



INFLUENCE OF GAMBLING IMPULSE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON VIOLENCE TENDENCY AMONG GAMBLERS IN ENUGU METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the influence of gambling impulse and socio-demographic factors on violence tendency among gamblers in Enugu metropolis. Adopting the cross-sectional survey design, two hundred and ninety-one (291) participants were recruited by employing purposive sampling technique. Participants' age ranged from 16 to 46 years with mean age of 22.07 years and SD of 3.82. Also, male gamblers were 259 (89.0) while 32 (11.0%) were females. In the process of investigating study variables, the Gambling Urge Scale (GUS) and Attitudes Toward Violence Scale (ATV) were employed as measuring instruments and the two hypotheses proposed were tested using linear and multiple regression statistics. The result showed that gambling impulse significantly predicted violence tendency such that participants with high level of violence tendency reported more violent disposition than their counterparts with low gambling impulse. This was evident in the confirmation of the first hypothesis ($\beta = 0.16$; $t = 2.74$; $P < 0.05$). Whereas, the second hypothesis which stated that socio-demographic factors will jointly influence violence tendency among participants was not confirmed $F(3,290) = 0.79$; $p > 0.05$. In line with the findings, implications centered around urgent need for a robust sensitization among gamblers for them to understand the danger which gambling portends, while recommendations was on increasing access to effective prevention strategies, engaging youths with skills acquisitions and meaningful enterprise that will redirect the negative energy of gambling.

Keywords: Violence tendency, gambling urge, youths, well-being, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Violence tendency is comprised of violence related feelings, thoughts and behaviors of individuals and can be

defined in terms of the level of thinking attributed to violence (Haskan & Yildirim, 2012). As expected, young people are prone to engage in violent acts

due to the high volume of testosterone in their body and the youthful exuberance that they normally feel in that young age. Also, some young people are battling with identity crisis, not knowing who they really are or where they are headed in the future. So, in the mist of all these, they tend to react and most times, violently or aggressively to happenings around them. Other reports indicate that with the increase in violence among young people, the society is becoming grossly unsafe (Kılıç, 2007). Findings from several scholars revealed that 75% of young people are exposed to or have witnessed violence in school, media and home environments. Further studies show that witnessing or being exposed to violence in this way makes the individual to perpetuate that vicious cycle, thereby, inducing violence tendency (Ayan, 2007; Korkut-Owen, 2008). Other researchers added that as young people consider themselves unimportant, their tendency to violence increases in order for them to prove a point (Lu & Wong, 2013) and girls are exposed to more violence in home environments, whereas boys are exposed to more violence in school and outside the home (Donat-Bacı & Özben, 2011, Haskan & Yıldırım, 2014). The information that these are the results of the effect of cultural leanings; while girls learn that being compatible was a good personality trait, boys learn that aggression is a part of the sense of “masculinity” and they socialize in order to be masculine through violence and aggression, while boys carry out open attacks particularly in schools, girls show

unnoticeable verbal aggression (Giles & Heyman, 2005; Lu & Wong, 2013).

Next to the social vice of being violent which gives a rush feeling in people is the issue of gambling. The emotional rush that people feel why they gamble and the sometimes aggressive behaviour they exhibit made the researchers to sense an empirical connection between violence tendency and gambling disposition. Nigeria has witnessed some significant changes in gambling activity particularly among Nigerian youth; however, participation in gambling cuts across all age groups, socio-economic status, and gender. Both financial and social rewards have been identified as reasons why many youths gamble (Adebisi *et al.*, 2020). These patterns of growth are evident in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria (Sewanyana & Bitanihirwe, 2018).

Gambling is a cross-cultural and global activity which typically involves the wagering of money or an item of monetary value. Further, gambling can be defined as “an activity that involves placing something of value at risk in the hopes of gaining something of greater value” (Potenza *et al.*, 2019). The diverse array of gambling options includes a variety of card games, dice, slot machines, betting, and casino games that people play to win – or, more frequently, lose – money. However, excessive (or pathological) gambling poses a serious risk to both individuals and society (RamnerÖ *et al.*, 2019).



In Nigeria, the issue of gambling among youth has been heightened by the upsurge in unemployment, underemployment and economic hardship (Bankole *et al.*, 2019). This has led to the extent that several studies have reported that involvement in gambling behaviour may be a springboard or increase in criminal, violent, and delinquent behaviours (Omanchi *et al.*, 2017, cited in Bankole *et al.*, 2019). Some other studies have reported more severe negative consequences resulting from gambling, for instance, Tade (2014) as cited in Bankole *et al.* (2019) reported that many gamblers commit suicide after losing their high stakes while some ruin their marriages and important social capital to gambling. Also, innumerable proportion of young gamblers develop compulsive gambling problems which may manifest in both psychiatric (such as anxiety, depression, and sleep deprivation) as well as long-term physical conditions e.g. cardiovascular disease, peptic ulcer disease, and hypertension (Abdi *et al.*, 2015; Langa, 2010). Ironically, in spite of these negative consequences, many youths still engage in one form of gambling or the other. Financial strain or stress motivate or pushes youths to gambling and ironically financial strain is not just a motivating factor for gambling, it also serves as detrimental consequences (Ahaibwe *et al.*, 2016).

Going forward, gender is implicated in gambling behaviour. Participation in risk activities and gambling inclusive tends to be male dominated. While women participate in a variety of risk activities,

greater proportions of participants in most risk activities are male (D'Acremont & Van Der Linden, 2006). Gambling participation rates vary significantly according to gender. There is difference in prevalence and patterns of gambling in male and female university students (Eboh & Babatunde, 2015).

Gambling is a popular leisure time activity in most countries especially in Nigeria where you can see gambling bet centers virtually in every nook and cranny of both urban and rural settings. The vast majorities of adults have been engaged in some form of gambling activity or the other at least once in their life, and between 40 and 80 percent have participated in some form of gambling in the last 12 months (Griffiths, 2010). For most individuals, gambling is a form of entertainment (Martin *et al.*, 2011; McNeilly & Burke, 2000); for other, it is comes as a compelling urge which they in most cases find it hard to resist –and the motivation for gambling is usually influenced by social interactions because gambling venues offer social settings to meet people (Loroz, 2004; Lee *et al.*, 2014), whereas others are mainly motivated by the dream of winning money (Lee *et al.*, 2014). By contrast, some use gambling to escape their problems, and when their expectations are not met, they might lash out in aggressive ways - especially among problem gamblers (Nower & Blaszczynski, 2010).

Previous research has established commonalities between gambling

disorders and other disorders linked to addictive behaviours in neurocognitive and physiological pathways (Paris et al., 2009; Tamminga & Nestler, 2006); which invariably can lead to some social vices such as violence. These are some of the salient reasons the researcher is motivated to investigate the impact of gambling impulse on violence tendency among gamblers in Enugu metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Violence among young people represents a serious problem affecting individuals, communities, and the larger society (Davidson & Canivez, 2012). In most cases, violence seen among youths are impulsive which is an important dimension found in gambling. When youths are prone to violence, they are bound to be highly impulsive, make silly mistakes that can cause them their mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing and their reputation, and future carrier. The characteristics of greed and grief (i.e., when one encounters loss over and over), and frustrations could bring about depression and the individual being aggressively violent. As the chances of winning a bet is very slim and the possibility of losing being very high for any given individual at any point in time, such person(s) may become aggressive as a result of their loss and may become violent. Just as the Id component in human personality represents the 'pleasure principle', while the ego component represents the 'reality principle', and the super-ego component represents the moral principle.

In an event, that people's urge for gambling makes them to lose money over and over again, their id component will be highly affected and the individual may become impulsively violent without thinking clearly. This action will consistently endanger the individuals involved as their source of livelihood will be depleting, and may lead to scarcity of resources, being involved with the Law enforcement security agencies and grounding the socio-economic status of individuals and families.

Moreover, being prone to something implies that you may likely carry out that action and that even when you don't carry out the action, you may end up accommodating negative behavioural traits that may affect the individual's communication, relationships, work, academics, and other areas of one's life. Hence, there may be a thin line between the urge to gamble and violent disposition. Based on the aforementioned problems, the study attempts to explore the impact of gambling impulse on violence disposition among a gambling population in Enugu metropolis. The general objective of this study will be exploring the role of gambling impulse and socio-demographic factors on violence tendency. However, the specific purpose of this study will be:

1. To understand the empirical link between people's gambling impulse and their tendency to be violent.



2. To assess the influence of socio-demographic factors on violence tendency among gamblers in Enugu metropolis.

Literature Review

People involved in antisocial behavior are more likely to have children at a young age, experience structural adversity, are likely to continue antisocial behavior and substance use/addictive behaviours, experience more stress, and have weak prosocial bonds all of which might lead to problems in raising their children (Besemer, 2015).

Although formally classified in DSM-IV as a disorder of impulse control, the addiction model is presently the dominant theoretical paradigm explaining pathological gambling (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002). This is reflected in DSM's decision to incorporate modified items used in substance dependence in the criteria set used to diagnose pathological gambling (Lesieur & Rosenthal, 1991). More recently, 'dependence' has supplanted the use of 'addiction', with the descriptor extended to apply to a broader range of non-substance *behavioural addictions* (Holden, 2001). Within this context, pathological gambling is viewed as a 'natural addiction' characterised by the compulsive consumption of non-substance derived rewards (Tamminga & Nestler, 2006). Tseng *et al.* (2023) in exploring the gambling problem, recruited 3,740 gamblers and found a number of gambling-related harms experienced by respondents, indicating

problem gambling behaviors are related to the negative consequences of gambling, but not necessarily synonymous. Besemer (2015) worked on intergenerational transmission that is focusing on transmission for females, biosocial interactions of genes and the environment and the use of (natural) experiments. Latvala *et al.* (2019) on their part reviewed complementing and contrasting views on the effects of gambling can be structuralized using a conceptual model, where impacts were divided into negative and positive; costs and benefits. Costs and benefits are categorized into three classes: financial, labor and health, and well-being. The study model offers a base on which to start building common methodology for assessing the impact of gambling on the society. The reviewed empirical work largely concentrated on the costs of gambling, especially costs on the community level. Hing *et al.* (2020) enrolled thirty-nine service providers in metropolitan (25) and regional (14) areas and in all Australian states and territories and identifies the range of situations where problem gambling and gendered drivers of violence against women each contribute to gambling-related intimate partner violence. In the study of involving delinquent formation, Besemer (2012) showed that sons of fathers convicted of a violent offense were about twice as likely to have a conviction of a violent offense compared to sons whose fathers were convicted of non-violent offenses. Van de Weijer *et al.* (2014) demonstrated that the transmission of violent offending from fathers to sons is

stronger than of non-violent offending. The researchers also demonstrated that a father's violent offending before his son's birth did not increase the son's risk to become violent, while a father's offending during his son's childhood and adolescence did increase this risk: suggesting that the actual exposure to interpersonal violence is important in the transmission. When illegal acts are present in individuals with gambling disorder, they tend to present with the most severe form of the disorder and that the majority of crimes committed by individuals with gambling disorder are committed to fund gambling (Laursen et al., 2016). Karagün (2015) investigated the violent tendencies of young people by recruiting 459 students found out that violence tendencies of young people differed significantly by gender, working in a sports branch being licensed, the number of years spent doing sports being licensed, the status of exposure to violence and the type of the violence exposure. Among a sample of individuals seeking treatment for problem gambling, the prevalence of family violence (typically parents and/or intimate partner violence) victimization is 18.4% and perpetration is 19.1% (Dowling et al., 2019). With respect to related studies of socio-demographic factors on violence tendency, Scandroglio *et al.* (2023) enrolled 275 healthcare professions students and 24 of participants showed that compared to females, males tend to be more involved in problem gambling and pathological gambling. Males tend to be more involved than females in

different types of gambling (such as cards, sports bets, gambling at the casino). Bankole *et al.* (2019) in assessing personality characteristics and financial strain as a determinant of gambling behaviour recruited 297 young people and the result showed that personality characteristics and financial strain predicts gambling behaviour and also there is sex differences in gambling behaviour.

Zamani *et al.* (2020) in exploring the public perception and the relationship between psychoactive substance use and violent crimes among 103 youths, revealed that there were generally positive public perception on psychoactive substance use and violent crime among youths. Other results showed a significant positive influence between age and gender group on the perception of violent crimes among youth; while religion and educational status did not contribute to violent crimes. There are other studies finding violence tendency significant according to the education level of mother and insignificant according to the education level of father (Arpacı, 2011, Ayan, 2007, Şahan, 2010). In the study of Haskan and Yıldırım (2014), those who engaged in sports and those not engaged in sports were compared, no significant difference was observed in the violence tendency scores. Adebisi *et al.* (2020) recruited thirty young gamblers in a semi-structured interview session and found that Nigerian youth adopt gambling as a coping strategy in the face



of a crisis-ridden socio-economic structure characterised by poverty, and unemployment. In other words, gambling has become a normative activity experimented by the youth to survive the harsh economic conditions.

Hypotheses

1. Gambling impulse will significantly predict violence tendency such that participants with high level of violence tendency will report more violent disposition than their counterparts with low gambling impulse
2. Socio-demographic factors will jointly influence violence tendency among participants.

Methodology

Research Design: the researchers employed a cross-sectional survey that made use of ex post facto design.

Study Area: The present study was systematically conducted at betting stores and gambling outlets within Enugu metropolis, Enugu State, Nigeria.

Study Population: Population of this study was residents of Enugu metropolis particularly gamblers. Hence, the inclusion criteria mainly had to do with gambling experience of 30 days and residing in Enugu metropolis.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The researchers employed purposive sampling technique in recruiting the participants. Participants of this study consisted of two hundred and ninety-one

(291) gamblers selected from strategic public centers in Enugu like the Shoprite, Cinemas, Eateries and Event Centers and sometimes with the consent of their parents and guardians. Out of the 300 copies of questionnaires administered, only two hundred and ninety-one (291) were usable representing a response rate of 97%. Gender of gamblers revealed a predominance of male gamblers who were 259 (89.0%) and females were 32 (11.0%). Participants' ages were between 16 and 46 years, mean age of 22.07 years and SD deviation of 3.82. Marital status of gamblers showed that majority – 241 (82.8%) were single, 41 (14.1%) were married, 2 (0.7%) were separated and 7 (2.4%) were engaged. The educational level of participants revealed that 21 (7.2%) had only FSLC, 115 (39.5%) had only WAEC, 32 (11.0%) had OND certification. In addition, 32 (11.0%) had HND qualification, 79 (27.1%), while 12 (4.1%) had Master degree.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two validated instruments were employed in this study, and they are: Attitudes Toward Violence Scale (ATV) and The Gambling Urge Scale (GUS).

Violence Tendency: In this study, violence tendency was measured using the Attitudes Toward Violence Scale (ATV) as revalidated by Davidson and Canivez (2012). The ATV consists of 20 items that capture capital punishment, corporal punishment, and partner/dating violence. The ATV measures two constructs: (a) "attitudes toward violence in interpersonal relationships" and (b) "attitudes toward violence in other

domains.” Items are written in a positive direction only and respondents rate their level of agreement to each item based on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all agree*) to 7 (*very much agree*). Also, Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.83 was obtained for the study.

Gambling Impulse: This is a standardized scale made up of the measure for assessing gambling impulse. The Gambling Urge Scale (GUS) as developed by Smith, Pols, Batters by and Harvey, (2013) was employed in this study. The GUS is a questionnaire measuring the extent of gambling urge based on the participant’s self-reported thoughts and feelings at the time of completing the questionnaire. The scale consists of six items rated on a Likert (0-7) scale (total scores ranging from 0 to 42) including statements such as ‘I crave a gamble right now’ and ‘All I want to do is gamble. The Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85 was obtained in the study to ensure that

the instrument is reliable with internal consistency.

Method of Data Analysis: A descriptive statistics such as frequencies, standard deviation and means were used as well as the linear and multiple regression in the present study.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku Ozalla, Enugu State, Nigeria.

Results

Hypothesis One: Gambling impulse will significantly predict violence tendency in such that participants with high level of violence tendency will report more violent disposition than their counterparts with low gambling impulse. This was tested using linear regressions and summary of results presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of linear regression showing the contribution of gambling impulse on violence tendency among gamblers in Enugu metropolis.

Predictor	Outcome	β	T	Sig	R	R ²	F	P
Gambling impulse	Violence tendency	0.16	2.74	<0.05	0.159	0.025	7.51	<0.05

Results presented in Table 1 above shows that gambling impulse yielded a coefficient of multiple correlation (R) of 0.159 and multiple correlation square (R²) of 0.025; which implies that 2.5% of the variance in violence tendency was explained by the influence of gambling impulse. In addition, gambling impulse

was an independent predictor of violence tendency ($\beta = 0.16$; $t = 2.74$; $P < 0.05$). Based on this result, the first hypothesis which stated that gambling impulse will significantly predict violence tendency in such that participants with high level of violence tendency will report more violent disposition than their counterparts with low gambling impulse was confirmed.



Table 2: Summary of multiple linear regressions revealing the role of age, gender, and educational level on violence tendency among gamblers in Enugu metropolis

Predictors	B	T	Sig	R	R ²	F	P
Age	.06	1.07	>0.05	0.091	0.008	0.79	>0.05
Gender	-.07	-1.23	>0.05				
Educational Level	-.02	-.35	>0.05				

Hypothesis Two: Socio-demographic factors will jointly influence violence tendency among participants.

The results presented in Table 2 shows that socio-demographic factors (age, gender and educational level) yielded a coefficient of multiple correlation (R) of 0.091 and multiple correlation square (R²) of 0.008. In other words, only 0.8% of the variance in violence tendency was accounted for by the combined influence of socio-demographic variables. Table 2 also indicates that age, gender and educational were not independent predictors of violence tendency ($\beta = .06$; $t = 1.70$; $p>0.05$; $\beta = -.07$; $t = -1.23$; $p>0.05$; $\beta = -.02$; $t = .35$; $p>0.05$). There was also no joint influence of age, gender and educational level on violence tendency $F(3, 290) = 0.79, P>0.05$. Therefore, the second hypothesis which stated that socio-demographic factors will jointly influence violence tendency among participants was not confirmed.

Discussion

This study was aimed at investigating the influence of gambling impulse and socio-demographic factors on violence tendency among gamblers in Enugu

metropolis. The first hypothesis which stated that gambling impulse will significantly predict violence tendency such that participants with high level of violence tendency will report more violent disposition than their counterparts with low gambling impulse was retained. The result showed that gambling impulse can predispose someone to the act of violence or being violent. This finding is in sync with the findings of Tseng *et al.* (2023) who found a number of gambling-related harms experienced by respondents and showing that problem gambling behaviors are related to the negative consequences of gambling including violent acts. This finding also agrees with the study of Hinget *al.* (2020) who identified the range of situations where problem gambling and gendered drivers of violence against women each contribute to gambling-related intimate partner violence. Possible explanation for this finding is that when a drug user decides to get treatment, and they are still in the same environment or neighborhood that compels them to use drugs, they will not be able to resist the urge and they will find themselves enticed by friends and will not have the

will power to resist the cravings, but will to continue to indulge.

The second hypothesis which stated that socio-demographic factors will jointly influence violence tendency among participants was not confirmed because gender, age and educational level did not jointly predict violence tendency. This implies that age factor (being young or old), gender (being a male or female) and educational level (formally educated or not) did not contribute significantly to violence tendency of gamblers. This finding was not consistent with the findings of Karagün (2015) who found out that violence tendencies of young people differed significantly by gender, working in a sports branch being licensed, the number of years spent doing sports being licensed. The findings was in line with the work of Scandroglio *et al.* (2023) who compared males and females and found a non statistically significant outcome between males and females in different types of gambling. The finding was also in line with Zamani *et al.* (2020) who in their study revealed that there were generally positive public perception on psychoactive substance use and violent crime among youths and they found that religion and educational status did not contribute to violent crimes. An explanation can be explained in the cultural roles of the African society which may greatly influence potential female gamblers from plying the trade. Also, the large amount of testosterone in men may be a biological factor which may predispose them to such risky

behaviours. Another explanation of this finding is that the ego of a man is most times at its primitive nature, which could explain why educational level and age were not important variables to understand violence tendency.

Policy Implications

There is urgent need for massive sensitization among gamblers in Enugu metropolis primarily to understand the gravity or danger their behavioural disposition can expose them to which includes being violent and aggressive that could lead to bodily harm, incapacitation, loss of revenue and even death in extreme cases. Age, gender and educational level were not found to contribute significantly to violence tendency and at such should not be taken seriously among gamblers or those in related behavioural addictions.

Limitations of the Study

In the process of conducting this study, the researchers encountered some challenges which are serving as study limitations:

1. Some participants found it difficult to read and understand the questionnaire. Hence, the researcher and at some point asked the research assistants to read out the questions for them to answer by explaining a few things for them before obtaining truthful response.
2. Secondly, when most of the participants demanded for some form of rewards and monetary inducements from the researcher



before they could partake in the study.

Suggestions for Further Study

Taking a cue from the limitations, future studies should consider developing instruments that will be easier to understand either in pidgin English or in local dialect so as to overcome the challenge of educational handicap of some respondents. In addition, future studies should source for grants so as to reduce research attrition and increase participation of gamblers because money at that stage where they are is their singular primary motivating factor and for their utmost attention, some form of reward should be factored going forward.

Recommendations

Seeing that gambling is an addictive behaviour and difficult to stop, taking advantage of available preventive avenues and therapeutic services are paramount. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are outlined:

- i. By actively engaging young people with skills acquisitions and meaningful enterprise that will make them to expend and redirect the negative energy of gambling into something more productive.
- ii. Family and friends can play critical roles in motivating individuals with gambling and aggressive problems to go for mentoring and counseling.
- iii. Family social support and encouragement can be helpful to properly redirect this behavioural problem aright.

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