

Trends in Online Gambling and Government's Inability to Achieve Decent Work in Indonesia: What Should We Do?

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ABSTRACT

In the global society human trafficking is a highly contentious topic. Because of a significant increase, human trafficking has also recently gained attention on a global scale. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia (PPPA) shows that 1,581 persons were victims of human trafficking between 2020 and 2022. The state's failure to give the populace respectable jobs was the primary reason of the enormous increase in human trafficking in Indonesia. The state has a responsibility to promote decent work and economic growth, according to SDG point 8. People are pushed into lucrative careers, including working overseas, as a result of the Indonesian government's inability to produce quality jobs. Unfortunately, people are frequently caught up in human trafficking as a result of the general public's ignorance of important issues pertaining to working abroad. Since human trafficking involves labor exploitation, it is usually regarded as a violation of human rights. The act of human trafficking is the same as working in the internet gambling industry. In Indonesia, online gambling is also very common for a variety of reasons, from the allure of the prizes provided to the general lack of public awareness of the risks involved. Online gambling has a domino effect that makes poverty rates rise and impedes the expansion of the Indonesian economy. Human trafficking is a problem in Cambodia since it is a nation that legalizes gambling and depends heavily on the gaming industry for its economic growth. This is particularly true for the online gambling industry. Human trafficking victims, particularly those from Indonesia, enter Cambodia through the Batam region, transit to Malaysia, and then enter Cambodia by air or boat. The ambassador of Indonesia to Cambodia stated that teenagers between the ages of 19 and 30 make up the majority of online gaming workers in Cambodia. Their desire to work in Cambodia is mostly driven by the promise of a high wage, particularly in the online gambling industry. The Indonesian ambassador to Cambodia stated that there are more than 1,200 Indonesian individuals employed in the gambling sector, despite the fact that only about 1,200 people have reported to the Indonesian Embassy and confirmed working in the industry. This is impacted by the ease of converting a tourist visa into a work visa as well as the strong need for laborers in the gambling sector in Cambodia. This is a qualitative study that gathers information from library research

Keywords: *Human Trafficking, Online gambling, SDGs, Indonesia government, Cambodia*

INTRODUCTION

Online gambling refers to gambling that takes place online and involves bets and money transactions. Online bookies have also set the rules governing online gambling. At first, gambling was restricted to card games, but as technology advanced, gambling grew as well, and eventually an online gambling website appeared, making it simpler for users to access and engage in online gambling that was created in this manner through games or websites. The popularity of online gambling has increased in recent years, particularly during and after the Covid pandemic, due to the ease of access to these sites. Indonesians frequently visit a number of websites related to online gambling, for example bheestybaultk.top. In June of last year, there were 875 thousand visits to this website, showing that 6.5 percent of the website's visitors were from Indonesia (CNN, 2024). 80% of the 2.3 million online gamblers, according to the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center, or PPATK, are low-income individuals who conduct transactions with a nominal value of less than IDR 100,000. This indicates that the widespread popularity of online gambling in Indonesia has extended to this demographic (Azhari, 2024). The ease of accessing online gambling websites, the simplicity of deposit transactions, the relatively low deposit amounts offered by online gambling website operators, and the impact of the surrounding environment are the main causes of this.

The phenomena of internet gambling itself has a major impact on society, as compulsive online gamblers resort to other forms of criminal activity in order to fund their habit. An increasing number of criminal cases in recent times have been driven by a propensity for internet gambling. In the most recent example, a policewoman set fire to her husband because he was so dependent on internet gambling that he was using their daily income for bets. In June 2024, this incident happened in Mojokerto, East Java. This incidence leads one to the conclusion that the government should pay particular attention to the online gambling issue as it not only has a negative economic impact but also a significant one. Because so many Indonesians are forced to work as online gambling administrators, the impacts of the phenomena of online gambling also extended to the Crime of Human Trafficking (TPPO). The tactic used to recruit administrative staff for online gambling involves misrepresenting the nature of the job as high-paying employment in a legal setting, while in reality, the staff is compelled to work in the gaming sector. The TPPO phenomena serves as a warning to the government about the potential negative effects of online gambling on public safety as well as the economy. It also indicates that the government is failing to create good jobs here domestically, which is why individuals are choosing to work overseas and being entangled in TPPO.

The author selected this term after noticing a cascading effect from the internet gambling phenomenon that resulted in criminal activity and human trafficking offenses, turning this into an emergency situation for Indonesia. Therefore, the author is interested in learning how to combat Indonesia's online gambling problem,

which not only has a negative economic impact but also serves as a breeding ground for criminal activity. The concepts employed in this scientific work, as explained above, are the notion of human security point 1 on economic security, point 5 on personal security, point 6 on communal security, and point 8 on decent employment and economic growth of the SDGs. This paper focuses on the domino effect that results from online gambling and what can be done to stop it. The previous study, *Analysis of the Impact of Online Gambling in Indonesia*, by Annisa Laras et al., explained how online gambling has an impact on the psychology of its players and causes social conflict. The research period for this study is 2020–2023. Its goal is to give an overview of how Indonesia's online gambling phenomenon affects security conditions, particularly economic and human security. It is hoped that this study will help the government by suggesting that they pay closer attention to this issue (Laras, et al., 2024).

METHODS

The author of this study opted to employ a descriptive methodology. The goal of the descriptive method is to clarify the facts regarding the connection between the rise in online gambling and the government's inability to give the populace suitable employment opportunities. In order to prevent the topic of trends in online gambling and the government's failure to achieve decent work in Indonesia and what should be done from becoming too broad, this study is restricted to the years 2020–2023. In order to describe and respond to inquiries, the author of this work employed a qualitative research methodology. The method of qualitative research is used to analyze the topic that the author raises, *Trends In Online Gambling and Government's Inability To Achieve Decent Work In Indonesia: What Should We Do?*, using library research by tracking down journals or published works. A method of gathering data through written works, theses, or books pertaining to the topic the author addresses is library research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indonesian Online Gambling Industry Growth Factors

There are already a lot of adults, teens, and kids in Indonesia who gamble online due to the country's widespread online gambling culture. PPATK's data attachment indicates that 80,000 players, or at least 2% of the total, are under the age of ten; 11%, or 440,000 persons, are between the ages of ten and twenty; and 13%, or 520,000, are between the ages of twenty-one and thirty (PPATK, 2024). The astounding figures that are included beg the issue of what is causing Indonesia's current epidemic of online gambling. According to Jaya (2023), there are four main reasons why internet gambling is so popular in Indonesia: economic, environmental, opportunity, and variables relating to low public understanding of online gambling (Jaya, 2023).

1. Economic Problem

The main cause of Indonesia's widespread internet gambling, particularly in the Covid-19 era, is the country's economy. This is a result of people being drawn to rapid ways to gain big income with little money, like online gambling that accepts deposits in the form of little, nominal amounts, because it is hard to find work and income. Due to the community's economic instability brought on by COVID-19, players are attracted to the prospect of increasing their earnings through online gambling. Since the teaching and learning process is conducted online, students in particular can easily access online gambling websites, which has contributed to the rise of online gambling in Indonesia during the epidemic. The ease of access to online gambling websites during the pandemic has contributed to the rise of online gambling in Indonesia, particularly among students who can access these websites at any time as long as they have an internet connection because education is conducted online. This is made worse by the environment around internet gambling, which resembles a game, and the absence of parental monitoring.

2. Lack of Oversight

Online gambling has become more and more common in society as a result of people's interest about it and their desire to attempt it after seeing others around them engage in it. In addition to the surroundings of the home, there are other environmental aspects to consider, including the state of the family unit and the parents' role in providing for and nurturing their offspring. Whether a teenager grows up healthily or is drawn to bad things like internet gambling depends on how well-reared and supported their parents are. As a result, parents must watch out for their kids more to prevent them from becoming addicted to internet gambling and believing it to be a game (Ginting & Ginting, 2023).

3. Ease of Access to Online Gambling Features

Because internet gambling is so simple to use, the features offered by websites that cater to it are also the reason why Indonesians are playing more and more games online. After pressing the button on the screen, players can begin playing the game. The machine will then begin to shuffle different icons, with the final images appearing at random. The winner is announced as the player when the machine stops and displays a specific pattern. In addition to the characteristics, players find the unpredictability of the opportunities to arise intriguing since it causes a dopamine release in their brains, which has a psychological effect. Dopamine is a chemical that is found in the brain and is released when people engage in enjoyable activities like eating and this is the fate of those who gamble online. The phenomenon known as "chasing defeat" occurs when players endure losses, yet this only motivates them to keep playing. This allows gamers who have been exposed to internet gambling and are caught in a state of uncertainty to overcome defeat (Robinson, 2023).

4. Lack of Awareness of Online Gambling

One reason for the widespread prevalence of internet gambling in Indonesia is a lack of public understanding of the negative effects of this activity. Online gamblers come seen as self-centered because a lot of people believe that they only gamble for fun and never hurt anyone. Even though playing games online is against the law and morality, many who play online games don't care as long as they believe no one is harmed by their actions. Ultimately, individuals who bet online have their own motivations for doing so, but it is important to emphasize that gambling has negative effects on players' morale and their economy when they lose.

It should be highlighted that the phenomena of online gambling affects issues with human security in addition to economic issues. One issue that is related to Indonesia's widespread internet gambling culture is human trafficking. It is evident that Indonesians continue to frequently find themselves stuck in low-paying work abroad. Recruiters also use this tactic to entice candidates to work in the online gaming sector.

Human Trafficking

One of the organized crimes that breaches human rights is human trafficking. Law No. 21 of 2017 is the specific law that the Indonesian government has put in place to combat the crime of human trafficking. In reality, human trafficking is widespread in Indonesia because there is still a lack of complete law enforcement. Indonesia suffers greatly from the issue of human trafficking, which is also mentioned in the 2015 military white paper as a real threat based on regional borders (Daud & Sopoyono, 2019).

Data from the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture is included, showing that from 2020 to March 2024, at least 3,703 cases of TPPO were deployed in the online gaming sector. With 1,914 cases, Cambodia had the highest number of TPPO victims; the remaining cases were distributed throughout Thailand, Myanmar, and the Philippines. In the meantime, the most of TPPO victims are reported to be tech-savvy and range in age from 18 to 35 (KEMENPPPA, 2024). This reality begs the question of how TPPO, particularly in the internet gambling sector, might trap a technologically savvy culture.

There was a death case involving an online gambling operator in Cambodia in September of 2024. After landing in Singapore, the victim of the TPPO was flown back to Cambodia and worked as an online gambling operator until, eventually, after working for 23 days, the victim was discovered dead and repatriated to Indonesia (Fatimah, 2024). The victim had originally wanted to work in Singapore. Until Kompong Som, also known as Sihanoukville, a town in Cambodia renowned as the center of online gambling run by the Indonesian population, the rampant online gambling providers were all from Indonesia. The bulk of TPPO's employees work in the online gambling industry's offices at Kompong Som, an office complex in and of itself (Firdaus, 2023).

The TPPO victims acknowledged that they gave in to temptation when they were offered pay that were nominally higher than those in Indonesia. But in reality, the huge pay that the recruiters had offered was only a ploy to get individuals to work in

the internet gambling sector. In order to make it impossible for the victims to return to Indonesia, the corporation would seize the passports of the tppo employed in the online gambling industry, forcing them to labor nonstop without holidays. The business also seizes the victims' telephones in addition to their passports, preventing the victims from contacting their families.

Victims of the internet gambling sector face not only psychological stress at work but also physical abuse, including beatings and electric shock torture. Moreover, businesses in the internet gaming sector use a variety of methods, including the position exchange system, to engage in people trafficking. In order to exit the online gambling organization under the position exchange system, a victim of human trafficking must locate a replacement. This process continues until the industry's pattern of human trafficking is established, which is challenging to disrupt. If TPPO victims wish to leave their positions as online gaming administrators, they must also pay a fee. In addition, TPPO torture victims are subjected to conditions in which their superiors trade them for different amounts based on the quantity of body parts they still have. This means that the cost of TPPO victims who still have all of their body parts differs from the cost of victims who do not (KumparanNEWS, 2024).

Government Failure to Create Decent Jobs

The relationship between unemployment and economic growth makes it a serious issue in Indonesia. Multiple causative elements, such as economic conditions, education, and restricted employment options, as well as government policies that appear to be skewed towards the community, are often the cause of unemployment problems. The government's discriminatory policies and lack of job chances are the main causes of the unemployment problem in Indonesia. According to Ishak (2018), one key measure of a nation's effectiveness in arranging education to combat poverty is the availability of workforce options (Ishak, 2018).

Law No. 11 of 2020, popularly referred to as the Job Creation Law, is one of the government initiatives that negatively impacts laborers. This statute ratifies a number of things that are thought to be harmful to employees, ranging from pay to leave policies. Paragraph 2 of Article 88 D states that "the formula for calculating the minimum wage takes into account the variables of economic growth, inflation, and certain indexes" In contrast to the Manpower Law, which also considers the elements of a good life when setting pay, the contents of this article are controversial since they are said to disregard the necessity for a decent life in Indonesia (CNN, 2023). A contentious article, Article 59, which eliminates the Manpower Law's previous regulation that companies can only enter into contracts with specific time constraints for a maximum of three years, is also present in the government regulation that replaces Law No. 2 of 2022 concerning job creation. According to Harruma (2023), the corporation is faced with two choices if the duration exceeds two years: either they choose to continue with the current contract or they choose to become a permanent hire (Harruma, 2023). The lack of a time limit in the employee's contract has drawn criticism from the workforce. This article appears to be advantageous to the company but detrimental to the workers as it leaves them uncertain about the length of their

shifts, allowing the company to terminate their contract at any time.

There are other factors that have contributed to the rise in unemployment in Indonesia, such as the culture of depending on insiders to obtain jobs, or nepotism, in addition to government rules that appear to make it harder for workers to get acceptable earnings and jobs. Even though the government has issued regulations against nepotism, such as in Article 5 paragraph 4 of Law No. 28 of 1999, which states that "every state administrator is obliged not to commit acts of corruption, collusion, and nepotism," nepotism has become something that is frequently encountered when looking for work in Indonesia. But nepotism still happens a lot in Indonesian society, particularly in the government. This is demonstrated by a number of recent incidents, in which individuals have held significant positions in state-owned businesses solely as a result of their strong ties to senior Indonesian government figures. Due to the culture of nepotism, this phenomenon undermines the order of employment in Indonesia by allowing people with less experience in the field to hold several important positions and by relying solely on personal connections with decision-makers. As a result, people with the necessary skills and expertise in particular fields are unable to obtain employment.

The high number of TPPO victims in the online gaming sector is partly due to the difficulty in obtaining acceptable jobs and earnings in Indonesia. Indonesians who have had enough of the country's labor and wage laws have finally decided to work overseas, often without realizing the potential drawbacks, such as becoming caught in a pay-per-click scandal in the online gambling business. Indonesians who have been victims of TPPO in the online gambling sector believe that working overseas, where high-paying employment are offered by recruiters in the industry, will change their destiny back home. This is a critique of the government for its inability to produce decent work at decent pay, which eventually leads to the large number of TPPO victims in the online gambling industry.

Efforts to Combat Online Gambling and Human Trafficking In Indonesia

The Indonesian government has implemented a number of oppressive policies aimed at curbing internet gambling, affecting both online gamblers and victims of TPPO. Repressive measures are the steps done in the wake of an occurrence to take strong action against the offenders. Article 303 of the Criminal Code contains regulations pertaining to gambling itself. Specifically, paragraph 1 of the code states that those who engage in online gambling may face a maximum prison sentence of 10 years or a maximum fine of 25 million rupiah for their actions. This is applicable to those who intentionally offer or provide the opportunity to gamble and make it a search, or who knowingly participate in a company that does so. Furthermore, online gambling is governed by Article 27 paragraph 2 of the ITE Law, which prohibits the dissemination, transmission, and/or accessibility of electronic documents and/or information involving gambling. In actuality, though, online gambling is still a troubling crime in modern society.

In addition to implementing rules, the government also takes various tactics

connected to conquering internet gambling. The government's strategies include everything from informing the public about the dangers of internet gambling to outright banning websites that promote it throughout Indonesia. However, the approach chosen by the government looks fruitless because the number of online gambling in Indonesia is still high and has gotten a lot of criticism from the public, especially the tactic taken by the government by sending SMS discussing online gambling appeals. In addition to the fact that internet gambling also extends invitations and offers via SMS and commercials, the public believes that government actions are completely ineffective and off target. The government, particularly the Ministry of Communication and Information, is urged to enact laws that will penalize internet gamblers more severely. Examples of such laws include fines equal to twice the amount of money lost through online gambling and lengthier jail terms for online bookmakers. There are also public requests for the government to treat victims of online gambling psychologically as opposed to socially.

In order to counteract the online gambling phenomenon that has become entrenched in Indonesia, the government must also work with governmental institutions. In order to prevent the purchasing and selling of accounts and to restrict accounts recognized as being used for online gambling transactions, the government must extend an invitation to state institutions like the Financial Services Authority (OJK). In the meantime, it is envisaged that educational settings, such as college campuses, will be able to better monitor students' online activity and facilitate online gambling-related socialization through affiliated groups. The proliferation of internet gambling in Indonesia is linked to both the large number of TPPO cases and the breakdown of the economic order. Thus, it can be said that the phenomena of internet gambling affects not just the economy but also organized crime.

Cross border and domestic human trafficking originates, transits, and ends in Indonesia. Law No. 12 of 2007 regulating the eradication of the crime of human trafficking is one of the legislation pertaining to human trafficking that the Indonesian government has established. Presidential legislation No. 69 of 2008, which established a task force to address and prevent human trafficking, further supports this legislation. Institutions that deal with migration also exist; one such organization is the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which mostly deals with labor migration and human trafficking.

In order to prevent and manage TPPO instances in Indonesia, the government and IOM have adopted a number of strategies. One such strategy is the 3P approach, which stands for prevention, protection, and prosecution. IOM Indonesia's prevention initiatives include spreading knowledge and organizing campaigns about safe migration as a way to stop TPPO before it traps vulnerable communities. In the meantime, IOM Indonesia offers protection to TPPO victims through the provision of relief funding and additional support in the form of family counseling, mental and physical health services, and legal aid. In addition, Indonesia also requires cooperation with other countries in eradicating TPPO, notably ASEAN countries (IOM, 2023).

Nevertheless, there are obstacles to cooperation that centers on managing TPPO in ASEAN, specifically the ASEAN non-intervention principle and the implementation of outdated legislation. When it comes to working together to handle the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPO), countries must overcome the ASEAN's non-intervention principle, which emphasizes that other nations have no right to meddle in their domestic matters. Furthermore, ASEAN is an interstate organization that has a history of implementing new rules slowly.

CONCLUSION

An effect of the government's inability to provide quality jobs in Indonesia with decent earnings is online gambling. As the country's regulator, the government has done little to lower Indonesia's poverty rate and has instead increased TPPO, particularly in the online gambling sector. The government, which has complete regulatory authority, has not been able to stop the spread of internet gambling, which harms its victims not only financially but also mentally. Indonesia is one of the countries that is most impacted by the online gambling phenomenon since it is hosted to both a large number of online gamblers and a sizable population of people who are employed by online gambling companies.

The government's policies that do not support the community result in wages that are below the cost of living in Indonesia, which contributes to the country's high unemployment rate. Nepotism has also been pervasive in Indonesian society and has become a cultural norm. Therefore, the most susceptible individuals to become entangled in TPPO are those with little to no understanding regarding human trafficking and online gambling. To ensure that job opportunities in Indonesia are equitable and serve the community, the government should promulgate employment policies that are devoid of nepotism. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the government will be able to offer training relevant to Indonesian employment, particularly in the technology sector.

Given that Indonesia is the largest online gambling player and a victim of TPPO online gambling, particularly in Cambodia, the Indonesian government is anticipated to work with other nations to combat online gambling and TPPO. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the government, particularly the Ministry of Communication and Information, will carry out community education regarding online gambling and the risks associated with human trafficking, particularly in school settings. Apart from obstructing websites linked to gambling and sending out alert texts on online gambling, the government may also offer counseling services concerning the risks associated with online gambling and legal work outside socially. Lastly, the government can tighten rules governing internet gaming and improve security measures at Indonesian borders.

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