

THE PREVALENCE OF WORKPLACE INTERNET GAMBLING AND ITS EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY: A SURVEY AMONG EMPLOYEES OF MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the prevalence of workplace internet gambling and its effect on employee productivity among selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. A correlational survey design was adopted, with a population comprising employees from five manufacturing firms such as General Plastic Nigeria Ltd, Zenith Plastic, Neo China Rubber and Footwear Industry Ltd, Prazic Limited, and Conglomerates Ltd. A total of 200 respondents were selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, applying Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at a 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed strong and statistically significant negative relationships between gambling frequency and both work performance ($r = -0.612$, $p < 0.05$) and work attendance ($r = -0.548$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, platform accessibility showed significant negative correlations with work performance ($r = -0.493$, $p < 0.05$) and work attendance ($r = -0.465$, $p < 0.05$). These findings indicate that frequent engagement in online gambling and easy accessibility to gambling platforms during work hours significantly reduce employee efficiency, punctuality, and organizational productivity. The study concludes that workplace internet gambling poses a serious threat to employee discipline and performance in the manufacturing sector. It recommends that organizations should enforce strict internet-use policies, implement digital monitoring systems, and organize awareness campaigns and counselling programmes to curb workplace gambling.

Keywords: Internet gambling, employee productivity, work performance, work attendance, platform accessibility, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, participation in gambling activities is generally very high in recent times. Gambling rate among employees in Rivers State is of growing concern. A lot of employees are engaged in gambling and they have the mindset of financial greatness that is why they use all their resources and that of the families to gamble. In addition to the individual harms that gambling can cause, organizations can also be negatively affected by the behaviours of gamblers. These harms apparently range from employees arriving to work late, absenteeism, presentism, low productivity to financial embezzlement. Because of the prolific use of smartphones as an instrument for gambling, the issue of productivity is also of a great concern to organizations. Gambling has been defined as an invisible addiction and it is of a great challenge to identify than alcohol or drug addictions. (Rafi, Lindfors & Carbiing, 2023).

These challenges under-scores the need for research exploring how the rate of gambling can be ameliorating to curb its effects while promoting positive and high level of employee productivity in the workplace. The existing research having required that importance of employee productivity in enhancing organizational performance globally, there is limited empirical evidence from Nigeria, especially in the context of Rivers State.

Research on prevalence of workplace gambling and its effect on productivity has been carried out in the Western and African context, leaving a gap in the understanding of how the concept operates perhaps in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular. For instance, one of the studies revealed that most of the respondent who gamble at the workplace are in Human Resource roles, followed by Finance and Accountants and other professionals (Ndegwa, Njihia, and James, 2018). Therefore, the applicability of these findings in Nigeria, Rivers State in particular is uncertain.

In Rivers State, where organizational structures are often constrained with limited resources to SMEs, external pressure, political instability and the recent state of emergency declared, the extent to which workplace gambling influenced productivity.

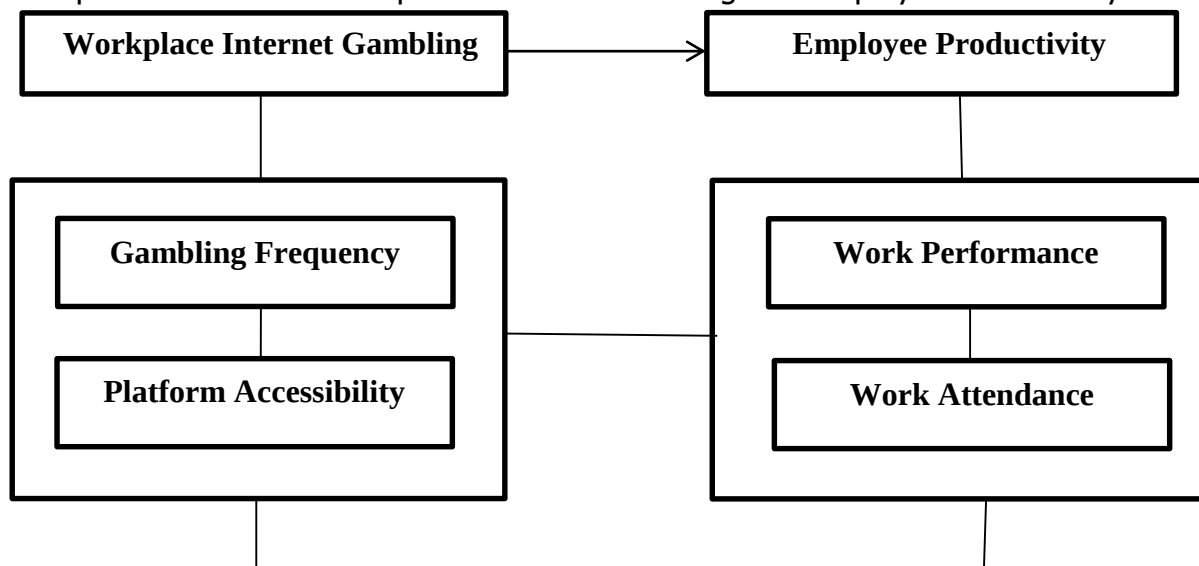
Statement of Problem

The increase rate of belting and gambling in Nigeria, Rivers State in particular, highlighted the need to investigate it economic and subsequently the behaviours associated with gambling. Employee productivity is characterized by the level of outputs which is capable of enhancing the organizational performance is very critical in addressing low productivity, absenteeism, presentism, low morale and lack of commitment.

Rivers State which is a home to Nigeria's most critical oil and gas sector, is facing unique socio-economic disparities, high employee turnover and the recent State of Emergency declared by the president by Federal Government led by Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the 18th March 2025 that has crippled the Rivers State economic activities, affecting the IGR of the State. These factors indeed have presented an ideal belting investigating the interplay between the prevalence of workplace gambling and employee productivity. As poverty level increases, businesses are losing its customers, many businesses are closing and relocating as a result of economic hardship, lack of employees' productivity, lack of financial breakthrough and the quest to augment their mega salaries, they use all their resources of the family. Researchers have investigated this issue globally, the effect of gambling and its effect on employees has remain largely unexplored in this context. This gap is particularly pronounced among employees of manufacturing firms such as General Plastic Nigeria Ltd, Zenith Plastic, Conglomerates Ltd. Neo China Rubber & Footwear industry Ltd, and Prazic Limited. However, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining the impact of gambling in workplace and employee productivity, focusing on staff of four manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Into how workplace gambling can be checked and controlled to foster employee productivity in Rivers State that is characterized by resource constraint, environment, economic hardship and the recent political State of emergency has further highlighted already existing economic crisis, thereby contributing over indulgence in gambling activities.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework Workplace Internet Gambling and Employee Productivity



Source: Adapted from Griffiths, M. D., & Nower, L. (2021).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of workplace gambling and employee productivity: the specific objective of the study was to:

1. examine the relationship between Gambling Frequency and work performance of employees.
2. determine the relationship between Gambling Frequency and Work Attendance of employees.
3. investigate the relationship between Platform Accessibility and work performance of employees.
4. examine the relationship between Platform Accessibility and Work Attendance of employees.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between gambling frequency and the work performance of employees?
2. What is the relationship between gambling frequency and the work attendance of employees?
3. What is the relationship between platform accessibility and the work performance of employees?
4. What is the relationship between platform accessibility and the work attendance of employees?

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses (H_0):

1. H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between gambling frequency and the work performance of employees.

2. H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between gambling frequency and the work attendance of employees.
3. H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between platform accessibility and the work performance of employees.
4. H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between platform accessibility and the work attendance of employees.

Literature Review

The impact of workplace gambling. Employee productivity has gained ground in contemporary research, especially organization globally are striving to tackle the negative consequences on productivity. This literature review critically examined relevant studies to establish the theoretical and empirical foundations of this research.

Concept of Internet Gambling

Internet gambling refers to the act of wagering or betting on games of chance or skill through internet-enabled devices such as computers, smartphones, or tablets. According to Gainsbury (2019), it encompasses various activities, including online casinos, sports betting, poker, bingo, and lotteries, where monetary stakes are placed via digital platforms. The digitalization of gambling has transformed traditional betting behaviors, offering convenience, anonymity, and instant access, but it has also introduced complex social and psychological challenges.

Internet gambling differs from traditional forms in that it occurs in a virtual environment without physical interaction, relying heavily on digital interfaces and payment systems (Hing et al., 2022). This accessibility increases the frequency and duration of gambling sessions, making it easier for individuals to gamble impulsively or excessively. The proliferation of mobile technology and social media advertisements has further normalized gambling as an acceptable leisure activity (Wardle et al., 2021). These developments have led to significant global growth in gambling participation rates and associated addiction risks.

Psychologically, online gambling provides an illusion of control, where gamblers often believe they can influence random outcomes, leading to cognitive distortions and compulsive behaviors (Kuss & Griffiths, 2022). Additionally, the rapid feedback cycles and constant availability of online platforms can trigger the brain's reward systems, reinforcing repetitive play and addiction patterns. Economically, it poses both opportunities and threats: while it generates revenue for operators and governments, it contributes to financial strain and workplace productivity loss among problem gamblers (Calado & Griffiths, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift toward online gambling as physical casinos closed, pushing individuals toward digital alternatives (Håkansson, 2020). This transition revealed the growing vulnerability of populations with easy access to online gambling tools, especially in regions with weak regulatory controls. Consequently, scholars and policymakers have emphasized the need for responsible gambling frameworks and digital safeguards to mitigate harm. In sum, online gambling represents a rapidly evolving behavioral and technological phenomenon that demands balanced regulation, psychological awareness, and organizational vigilance to prevent its detrimental social and economic consequences.

Types of Internet Gambling

Internet gambling refers to wagering or betting activities conducted through online platforms using internet-enabled devices such as smartphones, tablets, or computers. It encompasses a wide variety of gambling opportunities that mirror and expand upon traditional betting formats. As technology evolves, the accessibility, anonymity, and interactivity of these platforms have transformed gambling from a physical to a digital experience, leading to new behavioral patterns and regulatory challenges (Auer & Griffiths, 2020).

Online Casino Gambling

Online casinos are among the most popular forms of internet gambling. They replicate physical casino experiences by offering digital versions of slot machines, blackjack, roulette, baccarat, and live dealer games. The immersive graphics, instant feedback, and availability of real-time interactions enhance the entertainment value but also increase the risk of addiction and financial loss (LaPlante et al., 2021). These platforms often operate continuously, allowing users to gamble at any time, thus encouraging prolonged play and reduced self-regulation.

Online Sports Betting

Sports betting allows individuals to wager on outcomes of sporting events, including football, basketball, horse racing, and tennis. The rise of mobile apps and live betting systems has revolutionized this sector, offering gamblers the chance to place bets during ongoing matches. This real-time engagement creates an adrenaline-driven cycle that heightens both excitement and potential harm (Philander, 2020).

Online Poker and Skill-Based Games

Online poker combines elements of chance, strategy, and social interaction. Players participate in cash games or tournaments against others globally, often leading to excessive play due to competitiveness and constant accessibility. The sense of skill mastery can mask underlying addictive tendencies (Håkansson & Widinghoff, 2022).

Lotteries, Bingo, and Emerging Forms

Digital lotteries and bingo are simple, chance-based games that attract participants with low entry fees and high payout potential. Recently, new forms such as fantasy sports, eSports betting, and cryptocurrency gambling have emerged. These innovative formats appeal to younger, tech-savvy audiences but raise ethical and regulatory concerns regarding underage access and data security (Gainsbury & Blaszczynski, 2020).

Dimensions of Workplace Internet Gambling

Gambling Frequency

The frequency of internet gambling at work refers to how often employees engage in online betting or gaming activities during official working hours using internet-enabled devices such as smartphones, tablets, or computers. In Nigeria, the rapid expansion of mobile technology and the popularity of betting platforms like Bet9ja, NairaBet, and SportyBet have made workplace gambling increasingly common (Okeke & Ude, 2021). Employees often toggle between job-related tasks and online gambling, which blurs the line between professional commitment and personal indulgence. This growing trend is particularly

pronounced in urban areas, where internet accessibility and smartphone penetration are high (Eze & Nwankwo, 2020).

Frequent workplace gambling is influenced by several socio-economic and psychological factors. Many Nigerian workers facing financial hardship, delayed salaries, and inflation perceive gambling as a quick avenue for income generation (Afolabi & Fagbemi, 2022). Others engage in it for recreation, stress relief, or peer influence. However, repeated engagement during work hours can evolve into addictive behavior that disrupts concentration and reduces task efficiency (Olowookere & Oyeleke, 2021). Over time, such habits contribute to reduced job performance, lateness, absenteeism, and low morale among employees.

Moreover, the easy accessibility of betting platforms via mobile applications and social media advertisements encourages impulsive gambling behavior at work. This has significant implications for organizational productivity, as workers spend valuable time on non-work-related activities (Ogunleye & Okonkwo, 2021). Employers often find it difficult to detect or control such behaviors because of the private nature of online gambling. In essence, frequent internet gambling at work poses a growing challenge to Nigerian organizations. It not only undermines productivity but also affects employee discipline and ethical conduct. Understanding this behavioral pattern is crucial for human resource managers and policymakers to design effective workplace regulations and digital wellness initiatives.

Platforms Accessibility

The accessibility of gambling platforms at the workplace refers to the ease with which employees can connect to online betting and gaming websites or applications during working hours. With the widespread use of smartphones, mobile internet, and digital payment systems, employees now have constant access to gambling sites such as BetKing, 1xBet, and Bet9ja from their desks or mobile devices. This increased access has blurred the boundaries between work and leisure, allowing gambling behaviors to infiltrate professional environments (Owolabi & Ojo, 2021). The presence of personal internet connections and Wi-Fi networks makes it difficult for organizations to monitor or restrict such activities (Omodero, 2022).

Modern betting platforms are designed for convenience, offering 24-hour services, live betting options, and instant payment systems that make gambling quick and appealing. Their seamless integration with mobile apps and social media channels enhances accessibility and engagement, encouraging employees to gamble even during work hours (Ademola & Adeoye, 2021). As a result, workplace accessibility significantly contributes to gambling frequency and problem gambling behavior. Employees with constant access to gambling apps may experience distraction, divided attention, and reduced focus on assigned tasks (Uche & Ede, 2022).

Socioeconomic pressures in Nigeria such as inflation, underemployment, and financial instability also heighten the allure of easily accessible gambling platforms. Many employees perceive online gambling as an opportunity to supplement income or escape workplace stress, thereby normalizing the behavior (Adewale & Ojo, 2023). Unfortunately, the result is often declining productivity, missed deadlines, and lower work commitment. Furthermore, the absence of comprehensive workplace internet-use policies in many Nigerian organizations creates a permissive environment for online gambling. The accessibility of gambling platforms within the workplace poses a growing organizational concern. Restricting such access through digital monitoring, employee awareness programs, and

responsible gambling education is essential to preserve productivity and ethical work culture.

Dimensions of Employee Productivity

Work Performance

Work performance refers to the degree to which employees effectively carry out their assigned duties and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. It encompasses the quality, efficiency, and consistency of an employee's output in relation to expected standards (Omodero, 2022). In organizational psychology, work performance is often evaluated through indicators such as task completion, productivity level, teamwork, innovation, and adherence to deadlines. High employee performance is essential for sustaining competitiveness and operational success in any organization (Adewale & Ojo, 2023).

Several factors influence work performance, including motivation, job satisfaction, organizational culture, leadership style, and personal discipline. Employees who are motivated and work in supportive environments tend to exhibit higher engagement and commitment, leading to improved performance (Owolabi & Ojo, 2021). Conversely, distractions such as social media use, internet misuse, and workplace gambling can diminish focus, increase errors, and lower productivity. Technological accessibility has introduced both opportunities and risks while digital tools can enhance efficiency, they also provide avenues for non-work-related activities that compete for employees' attention (Uche & Ede, 2022). In Nigeria, work performance has become an important concern due to rising economic challenges, job insecurity, and digital distractions that affect concentration and morale. Poor work performance leads to low output, decreased profitability, and weakened organizational growth (Ademola & Adeoye, 2021). Therefore, improving employee performance requires effective management strategies such as performance appraisal, reward systems, professional development, and the creation of conducive work environments that minimize distractions and promote productivity.

Work Attendance

Work attendance refers to the consistency and punctuality with which employees report to their workplaces and perform their assigned tasks within scheduled hours. It is a critical determinant of organizational efficiency, discipline, and productivity (Eze & Nwosu, 2020). Regular attendance not only enhances teamwork and workflow continuity but also demonstrates employee commitment and accountability toward organizational goals. Conversely, irregular attendance manifested through absenteeism, lateness, and early departures can disrupt operations, reduce output, and increase the workload of present employees (Ibrahim & Musa, 2021).

Several factors influence work attendance, including job satisfaction, motivation, leadership quality, and personal well-being. In the Nigerian context, infrastructural challenges such as unreliable transportation, poor road networks, and unstable power supply often contribute to lateness and absenteeism (Onwuka & Eze, 2022). Moreover, digital distractions particularly the rise of mobile betting and social media use have exacerbated absenteeism and presenteeism, where employees are physically present but mentally disengaged (Nwankwo & Opara, 2023). Economic hardship and job dissatisfaction also encourage workers to prioritize personal income-generating activities, such as gambling, over consistent attendance. Organizations that implement effective attendance monitoring

systems, flexible scheduling, and employee welfare programs tend to record better attendance and higher morale (Adebayo & Alabi, 2021). Such measures, combined with supportive leadership and fair disciplinary practices, foster a culture of reliability and productivity. Ultimately, consistent work attendance remains vital for achieving operational stability and long-term organizational success.

Theoretical Review

Addiction Theory

Addiction Theory, was first systematically developed by Bruce K. Alexander in 1978 and later expanded by scholars such as Peele (1985) and Shaffer (1999), explains addiction as a complex psychological and behavioral condition characterized by compulsive engagement in rewarding stimuli despite harmful consequences. Traditionally, the theory was applied to substance abuse, but it has since evolved to include behavioral addictions such as gambling, internet use, and gaming. Alexander (1978), addiction arises not merely from chemical dependency but from social isolation, environmental stress, and a lack of meaningful alternatives, which drive individuals to seek artificial rewards through repetitive behaviors. The theory posits that addiction results from the brain's reinforcement system, where pleasurable activities release dopamine, reinforcing the desire to repeat such behaviors (Shaffer, 1999). Over time, the individual loses control, developing tolerance and dependence on the activity for psychological satisfaction. In the context of internet gambling, this theory helps explain why employees persist in online betting despite knowing its potential negative effects on productivity and well-being. Gambling stimulates the same neurological reward pathways as drugs or alcohol, leading to compulsive behavior and reduced self-regulation (Peele, 1985).

The relevance of Addiction Theory to the present study lies in its ability to interpret workplace gambling as a behavioral addiction driven by psychological gratification and environmental initiations such as accessibility and financial stress. It provides a framework for understanding how frequent exposure to gambling platforms can condition employees to habitual engagement, ultimately impairing focus, attendance, and work performance.

Empirical Review

Okeke and Ude (2021) conducted a study titled "The Prevalence and Effects of Sports Betting among Working-Class Adults in Southern Nigeria" using a descriptive survey design on 250 employees across selected private organizations in Port Harcourt. The results revealed that about 68% of respondents engaged in sports betting during working hours, leading to loss of focus, lateness, and decreased productivity. The study concluded that workplace gambling significantly impairs employee concentration and organizational efficiency. It further observed that gambling behavior often stems from economic hardship and peer influence. The authors recommended that organizations introduce strict internet-use policies, employee sensitization programs, and workplace counseling initiatives to discourage betting activities and promote a culture of productivity and discipline among employees. The finding of this study related to present study since it addressed the relevance of gambling which is a variable to the study. The study however differs from the present study in terms of targeted population.

Ogunleye and Okonkwo (2021) investigated Workplace Internet Usage and Employee Productivity: Evidence from Selected Organizations in Lagos" adopted a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires administered to 200 employees in the banking

and telecommunications sectors. The findings revealed that unrestricted internet access at work encouraged employees to engage in non-work activities, including online gambling and social networking, which adversely affected task performance and time management. The authors concluded that excessive and unsupervised internet use diminishes employee output and fosters distraction. They recommended that organizations adopt digital monitoring systems, implement time-tracking tools, and establish workplace policies that restrict gambling websites to minimize productivity loss and ensure employees utilize internet resources primarily for professional tasks and business-related research. The finding is related to the present study in that it addressed some factors that inhibited the internet gambling and employee productivity which are variables of the present study. The study differs from the present study in terms of location.

Afolabi and Fagbemi (2022) carried out a study titled "Internet Gambling and Its Psychosocial Implications among Nigerian Youths" employing a mixed-method design that included surveys and interviews of 300 participants across different employment sectors. The results indicated a strong correlation between online gambling, stress, financial instability, and reduced workplace engagement. Employees who frequently gambled online reported emotional exhaustion, absenteeism, and lack of commitment to job responsibilities. The study concluded that online gambling extends beyond financial consequences to include psychological distress and behavioral addiction that undermine productivity. The researchers recommended that organizations establish mental health support programs, provide counseling for employees exhibiting gambling tendencies, and promote responsible digital behavior to mitigate the detrimental psychosocial impacts of gambling among working individuals. The finding of this study is related to the present since it is an aspect of gambling which is a variable to the present study. However, the study differs from the present study in terms of population, location and statistical tool for data analysis.

Olowookere and Oyeleke (2021) conducted a correlational study titled "Online Gambling Behavior and Work Performance among Nigerian Employees" involving 150 respondents from selected manufacturing firms in Ogun and Lagos States. The study revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between gambling frequency and employee work performance, indicating that employees who frequently gambled online exhibited lower concentration, reduced efficiency, and higher error rates. The study concluded that workplace gambling has a detrimental impact on employee performance and organizational productivity. It emphasized that gambling during work hours disrupts focus and contributes to presenteeism. The authors recommended that employers introduce awareness campaigns, enforce anti-gambling policies, and implement periodic training on time management and self-regulation to improve employees' focus and performance. The finding of this study is related to the present study since it is an aspect of gambling which is a variable to the study. This study however differs from the presents study in terms of location, data collecting instrument and statistical tool for data analysis.

Eze and Nwankwo (2020) explored "Mobile Technology and the Rise of Online Betting Culture in Nigeria" using a qualitative research design that examined behavioral trends among 50 employees in service-oriented organizations. The study found that the proliferation of mobile phones and betting apps has made gambling highly accessible within workplaces, encouraging frequent participation during work hours. Peer influence, advertisements, and mobile notifications were identified as major triggers. The study concluded that mobile technology has intensified workplace distractions, lowering

productivity and ethical commitment. Eze and Nwankwo recommended the introduction of digital use regulations, workplace supervision mechanisms, and employee education programs to promote responsible internet behavior, reduce gambling-related distractions, and strengthen organizational performance and ethical work standards. The findings of this study related to the present since it is an aspect of gambling which is a variable to the study. The study however differs from the present study in terms location, data collection instrument and statistical tool for data analysis.

Omodero (2022) conducted a cross-sectional study titled "Internet Addiction and Employee Productivity in Nigerian Corporate Organizations" with 300 participants from selected corporate institutions in Abuja and Lagos. Using structured questionnaires, the study investigated the relationship between internet misuse, gambling addiction, and job performance. Results revealed that employees with higher internet gambling tendencies recorded lower productivity, higher absenteeism, and increased procrastination. The study concluded that internet addiction, particularly through online betting, undermines employee efficiency and overall organizational performance. It highlighted the need for management to address gambling as a workplace behavioral issue. The researcher recommended the implementation of digital monitoring software, employee wellness and rehabilitation programs, and awareness campaigns aimed at fostering responsible internet use and improving workplace productivity levels. This study differs from the current study in terms of findings, population and statistical tool for data analysis.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a correlational survey research design to examine the relationship between gambling frequency, platform accessibility, and employee productivity, focusing on work performance and work attendance among staff of selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables without manipulating any of them. The study population consists of all employees in five selected manufacturing firms General Plastic Nigeria Ltd, Zenith Plastic, Neo China Rubber and Footwear Industry Ltd, Prazic Limited, and Conglomerates Ltd. A sample size of 200 respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across departments and job categories. The research instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. All items were structured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To establish the validity of the instrument, it was subjected to expert review by professionals in human resource management and educational psychology. A pilot study was conducted using 30 employees from a similar firm not included in the main study, and the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients ranging between 0.78 and 0.86, confirming internal consistency. Data collection was carried out personally with the help of trained research assistants to ensure a high response rate. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing Pearson's correlation at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Correlation result for gambling frequency and work performance of employees

Variables		Gambling Frequency	Work Performance
Gambling Frequency	Pearson correlation	1	-0.612**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200
Work Performance	Pearson correlation	-0.612**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

Source: SPSS Output, (2025).) **correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 result shows a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = -0.612$, with a significance level of $p = 0.000$, which is less than 0.05. This indicates a strong negative and statistically significant relationship between gambling frequency and work performance. In practical terms, as employees engage more frequently in online gambling, their work performance tends to decrease substantially. The negative correlation suggests that high gambling frequency disrupts task focus, reduces concentration, and affects productivity outcomes. The finding implies that gambling during work hours distracts employees from organizational goals, leading to inefficiency and potential decline in work quality. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected, confirming that gambling frequency significantly affects employee performance.

Table 2: Correlation result for gambling frequency and work attendance of employees

Variables		Gambling Frequency	Work Attendance
Gambling Frequency	Pearson correlation	1	-0.548**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200
Work Attendance	Pearson correlation	-0.548**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

Source: SPSS Output, (2025).) **correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 reports a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.548$ with $p = 0.000$, indicating a moderately strong negative and significant relationship between gambling frequency and work attendance. This suggests that employees who frequently gamble online are more likely to exhibit poor attendance behaviors such as absenteeism, lateness, and early departures. Frequent gambling may cause loss of sleep, reduced motivation, or time mismanagement, which in turn lowers attendance consistency. The statistical significance implies that this relationship is not due to chance, reinforcing that workplace gambling disrupts organizational discipline. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected, establishing that gambling frequency negatively impacts employees' attendance patterns.

Table 3: Correlation result for platform accessibility and work performance of employees

Variables		Platform Accessibility	Work Performance
Platform Accessibility	Pearson correlation	1	-0.493**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200
Work Performance	Pearson correlation	-0.493**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

Source: SPSS Output, (2025). **correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 indicated a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.493$ with a p-value of 0.000 indicates a moderate, negative, and significant relationship between platform accessibility and employee work performance. This means that the easier it is for employees to access online gambling platforms (via smartphones, Wi-Fi, or unmonitored networks), the lower their job performance becomes. The negative association demonstrates that platform accessibility increases the temptation to gamble during work hours, thereby reducing concentration, time management, and task completion rates. The finding highlights the role of technological convenience as an enabling factor for workplace distractions. The null hypothesis (H_{03}) is therefore rejected, confirming that platform accessibility significantly influences work performance in a negative manner.

Table 4: Correlation result for platform accessibility and work attendance of employees

Variables		Platform Accessibility	Work Attendance
Platform Accessibility	Pearson correlation	1	-0.465**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200
Work Attendance	Pearson correlation	-0.465**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

Source: SPSS Output, (2025). **correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 presents a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = -0.465$ and $p = 0.000$, showing a moderate and statistically significant negative relationship between platform accessibility and work attendance. The result implies that employees with greater access to online gambling platforms are more prone to irregular attendance. Such employees may arrive late, take longer breaks, or even skip work to engage in gambling. The significance level confirms that the relationship is not random, suggesting that the availability of gambling technology contributes directly to attendance issues. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide clear evidence that workplace internet gambling has a significant negative influence on employee productivity in manufacturing firms within Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table one revealed a strong negative correlation between gambling frequency and work performance ($r = -0.612$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that as employees engage more frequently in internet gambling, their productivity and task efficiency decline. Frequent gambling disrupts focus and concentration, leading to poor decision-making, slower task completion, and reduced output quality. This finding supports the work of Olowookere and Oyeleke (2021), who observed that gambling activities interfere with employees' cognitive abilities, causing distraction and performance lapses. Similarly, Afolabi and Fagbemi (2022) confirmed that gambling addiction results in fatigue, loss of motivation, and underperformance at work. In essence, the time employees spend on gambling activities during work hours diverts attention from professional duties, diminishes creativity, and undermines overall organizational productivity, demonstrating that workplace gambling is detrimental to sustainable employee performance and efficiency.

Table 2 showed a moderately strong negative correlation between gambling frequency and work attendance ($r = -0.548$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that employees who gamble more frequently are more prone to lateness, absenteeism, and reduced punctuality. The pressure to monitor gambling results or recover losses often leads to emotional distress, late reporting, and occasional absenteeism. This finding corroborates Okeke and Ude (2021), who discovered that employees who engage in online betting frequently miss work or arrive late due to fatigue and loss of sleep. Similarly, Ogunleye and Okonkwo (2021) noted that gambling during work hours contributes to presenteeism, where employees are physically present but mentally distracted. Thus, excessive gambling creates a pattern of irregular attendance, disrupts workflow, and weakens organizational discipline, confirming that habitual gambling has a direct, negative impact on employee attendance and workplace reliability.

Table 3 indicated a significant negative relationship between platform accessibility and work performance ($r = -0.493$, $p < 0.05$), showing that the easier it is for employees to access online gambling platforms, the lower their productivity tends to be. When gambling platforms are easily available through smartphones, mobile data, or workplace Wi-Fi, employees face greater temptation to engage during working hours, leading to distraction and decreased work quality. This finding supports Eze and Nwankwo (2020), who emphasized that mobile technology increases exposure to gambling, thereby reducing concentration and commitment to work. Likewise, Omodero (2022) found that unrestricted internet access encourages misuse, resulting in low productivity. Therefore, the ease of gambling platform accessibility contributes significantly to time wastage, reduced focus, and overall inefficiency among employees, highlighting the role of technology in enabling workplace gambling behavior.

Table 4 revealed a moderate, negative, and statistically significant relationship between platform accessibility and work attendance ($r = -0.465$, $p < 0.05$). Employees who have unrestricted access to gambling platforms are more likely to develop irregular attendance patterns, including lateness and absenteeism. Easy access to gambling apps creates opportunities for distraction and prolonged engagement, which reduces employees' commitment to reporting on time. This finding aligns with Omodero (2022), who identified that internet misuse contributes to absenteeism, presentism and poor workplace discipline. Similarly, Owolabi and Ojo (2021) found that high digital access enables gambling addiction, affecting punctuality and productivity. The result implies that unregulated internet access at work fosters irresponsible behaviors that weaken attendance and disrupt organizational

operations. Hence, managing platform accessibility is essential for improving employee reliability, attendance consistency, and overall organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the prevalence of workplace internet gambling and its effect on employee productivity among manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The results clearly indicate that both gambling frequency and platform accessibility have significant negative relationships with employee work performance and attendance. Employees who frequently engage in online gambling tend to exhibit reduced concentration, poor task execution, lateness, absenteeism, and declining commitment to organizational goals. Similarly, the accessibility of gambling platforms enabled by smartphones, mobile data, and unmonitored internet connectivity has made gambling easier and more tempting during work hours, thereby diminishing productivity and workplace discipline. The findings align with the principles of Addiction Theory, which suggest that repetitive exposure to rewarding behaviors like gambling can lead to compulsive engagement despite adverse consequences. In this context, online gambling serves as a behavioral addiction that disrupts cognitive control and focus at work. The study therefore concludes that workplace internet gambling is a growing behavioral and managerial concern that adversely affects both individual performance and organizational efficiency. To address these challenges, organizations must adopt comprehensive strategies such as implementing strict internet-use policies, monitoring online activities, and providing employee education on the dangers of gambling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Implement Strict Internet-Use Policies: Organizations should establish clear regulations that restrict access to online gambling sites during work hours. Firewalls and monitoring software can be used to block gambling platforms on workplace networks.
2. Employee Awareness and Education: Regular seminars and training sessions should be organized to educate employees on the dangers of internet gambling and its negative impact on productivity, work discipline, and personal finances.
3. Introduce Counseling and Support Programs: Employers should provide access to counseling and employee assistance programs (EAPs) for workers exhibiting gambling tendencies. This will help address behavioral addictions early.
4. Promote Digital Responsibility: Human resource departments should incorporate digital ethics and responsible internet use into employee orientation and performance management systems.

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