Sports Betting Among Students of Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana

Angelo Elijah Opoku and Abraham Yeboah

ABSTRACT

Sports betting has recently become prevalent among students in institution of higher learning. Most students spend substantial amount of their time engaging in sports betting. The purpose of the study was to examine sports betting among students at colleges of education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The target population was students in colleges of education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The simple random sampling procedure was employed to select 361 students for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the questionnaire was 0.73. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to analyse data to answer three research questions that guided the study. The results showed that students patronised IxBet, EaziBet, EuroBet, SoccerCash [NLA] and Safari. It was found that, to a great extent, students agreed that their involvement in sports betting was low. Students reported that they engaged in sports betting to win cash and for entertainment. It was concluded that sports betting appeared more attractive to students since they offered free bonuses for placing bets. It was recommended that Guidance and Counselling Units on Colleges of Education campuses organise programmes to educate students on the types of sports betting available in the market and what they truly seek to offer clients. The Government and Conference of Principals of Colleges of Education (PRINCOF) should develop socially responsible regulations and statutes on sports betting that have the potential of discouraging students' involvement in the practice.

Keywords: betting, college, education, sports, students.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Gambling, like alcohol use, is measured as a possible addictive behaviour and the two disorders share a common underlying profile and reinforce each other [1]. Lesieur, Cross, Frank, Welch, White, Rubenstein, Moseley and Mark [2] intimated that gambling and alcohol disorders exist in a variety of populations. Russell, Hing and Browne [3] reported that persons with addictive gambling problems are involved in various forms of other serious gambling activities. Masaba, Sekakubo, Blaszczyński and Kuka [4] maintain that an estimate of one-third to half of addictive gamblers demonstrate varying degrees of poor physical health conditions with reported rates for gambling related criminal offences, psychosocial difficulties and familial conflicts as compared to non-gamblers.

The gambling phenomenon is growing faster [5] than expected in Sub-Saharan Africa as well and has assumed a new shape known as sports betting [6]-[8]. This form of betting has become the most common form of gambling in many countries [9]. In this gambling type, sports fans only have to stake a wager on the results of a sport related event by paying a small amount of money. An odd bet coming through makes one win a bigger amount [10].

According to "Sports betting destroying Ghana's youth" [11], the President of Uganda banned the issuance of new

licenses as well as the renewal of expired ones to sports betting companies to avoid the over-proliferation of sports betting centres in his country. Nigeria bets up to just over 25 million USD per day, and this figure has been climbing yearly in contrast to the country's economic growth over the past few years and the slight decline in 2016 as per [12]. Many countries globally permit unrestricted sports betting and often encourage the act, often in partnership with national regulatory bodies. Humphreys and Perez [13] noted that governments generally overlook the negative impacts of sports betting, in favour of the revenues it generates through the regulation and taxation of this activity.

A. Statement of the Problem

In recent times sports betting has become a serious problem, [14]-[17] which calls for research and understanding. Koross [18] indicates that the youth have resorted to betting and at times do so at the expense of their studies. In Ghana, authorities at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, (KNUST), a public University in Ghana, had to place a ban on sports betting and other forms of gambling on campus to ensure that students concentrate on their academic life, a decision which was necessitated after the academic board noticed a deterioration in the academic performance of students [19].

During football match days, for instance, it is common to see college students gather at their common halls of residence watching football matches ranging from the local league to the English Premier League, La Liga, German Bundesliga, Serie A, UEFA Champions League among others, not just because they love football but for the purpose of placing bets on their mobile phones via online channels. Some of these students even spend the whole day engaging in sports betting activities with companies such as MyBet, SportiBet, EuroBet, EaziBet at the expense of their academic work. The addictive nature by the students to betting is worrying. It is worrying because instead of the students using their precious time to work on their projects, assignments, and have some rest to enable them to regain enough strength for the following week, they resort to sports betting. Some studies on sports betting by Latvala, Castr'en, Alho and Salonen [20], and Ofori and Kotey [17], revealed that students who engage in sports betting experience work and educational disruption.

Flack and Morris [21] indicated that students are involved in betting to gain money, as a means of dealing with boredom, for social recreations and pleasure purposes, [22]. Masaba *et al.* [4] added that students resort to betting as their main means of income since winning money appears very vital than mere enjoyment of the game. But do these reasons reflect the situation on the ground? Interaction with some college of education students who engage in sports betting revealed that they primarily do so to win money. However, most students rather end up spending more money than winning, [23]-[24]. The question is what makes college students engage in sports betting in spite of the fact that they lose more than they win?

B. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of study was to examine sports betting among students at colleges of education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and how this can have implications for counselling.

C. Specific Purposes

- 1.To identify the types of sports betting patronized by students in the colleges of education.
- 2.To examine the extent to which students in the colleges of education involve themselves in sports betting.
- 3.To find out reasons for students' engagement in sports betting.

D. Research Questions

- 1.What are the types of sports betting patronized by students in the colleges of education?
- 2.What is the extent to which students in the colleges of education involve themselves in sports betting?
- 3.What reasons account for students' engagement in sports betting?

E. Significance of the Study

This study would be significant in creating awareness of the existence of sports betting among students at the colleges of education in Ashanti Region. The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) by this study would enact laws to regulate the operations and patronage of sports betting on college campuses. The Conference of Principals of Colleges of Education (PRINCOF) would be enlightened on the menace of sports betting on college campuses and the need to curb it.

F. History of Sports Betting Globally

Sporting events have a significance impact on the lives of many people. People take pleasure in both playing in sports and being a fan and express a lot of excitement as they cheer their favorite teams on. Some supporters do not only delight in watching their teams but go to the extent of wagering money on the outcome of the activity due to their confidence in the team they support. This is what is termed sports betting.

The task of determining the exact beginnings of sports betting has been quite herculean for historians. They admit that this event has been a practice around the world dating back to ancient times. The American Gaming Association [25] submitted that early records of betting equipment can be traced back to many centuries, with ivory dice retrieved from tombs of Egyptians made sometime before 1500 B.C. The Greeks, Chinese, Japanese and Romans are said to have practiced games of skill and chance for pleasure as early as 2300 B.C.

For Decker and Thuiller [26] the earliest acts of sports betting can be traced back to about 2,000 years ago when for the love of sports, the Greeks introduced the Olympics to the world as well as the first records of betting on athletic competitions. Greeks spectators practiced bet among themselves on the winners during competitive games, [27]. Sports betting then spread to Ancient Rome from the Greeks where it received acceptance and legalization. The Romans particularly practiced bet on the gladiator games and chariot races or the circus and when this ancient sporting event finally was stopped, betting continued to survive and found its way into other areas.

During the Industrial Revolution, horse betting was developed. Around the 16th and 17th centuries, these types of bets started growing in the United Kingdom among the educated and prominent members of the society. During this period, owners of horses were the only ones permitted to place bets on the outcome of matches. Hoteliers and pub owners then became major promoters of matches, which encouraged them to organize matches close to their business centres [28]. At the 19th century, countries like New Zealand, United States of America, and the Canada had also adopted and regulated this practice as a legal event. According to Mok [29], some religious leaders during the medieval times attempted to forbid sports betting. The event was therefore done in secret. In spite of that, it survived and flourished as new sporting events also popped up.

G. Betting Environment in Ghana

The National Lottery Authority (NLA) after its establishment in 1958, under the Department of National Lotteries, was authorized to oversee the regulation of lottery activities for the public for the purpose of entertainment and awarding of prizes. Sometime in 1960, the Lotteries Betting Act (Act 94) was enacted to begin the lottery business, having the objective for the promotion of economic development and generate revenue in support of the country's development [30], [17].

Nearly fifty years after establishing the NLA, the National Lotto Act 722 and the Gaming Act 721 was passed in 2006. The NLA was appointed to regulate, monitor, and supervise lotteries which were still legal, and popular. The Gaming Act 721 permitted four land-based casinos to operate lawfully and

also allowed the creation of online betting, provided they obey the regulations from the Gaming Commission of Ghana [31].

According to Ofosu and Kotey [17], the NLA in Ghana has been able to regulate the operation of lottery in the country by providing an enabling environment where both the companies and customers are protected. Before the advent of technological advancement that allows subscribers to patronize lottery through online platforms, the mode of operation for operators was the traditional lottery kiosk. Tolchard, Glozah and Pevalin [15] postulate that there are seven casinos in Ghana. Out of these, Accra has five, Tema has one and there is one in Kumasi. In addition, there are lotteries, traditional horse racing and online sports betting in operation as well.

H. Cognitive-behavioural Theories

Cognitive-behavioral theories present betting as a form of learning acquired through classical and operant conditioning reinforced by monetary benefits and autonomic excitement that expresses pleasure. Shin and Montalto [32] contend that these features are anticipated to be associated with cognition such as beliefs in the skill for betting and a perceived chance of winning or losing.

Classical conditioning theory which supports nurture over nature accentuates the significance of learning from the environment. The theory as cited in [33], [34], showed how through conditioning a dog automatically salivates at the sound of a bell. His investigations led to the conclusion that an organism's natural behaviour can be elicited by a neutral stimulus. In Pavlov's theory, a specific stimulus causes a specific response. In this approach, two stimuli can be paired together to elicit a new form of behaviour. Everything ranging from speech to emotional responses is considered by this theory as patterns of stimulus and response [33], [34].

According to Griffiths and Delfabbro [35], in operant explanations for betting, persistent betting can be understood as learned behaviour due to a favorable outcome. In this case the intermittent winning of betting produces in the individual the tendency to stake and win more. Ramnerö, Molander, Lindner and Carlbring [36] explain that the release of a reinforce rest is based on inconstant number of responses operating independently of the passage of time. They continue that Skinner used gambling/betting as an example of variable-ratio schedules, stating that the effectiveness of such schedules in generating high rates has long been known to the proprietors of betting establishments. Ramnerö *et al.* [36], further argue that the intermittent reinforcement schedules are responsible for betting behaviour. Addictive bettors are victims of the variable-ratio schedules that are inherent in all games of chance [37] such as sports betting. Conversely, the classical conditioning theory as cited in [35], argue that people's persistence in betting activities is because they have become conditioned to the excitement related to betting to the extent that lack of betting activities makes them uninspired and restless.

The classical and operant standpoints have been useful in the improvement of clinical interventions such as systematic desensitization, aversive conditioning, and satiation techniques [35]. The study can be placed in these theories since they assume that the more a person engages in betting

activities the more the person's behaviour is regulated by elements outside the individual's control. The effectiveness of the conditioning principles may be due to motivational factors and the nature of the activity. The motivation of some people to place bets might be rooted in excitement or relaxation. These needs are satisfied varyingly by different activities [38].

I. Social Learning Theories

The social learning theory pioneered by Albert Bandura posits that behaviours of humans are formed as a results of the intricate interaction between two basic domains of humans, namely the social (environmental) and the cognitive social learning theory. Kabiri, Shadmanfaat, Hayden and Cochran [39] advocate that social learning theorists are with the idea that learning involves cognitive process that ensues within a social context, and that learning is influenced by the observation and imitation of people. Individuals therefore learn from those observations and make decisions on whether to model the behaviour or not.

Social learning theory acknowledges that people learn new behaviours through observation of others and first hand experiences. Such people after observing imitate others through reinforcement. It is therefore common for young people to imitate the behaviour of persons they admire [40], [32]. Modelling of behaviour demonstrated by popular celebrities, films characters or role models making advertisements on online betting sites would possibly encourage this activity among the youth. Television stations that show high-stake betting activities have the power to influence the young people to perform such behaviours as they think it will benefit them by providing them some opportunity to gain extra money, pleasure, and ignore future costs [41], [40].

The present study can be rooted in the theory in the sense that the act of betting may show severe resistance to extinction and may continue notwithstanding aversive consequences that should reasonably be expected to decrease the likelihood of the behaviour. This is because there is reward for such behaviour. The theory can therefore be applied in most social behaviour contexts such as drugs, drinking as well as betting.

J. Types of Sports Betting

According to the Gaming Commission of Ghana [42] a number of betting companies are legally mandated to participate in sports betting in Ghana. These are SoccerBet, EaziBet, 1XBet, SoccerCash (NLA), SupaBets Ltd., Premier Betting, MyBet, EuroBet Ltd., KMK Entertainment, Safaribet, Ricos Golden Crown Ltd., Millionaires Sports Bet Gh. Ltd., KaiRo Sports Betting, Bet Ghana Ltd., Fantasy Football Ghana Ltd among others. Some of these betting firms have enjoyed considerable support from bettors and have become accepted establishments in the betting business. These are SupaBets, 1XBet, Premier Betting, MyBet.Com, EuroBet Ltd and Safaribet. Some of these betting companies such as the SupaBet, Soccerbet, MyBet, Premier, Winning bet, among others have opened betting centres on almost every busy street. Mybet.Com for instance has established other branches in Accra and Kumasi. This betting company has included the Ghanaian Leagues to help give it a local content as well [10]. These companies are famous in terms of

their patronage since first timer bettors are given mouthwatering incentives offers that give them free cash prizes to place bets. 1XBet for instance offers 100% up to €100.00 welcome bonus, EaziBet offers 100% first deposit bonus up to GHC200.00, Premier provides GHC200.00 risk-free bonus. SoccerBet offers bettors the opportunity to stake on many sports events, thus getting extra bonuses and money. The bonuses are real money bonuses that can further be used to place bets on the betting site. The companies also offer payment options which attract lower interest during sport betting [43]. Betway, Powerbets and Supabets have jackpots happening daily with various number of matches and various bonuses. They have plenty of retail outlets which are useful for cash out and can easily be contacted if someone has an issue that needs to be resolved [44].

Dreambet was also launched by Recognition Limited to tap into the increasing internet usage among consumers. Dreambet gives bettors the opportunity to place their stakes using short codes to text normal messages. This option provides an easier and excellence experiences in sports betting for their customers [10]. “List of all betting sites in Ghana” [31] reports of two large jackpots in Ghana which are Betway Ghana and Powerbets Ghana. They have jackpots being operated daily with a number of matches and bonuses.

Humphreys and Perez [13] also speak about another football pool betting, a form of sports betting very popular in the UK that is based on the correct prediction of the results in a number of football games. Entries are purely taken through the internet. There are some other types of bettings which include offshore poker, horse racing, racetrack, roulette, scratch tickets, bingo, slot machines, betting shops, internet betting, and video gambling.

K. Extent of Students' Involvement in Sports Betting

The current generation are witnessing unprecedented growth in the opportunities to place bet [45], making the means of placing bets through smart phones easier with less or no discomfort [46]. The extent of young people especially students' involvement in sports betting has therefore been of major concern to many nations. A study conducted in Turkey, for instance, reports of unprecedented participation of young individuals in online betting eliciting deep concerns for these folks [47], [48] conducted a study on betting experiences among young people due to the fact that most people between young adolescents to young adulthood are much attracted to these practices. Findings indicated that most bettors' first experience happened in a social medium, and that family and peers contribute to these early experiences. The conclusion therefore is that young people begin engaging in betting activities through interacting with those within their social environment.

A related study explored the extent of adolescents' participation in internet betting. The study was conducted in Canada due to worries about the adverse impact on the quality of life of adolescents. Findings showed that approximately 6% of the respondents in the space of the previous three months had placed a wage on a sports activity online [49]. Koross [18] reports in his study that majority of the students' respondents 50 (50%) reported a betting tendency of a minimum of once a week, while 28 (28%) indicated betting at least once every month and 12(12%) once every three

months. The conclusion was that nearly all students engage in betting activities at their convenience and time and occasions.

According to Ellenbogen, Jacobs, Derevensky, Gupta and Paskus [50], college students' involvement in sports betting makes them spend their school fees. They also spend precious time at betting centers which in turn affects their academic performance. Koross [18] also further submits that some students discontinue their education because they use their school fees for betting and ultimately lose the money. Ligami [51] opined that college students' involvement in sports betting makes them spend their pocket money. Okoti, Ogula, and Munyua [48] conducted a study on young people in colleges between 17 years to 35 years to find out the rate of their involvement in sports betting. Findings indicated that Kenyan youths are leading online betting (76%), closely followed by Ugandan youths (57%) and Ghanaian youths (42%). Okoti *et al.* [48] continue that despite the illegality of adolescent betting, the youths still engage in the practice. A study by Derevensky and Gupta [52] also revealed that in terms of online sports betting, a higher percentage of the youths are more engaged than the adult population.

L. Reasons for Students' Engagement in Sports Betting

Neighbors and Lostutter [53] identified some reasons provided by college students who engage in betting. The results indicate that participants bet to gain money, as a means of dealing with boredom, for pleasure and entertainment. Keovisai and Wooksoo [54] believe that betting produces some sense of excitement that ignites different feelings among the participants. Gordon, Gurrieri and Chapman [55] in qualitative research identified competition among peers as a reason for their involvement in sports betting. They continue that among the reasons, there is the demonstration of loyalty to favourite teams and players, and the display of intelligence in their knowledge of the game. Keovisai and Wooksoo [54], also explain that some people use betting as a coping strategy, for socialization purposes and as a means of displaying their luck or skill. Similarly, some people resort to betting as a means of dealing with stressors in life [4]. The betting experience is capable of providing an emotional or mental escape.

The reasons for betting also have societal and financial remuneration hopes as key [4]. There is the provision of conducive environments that enhance social and peer-group interactions. Some of these unemployed youth resort to betting as their main means of income, since winning money appears very vital than mere enjoyment of the game. Rodriguez, Neighbors, Rinker & Tackett [56], speak of recent research also suggesting betting for financial gains and for charitable events as regularly cited explanations for betting. Wojcik and Hodge [57] also indicate financial motivations as the reason behind students' betting, with many wanting to supplement their income as they experience rising living costs. Students who gamble express concern about the worrying nature of their financial situations. They only engage in the act to help ease and improve their finances on campus.

Koross [18], in a study indicated that 70% of students' respondents stated money as their main reason for betting. He further explained that students appear to depend on finances

from sports betting for taking care of their needs and as a source of entertainment. Other reasons for betting engagement were for enjoyment and socialization with peers. Flack and Morris [21], in their study into gambling motivations discovered emotion-focused reasons for betting. People engage in sports betting to increase the excitement of watching sports and make use of their extensive knowledge of sports. They also use the opportunity to get ahead financially.

II. METHODS

A. Research Design

The quantitative descriptive research design was employed for the study. The descriptive research design was employed to identify the types of sports betting patronized by students in the colleges of education, to examine the extent to which students involve themselves in sports betting and to find out reasons for students' engagement in sports betting.

B. Participants

The target population covered all college of education students in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. However, the accessible population consisted of students from five mixed public colleges of education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The total size was 5, 517 students as per Table I. A sample size of 361 was used for the study. Krejcie and Morgan [58] noted that for a population of six thousand (6000) a corresponding sample size of three hundred and sixty-one (361) participants would be appropriate for the study. Therefore, since the total population is five thousand five hundred and seventeen (5, 517), a sample size of three hundred and sixty-one (361) is representative of the accessible population. The simple random sampling procedure was used to select participants for the study. To get an equivalent proportion of student participants from each college, Babbie's [59], formula was used to determine the sample for each college.

TABLE I: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE SIZES FOR THE STUDY

College Name	Total Number of Population	Sample Size
Akrokerri	1346	88
Agogo	1150	75
Offinso	1210	79
Agona SDA	565	37
Wesley	1246	82
Total	5517	361

Source: Field Survey (2021).

C. Instrumentation

The data collection instrument for this study was a self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended items. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, A, B and C. Section A (10 items) elicited information on types of sports betting patronized in the colleges of education. Section B (9 items) sought information on the extent of students' involvement in sports betting. Section C (9 items) focused on reasons why students engaged in sports betting. The summary of the reliability coefficient obtained for each of the study variables included: Types of sports betting patronized in colleges (0.72), extent of students' involvement

in sports betting (0.74) and reasons for students' engagement in sports betting (0.70).

D. Data Collection Procedure

We requested for a letter of introduction from the Head of Guidance and Counselling Department at the University of Cape Coast to enable us to receive the full assistance of the Principals of the Colleges of Education in Ashanti region for data collection. We asked for help from a research assistant who basically assisted with the administration and collection of the data. Data was collected from students of the colleges. In the process of data collection, we urged the students to be accurate and sincere with the responses they provided.

E. Data Processing and Analysis

The data on research questions one and two was analysed using means and standard deviation whilst data on research question three was analysed using frequencies and percentages. The criterion in Table III was calculated by dividing the range (3) by the number of categories (4), giving 0.75. Then the criteria are 1.00-1.74 = strongly disagree, 1.75-2.49 = disagree, 2.50-3.24 = agree, 3.25-4.00 = strongly agree were used.

F. Results

Research Question One: What are the types of sports betting patronized by students in the colleges of education?

As shown in Table II, study participants indicated IxBet ($M=7.19$, $SD=2.33$) as the highest type of sports betting patronized by college students. It was followed by EaziBet ($M=7.17$, $SD=2.17$), EuroBet ($M=7.06$, $SD=3.12$), SoccerCash [NLA] ($M=6.62$, $SD=2.93$), Safari ($M=5.52$, $SD=2.38$), Premier ($M=5.43$, $SD=2.17$) and SupaBet ($M=5.06$, $SD=1.95$). The findings of the study further revealed MyBet ($M=2.92$, $SD=2.75$) and was ranked as 10th as the least type of sports betting patronized by college students. It is worthy to note that college students mostly patronized IxBet and EaziBet whilst on campus.

TABLE II: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF TYPES OF SPORTS BETTING PATRONIZED IN COLLEGES

Sports betting	M	SD	Rank
1. IxBet	7.19	2.33	1 st
2. Eazibet	7.17	2.17	2 nd
3. Eurobet	7.06	3.12	3 rd
4. SoccerCash (NLA)	6.62	2.93	4 th
5. Safari	5.52	2.38	5 th
6. Premier	5.43	2.17	6 th
7. SupaBet	5.06	1.95	7 th
8. SoccerBet	4.31	1.95	8 th
9. BetWay	3.02	2.30	9 th
10. MyBet	2.92	2.75	10 th

Survey: Field Survey 2020. M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation.

Research Question Two: What is the extent to which students in colleges of education involve themselves in sports betting?

It was found in Table III that in general, study participants indicated that the extent to which they involved in sports betting in colleges was low ($M=2.05$, $SD=1.17$). It was observed that participants disagreed that their involvement in sports betting made them to: log online to spend money on my teams ($M=2.45$, $SD=1.15$), journey to betting centres to place bets ($M=2.39$, $SD=.94$), have emotional harm ($M=2.33$, $SD=1.14$), have relationship challenges with friends ($M=2.12$, $SD=.99$) and commit criminal activity such as theft

($M=1.91$, $SD=1.04$). However, participants only agreed with the statements that their involvement in sports betting made them to: reduce my academic performance in schools ($M=2.85$, $SD=2.08$) and spend my upkeep money/allowance ($M=2.55$, $SD=1.06$).

Research Question Three: What reasons account for students' engagement in sports betting?

Under the reasons why study participants engaged in sport betting on campus, the results of the study showed participants agreed that they engaged in sport betting for several reasons. The results regarding the reasons for student's engagement in sport betting are summarised into four categories as in Table 4 based on how the items were scored. These categories were (a) strongly disagree, (b) disagree, (c) agree and (d) strongly agree.

The participants who responded that they strongly disagree that they engaged in sports betting on campus for several reasons were between 0.0% to 29.6% whilst between 5.3% to 49.9% disagreed.

Also, the study results showed that between 15.0% to 61.2% agreed that they engaged in sports betting on campus

for several reasons and between 13.3% to 60.1% strongly agreed. It could be seen from the study that majority of the participants agreed that they engaged in sports betting on campus.

TABLE III: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT IN SPORTS BETTING

My involvement in sports betting makes me to:	M	SD	Remarks
1. reduce my academic performance in school	2.85	2.08	Agree
2. spend my upkeep money/allowance	2.55	1.06	Agree
3. log online to spend money on my teams	2.45	1.15	Disagree
4. journey to betting centres to place bets	2.39	0.94	Disagree
5. have emotional harm	2.33	1.14	Disagree
6. have relationship challenges with friends	2.12	0.99	Disagree
7. commit criminal activity such as theft	1.91	1.04	Disagree
8. have suicide tendencies	1.86	1.15	Disagree
9. be exposed to narcotic drugs	1.63	0.98	Strongly Disagree
Overall Mean	2.05	1.17	

Source: Field Survey 2020 M=Mean S=Standard Deviation

TABLE IV: DISTRIBUTION OF RESULTS OF REASONS FOR STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN SPORT BETTING

I engage in sports betting:	SD		D		A		SA	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1. to win some cash	55	15.2	32	8.9	57	15.8	217	60.1
2. for entertainment	0	0.00	89	24.7	221	61.2	51	14.1
3. as a hobby	48	13.3	89	24.7	149	41.3	75	20.8
4. out of curiosity	106	29.4	53	14.7	134	37.1	68	18.8
5. because I have the skills of betting	86	23.8	147	40.7	54	15.0	74	20.5
6. for investment	50	13.9	60	16.6	160	44.3	91	25.2
7. to meet campus cost of living	36	10.0	112	31.0	122	33.8	91	25.2
8. to escape from socio personal problems	17	4.7	180	49.9	116	32.1	48	13.3
9. because it is a social activity	107	29.6	19	5.3	178	49.3	57	15.8

Survey: Field Survey 2021

III. DISCUSSION

A. Types of Sports Betting Patronised in Colleges

Research question one was to find out from students at colleges of education the types of sports betting they patronized. The findings of the study showed that students in colleges of education patronised IxBet, EaziBet, EuroBet, SoccerCash [NLA], Safari, Premier and SupaBet. The findings from the results of the study suggest that students' high patronage of sports betting such as IxBet, EaziBet, EuroBet and SoccerCash [NLA] could probably be due to the fact that these sports betting types are readily available to students and hence the high patronage. The discovery of the current study is consistent with findings of Neighbors and Lostutter [53] who reported that the patronage of students in sports betting is overwhelming. Students patronize in sports betting like IxBet, EaziBet, EuroBet, SoccerCash [NLA] and Safari. Similarly, 'Best Betting Sites in Ghana' [44] reported that Betway, Powerbets and Supabets are companies patronised by students in Ghana. The reason given for the assertion was that Betway, Powerbets and Supabets have jackpots happening daily with a number of matches and various bonuses and that they have plenty of retail outlets which are useful for cash out and can easily be contacted if someone has an issue that needs to be resolved. This finding further states that Betway is the best mobile site experience and topnotch customer service in Ghana at the moment.

The findings showed that students' patronage in Premier is rooted in the fact that when one clicks on the links to these betting companies, they become eligible for fabulous bonus offers that give them free money for just placing bets. This is supported by the assertion of 'Online Betting Companies in Ghana' [43] which submits that IxBet for instance offers 100% up to €100.00 welcome bonus for first timers. EaziBet gives 100% first deposit bonus up to GHC200.00, Premier provides GHC200.00 risk-free bonus. For SoccerBet, patronizers have the opportunity to bet on multiple events and get multiple bonuses. These bonuses are real money bonuses that can further be used to place bets on the betting site. In addition, these betting companies offer payment options that come with low transaction fees.

B. Extent of Students' Involvement in Sports Betting

The findings revealed that, in general, the involvement of students of colleges of education in sports betting was low. This was because students involved in the study only agreed with the statements that their involvement in sports betting contributed to reduction in their academic performance in schools and also made them spend their upkeep money/allowance. This is consistent with the results of Kamara [6] which state that the overall betting involvement for sports bettors is moderate because bettors adjust their betting frequency, number of bets and stake size based on wins and losses. The finding of this study suggests that, indeed, students have realized that their involvement in sports

betting would only cost them and hence their low involvement in sports betting on campuses. The findings also corroborate with findings of Ellenbogen *et al.* [50], who reported that college students' involvement in sports betting makes them spend their school fees and precious time at betting centers which in turn affects their academic performance. Koross [18] also reports in a study that several tertiary students involved in betting have difficulties in their academic performances and usually dropout. Ligami [51] opined that college students' involvement in sports betting makes them spend their pocket monies.

However, findings of the study disagree with findings of Koross [18] that suggests the existence of addictive and frequent betting practice among college students since the college life usually presents some form of freedom away from a student's family with less restrictions on their activities. Koross [18] opined that since college students have increased freedom and regular access to the internet they are considered as having three times the rate of addictive betting. Griffiths [60] submits that betting is considered as an addictive behaviour and arises in various populations, including college students. Koross [18] adds to this in his study which states that majority of the students' respondents 50 (50%) bet at least once a week, while 28 (28%) indicated that they bet at least once a fortnight and 12(12%) at least once a month.

Also, findings of the study, on the contrary, showed that students disagreed that their involvement in sports betting made them to: log online to spend money on their teams, journey to betting centres to place bets, have emotional harm, have relationship challenges with friends and commit criminal activity such as theft. These results do not suggest addictive betting by students as submitted by Koross, [18]. The findings of this study are therefore supported by the findings of [48] who conducted a study on young people between 17 years to 35 years in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, and Uganda to find out the rate of their involvement in sports betting. From the findings, Kenya was found to be on the lead in number of youths who betted, followed by Uganda and Ghana at 76% and 57% respectively. Ghana scored the lowest (42%). Even though there is a high involvement of college students in sports betting in other countries, the situation is otherwise in colleges of education in Ashanti region.

C. Reasons for Students' Engagement in Sports Betting

The results of the study showed that college students engaged in sport betting for several reasons. It was found that students engaged in sports betting to: (a) win some cash (b) entertain themselves and (c) also because sports betting is a social activity. The findings in the study were supported by findings of Neighbors and Lostutter [53] who postulate that college students engaged in sports betting to win money. Masaba *et al.* [4] mentioned that students in colleges engaged in sports betting for monetary reward expectations. Masaba *et al.* [4] asserted that some of these students resort to betting as their main means of income since winning money appears very vital than mere enjoyment of the game. Rodriguez *et al.* [56], reported in their study on sports betting among college students that students mostly engaged in sports betting for money. Wojcik and Hodge [57] also indicate financial motivations as the reason behind students' betting, with many

wanting to supplement their income as they experience rise in the cost of living. Students who bet on sports express concern about the worrying nature of their financial situations. They only engage in the act to help ease and improve their finances on campus. Koross [18] in a study indicated that 70% of students' respondents stated money as their main reason for betting. He further explained that students appear to depend on financial benefits from betting to meet their needs and gain pleasure from betting. Flack and Morris [21] in their study into reasons for sports betting also submit that people engage in sports betting not only to increase the excitement of watching sports but also use the opportunity to get ahead financially.

The findings in terms of college students engaging in sports betting to entertain themselves is buttressed by the results of Ray [22] who reports that students place bets on sports for social and enjoyment reasons. Researchers like Keovisai and Wooksoo [54] in a study report of respondents treating sports betting as a kind of entertainment. They further argue that betting produces some sense of excitement that ignites different feeling among the participants. Consistent with prior studies, the findings of a study by Koross [18] support this study when it reported that most college students consider betting as a harmless amusement distraction with only minor amounts of time or money being lost to the activity.

The findings of the present study confirm the findings of Keovisai and Wooksoo [54] who see sports betting as a social activity. In their study they submitted that some respondents engage in sports betting to help them socialize with friends, with a number of them conceding that they visit venues of betting activities with friends but would not go by themselves. They further stated that friends introduced them to betting and so visits to the venues in turn promote their togetherness. Apart from serving as a means of socialization, sports betting preserved the way of a society.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study investigated sports betting among students of colleges of education in Ashanti region of Ghana. Students in colleges of education mostly patronised IxBet, EaziBet and EuroBet because these companies appeared more attractive since they offer free bonuses for placing bets. Several reasons were found to persuade students' engagement in sports betting activities and prominent among these reasons were for the purposes of winning some cash, entertainment, and the fact that sports betting is seen as a social activity. In general, however, students' involvement in sports betting was low because they have realised the negative effects of this activity on their academic performance and expenditure.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There are so many types of sports betting in the market. It is recommended that Guidance and Counselling Units on Colleges of Education campuses organise programmes to educate college students on the types of sports betting available in the market and what they truly seek to offer clients.

2. It is recommended that students of colleges of education are educated on the constructive use of phones and internet and financial literacy so that their personal reasons for engaging in betting practices may not override their academic life.

3. Students, parents, and other stakeholders should be sensitized on the effects of sports betting among colleges of education students. This would influence their decision in relation to patronising sports betting.

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

1. There is an urgent need to examine and respond to betting issues in college students for prevention and public health orientation. Governments, institutions, parents, and religious organizations have a responsibility to protect colleges of education students from potentially harmful activities such as sports betting. The government in collaboration with PRINCOF must outline and promote effective institutional policy to help protect colleges of education students from exposure to betting products through a reduction in the accessibility and availability of all forms of regulated bettings. Guidance and counselling units should therefore be very active in providing and explaining these policies to students.

2. Prevention can consist of increasing knowledge and awareness of the risk of betting among college students. Guidance and counselling coordinators can use primary prevention strategies to help promote informed decision-making. These primary prevention strategies can be incorporated into the curriculum through frequent guidance and counselling programmes.

3. Guidance and counselling coordinators have an important role to play in screening for early identification of students who engage in sports betting. Further, their role can include providing social supports systems and other educative programmes that have the objective to minimise or eliminate the possibility of students' engagement in sports betting.

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