

Predictive Factors for Gambling and Prevalence of Problematic Gambling Among Students in Selected Public Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

Problem gambling is an emergent psychosocial as well as public health issue. Problem gambling behaviour causes interference and disruption in key domains of life; psycho-social, emotional relationships as well as physical. Gambling disorder is mainly marked and characterized by problem gambling behaviour that causes significant afflictions and distress in one's life. The first objective of this study was to find out whether gender, socio-economic status, peer influence and acute stress are predictive factors for gambling. The other objective was to examine prevalence of problematic gambling among the subjects. This growth is navigated by increasing affirmation of legal gambling. In spite the fact that problem gambling among university students is a global public health issue, few studies have established its magnitude among university students in Kenya. The study was anchored on social learning theory and cognitive behaviour theory. There is need to identify predictive factors and inclinations as well as prevalence rates of gambling among university students. The target population was students in Kisii university. The researcher applied descriptive quantitative research design. Data was obtained from a researcher generated social demographic questionnaire. Respondents were screened for problem gambling using gambling anonymous inventory. The unit of analysis was 576 students from Psychology department. Data was purposively collected from a sample of 152 university students from Kisii University. Respondents who were aged 18-20 and 21-22 years were 44% respectively while those who were 23-25 years and above were 9.9%, in addition those who were aged above 26 years were 3.2%. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 25. Furthermore, the data was also analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques and the results were presented in form of tables and figures. The proportion of respondents with problem gambling was high among male as compared to female students. The results of this study showed that male gender is a risk factor for gambling. Further, the respondents whose socio-economic status was low (78%) were more involved in problem gambling compared to those in medium and high socio-economic status. The study induced that low-social economic status is a predictive variable for gambling. Also, the results of this survey revealed that peer influence and extent of gambling are significantly related. This was supported by a chi square of 8.723 and p value of $0.013 < 0.05$. This implied that peer influence is a significant predictor of gambling. Also, the findings showed that stress and gambling are significantly related. This was supported by a chi square of 11.084 and p value of $0.004 < 0.05$. This implied that stress is a significant predictor of gambling. In terms of gender, 48 male respondents (31.57%) had problem gambling, only 4 female respondents (2.63%) had problem gambling. The current study underscored the need to focus on problem gambling which could negatively impact on the psychological well-being of university students. The findings of this study may also help mental health practitioners to develop interventions that can address problem gambling among students.

Keywords: Problem Gambling, University Students, Predictive Factors, Public Health, Well-Being