Exploring Social Media Influencers Promotion of Online Gambling Among South African Youth

Errol Baloyi, Nokuthaba Siphambili, Molebogeng Latakgomo and Ele Mukondeleli
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Pretoria, South Africa

EBaloyi2@csir.co.za
NSiphambili@csir.co.za
MLatakgomo@csir.co.za
EMukondeleli@csir.co.za

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalization of daily life, shifting work, education, and social interaction into the online environment. Within this context, social media has become a powerful platform for marketing and behavioural influence, reshaping how young South Africans engage with online gambling. This study examines the role of social media influencers in promoting and legitimizing online gambling among South African youth through a qualitative content analysis of posts on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. The findings reveal that gambling-related content is frequently embedded within lifestyle, entertainment, and aspirational narratives that portray gambling as a routine, glamorous, and desirable activity. Such portrayals contribute to the normalization of gambling, blurring the line between leisure and risk-taking behaviour. The findings further highlight the growing social and psychological consequences of this trend, including financial vulnerability, addiction risks, and cases in which some South African higher education students reportedly use their National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) allowances to fund online gambling activities. Moreover, the study identifies significant regulatory gaps between current social media marketing practices and existing South African gambling legislation, exposing weaknesses in the oversight of influencer advertising. These findings underscore the urgent need for stronger regulatory frameworks and ethical standards governing digital marketing and gambling promotion. The paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers, regulators, and digital platforms to strengthen advertising controls, enhance consumer protection, and promote media literacy initiatives aimed at mitigating the harmful effects of influencer-driven gambling promotion among South African youth.

Keywords: COVID-19, Social Media Influencers, NSFAS, Online Gambling.

1. Introduction

Social media advertising and influencer marketing that promote online gambling have long raised concerns. Hing et al (2014) found that incentives such as free bets often lead gamblers to exceed intended levels of play, indicating that advertising and influencer marketing stimulate gambling urges. Such practices are defined as paid, mediated communications from identifiable sources intended to influence audience behaviour (Richards and Curran, 2002). Social media platforms have become particularly attractive to gambling operators as low-cost, highly engaging alternatives to traditional advertising, facilitating direct interaction with users (Singer et al, 2024). These platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), enable interactive content sharing and user engagement, while advances in artificial intelligence (AI) have enhanced personalised content delivery and advertising optimisation (De Doncker & McLean, 2022; Charu, 2024).

Concerns have intensified as young people spend increasing time online, a trend amplified during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, when boredom, restricted mobility and disrupted routines contributed to greater engagement with online gambling (Malema et al, 2021; Fahrudin et al, 2024). During this period, the gambling industry expanded its marketing activities to stimulate demand and normalise gambling as everyday leisure (Thomas et al, 2023). Gambling companies increasingly employed social media influencers to enhance appeal and normalise gambling behaviours among young people, with research indicating that influencer and celebrity endorsements, particularly incentives-based promotions are highly persuasive (Fahrudin et al, 2024; Pitt et al, 2024; Thomas et al, 2023). Accordingly, this study examines the extent to which social media influencers shape the promotion of online gambling in South Africa.

1.1 Online Gambling

Online gambling is the ability to participating in activities such as casinos, sports betting, lotteries, e-gaming, and slot games through the Internet, allowing individuals to gamble conveniently from home using technologies such as smartphones (Sichali et al, 2023). Over the past decade, online gambling in South Africa has surged, fuelled by widespread smartphone adoption, affordable data plans and the rise of mobile betting platforms. While gambling has historically been a regulated recreational activity, the digital shift has introduced unprecedented

exposure and risk, particularly for young people. Recent political and media discourse suggests that online betting is evolving into a public health and social crisis rather than simply a leisure pastime (Mokoena, 2025).

The health and social impacts of online gambling are a growing global concern. Gambling disorders have been associated with suicidal behaviours, anxiety and depression, with some individuals using gambling as a coping mechanism for psychological distress (Kaggwa et al, 2022; Fahrudin et al, 2024). In Africa, online gambling is expanding rapidly and is considered particularly addictive, with damaging effects on family structures (Rammutla, 2024). Sports betting dominates this growth, accounting for a substantial share of lottery group sales and being heavily promoted through sports-related social media advertising (Sichali et al, 2023; Singer et al, 2024). The resulting harms have led countries such as Ghana to classify youth betting addiction as a national security concern, while similar cases of financial loss, academic disruption and student suicide have been reported amongst the student population (Avenyo et al, 2023; Kaggwa et al, 2022; Goni, 2025).

1.2 Youth in South Africa

The growth of the gambling industry have increasingly raised concern due to high levels of problem gambling among young people, with negative effects on personal wellbeing, family relationships, academic performance and future prospects (Anyanwu et al, 2023). This challenge persists despite legal restrictions, as the accessibility and appeal of online gambling platforms continue to drive youth participation (Fahrudin et al, 2024). In South Africa, youth are defined as individuals aged 15–34 years and comprise approximately 33.1% of the population, representing a key demographic group with substantial digital exposure (Department of Statistics, 2025). South African youth also dominate social media use, with 26.7 million active users nationally, concentrated largely among those aged 18–34 years (Statista, 2025). This exposure is significant, as gambling promotions are frequently disseminated through social media influencers, and research indicates that problem gambling is more prevalent among males, while gender differences also shape patterns of excessive social media and gaming use (Anyanwu et al, 2023; Castrén et al, 2022).

Social media use among South African youth has itself also become a growing concern, with evidence of addictive behaviours such as anxiety, compulsive use and difficulty disengaging from digital platforms (De Doncker and McLean, 2022; Castrén et al, 2022). Similar addictive patterns are observed in online gambling, which has been linked to neglect of family responsibilities and broader social withdrawal (Rammutla, 2024). These risks are increasingly visible among university students, some of whom misuse their National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) allowances to engage in high-risk online betting, resulting in substantial financial losses (Goni, 2025). Economic pressures, including delayed financial aid and rising living costs, appear to exacerbate this behaviour, positioning gambling as a perceived coping strategy rather than a recreational activity (Kobe, 2025). Lawmakers have consequently framed the issue as systemic exploitation of vulnerable youth, reinforced by evidence that gambling operators promote betting through aspirational, influencer-driven content that blurs the boundary between entertainment and advertising, often going unrecognised as sponsored messaging by young users (Lerma et al, 2024; Bolat et al, 2025; Mtembu, 2025; Ajibade et al, 2022; Mokoena, 2025).

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive content analysis to examine online gambling promotion by social media influencers in South Africa. The research focused on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) due to their high engagement levels, suitability for influencer-led promotional content, and widespread use in South Africa, as noted by De Doncker and McLean (2022). Gambling-related posts were identified using keywords and hashtags such as “online betting,” “sports betting,” “free bet,” “bonus,” “promo code,” and “Betway.” Influencers were included if they demonstrated clear commercial promotion of online gambling through sponsored content, affiliate links, or referral codes, and if they used a verified account or had more than 5000 followers.

3. Influencer Marketing and Gambling Promotions

Influencers frequently present online gambling as an accessible opportunity for young people to place bets via mobile platforms, emphasising potential winnings while downplaying or omitting associated risk, with major operators such as Hollywoodbets and 10bet increasingly relying on celebrity endorsements to expand their reach (Mtembu, 2025; Singer et al, 2024; Find More Africa, 2024; Kloren, 2025; 10bet South Africa, 2024). Social media platforms themselves further facilitate this promotion through interactive features such as livestreaming

and engaging visual and linguistic cues, which enhance user participation and social acceptability (Bolat et al, 2025: Rossi & Nairn, 2022). Against this background, the present study examines whether South African influencers similarly promote online gambling among youth, with Table 1 summarising selected local influencers involved in such promotional activities.

Table 1: Influencer Gambling Promotions

Platform	No. of Influencers Analysed	Influencer Categories	Common Promotion Tactics
Instagram	9	Lifestyle, sports, betting	Promo codes, aspirational imagery, Sign up codes & Betting codes
Facebook	11	Lifestyle, sports, betting	Live odds, betting advice, Aviator spins,
X (Twitter)	70	Lifestyle, sports, betting	Sponsored links, Betting bonuses, Betting odds, Real-time odds Online casino links

As illustrated in Table 1, a total of 90 social media influencers targeting South African youth were identified across the selected platforms. However, this figure does not represent the full population of such influencers, as some may not have been captured due to platform-specific limitations such as filter bubbles and echo chambers. These mechanisms can restrict content visibility and limit exposure to certain influencer accounts during data collection. Most of the influencers identified had verified accounts. Verification signals authenticity to users by confirming that these influencers are who they claim to be, which may increase trust among followers. In addition, many of these influencers had substantial followings, with some accounts exceeding 500,000 followers, indicating a significant potential reach and influence. To ensure relevance and impact, only influencers with a minimum of 5,000 followers were included in the study.

X (formerly known as Twitter) accounted for the highest number of influencers, followed by Facebook. On Facebook, betting companies demonstrated a particularly strong presence, frequently promoting free bets and free spins to attract new users. These promotional strategies are often reinforced through the use of celebrities in advertising campaigns, where gambling is portrayed as enjoyable and frequently associated with winning outcomes. Additionally, Facebook hosts numerous gambling-related pages where users actively promote betting by sharing their personal betting codes, a practice commonly referred to as “booming.” These users often employ catchphrases such as “Let’s Boom Together” and refer to themselves as “punters,” a term commonly used to describe bettors. However, these user-driven promotional accounts were not included in the influencer sample. Instagram was the platform with the fewest identified influencers.

Overall, the majority of social media influencers promoted gambling-related content through promotional codes, betting tips, odds, sign-up codes, free spins, and betting codes. The influencer categories identified included vloggers, sports betting influencers, celebrity influencers, lifestyle influencers, comedy influencers, and brand influencers. Promotional formats varied and included reels, stories, live sessions, organic posts, and sponsored posts. To appeal to youth audiences, influencers commonly employed strategies such as lifestyle endorsement, aspirational messaging, and the use of sports celebrity credibility, thereby framing betting as entertaining, successful, and closely linked to sports fame. Finally, sports betting emerged as the most heavily advertised form of gambling.

4. Consequences: Financial and Psychological Harm

As illustrated in Table 1, social media influencers in South Africa have become a major contributing factor to the increasing participation of young people in online gambling. Through sponsored content and influencer promotions, betting is portrayed as an exciting, attractive, and easily accessible pastime. Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and esports communities are gradually normalising gambling among youth (Kloren, 2025). This widespread exposure increases youth engagement and often draws young people into the appealing narrative of “fast money” or rapid financial gain (Mokonoto, 2025). However, research has shown that increased youth involvement in online gambling is associated with significant financial consequences. Several studies indicate that young South Africans, particularly students and unemployed individuals, often divert money intended for basic necessities such as food, transport, accommodation, and tuition towards gambling activities.

Of particular concern is evidence that some students misuse their NSFAS allowances for gambling, leading to mounting debt, financial instability, and long-term economic hardship (Mtembu, 2025). This trend highlights how the accessibility and targeted marketing strategies of online gambling platforms disproportionately affect financially vulnerable individuals. In addition to financial strain, online gambling is also associated with serious psychological consequences. Digital gambling platforms stimulate dopamine-based reward mechanisms, which can contribute to the development of compulsive gambling behaviours among young people. These patterns have been linked to increased anxiety, depression, and emotional distress, and, in severe cases, thoughts of self-harm (Moeti, 2025). These risks are further exacerbated by the constant availability of betting applications, which allow frequent and unrestricted engagement at any time.

5. Regulatory Response

Globally, various measures have been implemented to address the growing role of social media advertising and influencer marketing in promoting gambling activities, as well as to limit young people's exposure to gambling-related content in recognition of the associated harms.

5.1 Global Response

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP and BCAP) introduced updated gambling advertising rules on 14 October 2025, which now extend to sport, music, game design, animation, and social media content (Gravel, 2025). These changes followed the removal of the 2022 gambling rules, amid concerns that children aged 11–17 were increasingly being exposed to gambling advertisements online. In the United Kingdom, regulators now prohibit individuals under the age of 25 from gambling or being featured in gambling-related content (Gravel, 2025). This regulation implies that content creators with young audiences must ensure that their social media posts do not promote or target gambling activities toward underage users.

In Australia, the government has banned access to major social media platforms including TikTok, X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and Threads for individuals under the age of 16. This decision followed a commissioned study which found that 96% of children aged 10–15 used social media, and that seven out of ten had been exposed to harmful content. Effective from 10 December 2025, individuals under 16 are prohibited from creating new social media accounts, while existing accounts are deactivated. To ensure compliance, social media companies face fines of up to A$49.5 million (US$32 million; £25 million) for serious or repeated breaches (Livingstone, 2025). Similarly, the Malaysian government, under its proposed Online Safety Act, plans to ban children under the age of 16 from accessing social media from 2026 in an effort to protect young people from harmful online content (Saieed, 2025).

5.2 Regulatory Gaps: Gambling Legislation in South Africa

In South Africa, the gambling industry is regulated by the National Gambling Act 7 of 2004, which aims to protect consumers from over-stimulation and safeguard the rights of minors by prohibiting gambling by individuals under 18 years of age (DTI, 2017). The Act establishes a national gambling policy council and requires operators to be licensed by provincial authorities, defining gambling as wagering activities involving an element of chance with the potential for payout (DTI, 2017; NGB, 2025). The National Gambling Board (NGB) is responsible for overseeing the industry and maintaining regulatory integrity (NGB, 2025). Alongside statutory regulation, advertising in South Africa is governed by voluntary self-regulation, primarily through the Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB), which oversees the Advertising Code of Practice to ensure that advertising is legal, honest, decent and truthful, and provides mechanisms for consumer complaints and dispute resolution (Advertising Regulatory Board, 2025; Radu et al, 2025; De Lange, 2021; Barter, 2025). While advertisers are also subject to the Consumer Protection Act and intellectual property laws, the ARB's enforcement capacity is limited, particularly where advertisers are not ARB members, highlighting structural weaknesses in self-regulation (De Lange, 2021; Barter, 2025).

Although the National Gambling Act predates the rise of social media and does not explicitly regulate influencer marketing, the ARB, in collaboration with the NGB, introduced a gambling appendix to restrict gambling advertising directed at minors and prohibit influencers from promoting gambling to individuals under 18 (NGB, 2025). Despite these measures, enforcement remains weak, with evidence suggesting that many influencers either lack awareness of, or fail to comply with, existing regulations. These shortcomings have prompted concern among South African lawmakers, who have called for stricter oversight of influencer-led gambling advertising.

The NGB has similarly indicated its intention to increase scrutiny of gambling promotions on platforms such as Instagram, citing youth exposure, misleading content and the timing of advertisements as key regulatory concerns (Mokoena, 2025; Aspeling, 2025; Gandola, 2025; Ovute, 2025).

6. Recommendations

Gambling operators are increasingly using social media to encourage user engagement with gambling-related content through targeted advertising. They also rely heavily on social media influencers to market gambling products. As noted by Bolat et al (2025), influencers play a significant role in shaping gambling behaviours, particularly among young people aged 12–25 years. As shown in Table 1, these influencers employ tactics such as paid promotions and the portrayal of aspirational lifestyles to present gambling in a positive light while directly targeting young audiences, often through sign-up incentives and promotional offers. This approach normalises gambling behaviour and can make participation appear socially acceptable among youth. These findings are consistent with several other studies that highlight the growing use of influencers on social media platforms to endorse gambling activities due to their extensive reach and persuasive power (Bolat et al, 2025; Guillou-Landreat et al, 2021; Torrance et al, 2021; De Jans, Hudders & Constandt, 2024).

To address this issue in South Africa, regulatory bodies such as the NGB have taken steps to respond to the increasing influence of social media advertising and influencer marketing in the promotion of gambling activities, with the aim of reducing young people's exposure to gambling-related content. However, despite these efforts, significant regulatory gaps remain. Therefore, this study recommends a multi-faceted collaborative approach involving both academic institutions and policymakers. Such collaboration may facilitate more timely and effective solutions, particularly given that regulatory shortcomings related to online gambling are not unique to South Africa but are evident across the African continent. This concern is noted by Sichali et al. (2023), who, in mapping gambling regulations in Africa, emphasise the urgent need to address the regulatory void surrounding online gambling and the promotion of gambling products.

At the national level, this study recommends that, in the interim, the South African government adopt strategies similar to those implemented by the Malawi Gaming Board. In response to growing concerns about the mental health impacts of online gambling, the Malawi Gaming Board partnered with a local mental health service provider to offer free programmes and care to individuals seeking assistance (Sichali et al., 2023). Adopting a comparable approach in South Africa could help address online sports betting addiction and ensure that affected youth receive appropriate support.

Additionally, social media influencers should be positioned as part of the solution. As suggested by young participants in the study by Pitt et al (2024), influencers should take personal responsibility for their role in promoting gambling by declining paid gambling-related partnerships, particularly when they are aware that their audience includes young and impressionable users. Influencers could also participate in anti-gambling campaigns or use their platforms to communicate risk-related messages about gambling. This is especially important given existing literature demonstrating that online gambling can lead to serious health consequences, including psychological distress and, in extreme cases, suicide.

Furthermore, South African political actors have proposed a seven-point reform plan aimed at strengthening gambling regulation. This includes restricting gambling advertisements between 5 a.m. and 10 p.m., increasing gambling tax rates, improving know-your-customer (KYC) compliance, and requiring a substantial portion of marketing budgets to be allocated to responsible gambling initiatives (Mokoena, 2025). This study supports these proposals, as they reflect an understanding that the gambling crisis is not merely an issue of individual addiction, but one deeply connected to economic inequality, youth precarity, and the exploitative nature of digital marketing.

Finally, this study recommends the integration of relevant conceptual frameworks to inform future research and policy development. Media effects theory (Borah, 2016), including social cognitive theory, can help explain how influencer content shapes social norms, attitudes, and behaviours related to gambling. In addition, the socio-economic vulnerability framework (Vuong Tai et al, 2024) offers valuable insight into how financial insecurity—such as reliance on financial aid schemes like NSFAS may predispose students to engage in exploitative risk-taking behaviours.

7. Conclusion

This study examined the presence and role of social media influencers in the promotion of gambling content targeting South African youth. The findings demonstrate that gambling operators and affiliated influencers are actively leveraging popular social media platforms to normalise and promote gambling behaviours through promotional codes, betting tips, aspirational lifestyle portrayals, and celebrity endorsement. Influencers with large and verified followings were found to have substantial reach, positioning them as powerful intermediaries between gambling operators and young audiences. Sports betting emerged as the most prominently advertised form of gambling, often framed as entertaining, socially acceptable, and closely associated with success and sports culture.

The study further highlights how influencer marketing strategies exploit youth vulnerability by appealing to aspirations of financial gain, social status, and belonging. These practices contribute to the normalisation of gambling among young people, increasing the risk of harmful gambling behaviours. While regulatory bodies in South Africa have begun to respond to the growing influence of digital gambling marketing, existing measures remain insufficient to address the rapidly evolving nature of social media advertising. Overall, the findings underscore the urgent need for stronger, youth-focused regulatory frameworks, enhanced accountability for influencers, and a more comprehensive public health approach to gambling promotion in the digital environment.

Ethics Declaration

Ethical clearance was not required, since all data analysed were publicly available, and no private or personal communications were accessed. Influencers were not directly contacted, and no identifying information was reported.

AI Declaration

AI was not utilised in this study.

References

10bet South Africa (2024) 'Herschelle Gibbs joins 10bet South Africa', *10bet Blog*, 18 November. Available at: https://blog.10bet.co.za.

Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) (2025) *The Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) South Africa: official self-regulation body for advertising in South Africa*. Available at: http://arb.org.za/index.html.

Ajibade, S.-S.M. et al. (2022) "An Analysis of the Impact of Social Media Addiction on Academic Engagement of Students," Journal of Pharmaceutical Negative Results, 13(SO4). Available at: https://doi.org/10.47750/PNR.2022.13.S04.166.

Anyanwu, M.U. et al. (2023) "Problem Gambling Among Adolescents in Uganda: A Cross-sectional Survey Study," Journal of Gambling Studies, 39(2), pp. 971–985. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/S10899-023-10205-2/TABLES/2.

Aspeling, R. (2025) South Africa gambling regulator plans crackdown on influencer ads - iGamingToday.com - News, insights and Slots review, iGamingToday. Available at: https://www.igamingtoday.com/south-africa-gambling-influencer-ads-crackdown/.

Avenyo, S.J., Kwashie, N.S. and Demuyakor, J. (2023) "Online sports betting in universities: Does online sports betting addictions impact the academic achievements and social relations of students?," Journal of Digital Educational Technology, 4(1), p. ep2402. Available at: https://doi.org/10.30935/jdet/14039.

Barter, H. (2025) *Advertising law – South Africa*. Barter McKellar Law Firm, 13 June. Available at: https://www.bartermckellar.law/entertainment-law-explained/the-advertising-regulatory-board-in-south-africa-a-comprehensive-guide.

Bolat, E., Panourgia, C., Yankouskaya, A. and Kelly, M. (2025) 'Influencer-driven gambling content and its impact on children and young people: a scoping study', *Current Addiction Reports*, 12(1), pp. 1–3.

Borah, P. (2016) "Media Effects Theory," The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication, pp. 1–12. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118541555.WBIEPC156.

Castrén, S. et al. (2022) "Risk Factors for Excessive Social Media Use Differ from Those of Gambling and Gaming in Finnish Youth," International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2022, Vol. 19, Page 2406, 19(4), p. 2406. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/IJERPH19042406.

Charu (2024) "Case Study: The Role of AI in Social Media," International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, 5(11), pp. 2725–2726. Available at: www.ijrpr.com.

De Doncker, K. and McLean, N. (2022) "Social media, sleep difficulties and depressive symptoms: A case study of South African youth in Cape Town," Technology in Society, 70, p. 102038. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TECHSOC.2022.102038.

De Jans, S., Hudders, L. and Constandt, B. (2024) '#Sponsored: a systematic literature review and theoretical framework of gambling sponsorship research', *Journal of Advertising*, 53(3), pp. 434–453.
De Lange, R.W. (2021) 'Self-regulatory advertising codes as a framework for ethics in design', *Academia Letters*, pp. 1–2.
Department of Statistics South Africa (2025) The Social Profile of South African Youth: A Decade in Review | Statistics South Africa. Available at: https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=18083.
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) (2017) *National Gambling Act*. Pretoria: DTI.
Fahrudin, A. et al. (2024) "Online gambling addiction: Problems and solutions for policymakers and stakeholders in Indonesia," Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development. EnPress Publisher, LLC. Available at: https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i11.9077.
Find More Africa (2024) 'How online gambling in South Africa is getting teens hooked'. Available at: https://findmoreafrica.com.
Gandola, K. (2025) South Africa Moves To Restrict Influencer-Led Gambling Ads, Net Influencer. Available at: https://www.netinfluencer.com/south-africa-moves-to-restrict-influencer-led-gambling-ads/.
Goni, S. (2025) Students wager NSFAS allowances and their futures at online betting sites, Daily Maverick. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-10-20-students-wager-nsfas-allowances-and-their-futures-at-online-betting-sites/.
Gravel, D. (2025) ASA clarifies gambling ad appeal rules for under-18s, SiGMA. Available at: https://sigma.world/news/asa-clarifies-gambling-ad-appeal-rules-for-under-18s/.
Guillou-Landreat, M., Gallopel-Morvan, K., Lever, D., Le Goff, D. and Le Reste, J. (2021) 'Gambling marketing strategies and the internet: what do we know? A systematic review', *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12.
Hing, N. et al. (2014) "Do advertising and promotions for online gambling increase gambling consumption? An exploratory study," International Gambling Studies, 14(3), pp. 394–409. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/14459795.2014.903989.
Jamil, K., Dunnan, L., Gul, R.F., Shehzad, M.U., Gillani, S.H.M. and Awan, F.H. (2022) 'Role of social media marketing activities in influencing customer intentions: a perspective of a new emerging era', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12.
Kloren, S. (2025) How TikTok, YouTube and esports are turning South African teens into gamblers, IoL. Available at: https://iol.co.za/news/2025-10-25-how-tiktok-youtube-and-esports-are-turning-south-african-teens-into-gamblers/.
Kobe, M. (2025) Students gambling their NSFAS allowances away - ActionSA - POLITICS | Politicsweb, Politicsweb. Available at: https://www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/students-gambling-an-indictment-on-youths-future-u.
Lerma, M., Pfund, R.A. and Whelan, J.P. (2024) 'Does user activity promote gambling-related content on Twitter/X?', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 158, 108297.
Livingstone, H. (2025) How does Australia's under-16 social media ban work?, BBC News. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwyp9d3ddqyo.
Malema, M.J. et al. (2021) "ONLINE SPORTS AND E-GAMING AS MEANS TO PROMOTE LEISURE ACTIVITY AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC," International Leisure Review, 10(1), pp. 73–81. Available at: https://doi.org/10.6298/ILR.202106_10(1).0005.
Moeti, K. (2025) Betting On The Future Means Addressing Gambling Harms, Health-E News. Available at: https://health-e.org.za/2025/10/13/betting-on-the-future-addressing-gambling-harms/.
Mokoena, S. (2025) National Assembly Debates Gambling Crisis and Calls for Stricter Regulation to Curb Addiction and Protect Vulnerable Citizens - Parliament of South Africa, South African Parliament. Available at: https://www.parliament.gov.za/news/national-assembly-debates-gambling-crisis-and-calls-stricter-regulation-curb-addiction-and-protect-vulnerable-citizens.
Mokonoto, B. (2025) SLICE: Online gambling is harming the youth of South Africa - Wits Vuvuzela, University of the Witwatersrand - Vuvuzela. Available at: https://witsvuvuzela.com/2025/08/28/slice-online-gambling-is-harming-the-youth-of-south-africa/.
Mtembu, X. (2025) NSFAS, addiction and debt: how online betting hooks young South Africans, IOT. Available at: https://iol.co.za/news/south-africa/2025-10-27-nsfas-addiction-and-debt-how-online-betting-hooks-young-south-africans/.
National Gambling Board (NGB) (2025) *National Gambling Board*. Available at: https://www.ngb.org.za/home/.
Ovute, C. (2025) South Africa's Gambling Board Targets Influencer Ads and Illegal Gambling in Holiday Crackdown - iGamingToday.com - News, insights and Slots review, iGamingToday. Available at: https://www.igamingtoday.com/south-africas-gambling-board-targets-influencer-ads-and-illegal-gambling-in-holiday-crackdown/.
Pitt, H. et al. (2024) "Young people's views about the use of celebrities and social media influencers in gambling marketing," Health Promotion International, 39(1), pp. 1–12. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/HEAPRO/DAAE012.
Radu, Y.T., Mahomedy, S. and Mafuyeka, M. (2025) 'The Advertising Regulatory Board's jurisdiction: implications of *Bliss v Advertising Regulatory Board* for public health policy on unhealthy food and beverage advertising', *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal (PELJ)*, 28(1), pp. 1–24.
Rammutla, C.M. (2024) "The Ravaging Effects of Online Gambling on The Social Functioning of Male Breadwinners In African Families," Innovation Journal of Social Sciences and Economic Review, 6(2), pp. 26–36. Available at: https://doi.org/10.36923/ijsser.v6i2.259.

Richards, J.I. and Curran, C.M. (2002) "Oracles on 'Advertising': Searching for a Definition," Journal of Advertising, 31(2), pp. 63–77. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2002.10673667.

Rossi, R. and Nairn, A. (2022) 'New developments in gambling marketing: the rise of social media ads and its effect on youth', *Current Addiction Reports*, 9(4), pp. 385–391.

Saieed, Z. (2025) Malaysia to Ban Children Under 16 From Social Media, Echoing Australia - The New York Times, The New York Times. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/24/world/asia/malaysia-social-media-ban.html.

Sichali, J.M. et al. (2023) "Regulation of gambling in Sub-Saharan Africa: findings from a comparative policy analysis," Public Health, 214, pp. 140–145. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/J.PUHE.2022.07.018.

Singer, J., Wöhr, A. and Otterbach, S. (2024) "Gambling Operators' Use of Advertising Strategies on Social Media and Their Effects: A Systematic Review," Current Addiction Reports, 11(3), pp. 437–446. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/S40429-024-00560-4/TABLES/2.

Singer, R., Brodeur, M., Kim, H.S. and Wohl, M.J.A. (2024) *Gambling operators' use of advertising strategies on social media and their impact on young people: a systematic review*. Guelph: GREO Evidence Centre.

Statista (2025) South Africa: social media user age and gender distribution 2025| Statista, Report. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1100988/age-distribution-of-social-media-users-south-africa/?srsltid=AfmBOorKfreIgx10RKyHxrDdbmwtU-uUWTbxkHs6CigwcsZxdNkdMJ-0#statisticContainer.

Thomas, S. et al. (2023) "Protecting children and young people from contemporary marketing for gambling," Health Promotion International, 38(2). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daac194.

Torrance, J., John, B., Greville, J., O'Hanrahan, M., Davies, N. and Roderique-Davies, G. (2021) 'Emergent gambling advertising: a rapid review of marketing content, delivery and structural features', *BMC Public Health*, 21(1), p. 718.

Vuong Tai, C., Chung, E.S. and Kim, D. (2024) "A socio-economic vulnerability assessment framework against natural disasters: A case study in Seoul, South Korea," Urban Climate, 58, p. 102139. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/J.UCLIM.2024.102139.