviour is influenced by inaccurate beliefs of how other members of our social groupings think and behave. For example, an individual may overestimate the permissiveness of peer attitudes or behaviour regarding alcohol, smoking, or other drug use, while underestimating the amount to which peers engage in good behaviour (Berkowitz, 2003). In the estimation of Riley et al. (2021), "social norms are the unwritten rules that guide human behaviour; they are what we do, what we believe others do and what we believe others think we should do."

The work of Cislighi and Heise (2018) reviewed the Brofenbenner's socio-ecological model, which focusses on how individual, social, institutional, and macro-level elements interact to influence people's actions. The framework encourages users to investigate how the micro, meso, and macro environments interact to influence human behaviour. Hence, when social media advertisement glorifies a set of behaviour and portray such as normal, there is a high possibility that young minds might begin to see such behaviour or lifestyle as normal. By implication, social media advertisements promoting sports gambling can inadvertently register gambling as a normal behaviour in the minds of youths, thereby increasing the chances of addiction.

2.2 Social Media and Sport Betting: The Implications

Advertisers and marketers had before now romanticized with the traditional media of communication to reach their audiences, and to wage advertising 'war' in competition against themselves. However, this is rapidly changing. Recent studies indicate that the traditional mass media audiences are increasingly, and to a great extent turning toward the new media for information and gratification of certain communication needs (Pitt et al., 2016; Rossi & Nairn, 2021). Impact of social media can be seen in television advertisements which sign off with a plea for consumers to visit their websites, Facebook or Twitter page with the promise of an exciting online experience, fun incentives and a sense of community that people actually want to get involved with (Akinlosotu et al., 2019).

This has indicated a flight from the more conventional mainstream media especially among the younger generation to the alternative media of new (social) media. Today, if you are not on the social networking sites, you are not on the Internet. This fact has become truer for consumers as well as for advertisers. And advertisers and marketers are well aware of this singular fact. The Internet having advanced into Web 2.0, the new media is today facilitating two-way online interaction and user-generated content has become the mainstay of this development. What has become clear is that social media, especially social networking sites (SNS), enable users to present themselves, establish and maintain social connections with others, and articulate their own social networks (Eboh, 2015)

Today there are over a billion content creators and hundreds of millions of distributors. The proliferation of quality, affordable technology and the popularity of social networks and UGC sites have forever changed the media landscape. This growing popularity of social media has also brought about a paradigmatic shift in the way advertisers now use traditional media to 'catch' their target audiences, leading them to invest more effort into communicating with consumers through online social networking. This social engagement thus presents marketers and advertisers with the opportunity to promote their goods and services and affect the purchase decisions of their customers and targets through online marketing and social media (Russell et al., 2018).

Appel et al. (2019), while studying attitudes of young consumers towards social media marketing, surveyed a total of 124 students at some universities located in Istanbul. He found that 66.9% of the respondents think that using a social media tool for advertising is useful.

Social media advertising is booming. Global social media advertising spends tripled from \$51bn in 2017 to \$183bn in 2021 and is projected to reach \$385bn by 2027, (Statista. Digital Advertising Report 2022). In the UK, the

gambling industry has increased its marketing spend by 56% since 2014 to £1.5bn (\$1.9bn) in 2017 with the lion's share (£896 m) being spent on digital advertising, including £149 m directly going into social media marketing (Davies, 2018)

Thus, social media gambling advertising spend is close to the industry's TV advertising spend (£234). However, two things are worthy of note: the first, the most recent numbers are from 2017 and have most likely increased substantially since then; and second, social media ads are considerably cheaper to launch (LYFE Marketing 2021), which result in more adverts per dollar. Indeed, limited evidence available suggests a huge volume of social media gambling ads. For example, on Twitter the five largest online betting operators in the UK Ladbrokes, Bet365, Coral, Betfred, and Paddy Power published 19,100 tweets within 8 months. i.e. 78 each per day (Rossi & Nairn, 2021).

The high volume of gambling ads on social media inevitably results in young people's high exposure (Gainsbury et al., 2016). A related study conducted by Russell et al. (2018), found that 63.3% of adults (over the age of 25) reported seeing gambling ads on social media at least once a week, rising to 72.4% for 18–24-year-olds (Rossi & Nairn, 2021). Whilst mass marketing takes a scatter-gun approach, blasting a wide audience with the hope of hitting a few, social media marketing is a more targeted and personalised tool. Whilst gambling companies certainly target young men on social media, young people can also offer themselves up as targets by following gambling accounts. What is even more worrisome, though, is the high level of self-reported exposure by children.

The UK Gambling Commission found that 37% of 11–16-year-olds said they had been exposed to gambling ads on social media (Noble N), whilst other research found that 45.7% of 11–17-year-olds reported seeing gambling ads at least once per week (Rossi & Nairn, 2021). The high and potentially illegal exposure to gambling ads for minors is not only problematic because it normalises gambling (Chimezie, 2015). Also, because repeated exposure to a stimulus leads to an increasingly positive attitude towards this stimulus — the so-called *mere-exposure effect* (Research Clue, 2020). This effect has been reaffirmed in many experiments over the past decades. So, whether or not individuals report noticing such adverts, high exposure builds subconscious positive relationships to advertised brands.

The industry's high-volume advertising strategy seems to work, as the number of gambling account followers on social media is substantial, with the most prolific accounts having over 650,000 followers. Mirroring the high youth ad exposure, the share of young followers of gambling accounts on Twitter is similarly high with 7% of followers being under 16, and 66% of followers being between 16 and 23 (Research Clue, 2020). The report further shows that around 71% of all followers of gambling accounts are under 24 and repeatedly exposed to their ads.

Social media seems to exacerbate some of the negative effects of the incentives in these ads. The financial incentives are snappier (thus quickly appealing) but also complex (thus hard for young people to truly understand). Younger children find it hard to understand the concept of odds as this requires a grasp of probability which is not usually introduced into the school curriculum below the age of 12. Children instead see the presentation of odds in sports betting as factual information like the outcome of a match (Pitt et al., 2016)

Many do not certainly see anything wrong in the way some advertisers tweak their messages; which simply present gambling as an opportunity that should not be missed. This might help explain why such adverts are more appealing to children and young persons than to adults (Rossi & Nairn, 2021). Adults who understand that you can win or lose are more sceptical. Online sport gambling messages insidiously trick people to make it look like there is no outright loser in sport betting; making it a bit unlikely for younger users to critically process the messaging, before activating a betting account. A second problem derives from the close relationship between sports and gambling. Many social media ads are time sensitive, relating to a game currently played, or a special offer with limited time validity.

The targeted age by sport betting advertisers have been determined to be highly vulnerable and may possess weak mental restraint to withstand the volumes and pressure heaped on them by such intense gambling urges from social media influencers or online betting platforms. Pechmann et al, (2005) argue that these age group are still emotionally driven and prove to impulsive behaviour. This is highly problematic, because repeated exposure to time-sensitive gambling offers is more likely to result in action such as opening an account or placing a bet.

Indeed, 75% of children in an Australian study perceive sports betting as a normal part of sport (Pitt et al., 2016). It is very concerning that if users fall into a targeted segment either by actively following gambling accounts or by being in one of the targeted demographics (e.g. young, male football fans), they are highly likely to be bombarded with gambling ads especially, if their browser history and user patterns show the individual as having an interest in gambling or sports (Gainsbury et al., 2016). The repeated, targeted exposure to sponsored gambling ads on social media may well be luring young people into gambling.

2.3 Nigerian Youths and Online Sport Betting

Eboh (2015) examined the prevalence and determinant of gambling among undergraduate students of Federal University Oye Ekiti. In executing this research, social learning theory of gambling was adopted, which postulate that gambling as a form of behaviour is highly subjected to reinforcement and reward. The method of analysis adopted for this study was the frequency and percentages under the univariate level of analysis and chi-square analysis under the bivariate level of analysis to analyse the quantitative data that was obtained from the field. The sample for the study

consisted of one-hundred and twenty undergraduates of the university. They were selected in order to have a quantifiable representation of the students (5% of the total population). The study found out that among the students engaged in gambling; 87.2% out of which 100 students are males and 14.3% of the remaining is female. Majority of those who gambled said they engaged in it because they needed money. Despite that some of these students came from rich families and had educated parents, they still gambled because they needed more money than their regular allowances.

In an attempt to understand how football betting phenomenally shapes social relations in Nigeria, Olayinka and Fageyinbo (2015) carried out a study to discover the origin of football betting in the context of study and why people engage in football betting. The study was anchored within the theoretical orientation of social exchange and Marxism and utilized purposive and accidental sampling techniques. Qualitative approach was also adopted through eight in-depth interviews (IDIs) and eight key informant interviews (KIIs). Data analysis was done through statistical software and content analysis.

The results of the survey revealed that participants described the inducements offered by the industry were effective marketing strategies in getting themselves and other young men to bet on sports. Inducements were also linked with feelings of greater control over betting outcomes and stimulated some individuals to sign up with more than one betting provider. This research suggests that marketing plays a strong role in the normalisation of gambling in sports.

Also, a report has it that about 60 million young people are actively involved in sports gambling (NOIPolls, 2019). The increasing number of young people who engage in sports betting is attributed to multiple reasons. According to Lopez et al. (2017), people are motivated to gamble for five reasons which include socialization, amusement, avoidance, excitement, and monetary motives. In a similar study conducted by Akinlosotu, et al. (2019), it was established that young people gamble for multiple reasons which include ego, recreation and relaxation, resource accumulation, and therapeutic purposes, such as showing adherence to group norms to avoid sanction.

A related study conducted by NOIPolls (2019) in Nigeria, showed that 30% of the people who engaged in gambling attributed it to a quest for quick money; 21% to unemployment, and 15% to greed. Other reasons as contained in the study include cushioning the effect of economic hardship at 12%; poverty at 10%; for the fun of it at 5%; passion for sports at 5% and peer group influence at 2%.

With regards to the influence of advertising of sports bet on young people's participation in betting, studies by Deloitte (2012); Hing et al. (2014); Sambo (2018), indicated that young people's attitude towards gambling is influenced by advertising and they perceived gambling as a normal or common part of the sport. The concern here is that advertisements of sports betting are normalising and prematurely exposing vulnerable people to engage in gambling. These findings, therefore, highlight the enduring effects of sports betting advertising on youth. Tepperman (2009) in Akinlosotu et al., (2019) added that betting poses other concerns which include, "money problem, time issues, increasing separation from family activities, and the predominance of negative emotional responses to increased gambling" (p. 28).

Korn and Shaffer (1999) in Chimezie (2015) identified eight negative health and social consequences of gambling which include; gambling disorder, family dysfunction and domestic violence, youth and underage gambling, school and other drug problems, psychiatric condition, suicide, and suicide ideation, significant financial problems, and criminal behaviour. Sadly, adults and youths who gamble, do so out of the hope that one day, they will make it big from the games they stake on and become a millionaire; a fantasy that often ends in frustration, mental anguish, mental aberration, and sometimes, self-annihilation, especially after they have spent their lives savings and the wealth, they hoped to accrue from gambling remain elusive (Research Clue, 2020).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methods

This work utilised descriptive survey through the use of questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Google form, a web-based (online) survey was conducted between July and September 2023. The web-based, survey has become so common among scholars, because, it allows ease of participation. It also has in-built features for data cleaning and a wide range of options that helps improve respondents' survey-experience (Monroe & Admans, 2012). In order to address the inherent downsides of survey research method, this research considered the following:

Personalized WhatsApp and direct messaging were used to contact the sampled population. This selection was based on the tenets of purposive sampling, which specifically included, sampling youths and people who are familiar with online sport betting.

The questionnaire was simplified in a way that respondents understood it, and were informed about the approximately time of completion, beforehand. Also, the instrument utilised 5-point Liker Scale and close ended questions.

The study instrument clearly specified that all responses were treated with utmost secrecy to douse respondents' concerns.

At the beginning of the survey, the researcher provided a brief introduction into the research topic persuaded respondents that their participation was of high value.

The population of this research was selected from residents of Lagos State. Since the study focus is on the youths, the population for this study was gotten from the Lagos state fourth quarter report of the National Bureau of Statistics which put active internet user (which have been determined to be mainly youths) at 18,939,488.

To get the sample size for this study, the study adopted the Cochran’s formula to determine sample size for the study which was 385.

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)}{\frac{e^2}{Z^2} + \frac{p(1-p)}{N}}$$

Where:

n= sample size, Z= Standard normal score = 1.96, p= Population proportions= 0.5, e= sampling error that can be tolerated = 0.05 and N= population size.

The purposive technique was used to select social media users who are aware of sport betting advertising in the study area. The respondents were systematically selected from five tertiary institutions in Lagos State with deliberate intention of reaching younger population of social media users and people from diverse tribes and experiences. The data was analysed using SPSS statistical tool, and presented in simple frequencies and percentages. The descriptive analysis was used to interpret each variable.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Gender Distribution

The figure below shows that, the majority of the respondents are mostly male, with a respondent size of 332 out of the total sample size of 385, while the female respondents were 53. This simply shows that, the males are more active on sport betting sites than the female.

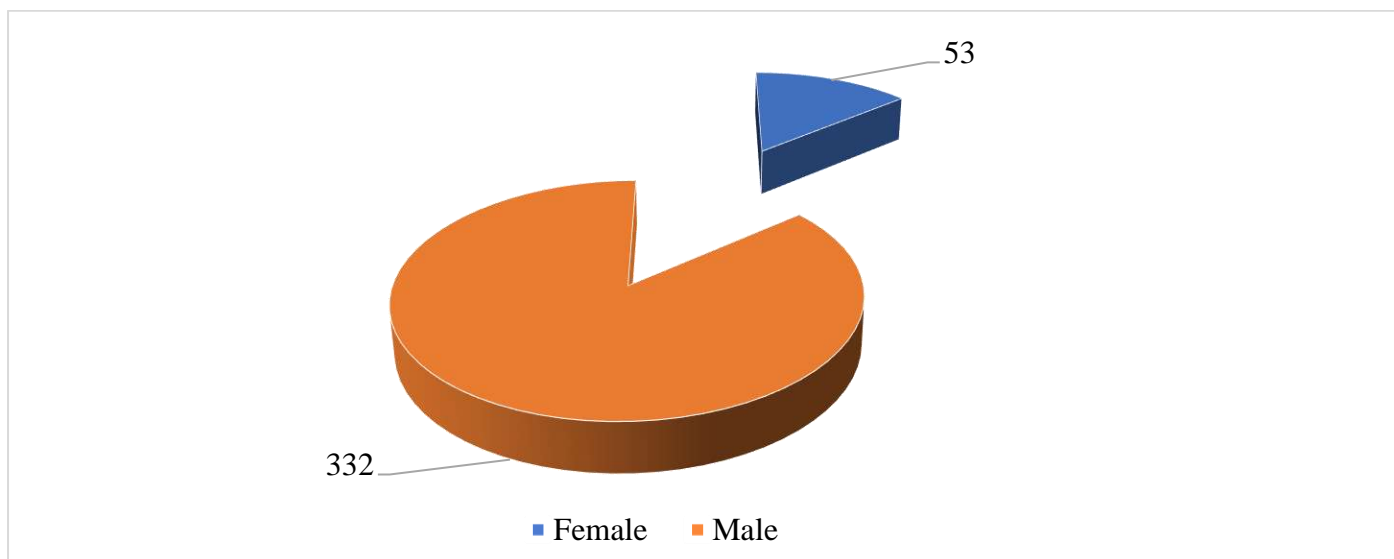


Figure 1
Respondents Gender Distribution

4.2 Frequency of Youths’ Exposure to Sport Betting Ads on Social Media

The Figure below shows how frequently social media platforms feature sport betting advertisements. The figure shows that 98.2% always encounter sport betting ads. While 97.7% of the youths indicated that they regularly see sport betting promotions on social media. The data in the chart also, reveal that sport betting advertisements have become so pervasive on all social media platforms in Nigeria.

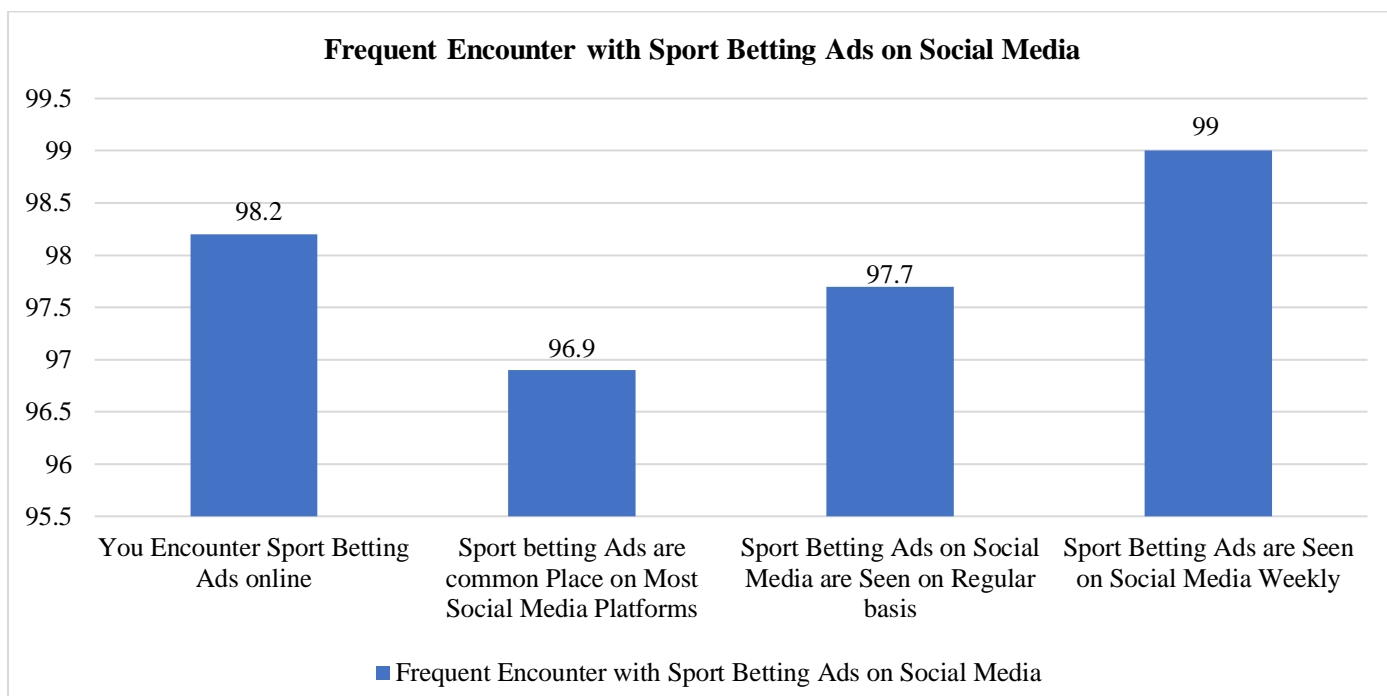


Figure 2
The Frequency of Sport Betting Advert on Social Media

4.3 Regular Exposures to Online Sport Betting Ads Influence Youths to Indulge in Online Gambling

The Figure below shows that the majority of the respondents, agreed that their encounter with online sport betting ads raised their curiosity about online gambling. Similarly, exposure to sports gambling on social media instigated some of the participants to sign-up on a sport betting site. In order to further show the deep influence of social media sports betting ads, we asked if all the respondents know about the online sport betting were through the online regular promotions they see on social media, 90.9% of the sample agree that it was so.



Figure 3
Sport Betting ads Influence Youths to Gamble

4.4 Extent of Exposure and How Sports Betting Ads Instigate Youths to Gamble

In the above chart, the data imply that exposure to social media messages respecting sport betting have deep rooted implications. Respondents believe that sport betting promotions has much to with youths’ gambling behaviour.

The result also shows that, online advertising persuades youths to place bets, while online platforms provide betting information to the bulk of interested youths about sport odds, thereby intensely raising their curiosity to partake in online sport betting. Many of the respondents further claims that online advertising makes them place bets and sign up on online sport betting platforms, and such pervasive messages have made them place betting multiple times than they would have naturally staked.

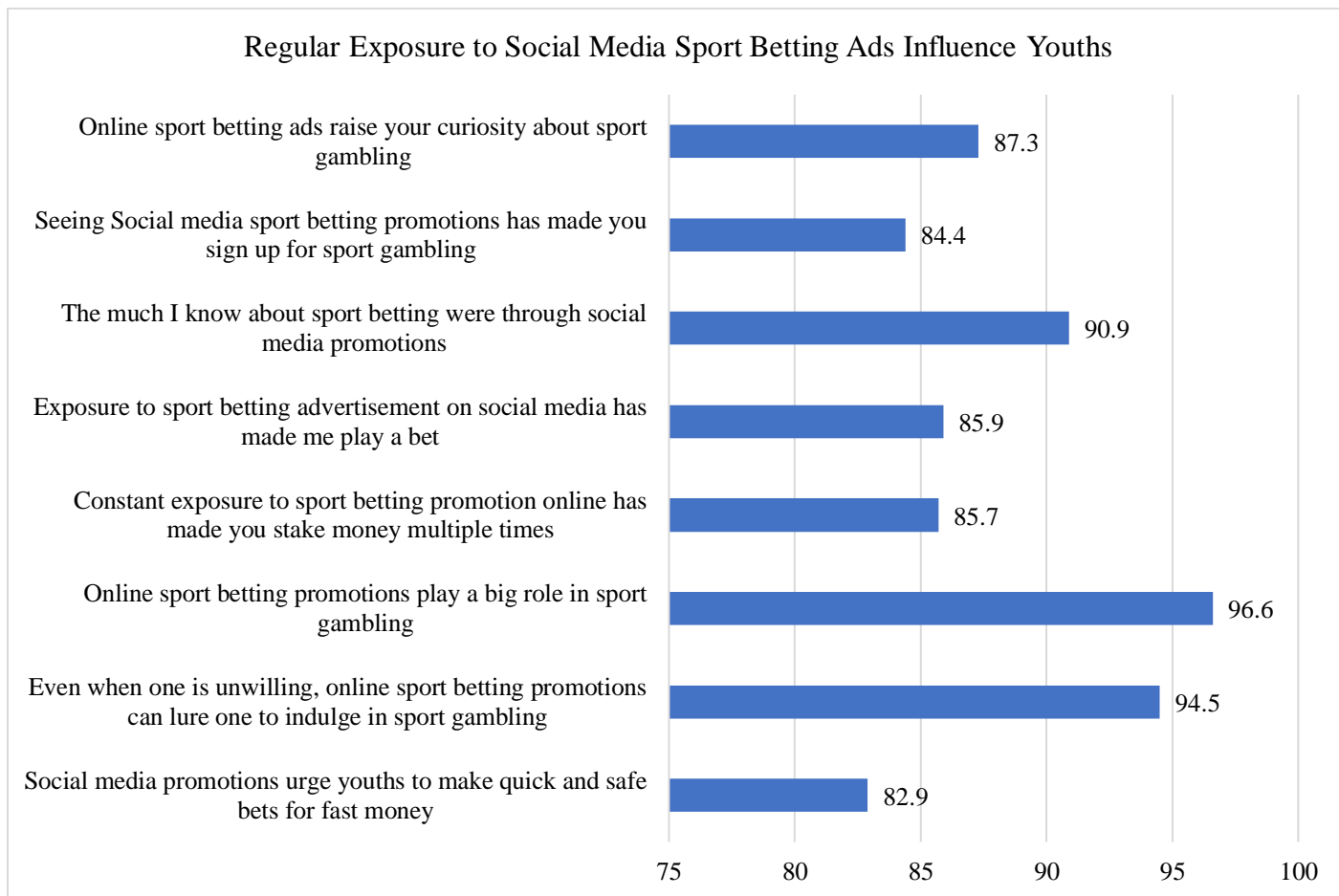


Figure 4
Various Ways Regular Exposure to Sports Betting ads Influence Youths

As shown in Figure 4 above, 96.9% of the total sample size agreed that online sport betting ad are very common on social media while 98.2% of the total sample size agreed that, they encounter online sports betting promotions on social media regularly. Giving these findings, the works of Russell et al. (2018) found majorly that the saturation of marketing for betting products, including sports-based commentary and sports programming, normalised betting. In a related study conducted by Rossi and Nairn (2021) found that 63.3% of adults (over the age of 25) reported seeing gambling ads on social media at least once a week, rising to 72.4% for 18–24-year-olds True to this fact, the Hierarchy of Effects Model shows how advertising influences a consumer's decision to purchase or not purchase a product or service.

Also, 87.3% of the total sample size agreed that their encounter with online sport betting ads raised their curiosity about online gambling. Meanwhile, 90.9% of the total sample agreed that all they know about online sport betting were through the online regular promotions they see on social media. In determining the extent sports gambling ads have influenced the youths, 96.6% of the total sample size, agreed that, many youths have become addicted, as they are urged to gamble due to the pervasive social media sport betting promotions, online sport betting ads entice them to sport betting gambling, 82.9% of the total sample size said that online sport betting ads encourage youths to make quick money by presenting online sporting gambling as safe, 94.5% of the total sample size agreed that even when they were unwilling to stake, sport betting ads could lure them to indulge in online sport gambling.

In agreement with these findings, Derevensky et al. (2010); Hing et al. (2019) revealed that media advertisements of sports bet and their exposure to young people stimulate both prospective and existing bettors to gamble. Also, Pitt et al. (2016), revealed that young people’s attitude towards gambling is influenced by advertising and

they perceived gambling as a normal. On the part of Deloitte (2012); Hing et al. (2019); Sambo (2018) they clearly stated that media advertisements of sports betting are normalising and prematurely exposing vulnerable people to engage in gambling. In consonance with all the, the hierarchy of effect theory has established that advertising messages have the capabilities to transit an individual behaviour from the point of awareness to conviction, intention, trial, search, purchase, adoption, commitment, and loyalty.

It is now very clear from the data above that sport betting promotions on social media can effectively induce Nigerian youths to sport gambling addiction. To this, Gainsbury et al. (2016), showed that high volume of gambling ads on social media inevitably results in young people's high exposure. Just in the same stance, Anchaliya (2023) ascertained that repeated exposure to a stimulus leads to an increasingly positive attitude towards this stimulus. Revealing how pervasive social media advertisement may influence young people to take up online sport betting unwittingly.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The pervasive nature of social media has causes many businesses and organisations to design various means of reaching their target market through engaging and highly interactive ads. As a result, social media platforms have been used to popularise online sport betting among Nigerian youths. This study has shown a baffling revelation that frequent exposure to online sport betting can lead to sport gambling addiction. While we understand the immediate consequences of sport betting addiction, the need to design proactive messages to conscientize the younger population on the adverse effects of online gambling. Such counter message will not only provide the much needed balance against the highly intrusive and pervasive sports gambling ads, but would assist the youths population to make sound judgement when it comes to online sport betting. It our expectation that all concerned stakeholders in this industry and government efforts will be stepped up to provide a workable framework for a sane online environment for young adults and provide adequate counter information that will enable then make a sound decision when it comes to sport gambling.

5.2 Recommendation

The following recommendations have been presented in consideration to the findings of the study; that social media ads should be design to reflect age restriction and warning messages to emphasize the harm involved in sport betting. Also, Sport betting companies should observe the strictest ethical restraints and they populate the online space with social media promotions. The study further propose that government should look into providing policies and put control measures in place that will dictate ethical boundaries for sport betting advertising in terms of taste, truthfulness, age sensitivities, and other social controls. In addition, the researchers identified that concerned agencies are to carry our mass orientation on the risks involved in sport betting addiction.

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