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# **Gambling Addiction Among Youths: Concepts, Types, Symptoms, Effects And Counselling Implications**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The paper aims at investigating the gambling addictions among youths: the concepts, types, symptoms, effects and counselling implications. To achieve the purpose of this study, a critical review of some relevant literature were made to ascertain the level by which the youths gamble. The paper also point out of the basic reasons why youth gamble and who is a youth. In a brief statement, it was also mentioned legal and illegal gambling, gambling addictions and risk factors in gambling business, also as part of the study treatment and strategies to reduce or manage gambling addiction were mention and recommendations and conclusions on the way forward were also part of the study.

**Keywords:** gambling addictions, youths, Sports Betting

## **INTRODUCTION**

Within the last seven years Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented economic crisis which has affected every sector of the country's economy and living standard of her citizens (young and old), particularly middle and lower class population. The rate of Unemployment and underemployment escalate daily with no sign of responsiveness and commitment from government at all levels to arrest the ugly situation. Businesses are collapsing, inflation keep rising unabatedly and depression rate is increasing daily which all result to people involving in different risky behaviour to survive. Most young people are ready to engage in any act (legal or illegal) that will put food on their tables and shade them from vicious circle of economic crises with scant attention to its effects and consequences. One prevalent risky behavior the economic depression in Nigeria has tilted most people especially the youth population towards is gambling.

Gambling has become a major source of income to many young people and an occupation to some who cannot get any payable job or employment even with their skills, certificates and qualifications. Temitope (2019) maintained that gambling has become an activity that most Nigerian youths and adolescents engaged in, sites for legal gambling have been established and the internet has made gambling accessible to almost everyone which also have high impacts on them. Both educated, uneducated, underemployed and unemployed adolescents, young and old adults are engaged in this activity. The gainfully employed are not exempted either. Even with numerous evident-based observations and testimonies of its negative effects on the individual's economic, social and psychological wellbeing, gambling is gradually becoming an acceptable recreational and vocational activity for the young and old. Gambling has become part of mainstream culture through the entertainment, leisure, sport, and tourism industries and it is a significant source of revenue to governments and private enterprise (Temitope, 2019).

It has been observed that gambling has recorded immense improvement among other business enterprises in Nigeria. One of these observations is contained in the data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) according to CBN (2019), there were 14 million web payments worth a total of N132 billion (\$420 million); transactions leapt to 29 million worth N185 billion in 2017 and in the first quarter of 2018, there were nearly 10 million worth N61 billion (Adigun, 2020). Although some individuals and organizations (especially religious individuals and organizations) see gambling as an illegal and antisocial activity but gambling in Nigeria is legal and it is partially regulated by the law of the land. The legal history of gambling in Nigeria is traced to Chapter 22 of the Criminal Code Act enacted in 1990 which legalized certain forms of gambling in an attempt to generate tax revenues. Gambling is regulated by National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) which is empowered by the National Lottery Act, 2005 to regulate betting lottery. This has made gambling more acceptable to the public, especially to the under-aged. Even though the law prohibits youngsters below 18 years of age in Nigeria to engage in gambling activities, legal actions are rarely seen or heard against victims within this age range which reinforces the behaviour among young people.

In the recent past, gambling has become a common recreational activity and source of livelihood for many youths, especially online sports betting. Aguocha and George (2021) stated that the most popular forms of gambling in present-day Nigeria are online sports betting (e.g. football league promotions and the pools), the lottery and slot machines. According to them, many Nigerians view gambling as a harmless leisure activity: a recent study of the Nigerian general population found that 36% of adult respondents had gambled and 53% of these people were daily gamblers. Traditionally, gambling involves wagering, auction, card matches, gaming, sports, video game, and Internet card and casino matches.

Generally, gambling is the act of playing a game, wagering of valuable or taking a risky action for money, valuable or a desired outcome. Statile and McConville in Adigun (2020) defined gambling as staking of money on the outcome of games or events involving chance or skill. It is the exchange of property or significant other valuables including human being (e.g. slave or a relative) on the outcome of an event largely, if not solely, determined by chance. It is also defined as wagering money or other belongings on chance activities or events with random or uncertain outcomes. People of different age group engage in this act but youths are more addicted to gambling. Gambling is of various pattern which are wagering and betting which involve placing a bet or wager on the outcome of an event such as a sporting event or race; gaming which involve placing bets on games that are constrained by mathematically predetermined rules and theoretical returns of players (gaming machines and casino table games) and lottery style games such as Cross-Lotto, Powerball, Pools, scratch tickets and keno, all of which award prizes based on the selection of winning symbol or number combinations. When the tendency to engage in any of these activities becomes compulsive and uncontrollable despite harm and negative consequences, it becomes gambling addiction.

Gambling is becoming the commonest problematic behaviour among the youths globally. The youth comprises 18 percent of the current world population, and 87 percent of youth live in developing countries (MCCL in Kinance, 2012) They are a unique group of people with a tendency to be independent and to plan for the future. One way of doing that is by trying to discover themselves in the light of vocational aspirations

### **Who is a Youth?**

The concept of youth has no universally accepted definition. The concept of youth could be seen as difficult to define, as it covers such a diverse area (UKEssays, 2018). Although in a very general definition, youth is a period of life in-between childhood and adulthood. Some authorities try to understand the concept of youth from the perspective of the period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. That is the reason, as a category, youth is more fluid than other fixed age-groups. Yet, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment, because "youth" is often referred to as a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job. Kinance (2012) sees the youth as young people who are largely in

secondly schools or tertiary institutions, or who have finished programmes but have (or not) been able to secure a job for themselves. This implies that the youths refer to all those young people who cannot afford a secondary or a university education but are capable of making a living for themselves to other legitimate means.

According to Henze (2015), youth is described as a time of experimenting with roles and identities, still void of the burden of social norms and obligations, yet slowly preparing the youngsters for their lives as full members of the social collective. The term youth is defined by sociologists as a transition between 'childhood and adulthood. During this process of social integration young people find themselves in a complex social system, composed of such elements as tradition, history, social demands, hopes, and individual future prospects, all of which they have to incorporate into a coherent picture in order to build a proper foundation for their personal life. Step by step they have to obtain new social roles and extend their range of social performances. This passage into society is guided by various socially defined norms and demands that serve the reproduction functions of society while conditions of economic and social integration set the framework for the political socialisation of the future citizens Henze (2015)

The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by member state (<https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>). The secretary general first referred to the current definition of youth in 1981 in his report to the General Assembly on International Youth and endorsed it in ensuing reports. However, in both the reports, the secretary general also recognized that, apart from that statistical definition, the meaning of them 'youth' varies in different societies around the world. When the general assembly, by its resolution in 1995, adopted the world programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond, it reiterated that the United Nations defined youth as the age cohort of 15-24. The General Assembly resolution in 2001, the commission for social development resolution in 2007 and general assembly resolution in 2008 also reinforce the same age-group for youth (<https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/factsheets/youth-definition.pdf>).

While the sociologists see youth as a transition between 'childhood and adulthood, the term is used within psychology to describe the common biological, psychological, emotional and sexual maturation phases associated with the onset of puberty and the teenage years. One striking commonality in the two views is that a youth is an individual who is transiting from one stage of life (maturing stage) to the other (matured stage). At this stage they are enveloped by curiosity about life and its dynamics and imbalances. These imbalances result from the need for independence which include economic independence, social independence, psychological and emotional independence. Inadequacies in these areas of life reinforces the need for gambling and gambling addiction. But for the purpose of this chapter, a youth is an individual between the ages of 16-40 years. People within this age bracket are seen and referred to as young men/women in most societies.

### **Concept of Gambling**

Gambling is the act of staking or wagering money or any valuable on an event with an uncertain outcome with the intent to win more money or things of value than was wagered. It involve risking something of value, including money, property or valuable belonging for the chance of winning more than you risked. It the betting or staking of something of value with consciousness of risk and hope of gain, on the outcome of a game, a contest, or uncertain event whose result may be determined by chance or accident or have an unexpected result by reason of the bettor's miscalculation (Glimne, 2023). The results of gambling games may be determined by chance alone, as in the purely random activity of a tossed pair of dice or of the ball on a roulette wheel, or by physical skill, training, or prowess in athletic contests, or by a combination of strategy and chance. Oyebisi et al. in Lungu (2020) maintained that gambling is a type of behaviour which has been detected to have severe effects on the health, habit of study and educational achievement of gamblers and has been associated with certain criminal conduct.

Youths 16 and 17 years old gamble less than adults and differently from adults, primarily betting on private and unlicensed games, especially betting on card games and sports and buying instant lottery

tickets (National Gambling Impact Commission, 1999), Youthful gamblers tend to bet much smaller amounts of money than adults. Adjusting for the smaller amounts of money at stake, the rates of pathological and problem gambling among 16 and 17 year olds are similar to those for adults, and the rate of at-risk gambling is about double the adult rate ([https://www.norc.org.PDFs/pulications\\_GIBSFinal\\_Report\\_April\\_1999.pdf](https://www.norc.org.PDFs/pulications_GIBSFinal_Report_April_1999.pdf)).

For adolescents, gambling is viewed as an adult activity that they can participate in fairly easily, such as playing for money with their friends. The rules by which gambling games are played sometimes serve to confuse the relationship between the components of the game, which depend on skill and chance, so that some players may be able to manipulate the game to serve their own interests. Thus, knowledge of the game is useful for playing poker or betting on horse racing but is of very little use for purchasing lottery tickets or playing slot machines. Gambling behaviour among young people, especially adolescents ranges from no gambling to experimentation to occasional or regular social gambling to excessive and problematic gambling otherwise known as gambling addiction. This continuum is skewed toward most youth gambling rarely or occasionally and some youth gambling excessively. Adults play commercial or legal forms of gambling such as slot machines at casinos or buy lottery tickets, whereas youth tend to play informal games amongst themselves such as poker or betting on sports or games of skill such as video games.

### **Legal and Illegal Gambling**

The line dividing legal and illegal gambling was originally chronological in nature. Although the legal age for gambling varies across jurisdictions but is most commonly between 18-21 years of age. In Nigeria for instance, the minimum legal age to be able to gamble is 18 years. Some youth celebrate reaching the legal gambling age birthdays by visiting gambling sites. Some underage youth play commercial games such as the lottery by obtaining lottery products in legal-age gamblers, including family members. Some laws however distinguish between games of skill (which are legal) and games of chance (which are illegal). Legal forms of gambling include the lottery, land-based casinos and sports betting, whereas roulette, dice games and non-skilled card games are considered illegal. There is no specific provision in the law to regulate online gambling which has given young people unrestricted access to gambling websites leading to compulsive behaviour towards the act which is referred to as gambling addiction.

### **Types of Gambling**

People can and do gamble on virtually anything. Currently, the most popular gambling activities are poker, sports betting, various types of lotteries, bingo, parimutual wagering on (horse and dog) races, casino games such as black jack and craps, slots, and a variety of electronic gambling machines (eg, video poker). The following types of gambling are available for youths as given by Gemma et al. in Lungu (2020):

1. *Lottery*. Game for distributing prizes by chance whether by throwing or casting of dice, tickets, cards lots, numbers or figures.
2. *Casino*, Private club or establishment where gambling takes place or place where people gamble by playing card games, roulette, slot machines etc.
3. *Promotional Competitions* These are competitions that are conducted for the purpose of promoting a producer, distributor, supplier or the sale of any goods or services and participants participate by sending SMS messages. The prizes are distributed by conducting random draws, examples include promotional competitions offered by telecom companies, beverage companies etc.
4. *Sports Betting*: This is the activity of predicting sports results and placing a wager on the outcome.
5. *Betting of animals*: This is activity of predicting animal race results and placing a wager on the outcome.
6. *Online/Internet gambling*: This refers to gambling that takes place over the internet.
7. *Ludo*: This is a board for two to four players, in which the players race their tokens from start to finish according to die rolls. In this study, it was considered to be gambling only if money was staked by the players involved.

### **What is Gambling Addiction?**

Gambling addiction otherwise known as problem gambling or ludomania or ludopathy is a compulsive and uncontrollable tendency for gambling despite harm and negative consequences. It is an individual's strong tempting urge for gambling activities without consideration to economic, social and health losses and implications. It is an addictive disorder that refers to the compulsive urge to gamble. Gambling is when something of value is risked in the hope of gaining something of greater value. Just like drugs, gambling is highly addictive even more addictive than drugs. Because of the hope for gaining something of greater value; frustration for loss (s) incurred in previous wagers and the terrible need to recover losses the gambler is reinforced to even go into heavy wagers which consequently leads to gambling addiction. Gambling addiction can act very similarly to drug addiction (Singh, 2023). According to him in both cases, the reward pathway in the brain can be stimulated, creating a sense of satisfaction. More specifically, the stimulation of this reward pathway triggers the release of a chemical messenger called dopamine, which leads to a euphoric feeling. Gambling products that enable easy and fast play, seen in particular with fixed-odds betting, can also be addictive, as 'near wins', which are losses disguised as a win, also excite the reward pathway in the brain.

In order to regenerate this feeling, some individuals may repetitively engage in gambling behaviour. Eventually, gamblers can build up a tolerance, causing their brain's neurons to adapt and produce less dopamine in response to that behaviour. In order to overcome this, compulsive gamblers will often engage in riskier ventures to create the same sense of satisfaction and may find it difficult to stop gambling. This cycle of behaviour can lead to addiction and gambling disorder. However, it is important to note that not all individuals who gamble will develop a gambling addiction (Singh, 2023). Although not everyone that bets has a gambling problem, but some people become compulsive gamblers at some point in life. People in this group lose control of their betting, to the point that it negatively impacts their personal lives and the lives of people around them. Such people cannot control their urge to gamble, even if they are losing a lot of money. They are willing to risk something of value in the hope that the return will be more valuable (Australian Psychological Association, 2011).

Wildman in Jazsers and Habi (2012) suggests that the important thing to remember about gambling is that it is "a conscious, deliberate effort to stake valuables, usually but it says currency, on how some event happens to turn out. Gambling addiction is an urge to gamble despite harmful negative consequences or a desire to stop. The term is preferred to compulsive gambling among many professionals, as few people described by the term experience more compulsions in the clinical sense of the word (Jazaeri & Habi, 2012). Gambling addiction, also known as pathological gambling, compulsive gambling or gambling disorder is an impulse-control disorder (Segal et al., 2021). A compulsive gambler cannot control the impulse to gamble, even when it has negative consequences for the individual or people around him.

*DSM-IV-TR* described gambling addiction or pathological gambling as an impulse-control disorder characterized by chronic, maladaptive wagering, leading to significant interpersonal, professional, or financial difficulties. *DSM-5* characterizes this behavioural pathology as a non-substance-related addiction and refers to it as gambling disorder (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2023). *DSM-5* criteria for the disorder include persistent, recurrent gambling not related to manic episodes, along with significant impairment or distress. Associated behaviours may include betting increasing amounts of money, inability to limit or stop gambling, and preoccupation with gambling.

### **Sign and Symptoms of Gambling Addiction**

Extreme cases of problem addiction may cross over into the realm of mental disorders. Gambling addiction was recognized as a psychiatric disorder in the *DSM-III*, but the criteria were significantly reworked based on large-scale studies and statistical methods for the *DSM-IV*. As defined by the American Psychiatric Association, gambling addiction is an impulse control disorder that is a chronic and progressive mental illness. Gambling addiction is now defined as persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behaviour meeting at least five of the following criteria, as long as these behaviours are not better explained by a manic episode:

- L. Preoccupation. The subject has frequent thoughts about gambling experiences, whether past, future, or fantasy.
2. Tolerance. As with drug tolerance, the subject requires larger or more frequent wagers to experience the same "rush"
3. Withdrawal. Restlessness or irritability associated with attempts to cease or reduce gambling.
4. Escape. The subject gambles to improve mood or escape problems
5. Chasing. The subject tries to win back gambling losses with more gambling
6. Lying. The subject tries to hide the extent of his or her gambling by lying to family, friends, or therapists
7. Loss of control. The subject has unsuccessfully attempted to reduce gambling
8. Illegal acts. The subject has broken the law in order to obtain gambling money or recover gambling losses
9. Risked significant relationship. The subject gambles despite risking or losing a relationship, job, or other significant opportunity
10. Bailout. The subject turns to family, friends, or another third party for financial assistance as a result of gambling
11. Biological bases. The subject has a lack of norepinephrine.

### **Risk Factors**

Although most people who play cards or wager never develop a gambling problem, certain factors are more often associated with compulsive gambling:

**Age.** Compulsive gambling is more common in younger and middle-aged people. Gambling during childhood or the teenage years increases the risk of developing compulsive gambling. But compulsive gambling in the older adult population can also be a problem.

**Sex.** Compulsive gambling is more common in men than women. Women who gamble typically start later in life and may become addicted more quickly. But gambling patterns among men and women have become increasingly similar.

**Family or friend influence.** If your family members or friends have a gambling problem, the chances are greater that you will, too.

**Medications used to treat Parkinson's disease and restless legs syndrome.** Drugs called dopamine agonists have a rare side effect that may result in compulsive behaviours, including gambling, in some people.

**Certain personality characteristics.** Being highly competitive, a workaholic, impulsive, restless or easily bored may increase your risk of compulsive gambling.

### **Reasons Youth Engage in Gambling**

Youths engage in gambling for different reasons and purposes. Some people engage in gambling for economic reason and some seek solace in gambling due to psychological or emotional distress, while others do so just feel among (peer pressure). In trying to deduce different reasons why young people tend to go into gambling, Lungu (2020) deduced the following:

**Peer pressure:** Some students get lured or pressured into the act by friends or peers. Since everyone is doing it, they also want to do it to feel among.

**Get Quick Rich Syndrome:** with the downward spiral in the country's economy young adults tend to want to do anything just to get quick money. Gambling seems to give such a view and most students jump into the act with the belief that one day they would win big and live rich

**Poverty/Environmental influence:** Most gambling students come from poor homes and tend to have unattended needs on every side. These prompts them to look for quick sources of money to sort out their Most of them turn to gambling as it portrays an opportunity to bring them and their families out of a life of poverty.

**Poor Economy:** With an economy that tends to widen the gap between the poor and the rich in Nigeria. Students from poor homes tend to go into gambling, as it gives a false hope of riches beyond their

imaginations affording them expensive opportunities alongside their rich counterparts. this is not usually the case as most of them end up much poorer than before.

### **Effects of Gambling Addiction**

Gambling addiction is not a healthy behaviour both to the individual addict and people around home thus, has negative effects on the individual's economic, social, psychological and general wellbeing.

**Relationship Problems:** An addicted gambler usually has relationship issues especially with family member and loved ones. The relationship problem could arise from the individual's inability to meet the financial and emotional needs of family members and loved ones. The increased pressure to financially support the family while the addicted partner gambles precious resources away causes intense pressure for the unaddicted spouse. This can result in the stable spouse pulling away emotionally and physically, putting further strain on the relationship.

**Financial Problems:** Every addicted gambler no matter his income level and how lucky he is in winning is likely to experience financial difficulties including bankruptcy. The psychology of gambling addiction is the more you win, the higher and heavier your wager and the more you lose, the stronger your passion and conviction to win. This is what plunges gamblers into financial crisis because they cannot stop even with huge losses.

**Legal Problems or Imprisonment:** Some gambling sites are known for notorious and criminal activities that attract the raid of law enforcement agencies and legal action. Most gambling site are used for the sales of hard drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, morphine, oxycodone, methadone, heroin, alcohol, methamphetamines (Meth), Nicotine (Tobacco) and other. Some gambling sites are used for the sales of stolen items which sometimes results to the raid of the site by law enforcement agencies leading to arrest of gamblers and taking necessary legal actions against them.

**Poor Work Performance or Job Loss:** Working class gambling addicts usually have problem of concentration at work which affects their performance. Every addicted gambler enjoys staying at gambling site than staying at the work place. He/she sees gambling time as leisure time which makes him uncomfortable at work leading to poor job performance.

**Poor General Health:** Gambling generally is physically and mentally tasking. Most gambling sites are not conducive enough to promote good healthy. There are issues of poor ventilation, poor hygiene, poor temperature and poor physical facilities to guarantee the safety of gamblers. This exposes gamblers to dangers and different diseases even when they contracted a disease, they are always not concern about their wellbeing due to lack of time to care for themselves.

**Mental health issues.** Gambling addiction is often associated with mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and mood disorders, substance misuse problems and personality disorders. Compulsive gambling may also be associated with bipolar disorder, obsessive- compulsive disorder (OCD) or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

**Emotional Problems:** Gambling generally is all about emotions. The gambler expresses pleasant emotions such excitement, enjoys the fan of winning and praises from friends and colleagues for winning games. However, the gambler also expresses unpleasant emotions arising from loses such as frustration, stress, regret and guilt. These feelings are capable wearing the individual's psychological and general wellbeing. Due to heavy losses some gamblers who cannot manage depression may attempt suicide or begins to idealize suicide (suicidal ideation).

### **Treatment Strategies for Gambling Addiction**

Just like other addictions, gambling addiction is treatable if the addicted individual recognizes his problem and wishes to stop the behaviour. Though every gambler is unique and so needs a recovery program tailored specifically to him or her as what works for one gambler might not necessarily work for another, there are general treatment strategies that can enable the gambler recover from the addiction. Many therapies and strategies abound for the treatment of gambling addiction but only cognitive-behaviour therapy and gambling anonymous shall be discussed in this chapter.

**Gamblers Anonymous (GA):** This is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from gambling addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop gambling. There are no dues or fees for Gamblers Anonymous membership; they are self-supporting through their own contributions. Gamblers Anonymous is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. Their primary purpose is to stop gambling and to help other compulsive gamblers do likewise. There is a twelve-step recovery program patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous to help gambling addicts recover from the addiction. A key part of a 12-step program is choosing a sponsor. A sponsor is a former gambler who has time and experience remaining free from addiction and can often provide invaluable guidance and support. Gambling addicts are encouraged to join Gambling Anonymous to enable recover from gambling addiction.

**Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT):** The use of cognitive-behavioral therapy for gambling addiction originates from the belief that the individual's compulsive urge for gambling emanates from his or her thought and belief system. Therefore the focus of this therapy is to enable the individual change unhealthy gambling behaviours and thoughts, such as rationalizations and false beliefs. The therapist teaches gambling addicts how to fight gambling urges, deal with uncomfortable emotions rather than escapes through gambling, and solve financial, work, and relationship problems caused by the addiction. The goal of treatment is to "rewire" the addicted brain by thinking about gambling in a new way. A variation of cognitive behavioural therapy, called the four steps program, has been used in treatment of compulsive gambling as well. The goal is to change your thoughts and beliefs about gambling in four steps; re-label, re-attribute, refocus, and revalue.

### **Counselling Implications**

Gambling addiction is negative behaviour that affects the gambler's psychological and general wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of people around him and the society at large. A family that has an addicted gambler is a psychological family which needs a psychological intervention to salvage her from the shackles of Thus, gambling addiction among youths has several counselling implications

1. There is urgent need to create enough awareness and sensitize the public on the rate at which gambling activities are increasing and its negative economic, social and psychological effects on the youths and society at large.
2. There should be community-based awareness campaign to enlighten the general public on the sign and symptoms of gambling addiction. This will assist family members and loved ones to notice when a member is addicted to gambling and encourage him to seek the services of a guidance counsellor.
3. Professional counselors are challenged by the prevalence of gambling addiction and its attendant consequences. Establishment of counselling centres within the communities and towns to provide psychological succor to gambling addicts and family members who are suffering from the consequences of the addiction. This will help to reduce and prevent depression among youths and family members
4. Young people should be encouraged to adopt better ways of making money and a healthy way to escape from life stressors rather than engaging and seeking solace in gambling activities.
5. Government should build more recreational centre such as Port-Harcourt Pleasure Park and other youthful event centers and program that can create sense of livelihood and excitement for the youths. Additionally, enabling environment should be provided to enable legitimate means of livelihood
6. Victims of gambling addiction should be encouraged to go for counselling in order to help these out of psychological and emotional distress associated with loss of money and properties to gambling. Many gambling addicts go through lots of psychological distress ranging from panic, traumatic stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, guilt, self-blame, and sometimes suicidal ideation. Going for counselling will help them overcome these psychological disturbances.



## CONCLUSION

Gambling is legal and illegal. It is illegal when the gambler is below 18 years in Nigeria while individuals above 18 are legally permitted to engage in gambling activities. Aside the age perspective of gambling, some laws equally differentiate between legal and illegal gambling by the nature of stakes and wagers as well as the event of gamble. The legal gambling often referred to as parties of skill include lottery, land-based casinos and sports betting while illegal gambling often referred to as games of chance include roulette, dice games and non-skilled sand patches. Whether legal or illegal gambling can become an addiction when the gambler develops compulsive siege to gamble and finds it difficult to stop even after huge losses and receive affects is interpersonal relationships Gambling addiction is a psycho-social problem that has eaten deep in the fabrics of our youths. Majority of our youths engage in one form of gambling or the other. Factors such as peer influence, poverty, unemployment. get-quick-rich syndrome and others are fuelling gambling behaviour. Gambling addiction has numerous negative effect on the social, physical and mental health of the gambler such as financial difficulties, interpersonal relationship issues, poor job performance, poor general health, mental health issues and emotional problems. The rate of gambling among the youths is becoming a disturbing trend and calls for professional intervention of counselling profession to salvage the situation and save the society from plunging into psychological cataclysms

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