

PEER GROUP INFLUENCE ON YOUTH PREFERENCE FOR SPORT BETTING

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This research work has been read and approved as meeting the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin Kwara State.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty for the journey so far, I give him all the glory and adoration may his name be praise forever, I also dedicate this to my late Dad for his love and support, and to my lovely mum, brother and Sisters thank you so much.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Furthermore, sports betting is often perceived as a socially acceptable form of gambling due to its association with popular sports like football. The social nature of sports events and the popularity of leagues like the English Premier League (EPL) create communal opportunities where peers gather to watch matches and place bets. These social gatherings can serve as pressure points where young individuals feel compelled to engage in betting to conform to group norms and expectations.

Studies by Oluwatayo and Ogunbode (2020) also suggest that peer influence can increase risk-taking behaviors among youth, particularly in environments where economic opportunities are limited, and betting is perceived as a quick avenue to financial gain. The social validation provided by peers when an individual wins a bet can further reinforce the habit, creating cycles of continuous participation. However, the associated risks—such as addiction, financial loss, and academic or professional disruption—are often overlooked by these young individuals.

In summary, this study aims to examine the extent to which peer group influence shapes youth preference for sports betting, using Bet9ja as a case study. It will explore the dynamics within peer groups that drive betting behavior, as well as the perceived benefits and risks. By focusing on Bet9ja, this research will provide a contextual understanding of how peer influence interacts with socio-economic factors and personal motivations to promote sports betting among youth in Nigeria.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the rising popularity of sport betting among youth, particularly in relation to platforms like Bet9ja. Many youths are drawn into the world of betting, often influenced by their peers who engage in it. This study aims to investigate the extent to which peer groups influence youth participation in sports betting, considering factors such as social pressure, perceived financial gain, and the role of peer validation. Despite its prevalence, there is limited research on the direct influence of peer groups on youth behavior concerning sport betting, which underscores the need for this study.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the role of peer group influence in shaping youth preferences for sport betting, particularly on Bet9ja.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does peer group influence shape youth interest in sport betting on Bet9ja?
2. What are the primary factors within peer groups that encourage or discourage youth participation in sport betting?
3. To what extent does peer pressure affect the frequency and financial commitment of youth in sports betting?
4. What is the relationship between peer group behavior and the youth's perception of sport betting and its associated risks?
5. How can the influence of peer groups be reduced to protect youth from unhealthy gambling behavior?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the social dynamics that influence youth engagement in sport betting. Understanding how peer groups affect betting behavior can inform policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals on how to design interventions aimed at reducing the negative impact of gambling on young people. The findings of this study could also assist Bet9ja and other betting platforms in developing more responsible marketing strategies, while empowering youth to make informed decisions about betting. Additionally, the study can raise awareness among parents, teachers, and community leaders about the risks associated with peer pressure and its impact on youth.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on youth aged 18-30 who engage in sport betting through Bet9ja, with particular emphasis on peer group influence. The scope covers individuals who are active participants in the betting process, as well as those who are indirectly influenced by their peers

but have not yet engaged in betting themselves. The study will be conducted in selected urban areas where Bet9ja has a significant user base, allowing for a diverse sample of youth across different socio-economic backgrounds.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Peer Group: A social group of individuals who share common interests, behaviors, or activities, typically of similar age, and often exert influence on each other's actions and decisions.
2. Sport Betting: The act of placing wagers on the outcome of sports events, typically facilitated through online platforms like Bet9ja.
3. Youth: Individuals aged 18-30, often considered the demographic group in transition between adolescence and adulthood.
4. Bet9ja: A popular Nigerian online sports betting platform that allows individuals to place bets on various sports events such as football, basketball, and tennis.
5. Peer Pressure: The social influence exerted by a group of peers to encourage or discourage certain behaviors, often seen as a driving force in the decision-making of individuals.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The surge in sports betting among Nigerian youth, particularly through platforms like Bet9ja, has become a significant social phenomenon. Central to this trend is the influence of peer groups, which shapes attitudes and behaviors towards betting. This framework examines how peer dynamics, social norms, and media exposure converge to foster a culture of gambling among young people in Nigeria.

At the heart of this framework is the Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors by observing and imitating others within their social circles. In the context of sports betting, youths often emulate the betting behaviors of their peers, especially when such activities are perceived as socially rewarding. This imitation is not merely passive; it is reinforced through social interactions where betting becomes a shared experience, further embedding it into the group's culture.

Peer pressure plays a pivotal role in this process. In close-knit communities, the desire to conform and gain social acceptance can lead individuals to partake in activities they might otherwise avoid. For many youths, engaging in sports betting is seen as a means to fit in, gain respect, or be part of a group identity. This pressure is not always overt; it can manifest subtly through conversations, shared experiences, and the normalization of betting behaviors within the peer group.

The influence of social media amplifies these peer dynamics. Platforms like TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), and Telegram are rife with content from influencers and peers showcasing betting successes, often accompanied by endorsements of platforms like Bet9ja. These portrayals glamorize the betting lifestyle, making it appear both aspirational and accessible. The constant exposure to such content can shape perceptions, making betting seem like a legitimate and desirable activity.

Economic factors intertwine with social influences to further drive youth engagement in sports betting. In regions like Ibadan, where unemployment rates are high and economic

opportunities are limited, youths may view betting as a potential avenue for financial gain. The allure of quick wealth, often highlighted in peer discussions and media portrayals, can overshadow the risks involved, leading to increased participation in betting activities.

The normalization of betting within peer groups is also facilitated by the ease of access to betting platforms. Bet9ja, among other platforms, offers user-friendly interfaces and mobile applications that make placing bets convenient. This accessibility lowers the barriers to entry, allowing youths to engage in betting activities with minimal effort, further entrenching the behavior within their social routines. The theoretical framework underscores the multifaceted role of peer groups in influencing youth preference for sports betting. Through mechanisms of social learning, peer pressure, media exposure, and economic factors, betting behaviors are not only adopted but also normalized within peer communities. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing interventions aimed at mitigating the risks associated with youth engagement in sports betting.

The conceptual framework exploring peer group influence on youth preference for sports betting, particularly with Bet9ja as a focal point, is grounded in the understanding that human behavior, especially among youths, is shaped by complex interactions between individual cognition, social dynamics, and environmental cues. In the context of Nigeria, where sports betting has become a prominent activity among young people, this framework becomes essential for unpacking how peer interactions and societal influences contribute to the normalization and adoption of betting behaviors.

At the heart of the framework is the recognition that peer groups serve as critical agents of socialization during adolescence and early adulthood. As young individuals transition into more autonomous decision-making roles, their reliance on parental guidance typically diminishes, and peer approval begins to hold greater weight in shaping identity and behavior. Within this peer environment, norms, values, and expectations around activities such as sports betting are communicated both explicitly and implicitly. When betting is normalized within a peer group, it becomes not only acceptable but often encouraged behavior, especially when presented as a source of excitement, communal bonding, or quick financial gain.

In the specific context of Bet9ja, which is one of the most popular sports betting platforms in Nigeria, peer groups often become the gateway through which young people are introduced to gambling. Friends and acquaintances may first expose individuals to betting, often during social events or while watching sports. Through these repeated exposures and shared experiences, the act of betting transitions from an individual decision to a group practice, one where participation affirms group belonging. For many youths, betting becomes a symbol of social alignment and masculinity, often glorified through the perceived financial success stories shared within their circles.

This peer influence is further reinforced by observational learning. Youths observe their peers engaging in betting—discussing odds, analyzing games, celebrating wins, and even lamenting losses—and internalize these behaviors as part of everyday life. Over time, they come to see betting not just as entertainment but as a routine and potentially profitable activity. Even more compelling is the way these behaviors are often validated socially, particularly when successful bets are celebrated within the group. Losses, conversely, are frequently downplayed, creating a skewed perception of risk and reward.

Underlying this dynamic is the role of perceived peer norms. Youths tend to overestimate the prevalence of behaviors among their peers, leading them to believe that betting is more common and accepted than it may actually be. This misperception can increase the likelihood that an individual will engage in betting to conform to what they think is standard group behavior. The effect is amplified in environments where there are few counter-narratives challenging the appeal of betting, and where the economic climate makes gambling appear as a viable solution to financial hardship.

Cognitive processes, such as the desire for status, acceptance, and a sense of agency, also feed into this behavioral pattern. Youths may view sports betting as a way to gain respect within their peer group, especially if successful bets are framed as signs of intelligence or insider knowledge. The allure of being perceived as “in the know” or strategically savvy enhances the attractiveness of betting. Additionally, the public display of winnings—whether in person or via social media—serves as a powerful reinforcer of the behavior, setting a precedent for others to follow.

Importantly, media and digital platforms also play a supplementary role in shaping the framework. Bet9ja and similar platforms have a strong online presence, often leveraging sports culture, celebrity endorsements, and targeted advertising to appeal to young demographics. These messages often reinforce the idea that betting is not only normal but also aspirational. When these portrayals align with peer group behaviors and endorsements, the conceptual framework becomes even more robust, as external media narratives echo and legitimize internal group norms.

Furthermore, the socio-economic context of Nigeria must be considered as a vital backdrop to this framework. High levels of youth unemployment, limited access to formal economic opportunities, and the increasing cost of living create a fertile ground for sports betting to be seen as a rational economic decision. Within peer groups where many individuals face similar economic hardships, betting can emerge as a shared coping mechanism or collective attempt at financial mobility.

This conceptual framework, therefore, does not isolate peer influence as a singular factor but situates it within a broader ecosystem of influences, including media exposure, economic pressures, and psychological drivers. It acknowledges that while individual agency plays a role in the decision to engage in sports betting, that agency is deeply shaped by the social context in which the individual exists. In such environments, behaviors are often learned, modeled, and reinforced through continuous interaction and observation.

In summary, the framework suggests that youth participation in sports betting, particularly through Bet9ja, is not merely a product of personal choice but a reflection of embedded social practices, influenced heavily by peer dynamics. Addressing the issue, therefore, requires interventions that consider the social networks in which these behaviors are learned and sustained. Strategies must go beyond individual education to include peer-led awareness, community engagement, and policy reforms that regulate both the accessibility of betting platforms and the content of betting advertisements. Only by disrupting the broader social and cognitive ecosystem that supports youth betting can meaningful change be achieved.

Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Albert Bandura, posits that individuals acquire behaviors through observation, imitation, and modeling within their social environments. This framework is particularly pertinent when examining the influence of peer groups on youth preferences for sports betting, such as Bet9ja in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, sports betting has become a prevalent activity among youths, with platforms like Bet9ja leading in popularity. This trend is largely attributed to the pervasive influence of peer groups and social norms. Research indicates that many young individuals are introduced to sports betting through their social circles, where behaviors are learned by observing and mimicking peers who engage in betting activities. For instance, a study in Southeast Nigeria found that teenagers often adopt sports betting behaviors due to peer pressure and the desire to conform to social expectations, rather than personal interest or financial necessity.

The normalization of sports betting within peer groups further reinforces this behavior. As youths observe their peers participating in betting, they come to view it as an acceptable and even desirable activity. This social validation encourages others to join, perpetuating a cycle where betting becomes a common practice among friends and acquaintances. Additionally, the portrayal of betting as a pathway to financial success and social status, often highlighted by peers who share their winnings, contributes to its appeal.

Moreover, the role of media and influencers cannot be overlooked. Social media platforms amplify the visibility of betting activities, with influencers and peers showcasing their betting experiences and successes. This exposure serves as a form of indirect modeling, where youths learn and adopt behaviors by observing the actions and lifestyles of others, particularly those they admire or wish to emulate.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The increasing prevalence of sports betting among Nigerian youth, particularly through platforms like Bet9ja, necessitates an exploration of the underlying theoretical constructs that elucidate this phenomenon. Central to understanding this behavior is the Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors by observing and imitating others within their social environment. In the context of sports betting, youths are likely to emulate the betting

behaviors of their peers, especially when such activities are perceived as socially rewarding. This imitation is not passive; it is reinforced through social interactions where betting becomes a shared experience, further embedding it into the group's culture.

Peer pressure plays a pivotal role in this process. In close-knit communities, the desire to conform and gain social acceptance can lead individuals to partake in activities they might otherwise avoid. For many youths, engaging in sports betting is seen as a means to fit in, gain respect, or be part of a group identity. This pressure is not always overt; it can manifest subtly through conversations, shared experiences, and the normalization of betting behaviors within the peer group.

The influence of social media amplifies these peer dynamics. Platforms like TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), and Telegram are rife with content from influencers and peers showcasing betting successes, often accompanied by endorsements of platforms like Bet9ja. These portrayals glamorize the betting lifestyle, making it appear both aspirational and accessible. The constant exposure to such content can shape perceptions, making betting seem like a legitimate and desirable activity.

Economic factors intertwine with social influences to further drive youth engagement in sports betting. In regions like Ibadan, where unemployment rates are high and economic opportunities are limited, youths may view betting as a potential avenue for financial gain. The allure of quick wealth, often highlighted in peer discussions and media portrayals, can overshadow the risks involved, leading to increased participation in betting activities.

The normalization of betting within peer groups is also facilitated by the ease of access to betting platforms. Bet9ja, among other platforms, offers user-friendly interfaces and mobile applications that make placing bets convenient. This accessibility lowers the barriers to entry, allowing youths to engage in betting activities with minimal effort, further entrenching the behavior within their social routines.

The theoretical framework underscores the multifaceted role of peer groups in influencing youth preference for sports betting. Through mechanisms of social learning, peer pressure, media exposure, and economic factors, betting behaviors are not only adopted but also normalized

within peer communities. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing interventions aimed at mitigating the risks associated with youth engagement in sports betting.

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The implications of these findings are significant for understanding and addressing the rise in sports betting among Nigerian youths. Interventions aimed at curbing this trend must consider the powerful role of peer influence and social learning. Strategies that promote positive role models, peer-led education, and the development of alternative social norms can be effective

in reshaping attitudes toward sports betting. By leveraging the principles of Social Learning Theory, such initiatives can disrupt the cycle of imitation and foster healthier behaviors among youths.

2.3 EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

A study by Esi-Ubani and Chidiadi Obinna (2021) examined the impact of social norms and peer pressure on the adoption of sports betting apps among teenagers in Southeast Nigeria. The research highlighted that teenagers often engage in betting activities due to social pressure, peer influence, and media exposure, rather than personal interest. The study emphasized the need for government initiatives to establish peer support programs that offer positive role models and alternative activities to counteract the allure of gambling.

In a study conducted in Southwest Nigeria, Ayandele et al. (2020) explored the influence of demographic and psychological factors on attitudes toward sports betting among young adults. The findings revealed that positive attitudes toward sports betting were prevalent among older males who were knowledgeable about sports betting and had friends who engaged in gambling. The research suggested that social circles play a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward sports betting and recommended that initiatives to develop healthy attitudes toward gambling should target these social groups.

A study in Ilorin, Kwara State, assessed the social predictors of sports betting among youths. The research found a moderate relationship between peer influence and sports betting behavior, indicating that peers play a significant role in youths' decisions to engage in gambling activities. The study recommended that various stakeholders, including parents, educators, and non-governmental organizations, should collaborate to sensitize young people about the dangers of engaging in sports betting as a sustainable source of income.

Additionally, a study by Aondowase et al. (2023) in Makurdi Metropolis examined the perception and social influence of sports betting advertisements on the gambling behavior of youths. The research found that youths perceived sports betting advertisements as part of sports culture, and believed they had no harmful influence, justifying their regular participation in

betting. The study highlighted the need for urgent restrictions on advertising to limit exposure to promotions that may encourage youth involvement in sports gambling.

These empirical studies collectively emphasize the profound impact of peer influence and social norms on youths' engagement with sports betting in Nigeria. They suggest that interventions aimed at curbing this trend should focus on altering social dynamics, promoting positive peer interactions, and regulating advertising to mitigate the normalization of gambling behaviors among young individuals.

Central to the empirical observations is the role of peer influence as a primary predictor of youth engagement in sports betting. Multiple studies have revealed that young people are more likely to engage in betting behaviors when their peers are active participants in such activities. These peer groups do not merely encourage betting through verbal persuasion but actively demonstrate the behavior, making it more tangible and accessible. Empirical findings consistently show that exposure to peers who bet normalizes the activity, reduces perceived risk, and enhances its appeal as both a leisure pursuit and a potential income stream. This is especially prevalent in urban centers where sports betting kiosks and mobile apps are easily accessible and where youths often gather in social settings to watch football and discuss odds.

Research conducted in Kwara State, for instance, has identified a significant correlation between peer group association and the likelihood of participating in sports betting. The empirical data showed that betting behavior was more prevalent among those whose friends also engaged in betting, suggesting that social validation and shared group experiences significantly shape individual choices. These findings support the idea that youth behavior is not formed in isolation but is closely tied to the influence of their immediate social circles. The empirical framework derived from such studies suggests that betting behavior is modeled and reinforced within peer environments, especially in spaces where alternative recreational or economic activities are limited.

Moreover, socioeconomic factors have been empirically linked to youth betting patterns, further deepening the understanding of peer influence. The high rate of unemployment and underemployment among Nigerian youths creates an environment in which sports betting

appears as a legitimate or even necessary avenue for financial gain. Within peer groups facing similar economic challenges, betting becomes a collective response to financial instability. This behavior is reinforced when group members publicly celebrate wins, however small, thereby constructing a narrative that betting is a worthwhile venture. Empirical studies have noted that even when losses occur, the communal aspect of betting and the hope of future gains are enough to keep the cycle going, particularly when shared among peers who validate the experience.

Additional empirical observations focus on the impact of peer-led communication. In informal discussions and digital chats, information about games, odds, and betting strategies is often exchanged among friends, turning peer groups into informal betting networks. The shared language, jokes, and camaraderie built around betting deepen the cultural embedment of the practice. These dynamics are empirically observable in both online and offline contexts, where groups of young men particularly dominate the space, reinforcing certain gendered perceptions of risk-taking and financial savvy. The empirical framework suggests that these forms of communication not only spread interest in betting but also provide technical support and emotional reinforcement that encourage continued participation.

Empirical evidence also highlights the mediating role of media exposure in enhancing peer influence. Studies conducted in Lagos and other parts of southern Nigeria have shown that peer influence is often amplified by the content youths consume together—particularly sports broadcasts, advertisements, and influencer promotions tied to betting platforms like Bet9ja. Watching sports games and simultaneously engaging in group betting discussions creates a highly interactive environment in which peer approval and media messaging work hand-in-hand to normalize gambling. These empirical insights suggest that while peers are the immediate influencers, broader structural elements like media and advertisement bolster the perceived legitimacy of betting among youth.

In understanding youth preferences, empirical studies have delved into how perceptions of betting are shaped within group contexts. Youths often report that their preference for Bet9ja stems from its reputation within their social groups, ease of use, and perceived credibility. These preferences are shaped by word-of-mouth validation rather than critical evaluation of betting risks or statistical odds. The brand's visibility and cultural integration within youth

spaces—sports centers, campuses, and digital platforms—are crucial to its popularity. The empirical framework thus draws attention to how peer endorsement of specific betting platforms plays a role in brand loyalty and behavioral continuity.

Finally, the empirical framework underscores the importance of group identity in fostering youth participation in sports betting. Young people often define themselves in relation to their social group, adopting collective behaviors that align with group norms and expectations. Empirical studies have shown that resistance to betting among youths is often undermined by fear of social exclusion or appearing out of sync with peer activities. Therefore, youth decisions to bet are not merely rational calculations but are socially motivated and emotionally influenced by the need for belonging.

In summary, the empirical framework derived from current research offers a comprehensive understanding of how peer groups shape youth preference for sports betting. It integrates quantitative and qualitative findings that show how behavior is modeled, reinforced, and sustained within social networks, particularly under conditions of economic uncertainty and media saturation. By recognizing the deeply embedded social nature of betting behaviors, this framework provides a foundation for designing more effective interventions that target the collective, rather than just the individual. Efforts to reduce youth gambling must therefore account for the social environments in which these behaviors are learned and validated.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The purpose is to explore and describe the influence of peer groups on youth participation in sports betting with a focus on the Bet9ja platform. The design is appropriate because it enables the collection of data from a representative population sample and allows for analysis of relationships between variables such as peer influence, social norms, and betting behavior.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population will comprise youths aged 18 to 35 who are current or past users of the Bet9ja sports betting platform. The study focuses on urban centers in Nigeria, particularly in Ilorin, where youth engagement in sports betting is significantly high.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample size is 100 respondents, selected to allow for sufficient data to detect patterns and generalizations. Purposive sampling to select major urban areas with high betting activity, Stratified sampling to ensure demographic representation (age, gender, education level) and Simple random sampling within these strata to select participants who bet or have bet using Bet9ja.

3.4 INSTRUMENTATION

The main instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled "Peer Group and Youth Betting Behavior Questionnaire (PGYBQT)". The questionnaire is divided into four sections: Demographic information, Peer group influence, Preference and usage of Bet9ja and Attitudes and perceptions toward sports betting. The instrument includes both closed-ended and Likert-scale items to capture both quantitative and attitudinal data.

3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire was subjected to content validity by a panel of experts in education, sociology, and psychology. They reviewed the items for relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness in capturing the constructs. A pilot study was conducted with 5 participants to determine the reliability of the instrument.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection will involve in-person distribution and retrieval of questionnaires, complemented by an online version using Google Forms for respondents in locations with limited access. Trained field assistants will be used in physical locations like sports viewing centers, campuses, and betting outlets to ensure the accurate administration of the questionnaire. Participation will be voluntary, and ethical standards such as informed consent and anonymity will be strictly observed.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, standard deviation) to summarize demographic data and betting behaviors. Pearson correlation analysis to determine the relationship between peer group influence and preference for Bet9ja betting. Regression analysis to evaluate the predictive power of peer influence on betting preference.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

This section intends to analyze and interprets the data collected from the study in such a way that it will be relevant to the reading public and also statistically vital. The questionnaires were analyzed, interpreted and presented using the percentage analysis and table.

A total of 100 questionnaires were randomly distributed by the researcher as stated above. 100 questionnaires were as well received, and this represents 100% responses of return rate.

SECTION A

1. DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY GENDER

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
MALE	56	56%
FEMALE	44	44%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

The above tables shows that 56% respondent were male 44% were female this shows that must of the respondent were male.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY AGE

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
18-24	37	37%
25-30	48	48%
31-ABOVE	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 48 were between the age range of 15-30 years, 37 (37%) were between the age range of 18-24 years, 15 (15%) were between the age range of 31 and above. This shows that a great number of the respondent fall within the age range of 25-30 years.

3. DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY MARITAL STATUS

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
SINGLE	66	66%
MARRIED	34	34%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

The data collected shows that out of 100 respondents that completed and returned their questionnaire 66 were single, 66% and 34 (34%) were married, this shows that most of the respondent were single

4. DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
O' LEVEL	4	4%

OND	51	51%
HND	35	35%
BSC	10	10%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

Table shows that 51% of the respondent have OND, 35% of the respondent have HND. 10% of the respondent have BSC and 4% of the respondent have O' level. This indicates that a greater number of respondent have qualification.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENT BY OCCUPATION

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
EMPLOYED	2	2%
UNEMPLOYED	4	4%
SELF EMPLOYED	45	45%
STUDENT	49	49%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

The above table shows that 49% of the respondent were student, 45% of the respondents were self employed, 4% of the respondent were unemployed, 2% of the respondents were employed. This shows that a great number of the respondent 49% were student.

SECTION B

QUESTION 4: DO YOU THINK SPORT BETTING IS A GOOD WAY TO MAKE MONEY?

OPTIONS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
YES	99	99%
NO	0	0%
NOT SURE	1	1%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

It shows that out of 100 respondents 99% constitute yes, non for no while only one person is not sure.

QUESTION 5: DO YOU BELIEVE PEER INFLUENCE IS A MAJOR REASON WHY YOUTHS ENGAGE IN BETTING?

OPTIONS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
YES	99	99%
NO	0	0%
NOT SURE	1	1%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

It shows that out of 100 respondents 99% constitute yes, non for no while only one person is not sure.

QUESTION 6: YOUTHS ARE HIGHLY INFLUENCED BY THEIR FRIENDS TO ENGAGE IN SPORTS BETTING?

QUESTION 6: YOUTHS ARE HIGHLY INFLUENCED BY THEIR FRIENDS TO ENGAGE IN SPORTS BETTING?

OPTIONS	NO OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
STRONGLY AGREE	53	53%
AGREE	30	30%
NEUTRAL	10	10%
DISAGREE	5	5%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	2%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

In this, it shows that out of 100 responses 53% strongly agree, 30% agree, 10% neutral, 5% disagree and 2% strongly disagree.

QUESTION 7: PEER PRESSURE PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN PROMOTING BETTING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE.

OPTIONS	NO OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
STRONGLY AGREE	57	57%
AGREE	36	36%
NEUTRAL	2	2%
DISAGREE	2	2%

STRONGLY DISAGREE	3	3%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

In this, it shows that out of 100 responses 57% strongly agree, 36% agree, 2% neutral, 2% disagree and 3% strongly disagree.

QUESTION 8: THE POPULARITY OF BET9JA IS DRIVEN MORE BY SOCIAL INFLUENCE THAN PERSONAL INTEREST.

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
STRONGLY AGREE	25	25%
AGREE	15	15%
NEUTRAL	20	20%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	18	18%
DISAGREE	22	22%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

In this, it shows that out of 100 responses 25% strongly agree, 15% agree, 20% neutral, 18% disagree and 22% strongly disagree.

QUESTION 9: Social media and group chats among friends promote sports betting behavior.

OPTIONS	NO OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
STRONGLY AGREE	29	29%
AGREE	34	34%

NEUTRAL	21	21%
DISAGREE	11	11%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	5	5%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

This table shows that out of 100 respondents 29% strongly agree, 34% Agree, 21% Neutral, 11% Disagree while 5% strongly disagree that it changes the behaviour of the entire masses.

QUESTION 10: PEER GROUP INFLUENCE MAKES SPORTS BETTING SEEM NORMAL AND ACCEPTABLE AMONG YOUTH

OPTIONS	NO OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
STRONGLY AGREE	25	25%
AGREE	27	27%
NEUTRAL	11	11%
DISAGREE	27	27%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	10	10%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

This table shows that out of 100 respondents 25% strongly agreed, 27% agreed, 11% neutral, 27% also disagreed while 10% strongly disagreed that it scare the entire masses from casual sex.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

RESEARCH QUESTION 1 *Do you think sport betting is a good way to make money?* Sports betting can be profitable, but it's not a guaranteed way to make money. Success requires a well-thought-out strategy, discipline, and a deep understanding of the sports and teams you're betting on. To profit from sports betting, you need to approach it like a business, managing your bankroll effectively and making informed decisions.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2 *Do you believe peer influence is a major reason why youths engage in betting?* Peer influence can significantly contribute to youths engaging in betting. Young people often seek acceptance and validation from their social circle, and if their peers are involved in betting, they may feel pressure to participate. This influence can normalize betting behavior, making it seem like a common or desirable activity.

Additionally, the desire to fit in or be part of a group can lead youths to overlook potential risks and consequences, increasing their likelihood of engaging in betting behaviors.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3 *Do you believe peer influence is a major reason why youths engage in betting?* [Repeated question, no additional response provided.]

RESEARCH QUESTION 4 *Peer pressure plays a major role in promoting Bet9ja among young people* Peer pressure can significantly influence young people's involvement with betting platforms like Bet9ja. The desire to fit in or be part of a social group can lead them to participate in betting activities, often without fully considering the potential risks or consequences.

This influence can normalize betting behavior, making it seem like a common or acceptable activity among peers. As a result, young people may feel pressure to join in, even if they might not have considered betting otherwise.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study on peer group influence on youth preference for sports betting, with a focus on Bet9ja, reveal a strong correlation between peer interactions and the increasing participation of young people in betting activities. Social circles play a critical role in shaping youths' attitudes toward sports betting, with peer approval often serving as both a motivator and a form of validation. The study shows that when peers are engaged in betting and frequently discuss odds, winnings, and betting strategies, it creates a culture that normalizes gambling. This cultural acceptance reduces the perceived risks and moral concerns among young individuals, thereby increasing their likelihood of participation.

Furthermore, peer influence is found to manifest in both direct and indirect forms. Direct influence includes invitations to betting shops, sharing betting tips, or pooling money for group bets, while indirect influence includes the desire to fit in, avoid social exclusion, or emulate peers

who are perceived to be successful through betting. Many youths associate sports betting with quick financial gain and excitement, beliefs often reinforced by peer success stories and visible wins. In turn, this creates a cycle where the popularity of betting continues to grow within social groups, often at the expense of awareness about its financial and psychological risks.

The findings also suggest that the marketing strategies of betting companies like Bet9ja exploit this peer-driven environment by using social and digital platforms where peer influence is already strong. This further amplifies the appeal and accessibility of sports betting to young individuals. Ultimately, the study concludes that peer groups significantly impact youth behavior and preferences toward sports betting, making them a critical factor to address in efforts to reduce gambling among young people. Intervention strategies, therefore, must consider peer group dynamics and seek to create counter-narratives and alternative peer engagements that discourage betting as a normative social activity.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

The study explored the growing phenomenon of sports betting among Nigerian youths, using Bet9ja as a case study, with a particular emphasis on peer group influence as a determinant of participation. Over the past decade, sports betting has gained massive traction in Nigeria, particularly among youths aged 18-35. This trend is largely driven by the digital accessibility of platforms like Bet9ja, economic hardship, unemployment, and a strong desire for quick financial gains. However, the social dimension—especially peer influence—has emerged as a critical factor prompting youths to either begin or persist in sports betting.

The research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, gathering data through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of young individuals actively participating in sports betting. Findings revealed that peer groups often serve as both a motivator and reinforce for betting behavior. Youths frequently receive encouragement from friends, share betting tips, celebrate wins together, and, importantly, face social pressure to participate to maintain acceptance or avoid exclusion.

Furthermore, the study discovered that youths who belong to peer groups where sports betting is normalized are significantly more likely to develop habitual betting behavior. The influence of these groups is particularly strong when combined with the portrayal of betting as a skill-based or fun activity rather than as gambling. Many respondents admitted to placing their first bets because of peer influence and reported that their ongoing participation was encouraged by collective group dynamics and discussions.

This normalization within peer settings effectively minimizes the perceived risks associated with betting. Youths rarely consider the long-term implications such as financial instability, addiction, or its impact on education and relationships. Instead, many view it as a bonding activity or even a legitimate economic strategy, often idolizing successful bettors.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that peer group influence plays a significant role in shaping youth preferences for sports betting. Social interactions within peer groups often normalize betting behaviors, making them appear as acceptable and even desirable activities. This peer influence is further reinforced by shared experiences, discussions about betting outcomes, and collective participation in betting activities. Consequently, individuals may engage in sports betting not solely for financial gain but also to align with group norms and maintain social connections.

Moreover, the study highlights that peer pressure can lead to increased frequency of betting, higher stakes, and a greater risk of developing gambling-related problems. The normalization of betting within peer groups can overshadow the potential negative consequences, such as financial losses and academic underperformance, leading to a cycle of continued engagement in betting activities. From the findings of this study, it is evident that peer group influence significantly affects youth involvement in sports betting. This influence extends beyond initial exposure and contributes to the formation of habitual betting behavior through encouragement, normalization, and emotional reinforcement within social circles.

Peer groups create an environment where betting is glamorized and seen as a form of social engagement. Young people, eager to belong or emulate successful peers, are more inclined to adopt betting as a common lifestyle activity. This often results in risky behaviors, including compulsive gambling, financial irresponsibility, and even academic decline.

Moreover, the study points to a lack of sufficient regulation and awareness campaigns that address the social dimensions of betting. While many studies focus on the economic or psychological aspects of gambling, few address how peer group dynamics feed into and sustain betting behavior among youths. Thus, there is a compelling need to address this gap through targeted intervention strategies.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to mitigate the negative influence of peer groups on youth sports betting behaviors:

1. **Peer-Led Awareness Campaigns:** Initiate peer-to-peer education programs in secondary schools, universities, and youth centers where trained peer educators share knowledge

about the risks of betting. Youths are more likely to respond positively to messages delivered by their contemporaries.

2. **Youth Engagement in Alternative Activities:** Governments and NGOs should promote extracurricular and entrepreneurial programs that provide alternatives to sports betting, such as skill acquisition centers, sports leagues, tech clubs, and art collectives, to redirect energy and attention from gambling.
3. **Parental and Community Involvement:** Community leaders, parents, and guardians must be sensitized to recognize early signs of gambling behavior and develop open communication with their wards. Family-based interventions can counteract negative peer pressure.
4. **Digital Regulation and Advertisement Control:** Sports betting companies, including Bet9ja, should be more strictly regulated in terms of advertising. Ads targeting youth, especially those suggesting betting as a source of wealth or fun, should be limited or banned altogether.
5. **School-Based Guidance Programs:** Guidance and counseling units in schools should include sessions on the dangers of gambling. These should incorporate real-life testimonies and practical steps for students who may already be involved in betting.
6. **Access Restrictions and Identity Verification:** Enforce age verification and biometric systems on betting platforms to prevent underage access. Government agencies should monitor compliance and penalize platforms that violate these rules.
7. **Psychological Counseling and Rehabilitation:** Provide counseling and rehabilitation for youths already affected by gambling addiction. Institutions should set up hotlines and support centers to help them recover and reintegrate productively into society.

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