

HOUSEHOLD FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SPORTS BETTING AND THEIR EFFECT ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION, IN MANDERA COUNTY, KENYA; A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY.

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ABSTRACT.

Background:

This study aims to examine household factors contributing to sports betting and their effect on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions, in Mandera County, Kenya.

Methodology:

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods with a descriptive research design. A total of 94 students were included using the systematic sampling method. Questionnaires and interview surveys were used to obtain primary data. Data collected will be analyzed using SPSS and then interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results:

Most students were males (61.7%) in their first year of study. The results obtained showed that source of income (livestock keeping at 36% or crop farming at 28%), history of winning money from betting (78.7%) and being sponsored by parents (73.4%) were the major factors associated with sports betting. A large percentage of the students (84.1%) who were betting got a poor grade point average of D, Possession of smartphones (89.4%), media advertisements (44.7%), and a combination of unlimited internet access, attractive media advertisements, and ease of access to credit (73.4%) were the combination of contributing factors for students' involvement in mostly online sports betting (95.7%).

Conclusion:

The study found that there is laxity in the implementation and effectiveness of sports betting mitigation measures in tertiary institutions, with no honesty by bettors when asked about the mandatory requirement of being above 18 years of age. It was suggested that regulation of credit companies to moderate credit access and clearing operators once they fully protect users were the main measures that could reduce the harmful effects of sports betting in tertiary institutions.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that education on the effects of gambling and its addiction among students should be incorporated into tertiary institution programs. Further, amendments should be made to by-laws and regulations to limit sports betting in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Household Factors, Sports Betting, Students' Academic Performance, Mandera County, Kenya.

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BACKGROUND.

Globally, sports betting has gained popularity and acceptance across different countries. Most of the developed countries have encountered an unusual expansion in gambling acceptance, attraction, and accessibility (Okoti, 2019). Although gambling may provide some excitement for the one who bets occasionally it may have dire consequences for the compulsive gambler. Compulsive betting not only affects the individual financially and psychologically but it has been attributed to lead to other social problems such as loss of productivity and increased crime rate (Fabio, 2020). The rapid adoption of technology and ease of internet access have drawn the majority of the youths into gambling, especially in tertiary institutions. As a means of countering boredom and idleness majority of the youths engage in betting at the expense of their education which greatly affects their productivity in class and their academic performance.

Tertiary education is an important stage in a student's life in that such education introduces a learner to the different means by which they have to face the outside world. Tertiary learners have for the past few years been the risk group concerning online betting. The rate of gambling in tertiary institutions is on the rise having been escalated by the cheap access devices and ease of internet access as well. Different nations have focused on access to education for all with the provision of HELB to needy students and the subsequent provision of TVET loans to students joining tertiary polytechniques who were not previously eligible for loans. Despite this huge investment in tertiary education, little education has been provided to address sports betting. Betting has been so detrimental to the extent that some of the youths have ended up taking their life upon losing a bet. Others end up committing their fees on bets where they fail to do examinations and end up dropping out of the tertiary institution. The rising number of youths in sports betting is wanting and has caused a public outcry from society and parents. Although

some studies have focused on how sports betting influences youth's behavior fewer studies have addressed the influence of betting on academic performance. This creates a gap that this study seeks to fill. Academic performance among students in Mandera County is poor which is also characterized by low completion rates in the tertiary institutions. Sports betting has been a major contributing factor, especially for the male child who has been majorly affected by betting. This study therefore seeks to assess the influence of sports betting among students in tertiary institutions in Mandera East and therefore provide policy recommendations on how to curb the detrimental vice. This study aims to examine household factors contributing to sports betting and their effect on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions, in Mandera County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY.

Research Design.

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive design because it checks out the current status. This method is aimed at systematically and accurately describing a situation, phenomenon, or population. In addition, descriptive design is an appropriate choice when a study aims to identify trends, frequencies, and categories of a study (Cuneen & Tobar 2017).

Study Area.

The study was conducted in Mandera County, Mandera East Sub-County. Mandera County is located in North Eastern Kenya where it borders Wajir County to the south, Somalia to the East, and Ethiopia to the North. Over 90% of the land is owned communally and is extensively used for grazing. The area receives bimodal rainfall with short rains occurring during October and November while the long rains occur during April and May. The area is characterized by minimal and unpredictable rainfall at 255 millimeters yearly. The area is also characterized by high temperatures with a low

of 24 degrees Celsius and a high of 420 degrees Celsius in July and February respectively. Nearly 95% of the area is semi-arid with a vegetation cover of thorny shrubs and 'mathenge' trees (Gok, 2017). The study area was preferred due to its size and the surging number of tertiary institutions in the area.

Target Population.

The targeted population was the entire population in which the study intends to conclude the study. The target population was 8 principals, 45 teachers, and 1630 students in selected tertiary institutions in Mandera East Sub County.

Sample Size.

Considering that studies do not have the resources nor the time to analyze an entire population, sampling techniques are applied to reduce the number of cases which gives an estimation of the entire population's features (Taherdoost, 2016). Due to the diversity exhibited by the population under study, the study used different sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to get two principals from the best-performing and the less-performing tertiary institutions. Simple random sampling was used to obtain the sample size of tutors. The study then used systematic sampling to obtain the sample size of students.

The sample size of the largest population (students) was computed using Yamane's (1967) formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where;

n = the sample size

N = the size of the population

e = the error of 10% points

Using the formula yields a sample size of

$$n = \frac{1630}{1 + 1630(0.1)^2}$$

n = 94 students

Table 1: Sample Size of the respondents

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sample (%)
Principals	8	2	25
Tutors	45	9	20
Students	1630	94	6
Totals	1683	105	51

Source, Study (2020)

Data Collection Instruments.

Questionnaires.

The study used questionnaires since they provide a relatively quick and effective way of acquiring large quantities of information from a large sample of a population (Cahill et al., 2015). The questionnaires were self-administered to allow the respondents to give honest

opinions on the questions at their convenience. The questionnaires contained both closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were structured as per the study objectives. The questionnaire first evaluated the background check on the participant after which the questionnaire was subdivided into four sections. Section "A" examined the household factors contributing to sports betting and their effect on students' academic performance. Section "B" aimed to establish how sports

betting in tertiary institutions affects academic performance while section “C” aimed to identify factors that lead to sports betting in tertiary institutions. Section “D” was to determine the effectiveness of sports betting mitigation measures in tertiary institutions in Mandera County.

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Interviews.

The study also used interviews for primary data collection. The main benefit of interview questions is the fact that questions are open-ended, hence allowing the study to give opinions on the study (Salmons, 2015). Additionally, they also trigger participants to reveal more information as compared to other research tools.

Pilot Testing of the Instruments

To assess the feasibility of the research instruments, the study first conducted a pilot study. A pilot study smoothens decision-making and thereby serves as a small-scale investigation or a set of observations taken to decide whether and how to undertake a full-scale investigation (Fraser et al., 2018). The research instruments were issued to a sample of 35 respondents twice at two-week intervals. The study then modified the research tools to get rid of ambiguity and vague statements.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments.

Validity and reliability of the research instrument entailed: -

Validity of Research Instruments.

The validity of a study is the extent to which a research tool measures what it is expected to measure in the course of generating research findings. The research instruments were subjected to a pilot study. The selected participants were allowed to return the research instruments at their own convenient time. To determine the validity of the research tool, the filled instruments were presented to an expert for their professional opinion on the instrument. The expert's suggestions were used to adjust the questionnaire to enhance its validity.

Reliability of Research Instruments.

Reliability refers to the extent to which a research tool consistently produces the same results after conducting multiple trials under the same conditions (Taherdoost, 2016). The study used a test-retest technique to ascertain consistency. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7 is typically taken to be the threshold of acceptable convergence (Vogt, 2014). All the variables that did not reach a coefficient of 0.7 using Cronbach's Coefficient were adjusted.

Data Collection Procedures.

The study collected data in three stages. The first stage entailed an exploratory visit to the study area one month before carrying out the study. The main purpose of the visit was to familiarize the study with the study area as well as create an interaction with the study participants. During this visit, the study pointed out possible challenges that may be encountered when conducting the research. The visit also helped the study to introduce the research to the participants.

The second stage involved piloting of the research tools. The study conducted a pilot study in Frontier Institute of Business Studies and Mandera Technical Training Institute. The responses from the participants helped the study to reframe the questions accordingly. The progress of this stage gave a green light for conducting the study.

The last stage was gathering data from the study respondents. Questionnaires and interviews collected primary data while secondary data were obtained from articles, books, magazines, and journals.

Data Analysis.

Quantitative data were recorded, coded, and then analyzed using SPSS version 20. The analyzed data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, and means. On the other hand, qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions were grouped into broad themes as per the study objectives after which they were reported through content analysis.

Ethical Consideration.

The study assured the study participants that the study would not cause any psychological or physical harm to them. The study briefed the respondents on the purpose of conducting the research. The study assured the study participants that the information obtained would be treated with utmost confidentiality and solely used for academic purposes. The research tools were structured so that participants were not required to indicate their names. The participants were first being presented with consent forms seeking their permission to participate in the study. The study then sought an ethical clearance from Mount Kenya University after which the study obtained an introductory letter from the same institution. The study then obtained a research permit from NACOSTI before proceeding to the field to conduct the study.

RESULTS.

Socio-demographic information of the study participants.

All the 2 principals, 9 tutors, and 94 students proposed to be sampled participated in the study. The two principals were all males (100%) with teaching experience of more than 7 years. On the other hand, teachers were mainly

females (66.7%) who had been teaching for the past 3-4 years (77.8%).
 On the other hand, most students were males (61.7%) in their first year of study (Table 2). Regarding age, most of the students appeared to be 18 years and below. This

observation aligns with the government policy of enrolling children in class one at six years, making it possible to expect that those in form one to form four are of age below or at 18 years.

Table 2. Characteristics of students included in the study.

Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	61.7
	Female	36	38.3
Age	18 years or less	40	42.6
	19-24 years	54	57.4
	25 and above	0	
Year of Study	First	46	48.9
	Second	34	36.2
	Third	14	14.9

Household factors contributing to sports betting in tertiary institutions in Mander County, Kenya
 Most students were from families whose source of income is either livestock keeping (38.3%) or crop farming (29.8%) (Table 3). Most of the students have ever

participated in sports betting (82.9%), and 78.7% had ever won money from betting. These students are either self-sponsoring their studies (14.9%) or are being supported by their parents (73.4%). These assertions were confirmed by the teachers and the principals during the interviews.

Table 3. Household factors contributing to sports betting by students in tertiary institutions in Mander County, Kenya.

Respondents	Factor/question	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Students	Source of household income	Livestock Keeping	36	38.3
		Bee Keeping	14	14.9
		Crop Farming	28	29.8
		Employment Income	16	17.0
	Have you ever participated in sports betting	Yes	78	82.9
		No	16	17.1
	Have ever won money from betting?	Yes	74	78.7
		No	20	21.3
	Who pays your school fees?	Parent	69	73.4
		HELB/Bursary	5	5.3
		Sponsor	6	6.4
		Self	14	14.9

Analysis of the reasons for students' participation in betting indicated that most of the students strongly agreed or agreed to participate in sports betting because of financial constraints and that males participate in sports betting more than females (Table 4). Teachers (77.8%) and principals (100%) believed that male students were the most likely involved in sports betting. However, all the students either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they

engage in financial betting because their parents do the same. Students were a bit neutral or strongly disagreed when asked whether they engaged in sports betting for immediate gratitude or because they have much free time in school which allows them to engage in sports betting. Students confirmed that engaged in sports betting during class time (76.6%).

Table 4. Reasons for students participating in sports betting in tertiary institutions in Mander County, Kenya.

Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
I participate in sports betting because of financial constraints	√	√			
I engage in financial betting because my parents do the same				√	√
Males participate in sports betting more than females	√	√			
I engage in sports betting for immediate gratitude			√	√	√
I have much free time in school which allows me to engage in sports betting			√	√	√

Key: SA; Strongly Agree, A: Agree, N: Neutral, SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree

DISCUSSIONS.

Most of the students strongly agreed or agreed to participate in sports betting because of financial constraints and that males participate in sports betting more than females. Previous studies (Benson et al., 2021; Ndala, 2021) revealed that there is always a positive and significant association between betting severity and economic well-being which aligns well with the present observation. These observations are different from reports in other countries where students have engaged in sports betting for immediate gratitude (Derevensky, & Gupta, 2004). Students may have a higher propensity than adults to develop gambling problems or betting addiction if they have a fondness for sports (Kapukotuwa et al., 2023). The indication that students have some free time for betting could explain the high number of students engaged in betting in the studied schools (Brevers et al., 2022).

In a similar study in Enugu state (Nigeria), Francisca et al. (2022) reported that students engaged in betting to win cash. In Kenya, getting money is the main motivation behind student involvement in betting, followed by admiration of those who win. Other reasons include entertainment, influence from friends and peers, and lastly leisure (Okoti et al., 2019). It could also be envisaged that being self-sponsored could encourage students to participate in betting.

CONCLUSIONS.

Source of household income, history of winning money from betting, and being sponsored by parents are the major factors associated with sports betting.

Sports betting negatively impacts the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions, in Mandera County, Kenya.

Possession of smartphones, media advertisements, and a combination of unlimited internet access, attractive media advertisements, and ease of access to credit are the contributing factors to sports betting among students in tertiary institutions, in Mandera County, Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Education on the effects of gambling and its addiction among students could be incorporated into tertiary institution programs.

Amendments should be made in by-laws and regulations to limit sports betting in tertiary institutions.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

HELB: Higher Education and Loans Board
NACOSTI: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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The study was not funded.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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