



## Investigating the Gambling-Related Risks among Secondary School Students in Ido Local Government, Ibadan, Oyo State

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the awareness of gambling-related risks among secondary school students in Nigeria. It examined the relationship between awareness and gambling behaviour, as well as the influence of gender and age on awareness. Five research hypotheses were raised and were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population for this study comprised of all secondary school students in Ido Local Government, Ibadan, Oyo, State with 100 students selected from public and private secondary schools using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire (QAGRRS) and analyzed using inferential statistics; Pearson correlation, independent t-test, and one-way ANOVA. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between awareness and gambling behaviour, while gender and age did not significantly influence awareness. The study concluded that although awareness reduces gambling behaviour, students continue to gamble, highlighting the need for school programs, parental supervision, counselling, and media campaigns.*

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Gambling, Awareness, Adolescents, Secondary School.

### INTRODUCTION

Gambling among adolescents has become an increasing global public health concern, with rising participation rates reported across different regions of the world. Recent evidence indicates that a significant proportion of young people engage in gambling activities. For example, a large-scale survey in the United Kingdom reported that approximately 27% of adolescents aged 11–17 years had participated in gambling within the past year (Gambling Commission, 2024). Similarly, earlier findings indicated that about 26% of adolescents were involved in gambling activities, demonstrating the widespread nature of gambling behaviour among young people (Gambling Commission, 2023).

Beyond participation rates, there is growing concern regarding problem gambling among adolescents. Although only a small proportion develop severe gambling problems, approximately 0.7% to 1.5% of adolescents are

classified as problem gamblers, while a larger proportion are considered at risk (Gambling Commission, 2023). Recent reports further suggest an upward trend in youth gambling vulnerability, driven largely by increased exposure through digital platforms and online accessibility (Gambling Commission, 2024).

Globally, the expansion of online gambling platforms and mobile technologies has significantly increased adolescents' access to gambling opportunities. The Lancet Public Health Commission identifies gambling as a major global public health challenge, with adolescents considered particularly vulnerable due to developmental characteristics and exposure to digital environments (Wardle et al., 2024).

Adolescents are especially susceptible to gambling behaviour due to developmental factors such as risk-taking tendencies, curiosity, and peer influence. Empirical studies consistently show that adolescent gambling is associated with

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negative outcomes, including poor academic performance, financial difficulties, addiction, and psychological distress. Furthermore, early exposure to gambling has been linked to an increased likelihood of developing problem gambling behaviours in adulthood.

Awareness of gambling-related risks is often considered an important factor in reducing engagement in risky behaviours. Within health behaviour theories, awareness is viewed as a precursor to behavioural change. However, emerging evidence suggests that awareness alone may not be sufficient to prevent adolescents from engaging in gambling. Factors such as peer pressure, social influence, perceived financial rewards, and normalization of gambling behaviour often override risk awareness (Wardle et al., 2024). In the Nigerian context, the rapid growth of gambling opportunities and widespread accessibility of betting platforms have contributed to increased participation among young people. Gambling, particularly sports betting, has become highly normalized among Nigerian adolescents through mobile phones and online platforms (Ogunleye & Adeyemi, 2021; Adebisi et al., 2022). Empirical studies indicate that a significant proportion of secondary school students in Nigeria engage in gambling activities, with many exposed at an early age (Olaseni et al., 2023).

Recent Nigerian studies have further linked adolescent gambling behaviour to several psychosocial challenges, including poor academic performance, financial hardship, and emotional distress (Adebayo & Oladipo, 2022; Ezeh et al., 2024). Environmental factors such as peer pressure, media influence, and easy access to betting platforms have also been identified as major drivers of gambling behaviour among students (Ajayi & Fawole, 2023). Despite varying levels of awareness of gambling-related risks, many adolescents continue to engage in gambling activities, suggesting a disconnect between knowledge and behaviour (Olatunji, 2021; Adeyemo et al., 2025).

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite increasing awareness campaigns and educational interventions on the

risks associated with gambling, adolescent participation in gambling activities continues to rise both globally and within Nigeria. Existing studies indicate that although many secondary school students are aware of the potential dangers of gambling—such as addiction, financial loss, academic decline, and psychological distress—they still engage in gambling behaviours. This suggests a possible disconnect between awareness and actual behavioural practice.

In Nigeria, particularly in urban centres such as Ibadan, the rapid expansion of betting outlets and the widespread accessibility of online gambling platforms have further intensified adolescents' exposure to gambling opportunities. The easy availability of smartphones and internet services has also contributed to increased participation among secondary school students.

While several studies have examined the prevalence and determinants of gambling among youths, limited empirical attention has been given to whether awareness of gambling-related risks significantly influences gambling behaviour among secondary school students. In addition, findings from previous studies remain inconsistent regarding the influence of demographic variables such as gender, age, class level, and school type on gambling behaviour. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between awareness of gambling-related risks and gambling behaviour among secondary school students in Ido Local Government Area of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

#### Research Hypotheses

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between level of awareness of gambling-related risks and gambling behaviour among secondary school students.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of gambling-related risks between male and female secondary school students.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of gambling-related risks based on age among secondary school students.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of gambling-related risks

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between Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) students.

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of gambling-related risks between students in public and private secondary schools

### METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data from a representative sample of secondary school students and describe their level of awareness of gambling-related risks and its relationship with gambling behaviour without manipulating any variable. The population of this study comprised all secondary school students in Ido Local Government Area of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. This includes students in both public and private secondary schools, as well as students in Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS).

A total of 100 secondary school students were selected for the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation of relevant subgroups within the population. The population was stratified based on the following variables: gender (male and female), age categories, class level (JSS and SSS) and school type (public and private). After stratification, respondents were randomly selected from each subgroup to ensure fairness and reduce sampling bias. This method was adopted because it enhances representativeness and improves the reliability of findings.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: "Awareness of Gambling-Related Risks and Gambling Behaviour Questionnaire (AGRGBQ)". The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A contains Demographic information of respondents (gender, age, class level, and school type) while Section B contains Items measuring level of awareness of gambling-related risks and gambling behaviour among secondary school students. The items in Section B were structured on a 4-point Likert scale as follows: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)

The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validity and the reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method and the scores obtained were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained, indicating that the instrument is reliable. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistic; Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the relationship between level of awareness of gambling-related risks and gambling behaviour, independent t-test was used to test differences based on gender, class level, and school type and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences based on age categories. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### RESULTS

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between awareness of gambling-related risks and gambling behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the Relationship between Awareness of Gambling-Related Risks and Gambling Behaviour among Secondary School Students.

		Awareness	Gambling
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.195
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.132
	N	90	61
Gambling	Pearson Correlation	.195	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.132	
	N	61	61

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### Interpretation

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis revealed a weak positive relationship between awareness of gambling-related risks and gambling behavior ( $r = 0.195$ ), which was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.132$ ). This result indicates that awareness of gambling risks did not significantly influence students' gambling behavior. Consequently, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This finding suggests that although

students may be aware of the risks associated with gambling, such awareness alone is insufficient to deter participation, possibly due to peer influence, perceived financial benefits, or developmental factors associated with adolescence.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in awareness of gambling-related risks based on gender.

Table 2: Independent Sample T-Test showing the Difference in Awareness of Gambling-Related Risks Based on Gender.

		Levene's Test for Equality		t-test for Equality of Means of Variance		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Awareness	Equal variances assumed	.830	.365	-.530	87	.598
	Equal variances not assumed			-.524	79.596	.601

An independent samples t-test showed that female students had a slightly higher mean awareness score ( $M = 3.37$ ) than male students ( $M = 3.31$ ); however, this difference was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.598$ ). This indicates that gender did not significantly influence students' awareness of gambling-related risks. As a result, the null hypothesis was retained. The finding suggests that both male and female students are

similarly exposed to information about gambling risks and possess comparable levels of awareness.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in awareness of gambling-related risks among secondary school students based on age.

Table 3: One Way Analysis of Variance showing the Difference in the Level of Awareness of Gambling-Related Risks Based on Age among Secondary School Students.

Awareness	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.207	3	.402	1.256	.295
Within Groups	27.243	85	.321		
Total	28.450	88			

### Interpretation

The analysis of awareness of gambling-related risks across age groups was conducted using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result revealed no statistically significant difference in awareness of gambling-related risks across age groups ( $F(3,85) = 1.256$ ,  $p = 0.295$ ). This finding indicates that age did not significantly

influence students' awareness of gambling-related risks. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in awareness of gambling-related risks among secondary school students based on age was retained. The result suggests that awareness of gambling-related risks is relatively uniform across age categories, implying that exposure to

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information about gambling risks may occur early and remains consistent throughout adolescence.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference in awareness of gambling-related risks among secondary school students based on class level.

Table 4: Independent Sample T-Test showing the Difference in Awareness of Gambling-Related Risks Based on Class Level.

		Levene's Test for Equality		t-test for Equality of Means of Variance		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Awareness	Equal variances assumed	1.033	.312	-.582	87	.562
	Equal variances not assumed			-.563	56.108	.576

**Interpretation**

An independent samples t-test was also employed to examine differences in awareness of gambling-related risks based on class level. The result demonstrated that the difference in awareness between junior and senior secondary school students was not statistically significant ( $t(87) = -0.582, p = 0.562$ ). This implies that class level did not significantly influence students' awareness of gambling-related risks. Accordingly, the null hypothesis asserting that there is no significant difference in awareness of gambling-

related risks based on class level was retained. This finding suggests that awareness of gambling-related risks cuts across class levels, indicating that both junior and senior students possess comparable levels of understanding regarding the dangers associated with gambling.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference in awareness of gambling-related risks among secondary school students based on school type.

Table 5: Independent Sample T-Test showing the Difference in Awareness of Gambling-Related Risks Based on School Type.

		Levene's Test for Equality		t-test for Equality of Means of Variance		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Awareness	Equal variances assumed	.443	.507	-.879	87	.382
	Equal variances not assumed			-.876	82.541	.384

**Interpretation**

The influence of school type on awareness of gambling-related risks was examined using an independent samples t-test. The analysis showed that the difference in awareness scores between public and private school students was not statistically significant ( $t(87) = -0.879, p = 0.382$ ). This result indicates that school type does not significantly affect students' awareness of gambling-related risks. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that

there is no significant difference in awareness of gambling-related risks based on school type was retained. This finding implies that awareness of gambling-related risks is broadly similar among students regardless of whether they attend public or private secondary schools.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between awareness of gambling-related risks and gambling behaviour among secondary school students. This indicates

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that although many students are aware of the risks associated with gambling, such awareness does not necessarily prevent them from engaging in gambling activities. This result suggests that awareness alone may be insufficient to curb gambling behaviour among adolescents. Factors such as peer influence, easy access to betting platforms, social media exposure, and the desire for quick financial gain may override knowledge of risks. This finding aligns with earlier studies which reported that adolescents may engage in gambling despite understanding its negative consequences (Derevensky & Gupta, 2019; Canale et al., 2021).

The findings further showed that gender did not significantly influence awareness of gambling-related risks among secondary school students. Consequently, the null hypothesis was retained. This implies that both male and female students possess a similar level of awareness regarding gambling-related risks. The result may be attributed to equal exposure to gambling information through mass media, social networks, and peer discussions irrespective of gender. This finding supports studies which reported no significant gender differences in gambling awareness among adolescents (Molinaro et al., 2020).

The study also revealed that age did not significantly influence students' awareness of gambling-related risks. Students across different age categories demonstrated comparable levels of awareness. This finding suggests that exposure to gambling information occurs early in adolescence and cuts across age groups. The increasing penetration of digital media and online betting advertisements may account for this trend. This result corroborates earlier findings that gambling awareness among adolescents is not strongly age-dependent (Calado et al., 2017).

The study examined whether school level (Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School) influenced students' awareness of gambling-related risks. The findings indicated that there was no significant difference in the level of awareness between junior and senior secondary school students. Hence, the null hypothesis was retained. This suggests that

students in both junior and senior secondary schools are similarly exposed to gambling-related information. The early introduction of smartphones, peer interaction, and social media exposure may have reduced the expected difference in awareness across school levels. This finding aligns with Molinaro et al. (2020), who observed that adolescents across different school levels are exposed to gambling content at similar rates.

Findings from the study further revealed that school type (public and private) did not significantly influence students' awareness of gambling-related risks. Students from both school types demonstrated similar levels of awareness. This may be attributed to the fact that gambling-related information and advertisements are widely accessible outside the school environment through television, social media, and betting shops. This finding implies that awareness of gambling risks is shaped more by societal exposure than by school ownership. Similar findings have been reported in Nigerian studies which noted that adolescents' gambling exposure cut across school types (Akanbi et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that secondary school students possess a moderate level of awareness of gambling-related risks. However, this awareness does not significantly influence gambling behaviour. Demographic variables such as gender, age, school level, and school type did not significantly affect students' awareness of gambling-related risks. This indicates that gambling among adolescents remains a concern despite awareness, highlighting the need for more targeted preventive interventions beyond mere information dissemination.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Schools should intensify practical counselling programmes that address



- peer pressure and behavioural control related to gambling.
2. Parents should closely monitor students' access to online betting platforms and gambling-related content.
  3. Government and regulatory bodies should enforce stricter regulations on gambling advertisements targeting young people.
  4. Guidance counsellors should incorporate gambling risk education into life skills and moral instruction programmes.
  5. Future studies should examine other factors such as peer influence, parental gambling behaviour, and socioeconomic status.

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