

Optimizing the Strategic Role of Youth in Preventing Online Gambling in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

This research article explores the optimization of youth roles in preventing and combating online gambling practices in the digital era. Online gambling has seen rapid growth due to technological advancements that facilitate easy access to digital gambling platforms. Contributing factors to its widespread use include the user-friendly nature of technology, social environmental influences, and the appealing features embedded in gambling platforms. This study adopts a literature review method by referring to various sources, including dissertations, scientific journals, and relevant articles, and is supported by observations of online media content. The main objective is to identify concrete strategies that youth can initiate in the effort to prevent and eradicate online gambling. Findings indicate that online gambling has significant negative impacts financially, psychologically, and socially. Youth, as agents of change, possess strategic potential in prevention efforts. Their roles may include promoting financial and digital literacy, establishing active social communities, and developing technological innovations to support regulatory and monitoring systems. Moreover, young people can contribute through data-driven academic research, visual educational campaigns, and various other creative initiatives aimed at raising public awareness of the dangers of online gambling. The approach in this article is grounded in the socio-psychological communication tradition, which highlights the influence of messages on attitudes, behaviors, and social relationships within society. The synergy between youth creativity, government policy, and community participation serves as a key element in creating a healthy and productive digital ecosystem. This cross-sector collaboration not only helps curb the spread of online gambling but also contributes to the development of a more resilient, empowered, and responsible digital society.

Keywords: Youth, Online Gambling, Prevention, Digital Literacy, Socio-Psychological Communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

As information and communication technology advances quickly and makes it easier to access a variety of gambling platforms, online gambling has become one of the most urgent issues of the digital age. Slot machine gambling is one of the most popular types of online gambling because it easily draws users in with the promise of large payouts through visually appealing gameplay. Nevertheless, this activity's addictive qualities have caused major issues since the fleeting joy it offers can lead to compulsive behaviors that are detrimental to both individuals and society as a whole.

The public's interest in gambling, especially online gambling, has grown as a result of its widespread appeal. Both internal and external factors, such as social environments and personal tendencies, frequently impact this trend and add to the growing popularity of online gambling. Among these, outside influences frequently have a major influence. The impact of one's immediate surroundings can be a strong motivator; for instance, a person who is

surrounded by internet gamblers might become curious and give it a try. This preliminary testing may serve as the starting point for compulsive gambling (Asriadi, 2021).

The online gambling industry continues to expand due to the variety and attractiveness of the games offered. Service providers offer game models designed to appeal to players, with features that are visually stimulating and easy to access, alongside the alluring prospect of large rewards. These combined factors explain why more individuals are becoming engaged in online gambling.

The widespread appeal of online gambling is largely rooted in social factors. Peer influence and social encouragement contribute to the rapid spread of gambling habits. Many individuals disregard the risks and legal consequences, viewing gambling simply as a form of entertainment or technological advancement. Caught up in the excitement, they often fail to consider the possible repercussions.

The adverse effects of online gambling, as outlined by (Solehudin et al., 2025), include financial losses and mental health challenges. While some individuals believe that gambling presents opportunities for significant financial gain, there is, in fact, a greater likelihood of substantial monetary loss. This risk arises from the inherent uncertainty tied to the funds wagered during online gambling activities. Players may either obtain large profits or lose all of their money. Since money is used as the primary stake in gambling, it becomes the central component of the activity. Individuals lacking financial capital cannot participate in gambling, as the act itself requires monetary input. Consequently, online gambling has a negative impact on individuals' financial well-being by depleting their material resources. As (Sahputra et al., 2022) assert, individuals who become addicted to online gambling are often willing to sacrifice large sums of money just to continue playing, thereby diminishing their material value and financial stability.

Those suffering from gambling addiction are often willing to forgo essential needs in order to continue playing. When funds run out, they may go into debt or sell off their remaining assets. In more severe cases, they may even resort to criminal acts such as theft to support their addiction (Nurdiana et al., 2022, p. 107). These individuals are often desperate and deluded into believing they can beat the odds, when in reality, they are statistically bound to lose, summarized by the saying: "Instead of profit, comes ruin."

The psychological toll of online gambling is closely tied to the financial distress it causes. Individuals who suffer financial losses may experience chronic stress, anxiety, and a sense of hopelessness. In desperation, they may attempt to recover their losses by placing even higher bets. This "chasing losses" mentality often leads to even deeper losses, as online gambling platforms are designed with systems that favor the house. It is important to understand that in such platforms, the operators are always in control and ensure their own profits.

Frustrated players often spiral further into gambling as a form of emotional coping, which intensifies the psychological burden. These individuals tend to become more emotionally unstable, sensitive, and distracted. Their addiction affects not only their mental health but also their personal and social relationships. Emotional volatility, low self-esteem,

and withdrawal from social interaction are common, leading to negative ripple effects within their immediate environment.

When gambling develops into a chronic addiction, that is a serious concern as well. At this point, it's hard for the person to stop gambling. It turns into a perceived "need." These people might not care as much about winning or losing as they do about the enjoyable feelings that come with playing. They turn gambling into a way to feel good about themselves.

This behavior can be observed in individuals addicted to online slot games, for example, who feel intense satisfaction from watching the spinning reels align. The sense of "satisfaction" or excitement that arises when winning becomes a trigger, creating a cycle of craving and compulsion. Many players convince themselves that gambling is simply another form of entertainment, even justifying their behavior by comparing it to regular games, albeit with monetary stakes. This reinforces the addictive nature of online gambling.

Thus, two primary issues emerge from this analysis: the inherently addictive nature of online gambling and the pleasure it provides, which reinforces continued play. This pleasure, however, is temporary and conditional on repeated engagement with the game. The addictive satisfaction drives players to return again and again, seeking the same emotional high.

This phenomenon can be understood as "addictive pleasure," where individuals become psychologically dependent on gambling to experience joy. The concept of addictive pleasure comprises three interrelated elements: gratification, craving, and compulsive behavior. These elements combine to create a longing for the fleeting euphoria once experienced through gambling.

People aren't worried about winning or losing anymore. All they want is to sate their inner cravings. They start to view gambling as an end in and of itself, a new way to find pleasure, rather than as a means to an end. This shift represents a risky tipping point where internet gambling solidifies into a routine and ingrained habit.

Online gambling is not just a personal problem; it is becoming a growing social threat due to the variety of detrimental effects, which include financial loss, psychological stress, and addictive behaviors. Several stakeholders must be involved in comprehensive, strategic interventions to address this issue. This study particularly emphasizes the roles and actions that can be taken to address the problems associated with internet gambling, particularly by a demographic that has enormous transformative potential: young people.

2. METHODS

In order to gather, examine, and synthesize a variety of written sources about online gambling and the strategic role that young people can play in preventing it, this study uses a literature review method. While older sources with significant theoretical or empirical value were also included, works published within the last five to ten years were given priority when choosing sources. Peer-reviewed journals, scholarly dissertations, official institutional reports, and respectable mainstream media were all used to establish credibility. Each source

had to discuss online gambling problems, its effects, or youth-led prevention tactics in order to be considered relevant.

Thematic content analysis was used in a qualitative manner to investigate important concepts and developing narratives. According to (Goyanes et al., 2025) Goyanes et al. (2025), this method works well for finding thought patterns and communication techniques in digital materials that are valid and replicable. In order to gain a better understanding of how youth-driven responses are developed in order to address the online gambling phenomenon, this study employed it to uncover key themes like digital literacy, social advocacy, and community-based prevention.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study takes a method based on pertinent communication traditions in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon of online gambling. The socio-psychological tradition is one such method that emphasizes the connection between communication processes, personal psychological states, and how these affect behavior. This method is regarded as pertinent since it clearly explains the internal elements that, whether consciously or unconsciously, influence a person's propensity to gamble online.

Socio-Psychological Tradition

One method used in communication studies that concentrates on individual psychological factors like motivation, personality, perception, and emotional reactions is the socio-psychological tradition. According to this tradition, responses to communicative messages are determined by the mind, which is also the site of information processing (Littlejohn et al., 2017, p. 42). This approach's main goal is to comprehend causal relationships that can forecast a person's behavior in a specific communication situation.

This tradition can be broadly categorized into three branches: biological, cognitive, and behavioral approaches. The behavioral approach focuses on how people respond to communication stimuli by acting in particular ways. The cognitive approach studies how people receive, store, and process information when making decisions. In contrast, the biological approach concentrates on neurological and genetic elements that may affect an individual's behavior, such as brain chemistry and structure. (Griffin, 2012, p. 38).

These three approaches indicate that the socio-psychological tradition is closely related to the field of psychology, particularly in explaining how communication affects internal states of individuals. In the context of online gambling, this tradition is used to explain how both interpersonal and digital media-based communication can influence players' emotions, cognition, and social pressure. This approach also serves to understand how young people with strong interpersonal communication skills can build a supportive social environment and contribute to recovery efforts from online gambling addiction.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The previous explanation indicates that the growing phenomenon of online gambling not only has economic, social, and psychological impacts but also reflects the complexity of the behaviors exhibited by the players involved. To gain a deeper understanding of this

dynamic, it is essential to examine the various types of online gambling players based on their characteristics, motivations, and psychological tendencies. Individuals involved in online gambling display a wide range of motives, backgrounds, and patterns of interaction with gambling platforms. This variation underscores that online gambling should not be viewed as a homogeneous activity, but rather as one involving individuals with diverse behavioral profiles. Based on observations and analyses drawn from (Rustiardi, 2023, pp. 55–57), several types of online gambling players can be identified, each with distinct behavioral patterns and motivations.

The first is the *patience player*, also known as the *relax player*. These players typically engage in online gambling with a calm and unhurried attitude, in line with the term's literal meaning. According to (Zulfan et al., 2025) this group frequently consists of people who view internet gambling as merely a kind of amusement. They typically lack the motivation to actively seek out significant financial gains. Rather, they participate because they like it, the game is exciting, or they just want to kill time.

The next type of player is the ambitious one, who has a strong desire to win big every time they wager. (Agbenorxevi et al., 2023) state that players in this category are usually motivated by strong economic incentives in addition to cognitive biases like unrealistic optimism and the illusion of control. These players frequently act impulsively and have a laser-like focus on reaching predetermined objectives. Often, their ambition stems from prior experiences of significant victories, which engender a strong desire to replicate those successes. However, it is important to note that the hope of continuously achieving large wins in online gambling is speculative and filled with uncertainty, making such ambition a risk factor that can worsen addictive tendencies.

The third type is the *analytical player*, who believes that every gambling game has a certain pattern or system that can be analyzed to increase the chance of winning. Players of this type tend to use analytical approaches in decision-making and are often considered more rational than others. They attempt to recognize game patterns, assess risks, and formulate strategies believed to be advantageous. In some cases, as described by (Mutabar, 2024), individuals of this type even treat gambling as their main source of income, believing that systematic analysis can yield consistent profits. Nevertheless, despite their analytical skills, it must be acknowledged that gambling systems are generally designed to benefit the operators or the house. Apparent patterns are often misleading or illusory. Therefore, regardless of how intelligent or complex their strategies are, players remain vulnerable to loss. This reinforces that gambling is inherently high-risk and should not be considered a stable or sustainable income source.

Another type is the *escape from reality player* individuals who engage in online gambling as a way to escape from life problems. These players are not simply seeking entertainment but are trying to avoid stress, pressure, or economic difficulties. Rather than solving their problems, gambling often exacerbates them. For example, someone burdened by debt may resort to online gambling in the hope of obtaining quick and large profits. Unfortunately, many of these individuals end up with greater losses, financial ruin, and a deepening spiral of problems. In addition, some individuals who initially gamble casually

for entertainment or short-term profit may become addicted due to the inherently addictive nature of gambling games.

Aside from the types mentioned above, there are also individuals who have reached the level of severe addiction, having lost significant financial assets. (Sahputra et al., 2022) explain that this type of player engages in gambling driven by unconscious impulses, making it extremely difficult to stop as they have reached an advanced stage of addiction. These individuals often become obsessed with recovering their losses and resort to increasingly higher bets in hopes of securing a major win. Alarming, the capital used often comes from borrowing either from family, friends, or online loan services. This condition not only leads to severe financial problems but also affects the mental health of the player, representing the most extreme consequence of online gambling addiction.

The issue of online gambling addiction can be analyzed through psychological, economic, and social lenses. Psychologically, individuals involved in online gambling frequently experience stress, anxiety, and emotional dependency on the activity. Economically, financial losses are among the most significant impacts, particularly for those who continue to spend money on gambling. From a social perspective, as noted by (Sugitanata, 2024), online gambling addiction is a serious issue that contributes to family conflicts and deteriorates the quality of social relationships within communities. The addictive nature of online gambling, which involves intense sensations of winning or losing, creates a compulsive behavior cycle that is difficult to break.

Philosophically, this phenomenon can be explained using the concept of hedonism, as discussed by (Rustiardi, 2023, p. 84), which includes both egoistic and utilitarian hedonism. Egoistic hedonism focuses on the pursuit of personal pleasure, where online gamblers derive short term satisfaction from gambling activities. However, this pleasure is shallow and temporary, falling short of true happiness as defined by egoistic hedonism. On the other hand, from the perspective of utilitarian hedonism, online gambling does not bring collective benefit; instead, it causes greater harm to society as a whole socially, economically, and morally.

Given the widespread and damaging impacts of this phenomenon, concrete steps must be taken to address it comprehensively. Online gambling has become a serious challenge affecting multiple dimensions of society, as previously explained. The prevalence of online gambling practices in Indonesia has reached alarming levels, especially among the youth. According to data from (PPATK | Pusat Pelaporan Dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan, 2024), there are approximately 4 million online gamblers in Indonesia, with 2% of them under the age of 10. This situation underscores the urgency of enhancing financial and digital literacy as an effective preventive measure.

In this regard, youth as agents of change hold a strategic role in helping address the issue. The diverse capabilities of the younger generation should be optimized to develop effective and sustainable solutions.

Contributing to Financial and Digital Literacy in Society

First, people who possess strong financial literacy are able to manage their money sensibly, which includes budgeting, spending control, and safe investing. Financial literacy

can help people avoid falling into online gambling traps that promise quick profits but carry significant risks, according to Firman Kurniawan, a digital communication specialist from Universitas Indonesia (Kristianti, 2024). People who have enough knowledge are better able to spot dubious investment offers and resist the urge to use illegal means in an attempt to make quick money.

Digital literacy is just as important as financial literacy when it comes to avoiding online gambling. The ability to access, comprehend, and critically assess digital information is known as digital literacy. People who possess a high level of digital literacy are better able to identify the tactics used by online gambling sites, comprehend the dangers involved, and take precautions against fraud and other online crimes. According to Muhammad Nidhal of the Center for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS), quoted in (Basuki Eka, 2024), having a sufficient level of digital literacy can help people protect themselves from online threats and prevent an addiction to online gambling.

Young people have a great deal of potential to improve financial and digital literacy in society as change agents. They are able to spread accurate information about the risks of online gambling and the significance of digital and financial literacy by actively participating in educational campaigns, seminars, and community discussions. In addition to promoting self-awareness, this active engagement has a positive knock-on effect on those in their immediate vicinity.

Improving financial and digital literacy requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including the government, educational institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations. Integrated and sustainable educational programs can deliver a more substantial impact in curbing online gambling practices. The government, through the Financial Services Authority (OJK) and the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo), has already taken measures such as blocking gambling websites and conducting public outreach. Nevertheless, active engagement from all sectors remains essential in building a safe and healthy digital ecosystem.

Financial and digital literacy enhancement is an effective preventive strategy in reducing public, especially youth, involvement in online gambling. With proper knowledge of financial management and digital risk awareness, individuals can make more informed decisions and resist the lure of instant gains promoted by gambling platforms. Cross-sector collaboration and active youth participation are key to fostering a more aware, resilient, and responsible society in today's digital age.

Youth with Strong Interpersonal Communication Skills

Communities devoted to preventing and educating others about the risks of online gambling could be formed by young people with strong interpersonal communication skills. These kinds of communities can act as cooperative forums for promoting reliable information, increasing public awareness, and fortifying shared ideals that oppose internet gambling. A person's ability to express themselves, comprehend others, and communicate effectively increases with their level of communication skills (Puspitasari & Laksmiwati, 2012).

These communities can engage in a range of activities, including digital campaigns, discussion boards, and financial and digital literacy training, through open communication. In addition to improving member connectivity, these activities promote social solidarity, which fortifies defenses against the harmful effects of internet gambling.

Additionally, by offering training in practical skills like understanding digital risks and personal financial management, the community can help its members become more self-reliant. With these skills, people should be able to defend themselves against possible online gambling involvement and contribute to the spread of moral principles in their community.

In this situation, interpersonal communication becomes an essential basis for establishing community commitment, trust, and a sense of belonging. As part of a social movement to stop the spread of online gambling, effective communication patterns support the development of safe spaces for discussion, the resolution of constructive conflicts, and the strengthening of a common identity.

Youth as Technological Innovators in Online Gambling Prevention

Because of their considerable advantage in digital technology, today's youth are well-positioned to play a pivotal role in developing novel solutions to societal issues, such as the proliferation of online gambling. They possess the technical skills necessary to create technological tools that are both relevant and flexible. These developments could include programs that automatically block gambling websites, early-warning systems for users, and artificial intelligence algorithms capable of detecting and reporting suspicious activities in real time.

This role is not only technical in nature but also strategic within broader prevention efforts. Technology empowers young people to take preventive not merely reactive approaches that can limit early access to digital gambling platforms. In line with this, (Zamzami, 2024) emphasizes that the utilization of technology encourages creativity, enables cross border collaboration, and accelerates access to informative and solution-based content. Therefore, youth engagement in technological innovation development can serve as the frontline in establishing a digital ecosystem that is safe, healthy, and centered on public protection against the dangers of online gambling.

Youth Can Contribute to Strengthening Regulation through Advocacy

In their writing, (Igomu et al., 2024) assert that Indonesia upholds a strict legal stance regarding online gambling practices. The state enforces a comprehensive prohibition on gambling through various regulations, including Law No. 7 of 1974 on the Control of Gambling, which declares that all forms of gambling are illegal and subject to criminal sanctions. In addition, the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) also contains provisions that impose penalties on individuals who disseminate gambling-related content online. Specifically, Article 27(2) of the ITE Law states that any person who intentionally and without authorization distributes, transmits, or makes accessible electronic information containing gambling content is subject to criminal prosecution.

Youth play a strategically important role in this context. Young people can make a difference by actively advocating for policies in addition to educating others and running online campaigns. They can work with the government and pertinent organizations to support more efficient law enforcement against online gambling offenders and provide helpful suggestions to reinforce current regulations. The primary obstacle to combating online gambling, according to (Gainsbury & Blaszczynski, 2020), is not only the need for stricter laws but also the pressing need to create flexible regulations that can adapt to changing social norms and technological breakthroughs. Therefore, because of their in-depth knowledge of the digital media ecosystem that is frequently abused in online gambling activities, the younger generation has a great deal of potential to serve as a bridge between policymakers and the digital community.

Youth Contribution to Rehabilitation through Psychology and Social Sciences

Young people with academic backgrounds in social sciences and psychology have a great deal of potential to make a significant contribution to the recovery and rehabilitation of those who are addicted to online gambling. Their scientific expertise and social awareness enable them to create humanistic, evidence-based, and sympathetic intervention strategies.

These approaches can be implemented through individual counseling services, group therapy sessions, life skills training, and family education programs aimed at creating a supportive social environment conducive to recovery. As explained by (Adriansyah et al., 2015), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been proven effective in helping individuals identify and change maladaptive thought patterns and behaviors.

Additionally, young people with this kind of expertise can help create educational modules, design community-based rehabilitation programs, and facilitate intervention programs that support psychological well-being. Their participation places them in a position to address the long-term psychosocial effects of an addiction to online gambling.

Youth with Other Specialized Skills

Young people with additional specialized skills can also make special contributions. Academic writers, for instance, can carry out in-depth research on the effects of online gambling and suggest evidence-based remedies. Policymakers, scholars, and the general public can use these studies as important resources when creating more potent plans and regulations to stop and eradicate online gambling. According to (Alkhajar et al., 2024), writing literacy allows people to record their experiences and knowledge, which can subsequently be disseminated to others for educational, motivational, and informative reasons. Writing abilities are therefore a means of generating constructive social impact in addition to being a tool for comprehending important issues.

Similarly, young people who are skilled in visual communication design and art can convey strong ideas through imaginative works that the general public can understand, like posters, films, or illustrations. Strong visual messaging can educate audiences about the dangers of online gambling and emphasize the importance of taking preventive action. As described by (Arifianto, 2021), visual art and communication design are effective promotional tools because of their persuasive nature and ability to capture attention quickly and effectively.



Figure 1. September 23, 2023 – YouTube content by Dolewak on online gambling

Source: Screenshot from Dolewak's YouTube channel

An example of this is a YouTube video produced by content creator Dolewak, which portrays the dangers of online gambling through an animated dialogue between internal body organs, filled with moral messages. In the video, bodily components such as the hormone ghrelin and the nervous system are personified as characters explaining the negative effects of gambling, including hormonal imbalance, excessive dopamine production, and damage to other bodily systems. This humorous yet informative visual approach likens gambling addiction to the effects of alcohol or drug use, both of which induce dependency and impair bodily function. The interactive and creative presentation not only educates viewers about the risks of online gambling but also builds emotional awareness in an engaging and accessible way.



Figure 2. June 28, 2024 – YouTube content by Raymond Chin on online gambling

Source: Screenshot from Raymond Chin's YouTube channel

Another example is a YouTube video uploaded by Raymond Chin titled "Online Gambling is Trash." In this content, Raymond Chin explicitly criticizes online gambling as a harmful activity by presenting facts about its impact on society, ranging from financial ruin to mental health issues that can lead to extreme actions such as suicide. He also highlights the unfair mechanisms behind online gambling games, the modus operandi of the platforms, and the virtual impossibility for players to gain profit. His content is supplemented with an in-depth analysis of gambling regulations in other countries, showing that even though gambling is legalized in some nations for economic purposes, the activity still causes harm to the majority of the population. Through a data driven approach, logical narrative, and assertive delivery, Raymond Chin uses his content to educate the public about the dangers of online gambling and urges society to stay away from it.

Both examples demonstrate how digital platforms like YouTube can be used to deliver educational messages that are fact-based and designed to attract broad public attention. Whether through creative illustrations or analytical commentary, such content plays an important role in raising awareness about the dangers of online gambling in the digital age. Creative digital messaging is a powerful tool for driving social change and fostering a more conscious and responsible society.

5. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the ease of access to technology, social and environmental influences, and the allure of digital platforms that provide captivating gaming experiences are the main drivers of the rapidly expanding phenomenon of online gambling in the digital age. This practice has serious negative effects on social, psychological, and financial aspects, even though it might offer momentary enjoyment. People frequently lose control over their personal finances, which can occasionally result in criminal activity. Online gambling has been linked psychologically to stress, addiction, and mental illnesses, which can lead to obsessive behavioral patterns. On a social level, internet gambling can cause interpersonal disputes and upset family harmony.

Young people have a strategic role as change agents in addressing the complexity of this issue. Enhancing digital and financial literacy, creating communities of support, creating technological innovations for monitoring, and actively advocating for policies that strengthen regulatory frameworks are all ways to fulfill this role. Young people can also help by using innovative and instructive strategies like data-based research, visual campaigns, and addiction victims' rehabilitation assistance.

Therefore, creating a more responsible and healthy digital ecosystem requires cooperation from young people, legislators, and the general public. In addition to preventing online gambling, this strategy helps build a resilient, strong, and socially conscious digital society in the age of technology.

To spread anti-online gambling messages broadly and sustainably, it is imperative to launch an integrated prevention program involving educational institutions, youth organizations, religious institutions, and social media platforms. It is anticipated that these programs will not only educate but also change society by giving the younger generation in particular the necessary skills and resilience to withstand the harmful effects of online gambling.

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