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**INFLUENCE OF ONLINE GAMBLING ADVERTISEMENTS ON YOUTHS' PERCEPTION, ATTITUDE AND INVOLVEMENT IN FOOTBALL BETTING IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA.**

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***Abstract***

*Several research findings have established the need to regulate advertisements of potentially harmful products. Some of these products include junk foods, cigarettes and alcohol. Gambling is one of the services that call for caution and restrictions (in terms of advertisements) due to the inherent risk of addiction. The caution becomes imperative these days, considering the ease of access and availability of betting options made possible by internet and other wireless technology. Though the powerful impact of advertisements on adolescents and youths have been studied in several public health domains, the effects of gambling advertisements on youths have been largely neglected. Consequently, this study attempts to examine the influence of online football betting advertisements deployed in football betting (with emphasis on online gambling) and how they may escalate the growing negative effects on youths, with a view to recommending policies aimed at regulating the marketing of gambling products to minimize the risks presented to youths, thereby stemming the dangerous growing tide of gambling and forestalling potential future problems. The study was carried out using the quantitative research method. With the use of multi stage sampling techniques, self-structured questionnaire was administered on 1067 participants randomly selected across three state capitals (Lagos, Ibadan, Oshogbo) in South West Nigeria. Six hypotheses were drawn and analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The test of hypotheses was done using simple and multiple linear regression, with the adoption of Statistical*

*Product and Services Solution (SPSS 22). The study concluded that youths engage in football betting as a result of increased exposure to online football betting advertisements, which has the tendency of resulting in football betting addiction, if not regulated*

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**Keywords:** *Online gambling advertisement, football betting, attitude, perception, involvement, youths*

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### **Introduction**

Considering the ease of access and availability made possible by internet and other wireless technology, gambling industry can be regarded as one of the fastest growing industries in the world. (Binde, 2006). Besides the traditional forms of gambling, the global online gambling and betting market accounted for 45.8 billion US dollars in 2017 and is expected to reach 94.4 billion US dollars globally by 2024, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of around 10.9% between 2018 and 2024 (Globe Newswire, 2019). In Nigeria, nearly 2 billion naira is laid out on sports betting everyday, which turns into nearly 730 billion naira in a year. That explains why betting shops are spotted on almost every corner (in most cities in Nigeria), and each day, new betting places or shops are set up (The Tide Admin, 2018)

All over the world, there is increasing evidence to suggest that minors and youths engage in gambling and develop more gambling-related problems than any other age groups. Research from Canada, United State of America, United Kingdom, Norway and Australia shows that 63% to 82% of teenagers (12 to 17years) gamble each year; 46% to 72% of adolescents exhibit serious patterns of pathological gambling and 10% to 15% are at risk for either developing or returning to a serious gambling problem (Cherney et al, 2014; Derevensky, Sklar, Gupta & Messerlain, 2010; Delfabbro & Thrup, 2003; Derevensky & Gupta, 2004; Johansson & Gotestam, 2003; National Research Council, 1999). Nigeria has had her fair share of the negative effects of this social malaise as evident in some scholarly works. A research report submitted by Eboh, V.C. (2015) examined the prevalence and determinant of gambling behaviour among undergraduate students of Federal University, Oye Ekiti. The study found out that 67.5% of students of Federal University, Oye-Ekiti students engage in gambling activities, in which 82.7% of them are male and 14.3% are

females. Majority of the respondents, who ever gambled, reported that they engage in such activities because they needed money. Various newspapers equally reported the maladaptive behaviours exhibited by youth gamblers more frequently. These ranges from depression, crime and suicide. For example, an agent of *Nairabet*, a sports betting platform was reported to have ended his life over his inability to pay a customer who allegedly won six hundred thousand naira in Lagos (*punchng.com*, 2017). In another development, a Lagos High Court in Ikeja sentenced a 29-year-old woman to seven years' imprisonment for killing her husband with a kitchen knife during an argument over premier lotto popularly known as 'Baba Ijebu'. On the day of the murder, the deceased reportedly came home angry for losing to 'Baba Ijebu', which resulted in a fight between him and his wife (*Punch*, May 9, 2017). Another incident involved a 29-year-old man who admitted to killing his 99-year-old aunt whom he accused of using her spiritual powers to change his 'Baba Ijebu' lottery winning number. According to the police, the suspect admitted before homicide detectives that he matcheted the old woman because he had an inclination that the woman was responsible for most of his spiritual problems (*guardian.ng*, 2019).

More recently, the Wednesday, 5th February, 2020 edition of Nigerian Tribune also featured a report on Nigeria's growing multi-million dollar betting industry, and the challenges it pose to the society. In the report, an expose of the sports betting industry in Nigeria was carried out, and most people interviewed agreed that the act is fast becoming a great challenge on the social, health, economic, educational and security spheres of the country.

Though the powerful impact of advertisements on adolescents and youths have been studied in several public health domains (including alcohol, tobacco and junk food consumption) with a view to minimizing potential harms caused by certain marketing techniques, the effects of gambling advertisements on youths have been largely neglected. Despite the increasing awareness of the importance of addressing the issue of youth gambling, most especially football betting, there is little empirical research on the influence of gambling advertising on youths' perception, attitudes and involvement in gambling in Nigeria.

Consequently, this study attempts to examine the influence of online football betting advertisements deployed in football betting (with emphasis on online

gambling) and how they may escalate the growing negative effects on youths, with a view to recommending policies aimed at regulating the marketing of gambling products to minimize the risks presented to youths, thereby stemming the dangerous growing tide of gambling and forestalling potential future problems.

### **Literature review**

Because of Nigeria's large population, it has the largest market in terms of betting games in Africa. Indeed, Nigeria is the hot destination and preferred hub when it comes to investments in betting games. Increased involvement of known Nigerian indigenous company's participation in the betting sector also contributed immensely to the growth of the industry. When betting games were still offline and with low indigenous company participation, the rate at which betting games were played in Nigeria by the youth was very low (Olaore, Adejare and Ekpenyong; 2020). But with the population explosion in Nigeria, coupled with unemployment and underemployment among the youth, and betting companies identifying investment opportunities in the betting game industry, this made many of these indigenous companies to thrive. Their investment into the sector led to the eruption of betting centres and shops across Nigeria, which also led to the increased participation of youth in betting games in Nigeria (Gupta and Derevensky, 2014). As at February 13th 2021, there are sixty five (65) active betting websites in Nigeria. (<https://bestcitybet.com/index.php/list-of-betting-wetting-websites-in-nigeria>)

According to a Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) report on Gambling in Africa, about 60 million Nigerian adults (18-40 years old) are into *active* sports betting. The common player would spend about 3,000 Naira (nearly 15 dollars) on sports betting. Proportionately, nearly 2 billion Naira is laid out on sports betting in Nigeria every day, which turns into nearly 730 billion Naira for a year (*Daily post*, 2014). That explains why betting shops can be spotted on almost every corner in major cities in South West, Nigeria, and each day, new betting shops spring up.

All forms of legalized gambling; including sports betting is licensed and regulated by the National lottery Regulatory Commission. The National Lottery Regulatory Commission was established through its enabling law, the National Lottery Act, 2005, enacted by the National Assembly of the Republic of

Nigeria, Part II of the act states the functions of the commission. Part V of the Act spells out the conditions for operating the business of a National lottery. As computed by section 17, part V of this Act, ‘The operation of the business of a national lottery or any other lottery, by whatever name called, shall be subject to a license granted by the president upon recommendation by the commission and compliance with the provisions of this Act or any regulations made pursuant thereto’ (National Lottery Act, 2005.)

The need to regulate football betting became imperative due to the inherent danger the act portends to the bettor (whom may develop addiction) in particular, and the society in general. Several research findings have established this position, some of which are reported herein.

Binde (2009) did an extensive research on the impact of gambling advertising, using the interview method of data gathering. This study qualitatively explored the impact of gambling advertising on addictive gambling by interviewing twenty-five people with current or past gambling problems. Interviews were relatively long and involved the participants’ viewing numerous examples of gambling advertising. A quarter of the participants reported that gambling advertising had no impact on their problems, slightly over half of them reported that advertising had a marginal impact, and one fifth reported a tangible influence. However, none considered advertising to be a main cause of their gambling problems. The negative self-perceived impact was primarily that advertising triggered impulses to gamble. Advertising thus increased already high involvement in gambling and/or made it harder to stick to a decision to gamble less or not at all.

Kim, Lee & Jung. (2013)’s study on *Changing the stakes: A content analysis of Internet gambling advertising in TV poker programs between 2006 and 2010* is another research report that was reviewed. Given societal and public health concerns about Internet gambling, their study examines how prevalent Internet gambling advertising is during TV poker programs and how Internet gambling companies employed alternative strategies to promote Internet gambling on TV in response to government regulations in 2006 and 2010. Despite legislation to prohibit Internet gambling in 2006, the results reveal that the extent of Internet gambling advertising during TV poker programmes slightly increased in 2010 versus 2006. In terms of advert message appeals and strategy, the findings of this study suggest that there were some similarities and differences between

2006 and 2010 in the use of dominant appeals, as well as the proportion of Internet gambling adverts featuring references to an educational purpose, a legal disclaimer, and a big payout. The gap in their study is that it was limited to a defined society within specific period (2006-2010), and its findings cannot be generalized for all societies and cultures.

Korn, Hurson, & Reynolds (2005) wrote a research report on commercial gambling advertising, with specific focus on possible impact on youth knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behavioural intentions. This report presents the results of the first study in Ontario to examine the possible impact of commercial gambling advertising on youth. The primary purpose of the study was to explore the ways that commercial gambling advertising might affect the attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and behavioural intentions of youth. Although this research is an exploratory study, the findings have implications for future research, preventive programming, and healthy public policy.

An empirical study by Derevensky, Sklar, Gupta & Messerlian (2010) examined the impact of gambling advertisements on adolescent gambling attitudes and behaviors. Based upon a previous qualitative study a questionnaire ascertaining adolescents' awareness of gambling advertisements and their impact upon their behavior was developed and administered to 1,147 youth between the ages of 12 and 19. The findings suggest that almost all respondents reported being exposed to advertising with many individuals indicating being bombarded with messages, especially through pop-up adverts viewed on the Internet. Sixty-one percent of youth reported receiving spam gambling advertisements by e-mail and 96% had seen TV advertisements for gambling.

Deans, Thomas, Derevensky & Daube (2017)'s study which is equally relevant to this work is titled *The influence of marketing on the sports betting attitudes and consumption behaviours of young men: Implications for harm reduction and prevention strategies*. According to them, gambling can cause significant health and social harms for individuals, Deans et al (2017) posited that while many studies have explored the individual factors that may lead to and minimize harmful gambling, there is still limited knowledge about the broader range of factors that may contribute to gambling harm. There are significant regulations to prevent the marketing of some forms of gambling but comparatively limited regulations relating to the marketing of newer forms of online gambling such as sports betting. According to them, there is a need for better information about

how marketing strategies may be shaping betting attitudes and behaviours and the range of policy and regulatory responses that may help to prevent the risky or harmful consumption of these products.

Back home in Africa, a research work titled *Implications of Sports Betting in Kenya: Impact of Robust Growth of the Sports Betting Industry* was conducted by Mwadime (2016). The general objective of the study was to assess sports betting impact in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to assess the role and impact of technology on sports betting, to examine the effects of sports betting on vulnerable segments of users, and to examine the role of controls and legislation on sports betting. To achieve these objectives the study utilized a descriptive research design using quantitative research approach. The population of the study was drawn from individuals engaging in sports betting within Nairobi County. In total, it was estimated that 2 million individuals were engaged in sports betting. Using stratified random sampling and Yamane's formula, a sample size of 100 respondents was selected for inclusion in the study. Collected data was analyzed using SPSS and MS Excel worksheets using descriptive statistics of frequency distributions, means and modes. Analyzed data was presented using tables and figures.

The study found that majority of the individuals engaging in sports betting were male of the ages below 40 years and above 21 years. In addition, the biggest source of income for sports betters was salaries indicating that employed individuals were at a higher probability of engaging in sports betting than entrepreneurs and unemployed individuals. Most of sports bets were placed using the website on a more than once per week interval.

### **Underpinning Theory**

The theoretical frameworks adopted for this study were the Social Learning Theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

#### **The Social Learning Theory**

The first serious look at learning through observation was offered by two psychologists, Neal Miller and John Dollard in 1941. They propounded that imitative learning occurred when observers were motivated to learn, when the cues or elements of the behaviours to be learned were present, when observers perform the given behaviours, and when observers were positively reinforced

for imitating those behaviours (Baran & Davis, 2012). The meaning of this theory was however broadened by Albert Bandura and R.H.Walters in 1963.

The social learning theory is hinged on the belief that humans learn from observation. Observation then leads to two forms of responses: imitation and identification. While imitation is the direct mechanical reproduction of behaviour, identification on the other hand, is ‘a particular form of imitation in which copying a model, generalized beyond specific acts, springs from wanting to be and trying to be like the model with respect to some broader quality’. (White, 1972). This is equally supported by Baran & Davis (2012) who believes that humans learn from observation.

The social learning theory is relevant to this study because gambling is a form of behavior that is highly subjected to reinforcement and reward. Adapted to this work, the theory proposes that as individual engage in gambling and such gambling brings high return in term of money, such individual is motivated and reinforced to participate more in the 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 order to gain more profit. In other words, as level for return from gambling is encouraging, such individual are engaged more in gambling and may eventually experience gambling addiction at the end. The theory suggests a strong association between reward and gambling which predisposes individual in more gambling related activities.

### **The Theory of Reasoned Action**

Theory of Reasoned Action is one of the several theories posited to explain attitudes and attitude-behaviour correspondence (Cacioppo, Petty & Cripes, 1994). According to the theory, the behavioral intention is the single best predictor of behaviour. This theory was propounded by Fishbein (1967) to the effect that behaviour is influenced by one’s intention to perform that particular behaviour, and that one’s intention is influenced by attitudes and perceived subjective norm regarding that behaviour. A modification to this postulation was the Theory of Planned Behaviour. (Fishbern & Ajzein, 1975) to which was added the construct of perceived behavioural control to account for an individual’s perception of control over behaviors that they might be able to



control completely. The central factor in the Theory of Planned Behaviour 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 behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control.

According to the theory, as the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control regarding a behaviour become more favorable, so does the individual's intention to perform that behaviour. Furthermore, behavioral intentions positively correlate with participation in the behavior of interest (Ajzen, 1991).

The Theory of Reasoned Action is quite relevant and appropriate to this study because there are arrays of empirical evidence to suggest its adoption in several health research (Stead, Tagg, Mackintosh & Eddie, 2005), research into harmful products (Marcoux & Shope, 1997; Norman, Conner & Bell, 1999) and gambling research. Areas of focus in gambling research which the theory has been made use of, include casino gambling (Oh & Hsu, 2001; Phillips, 2009; Song, 2010), online gambling (Jolley, Mizerski & Olaru, 2006) lottery gambling (Sheeran & Orbell, 1999; Walker, Deng and Dieser, 2005; Wood & Griffiths, 1998) ethnicity and gender in gambling (Walker, et al., 2005; Walker, Courneya & Deng, 2006), gambling by children and young people (Moore & Ohtsuka, 1997; Wood and Griffiths, 2004).

### **Uses and Gratification Theory**

Uses and gratification theory was first advanced in the 1940s by Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1944) in their attempt to explain the reasons people use mass media and the different types of gratification they receive from it. The theory is premised on the belief that the audience is not merely a group of passive media to meet their needs. The theory came into prominence in late 1950s to early 1960s at a time when researchers realized that traditional effects theories did not adequately explain audience experiences with mass media (Blumler, 1979). Rubin (1986) stated two underlying presumptions of the uses and gratification model. First, researchers need to understand audience needs and motives for using mass media, in order to comprehend the effects of the media. Second, understanding audience consumption patterns will enhance understanding of media effects.

The Uses and Gratification theory is relevant to this study because it lays the premise about the reason why people behave the way they do. In other words, it explains the fact that people’s perception, attitude and involvement in any act is primarily defined and determined by what they stand to gain by it. On daily basis, Smartphone users and other users of internet devices receive unsolicited advert messages in form of pop-up messages, but choose to read the ones they can relate with in terms of interest and utility value. The ones that are not of value to them often times go unnoticed. Those interested in football betting would consciously subscribe to web pages that share such information online. That explains why bettors stake all odds in order to have whatever they believe would satisfy their urge. Gambling has financial gratifications that it promises its patrons, the advertisement they come across online strengthens this position, and that is why no amount of persuasion would make their participants quit.

### Conceptual Model

The diagram below (Fig. 1) illustrates the conceptualization of the variables in the study with the aid of a diagram. The operationalised variables in this study are gambling advertising, football betting advertising, perception, attitude, and involvement in betting activities.

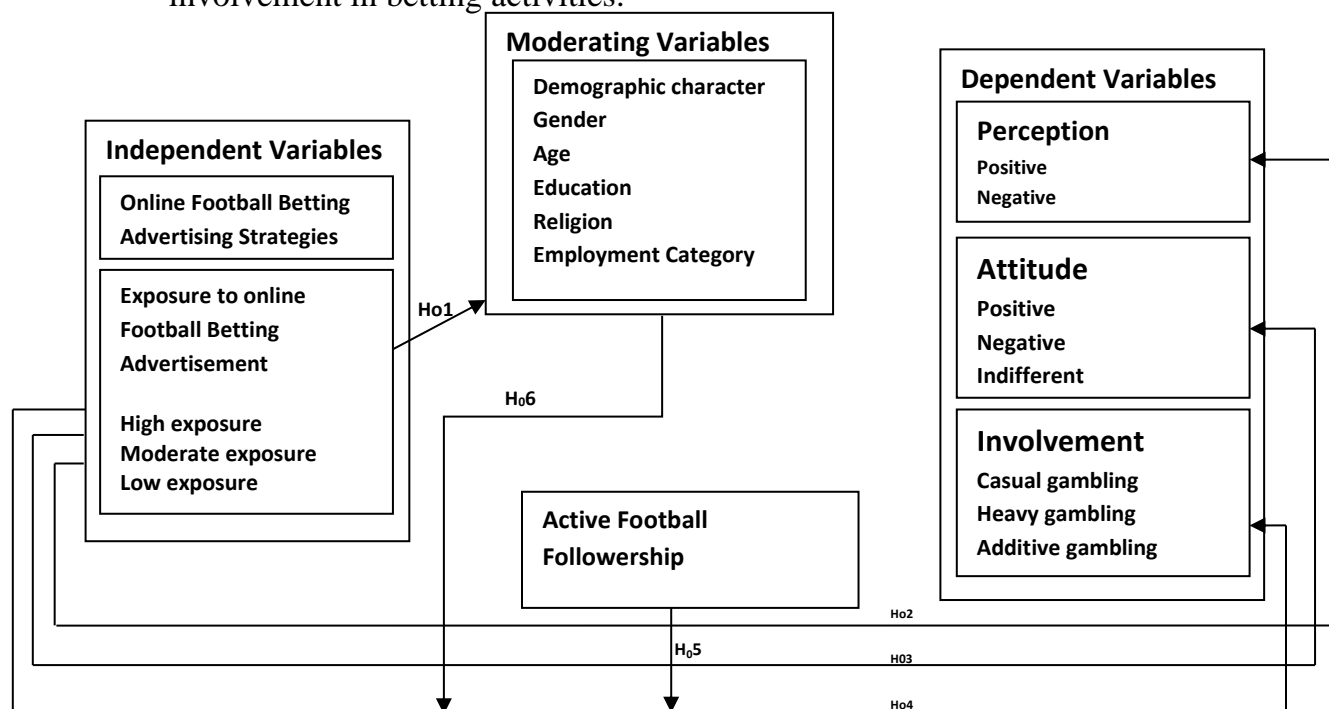


Fig. 1: Conceptual Model for Influence of Online Gambling Advertisements on Youths’ Football Betting Perception, Attitudes and Involvement in South West Nigeria.

The conceptual model illustrated in Fig. 1 above suggests that online gambling advertising that football betting companies deploy do not only create awareness, but goes a long way in determining the perception, attitude and involvement of youths in gambling and betting activities. These adverts strengthen the belief system of respondents through the false hopes it gives to participants. The various online platforms promise instant win for participants in these lotteries in the most easy way possible, which soars up the number of bettors almost on daily basis. This conceptual model further illustrates the long term effect of sustainable online gambling advertising on youths' adoption of same and identified three levels of involvement in football betting. They are occasional gamblers, heavy gamblers and addictive gamblers. Reinforced by regular online betting adverts, bettors have the tendency to get more involved on daily basis until it becomes habitual and increasingly difficult to quit. Over time, they cease to be occasional bettors, and become addictive bettors.

However, there are moderating variables which determine individual level of commitment to football betting. These include demographic variables of gender, age, education, religion and employment status. Economic motivation is equally a moderating variable that comes into play in determining bettors' perception, attitude and involvement in football betting.

### **Research Design**

The study was carried out using the quantitative research method. Specifically, survey research design was adopted for the quantitative data sourcing. This is because it gave the researchers the ability to collect data on a cross-section of participants in a scientific manner, which aided representative generalization of results on the entire population. This research design required the administration of copies of questionnaire which was used to get the opinions of the people and examine the behavioural responses of respondents in the selected states in South West, Nigeria towards online football betting advertisements. This research design was found appropriate because it was made use of in several researches that studied human opinions and behavioural patterns. These include Derevensky, Sklar, Gupta & Messerlain, 2010; Clemens, Hanewinkel, & Morgenstern, 2016; Borg & Stranahan, 2005; Gainsbury, Delfabbro, King & Hing, 2016; Fried, Teichman & Rahav, 2010; Hing, Vitartas & Lamon, 2013; amongst others

### Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of residents of South-West Nigeria. This geopolitical zone has six (6) states, namely Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States. The population of the six states according to the 2006, National Population Census exercise is: Ekiti State = 2,398,957; Lagos State = 9,113,605; Ogun State = 3,751,140; Ondo State = 3,460,877; Osun State = 3,416,959 and Oyo State = 5,580,894. The total number of population across states in South-West Nigeria on which this study was based is 27,722,432. (National Population Commission, 2006).

### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The word sample implies a part of a whole. In the context of research methodology, it is expected that a sample is a representative proportion of a population. This view is especially needed when the orientation of a study is quantitative and there is the need to generalize results. The sample size for this study was calculated using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula as follows:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where:

S = Desired Sample Size

X = Z value (e.g. 1.96 or 95% confidence level)

N = Population Size

P = Population proportion (expressed as a decimal and assumed to be 0.5 or 50%)

d = Degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion is 0.03 as a margin of error

With a working population of 27,722,432 using Krejcie and Morgan formula:

$$S = \frac{1.96^2 \times 27,722,432 \times 0.5 (1- 0.5)}{0.03^2 (27,722,432-1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

$$S = \frac{3.84 \times 27,722,432 \times 0.5 (0.5)}{0.0009(27,722,432) + 3.84 \times 0.5 (0.5)}$$

$$S = 1067$$

### **Sampling Techniques**

The sample size was 1067 and it met the criterion set by Simon and Burstein (1985) that the sample size for research into human perceptions and attitude should be between 1,000 and 1,500. Having determined the sample size, the next phase of methodology in this study was the sampling technique. This process needed to be scientific in order to ensure that the section of the population selected for this study was representative. This study adopted the multi-stage sampling technique. This method was adopted because of the complexity of the population, and using a particular approach may not give the representative sample. Hence, sampling needs to be done in stages.

The first stage of selection involved selecting three states out of six states in South-West Nigeria, through simple random sampling technique, adopting fishbowl method whereby the names of the six states were written in separate sheets of paper and thereafter wrapped and placed in a bowl. Three wrapped pieces of paper were selected. This procedure gave equal chance of selection to all the six states and it resulted in the selection of **Lagos, Osun and Oyo States** which on the other hand represents 50% of states in South-West; hence reasoned to be representative.

The second stage of sampling considered the factors that facilitate online gambling advertising and football betting perception, attitude and involvement. It was reasoned that the metropolitan areas of the state capitals should be considered for the study because of some factors. Firstly, it was observed that gambling outfits have more outlets in the state capitals. Secondly, the state capital in South West states were observed to have more infrastructure such as Internet access, football viewing centres and football club membership driven by dedicated football followership, as opposed to what was observed in other areas of the state. In Lagos State, Ikeja Local Government Area (LGA) was selected purposively because it is the local government where the state capital is. For Osun State, Osogbo and Olorunda Local Government Area were the local governments that are in the state capital; while in Oyo State, Ibadan North and Ibadan South West Local Government Areas were the Local Government Areas that are in close proximity to the administrative seat of power (Government House) in the State. In the third stage, one Local Government Area (LGA) in each state capital except in Lagos State was selected using simple random sampling technique (fishbowl method) which ensured 50%

representation. Therefore, Osogbo and Ibadan South West LGAs were selected representing Osun and Oyo States respectively. The justification for picking one local government in Lagos State was premised on population size of residents in the Local Government (Ikeja Local Government) selected; which is closely at par with the population of residents in the two local governments combined in each of the two other states selected. This implied that the local governments of focus for this study were Ikeja, Osogbo and Ibadan South West Local Government Areas (LGAs).

In the fourth stage of sampling, wards from selected Local Government Areas were represented in the study. In order to ensure representativeness, fifty percent (50%) of the wards in each of the local government areas were selected through simple random sampling.

The sixth stage involved proportional distribution of sample size across selected local governments considering the population of each local government. This procedure further helped to ensure appropriate representation of participants across selected LGAs.

**Table 1: Sample Size of Ibadan South West, Ikeja and Osogbo LGAs**

LGAs	Population	Proportion (%)	Sample Size
<b>Ibadan South West LGA</b>	283,098	37.44	399
<b>Ikeja LGA</b>	317,614	42.00	448
<b>Osogbo LGA</b>	155,507	20.56	219
<b>Total</b>	<b>756,219</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1067</b>

*Source: Nigeria Population Census (2006)*

From Table 3.4, the sample size for Ibadan South West LGA was 399, Ikeja LGA is 448; while that of Osogbo LGA was 219, totaling 1,067. Finally, the seventh stage of sampling involved the selection of football betting shops on selected streets purposively; and this was because it was from their customers that appropriate answers were gotten in respect of online gambling advertisement, football betting perception, attitudes and involvement. Therefore, the football betting shops were the location, where participants were selected by purposive sampling technique. This was done because it was

practically impossible to acquire a list of customers that patronize the football betting shops, and not all bettors use or have smartphone through which they could receive football betting advertisements. Each ward had equal distribution of respondents; the distribution of respondents across the wards was done to ensure equal representation by wards. For Streets that did not have any football betting shop, the next street on the list was included in the study until the appropriate number of participants was gotten for the study (See Table 3.5).

### **Method of Data Collection**

The research design for this study was survey. Survey entails the use of self-structured questionnaire, intended to elicit valuable responses from selected respondents. Having identified the streets that the respondents were purposively selected (through multi-stage sampling technique earlier discussed); three research assistants specifically trained for the purpose of this study, located football betting outlets in the selected streets, with the exact numbers of copies of questionnaire allotted for respondents in each street. In streets where there were more than one of such football betting outlets, the research assistants randomly selected two or three of such outlets, and administered the number of copies of the questionnaire meant for that street, on willing respondents. This flexibility was encouraged because of the subject being studied (football betting) as enlisting the interest and participation of youths was challenging.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The collected data were coded and analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive statistics were carried out using frequency distribution tables, mean and standard deviation, while the test of hypotheses was done using simple and multiple linear regression; adopting the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS 22).

### **Hypotheses**

Six null hypotheses were generated as a result of literature reviewed.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements based on demographic characteristics.

- H<sub>02</sub>:** Level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' perception of football betting.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** Level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' attitude towards football betting.
- H<sub>04</sub>:** Level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' involvement in football betting.
- H<sub>05</sub>:** Economic motivation for football betting does not significantly moderate the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting.
- H<sub>06</sub>:** Demographic characteristics do not significantly moderate the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting.

### Test of Hypotheses

#### Decision Rule

The pre-set level of significance for this study is 0.05. The hypotheses presumed that there was no significant influence between the variables under consideration. If the P-value which indicates the significance or the probability value exceeded the pre-set level of significance ( $P > 0.05$ ), the hypothesis stated in the null form was accepted, however, if the P-value was less than or equal to 0.05 ( $P \leq 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Analysis of Demographic Features of Participants

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	867	81.4
	Female	198	18.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	18-25 years	435	40.8
	26-30 years	27	2.5
	31-35 years	359	33.7
	36-40 years	244	22.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>100.0</b>



Marital Status	Single	1000	93.9
	Married	48	4.5
	Divorced	12	1.1
	Separated	5	.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Highest Education	First School Leaving Certificate	62	5.8
	WASC/equivalent	130	12.2
	ND/NCE	471	44.2
	HND/BSc	385	36.2
	Postgraduate	17	1.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Employment Status	Employed	121	11.4
	Self-employed	280	26.3
	Unemployed	664	62.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Survey 2020

*The hypothesis was analyzed separately based on different demographic factors of gender, age, marital status, higher education and employment status.*

### **Discussion of findings on H<sub>0</sub>1**

As indicated in the test of null Hypothesis I just analysed, there are proofs that demographic variables play significant role in youth's exposure to online football betting advertisements. The variables tested were gender, age, marital status, education qualification, and employment status. A total of one thousand and sixty five (1065) youths were selected from football gambling outlets across Lagos, Osun and Oyo States. Males (81.4%) dominated the study, while females had 18.6 percent representation. This finding is in line with earlier research report which established the fact that males are more involved in gambling generally than females (Eboh, 2015; Moore & Ohtuska, 1999; Tsitiska, Critselis, Janikian, Kormas & Kafetzis, 2011). This is similar to Mwadime

(2016) who also found that majority of the individuals engaging in sports betting were male of the ages below 40 years and above 21 years. This might be because football betting seemed to be perceived as a male dominated activity. The study involved youths across age categories ranging from 18 to 25 (40.8%), followed by 31 to 35 (33.7%) and 36 to 40 (22.9%). In addition, the study was dominated by single youths (93.9%); hence could perceive themselves to have free resources to which could be diverted for football betting.

Youths involved in this study could read and write because 44.2 percent had ND/NCE degrees, followed by 36.3 percent with HND/BSc degrees, while 5.8 percent had First School Leaving Certificate. This also implies that about 80 percent of the youths had more than basic writing and comprehension skills; hence they were more likely to assimilate and know the implication of the football betting messages they received. Finally, out of the youths who participated in this study, majority were unemployed (62.3%), 26.3 percent were self-employed while 11.4 percent were employed. This suggests that unemployed youths may be more likely to be involved in football betting than those who were employed and self-employed. This may be the case because they may have more time on their hands and might look at football gambling as a means to making an income. Corroboratively, a poll revealed that Nigerians bet on football games every day not only because it is a way to make quick money, but also because it distracts people from high unemployment rates. Youth unemployment rates in Nigeria increased from 25 percent in the third quarter of 2016 to 25.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016. By comparison, the numbers averaged 19.2 percent between 2014 and 2016 (The Tide Admin, 2018).

In the same vein the test of Hypothesis I in this study showed that employment status generally negatively and significantly moderated the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting ( $B = -0.726$ ,  $t = -5.700$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However, youths who were self-employed ( $B = 1.897$ ,  $t = 16.662$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and unemployed ( $B = 1.171$ ,  $t = 11.669$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly improved the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and their involvement in football betting. This suggests that self-employed and unemployed youths had higher exposure to online football betting

advertisements which makes them to have increased involvement in football betting.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' perception of football gambling.

**Table 3: Influence of Level of Exposure to Online Football Betting Advertisements on Youths' Perception of Football Betting**

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	P
(Constant)	28.115	0.425		66.113	0.000
<b>Level of Exposure to Online Football Betting Advertisements</b>	0.382	0.038	0.295	10.079	<b>0.000</b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.087				

**Dependent variable: Youths' Perception of Football Gambling**

**Source:** Field Survey 2020; **Note:**  $\beta$ = Standardized Coefficient, significant at 0.05

### Discussion of findings on H<sub>02</sub>

The analysis implies that an increase in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements will lead to better youths perception of football betting. This suggests that football betting companies could improve the perception of football betting among youths by increasing their exposure to online football betting advertisements. Several research findings have established that powerful and ending effect of advertising on youth, as they appear more vulnerable to the effects of advertising than any other age groups. ( Collins, Ellickson, McFamey & Hambasoomians, (2007).

Specifically, exposure to gambling advertisement has impacted on youth's perception of football betting quite significantly; owing to the fact that youths believe in whatever is advertised in the media; and perceive such to be normal, acceptable, harmless and credible (Moore & Ohtsuka; 1999). However, the efficacy of other media (billboard, television, radio, flyers etc) used for football advertisements could not be undermined, even if they are not tested in this research work.

This study found through test of hypothesis that exposure to online football betting advertisements positively and significantly influenced youths' perception of football gambling ( $R^2 = 0.087$ ,  $\beta = 0.295$ ,  $t = 2.813$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that an increase in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements will lead to better youths perception of football betting. It equally suggests that football betting companies could improve the perception of football betting among youths by increasing their exposure to online football betting advertisements. In the same vein, Binde (2009) found that a quarter of the participants reported that gambling advertising had no impact on their problems, slightly over half of them reported that advertising had a marginal impact, and one fifth reported a tangible influence. However, none considered advertising to be a main cause of their gambling problems. The negative self-perceived impact was primarily that advertising triggered impulses to gamble. Advertising thus increased already high involvement in gambling and/or made it harder to stick to a decision to gamble less or not at all.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' attitude towards football gambling.

**Table 4: Influence of Level of Exposure to Online Football Betting Advertisements on Youths' Attitude Towards Football Betting**

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	P
(Constant)	28.693	0.632		45.392	0.000
<b>Level of Exposure to Online Football Betting Advertisements</b>	0.174	0.056	0.094	3.089	<b>0.002</b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.009				

**Dependent variable: Attitude Towards Football Gambling**

**Source:** Field Survey 2020; **Note:**  $\beta =$  Standardized Coefficient, significant at 0.05

Table 4 indicates that the level of exposure to online football betting advertisements positively and significantly influenced youths' attitude towards football betting ( $R^2 = 0.009$ ,  $\beta = 0.094$ ,  $t = 3.089$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The model shows that level of exposure to online football betting advertisements could explain 0.9

percent ( $R^2= 0.009$ ) in youths attitude towards football betting, which shows that there are other factors that were not accounted for in the model. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' attitude towards football betting was rejected.

The analysis suggests that an increase in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements will lead to better attitudinal disposition from youths. This suggests that football betting companies could improve the youths attitude towards football betting by increasing their exposure to online football betting advertisements.

### Discussion of findings on H<sub>03</sub>

This study revealed that exposure to online football betting advertisements positively and significantly influenced youths' attitude towards football gambling ( $R^2 = 0.009, \beta = 0.094, t = 3.089, p < 0.05$ ). This implies that an increase in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements will lead to better attitudinal disposition from youths. This suggests that football gambling companies could improve the youths attitude towards football gambling by increasing their exposure to online football betting advertisements. Similarly, Lee, Lemanski and Jun (2008) discovered that media exposure impacts gambling attitudes and behavioral intentions both positively and negatively, depending on the valence of the gambling depiction. In the same vein, Hing, Vitartas & Lamont (2013) found that attitudes to gambling and gambling intention were positively associated with response to gambling advertisement.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' involvement in football gambling.

**Table 5: Influence of Level of Exposure to Online Football Betting Advertisements on Youths' Involvement in Football Betting**

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	P
(Constant)	31.755	.978		32.465	0.000
Level of Exposure to Online Football	1.461	.087	0.458	16.781	<b>0.000</b>

Betting Advertisements					
R <sup>2</sup>	0.209				
Dependent variable: Youths' Involvement in Football Betting					

**Source:** Field Survey 2020; **Note:**  $\beta$ = Standardized Coefficient, significant at 0.05

Table 5 shows that the level of exposure to online football betting advertisements positively significantly influenced youths' involvement in football gambling ( $R^2 = 0.209, \beta = 0.458, t = 16.781, p < 0.05$ ). The model shows that level of exposure to online football betting advertisements could explain 20.9 percent ( $R^2 = 0.209$ ) in youths involvement in football betting. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that level of exposure to online football betting advertisements does not significantly influence youths' involvement in football gambling was rejected. The analysis implies that an increase in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements will lead to increased involvement in football gambling.

**Discussion of findings on H<sub>0</sub>4**

In this study the test of hypothesis showed that the level of exposure to online football betting advertisements positively and significantly influenced youths' involvement in football gambling ( $R^2 = 0.209, \beta = 0.458, t = 16.781, p < 0.05$ ). The implication of this is that an increase in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements will lead to increased involvement in football betting. Corroboratively, Hanss, Mentzoni, Griffiths & Pallesen (2015) similarly found that advertisements and promotions invoked urges to gamble among treatment-seeking gamblers, and appeared to some participants to be designed to target individuals who had taken steps to limit or cease gambling. Findings provide preliminary evidence of Internet gambling promotional activities increasing overall consumption amongst a subgroup of gamblers. Hing, Lamont, Vitartas & Fink. (2014) also found that the strongest predictors of intended frequency of sports betting were higher problem gambling severity, previous sports betting participation, more frequent exposure to the promotions, and more positive attitudes towards them. Results obtained suggest that the audience most likely to be stimulated by these promotions are problem gamblers

because they have greatest exposure and a favourable disposition to them, and report they have maintained or worsened their problem sports betting behaviours.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** Economic motivation for football betting does not significantly moderate the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting.

**Table 6: Moderating Effect of Economic Motivation on the Relationship between Level of Exposure to Online Football Betting Advertisements and Youths' Involvement in Football Betting**

Model	Coeff.	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	26.913	2.334	11.530	0.000	22.333	31.493
Level of Exposure to Online Football Betting Advertisements	1.130	0.231	4.884	0.000	0.676	1.584
Economic Motivation	0.640	0.272	2.348	0.019	0.105	1.174
Moderating Effect of Economic Motivation	0.028	0.026	1.069	<b>0.285</b>	-0.024	0.080

Source: Field Survey 2020

*LLCI = Lower Level Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper Level Confidence Interval*

Table 6 depicts that economic motivation does not significantly moderate the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting ( $B= 0.028, t = 1.069, p>0.05$ ). This suggests that economic motivation does not improve the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that economic motivation does not significantly moderate the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football gambling was accepted.

### Discussion of findings on H<sub>05</sub>

The test of hypothesis in this study also showed that economic motivation did not significantly moderate the relationship between level of exposure to online

football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football gambling ( $B= 0.028, t= 1.069, p>0.05$ ). This suggests that economic motivation does not improve the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting. These finding contradicts the assumptions of the social learning theory and that of the uses and gratification theory. This is because economic motivation is a reinforcement which should strengthen the relationship between gambling and outcome. The theory posits that reinforcement such as economic motivation should create a sense of physiological arousal which serves as impetus for youths to engage in gambling in order to gain more profit. Consequently, if the level of return from gambling is encouraging, such youths will engage more in gambling and may eventually experience gambling addiction at the end. This further suggests that it was possible that the youths involved in this study might not have had encouraging gambling outcomes; this might explain their low economic motivation to engage in betting. This study findings contradicts that made by Lewis, McLeod and Haycock (2012) where it was discovered that younger men, moderate and high risk gamblers and those from low socio-economic backgrounds were particularly influenced by incentivization to gambling.

**H<sub>06</sub>:** Demographic characteristics do not significantly moderate the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football gambling.

*The hypothesis was analyzed separately based on different demographic factors of gender, age, marital status, higher education and employment status.*

### **Discussion of findings on H<sub>06</sub>**

The study showed that there was a significant difference in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements based on gender ( $t(1063)= 2.381, p<0.05$ ); implying that male respondents had higher level of exposure to online football betting advertisements than female participants. This finding is similar to that made by Lewis, McLeod and Haycock (2012), they found that male participants felt 'bombarded' and 'targeted' by sports bet advertisements and that most women actively resisted gambling marketing strategies. However, this study found that there was a significant difference in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements based on age ( $F(3, 1061) =$



6.316,  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that the level of youths' exposure to online football betting advertisements varied based on age groups. In addition, youths between the ages of 20 to 30 years had significantly higher exposure to online football betting advertisements ( $p < 0.05$ ) than those who were between the ages of 18 to 25 (MD = 3.73), 31 to 35 (MD = 3.54) and those who were aged 36 to 40 (MD = 3.11). This analysis also shows that youths who were between the ages of 18 to 25, 31 to 35 and 36 to 40 had similar level of exposure to online football betting advertisements.

Furthermore, there was a significant difference in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements based on marital status ( $F(3, 1061) = 4.203, p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that the level of youths' exposure to online football betting advertisements varied based on marital status. Separated youths had significantly higher exposure to online football betting advertisements ( $p < 0.05$ ) than those who were single (MD = 5.78) and married (MD = 5.96). However, single youths had similar level of exposure to online football betting advertisements with those who were married and divorced. There was also a significant difference in youths' level of exposure to online football betting advertisements based on educational qualification ( $F(4, 1060) = 15.36, p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that the level of youths' exposure to online football betting advertisements varied based on educational qualification.

The difference could be attributed to youths with postgraduate educational qualifications who had significantly higher exposure to online football betting advertisements ( $p < 0.05$ ) than those with ND/NCE (MD = 4.62) and HND/BSc (MD = 3.66) and those with HND/BSc who had significantly higher exposure to online football betting advertisements ( $p < 0.05$ ) than those with ND/NCE (MD = 0.96). Consequently, youths who had First School Leaving Certificate had similar level of exposure to online football betting advertisements compared with those who had WASC/equivalent, HND/BSc and postgraduate educational qualifications. Furthermore youths who had WASC/equivalent qualifications had similar level of exposure to online football betting advertisements compared with youths with postgraduate educational qualifications.

Further analysis showed that educational qualification positively and significantly moderated the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football gambling

( $B= 0.447$ ,  $t= 4.743$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This suggests that youths' educational qualification improves the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football gambling. Further analysis showed that youths' educational qualification could only account for 1.6 percent change in R square ( $R^2\Delta = 0.016$ ) in the improvement of the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football gambling. This analysis pointed out that WASC/equivalent ( $B= 1.047$ ,  $t= 9.700$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), ND/NCE ( $B= 1.494$ ,  $t= 17.224$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and HND/BSc ( $B= 1.940$ ,  $t= 14.344$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) educational qualifications improved the relationship between level of exposure to online football betting advertisements and youths' involvement in football betting. This also suggests that youths who had WASC/equivalent, ND/NCE and HND/BSc educational qualifications had higher exposure to online football betting advertisements which lead to increased involvement in football betting.

### **Conclusion**

The gaming industry is one of the service providers that explore the windows of opportunity made available through advertising, to expose youths to the act of gambling. Since adverts give credence to products available, services provided, services and ideas canvassed; youths in recent times see gambling in general and football betting in particular as a credible activity. These explain one of the reasons why football betting is regarded as normal and harmless; and appear so popular among youths in South West Nigeria. This popularity seems to have increased as a result of growing accessibility to betting centres, level of education and exposure of youths to online football betting advertisements. This situation seem to be compounded by the role that technology is playing in the gambling industry, which makes youths to be exposed to football betting advertisements at an increased rate through social media, websites, mobile apps and blogs. This results in convenience, ease of access and use that characterize football betting advertisements and gambling as a result of the application of technology which brings advertisements and gambling closer to youths. Consequently, youths engage in football betting as a result of increased exposure to football betting advertisements. This has the tendency to result in addicted football betting among youths as a result of extreme football betting involvement.

### **Recommendations**

There is a need to regulate the use of online platforms as medium of advertisement placements in Nigeria. This is because internet accessibility in terms of website visitation is unrestricted; and the use of smartphone is unregulated. Children and adolescents use internet and smartphone indiscriminately, through which they get swayed easily; by unsolicited messages received advertisements. It is therefore recommended that messages which warn prospective bettors of the age limit (which is 18 years) and the potential danger of developing addiction to betting, should be mandatory on such adverts displayed. This would require the National Assembly and the states' Houses of Assembly to legislate on this, so as to be enforceable. It is only then that the National Lottery Regulatory Commission shall be empowered to sanction erring companies that do not obey the laws regulating football betting advertisements.

Furthermore, online advertisements are equally unregulated in terms of time, which is crucial in broadcast media. There are regulated time that certain adverts are permitted to run in the broadcast media; especially when it comes to potential harmful or abusive products and services. The idea is to protect children and adolescents from exposure to such products and services. Football betting has the tendency of making a prospective bettor to become an addictive one over time. That is why such advertisements online should be regulated. Presently, any smartphone user who visits any of the social platforms will encounter pop-up messages and advertisements that canvass patronage of these various football betting operators at any time of the day. Therefore, adequate regulations should be put in place whereby different media channels will have limited time for football betting advertisements in order to reduce its effect on football betting involvement. This implies that the relevant regulatory bodies such as the National Lottery Regulatory Commission, Lagos State Lottery Board and even the National Assembly and the states' Houses of Assembly should develop appropriate regulatory mechanism in order to limit the amount of time football betting advertisements could be made in different media.

### **Suggestion for Further Studies**

One of the delimitations to this study, was that the participants were purposively selected. They were bettors who received football betting advertisements

through online platforms only. Future researchers may study the influence of other advertising media and strategies, on the perception, attitude and involvement of same or other age groups in South West Nigeria. There are lots of outdoor advertisement messages on billboards, erected by different betting operators. They equally use the broadcast media (radio and television) for gambling advertisement messages. The influence of these on bettors' perception, attitudes and involvement needs to be researched into.

Researchers in the field of social sciences, behavioural and health sciences can equally study other factors that influence bettors to develop problem gambling, which is an uncontrollable involvement in football betting. These other factors may include, but not limited to peer influence, religious beliefs, family orientation or values, financial disposition, economic status, employment status among others.

Finally, respondents for this study were selected from youth bettors in Osun, Oyo and Lagos States, as representative of the entire South West. Other researchers can study other States in South West Nigeria to see if the findings would be same or different. Other geopolitical zones can also be studied by other researchers in order to determine the reliability of these research findings.

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