

Advertising, Football Viewership and Sports Betting Among Nigerian Youths – A Study of Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship among advertising, football viewership and sports betting among Nigerian youths. This is in light of the perceived widespread acceptance of betting among Nigerians across ethnic, religious and professional divides. The research studied the pattern of gambling among youths in Ilaro in light of celebrity endorsements of betting companies in Nigeria. It also examines the implications of betting on the economic and moral development of the nation. Against the background of the proliferation of betting companies in Nigeria, the paper focuses on the implications of celebrity endorsement of betting companies on personal economy and the morality of the society. The survey method was used for the study and a self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data from 108 youths living in the town. Using the Expectancy-value and Social Learning theories, the paper argues that endorsement of sports betting companies by celebrities brings about negative outcomes, in the sense that it negatively affects moral values and personal finances of sports betters. It recommends value renaissance as a panacea to the festering social challenge. It also recommends that betting commercials should carry warnings like those of cigarettes and alcohol stating the inherent dangers in betting.

Keywords: Advertising, Celebrities, Endorsement, Social-Learning, Sports-betting

iSTEAMS Proceedings Reference Format

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sports betting is a fast-growing phenomenon among Nigerians. As football fans gather at viewing centers and bars to watch football games at midweek and weekends, there is much more than passion at stake. While many pray for the victory of their beloved teams, many others hope that mother luck would make fortune smile on them and their predictions for the games would come to pass so they could improve their economic status even if it is momentarily. The prospect of making money from their passion seems to lure them to take periodic risks. Football has diverse appeals and its purposes and manifestations are multi-contextual. While some people watch for fun, others watch for money and some attend soccer games to be in company of friends and loved ones. In past decades, sports betting was done by relatively old men. Men in their middle and old ages were the major patrons of sports betting. It was called pool. Pooling was generally seen as a form of gambling and men who visited pooling houses were generally considered as lazy gamblers and they constituted objects of shame and ridicule to their families. However, the narrative on sports betting has changed as more and more Nigerians irrespective of age, religion or gender are actively involved in sports betting. They stake money at weekly with the hope of reaping in many folds. The current narrative is that sports betting is a way of putting one's money where one's mouth is. One of the popular betting companies in Nigeria boldly claims to be rewarding the passion of the viewers.



Since sporting companies are recognized and regulated by the Nigerian law, many Nigerians claim it is not gambling but lottery. Betting companies in Nigeria have taken their awareness campaigns to the mass media. Their commercial messages are relayed during football matches and other sports programmes. They also use the social media to promote their services. Many betting houses in Nigeria have also leveraged on the power of celebrities in their bids to create greater awareness for their brands and also increase patronage. To this end, some sports music and movie icons have become brand ambassadors for some betting companies in Nigeria. Some of the notable faces associated with betting companies in Nigeria are two former captains of the national male football team, (Super Eagles) Austin Okocha and Kanu Nwankwo as well as their former teammate Victor Ikpeba. Other entertainers in the mix are veteran actor Kunle Coker, comedian Seyi Law, actor Bola Ninalowo (Nino) and singer Mr. Eazi. These celebrities have followers across the country and beyond and they influence their followers to patronize the brands they support. With legal backing and celebrity endorsement, sports betting seemingly becomes a “lesser evil”.

The betting industry is a huge part of the Nigerian economy. According to industry experts, “the sector generates about \$1 billion a year and is likely to grow faster than South Africa and Kenya where the business is more developed” (Akwagyiram & Akinyelure, 2018) in the coming years. In 2016 the total betting web payments in Nigeria was 14 million and the monetary worth was 132 billion naira. In 2017, it rose to 185 billion naira. In the first quarter of 2018, the web payments were 10 million which amounted to 61 billion naira in monetary value (Akwagyiram & Akinyelure, 2018). The trend shows that total payments and monetary value of betting transactions of 2018 in Nigeria were on course to beat the records of the preceding years. There is a moral question on the idea of sports betting. Why would someone invest 100 (one hundred) naira and hope to receive 81,000 (eighty-one thousand) naira in return after 48 (forty-eight) hours. Although such a “business” may be legal, it is seemingly immoral. Interestingly, the dominant religions in Nigeria (Christianity and Islam) generally frown at the idea of gambling. Curiously, Nigeria is one of the most religious countries of the world. Most of those who populate the sports betting industry are either Christians or Muslims.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Gambling encourages people to seek quick and easy money. Gamblers tend to present odd cases of people who have won big amounts of money as a positive indicator of betting. Sports betting companies use the mass media and celebrities to market their services and consequently encourage Nigerians to embrace the betting culture. Black Bet uses Bola Ninalowo (Nino) as brand ambassador while musician Mr. Eazi is the face of Betpawa. Similarly, retired Super Eagles captains Austin Okocha and Kanu Nwankwo are ambassadors for Bet King and Sportybet respectively. Victor Ikpeba (former Super Eagles’ striker), Seyi Law (comedian) and Kunle Coker (veteran actor) combine their star appeal for the benefit of Bet9ja. With the endorsement of betting companies by celebrities, many Nigerians are increasingly regarding sports betting as a normal part of human existence. They do not consider the fact that the celebrities may only be working for their money. Many celebrities have business interests and they understand that it takes hard work, dedication and patience to acquire wealth. The celebrities may not engage in actual betting but they encourage their fans to bet thereby selling their fans to the sports betting companies. Sports betting offers people uncertain windows of escape from poverty yet many Nigerians embrace this uncertain window and filter away their hitherto inadequate resources.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

In view of the problem discussed above, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- ❖ To ascertain the demography of Nigerian betters.
- ❖ To examine the effects of sports betting on the morality of Nigerians.
- ❖ To evaluate the impact of betting on the finances of Nigerian betters.
- ❖ To gauge the perception of betting-endorsing celebrities by Nigerian betters.
- ❖ To examine the impact of sports betting on the attitude of Nigerians to work.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This theoretical foundation for this paper is Martin Fishbein's Expectancy-value theory and Albert Bandura's Social Learning theory.

2.1.1 Expectancy-Value Theory

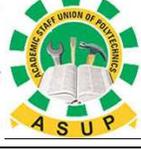
The theory states that human expectations and expected values are the determinants of human behavior. Therefore whenever there is possibility of more than one behavior, an individual would choose the behavior that offers the greater prospect of success. Expectancy-value theory suggests that human beings are goal-oriented and thus their behaviors are "are undertaken to achieve some end" (Utwente.nl, 2018). In relation to this study, Nigerians who engage in sports betting do so to achieve economic objectives. They always have two pathways to relative economic success. The first pathway is to save their money and invest in long term businesses which would yield marginal but assured profits in future. The second pathway is to stake their money on football matches every week with the hope of making uncertain but astronomic return on investment within a couple of days. They often rush to take the second option.

It is interesting to note that the seemingly easier choice offers the greater risk. They pay relatively little amount of money to the betting companies weekly or bi-weekly and they would be lucky to win once in a year. Results of matches rarely go their ways but they are encouraged by the periodic margin of error in each set of games staked upon and they stake again at the next opportunity hoping for better luck. It must be said that the prevailing socio-economic situation in Nigeria is another factor that nudges people to bet on sports. The little chances of gratifying their economic needs and ultimately their social/esteem needs through their prospective winnings are usually irresistible and it urges them to use betting services.

In using the expectancy-value formula, the betting patron "determines the gratifications that will be sought by a media user by summing his or her beliefs about what media can provide weighted by one's evaluations of those beliefs" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 979). To this end, Nigerian patrons of betting companies evaluate the commercial messages of the betting companies as well as the endorsement by their favorite celebrities and make their betting decisions in view of the weight of the claims and endorsements of the companies and the celebrities respectively. The summary of the expectancy-value theory is that human behaviours, and attitudes are functions of our perception of a line of action and the extent to which it is likely to give us a positive or negative outcome.

2.1.2 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory was propounded by psychologist Albert Bandura. The theory holds that youths are developmentally establishing their independence and identity and are heavily influenced by role models, making them particularly susceptible to celebrity endorsements. Researches have demonstrated that young people frequently adopt certain self-image, lifestyle patterns and purchasing decisions based on observation of individuals presented in the media. These mediated role models can have a significant effect on the career aspirations, educational choices and self-views of young adults. When young viewers watch the successful footballers like Austin Okocha and Kanu Nwankwo endorsing betting companies, they would come to believe that betting is morally and economically right. Similarly, when music and movie lovers watch Olamide, Bola Ninalowo and Mr. Eazi promoting betting companies, they could assume that betting could help them achieve financial breakthrough to make them live the lives of celebrities. This is without consideration of the fact that most of these celebrities had humble beginnings and they had to work their ways to stardom.



2.2 History of Gambling in Nigeria

It is difficult to pinpoint the origin of betting in Nigeria. However, pointers indicate that it is a colonial legacy in Nigeria. The first effort at regulating gambling in Nigeria was the Casino Taxation Act of 1965 (Gamblingafrica.com, 2018). Lagos has been the unofficial national headquarters of gambling in Nigeria. This is due to its status as the former political headquarters of the country as well as its position as the nation's economic capital. The importance of gambling to the economy of mega cities was identified early in Lagos and the Lagos State Lotto Authority was established to oversee lottery and pooling activities in the state. However, the act of gambling was largely unregulated in other cities across the country (Gamblingafrica.com, 2018).

Licensed operators of casinos were protected by the government with the ban on unregistered betting/gaming houses in 1977. This suggests that the government valued the economic contributions of betting houses. The government of Nigeria legalizes lotteries, racing, pools and selected casino. As a proof of the government's interest in the gambling industry, the Nigerian National Lottery was established to raise funds for the development of national sports and other areas. Thus an act of parliament was enacted in 2004 for the regulation of lottery activities. The process of the Nigerian lottery is hard to comprehend for non-players. Sports betting is another form of gambling in Nigeria. It is the modern form of gambling. While it offers gamblers the chance to bet on popular sports like, tennis, basketball cricket, golf, and boxing among others, football betting is particularly popular among Nigerian gamblers. Internet revolution has provided Nigerians the opportunity to gamble without visiting betting houses. They can place their bets online

Before the advent of modern betting companies in Nigeria, the most popular betting was "Baba ljebu". It was predominantly patronized by illiterates especially those associated with public transport services in South-western Nigeria. However, the introduction of modern betting companies and the use of celebrities has expanded the betting industry to hitherto closed markets. Students and white collar workers across the country now engage in betting. They do not have to face the stigma of visiting betting houses because they can always place their stakes online using their smartphones.

2.3 Effects of gambling on the society

When results of football matches do not go as desired by the fans, some "spouses experience dramatic mood changes and engage in deviant behaviors" (Tade, 2014). The drama would go up a notch when the fan puts money on his favorite team and loses the money. This puts a strain on marriages. Although national and global trends suggest that "it is impossible for humans to develop without sports and human relations may become more challenging without sports" (Olayinka & Fageyinbo, 2015, p. 47), the emerging powerful narrative that sports betting offers a sure pathway to financial freedom is erroneous. The presentation of the endorsements are misleading and therefore socially immoral. It is arguable that most of the celebrities fronting for betting companies do not bet and may not engage in betting in future. The commercials espousing the benefits of betting and the uniqueness of each betting company are media productions which are not real. They are packaged for effects and impression on the market.

The adverts misrepresent the odds. Most of them totally ignore the chances of losing while that of Bet9ja admits the possibility of losing but downplays the possibility. In reality, weekly informal surveys at bars and viewing centers reveal that the number of losers greatly outnumber the number of winners every week. For some people, they have lost 30 stakes for each stake won. While some have never won since they have been making bets, yet they persevere because of the perennial closeness of their predictions. There are negative micro and macro implications of betting. Since the chances of losing are higher than the chances of winning, gamblers frequently go broke. As their pool of funds dry up, they often resort to crime in order to pay debts, maintain appearance and garner more money to gamble. With the frequent loss of funds, poverty becomes a common feature and the fight for survival sets it. When members of a society are preoccupied with basic survival, morality is often relegated to the background.



The implication is that sports betting in Nigeria is a social and economic gunpowder. We risk a complete breakdown in the moral fabric of society.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study follows a quantitative design. The survey method is employed. This approach is necessary because the study deals with the attitude and perception of respondents. The instrument of data collection is questionnaire.

3.1 Sample

The population of Nigeria makes it impossible to study every sports better, therefore, a sample is needed. Also the sheer size of Nigeria makes it impossible to cover every city, town or village in Nigeria. A sample size of 120 respondents was selected for the study and 120 copies of the questionnaire was distributed, but only 108 copies were returned. This gives us a 90% return rate. This sample size is based on the position of Emory (1985) that the absolute size of a sample is much more important than its size relative to the population. He explains that because the formulae for sample size in probability sampling assume an infinite population, a sample of 100 drawn from a population of 5,000 has roughly the same estimating precision as a sample of 100 drawn from a population of 200 000 000. The only difference is the difficulty in drawing the sample from the larger population. Respondents were selected from betting houses and football viewing centers and pubs where football is watched. The locations were purposively selected while the respondents were selected at random.

4. DATA PRESENTATION

Do you watch football?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes		90	90	90
	No		9	9	100
Total		1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

The table above shows that 91% of the respondents are regular viewers of football matches. While the remaining 9% were at the locations for other reasons. This high rate of the regular football watchers in the sample justifies the selection of the location for the collection of data. It also suggests that one of the major reasons for patronising pubs in Nigeria is to watch football.

Do you place bet on sporting activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes		81	81	81
	No		18	18	100
Total		1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

The table above shows that 81.5% of the respondents engage in sports betting while 18.5% of them do not. The implication is that sports betting is a common habit among the respondents.



How did you hear about your favourite betting company?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Newspaper advertisement		17	18	18
	Television advertisement		14	15	34
	Social media advertisement		15	16	50
	Interpersonal communication		47	49	100
	Total	1	95	100	
Missing	System		4		
Total		1	100		

Source: Field Study, 2019

Betting companies operating in Nigeria make efforts at publicizing their services through the mass media. Although their publicity efforts in the media have yielded great awareness, interpersonal relationship seems to be more effective in spreading the word about the activities of the betting companies. As shown in the table above, advertisement in the mass media cumulatively yielded 50.5% of the publicity among the respondents while interpersonal communication alone yielded 49.5% of the awareness (about) and brand loyalty to betting companies among the respondents.

Sports betting is gambling

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	True		51	51	51
	False		41	41	93
	Undecided		6	6	100
	Total	1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

Perception is a crucial force at the base of all forms of social interaction including betting. The perception of sports betting by Nigerian youths is varies. While some of the respondents (52%) believe it is gambling others (42%) believe it is not gambling. The rest do not have an opinion on it.

Sports betting is a potential source of financial liberation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	True		68	68	68
	False		18	18	87
	Undecided		13	13	100
	Total	1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

The table above sheds more light on the perception of sports betting by the respondents. 68.5% of the respondents believe that sports betting is a potential source of financial liberation. This indicates that they have greater faith in luck than work. Therefore, they are more likely stake their money on football games instead of saving and investing in other forms of businesses which are less risky but have little profit margins. The love for quick money seems to permeate the Nigerian society and the youths are not left out.



Have you seen sports betting advertisements on television?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes		85	85	85
	No		14	14	100
Total		1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

Television plays a huge part in the creation of awareness about sports betting and betting companies in Nigeria. As seen in the table above, 85% of the respondents have come across television commercials promoting betting companies in Nigeria. This is an indication that sports betting companies are making great efforts at reaching their target audience and they are hitting the target in their publicity drive. However, 15% said they have never seen a television commercial promoting a betting company.

The use of celebrities in betting advertisements is good

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	True		72	72	72
	False		9	9	81
	Undecided		18	18	100
Total		1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

The table above shows the respondents' perception of the endorsement of betting companies by Nigerian celebrities. 72% of the respondents think that the use of celebrities for betting advertisements is a good thing while 9% think it is a bad development. 19% are undecided about it.

Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male		74	74	74
	Female		21	21	95
	Others		4	4	100
	Total	1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

The table above shows that 74% of the respondents are male while 21% are female. The table buttresses the widely held belief that football is men's sport. Although there are many women who are passionate about football, their number pale in comparison to their male counterparts. It also shows that men patronize viewing centers and pubs more than women.

Age of respondents		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-23	7	73.	73.	73.
	24-29	2	19.	19.	92.
	30-35		5.	5.	98.
	36-41		.	.	99.
	Above 41		.	.	100.
Total		10	100.	100.	

Source: Field Study, 2019



The distribution of the ages of the respondents is shown in the table above. 73% of the respondents are between 18 and 23 years old while 19% are between 24 and 29 years old. Cumulatively, 93% of the respondents are under the age of 30. This gives credence to the argument that the youths of this country are her main resources. The table also shows that 9% of the respondents are above 30 years old.

Occupation of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Student		80	80	80
Artisan		1	1	82
Civil servant		12	12	94
Corporate sector worker		5	5	100
Total	1	100	100	

Source: Field Study, 2019

The table above shows that most of the respondents (80.6%) are students. Civil servants make up 12% of the population and the rest are either artisans or corporate sector workers. The overwhelming number of students in the sample suggests that those most of those who patronize pubs to watch football matches do not have the financial capacity to watch the matches in the comfort of their homes. Workers in the corporate sector are arguably better paid than their counterparts in the civil service and this explains why they are few in the sample. They could afford to watch football games live from the comfort of their homes.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the data collected for this study shows that sports betting is widespread among Nigerians even though it is more popular among young people who have no steady source of income. Those who have little income are seemingly more open to making quick money. The data also shows that betting has become a permanent fixture within Nigerian socio-cultural space. It is widely accepted by Nigerians. Even those who do not engage in it do not necessarily castigate those who engage in it. In past decades, any form of gambling was frowned upon by the society however, this has changed today as governments and betting companies both use the appeal of stars to push for the development of sports betting in Nigeria.

Sports betting is more rampant among men than women. This is not surprising because men generally follow football more than women. Perhaps the scourge of unemployment in the country has helped the spread of betting among the teeming youths of Nigeria. Those who are in dire need of financial breakthrough are more likely to engage in betting and other lotteries. They live in the hope of winning a huge amount of money that would change the course of their lives economically. The flipside is that they may be lured into a rat race through betting. There is a relationship between football viewership and sports betting in Nigeria. Although it is difficult to classify both of them into dependent and independent variables, they both move in the same direction. Many people bet because they are football fans, and many others watch football matches because they have placed bets on certain games. Interpersonal communication is essential to the spread of sports betting in Nigeria. That is an indication that peer pressure is as important as (if not more important than) media placement in the spread of ideas. Many people may not see the commercials when shown on television, but their interaction with their friends, family and colleagues who bet regularly could sway them to partake in sports betting.



5.1 Summary

Sports betting is a widespread and fast growing phenomenon in Nigeria, it is very popular among the youths of Nigeria. It is closely tied to football viewership even though it is difficult to explain which one drives the other between them. Men and women alike play sports betting even though men are more involved in football viewership and sports betting. The economic challenges faced by Nigerians have increased the patronage of betting companies by Nigerian youths with the hope that they would win big someday and pull out from the economic rat race. However, the expectation may not always play out because betting is a game of luck. The study also shows that interpersonal communication has helped in building brand loyalty for betting companies more than advertisements on radio and television even though the professionally packaged advertisements in the mass media use celebrity endorsements.

6. CONCLUSION

It is a well-known fact historically and statistically, that Celebrities endorsement and advertisement helps to boost sales, attract new set of customers, and it also helps to increase the consumer desire for the products. Therefore, various Betting companies, make use of celebrities for advert and in order to gain more customers and this is affecting the populace involve in sports-betting negatively, and the Economy also. Because majority of people involved in Sports Bet have become lazy and lack vision to work hard in life, with the hope that they will soon hit "Jackpot" from the Bets. It also brings about anti-social behavior, Suicide thoughts for those that might have lost a fortune through sports bets. There is frustration and anger when the winning is not forth coming, thereby resulting to greed. Sports-betting effects can be likened to the exposure to alcohol drinking, tobacco smoking, drug use, junk food e. t. c, which may lead to addiction. Therefore, there is the risk of gambling addiction which ultimately might lead to poverty. Celebrities advertising this Sport Bets cause more harm than good, in the sense that by advertising and encouraging people who idolize them to involve themselves in betting, they are unknowingly destroying their moral values, making them gambling addicts.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Betting commercials should carry warnings like those of cigarettes and alcohol stating the inherent dangers in betting. Although the caveat would not stop people from gambling altogether, it would serve as a warning to budding and aspiring gamblers that the representations portrayed in betting commercials are far from reality. Also, celebrities should see themselves as moral models and therefore shun products and brands that have the potential of negatively affecting the society. Families, schools and religious organizations should educate their children/wards, students and adherents on the dangers of gambling. They should encourage a renaissance of societal values. Money should be de-emphasized in social relations.



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