



# Gambling and Gambling research in Emerging Markets: Africa and Asia

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**Citation:** Turner, N.E., Rai, B., Di Falcom, S. (2026). Editorial. Journal of Gambling Issues, 57, 1-6.

**Editor-in-Chief:** Nigel Turner, Ph.D.

**Received:** 03/10/2026  
**Accepted:** 03/12/2026  
**Published:** 03/28/2026

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**Abstract.** N/A



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Gambling is a world-wide phenomenon, has a long history around the world, and is found in most cultures (see Ferentzy & Turner, 2014; Schwartz, 2006). Up until recently, most of this gambling was offered in bricks-and-mortar casino, racetrack, betting shops, and bingo halls (Williams et al., 2021). However, in the past few years we have witnessed the rapid expansion of online and sports gambling in Canada (Turner et al., 2024) and around the world (Cabral, et al., 2025; Saefullah et al., 2025) and this has led to calls for stronger prevention and harm reduction strategies. We are particularly concerned about how online gambling and video gaming have targeted adolescents and young adults (Boak, et al., 2022; Turner et al., 2024).

Most of the research on gambling and gambling problems has taken place in Western countries such as North America and Europe. However, the gambling industry is a worldwide industry, and it is expanding all over the world. Two emerging markets for the gambling industry are in Africa and Asia. According to Statista (2025), the gambling market in Africa is projected to reach US \$17.04 billion in 2025 and is expected to grow by 3.7% annually. This growth is driven by changing customer preferences, rising disposable income and increasing digitalization such as smartphone penetration and internet connectivity. The largest gambling market in Africa is South Africa followed by Nigeria fueled by rapid growth of online gambling (Manimama, 2025). According to Manimama, (2025), 60 million Nigerians actively participate in online gambling. Kenya, Ghana, and Uganda have also shown substantial growth in gambling revenue largely driven by increasing popularity of mobile gambling and sports betting (Manimama, 2025).

In addition, there is a growing body of research on problem gambling that has focused on Africa. For example, Olusegun et al.'s (2023) reported that out of 390 Nigerian online sports bettors 75.4% were classified as probable pathological gamblers. Other studies from Uganda (Anyanwu et al. 2023), Ghana (Manu et al. 2024) and Nigeria (Daniel et al. 2025) have also reported alarmingly high levels of problem gambling. These findings suggest that gambling in Africa is an issue of growing concern requiring greater awareness and preventative measures.

In recent years the JGI has seen an increase in submission from non-western countries including countries from Africa and Asia. We are pleased to support researchers in these emerging market countries and view expanding the international reach of gambling studies as part of our mandate. For Volume 57 we have combined together papers that report on the gambling situation in Africa by researchers located in Africa.

The themes of the papers included in this volume are similar to those that occur in gambling research in the West. Angmor et al., (2025) examined the impact of gambling on the academic performance among students in Ghana. While some students perceive the potential benefits of gambling,

the study identifies substantial negative effects, including addiction, poor academic performance, excessive borrowing and engagement in risky behaviours such as criminal activity and substance use. They recommend targeted school-based prevention programmes, strengthening family and community involvement, as well as stricter enforcing of regulation to reduce the harms of gambling. Sulaiman et al., (2025) examined the information about sports bets that undergraduate students in Nigeria seek related to gambling; They report that it is often about team line-ups and injury updates. They recommend that policymakers and regulators need to strengthen laws regarding the information and run campaigns on responsible betting to protect undergraduates from exploitative platforms and financial losses. Konadu et al., (2025) examined sport betting among female gamblers in Ghanaian. Their results indicate how swift payment of wins attracts people to betting products. They call for a need for aggressive educational campaigns to deal with the issue. Gbadeyan et al., (2025), examined deceptive advertisements in Lagos, Nigeria and their impact on youth. They used interviews, and Focus Group Discussions to examine the issue, The findings reveal that gambling advertisements exploit the economic vulnerabilities of youth, promoting unrealistic expectations of financial success, which often leads to risky gambling behaviour, financial instability, addiction, and depression. Finally, Tuffour et al., (2026) using the General Strain Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, investigated the relationship between gambling and academic performance among university students in Ghana. Their results suggest that problem gambling poses a serious academic risk. These papers expand our understanding of the worldwide context of the gambling industry and the impact of gambling on various people.

**Statement of Competing Interest**

None declared

**Ethics Approval**

Not relevant for this editorial

**Contributions**

NT came up with the idea for this editorial. BR and SDG were placement students from Humber college who contributed to this editorial. BR used his background and interest in economics to explore the economic aspects of gambling in Africa. SDF used her background and interest in sociology to gathered information on the harm from gambling in Africa.

**Funding Source**

The first author also has funding from the Canadian Institute for Health Research (GAM-193002 & PJT-183838) for research into gambling problems. In addition, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provides salary and office space for all CAMH hospital staff.

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**Article Submission:** <https://gamb.manuscriptmanager.net/>