

Full Length Research Paper

Assessing the effects of sports gambling among the youths in Blantyre City of Southern Malawi

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The study aimed at assessing the effects of sports gambling among the youths of Blantyre City in Southern Malawi. In this study, the sample size was made up of 30 youths comprising 19 males and 11 females. They were randomly selected by the researcher through probability sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The study achieved a 100% response rate. The study revealed that 84.2% of the youths involved in sports betting are not aware of any of the rules or regulations protecting them as bettors, 68% of them do not invest in the money they get. Asked how this activity has affected them either negatively or positively, it is discovered it has brought more harm than good. A total of 9 of the respondents were affected by addiction, 5 of the respondents had financial constraints caused by betting, 3 of the respondents agreed that it wasted their time and 8 of them said that it affected them positively as it helps them spend their leisure time. The study established that sports betting is an activity that can jeopardize the social and moral welfare of the youths; hence, more research on sports betting addiction is needed about the youths to examine more the effects associated with this activity in Blantyre; and that more protection must be devised for the youths through the main stakeholders to safeguard their moral, social and academic welfare. The government policy should be more strengthened and tightened by increasing the eligible age for bettors and that more awareness about pathological betting is needed among the youths of Blantyre.

Key words: Gambling, betting, youths, effect, sports.

INTRODUCTION

The gambling industry has experienced rapid expansion over the past years as new laws legalized more types of gambling (Yuan et al., 1996). According to Vacek (2011) gambling in various forms has been around throughout recorded history, but its in-depth study is a recent phenomenon occasioned by the resurgence of

widespread gambling in America in the 1980s and 90s.

According to Newall et al. (2019), adverts made by bookies have attracted many young players into gambling. The driving force behind the increase in the participation by young players in gambling is due to the online technology and universal access to the internet.

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Wong et al. (2013)'s findings indicate that males are more than twice as likely as females to have gambled in the past year, males are three times more likely to respond to two or more "problem gambling" questions than females and that gambling involvement is positively correlated with substance abuse and all other risk factors for substance use.

According to Williams et al. (2006) the lifetime gambling in college and university students is typically from 70 to 94%, with males consistently having higher rates than females. Furthermore, Moore et al. (2013) concluded that young people including university students are a high-risk group for gambling problems.

In Malawi, betting became legal due to the legal provisions of the Gaming Act which was introduced in 1996. This Act led to the introduction of the Malawi Gaming Board which among other functions decides whether licenses get approved or not. Since then, sports betting have become a very vital and profitable yet a very addictive and volatile activity of the 21st century in Malawi.

Problem statement

Recently, there has been a rapid increase in sports betting among the youths of Malawi. The Malawi Gaming Board has advised that all youths work hard in education instead of engaging in gambling in different designated places across the country (<https://www.gamingboard.org.mw>).

Most youths in colleges are susceptible to betting; they are made vulnerable because less restrictions are imposed on their activities. A high school gambling fact sheet asserted that while the vast majority of youths will gamble on occasion and just for fun, others will gamble excessively and develop serious problems (Shaffer et al., 2005).

According to Derevensky et al. (2010), youths are the riskiest demographic and highest risk age group because they think they are smarter than everyone else and invulnerable. A high school fact sheet in the USA stresses that approximately 45% of youths have a gambling problem and that 10-14% are at risk of developing an addiction. According to Mkwanda (2019), most Malawians have begun to gamble a lot. A look at trading centers, towns and cities reveals that many people especially young people have taken to gambling as a hobby. In the absence of jobs and capital for business most youths have taken to gambling as a means to survival.

Research objective

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of sports betting on the youths of Blantyre City in Southern Malawi. The specific research objectives were;

1. To establish the causes of sports betting among
2. The youths in Blantyre City.
3. To determine the effects of sports betting among the youths in Blantyre City.
4. To establish possible regulations concerning sports betting in Malawi.
5. To suggest best practices in addressing problems of sports betting addiction in Malawi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of sports betting

According to Palmer (2013) sports betting can be defined as placing a financial wager on the outcome of a match, as well as events that occur within the larger match or fixture. Palmer (2013) argues that the speed with which sports betting and technologies which support it change, the relative ease with which sports betting sites can be accessed by bettors, and the links to youth markets in which wagering brands is perceived to have changed the experience of sport for audiences, all make research into sport betting necessary.

Information available at Victoria Responsible Gambling Foundation (2019) defines sports betting as a wide range of wagers on the outcomes of events, or events that occur within the larger events.

Comprehensively, Australian Gambling Statistics (2014) defines sports betting as the wagering on approved types of local, national or international sporting activities whether on or off course, in person, by telephone, or via the internet.

All the definitions bring about the issue of sports betting clearly. The common idea here is wager, that is, risking money by guessing the results of something. However, the definitions do not point clearly to the moral implication of sports betting on the bettors.

Most of the literature reviewed tends to suggest that the majority of bettors are males and that they have a higher rate of problem gambling than the females and such gender differences may be attributed to men taking more risks and being more socially anxious than women (Wong et al., 2013).

Palmer (2013) argues that although literature on sports bettors as a specific population group is relatively scant, research into their demographic characteristics suggest that they are a unique cohort. However, according to Palmer (2013), sports bettors tend to be younger males, of a higher social economic status, better educated and have regular access to the internet and mobile phones; therefore, her study is divergent from the fact that those who gamble are the poor who look for quick money in order to make ends meet.

Similarly, Humphreys and Pérez (2012) found that sports bettors were young males with high incomes. Such findings are consistent with studies by Gainsbury et al.

(2013) which found that interactive sports gamblers appeared to be younger males with higher levels of education and employment and with access to the internet.

Another study conducted by Victoria Responsible Gambling Foundation (2019) found out that those betting on sport tend to be young men in the 20s and early 30s.

Notwithstanding the fact that the above literature is factual about the young male population's orientation toward sports betting, it is important to note that the study conducted in Australia by Palmer (2013) cautions that those who approach as a male youths 'activity should approach it with caution. She affirms that while there is no literature on the female sports funds and sports betting specifically, it is reasonable to suggest that sports betting may be part of women 's experiences of consuming sport as for men. Carnelley (2007) supports that by arguing that both male and female students were found to take part in a multitude of different types of gambling activities and both male and female students fell into the sub-set of gamblers with a strong predisposition to gamble.

Irrespective of the demographic characteristic of bettors, Warren-Kindt and Asmar (2002) argue that students who bet are more vulnerable to ruining their school's reputation, jeopardizing their eligibility and compromising their integrity.

The social learning theory

This theory explains that man is neither driven by inner forces nor buffeted helplessly by environmental influences. Rather, psychological functioning is best understood in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between behavior and its controlling conditions.

According to Latham and Saari (1979) popularized personality doctrines depicted behavior as impelled by inner forces in the form of needs, drives and impulses often operating below the level of consciousness. In order to understand man's actions, one has to understand the forces residing deep in the individual meaning that people don't just do things for the sake of it but rather they do them because of what compels them from deep within themselves.

Latham and Saari (1979) explain that the social learning view states that new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others.

It could therefore be argued that sports betting as one of the behaviors being studied could be the fact that individuals get themselves into betting through direct experience whereby may be some of them are able to access the betting sites directly from their phones and the impact it has to their lives now becomes in a direct way.

Others may learn to do sports betting by learning the behavior from other people either through observation or

even getting to hear their experience in sports betting either through the win they get or the loses they experience.

Latham and Saari (1979) state that people are repeatedly confronted with situations with which they must deal with in one way or another. With this, some of the responses that individuals try prove unsuccessful while others produce more favorable effects. Through all these processes of differential reinforcement successful modes of behavior are eventually selected from exploratory activities, while ineffectual ones are discarded.

During the course of learning, people do not only perform responses but they also observe the differential consequences accompanying their various actions.

In explanation as to why people behave the way they do, Latham and Saari (1979) explain that most of the behaviors that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently through influence. This helps to understand how the individuals involved in sports betting do the way they do because with time they learn how to use the different betting sites and are able to access them through their mobile phones; with time they become addicted some without even knowing what is happening in their lives. Since as described by this learning theory that most behaviors come with influences, it is clear to say that individuals who bet at times is as a result of influence from media because the betting sites have been highly publicized. It triggers them to the action of starting to do betting because they are highly exposed to it and it becomes easy for them to fall into it.

It also states that some behaviors are learnt by observing others the way they do their things. With this, people are able to learn some behaviors from others. Taking an example of a family with a brother who does sports betting and a small brother who does not, with time, the small brother observes what the other is doing and may be curious enough to ask questions; with this they learn how everything happens and may be acquainted to the behavior directly or indirectly with time.

The social learning theory still expounds that a person cannot learn much by observation if he does not intend to, or recognize the essential features of the model by example is therefore concerned with attentional processes. This means that in as much as individuals observe the behavior of others, for them to be acquainted into it, they must be actively involved in it. For example, one cannot be an addict of sports betting if they are not directly involved into it or they don't show much attention towards it.

According to Bandura et al. (1961) an experiment called the Bobo Doll study involved 66 nursery children who were divided into three groups. They watched a film of an adult (the model) kicking and punching a "bobo" doll. With this their reaction to the toys they had was the same and they started doing so to their dolls and adopted aggressive behaviors. The condition one was that the children saw the model being rewarded by second adult.

Condition two was that the children saw a second adult telling off the model for the aggressive behavior. The third condition was that the model was neither punished nor rewarded.

In all the films, the children adopted the behavior they observed and this confirms the fact that observational learning has a great effect on the lives of the youths. In relation to sports betting it is the same whereby bettors first observe or learn the act through their environment and with time they pick it up.

History of sports betting

Suren (2017) states that the history of sports betting in Malawi is relatively a short history since Malawi attained its independence in 1965. Suren (2017) further explains betting in Malawi, sports were a relatively unknown activity prior to independence, and only began to develop in the early 1980s. With time, this practice has steadily picked up and today there exists numerous types of games involving betting in sports, such as horse racing, football, tennis and basketball.

In Malawi, betting is controlled by the Malawi Gaming Board which was established by an Act of Parliament. The laws regarding gambling in Malawi are extremely relaxed compared to many other African nations. All forms of gambling are legal, and residents can enjoy playing in casinos, wagering in bookmakers or trying their luck on the lottery.

This Act provides for the control and licensing of betting and gaming premises together with the activities carried thereon. The Act also provides for the authorization of lotteries and prize competition as well as eradication of illegal gambling. On the positive contributions, Suren (2017) states that gaming and betting industry is fundamental for the economy in terms of employment and revenue generation. Betting continues to become a legitimate consumer practice and therefore there is great need for vigorous and state supervision so that to facilitate the control of these gaming and betting activities.

The Government of Malawi plays a very important role in the legal administration and the control of the betting activities in Malawi sports by establishing various bodies, laws and stipulation penalties, crimes and offenses related to betting. Examples of the consequences of this law on betting are the betting facilities, lotteries and Gaming Act, together with the Betting Control and Licensing Board.

With all this in action, Suren (2017) states that the Malawian government has been able to safeguard the public and third parties from unscrupulous betting operators, while also providing certain mandatory requirements related to licensing, ticketing, and submission of returns, bookmaking and totalizing. As a result, several betting institutions have also been

established.

Section two of this Act defines betting as “to wager or stake any money or valuable thing by or on behalf of any person or, any money or valuable thing on a horse race, fight, game, sport, lottery or exercise or any other event or contingency.

This Act strictly defines betting premises to which the public has or may have access and which are kept or used (whether on one occasion or more than one).

Suren (2017) states that the board’s mission is to ensure that betting is conducted honestly and completely with minimum costs but maximum contribution to society and that it is free from criminal activities.

Richard (2013) states that sports betting creates a great opportunity to many persons with criminal intentions to realize their intentions especially money launderers, drug and narcotics. This means that sports’ betting has an impact on the lives of people in the society.

According to history, gambling was referred to as playing unfairly or cheating at play whereby, a gambler was defined as a fraudulent gamester, shaper and habitually just plays for money, in most cases a gambler often takes on extravagantly high stakes. Although things have changed as time has moved on, nowadays, gambling has come to mean wagering money or other belongings on chance activities or events with random or uncertain outcomes. This actually is how gambling is nowadays. This is why many are in debt because they see what could be of their returns and forget to picture a scenario whereby, if all went wrong then what would they do or what next.

According to Cinematik (2016), through gambling one may actually acquire skills, “a bettor’s knowledge of playing strategies can improve his or her chances of winning in certain games.” This then results in improved predictions, hence reducing the randomness of the outcomes but, due to other factors that cannot be analyzed or predicted, the outcome still remains uncertain. Today, there are gamblers who are said to be ‘The Gurus of gambling’, this is because most of their bet slips often do return large amounts of winning, some even depend on this for their income.

How can one live on only betting one may ask? In our society today, the more times move on the more people get more desperate for riches therefore, one (a gambling guru) may decide, in this instance sports, to predict the end results for a number of games being played that day, and later sells the bet slip to a number of people. According to research the prices fall in the region of 1000USD to 5000USD, this is dependent on how much the gambler is credible, the more the number of winnings they have registered then the more credible they become.

Although, it should be noted that most are conmen, and because in Malawi no rules have been put by the government on gambling then many fall victim, and fail to ever reclaim their money. This is because following up

the accused becomes hectic, since they make sure they do not leave any trace; this includes changing their identity, changing their numbers, or even moving to another city or country and unfortunately employ the same injustice to other desperate gamblers.

South America and some parts of Europe are said to be the home of match fixing whereby tycoons offer clubs large amounts of money in order for them to not perform in the upcoming events. In exchange, the tycoons get to at least three times what they paid of the clubs as their returns, at the end of the day it was a profitable risk but a degrading factor to the sports faculty. It ruins the whole sense of competition.

The main focus of the study was the sports betting which has been made popular by the availability of mobile phones and the internet. Gambling on the outcome of sports events is a very popular pastime for millions of people around the world, who combine a flutter with watching and enjoying their favorite sports.

Blantyre City is no exception (Suren, 2017). In Malawi there are various sports betting sites which include: Premierbet, Worldstar Betting, Betyetu which are the popular companies that allow betting using the mobile phone. Sports betting in Blantyre City is very popular due to access to mobile phones. An individual can access an android phone with K10000.

According to Suren (2017), in Malawi the multi-billion industry is regulated by the Malawi Gaming Board under the Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act. The core functions of the Malawi Gaming Board include; Licensing and controlling betting and gaming premises and activities carried therein, authorization and control of prize competitor and lotteries, curbing illegal betting, lotteries and gaming, providing an enabling environment for betting, lotteries and gaming, advocating for betting, lotteries and gaming as with any other activity.

Betting in Malawi can lead to a number of offenses. The followings have been declared illegal and are subjected to sanctions in Malawi; betting with young persons, betting in unauthorized places, operating without a license, betting in an unlicensed premise, public invitation to unlicensed premises, reception and advancement of money at unlicensed premises (Suren, 2017).

Effects of Gambling Among Youths

Addiction

According to Alavi et al. (2012), addiction is a pathological love between the person and the addictive object, be it a substance (such as nicotine, food, alcohol or heroin, etc.) or an event (such as gambling, work, love, or the internet, etc.). Addiction is a social-cultural invention; a social construct manufactured by the culture as a means for a given goal.

Furthermore, Alavi et al. (2012) explain that, —facts reflect that people become addicted to anything, yet they say addiction is solely a human phenomenon. They urge that three major conditions should be present for an addiction to occur: firstly a social cognition (a consciousness, knowledge, shared meanings and purpose, etc.) in the mind of the addict toward the addictive object—social cognition tends to be a reflection of learned experiences and efforts and impacts of the social environment; secondly a vulnerable emotional makeup (troubled self-esteem, lack of confidence, abuse, emotional deprivation, etc.); and thirdly a possible chemical imbalance in the body. These factors contribute to gambling addiction.

Gambling addiction

Gambling addiction or pathological gambling is a persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior, characterized by some of the following: preoccupation with gambling, need to gamble with increasing amounts, inability to cut back or stop, "chasing" losses, lying about gambling, adverse social and financial consequences at risk" gambling and problem gambling, to gambling addiction (Henrietta and Sanju, 2012). Most people do not recognize that one can become addicted to gambling just as one can become addicted to alcohol or drugs. Even persons who are heavily involved and in great difficulty because of their gambling think they are having money problems or it is a run of bad luck. They just do not see themselves as possibly addicted to this activity. Most people think of addiction as associated with some kind of substance, not with an activity.

Henrietta and Sanju (2012) went on to explain that gambling addiction can negatively affect the individual (physical problems such as stress related symptoms or conditions, and psychiatric problems such as depression, anxiety spectrum disorders, and substance misuse), their family (relationship problems, domestic violence, neglect of children), and wider society (crime and absenteeism from work). Further, addictive gamblers are very reluctant to seek help because of a fear of stigma or because of guilt and shame about the gambling behavior and its consequences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The mixed methods research design was used to carry out the study and gather the data. The study area was the various places that people go to place their bets in Blantyre City, be it through shops or agents. Those that place their bets online were also considered. The study population consisted of both male and female aged 17 and above.

Sampling methods

Simple random sampling was used. The questionnaires were not

Table 1. Gender of the bettors.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	19	63.3
Female	11	36.6

Table 2. Age of sports bettors.

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage
17-24	25	83.3
25-28	5	16.6
28 and above	0	0

Table 3 Number of sports betting participators.

Participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	63.3
No	11	36.6
total	30	100

only given to the specific people involved in sports betting but also got views on the same from those who were not involved in it as this would help to analyze the effects sports betting on them. There was also sampling of those not involved but had been directly affected by betting either through their friends or relatives.

Sample size

From the study population described above 30 respondents both male and female were requested to complete the questionnaire.

RESULTS

Gender of the sport betters

Results showed that the number of male respondents was high compared to the female respondents. The percentage indicated 63.3% of the respondents comprised males while 36.6% of the respondents were females, as illustrated in Table 1. The results indicate that most male youths engaged in sports betting.

Age bracket of the better

Table 2 indicates the age of the respondents. As tabulated in the table, out of the 30 respondents, 25 of the respondents were aged between 17-24 years, and 5 of the respondents were aged between 25-28 years. None of the respondents were aged 28 years and above.

This could imply a majority of the youth that participate in sports betting in Blantyre are aged between 17-24 years.

Descriptive data

This section presents the descriptive results of participation in sports betting by the youth. The respondents were asked how many participated in sports betting. Out of the 30 respondents 19 (63.3%) participated in sports betting while 11(36.6%) did not participate in sports betting. This showed that sports betting was popular among the youths. Table 3 shows the frequency of those who participated in sports betting.

On how they learned about sports betting, a degree of variance was observed. Out of the 19 respondents 14 (73.68%) had learned from friends, 3 (15.79%) from media advertisement and lastly 2 (10.53%) from the internet. According to Figure 1 most of the respondents learnt about sports betting from their friends.

Furthermore, out of the 19 youths who participated in betting, 17 of them betted 1-3 times in a day while 2 of them betted 4-6 time in a day. None of them betted 6 times and more in a day. This showed that the respondents were more responsible since the majority were betting between 1-3 times in a day.

The respondents were also asked what motivated them to bet and 14 of them indicated it was the desire to win, 6 claimed financial constraints, 3 respondents said it was media influence, 5 respondents were influenced by peer pressure and lastly 2 respondents did it for fun. The results indicate most youths were influenced by the desire to win followed by leisure, financial constraints peer pressure and finally media influence.

The study further sought to determine on average how many betting sites were visited on average by the betters. Out of the 19 betters, 10 visited premier bet, 7 visited Worldstar, 2 visited casinos and non-visited Betyetu. From these values, it is correct to say therefore that the most visited site by the sports betters in the study population is premier bet. Figure 2 shows this information.

Choice was further provided for the Betyetu site but none of the 19 sports betters were involved in this site with reasons known to themselves. On the other hand, out of the 19 betters, 2 were involved in 2 sites. 1 of them is involved in 3sites and 17 of them were involved into 1 site as shown in Figure 3.

On how much money is spent on average by the betters in a day, out of the 19 study population, 11 of them use 50-500 kwacha a day, 4 of them use 600-1000 kwacha a day, 3 of them use 1000-5000 kwacha a day and 1 of them uses above 5000 kwachas a day for betting. Table 4 represents this data.

The study also sought to find out how much money is won on average after placing a bet. Out of the 19 betters, 3 of them on average win between 100-500 kwacha, 6 of them win between 2000-5000 kwacha, 7 of them win

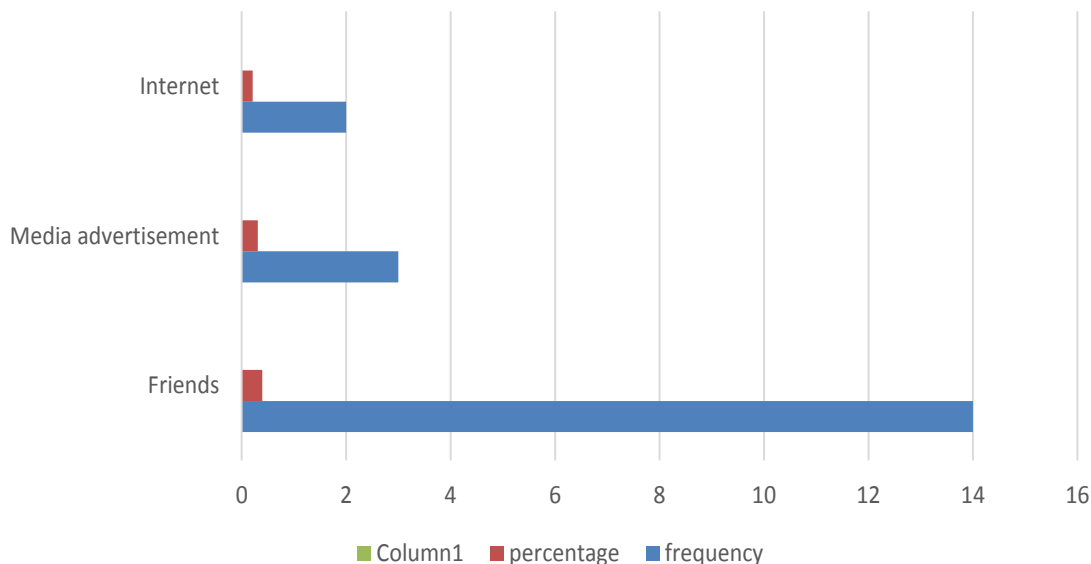


Figure 1. Learning sports betting.

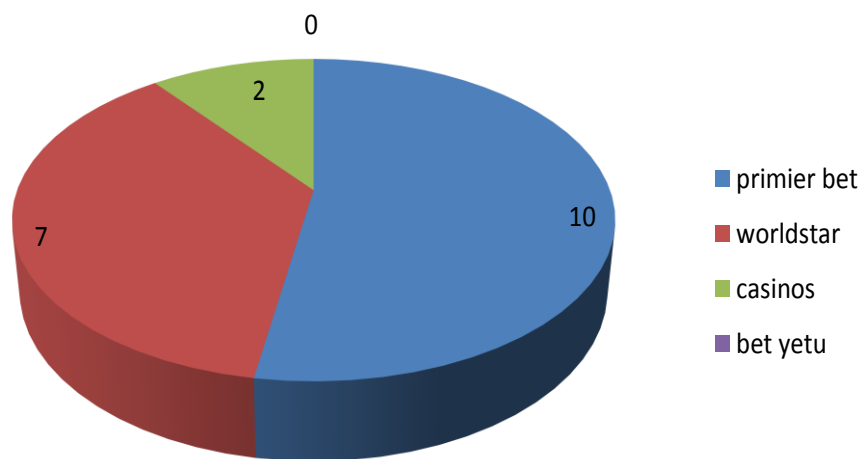


Figure 2. Number of bettors in each site.

between 600-2000 Kwachas and 3 of them win 5000 kwachas and above. This shows that they get less than they bet, showing that a lot of money is put to waste as they hope to get more money with their betting process (Figure 4). Asked whether they have ever invested the money gotten from the wins they got and 13 of them said they have never whereas 6 of them said that they have ever invested. This clearly shows that a lot of money is put into waste and they use most of the money they win to do more betting and not think of investing. This then explains why they are addicted to this game as presented in Figure 5.

Asked how sports betting has affected them both positively and negatively, the results show that 9 of them

were affected by addiction, for 5 of them it caused financial constraints, 3 of them agreed that it wasted their time and 8 of them said that it affected them positively as it helps them spend their leisure time. This therefore shows that most of them are negatively affected by sports betting as it bring more harm than good to their lives. Figure 6 represents this data.

On the other hand, asked whether they were aware of any law or regulations governing them as betters. Out of the 19 sports bettors only three were aware of the laws and regulations. This clearly shows that they are involved in this blindly not knowing the direction it may take them to (Table 5).

The respondents were asked on what recommendations

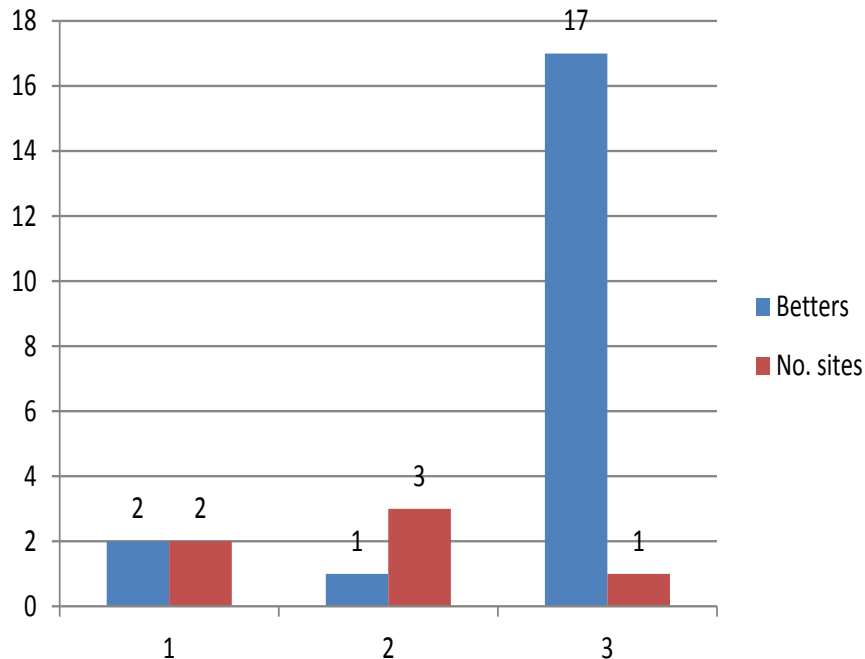


Figure 3. Number of sites visited

Table 4. Amount of money spent.

Amount in Malawi Kwacha	Frequency
50-1000	11
600-1000	4
1000-5000	3
Above 5000	1

they would give to the government or individuals concerning sports betting. Out of the 30 questionnaires given out 19 of them agreed that they participated in sports betting whereas 11 of them agreed that they did not participate in sports betting. All of the 30 were required to give their suggestions to the question and the following were their answers:

1. Sports betting is a complete waste of time and it should be banned Less advertisements to lessen the chances of betting
2. More control of the sites
3. I wish the government to stop the sites for it has
4. Caused me addiction and don't know how to stop doing this, maybe when stopped, it will help
5. Sports betting should not be stopped but more control should be put
6. Training on sports betters and non-bettors to educate them on how betting can affect them
7. Reduce advertisements to prevent enticing those addicted

Out of the recommendations received one thing that stood out is that the respondents wanted more control of the betting sites so that there would be a limit in what occurs during betting.

DISCUSSION

Response rate

All the questionnaires were duly completed and returned converting to a 100% response rate. The results showed that the number of male respondents was high compared to the female respondents. The percentage indicated that 63.3% of the respondents comprised males while 36.6% of the respondents were females. Based on age, out of the 30 respondents, 25 of the respondents were aged between 17-24 years, and 5 of the respondents were aged between 25-28 years. None of the respondents were aged 28 years and above

Effects of sports betting in relation to lack of regulations

When the respondents were asked if they knew of regulations concerning sports betting the results showed that those involved in sports betting as a form of gambling have no idea of any rules or regulations that protect them as betters. The study found out that 84.2% of the youth involved in sports betting are not aware of

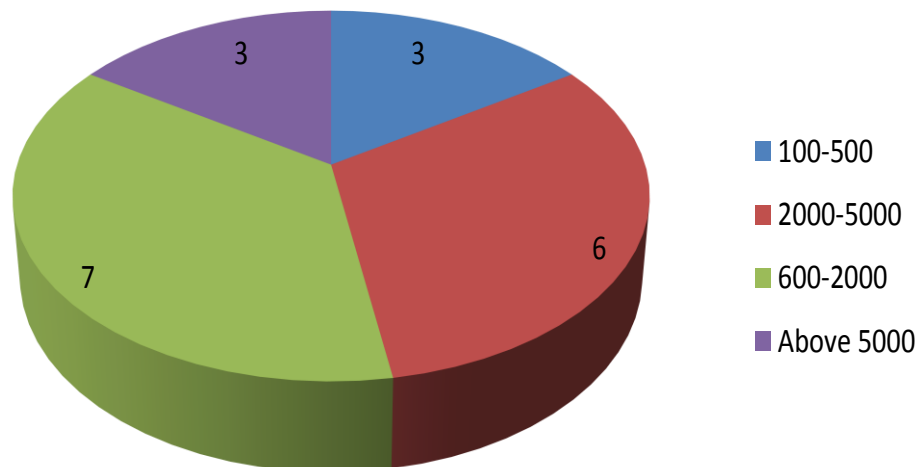


Figure 4. Average number of wins.

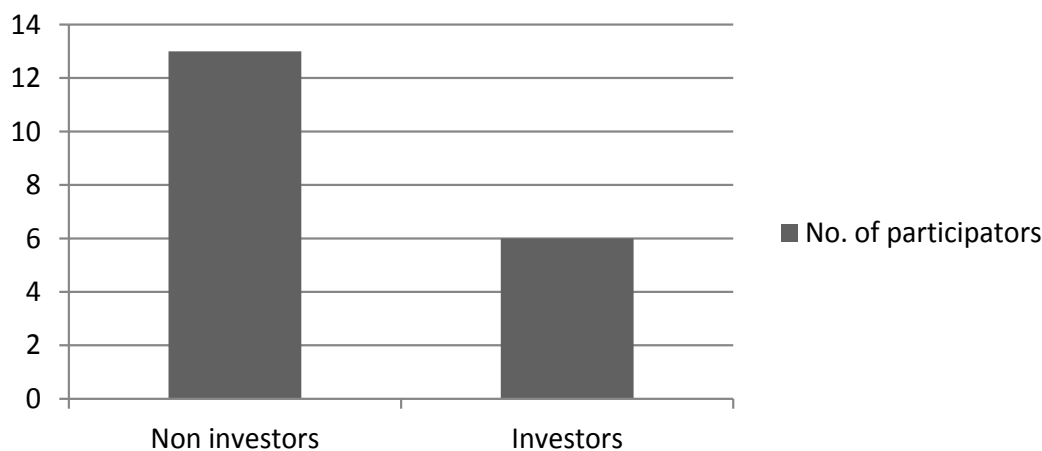


Figure 5. Investment.

any of the rules or regulations protecting them as betters. Clearly, they do it blindly not knowing what may happen to them in case something legal comes up in relation to sports betting as a form of gambling. Suren (2017) states that in Malawi, betting is controlled by the Malawi Gaming Board. Getting this information is important because the study showed that 84.2 % of sports betting participants are not aware of any laws that protect them as betters. The Gaming Act provides for the control and licensing of betting and gaming premises together with the activities carried thereon. The Act also provides for the authorization of lotteries and prize competition as well as eradication of illegal gambling (Suren, 2017).

Effects of gambling in relation to finance

Out of the 19 betters, 3 of them on average win between

100-500 Kwacha, 6 of them win between 2000-5000 Kwacha, 7 of them win between 600-2000 Kwacha and only one of them wins 5000 Kwachas and above. In terms of spending, out of the 19 study population, 11 of them use 50-100 Kwacha a day, 4 of them use 600-1000 Kwacha a day, 3 of them use 1000-5000 Kwacha a day and 1 of them uses above 5000 Kwachas a day for betting. This shows that they bet with more money than what they receive as wins and clearly more money is spent in the hope of winning more games.

This money would have been used in other better ways than just being put in to waste. That is why an inquiry into whether they have ever invested the money obtained from the betting showed that only 6 out of the 19 betters have ever invested. This shows that 68% of them do not invest in the money they get and as the youths of this country, this poses a danger to their lives financially as it can lead to financial constraints. This confirms that

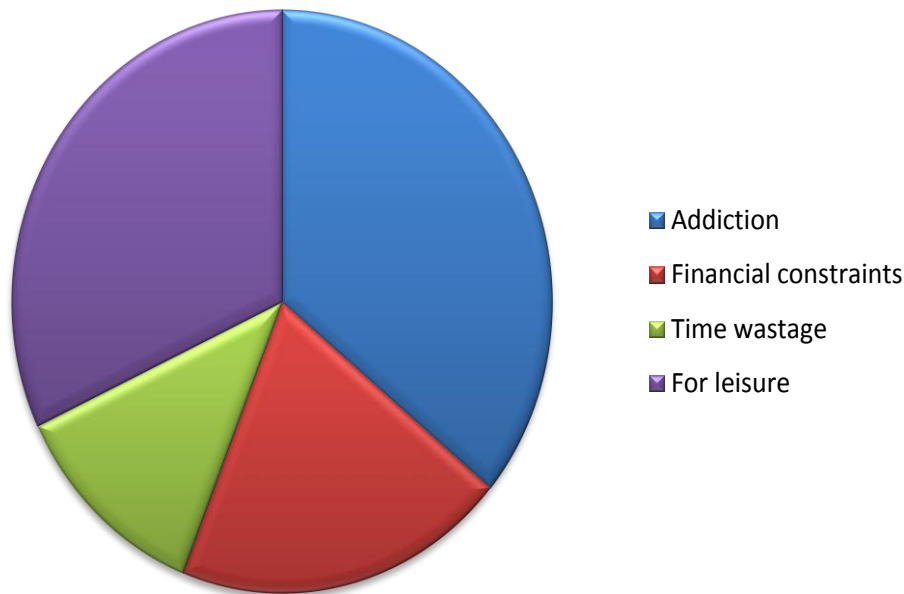


Figure 6. Effects of sports betting.

Table 5. Awareness of Sports betting rules/ regulations.

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Not aware	16	84.2
Aware	3	15.7

there is need to educate the youth on this whole idea of sports betting.

This study finding agreed with Reith and Dobbie (2011) who stated that individual students who participate in gambling/sports betting suffer from financial problems. Also, Rintoul and Deblaquiere (2019) asserted that gambling can be addictive for some persons and can lead to financial strain.

Effects of sports betting on their lives

The study showed that the majority of the youth participate in betting activity given that 63.3% participated in sports betting while 36.6% did not participate in sports betting. Asked how this activity has affected them either negatively or positively and the results were that most of it brought more harm than good. A total of 9 of the respondents were affected by addiction, for 5 of the respondents it caused financial constraints, 3 of the respondents agreed that it wasted their time and 8 of the respondents said that it affected them positively as it helps the spend their leisure time.

This explains the effect that sports betting have on the

young people which is tremendous and the addiction part is even more pronounced. Further gaps were provided for the respondents to fill on whether it affected them positively and only 8 of the respondents said it was for leisure time. The question that a still remains unanswered is why are they still continuing with betting yet it has a negative impact on their lives.

Vamplew (2018) explains that sports betting can cause conflict between rival fans that stems from emotional attachment from the supporters to their teams. This attachment could result from geographical attachment, common bond of religion, ethnic or national background. Another effect sports betting has on these youths is that it has led to financial constraints. As explained above the largest percentage of them was addicted to sports betting and their desire to win more money by chance makes them to bet even more.

Wong et al (2013) stated that students perceive gambling as a common socially acceptable recreational activity. Wong et al (2013) was supported by Derevensky et al (2010) who viewed gambling as a legitimate, socially acceptable form of entertainment. However, much as some authors agreed that it was a form of entertainment, some disagreed that sports betting is a recreational activity and this was supported by Huggins (2018) who in his study noted that in the British society betting was dubbed —anti-social, therefore, it could not be viewed as an approved activity in the society.

The social learning theory

In relation to the social learning theory, Bandura et al.

(1961) explain that the social learning view states that new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others. This then explains that the study indicated that it is through friends that most of the bettors learnt the betting game and got in to it with time. This theory explains why people behave the way they do and this explains the study findings.

Latham and Saari (1979) argue that popularized personality doctrines depicted behavior as impelled by inner forces in the form of needs, drives and impulses often operating below the level of consciousness. This argument agrees with the study in that individuals are compelled by different motivations that make them participate in sports betting. He as well explains that most of the behaviors that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently through influence.

On the other hand, Bandura et al. (1961) in his social learning theory expounds that a person cannot learn much through observation if he does not attend to the activity to be learnt. This therefore explains why most of the youth learn sports betting from their friends and in turn put it into action and eventually causes addiction as part of the negative effects in their lives.

As to what motivates them into betting and the largest one was having the desire to win (73.6%) followed by leisure (36.8%) and financial constraints (31.5%). This greatly shows that the respondents had their desires to win that made them participate even more. It could be they were looking for more money other than what they had maybe that was intended for their personal upkeep.

Sports betting in Malawi-Blantyre City

The study was motivated by the fact that in recent past and now, there has been a great increase of sports betting amongst youth in Blantyre City or in Malawi as a whole and most of them being the young people. Many times when one switches on the television sets there are advertisements on sports betting coming frequently. Not only is this being observed on television but also it is evident on the roads with billboards advertising the sports betting. It is not only in Malawi that this happens but as described by Jackson (2014) who indicates that sports betting is the fastest growing area of the gaming industry in the UK. He further says that the major bookmakers make a distinction between their core business which is betting on horse and greyhound racing and sports betting which includes betting on soccer, tennis, rugby, American football, snooker and even political elections.

In relation to the findings of this study, it clearly showed that sports betting have brought more harm than good and this shows that it is a matter of urgency and needs to be addressed or controlled. Suren (2017) explains that the history of sports betting in Malawi is relatively a short history since Malawi attained its independence in 1965.

He further explains that betting in Malawi was a relatively unknown activity prior to independence, and only began to develop in the early 1980s. With time, this practice has steadily picked up and today there exists numerous types of games involving betting in sports such as horse racing, football, tennis and basketball. This explains the reason why sports betting have picked up so fast today and is being embraced by people.

In line with the study, investigations were carried out on the effect sports betting have on the youths in Blantyre City. The study adopted collection of data by the use of questionnaires. Random sampling was used to study the population sample set by the research guidelines. The first objective which was to find out the causes of sports betting, the study showed that 63.3% were male whereas 36.6% were female. This shows that most people involved in sports betting are men.

This explains why most of the times football matches are watched by men either at home or in pubs and hotels together with their friends. Since most of them watch football matches, a lot of advertisement concerning sports betting occurs many times therefore increasing their chances of betting. Furthermore, most sports bettors access the betting sites by the use of mobile phones which are easily accessible and therefore facilitating the betting process to take place. One of the findings was that the largest percentage of where they learnt sports betting was through their friends. This explained why most times the participants watch the football matches together in groups.

Conclusion

This study found out that 84.2% of the youths involved in sports betting are not aware of any of the rules or regulations protecting them as bettors. Clearly, they do it blindly not knowing what may happen to them in case something legal comes up in relation to sports betting as a form of gambling. Asked how betting has affected them whether negatively or positively the results were that most of it brought more harm than good. In total 9 of the respondents were affected by addiction, for 5 of the respondents it caused financial constraints, 3 of the respondents agreed that it wasted their time and 8 of the respondents said that it affected them positively as it helps them spend their leisure time. This explains the effect that sports betting have on the young people which is tremendous and the addiction part is even more pronounced. Further gaps were provided for the respondents to fill on whether it affected them positively and only 8 of them said it was for leisure time. The question that still remains is why are they still continuing with betting yet it has a negative impact in their lives.

Apart from that, out of the 19 bettors, 3 of them on average win between 100-500 Malawi Kwacha, 6 of them win between 2000-5000 Kwacha, 7 of them win between

600-2000 Kwacha and only one of them wins 5000 Kwachas and above. In terms of spending, out of the 19 of the study population, 11 of them use 50-100 Kwacha a day, 4 of them use 600-1000 Kwacha a day, 3 of them use 1000-5000 Kwacha a day and 1 of them uses above 5000 Kwachas a day for betting. This shows that they bet with more money than what they receive as wins and clearly more money is wastage in the name of winning more games.

This money would have been used in other better ways than just being put in to waste. That is why an inquiry into whether they have ever invested the money won from sports betting the result showed that only 6 out of the 19 bettors have ever invested. This shows that 68% of them do not invest the money they get and as the youths of this country, this poses a danger to their lives financially as it can lead to financial constraints. This confirms that there is need to educate the youth on this whole idea of sports betting.

In relation to the findings of this research, it clearly showed that sports betting have brought more harm than good and this shows that it is a matter of urgency and needs to be addressed or controlled. However, more research is recommended on the effects of sports betting on the youths in Malawi as the study only covered Blantyre City.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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