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JOINT INFLUENCE OF PSYCHO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON ADOLESCENTS' GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

Isukwem Gideon Chidozie[1],
Rosemary Obiagaeri Ekechukwu[2i]
[1]Department of Educational Psychology,
Guidance and Counselling
Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt,
Nigeria
[2]Dr., Department of Educational Psychology,
Guidance and Counselling
Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt,
Nigeria

Abstract:
The study investigated the joint influence of psycho-demographic variables on adolescents gambling behaviour in Rivers State. The study used the ex-post-facto and correlational research designs. One research questions and one corresponding hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study comprised all 9636 students in senior secondary class two from 3 Local Government Areas (Obio/Apkor, Ahoada East, and Eleme) in the 3 Senatorial Zones of Rivers West, East, and Rivers South of Rivers State, Nigeria. A sample of 963 students (male 581 and female 382) was randomly drawn using purposive sampling technique from the 40 schools in the sampled 3 Local Government Areas. Four instruments were used to collect data for the study and they include; Adolescent Gambling Behaviour Index (AGBI), Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) and Peer Group Influence Scale (PGIS). The Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instruments; the reliability coefficients obtained were 0.78, 0.76, 0.69, and 0.71 respectively. The research question and corresponding hypothesis were analyzed with Anova and multiple regression statistics. The finding of the study shows that psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relate significantly to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that parents and care givers should endeavour to check and moderate the activities of

[i] Correspondence: email mamatriplets01@yahoo.com

their children from time to time. This will help in reducing some mischievous activities that are carried on by adolescents' both at home and in school.

Keywords: psycho-demographic variables (emotional intelligence, self-esteem, gender, location, peer group) and gambling behaviour

1. Introduction

Gambling is a form of behaviour that has been identified to have serious consequences on gamblers health, study-habit, academic performance, and has been reported to be related to some criminal behaviour (Oyebisi, Alao, & Popoola, 2012). Gambling has been generally defined as betting or wagering of money or something of value on an event that has an uncertain outcome with the possibility of winning money or materials (Korn and Shaffer, 1999; Potenza, Fiellin, Heninger, Rounsaville, & Mazure, 2002). Gambling traditionally includes activities such as wagering at casinos, on lotteries, animal racing, card games, sporting events, video lottery, and Internet card and casino games (Potenza *et al.*, 2002). As compared with adults, adolescents have been found to have high rates of problem and pathological gambling. Relatively, few adolescents seek help for gambling problems. Turner (2005) in his own opinion posited that, gambling is the act of risking the loss of something of value (usually money) on an uncertain outcome which is usually in the hope of winning something of greater value (usually money). The recent increase of gambling in North America and other parts of the world has been associated with increased opportunities for gambling and a greater social acceptability for the behaviour. The promotion of widely available government lotteries such as 'Win A Trip to Israel' (WATTI) promo organised by the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission (NCPC), the centenary lottery game, televising of poker tournaments, and accessibility of internet gambling make today's gambling environment significantly different from that of years past. In this environment, more adults report gambling than did in prior decades (National Research Council, 1999).

Gambling is based on a combination of skills or chance or both and something of value that can be won or lost (Kassinove, 1996). Young people including secondary school adolescents are a high risk group for gambling and gambling problems (Moore, 2013). A high prevalence of gambling participation has been observed in different secondary school adolescent populations, (Etel, Tabchi, Bou Khalil, Hlais & Richa, 2013). Secondary school students engage in a wide range of gambling behaviours, including playing lottery, poker/cards for money, casino games (i.e., slots/poker machines), horse racing, betting on sports and internet gambling (Burger, Dahlgren, & MacDonald, 2006). While gambling has, at times, been considered a socially deviant or immoral behaviour in some cultures and throughout history, the American Psychiatric Association only first defined it to be a medically diagnosable health problem in 1980 in the 3rd version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual DSM–V (Korn & Shaffer, 1999). Therefore, when gambling behaviour results in behavioural, emotional, relationship, or

financial problems, it may develop into a diagnosable condition known as problem or pathological gambling.

For adolescents with severe gambling problems, gambling consumes their lives much like adults with pathological gambling. However, the clinical presentation is typically different from that in adults. Because of their age, adolescent problem gamblers may still be in school, not yet be married, and live with their parents. Similar to adults, their family and friends may distrust them in view of repeated lies about their gambling, episodes of stealing, and unpaid loans. If they are still in school, schoolwork may suffer due to their preoccupation with gambling or obtaining money to gamble (Gupta & Derevensky, 2001). The public perceptions of gambling are often misleading. On the one hand, people 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, providing a source of revenue for sporting clubs or humanitarian causes) and can be an enjoyable pastime for individuals (Abbott & Cramer, 1993; Vong, 2009). Nigerian youths especially in Rivers State, are engaging themselves in gambling as a means of surviving; this is an intricate issue of special concern as this behaviour may predispose them to pathological/compulsive gambling (Oyebisi, Alao, & Popoola, 2012).

Gambling issues among adolescents have generally gotten very little or no attention as such; there are few writings on adolescent gambling. Nevertheless, adolescent by all indication, seem to be especially crucial in considering gambling practices given the likely dangers associated with gambling practices. Studies have shown a high prevalence of gambling among young people in Rivers state and much of this practice takes place in schools (Eneh & Stanley, 2004). Statistics revealed that in Rivers state a significant proportion of secondary school adolescents engage in various forms of gambling (Nariabet, Bet9ja lotto plus, MTN Quest4Football, Merrybet etc) (Nigeria Communications Week, 2017). This trend is particularly prevalent among adolescents, wherein adolescents are constantly seen in game centers, pool shops, and under canopies along streets where gambling activities take place. The situation is such that adolescents have to predict the outcome of matches in order to win money or other materials. The higher the number of matches predicted the higher the expected outcome if the prediction is right at the end of the match. The researcher has also observed that secondary school students particularly those in boarding schools, usually use their meals, beverages, cloths and other personal items to gamble among their peers.

As a result of technological development and availability of internet facilities, the level of adolescent's engagement in gambling behaviour in Rivers State is increasing. This is a big problem among this population. Present indication shows that more and more adolescents are involving themselves in this activity; some have even perceived it as a source of income and abandon other activities that can provide them with better income for the future. Recent data shows that Nigerians spend about 1.8 billion naira daily on online sport betting (Online Sportnews, 2015). A public opinion poll revealed that gambling and betting is becoming very popular in Nigeria, particularly amongst

the country's bulging youth population and sports fans aged between 18–35 years (NOIPolls, 2017).

There are debates that self-esteem may relate to gambling behaviour among adolescents. For instance, Harter (1990) stressed that around one-half of adolescents in the world struggle with low self-esteem which may lead to delinquency, gambling, self-inflicted behaviours, suicide, and eating-disorders. Lightfoot, Cole and Cole (2008) suggested that individuals who have low self-esteem are more prone to engage in risky behaviours and develop gambling addictions. They further explain that, perhaps poor self-esteem is a starting point for adolescents becoming involved in gambling. Other studies point out that engaging in gambling activities has a negative effect on one's own self-worth (Kaare, Mottus, & Konstabel, 2009).

Emotional intelligence is conceptualized as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Kaare, Mottus, and Konstabel, (2009) observed that, individuals with lower levels of emotional intelligence are at a greater risk of developing problem gambling and other self-destructive behaviour. According to Kaur, Schutte, and Thorsteinsson (2006), those who have lower levels of emotional intelligence run a greater risk of problem gambling. Furthermore, they reported that individuals with a higher emotional intelligence perceive themselves as more competent and successful, thus better able to handle any gambling tendencies they may have.

Peer group has also been suggested to be a significant determinant of gambling behaviour among adolescents. An individual who often associate with friends that gambles is also vulnerable to gambling related activities. This is based logically on the fact that an adolescent who fails to conform to a group norms may face social rejected and finally evicted from the group. Peer pressure exert immense influence on adolescents thus, because of fear of social rejection, adolescents tend to follow the group rules including behaviours' that may be detrimental to their life, psychological wellbeing and family relations such as gambling. It is not surprising to state that socioeconomic status influences adolescents' participation in gambling.

Location (rural or urban), may influence adolescents' gambling behaviour. Urban dwellers presumably have a higher tendency to gamble compared with rural dwellers because gambling centers, gambling spots, horse racing clubs, internet gambling cafes and lottery ticket outlets, are primarily within easier access in urban areas. Nevertheless, the possibility exists that rural dwellers may gamble more, especially as it may be considered their only form of entertainment. A national survey of adults conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, found that respondents living within 50 miles of a casino had twice the rate of problem or pathological gambling as those living farther from a casino (Gerstein, 1999). However, Scott and Garen (1994) noted that location does not affect gambling participation.

Without doubt, participation in gambling by secondary school adolescents is a major problem which can cause serious health risks; pose academic challenges,

abnormal heart rhythms, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, and sensory disturbances. Although, adolescents who participate in gambling feel that engaging in it helps reduce tension, frustration, boredom and sometimes help them stay awake all night or increase their mental alertness. However, experiences of some gamblers have shown that engaging in gambling carries a high price tag which often leads to fatality, drug use, smoking, suicidal and gangsterism. When gambling behaviour increases, it may produce negative consequences in the adolescent's financial, social, and overall health. Some of these negative health and social consequences of gambling on adolescents may include; gambling disorders, family dysfunction and domestic violence, alcohol and other drug problems, psychiatric conditions, suicide and suicide attempts, significant financial problems, and criminal behaviour. A major consequence of gambling among secondary school adolescents is poor academic performance, truancy and increased school dropout. Gamblers often show signs of depression, withdrawal, mood swings and have difficulties establishing close friendships or maintaining social networks, often replacing friends with gambling associates.

In many cases, gambling results in problems such as debt, bankruptcy, eviction and homelessness. There is also evidence of adolescents stealing from other family members to fund their gambling. From the foregoing therefore, the researcher is motivated to examine the joint influence of psycho-demographic variables on adolescents gambling behaviour in Rivers State.

2. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined the joint influence of psycho-demographic variables on adolescents gambling behaviour in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to;

- Determine whether psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relates to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State.

2.1 Research Questions

- To what extent does psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relates to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State?

2.2 Hypotheses

- Psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) do not jointly relate to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State.

3. Methodology

The study adopted two research designs namely; correlational design and ex-post-facto research design. The population of the study comprised of all the 9636 students in senior secondary class two from 3 Local Government Areas (Obio/Apkor, Ahoada East, and Eleme) in the 3 senatorial zones of Rivers West, East, and Rivers South of Rivers State, Nigeria.

A sample of 963 participants was randomly and independently selected using purposive sampling technique from the 40 schools in the sampled 3 Local Government Areas in Rivers State, Nigeria (Obio/Apkor, Ahoada East, and Eleme). An instrument titled "Adolescent Gambling Behaviour Index" (AGBI) was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A dealt with the respondents' personal information, while section B was sub-divided into different parts e.g. (gambling behaviour) and (peer group influence).

The Adolescent Gambling Behaviour Index (AGBI) was designed on a four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. The Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to establish the internal consistency reliability coefficient 0.76 for the Adolescent Gambling Behaviour Index (AGBI). Responses to the research questions were analyzed with mean and standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment correlation and independent sample t-test respectively, while the corresponding hypotheses were tested with independent sample t-test, linear regression.

4. Results

4.1 Research Question One

To what extent does psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relates to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State?

Table 1: Multiple regression of the joint relationship between psycho-demographic variables and gambling behaviour

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.378[a]	.143	.138

Table 1 revealed that there is a low positive relationship between psycho-demographic variables and gambling behaviour with a regression coefficient of 0.378. The r square of .143 and adjusted R square of 0.138. The coefficient of determinism of is given as 14.3%. The analysis thus showed that psycho-demographic variables jointly predict gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State by 14.3%.

4.2 Hypothesis One

Psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) do not jointly relate to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State.

Table 2: ANOVA associated with multiple regression of the joint relationship between psycho-demographic variables and gambling behaviour

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8872.529	5	1774.506	31.873	.000[a]
	Residual	53279.629	957	55.674		
	Total	62152.158	962			

a. Predictors: (Constant), peer group, location, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, gender

b. Dependent Variable: gambling behaviour

Table 2 revealed that the F value was computed to be 31.873. With degrees of freedom of 5 and 957, the calculated F-value of 31.873 is statistically significant at 0.000 when subjected to alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

By implication, the data analyzed shows that psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relate significantly to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State.

4.3 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are summarized as follows: the study revealed that psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relate to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State.

5. Discussion of Findings

5.1 Psycho-demographic Variables and Gambling Behaviour

The result of this study showed that psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relate to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State.

Therefore, the null hypothesis of no joint significant relationship between psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) and gambling behaviour was rejected. Further analysis of the result revealed that female students tend to gamble more than male secondary school students in Rivers State.

The findings of this study is in agreement with the findings of Hardoon and Derevensky (2001) who asserted that, peer group plays a significant role in adolescents'

gambling behaviour. They argued that peers may introduce others to gambling as a shared social activity.

Jianbin and Ziying (2016) also explained that risk propensity to gambling is directly positively related to and moderated by peer gambling. The reason why peer group accounts for adolescents' gambling behaviour may be because members of a peer group usually have strong behavioural influence on each other. Moreso, members of a peer group may fear of losing the acceptance of their peers if they do not join them in doing what they do.

The finding of the study also agrees with Kaare, Mottus and Konstabel (2009) who explained that having a low self-esteem influence an individual's decision to engage in gambling as a recreational activity, and as the behaviour increases and becomes problematic this further decreases the individual's self-esteem.

Kaur, Schutte, and Thorsteinsson (2006) explained that those who have lower levels of emotional intelligence run a greater risk of problem gambling. They further reported that individuals with a higher emotional intelligence perceive themselves as more competent and successful, thus better able to handle any gambling tendencies they may have.

The however disagree with the study by Scott and Garen (1994) who found out that location does not affect gambling participation among secondary school adolescents.

6. Conclusion

Participation in gambling by secondary school adolescents is a major problem which can cause serious health risks; pose academic challenges, abnormal heart rhythms, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, and sensory disturbances.

This study has shown that psycho-demographic variables (gender, peer group, location, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) jointly relate significantly to gambling behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Rivers State.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended the following;

1) Parents and care givers should endeavour to check and moderate the activities of their children from time to time. This will help in reducing some mischievous activities that are carried on by adolescents' both at home and in school.
2) Schools should enforce strict disciplinary measures prohibiting any form of gambling among students.
3) The school should endeavour to make good use of its entrepreneurial seminars and centers to empower students on vocational training, with the aim of making profit.
4) The government should regulate gambling activities by stipulating the age of persons eligible to gamble and arrest and punish underage gamblers.

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