

Gambling Characteristics and Demographic Differences as Determinants of Attitudes Towards Gambling Among Youths in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

In this cross-sectional survey study, we investigated gambling characteristics (“quick” money syndrome, frequency of gambling, preferred gambling products and platforms) and demographic (age and gender) differences as determinants of attitudes towards gambling among youths in Lagos. We used a purposive snowball technique to recruit 179 respondents in Lagos (men: $n = 165$ [83.8% of participants]; women: $n = 32$) with a history of gambling activities. Gambling characteristics, demographics, and attitudes towards gambling were measured by using a gambling characteristics profile, the bio-data of the respondents, and the short form of the Attitudes Towards Gambling Scale (ATGS-8), respectively. The results showed that respondents believed that to make quick money, one needed to gamble once a week or more (67%), wager on sports betting (37.1%), and bet online (65.5%). The mean ATGS-8 composite score (28.2 ± 4.75) indicated overall positive attitudes among respondents. Independent sample t tests showed a significant difference between older (24–34 years) and younger (18–23 years) youths in their attitudes towards gambling ($t = -2.30, p < .05$) but no significant gender differences ($t = 0.06, p > .05$). One-way analysis of variance revealed a significant difference in attitudes towards gambling based on gambling frequency, $F(3, 196) = 6.86, p < .05$, with those who gamble monthly having the highest score. Participants displayed the belief that the easiest way to quick money is to gamble at least once weekly and to bet online. Younger participants and those who gamble at least once a month reported more positive attitudes towards gambling. Youths need to be made aware that gambling is not a viable source of income.

Keywords: gambling frequency, sports betting, lotto, gambling attitudes, Nigeria

Résumé

Cette étude s'est penchée sur les caractéristiques de la pratique des jeux de hasard (syndrome de l'argent « facile », fréquence du jeu, produits et plateformes des jeux de choix) et les différences démographiques (âge et genre) en tant que déterminants des attitudes envers le jeu chez les jeunes au Lagos. Un échantillon de 197 joueurs (hommes; $n = 165$ [83,8% des participants], femmes ; $n = 32$) a été choisi à dessein à l'aide d'un sondage en boule de neige aux endroits suivants : guichets de paris sportifs, kiosques de loterie, centres de visualisation de matches de football, centres commerciaux, centres de détente et parcs de sport automobile à Lagos, au Nigeria. Les attitudes ont été mesurées à l'aide de l'échelle des attitudes envers les jeux de hasard (ATGS-8). Les résultats montraient que les répondants croyaient que pour gagner de l'argent facilement aux jeux de hasard, il fallait jouer au moins une fois par semaine (67 %), faire des paris sportifs (37,1%), et parier en ligne (65,5 %). Le pointage combiné moyen de l'ATGS-8 ($2,2 \pm 4,75$) indiquait dans l'ensemble des attitudes positives chez les répondants; un test t sur échantillon indépendant a révélé une différence importante dans l'attitude envers les jeux de hasard entre les joueurs jeunes plus âgés et plus jeunes ($t = -2.30$, $p < 0.05$), mais aucune différence significative entre les genres ($t = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$). L'analyse de variance à un critère de classification révèle des différences importantes dans les attitudes envers les jeux de hasard en fonction de la fréquence de la pratique de ces jeux ($F(3, 196) = 6.86$, $p < 0.05$); et ceux qui jouent tous les mois obtenaient le pointage le plus élevé. Les participants démontraient irréfutablement la conviction selon laquelle le moyen le plus facile de faire de l'argent facile est de jouer à des jeux de hasard au moins une fois par semaine et de parier en ligne. Les participants plus jeunes et ceux qui s'adonnent aux jeux de hasard au moins une fois par mois faisaient preuve d'attitudes plus positives à l'égard des jeux de hasard. Il faut faire comprendre aux jeunes que la pratique des jeux de hasard ne représente pas une source de revenu viable.

Introduction

As the biggest country in West Africa, Nigeria has embraced gambling as other African countries have done; it is seen as an entrenched leisure pastime due to the government's policy of legalizing and liberalizing it, similar to other business enterprises (Udeze, 2018). However, gambling is fast becoming a common acute public health and social concern that can hamper aspects of participants' livelihoods (Oyeleke et al., 2017). With the unprecedented growth in advertising strategies and greater social acceptability of gambling, betting shops and kiosks have materialized in urban and rural centres around the country, leading to increased opportunities for gambling activities (NOIPolls, 2019). This could be one of the reasons that youths

begin to develop the belief that, in order to make money, people have to gamble on virtually anything.

Gambling refers to the betting or wagering of money or valuable possessions on the outcome of a game or event in which that outcome is influenced by chance (Whelan et al., 2007). The uncertain outcome is the probability of winning something, usually money. There has been a considerable expansion of gambling activities throughout the world (Calado & Griffiths, 2016). Systematic reviews of empirical surveys revealed that in many countries, there are more persons who have a positive attitude towards a gambling activity at some point in their lives than there are those who have never gambled (Calado & Griffiths, 2016; Shaffer & Hall, 2001). The literature has revealed that up to 86% of the population have reported one form of gambling or another, with a significant minority of young adults (4%–8%) reporting serious multiple gambling problems across the socio-demographic spectrum globally (Kristiansen & Jensen, 2014; Oyeleke et al., 2017; Salaam & Brown, 2012).

A survey identified the quest for “quick” money (30%), unemployment (21%), greed (15%), economic hardship (12%), and poverty (10%) as the major reasons that Nigerians engage in gambling (NOIPolls, 2019). About 60 million Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 40 years were reported to spend about 1.8 billion Naira (\$5 million) daily on gambling activities, with an average investment of 3,000 Naira (\$8.33) per day (Akwayiram & Akinyelure, 2018). This acceptance of gambling by both youths and adults has contributed to the “get-rich-quick” syndrome in society. The theory of cognitive distortion explains that behaviours such as gambling frequency facilitate the reasoning among youths that allow them to perceive themselves as winning; this view neutralizes their conscience and guilt, which would have prevented harmful behaviour such as gambling, and instead predisposes them to it (Barriga et al., 2001; Beck, 1972, 2004). The erroneous confidence in one’s ability to determine the outcome of gambling can influence the frequency of gambling behaviours (Oyeleke et al., 2017). An experiment conducted among 30 sports bettors in Canada to determine whether their predictions were better than chance showed that expert bettors are just persons with gambler’s fallacy and that their “skills” resulted from cognitive distortions (Cantinotti et al., 2004).

Recently, a positive attitude towards gambling is becoming common among young people, the majority of them reporting a previous gambling activity (Calado & Griffiths, 2016), and with around half of British adults (48%) indicating that they have previously participated in a gambling activity (Gambling Commission, 2017). McCarthy et al. (2018) reported that 45% of women aged 16–34 years in Australia gambled more than once a week; similarly, 40.5% of respondents in Uganda gambled at least once a week (Ahaibwe et al., 2016). A rapid survey conducted among 3,879 youths in Africa revealed that the majority of them (54%) had indulged in gambling at some point (GeoPoll, 2017), while another poll indicated that 41% of 1,000 randomly selected youths in Nigeria had engaged in some form of betting (NOIPolls, 2019). Similarly, more than half (57%) of high school students in Nigeria had previously gambled (Aguocha et al., 2019). Older age (i.e., youths over 24 years)

is linked to positive attitudes towards gambling (Ayandele & Aramide, 2020; Gambling Commission, 2017; Orford et al., 2009; Salonen et al., 2017). Previous research also revealed gender differences in gambling, with young male participants reporting more frequent gambling activity than young female participants (e.g., Ahaibwe et al., 2016; Ayandele & Aramide, 2020; Gambling Commission, 2017). Gambling activities have different forms, and youths' preference for one or the other could be due to educational or social exposure.

Lotteries, scratch cards, and slot machines are the commonest types of gambling products in the United Kingdom (Gambling Commission, 2017), whereas poker, bingo, sports betting, casinos, lotteries, animal races, and electronic gambling machines are popular in North America (Holtgraves, 2009). In Australia, sports betting, horse betting, electronic gambling machines, and casinos are the most common forms of gambling (McCarthy et al., 2018). In African countries, betting on sports, cards, and dice; playing the lotto; online gambling; and casino games are the commonest types of gambling (Ahaibwe et al., 2016; GeoPoll, 2017; Oyeleke et al., 2017). The development of internet websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications have increased opportunities to gamble and made it more pervasive and less stigmatized among youths (Deans et al., 2016). A study reported that millennials in Africa are using their mobile phones to place bets (GeoPoll, 2017) because of increased access to the internet, with young women increasingly "closet" gambling with the aid of the internet and smartphones (Ahaibwe et al., 2016).

Studies have reported that men typically prefer strategic games (e.g., betting on sports or cards, casino games), whereas women tend to prefer non-strategic types of gambling that are determined by luck (e.g., lotteries, lotto, electronic gambling machines; Holdsworth et al., 2012; Holtgraves, 2009; Petry, 2003). Data from cross-sectional studies in Finland (Salonen et al., 2017) and Norway (Hanss et al., 2014) showed that men hold more favourable attitudes towards gambling than women do. Similarly, in Africa, men have more positive attitudes towards gambling than women do (Ayandele et al., 2019; Peltzer & Thole, 2000). These findings indicate that an increasing number of women are beginning to gamble (Holdsworth et al., 2012). Women regard online betting as a safe place to gamble (Corney & Davis, 2010), and both men and women gamble because there are no gender restrictions imposed by the government.

Because there are few restrictions on the marketing of gambling products, many minors and youths are being influenced to indulge in gambling activities (Monaghan et al., 2008). Similarly, gambling advertisements and promotions tend to increase gambling frequency among some youths who gamble (Hing et al., 2014). Nigerian gambling companies such as BetNaija, Nairabet, and Premier Bet Lotto, among others, with their shops and kiosks on street corners around the country, are now placing advertisements on television, radio, and social media, as well as having sponsorship agreements with Stadia, broadcasters, and sport clubs to drive the use of mobile phones and the internet as platforms for gambling. Similarly, in Nigeria,

several multinational firms such as brewery, bottling, and communication companies have used gambling as a sales promotion by stipulating that residents can either buy a bottle or recharge their mobile line to get a chance to watch live premiership matches or FIFA world cup finals (Udeze, 2018). These advertisements and promotions could increase the risk for pathological gambling or encourage a positive disposition towards gambling among youths (Griffiths, 2003).

Public attitudes towards gambling are often ambivalent; although people are aware of the risk that excessive gambling poses for youths, they also recognize the positive contribution of gambling to society (e.g., sources of fun, employment, pleasant socializing, and government revenue; Calado & Griffiths, 2016; Gambling Commission, 2017; Oyebisi et al., 2012). Scholars (e.g., Bussu & Detotto, 2013; Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003) have opined that gambling attitudes and activities are driven by economic gain, gratification, compensatory distraction, and opportunities for players to come together, relax, socialize, and share special time with others. It was claimed that attitudes towards gambling are becoming more positive across all age groups (Salonen et al., 2017). Individuals who gamble frequently or excessively are more likely to hold positive attitudes towards gambling (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003) and such individuals reported more favourable attitudes towards gambling than infrequent gamblers did (Orford, et al., 2009).

Excessive gambling activities could lead to staking more money than one can afford, developing higher levels of gratification and tolerance, and living a kind of parallel life so as to hide one's gambling pathology (Bussu & Detotto, 2013). Egbujo (2018) suggested that gambling pathology can, sooner rather than later, become a threat to public health. Gambling pathology is associated with a range of psychological sequelae such as depression, anxiety, mood swings, low self-esteem, criminal behaviour, and drug misuse (Blinn-Pike et al., 2010). Aside from the economic difficulties that middle-aged people and youths experience repeatedly while indulging in gambling activities, this behaviour is associated with both social and psychological challenges in adulthood (Salaam & Brown, 2012). Considering these unpleasant consequences, there is a serious need to better understand the factors that could make individuals susceptible to gambling pathology, so as to place this psychosocial problem under control or reduce it to a level that is not hazardous to players and society.

Research Goals

Most studies on gambling have been conducted in Western countries, Asia, and Oceania (Calado & Griffiths, 2016), leaving a gap in knowledge about gambling in Africa, particularly Nigeria (Aguocha et al., 2019). Our aim in this study, therefore, was to examine how the belief in making quick money, gambling frequency, gambling product and platform preferences, and differences in demographics (age and gender) could determine attitudes towards gambling among a sample of youths in Lagos, Nigeria.

Method

Sample and Recruitment

In this cross-sectional survey study, we used a structured questionnaire to collect data from 179 respondents. Individual youths who have history of gambling activities in Lagos were purposively selected through a snowball sampling technique. This is a megacity in Nigeria that accommodates all tribes in Nigeria; it has been found to record the highest levels of gambling activities in the country (NOIPolls, 2019). For this reason, Lagos was seen as the most appropriate research setting for this study. Respondents were youths who resided in the Yaba, Ikeja, and Festac areas of Lagos (these areas have numerous offices where gambling activities are mostly performed) between June and July 2019, which made it easier for researchers to locate the potential participants. Young people who claimed to be currently engaged in gambling activities or had recently been engaged in them were contacted and asked to connect the researchers with as many of their colleagues as possible. This population was chosen in an effort to obtain a more representative depiction of gambling frequency, preference, activities, and attitudes among those who gamble and to allow for analysis of age and gender differences. The inclusion criteria were that participants had to be 18 years of age or older and to have regularly participated in gambling activities in the past 6 months. Ethical approval was obtained from the lead author's departmental ethical committee. All applicable protocols regarding the ethical use of human volunteers were followed during the research; respondents gave their consent and their participation was voluntary and anonymous. Older youths in this study were participants between 25 and 33 years old, and younger youths were those between 18 and 24 years old.

Measures

Gambling Frequency

Gambling frequency was assessed by asking, "To make quick money by gambling, how often does one need to gamble at least once?" Participants could select from the following responses: (1) daily, (2) weekly, (3) fortnightly, or (4) monthly.

Gambling Products

Perceptions of gambling products were assessed by asking, "Which gambling product is easiest for making *quick* money?" Response options included (1) casino games, (2) virtual games/racing, (3) live matches/sports betting, and (4) lotteries.

Gambling Platforms

Gambling platforms refer to the use of offline platforms such as shops or kiosks and online platforms such as apps or websites. Use of these platforms was assessed by asking, "The surest way to make *quick* money gambling is by?" Response options

included (1) using gambling/betting applications, (2) opening gambling/betting websites, and (3) visiting gambling/betting shops or kiosks in the area.

Attitudes Towards Gambling

Attitudes towards gambling were measured with the short form of the Attitudes Towards Gambling Scale (ATGS-8; Orford et al., 2009). Agreement was on a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An example item is “People should have the right to gamble whenever they want.” Appropriate items were reverse-coded and the sum of all items formed the total ATGS-8 score (range 8–40), where a score of 24 represents an overall neutral attitude towards gambling, a score above 24 indicates a favourable (positive) attitude, and a score below 24 indicates an unfavourable (negative) attitude (Table 1). The scale authors reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .88 and revalidation for the current study yielded a Cronbach’s alpha value of .70.

Data Analysis

Data gathered were analysed with SPSS version 22.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). Bar and pie charts were used to describe gambling frequency, products, and platforms used by respondents. An independent *t* test was conducted to examine age and gender differences in attitudes towards gambling, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the significant effect of gambling frequency on attitudes towards gambling. This was followed by a Tukey HSD test to determine how mean attitudes towards gambling scores differed between gambling frequency groups. Significance was set at $p < .05$.

Table 1

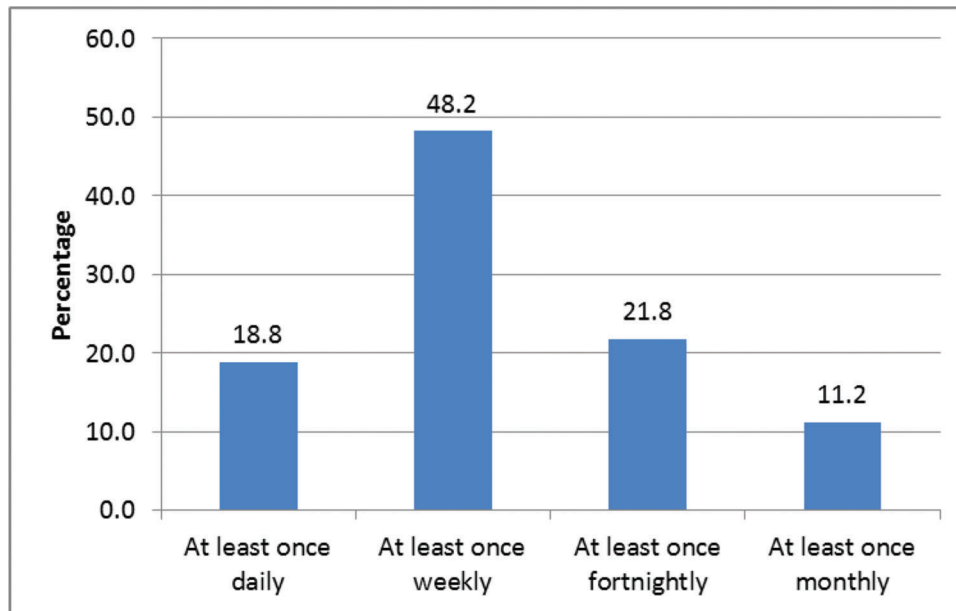
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 197)

Characteristic	Frequency (%)	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>
Age (years)			
18–34	197 (100)	22.81	3.19
Gender			
Male	165 (83.8)		
Female	32 (16.2)		
Relationship status			
Not dating	67 (34.0)		
Dating	124 (62.9)		
Married	6 (3.0)		
Attitudes towards gambling ^a			
Negative (less than 24)	32 (16.2)	28.20	4.75
Neutral (equal to 24)	11 (5.6)		
Positive (more than 24)	154 (78.2)		

^aAs assessed by respondent’s total score on the short Attitudes Towards Gambling Scale.

Figure 1

Frequency of gambling to make quick money.



Results

Sample Description

The sample consisted of relatively young people ($M_{age} = 22.81$ years, $SD = 3.19$) and more male ($\bar{X} = 83.8\%$) than female participants ($\bar{X} = 16.2\%$). Most participants (62.9%) were in a dating relationship. The ATGS-8 scores for the sample overall ($M = 28.2$, $SD = 4.75$) indicated positive attitudes, with most participants (78.2%) reporting positive attitudes towards gambling (ATGS-8 score of more than 24; see Table 1).

Gambling Frequency to Make Quick Money

Figure 1 shows the gambling frequency of youths who gamble in Nigeria to make quick money. The largest proportion of the sample gambled at least once weekly (48.2%), followed by nearly a fifth who gambled at least once fortnightly (21.8%) and those who gambled at least once daily (18.8%). The smallest proportion of the sample gambled at least once monthly (11.2%) to make quick money from gambling.

Gambling Products to Make Quick Money

The largest percentage of youths who gamble in Nigeria reported wagering on live matches/sports betting (37.1%), virtual games (31%), or lotto (26.9%) as the easiest way to make quick money. The remaining 5.1% of youths who gamble participated in casino games (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Perceptions of gambling products easiest for making quick money.

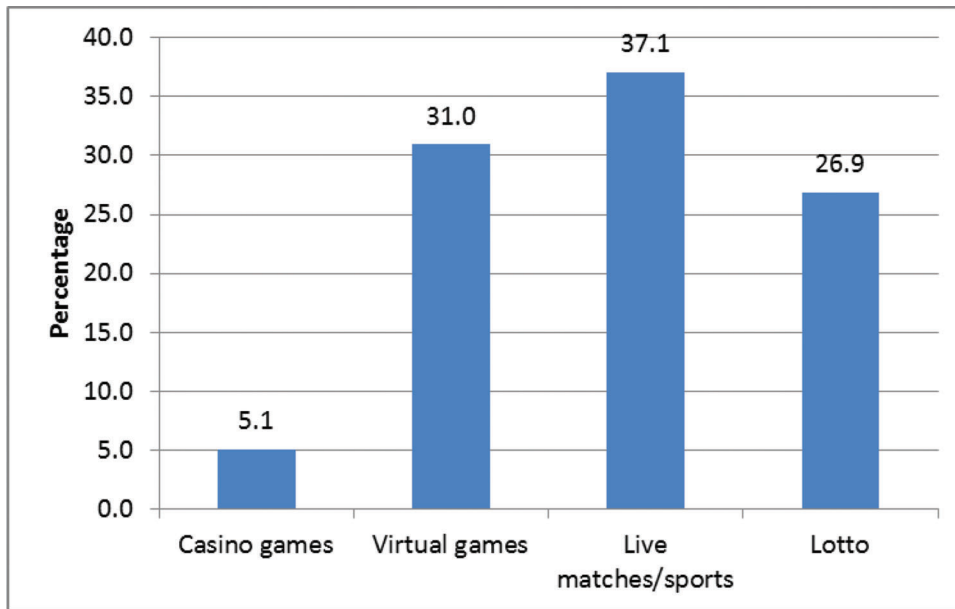
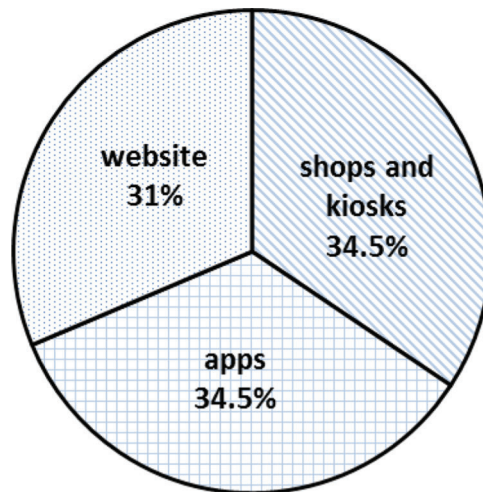


Figure 3
Perceptions of gambling platforms surest to make quick money.



Gambling Platforms to Make Quick Money

When the respondents were asked about their preferred place of gambling to make quick money from three possible gambling platforms, each platform was chosen by approximately a third of the respondents. As shown in Figure 3, about one in three youths who gamble used smartphone or tablet applications (34.5%), about one in

three used betting shops/gambling kiosks (34.5%), and about one in three used internet websites (31.0%).

Demographic Differences in Attitudes Towards Gambling

Significant differences were found between older and younger youths in their attitudes towards gambling ($t = -2.30$, $df = 187.9$, $p < .05$), as younger youths who gamble had more positive attitudes towards gambling than older youths did. No significant differences were found between women and men in their attitudes towards gambling ($t = .061$, $df = 195$, $p > .05$). Rather, both genders held positive attitudes towards gambling; men had slightly higher scores than women did (see Table 2 for attitudes towards gambling by age and gender).

Gambling Frequency Differences in Attitudes Towards Gambling

As shown in Table 3, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether there was a statistically significant difference in gambling frequency regarding attitudes towards gambling. The result gave rise to a significant F -ratio, $F(3, 196) = 6.86$, $p < .05$.

Post hoc comparisons with the Tukey HSD procedure, as presented in Table 4, showed that youths who gambled monthly formed a separate subset with significantly higher scores in attitudes towards gambling ($M = 31.82$; $SD = 4.75$)

Table 2

Summary of Independent t Test for Age and Gender Differences in Attitudes Towards Gambling

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t	df	p
Age						
Older youths (≥ 23 years)	95	27.40	4.99	-2.303	187.9	.02
Younger youths (< 23 years)	102	28.95	4.41			
Gender						
Male	165	28.21	4.69	.061	195	.95
Female	32	28.16	5.13			

Table 3

One-Way Analysis of Variance Showing the Difference in Attitudes Towards Gambling Based on Gambling Frequency

Groups	SS	df	MS	F	P
Between groups	427.074	3	142.358	6.864	$< .05$
Within groups	4002.804	193	20.740		
Total	4429.878	196			

Note: SS = Sums of Squares while MS = Mean Squares.

Table 4

Homogeneous Subsets of Means of Gambling Frequency for Attitudes Towards Gambling

Gambling frequency	<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	<i>P</i>
Daily	37	28.41	5.177	< .05
Weekly	95	28.09	4.534	
Fortnightly	43	26.42	4.463	
Monthly	22	31.82	3.581	
Total	197	28.20	4.754	

compared with youths who gambled daily ($M = 28.41$; $SD = 5.18$), weekly ($M = 28.09$; $SD = 4.53$), and fortnightly ($M = 26.42$; $SD = 4.46$), who could also each be grouped into a homogeneous subset. Therefore, the hypothesis was confirmed and accepted.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggested that participants believed that one needs to gamble once a week or more in order to make quick money. This means that the majority of the sample gambled at least once weekly, which agrees with the findings of Ahaibwe et al. (2016), the Gambling Commission (2017), and McCarthy et al. (2018), all of whom reported gambling “more than once a week” as the most popular option. The quest for quick money—along with unemployment, greed, and the get-rich-quick syndrome in Nigeria—could be contributory factors in the preference for gambling at least once in a week.

Most respondents in this study suggested that quick money can also come from staking on live matches (sports betting). This could be due to the popularity of European football leagues among Nigerians and because the majority of our respondents were men. Previous studies revealed that gambling players tend to prefer sports betting, which they see as a strategic game compared with other gambling platforms (Holdsworth et al., 2012; Holtgraves, 2009; Petry, 2003). In addition, a high rate of unemployment and inadequate government social welfare services could be factors that contribute to gambling as a way to make ends meet or a means to escape poverty among youth wagers.

Most respondents preferred to gamble online, either by using gambling applications or by visiting gambling websites. This assertion is backed by previous research that showed acceptance of new technologies for gambling activities (Deans et al., 2016; GeoPoll, 2017). The respondents’ preference for online gambling could also be due to reports that many youths who gamble regard the internet as a safe place to gamble (Corney & Davis, 2010) and that many women, because of society’s stigmatization of gambling, are involved in closet forms of gambling, that is, using mobile

internet-based gambling (Ahaibwe et al., 2016). This finding may equally be due to the promotion of gambling mobile apps and websites by sports betting companies.

Unlike the results of previous studies that noted that older youths tend to report more positive attitudes towards sports betting than younger youths do (Ayandele & Aramide, 2020; Gambling Commission, 2017; Salonen et al., 2017), the results of our study showed that younger youths who gamble displayed more positive attitudes towards gambling than their older counterparts did. Early youthful exuberance, peer pressure, unemployment, poverty, and school problems might serve as confounding variables in the reported positive attitudes towards gambling among younger youths.

In agreement with the claim that youths who gamble generally have more favourable attitudes towards gambling (Gambling Commission, 2017; Oyebisi et al., 2012; Salonen et al., 2017), but contrary to the results of prior studies (e.g., Ayandele et al., 2019; Hanss et al., 2014; Peltzer & Thole, 2000) that identified men as having significantly more positive attitudes towards gambling than women do, the sampled youths who gamble in this study (both men and women) expressed positive attitudes towards gambling, with men reporting insignificantly higher scores than women did. The positive attitudes of youths in Lagos contrast with the negative attitudes towards gambling among youths found in the southwest (Ayandele & Aramide, 2020) and southeast (Aguocha et al., 2019) parts of Nigeria.

Whereas previous reviews reported that individuals who gamble more frequently are likely to have a positive attitude towards gambling (Delfabbro & Thrupp, 2003), this study revealed that individuals who gamble monthly exhibit a more positive attitude than do those who gamble daily, weekly, or fortnightly. It is likely that those individuals who gamble monthly are leisure gambling practitioners and probably less likely to gamble excessively.

In addition to our earlier stated postulations, frequent patronage of gambling products and positive attitudes towards gambling in the studied sample could also be due to cognitive distortion (Barriga et al., 2001; Oyeleke et al., 2017). This erroneous confidence of the participants in their knowledge of how to make quick money by gambling resembles that shown by individuals displaying the “gambler’s fallacy” (Cantinotti et al., 2004).

Limitations

When interpreting these results, one should be aware of some caveats: The study’s cross-sectional nature and reliance on respondents’ statements, without observing their live gambling behaviour, make it difficult to draw causal relationships among the variables examined. The unequal gender distribution of the respondents, despite the assurance of anonymity, meant that many potential female respondents (met at sport betting shops and lotto kiosks) who were invited to participate in this study refused (Corney & Davis, 2010), probably because of society’s stigmatization of female gambling (Dumbili, 2015), especially in Nigeria. As a result, this study may

not be generalizable to the entire Nigerian population. However, in future studies, investigators could use the national survey in Nigeria or a longitudinal approach to better examine causal relationships; they could also use interviews for more comprehensive insights. Furthermore, subsequent related studies should use female gatekeepers to facilitate recruitment of females who gamble. Despite these limitations, the current study has ecological validity and generated some significant outcomes.

Social Implications/Recommendations

The findings of the study provide insights into the frequency, patterns, and demographic differences in attitudes towards gambling among selected youths in Lagos, Nigeria. The empirical data generated can assist in formulating appropriate evidence-based strategies to promote safe gambling behaviours and reduce the risk of excessive gambling. Parents, educators, and the media should make young people aware that gambling is not a viable source of income. It is equally expedient to provide job opportunities for youths in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria to enable them make money through productive and sustainable means instead of through gambling. Treatment and prevention strategies against excessive gambling should emphasize that the randomness of success in gambling is not determined by one's knowledge or frequency of gambling.

Conclusion

Youths who gamble who participated in this study revealed their belief that the easiest means to quick money is to gamble at least once weekly and to bet online. Youths who gamble on a monthly basis reported more positive attitudes towards gambling than did those who gamble daily, weekly, or fortnightly. There should be concerted efforts to reduce poverty and increase employment opportunities in Nigeria. Interventions that target gambling could help prevent cognitive distortion.

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Submitted June 20, 2020; accepted October 20, 2020. This article was peer reviewed. All URLs were available at the time of submission.

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Competing interests: None declared (all authors).

Ethics approval: Ethical approval was obtained from the Department of General Studies, The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria's Ethical Committee.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank all the participants for their cooperation during this study's gambling.