



RESEARCH REPORT AND POLICY BRIEF ON GAMBLE ALERT'S ANTI-UNDERAGE GAMBLING CAMPAIGN IN SELECTED PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ALIMOSHO, LAGOS STATE



1. Overview

During its 7th edition of the Advocacy Tour, Gamble Alert conducted a study among 800 secondary school students in Alimosho LGA of Lagos State. The data were collected with the cooperation of school authorities and with participation from officials of the Lagos State Lotteries and Gaming Authority, the Association of Nigerian Bookmakers, WYS Solicitors, and some industry operators, ensuring that the process adhered to appropriate standards and reflected on-the-ground realities within the communities studied.

This study provides empirical evidence on the prevalence, drivers, and risk factors associated with adolescent gambling. Despite strong legal prohibitions against gambling for individuals under 18, enforcement gaps, community norms, peer pressure, and advertising exposure continue to enable widespread participation among minors.

Findings from this research offer relevant insights to guide regulatory reforms, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and inform the development of school- and community-level prevention programs across Lagos State.



2. Key Findings



A. Prevalence and Awareness

- 91.4% have heard of gambling; 96.6% correctly defined it.
- 85.1% know common gambling types (sports betting, lotto, pools, virtual games).
- 35.3% (282 students) reported having ever gambled, showing high engagement despite being underage.

B. Demographic Profile

- Age distribution: 52.6% are between 13 - 15 years.
- Gender: 55.4% male, 44.6% female.
- As a continuous variable, age increases gambling odds by 26%.
- Male students are significantly more likely to gamble ($p < .001$).

C. Social and Environmental Drivers

i. Peer Influence (strongest predictor)

- 53.7% of students experiencing peer pressure have gambled ($p < .001$).
- Logistic regression: 2.18 times higher odds of gambling.

ii. Being Sent to Bet by Adults. A clear dose-response effect:

- Never sent: 31.1% gambled
- Rarely sent: 51.9% gambled
- Sometimes sent: 71.4% gambled
- Often/Very often: 100% gambled
- Logistic regression: 2.3 times higher odds ($p < .001$).

This reflects normalization of gambling within families and communities.

iii. Advertisement Exposure

- Significant association with gambling participation ($p = .021$).
- Higher exposure correlates with increased spending and use of personal money.

However, effect becomes non-significant after controlling for peer/family factors, indicating indirect influence.



2. Key Findings

D. Awareness of Harm

- Students aware of gambling-related harm were less likely to gamble (32.8% vs. 48.4%, $p = .001$).
- Awareness decreases odds of gambling by 41%, but is not strong enough alone to offset social influences.

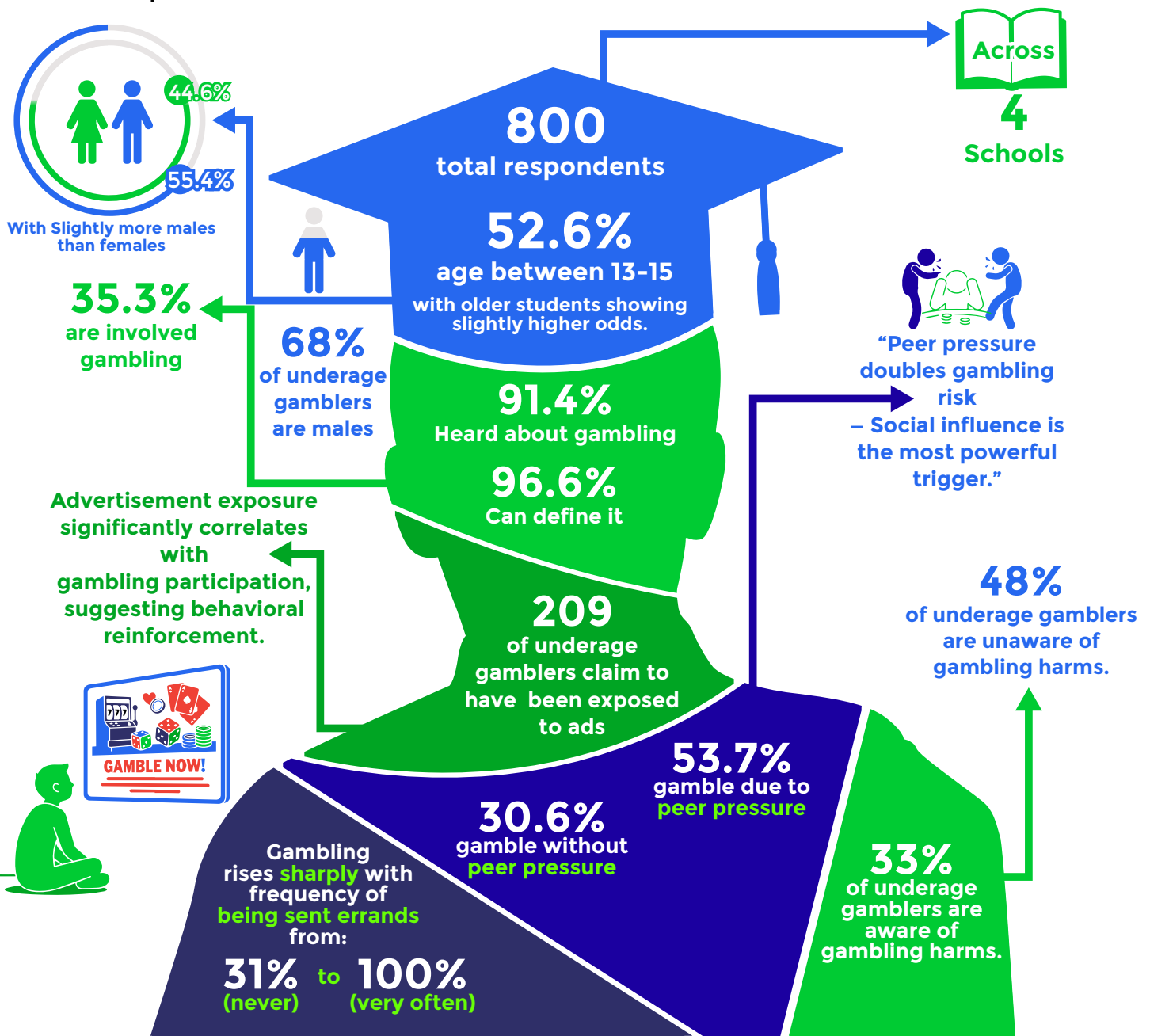
E. Additional Indicators

Correlations show consistent relationships between advertising exposure, peer influence, being sent to gamble, amount spent, and use of personal money.

Reliability analysis confirmed strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$).



To establish who the respondents are and to show representativeness across schools, ages, and genders.



“Half of all participants are between 13-15 years old, showing that underage gambling awareness is mainly a middle-school issue.”

“Boys are twice as likely to gamble as girls – gender is a major behavioural predictor.”

After accounting for multiple factors, social variables (peer and family) remain the strongest predictors. Advertisement exposure loses statistical significance, confirming it operates indirectly. Awareness and gender are meaningful moderators.

3.Implications for Policy and Regulation

a) Enforcement Gaps

Despite Lagos State regulations, minors can access both physical and online betting platforms. The following gaps are evident:

- i. Betting outlets routinely admit minors or allow them to place bets through intermediaries.
- ii. Children are frequently sent by adults to betting shops; an overlooked enforcement violation.
- iii. Outdoor and digital advertisements for sports betting are widely accessible to minors, especially near schools.
- iv. Schools lack structured gambling-harm education or early identification systems.

b) Community Normalization

Family and neighbourhood practices are unintentionally facilitating underage gambling. This demonstrates the need for state-level community engagement and public awareness campaigns coordinated through LSLGA.

c) Peer-Driven Risk

Adolescents engage in gambling primarily as a social activity. School environments require preventive interventions: peer-led programs, counsellor training, and behavioural support, to counteract this trend.

d) Media and Digital Risk

Exposure to advertising, particularly gambling promotions, subtly shapes attitudes and spending behaviours. Stronger promotional restrictions and compliance monitoring are needed.

4. Policy Recommendations for LSLGA

I. To effectively address the growing challenge of underage gambling in Lagos State, the Lagos State Lotteries and Gaming Authority (LSLGA) will need to adopt a comprehensive, multi-level regulatory and public health strategy. Strengthening the enforcement of age restrictions is a critical first step, as current gaps in compliance allow minors to access gambling services through both direct and indirect routes. Betting outlets must be required to adopt strict age-verification procedures, including mandatory ID checks, and should face meaningful consequences when found to admit or transact with minors. Regular inspections, particularly in high-risk communities such as those across Alimosho, will help reinforce the seriousness of these protections.

II. A second priority area is the regulation of gambling advertising. The study clearly shows that adolescents are regularly exposed to promotional content for gambling, through outdoor adverts, social media, and youth-oriented media platforms. LSLGA should therefore establish clearer restrictions on the placement and timing of gambling advertisements, particularly around schools, public transport corridors, and in digital spaces frequented by young people. All promotional materials should carry prominent age-limit warnings and stronger harm-reduction messages to counter the glamorized portrayal of gambling.

III. Schools are central to early prevention, and integrating gambling harm education into existing civic or health curricula offers a practical and sustainable solution. Teachers, school counsellors, and administrators should be equipped with the tools to identify early signs of

gambling involvement and provide necessary support. Peer-led programs, youth clubs, and ambassador initiatives can also empower students to influence one another positively and provide healthy alternatives to gambling as a social activity.

IV. Since the research shows that parents and family members play a significant role in introducing minors to gambling, sometimes unintentionally, LSLGA will need to lead extensive **community sensitization efforts**. Public awareness campaigns should target parents, guardians, PTAs, religious institutions, and community associations to correct misconceptions about gambling and to discourage practices such as sending minors to gambling shops. These campaigns should also promote safer, youth-friendly recreational activities as alternatives for after-school engagement.

V. **Collaboration with NGOs such as Gamble Alert** is essential in scaling public education and early-intervention initiatives. Through strategic partnerships, LSLGA can support evidence-based outreach, helplines, counselling services, and school tours. Such collaborations would also be valuable in developing annual statewide surveillance reports that help track trends, identify hotspots, and monitor the impact of preventive measures over time.

VI. **Finally, early intervention and support services** should form a core part of the state's response. Schools and communities need accessible pathways for students who may already be involved in gambling or showing signs of distress. This includes counselling, referral mechanisms to mental health services, integration of screening tools into school health programs, and the availability of anonymous support channels such as helplines or teletherapy services.

Together, these measures offer a comprehensive path forward to strengthen regulatory oversight, protect minors from further harm, and establish Lagos State as a leader in responsible gaming governance.

5. Conclusion

Underage gambling in Alimosho LGA is a substantial and preventable public health concern. More than one-third of students have engaged in gambling despite legal restrictions. The behaviour is driven primarily by peer influence, family involvement, and community normalization, reinforced by widespread advertisement exposure.

Awareness alone is insufficient to curb participation. A coordinated regulatory response led by the Lagos State Lotteries and Gaming Authority, supported by educational institutions, parents, community leaders, and NGOs, is urgently needed.

Strengthening enforcement, regulating advertising, and implementing structured prevention programs will significantly reduce exposure and protect Lagos State's adolescents from long-term financial, social, and psychological harm.





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