

SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES AND AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF SPORTS BETTING

BY

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CERTIFICATION

Fasanya, Opeyemi Elizabeth, a post graduate student in the Department of Mass Communication with matriculation number 16PBE01442, has satisfactorily completed the requirements for the research work for the Degree of Master of Science (M.Sc) in Mass Communication (Broadcasting). The work contained in this thesis is original, and has not to the best of our knowledge been submitted in part or full for any other diploma or degree to this, or any other University.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God Almighty, for He alone was my Guide all through this write up. I really would not have been able to put this work together but for His provision of inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

This study centered on audience perception of sport betting was carried out to find out the audience perception of the social acceptability of sport betting. For decades, Nigerians have not been positively disposed to sports betting because of their preexisting belief and values but in recent times, audience perception of sport betting seem to have been interrupted as there have been a huge rush by young and old to betting outlets. This study finds out how social media is being used by sport betting operators to change audience perception of sport betting including the themes of messages conveyed. Online survey and content analysis was carried out to effectively answer the research question. The online survey was conducted to inquire the audience perception of the social media messages of sport betting operators. A representative sample of two sport betting operators and 146 followers was obtained. While messages of sport betting operators *Facebook and Twitter* platforms were audited to investigate the themes of messages shared on the platform. Results shows that each theme of messages shared by sport betting operators include betting content which can be deduced as a way of normalizing betting. A key finding is that sport betting operators have been able to utilize the social media platforms to interrupt negative perception of sport betting by sharing information that impel followers and influence them to make a betting decision forgetting their preexisting belief of betting. From the result of the survey, it was deduced that the social media platform is seen as a leverage to sport betting operators since they can share information without being controlled by a regulatory board., Thus, this study suggests that information shared by sport betting operators on social media platforms be regulated just as it is done in advertise