

INFLUENCE OF TELEVISED EUROPEAN FOOTBALL MATCHES ON NIGERIAN YOUTHS AND NIGERIAN FOOTBALL

Buiké Oparaugo

Mass Communication Department

Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto, Nigeria

buikeoparago@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper assessed the influence of televised European football matches on Nigerian football and Nigerian youths, a study of Enugu metropolis. The objectives of the study were to find out the fan followership of European football clubs by Nigerian football fans; to find out the extent to which Nigerian youths watch televised European football matches; to ascertain the effects of televised European football matches on Nigerian youths, and to determine the effect of televised European football matches on Nigerian football. The research method adopted for this study is the participatory observation research method. The researcher visited viewing centers and betting shops to observe the reactions of football fans during live matches and betting sessions. The researcher found out that televised European football matches have greatly influenced Nigerian football through observations. This is evident as Nigerian fans now support clubs in Europe more than Nigerian clubs. The researcher also found out that European football matches have positively and negatively influenced Nigerian youths. Part of the recommendations is that students should desist from betting as failure to win could lead to depression or social vices.

Keywords: Europe, Nigeria, football, match, fans, youths, bet, gambling.

INTRODUCTION

Football is arguably the world's most popular and globalized sport, and it has gained attention from social science disciplines. The importance of football in African culture cannot be overemphasized. Football has become so popular that it has affected its politics, economy, and education. Football is a usually competitive physical activity or game aiming to use, maintain, or improve physical abilities and skills. Usually, the contest or game is between two sides attempting to excel the other. Football allows a tie game and provides tie-breaking methods to ensure one winner and one loser. Adeyemi and Kola (2017), citing Ndubuoke (n.d), describes the game of football as man's greatest social invention. Football has had a distinguished presence in Nigeria's history. In essence, football is the most popular game in the world, is a rallying point for Nigerians and a common ground for demonstrating the 'Nigerians' in the people.

Football is the most popular sporting activity in Nigeria. It is one sporting activity you can say that is generally accepted. This acceptance can be seen and felt in several ways (Tutor, 2019). Kids, teenagers, and youths who play the game in the streets; Creation of Football Academies in the country; Football teams in the higher institution; Football Betting; Media

Coverage, etc. Also, the happiness on the face of a bit of child when they see and say "ball." Football games enjoy viewership and followership in Nigeria more than any other sports. The media, especially television, has made this easier and faster.

The passion, zeal, accuracy and dexterity with which presenters of football matches broadcast and run commentary of the champions league increases viewers' love and interest for the game of football (Majaro-Majesty, 2010). It influences the viewers to identify with a club as a fan or supporter. These viewers (youths) follow up the matches from the beginning to the end of the champions league through the pay-per-view centers, scattered all across the nooks and crannies of the country. It is not uncommon to see Nigerian students (male and female) who are viewers of these matches and are proud to be identified as a fan of a chosen club in Europe at viewing centers, streets, markets, places of work, lodges, institution's hostels, classes, etc. displaying knowledge of clubs history, players' profiles and mini-fans clubs (non-formalized club), accompanied by the words "our man," "this/our season," "blues," "gunners," and so on, thereby showing their unflinching support and love for their chosen clubs.

The European clubs with high fan followership from Africa are primarily found in England, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Portugal, The Netherlands, etc. The continental competitions are the UEFA Champions League, the UEFA Europa League, and the newly introduced UEFA Conference League. Also, these countries have second and third-division leagues. For example, England has competitions like the Premier League (1st division), Championship (2nd division), League One (3rd division), League Two (fourth division), etc. Spain has LaLiga (1st division), Segunda Division (2nd division), etc. Italy has Serie A (1st division), Serie B (2nd division), etc. Germany has Bundesliga (1st division), Bundesliga 2 (2nd division), etc. France has Ligue 1 (1st division), Ligue 2 (2nd division), etc.

This study will investigate the influence of televised European football matches on Nigerian youths and Nigerian football from an observational point of view.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The wind of European football has swept across the African continent and Nigeria through the aid of pay-TV and is almost sending our local league into extinction. Fan followership of these European football clubs maybe started growing since the signing of former Nigeria international Kanu Nwankwo by Arsenal FC of England. Nigerian billionaire businessmen Orji Uzo Kalu and Aliko Dangote have all expressed interest in buying massive shares at Arsenal FC while neglecting to invest such money in our local leagues with clubs like Enyimba and Kano Pillars, etc. This research paper investigates how televised European football matches have affected Nigerian football's patronage and popularity and the Nigerian youths.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective is to evaluate the influence of televised European football matches on Nigerian youths and Nigerian football. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To ascertain the fan followership of European football clubs by Nigerian football fans.

2. To determine the extent of viewership of televised European football matches among Nigerian youths.
3. To ascertain the effects of televised European football matches on Nigerian youths.
4. To determine the effect of televised European football matches on Nigerian football.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions have been raised for the study:

1. Which European football clubs do Nigerian football fans support?
2. Are Nigerian youths heavily exposed to televised European football matches?
3. Do televised European football matches influence Nigerian youths?
4. Do televised European football matches influence Nigerian football?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will help suggest the various ways through which Nigerian youths can balance their academic life with viewing televised European football matches. The documented findings and analysis will also serve as reference materials to students and other related agencies for academic and future research. Findings of this study will also contribute towards the national development; sport, ethnicity, conflict and peacebuilding.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Television and Football

Football is a game in which 22 players play a round-leather object for 90 minutes. These 22 players consist of 11 players, each consisting of 10 outfield players and one goalkeeper. A football match is divided into two halves – first and second – each lasting 45 minutes. Added time/additional time/injury time/stoppage time of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 minutes is added to each half depending on what the center referee deems fit due to time wasted during the game. In a knock-out tie, 30 minutes (15 minutes for each half) is awarded as extra time to decide the winner if the match remains a tie at full time. A penalty shoot-out is used to decide if there is no winner after extra time. Three substitutes are allowed per game (except friendly matches), with a fourth allowed if the match goes into extra time.

A football match requires a center referee, two assistant referees and the fourth official. However, a Video Assistant Referee (VAR) in this modern era aids officiation. There are a lot of football competitions: tournaments (World Cup, European Championship, African Cup of Nations, etc.), league (Premier League, LaLiga, Serie A, Bundesliga, Ligue 1, etc.), continental club competitions (Champions League, Europa League), league cup, FA Cup, Super Cup (contested by league winners and the FA Cup winners; or Champions League winners and Europa League winners).



The spread of soccer viewing centers (SVCs) in Nigeria is one of the unfolding legacies of global sporting media in Africa. While providing access to live broadcasts of European soccer competitions, SVCs have developed into supplementary social spaces where culturally defined rules of social relations are contested (Adebayo, Olugbenga & Akintunde, 2019). The prevalence and dominance of foreign content in the Nigerian media space is an ongoing discourse among scholars in Nigeria, especially within the context of cultural imperialism. The media are potent social systems that transmit cultural heritage from one generation to another. Consequently, media and communication scholars have accused the Nigerian media of allowing foreign content to dominate the Nigerian media space.

The Nigerian sports media has played a prominent role in nurturing and promoting Nigerian soccer. Apart from reporting the exploits of teams and players, it has also been the significant custodian of sports history (Alao, 2018). Throughout the world, live coverage of major football and sports games has become one of the most popular forms of a television broadcast. It has become a veritable source of revenue for the broadcast rights holders, the Sporting Federations and the individual teams (Nwabueze, 2020). Before the launch of significant TV platforms, the rights to major national and international competitions belonged to the National free to air broadcasters individually or collectively. Unfortunately, the lack of proper regulation in this area in Nigeria ensured there were no definitive provisions for the distribution of broadcasting rights.

Among global televised football competitions and leagues globally, European leagues such as English Premier League, Spanish LaLiga, Italia Seria A, German Bundesliga, French League 1, and the UEFA Champions League are at the top of quality organization and coverage. Most local football players in Africa have dreamed of playing in these leagues and tournaments. Players in Africa, Asia and South America are constantly making ways to reach Europe; therefore, they contact football agents to facilitate their movement to Europe (Dogari, Apuke and Shadrach, 2018).

European Football Leagues

Every country in Europe have their league, but there are the top five leagues in Europe. These leagues have the most fans from other parts of the world, including Nigeria. These countries include England, Spain, Italy, Germany, and France. So Nigerian football fans also bet in leagues across other European countries.

In England, the top tier league football is known as the Premier League and is contested by 20 teams running from August to May with teams playing 38 matches (playing each other home and away). It runs on a system of promotion and relegation. Most games are played on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. In Spain, it is known as Primera Division or commonly as La Liga with the same format of the English league system. Teams finish in the last three positions (18-20) drop to the Segunda Division. Serie A, also called Serie A TIM due to sponsorship by TIM, is a professional league competition for football clubs in Italy. The second division of Italy's league system is Serie B. Ligue 1, also called Ligue 1 Conforama for



sponsorship reasons, with Conforama, a French professional league for men's association football clubs. At the top of the French football league system, it is the country's primary football competition. Contested by 20 teams, teams finishing in 19 and 20th positions are relegated to Ligue 2, while the team finishing in 18th position contests a play-off with the team finishing 3rd in Ligue 2. The Bundesliga 1. is a professional association football league in Germany and the league with the highest average stadium attendance worldwide. The premier football competition in Germany in the Bundesliga. The Bundesliga comprises 18 teams and operates on a system of promotion and relegation with the 2. Bundesliga (sic). Seasons run from August to May. Most games are played on Saturdays and Sundays, with a few played on weekdays. All of the Bundesliga clubs qualify for the DFB-Pokal. In addition, the winner of the Bundesliga qualifies for the DFL Super cup.

The UEFA Champions League is an annual continental club football competition organized by the European Football Association (UEFA) and contested by top-division European clubs. It is one of the most prestigious tournaments globally and the most prestigious club competition in European football, played by the national league champions (and, for some nations, one or more runners-up) of the strongest UEFA national associations. The UEFA Champions League final is the most-watched annual sporting event worldwide. The UEFA Champions League final is the most-watched annual sporting event worldwide. Introduced in 1992, the competition replaced the European Champion Clubs' Cup, or simply European Cup, which had run since 1955, adding a group stage to the competition and allowing multiple entrants from certain countries. The UEFA Europa League is an annual football club competition organized by UEFA since 1971 for eligible European football clubs. Clubs qualify for the competition based on their national leagues and cup competitions. Previously called the UEFA Cup, the competition has been known as the UEFA Europa League since the 2009–10 season, following a format change. For UEFA football records purposes, the UEFA Cup and UEFA Europa League are considered the same competition, with the change of name simply being a rebranding. In 1999, the UEFA Cup Winners' Cup was abolished and merged with the UEFA Cup. Other European leagues include the Portuguese league, Belgian league, Danish league, Scottish league, Welsh league, Dutch league, etc.

Fan Followership of European Football Clubs

There is hardly a youth (male or female) who do not fan a European football club. This is because it has become the order of the day. These clubs play in the leagues of different European countries like England (The Premier League), Spain (La Liga), Italy (Serie A), Germany (Bundesliga), France (Ligue 1), Belgium (Super Ligue), Portugal (Primeira Liga), The Netherlands (Eredivisie), etc. However, some of these clubs in the different countries include Chelsea, Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool, Arsenal, Tottenham (all England), Barcelona, Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid (all Spain), Juventus, AC Milan, Inter Milan (all Italy), Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund (both Germany), Paris Saint-Germain (France), etc., while the continental competition is called "UEFA Champions League," in which different clubs from



different countries compete together. Also, in Europe, clubs from different countries can compete together in the Europa League.

However, matches between some of these clubs are known as "derbies" and "classics." A derby is a match between two rival teams from the same city, while a classic is a football match between two of the most successful or dominating teams. For example, in Spain, derbies are Real Madrid vs. Atletico Madrid, Barcelona vs. Espanyol, etc. The classic is Barcelona vs. Real Madrid, popularly known as "El Classico." In England, matches between Liverpool vs. Everton, Chelsea vs. Arsenal, Manchester City vs. Manchester United, Arsenal vs. Tottenham, Tottenham vs. Chelsea are all derbies. At the same time, Manchester United vs. Liverpool is an English classic. In Italy, AC Milan vs. Inter Milan matches is derbies, while Juventus vs. AC Milan is the Italian classic. In Germany, Bayern Munich vs. Borussia Dortmund is referred to as "Der Klassiker." In France, PSG vs. Olympique de Marseille is referred to as "Le Classique." In Portugal, Benfica vs. FC Porto is the Portuguese classic called "O Classico" in Scotland; Celtic vs. Rangers is both a derby and a classic and is called the "Old Firm Derby."

It is not uncommon to hear people bearing such names as Okey Chelsea, Nwa Gunners, Emma Barca, Man City boy/girl, Juventus, Mourinho, Drogba, Deco, Zidane, etc. The followership could be compared to that experienced with the Nigerian local football league in the 1970 and mid-80s, which has been reduced drastically because of poor organization. Apart from the national media, another medium providing Nigerians with the avenue to view live coverage of these matches is the pay-per-view centers, scattered all across the nation's cities. These viewing centers, specializing in providing pay-per-view services of European football matches, had increased tremendously since the beginning of the 21st century when more cable television networks entered into the business with relatively affordable subscription rates. As a result, audiences watching football games, plus fanatic support for particular clubs, have increased. Even some commentators of European football matches are beginning to have Nigerian fans after Peter Drury's ironic commentary on AS Roma vs. FC Barcelona during the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League season when Roma of Italy overturned a 4-1 lead and won 3-0 to progress to the semifinals at the expense of Barcelona. He said:

Roma has risen from their ruins. Manolas, the Greek god in Rome. The unthinkable unfolds before our eyes. This was not meant to happen; this could not happen; this is happening. Barcelona is extraordinarily eight minutes from elimination, and Di Francesco does not know where to go. Iniesta does not know where to look. A Greek from Mount Olympus has come to the Seven Hills of Rome and pulled off a miracle.

Influence of Televised European Football Matches on Nigerian Youths: Observations

The impact of sporting activities on society cannot be overemphasized. According to the United Nations (2003), sport can be described as all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. Nigerian youths have formed part of the global followers of the European football league matches. The national media's specialty at covering

and broadcasting the league has been unprecedented. The rise of pay-TV has also helped this trend as about 8 of 10 homes now have either DSTV, GOTV, Star Times, etc.

European football leagues and clubs have witnessed a boom in fan followership from Africa, which significantly influences the youths (fans). Some of these influences can be seen in the less time they now put into studies; betting – which is now common in 7/10 boys; talking patterns, and general behavior as most of their discussion topics are now on football-related matters. This ranges from who is the better player between Cristiano Ronaldo of Real Madrid and FC Barcelona's Lionel Messi; league fixtures like Super Sundays (Sundays in which two big teams are playing); player transfers and their wages; coaches to be hired/sacked; teams to be relegated or promoted; teams likely to win the league or the Champions League, etc.

Before 2015, Nigerian football fans supported these European teams based on their likes. But in recent times, they support teams based on who they placed a bet on. So you can see a Chelsea fan rejoicing when Manchester United score or are winning just because he has placed a bet that Manchester United will win. Ademoye (2018, p.8) supported this when he posited, "it is alarming to know that many children are cultivating a gambling lifestyle. What is more frightening is the notion that such habit is increasingly becoming a social behavior of a city child – and what's worse, the indications are not comforting." Sports betting and other forms of gambling are becoming a phenomenon across Africa and Nigeria in particular. Betting over which sports team may win has become a multi-million Naira business. Nigeria is witnessing a massive expansion in sports betting and other forms of gambling (Sule and Adam, 2018).

The growing popularity of Sports Gambling/Betting in Nigeria and the fact that much more youth across the country are getting involved in it daily is a significant call for concern. In 2018, a 25-year-old football fan committed suicide by hanging in Ilorin, Kwara state, after he lost his bet on AS Roma vs. Barcelona match (Fagbemi, 2018, April 17, online). A Manchester United fan in Nigeria killed four people when he drove his minibus into a crowd of Barcelona supporters after his team was beaten in the champions league final in 2009 (The Telegraph UK, 2009, online). In 2017, an Arsenal fan slumped and died while watching Stoke vs. Arsenal as Stoke City scored (Information Nigeria, 2017, online). In 2010 a Nigerian fan was killed as clashes ensued in Gokana, Rivers state, after Chelsea's win over Spartak Moscow in the Champions League (Goal.com, 2010, online).

Nigerian youths also devote major parts of their time playing video games such as FIFA, PES, PCS, Fantasy Football Manager, etc. Some even play these bets with their house rents, feeding money, school fees hoping to win a payback, but end up losing. They sometimes resort to stealing to pay back the money. Televised European football matches can also bring disunity among youths who disagree on the referee's officiating and match result. Positively, it can promote unity and love among football fans irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity or religion.

Influence of Televised European Football Matches on Nigerian Football: Observations

The influence of televised European football league matches on Nigerian football cannot be overemphasized. It has caused Nigerian sports lovers to switch their allegiance to Europe. Those

who were known to be supporters of the likes of Iwuanyanwu Nationale of Owerri, Enugu Rangers, Enyimba of Aba, etc., are now ardent supporters of Chelsea, Man United, Liverpool, Arsenal, Barca, etc., and this has resulted in low patronage of the Nigerian national league system in their ticket sales.

This influence is also evident in terms of naming football clubs in Nigeria. It is well known that most football clubs in the United Kingdom have their names ending in "United." Example: Manchester United, Newcastle United, Leeds United, West Ham United, etc. The Nigerian football system has also copied this pattern in naming their football clubs. Example: Akwa United, Adamawa United, Kwara United, Katsina United, Nasarawa United, Gombe United, Plateau United, Rivers United, etc.

In Italy, one of the two giant clubs in the capital is known as *Internazionale Milano* or *Inter Milan* for short. It has affected the naming of the Imo state club in *Iwuanyanwu Nationale* and *Inter Enugu* in Enugu state. Also, the most famous club in Enugu is known as *Enugu Rangers*, named after a Scottish club called *Rangers*.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, the researcher adopted the participatory observation research method. The researcher used the participatory observation tool to observe students, businessmen, and women. The researcher made a series of visits to football viewing centers, joints and betting shops in Enugu metropolis and engaged the youths in discussions on why they support which teams and why they bet. The researcher also monitored Facebook posts in Facebook groups as football fans trolled and taunted themselves. The researcher also interviewed to elicit some information from the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The observations made by the researcher have been presented in tables. These observations were according to gender, age bracket and the four research questions. For the viewing centers and bet houses visited by the researcher, an average of one hundred (100) football fans were observed and interviewed. The data were analyzed using tables, frequencies and percentages.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	95	95%
Female	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Field Survey, 2021

The table above showed that 95% of the respondents are males while 5% are females. It, therefore, means that there are significantly more males among the respondents than female fans among them.



Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents.

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Under 18 years	6	6%
18-24 years	22	22%
25-30 years	40	40%
Above 30 years	32	32%
Total	100	100%

Field Survey, 2021

The table above showed that 6% of the respondents are observed to be Under 18, 22% of them were observed to be between 18-24 years, 40% of them were observed to be 25-30 years, and 32% of them were observed to be above 30 years. It, therefore, means that there are more football fans aged between 25-30 years among youths in Enugu urban.

Table 3: Question 1: Which European football clubs do Nigerian football fans support?

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Chelsea	26	26%
Man Utd	22	22%
Liverpool	10	10%
Arsenal	12	12%
Barcelona	15	15%
Real Madrid	5	5%
Others (specify)	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Field Survey, 2021

The table above shows that 26% of the respondents are Chelsea supporters, 22% of the Manchester United supporters, 10% are Liverpool supporters, 12% are Arsenal supporters, 15% are Barcelona supporters, and 5% are Real Madrid supporters. In comparison, 10% of them are supporters of other clubs such as Manchester City, Juventus, AC Milan, Bayern Munich, etc. The table, therefore, indicated that there are more Chelsea fans among the respondents than any other club.

Table 4: Question 2: Are Nigerian youths heavily exposed to televised European football matches?

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	90	90%

No	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Field Survey, 2021

The table above showed that 90% of the respondents are heavily exposed to televised European football matches, while 10% are minimally exposed to televised European football league matches. Therefore, it means that most of the respondents watch televised European football league matches.

Table 5: Question 3: Do televised European football matches influence Nigerian youths?

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	70	70%
No	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Field Survey, 2021

The table above showed that 70% of the respondents agreed that televised European football matches influence them, while 30% disagreed with the question. These influences can be positive and negative, such as betting. Therefore, televised European football matches influence Nigerian youths.

Table 6: Question 4: Do televised European football matches influence Nigerian football?

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	85	85%
No	15	15%
Total	100	100%

Field Survey, 2021

The table above showed that 85% of the respondents agreed that televised European football matches influence Nigerian football, while 15% disagreed with the question. These influences can be a lack of support for the local teams and reduced media coverage. Therefore, televised European football matches influence Nigerian football.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The researcher made a series of visits to bet shops and observed that Nigerian fans' fan followership of European football leagues and clubs has significantly increased. Adeyemi and Kola (2017) discovered that Nigerian youths have practically abandoned their citizenship values such as love and loyalty to the country, patriotism and commitment to national ideas, and have



embraced the values promoted by the internet with their passion for foreign football. The English Premier League had the most fans, about more than 60%, compared to other leagues, while the French Ligue 1 had the least fans compared to Europe's top five leagues (England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France) with about less than 5%. Findings revealed that Chelsea Football Club of England had the most fans while Borussia Dortmund of Germany had the least fans.

It was also found out that televised European football matches have greatly influenced Nigerian football. The researcher found that television is the most preferred platform for football and sports content for Nigerian youths in this study. Adebayo, Olugbenga and Akintunde (2019) also found out that while providing access to live broadcasts of European soccer competitions, soccer viewing centers have developed into supplementary social spaces where culturally defined rules of social relations are contested. In addition, televised European football matches greatly influence the naming pattern of Nigerian football clubs. It was also discovered that Nigerian youths support European clubs more than local football clubs in Nigeria. It was also found out that this support has dramatically affected the patronage of the Nigerian league system by football supporters. Finally, Alao (2018) discovered that commercial considerations influenced the agenda-setting credential of sports media practitioners.

The researcher observed that televised European football matches had greatly influenced Nigerian youths. Some are positive, while some are negative. Positively, it has unified many people despite gender, age, religious or tribal differences. Negatively, youths are becoming addicted to betting/gambling on matches. Sule and Adam (2018) found out that online football betting has become prevalent among Nigerian youths and for which Muslim youth are deeply involved. Football fans support teams based on their economic interest; that is, the team they had staked on to win. There are many things football fans can bet in a football match, such as red card, first yellow card, first offside, first goal, goalless draw, hat-trick (a player scoring three times in a match), half time score, full-time result, etc.

Findings also showed that Nigerian youths watch televised European football matches to a great extent. Football fans also support teams based on their favorite player on the pitch, Like Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, etc. It was also observed that fans support teams due to the presence of some players. For example, most Chelsea fans support the team due to the frequent presence of black players– Mikel of Nigeria, Didier Drogba of Ivory Coast, Michael Essien of Ghana, etc.

Television stations showing football matches have unified Nigerians several times. On the other hand, however, there is the negative social effect such as conflict, youth fraternity, and anti-social behaviors. And in recent times, many youths have been found spending more time in betting houses than on their studies.

Evidence has shown many studies conducted on European football viewership in viewing centers in developing countries and its impact on the local leagues. However, most studies on televised football matches have focused on European football viewership's social and psychological implications, especially on peace and conflict. Dogari, Apuke and Shadrach

(2018) found out that European football can break religious, language, ethnic and political barriers prevalent among Nigerians and bring people together. Still, it could also lead to arguments and conflicts if not correctly managed.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Data analysis showed significantly more males among the respondents than female fans among them. Also, more football fans are aged between 25-30 years among youths in Enugu urban. There are more Chelsea fans among youths in Enugu urban area than any other club. Also, the Premier League (England) has more football fans among Nigerian youths than any other league (Spain, Italy, Germany, France, etc.) The majority of the respondents watch televised European football league matches, and television is their most preferred medium for sports.

Televised European football matches influence Nigerian youths and Nigerian football. These influences lack support for the local teams and betting among youths. Supporting the above submission, Ademoye (2018, p.8) avers that "it is alarming to know that many children are cultivating a gambling lifestyle. What is more frightening is the notion that such habit is increasingly becoming a social behavior of a city child – and what's worse, the indications are not comforting." Sports betting and other forms of gambling are becoming a phenomenon across Africa and Nigeria in particular. Betting over which sports team may win has become a multi-million Naira business. Nigeria is witnessing a massive expansion in sports betting and other forms of gambling (Sule and Adam, 2018).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The televised European football matches play an essential role in our societies because its viewership inculcates into individuals the spirit of oneness, division, love, unity, hatred, among other virtues. From the observations made by the researcher, it was found out that televised European football matches have a 'grievous' negative influence on the academics of Nigerian youths. Such negative influences include ineffective use of time, poor academic results due to deliberate skipping of classes, betting/gambling, leading to social vices like stealing when the gambler runs out of cash, etc. The youths in Enugu mostly like to go to viewing centers and bet houses to watch live matches. Also, some own television sets yet prefer to watch matches at viewing centers.

However, the researcher recommended that students not leave, postpone or abandon their academic activities to watch their teams/clubs play. Such habits could lead to their failure and attract extra years in school. The researcher also recommended that students use the same ability to cram names of clubs and profiles of players to read and cram their notes and textbooks to enable them to excel in academics. Finally, the researcher also recommended that students desist from playing bets as a loss could lead to depression or social vices.

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