

ONLINE BETTING TECHNIQUES AND YOUTH PATRONAGE OF SPORT BETTING COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE BY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the relationship between online betting techniques and youth patronage in sport betting companies in Rivers State. The aim was to examine the relationship between online betting techniques and youth patronage in sport betting companies in Rivers State. The study adopted cross-sectional research design. The population consisted of 17 online 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 online betting techniques significantly related with youth patronage in sport betting companies in Rivers State, thus enhancing word of mouth and betting commitment. The study concluded that, online betting techniques significantly related youth patronage. Based on the findings, the study, recommended that the youths should apply the dimensions of online betting techniques to enable them maximise the profit and reduce loses.

Keywords: Online Betting Techniques, Youth Patronage, Online Sport Betting

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the economic hardship in Nigeria is becoming unbearable as most people are finding it difficult to meet their basic needs. Unemployment and under-employment rate is on the increase, business is collapsing and depression rate is increasing daily which all result to people involving in different risky behaviour to survive (Chiedozi, 2019; Alanana, 2003). In recent times, one of the consumer risky behaviour is online betting as a means of survival and recreation (Oyebisi, & Popoola, 2012). Online 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 (Omachi, & Okpamen, 2018). The rise of betting industries may be attributed to digital sports betting exceeding most other types of betting and concentrating on the active young market (Gainsbury, Hing, Delfabbro, & King, 2014). Betting industries has taken the Nigerian business space like a storm and with the advent of the Internet, betting services can be offered through multiple distribution channels such as personal computers and mobile devices (Oyelusi, & Popoola, 2018). The geometric growth rate of betting industries are astounding in terms of its availability, forms, and monetary equivalent (Griffiths, 2010) and its various forms, including, lotteries, casinos, gaming, and pool betting, differ in popularity among different groups and classes of people. 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). Online betting techniques is a fashionable area in the sport betting. Scholars affirm that online betting techniques (OBT) is a critical construct that has profound implication to youth patronage (Angelo & Yeboah, 2021; Ofosu & Kotey, 2020; Benson et al., 2021). Many researchers have carried out studies on online betting. For instance, Derevensky, Gupta, & winters (2003) conducted a research on sport betting incentives encourage gamblers to select the long odds in Australia. Moore, & Ohtsuka, (1999), examined the efficiency of online betting markets. In view of the above, scholars critically observed that the study of online betting has not been applied in all sectors of the economy that are craving for attention (Mao, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2015; Rockloff, Browne, Russell, Hing, & Greer, 2019; Tagoe, Yendork, & Asante, 2018). 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. Consequently, the challenges of this industries is the high risk of loses among the youths, but with the aids of online betting techniques (betting cash out and betting handicap) the youths will achieve opportunity to earn extra cash and also reduce poverty in the economic. Thus, it is hoped that when applied the online betting techniques, it would help resolve this challenges. All these must put in place for the youth to reconsider patronizing such erring online sport betting companies. Some studies suggest that online sport betting has negative effects on youths while others suggest it has positive effects on youth welfare. With the significantly high payoffs from sports betting, evidence exists to suspect betting participants may view betting as an investment tool. But, so far, to the best of our knowledge, no literature has actually looked at the effect of online betting techniques on youth patronage. This study tends to find out if the conceptual framework of this study which are the dimensions of online betting techniques (betting cash out and betting handicap) and the measures of youth patronage (word of mouth and betting commitment) has the capacity to solve the problem of unemployed youth in Rivers State. This study sought to propose an empirical investigation on online betting techniques (betting odds, betting cash out, betting bonus and betting handicap) and youth patronage (word of mouth and betting commitment) of sport betting companies in Rivers State. Thus, 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 cash out and handicap as the dimension of the predictor variable) and youth patronage (word of mouth and betting commitment as the indicators).

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is underpinned by social exchange theory. This theory is used to explain online betting techniques. The theory states that any interaction between individuals is an exchange of resources (Homans, 1958). The theory further posits that each partner in a relationship must have valuable resource to offer. The theory is used in this study because relationship is a central tenet in business-to-business (B2B) and business-to customer (B2C) relationships (Lambert et al., 2001). Lambert (2004) stated that successful benefit requires cross-functional integration of key business processes within the company and across the network of companies that consist of the online techniques. Organizations must integrate their operations with trading partners in order to sustain competitive advantage for the whole supply chain (Lambert & Cooper, 2000). Online betting techniques process brings agents, suppliers, corporate buyers (youth patronage), and other major partners into transactional social exchanges of money, information, and goods. Therefore relational norms, trust, and reward-sharing are critical to sustain a relationship. A transactional and interactional relationship is strengthened when the partners benefit from its outcomes and will lessen or even be terminated when it is not rewarding (Gouldner, 1960). Power (2005) asserts that online betting techniques involves the cooperation, integration, information sharing, trust, partnerships, shared technology and a fundamental shift away from managing individual functional processes to managing integrated chains of processes. Social exchange theory is a good approach for improving business performance in a highly competitive market (Narasimhan, Jayaram, & Carter, 2001).

3. CONCEPT OF ONLINE BETTING TECHNIQUES

Online betting can be defined as placing a financial wager on the outcome of a match, as well as events that occur within the larger match or fixture (Palmer, 2013) and he argues that the speed with which online betting and technologies which support it change, the relative ease with which online betting can be accessed by bettors, and the links to youth markets in which wagering brands is perceived to have changed the experience of sport for audiences, all make research into sport betting necessary. Information available at Victoria Responsible Gambling Foundation (2019) defines online betting as a wide range of wages on the outcomes of events, or events that occur within the larger events. Similarly, Humphreys & Pérez (2012) found that sports bettors were young males with high incomes. This findings are consistent with studies by Gainsbury et al. (2013) which found that interactive sports gamblers appeared to be younger males with higher levels of education and employment and with access to the internet. Another study conducted by Victoria Responsible Gambling Foundation (2019) found out that those betting on sport tend to be young men in the 20s and early 30s. Notwithstanding the fact that the above literature is factual about the young male populations orientation toward sports betting, it is important to note that the study conducted in Australia by Palmer (2013) cautions that those who approach as a male youths „activity should approach it with caution. She affirms that while there is no literature on the female sports funds and sports betting specifically, it is reasonable to suggest that sports betting may be part of women’s experiences of consuming sport as for men.

Betting Cash Out-Betting cash out is a relatively new phenomenon which allows you to end your bets and claim some money while events in your bet slip are still on-going (bet9ja.com; Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2017). The value of the cash out amount may be greater or less than your initial stake, depending on the time you choose to cash out and how close you are to winning your bets (bet9ja.com) and the value is always less than the potential winnings on your initial bets. If you are close to winning your bet, the cash out value will be close to your potential winnings, but if your bet is losing, the amount will likely be lower than your initial stake (accessbet.com). You can then accept

the cash out offer and cut your losses. Like they say, half bread is better than none. The cash out technique is available for both pre-match and live betting, and can be used on both single and multiple bets (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2017; [nairabet.com](#)). Depending on the state of your bet, cash out allows to cut your losses or make some profit by terminating the bet while the events in the bet slip are still going on ([bet9ja.com](#)). Imagine a situation where nine events in your 10-game accumulator have come good. The cash out option gives you the option to close the bet and avoid the stress of waiting out the final event. Because you are very close to winning your bet, the cash out amount will be very close to your potential winnings. Hence, you will make some very decent profit. In a scenario where your bet is losing, cash-out allows you to cut your losses and regain some money ([bet9ja.com](#)). The value of the cash-out amount will be lower than your stake, but at least you get to recoup some of your cash (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2017).

4. BETTING HANDICAP

Handicaps look too complex to understand, but they are relatively easy to comprehend. They are also some of the best wagers in online betting industry. They also promise great value, which increases your returns on investment better than most bets ([bet9ja.com](#)). Handicaps are an alternative betting method for people that want to bet on traditional favourites and still get decent returns from the stakes (Angelini, & De Angelis, 2017). The wagers work by awarding or deducting one team several goals before the start of a match ([accessbet.com](#)) and for a bet to be considered a win, your preferred team must win by a specific margin of goals. Betting experts advise newcomers to gain betting experience on regular wagers before branching into handicaps (Wheatcroft, 2020). It makes sense if you consider the amount of research you need to do be confident one team could beat the other by multiple goals. Handicap means a football bet in which the backer (player) has to select the winning team in a match after the official Score has been adjusted with the pre-determined Handicap-goals ([Betfair.com](#)). Handicap-goal means an advantage or disadvantage of goals imposed on a team by the operator for betting purposes ([Nairabet.com](#)) and it stated that the number of Handicap-goals to be offered is in multiples of whole or half goals as the operator may decide from time to time. Handicap Home/Away/Draw means a football bet in which the backer (player) has to select a home team to win, an away team to win, or a draw in a match in accordance with the handicap score for that football bet ([Betfair.com](#)). Handicap score means the official score of a match adjusted by the applicable handicap-goals (Arabzad, et al., 2014). Handicaps are an alternative way to bet on teams with extremely high chances of winning and still get good returns (Giovanni, & De Angelis, 2019).

Youth Patronage-Youth patronage is the support, encouragement, privilege or financial act that an organization or individual bestows to another. Mohsan et al. (2011), patronage is defined and determined in behavioural terms. Behaviour can be seen as way in which individual controls him/herself. It could also mean the act of being a regular customer to a shop. Youth patronage is influenced by a combination of attitude, normative beliefs and motivations that will influence purchasing behaviour (Moses et al., 2015). Kotler (2004) submitted that store beautification will affect store image and patronage intention. Baker et al. (2012) stated that the willingness of youth to shop longer in a store, deliver good word-of-mouth for the store, buy more in the future and repurchase made up patronage intention in retailing industry. Loke et al. (2011) online betting operators have to fully understand the patronage intention of their target customers in order to forecast behaviour of their youth's in the future. Kattara et al. (2015) examined the youth responses to the environment. They further explained that youth with and without time pressure respond to the different service environment. For example, if youth's are very busy and have limited time to make purchases, they will often time move through the service environment ignoring its beautifications and other decorative dimensions and become angry when the environment hinders them unlimited time to spend in service environment shopping and sightseeing enjoy the atmosphere.

Betting Commitment-Commitment is a pledge of continuity or potential for sacrifice if a relationship earns (Gustafsson et al., 2005). This generates and establishes a bond that retains customers or youth to patronize the betting company even when actual satisfaction is low. Commitment is stronger than satisfaction because it has future implication unlike satisfaction that is backwards focused. Commitment occur when an exchange partner believes that an ongoing relationship with another is enough to warrant maximum effort at maintaining it (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) as cited in Verhoef et al. (2002). Commitment is the degree loyalty that a consumer or consumers have for a firm's brand and is likely to repurchase its offerings in the future ([www.blackcoffee.com](#)). Betting commitment is an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship with a brand (Rasheed et al. (2015). Evanschitzky et al. (2006) views commitment as economic, emotional and psychological attachments that the consumer may have for a brand. Verhoef et al. (2002) affirm that affective commitment and calculated commitment are the components of commitment. Affective commitment is psychological attachment an exchange partner has to another which depend on feelings of

identification, loyalty and affiliation, while calculated commitment is the degree of perceived need to maintain a relationship by the parties involved given the expected switching costs associated with quitting.

Word of Mouth-Word of mouth is the passing of information from person to person by oral communication, which could be as simple as telling someone the time of day (Park & Han, 2007). Storytelling is a common form of word-of-mouth communication where one person tells others a story about a real event or something made up. Word-of-mouth in marketing communication (WOM) entails the process of passing information from a non-commercial communicator (i.e. a person who is not rewarded) to a receiver about a product, brand, or services (Dichter, 1966). An online betting customer (the youth) that perceives certain positive cue about the company has the tendency of telling someone else his experience which will encourage them to try out the online betting company too. If word of mouth is carried out through electronic medium, it results to electronic word of mouth (eWoM) which relates to any statement shared by consumers through the internet (e.g., social networks, web sites, news feeds, instant messages) concerning a service, product brand, or business (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013). If the sender of word-of-mouth communication is rewarded then this process is referred to as word-of-mouth marketing, which relies on the added credibility of person-to-person communication, a personal recommendation (Kumar & Shah, 2004).

5. ONLINE BETTING TECHNIQUES AND YOUTH PATRONAGE

Olayinka & Fageyinbo (2015) affirmed that even though it might be hard to precisely appraise the all-out estimation of worldwide online betting, because of the inconsistency in the administrative and financing conditions, dependable overviews gauge the estimation of the sports betting industry at around 700 billion U.S. dollars and 1.000 billion U.S. dollars, while in certainty the unlawful betting just maybe as high as 500 billion U.S. dollars. Sport betting has turned out to be a recreational commitment, as well as a social and financial activity with a solid intrigue crosswise over classes, sexes, races, sexuality and other social categorization, particularly in Port Harcourt and beyond (Obiyemi, et al., 2012) with constantly tremendous potential for development. For the most part, against all the sport betting platforms online and offline, the chances offered by bookmakers depend on probability assessments or forecasts of matches which draw in a wide help of the fan base (Siwei, 2011). Notwithstanding the level of the loyalty of youths, the denominator is the strong followership of sport which has prompted capitalistic business creations. It is, however, vital to take note of that online betting, as a type of financial trades, while filling positive capitalistic enterprise purposes, (for example, the creation of employment and riches) for the high society could have negative results on bettors and societies.

6. BETTING CASH OUT AND YOUTH PATRONAGE

The betting cash out has been introduced alongside the ability to bet in online betting. The betting cash out is now offered to sports bettors by many online betting operators. It enables sports bettors to settle an open bet for a value offered at the time of cashing out (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2017). This figure is based on the current status of the bet and the statistical likelihood of the bet winning. This figure can also be higher or lower than the initial stake amount. In recent years, increased attention has been given to researching in online betting. A Betting Commission (2016) prevalence survey reported that individuals who bet online were more likely to be categorized as problem betting. A recent scoping study identified 16 academic papers that had referenced online sports betting (Killick & Griffiths, 2019) and concluded that online sports betting has the potential to be more harmful than more traditional ways of gambling. The review also noted that different research methods had been used to explore this area. One method is the use of behavioural tracking data provided to researchers by online betting operators. Such research has found that heavily involved gamblers are more likely to bet on online events (LaBrie, Laplante, Nelson, Schumann, & Shafer, 2007) and that they increased the frequency of the number of the number of online bets being placed after a three-month period (LaPlante, Schumann, LaBrie, & Shafer, 2008). Lopez-Gonzalez et al. (2019) carried out a study of 659 Spanish sports bettors and examined the association between structural characteristics of online sports betting and gambling severity. The results demonstrated that sports bettors with high problem gambling scores were more likely to use online betting and the cash out technique. Consequently, the present study explored the opinions towards online betting behaviours of youth patronage. Specifically, it explored sports bettors perceived motivation and opinions towards online betting techniques. The specific objectives is to explore the online betting techniques and youth patronage. Based on this criticism we hypothesize that:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between betting cash out and word of mouth.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between betting cash out and betting commitment.

7. BETTING HANDICAP AND YOUTH PATRONAGE

The betting handicap is a form of betting in which adversaries are handicapped according to their difference in strength (bet9ja.com). The term handicap means that one team is assigned a hypothetical score advantage before the

match is played (betfair.com; Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2017). In what follows, the decimal odds system is to illustrate payoff in the event of winning a bet. The decimal odds number represents the total return ratio of the stake; implying that the stake is already included in the decimal number. For example, a payoff of '5' returns five times the stake; i.e., a bet of ₦2 would return $2 \times 5 = ₦10$ (₦5 profit). Odds also reflect probability that incorporates the bookmakers' profit margin, retrieved by 2 odds. In standard betting handicap, the underdog is given a hypothetical goal advantage that aims to make the contest equal. In football, betting handicap also reduces the possible match outcomes from five (i.e., 2X5) to five; a binary outcome of either team winning (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2017). Since standard betting handicap aims to make the contest equal, the uniformity of the betting handicap distribution is maximised. That is, the handicap applied is the one that optimises the odds, for both teams to win, towards 50% chance of winning. Despite its popularity, betting handicap has had limited impact in the literature. While hundreds of papers cover football modelling and betting in great detail, only four published papers appear to involve some analysis related to betting handicap in sport betting. Specifically, Vlastakis et al. (2008) used handicap odds as one of their model variables to predict match scores and showed that they are a strong predictor of match outcomes. Grant et al. (2018) used handicap odds, in conjunction with 1X2 odds, to analyse arbitrage opportunities and showed that these exist across a large number of fixed-odds and exchange market odds. Hassanniakalager & Newall (2020) investigated the product risk associated with different football odds and showed that the handicap odds would generally generate lower losses compared to other popular types of bet such as the 1X2, Under/Over, and correct score. Remarkably, no previous published work involves a model specifically designed for, and assessed with, handicap bets. Based on the above we formulate the following hypotheses. Thus:

H₀₃: There is no statistically significant relationship between the offer of betting reliability in times of betting handicap and word of mouth.

H₀₁₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between the offer of betting advantage in times of betting handicap and betting commitment.

8. METHODS

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). Thus, population consist 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 population of the study. 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. From the 398,255, the study adopted Taro Yemane's technique to determine the sample size which is 399. That is to say, 399 youth in Rivers State patronize sport betting companies. We operationazes and measure betting cast out using profitability, choice, compensation, reward, motivation and attraction. While betting handicap is measure with reliability, advantage and competence. Thus structural equation modelling (SEM) was use to analyse the questionnaire 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	Composite Reliability
1	Betting cash out (BCO)	0.816	0.829
4	Betting handicap (BH)	0.834	0.844
5	Word of mouth (WOM)	0.831	0.948
7	Betting commitment (BC)	0.771	0.861

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
BCO1	40	Betting cash out	0.79	0.624	0.4735	0.790	0.862	0.853	0.816
BCO2	40	Betting cash out	0.88	0.774	0.3322				
BCO3	40	Betting cash out	0.80	0.640	0.4586				
BCO4	40	Betting cash out	0.68	0.462	0.6242				
BCO5	40	Betting cash out	0.77	0.593	0.5027				
BCO6	40	Betting cash out	0.82	0.672	0.6077				
BCO7	40	Betting cash out	0.83	0.689	0.5371				
BH1	40	Betting handicap	0.74	0.548	0.5436	0.795	0.864	0.894	0.767
BH2	40	Betting handicap	0.81	0.656	0.3087				
BH3	40	Betting handicap	0.78	0.608	0.4926				
BH4	40	Betting handicap	0.82	0.672	0.4829				
BH5	40	Betting handicap	0.79	0.624	0.4920				
BH6	40	Betting handicap	0.83	0.689	0.5193				

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	BCO	BH
BCO	0.853	0.213
BH	0.213	0.894

9. SOURCE: COMPUTED FROM PILOT STUDY CFA RESULTS

From Table 2, it can be seen that the average variance extracted is above the 0.5 threshold in all cases, being 0.790 for betting cash out, and 0.795 for Betting handicap. Likewise, the composite reliability coefficient is 0.853, and 0.894 for, betting cash out, and betting handicap 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
WOM1	Word of mouth	0.87	0.757	0.3155				

WOM2	Word of mouth	0.81	0.656	0.4127	0.800	0.798	0.960	0.831
WOM3	Word of mouth	0.84	0.706	0.3650				
WOM4	Word of mouth	0.77	0.593	0.4735				
WOM5	Word of mouth	0.71	0.504	0.5587				
WOM6	Word of mouth	0.80	0.640	0.4521				
BC1	Betting commitment	0.83	0.689	0.2290	0.795	0.911	0.873	0.771
BC2	Betting commitment	0.81	0.656	0.1930				
BC3	Betting commitment	0.76	0.578	0.4882				
BC4	Betting commitment	0.80	0.640	0.5722				
BC5	Betting commitment	0.85	0.723	0.3487				
BC6	Betting commitment	0.72	0.518	0.4613				

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 online betting techniques 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 0.795 for word of mouth, and betting commitment respectively. The respective composite reliability coefficients of 0.960, and 0.873 are also higher than 0.70 threshold value, hence, the conditions for convergent reliability are well satisfied.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity

Construct	R	BC
WOM	0.798	0.340
BC	0.340	0.911

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.

10. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

Data on the demography was examined on six characteristics: Gender, Age Group, Marital Status, Educational Qualification and Length of Service in the Organisation.

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	128	55.4	55.4	55.4
	Female	103	44.6	44.6	100.0
Total		231	100.0	100.0	

Source – Field Survey, 2023

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%).

Test of Hypothesis

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

Ho	Relationship	Standardised Estimate (Beta value) > 0.5; or ≥ 0.7	Actual Beta	S.E.	Critical Ratio the t-value ≥ 1.96	P. Value	Remark
(H ₀₁)	Betting cash out and word of mouth	0.61	0.89	0.18	3.22	0.001	Not Supported
(H ₀₂)	Betting cash out and betting commitment	0.77	0.82	0.27	3.03	0.000	Not Supported
(H ₀₃)	Betting handicap and word of mouth	0.72	0.92	0.12	1.99	0.001	Not Supported
(H ₀₄)	Betting handicap and betting commitment	0.59	0.84	0.14	4.23	0.002	Not Supported

Source: Amos 24.0 Output on Research Data, 2023

11. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Relationship between Betting Cash-Out and Youth Patronage-The 1st hypothesis (H₀₁), states that there is no significant relationship between betting cash out and word of mouth. However, table 6 indicates that betting cash out has a positive and significant relationship with word of mouth to sport betting companies in Rivers State ($\beta=0.61$, $r=3.22$, $p<0.005$). Thus, H₀₁ was not supported. The evidence presents betting cash out as a strong predictor of referral to sport betting companies in Rivers State. Statistically, it shows that when betting cash out goes up by 1 standard deviation, referral goes up by 0.61 standard deviation. That is, when betting cash out goes up by 1, referral goes up by 3.22 units. The regression weight for betting cash out 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 cash out and betting commitment. However, table 6 suggests that betting cash out has a significant relationship with betting commitment ($\beta=0.77$, $r=3.03$, $p<0.005$). Thus, H₀₂ was not supported. This means that the presence of betting cash out of sport betting companies in Rivers State, will lead to betting commitment. Statistically, it shows that when betting cash out goes up by 1 standard deviation, betting commitment goes up by 0.77 standard deviation. In other words, when betting cash out goes up by 1, betting commitment goes up by 3.03. The regression weight for betting cash out in the prediction of betting commitment is significantly different from zero at the 0.005 level (two-tailed). Our findings are consistent with the works of Olayinka & Taiwo (2017), who found out that individuals who engage in sports betting were employed male below the age 40 years and above 21 years. The study found out that employed people had the highest probability of betting as compared to entrepreneurs and unemployed people. Koross, (2016) found that increased gambling among students has led to loss of valuable time, where students missed classes due to gambling. Their study found that students had sold some of their valuable possessions to finance their gambling behaviour. Wanjohi (2012) found out that the youth are directly involved in gambling visiting casinos two to three times per week. Unemployment had no impact on their gambling behaviour but showed that youths were involved in betting so as to earn some income.

Relationship between Betting Handicap and Youth Patronage-The third hypothesis (H₀₃), states that there is no significant relationship between betting handicap and word of mouth. However, table 6 indicates that betting handicap has a positive and significant relationship with referral of sport betting companies in Rivers State ($\beta=0.72$, $r=1.99$, $p<0.005$). Thus, H₀₃ was not supported. The evidence presents betting handicap as a strong predictor of referral to sport betting companies in Rivers State. Statistically, it shows that when betting handicap goes up by 1 standard deviation, referral goes down by 0.72 standard deviation. That it, when betting handicap goes up by 1, referral goes up by 1.99 units. The regression weight for betting handicap in the prediction of referral is significantly different from

zero at the 0.005 level (two-tailed). The results indicate that betting handicap drives referral. The fourth hypothesis (H_{04}), states that there is no significant relationship between betting handicap and betting commitment. However, table 6 also suggests that betting handicap a significant relationship with betting commitment to sport betting companies in Rivers State ($\beta = -0.59$, $r = 4.23$, $p < 0.005$). Thus, H_{04} was not supported. This means that the betting handicap of sport betting companies in Rivers State, will lead to betting commitment. Statistically, it shows that when betting handicap goes up by 1 standard deviation, betting commitment goes down by 0.59 standard deviation. In other words, when betting handicap goes up by 1, betting commitment goes up by 4.23. The regression weight for betting handicap in the prediction of betting commitment is significantly different from zero at the 0.005 level (two-tailed). Our findings agreed with the studies of Deans, Thomas, Derevensky & Daube (2017) that most of the environments in which participants reported seeing or hearing betting advertisements were not in environments specifically designed for betting. Daniel et al. (2014) examined the Attitudes toward gambling among adolescents. Their results showed that significant associations were found for gender (males more favourable); Sensation Seeking (positive association); Agreeableness (negative association); and family/peer gambling history (positive association for lifetime gambling, negative association for problematic gambling). Although a variety of individual-level and social factors are associated with more favourable attitudes toward gambling, it appears that family and peer approval of gambling are most important. Chinwe & Kenneth (2021) study agreed that the respondents who were found to be avid online bettors in a social learning sense, have learned betting behaviour through imitation of influential models such as family members and friends within their peer group. Gemma et al (2016) finding of their study showed that at least one adult in every four adults had participated in betting involvement in the last twelve months. Moreover, this study showed that gender, age, employment, and income of respondents are major factors of betting involvement. However, the study indicated that the higher amount of personal income was spent by poorest in society compared to the society with higher income, which spends a low amount of their income.

12. 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. To our knowledge, the progression of adolescent online betting is seldom reported on by youths who currently experience problem gambling and precarious in handling issues resulting from betting. The questions and objectives of the study to an extent have been resolved. 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:

- Betting cash-out has significant and positive influence on youth patronage and as such enhances its indicators such as positive word of mouth, and betting commitment.
- Betting handicap has a significant relationship with youth patronage and as such contributes towards the indices such as word of mouth and betting commitment.
- In conclusion, online betting techniques positively and significantly related with youth patronage in sport betting companies in Rivers State.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that the youths should apply the dimensions of online betting techniques to enable them maximise the profit and reduce loses.
- Betting cash out should be use to gain potential stake of the bet plays.
- Betting handicap should be massive to attract potential customers.

14. REFERENCES

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