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Cultivating Critical Minds: Interdisciplinary Strategies for Empowering University Students Against Online Gambling Propaganda

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Abstract

In this qualitative study on "Cultivating Critical Minds: Interdisciplinary Strategies for Empowering University Students against Online Gambling Propaganda," researchers have uncovered critical insights from experts spanning fields like Psychology, Public Health Science, Communication Arts, Law, and Information Technology. Conducted between December 2022 and January 2023, this research brings to light several key findings: 1) Lack of Awareness and Understanding: A significant issue is the lack of awareness among university students regarding the risks associated with online gambling. This knowledge gap can lead to adverse consequences such as depression and financial distress. Experts emphasize the need to educate students about the intricacies of online media and digital platforms to address this challenge. 2) Role of Mass Media and Regulation: Mass media has a paradoxical role in promoting gambling while failing to educate students about its risks. Experts recommend vigilant monitoring of online gambling sites, identifying suspicious transactions, and collaborative efforts with law enforcement agencies to combat this issue. Building public awareness and collective immunity against online gambling propaganda is also crucial. 3) Addressing Root Causes: The study identifies various factors pushing university students towards online gambling, including societal influences, economic pressures, family dynamics, and lax law enforcement. Experts advocate for a comprehensive approach to mitigate these underlying issues, such as promoting positive peer influences, delivering financial literacy education, reinforcing family values, providing counseling services within educational institutions, and implementing stricter legal measures. 4) Treating Gambling Addiction: A holistic strategy is presented for combating gambling addiction, focusing on trust-building, critical thinking cultivation, experiential learning, life skills development, and promoting acceptance and understanding. These measures aim to help adolescents recognize the consequences of their actions. 5) Legal Framework and Education: Urgent reforms are needed in the legal framework to effectively combat online gambling. Proposals include clear definitions, supplementary laws targeting media platforms, and comprehensive educational campaigns highlighting the risks of online gambling. Experts also recommend studying the public relations strategies employed by gambling media platforms and developing online gambling media literacy programs. In summary, this research underscores the need to address the pervasive influence of online gambling propaganda among university students. It advocates for a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach that involves education, regulation, and addressing root causes to protect vulnerable populations. Implementing these recommendations

has the potential to create a safer online environment for students and empower them with the critical tools needed to make informed choices.

Keywords: Cultivating critical minds, Interdisciplinary strategies, Empowering,
University students, Online gambling propaganda

Introduction

In today's digital era, online platforms have become pervasive in our daily lives, offering a multitude of opportunities and challenges. One such challenge that has gained significant attention is the issue of online gambling propaganda, particularly among university students. The influence of persuasive and misleading content on online platforms has the potential to shape beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards gambling, often leading to detrimental consequences for vulnerable individuals. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, a comprehensive approach is required to address the complex dynamics of online gambling propaganda. This necessitates the integration of knowledge from various disciplines, including psychology (PSY), public health science (PHS), communication arts (CA), law (LAW), and information and communication technology (ICT) . By leveraging the insights and methodologies from these diverse fields, we can equip university students with the necessary skills to critically evaluate and navigate the digital landscape, enhancing their media literacy and resilience to online gambling propaganda.

Psychology (PSY) offers valuable insights into the cognitive processes and vulnerabilities that make individuals susceptible to persuasive messaging (Wood & Williams, 2009). Understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying online gambling propaganda can enable us to design effective interventions that target cognitive biases, emotions, and decision-making processes.

Public health science (PHS) plays a crucial role in elucidating the health- related consequences of online gambling and its associated propaganda (Gainsbury & Blaszczynski, 2 0 1 1). By studying the impacts on mental health, social well- being, and addiction, public health experts can inform evidence- based prevention strategies and interventions tailored specifically for university students.

Communication arts (CA) provide the tools to analyze the persuasive techniques employed in online gambling propaganda (King & Delfabbro, 2016). By examining the rhetoric, visual design, and narrative strategies used to promote gambling, communication experts can help students deconstruct these tactics and cultivate critical thinking skills necessary for media literacy.

Law (LAW) serves as the regulatory framework that governs online gambling practices and propaganda (Hing & Gainsbury, 2 0 1 1) . Understanding legal and ethical dimensions is crucial for developing policies that protect students from exploitative gambling practices and hold accountable those who engage in deceptive promotion.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a fundamental role in shaping the online landscape (Gainsbury et al., 2 0 1 5). By harnessing technological advancements, such as AI- based content analysis and detection algorithms, we can develop innovative solutions to identify, flag, and mitigate online gambling propaganda, providing students with a safer digital environment.

By synergistically integrating knowledge from psychology (PSY), public health science (PHS), communication arts (CA), law (LAW), and ICT, we can establish a multidisciplinary framework for fostering media literacy on online gambling propaganda among university students. This comprehensive approach will equip students with critical thinking skills, empower them to recognize and resist manipulation, and ultimately promote responsible digital citizenship.

Believing in propaganda media and developing an addiction to online gambling can have serious consequences for university students. Some potential effects include:

1. Academic Performance Decline (APD): Students who become addicted to online gambling may experience a decline in their academic performance (Delfabbro & King, 2012). The time and energy spent on gambling activities can interfere with their ability to study, complete assignments, and prepare for exams.

2. Financial Problems (FP): Online gambling addiction can lead to significant financial difficulties   (LaPlante et al., 2011). Students may spend money they cannot afford to lose, accumulate debt, or resort to borrowing money from friends, family, or even engaging in illegal activities to fund their gambling habits.

3. Psychological Distress (PD): Gambling addiction can cause emotional and psychological distress. Students may feel anxious, stressed, or irritable when they are unable to gamble or face financial losses (Kourgiantakis, Saint-Jacques, & Tremblay, 2013). This can lead to a decline in mental well-being, affecting their overall quality of life and potentially leading to depression or anxiety disorders.

4. Social Isolation and Relationship Issues (SIRI): Gambling addiction often leads to social isolation as individuals spend more time gambling online and less time engaging in social activities or maintaining relationships (Hodgins, Stea & Grant, 2011). Students may withdraw from their social circles, neglect their friendships, and experience difficulties in their personal relationships.

5. Legal and Ethical Problems (LEP): In some cases, online gambling may involve illegal activities or unethical behavior (Shead, Derevensky & Gupta, 2010). Students who engage in illegal gambling may face legal consequences, including fines or even criminal charges. Moreover, the addictive nature of online gambling can lead individuals to engage in unethical practices, such as cheating or lying to support their gambling habits, which can have long-term negative effects on their personal and professional integrity.

6. Impaired Future Opportunities (IFO): If a student's addiction and related consequences become known to their university or potential employers, it can negatively impact their future opportunities (Elton-Marshall, Leatherdale & Turner, 2016). It may lead to disciplinary actions, academic probation, or expulsion from the university. Additionally, employers may be hesitant to hire individuals with a history of addiction and associated issues.

It is important for university students to be aware of the potential consequences and seek help if they are struggling with gambling addiction or finding themselves excessively influenced by propaganda media. Universities often have support services, counseling centers, or student organizations that can provide assistance and guidance to students facing these challenges.

Research on fostering media literacy on online gambling propaganda among university students is essential for several reasons:

1. Understanding the impact (UI): Research helps us understand the effects of online gambling propaganda on university students (Messerlian, Derevensky, & Gupta, 2005). By examining the psychological and behavioral aspects, we can assess how exposure to such

content influences attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to gambling. This understanding can guide the development of effective interventions.

2. Identifying risk factors (IRF): Research allows us to identify specific risk factors associated with online gambling propaganda (Shaffer & Martin, 2011). Factors such as cognitive biases, susceptibility to persuasive messages, and social influences can contribute to the effectiveness of gambling propaganda. Identifying these risk factors helps in designing targeted prevention strategies.

3. Developing effective interventions (DEI): Research provides insights into effective strategies to foster media literacy and counter the influence of online gambling propaganda (Hing, Cherney, Blaszczynski, Gainsbury & Lubman, 2014). By studying the effectiveness of different approaches, such as educational campaigns, cognitive-behavioral interventions, and regulatory policies, we can develop evidence-based interventions to enhance media literacy skills among university students.

4. Legal and policy considerations (LPC): Research can inform policymakers and lawmakers about the potential risks associated with online gambling propaganda (Hare, Turner & Armstrong, 2008). By examining the existing legal frameworks, regulatory policies, and their effectiveness, research can help identify gaps and provide recommendations for strengthening legal and policy measures to protect university students from harmful gambling influences.

5. Media literacy promotion (MLP): Research helps in understanding the current level of media literacy among university students concerning online gambling propaganda (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). By assessing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards media consumption, researchers can identify areas that require improvement. This information can guide the development of educational programs and resources to enhance media literacy competencies among students.

6. Interdisciplinary approach (IDA): Research on this topic benefits from the integration of knowledge from various disciplines (Blaszczynski, Ladouceur & Shaffer, 2004)., including psychology (PSY), public health science (PHS), communication arts (CA), law (LAW), and information and communication technology (ICT). Collaborative research across these disciplines allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issue and the development of holistic interventions that address the multifaceted nature of online gambling propaganda.

Therefore, research on fostering media literacy on online gambling propaganda among university students is crucial in this qualitative study titled "Cultivating Critical Minds: Interdisciplinary Strategies for Empowering University Students against Online Gambling Propaganda." This research aims to inform evidence-based interventions, policy development, and educational initiatives aimed at protecting students from the potential harms of online gambling and promoting responsible media consumption.

The objective of this research

The first objective of this research is to explore and integrate knowledge from all five branches of science: physical science, life science, earth science, social science, and formal science. This integration aims to develop comprehensive and interdisciplinary educational materials that can help students gain a holistic understanding of various scientific concepts and principles.

The second objective is to develop strategies and educational materials that promote responsible online behavior among students. This includes raising awareness about the risks and consequences of online gambling, providing guidance on setting limits, and fostering self-control when engaging with online platforms. By equipping students with the necessary

knowledge and skills, they can make informed choices and develop a healthy relationship with online media while minimizing the potential negative impact of persuasive messages related to online gambling or other regenerated activities.

By pursuing these objectives, the research aims to empower students with a comprehensive scientific education, critical thinking skills, and media literacy, enabling them to make informed decisions and navigate the digital landscape responsibly.

Research flow

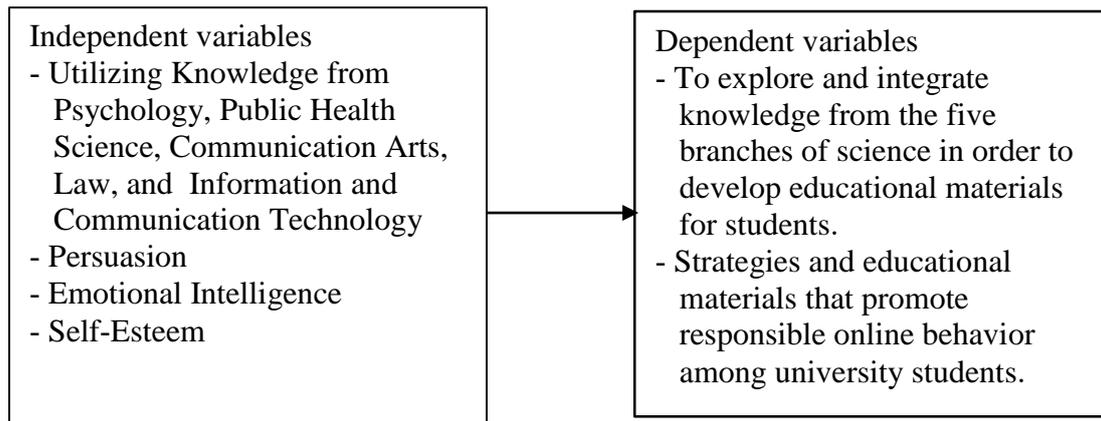| Independent variables
- Utilizing Knowledge from Psychology, Public Health Science, Communication Arts, Law, and Information and Communication Technology
- Persuasion
- Emotional Intelligence
- Self-Esteem | → | Dependent variables
- To explore and integrate knowledge from the five branches of science in order to develop educational materials for students.
- Strategies and educational materials that promote responsible online behavior among university students. |

Figure 1 This is a research flow of Cultivating Critical Minds: Interdisciplinary Strategies for Empowering University Students against Online Gambling Propaganda. (Source: Natthanan Siricharoen, 2023)

Literature Review

Children and teenagers in North America constitute the first generation of youth to come of age in a society where numerous forms of gambling are readily accessible and promoted extensively. What was once regarded as a sinful and vice-ridden activity is now commonly viewed as a benign form of adult entertainment and has gained widespread acceptance in our culture. In Canada, although government-regulated gambling is prohibited for individuals under the age of 18, an increasing number of young people are engaging in gambling as a form of leisure and amusement (Jacobs, 2000). Furthermore, it's important to acknowledge that there are certain methodological challenges when it comes to assessing pathological gambling in young individuals. Despite these challenges, there is a consistent body of evidence indicating that the rates of probable pathological gambling in youth range from 4% to 8%. This prevalence rate is notably higher when compared to the rates of pathological gambling in the general adult population, which typically fall within the range of 1% to 3%. (Derevensky, Gupta, & Winters, 2003; National Research Council, 1999). Technological advancements in the gaming industry have led to the emergence of various new forms of gambling. In recent years, the gambling landscape has witnessed significant developments, including online gambling, advanced slot machines, electronic gambling machines, Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs), interactive television games, and telephone wagering (Griffiths & Wood, 2000). These innovations have reshaped the way people engage with and experience gambling activities The gambling industry has undergone significant transformations in recent years, largely driven by rapid technological advancements. These innovations have given rise to new forms of gambling, presenting both opportunities and

challenges for individuals, regulators, and society as a whole. Online Gambling: A Convenient and Controversial Frontier. One of the most noteworthy developments in the gambling world is the proliferation of online gambling platforms. Enabled by the internet, players can now engage in various casino-type games from the comfort and privacy of their own homes. This convenience has undoubtedly contributed to the growing popularity of online gambling. However, these developments also raise concerns related to legality, responsible gambling, addiction, and social impact.

This literature review explores the interdisciplinary approach to promoting media literacy through online media by integrating knowledge from psychology, public health, communication arts, information technology, and communication. It highlights the significance of media literacy in the digital age and the challenges posed by online media. The review examines the role of each discipline in enhancing media literacy skills and emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts. It discusses psychological factors influencing media consumption, interventions to enhance critical thinking skills, the role of public health in promoting media literacy, analysis of media messages, the impact of digital technologies on media literacy, and the use of online media as educational tools. The review concludes by emphasizing the need for ongoing interdisciplinary collaboration and future research to effectively address the challenges of the digital media landscape and empower individuals in navigating it responsibly.

The Theory of Persuasion, also known as persuasive communication theory, explores how people are influenced and persuaded to adopt certain attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors through communication. It seeks to understand the psychological processes and strategies involved in changing or shaping an individual's thoughts and actions. One prominent theory of persuasion is the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) developed by Richard E. Petty & Cacioppo (1981). The ELM suggests that persuasion occurs through two routes: the central route and the peripheral route. Central Route: This route involves a person's careful and systematic evaluation of the information presented. When individuals are motivated and have the ability to process the message deeply, they are more likely to be persuaded through the central route. The key factors in this route are the strength and quality of arguments, credibility of the source, and logical reasoning. Peripheral Route: This route relies on peripheral cues, such as superficial aspects of the message or the credibility and attractiveness of the communicator. When individuals lack motivation or cognitive resources to engage in deep processing, they are more likely to be influenced through peripheral cues. Examples of peripheral cues include attractive visuals, celebrity endorsements, or emotional appeals. Other theories and concepts related to persuasion include social proof (the idea that people are more likely to adopt a certain belief or behavior if they see others doing the same), reciprocity (the tendency to feel obligated to return a favor or concession), scarcity (the perception that something is more valuable when it is limited or difficult to obtain), and the foot-in-the-door technique (starting with a small request to increase compliance with a larger request later).

Therefore, the theory of persuasion helps us understand how messages are crafted and delivered to influence people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. It involves understanding the cognitive processes, motivations, and situational factors that play a role in effective persuasion.

Emotional Intelligence Theory: Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a concept that refers to the ability to identify, understand, manage, and express emotions effectively in oneself and others. The theory of emotional intelligence proposes that this set of skills plays a crucial role in personal and social success. The most influential model of emotional intelligence was developed by psychologists Salovey & Mayer (1990) and popularized by Goleman (1995). This model defines emotional intelligence as consisting of four key components: Perceiving

emotions: The ability to accurately recognize and interpret emotions in oneself and others, including facial expressions, body language, and vocal cues. Using emotions: The ability to harness emotions to facilitate thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. This involves using emotions to motivate oneself, generate creative ideas, and stay focused. Understanding emotions: The capacity to comprehend the causes, consequences, and complexities of emotions. This includes recognizing the relationship between emotions, thoughts, and behavior. Managing emotions: The skill to regulate and control one's emotions and to effectively manage the emotions of others. This involves handling stress, controlling impulses, adapting to change, and fostering positive relationships. Research has shown that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to have better interpersonal relationships, stronger leadership skills, higher job performance, and greater psychological well-being. Emotional intelligence theory focuses on understanding and managing emotions effectively, both in oneself and in others. It can be applied to various aspects of life, including media literacy and recognizing propaganda, as well as making informed decisions about online gambling. Here are some examples:

Media Literacy: Emotional intelligence can help individuals become more discerning consumers of media by enabling them to: Recognize emotional manipulation: Emotional intelligence allows individuals to identify when media content aims to evoke specific emotions to influence their opinions or behaviors. Analyze bias and objectivity: Emotional intelligence helps individuals remain objective and critically evaluate media sources, recognizing any potential biases or agendas that might affect the information presented. Differentiate between fact and opinion: Emotional intelligence enables individuals to differentiate between factual information and subjective opinions, allowing them to form more informed judgments. Manage emotional responses: Emotional intelligence helps individuals regulate their emotional reactions to media content, reducing the risk of being swayed by sensationalism or fear-based tactics.

Propaganda: Emotional intelligence can play a crucial role in recognizing and resisting propaganda techniques, such as: Emotional manipulation: Propaganda often attempts to manipulate emotions to shape public opinion. Emotional intelligence helps individuals identify when their emotions are being targeted to influence their beliefs or actions. Empathy and perspective-taking: Emotional intelligence allows individuals to understand and consider different perspectives, helping them question and critically analyze propaganda messages. Emotional regulation: Emotional intelligence helps individuals manage their emotional responses to propaganda, enabling them to think more rationally and make decisions based on facts rather than emotional manipulation.

Online Gambling: Applying emotional intelligence when engaging with online gambling can lead to more responsible behavior, such as: Self-awareness: Emotional intelligence enables individuals to recognize their own emotional triggers and vulnerabilities, helping them identify when they might be prone to impulsive or excessive gambling. Emotional regulation: Emotional intelligence helps individuals manage urges, impulsivity, and frustration related to gambling, reducing the risk of developing addictive behaviors. Empathy and social awareness: Emotional intelligence allows individuals to understand the potential negative impact of gambling on themselves and others, fostering empathy and encouraging responsible gambling practices. Decision-making: Emotional intelligence assists individuals in making informed decisions about online gambling by considering the potential consequences, assessing risks, and weighing their emotional and financial well-being.

Remember that these examples highlight how emotional intelligence theory can be applied in the context of media literacy and online gambling, promoting critical thinking, responsible behavior, and self-awareness.

Self-Esteem Theory, proposed by Morris Rosenberg (1965), suggests that individuals have a fundamental need for positive self-regard, and their self-esteem is influenced by the evaluations they receive from others, particularly significant individuals in their lives. It emphasizes the role of social comparison in the development and maintenance of self-esteem, as individuals assess their worth and value by comparing themselves to others. Self-esteem is influenced by personal achievements, social comparisons, and feedback from others. There are two types of self-esteem: trait self-esteem, which is a person's general and enduring level of self-worth, and state self-esteem, which fluctuates depending on specific events and social comparisons. Higher self-esteem is generally associated with greater resilience, motivation, and psychological well-being, although excessive or fragile self-esteem can lead to negative outcomes. In the context of media literacy and online gambling, individuals with low self-esteem may be more susceptible to manipulation and propaganda related to online gambling due to their desire for validation and enhancement of self-esteem.

For example, imagine a person with low self-esteem who feels inadequate and seeks validation and acceptance. They might come across online advertisements or social media posts promoting online gambling as a way to boost their self-confidence and achieve success. These messages may emphasize the possibility of winning large sums of money, gaining recognition, or being part of an exclusive group of successful gamblers. This propaganda appeals to their desire for social acceptance and validation, offering a perceived solution to their self-esteem issues. Lacking media literacy skills, such individuals may fail to critically analyze and question the claims made in these messages. They may overlook the risks and negative consequences associated with gambling, such as financial loss, addiction, and emotional distress. Instead, they might focus on the short-term excitement and the potential for an improved self-image that gambling promises. In this scenario, media literacy plays a crucial role in empowering individuals to recognize and resist propaganda related to online gambling. Media literacy education can provide individuals with the knowledge and skills to critically evaluate media messages, understand the tactics used in propaganda, and make informed decisions based on accurate information. By developing media literacy, individuals can better recognize manipulative strategies and protect themselves from being swayed by misleading claims that exploit their self-esteem vulnerabilities. The self-esteem theory can shed light on how individuals with low self-esteem might be targeted by propaganda related to online gambling. Through media literacy education, individuals can become more discerning consumers of media, enabling them to make informed decisions and resist manipulation that can negatively impact their well-being.

Both emotional intelligence and self-esteem theory contribute to our understanding of human behavior and well-being. While emotional intelligence focuses on the ability to perceive and manage emotions effectively, self-esteem theory emphasizes the importance of self-worth and evaluation in shaping individuals' thoughts and behaviors.

Related Research

Kaewmanee & Pongloe (2021) investigated the factors affecting attitudes and behaviors towards gambling among undergraduate students. They found that 6.5 percent of students regularly participated in gambling activities. The most popular forms of gambling among students were playing cards (48.3 %), underground lottery (15.7 %), and football betting (13.5 %). The study identified various locations where gambling took place, including dormitories

(35.1 %), residences (26.3 %), and educational institutions (11.1 %). It also highlighted the significant influence of friends on students' gambling behaviors, with 54.5 percent of participants reporting that gambling among friends made them more likely to gamble. Inviting friends to gamble together was seen as a convenient way to engage in gambling. The research emphasized the influential role of parents and friends as environmental factors in students' gambling experiences. Online gambling was found to be prevalent among students, highlighting the need for effective enforcement of the Gambling Act 1935 concerning internet gambling. However, the study revealed that enforcement was ineffective due to issues such as the lack of a clear definition of online gambling and low penalty rates, which resulted in students paying less attention to the regulations.

Research has been conducted on the factors that influence students' attitudes and behaviors towards gambling. It is crucial to raise awareness among students about the influence of media propaganda that promotes online gambling, which comes in various hidden styles and types. Family members, including parents and relatives, play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. Numerous studies in the social sciences by academics such as Amato & Fowler (2002), Baumrind (1991), Belsky, Conger & Capaldi (2009), Elder et al. (1995), Ryan & Deci (2000), and Knafo & Plomin (2006) have explored the impact of family influence. The family, as an important institution, holds great significance for individuals, starting from birth and continuing through their upbringing and personality development. Families serve as the primary source of indoctrination, instilling habits and shaping the conscience of children from a young age. Consequently, children and youth, including students, display behaviors influenced by their family's values and cultural background. By gradually conveying appropriate attitudes, families can guide children and youth to develop positive thoughts aligned with Thai society's norms. Ultimately, these thoughts become ingrained in their daily lives and determine their behavior. Friends, educational institutions, and government agencies play essential roles in combating the hidden dangers of online gambling. By utilizing the latest information and formulating guidelines, they can raise awareness and improve public policies to protect individuals and families. Through their collective efforts, they can effectively address this issue in today's modern world.

Methodology

In this qualitative research study, the aim was to gather insights from experts in psychology, public health, communication arts, law, and information and communication technology on strategies to empower university students against online gambling propaganda. The primary data collection method utilized for this study was in-depth interviews with experts from various fields. These interviews were conducted during the months of December 2022 and January 2023.

Key Informant Selection: Key informants were carefully selected based on their expertise and extensive knowledge in the relevant fields. The criteria for selecting these informants were designed to ensure that they were information-rich and capable of providing valuable perspectives. To maintain the confidentiality of key informants, their names and photographs were concealed in the research findings and reporting. The chosen key informants possessed at least a decade of experience in academic or professional fields related to the research topic. They had a background in issues concerning hidden online gambling games and the use of propaganda media to entice teenagers into gambling. Some of the informants had served as advisors for theses and dissertations of master's and doctoral students conducting research on topics related to hidden online gambling games. Others held executive positions in

agencies dealing with missions related to online hidden gambling games. In total, five key informants were selected, all of whom had direct relevance to the research topic.

Data Collection Instruments and Analysis Methods: For data collection, semi-structured interview guides tailored to each expert's field of expertise were employed. These guides were designed to elicit detailed information about the experts' perspectives and experiences regarding online gambling propaganda. Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, wherein transcripts of the in-depth interviews were coded and categorized into themes and patterns. This method aimed to identify recurring themes and insights shared by the experts.

Ensuring Credibility of Findings: Several measures were implemented to establish the credibility of the research findings. Member checking was one such measure, where participants were given the opportunity to review and validate the findings based on their own interviews. Peer debriefing and triangulation were also utilized to enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the data. Triangulation played a pivotal role in enhancing the trustworthiness and validity of the data. Triangulation is a methodological approach that involves using multiple sources, methods, or perspectives to validate and corroborate research findings.

1. Triangulation of Data Sources: One crucial aspect of triangulation in this study was the use of multiple data sources. Rather than relying solely on one type of data, the researchers incorporated a diverse range of sources to gather information on strategies for empowering university students against online gambling propaganda. The primary data source was in-depth interviews with experts from various fields, as previously mentioned. These interviews provided rich qualitative data from individuals with extensive knowledge and experience. In addition to interviews, the study could have also benefited from the inclusion of other data sources, such as surveys or content analysis of online gambling propaganda materials. By incorporating different data sources, researchers can cross-verify findings, making the results more robust and reliable.

2. Triangulation of Methods: The study primarily utilized in-depth interviews as the main data collection method. However, triangulation of methods involves using different research techniques to explore the same research questions. In this context, researchers could have employed additional methods, such as focus groups, participant observation, or document analysis, to gather complementary data. For example, conducting focus groups with university students themselves could have provided valuable insights into their perceptions and experiences with online gambling propaganda. Participant observation could have allowed researchers to immerse themselves in the online environments where propaganda is prevalent, gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Document analysis could have been used to examine propaganda materials directly.

3. Triangulation of Researchers: Another form of triangulation involves using multiple researchers to analyze and interpret data independently. In this study, having multiple researchers independently code and analyze the interview transcripts would have added an extra layer of validation to the findings. Different researchers bring diverse perspectives and biases to the analysis process, which can help identify potential errors or biases in the data interpretation. During data collection, a primary researcher and research assistants were involved in collecting various data.

In the qualitative study on empowering university students against online gambling propaganda, triangulation was a valuable methodological approach employed to enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the data. While the study successfully employed in-depth interviews as a data collection method, it could have further strengthened its research design by incorporating triangulation of data sources, methods, and researchers. By diversifying data

sources and methods, the study could have provided a more comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the research topic. Additionally, involving multiple researchers in the data analysis process would have added rigor to the interpretation of findings. Triangulation, when used effectively, not only bolsters the credibility of qualitative research but also enriches the depth and breadth of insights generated from the study.

Figure 2 The process of collecting research data from 5 experts in 5 fields
(Source: Natthanan Siricharoen, 2023)

Results

The research results obtained from in-depth interviews with experts in various disciplines regarding online gambling propaganda and its impact on university students. The names of the key informants have been omitted to maintain confidentiality.

Research Findings

1. Communication Arts Perspective: Communication Arts Specialist underscores that children today face a significant risk of exposure to gambling and gaming without a full understanding of the associated dangers. This lack of awareness can result in various negative consequences, including depression and academic disinterest. To address this issue, experts recommend: Educating children about online media and digital platforms to promote responsible use. Providing information about the risks associated with online gambling. Encouraging active participation and knowledge sharing to engage students in discussions and decision-making processes.

2. Information Technology and Law Perspective: Information Technology and Law Specialist highlights the dual nature of IT, emphasizing both its positive and negative aspects. One of the negative consequences discussed is the rise of online gambling among students due to exposure to advertisements. To combat this issue, it is recommended to: Implement measures to filter and monitor online gambling sites. Promote digital literacy and critical thinking skills. Engage influential figures, such as celebrities, to raise awareness about the risks of online gambling.

3. Public Health Perspective: Public Health Specialist delves into the causes of online gambling among college students, identifying multiple contributing factors. To address these root causes, the following strategies are proposed: Foster positive peer influence and guidance

to deter students from gambling. Teach financial literacy and highlight gambling risks. Involve families in instilling values and educating children about gambling risks. Provide counseling services and advisors in educational institutions. Strengthen law enforcement measures and penalties for online gambling.

    4. Psychiatry and Adolescent Health Perspective: Psychiatry and Adolescent Health Specialist focuses on building trust and critical thinking skills in adolescents addicted to gambling. Key steps in this approach include: Multidisciplinary treatment involving psychologists and social workers. Modifying the environment to reduce gambling triggers. Building trust with addicted adolescents. Teaching critical thinking and life skills. Emphasizing acceptance, understanding, and open communication.

    5. Legal and Media Perspective: Legal and Media Specialist addresses the legal framework and media literacy regarding online gambling. The following strategies are proposed: Updating laws to define roles and actions in online gambling. Drafting supplementary laws targeting media platforms that promote gambling. Providing comprehensive education to students about online gambling and media literacy.

Integration of Knowledge and Strategies

    Based on the insights from these disciplines, it is essential to integrate knowledge and develop comprehensive strategies for university students: Develop strategies and materials for students, emphasizing media literacy and awareness of online gambling propaganda. Implement interdisciplinary approaches that leverage the strengths of each discipline to address the multifaceted issue of online gambling. Encourage active participation and critical thinking among students to empower them in making informed decisions regarding online gambling. The synthesis of research findings from experts in Communication Arts, Information Technology, Public Health, Psychiatry, and Law highlights the urgent need to address the issue of online gambling propaganda among university students. By integrating knowledge and strategies from these disciplines, we can better equip students to navigate the digital landscape and make informed choices, ultimately mitigating the negative impact of online gambling propaganda on society.

    To further elaborate on the integration of knowledge and strategies from all five disciplines (Communication Arts, Information Technology and Law, Public Health, Psychiatry and Adolescent Health, and Legal and Media), consider the following:

Integration of Knowledge

    Interdisciplinary Workshops: Organize interdisciplinary workshops where experts from each discipline come together to share their insights and collaborate on developing a holistic approach to addressing online gambling propaganda.

    Joint Research Projects: Encourage collaborative research projects that involve experts from multiple disciplines working on specific aspects of the online gambling issue. For example, a joint study could investigate the psychological effects of online gambling advertisements.

    Knowledge Exchange: Facilitate regular knowledge exchange sessions among experts to ensure they stay updated on the latest research findings, trends, and developments in their respective fields.

    Cross- Disciplinary Training: Offer cross- disciplinary training sessions for professionals in each field to broaden their understanding of how their expertise can contribute to a comprehensive solution.

Integrated Strategies

Comprehensive Curriculum: Develop a comprehensive curriculum that incorporates elements from all five disciplines, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education on media literacy, online gambling, and its broader implications.

Interdisciplinary Task Forces: Establish interdisciplinary task forces comprising experts from each discipline to design and implement multifaceted strategies addressing online gambling propaganda.

Media Campaigns: Launch media campaigns that combine the strengths of each discipline, such as using effective communication techniques, legal insights, public health messaging, and mental health support to raise awareness and promote responsible online behavior.

Policy Advocacy: Collaborate with legal experts to advocate for policy changes and regulations that address online gambling advertising and its impact on vulnerable populations, especially youth.

Mental Health Support Programs: Develop mental health support programs within educational institutions that leverage insights from psychiatry and adolescent health experts to assist students struggling with online gambling addiction.

Media Literacy Initiatives: Implement media literacy initiatives that incorporate legal and media perspectives to help students critically evaluate online content, including gambling advertisements, and make informed choices.

Interdisciplinary Research Centers: Establish interdisciplinary research centers dedicated to studying the multifaceted aspects of online gambling, promoting collaboration among experts, and disseminating research findings to the public.

Community Outreach: Extend strategies beyond the university setting to engage with the broader community, involving public health professionals in awareness campaigns and legal experts in advocating for regulatory changes.

By integrating knowledge from these diverse disciplines and implementing integrated strategies, universities and stakeholders can create a comprehensive approach to combat online gambling propaganda, better equip students to navigate the digital landscape, and contribute to broader societal change in addressing this pressing issue.

To develop strategies and materials for university students with a particular emphasis on media literacy and the impact of online gambling propaganda, consider the following steps and content:

Strategies:

Curriculum Integration: Collaborate with academic institutions to integrate media literacy and online gambling awareness into existing courses or create dedicated courses on these topics.

Interactive Workshops: Conduct interactive workshops where students can critically analyze online gambling advertisements, identify propaganda techniques, and discuss the consequences of gambling.

Guest Lectures: Invite experts from various fields, including psychology, law, and public health, to deliver guest lectures on the psychological, legal, and health implications of online gambling.

Peer Education Programs: Establish peer-led programs where knowledgeable students can educate their peers about media literacy and responsible online behavior.

Online Resources: Create an online platform with resources such as articles, videos, and quizzes that students can access to enhance their understanding of media literacy and online gambling.

Materials

Educational Videos: Produce informative videos that explain the tactics used in online gambling propaganda and the potential consequences of online gambling addiction.

Infographics: Design visually appealing infographics that illustrate key concepts related to media literacy and online gambling, making complex information more accessible.

Case Studies: Develop case studies highlighting real-life examples of individuals affected by online gambling, including personal stories and the resulting challenges they face.

Interactive Games: Create gamified educational tools that engage students in decision-making scenarios related to online gambling, allowing them to experience the consequences of their choices.

Discussion Guides: Provide discussion guides for educators to facilitate meaningful conversations in the classroom, encouraging students to critically analyze online content and its influence.

Social Media Campaigns: Launch social media campaigns with sharable content that raises awareness about online gambling propaganda and promotes responsible online behavior.

Printed Materials: Produce pamphlets, brochures, and posters for distribution on campuses, in libraries, and at student events to reach a wider audience.

Online Forums: Establish moderated online forums or discussion boards where students can ask questions, share experiences, and seek guidance on media literacy and online gambling issues.

By implementing these strategies and developing relevant materials, universities can effectively equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the digital landscape responsibly, recognize online gambling propaganda, and make informed choices regarding their online activities.

Summary of Research Results

The research on online gambling among children and college students in Thailand brings to light several crucial perspectives and findings. The comments from experts in communication arts, public health, IT, and law shed light on the challenges and potential solutions, emphasizing the importance of education, regulation, and addressing root causes. The key findings of the research encompass psychological factors, public health implications, communication strategies, legal framework, information technology, and the long-term impact of media literacy interventions.

Perspectives and Solutions: Lack of Awareness and Understanding: Experts highlighted the lack of knowledge and awareness among children and students regarding the risks associated with online gambling. To address this, education about online media and digital platforms, along with information about online gambling risks, is crucial.

Role of Mass Media and Regulation: Experts pointed out that mass media promote gambling but fail to educate children about the risks. Proposed solutions include filtering and monitoring online gambling sites, identifying suspicious transactions, and collaborating with cyber police for enforcement.

Addressing Root Causes: Several factors contributing to online gambling among college students were identified, including social environment, economic changes, peer influence, family dynamics, weak law enforcement, and easy access to technology. Solutions involve positive peer influence, financial literacy education, family values, counseling services, and stricter laws.

Treating Gambling Addiction: A comprehensive approach was proposed, focusing on building trust, encouraging critical thinking, experiencing gambling games together, training life skills, and promoting acceptance and understanding.

Legal Framework and Education: Updating the legal framework, defining roles and actions, targeting media platforms, and providing education about online gambling and risks were recommended.

Key Research Findings

Psychological Factors: The study identified cognitive biases, personality traits, social influence, and peer pressure as influential factors in online gambling susceptibility among university students.

Public Health Implications: Excessive gambling was linked to negative mental health outcomes, and exposure to online gambling propaganda was associated with gambling-related problems and addiction risks among university students.

Communication Strategies: Media literacy interventions were found effective in enhancing critical thinking skills and resistance to online gambling propaganda. Social marketing campaigns also played a role in changing attitudes and behaviors.

Legal Framework and Regulation: The research assessed existing legal frameworks and regulatory bodies, identifying gaps and recommending improvements in protecting university students from deceptive gambling propaganda.

Information Technology: Technological tools, including browser extensions and machine learning algorithms, were explored for detecting and blocking online gambling propaganda. Educational platforms and gamified applications were developed for media literacy training.

Long-term Impact of Media Literacy Interventions: Longitudinal studies measured the effectiveness of media literacy programs in reducing susceptibility to online gambling propaganda over time, with spillover effects on other areas of students' lives.

Interdisciplinary Approach: The research suggests an interdisciplinary approach to media literacy education by integrating knowledge from psychology, public health, communication arts, IT, and communication to foster critical engagement and responsible media consumption in the digital era.

Promoting Responsible Online Behavior and Awareness: Strategies and educational materials were proposed to promote responsible online behavior and raise awareness about online gambling risks among university students, including workshops, guest speakers, informational campaigns, online resources, peer-to-peer education, counseling services, and involving parents and families.

Theoretical Concepts: The research draws on theoretical concepts such as the theory of persuasion, emotional intelligence theory, and self-esteem theory to understand and address the influence of propaganda and media on online gambling behavior.

In conclusion, the research underscores the need for comprehensive efforts in education, regulation, and addressing root causes to mitigate the negative impacts of online gambling among children and college students. By implementing the suggested solutions and understanding the psychological factors at play, we can better protect vulnerable populations and promote responsible online behavior.

Discussions

In this qualitative study titled "Cultivating Critical Minds: Interdisciplinary Strategies for Empowering University Students against Online Gambling Propaganda," researchers identified a significant lack of awareness and understanding among children and students regarding the risks of online gambling. Education plays a crucial role in addressing this issue. Integrating digital literacy and information about online gambling risks into the educational curriculum can equip students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to responsibly navigate the digital landscape. Additionally, involving parents and families in these educational efforts can reinforce these messages at home.

Role of Mass Media and Regulation: The acknowledgment that mass media often promote gambling without adequately educating individuals about the associated risks highlights the need for a balanced approach. While media platforms should be held accountable for their content, it is equally important to empower individuals to discern between responsible entertainment and harmful propaganda. Collaborating with regulatory authorities and law enforcement agencies to monitor and enforce existing laws is essential. However, as mentioned, the challenges posed by foreign servers necessitate a focus on building public immunity through education and awareness campaigns.

Addressing Root Causes: The research identifies a multitude of factors contributing to online gambling among college students, ranging from peer influence to weak law enforcement. This underscores the complexity of the issue and the need for multifaceted solutions. While educational institutions can provide counseling services and promote financial literacy, a broader societal approach is required. Families, communities, and government agencies must work together to create a supportive environment that discourages harmful behaviors while fostering positive values and social support systems.

Treating Gambling Addiction: The specialist's proposal for a comprehensive approach to treating gambling addiction is noteworthy. Building trust, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting acceptance and understanding are integral components of a holistic treatment strategy. By addressing not only the behavior but also the underlying emotional and psychological factors, individuals can embark on a path to recovery and make lasting positive changes in their lives.

Legal Framework and Education: The specialist's recommendations regarding updating the legal framework and supplementary laws targeting media platforms are essential steps in combating online gambling propaganda. Clarity in defining roles and actions in online gambling is critical to effective regulation. Additionally, education about online gambling risks should be integrated into school curricula, emphasizing the legal and ethical dimensions of online activities.

Psychological Factors: The research findings on psychological factors, including cognitive biases, personality traits, and social influence, underscore the need to consider individual vulnerabilities in addressing online gambling propaganda. Tailoring interventions to target these specific factors can enhance their effectiveness in preventing gambling-related problems among university students.

Media Literacy and Propaganda: Media literacy interventions have been shown to empower students to critically evaluate media messages, including online gambling propaganda. By teaching students how to recognize emotional manipulation and differentiate between fact and opinion, we can equip them with the tools to resist deceptive messaging.

Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem: The role of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in susceptibility to propaganda highlights the importance of addressing individuals' emotional vulnerabilities (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Media literacy education should incorporate emotional intelligence concepts to help students manage their emotional responses and make informed decisions. Additionally, fostering healthy self-esteem can reduce individuals' susceptibility to seeking validation through risky behaviors like online gambling (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The interdisciplinary approach advocated in this research aligns with the dynamic nature of online gambling propaganda. By drawing from various disciplines (Knafo & Plomin, 2006), the research can develop a holistic understanding of the issue and craft effective strategies for prevention and intervention. The collaboration between experts from different fields enriches the insights and solutions presented in this research.

Conclusion and suggestions

Based on information provided by experts from in-depth interviews, strategies and learning materials that foster responsible online behavior among university students have been analyzed and classified by the researcher. This analysis includes raising awareness about the risks and consequences of online gambling as follow: Develop a comprehensive curriculum: Design a curriculum that integrates digital citizenship and online safety education, with specific modules addressing online gambling risks and responsible decision-making. Conduct interactive workshops and presentations: Engage students in discussions about responsible online behavior using real-life scenarios and case studies. Provide guidance on making responsible choices online. Invite guest speakers and experts: Bring in experts such as psychologists and addiction counselors to share insights into the psychological and financial impacts of online gambling and strategies for avoiding addictive behaviors. Create online resources and videos: Develop easily accessible and visually appealing educational materials about responsible online behavior and the risks of online gambling. Gamify learning: Incorporate interactive online games or quizzes that test students' knowledge about responsible online behavior and the risks of online gambling. Establish peer mentoring and role-playing activities: Create peer mentoring programs and conduct role-playing activities to simulate online scenarios, including those involving online gambling, to develop critical thinking skills and responsible decision-making. Engage parents and guardians: Organize informational sessions and provide resources for parents and guardians to monitor their child's online activities and discuss the risks of online gambling. Collaborate with community organizations: Partner with local community organizations to organize awareness campaigns and workshops on responsible online behavior. Remember to continuously update and adapt these strategies based on the evolving landscape of online behaviors and technologies. Tailor them to the specific needs and culture of your university community. Ongoing education and reinforcement are essential in promoting responsible online behavior.

Suggestions: Strategies and educational materials to promote responsible online behavior among university students and raise awareness about the risks of online gambling can include digital literacy programs, workshops and training sessions, awareness campaigns, peer education programs, collaborations with external organizations, integration into the curriculum, online platforms and resources, and research and evaluation. These approaches aim to provide comprehensive education, practical skills, and support systems to students, enabling them to make informed decisions online and avoid the negative consequences of online gambling. By employing these strategies, universities can foster a culture of responsible

online behavior and equip students with the necessary knowledge to navigate the digital world safely.

Summary of Recommendations: Universities can develop targeted educational campaigns on online gambling by creating awareness through social media, posters, and workshops, providing accurate and relatable information about the risks and consequences. They should collaborate with student organizations and engage faculty and staff to promote responsible behavior and support mechanisms. Establishing peer support networks, implementing monitoring and reporting systems, and partnering with external organizations will further enhance efforts. Continuous evaluation and updating of strategies based on feedback and emerging trends are crucial for the effectiveness of these campaigns.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

The novelty of the article's research on the prevalence of online gambling propaganda and its effects on university students, as well as the interdisciplinary approach proposed to address this issue, can have far-reaching effects on society and communities at various levels. Experts in relevant fields can provide additional insights on the potential impacts:

Public Health Experts: Public health professionals emphasize that the detrimental effects of problem gambling extend beyond individual mental health. The social and economic consequences, including increased healthcare costs and family disruptions, are substantial. Therefore, interdisciplinary collaboration can help society better understand the broader health implications and develop comprehensive strategies for prevention and intervention.

Psychologists: Psychologists can shed light on the psychological vulnerabilities that make university students particularly susceptible to online gambling propaganda. They may also suggest evidence-based interventions and therapeutic approaches to support affected individuals. Furthermore, they can emphasize the importance of early identification and treatment.

Lawyers and Legal Scholars: Legal experts can offer insights into the legal framework surrounding online gambling and advertising. They can explore potential legal avenues for regulating and curbing deceptive practices, advocating for stricter enforcement of existing laws, and even proposing new legislation to protect vulnerable populations.

Educators: Experts in education can provide guidance on integrating media literacy and critical thinking skills into the curriculum. They can design effective pedagogical approaches to ensure that students can comprehend and analyze online gambling propaganda, fostering a more informed and responsible generation.

Community Leaders: Local community leaders can play a crucial role in creating awareness about the issue. They can collaborate with universities and organizations to implement preventive programs and support services for those affected by problem gambling. Additionally, they can advocate for policies at the local level to address the issue more comprehensively.

Technology Experts: Experts in information and communication technology can delve deeper into technological solutions for reducing exposure to online gambling propaganda. They can provide guidance on the development and promotion of safer online environments through the use of advanced tools and software.

Media and Communication Specialists: Specialists in this field can contribute by analyzing the ways online gambling propaganda is disseminated through various media

channels. They can propose ethical guidelines for media outlets and advertising agencies, promoting responsible advertising practices.

Economists: Economists can evaluate the economic impact of problem gambling on local communities and society at large. They can quantify the costs associated with addiction and propose economic incentives for responsible gambling practices and addiction treatment.

Social Scientists: Social scientists can study the social dynamics and cultural factors contributing to the acceptance of online gambling propaganda. They can help design interventions that consider the social context in which gambling behavior occurs.

In summary, the interdisciplinary collaboration proposed in this research not only increases awareness and empowers university students but also has the potential to create a ripple effect throughout society. By engaging experts from various fields, society can develop a holistic approach to tackle the complex issue of online gambling propaganda and its consequences, ultimately leading to a safer and more informed digital environment for everyone.

Suggestions for future research

1. Examining the effectiveness of communication strategies in promoting media literacy and resisting online gambling propaganda.

2. Harnessing technology for media literacy: using AI to detect deceptive gambling advertisements and developing interactive educational platforms.

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