



The Use of Social Studies Education in Curtailing the Menace of Gambling among University Students as Educational Solution to Societal Renewal

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Abstract

Values serve as standard for social interactions among members of a particular group of people. They are manifested in the attitude and behavior of the people. This study discussed gambling and how it has eroded the core values of the society. The aim is to suggest ways of curtailing the menace through Social Studies education as an educational solution to societal renewal. The concept of gambling was looked at. The causes of gambling, such as societal attitude towards gambling, pauperism, the desire to acquire material wealth, breakdown in moral values, legalization of gambling platforms among others, were discussed. The effects of gambling, such as loss of learning interest, social disorder, juvenile delinquency, poor academic performance, family dysfunction and domestic violence, liquor and substance issues, mental health circumstances, Suicide, and suicide ideation among others, were examined. The study also X-rayed the efficacy of the role of Social Studies education in curtailing gambling among university students in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that ethical issues should be emphasized during the teaching and learning of Social Studies. Universities should organize periodic seminars for students on the effects of gambling regarding their academic performance, and the Government should engage the youth by empowering them in profitable activities which bother on vocational training.

Keywords: Social Studies Education, Gambling, Educational Solution, Societal Renewal



Introduction

Gambling is enjoyable and harmless to some individuals, but to others it can be both addictive and problematic with serious negative effects. But “No man can eat his cake and have it back”. This old saying may sound absurd, but it is true. There is no prize without sacrifice. With this ideology in focus, it is therefore not debatable that in the cause of strugglingly to win a prize, conscious or unconsciously, self-sacrifice must come in. Where this happens, gambling has sets him. Having this notion in mind, the big question in context is who is not a gambler? Every person in the society is involved in gambling in one way or another. It is not when only money or property is involved that is gambling. Gambling is the act of risking valuables on an uncertain outcome with the hope of winning more valuables. According to Alimi, Aderojum and Falade (2020), gambling is understood as the established practice of staking money or other valuables on games or events for an uncertain outcome. Therefore, gambling is a controversial, contemporary and obstreperous global social issue that has entrapped many in its political, cultural and social milieu. Its effects on man's activities have been so devastating that some have vowed never to indulge in it.

Obianua et al. (2024), opined that gambling has become more popular, owing to the development in internet technologies globally. This implies that there are millions of gamblers all over the world. In African countries such as South Africa, Cameroon, Mali, Morocco and Nigeria, the rate at which people gamble is very high. No African country is totally free from gambling addiction issues. Despite the negative effects of gambling activities, it has become a significant contributor to the Nigerian economy. This industry generates substantially revenue for the government through taxes and licensing fees, while it also creates employment opportunities for thousands of Nigerians. The government continues to grapple with how to balance the economic benefits of gambling with the need to mitigate its potential negative social consequence, which are also astronomical. For instance, bankruptcy, job loss, broken homes, the use and abuse of substances, depression, and addiction and the quest to acquire more wealth are synonymous with gambling in most part of the world. Gambling is on the rise among the youths.

A university student is someone enrolled to undergo a certain academic programme in the university. The issue of gambling among university students has become a matter of great concern to school administrators, parents, counselors, Social Studies experts and the public. Contrary to the needs for students to engagement in profit making jobs, some students now engaged in risky and addictive income-making activities that endanger their personality traits, health and academic performance. One of such activity is gambling. Lungu (2020) has reported that many undergraduates have been rendered bankrupt due to gambling, that some use their school fees to gamble which they have lost, while many missed their examination or had their academic performances and final year grades severely wounded.

Gambling among university students in Nigeria is a multifaceted issue influenced by several factors, such as financial pressure due to rising tuition fees, the quest to live an expensive lifestyle and economic challenges prevalent in the country caused by bad government. Some students see gambling as a quick way to make money, alleviate financial burdens and to support themselves through school, or even to pursue a new lifestyle and procure certain luxurios. Others are societal influences and sometimes addiction and the fact that gambling is often normalized or glamorized in the Nigerian society through social media, peer influence, and cultural acceptance of betting on sports, card games and other forms of gambling (Raymond, 2022). This normalization can make it easier for students to engage in

gambling activities without fully understanding the risks involved. Furthermore, the widespread availability of gambling facilities makes it easier for students to access and participate in gambling activities. Mobile apps and online platforms offering various forms of gambling further contribute to the accessibility and prevalence of gambling among undergraduates. It is also a fact that peer pressure and social dynamics within university communities play a significant role in students' decisions to gamble. Social gathering, dormitory activities and campus events may involve gambling as a form of entertainment, further normalizing its presence among students.

Many students may not fully understand the risks associated with gambling, including the potential for addiction, financial loss, and its negative impacts on academic performance and mental health. The above issues are further complicated by lack of education and awareness campaigns addressing the consequences of gambling, leaving students vulnerable to its allure. The need to sensitize the students on the risks involved in gambling therefore cannot be overemphasized. How can this be achieved? The focus of this study is on how Social Studies could be used to curtail gambling.

The term gambling is etymologically extrapolated from a Latin word "periculum" which means danger or risk. This infers that gambling has the power to exterminate lives. This is perhaps one of the reasons Sunday, July 14th, 2024 Bulletin of St. Paul Catholic Chaplaincy Delsu describes gambling as the addiction of betting to greedy get quick money that can result to depression and early deaths of teenagers. This description depicts its monstrous nature. Obianua et al. (2024) see gambling as the act of risking money or valuables on an uncertain outcome with the hope of winning more money or goods. This analogy further delineates its monstrous nature. Kayode, Isiaka, Mohammed, Abdulganiyu and Moshood (2020), define gambling as wagering money on activities, for instance, lottery, cards, sports events, bingo, casino type games with a chance of winning or losing money.

This implies that profit making is the sole aim people engage in gambling. According to Ugochukwu, Anadi, Ounkwo and Offiah (2021), it is a type of behaviour which has been detected to have severe effects on the health, habit of study and educational achievements of gamblers and has been associated with certain critical conducts. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines gambling as to play a game in which you can win or lose money or possession: to bet money or other valuable things. Gambling involves wagering of money or something of value (referred to as "the stakes") on an event with an uncertain outcome. The primary intent of gambling is winning money or material goods. However, from the ongoing, one can say that gambling is the betting or wagering of money or something of value on an event that has an uncertain outcome with the possibility of winning money or materials.

Causes of Gambling

The Causes of Gambling is fed by societal acceptance. There are casinos, lotteries, and sport betting centers that no one complains about. The bookies give easy credit to teens and youths and force parents to pay their children' gambling debts or face the risk of appraisals. However, the following but not limited to these are causes of gambling in Nigeria.

- i. **Societal Attitude Towards Gambling:** This is one of the major causes of gambling in Nigeria. Most societies have accepted gambling, and this has increased gambling activities among youths in the society.



- ii. **Pauperism:** The Poverty level in Nigeria is very high. The astronomical incidence of poverty level in the midst of abundance has severally been linked to gambling in Nigeria.
- iii. **Get-Rich Quick Syndrome:** Get-rich-quick syndrome has led many Nigerian youths to involved in gambling and other syndicate businesses like internet fraud, kidnapping and the likes.
- iv. **Desire to Acquire More Wealth:** Those who acquire wealth, especially through gambling, are highly esteemed in Nigeria. No one cares how you made it. Consequently, many Nigerians have no regard for their integrity when it comes to material wealth.
- v. **Breakdown in Moral Values:** The breakdown in moral values, customs, and manners has led to aberrant style of personality such as gambling.
- vi. **Legalization of Gambling Practices:** Legalization of different forms of gambling in various countries has contributed to the rising and high prevalence of gambling practices among adolescents and youths in various countries. Though, many of the gambling practices engaged by adolescents and youths remain illegal.
- vii. **Availability of Gambling Centers:** Gambling centers are usually available in almost everywhere society, and this has given rise to gambling addiction among the youths in Nigeria.
- viii. **Failure by the Government to Control Illegal Gambling:** Because the government is benefiting from the tax generated from these gambling platforms, they fail to control illegal gambling in Nigeria.

Effects of Gambling

- i. Loss of learning interest
- ii. Social disorder
- iii. Juvenile delinquency
- iv. Poor academic performance
- v. Family dysfunction and domestic violence
- vi. The use and abuse of substances
- vii. Mental health issues
- viii. Suicide and suicide ideation
- ix. Major economic and criminal issues.
- x. Bankruptcy
- xi. Depression and addiction
- xii. Broken homes
- xiii. Eventual death.

The Use of Social Studies in Curtailing the Menace of Gambling among Universities Students in Nigeria

Social Studies is required to have a good grasp of the society in which we live. Since gambling is a social vice and as one of the common behavioural patterns among university students in this modern society, a Social Studies platform is required to address the menace of



gambling among these students. According to Ogheneakoke (2017), Social Studies is the study that penetrates deep into the behavioural root of a person with the aim of correcting some anomalies. Passing through Social Studies exposes an individual to the core value system that nurtures a person's conduct and behaviour in the society and when such individual is acclimatized with the values and principles of the environment or system, he stands a better chance of withstanding the ensuing storms that might subsequently arise from the environment.

However, Social Studies, in its uniqueness and nature, deal with the interaction between human-beings, their environments and the problems that could emerge from these interactions. Many scholars, including Otoja (2005), Osakwe (2010), and Iyamu (2016) conceded that Social Studies is a veritable instrument for curbing social vices in the society, and gambling is one of the common social vices in our Nigerian contemporary society. This is evident in the teaching and learning process. During this process, learners are engaged in activities that are capable of promoting the achievement of a land bright and full of opportunities for all citizens. Social Studies, like the rubber industry, aids the learner to process the human-mind from its tabula rasa (raw mind) state to a well redefined state. The mind appears to be raw because the culture of a particular group of people is not known to the child until he learns the way of the people.

Thus, the child's fountain of information emanates from the environment in which he is born. Through the transmission of Social Studies, members of the society are exposed to positive values such as honesty, hard work, co-operation, obedience, transparency, orderliness and sincerity, among others, which are necessary for character and nation building (Ogheneakoke, 2013). Accordingly, one of the major functions of Social Studies is socialization process. Social Studies prepares the child to be responsible and a prospective member of the society.

The subject is also capable of producing people who are socio-civically suitable. Consequently, high caliber of leaders who have vision to move the country forward could be produced through the teaching of the subject for sustainable democracy and development. Social Studies as an instrument also has the efficacy of imbuing into the learner knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, beliefs patterns of behaviour which are essential element of national integration to shun gambling. In other words, the spirit of national consciousness is inculcated into the youths through Social Studies education.

Therefore, Social Studies education is a veritable tool for curtailing gambling among students in Nigerian universities.

Conclusion

The study discussed gambling and how it has eroded the core value of Nigeria as well as students' academic performance in schools. The causes and effects of gambling were x-rayed. The work pointed out the efficiency of Social Studies in curtailing the menace of gambling among universities students in Nigerian Universities.

Recommendations

From the above study, the following recommendations were made:



- i. Ethical issues should be emphasized during the teaching and learning of Social Studies.
- ii. Universities should organize periodic seminars for students on the effects of gambling with regard to their academic performance.
- iii. The government should engage the youth by empowering them in profitable activities which bother on vocational training.
- iv. The Government should make policies to reduce the problem of gambling by focusing on how to control betting activities of betters in the society.



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