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### Research Article

## Sports Betting Impact on Academic Performance and Coping Strategies Among Students of the University of Port Harcourt

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### About Article

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### ABSTRACT

Sports betting has become a pervasive activity among youth, with significant implications for their academic performance and overall well-being. This study investigated Sports Betting Impact on Academic Performance and Coping Strategies Among Students of the, University of Port Harcourt. The study adopted the descriptive research design. The population of the study consisted the undergraduate students of the University of Port Harcourt with on a sample of 201 respondents. The findings reveal that 70% of students have attempted coping strategies, with varying levels of effectiveness, and the most common approaches include setting time limits for betting (60%), avoiding betting during school terms (55%), and engaging in alternative activities (50%). Despite these efforts, sports betting remains a persistent distraction, with its influence exacerbated by peer pressure, accessibility, and aggressive advertisements. The study highlights the need for increased awareness, stricter regulations, and parental or institutional interventions to address the challenges posed by sports betting. Recommendations include targeted educational campaigns, counseling support, and policies aimed at reducing betting accessibility among students.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, sport betting has become a major cultural and economic phenomenon in Nigeria, especially among young people. However, in the past few years, the accessibility of internet and mobile technology has changed how people are able to partake in sports betting as an endeavor. Betting has transitioned from a relatively rare undertaking to a common practice, primarily due to the proliferation of sports betting platforms, which include Sportybet, Bet9ja, NairaBet, and BetKing (Adetayo *et al.*, 2023). These platforms are easy to use and have low entry barriers such that young people can place bets of 100 Naira. Consequently, sports betting has become a part of the everyday life of several young Nigerians, particularly students of tertiary institution like University of Port Harcourt.

The lure of sports betting is what seems to be, on the one hand, a guaranteed source of entertainment, on the other, a source of profit. Millions of Nigerian youths view placing bets with bookmakers as an avenue to earn some money, as the country's harsh economic conditions, characterized by high unemployment and underemployment rates, make it difficult for many to make ends meet. The rate of unemployment among youth in Nigeria is over 40% (Olaleye & Ajayi, 2022), which leads students to search for alternative financial support. The appeal of easy and fast money through sports betting, especially in the wake of peer pressure and the exhilaration around attractive sports, such as football, is especially appealing to students.

One of the factors that contributed to the popularity of sports betting was the increasingly available sports betting facilities. Along with physical betting shops, students today are able to place bets at any outright betting apps and sites. So convenient, but with live betting available, it has enabled them and normalized it for those students. It is readily available and widespread among students. Recent studies indicate that many university students participate in betting, motivated by factors including financial position, peer pressure, and recreational purpose (Olaleye & Ajayi, 2022).

A further aspect to this matter relates to the attitudes and behaviors around gambling. As with other gambling behaviors, student enthusiasm for betting can vary from the occasional couple bucks on a game or two, all the way down to the compulsive gambler. An assessment of the phenomenon of gambling among students of the University of Port Harcourt provides an avenue for insightful understanding of the factors that serve as a guide in the manner in which students of the University of Port Harcourt engage in sport betting. This knowledge is crucial, because betting carries risks beyond just losing money; it can make people more prone to gambling addiction and has other negative consequences.

In addition, the rise of smartphones and cheap internet services have also contributed to the increasing popularity of sports betting among students. You have platforms with mobile apps, real-time updates, live betting options — it's a whole new world of convenience for people participating from almost anywhere. These technological developments have also facilitated the proliferation of advertisements for sports betting, often featuring celebrities and athletes who are role models for many young people. Certainly, this marketing

approach has increased awareness of betting sites while kind of mainstreaming it, especially among susceptible publics (Okonkwo & Eze, 2023).

Sports betting have enjoyed great success, however, the popularity of sports betting raises serious questions about the potential impact it could have on students' academic performance. Betting can also lead to detrimental consequences, including a tendency to neglect academics, face financial risks, and the development of psychological issues. Some examples include that Nwoke and Chukwuma (2023) found out that students who indulge in pathological sports betting often claim that they find it difficult to concentrate on their studies because of distractions and the emotional impact of gambling losses. These results highlight the importance of considering the wider impact of this trend in the academic context.

Betting on sports is not just a pastime; it is, for many students, a means of coping with financial and social pressure. Yet, the long-term impact of this behavior, specifically regarding academic performance, is much less studied. Then, addressing what we already know about sports betting in the context of academic outcomes is essential to countering the threat to students' academic success and well-being. Given the heterogeneity in demographics of the students and the high instances of sports betting in these communities, institutions like the University of Port Harcourt provide conducive environments for such research.

### 1.1. Objectives of the Study

- i. assess the prevalence of sports betting among students of the University of Port Harcourt
- ii. determine the accessibility of sports betting facilities among students of the University of Port Harcourt.
- iii. identify the impact of sports betting on students' academic performance at the University of Port Harcourt.
- iv. suggest coping strategies to reduce the impact of sports betting on academic performance among students of the University of Port Harcourt.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Prevalence and popularity of sports betting among youth

Academic studies shows the increasing popularity of sports betting in Nigeria's youth, driven by economic strain and technological development (Adetayo *et al.*, 2023). The sports betting platforms are widely available due to the proliferation of mobile phones and low-cost internet. They argue that gambling no longer only occurs in physical betting shops — these have been extended to digital spaces, which makes it more appealing for the young. High-risk unemployment, and whose burden falls more on youth, contributes to many students considering betting as a potential source of financial support (Olaleye & Ajayi, 2022). This is consistent with Eboh (2015)'s study, which reports that in particular, university students fall victim to scams due to peer pressure and the desire to earn cash quickly.

### 2.2. Motivations for sports betting

Research such as Okonkwo and Eze (2023) have been made on the influencers of sports betting among the students. Financial



challenges, peer pressure and recreational interests are the main factors identified by the authors. Students view sports betting as a low-risk career to earn some extra money during a social life. Discussion The psychological appeal of gambling, a thrill-seeking behavior combined with anticipated rewards, leads to habitual engagement and what is known as push and pull factors (Oyebode, 2021). But this can get addictive behaviour – particularly for susceptible groups including students.

### 2.3. Negative effects of sports betting

It is well-documented that sports betting has a negative impact on academic performance. A study done by Nwoke and Chukwuma (2023) on Nigerian universities established that students who bet frequently had lower academic achievement, reduced concentration and irregular attendance. This was because of the time and emotional energy expended on betting activities. Likewise, Ibrahim and Akinlabi (2021) reported that financial losses due to gambling can cause psychological distress which may lead to lack of concentration and motivation to academic work.

### 2.4. Sports betting and academic distractions

Afolabi (2022) underlines sports betting as a reason for students neglecting academics. Undergraduates who bet often are more likely to rank watching matches and analyzing odds higher than turning up to lectures or completing assignments, according to the study. This is in line with Chukwu and Adebola (2020), who states that the addictive nature of sports betting promotes procrastination, resulting to poor academic performance. It is also noted by students that they persistently understate the time spent in gambling and gambling-related activities which makes the impact even worse on the studies.

### 2.5. Potential benefits of sports betting

Many studies acknowledge possible benefits, even if the negative aspects predominated in much of the discussion. According to Eze and Oladipo (2022), moderate sports betting can build social bonding among students while enabling them to acquire analytical skills through the analysis of sports statistics and betting odds. However, they warn that such benefits are rarely achieved due to unhealthy betting behaviour dominating.

### 2.6. Interventions and policy recommendations

Researchers have proposed a number of interventions to reduce the harmful effects of sports betting. The first suggestion by Ibrahim and Akinlabi (2021) are steps to create awareness for students who partake in betting that highlights the dangers of betting addiction. Okonkwo and Eze (2023) advocate for tougher regulations to be introduced in sports betting advertisements, with a particular focus on those that are aimed at young audiences. Nwoke and Chukwuma (2023), moreover, call for university-based counselling services to combat the psychological and financial difficulties associated with gambling.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research design, suitable

for investigating and analyzing the effect of sports betting on the academic performance of students of the University of Port Harcourt. Because the descriptive research design allows the researcher to describe, explain, and analyze events or behaviours as they naturally occur in the environment, it is very effective in understanding students' attitudes and behaviours on sports betting. Moreover, the study drew on a quantitative research strategy, as it was used to measure and quantify variables into numerical values for an objective analysis. The quantitative used to avoid any bias, ensure statistical reliability, and measure the variables being investigated. The population of the study consisted of total undergraduate students of the University of Port Harcourt. This cohort was selected as participants were likely to be more familiar with various forms of gambling, making it relevant to obtain insights about prevalence, accessibility and impact of sports betting within a university atmosphere. A sample of 201 undergraduate students was drawn to obtain a representative population. A simple random sampling method was applied to this to ensure each student had an equal chance of being included in the study. The use of this method improved the representativeness and generalisability of the findings.

The primary instrument of data collection was self-structured questionnaire. It was justified that this research tool was helpful in collecting qualitative and quantitative data to provide a well understanding of the research problem. Using a questionnaire was also cost-effective and easy to administer, and minimised the researchers' influence over respondents' answers. The questionnaire asked students about the accessibility and prevalence of sports betting, their attitude towards it, its impact on their academics, and the strategies they suggest to cope with it. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the researcher's supervisor and two other lecturers in the field of Sport and Exercise Science. They provided comments, corrections, and suggestions that were used to improve the quality and reliability of the instrument and ensure its compatibility with the major objectives of the study. The instrument was finalized and the questionnaire was given to the respondents selected. The participants were allowed sufficient time to fill out the questionnaire, and the forms were then collected for analysis. The researcher supervised the process of questionnaire delivery and collecting of answers to minimize mistakes and maximize the accuracy of responses.

The responses from the questionnaires were thoroughly checked for errors and inconsistencies. Descriptive statistics (percentages and charts) were applied to analyze demographic data and to address the research questions. This simplified the interpretation of their results and served as comfortable way to report the findings. These three methods of data collection through purposeful sampling in a single-embedded case study will lead to reliable findings and general impacts regarding the impact of sports betting on students of the University of Port Harcourt.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

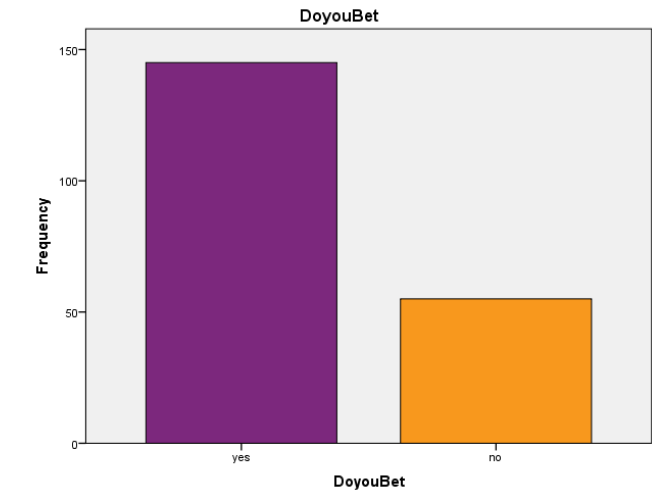
A total of 200 students at the University of Port Harcourt were sampled, and the results show a prevalence of betting as 72.1% (n=145) admitted to betting. In comparison, 27.4% (55 students)



**Table 1.** Prevalence of betting among students

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	145	72.1
	No	55	27.4
	Total	200	99.5
	No response	1	0.5
Total		201	100.0

reported that they had not engaged in any gambling. Note that only one respondent refused to answer this question or 0.5% of the total sample. The findings also show that sports betting is a frequent activity among the student body, indicative of the potential acceptance of sports betting from the student population. These data highlight now important it is to continue to investigate the causes and the consequences of the behavior.



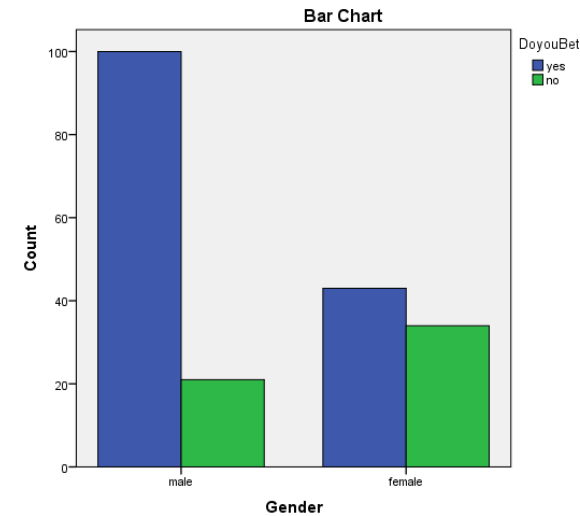
**Figure 1.**

This bar chart shows the distribution of frequencies of responses to the question “Do you bet?” among the sample population. There are apparently many respondents who engage in betting activity, explained by the significantly higher frequency of the purple bar- “Yes” as compared to the orange; “No” For a study with a few observation points, the output probably indicates that (gambling should be the word in this case) - betting is common among the sample population. This figure is in line with society in general, where like studyMeer and colleagues found that youth become popular with sports betting.

**Table 2.** Prevalence of betting by gender

Gender*	Male	Observed count	121.0
		% within do you bet	61.1%
	Female	Observed count	77.0
		% within do you bet	38.9%
Total		Observed count	198.0
		% within do you bet	100.0%

The prevalence of betting of students at the University of Port Harcourt has shown significant difference in gender. Among the 198 respondents who specified their sex and their betting habits, 61.1% were male and 38.9% female. This suggests that there is a higher propensity of betting among males than with females, reflecting a broader trend where male students account for a larger share of participants in the gambling activity. The results indicate that gender might be an important factor for betting behaviour that could be determined by cultural, social or psychological determinants. These variations are vital for customizing interventions and counteracting the effect of gambling on academic achievement between the sexes.



**Figure 1.** Gender

From the analyses a significant association was observed between sex (male/female) and betting status with a higher proportion of males (61.1%) than females (38.9%) engage in betting.

**Table 3.** Prevalence of betting by age

What is your age	16 – 20	Observed count	37.0
		% within do you bet	18.5%
	21 - 30	Observed count	152.0
		% within do you bet	76.0%
	31- above	Observed count	11.0
		% within do you bet	5.5%
Total	Observed count	200.0	
	% within do you bet	100.0%	

The majority of respondents was in the age range of 21–30, and this sample was found significant in betting activity at the University of Port Harcourt. The most active demographic by behaviour are those who reported engaging in betting; which made up 76.0% of those ever reporting engaging in this behaviour. Among bettors, 18.5% were aged 16–20, and only 5.5% of respondents aged 31 or older indicated that they had been betting. These results imply that gambling is most



common in young adults in their twenties, as they are more independent, have access to financial resources, and are more socially active. And these age-related betting tendencies are worth cognizing for the sake of developing early interventions that can mitigate its academic and social consequences.

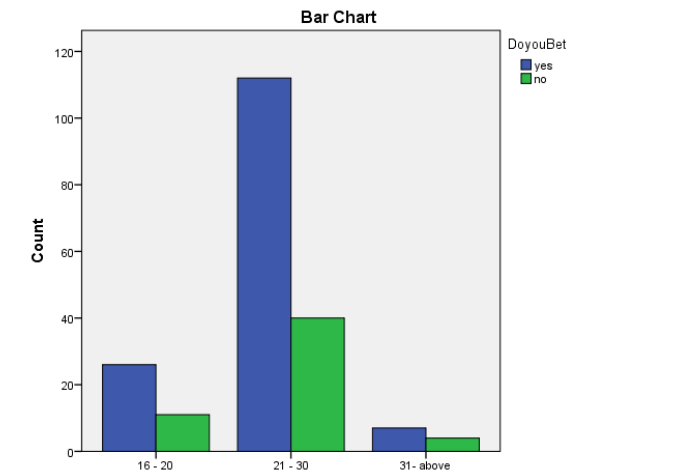


Figure 3. Age

Age Breakdown of Betting Among Students at the University of Port Harcourt. From the bar chart above we can see that the most betting activity is between 21 years old and 30 years old, with a considerably high number bet vs. no bet. They form an overwhelming majority busily topping the charts, a reflection of their enthusiasm for betting. The betting under 16–20 age is also a thing of but it is very less than age of 21–30. Vast majority of betting activity in the last 12 months is in the under 30’s, the betting example here was the lowest count on the survey for bettors and non-bettors age 31 and above. The chart clearly highlights that the 21–30 age range is the most active demographic group when it comes to betting, due to the increased independence, social exposure, and increased availability of betting platforms.

Table 4. Prevalence of betting by level of study

Level of study	100	Observed count	18.0
		% within do you bet	9.1%
	200	Observed count	14.0
		% within do you bet	7.1%
	300	Observed count	44.0
		% within do you bet	22.3%
	400	Observed count	86.0
		% within do you bet	43.7%
	500	Observed count	30.0
		% within do you bet	15.2%
	600	Observed count	5.0
		% within do you bet	2.5%
Total	Observed count		197.0
	% within do you bet		100.0%

The level of study was equally considered during the survey, although there was no significant association between age and level of study, with general trend for the proportion of students who bet evenly distributed among the different sub groups. Figure 4 shows relative distributions across the level of study of the respondents.

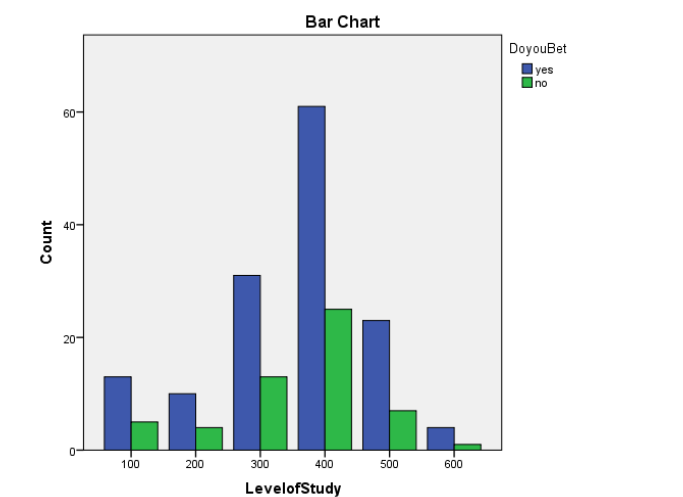


Figure 4. Level of study

The bar chart above depicts the prevalence of betting among students at different levels of study at the University of Port Harcourt. Betting activity is most prominent among 400-level students, with a significantly higher number of bettors compared to non-bettors in this group. Similarly, 300-level students also display a notable participation in betting, with bettors outnumbering non-bettors. In contrast, 100-level and 200-level students show lower betting participation, with both bettors and non-bettors at minimal counts. Among 500-level and 600-level students, the trend shifts slightly, with a balanced or lower count of bettors relative to non-bettors. These findings suggest that betting activity peaks during the middle years of study, potentially due to increased financial access or peer influence, while first-year and final-year students exhibit comparatively less engagement.

Table 5. Accessibility of sports betting facilities to students

Betting sites are easily accessed by everyone	Strongly agree	Observed count	116.0
		% within do you bet	58.9%
	Agree	Observed count	72.0
		% within do you bet	36.5%
	Strongly disagree	Observed count	1.0
		% within do you bet	0.5%
	Disagree	Observed count	8.0
		% within do you bet	4.1%
	Observed count		197.0
	% within do you bet		100.0%

The data from the table above reveals that sports betting facilities are highly accessible to students at the University of Port

Harcourt, reflecting the ease with which they can participate in betting activities. A significant majority of respondents (94.4%) agreed that betting facilities are easily accessible, with 58.9% strongly agreeing and 36.5% agreeing. Similarly, 79.9% of the respondents indicated that funds for betting are readily accessible to students, suggesting financial ease as a contributing factor to betting prevalence. Among those who bet, an even higher percentage (95.8%) acknowledged the accessibility of betting facilities. Only a small fraction of respondents (4.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the accessibility of these facilities. These findings highlight the pervasive availability of betting platforms and resources, underscoring their potential influence on the betting behaviors of students.

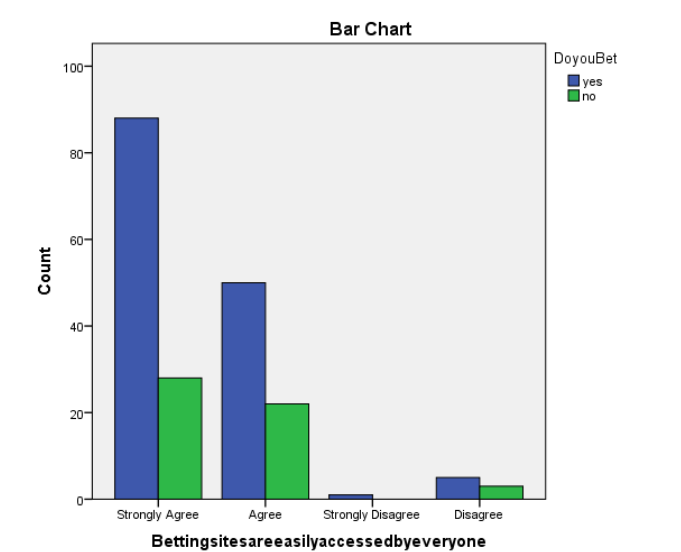


Figure 5. Betting sites are easily accessed by everyone

The bar chart illustrates students' perceptions of the accessibility of betting sites at the University of Port Harcourt. The majority of respondents who bet strongly agree that betting sites are easily accessible, as indicated by the highest bar in the "Strongly Agree" category. This is followed by those who agree, further underscoring the widespread belief that betting facilities are highly accessible. A very small proportion of respondents strongly disagree or disagree, indicating minimal resistance

Table 7. Impact on academic performance of students

Due to the nature of betting it distracts students from their academics	Strongly agree	Observed count	67.0
		% within do you bet	33.5%
	Agree	Observed count	76.0
		% within do you bet	38.0%
	Strongly disagree	Observed count	7.0
		% within do you bet	3.5%
	Disagree	Observed count	50.0
		% within do you bet	25.0%
Total	Observed count		200.0
	% within do you bet		100.0%

to this perception. Interestingly, a similar trend is observed among non-bettors, though their responses are generally fewer in number compared to bettors. Overall, the data highlights the high accessibility of betting platforms to students, contributing to the prevalence of betting on campus.

The data presented in Table 5 highlights the significant impact of betting on the academic performance of students at the University of Port Harcourt. According to the findings, 71.5% of respondents agree that betting distracts students from their academic activities, with 33.5% strongly agreeing and 38.0% agreeing. This suggests that the majority of students perceive betting as a factor that negatively affects focus and academic productivity. Conversely, 28.5% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with this notion, indicating a minority who may not view betting as a distraction. These results align with similar responses in related questions, where 75.5% of participants affirmed that betting could be a distraction from schoolwork. The findings underscore the potential for betting to detract from students' academic goals and priorities.

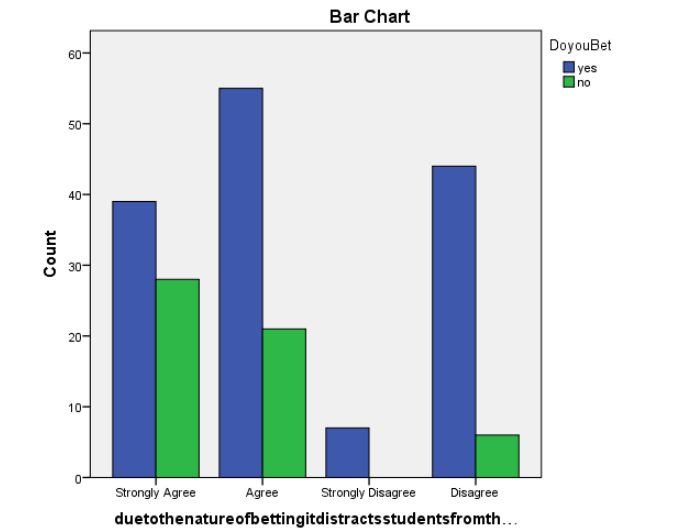


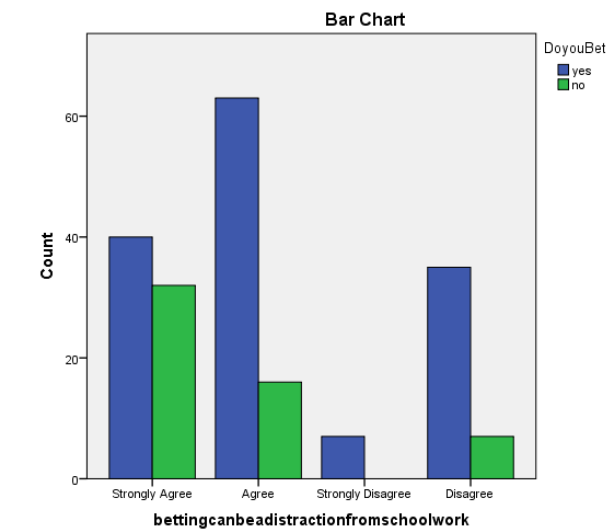
Figure 6. Nature of betting distracts students from their academics

A question was also included to elicit the time spent by students in bet centers and time spent in betting online. This was a multiple response item, with students being able to choose from different time ranges.

Table 8 reveals that a significant proportion of students perceive betting as a distraction from schoolwork. A combined 75.5% of respondents either strongly agree (36.0%) or agree (39.5%) that betting can divert attention from academic responsibilities. In contrast, 24.5% of respondents disagree, with 21.0% disagreeing and 3.5% strongly disagreeing with the statement. These findings suggest that while a majority acknowledge the disruptive nature of betting on their schoolwork, a smaller segment does not share this view, indicating varied experiences with the impact of betting on academic focus and performance. This bar chart compares the responses of individuals who bet ("Yes") and those who do not bet ("No") regarding the statement "Betting can be a distraction from schoolwork." The responses are categorized as "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and

**Table 8.** Betting as a distraction from school work

Betting can be a distraction from school work	Strongly agree	Observed count	72.0
		% within do you bet	36.0%
	Agree	Observed count	79.0
		% within do you bet	39.5%
	Strongly disagree	Observed count	7.0
		% within do you bet	3.5%
	Disagree	Observed count	42.0
		% within do you bet	21.0%
Total	Observed count		200.0
	% within do you bet		100.0%



**Figure 8.** Betting can be a distraction from school work

“Strongly Disagree.” A significant portion of respondents who bet (blue bars) strongly agree or agree that betting can distract from schoolwork, with the “Agree” category having the highest count among bettors. Non-bettors (green bars) also acknowledge the potential distraction, though their agreement levels are lower compared to bettors. There are fewer responses for “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree,” particularly among bettors. This chart highlights that both bettors and non-bettors recognize the negative academic impact of betting, though bettors seem to agree more strongly.

The data in Table 9 provides insights into students’ coping strategies to mitigate the impact of sports betting on their academic performance. A significant majority (70%) of respondents indicated they had attempted strategies to address this issue. Among those who tried strategies, 40% found them effective, and 30% found them very effective, although 15% remained neutral and 15% found them ineffective to some degree. The most commonly used strategies were setting time limits for betting (60%), avoiding betting during school terms (55%), and engaging in alternative hobbies or extracurricular activities (50%). A smaller proportion utilized methods such as limiting access to funds for betting (45%) or seeking counseling/mentorship (25%). Regarding potential solutions, half of the

**Table 9.** Coping strategies to reduce the impact of sport betting on academic performance among students

Category	Responses	Percentage
Have you ever tried strategies to reduce the impact of sports betting on your academics?		
Yes	141	70%
No	60	30%
Effectiveness of strategies tried		
Very effective	42	30%
Effective	56	40%
Neutral	21	15%
Ineffective	14	10%
Very ineffective	7	5%

**Strategies used to cope with sports betting**

Setting time limits for betting	121	60%
Avoiding betting entirely during school terms	111	55%
Engaging in alternative hobbies/ extracurriculars	101	50%
Limiting access to funds for betting	90	45%
Seeking counseling or mentorship	50	25%
Other (e.g., avoiding peer pressure)	20	10%

**Increasing awareness about the impact of betting**

Strongly agree	101	50%
Agree	60	30%
Neutral	20	10%
Disagree	14	7%
Strongly disagree	6	3%

**Stricter regulations on sports betting accessibility**

Strongly agree	81	40%
Agree	71	35%
Neutral	30	15%
Disagree	14	7%
Strongly disagree	5	3%

**Parental or institutional intervention**

Strongly agree	91	45%
Agree	71	35%
Neutral	20	10%
Disagree	14	7%
Strongly disagree	5	3%

respondents (50%) strongly agreed that increasing awareness about betting's impact could help, while 40% strongly agreed that stricter regulations on betting accessibility would be beneficial. Furthermore, 45% strongly believed that parental or institutional interventions could play a role in reducing betting's impact on students. These findings underscore the importance of structured interventions and awareness programs to address this issue effectively.

#### 4.1. Discussion

Findings indicate that sports betting is quite accessible to students, with 94.4% of visitors agreeing to its accessibility. This is consistent with previous work, including Derevensky and Gupta (2011), noting that online platforms and physical gambling venues have made gambling relatively easy to access for youth. Likewise, Hing *et al.* (2017) found that since betting platforms often target the younger demographics with promotions and advertisements, it is quite common among students. The financial independence is reinforced by the 79.9% of respondents indicating the ability of students to borrow money for placing bets as a reason behind their betting frequency.

Also, the study confirms that the students are heavily distracted from their studies by sports betting. More than two-thirds (71.5%) believe betting prevents academic work, while 75.5% think it is a distraction from normal school activities. These results confirm those of Buchanan *et al.* (2017), found that time management and the ability to focus on academics were significantly disrupted by gambling behaviors among students. Gambling-related distractions (like reviewing betting analyses, for example) — as well as the emotional highs and lows from winning or losing — directly impacts academic performance but also was identified in the paper by Derevensky *et al.* (2008). The data highlights the importance of institutions putting policies in place to curb such disruptions to reduce gambling-related negative effects on academic performance.

Students used various strategies to minimize the adverse academic effects of sports betting. Seventy percent of the respondents tried strategies to lessen the effect, while 40 percent found the mitigation strategies somewhat effective and 30 percent rated them as very effective. Common strategies also involved i.e., imposing time limits for betting (60%), abstaining from betting during school terms (55%), and participating in alternative hobbies or extracurricular activities (50%). The trends in these findings align with Griffiths' (2012) initial research which suggests that time management and participation in non-gambling activities are key protective factors mitigating against problem gambling. However, only a quarter (25%) of students sought counseling or mentorship, which could be suggestive of professional intervention being stigmatized or not well understood (Hing *et al.*, 2016).

A majority of survey respondents agree that increased awareness could help reduce betting in all students, adding that more stringent regulations would help reduce the influence that sports betting has on students as a whole. Half of all the respondents (50 %) agreed strongly that awareness campaigns about the adverse impact of betting would help, while four in ten (40 %) strongly supported stricter regulations

on the availability of betting. These results are consistent with Volberg *et al.* (2010), which addressed the effectiveness of targeted public education campaigns to discourage gambling behaviors. The limitations on gambling such as age limits for gamblers and an overall limitation on the advertising of betting are stricter for some and help reduce the prevalence of gambling amongst younger populations (Hing *et al.*, 2014).

Identifying parental and institutional interventions as possible solutions, 45% agreed strongly, while 35% simply agreed they could help mitigate the effects of betting. Institutions can provide resources, awareness programs and policies that discourage betting behaviors and play a pivotal role in that process. Research by Shaffer *et al.* (2000), Numerous researchers argue for preventative interventions in the university context and cite these elements as crucial (Wardle & McManus, 2021). The results have multiple implications for policymakers and researchers. Fourth, the popularity of betting facilities makes it easier for schools or other intermediate agencies to regulate and oversee the gambling habits of students, and students are very sensitive to betting advertisements. The second is, we need to promote awareness campaigns and other leisure activities for students to have fun in to prevent them from the urge to gamble. Finally, increasing access to counseling and mentorship programs regarding personal issues would also help address the deeper psychological and emotional issues behind students' betting behavior (Derevensky *et al.*, 2011).

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

The study has shown how sports gambling negatively affected students' academic performance and a lot of students said that sports betting did not help them to be focused or to manage their time. To manage, students used time restrictions, refrained from betting on school terms, and participated in hobbies with mixed success. Respondents expressed high levels of agreement with raising awareness, enforcing stricter betting regulations, and increasing parental or institutional interventions to mitigate these effects. The results show the importance of thorough strategies to tackle the problem and promote academic excellence in students.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, this researcher recommends that educational institutions and other stakeholders should develop awareness campaigns to enlighten students on the negative impact of sports betting on academics. More stringent restrictions should be imposed to curtail students' access to gambling sites, especially during school terms. Secondly, there should be more counseling services and mentorship programs for students which can guide students and help them overcome their challenges with betting. Encouraging alternative interests and extracurricular activities will allow students to expend their time and energy in healthier ways. Schools should also encourage parental involvement and institutional interventions necessary to relieve oversight to students to be able to focus on their academics.

#### ETHICAL CLEARANCE

This study was conducted according to the ethical principles





and guidelines mentioned in research on human participants. Once enrolled, participants were briefed on the rationale for the study, guaranteed confidentiality, and informed they had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained from all subjects prior to the start of data collection.

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