

Prevention of online gambling crimes to maintain social structure stability

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of digital technology has led to the proliferation of online gambling practices in Indonesia, significantly affecting the stability of social structures. This study aims to examine the relationship between online gambling crimes and social disintegration, with a particular focus on their impact on families, communities, and cultural value. Employing a normative legal research method with statutory, conceptual, and comparative approaches, this study analyzes existing regulations, including those stipulated in the Criminal Code (*KUHP*) and the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (*UU ITE*), as well as legal concepts related to cybercrime prevention. The research findings indicate that online gambling triggers financial problems, family breakdowns, increased criminality, moral degradation, and weakened social cohesion, all of which negatively affect the social structure of communities. Preventive efforts require a holistic strategy, including strict law enforcement, the use of advanced detection technologies, website blocking, restrictions on virtual private network (VPN) access, digital literacy education, active involvement of educational and religious institutions, formation of anti-gambling communities, rehabilitation support for addicts, and economic empowerment of vulnerable groups. International collaboration through information-sharing and extradition mechanisms is crucial for addressing cross-border offenders. This study underscores the importance of cross-sectoral synergy and a multidisciplinary approach to prevent the widespread destructive impact of online gambling on social structures.

Keywords: crime prevention, online gambling, social structure, community.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Alongside technological advancements, society has increasingly adopted new forms of gambling, commonly referred to as online gambling. Online gambling entails engaging in gambling activities through digital platforms such as websites or mobile applications related to gambling. Enabled by technological convenience, individuals now find it easier than ever to participate in online gambling, as they can gamble from home using smartphones, laptops, or other electronic devices capable of accessing gambling websites and applications. The borderless nature of cyberspace allows individuals of all ages, from children to the elderly, to access and utilize these platforms at their own discretion. Consequently, gambling is no longer restricted to adults; anyone can now become involved in gambling activities (Kuasa & Jaya, 2022).

The cases of online gambling in Indonesia show a significant upward trend. One of the primary factors contributing to this increase is the ease of technological access combined with limited legal awareness among the public. Online gambling activities are now accessible to various segments of society, ranging from children and adolescents to adults. This rising trend corresponds to the data on the volume of financial transactions and turnover related to online gambling in Indonesia, which has continued to surge over the past five years (Table 1).

Table 1. Value of Fund Turnover and Volume of Online Gambling Transactions in Indonesia (2020–First Quarter 2025)

Year	Value (Trillion IDR)	Volume (Million Transactions)
2020	15,8	2
2021	57,9	5,6
2022	104,4	43,6
2023	327,1	104,8
2024	359,8	168,4
Q1 2025	47,9	39,8

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

According to Databoks, the value of online gambling fund turnover in 2020 remained below IDR 20 trillion, with a relatively low transaction volume. However, starting in 2021, the amount increased drastically, exceeding IDR 50 trillion, and it continued to rise in subsequent years. The peak occurred in 2023 and 2024, when transaction values reached hundreds of trillions of rupiah, accompanied by transaction volumes exceeding hundreds of millions. Even in the first quarter of 2025, the fund turnover had already approached IDR 50 trillion, indicating that the annual figure for 2025 is likely to rival or even exceed that of previous years. This surge demonstrates that online gambling has become a massive phenomenon, involving not only individual actors but also forming a large-scale transactional ecosystem that is increasingly difficult to regulate.

Online gambling in Indonesia is illegal; however, law enforcement against such activities faces numerous challenges. Operators often operate from overseas, utilizing encryption technologies and virtual private networks (VPN) to conceal their activities. Online gambling is frequently linked to other crimes such as money laundering, fraud, and cybercrime. Existing regulations are insufficient to address the complexities of online gambling. Many individuals involved in online gambling experience serious financial difficulties, including personal bankruptcy and debt. Dependence on online gambling can deplete savings, increase debt, and lead to criminal acts committed to obtain money (Kesuma, 2023).

In a sociological context, online gambling introduces new dynamics within the social structure. A stable social structure is the fundamental basis for building a healthy and prosperous community. However, when deviant practices such as widespread and uncontrolled online gambling proliferate, the social structure experiences an imbalance. Social norms and values are disregarded, interpersonal relationships among community members become strained, and social solidarity is undermined. When

individuals choose to spend their time gambling online rather than engaging in productive social activities, a significant shift in societal value orientation occurs (Kesuma, 2023).

Furthermore, the impact of online gambling on the social structure of society is evident in the rising rates of crime associated with such activities. Numerous criminal cases, including theft, fraud, and domestic violence, have been triggered by online gambling addiction. Individuals who suffer financial losses due to gambling tend to seek quick solutions to recover their losses, often resorting to illegal means. This situation has the potential to create a vicious cycle of crime that can undermine the existing social order.

It is also important to note that individuals involved in online gambling are not solely drawn from the lower economic strata. Increasingly, middle-class people and professionals have become ensnared in such practices. This indicates that online gambling is not merely an economic issue but also a psychological and social one. Factors such as work-related stress, life pressures, and the desire for instant gratification make individuals susceptible to gambling. Moreover, extensive promotion through social media platforms and influencers contributes to the normalization of online gambling in society.

Culturally, Indonesian society, traditionally known for upholding strong familial and spiritual values, is beginning to exhibit signs of value shifts due to the infiltration of the online gambling culture. Values such as honesty, diligence, and simplicity are gradually being replaced by hedonistic, instant, and materialistic attitudes among the youth. Online gambling promises substantial gains in a short period without significant effort, which directly contradicts local cultural principles that emphasize the process and hard work. When this instant-gratification culture takes root, societal mindsets inevitably shift, directly affecting the nation's sociocultural resilience (Anindito & Perkasa, 2025).

Prevention strategies for online gambling cannot be solely entrusted to law enforcement authorities but require cross-sectoral collaboration. The government, educational institutions, community leaders, religious organizations, and mass media must work synergistically in preventive efforts. Public education on the dangers of online gambling must be conducted extensively and continuously. In addition, more stringent and technologically adaptive regulations and policies must be formulated promptly. The government must also cooperate with Internet service providers to effectively block access to gambling websites.

The phenomenon of online gambling has been widely studied from a global viewpoint. Several studies have indicated that countries with robust cyber legal frameworks tend to be more effective in curbing the spread of online gambling. For instance, Australia has adopted the Interactive Gambling Act 2001, which restricts the promotion and cross-border access to online gambling activities (Gainsbury & Wood, 2011). In the United Kingdom, regulation by the UK Gambling Commission emphasizes operator transparency and consumer protection to prevent social harm associated with gambling (Wardle et al., 2019). Studies in South Korea have also highlighted the importance of technology-based interventions, such as the automatic blocking of illegal websites through collaboration between the government and Internet service providers (Yoon et al., 2020).

From a social impact perspective, research indicates a strong correlation between online gambling and family breakdown and the weakening of social cohesion. (Nasaruddin et al., 2024) emphasized that addiction to online gambling increases the risk of divorce, domestic violence, and social isolation. Similarly, Casu et al. (2023) found a significant relationship between online gambling, psychological stress, and family dysfunction. Theoretical studies have evolved by incorporating perspectives from criminology and digital sociology. Cohen and Felson (1979), through Routine Activity Theory, emphasized that the increasing incidence of digital crime is influenced by the convergence of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of an adequate guardian. General Strain Theory (GST) (Manullang, 2023) explains that social and economic pressures can drive individuals to seek compensation through illegal activities such as online gambling.

This literature indicates that online gambling cannot be separated from the phenomena of globalization and modernization. The massive influx of information and technology into various layers of society has accelerated the ongoing social transformation. Globalization brings numerous benefits, such as access to information, economic mobility, and enhanced communication. However, it also introduces

foreign values that may not align with local norms and cultural traditions. Online gambling represents one of the negative consequences of globalization, which, if not adequately anticipated and addressed, may lead to social disintegration.

This study is important because of the limited availability of scientific literature that specifically examines the relationship between online gambling crimes and the stability of societal social structures, particularly in the Indonesian context. Most existing studies have primarily focused on law enforcement, while broader social impacts have not been thoroughly explored. However, a comprehensive understanding of the social consequences of online gambling is essential for formulating effective policies. By examining this phenomenon from a structural perspective, this study is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the development of more effective and comprehensive prevention strategies.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a normative legal research method to examine statutory regulations and legal concepts related to the prevention of online gambling crimes to mitigate their negative impact on the social structure of society. Normative legal research utilizes statutory, conceptual, and comparative approaches. The statutory approach involves an in-depth analysis of various regulations currently in force in Indonesia concerning the prohibition and prevention of online gambling, such as the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Criminal Code (*KUHP*), and Law Number 1 of 2024 on the Second Amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE). A conceptual approach is employed to explain and analyze relevant legal concepts, such as the concept of cybercrime, the social structure of society, and theories of crime prevention. A comparative approach was used to examine and compare the legal frameworks and practices of countries that have effectively reduced online gambling cases, including Australia, the United Kingdom, and South Korea. In this study, the legal materials used consist of primary legal sources, including statutory regulations, and secondary legal sources, such as scholarly literature, journals, expert articles, and findings from previous research. Legal materials were collected through library research, involving the examination of various relevant legal sources from both physical libraries and digital databases. The collected legal materials are then analyzed qualitatively to identify key issues, examine normative gaps, and formulate systematic and in-depth legal arguments, ultimately yielding findings that can serve as recommendations for preventing online gambling crimes in Indonesia (Efendi & Ibrahim, 2016).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Online Gambling Affects the Social Structure of Society

Online gambling, as a form of social activity that deviates from legal and social norms, has widespread consequences for the social structure of society. Social structure refers to the arrangement of relationships among individuals, groups, and social institutions within a society, forming relatively stable patterns of interaction within it. When an illegal and harmful activity, such as online gambling, spreads widely and becomes embedded in daily life, the social structure may suffer serious disruptions, affecting the smallest social units, such as the family, as well as broader societal levels.

Within the framework of Routine Activity Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979), online gambling can be understood as a form of cybercrime that occurs when there is a motivated offender (gamblers and website operators), a suitable target (digital platforms and users), and the absence of adequate guardianship (weak regulations and technological control). This explains why online gambling has proliferated rapidly in Indonesia: the combination of easy access, limited state control, and widespread Internet penetration creates a conducive environment for such activities. GST (Manullang, 2023) provides an additional perspective by emphasizing that economic pressure, unemployment, and psychosocial stress drive individuals to seek quick solutions through online gambling. When expectations do not align with reality, individuals become more susceptible to deviant behaviors, including online gambling participation. This

is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where socioeconomic inequality is a significant contributing factor.

One of the earliest and most evident impacts of online gambling is the breakdown of family cohesion. As the foundation of society, the family plays a crucial role in shaping individual character and social values. However, the infiltration of online gambling into family life presents significant challenges to family integrity and functional stability. When one family member becomes involved in online gambling, the entire family dynamic can change drastically. Social roles that should be fulfilled in a stable manner are disrupted, which has implications for the breakdown of other social functions within the household.

Online gambling significantly impacts family structure, particularly in communities with a high penetration of digital technology. The family, as a fundamental social unit, must maintain its integrity; however, online gambling practices often lead to disintegration of relationships among family members. Online gambling can cause serious financial issues. Individuals involved in online gambling frequently suffer substantial financial losses, which can deplete family savings and lead to overwhelming debts. When a family's financial resources are eroded by one member's gambling behavior, basic needs such as children's education, healthcare, and daily living expenses may be neglected. This situation often triggers internal family conflicts, diminishes the quality of interpersonal relationships within the family, and may ultimately result in divorce (Nurdiansyah et al., 2024).

In addition, online gambling addiction not only damages financial conditions but also affects the mental health of individuals. Psychological stress resulting from the inability to control gambling behavior often leads to stress, anxiety, and depression. These psychological effects are not limited to the gambler alone but are also experienced by other family members who feel worried, angry, or frustrated by their situation. The family, which should serve as a source of emotional support and protection, instead becomes a site of conflict and instability. This condition is further exacerbated by the social isolation experienced by online gambling addiction. As online gambling can be conducted privately and individually, individuals tend to spend increasing amounts of time alone in front of screens, neglecting social interaction and family responsibilities. This lack of engagement contributes to the weakening of emotional bonds among family members, creating a growing emotional distance that is difficult to bridge (Akbar et al., 2022).

From the perspective of structural functional theory (Talcott Parsons), society is viewed as a system composed of interrelated and interdependent components. If one element fails to function properly, the entire system is disrupted. In this context, if the family unit experiences dysfunction due to the impact of online gambling, the overall stability of society is threatened. The family's functions as an agent of socialization, social control, and emotional support cannot operate effectively, leading to the emergence of individuals who are more vulnerable to social deviation.

At the community level, online gambling can have damaging effects on social cohesion and contribute to increased criminal activity. The widespread prevalence of online gambling may encourage economic crimes such as fraud and theft, committed to financing gambling habits. Individuals trapped in debt due to online gambling often feel compelled to obtain money illegally. This not only damages an individual's reputation but also disrupts security and public order within the community. Such crimes generate a sense of insecurity among community members and erode mutual trust, which is a fundamental element of cohesive communities (Igomu, Mulyono & Bonggoibo, 2024).

Moreover, online gambling often serves as an entry point for organized crimes. Criminal networks operating illegal gambling websites typically employ a modus operandi that involves fraud, extortion, and other illicit activities. Communities affected by online gambling frequently experience declines in social and moral values. When online gambling becomes common and normalized, whether through promotion by public figures or direct personal exposure, values such as hard work, integrity, and social responsibility may be replaced by materialistic and instant gratification-oriented attitudes. This is particularly dangerous for the younger generation, who may perceive online gambling as an effortless path to wealth. In the long term, the negative impact of online gambling on social structures, both at the family and community levels, may lead to serious social disintegration (Ihsanudin et al., 2023).

From the perspective of conflict theory (Karl Marx), social deviance, such as online gambling, can be understood as a manifestation of economic and social inequality. Online gambling is often exploited by individuals who feel marginalized by the formal economic system to obtain quick income. However, rather than resolving their problems, they become trapped in a cycle of poverty and indebtedness. This inequality ultimately intensifies social conflict within society.

Online gambling is strongly correlated with an increase in various types of crime. When individuals engage in online gambling, they often risk losing substantial amounts of money. Failure in gambling may drive individuals to seek illegal means to recover lost funds. Theft is one of the crimes frequently associated with online gambling. An individual addicted to gambling who has run out of money may feel compelled to steal from family members, friends, or even strangers. This occurs due to the urgent need to finance gambling habits or settle mounting debt (Igomu et al., 2024).

In addition, fraud frequently emerges because of gambling online. Desperate gamblers may commit financial fraud, such as using fake identities or stolen credit cards, to continue gambling without spending their money. Such fraud not only causes financial harm to victims but also results in serious legal consequences for perpetrators. Online gambling is often linked to more organized criminal activities. Illegal gambling websites are typically operated by criminal syndicates involved in other illicit activities, such as drug trafficking and money laundering. Involvement in these criminal networks expands the scope of criminal activity and increases the complexity of law enforcement efforts (Silalahi et al., 2024).

Online gambling crimes also trigger cultural changes in society, particularly in terms of values, norms, and symbols. As advertisements and covert promotions increasingly portray online gambling as a “normal” activity, society becomes more permissive toward such behaviors. This creates what is known as “cultural lag,” a disparity between technological advancement and the slower adaptation of social norms in response. While gambling technology continues to advance rapidly, social norms and controls have not evolved quickly enough to prevent its misuse.

Online gambling does not only affect individuals directly involved but also leads to broader changes in social behaviors. One of the most significant changes was the increase in social isolation. Individuals addicted to online gambling often spend excessive amounts of time in front of computer or mobile screens, neglecting social interactions with their families and friends. This isolation can lead to psychological issues, such as depression and anxiety. In addition, online gambling can alter an individual’s perception of moral and ethical value. When individuals engage in gambling, they may begin to view unethical behavior as acceptable. For example, lying to conceal gambling habits or obtaining money through illegitimate means has become more common. Values such as integrity and honesty may gradually erode (Igomu et al., 2024).

Online gambling can also lead to increased aggression and interpersonal conflicts. When individuals repeatedly experience losses while gambling, they become more prone to anger and frustration. These negative emotions may manifest as verbal or physical violence toward close family members, resulting in an unstable and non-harmonious household environment. Furthermore, the normalization of gambling in society, particularly among young people, can influence future behavior. Children and adolescents who perceive gambling as a common and socially acceptable activity are more likely to engage in gambling as adults. This poses long-term risks to the moral and social development of future generations (Silalahi et al., 2024).

3.2 Strategies to Prevent Online Gambling Crimes from Affecting the Social Structure of Society

Online gambling is a complex form of cybercrime that directly impacts social life, particularly in terms of family resilience, social cohesion, and stability of cultural norms. Rapid technological development has created opportunities for various forms of Internet misuse, including the increasingly widespread practice of online gambling. Online gambling is not merely an illegal activity but a social phenomenon that threatens the very foundation of society. The family, as the smallest social unit, is highly vulnerable to disintegration when a family member becomes addicted to online gambling, which can trigger economic problems, domestic conflicts, and even other criminal acts such as fraud and theft. Social

cohesion within communities is disrupted when online gambling normalizes deviant behavior and undermines solidarity among citizens. Cultural norms that have long been upheld, such as the values of hard work, patience, and integrity, are eroded by the instant gratification and hedonistic mindset promoted by online gambling practices. Therefore, the prevention of this crime cannot be achieved through isolated or partial efforts alone but requires a holistic and integrated strategy encompassing legal, technological, educational, community-based, and economically grounded approaches (Igomu, Mulyono & Bonggoibo, 2024).

Prevention strategies for online gambling crimes must be based on a strong legal framework, as stipulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP), including both the older version (Law Number 1 of 1946) and the latest version (Law Number 1 of 2023), and Law Number 1 of 2024 on the Second Amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE).

Online gambling, as a form of cybercrime, cannot be viewed solely through the lens of criminal law; it must also be examined from social, economic, and cultural perspectives. While a penal approach focusing on punishment is important, it is insufficient to address the root causes of the problem itself. Therefore, prevention strategies must integrate non-penal approaches that are more humane, persuasive, and oriented toward social rehabilitation. This strategy emphasizes raising awareness, strengthening moral values, empowering communities, and promoting social reconciliation to minimize the impact of online gambling on adolescents. As such, the non-penal approach is more proactive than reactive, enabling the prevention of the widespread influence of online gambling on the social structure (Pratama & Pangestika, 2024).

Restorative justice can serve as one of the main foundations of a non-penal approach to preventing online gambling crimes, particularly concerning users. Conceptually, restorative justice differs from the conventional criminal justice system, known as retributive justice, which emphasizes punishment as a form of retribution and deterrence. Restorative justice instead focuses on restoration, both for victims and offenders, as well as for the broader community affected by the crime. Its core principle is that a criminal act is not merely a violation of state law but also a breach of social relationships, moral norms, and societal balance. Therefore, resolution should prioritize the restoration of social relations, personal accountability of the offender, and reintegration of the individual into the community (Pratama & Pangestika, 2024).

The restorative justice approach is highly relevant in the context of online gambling. This is because the majority of individuals involved in online gambling at the user level are victims of addiction, trapped within digital systems that exploit human psychological vulnerabilities. Many of them become involved not out of criminal intent but due to economic hardship, social pressure, or a momentary desire to obtain quick financial gains. If this group is punished solely through imprisonment, their prospects for recovery become significantly diminished. They not only lose their freedom but also face social stigma, become estranged from their families, and encounter greater difficulties in securing employment after serving their sentence. As a result, upon release from correctional facilities, they are at a high risk of reoffending or falling into other forms of criminal behavior (Rahayu et al., 2025).

In contrast, through restorative justice, individuals who use online gambling platforms can be directed toward rehabilitation programs, psychological counseling, addiction therapy, and vocational training as alternatives to incarceration. Such rehabilitation programs can be implemented by state institutions, civil society organizations and local communities. For instance, the government can collaborate with mental health hospitals, social rehabilitation centers, or counseling institutions to provide cognitive behavioral therapy that helps gambling addicts manage their psychological impulses. In this way, individuals are not only deterred from continuing their behavior, but are also supported in their recovery to resume healthy and productive lives (Rahayu et al., 2025).

In addition to individual rehabilitation, restorative justice emphasizes the importance of community mediation as a means of resolution. This process involves law enforcement officials, community leaders, family members, and indirect victims of online gambling. For example, families who have suffered financial loss or experienced familial breakdown due to a member's addiction can participate in the dialogue. This mediation process allows offenders to directly understand the consequences of their actions, offer apologies, and commit to taking responsibility for repairing the harm they caused. Within the context

of Indonesian society, which continues to uphold the values of familial solidarity, deliberation, and mutual cooperation, such mechanisms are more aligned with the social culture than purely punitive approaches (Flora, 2025).

From a social justice perspective, restorative justice is more aligned with rehabilitation objectives. In principle, modern criminal justice systems have shifted their focus from retribution to rehabilitation and reintegration. However, in practice, many cases involving users are still handled using repressive measures. Online gambling is a case in which a restorative approach, particularly for users, is more effective. By providing users who commit offenses with the opportunity to correct their behavior through non-penal pathways, the state not only reduces the burden on correctional facilities but also prevents the recurrence of recidivism, which repeatedly harms society (Flora, 2025).

Additionally, the restorative justice approach can enhance community participation in preventing online gambling. When communities are involved in mediation and rehabilitation processes, they develop a shared sense of responsibility for protecting their environment from gambling. For example, anti-online gambling communities at the village or neighborhood level can collaborate with local authorities to monitor residents, report suspicious activities, and provide support to individuals who have been previously involved. This community-based approach strengthens informal social control, which has long been proven effective in maintaining social norms and cohesion within society (Rahayuningsih et al., 2025).

The implementation of restorative justice in the context of online gambling can also be carried out through a diversion model, which involves redirecting case handling away from formal prosecution to informal measures. Diversion may involve replacing imprisonment with mandatory participation in digital literacy programs, community service, or counseling. For instance, a university student found to be involved in online gambling may not be immediately imprisoned but instead directed to undergo regular counseling and participate in digital literacy campaigns as a form of social responsibility. In this way, the individual is not merely punished but also learns to make positive contributions to society (Rahayuningsih et al., 2025).

However, it must be understood that restorative justice does not imply that all individuals involved in online gambling should be exempt from punishment. This approach is most appropriate for users or those who are victims of addiction, while operators or administrators of online gambling sites must still be strictly prosecuted through criminal measures. This is because operators are the primary actors who gain substantial profits, exploit users, and cause widespread societal harm. Therefore, restorative justice should be applied selectively, considering the level of wrongdoing, the role of the offender, and the social impact.

The challenges of implementing restorative justice in online gambling cases in Indonesia are significant. First, societal stigma toward gambling offenders remains strong, making it difficult for communities to accept them back after they have been involved in gambling. Second, specialized rehabilitation facilities for gambling addicts are extremely limited, unlike those for drug addiction, which already have a national rehabilitation system. Third, law enforcement authorities still tend to prioritize criminal prosecution as a measure of “success”. Therefore, clear political commitment and regulatory support are needed to accommodate the restorative justice approach, such as through government regulations or specific policies that provide a legal framework for rehabilitation programs for online gambling addicts (Sarbini, et al., 2020).

To overcome these obstacles, the government may adopt models already in place for handling drug addiction. For instance, drug users proven to be dependent rather than traffickers are placed in rehabilitation centers instead of being imprisoned. The same scheme can be applied to individuals addicted to gambling online. In addition, collaboration with religious institutions and civil society organizations is important. Religious leaders can provide spiritual guidance to strengthen moral awareness, while civil society organizations can offer counseling services and community support (Sarbini et al., 2020).

Overall, a restorative justice-based strategy aligns with the comprehensive, humane, and sustainable objectives of preventing online gambling crime. This approach not only reduces the number of violations but also fosters collective awareness, strengthens social norms, and ensures that individuals who have become involved do not lose their futures. By prioritizing restoration over punishment, restorative justice

positions itself as a means of social reconstruction rather than a tool for retribution. In the long term, this strategy will be more effective in preserving family resilience, reinforcing social cohesion, and protecting younger generations from the destructive dangers of online gambling.

Prevention based on education and digital literacy is a crucial non-penal strategy for addressing the growing phenomenon of online gambling in Indonesia. While repressive measures through law enforcement are necessary to curb gambling practices, particularly against operators or platform providers, long-term prevention must be based on public awareness. Online gambling is not merely an illegal act but also a serious threat to family resilience, the future of the younger generation, and social cohesion. Without preventive efforts that address the root causes, online gambling will continue to find opportunities to spread, especially in the context of rapid digital technological advancement, which is increasingly difficult to monitor (Yunus et al., 2024).

One concrete form of this strategy is integrating education on the dangers of online gambling into the school curriculum. Character education, digital literacy, and moral education should be designed to ensure that young people develop a critical awareness of the risks present in the digital world. Students should not only be informed about legal regulations prohibiting online gambling but also guided to understand its personal and social consequences, such as financial loss, family breakdown, psychological addiction, and secondary criminal acts such as fraud and embezzlement. In this way, schools become not only centers for knowledge transfer but also institutions for shaping resilient characters capable of resisting digital temptations (Yunus et al., 2024).

In addition to formal education, digital literacy campaigns in the community play a vital role. These campaigns can be conducted through social media, seminars, workshops, and television and radio broadcasts that reach diverse segments of society. Digital literacy does not merely involve teaching technical skills, such as using devices or applications, but also encompasses the development of critical and ethical attitudes in online interactions. For example, young people need to be equipped with the ability to recognize covert advertisements, dangerous links, or online games that appear harmless but involve gambling practices. In this way, they are able to reject online gambling not simply because it is prohibited, but because they are aware that such practices pose risks to themselves and their social environment (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Furthermore, financial literacy must not be overlooked in the prevention of online gambling. Many gambling addiction cases originate from individuals' weak ability to manage their personal finances. A lack of knowledge regarding financial planning, sound investment, and risk management makes some people vulnerable to the promise of quick wealth offered by online gambling websites. Therefore, financial literacy should be instilled from an early age through school education and community-based programs. Students and the public must be taught the importance of saving, budgeting, distinguishing between needs and wants, and understanding the risks associated with speculation. Individuals with strong financial skills are less likely to be lured by the false promises of gambling and are instead more inclined to adopt productive methods of managing and growing their finances (Hidayat et al., 2024).

The integration of digital and financial literacy creates a dual layer of resilience. Digital literacy protects individuals from concealed online gambling traps disguised within digital platforms, and financial literacy strengthens psychological resistance against the lure of instant financial gains. In this context, these two forms of literacy are mutually reinforcing. One focuses on recognizing digital pitfalls, and the other focuses on managing personal behavior to avoid economic entrapment (Cahyani et al., 2025).

However, prevention based on education, digital literacy, and financial literacy will not function optimally without concrete support from legal institutions and the government. Several institutions play strategic roles in strengthening the non-penal approach to online gambling. For example, the Indonesian National Police (Polri) has responsibilities that extend beyond law enforcement in dismantling online gambling networks operating both domestically and abroad. The police can also play an active role in educating the public. Socializing the dangers of online gambling in schools and communities is an important step that the Polri can undertake. In addition, Polri can collaborate with community leaders to strengthen social control at the local level, enabling prevention efforts to take root at the grassroots level (Cahyani et al., 2025).

In addition to the police, the Attorney General's Office of the Republic of Indonesia also plays a significant role, not only as a prosecutor but also in promoting diversion for certain cases, particularly those involving young individuals or vulnerable groups involved in online gambling. Through this approach, offenders are not automatically channeled into criminal proceedings but may instead be facilitated to participate in counseling, rehabilitation, or digital and financial literacy programs. This approach provides individuals with the opportunity to reform themselves and prevents further gambling entrenchment. Likewise, the Supreme Court and district courts play equally important roles. The judiciary can develop jurisprudence that emphasizes social rehabilitation rather than mere punishment. Judges, for instance, may impose alternative sentences such as mandatory rehabilitation, community service, or required participation in digital and financial literacy training, enabling courts to contribute constructively to preventive efforts (Hidayat et al., 2024).

However, the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (Komdigi) plays a crucial role in cutting off access to online gambling sites, which continue to emerge rapidly. However, its role should not be limited to blocking. Komdigi can serve as a leading institution in national digital literacy campaigns by collaborating with schools, universities, creative communities, and mass media. With its existing capacity, Komdigi can extend the reach of education to remote regions across the country. Simultaneously, Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK) and Bank Indonesia (BI) are tasked with strengthening public financial literacy. Through digital financial education programs, these institutions can provide knowledge on sound investment practices, risk management, and monitoring suspicious transactions related to online gambling. With the involvement of the OJK and BI, the public is not only better informed about financial matters but also protected from the misuse of financial systems by parties involved in gambling activities (Hendarto & Handayani, 2024).

In the field of education, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Kemendikdasmen) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemdiktisaintek) play fundamental roles. Kemendikdasmen and Kemdiktisaintek must ensure that digital, moral, and financial literacies are fully integrated into school and higher-education curricula. A comprehensive formal education system will serve as the primary defense in shaping the character of the younger generation, equipping them to be intelligent, critical, and prudent in managing technology and finances (Cynthia & Sihotang, 2023).

The prevention of online gambling cannot rely solely on repressive, punitive approaches but requires non-penal strategies that are more persuasive, educational, and oriented toward social recovery. Restorative justice, education and digital literacy, financial literacy, and support from various legal and state institutions constitute essential foundations for building a society that is more resilient to the threat of online gambling. Synergy among institutions, including law enforcement agencies, ministries, financial institutions, and educational bodies, will create a more comprehensive prevention ecosystem. Consequently, the public is not only protected from legal and financial harm but also empowered to consciously and collectively reject gambling practices. Ultimately, the success of non-penal strategies in preventing online gambling is not merely measured by a reduction in violations but by the cultivation of a generation that is intelligent, critical, morally grounded, and capable of building the nation's future free from the grip of gambling.

4. CONCLUSION

Online gambling often leads to financial problems and economic hardship, exacerbating the social inequality. Online gambling affects both family and community social structures negatively. Families frequently experience disintegration due to financial strain and mental health issues related to gambling addiction. This deteriorates relationships among family members and may lead to divorce. At the community level, online gambling encourages economic crimes and undermines social cohesion, resulting in increased fraud, theft, and involvement in criminal activities. Individuals addicted to gambling suffer from social isolation, depression, and moral value shifts, which disrupt emotional bonds within families and communities.

Effective prevention must integrate legal, technological, social and cultural approaches. Non-penal strategies to prevent the impact of online gambling on social structures should emphasize persuasive, educational, and socially rehabilitative measures. Restorative justice offers a more humane alternative by directing offenders, particularly those who are victims of addiction, toward rehabilitation, counseling, and skills training instead of imprisonment. This approach not only reduces social stigma but also supports the reintegration of individuals into society as productive members. Furthermore, prevention based on education, digital literacy, and financial literacy is a key component of building collective awareness. By providing an early understanding of the dangers of online gambling, fostering critical attitudes toward technology use, and instilling financial literacy, communities will be better equipped to resist and avoid gambling practices.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable.

Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization, TCA., and BB; methodology, TCA., and BB; validation, TCA; formal analysis, TCA., and BB; resources, TCA; writing – original draft preparation, TCA; writing – review and editing, TCA; final manuscript approval, BB.

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The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons.

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