



## Sports Betting among the Catholic Youths of Ota deanery in Abeokuta Diocese

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### ABSTRACT

This study specifically examines the Catholic youths within Ota deanery of Abeokuta Diocese, Nigeria, focusing on determining the prevalence of sports betting and identifying the factors that propel these individuals towards betting activities. Anchored on Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the research adopts a mixed-methods sequential design. To this end, a simple random sample of 331 participants was drawn from a broader target demographic of 1,918 youths for the quantitative strand, while a purposive sample consisting of 4 Youths, 3 Priests, and 2 Parents was selected for qualitative interviews, resulting in a comprehensive sample size of 340. The quantitative data was analyzed descriptively, while qualitative responses were examined for thematic patterns and synthesized into narratives through thematic analysis. Findings from the study revealed that a significant 69% of the surveyed population engage in sports betting, with around 15% exhibiting behaviors indicative of problem betting. This research elucidates the scale of sports betting activities among Catholic youths in Ota Deanery and unveils the underlying motivations driving their engagement, leveraging the conceptual lens of SDT's fundamentals of autonomy, competence, and relatedness to navigate the complexities of youth sports betting.

Keywords: Sports betting, Gambling, Catholic Youths, Abeokuta Diocese

### Introduction

In recent years, sports betting has gained substantial momentum worldwide, particularly among youths. Despite its legal restrictions in some countries, the industry saw a global valuation increase to \$194.63 billion in 2021 (Statista, 2022). The United States has seen significant legalization growth, with 37 states permitting sports betting as of now (Yakowicz, 2023). Public awareness varies, with demographic differences in familiarity and engagement levels (Lines, 2023). The market is anticipated to reach a value of \$167.66 billion by 2029, driven by online gambling acceptance and technological advancements (FinSMEs, 2023; Bazoom, 2023). In the UK, online gambling's popularity has surged, with 26% of the population participating monthly (UK Gambling Statistics, 2023).

Internationally, the legal landscape of sports betting varies significantly. In Asia, regulations fluctuate, with some countries outright banning the practice and others fully embracing it (Ojeagbase, 2023). South Africa and Egypt have shown substantial gambling activity, with a notable rate of engagement among their populations (Neethling, 2023). Ghana's betting sector is burgeoning, reflecting a strong inclination towards sports betting for monetary gain and entertainment (Gna, 2023).

Nigeria presents an intriguing case of historical and contemporary betting culture. Once limited to pool betting, the country has seen a shift towards a more diverse sports betting scene with the advent of sports lotteries in the 1990s, growing significantly in the 21st century (Ibeh, 2023). This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive discussion on the proliferation of sports betting, particularly among youths, and the various factors influencing this trend globally.

The purpose of this study is twofold: to investigate the prevalence of sports betting among Catholic youths in Ota Deanery and to identify the underlying factors that predict sports betting gambling problems among this demographic. By leveraging the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) framework, this study aims to unpack the motivational dynamics driving youth engagement in sports betting, and assess the impact of such activities.

### Statement of the Problem

The Ota Deanery within the Abeokuta Diocese of Nigeria grapples with a pressing issue concerning the prevalence of sports betting among its Catholic youth population. This descriptive study aims to investigate the extent of sports betting engagement among these youths, shedding light on the frequency and scale of their participation in betting activities. By delving into the prevalence of sports betting practices within this demographic, the research seeks to uncover the patterns and trends that characterize their involvement in this phenomenon.

Moreover, the study endeavors to identify and delineate the underlying factors that drive youths in Ota Deanery towards sports betting practices. Understanding the motivations and influencers behind their betting behaviors is pivotal in deciphering the root causes of this prevalent activity among Catholic youths in the region. By examining and elucidating the multifaceted factors that propel these individuals towards sports betting, the research aims to offer nuanced insights into the drivers shaping their betting preferences and habits.

Through a descriptive lens, this study aims to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the landscape of sports betting prevalence and the intricate web of factors influencing betting behaviors among Catholic youths in Ota Deanery. By dissecting these dimensions, the research endeavors to contribute valuable data and understanding that can inform targeted interventions and strategies to address the challenges posed by sports betting within this specific demographic.

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## Literature Review

### *Prevalence of Sports betting*

The prevalence of sports betting among various demographic segments has garnered considerable attention from researchers, shedding light on the normalization and predictors of problem gambling behavior. A study by Constandt et al. (2022) delves into the societal accommodation of gambling within sports clubs, indicating a pervasive normalization of sports betting practices within these settings. Similarly, Wilson et al. (2022) uncovered a strong correlation between predictor gaming engagement and online sports betting frequency, specifically noting heightened engagement among younger age groups and its association with increased problem gambling severity levels.

Turning to a regional perspective, Sheikh (2019) elucidated the prevalence of sports betting addictive disorder among medical students in Zambia, showcasing a notable preference for online betting platforms and highlighting the steadfast engagement of students despite awareness of the associated risks. Furthermore, the study by Muhammad et al. (2022) explored the emerging trend of virtual sports betting among youths in Northern Nigeria, underscoring a shift towards virtual platforms and increased engagement hours at betting establishments, reflecting evolving gambling dynamics in contemporary settings.

Resonating with these insights, Afe et al. (2021) conducted a study in a Southwest Nigerian community, revealing a noteworthy prevalence of gambling disorder linked to socio-economic factors like educational attainment and employment stability. These collective research findings underscore the escalating trends in sports betting engagement globally, setting a crucial backdrop for understanding the current landscape of youth involvement in Ota Deanery. As sports betting centers proliferate across the locality, this study aims to scrutinize the extent to which youths in Ota Deanery have embraced sports betting, offering vital insights into their participation levels and betting behaviors within this dynamic context.

### *Factors Predicting Sports Betting Gambling Problems among Youths*

Gambling disorder, characterized by persistent problematic gambling behaviors leading to distress and functional impairments, poses a significant concern for youth engaged in sports betting. Demographic factors play a crucial role in influencing sports betting behaviors among youths. Studies by Valenciano-Mendoza et al. (2023), Macey et al. (2020), and Ayandele et al. (2020) highlight the prevalence of male participation in sports betting activities, with factors such as age, gender, and interests shaping betting inclinations. Additionally, Habibu et al. (2020) noted high-risk-taking tendencies, particularly among younger students, emphasizing the need to address age-specific risk factors in the context of sports betting.

Social influences also significantly impact youth sports betting behaviors. Peer pressure, as highlighted by Hareyan et al. (2020) and Mukabi (2022), emerges as a compelling predictor of sports betting among youths, underscoring the influential role of friends and social circles in shaping betting decisions. Advertising exposure, as studied by McGrane et al. (2023), is associated with increased gambling intentions, amplifying the allure of betting among youth through brand endorsements and promotional activities.

Moreover, cultural and contextual factors, identified by studies such as Aguocha et al. (2019), shed light on the normative influences within social circles, including friends and family, impacting youths' gambling behaviors. While these quantitative studies offer valuable insights, a dearth of qualitative exploration limits a deeper understanding of the underlying motives and experiences driving sports betting behaviors. Incorporating qualitative methodologies can provide nuanced perspectives on the social dynamics and complexities underpinning youth engagement in sports betting.

An overarching consideration for future research involves a holistic approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative analyses to elucidate the multifaceted dimensions of youth sports betting behaviors. By examining the interplay between demographic, social, and cultural influences, researchers can develop targeted interventions and strategies to mitigate the risks associated with sports betting among youths. Understanding the intricate web of factors contributing to sports betting problems among youths is pivotal in formulating effective prevention and intervention measures tailored to the unique needs and challenges of this demographic.

The accessibility and availability of online sports betting platforms have emerged as pivotal drivers of youth engagement in sports betting activities. Studies by Grey and Wardle (2022), Dei et al. (2020), and Hing et al. (2015) underscore the allure of easy access and round-the-clock availability, highlighting the impact of perceived gambling availability and marketing exposure on youth sports betting behaviors. Additionally, the convenience and simplicity of online/mobile sports betting, as noted by Rodgers (2023), have reshaped the landscape of sports betting toward digital channels, emphasizing the need to regulate advertising practices and promote responsible gambling habits among youths.

Problem gambling tendencies and risk-taking propensities are pivotal individual factors predicting sports betting behaviors among youths. Faught and Falkner (2021) and Lopez-Gonzalez and Griffiths (2022) have linked problem gambling in adolescence and risk-taking inclinations with increased sports betting engagement in early adulthood, underscoring the importance of addressing these factors to curb problematic betting behaviors among youths.

Furthermore, perceived knowledge and gambling beliefs influence youths' sports betting decisions. Studies by Andersson et al. (2009) and Cooper et al. (2021) elucidate the impact of perceived knowledge on sports betting outcomes, revealing that erroneous cognition and beliefs in luck or skill significantly shape betting behaviors among young individuals. Ayandele et al. (2020) underscored the importance of sports betting knowledge as a predictor of attitudes toward sports betting among young adults, emphasizing the role of perceived competence in influencing betting behaviors.

Together, these findings offer valuable insights into the multifaceted factors driving youth engagement in sports betting activities. From the influence of accessibility and marketing exposure to individual tendencies towards problem gambling and risk-taking, understanding these predictors is essential in developing targeted interventions to promote responsible gambling practices and mitigate the risks associated with sports betting among youths. In the context of the Ota deanery, exploring how youths navigate the complexities of perceived knowledge and betting beliefs amidst the allure of online platforms will shed light on their motivations and challenges in this prevalent activity.

## Methodology

In this study, a mixed-method sequential design was employed to examine the prevalence and predictors of sports betting among Catholic youths in Ota Deanery. The population targeted comprised 1,910 individuals, as confirmed by the Dean of Ota Deanery, encompassing a demographically diverse group of youths aged 15-35 years. The research consisted of two phases: an initial quantitative phase using surveys to determine sports betting prevalence, followed by a qualitative phase involving semi-guided interviews to explore the factors influencing gambling problems, building upon the insights gained from the surveys. Data from the surveys were analyzed descriptively with tables, while responses from the interviews were scrutinized for themes and patterns, then synthesized into narratives and direct quotations. This methodology facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the sports betting phenomenon within the specified youth demographic.

**Validity and reliability of Instrument:** The questionnaire's validity was confirmed by ensuring it accurately measured variables related to problem gambling severity, as defined by the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). This included aspects like chasing losses and borrowing money. The PGSI's reliability and validity were established through confirmatory factor analysis, demonstrating significant correlations with gambling behavior and consequences, and a positive relationship with the Addiction Tendency Questionnaire ( $r=0.57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Cronbach's alpha confirmed the scale's reliability at 0.79, underscoring the PGSI as a reliable tool for assessing gambling problems. The instruments' reliability was confirmed through a pretest involving 15 youths from a different deanery, ensuring their understanding of the questionnaire items and bolstering confidence in the study's tools.

**Interview guide and Trustworthiness:** The researcher administered interviews to some selected respondents who addressed the qualitative strands of the study. Four Youths, three Priests, and two Parents addressed the research objective of establishing the factors leading to sports betting among the youths in Ota deanery. The process of the study and the participant interview guide was discussed and critically analyzed with the two research supervisors, with other researchers conducting similar research as the researcher, and with research methodology experts in order to ensure the reliability of this research through the use of peer review.

## Result

**Demographic characteristics:** The demographic composition of the respondents' pool is significant for understanding the context of the study result. Among the 171 youth participants who completed the questionnaire, a majority were male (65.5%). As of January 2023, the most active WhatsApp users are men. WhatsApp is used by 53.5% of men, while women use WhatsApp 7% less than men (Prokofieva, 2023). Information on the age of the respondents was sought by grouping the ages into four age brackets: 15 – 20, 21 – 25, 26 – 30 and 31 – 35. The distribution of the different age brackets is presented in Figure 3, which shows that an overwhelming majority of the members of CYON in Ota Deanery (89%) are in their 20s and 30s. This range are usually those on ground in the parishes, just finished tertiary learning, already working and mostly available in the parishes for socialization.

## Prevalence of Sports Betting among Catholic Youths in Ota Deanery

The first objective of the research was to assess the prevalence of sports betting among the respondents. The information was gotten through Section B of the questionnaire, which is the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), comprising nine questions with a self-reporting four-point Likert scale format (0: "never", 1: "sometimes", 2: "most of the time", 3: "almost always"). According to the scale, the higher the score, the greater the risk that the gambling is a problem, where 0: Non-problem gambling, 1 or 2 is low level of problems with few or no identified negative consequences, 3 to 7 is Moderate level of problems leading to some negative consequences, and 8 or more suggests Problem gambling with negative consequences and a possible loss of control.

**Table 1**

*Prevalence of Sports Betting among Participants*

Ratng	N	%
Non	53	31.0
Low Level	12	7.0
Moderate Level	79	46.2
Problem Gambling	27	15.8
Total	171	100.0

**Table 2***Descriptive statistics of Youths' responses to Sports Betting Scale*

		Never		Sometimes		Most of the time		Almost always	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	"Bet more than you could afford to lose in the past 12 months."	110	64.3	39	22.8	12	7.0	10	5.8
2	"Needed to bet with larger amounts to get the same feeling of excitement in the past 12 months."	108	63.5	47	27.5	10	5.8	6	3.5
3	"When you bet, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?"	88	51.5	51	29.8	24	14.0	8	4.7
4	"Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to bet?"	158	92.4	11	6.4	2	1.2	-	-
5	"Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?"	108	63.2	33	19.3	14	8.2	16	9.4
6	"Has betting caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?"	132	77.2	34	19.9	2	1.2	3	1.8
7	"Have people criticized your betting and told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?"	137	80.1	27	15.8	3	1.8	4	2.3
8	"Has your betting caused any financial problems for you or your household?"	142	83.0	21	12.3	5	2.9	3	1.8
9	"Have you felt guilty about the way you bet or what happens when you bet?"	112	65.5	41	24.0	9	5.3	9	5.3

*Note:*  
F=Frequency;  
%=Percentage.

The study results in Table 1 indicate that out of 171 respondents, a significant number of youths (46.2%) were considered moderate risk bettors, (69.0%) show low to problematic gambling. Although it may seem that only a small minority (15.8%) have problem gambling, this percentage is not

negligible as it indicates 1.5 in 10 youth having problematic sport betting.

### Factors Leading to Sports Betting among Catholic Youths in Ota Deanery

The second objective of this study was to determine the factors leading to Sports betting among Catholic Youths in Ota deanery. Here, a qualitative study was carried out using the nine respondents in a semi-structured interview and codes were assigned to each of them.

**Table 3***Lists of Participants and their Codes*

Participant	Code
1	Youth 1
2	Youth 2

3	Youth 3
4	Youth 4
5	Priest 1
6	Priest 2
7	Priest 3
8	Parent 1
9	Parent 2

The codes assigned to the participants in the interviews are listed in Table 3 based on the order of the interviews. Based on the responses provided by the 9 respondents in the qualitative study on the factors leading to sports betting among catholic youths in Ota Deanery, Abeokuta Diocese, Nigeria, it is evident that multiple themes and factors contribute to the popularity of sports betting among the youth in this region.

The primary factors contributing to the increasing popularity of sports betting among Catholic youths in Ota Deanery, Abeokuta Diocese, Nigeria, are predominantly driven under the following themes: socioeconomic circumstances, peer pressure, and personal motivations.

**1. Economic Situation:** Respondents highlighted the economic hardship facing Nigeria, including high unemployment rates and low income, as a significant factor driving youths towards sports betting. The lack of job opportunities and meager salaries compel individuals to seek alternative means of income generation, with sports betting appearing as a lucrative option.

According to Youth 3:

I think in my opinion the factor contributing to this is high unemployment rate. Our population as well. You see, from the United Nations, it is understood that Nigeria's population stands at 226 million people, and about 70% of that population are youths. So imagine when you have about 150 million people, and inside that 150 million people, 53.4% of them are unemployed. So in the course of trying to get money and how to survive, you find them going into the sporting bet. So they see it as easy way of making money. (Interview, February 16, 2024).

This was also corroborated by Priest 2 when he echoed:

"The main factor of contribution is basically unemployment and low income. Probably those working... many a times when you look at our deanery here, as a case study, many of our youths here are into factory works (Casual work). And when you look at their salary, they pay them peanuts, so in order to augment what they receive, they tend to subscribe to sports betting as a way of meeting their daily needs, as a way to help themselves to make some little more funds" (Interview, February 8, 2024).

**2. Peer Pressure and Social Influence:** According to the findings, the influence of peers and societal norms emerged as a compelling factor, with many youths engaging in sports betting due to the perceived social acceptance and the desire to emulate successful individuals within their social circles. Youth 1 mentioned peer pressure as a factor "because a lot of youths are involved here, and the young people are seeing everybody doing the thing." (Interview, February 5, 2024). Similarly, Youth 2 acknowledged the influence of peers in the context of poverty and joblessness: "So poverty is at the best part of the motivation. That I can invest N100 and use it to make N100,000, N200,000." (Interview, February 9, 2024). For Priest 5, the impact of social media and peer influence on youth engagement in sports betting is so pronounce: "you see some persons who are engaged in sports betting on Twitter or social media platform and they post their winnings." (Interview, February 8, 2024).

**3. Technological Access and Internet Services:** The proliferation of smartphones, easy access to the internet, and the prevalence of sports betting centers have facilitated the widespread participation of youths in betting activities. Priest 1 mentioned technological access and internet services as contributing factors: "High increase in access to smart and iPhone, availability and cheap internet services." (Interview, February 9, 2024). In the same light, Priest 3 emphasized the role of technology in sports betting: "immediate results, immediate 'cash out' in the language of the youths, at the end of the day, there is 'cash out' after the 90 minutes game." (Interview, February 16, 2024).

**4. Personal Motivations:** Respondents cited various personal motivations driving youths towards sports betting, including the desire to make quick money, aspirations for a better social standing, entertainment, escape from financial constraints, and the allure of a lavish lifestyle. Youth 2 mentioned personal motivations tied to making money quickly: "The only motivation is to make money while being entertained... So, the motivation there is to make money as quickly as possible." (Interview, February 9, 2024). As for Youth 3, what makes up personal motivation is greed and impatience with the process: "So I think it is greed... Nobody has that patience of trying to... you just want to get this money without going through the process." (Interview, February 16, 2024). Priest 2 discussed personal motivations driven by social media influences and the desire to replicate others' successes: "These are motivations for the youths, that if these ones can win, I can also do it." (Interview, February 8, 2024). Furthermore, Priest 3 elaborated on personal motivations linked to immediate rewards and resilience: "The reward of immediate money keeps motivating them, that even though they fail today, they still have the belief that they can still make it tomorrow." (Interview, February 16, 2024).

**5. Psychological Drivers:** Psychological factors such as the quest the need for immediate rewards, success, need to belong/identify with peers, or celebrities, to mention a few play a significant role in attracting youths towards sports betting as a means of fulfilling their desires and aspirations. Priest 3 highlighted psychological factors related to immediate rewards and persistence: "The reward of immediate money keeps motivating them, that even

though they fail today, they still have the belief that they can make it tomorrow." (Interview, February 16, 2024). In the same vein, Parent 1 touched on psychological drivers such as the desire for wealth and societal approval: "Getting rich quick, amassing wealth to please friends, relative and living big within the society." (Interview, February 19, 2024)

## Discussion

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that individuals are motivated by a need to achieve competency, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2008). When applied to gambling behaviors, SDT suggests that youths may engage in sports betting as a means to fulfill these psychological needs. However, this can lead to varying degrees of gambling severity, dependent on how gambling activities align with or detract from these core needs. This significant proportion suggests that a substantial number of youths might be using gambling to fulfill their needs but are experiencing some negative consequences. According to SDT, the autonomy of these individuals could be compromised, leading to an inability to regulate their behavior effectively.

Such alignment with this threshold is further supported by some literature cited in this work that suggested that a great significant number of youths are involved in sports betting. Afe et al. (2021), found that an estimated 30.5% of people have a gambling disorder, Muhammad et al. (2022) had confirmed how much a sizable proportion of youths from Northern Nigeria are into virtual sports under which sports betting is categorized.

Looking at this also in the light of the finding within the components of the Problem Gambling severity index (Table 2), it underscore the nuanced engagement of the CYON members of Ota deanery with sports betting. Notably, behaviors such as chasing losses (48.5%) highlight a significant challenge to their sense of competence, reflecting a persistent hope for reclaiming lost bets. Similarly, the experiences of affordability (35.6%), tolerance (36.8%), and guilt feelings (34.4%) suggest a complex interaction between the autonomy to engage in betting under economic constraints and the quest for financial improvement. Lesser but significant percentages reporting borrowing money (7.6%) and facing financial problems (17%) point to the risk of sports betting on economic stability, impacting relatedness and social connections. Health issues (22.9%) further indicate the psychological and moral conflicts confronting youths, tying back to the foundational STD needs of autonomy, competence, and connectedness. This interplay underscores the importance of addressing underlying holistic needs to foster resilient and adaptive coping strategies, moving beyond mere behavioral interventions in sports betting.

The findings from the qualitative study among youths in Ota Deanery align closely with the literature presented on social factors influencing sports betting behavior, particularly emphasizing the significant role of economic situations. The testimonies of the respondents in Ota Deanery reflect the challenges posed by high unemployment rates and low income, driving individuals towards sports betting as a potential source of income, as supported by Mukabi (2022) and Aguocha et al. (2019), who highlight the strong influence of peer pressure and social acceptance in prompting sports betting behavior among youths. The narratives of economic hardship leading to a turn towards sports betting, as voiced by the youths and Priest 2, echo the literature's assertion that societal structures, economic constraints, and peer influences contribute significantly to youths' engagement in gambling activities. This alignment underscores the crucial interplay between economic factors and social dynamics in shaping sports betting behaviors among youths in Ota Deanery, emphasizing the need to consider these complex influences when designing interventions and support mechanisms.

According to majority of respondents, the country's economic situation can have an impact on both autonomous and controlled motivations. This is in line with the Self-Determination theory, which serves as our theoretical framework for this study. Teenagers may be influenced by outside factors to turn to sports betting as a source of financial stability as a result of the difficult economic climate. This is consistent with motivated control. On the other hand, betting carries elements of autonomous motivation if it is viewed as a calculated decision made with the knowledge of the risks and the goal of bettering one's life in order to overcome financial difficulties.

A confirmation of peers pressure and social influence factor has further boosted the result of the study by Hareyan et al. (2020); Mukabi (2022), where peer pressure was identified as a strong predictor of teen sports betting. Youth who had friends who bet on sports had a higher likelihood of doing so themselves. It is evident that social influence and peer pressure are related to controlled motivations in Self Determination Theory. Be it giving in to peer pressure or conforming to specific social circles, actions motivated by outside forces take the place of volition, and influence the Youths of Ota deanery in the choice of Sports betting. These quotes highlight the significance of technological advancements and internet accessibility in influencing youth participation in sports betting, thereby confirming the outcome of the study by Grey and Wardle (2022), who examined the accessibility of online betting platforms and found that the ease of access and 24/7 availability were attractive to young people.

These personal motivations further confirms the result of the study reflected in our literature review carried out by Opoku and Yeboah (2021) on a population of college students in Ghana, where it revealed that prominent among the reasons College students engage is Sports Betting is the purpose of winning some cash and entertainment.

Through the Self Determination Theoretical lens, personal motivations such as the desire for quick money and the desire for a better social standing can be understood as reflecting both autonomous and controlled aspects. On the one hand, youths in Ota deanery may turn to sports betting in order to satisfy their basic psychological needs for competence (the sense of efficacy and the capacity to accomplish goals) and autonomy (the drive to take charge of one's own life). However, these behaviors are more in line with controlled motivation, which is covered by the Self-determination theory, when they are motivated by outside forces or a sense of obligation to better one's social standing or financial circumstances. In addition to this, when sports betting is engaged in purely for enjoyment, it can be associated with the intrinsic form of autonomous motivation. Here, the behavior is self-endorsed and volitional, with individuals participating in sports betting for the inherent satisfaction it brings, rather than for external rewards or pressures.

The findings from the qualitative segment of the study illuminate the psychological underpinnings driving youth engagement in sports betting within the Catholic youths of Ota Deanery, echoing the study's objective to identify predictive factors of sports betting gambling problems among this demographic.

The insights provided by Priest 3 and Parent 1 underscore the significant role of immediate gratification and societal pressures in fueling the allure of sports betting among youths. The desire for rapid financial gains, as highlighted by Priest 3, reflects the youth's susceptibility to the appeal of immediate rewards, a psychological driver that not only motivates their initial participation but also sustains their engagement despite recurring losses. This quest for instant success taps into the broader need for achievement and recognition, aligning with the Self-Determination Theory's (SDT) emphasis on competence as a fundamental human motivation.

Moreover, Parent 1's remarks regarding the pursuit of wealth for societal approval and to boost social standing captures another facet of the psychological drivers: the need for relatedness and social belonging. The pressure to conform to peer and societal expectations exemplifies how sports betting is perceived as a viable avenue to fulfill these social and psychological needs. These findings suggest that sports betting among youths is not merely a financial or recreational activity but is deeply intertwined with their intrinsic psychological needs and external societal influences.

The discussion resonates with the study's objectives by highlighting how sports betting serves as a complex attempt among youths to navigate and fulfill their psychological desires for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, the consequences of such behavior raise concerns, suggesting a need for interventions that address these underlying psychological motivations, promoting healthier alternatives to meet these needs and ultimately mitigate the adverse effects of sports betting gambling problems among Catholic youths in Ota Deanery.

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## Recommendations

Based on the research outcome, this study proposes a few recommendations which are:

- i. Community Leaders and Stakeholders: They are to facilitate ongoing dialogue and Education sessions within the community to raise awareness on the danger of crossing the threshold of addiction to sports betting among the youths in Ota Deanery.
- ii. For Religious Institutions, Priests, and Educational Bodies: The diocese, priests and educational bodies may incorporate discussions on responsible gambling and promote informed decision-making by the youths who are engaged in betting or have the intention to in the future.
- iii. Youth Leaders and Collaborative Partnerships: This group may collaborate with youths, regulatory bodies, and partnering organizations to establish peer support networks and implement community-based initiatives aimed at fostering responsible gambling practices among youths in Ota Deanery.

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## Limitations

This study acknowledges a few limitations that may influence the interpretation and generalization of the findings:

- i. Scope of Study Population: The research focused solely on Catholic youths within Ota deanery, which may limit generalizability or demographic groups.
- ii. Potential for Bias: Given the sensitive nature of the topic, there is possibility of responses bias from participants, particularly in self-reported data regarding gambling habits and attitudes.
- iii. Limited samples: Given the sample participants of 171 from the sample size of 331, it may appear that the sample size is limited for generalizability.

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## Conclusion

This paper explores the factors that motivates youths in Ota deanery to engage in sports betting. The research aim and objectives of thesis was examine. The findings revealed a moderate level of sports betting activity among the youths, contrary to initial assumptions of high engagement. The second objective set out to establish the factors leading to sports betting. These were identified as economic situations, peer pressure, social influences, technological access and internet access, personal motivations, and psychological drivers. These factors played a role in influencing youths' participation in sports betting activities.

Conclusively, a significant 69% of the surveyed population engage in sports betting, with around 15% exhibiting behaviors indicative of problem betting, thereby exposing the prevalence of sports betting in Ota deanery and underscores their underlying motivations driving their engagement, leveraging the conceptual lens of SDT's fundamentals of autonomy, competence, and relatedness to navigate the complexities of youth sports betting.

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