

Perception of Online Gambling Actors: A Review of Social Construction Theory in Ambulu Sub-district, Jember Regency

Good Sukma Pradana Putra¹ Dr. Sukidin, M.Pd.²

¹University of Jember Master of Social Science Education Study Program Jember, East Java, Indonesia
Putrasukma6588@gmail.com

²University of Jember Lecturer, Master of Social Science Education Study Program Jember, East Java, Indonesia
sukidin.fkip@unej.ac.id

Abstract: *This research aims to fill the gap in studies related to the perception of online gambling perpetrators, especially in Ambulu District, Jember Regency. This research uses a normative juridical method with a Social Constructivity Theory approach to analyze legal regulations related to online gambling in Ambulu District. Secondary data in the form of legal literature and local statistics were analyzed through in-depth interviews and mapping of cases and perspectives of online gamblers in Ambulu District, Jember Regency. The results showed that the perception of online gambling perpetrators in Ambulu Sub-district was influenced by economic factors, technology, and weak law enforcement. This phenomenon reflects a social construction where online gambling is considered a quick solution to financial difficulties, although it ends up with significant losses financially, socially, and psychologically. The normative juridical approach reveals that although online gambling violates Article 303 of the Criminal Code and the ITE Law, weak supervision and law enforcement are the main factors for the rise of this activity.*

Keywords— Online Gambling, Society, Social, Economic

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of online gambling has grown rapidly as one of the complex social challenges in the digital era. The increasingly widespread ease of internet access has become one of the main drivers of the spread of online gambling. This activity allows individuals to bet through digital platforms without geographical limitations. Maryanti et al. [1] noted that the openness of information through the internet plays a significant role in accelerating the spread of online gambling in Indonesia, making this issue increasingly relevant to study. Online gambling not only affects individuals personally but also has a broad negative impact on society.

The impact of online gambling covers various aspects, from social to economic and psychological. This activity is often associated with increased crime rates, broken family relationships, and disruption of community welfare. On the other hand, economically, online gambling often causes significant financial losses, both for individuals and communities. In the local context, the Jember Regency Government (2024) reported that the poverty line in Jember Regency increased in 2023, from IDR 380,397 to IDR 400,961 per capita per month. Ambulu District is one of the affected areas, with high public reports regarding online gambling activities in the area.

The importance of understanding the perceptions of online gamblers cannot be overstated. These perceptions can provide insight into how they view the activity, whether as a form of entertainment, a quick way to earn money, or as an escape from social pressure. These perceptions also influence their motivation to stay involved or quit online gambling activities. According to Kesuma [2], significant socio-economic

inequality often drives people to seek instant solutions such as gambling, even though this actually worsens their social and economic conditions. By understanding these perceptions, more effective policies can be designed to address the problem.

In the theoretical framework, social construction theory is an important foundation for understanding how online gambling actors' perceptions are formed. This theory explains that individuals create meaning through social interactions, which then shape their views on certain phenomena. In the context of Ambulu District, local social and cultural norms influence how people view online gambling. Iswahyudi et al. [3] highlighted that social inequality and lack of access to education also shape people's views on illegal activities such as online gambling.

Ambulu District has unique characteristics, including high levels of internet access and a heterogeneous local culture. However, the area also faces significant economic and social challenges. Addiyansyah [4] noted that low digital literacy makes people more vulnerable to the risks of online gambling. The lack of job opportunities in the area also encourages individuals to seek alternative income, even with high risks, such as engaging in digital gambling activities.

The negative impacts of online gambling in Ambulu District can be seen from various aspects. Family conflicts, social pressure, and social exclusion are some of the main consequences. Widhiatanti & Tobing [5] revealed that community involvement in online gambling often leads to social exclusion, which ultimately worsens structural poverty. This condition indicates the need for comprehensive intervention to reduce the negative impacts of online gambling in society.

This study aims to fill the gap in studies related to the perceptions of online gambling actors, especially in Ambulu District. Studies that combine social construction theory with local contexts are still limited, so this study can provide new insights that are useful for the development of social and legal policies. By utilizing this approach, the study is expected to be able to describe how social interactions and norms influence the perceptions of online gambling actors.

The purpose of this study is to understand how online gambling perpetrators in Ambulu District build their perceptions of the activity. This perception is influenced by various factors, including social interactions, local norms, and personal experiences. By understanding these factors, it is hoped that more effective interventions can be designed to reduce online gambling activities in the community. This study is also expected to be a basis for local governments and related parties to design more holistic strategies in dealing with this problem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Socio-Economic Inequality

Socio-economic inequality refers to significant differences in the distribution of income, wealth, and access to resources or economic opportunities among individuals or groups in a society. This phenomenon is influenced by various factors, including differences in education, access to public services, and unequal distribution of wealth. The main indicator of inequality is the Gini ratio, which reflects the level of income inequality in a population. Other indicators include the distribution of per capita income, the proportion of the population living in poverty, and the human development index (HDI). Socio-economic inequality can impact social stability, exacerbate poverty, and hinder economic growth. For example, high inequality reduces people's purchasing power and limits their economic participation, thereby slowing overall economic growth. Socio-Economics in Rural Areas

Socio-economic inequality in rural areas tends to be more significant than in urban areas due to limited infrastructure, access to education, and health services. A study by Kurniawatik et al. [6] showed that rural communities often face difficulties in accessing equal economic opportunities, especially in remote areas with minimal infrastructure. In addition, social and economic factors can also reinforce inequality, such as gender inequality in employment or education. Research by Shohibuddin [7] confirms that inequality in rural Indonesia is often associated with unequal access to land and natural resources, which leads to the concentration of wealth in certain groups.

The impact of socio-economic inequality extends to various aspects of life, including social stability and community welfare. High inequality triggers social tensions, increases the risk of conflict, and weakens community solidarity. On the economic side, inequality creates barriers to social mobility, especially for lower-class communities, thus reinforcing the cycle of poverty. In the rural context, lack of

access to quality education is one of the main obstacles to increasing community income. Meanwhile, negative impacts include low labor productivity due to poor public health and lack of skills due to inadequate education.

Addressing socio-economic inequality requires a multidimensional approach. Redistributive policies, such as progressive taxation and social assistance programs, are among the main solutions. Investment in education and skills development is also critical to creating more equitable social mobility and economic opportunities. A study by Pellu [8] suggests that developing inclusive economic sectors, such as MSMEs in rural areas, can help significantly reduce inequality. In addition, collaboration between government, state, and civil society is needed to ensure the sustainability of these solutions, resulting in a more just, prosperous, and inclusive society.

2.2 Online Gambling

Online gambling is a gambling activity conducted through a digital platform, such as a website or application, that allows users to wager money on various games or bets. The main characteristics of online gambling include easy accessibility, user anonymity, and a wide selection of games, ranging from poker, sports betting, to virtual casinos. Unlike traditional gambling, online gambling can be done anytime and anywhere as long as there is internet access, which makes it very attractive to many groups of people. According to a study by Scott et al. [9], the convenience and speed of transactions in online gambling are its main attractions, especially for the younger generation who are accustomed to technology.

The spread of online gambling in society is influenced by several factors. First, the rapid advancement of digital technology facilitates the development of more interactive and attractive gambling platforms. Second, the lack of effective regulation or law enforcement in many countries, including Indonesia, opens up loopholes for online gamblers to operate. Third, economic factors, such as poverty or urgent needs, encourage individuals to seek quick solutions through gambling. Research by Yuen et al. [10] shows that psychological factors, such as life pressures or the desire to get rich quick, are also major triggers. In addition, aggressive promotion through social media and the use of influencers also accelerate the spread of online gambling among the wider community.

Online gambling has a significant negative impact on society. Socially, this activity often causes conflict in families, social isolation, and addictive behavior that breaks social ties. The economic impact is no less serious, such as individual bankruptcy, increasing debt, and decreased work productivity. According to research by Widhiatanti & Tobing [5], online gamblers tend to experience greater financial difficulties than conventional gamblers due to easy access and higher frequency of play. From a psychological perspective, online gambling can cause mental disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and prolonged stress. A study by Addiyansyah

[4]even revealed that online gambling addiction has similar impacts to drug addiction, including behavioral changes that are detrimental to oneself and others.

Addressing online gambling requires a comprehensive approach, including stricter law enforcement and strengthening regulations. In addition, public education about the dangers of online gambling needs to be improved, especially through digital campaigns. The development of rehabilitation programs is also important to help individuals who have become addicted to online gambling. Research by Elvia et al. [11]emphasizes that cooperation between the government, internet service providers, and civil society can help block access to illegal gambling sites. With this approach, it is hoped that the spread and negative impacts of online gambling can be minimized significantly.

2.3 Social Construction Theory

The theory of social construction of reality, as defined by Berger and Luckmann in Dewantara [12], is a social process that occurs through action and interaction, in which individuals continuously create and maintain a reality that is owned and experienced together subjectively. This theory emphasizes that reality is not simply discovered, but rather produced through a dynamic social process. This social construction perspective has taken root in the philosophy of constructivism, which views that reality is formed through interactions between individuals and their environment.

The history of constructivism as a theoretical basis for social construction can be traced back to the thoughts of Giambattista Vico in the 18th century. In his work *De Antiquissima Italorum Sapientia* [13], Vico stated that humans can only understand something that they have constructed themselves. Vico asserted that "knowing" means understanding the elements that form an object or concept. This perspective emphasizes that knowledge is the result of a construction process, not just a passive reflection of objective reality [14]. Thus, social construction theory is rooted in the idea that understanding the world is the result of cognitive work and social interaction.

Knowledge does not always represent objective reality, but rather is the result of individual construction based on subjective experience. This perspective strengthens the foundation of social construction theory, which views that shared reality is the result of social negotiation between individuals. This process includes internalization, externalization, and objectivation, as described by Berger and Luckmann [15].

In its development, constructivism is also associated with the philosophy of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Socrates emphasized the importance of dialogue as a way to explore the truth, while Plato emphasized the role of reason in understanding the world. Aristotle, with his concept of essence and substance, stated that humans are social beings who depend on interaction to test and prove knowledge. This thinking is the basis for the constructivist approach which

emphasizes the relationship between individuals, reality, and social interaction [16].

According to Demetron [17], constructivism has three main schools of thought, namely radical constructivism, hypothetical realism, and ordinary constructivism. Radical constructivism considers knowledge as a pure result of mental construction without any direct connection to objective reality. Hypothetical realism sees knowledge as an approach to reality that is close to the truth, while ordinary constructivism understands knowledge as a representation of objective reality. These three schools of thought agree that knowledge is the result of individual interaction with the environment, which involves the process of interpretation and cognitive construction.

Berger and Luckmann in Liberta [18]describe three main processes in social construction, namely externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Externalization occurs when individuals express their thoughts or actions to the outside world. Objectivation is the process by which these actions and thoughts become part of a shared reality, while internalization involves the individual's acceptance of the objectified reality. This process shows that social reality is dynamic and continues to be formed through interaction.

Research on social construction has enriched our understanding of how individuals and groups create shared meaning. Berger and Luckmann's studies [15]paved the way for further research on the role of language, symbols, and institutions in shaping social reality. For example, Gergen's research [20]on social construction in psychology shows how individual identities are formed through dialogue and interaction with others.

Thus, social construction theory provides a powerful framework for understanding the relationship between individuals and society. This perspective asserts that social reality is the result of interactional processes involving negotiation, interpretation, and construction. Through this approach, we can explore how meaning and knowledge are formed in a variety of contexts, from education to the media, and how individuals and groups contribute to creating the social worlds they inhabit.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a normative legal method with a Social Constructivity Theory approach in Ambulu District, Jember Regency. The normative legal method focuses on the analysis of applicable laws and regulations, such as Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) and Article 303 of the Criminal Code, which are relevant in regulating and controlling online gambling activities. This study also explores the legal gaps that contribute to the rampant practice of online gambling and the obstacles in its implementation. Secondary data used include legal literature, official government documents, and academic journals related to socio-economic inequality and online gambling. This study connects legal aspects with empirical conditions in Ambulu

District through case mapping, evaluation of socio-economic impacts, and critical analysis of the effectiveness of existing policies.

The social constructivist approach was used to understand how socio-economic inequality in Ambulu District is the main trigger for the rise of online gambling. Ambulu residents, who mostly work in the informal sector with low incomes, are a vulnerable group who are driven to seek instant economic solutions through online gambling. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with community leaders and analysis of social reports, while quantitative data were obtained from local statistics related to internet access, poverty levels, and online gambling activities. This combination of methods aims to provide a holistic picture of the relationship between socio-economic inequality, social conflict, and the spread of online gambling in Ambulu District.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Socio-Economic Inequality in Ambulu District

Ambulu District, located in Jember Regency, East Java, has a fairly varied economic profile, reflecting the socio-economic dynamics of a developing rural area. Data shows that the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of Ambulu District is still dominated by the agriculture and fisheries sectors, while the contribution of the services sector and small and medium industries is relatively small. In 2023, the GRDP per capita of Ambulu District was recorded at IDR 18 million, below the Jember Regency average of IDR 25 million. In addition, the Human Development Index (HDI) of Ambulu District is at 67.2, which reflects the still low level of education, health, and community income when compared to the national average of 72.9. This inequality can be seen from the concentration of wealth among a handful of upper-middle economic groups, while the majority of the population relies on the informal sector with uncertain incomes.

This socio-economic inequality is one of the main triggers for the rampant practice of online gambling in Ambulu District. Limited economic opportunities for low-income people trigger financial pressure and make some residents look for alternative sources of quick income, even though it is illegal. Online gambling is becoming an increasingly popular choice because it is easily accessible through digital devices. In a legal context, this action is contrary to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (UU ITE), especially Article 27 paragraph (2) which prohibits the distribution of gambling content, as well as Article 303 of the Criminal Code which prohibits all forms of gambling in Indonesia. However, weak law enforcement and limited digital education often trap people in this cycle of lawlessness.

Another factor that exacerbates social inequality is the lack of access to education and skills training in Ambulu. Many people of working age do not have work skills relevant to the modern labor market, widening the gap between the middle and lower economic groups. In some cases, this phenomenon is exacerbated by the low participation of private and

government institutions in providing appropriate training. This unequal access not only impacts individual incomes but also reduces the overall social mobility of society, reinforcing existing patterns of inequality.

A comprehensive approach is needed to address these socio-economic disparities, starting from strengthening the local economic sector, developing technology-based skills training, to stricter law enforcement against illegal practices such as online gambling. In addition, community empowerment through community-based programs, such as entrepreneurship and financial management training, can help reduce dependence on the informal sector and minimize the urge to seek income through illegal means. Synergy between local governments, educational institutions, and local communities is key to creating inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Ambulu District.

4.2 Perception of Online Gambling Actors in Ambulu District

The phenomenon of online gambling in Ambulu District, Jember Regency, is increasingly prominent along with the many cases that reflect the complexity of this problem. One case that stole attention was the involvement of a 24-year-old young man who was forced to leave his job after being in debt due to a big loss in online gambling. The young man, who previously worked as a daily laborer, was tempted by the promise of instant profits offered by the online gambling platform. Instead of getting a profit, he actually experienced significant financial losses, to the point of having to sell his family's belongings to pay off the debt.

Another case involves a housewife who used the family's shopping money to gamble online. In the hope of increasing the family's income, she fell into a cycle of losses that not only destroyed her financial condition but also caused family conflict. This case illustrates how economic pressures at the household level can trigger risky behavior, while also showing that online gambling has penetrated various levels of society, including vulnerable groups such as housewives.

A similar story was experienced by a high school student who used his pocket money and education savings to gamble online. Initially, he was inspired by an advertisement on social media that offered big prizes. However, after several losses, he started borrowing money from his friends until he finally got into social problems at school because he was unable to repay the loan. This case is proof that the young generation in Ambulu District is one of the groups most vulnerable to the negative influence of online gambling, especially with easy access via smart devices.

In addition to individual cases, reports from local law enforcement indicate that there are small groups organizing online gambling in the region. These groups take advantage of weak law enforcement to manage gambling transactions digitally. In several raids, police found evidence in the form of online gambling applications installed on the perpetrators' devices, along with cash flows indicating large-scale gambling

activity. However, limited police resources and suboptimal supervision often make law enforcement efforts unsustainable.

This context shows that the phenomenon of online gambling in Ambulu District is not only an individual problem but also a social issue that requires serious attention. Various cases that have occurred show a pattern of community dependence on online gambling as a "quick solution," even though it ultimately has detrimental impacts, both financially, psychologically, and socially. Mazoochi's study [21] also revealed that areas with low economic levels are more vulnerable to the spread of online gambling activities due to economic pressures that trigger risk-taking behavior.

In dealing with this phenomenon, a multidimensional approach is needed. Local governments, law enforcement officers, and community groups need to work together to provide education, create economic empowerment programs, and increase supervision of gambling platforms. Without strategic intervention, this problem will continue to grow and worsen the socio-economic conditions of the people in Ambulu District.

4.3 Analysis of Social Constructivity Theory

In Ambulu District, Jember Regency, the phenomenon of internet gambling is a reflection of complex socio-economic factors. One of the main reasons individuals see internet gambling as a quick fix to improve their financial situation is income inequality. Despite the fact that this activity violates Article 303 of the Criminal Code and Article 27 paragraph (2) of the ITE Law, many low-income people are attracted to the quick opportunities provided by these gaming sites. The lack of effective law enforcement in this sector creates a loophole that allows uncontrolled internet gambling activities to flourish. Therefore, research by Setiawan [22] suggests that the lack of effective law enforcement can lead to an increase in online gambling and other digital-based crimes.

Online gambling has become more accessible due to technological advancements, especially for young people. There are many options for accessing gambling platforms thanks to the availability of smart gadgets and the decreasing cost of internet. The idea that online gambling is a quick solution to financial difficulties is reinforced by aggressive advertising that guarantees immediate income. However, a study by Stetzka [23] shows that most players experience huge losses resulting in severe financial difficulties, confirming that the financial rewards from online gambling are often fictitious.

Online gambling has detrimental effects on mental health in addition to its economic effects. Continuous losses cause stress, anxiety, and sadness in many players. Gambling games give players a false sense of control and false hope of winning, which worsens emotional conditions over time. These results are in line with research by Dewi et al. [24], who found that online gambling can increase the likelihood of mental illness among players. In addition, the social stigma associated with this practice often worsens self-esteem and feelings of loneliness.

Online gambling has a significant negative impact on productivity in both business and educational settings. Time and effort spent on gambling often results in poorer academic and professional performance. According to research by Hidayah et al. [25], Internet gamblers are often distracted, which interferes with their productivity as a member of society. This shows how this act has an impact on society as a whole, not just on the individual.

It is easy to overlook the perception of legal issues associated with internet gambling. Many players overlook potential legal repercussions in favor of the adrenaline rush and the prospect of huge rewards. This problem is further compounded by inadequate digital education and ignorance of the law. Significant legal education efforts are needed to increase public awareness of the risks associated with this illegal behavior [26].

In addition, socio-economic inequality in Ambulu District is exacerbated by the presence of online games. Due to the lack of access to quality education and job training, many people of productive age are trapped in a cycle of poverty. According to Sulaiman's research [27], local economic empowerment initiatives are needed in this case to provide people with access to healthier and halal options that will improve their standard of living.

A comprehensive strategy is needed to address this situation. By monitoring Internet gambling sites more closely, local governments can increase law enforcement. The lure of Internet gambling can be reduced by creating job skills training programs and educating the public about its dangers through legal awareness campaigns. Better economic options should also be provided by improving local economic empowerment programs. The government, legal institutions, and the community must work together to implement long-term reforms that will improve the overall socio-economic conditions of the community and successfully curb the phenomenon of online gambling.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the theory of social constructivism, the phenomenon of online gambling in Ambulu District can be understood as the result of a complex interaction between social, economic, and technological dynamics. The socio-economic inequality that occurs, such as low GRDP per capita, limited job opportunities, and unequal access to education, encourages people to seek quick solutions to meet their living needs. Online gambling is an attractive alternative because it offers easy access through digital technology, even though it violates the law as regulated in Article 303 of the Criminal Code and Article 27 paragraph (2) of the ITE Law. The community's dependence on this practice shows that the mindset formed by social conditions has built the perception that online gambling is a rational solution to their economic problems, even though it ultimately causes major financial, psychological, and social losses.

The implications of this phenomenon extend to various aspects of people's lives. Economically, online gambling

exacerbates inequality because the losses experienced by perpetrators often destroy the financial stability of families. Socially, this practice increases stigma against individuals and groups involved, creating social isolation that worsens the mental condition of perpetrators. From a legal perspective, weak enforcement of regulations creates space for online gambling operators to continue to grow, thus increasing their impact on society, including the younger generation who are increasingly vulnerable to the negative influence of this platform. Another implication is decreased productivity in educational and work environments due to the time and energy consumed by gambling activities, as found in various previous studies.

As a suggestion, strategic steps are needed that involve synergy between the government, law enforcement, and local communities. The government needs to increase supervision and enforcement of online gambling platforms, accompanied by legal education and digital literacy campaigns to change people's mindsets about the risks of gambling. Community-based economic empowerment programs, such as job skills training and local entrepreneurship development, are also very important to provide healthier and more sustainable livelihood alternatives. In addition, educational institutions and religious communities need to be involved to create collective awareness about the negative impacts of online gambling and encourage more productive life values. With this comprehensive approach, the phenomenon of online gambling in Ambulu District can be minimized, and the socio-economic conditions of the community can be improved sustainably.

6. REFERENCES

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