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Towards Effective Curriculum Delivery: Examining the Intervening Role of Religion on Students' Involvement in Sports Betting Among Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Habitual sports betting among students is concomitant with numerous psychological, social and health effects whose ramifications may encumber effective curriculum delivery. To this, religion, being the spiritual and moral compass of society should not turn a blind eye. Little research has however, been done to examine the role of religious intervention on mitigating gambling involvement among students. This study investigated the intervening role of religious doctrine and religious commitment on sports betting among secondary school students in Mumias-East sub-county, Kenya. It involved 369 students, obtained by stratified random sampling. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Results were analysed using frequencies and percentages, while hypotheses were tested using Chi Square. The study found that the doctrine of most religious denominations reprehended sports betting. However, there was no significant relationship between religious doctrine and involvement in sports betting. But the study found a significant relationship between students' commitment to religion and involvement in betting. Students who were 'Very Committed' to religion had the least propensity for sports betting. It was thus concluded that religious doctrine per se does not affect an individual's decision to bet or otherwise. Rather, the level of commitment to the doctrine and practice of one's faith is what affects their decisions. The study thus recommends that schools should work with religious leaders to institute programs that enhance students' commitment to their religious faith. It also recommends an inclusion of betting awareness in school curriculum, which could be done by integration of the content into already existing subjects.

Keywords: *Religious doctrine, Religious commitment, Sports Betting, Secondary Schools*

1. Introduction

Sport betting is an act of placing a monetary wager on the result of a sporting match, or the events of the entire match fixture (Palmer, 2013). This involves risking of money on an outcome which is contingent on sheer probability and luck, albeit there being bureaus that purport to provide guidance on how to increase one's winning chances. Though betting was initially perceived as a reserve for adults, there is increasing popularity and participation among youths (Derevensky, 2012). Some of these youths involved in sports betting may be students in secondary schools (Okoti, Ogula & Munyua, 2019). As an activity that cuts across age, race, and religion, sports betting has fascinated both the young and the old across all races. The lay people and the clergy are equally engrossed in it. In fact, some religious leaders have even won their bets (Inyanji, 2016). Such wins by spiritual leaders may paint a picture that sports betting is acceptable by standards of religion, and profitable as well (Okoti, 2019). However, Mugalo, Wachege and Kinyua (2018), whose study was church-based found that there were different interpretations of Scripture and teachings by different local churches on whether a Christian should bet or not. The body of teachings of a given religious group constitutes their religious doctrine. On the other hand, being loyal to, and abiding by the doctrine and practice of one's religious denomination is what has over time defined religious commitment (Glock, 1962). Knowledge of doctrine, and commitment to abide by it are thus the two feet by which one treks the path of their religious faith.



As vital as sports betting might be for individuals and nations, the challenges that come by it cannot be ignored. Apart from being a leisure activity for some and an entertainment for others, betting provides valuable, though unpredictable income to those who win (Mutuku, 2013). It is a gigantic and global industry that offers a myriad of employment opportunities to persons such as operators, software developers, coding experts, security specialists, graphic designers, customer care representatives and many others who work behind the scenes to keep the systems running. Betting is also a source of great revenue to governments that have legalized it, through collection of taxes and licensing fees (Rickwood, *et al*, 2010). In Uganda, for example, gambling generated colossal revenue for the government, with an uptick of tax collections from 0.24 billion Uganda Shillings (0.06 Million USD) in 2002/2003 to 11.1 billion Uganda Shillings (2.8 Million USD) in 2013/2014 (Ahaibwe, Lakuma, Katunze & Mawejje, 2016). Nations compete in growth of revenue generation through gambling. For instance, as gambling revenues in Las Vegas (a city in the U.S state of Nevada renowned for its great revenue through tourism and gambling) increased from \$6.923 billion in 2016 to \$7.09 billion in 2017, gambling revenues in Macau, China also rose from \$28 billion in 2016 to \$33 billion in 2017. In Canada similarly, gambling continues to burgeon and has also become a multi-billion-dollar business with revenues playing a vital role in financing of government budgets (Derevensky, Gupta & Csiernik, 2010).

Though sports betting is a lucrative business for bookmakers, individual bettors and government, numerous challenges have come by it (Mutuku, 2013). It has brought about corrupt practices and illicit manipulation of individual sporting contests, which has affected the integrity of sports events (Deutscher, Dimant, & Humphreys, 2017). These practices include point-shaving and match-fixing. Point-shaving is where players are influenced to deliberately affect the score by missing shots. Match-fixing is where gamblers, players, team officials and/ or referees exchange money and dishonestly pre-determine the overall result of the game before it is played. Another challenge associated with betting is illegal gambling. Researchers have observed rising prevalence of illicit adolescent gambling due to weak or complete absence of implementation of the regulations and laws that bar the under-aged from engaging in betting (Derevensky & Gupta, 2000). An earlier study by Shaffer and Hall (1996) that examined adolescent gambling prevalence rates in North America revealed that between 77-83% of high school students aged 13 to 20 were engaging in gambling behavior. In Kenya for instance, this is the age bracket of children in secondary schools. Habitual involvement of such students in the practice may lead to gambling addiction. A gambling addiction occurs when a person continues to gamble despite negative effects that may impact their finances, relationships or well-being (Browne, *et al*, 2017). Sports betting thus, is not without negative effects on those involved, which necessitates intervention measures.

Korn, Gibbins and Azmier (2003) observed that gambling activities have been considered from various paradigms, ranging from moral, mathematical, economic, social, psychological, cultural and biological perspectives. These perspectives have determined the gambling intervention approaches championed by various researchers. Korn, *et al* (2003) further argued that gambling needed to be examined from a public health perspective, and proposed framing of a public policy towards a public health paradigm for gambling. On the other hand, Pagano, *et al* (2015) considered it from a social perspective. They conducted an investigation of how “Peer Helping” would be of help in treating adolescent addiction in individuals who had ‘social anxiety disorder’. This was due to the concern that many youths in various addictions were driven by the developmental need to fit in with their peers, with the risk of negative peer appraisal. Participants were 195 adolescents aged 14 to 18 years entering residential treatment at a large adolescent treatment facility in the northeastern United States. Peer-helping involved a low-intensity, social activity in a 12-step program associated with greater abstinence among treatment-seeking persons. Data were collected using rater-administered assessments, youth reports, clinician reports, medical charts, and electronic court records. The study found that 42% of youths reported a persistent fear of being humiliated or scrutinized in social situations, and 15% met the diagnostic criteria for social anxiety disorder. Twelve-step participation patterns during treatment did not differ between youths with and without social anxiety disorder. However, peer-helping was associated with reduced risk of relapse ($p < 0.01$) and incarceration ($p < 0.05$) in the six months of posttreatment. Social anxiety disorder was associated with higher service participation during treatment, which was associated with reduced risk of relapse and incarceration in the 6 months posttreatment. Findings indicated the benefits of service participation for juveniles with social anxiety disorder which provides a nonjudgmental, task-focused avenue for developing sober networks in the transition back into the community. This study limited its scope to addictions involving drugs, alcohol and substance abuse, but excluded gambling addiction which the current study considered. Furthermore, while Pagano, *et al* (2015) examined the role of “peer helping”, the tested models were not exhaustive, since other non-specified variables such as spirituality which may increase in tandem with helping behaviors could also account for observed relationships. The current study thus considered the role of religion.



Dowling, Jackson and Thomas (2008) conducted meta-analysis of behavioral interventions in the treatment of pathological gambling. This involved investigation of the efficacy of the behavioral intervention strategies of activity scheduling and desensitization in the treatment of pathological gambling. Desensitization and exposure techniques were based on the principles of classical conditioning, and aimed at modifying the conditioned response of arousal or excitement by pairing the stimulus cues for gambling with no gambling or a competing response such as boredom or relaxation. The findings of the study indicated that a combination of several cognitive-behavioral programs and techniques was effective in the treatment of pathological gambling. However, the study found that methodological considerations made it difficult to elucidate the relative efficacy of each of the various approaches, as most were comprised of a combination of therapeutic components. Further research was recommended, designed to determine the degree to which the approach was effective as a sole therapy in treating pathological gambling using measures that directly evaluate change in activity engagement. Many addiction intervention strategies are usually a combination of approaches. This makes it difficult to determine the efficacy of a single approach. The current study thus focused on a single factor of religion.

In Canada, Mutti-Packer, Hodgins, Williams and Thege (2017) conducted a study on the protective role of religiosity against problem gambling. The aims of the study were to examine the “potential longitudinal association between religiosity and problem gambling among adults” and the potential moderating role of gender on this association. Participants were 4121 Canadian adults from Belleville, Ontario, Canada. Two models were tested; the first examined the influence of past-year religious service attendance, and the second examined an overall measure of personal religiosity on the trajectory of problem gambling. The study found that at baseline, higher frequency of past-year religious service attendance and greater overall personal religiosity were associated with lower gambling scores. The moderating effect of gender indicated that the influence of past-year religious service attendance was greater among females, however, the effect of overall religiosity was greater among males. With respect to religious affiliation, no measures of religiosity or religious affiliation were associated with the overall decline in problem gambling severity. The study concluded that religiosity may act as a static protective factor against problem gambling severity but may play a less significant role in predicting change in problem gambling severity over time. This study however had a very low response rate of 21.3%, which means that the findings from this study should be interpreted with caution.

Mugalo, Wachege and Kinyua (2018) conducted a study on the impact of habitual betting enterprise on Christian youth in the light of Jesus’ liberating pedagogy in Soweto village of Nairobi county, Kenya. The goal of the study was to identify the triggers and the effects of habitual betting among Christian youths, and the role of the church in curbing youths’ betting involvement. A descriptive survey design was used. By purposive sampling, 40 Christian youths, 10 parents, 7 administrators and 3 clergy were selected to participate in the study. The data were obtained using questionnaires and structured interviews, and analyzed using frequencies, means and percentages. The study found that triggers of betting involvement were unemployment, advertisements, peer pressure, early exposure to betting and an escape from reality. The study also found that the effects of habitual betting among Christian youths included betting addiction, early school dropout, family disruptions, job loss, suicide thoughts, rising debt level and rising criminal behaviour. The study also found that the church was making some efforts towards curbing betting. However, there were different interpretations of Scripture by different local churches on whether a Christian should bet or not. The study recommended that the church needed to talk openly on the causes and effects of habitual betting and betting enterprise among Christian youth. The fact that betting involvement was responsible for school dropouts according to this study, is a clear pointer to the necessity of intervention measures.

Uecker and Stokes (2016) conducted a study on religious background and gambling among young adults in the United States. They used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health to investigate whether and how the gambling behaviour of young adults is associated with their religious beliefs and practices during adolescence. The study found that young adults who grew up as conservative protestants, mainline protestants, Mormons and Jehovah’s witnesses; those who were raised in a religiously conservative background; and those who attended religious services weekly were less likely to have ever gambled. Among gamblers, young adults who attended religious services up to three times per month as adolescents were more likely to experience gambling problems than those who never attended. There was no association between religion and gambling. While this study focused on adults, there is need to investigate whether a nil effect of religion can also occur among school-going students.

Kim, Shifrin, Sztainert and Wohl (2018) examined the potential role that religious beliefs may play in disordered gambling in two studies. The research investigated the relationship between religiosity and gambling problems, and



whether gambling fallacies mediated this relationship. They tested the idea that religiosity primes people to place their faith in good fortune or a higher power. In the first study, an online sample was recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk to complete measures that assessed the central constructs (religiosity, disordered gambling, and gambling fallacies). The sample consisted of 201 gamblers (96 females and 105 males), ranging in age from 18 to 73 years. In the second study, a secondary analysis of a large data set of representative 4,121 adults from a Canadian province was conducted, which contained measures that assessed the constructs of interest. Results in the first study indicated that religiosity significantly predicted gambling problem. People who were high in religiosity were more at risk of developing gambling fallacies, as they believed that a higher power could influence the outcome of a game of chance in their favour. Conversely, there was no direct relationship between religiosity and gambling in the second study. Importantly, a significant indirect effect of religiosity on disordered gambling severity through gambling fallacies was found in both studies, thus establishing mediation. The results remained the same when controlling for age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status for both studies. The findings suggested that religiosity was associated with gambling fallacies, which needed to be considered in the progression (and possibly treatment) of gambling. These findings showed religion as being either inconsequential or negatively contributing to gambling addiction intervention efforts, hence pointing to the need of further investigation. The current study thus investigated the intervening role of religion on student's involvement in sports betting among secondary school students, with a view to enhance effective curriculum delivery.

Research has shown that sports betting among youths is on the rise. Some of these youths are school-going students. Since habitual sports betting is concomitant with numerous psychological, social and health effects (Fong, 2005), its ramifications may encumber effective curriculum delivery in schools. To this, religion, being the spiritual and moral compass of society should not turn a blind eye. The underpinnings of most studies on gambling interventions have been on medical and/or counselling psychology perspective. Little research has examined the role of religious intervention in mitigating gambling involvement, especially among school-going students. With Kenya having the highest number of young people who engage in sports betting in Sub-Saharan Africa (GeoPoll, 2017), such youths if school-going, may be faced with the challenge of balancing their attention between betting and the school work, thus impeding the overall curriculum delivery process. Guguyu (2016) expressed this concern as: "Your child may be gambling more than doing homework". This points to the necessity of intervention measures. Therefore, this study investigated the intervening role of religion on students' involvement in sports betting among secondary school students in Mumias-East sub-county, Kenya with a view of enhancing effective curriculum delivery. As Henley (2017) argued, religion cannot be ignored in assessing the totality of institutional influences on an individual.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Mumias East Sub-County in Kakamega County, Kenya. A causal-comparative design was employed to compare responses of students who had been involved in sports betting and those who had not along the factor of religion. The study sought to answer the questions of the extent of students' involvement in sports betting; the relationship between religious doctrine and students' involvement in sports betting; and the relationship between students' commitment to religion and involvement in sports betting. It targeted 4936 students of Forms II, III and IV of all 22 public mixed day secondary schools in the Sub-County. Mixed secondary schools were targeted with a view to bring out gender differences. Stratified random sampling was applied to obtain schools from the sub-urban category and the rural category. The sample of students comprised of 378 students who were randomly sampled. Data for the study was collected by use of questionnaires.

Validity of the content was checked by seeking for the judgement of authorities with expertise in education and research, who were well knowledgeable and acquainted with the area of study to judge whether the instruments adequately covered the required content area or adequately represent the construct of interest. Lastly, to ensure face validity, which is based on superficial examination of items (Ogula, 2010), independent experts in education reviewed the research instruments to check both content coverage and clarity. Piloting was carried out. Data collection instruments were administered to a small sample that was representative and identical to, but excluding the targeted group. This was carried out in one randomly selected school within the population sample in Mumias-East sub-county. Twenty students randomly selected from the selected school were the respondents during pilot study. The school in which the instruments were piloted were excluded in the actual study. Instruments were administered at an interval of two weeks using test-retest technique. It was done by giving the same instruments twice on the very group of participants. Results were then correlated using Pearson's Correlation coefficient to test for similarity, closeness or



strength of association of the two sets of scores. A value of $r = +0.896$ was obtained with student questionnaires, hence there was indication of strong association between the two sets of scores, and thus the instruments were accepted. The researcher identified the sources of measurement error that would affect correctness of score interpretation. The questions answered by respondents included:

- i) What is your religious denomination?
- ii) Have you ever betted on sports?
- iii) If you have ever betted, how frequently do you bet per month?
- iv) If you have ever betted, who among the following are aware of your involvement in betting: parents, teachers, religious leaders, none of the above?
- v) What views (doctrine) does your religious denomination hold concerning sports betting?
- vi) How would you rate your commitment to your religious denomination?

The results were then analysed using descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics, with a view to investigate the relationship between religion and sports betting under the null hypotheses:

H₀: There is no relationship between religious doctrine and students' involvement in sports betting.

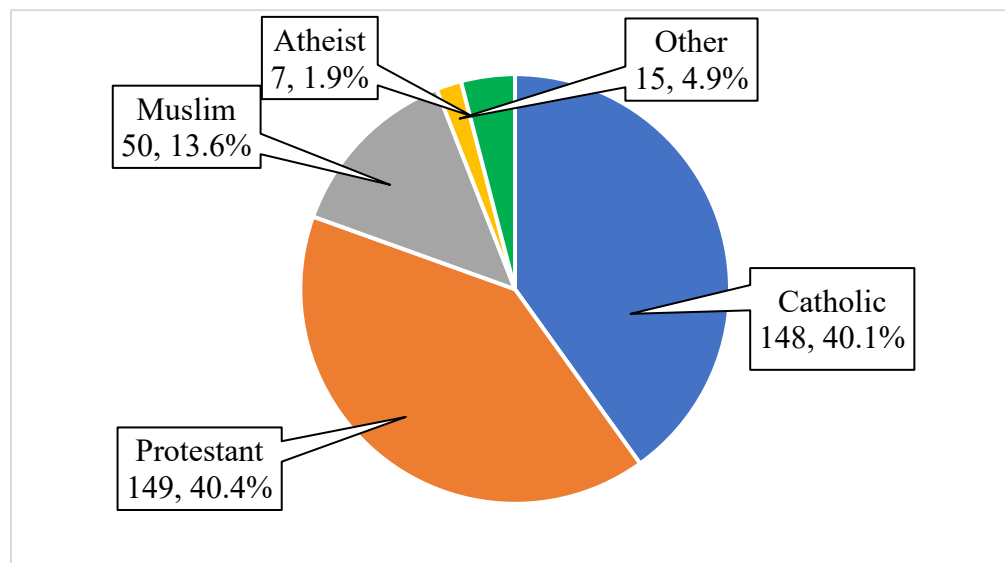
H₀: There is no relationship between students' commitment to religion and involvement in sports betting.

3. Results and Discussion

i) Religious doctrine and sports betting involvement

The study first sought to know the frequency and percentage distribution of the students by their religious denominations. They were asked the question: What is your religious denomination? Their responses were as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Students' response to the question "What is your religious denomination?"



The results indicated that most students were Christians, 40.1% being of the Roman Catholic faith and 40.4% of Protestant faith. A total of 13.6% were Muslims, 1.9% were Atheists while 4.9% belonged to "Other" religions. It was thus evident that Christianity was the dominant religion of students in Mumias-East sub-county. This could be attributed to the many years of ongoing spread, influence and conversion of residents of Mumias to Christianity. This started as early as 1904 with arrival of the Catholic Mill Hill Fathers, and thereafter the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1905 (Sifuna, 1990). There was also a noticeable Muslim population of 13.6%, probably resultant from the earlier trade ties between the Wanga Kingdom in Mumias, formerly known as Lureko, and the Kenyan coast (Ochieng' & Maxon, 1993).

Secondly, the respondents were asked whether they had ever betted on sports. Their responses were analysed by their religious denominations. Results were as in Table 1.



Table 1: Students’ involvement in betting, by religious denomination.

	Religious denomination					Total
	Catholic	Protestant	Muslim	Atheist	Other	
Yes	48(42.1%)	44(38.6%)	14(12.3%)	2(1.8%)	6(5.3%)	114(30.9%)
No	100(39.2%)	105(41.2%)	36(14.1%)	5(2.0%)	9(3.5%)	255(69.1%)
Total	148(40.1%)	149(40.4%)	50(13.6%)	7(1.9%)	15(4.1%)	369(100%)

It was found that a majority of those who had betted were Christians, 42.1% of Catholic faith and 38.6% of Protestant faith. This result, however, corresponds to the percentage distribution of the target population, which had most students as Christians, with 40.1% of the Roman Catholic faith and 40.4% of Protestant faith.

Thirdly, the doctrinal position of the religious denominations of respondents was sought through the question, “What views does your religious denomination hold concerning involvement in betting?” The results were as summarized in Figure 2.

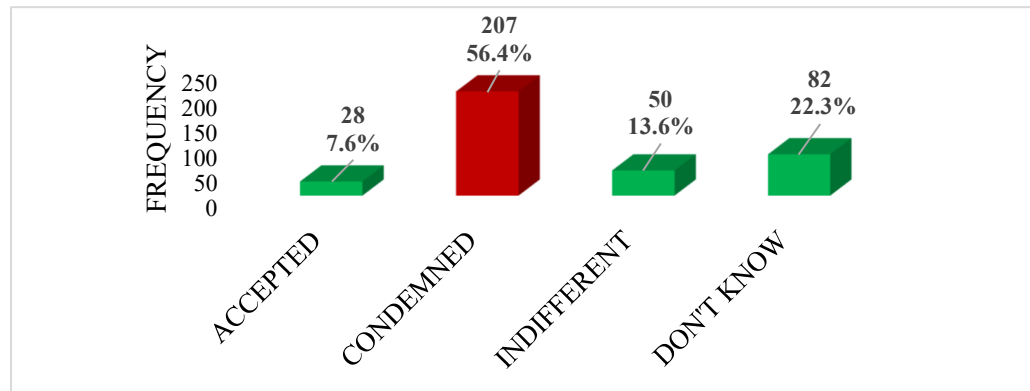


Figure 2: Students’ responses to the question “What views does your religious denomination hold concerning involvement in betting?”

A majority (207, 56.4%) indicated that their religious denominations condemned the practice of betting. Only 28 (7.6%) indicated that it was accepted, 50 (13.6%) said it is neither accepted nor condemned and 82 (22.3%) did not know the position of their religious denominations on betting.

The responses of religious doctrinal position were then analyzed by betting involvement. Results were as in Table 2.

Table 2: Responses of students’ involvement in betting, against the doctrinal position of their religious denominations.

	Betting is Accepted	Betting is Condemned	Indifferent about betting	Don’t know	Total
Have betted	11	62	12	29	114
Have not betted	17	145	40	53	255
Total	28	207	52	82	369

The results showed that those who betted were less than those who did not bet, and the betting occurred irrespective of the doctrinal position of their religious denomination. For instance, 62 (30%,) of those whose religious denominations condemned betting still went ahead to engage in the practice. On the other hand, 17 (61%) of those whose religious denominations accepted betting did not engage in the permitted practice. This means that what religion teaches per se does not affect an individual’s decision to bet or not. This finding differs from that of a research done



among African-American Methodists, which showed that religious doctrine had influence on one’s decision to gamble as a way of spending leisure time, based on church’s teaching and view of gambling as a sinful way of spending one’s leisure time (Waller & Martin, 2017).

The relationship between religious doctrine and student involvement in betting was tested under the hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between religious doctrine and student involvement in betting.

A chi-square test for independence was used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The results of the test were as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Chi Sure Results of Relationship between religious doctrine and involvement in betting

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.877 ^a	3	.411
Likelihood Ratio	2.883	3	.410
Linear-by-Linear Association	.022	1	.881
N of Valid Cases	367		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.70.

The results of the test revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between religious doctrine and student involvement in betting, with X^2 (df= 3, N= 367) = 2.877, p= 0.411 at α = 0.05. The null hypothesis was thus not rejected. It was therefore accepted that there was no significant relationship between religious doctrine and student involvement in sports betting. It thus means that young people do not make financial decisions necessarily based on what their religious faith teaches. Uecker and Stokes (2016) also found that there was no association between religion and gambling. On the other hand, Kim, *et al* (2018) found that religion in fact increased the risk of people developing gambling fallacies in believing that a higher power could influence the game outcome in their favour.

According to Hoffmann (2000), many religious organizations have spoken out in opposition to legalized gambling and discouraged members from gambling. The current study however reveals that speaking against gambling per se does not deter people from it. Behaviour formation and change happens differently. For instance, according to Kristiansen, Trabjerg and Reith (2015) gambling involvement is both contrived and exacerbated by peer influence. A similar influence in a religious trajectory could as well bring about the desired good.

ii) Religious Commitment and Sports Betting Involvement

The first aspect of religious commitment examined was accountability to religious leaders and others in authority. This was to find out whether students who betted were accountable to religious leaders and others in authority (parents and teachers) over their actions. They were asked the question “If you bet, who among the following are aware of your involvement in betting?” The results were as summarized in Figure 3.

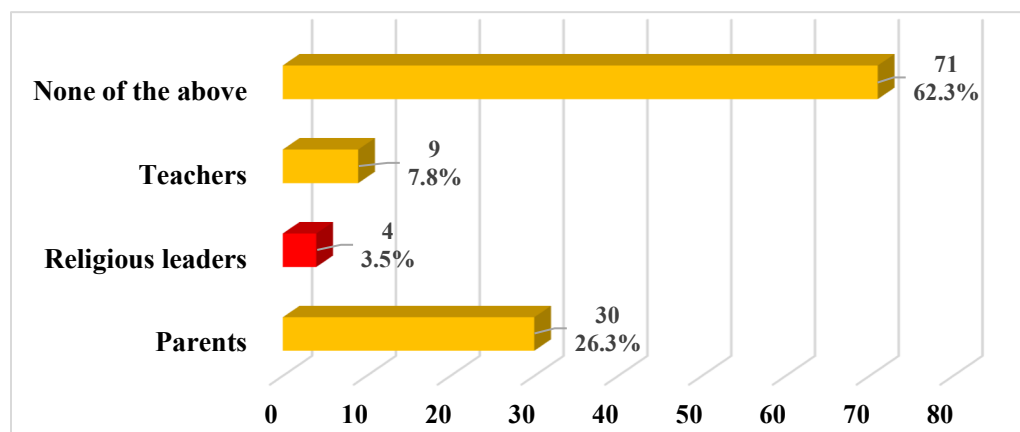


Figure 3. Students responses to the question “If you bet, who among the following are aware of your involvement in betting?”



The study found that students were least accountable to religious leaders over their actions. Only 3.5% of those involved in betting had made their religious leaders aware of it. This therefore means that most religious leaders were oblivious of the extent to which their religious flock engaged in betting. 62.3% indicated that they were accountable to neither parents, teachers nor religious leaders. This finding is rather disturbing, that modern society could be raising a generation of young people who do not want to be accountable to anyone in authority over their actions. Calhoun, and Daniels (2008) voiced this concern, arguing that when young people are not accountable to authority over their actions, harmful incidences such as school violence easily happen. They further argued that there was need to re-define accountability, and detail how best it might be achieved.

The participants were then asked concerning their level of religious commitment, that is, being loyal to and abiding by the doctrine and practice of their religious denominations. A comparison of responses to the question “How would you rate your commitment to your religion?” and “Have you ever betted on sports?” produced the results in Table 4.

Table 4. A comparison Between Religious Commitment and Betting Involvement

	Betted		Not betted		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Very committed	15	13.5	78	30.7	93	25.3
Averagely committed	47	41.2	79	31.1	126	34.2
Not committed at all	52	45.6	97	38.1	149	40.5
Total	114	30.9	254	69.1	368	100

The results showed that the level or religious commitment among secondary school students was low. A total of 149 students (40.5%) indicated that they were ‘Not committed at all’ to their religion, 126 (34.2%) were averagely committed while only 93 (25.3%) were very committed. This means that the religious leaders and sponsors of schools may be lacking suitable programs that can enhance students’ commitment to religious doctrine and practice.

The results also indicated that the majority (45.6%) of those who betted were ‘Not committed at all’ to their religions. Those who were very committed to religion had the least level of betting involvement at 13.5%.

Religious commitment by gender was also analyzed, and results were as in Table 5.

Table 5. Religious commitment by gender

		Very committed	Averagely committed	Not committed at all	Total
Gender	Male	36	75	76	187
	Female	57	51	73	181
Total		93	126	149	368

It was revealed that females had higher religious commitment than males. Of those who indicated that they were ‘Very committed’ to religion, 57 (61%) were females while 36 (39%) were males as illustrated in Figure 4.

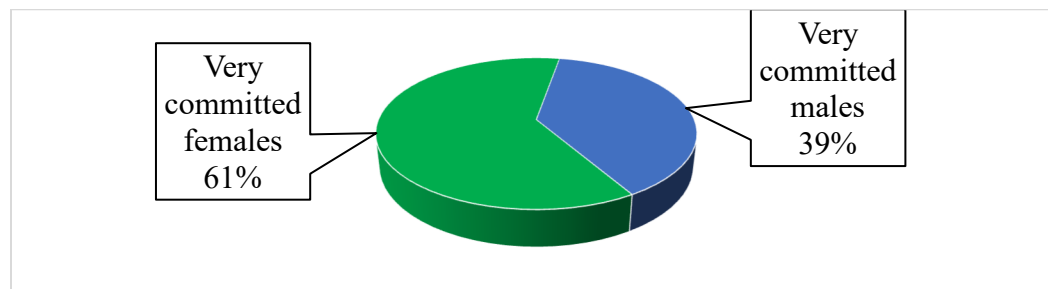


Figure 4. Religious commitment by gender



The reason why female students were more committed to religion than males is unclear. According to Stark (2002), the question of women being more religious than men cuts across history of all religious movements, except those that excluded women from membership. He further explained that the most popular of all explanations proposes that women are socialized to be more religious than men. This explanation resonates well with what happens in society today, where girls are handled as delicate, soft and in need of gentle care. This may generate in them tendencies and virtues associated with religiosity. On the other hand, boys are trained to “man-up”, be strong, hardy and in control. This may make them to be risk takers, who go out to get what they want, and may not readily submit to external control, whether physical or spiritual.

This relationship was then tested under the null hypothesis that:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between students’ commitment to their religious denomination and involvement in betting.

A chi-square test for independence was used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The results of the test were as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Chi-Square Results of Relationship Between Students Religious Commitment and Betting Involvement

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.018 ^a	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	14.145	2	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.715	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	368		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 28.81.

The results of the test showed that there was a significant relationship between students’ commitment to their religious denomination and involvement in sports betting, with X^2 (df= 2, N= 368) = 13.018, $p= 0.01$ at $\alpha= 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was thus accepted that there was a significant relationship between students’ commitment to their religious denomination and involvement in betting. This differs with Uecker and Stokes (2016) whose study revealed that there was no association between religion and gambling. Uecker and Stokes found that young adults who attended religious services upto three times per month as adolescents were more likely to experience gambling problems than those who never attended. This also differs with Kim, *et al* (2018) who found that religiosity significantly predicted gambling problem, as people who were high in religiosity were more at risk of developing gambling fallacies, believing that a higher power could influence the outcome of a game of chance in their favour.

The finding of the current study, however, agrees with Mutti-Packer, *et al* (2017), whose study found that religion played a protective role against gambling. Similarly, a research done among African-American Methodists also showed that religious doctrine had influence on one’s decision to gamble as a way of spending leisure time, based on church’s teaching and view of gambling as a sinful way of spending one’s leisure time (Waller & Martin, 2017). This resonates well with Alderman, Forsyth and Walton (2017) who also argued that religious beliefs may have strong influence on an individual’s financial decision-making. Beyerlein and Sallaz (2017) who sought to find out how religion deters gambling, through a quantitative analysis found that religious tradition and religious service attendance reduced the likelihood of casino gambling and lottery play among adults, while religious salience was the only dimension found to constrain online gambling. This thus brings to the fore the role of religious faith in shaping human behaviour, which may consequently have possible implications on curriculum and pedagogy. Henley (2017) observed that religion cannot be ignored in assessing the totality of institutional influences on an individual.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought to investigate the intervening role of religion on students’ involvement in sports betting whose ramifications encumbered effective curriculum delivery. The study found that most religious denominations condemned betting as unacceptable. Students were least accountable to religious leaders over their actions. A chi square test conducted showed no statistically significant relationship between religious doctrine and student involvement in sports betting. However, there was a significant relationship between students’ commitment to their religion and involvement in betting. Those who were least committed to their religious faith had higher propensity for betting involvement than those who were committed. It was thus concluded that what religion teaches per se did not affect an individual’s decision to bet or not, but rather, how much the individual was committed to the doctrine.



The study therefore recommends that schools should work with religious leaders to institute programs that enhance students' commitment to their religious faith. To this end, schools' administration can intensify spiritual programs in schools. Furthermore, religious leaders should teach young people the purpose and pursuit of work, as a more reasonable means of getting income rather than gambling. Finally, the study recommends an inclusion of betting awareness in the school curriculum. It can be done by integration of the content into already existing subjects.

Further research is needed in determining the role of religion and spirituality quotient in shaping learners' behaviour, and its subsequent implications for curriculum and pedagogy. Findings of this study showed that students with higher level of commitment to religion had a lower betting involvement. This can only be validated with further research. In addition, future studies should preferably be longitudinal, since measures of religion are not static but instead change over time. Finally, there is need to investigate how religion can help to liberate those who are already addicted to sports betting and any other forms of gambling that may encumber curriculum delivery among students.

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