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# Beliefs about the Consequences of the Establishment of Betting Terminals on Attendance and the Promotion of Youth's Gambling

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**Abstract:** The increase in the number of betting terminals over the years has attracted many people to watch matches and stake odds. Since live matches have been found to provide more money for betting companies, betting companies are providing more options for people to stake live bets by establishing many terminals. Sports fans have also taken the opportunity to watch free live matches in the betting terminals. The current study examined the reasons why football fans prefer watching live matches in betting terminals instead of at the stadia. Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) the views of six football fans (bettors) were examined in betting terminals. Findings revealed that fans are attracted to watch matches at betting terminals based on cost-effectiveness and financial benefits, socialisation/atmosphere, watching many matches at the same time, and proximity (nearness of betting terminals to their homes). While the respondents foresaw the establishment of betting terminals as a threat to promote gambling among the youths they don't support the ban on the establishment of betting terminals as they see it as an avenue to generate extra revenue. Suggestions and discussions for the future can be found in the appropriate section in this paper.

**Keywords:** betting terminals, sports betting, attendance, football matches

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## 1. Introduction

Sports betting is one form of gambling that has taken the world by storm. The European Gaming and Betting Association <sup>[17]</sup>, reported that sports betting has increased worldwide in terms of revenue and money gambled and has become the swift growing form of gambling across cultures while other gambling products have deteriorated <sup>[18]</sup>. In developed countries such as the USA, UK, Australia and Canada, betting on sporting events has increased tremendously especially through the internet. For example, in Australia, sports betting appeared to be the fastest-growing form of gambling with a double increase in popularity over the last decade <sup>[19]</sup>. Sports betting alone generated an estimated revenue of \$600 million in 2011 from \$264 million in 2006. In Africa, sports betting has been rising in popularity over the past few years. For instance, sports betting has been gaining grounds over the past decade contributing \$37 billion to the gambling industry with no signs of slowing down <sup>[20]</sup>. Ghana is a good example as more than five betting companies have set up terminals in almost all parts of the country. These terminals are expected to create jobs for the people to help solve the unemployment crisis and to further improve Ghana's economic situation. The influx of these betting companies created the need for the establishment of the Gaming Commission Act 2006, (Act 721). According to the act, all games of chance are legal except for lottery. Hence, sports betting falls under legal games and can be operated freely in the country. The commission further regulates control, monitor, and supervise the operation of all games of chance in Ghana <sup>[21]</sup>. With the establishment of the law, Ghanaians have the mandate to freely enjoy most of the popular sports action worldwide like NBA, European leagues among others.

On the contrary, sports betting interrelates with a wider range of both psychological and social elements involving sports fans, sport team identity, media psychology (watching live sport events), sports consumption-related behaviours (drinking alcohol, eating junk food, general viewing) and emotionally burden situations <sup>[23, 35]</sup>. Anecdotally, evidence also suggests that sports managers and team owners in developing countries are annoyed by the creation of many betting terminals which telecast most of the sporting events live while providing free access to the internet for people to follow live scores of matches and stake odds. However, some of the betting companies provide sponsorship to most of the football clubs thereby making it difficult for team owners to complain about their operations. Nonetheless, the persistent increase

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in gate fees together with the advent of televised and stream sports have created the need for many sports fans to migrate from the stadia to pubs especially in the UK <sup>[13]</sup>. With in-play betting as one of the most popular expressions of sports betting in the world <sup>[28]</sup>, bookmakers have realised the need to create many terminals to provide access for sports fans to watch and follow the score of matches and bet at the same time. Research on sports betting have focused primarily on its effects on individual and society. For example, research by <sup>[6, 28, 35]</sup> centered on the problems associated with sports betting or gambling addiction. Despite the numerous researches, a gap in the literature exists on examining fans reasons to watch matches in terminals instead of going to the stadia. Dixon <sup>[13]</sup> examined reasons why fans are migrating to the pubs instead of the stadia and found out that regular increase in gate fees, televised sports and the ability to stream most of the live matches accounted for such decisions.

Therefore, the current study examined factors influencing sports fans (bettors) to watch live matches in betting terminals instead of the stadia in Ghana by using a qualitative semi-structured interview involving six football fans.

Sports betting terminals have the potential to expose people to be problem gamblers apart from attraction to watch live matches. Betting on what one sees (live betting) can lead the individual to place more odds on a single game with the intent of winning more money. In instances where laws that prevent younger people below 18 years from watching sport in betting terminals are not properly enforced, many of them will troop to watch football matches in such places. This can expose them to become bettors because of the advertisement in the terminals which show people with huge bet winnings. Although betting on mobile devices is common, many people have difficulty in getting access to internet connectivity, are concerned about the charges and network reliability especially in developing countries <sup>[36]</sup>. Therefore, watching live matches in betting terminals is still relevant as it provides opportunities to place odds without internet problems. The betting terminals also provide opportunities for sports fans to watch top European football matches, save money on transportation and gate proceeds that would have been incurred at the stadia. It can also enable the fans at the terminals to save money to place odds which can generate extra income.

## 1.1 Sports Betting

Several forms of sports betting exist with online betting being the most popular one. The online sports betting has created the need for bettors to forego the traditional match betting or fixed betting where bets are wagered before the start of the game. For instance, in-play betting or live betting which is staked momentarily without proper planning has been found scientifically as a form of reckless and irresponsible gambling <sup>[28]</sup>. In-play betting-viewing the sport while betting (betting on what one sees), allows the bettor to place a wager at any time during the event or a match until it's about to be over. Studies to assess in-play betting concerning gambling frequency revealed that heavy gamblers bet more frequently with in-play options compared to occasional gamblers in a study of 45,000 subscribers to Bwin sports betting operator <sup>[5, 6, 31, 32, 41]</sup>. Moreover, betting companies seem to benefit when more people wager on betting products. For example, the global leading bookmaker Bet 365 reported that 80% of revenue accrued are derived from in play-betting <sup>[26]</sup>. Although, in-play betting required the use of second-screen devices like smartphones, tablets, and to some extent laptops alongside watching streamed or televised sports while in the comfort of the home, pubs or the stadia <sup>[28]</sup>, bookmakers have also created other in-play betting opportunities for bettors. One such way is the establishment of betting terminals. Watching football matches in commercial places such as betting terminals and the stadia could be attributed partly to the social identity theory. Based on the theory, people get self-satisfaction from the group they belong to <sup>[54]</sup>. Therefore, it is assumed that people with similar interests will often confine themselves in a specific place to watch sporting events together (communal viewing). To this end, it is common to see people who support a team or have an interest in a specific sporting event watching matches or consuming sports products together either at the stadia, a betting terminal or a pub.

## 1.2 Betting Terminals

Fixed-odds betting terminals are computer terminals that enable the bettor to place bets on events that have fixed odds. The machines are electronic slots that offer the bettors the chance to play quick games. The bettor can see a percentage figure that will be available for consideration referred to as Return To Player (RTP). The RTP determines how much money on average the bettor will get back <sup>[42]</sup>. In countries like Australia, the machines are referred to as gaming machines while Americans have slot machines at the casinos and gaming centres. The gaming machines have bonuses and second-screen features like free games and bonus levels. In Ghana and other countries in Africa, such places are referred to as sports betting terminals. Operationally, betting terminals refer to special buildings with machines where people go there to stake odds.

## 1.3 Statement of the Problem

The phenomenological approach as a method of inquiry is used to uncover meanings, articulate essences in meanings

in the bettor's decisions to attend football matches. Using a qualitative semi-structured interview, the purpose of the present study was to explore factors influencing football fans to watch live matches in betting terminals instead of at the stadia.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Pathological gambling-failure to resist gambling despite severe vocational and family consequences<sup>[14]</sup> is one of the most outspoken problems associated with gambling. With policymakers in developed countries trying to prevent gambling addiction, betting companies are also trying to extend their markets to places like Africa. Regarding this, many betting terminals have been created in almost all parts of Africa where betting companies exist with Ghana as a reference point. The present study is the first of its kind to examine the relationship between the establishment of betting terminals and attendance intentions, especially in developing countries. It will also create an avenue for sports managers to identify some of the reasons why spectators are not attending matches. To the policymakers, it will inform them of some of the effects of the creation of many betting terminals in the country and how to formulate laws to regulate the establishment of betting terminals. The present study will also add up to the academic works of literature on sports betting and create the opportunity for researchers in developing countries to analyse some other effects of sports betting.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Design**

The current study examined the reasons why sports fans prefer to watch live football matches in betting terminals instead of the stadia. An interpretive research paradigm focused on a strategy of inquiry that seeks to construct knowledge from the interpretations of both the research participants and researcher were employed in the current study<sup>[11]</sup>. Interpretivism, a general term used to capture a collection of related views<sup>[15]</sup>, emphasizes the constructed and evolving nature of social reality, repudiating the positivist notion that knowledge is objective and real. In contrast, a primary intent of the interpretive paradigm, associated with qualitative research methods, is to "... understand social reality through the eyes of those being studied"<sup>[12]</sup>, and to use those meanings to generate knowledge between the researchers and research participants<sup>[24]</sup>. Although the research process was emergent in nature, the researcher worked from a platform of prior knowledge concerning the effects of an increase in betting terminals on attendance, as explained in the introductory parts. These theoretical constructs were used in the research design in general, and in data generation and analysis, in particular. The technique involved was a face to face interview in a betting terminal after telecast football matches.

### **2.2 Participants and Research Sites**

Conducting qualitative research demands the collection of data in natural settings and facilitates understanding from the participants' point of view and the meanings they ascribed to their actions<sup>[4]</sup>. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is ideal to select the case that presents an opportunity for an in-depth study of the phenomenon in question<sup>[53]</sup>. Stake further maintained that while typicality is ideal when selecting a case, selection should consider participants' desire to learn about the phenomena. Considering this, three-betting terminals were intentionally selected by the researcher based on the participants at this terminals willingness to participate in the study<sup>[46]</sup>, logistical considerations (proximity and access)<sup>[57]</sup>and the high experience level of the participants studied<sup>[45]</sup>. The researcher thought that it was relevant to consider the betting terminal sites as multiple cases. This provides opportunities for the researcher to generate new theories. The comparative analysis of many cases assists to develop and refined theoretical formulations. Basing on each case, an emerging theory was adjusted to cater for instances associated with the topic under study. Multiple cases are relevant to examine the differences within and between cases. The aim is to replicate finding across the cases to draw conclusions<sup>[62]</sup>. The three betting terminals offer similar services at different locations. The researcher selected two participants from each of the sites so that there will be diversity in the responses. Also, it enabled the researcher to analyse different views of the bettors at different terminals. The researcher visited each of the betting terminals on six different occasions. During the first two visits, the researcher used it as an opportunity to develop a rapport with the participants in the betting terminals. General issues on football were discussed before attendance at live football matches. The participants were supporters of various football clubs in Ghana who used to attend some of the local league games. However, they no longer attend live matches at the stadia because the betting terminals are providing them with opportunities to watch many matches including the local and the foreign leagues. The remaining four days were used to conduct the interviews.

Hence the following criteria were used to select the participants:

- (a). They were interested in watching football matches and have watched football matches in stadia and at terminals. This can enable them to compare the differences between being at the stadia and betting terminals.
- (b). They were sports fans who have bet or are bettors and watch live matches in betting terminals so that they can

give accurate information about the topic under study.

(c). They were interviewed in betting terminals only so that issues of the participant rejecting the idea that they have never been in a betting terminal to watch matches will be minimised.

In total six bettors showed the desire and the willingness to participate in the study. Creswell <sup>[8]</sup> recommended a sample size of 5-25 while Morse <sup>[40]</sup> recommended a sample size of at least 6 participants for phenomenological analysis. Based on this, the sample size was considered ideal for the present study. They were selected by Following IPA guidelines <sup>[52]</sup>, to purposively select a relatively homogenous group of sports fans with similar interests in watching live football matches at betting terminals. The IPA guidelines include:

1. IPA is based on small sample sizes.
2. It involves a detailed case to case analysis of each participant transcript.
3. Researchers use a fairly homogenous sample whom the research question will be significant. Therefore, a researcher should be pragmatic in conducting a research as one's sample for a study is defined by the participants who will be willing to take part.
4. There is no specific sample size as it is determined by several factors:
  - a. The level of participants' commitment to the case study level of the analysis and reporting.
  - b. The content of each case and
  - c. The limitations the researcher operates under.

### 2.3 Instrument

Before the main study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a 32-year-old sports fan (a bettor) at a betting terminal. An initial interview guide was developed that focused on factors influencing sports fans to watch live matches in betting terminals instead of the stadia. The questions were based on pre-determined open-ended questions that were standardized. The pre-determined schedule was employed because the researcher intended to gather the same information from the participants as efficiently as possible. The standardized questions ensured that each interview was focused on individual differences <sup>[44]</sup>. The duration of the pilot interview was 15 minutes and drew attention to ways in which the interview guide could be ameliorated by making some adjustments to the order and wording of certain questions. Considering some questions, the researcher became aware that certain questions should be skipped while alternatives should be provided for some of the participants to express their views on why they prefer watching matches in terminals instead of the stadia. Similarly, the pilot interview availed the range of standardized relevant to generate an appropriate depth of discourse in the main study <sup>[30]</sup>.

The questions asked and the justification for each of the questions are explained in the table below.

**Table 1. Questions used and Justifications during the data collection**

Question	Justification
How did you get into football?	to usher the participants into the interview and create an expectation for the questions that followed.
Describe what you know about sports betting? Have you bet on a sporting product	to examine whether a participant has any background knowledge about sports betting and to speak freely about sports betting. to determine whether a participant is interested in betting and has bet on a sporting product.
Where do you watch most of the live football matches?	to determine where the participants watch live football matches
What are some of the reasons why you would like to watch matches in betting terminals? Could you tell me some other reasons?	To identify reasons why participants will prefer going to watch matches at betting terminals
Given the opportunity to choose between matches played at the stadia and live matches in betting terminals which of them will you attend? What are the reasons for your answer?	to let the participants, mention as many reasons as possible why they are interested in watching matches at betting terminals and not in stadia.
Is there anything else you will like to tell me about sports betting?	To provide an opportunity for the researcher and the participants to share any other information on sports betting.
What is your profession? Are you married? How many children do you have?	to find out the profile of the bettors and to examine if they have other responsibilities that pressurized them to find other sources of income.

### 2.4 Procedure

Participants who were willing to participate in the research were given informed consent that explains the purpose of the study to be signed before they participated in the interview. The owners of the betting terminals were contacted through a letter that such an activity will be going on in the terminals from time to time. Interviews took place in the betting terminals in private at the end of a particular match and after other people have left. This was to prevent interruption

from other fans. Interviews were conducted on days when clubs in Ghana were playing matches to create the impression that the fans have options to select from—watching at betting terminals or going to the stadia. Personal contacts were established with fans who were openly observed to be engaging in betting activities during the match. Participants were informed that they can withdraw at any time due to the voluntary nature of the study and that there was no financial gain for their participation. Participants were made to be aware that the session will be recorded for accuracy. Thereafter, each participant was given a copy of the transcript to check and decide if any material did not correspond to what was said. This decision was following Lincoln and Guba's <sup>[33]</sup> assertion that credibility should be used in qualitative studies to establish what is commonly known as 'internal validity'. Participants were made to be aware that the researcher would review the transcripts for data analysis. The anonymity of the participants and the data was explained to each participant. Each participant was identified using personal pronouns to maintain confidentiality.

## 2.5 Qualitative analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the data. The IPA is a suitable approach when the researcher intends to find out how individuals are perceiving the particular situation they are facing, how they are making sense of their personal and social world <sup>[52]</sup>. IPA is usually conducted on a small sample size. The study aimed to enable the participants to share their views on factors that will influence them to watch live matches in betting terminals instead of at the stadia. This, therefore, calls for the detailed case by case analysis of each participant's transcript rather than making general claims. This does not mean that the IPA cannot be used for larger populations, but rather it is committed to painstaking analysis instead of jumping to generalization. IPA is intended for studies that participants are purposively sampled, those that the research question is significant. In the present study, sports bettors were purposively sampled based on the research question. The current study adopted the following steps in an attempt to reveal the underlying meaning of the participants' accounts "through a process of interpretative engagement with texts" <sup>[50]</sup>.

1. The transcript was read for several times and the left margin was used to write down preliminary comments, associations and summaries concerning data.

2. Unnecessary and repetitive data, verifying the elimination of said data, and member checking. Elimination of data was purposely aimed at ousting meaningless utterances such as, "hmmm," and "Ummm." However, it was conducted in a manner that the essential meaning of the participants' experiences was not altered but to allow for a smaller and more manageable transcript <sup>[16]</sup>. A summarized version of the transcripts was then given back to the participants to ensure that none of the meanings of the interview was lost. The Participants were allowed to view the transcripts at any time throughout the analysis, referred to as member checking, to provide any additional suggestions or changes of the recordings to ensure their experiences were truthfully conveyed.

3. Using the preliminary notes, transcript 'a' was reread several times and emergent themes within the text were noted in the right margin.

4. Using the emergent themes from transcript 'a' as a basis, the preliminary notes and text from transcript 'b' were reread. Whilst looking for and noting down instances of themes already found in transcript 'a', new themes were identified and noted in the right margin. This cumulative process was continued for all six interviews.

5. Emergent themes within each transcript and references to where instances of it could be found were transferred to a separate master list for each interview.

6. Connections between the themes within the master list 1 were looked for, concerning the actual quotes in the transcript, to enable the clustering of themes into categories. During this stage, certain themes were dropped due to not being supported by rich detail evidence in the transcript or not fitting with the structure of categories.

7. Using categories identified in master list 1 as a basis, themes from master list 2 were added into old categories and used to make new categories if necessary. Concerning the primary source material, this cumulative process was continued for all six interviews to produce a master list for the group. During this stage themes and categories that were not supported by rich detail evidence or did not fit with the structure of categories were dropped.

## 2.6 Reliability

For a qualitative study to be reliable, the researcher must consider the participants as trustworthy. Reliability refers to a situation where results from a particular study are consistent across people and time. Member checking, a process whereby the transcripts are reviewed by the participants to ensure the accuracy of the recordings to their experiences <sup>[44]</sup>, demonstrated reliability since there was no suggestion for changes. The themes conveyed by the participants were deemed trustworthy, thus indicating the reliability of the results. Although consistent findings may be observed in interpretive research of a particular study, consideration must be given to the fact that "human descriptions and meanings change over time as a result of changing experiences" <sup>[56]</sup>.

## 2.7 Validity

Egli et al <sup>[16]</sup> asserted that the degree of a study's validity is based on a reader's ability to express the descriptions as truthful. Eight procedures have been identified that help to increase the trustworthiness or validity of qualitative projects <sup>[8]</sup>. They comprise: (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; (b) triangulation (or crystallation); (c) peer review and debriefing; (d) negative case analysis; (e) clarification of researcher bias; (f) member checking; (g) rich, thick description; and (h) external audit. Glesne<sup>[22]</sup> hypothesized that all the procedures cannot take place in every study; notwithstanding, most of them were used in the study to promote trustworthiness.

## 3. Findings and Discussions

Participants were allowed to express their views on factors influencing them to watch matches in betting terminals instead of the stadia. After a case to case analysis of each participant's transcript, four major themes emerged from the data analysis. Two of the themes were related to money so they were combined as *cost and financial benefits* and were discussed as a single theme. Participants also mentioned *socialization/atmosphere, the opportunity to watch more than one match at a time* and *proximity-nearness* of the betting terminals to their homes as the other factors. On the contrary, the participants revealed that the increase in the number of betting terminals has resulted in younger people being exposed to betting and are neglecting their studies. While the inscriptions on the gates of the betting terminals state that people under-18 are not expected to enter the terminals, they rather make up most of the people staking odds. To most of the participants, the government should make and enforce laws that can move to the extent of imposing a fine on betting companies where younger people usually go there to watch matches while other participants insisted the betting commission should ensure that the rule restricting people below the age of 18 from entering betting terminals are enforced.

### 3.1 Cost and Financial Benefits

Cost and financial benefits were a factor influencing fans to watch matches in betting terminals instead of attending the stadia. Although the cost has been tested as a barrier to attending matches in the developed countries, it has rarely been identified as a constraint to attend matches <sup>[29, 34]</sup>. However, Dixon <sup>[13]</sup> hypothesized that the persistent increase in gate fees together with the advent of televised and stream sports have created the need for many sports fans to migrate from the stadia to pubs especially in the UK. Rocha and Fleury <sup>[48]</sup> also identified cost as a constraint to attend Brazilian soccer matches. The current study has also revealed that cost is an important reason why fans are moving to betting terminals instead of the stadia to watch matches. Fans considered the total cost of attending football matches at the stadia (tickets, transportation and other emergency costs) that will be incurred on match days as a major reason why they prefer going to betting terminals. One fan reiterated "*The reason is that when you compare the cost involved like when you go to the sports stadia to watch football the cost involved is more than the cost that you will incur at sports centers. Example, if I have two cedis, I can go to a sports centers to watch my football or if I don't have money at all, I can go to a betting terminal, but you can't take two cedis to go to the stadia to watch live football matches*". Another participant was of the view that "*I don't board a car to watch matches in betting terminals so all I need is to walk down there and watch live football matches which is free of charge and also the travelling, the gate entrance, and the risks involved but at the betting terminals they don't collect any amount*".

Participants mention financial benefits as a major reason why they prefer watching live matches in betting terminals to the stadia. When football fans intend to attend matches at the stadia, they are likely to incur costs but at the betting terminals, they can even win a bet which is a financial benefit. A participant who was a teacher stated "*since I am into betting, I am much closer to bets, I mean live betting because since I am there watching the match live, I can predict the outcome about 70%, 80% by watching so that is one of the reasons I go there*" another participant was of the view that *well, when you are watching a football match at the betting terminal, you have the chance of betting, live betting, the same time you will be watching the match and there are a lot of people involved, and your bet that you have already placed, you will get to know whether you are losing or you are winning. So, in case you are losing, and you want to bet on another one, it is simple when you are at the betting terminal.*" Therefore, participants mention in-play betting or live betting as a major chance to win bets creating the need for them to visit terminals to watch matches which can also assist them to get money. On the contrary, studies to assess in-play betting revealed that heavy gamblers bet more frequently with in-play betting options <sup>[5, 6, 31, 32, 41]</sup>. Since participants prefer to monitor bets in terminals and adjust them to win odds, they are likely to participate in in-play betting which can lead to problem gambling. The exposure to numerous adverts in the terminals displaying huge winnings with small odds can motivate many people to stake odds.

### 3.2 Socialisation/Atmosphere

Socialization/ atmosphere is an important reason why people like to consume sports events. The social identity theory posits that people classify themselves and others into different social groups which gives them a social identity <sup>[54]</sup>. Social identity theory assists the individual to locate themselves within the social environment <sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, people usually like to go to places where they can easily make friends and consume sports products together. Although attending football matches at the stadia seems to provide this opportunity, participants saw the sight betting and arguing at the terminals provide an added advantage. A participant maintained that *“the arguing, the site betting and the atmosphere is more or less like the stadia”* *“Then the socialisation as well.”* So, while socialisation used to be the main motive why sports spectators prefer to attend matches at the stadia, the betting terminals are also providing similar opportunities. The desire to relieve stress in the terminals also makes participants visit there frequently. Football matches are shown throughout the week in betting terminals with leagues from all over the world. Therefore, people who hardly find others to converse with usually go there. One fan also said *“You can meet different people at betting terminals, although at the stadia you can meet different people, the movement is restricted. At the terminals, you can get people who will teach you how to operate the machines, information on scoring and profile of matches in detail. You can socialise with many people and relieve stress as well.”*

In contrast, the feeling of identity or socialisation is likely to make it more difficult to control problem gambling disorders. Sports consumption-related behaviours such as eating junk food, consuming alcohol, general viewing and emotionally burden situations <sup>[23, 35]</sup> are done in groups. The members of the group are more likely to stake odds apart from the stated activities. They can make predictions about the outcome of matches and encourage others to stake them especially when some of the predictions become true. Consuming alcohol and eating junk food in groups also require money and always pressurize the individual to look for other revenue sources to make contributions and one such way is by staking odds. Regarding this, when treating gambling disorders among people identified within a particular group, it will be better to treat all the members in the group or advised those who have been treated from pathological gambling to abstain from such groups. Research on the decision to give up addiction to gambling has been borrowed from drug addiction which is also addictive behaviour. The decision to give up on gambling has been linked with the role to give up on drugs such as changing social relationships, financial difficulties and life challenges <sup>[26, 55]</sup>. Reith and Dobbie <sup>[47]</sup> hypothesised that to be able to manage gambling effectively there is the need to re-shape oneself and enrich social relationships in culturally acceptable ways such as becoming a responsible person in the community.

### 3.3 The Opportunity to Watch More Than One Match at a Time

The opportunity to watch many football matches all over the world at the same time was mentioned by the participants as one of the major reasons why they prefer to watch live football matches in betting terminals instead of at the stadia. When at the stadia, you have the opportunity to watch only one match so if the match tends to be boring or the level of play is not as expected, you cannot watch any other match. This problem is solved in a betting terminal as there are a lot of television sets showing different matches. The betting companies also have the right to telecast most of the local matches live so attending the stadia seems to offer a little in this sense. Similarly, most of the clubs do not have their own stadia and play league matches on sub-standard fields. Therefore, stadium arena designs like beautiful scoreboards that can provide varieties of viewing options for the fans are not available. Sports cape features have been observed as an important factor that attracts spectators to sporting events see <sup>[58, 25, 60]</sup>. Although betting terminals do not offer such amenities, they at least provide some form of variety by showing different matches on match days.

### 3.4 Proximity

Proximity- the closeness of participants to betting terminals offer one of the reasons why fans would like to watch live matches there instead of the stadia. A fan mentioned, *“proximity is very important, So, you can rush to the house and do something and come back but, at the stadium, you cannot come back to the house and do whatever you want to do”*. Although this point seems not to be all that important as there may be other people who stay at places where there are no betting terminals, the number of the terminals in most of the Ghanaian cities are overwhelming. Willoughby <sup>[61]</sup> postulated that demographic characteristics of cities have no direct effect on attendance at sporting events but can have an indirect effect through the medium of attendance. Sports fans considered the means through which they can have access to the stadia as an important factor which is why they may prefer to go to terminals that are close to their homes.

Another issue that emerged from the study was that most of the fans were willing to attend matches that involve their teams playing with high profile teams. A fan expressed his interest to watch matches in Ghana to help promote the local league and become a patriotic citizen as well. However, he lamented on the type of a match and the time the match will

be played as an important factor to decide whether to go to the stadia or watch the match in a betting terminal. Correia and Esteves<sup>[7]</sup>, were of the view that the interest in an event increase in direct proportion to the uniqueness of the event in a study conducted in Portugal on the spectator's motivation in football. The attendance to matches involving their clubs playing against only high-profile teams questions their commitment to the clubs and the type of fans they may be. Highly identified fans have been found to attend matches irrespective of the circumstances. For instance, college sports fans high in level of identification were found to attend many home matches, travel to attend many away matches and were less bothered about ticket cost<sup>[37]</sup>.

### 3.5 Betting Terminals and the Youth Gambling

The current study is important to the policy maker and the sports manager. To the policy maker, the existing laws on sports betting that do not permit people below the ages of 18 years should be monitored to prevent the youth from engaging in betting at this stage. The youths do not only risk becoming problem gamblers but also, they may neglect their books by spending most of the time in the betting terminals. The increase in the number of sports betting adverts on the television and online have already exposed the youths to online betting especially people displaying their rewards on the television<sup>[39]</sup>. A research conducted in the UK revealed that an estimated 41,000 children under the age of 16 follow game-related accounts online<sup>[9]</sup>. Notwithstanding, no such checks have been conducted in Ghana to examine the number of children who go to the betting terminals on match days. Already there may be problem children gamblers in the country. The implication is that the Gaming Commission Act (721) has failed to monitor, control and regulate the activities of the betting companies as outlined in their mandate.

To the sport managers and the football administrators, although sport betting companies are providing them with sponsorships, they are at risk of losing match day revenues especially on the part of lowly identified fans. They should find various ways to improve fan identification with teams as highly identified fans will ignore the profile of matches and other opportunities available at the betting terminals and go to the stadia. Clubs with their stadia should provide free internet access to the spectators during match days so that fans (bettors) can follow their bets at the stadia and follow the score of other matches.

## 4. Limitations

The current study examined the reasons why six football fans prefer to watch live matches in betting terminals instead of going to the stadia. The study purposively sampled only football fans who watch live matches in betting terminals. The sample size of only male football fans who usually watch live matches from betting terminals created an important limitation to the study. The exclusion of female fan (s) in the study is creating the impression that no female football fan is a sports bettor. However, there may be other female fans who prefer to bet on their phones and not necessarily going to the terminals to follow live bets. Moreover, since the participants were selected based on the willingness to participate in the study, the issue of gender bias seems to be less relevant in the present study. Notwithstanding, a more optional approach should have been the use of a snowballing approach where identification of a fan who bets, can lead to the identification of many other fans outside the betting terminals. This could be useful when the researcher intends to find the profile of sports bettors.

Despite all these factors, the current study highlighted the unique experiences of six football fans on the reasons why they prefer to watch matches in terminals which also brought out the issue of minors (under-18) being introduced to sports betting. Again, accessibilities of these minors to cell phone where they can bet online also pose danger to their studies which provides opportunity for further studies. Future studies should also examine the effects of the creation of many betting terminals on the academic performance of the youths and the role of the gaming commission in controlling and monitoring the activities of sports betting in Ghana.

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