



SPORT'S BETTING TECHNIQUES AND YOUTH PATRONAGE (A CASE STUDY OF BETTING COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE)

Chisa Chinda¹, Henry N. Ozuru²

¹Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Port Harcourt Choba, Port Harcourt. chiclintex@gmail.com

²(Professor of E-Marketing) Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Port Harcourt. henry.ozuru@uniport.edu.ng

ABSTRACT:

This paper examined the relationship between sport's betting techniques and youth patronage (A case betting companies in Rivers State). The aim was to examine the relationship between sport betting techniques and youth patronage. The study adopted cross-sectional research design. The population consisted of 17 sport betting companies in Rivers State. 399 copies of questionnaire distributed. The Multiple Regression Statistical and Structural Equation Model tools were adopted, discriminant validity (AVE) and Cronbach Alpha verified the internal consistency and validity status and the results were positive. The findings of the study showed that sport betting techniques significantly related with youth patronage, thus enhancing referrals and repeat visit. The study concluded that, sport betting techniques significantly supported youth patronage. Based on the findings, the study, recommends that, it is recommended that youths should apply the techniques of online sport betting to enable them make profit instead of loses. It is also recommended that the lower the betting odds the higher the chances of youth the making profits and Sports betting companies should increase their betting bonus so that it will attract and motivate more youth to patronize the companies.

Keywords: Sport Betting Techniques, Youth Patronage.

INTRODUCTION

Today, Sports betting has become a major form of business in Nigeria (Okon, 2015). It is a solid and rapidly growing industry of the global economy, as betting shops are opening, thus becoming an important part of social phenomena, regardless of the national under development (Griffiths, 2010). Sports betting has become part of mainstream culture through the entertainment, leisure, sport, and tourism industries and it is a significant source of revenue to governments and private enterprise (Wann et al., 2001). Betting industry is one of the legalized industries in Nigeria that is regulated by the National Lottery Regulatory Commission, and is being governed by the National Lottery Act 2005 and National Lottery Regulatory 2007 (as amended) (Lagos State Lottery Board, 2017). However, online betting via mobile phones incorporating in-play betting options, has synchronized the online betting and watching activities, making them both happen simultaneously and hence allowing a larger degree of interactions between head-to-head industries (Benson et al., 2021).

The year 2019 revolutionized the world of betting in Rivers State as the industry embraced this tremendous growth in number of betting organizations and participants by rapidly increasing activities and introducing various modes and facilities (Lagos State Lottery Board, 2017). In 2021, there are over 5,000 betting outlets and over 10,000 participants in Rivers State alone (Lagos State Lottery Board, 2017). The proliferation of betting has seen the industry diversify from early betting modes such as casino betting and national lotteries to newer modes such as online sports betting (d'Astous, & Gaspero, 2013). The betting industry has been able to leverage on Nigeria's huge football culture (Mustapha, & Enilolobo, 2019). Some of the big leagues, such as the English Premier league (EPL), German Bundesliga, Italian Serie A, French League one and Spanish La Liga, have millions of fans in the country, betting provides Nigerians the opportunity to earn from what they love (Jackson, 2019).

Betting industries can now be spotted in almost every street in Rivers State, new ones are propping up daily, with subscribers in store and online daily. Akingbolu, & Akinlosotu (2019) stated that the industry has been fast growing at a pace of 16% per year from 2016 to the present, and worth more than \$147 million and has a bright future. This betting industry has greatly aided the nation's economic growth and reportedly supported eight thousand (8,000) jobs directly or indirectly and scene of revenue (Chiweshe, 2019). The industry is now very competitive and betting companies are looking for better strategy the betters will stack their bet to make profit out of it (NOIpolls, 2019). They device superior techniques to such as, offer players generous registration bonuses, feature high levels of usability and platform security and have extensive libraries of different online betting games for players to choose from betting odd, betting cash out, betting bonus and handicap (Griffiths, 2010). The future looks bright for the betting industry as it is becoming increasingly popular every year.

Lopez-Gonzalez, Guerrero-Sol6, Est6vez, & Griffiths, (2017) studied the implications of sports betting in Nigeria, accessing the role and impact of technology on sports betting and effects of sports betting on vulnerable users and analysed the impact of the robust growth of the betting industry. Other scholars studied the role of online betting in improving operating performance of the youths (Koross, 2016; Mao, 2013; Siwei Xu, 2011; Bankole, 2019; Olusola et al., 2021). Other scholars supported the need for the extension of the study of online betting to other fields in order to foster development (Akinlosotu et al., 2019; Olaore et al., 2020; Herskowitz, 2016). Consequently, this study expands theory by adopting two predictor variable of online

betting techniques (Betting Odds, and Betting Bonus) from extant studies modifiable to betting industry and relating same to two youth patronage (referral and repeat visit). It appears somewhat surprising that there has been inadequacy of empirical evidence in the investigation of online betting techniques and youth patronage of sport betting companies. In spite of the role of relationship assimilation in the online betting techniques, it was not considered by previous scholars and has also proposed frameworks that recognize the moderating effects of betting regulation. This is the gaps the researcher intend to fill in the literature. Given the foregoing, this study seeks to ascertain the node between online betting techniques (betting odds and betting bonus as the dimension of the predictor variable) and youth patronage (referral and repeat visit as the indicators).

Statement of the Problem

The alarming issues regarding the high rate of unemployment especially in Nigeria in recent times have been a major issue on the front burner of the government at various levels and other stakeholders. The hardship that has been experienced in Nigeria by many unemployed youths is becoming unbearable that it has driven many to seek solace in crime, engage in betting games as a means of sustenance and acting such as thugs and usable tools in the hands of many politicians in Nigeria (Olayinka, & Taiwo, 2017). Millions of youths and old people who are lured by prospects of winning big in sport betting continue to patronize the betting shops that can change their lives in the face of acute shortages of employment opportunities in the country (Ofosu & Kotey, 2020). But, some betting companies has witnessed drop in patronage as a result of account hackers, online fraudsters, challenge in cashing out while the match is ongoing, website pop-up adverts which limit the speed in accessing the site and winning payout issues, thus, affect customers' patronage. Some of these companies' websites are not easy to access, as some youth's complained bitterly in frustration experienced when trying to access the site to book their preferred games. This has caused drop in patronage as some of the customers give negative referrals, stop to revisit the site as well as their commitment and loyalty with the company.

This study tends to find out if the conceptual framework of this study which are the dimensions of online betting techniques (betting odds and betting bonus) and the measures of youth patronage (referral and repeat visit) has the capacity to solve the problem of unemployed youth in Rivers State. This study sought to propose an empirical investigation on sports betting techniques and youth patronage of betting companies in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The main aim of this study is to empirically examine the relationship between online betting techniques and youth patronage of betting companies in Rivers State. Based on this, we have the following specific objectives to:

1. Determine the extent of relationship between betting odds and youth patronage.
2. Determine the extent of relationship between betting bonus and youth patronage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of probability underpinned this paper. The term probability refers to the possibility or the chance of something happening. It is basically an estimation of relative average frequency of the event occurring in repeated and independent trials. The probability relative frequency ranges between 0% to 100% and it allows us to predict the happening of the event without necessarily indicating the time of the happening. In a particular game, probability plays an important role in determining the terms or conditions to achieve some given results or some financial prospects in addition to the determination of worthiness of playing a given game. Probability can either be expressed in decimal or fraction form. Another way of describing probability is the use of odds in describing the chances of winning in betting or lottery (Turner et al., 2009).

The odd ratio shows the ratio of success to failure the odd ratio would be 3 to 1 implying that there are 3 probabilities of losing and only one opportunity to win. In converting the odds into probability of winning, you just use the chances of success as numerator and the total chances as denominator. When chance of winning equals' chance of losing in an odd ratio, that's referred to as an even odd and a payout of the same ration is referred to as even money (Turner et al., 2009). It important to estimates the available number of opportunities for any occurrence in a game in computation. In an instance of loyalty in any lottery, the probability of winning increases with the number of tickets bought. In other words, the most tickets are bought the higher the chances of winning. While playing in a random event, much of the systems and beliefs in the gambling are more of misconceptions and players imagine that as they keep playing the will eventually emerge as winners.

Sports Betting Techniques

Australian Gambling Statistics (2014) defines sport betting as the wagering on approved types of local, national or international sporting activities whether on or off course, in person, by telephone, or via the internet. All the definitions bring about the issue of online betting clearly. The common idea here is wager that is, risking money by guessing the results of something. However, the definitions do not point clearly to the moral implication of online betting on the bettors. Most of the literature reviewed tends to suggest that the majority of bettors are males and that they have a higher rate of problem gambling than the females and such gender differences may be attributed to men taking more risks and being more socially anxious than women (Wong et al., 2013). Palmer (2013) argues that although literature on sports bettors as a specific population group is relatively scant, research into their demographic characteristics suggest that they are a unique cohort.

However, Palmer (2013), sports bettors tend to be younger males, of a higher social economic status, better educated and have regular access to the internet and mobile phones; therefore, her study is divergent from the fact that those who gamble are the poor who look for quick money in order to make ends meet. Carnelley (2007) supports that by arguing that both male and female students were found to take part in a multitude of different types of betting activities and both male and female students fell into the sub-set of bettors with a strong predisposition to bet. Irrespective of the demographic characteristic of bettors, Warren-Kindt & Asmar (2002) argue that students who bet are more vulnerable to ruining their schools reputation, jeopardizing

their eligibility and compromising their integrity. Betting is the exercise of staking of money or something of value (often referred as the stake) on an event with an uncertain outcome with the hope of winning more than what one stakes. It is a global phenomenon and can be a life experience for many young people in Rivers State.

Betting Odds

Betting odds can be seen as an aggregated expert opinion reflecting both the judgment of bookmakers and the betting behaviour of bettors. However, it is a completely different form of expert opinion compared to studies where experts are asked to perform forecasting tasks in an experimental environment. Whereas those experts usually do not have to fear negative consequences from inaccurate forecasts, offering inaccurate odds will have serious financial consequences for bookmakers. This could be a reason why betting odds were shown to be clearly outperforming soccer tipsters publishing their forecasts in sports journals (Spann, & Skiera, 2009). Hvattum & Arntzen (2010) show that in general betting odds possess an excellent predictive quality and perform better in forecasting soccer results than various quantitative models. A consensus model based on betting odds of various bookmakers was shown to provide more accurate forecasts on the European championship 2008 in soccer than methods using the ELO rating and the FIFA World Ranking (Leitner, et al., 2010).

Kovalchik (2016) even investigates eleven forecasting models in football and finds that none of it is able to outperform betting odds in forecasting singles matches. Without denying the general predictive power of betting odds, it is worth noting that there are empirical indications on the imperfectness of betting odds as shown in (Wunderlich & Memmert, 2016) or in the extensively documented favourite-longshot bias. Moreover, it is worth noting that various model based approaches were yielding positive betting returns when deducing betting techniques from the forecasts (Peeters, 2018). As a wide consensus exists that betting odds have proven to be a powerful instrument in forecasting (Forrest, et al., 2005), betting odds are routinely used as a quality benchmark for testing the predictive quality of mathematical approaches (Kovalchik, 2016). By doing this, betting odds and mathematical models are outlined as contrary approaches for the same forecasting task, instead of mixing the power of both approaches to create new forecasting possibilities.

Betting Bonus

The bonus system and performance is an essential part of any organizations. In context of online betting, Investopedia (2016) defined bonus as an additional compensation given to the youths above his/her normal stake and it can be used as a reward for achieving specific goals set by the company, or for dedication to the company. Heathfield (2016), stated that bonus pay is compensation over and above the amount of pay specified as a base salary or hourly rate of pay. The base amount of compensation is specified in the youth's data page. Employers (online betting company) can distribute bonus pay randomly as the company can afford to pay a bonus, or the amount of the bonus pay can be specified by contract. Bardot (2014) describe bonus is a payment which is backward-looking and usually discretionary or at least not expected from the employee(s). A decision is made to pay it to one, a group or all employees, based on criteria decided by management to reward past achievements, such as reaching a specific profit or some important milestones for the organization, or in a totally discretionary manner but defined an incentive as a plan which is forward-looking.

Payment is tied to the achievement of specific objectives that have been pre-determined and communicated to the employees that are on the plan. The purpose of the incentive scheme is to influence behaviour to reach the objectives by providing an incentive to work towards the goals. Romanoff (2008) defined bonus as a single payment made at the end of the performance period typically a year to reward extraordinary effort or achievement while incentive is a tangible or intangible reward that is designed to motivate a person or group to behave in a certain way. Bardot (2014) further stressed that incentives differ from bonuses in that incentives define both what needs to be accomplished, what the employee will receive in return for accomplishing it. As a result incentives have greater behavioral and motivational impact. The bonus system and performance is an essential part of any organizations.

Youth Patronage

Patronage is a substantial assistance and encouragement given to a patron which could also be called customer in an exchange relationship (Nwulu & Asiegbu, 2015) and they stated that patronage is the act of regularly buying from a seller or business outlet. Patronage could only be sustained by offering a need satisfying product/service in a competitive business arena (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Patronage in betting company is basically influenced by price, quality, security, environment and exceptional employee service speed (Ali et al., 2014). Henkel et al. (2006) satisfied customer with a service settings have a high future repurchase intention. This enhances commitment and customer patronage. Customer patronage is a mixed of psychological variables that determine purchase behaviour (Onuoha & Nnenanya, 2017). Psychological factors are prime to consumers (Moye & Giddings, 2002), and serves as a pointer to which brand of product/service to patronise by a consumer (Ogbuji et al., 2016). Patronage is desire driven base on the perception of service/product quality or qualities (Adiele et al., 2015). They added that the perception of the physical environment (service settings) and the resulting feelings of the customer/consumer in respect to his/her self-concept define patronage.

Referral

Referral is defined as face-to-face communication about a brand, product or service between people who are perceived as not having connections to a commercial entity. The most effective types of marketing programmes that firm adopt are those that cost nothing, or next to nothing, and prevent work. Referrals are one of such marketing tactics that are commonly used by firms to aid their marketing efforts, and referrals is one of them (Rowley, 1998). Referrals is understood as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product/company, which is made available through offline or online channel (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Speaking about a brand to others is considered an important part of an individual's identity construction. It has been shown to influence other people's purchase behaviour (Kim et al., 2009). Referral is an oral person to person communication between a receiver and a communicator, the person being seen as independent from the brand, product, or service (Shimp, 2007). The

above definition entails face to face, oral involvement between a communicator and a receiver. The internet is a readily available source of recommendation and complaint communication. Referrals also can be the individual customers' contribution to a service providers' goals as a result of satisfaction derived from success.

Repeat Visit

Lacey and Morgan (2009) opined that retailers invest a lot of effort and money in trying to get a customer purchase their product for the first time. After a product had been tried once, its success can be measured in how quickly, how often and in what quantities were repurchased. Jim (2009) opined that repeat visit refers to the number or percentage of customers who purchases a second time, or how often they buy again. To achieve a high level of repeat visit, betting industries must develop an effective relationship with the customers. This includes activities such as; regular communication, incentives and research into customers' needs and wants (Rosli et al., 2020). The concept of RV derives from behavioural intention, which can be defined as the intention to plan to perform a certain behaviour, for example, the repurchase of restaurant services (Rosli et al., 2020). RV is defined as an individual's readiness or willingness to make a repeat visit to the same service provider, providing the most accurate prediction of a decision to revisit, e.g. purchase of a vacation package to the same service provider (Rosli et al., 2020). Cole and Scott (2004 as cited in Rosli et al., 2020) define RV as the desire to visit, in a specific timeframe, a prior destination for a second time. Based literatures, we conceptualized revisit intention as the individual readiness or willingness to make a repeat visit to the same restaurant. Repeat visit is the second patronage made as well as the further times the consumer keeps buying (Nasim, 2014).

Online betting techniques and youth patronage

Online betting is a strong socio-economic phenomenon in many countries in the world. This is mostly so in assessment with European football clubs. The number of football fans from different clubs is massive, as a result of which the Nigerian economy is positively developed. Each time a match of significant football Leagues over the world takes place, fans apart from viewing the football matches make wagers on the outcomes, wanting to get financial prizes, just as the psycho-social encounters. According to Olayinka & Fageyinbo, (2015), online betting is presently a notable kind of business in Port Harcourt and Nigeria at large. It is a developing business, betting shops are opening in the state, along these lines turning into a vital piece of social phenomena, paying little mind to the national underdevelopment (Olayinka & Fageyinbo, 2015).

Palmer (2013) characterized online betting as placing a financial bet on the result of a sports match, just as on occasions that happen inside the bigger match or fixture. Omobowale (2009), affirmed that online betting are normally aimed for entertainment and recreation, nevertheless, their importance changes among various societies. Obiyemi et al. (2012), online betting fill both social and therapeutic needs crosswise over social settings, including male and female relations with regards to the home. This demonstrates that online betting, like football, have diverse appeals and are multi-logical in purposes and manifestations (Tade, 2014). In Port Harcourt and world today, it is practically impossible for people to develop without online betting (sports) and human relations may turn out to be all the more difficult without sports.

Betting Odds and Youth Patronage

Betting odds are frequently found to outperform mathematical models in sports related forecasting tasks (Vlastakis et al., 2007). According to Goddard & Asimakopoulous (2004), the factors contributing to betting odds are not fully traceable and in contrast to rating based forecasts no straightforward measure of team specific quality is deducible from the betting odds. Betting odds are widely used to derive forecasts as they are simply transferrable to probabilities and have proven their quality in a large number of different studies (Paton & Vaughan, 2005). If no bookmaker margin was contained in the betting odds, the inverse betting odds for any possible outcome of a match could be interpreted as its probability of occurring. To eliminate the bookmaker margin from the odds, i.e. ensure that the derived probabilities sum up to 100%, we applied the most widely used approach of basic normalization.

Extensive analyses in economics and business literature suggest that betting odds provide an efficient forecasting instrument (Vlastakis et al., 2007). Andersson et al. (2005) compare the performance of experts' odds and youth in predicting the outcomes of the soccer World Cup 2002; the difference in their performance is not statistically significant. Forrest et al. (2005) also study the forecasting performance of odds in several British bookmaking companies for the outcomes of English soccer games over a five-year period and find that the forecasting performance increases over time. Boulier et al. (2006), analyse the odds forecasting performance of betting market spreads for outcomes during 1994–2000 in the American National Football League (NFL) but show that no information beyond the point spread explains outcomes significantly better. Based on this criticism we hypothesize that:

H₀₁: Betting odds has no significant relationship with referral.

H₀₂: Betting odds has no significant relationship with repeat visit.

Betting Bonus and Youth Patronage

Crucial to the success of an organization is competence of the management productivity, on the other hand, had been hinged on the customer/consumer capability and motivation received amongst other factors, to perform the various tasks assigned to the customer. Lai (2009) stated that motivation may not necessarily drive chronic non-performer to optimal productivity, however, a motivated workforce is a lubricant to the engine of the organization and its benefits include, dedication, employee retention, loyalty and harmony. These factors according to the author are crucial to the growth of the organization. Principal among the tools that can be used to motivate customer is bonus. Banjoko (2006) stated that bonus are the awards given out when predetermined objectives have been attained within an organization. It can also be regarded as variable payments made to customer/employees on the

basis of the amount of output or results achieved. Azasu (2003) however averred that bonus by definition may not be guaranteed but mostly contingent on performance.

The use of performance bonus according to the author dates back to early 20th century and conventional wisdom on the subject showed that there is a positive association between compensation and company performance. Jeffrey & Shaffer (2007) reported that in 2004, 1 billion USD was spent on bonus and that number was expected to grow at 7% per annum. In Nigeria, of the 131 organizations where bonuses were introduced, all the companies had a boost in production and productivity except those severely hit by economic recession (Jeffrey & Shaffer, 2007). The study revealed an average increase of 60% and 41% in the levels of output and productivity respectively thereby underscoring the importance and effectiveness of bonuses in motivating customer/employees. Bonuses as motivational factors have been used in the private and public sectors and in the various line of business. Based on these unending arguments, we hypothesize that:

H₀₃: There exists no statistically significant relationship between betting bonus and referral.

H₀₄: There exists no statistically significant relationship between betting bonus and repeat visit.

Methodology

Research Design: This paper adopted cross-sectional survey method. This is in line with deductive approach which allows the researcher to create the research hypotheses and design an appropriate technique to verify such approaches (Gill & Johnson, 2010).

Population of the Study: The population of this study compare the registered and regulated sport betting companies in Rivers State. According to Lottery Regulatory Commission (2022), there are seventeen (17) sport betting companies in Rivers State, which is the target. Therefore, Information gathered from the Lottery Regulatory Commission (2022) revealed that there are Three Hundred and Ninety-Eight thousand, Two hundred and Fifty-Five (398,255) estimated youths that visit sport betting companies in Rivers State. Thus, the Taro Yemane's technique was adopted to determine the sample size of the study and with a significant level of 95% (0.05) and we have 399. That is to say, Three hundred and Ninety-Nine (399) youth in Rivers State patronize sport betting companies.

Methods of Data Analysis: We offer the data from the field study to reflect the copies of the questionnaire that was distributed, and then we used inferential statistics, specifically structural equation modelling (SEM). Descriptive statistics calculated the mean and standard deviation to capture the features of the variables under examination, sample characteristics, and other associated topics.

Validity and Reliability of instruments: The instrument was subjected to face validity, construct validity and content validity; we engaged the scrutiny of supervisor(s), some colleagues, and other informed persons to ensure the items adequately result from theories and represent the property intended to measure. In this study, two internal consistency reliability methods were used; namely Cronbach's (1951) Alpha and composite methods. These methods are also consistent with Likert measurement scale, with each having a threshold value of 0.7. Thus, a reliability coefficient of 0.7 above is an indication that the instrument is reliable. Based on the pilot study results, the scale reliability coefficients are reported in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Reliability of the Variable Scales

S/N	Scale	Alpha Coefficient	CR
1	Betting odd (BO)	0.765	0.815
2	Betting bonus (BB)	0.842	0.850
3	Referral (STA)	0.831	0.948
4	Repeat visit (RV)	0.801	0.839

Source: SPSS output.

Table 2: Pilot Study CFA Results for Online betting techniques Dimensions

Item	Sample	Latent Factor	Loading	Square Loading	Error Variance	AVE	RAVE	CR	Alpha
BO1	40	Betting odd	0.70	0.490	0.5986	0.785	0.849	0.839	0.765
BO2	40	Betting odd	0.89	0.792	0.3650				
BO3	40	Betting odd	0.75	0.563	0.5311				
BO4	40	Betting odd	0.85	0.723	0.3811				
BO5	40	Betting odd	0.74	0.548	0.5450				
BO6	40	Betting odd	0.78	0.608	0.5617				
BO7	40	Betting odd	0.81	0.656	0.4812				
BB1	40	Betting bonus	0.73	0.533	0.5587	0.798	0.829	0.879	0.842
BB2	40	Betting bonus	0.86	0.740	0.2290				
BB3	40	Betting bonus	0.78	0.608	0.4882				
BB4	40	Betting bonus	0.81	0.656	0.4435				

BB5	40	Betting bonus	0.82	0.672	0.4282				
BB6	40	Betting bonus	0.79	0.624	0.3815				
BB7	40	Betting bonus	0.85	0.7225	0.3751				

Source: Computed from Pilot Study CFA results (AVE = Average Variance Extracted; RAVE = Square Root of Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability)

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

Construct	BO	BB
BO	0.839	0.283
BB	0.283	0.879

Source: Computed from Pilot Study CFA results

From Table 3, it can be seen that the average variance extracted is above the 0.5 threshold in all cases, being 0.785 for betting odd and 0.798 for betting bonus. Likewise, the composite reliability coefficient is 0.839, and 0.879, for betting odd, and betting bonus respectively. These coefficients are also well above the 0.7 convergent reliability threshold; hence, all the scales satisfy the convergent reliability conditions. From Table 3, it can be seen that the square root of average variance extracted (values in bold) for each construct is considerably higher than all off-diagonal elements of the correlation matrix, which represent the correlation between the constructs. Therefore, discriminant validity has been achieved.

Table 4: Pilot Study CFA Results for Youth patronage Dimensions

Item	Latent Factor	Loading	Square Loading	Error Variance	AVE	RAVE	CR	Alpha
R1	Referral	0.87	0.757	0.3155	0.800	0.798	0.960	0.831
R2	Referral	0.81	0.656	0.4127				
R3	Referral	0.84	0.706	0.3650				
R4	Referral	0.77	0.593	0.4735				
R5	Referral	0.71	0.504	0.5587				
R6	Referral	0.80	0.640	0.4521				
RV1	Repeat visit	0.80	0.640	0.4282	0.788	0.783	0.851	0.801
RV2	Repeat visit	0.85	0.723	0.2467				
RV3	Repeat visit	0.75	0.563	0.5027				
RV4	Repeat visit	0.68	0.462	0.6242				
RV5	Repeat visit	0.92	0.846	0.5450				
RV6	Repeat visit	0.73	0.533	0.864				

Source: Computed from Pilot Study CFA results (AVE = Average Variance Extracted; RAVE = Square Root of Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability)

From Table 4, like the case of youth patronage dimensions, the average variance extracted is above the 0.5 threshold in all cases, indicating that convergent validity is achieved. The average extracted variance is 0.800 and 0.788, for referral and repeat visit respectively. The respective composite reliability coefficients of 0.960 and 0.851, are also higher than 0.70 threshold value, hence, the conditions for convergent reliability are well satisfied.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity

Construct	R	RV
R	0.798	0.190
RV	0.190	0.783

Source: Computed from Pilot Study CFA results

From Table 5, it is clear that discriminant validity is achieved, with the square root of average variance extracted (values in bold) being considerably higher than the all off-diagonal elements which represent the correlation between the constructs.

Results and Discussion

It was analyzed that, the distribution on gender of respondents with the highest distribution on the participants reported as males – 128 (55%); followed by respondents reported as females – 103 (45.0%). The distribution on age of the respondents with the highest distribution on respondents within age bracket of 36 - 45years, 98 (42.2%); followed by those reported as being between 26 - 35 years, 56 (24.2%) and lastly those within 46 - 55 years, 43

(18.6%). The distribution on marital statuses of the respondents with the higher distribution on respondents reported as single – 93 (40.3%); followed by those reported as married – 138 (59.7%). The distribution on educational qualification of respondents with the highest distribution on individual respondents who are reported as having obtained PGD/Masters - 142 (61%); followed by those reported to have HND/B.Sc – 82 (36%); followed by those reported to have PhD – 7 (3%).

4.1 Test of Hypothesis

Table 6: Result of Standardized and Unstandardized Regression Estimate of the Model

Mediation Stage	Relationship	Standardised Estimate (Beta value); > 0.5; or ≥ 0.7	Actual Beta	S.E.	Critical Ratio (CR) the t-value ≥ 1.96	P. Value	Remark
X → Y (H ₀₁)	Betting odd and referral	0.67	0.86	0.11	2.31	0.001	Not Supported
X → Y (H ₀₂)	Betting odd and repeat visit	0.78	0.83	0.32	3.20	0.000	Not Supported
X → Y (H ₀₃)	Betting bonus and referral	0.72	0.76	0.12	3.12	0.000	Not Supported
X → Y (H ₀₄)	Betting bonus and repeat visit	0.81	0.87	0.45	2.23	0.000	Not Supported

Source: Amos 24.0 Output on Research Data, 2023

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between Betting Odds and Youth Patronage

The first hypothesis (H₀₁), states that there is no significant relationship between betting odd and referral. However, table 6 indicates that betting odd has a positive and significant relationship with referral of sport betting companies in Rivers State ($\beta=0.67$, $r=2.31$, $p<0.005$). Thus, H₀₁ was not supported. The evidence presents betting odd as a strong predictor of referral to sport betting companies in Rivers State. Statistically, it shows that when betting odd goes up by 1 standard deviation, referral goes up by 0.67 standard deviation. That is, when betting odd goes up by 1, referral goes up by 2.31 units. The regression weight for betting odd in the prediction of referral is significantly different from zero at the 0.005 level (two-tailed).

The second hypothesis (H₀₂), states that there is no significant relationship between betting odd and repeat visit. However, table 6 also suggests that betting odd has a positive and significant relationship with repeat visit of sport betting companies in Rivers State ($\beta=0.78$, $r=3.20$, $p<0.005$). Thus, H₀₂ was not supported. This means that the type of betting odd of sport betting companies, could lead to repeat visit. Statistically, it shows that when betting odd goes up by 1 standard deviation, repeat visit goes up by 0.78 standard deviation. That is, when betting odd goes up by 1, repeat visit goes up by 3.20 units. The regression weight for betting odd in the prediction of repeat visit is significantly different from zero at the 0.005 level (two-tailed).

The findings of this study Angelo & Yeboah (2021) whose results showed that students patronised IxBet, EaziBet, EuroBet, SoccerCash (NLA) and Safari. It also 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 and the study was concluded that sports betting appeared more attractive to students since they offered free bonuses for placing bets. Ofose & Kotey (2020) findings demonstrated that sports betting participants viewed betting as a means to an end, a chance to improve their financial circumstances, rather than as a substitute for investing, and exhibited understanding of a clear distinction, with regards to behaviour, towards investing and sports betting. Their findings also provided evidence that individual sports betting behaviour can be moderated by influencing one's financial circumstances.

Relationship between Betting Bonus and Youth Patronage

The third hypothesis (H₀₃), states that there is no significant relationship between betting bonus and referral. However, table 6 indicates that betting bonus has a positive and significant relationship with referral of sport betting companies in Rivers State ($\beta=0.72$, $r=3.12$, $p<0.005$). Thus, H₀₃ was not supported. The evidence presents betting bonus as a strong predictor of referral to sport betting companies in Rivers State. Statistically, it shows that when betting bonus goes up by 1 standard deviation, referral goes down by 0.72 standard deviation. That is, when betting bonus goes up by 1, referral goes up by 3.12 units. The regression weight for betting bonus in the prediction of referral is significantly different from zero at the 0.005 level (two-tailed). The results indicate that betting bonus drives referral.

The fourth hypothesis (H₀₄), states that there is no significant relationship between betting bonus and repeat visit. However, table 6 also suggests that betting bonus has a significant relationship with repeat visit ($\beta=0.81$, $r=2.23$, $p<0.005$). Thus, H₀₄ was not supported. This means that the betting bonus of sport betting companies in Rivers State, will lead to repeat visit. Statistically, it shows that when betting bonus goes up by 1 standard deviation, repeat visit goes down by 0.81 standard deviation. That is, when betting bonus goes up by 1, repeat visit goes up by 2.23. The regression weight for betting bonus in the prediction of repeat visit is significantly different from zero at the 0.005 level (two-tailed).

This present findings aligned with the works of the following authors: Olusola, et al. (2021) results showed that respondents believed that to make quick money, one needed to gamble once a week or more (67%), wager on sports betting (37.1%), and bet online (65.5%). The mean ATGS-8 composite score (28.2 ± 4.75) indicated overall positive attitudes among respondents. Independent sample t tests showed a significant difference between older (24–34 years) and younger (18–23 years) youths in their attitudes towards gambling ($t = -2.30, p < .05$) but no significant gender differences ($t = 0.06, p > .05$). Eboh (2015) found out that among the students engaged in gambling; 87.2% out of a 100 students are males and 14.3% of the remaining is female.

Conclusion

This paper explores youth involvement on online sport betting. The research aim and objectives and research questions of this thesis was examine the relationship that exist between online betting techniques and youth patronage in sport betting companies in Rivers State. The findings revealed that there exists a supported significant relationship between online betting techniques dimensions and youth patronage measures in sport betting companies in Rivers State. Below is the summary of conclusions:

1. Betting odds significantly correlates with youth patronage and as such enhances indicators such as referrals and repeat visit.
2. Betting bonus has a significant relationship with youth patronage and as such contributes towards the indices such as referrals and repeat visit.

In conclusion, online betting techniques positively and significantly related with youth patronage in sport betting companies in Rivers State.

Recommendations

The result of this study is suitable for any kind of organization having great challenges on betting referrals, repeat visit to online sport betting sites and betting commitment. Based on the conclusion, recommendations are made as follows;

1. It is recommended that youths should apply the techniques of online sport betting to enable them make profit instead of loses.
2. It is recommended that the youths should take the advantage of the lower the betting odds the higher the chances of making profits.
3. Sports betting companies should increase their betting bonus so that it will attract and motivate more youth to patronize the companies.

REFERENCES

1. Adiele, K. C., & Opara, B. C. (2015). Analysis of corporate identity on customer patronage of banks in Nigeria. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 3(4), 1809.
2. Andersson, P., Edman, J., & Ekman, M. (2005). Predicting the world cup 2002 in soccer: Performance and confidence of experts and non-experts. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 21, 565-576.
3. Akinlosotu, N. T., Mandojemu, K., & Aina, B. J. (2019). Sports betting and Nigerian youths: A study of sports betting in Edo State. *International Journal of Business Marketing and Management*, 4(9), 23-35.
4. Akingbolu, E. & Akinlosotu N. T. (2019). Sport betting and Nigerian youths: A study of sports betting in Edo State. *International Journal of Business Marketing and Management (IJBMM)*, 4(9).
5. Azasu, S. (2003). Incentive plans within real estate firms – A partial review of existing literature. Working Paper No 51, Real Estate Economics
6. Banjoko, S. (2006). Managing corporate reward systems, Pumarck Nigeria Limited.
7. Bankole, E. T. (2019). Pattern and prevalence of gambling behaviour among youths in South-West Nigeria: A Case Study of Youths in Oyo and Ekiti State. *British Journal of Psychology Research*. European Centre for research Training and Development UK. (Accessed: 17/02/2020. www.eajournals.org)
8. Benson, G. N., Simon, M., Wanjira, J., & Inyega, J. (2021). Investigating the effects of online sports betting on the perceived social wellbeing of student athletes. *International Journal of Business Ecosystem & Strategy (2687-2293)*, 3(2), 62–72.
9. Boulrier, B. L., Stekler, H. O., & Amundson, S. (2006). Testing the efficiency of the national football league betting market. *Applied Economics*, 38, 279-284.
10. Chiweshe, K. M. (2019). Playing the odds: the rise of soccer betting houses as a livelihood option in Harare, Zimbabwe”, *Soccer and Society*, doi: 10.1080/14660970.2019.1671828.
11. d'Astous, A., & Gaspero, M. D. (2013). Explaining the performance of online sports bettors. *International Gambling Studies*, 371-387.
12. Forrest, D., Goddard, J., & Simmons, R. (2005). Odds-setters as forecasters: The case of English football. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 21, 551-564
13. Goddard, J., & Asimakopoulos, I. (2004). Forecasting football results and the efficiency of fixed-odds betting. *Journal of Forecasting*, 23, 51–66
14. Griffiths, M. (2010). Problem gambling in Europe: What do we know?, *Casino and Gaming International*, 6(2), 81-84.
15. Hennigh-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of mouth via consumer opinion platform: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(1), 38-52.
16. Herskowitz, S. (2016). Gambling, saving, and lumpy expenditures: Sports betting in Uganda. Job market paper. www.sylvanherskowitz.com/jmp.html.
17. Hvattum, L. M., & Arntzen, H. (2010). Using ELO ratings for match result prediction in association football. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 26(3), 460–470.
18. Jackson, D. (2019). Sports betting threatening the youth development in Ghana: Educationalist warns. *Modern Ghana*. <https://www.modernghana.com/news/952633/sports-betting-threatening-youth-development-in.html>
19. Jeffrey, S. & Shaffer, V. (2007). *The motivational properties of tangible bonuses*. Sage Publications.
20. Koross, R. (2016). University students gambling: Examining the effects of betting on Kenyan university students' behaviour. *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*, 4(8), 57-66.

21. Kovalchik, S. A. (2016). Searching for the GOAT of sport win prediction. *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports*, 12(3), 31-41.
22. Lagos State Lottery Board (2017). Quarterly report, available at: www.lslb.lg.gov.ng/uploads (accessed 12 December 2019).
23. Lai, C. (2009). Motivating employees through bonuses programs. Bachelor Thesis, Jvyasklya University of Applied Sciences.
24. Leitner, C., Zeileis, A., & Hornik, K. (2010). Forecasting sports tournaments by ratings of (probabilities). A comparison for the EURO 2008. *International Journal of Forecasting* 26(3), 471–481.
25. Lopez-Gonzalez, H. Guerrero-Solé, F., Estévez, A. & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). Betting is loving and bettors are predators: A conceptual metaphor approach to online sports betting advertising. *Journal of Gambling Studies*. Epub ahead of print doi: 10.1007/s10899-017-9727-x
26. Mao, L. (2013). Sports gambling as consumption: an econometric analysis of demand for sports lottery: University of Florida.
27. Moye, L. N. & Giddings, V. I. (2002). An examination of the retail approach – avoidance behaviour of older apparel consumers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 6 (3), 259 –276.
28. Mustapha, A. S. & Enilolobo, S. O. (2019). Effects of gambling on the welfare of Nigerian youths: A case study of Lagos state, *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 4(3), 29-44.
29. NOIpolls, (2019). Betting and gambling in Nigeria. Available at <https://noi-polls.com/betting-and-gambling-in-nigeria/>
30. Ofosu, A. & Kotey, R. (2020). Does sports betting affect investment behaviour? Evidence from Ghanaian sports betting participants.
31. Ogbuji, C. N., Onuoha, A. O. & Abdul, U. (2016). Spatial layout and customer patronage of cinema firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Business Studies and Management*, 3(6), 44-50.
32. Okon, E.O. (2015). Small and medium scale enterprises, employment and income generation in Nigeria: a focus on professional sports viewing and betting centres, *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 18, 39-56.
33. Olaore, G. O., Adejare, B. O., & Udofia, E. E. (2020). The nexus between the increasing involvement of youth in betting games and unemployment: the Nigerian perspective. *Journal of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences*. DOI 10.1108/JHASS-02-2020-0026.
34. Olayinka & Fageyinbo T. K. (2015). Football betting in Nigeria. *Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica*, 16(4), 46-63.
35. Olayinka & Fageyinbo TaiwoKolade (2015). Football betting in Nigeria. *Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica*, 16(4), 46-63.
36. Olusola, A., Rotimi, O., & Olapegba, P. O. (2021). Online betting characteristics and demographic differences as determinants of attitudes towards gambling among youths in Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of Gambling Issues*. 4(7), 43-51.
37. Omobowale O. A. (2009). Sports and European soccer fans in Nigeria. *Journal of Asian African Studies*, 44(6), 624-634.
38. Palmer, C. (2013). Sports betting research: Literature review, Available at https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/43945/Sports_Betting_Literature_Review.pdf.
39. Paton, D., & Vaughan, W. L. (2005). Forecasting outcomes in spread betting markets: Can bettors use 'Quarbs' to beat the book? *Journal of Forecasting*, 2(4), 139-154.
40. Peeters, T. (2018). Testing the Wisdom of Crowds in the field. Transfermarkt valuations and international soccer results. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 34(1), 17–29.
41. Siwei Xu, J. (2011). Online sports gambling: a look into the efficiency of bookmakers' odds as forecasts in the case of English premier league, https://www.econ.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/siwei-xu_jasmine.pdf
42. Spann, M., & Skiera, B. (2009). Sports forecasting. A comparison of the forecast accuracy of prediction markets, betting odds and tipsters. *Journal of Forecasting*, 28(1), 55–72.
43. Turner, N., Powel, J. & Peterborough, S. (2009). Probability, random events and the mathematics of gambling, Centre for Addition and Mental Health.
44. Vlastakis, N., Dotsis, G., & Markellos, R. N. (2007). How efficient is the European football betting market? Evidence from arbitrage and trading strategies. Athens University of Economics and Business Working Paper.
45. Wann, D. L., Melnick, M. J., Russell, G. W., & Pease, D. G. (2001). Sport fans: The psychology and social impact of spectators. Routledge.
46. Wunderlich, F., & Memmert, D. (2016). Analysis of the predictive qualities of betting odds and FIFA world ranking. Evidence from the 2006, 2010 and 2014 Football World Cups. *Journal of sports sciences*, 34 (24), 2176–2184.