Gambling among Nigerian Youths; Implications for Counselling

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Abstract :- **This paper describes gambling and its Implications among students in Nigeria. It explores the concept, theories, types, dynamics, consequences and educational implications of gambling to students in Nigerian educational institutions. On the one hand, gambling has helped gambling agents (who are sometimes students of some higher institutions) to be gainfully employed and increase the social capital of those in the business. On the other hand, there has been increase in crime and other social vices as well as a rise in reported cases of delinquent behaviours associated with gambling. Some of the recommendations made by the study include; The University, through its entrepreneurial centre should empower students on vocational training, with the aim of profit making and educational institutions should also organize and orientation program to educate the students on the effect of peer influence on the or academics and social behaviour.**

Keywords: **Gambling, Addiction, peer influence, lottery, sports betting and casino.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Gambling is a type of behaviour which has been detected to have severe effects on the health, habit of study and educational achievement of gamblers and has been associated with certain criminal conduct (Oyebisi, Alao & Popoola, 2012). Gambling has also usually been described as wagering or wagering for cash, or for something worth, for a case which has an unspecified result with a chance of making cash or material (Potenza, Fiellin, Heninger, Rounsaville, & Mazure, 2002). Traditionally, gambling involves wagering, auction, card matches, gaming, sports, video game, and Internet card and casino matches (Potenza et al. 2002). Young individuals and college teachers are a high-risk gambling issue group (Moore et al., 2013). There has been a significant incidence of gambling involvement and problem gambling among various college communities, primarily in high-income surveys (Etel, Tabchi, Bou Khalil, Hlais & , 2013, Blanksbya, 2013; Tozzi, Akre, Fleury-Schubert & Suris, 2013).

In addition, the incidence of adult entertainment is projected at 86 percent in the United States (Potenza et al. 2002). In the United States, there is an approximately 3.8% of adult issue gamblers, and 2.8% of issue gambler "last year" (Potenza et al. 2002). Olayinka and Fageyinbo, (2015) also found that sport betting is the most popular among Nigerians. Gambling may, however, include daily events which are not usually associated with word gaming connotations, such as community or organizational sponsored raffles, bingo or board games for children. The practice of staging cash or other valuables in matches or unclear result activities (Binde, 2005), may also be recognized as gambling.

The public view of gambling is frequently inaccurate. On the one side, it is common knowledge that gambling presents a severe risk to those who are too willing to play. However, on the other side, it is also recognized, on average, that gambling can have beneficial effects on societies and be a pleasant pastime for individuals (for example through the provision of a source of income for sports clubs or humanitarian causes) (Vong, 2009). A prevalent finding is that people with more favorable gambling behaviours are more susceptible to gaming and gambling-related issues (Chiu & Storm, 2010; Wardle, Moody, Griffiths, Orford and Volberg, 2011; Wood& Griffiths, 2004; Delfabbro & Puglies, 2009) There are concerns in the areas of public health and addictions regarding the effect of the comprehensive accessibility, publicity and sanction of legalised gambling. The incidence of unregulated gambling among adolescents has considerably risen between 1977 and 1993.

A compulsive gambler is unrealistic in his thinking whereas non-gamblers view gambling as unethical and disruptive, the gambler sees gambling as taking calculated risks to build in a lucrative business with the firm belief in the saying “no wasting, no wanting”. There is a persistent “today is my day” feeling and in spite of heavy losses he still hopes to hit it big. (Faloye, 1996). The gamer behaviour is not usually illegal, it has increased the prevalence of gambling in societies and allows almost every part of the world to play one way or the other. The lack of sanctions on the players ' part paves the way for new forms of play such as a 1960 bet in Nigeria to be introduced.

Gambling is widely regarded as an acceptable social form of recreation (Stucki and Rihs-Middel, 2007). Gambling is enjoyable and harmless for many people, but for others it can be both addictive and problematic with serious negative effects (Meyer, Hayer and Griffiths, 2009). These include bankruptcy, job loss, broken homes, the use and abuse of substances, depression and addiction. As an important public health and addiction concern, the impact of the extensive availability of gambling and the legalization of its publicity have been identified. (Corn and Shaffer, 2002; Volberg, Williams and Stevens, 2012). The prevalence of disordered gambling has significantly increased among young people and especially students in Nigeria’s secondary and tertiary institutions.

Gambling has been linked to risky personality, risky decision-making and pro-risk behaviour. Personality characteristics such as impulsiveness and low self-control are linked to gambling behaviour. Those with impulse characteristics tend to prefer short-term recompense with potential immediate and future costs without prediction or planning. Like impulsiveness, poor self-control is linked to a tendency to concentrate on present-day temptations, which ignores the long-term consequences (Marcus 2003).Gambling often leads to behaviour, emotional, relationships or financial problems among students which, if they are not correctly handled, may lead to a diagnosed condition called pathological gambling. The Mental Disorders Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (4th issue, text rev.; DSMIV-TR) classifies pathological gambling as impetus control disorder (4th issue, text rev.; DSM-IV-TR; American Psycho-Scientific Association, 2000).The study will therefore study the pattern, prevalence and associated risk factors of gambling among students in Nigeria and the implication for counselling.

II. CONCEPT OF GAMBLING

Gambling has proven to be a major problem for college students. The prevalence of gambling problem among students at universities can be almost three times that of adults (Shaffer & Korn 2002). It is estimated that 2,6million students at universities can be classified as problem gamblers with often adverse consequences (Lostutter, Lewis, Cronce, Neighbors, & Larimer, 2012).).Gambling is a common behaviour among secondary school and university students; it is most common in casinos and online gambling. There are multiple risk factors and commodities for college students that increase their likelihood of problem gambling such as: male gender; tobacco, drugs, and alcohol; certain behavioural conditions, lower socioeconomic status,; and participation in athletics (Atkinson, Sharp, Schmitz, & Yaroslavsky 2012; Barnes, Weltme, Hoffman, and Tidwell 2010).

Bet is currently a very popular gambling activity with Nigerian young people in bet9ja where gaming needs to be predicted. The higher the number of matches, the higher the expected result will be if the forecast ends the match. Due to technological advances, emergency for new gambling forms like online gambling, such as betting in bet9ja, this increases the prevalence of this behaviour in society, because people only need to sit in their room to apply for a matching prediction online, which in turn increases the diverse gambling implications among this population (Oyebisi, Alao and Popoola, 2012). Gambling is a major problem among Nigerian students today, with high levels of involvement in gambling being a problem that also involves gambling dependence, a problem that has been reported as predisposing young people towards various health-related problems such as depression and even psychoactive substances.

III. THEORIES OF GAMBLING

The Social Learning Theory

The social learning model of gambling proposes that gambling as a form of behaviour that is highly subjected to reinforcement and reward. the theory propose that as individual engage in gambling and such gambling brings high return in term of money, such individual is motivated and reinforce to participate more in the is behaviour. This reinforcement tends to strengthen the relationship between gambling and outcome of such gambling (reward). The theory posits that this reinforcement create a sense of physiological arousal which serves as motivation or enforcement for an individual to engage in gambling in other to gain more profit. In other words, as level for return from gambling is encouraging, such individual are engage more in gambling and may eventually experience gambling addiction at the end. The theory suggests a strong association between reward and gambling predisposes individual in more gambling related activities.

Oyebisi, Alao, & Popoola (2012) justifies the claim above, asserting that the level of individual participation in gambling related activities is a function of reinforcement history. The reinforcement history can be explained base on the fact that whether such individual has been making profit from gambling or not. In other word the level of success in the previous gambling go along way on predicting whether such individual will engage more in gambling at future time. Further, Mubaraka and Blanksbya (2013) also explained that early big reward or win from gambling predisposes individual to gambling in future tome. Win serves as motivation which improve individual attitude toward gambling. However, in the case of problem gambling where people still engage in gambling without despite the fact that they are losing, the explanation for this is based on the fact that the first reward from gambling create a great and very strong reinforcement which last long till the person get addicted to gambling.

From the social learning theory explanation, Brown (2007) suggest that there are six major mechanism which predisposes people to gambling addiction; they are

i. Felling of anxiety or depression
ii. cognitive distortion concerning gambling behaviour.
iii. reinforcement schedule
iv. Opportunity and availability of gambling spot
v. attitude of socio-cultural context toward gambling
vi. internal relationship

Furthermore, Brown (2007) reiterated that an individual is predisposes to gambling if he/she is residing in a culture which permit gambling and the attitude of the people toward gambling is positive. In other word, an individual living in an environment where people are engaging in gambling, such individual is also expected to join the group and participate in such act. Brown (2007) also suggests that physiological arousal also motivate an individual to engage in

gambling, Brown claim that internal reinforcement improve the vulnerability of individual to gambling. The internal urge to gamble according to Brown predisposes individual to engage in gambling. Gambling availability in Nigeria according to this theory is one of the reasons while some people may experience gambling and eventually develop a gambling addiction.

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

Fishbein(1967) suggests that behaviour is influenced by one's intention to perform that behaviour and that one's intention is influenced by attitudes and perceived subjective norms regarding that behaviour. More recently, an adaptation of the TRA, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) added the construct of perceived behavioural control to account for an individual's perception of control over behaviours that they might be able to control completely (Ajzen, 1991).The central factor in the TPB is the individual's intention to perform a given behaviour, which indicates how hard people are willing to try and how much effort they will exert to perform a behaviour that is under their volitional control (Ajzen, 1991). The theory postulates three independent determinants of intention: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. According to the theory, as the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control regarding a behaviour become more favourable, so does the individual's intention to perform that behaviour. Further, according to the TPB, behavioural intentions positively correlate with participation in the behaviour of interest (Ajzen, 1991).

Researchers have examined some components of this process among college student gamblers (e.g., Larimer &Neighbors, 2003; Neighbors et al., 2007). For example, Adewuya, Ola, Aloba, Mapayi and Oginni, (2006) found that intention to gamble correlated strongly and positively with both gambling frequency and problem gambling. Furthermore, this study also showed that intention to gamble was significantly associated with both attitudes and subjective norms. In addition, Neighbors et al. (2007) found that favorable attitudes toward gambling correlated with problematic gambling (i.e., gambling frequency, expenditure, and negative consequences).

IV. TYPES OF GAMBLING

According to Gemma, Corti, Miriam and Joseph (2016), the following are some of the different types of gambling available to students;

i. *Lottery:* Game for distributing prizes by chance whether by throwing or casting of dice, tickets, cards lots, numbers or figures.
ii. *Casino:* Private club or establishment where gambling takes place or place where people gamble by playing card games, roulette, slot machines etc.
iii. *Promotional Competitions:* These are competitions that are conducted for the purpose of promoting a producer, distributor, supplier or the sale of any goods or services and participants participate by sending SMS messages. The prizes are distributed by conducting random draws, examples include promotional competitions offered by telecom companies, beverage companies etc.
iv. *Sports Betting:* This is the activity of predicting sports results and placing a wager on the outcome.
v. *Betting of animals:* This is the activity of predicting animal race results and placing a wager on the outcome.
vi. *Online/Internet gambling:* This refers to gambling that takes place over the internet.
vii. *Ludo:* This is a board game for two to four players, in which the players race their tokens from start to finish according to die rolls. In this study, it was considered to be gambling only if money was staked by the players involved.

V. DYNAMICS OF GAMBLING

In deducing the different reasons why students tend to go into gambling, the following were deduced;

i) Peer pressure: some students get lured or pressured into the act by friends or peers. Since everyone is doing it, they also want to do it to feel among.
ii) Get quick rich syndrome: with the downward spiral in the country's economy young adults tend to want to do anything just to get quick money. Gambling seems to give such a view and most students jump into the act with the belief that one day they would win big and live rich.
iii) Poverty/Environmental influence: Most gambling students come from poor homes and tend to have un-attended needs on every side. These prompts them to look for quick sources of money to sort out their needs. Most of them turn to gambling as it portrays an opportunity to bring them and their families out of a life of poverty.
iv) Poor Economy: With an economy that tends to widen the gap between the poor and the rich in Nigeria. students from poor homes tend to go into gambling, as it gives a false hope of riches beyond their imaginations affording them expensive opportunities alongside their rich counterparts. However, this is not usually the case as most of them end up much poorer than before.

VI. YOUTHS ATTITUDES TOWARD GAMBLING

Youths perceptions of gambling are often equivocal. On the one hand, they are usually aware that gambling poses serious risks to those who are predisposed to gamble excessively. However, on the other hand, it is also acknowledged that gambling can have positive consequences for communities (e.g. via providing a source of revenue for sporting clubs or humanitarian causes) and can be an enjoyable pastime for individuals (Vong, 2009). The balance

of such negative and positive views very likely affects the attitudes that individuals hold toward gambling and ultimately influences their decisions to engage in gambling (Gainsbury, Wood, Russell, Hing, & Blaszczynski, 2012).

There is ample evidence showing that youth's attitudes toward gambling are good predictors of how much they gamble and how likely they are to experience gambling related problems. A common finding is that those who hold more positive attitudes toward gambling are more likely to gamble and to experience gambling-related problems (Chiu &Storm, 2010; Wardle et al., 2011). These findings provide support for theories of behaviour and decision-making that assign attitudes an important role in determining students' intentions to act and, indirectly, their actual behaviour; an example is the theory of planned behaviour. Authors who have applied this theoretical framework to gambling behaviour as well as more general, health risk-taking behaviours (Fishbein & Cappella, 2006) suggest that attitudes are affected by broader demographic, personality and other individual-level factors. However, in connection with attitudes toward gambling, little is known about the relative importance of the different background influences (Fishbein & Cappella, 2006).

VII. GAMBLING ADDICTION

Otherwise viewed as problem gambling, a gambling addiction can be described as a compulsive behavior that involves individuals in gambling, although that is harmful to their lives. The individuals who encounter gambling problems are gambling to the point that gambling affects their lives in adverse way but they still play. Gambling dependence is the desire to play, despite the damaging effects of gambling in their lives. A person with this dependency can use the entire cash remaining in his pockets that was intended to be used for better things to bet. "Problem gambling" is described from the point of view of the Ministerial Gambling Council (MGC), "Problem gambling is characterized by many difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others or for the community. Also, "The University of Maryland Medical Centre defines pathological gambling as "being unable to resist impulses to gamble, which can lead to severe personal or social consequences"

VIII. CONSEQUENCES OF GAMBLING TO YOUTHS

These behaviours can provide the occasional player with an innocuous chance of enthusiasm, socialization or consolation. However, when these conducts rise, the issue and pathological gambling have adverse implications for the economic, social and overall health of an individual. The following were found: gambling disturbances, family dysfunction and domestic violence, youth and underage gambling, liquor and substance issues, mental health circumstances, suicide and suicide ideation, major economic and criminal issues. Negative financial outcomes are among the most tangible consequences of gambling and problem gambling. College students are at a higher risk for financial problems than older adults due to other financial obligations from college expenses and tuition, as well as potential debt from the increased credit card availability to young adults (Norvilitis & Maria, 2002; Robb, 2011). A study conducted at two Mississippi universities found that older college students are more likely to have problematic financial behaviours (Worthy, Jonkman, & Blinn-Pike, 2010). According to Worthy and colleagues (2010) these problematic financial behaviours were associated with sensation-seeking and risk-taking activities like gambling. College students often use resources such as credit cards, debit cards, or borrowed money to gamble; this is common for adult gamblers as well, but these habits may have greater negative financial consequences in a younger population.

Another negative consequence of heavy gambling is poorer academic standing. Potenza and colleagues (2011) found an association between poor academic performance and pathological gambling in young adults (ages 14-18). Heavy Internet gambling was associated with grade averages of D or lower.

IX. IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

It also revealed that the common pattern of gambling the youths engage in is sport betting and lotto and the associated risk factors are depression, personality trait 'neuroticism' and gender. It was also revealed that monetary gain and excitement are the potent motivating factors for gambling among youths.

Therefore, this study implies that there is need to create awareness on the rate at which gambling activities are increasing and its negative consequences. Also, awareness for sign and symptoms of depression should be created and treatment offer should be given by the counsellor. This will help to reduce and prevent depression among youths.

Furthermore, youths should be encouraged to adopt better ways of making money and a healthy way to escape from life stressors rather than gambling. Recreation centre and youthful program that can create sense of livelihood and excitement should be created.

X. CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that some of these youths come from a rich home and well-educated parents, they still needed more money than their regular allowances. Most of the time, peer influence account for the reason why most people engage in gambling, these particular set of people will want to live a larger life like their friends and would decide to take on activities that would double or increase their regular income.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The followings are recommended:

- Government should regulate the establishment of betting centres and the medium and rate at which the organization make their unsolicited adverts.
- The University should also organize and orientation program to educate the students on the effect of peer influence on the or academics and social behaviour
- Gambling should be declared illegal, and gamblers should be arrested and punished
- There should be proper security prohibiting any form of gambling.
- There should be skill empowerment of the student Jobs should also be created to discourage the rate at which people gamble.

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