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[adejet@unilag.edu.ng](mailto:adejet@unilag.edu.ng)

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PERCIEVED INFLUENCE OF ONLINE GAMBLING ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN LAGOS METROPOLIS

SANGODE, Adekunle Oluwadamilare,  
[sangodeadekunle@gmail.com](mailto:sangodeadekunle@gmail.com)

&

ADENIYI, Samuel Olufemi, PhD

&

LONGE Olubukola Oluwadaisi, PhD

Department of Educational Foundations,  
Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

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**Abstract**

The rise of online gambling among students in Lagos Metropolis has raised concerns about its potential effects on academic performance. This study investigates the perceived influence of online gambling on students' academic performance for secondary school students in Education District 1 of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 250 secondary school students was selected using stratified random sampling. Gambling Related Cognition Scale, (GRCS) and the Academic Self Concept Scale, (ASCS) were used to gather data. The research was guided by three research hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data gathered were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, t-test, and Analysis of Variance. Findings revealed that online gambling has a significant influence on students' academic performance, and that there is a gender difference in online gambling among secondary school students. Age was found not to have a significant influence on online gambling among secondary school students. It was recommended there should be a strict compliance to age restriction to online gambling and social media networking.

**Keywords:** Academic Performance, Addiction, Behaviour, Gender, Modelling, Online gambling

## **INTRODUCTION**

Online gambling, with its ease of access and allure of quick winnings, poses significant implications for academic performance among students. Numerous studies have explored the relationship between online gambling and its impact on students' ability to focus on their academic responsibilities. One of the primary concerns is the addictive nature of online gambling. Adeoye (2021) conducted research investigating how the accessibility of online platforms can lead to compulsive gambling behaviors. The constant availability of gambling opportunities on the internet makes it easier for students to develop addictive habits, ultimately affecting their ability to concentrate on their studies. This addiction can lead to a cycle of procrastination and neglect of academic obligations, resulting in poor performance. Ahn, Hu, & Vega (2020) further emphasize the correlation between problem gambling and academic difficulties. Their research suggests that students who engage in online gambling are more likely to experience challenges such as decreased motivation, lower grades, and even dropout rates. These academic struggles can have long-lasting consequences on students' prospects and career opportunities.

Financial implications also play a significant role in the relationship between online gambling and academic performance. Ayandele & Aramide (2020) argue that problem gambling can lead to financial strain, as students may spend excessive amounts of money on gambling activities or accrue significant debts from losses. This financial burden can create stress and anxiety, which in turn can impact cognitive functions necessary for academic success. Moreover, the psychological effects of online gambling can also hinder academic performance. Delfabbro et al. (2009) note that the stress and guilt associated with gambling losses can lead to mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. These psychological challenges can manifest as difficulty concentrating,

memory problems, and overall decreased cognitive functioning, all of which can impede students' ability to perform well academically.

Smith, 2018, and Clark 2021, note that online gambling among adolescents has gained attention in recent years due to the potential impacts on their wellbeing and academic performance. Adolescents in their quest for identity and thrill-seeking experiences, may be drawn to various forms of gambling including online platforms, sports betting, and traditional casino games. (Johnson & Williams 2019) The accessibility of these activities has increased with technological advancements, posing a significant challenge to the educators, parents, and the country at large, Smith, 2018). Gambling has been around since the oldest times and has been described as one of the oldest forms of games dating back to thousands of years. It is the desire to win, gain welfare and prestige by taking continuous risk. Gambling is also one of the most popular forms of entertainment. (Buen, 2022). Gambling has become a common form of entertainment and social interaction that has turned a menace particularly among adolescents. It has become a social problem that the educational system is trying to address. Despite different measures taken, such as, educating and creating awareness on the dangers and consequences of gambling, restriction of access and availability to gamble, as well as varying treatment and support programmes, by schools' administration to prevent or reduce the trend, gambling persists. Gambling is linked to some criminal activities and has been found to have major negative effects on a person's health, study habits and academic performance. (Oyebisi, Alao & Popoola, 2012). It has been observed that the in-school adolescents have been engaging in a lot of gambling activities which leads to gambling problems and gambling addiction and psychological distress. (Calado & Griffiths, 2016).

Students who engage in online gambling undergo tremendous psychological pressures and problems that can have a negative impact in their life, health status, study habits and academic success. Psychological challenges describe a person's emotional state of helplessness, unhappiness, fear, discomfort, and development of social seclusion tendencies (Ryu & Fan, 2023). Among adolescents, psychological pressures are considered a major cause of several negative behavioral outcomes such as suicidal thoughts and attempts, below average academic performance and deteriorating physical health (Ratanasiripong, 2022; Waters & Ashton, 2022). They spend more time and money than intended on gambling activities. They are fond of Arguing with family and friends after gambling. There is always the feeling of an urge to return as soon as possible to win back losses after losing at gambling. They also feel guilty and remorseful about gambling. They miss a lot of schoolwork, assignments, projects, and other commitments to gamble. However, it has been found that adolescents who engage in gambling undergo depression and there is a feeling of fear and anxiety as they do not have control over the outcome of events Anyanwu, 2023). Depression has been reported to be both an antecedent (Dussault, Brendgen, Vitaro & Wanner, 2011) and a consequence of gambling (Chinneck, Mackinnon, Stewart, 2016). In some of the severe cases, gambling addiction can lead to violence, aggression as there is always a win at all cost syndrome to gain back what has been lost through repeated gambling. Proliferation of gambling venues is even alarming with the rate of the use of media advertisement using internet and all forms of social media such as Facebook, X, (formerly known as twitter) Instagram, snapchat, TikTok and many more. The effect of this phenomenon has become a major concern in recent times as many online gambling platforms are being introduced daily. (Chóliz, Marcos & Ludens, 2021; Griffiths, 2009). Most of the online gambling apps have in-built game mechanics that deliver design

affordances to optimize loyalty and trigger end-user enthusiasm (Martín-Peña 2023). This may consequently lead to high gambling frequency of gambling due to ease and convenience.

Many reasons have been advanced for gambling among adolescents. These factors include childhood family background, socioeconomic status, faulty social learning, inadequate life opportunities, deficits in social skills, peer pressure have all been implicated. The development of internet websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications have increased opportunities to gamble and made it more pervasive and less stigmatized among adolescents (Deans, Thomas, Daube, & Deverensky, 2016).

However, online gambling is fast becoming a common acute public health and social concern that hinders various aspects of school adolescents' sense of concentration in academic work and school activities (Oyeleke, Ajibewa & Adedayo, 2017). The unprecedented growth in advertisement strategies and greater social acceptability of gambling, have made betting arenas materialized in urban and rural areas in the country leading to increase opportunities for gambling (Udeze, 2018). There has been a great expansion in gambling activities throughout the world (Calado & Griffiths, 2016). The survey carried out by Calado and Griffiths, (2016) and Shaffer and Hall, (2001), revealed that there are more persons who have positive attitude towards gambling activities at some point in their lives than those who have wagered. 86% of the populated researched have reported one form of gambling or the other, with a significant minority of adolescents (4% – 8%) reporting serious multiple gambling problems globally. (Kristiansen & Jensen, 2014; Oyeleke, Ajibewa & Adedayo, 2017; Salaam & Brown, 2012)

The prevalence of online gambling is driven by various technological, economic, and social factors. Technological advancements, such as increased internet accessibility and the proliferation of smartphones, have made online gambling more accessible than ever. In Nigeria, Umeh and Olamide (2020) highlight that the widespread adoption of mobile technology has enabled individuals to participate in gambling from their homes, eliminating the need for physical casinos. Globally, Griffiths and Parke (2002) emphasize that innovative features, including live streaming and interactive interfaces, enhance user experience, drawing in a diverse audience. Additionally, the convenience of 24/7 access to online platforms has made gambling highly appealing to individuals with varying schedules.

Economic factors also play a significant role. Online gambling platforms entice users with promotions, bonuses, and lower entry costs compared to traditional gambling venues. This affordability makes it particularly attractive in developing economies like Nigeria, where many people view gambling as a potential escape from financial hardship (Nwaobi, 2022). Similarly, international scholars like Shaffer and Korn (2002) argue that targeted advertising and celebrity endorsements amplify gambling's reach, particularly among young people. Social factors, including anonymity and the sense of escapism gambling provides, further contribute to its widespread appeal, as individuals seek distractions from stress or boredom.

Finally, regulatory changes and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated the growth of online gambling. Many governments, including Nigeria's, have legalized, or partially regulated online gambling, providing a structured framework for its growth (Akanle & Omotosho, 2020). Globally, the pandemic forced physical casinos to close, pushing gamblers toward online platforms

for entertainment (Griffiths, 2020). These combined factors have made online gambling a rapidly growing phenomenon, with significant implications for individuals and society.

The study seeks to investigate the Perceived Influence of Online Gambling on Students Academic Performance in Lagos Metropolis. The huge accessibility to gambling has led to an increase in the number of individuals who gambles (Fong & Rosenthal, 2008). Considering the negative consequences associated with this trend, it is therefore imperative that treatment models are available for the treating individuals with such problems.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The rise of online gambling among students has become a growing concern, with potential consequences for their academic performance and has also raised concerns about its potential impacts on their overall well-being. Many students are increasingly exposed to gambling platforms through the social media and digital advertisements leading to habits that could interfere with their focus, study habits, study routines, and overall academic achievements. The addictive nature of online gambling may also contribute to time management, financial difficulties, and emotional stress, further impacting their educational outcomes. Despite its growing prevalence, there is limited research exploring how students perceives this influence, creating a gap in understanding the extend of the problem and its implications on education. This study seeks to investigate the perceived influence of online gambling on students' academic performance to provide insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the education sector.



## **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between online gambling and students' academic performance.
2. There is no significant gender difference between online gambling on students' academic performance.
3. Age will not significantly influence online gambling and academic performance among secondary school students.

## **Methodology**

The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey research design. This was chosen because it involves using structured questionnaire in the researcher variable of interest as it investigated the perceived influence of online gambling on students' academic performance in Lagos metropolis. The population of the study comprised of all senior secondary school 2 students in Education District 1 of Lagos state.

The sample for this study comprised 250 students from five randomly selected secondary schools in Education District 1. The sampling techniques employed in the selection of participants were the stratified, and simple random techniques respectively. The instruments for data collection were the Gambling Related Cognition Scale, (GRCS) and Academic Self Concept Scale, (ASCS). GRCS is a 23-item questionnaire. The items were adopted with a 4-point Likert scale method. This includes, Strongly Agreed=SA, Agree=A, Disagree=D., Strongly Disagree=D. and Academic Self Concept Scale, (ASCS). was also adopted to collect data on the students' academic performance with a 5-point: Likert scale.

The researcher first visited the schools to become acquainted. Later, the researcher, accompanied by research assistance, returned to administer the research instruments to the students. The data was thus collected for analysis.

Data collected were analysed with the using percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA)

**Results**

**Research Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between online gambling and students’ academic performance.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used, and the result obtained is showed in the table below.

**Table1: Relationship Between online gambling and students’ academic performance.**

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Online Gambling	250	23.48	2.76	198	4.78	1.98	Rejected
Academic performance		26.80	3.84				

Table 1 shows that the calculated r-cal of 4.78 is greater than r-crit of 1.98 and the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis was accepted. It was hence concluded that there is a significant perceived influence of online gambling on students' academic performance.

**Research Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant gender difference in social media usage among secondary school students.

This hypothesis was tested using independent t-test statistical tool and the result obtained is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: independent t-test Analysis showing Gender Difference in Social Media Usage and Academic Performance among Students**

Variables	N	SD	X	t-cal	t-tab	P	df
Male	125	28.69	88.4	2.41	1.98	0.05	248
Female	125	55.00					

Evidence from Table 2 reveals that the calculated t-cal is 2.41 while the critical value t-tab/t-crit is 1.98. Given that t-cal is higher than t-crit the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was retained. This implies that there is significant gender difference in perceived influence of online gambling and academic performance among secondary school students.

**Research Hypothesis Three:** Age will not significantly influence social media usage and academic performance among secondary school students.

This hypothesis was analyzed using ANOVA statistical tool and the result obtained is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on previewed influence of online Gambling on students Age and academic performance.**

Age	N	X	SD
13 – 15 years	80	54.87	5.752
16 – 18 years	110	55.40	3.822
19 years and above	60	54.52	4.104
Total	250	54.52	4.584

Variables	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	702.14	2	351.07	0.592	3.15
Within groups	7107	12			
total	7809	14			

Results displayed from table 3 shows F-calculated value of 0.592 is less than the F-critical value of 3.15. given that the F-cal is not significantly, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis rejected. This implies that there is no significant influence of age on online gambling and academic performance.

### Discussion of Findings

The results of research hypothesis one states that there is no significant relationship between online gambling and students' academic performance. This hypothesis was rejected as finding revealed that there is a significant influence of online gambling on students' academic performance. The result of this finding may be because the time that should be used in study by the students is spent online gambling which leads to poor performance in examinations. This finding supports Falade et.al. (2023) who noted that students who spend more time on social media networks gambling other than for academic purposes are affected by the internet. While they enjoy the informative power of the social media, their academic performance experiences a downward trend. Martin (2022) also agrees with this finding when he maintained that there is a correlation between how much time is spent on a social media and grades obtained by the students.

The results of hypothesis 2 showed that there is no significant gender difference between online gambling and students' academic performance among students in secondary schools. The finding of this study revealed that boys and girls did not differ in online gambling and social media usage. The reason for this finding may be because both boys and girls are users of social media. This finding corroborates Williams and Martin (2022) who noted that boys and girls are often found to be obsessed with staying online and making use of every available social media at their disposal. Hence, adolescents and young adults have been found in the exiting literature to be heaviest users of phones and online sharp practices have been reported to be adolescent pre-occupation in today's world. However, this finding contradicts Awosika et.al (2022) who studied students' motivation for Facebook usage and found that males spend more time on Facebook than females. Friendship was named the most favourite activity on social media among male students who use the internet. In a twist, Chineye and Sanju (2020) reported the females are more likely than males to report spending longer amounts of time on Facebook than initially intended.

The research hypothesis 3 revealed that there is no significant perceived influence on age between online gambling and academic performance of students. This hypothesis was retained as result showed that age has no significant influence on online gambling. This finding supports Kristen and Mattus (2013) who opined that gambling apps and its usage has increased in recent years across all age levels. This however contradicts the Delfabbro et.al. (2019) and Chu & Storn (2020) who reported that although 73% of teens between the ages of 12 and 17 use this gambling and games apps, the rate of its usage are even higher (87%) for young adults between the ages of 13 and 29. However, middle age adolescents do not appear to have the same level of social media access as older students due to age restriction and limited access to internet usage.

## **Conclusion**

This study reported significant online gambling influence on students' academic performance. The time that should be devoted to intensive study by students is wasted on gambling sites and on betting apps which has gained unprecedented acceptability among today's adolescents. Apparently, students devote more time these betting app for financial gains than on their academic work such as execution of assignments and preparation for examinations. The study found no gender difference in students' online gambling which means that both boys and girls are high users of these networks and betting apps. Also, the study found no age influence on social media usage among secondary school students. This implies that both boys and girls of all ages use visits and make use of betting and games apps in secondary schools. The study hence proffered useful recommendations as they offered practical guidance to educators, school administrators and policy makers in designing interventions that directly targets the root cause of online gambling among secondary school students.

## **Impact of Online Gambling on Sustainable Educational Development in Nigeria**

The rise of online gambling in Nigeria has had significant implications for sustainable educational development, with both positive and negative consequences. On the negative side, studies highlight that gambling diverts financial resources from essential educational needs such as school fees and learning materials, exacerbating economic inequality (Akanle & Omotosho, 2020). Young people, who are particularly vulnerable to the allure of quick wealth, often misuse funds meant for education on gambling, leading to academic neglect, poor performance, and even dropout cases. Griffiths (2003) also notes that gambling addiction among youths fosters a culture of instant gratification, undermining the values of hard work and perseverance that are crucial for academic success and societal progress.

On the other hand, online gambling offers potential economic benefits that could indirectly support education if managed effectively. Legalized gambling generates significant tax revenues, which, if properly allocated, could improve educational infrastructure and fund scholarships (Nwaobi, 2022). Additionally, the industry's growth creates jobs in technology and marketing, providing incomes that could be invested in education. International scholars like Shaffer and Korn (2002) argue that responsible gambling frameworks and public awareness campaigns can help mitigate its negative effects while channelling its economic benefits into productive sectors, including education.

To address these challenges and harness the potential benefits, it is essential to strengthen regulatory frameworks, promote financial literacy, and redirect gambling revenues toward education. Investments in alternative recreational programs and addiction counselling services can also help reduce gambling's appeal among students. By striking a balance between regulation and economic benefits, Nigeria can mitigate the adverse effects of online gambling and use its opportunities to foster sustainable educational development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Policy enacted against online gambling should be properly monitored and implemented at all levels of governance for the prohibition of gambling for under aged gambling for children under the age of eighteen.
2. Government at all levels should endeavour to provide the necessities of life for the citizenry to reduce extreme poverty bewildering the economic and social life which is the cause of the get rich quick syndrome for adolescents through gambling.

3. Counsellors should encourage the use of therapies such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Modelling Therapy to counsel adolescents who may be addicted to online gambling.
4. Counsellors should promote communication skills training alongside cognitive Behaviour therapy to help adolescents develop more effective communication abilities.
5. Follow-up services should be implemented to ensure that the students continue to apply the skills they have learnt during intervention.

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