

Government Policy on the Phenomenon of Online Gambling in Indonesia: An Integrative Analysis of Law, Technology, and Siyasah Syar'iyah

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of online gambling has grown rapidly as a form of digital crime that is adaptive to the weaknesses of the state's surveillance system. This study aims to analyze online gambling practices in Makassar City, Indonesia, with a focus on operational patterns, the effectiveness of government legal policies, and normative legitimacy from the perspective of siyasah syar'iyah. The research approach is qualitative and descriptive, combining empirical juridical and normative analysis of Sharia. Primary data were obtained through field observation and in-depth interviews. Secondary data are sourced from laws and regulations, and scientific articles related to the research theme. The results of the study show that online gambling practices in Makassar City are dominated by slot games, poker, and lotteries accessed through social media, messaging applications, and Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). Transaction patterns utilize e-wallets and anonymous accounts, making it difficult to track the law. The government has carried out site blocking, site raids, and digital socialization, but its effectiveness is limited due to the limitations of digital forensics and weak cross-agency coordination. Religious institutions began to play a role in moral campaigns, but they were still sporadic. These structural barriers are even more contrasting when compared to the multi-level strategy of East Asian countries that combine artificial intelligence (AI) technology, cross-border financial cooperation, and national digital literacy. The implications of this study emphasize the need to shift the paradigm of online gambling prevention from a repressive approach to an integrative adaptive model that combines law, technology, institutions, and religious values. Strategic recommendations include strengthening AI-based domain monitoring, increasing digital forensic capacity, integrating policies across sectors, and optimizing the role of communities and religious institutions in prevention. This research contributes to the development of a national policy framework in the face of the increasingly complex challenges of online gambling.

Keywords: Law; Online gambling; digital crime; public policy; siyasah syar'iyah.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has changed the social, economic, and legal structures in various countries, including Indonesia. One of the most prominent phenomena in the last decade has been the rise of widespread online gambling practices through different digital platforms. Ease of internet access, the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), social media, and electronic payment platforms are the main driving factors for the rise of online gambling activities. This phenomenon is not only a legal question, but also concerns social, economic, moral, and religious dimensions (Nguyen & Lee, 2020; Rahman, 2022). In Indonesia, technological changes show crime dynamics that are highly adaptive to the weaknesses of the state's regulatory and supervisory system (Kim, 2021). Thus, the urgency of research on online gambling has become stronger because it has a direct impact on social order and legal stability.

The practice of online gambling is inseparable from the development of digital technology and the platform's economic model that facilitates financial transactions in small amounts but at high frequency. Recent studies show that the adaptive pattern of online gamblers occurs due to a combination of the availability of digital

infrastructure, weak state supervision capacity, and lack of digital literacy of the community (Tan & Goh, 2020; Wang & Lim, 2019). These activities are often associated with shadow economy activities, money laundering, and increased crime at the local level (Liu, 2022). In the context of Islamic law, the practice of gambling (maysir) is an activity that is strictly prohibited because it is considered to damage the social and economic order (Al-Faruqi, 2019). Therefore, this issue has become very relevant both in the context of positive law and the principle of *siyasah syar'iyah* as the basis for the legitimacy of public policy.

The main problem faced by the government is the inequality between the pace of technological development of online gambling actors and the available law enforcement capacity. Based on field data and various cyber law studies, online gambling sites can metamorphose quickly after being blocked, even in less than 12 hours (Santoso, 2021). This causes repressive legal strategies to be ineffective. The government has relied on Article 303 of the Criminal Code (KUHP) and Law No. 1 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law No. 11 of 2008 (ITE) as a legal basis, but this legal framework tends to be reactive and has not been supported by technology-based adaptive mechanisms. Many studies confirm that the effectiveness of the law against digital crime is highly dependent on the speed of adaptation, digital forensic capabilities, and cross-agency coordination (Chen, 2020; Park et al., 2022).

In the social context, the productive age group (18–35 years old) is the main target of online gamblers. This group has high digital behavioral characteristics, is susceptible to the visual temptation of games, and is often driven by the illusion of instant gain (Lee, 2018; Rahmawati & Yusuf, 2022). Digital psychology research shows that addictive game design has an essential role in shaping online gambling behavior (Griffiths & Nuyens, 2017). Meanwhile, economically, online gambling transactions use many e-wallets, anonymous accounts, and transaction-solving patterns to avoid tracking (Setiawan, 2021). These findings suggest that online gambling practices have formed a semi-organized ecosystem that complicates conventional law enforcement efforts.

The formulation of the problem in this study is directed to answer three fundamental questions. First, what is the pattern of online gambling practices in Makassar City, Indonesia, in the context of social, economic, and digital technology? Second, how effective are the government's legal policies and enforcement measures against this phenomenon? Third, how is the legitimacy of the legal action when analyzed from the perspective of *Siyasah Syar'iyah*? This formulation was compiled to identify weak points in legal policy and find opportunities for integration between positive law and Islamic normative values in strengthening the effectiveness of online gambling countermeasures.

The necessary solution approach cannot only rely on legal action. Effective online gambling management models in different countries combine law enforcement strategies with AI-based technology monitoring, cross-agency coordination, and civil society engagement (Wang & Lim, 2019; Tan & Goh, 2020). In the Indonesian context, the involvement of religious institutions and community leaders has significant potential because of the strong Islamic normative foundation in rejecting gambling practices (Al-Qaradawi, 2018). This collaborative approach allows for the formation of a more adaptive prevention and enforcement system.

Several previous studies have highlighted the success of multi-level models in East Asian countries, such as South Korea and Singapore, in suppressing online gambling practices. These countries are leveraging automated detection technologies, cross-border financial tracking systems, and nationwide digital literacy campaigns (Chen, 2020; Wang & Lim, 2019). However, Indonesia still faces significant gaps in terms of technology, coordination, and institutional governance. This gap needs to be bridged through policy innovation that combines a positive legal framework with a religious values-based approach.

The academic literature on online gambling in Indonesia is still mostly descriptive and sectoral, focusing only on criminal law or social aspects. There has not been much research that integrates Islamic legal approaches, public policy, and technology in one analytical framework. In fact, this integration is essential to produce effective and sustainable countermeasures policies (Rahman, 2022; Nugraha et al., 2023). Thus, this study seeks to fill this gap through a comprehensive normative-empirical approach.

This study has the main objectives to: (1) identify and map patterns of online gambling practices in Makassar City, Indonesia; (2) analyze the effectiveness of existing legal and institutional policies; and (3) evaluate the legitimacy of government actions from the perspective of *siyasah syar'iyah*. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of empirical and normative analysis, as well as in the proposal of adaptive policies that combine positive law, digital technology, and religious principles. The scope of the research covers the city of Makassar, Indonesia, in the period 2024–2025, with a focus on perpetrators, transaction patterns, legal policies, and the role of the community in prevention. With this framework, the research is expected to make a significant contribution to strengthening cyber law governance and the national strategy to counter online gambling in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review aims to provide a solid theoretical and conceptual framework to understand the phenomenon of online gambling in Makassar City, Indonesia. The primary focus is directed at the relationship between the development of digital technology, the national legal framework, the principles of *siyasah syar'iyah*, and the effectiveness of law enforcement in the cyber age. In this context, a literature review not only describes theories and regulations but also synthesizes the findings of previous studies to identify research gaps relevant to public policy.

The development of information technology has created a fundamental transformation in the way people access online services, including online gambling. Recent studies show that online gambling is growing rapidly as internet and mobile device penetration increases in Southeast Asia (Nguyen & Lee, 2020; Rahman, 2022). Online gambling activities are no longer limited to conventional sites, but have penetrated into various social media platforms, instant messaging applications, and mirror sites that easily evade government blocking (Kim, 2021; Pranata, 2023). This pattern illustrates the dynamics of cybercrime that are adaptive to state surveillance instruments.

Theoretically, the study of online gambling draws heavily on social control theory and opportunity theory, which explain why illegal activity increases when social control is weakened and technological opportunities are wide open (Clarke & Felson, 2017). In the context of Islamic law, the practice of gambling (*maysir*) is an activity that is strictly prohibited because it causes moral and social damage, in line with the principles of *dar'u al-mafāsid* (prevention of harm) and *maslahah 'ammah* (public good) (Al-Faruqi, 2019). The integration between positive legal norms and Sharia principles is an essential basis in the analysis of public policy regarding online gambling countermeasures.

Indonesia's national legal framework for gambling has long been regulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP), specifically Article 303, which prohibits all forms of gambling. In the context of digital technology, this provision was expanded through Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law), which provides a legal basis for blocking websites and taking action against perpetrators. However, the legal literature shows that there is a gap between legal norms and the effectiveness of their implementation (Santoso, 2021; Aulia & Setiawan, 2023). Blocked gambling sites can reappear in a matter of hours via a new domain or virtual private network (vpn), so the blocking policy is reactive.

In addition, law enforcement against online gambling is often hampered by the limitations of digital forensics and weak cross-agency coordination. Comparative studies in Asian countries show that digital forensic capacity and cross-agency partnerships are key factors in the success of eradicating online gambling (Tan & Goh, 2020; Park et al., 2022). Indonesia itself still faces serious challenges in institutional integration between the police, the Ministry of Communication and Information, and financial institutions in detecting the flow of gambling funds.

From a social perspective, research shows that vulnerable groups, especially adolescents and young adults (18–35 years old), are the primary targets of the online gambling industry (Lee, 2018; Rahmawati & Yusuf, 2022). The instant, addictive, and nuanced characteristics of digital entertainment games make many individuals unconsciously entangled. In this context, a repressive approach alone is not enough. Preventive strategies based on digital and religious literacy are also needed to break the chain of vulnerability (Hidayat, 2021;

Nugraha et al., 2023). Religious literature places gambling as a violation of the maqashid Sharia (the purpose of Sharia), especially in safeguarding property (hifz al-mal) and reason (hifz al-'aql). The concept of siyasah syar'iyah gives legitimacy to the state to take necessary actions to protect the community from socio-economic dangers (Al-Qaradawi, 2018). Therefore, an approach based on Islamic values can be a complement to favorable legal policies in eradicating online gambling.

Various international studies show the effectiveness of a multi-level approach, which combines technology blocking, financial investigations, and social campaigns (Wang & Lim, 2019; Chen, 2020). This model shows significant results in reducing the prevalence of online gambling in several East Asian countries. However, in Indonesia, this kind of policy integration is still minimal. Blocking efforts are carried out sectorally, not always followed by strengthening financial investigations or public education.

In addition to technological and legal factors, the economic dimension also plays an essential role in strengthening online gambling networks. Transactions using e-wallets and anonymous accounts provide ample space for perpetrators to avoid tracking. Research by Setiawan (2021) and Liu (2022) confirms the importance of cross-agency financial reporting mechanisms to uncover the flow of online gambling funds. Cooperation between law enforcement officials and banking institutions is crucial to limit the perpetrators' movement space.

In the context of empirical research, field studies in several major Indonesian cities show that the effectiveness of law enforcement is highly dependent on the speed of response of the authorities and the capabilities of monitoring technology (Nugroho, 2023). When blocking attempts are made manually and slowly, the perpetrators quickly shift their operations to the new domain. In contrast, the use of AI-based automated systems/web crawlers is more effective in detecting and blocking gambling sites (Prasetyo et al., 2022).

However, there has not been much research in Indonesia that examines the integration between the principles of siyasah syar'iyah and favorable legal policies in the context of online gambling. Most studies still focus on only one aspect, thus providing a gap for this research to fill these theoretical and empirical gaps. In addition, most previous research has been descriptive, having not developed an integrative policy model between law, technology, and religious values.

Thus, this literature review confirms the close relationship between technological developments, national legal frameworks, and religious principles in dealing with online gambling. However, the existing literature also shows limitations in the approach to countermeasures that are fragmentary. This research is here to contribute by integrating these three aspects into a more adaptive and comprehensive policy analysis framework.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is designed to provide a strong scientific foundation in analyzing online gambling practices in Makassar City from a positive legal perspective and the principles of siyasah syar'iyah. The methodological approach used combines descriptive qualitative research with empirical juridical and normative Sharia approaches. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to delve deeply into social, legal, and religious phenomena and interpret the dynamics of online gambling practices contextually. The qualitative method provides flexibility in capturing the meaning behind social phenomena and legal policies, while the normative-juridical approach ensures linkage with national regulatory frameworks and religious principles. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative approaches are particularly relevant in legal and social research when the main goal is to understand the context, meaning, and process comprehensively. This approach also supports interpretive analysis that is in line with the tradition of Islamic legal research (Al-Farوقي, 2019; Smith & Dean, 2021).

The research was carried out in the Makassar City area, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, as one of the urban areas with a high intensity of online gambling cases. The selection of this location is based on preliminary data from local police officers and the Ministry of Communication and Information, which recorded a significant increase in the number of online gambling sites operating in 2024–2025. The scope of the research includes online gambling practices, government legal policies, and the role of religious institutions in supporting

countermeasures. This study utilizes two main types of data sources, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through field observation and in-depth interviews with law enforcement officials, local government officials, religious leaders, and affected communities. Secondary data was obtained through documentation studies, including laws and regulations, legal rulings, official reports, and scientific publications related to online gambling. The combination of these two types of data is expected to provide a complete and comprehensive picture of the phenomenon studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018).

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participatory observation was carried out at several locations that were indicated to be the center of online gambling activities, including cafes and boarding houses. In-depth interviews are conducted with a semi-structured approach to gain rich and contextual insights from key informants. Document analysis through reasoning of legal regulations (K.K.P., ITE Law), regional policies, and other law enforcement documents. The source triangulation approach is used to ensure the validity of the data obtained (Denzin, 2017). Data analysis is carried out through two main stages. First, thematic analysis is used to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between field findings. Second, normative-syar'iy analysis is carried out to assess the extent of the actions of the government and law enforcement officials in accordance with the principle of dar'u al-Mafâsid. The analysis process is carried out iteratively, starting from raw data collection, thematic coding, categorization, and normative interpretation. This analytical approach allows for the formation of a holistic understanding between the empirical and normative dimensions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018).

Research Results

The results of this study were compiled based on field data obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of legal documents, and combined with theoretical frameworks and academic literature. All findings are presented in a systematic thematic structure, reflecting the complexity of online gambling practices in Makassar City and the accompanying legal and social responses.

Typology and Operational Patterns of Online Gambling

The initial findings of the study show that online gambling practices in Makassar City are proliferating and are adaptive to state supervision instruments. This gambling activity is mainly in the form of slot games, online poker, lotteries, and buying and selling chips on entertainment applications such as popular online games that are widely used by the public. Access to gambling platforms is obtained through a variety of channels, including links circulating on social media, groups of instant messaging apps such as Telegram and WhatsApp, as well as the use of virtual private networks (VPNs) to bypass government blocks. These findings show a pattern similar to those noted in regional comparative studies in Southeast Asia (Nguyen & Lee, 2020; Kim, 2021).

Online gambling operational practices generally utilize digital transaction systems through e-wallets, QRIS, and anonymous accounts that are difficult to track by law enforcement officials. Based on field observations, perpetrators usually use loan accounts or fictitious accounts to avoid detection by the banking system. This kind of mode is also found in cross-border research on cybercrime and online gambling (Setiawan, 2021; Liu, 2022). Additionally, local gambling operators often partner with overseas domain providers that have speedy site rotation capacity—in some cases, new domains can be active in less than 12 hours after the blocking of an old site.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Users

Data from interviews with police officers and community leaders shows that the productive age group (18-35 years old) is the dominant user of online gambling platforms in Makassar. The majority come from informal workers, college students, and high school students. This demographic characteristic is consistent with the findings of previous studies on the vulnerability of young people to online gambling activities (Lee, 2018; Rahmawati & Yusuf, 2022). The main driving factors for this group's involvement include ease of access, curiosity, and the illusion of quick profit.

In addition to age and social status factors, this study also found that there is a psychological dimension that strengthens dependence on online gambling. Some informants admitted that they were interested in the game's attractive visual features, instant reward system, and the existence of an online community that strengthens the sense of attachment. Previous studies have confirmed that elements of digital game design have a significant role in encouraging addictive user behavior (Griffiths & Nuyens, 2017; Rahman, 2022).

Transaction Patterns and Circulation of Funds

The pattern of online gambling transactions shows characteristics that are highly fluid and difficult to track. Any bets or chip purchases are made through e-wallets and bank transfers between accounts, often with a small amount so as not to suspect the banking system. Field investigations identified a pattern of transaction smurfing to circumvent automated financial reporting systems. These findings are consistent with the international financial crime literature that highlights the close relationship between online gambling and money laundering activities (Liu, 2022; Park et al., 2022).

Some of the perpetrators interviewed claimed to act as "chip exchange agents" who profited from the difference in selling and buying prices. This kind of transaction exhibits the semi-organized characteristics that strengthen the online gambling ecosystem. This emphasizes the urgency of strengthening cooperation between law enforcement officials, financial authorities, and digital payment service providers to suppress the circulation of illegal funds.

Government Response and Actions

The government's action against online gambling practices in Makassar involves several layers of strategy. The first strategy is repressive actions in the form of domain blocking, raids on physical locations suspected of being places of operation, and legal action against perpetrators and operators by institutions that have authority, namely the Ministry of Communication and Digital of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemkomdigi). The following are the actions of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on online gambling practices in Indonesia from 2024 to 2025, as described in the table:

Table: Government Actions Against Online Gambling Practices in Indonesia 2024–2025

No	Government Actions	Forms and Practices of Online Gambling	Platform Digital	Site Closure 2024–2025	Information
1	Domain Blocking	Live betting sites and slot games	Online Gambling Websites	3.300	Blocking of primary domains and subdomains identified by the Ministry of Communication and Communications
2	App Removal	Chip games and betting via mobile app	Mobile Apps (APKs)	535	Removal of apps from the Play Store/App Store and local servers
3	Account Blocking and Promotional Content	Affiliate link promotion and gambling link	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)	307	Closure of official accounts and affiliate promotional content
4	Communication Network Monitoring and Shutdown	Transactions through groups and channels	Messaging Platforms (Telegram, WhatsApp)	161	Deactivation of active groups and channels for online gambling transactions
5	DNS/IP Address Blocking	Domain redirection via VPN and mirror site	Mirror Domains and VPNs	1.265	DNS/IP blocking is used to avoid blocking the leading site

Source: primary data, 2025

Based on the data from the table, in the period 2024-2025, there were 3,300 blocking of main domains and subdomains identified by the Ministry of Communication and Commerce, 535 removal of applications from Playstore/App Store and local servers, 307 closures of official accounts and affiliate promotional content, 161

Deactivation of active groups and channels for online gambling transactions, 1,265 DNS/IP blocking used to avoid blocking of leading sites. The second strategy is public socialization through digital campaigns and public literacy education to prevent participation in online gambling.

However, the effectiveness of both strategies is still limited. Gambling sites that have been blocked are reappearing in a short period of time, and digital socialization has not fully reached vulnerable groups of society. These findings reinforce the results of previous research that state that domain blocking without strengthening the monitoring and coordination system across sectors only has a short-term impact (Santoso, 2021; Chen, 2020).

Involvement of Religious Institutions and Community Leaders

In the socio-religious context, the findings of the study show that the role of religious institutions and community leaders is still sporadic. Several mosques and digital da'wah institutions in Makassar have started to carry out online anti-gambling campaigns with a moral and spiritual approach, but they have not been systematically coordinated with government programs. In fact, the principle of siyasah syar'iyah provides a basis for legitimacy for the government to involve moral authority in preventing social harm (Al-Qaradawi, 2018; Al-Faruqi, 2019).

Several scholars and community leaders stated that digital da'wah can be an effective instrument to narrow the space for social legitimacy for online gambling practices. This is in line with the findings of Nugraha et al. (2023), which show that interventions based on religious values can strengthen the effectiveness of public policies.

Structural and Technical Barriers to Law Enforcement

Despite the various efforts that have been made, law enforcement against online gambling in Makassar still faces structural and technical obstacles. First, budget and human resource limitations are the main obstacles to strengthening cyber units at the regional police level. Second, coordination across agencies (Police, Diskominfo, OJK, and local governments) has not been fully integrated. Third, the lack of digital forensic capacity causes many cases not to be comprehensively traceable.

These barriers reinforce the conclusion of the international literature that the success of eradicating online gambling is highly dependent on the speed of technological adaptation and institutional synergy (Tan & Goh, 2020; Park et al., 2022). In the local context of Makassar, these efforts are still in their early stages and require significant institutional strengthening.

Comparison with International Practice

To provide comparative context, this study also examines law enforcement practices against online gambling in several East Asian countries. Countries such as South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia combine three layers of strategies, namely AI-based automated domain blocking, cross-border financial cooperation, and national digital literacy campaigns. The multi-level approach has been shown to reduce online gambling traffic significantly (Wang & Lim, 2019; Tan & Goh, 2020).

This comparison shows the strategic gap between Indonesia and these countries, especially in the capacity of technology monitoring and cross-sectoral policy integration. However, the experiences of these countries also provide an important lesson that the success of online gambling countermeasures is not solely determined by legal sanctions, but by policy synergy across fields.

Implications of the Findings for the Policy Framework

The results of this study have several important implications for strengthening public policies. First, the findings regarding the operational patterns of online gambling show the need to shift from a reactive law enforcement approach to an adaptive preventive approach based on digital technology. Second, the

involvement of non-state actors, such as religious institutions and local communities, needs to be strengthened so that countermeasures policies have a stronger basis of social legitimacy. Third, national strategies need to include cross-agency and cross-country cooperation to address the transnational nature of online gambling practices.

Thus, the results of this study strengthen the argument that online gambling in Makassar cannot rely on a single policy instrument, but requires a multi-level approach that combines law, technology, economics, and religious values.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that the practice of online gambling in Makassar City, Indonesia, represents a digital crime phenomenon that is highly adaptive to technological developments and weaknesses in the law enforcement system. This adaptivity can be seen from the circulation patterns of gambling sites and applications that are rapidly regenerating, the use of encrypted communication channels, and the use of digital payment systems that are difficult to track. This fact confirms the theoretical conclusion that cybercrime tends to develop faster than the regulatory capacity of countries, particularly in developing countries (Kim, 2021; Park et al., 2022). In this context, domain blocking without the support of adaptive detection mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration only results in short-term effects, not structural changes.

This phenomenon also indicates that reactive legal strategies are not effective enough in dealing with digital crime. Regulations in the Criminal Code and the ITE Law do provide a legal basis for enforcement, but they do not necessarily guarantee the state's ability to detect, prevent, and take action on online gambling practices on an ongoing basis. Many policy studies confirm that in the context of cybercrime, the effectiveness of the law is highly dependent on technical capacity, speed of adaptation, and interoperability between law enforcement agencies (Chen, 2020; Tan & Goh, 2020). Therefore, the strategic shift from a purely law enforcement paradigm to a digital risk management paradigm is essential.

Fundamental weaknesses in Indonesia's institutional structure related to online gambling can be seen from the slow coordination across agencies and the limited capacity of digital forensics at the regional level. While in many East Asian countries, multi-level strategies with AI support and automated monitoring systems have been implemented to reduce online gambling traffic (Wang & Lim, 2019; Nguyen & Lee, 2020), in Indonesia, a similar approach is still partial and sectoral. This inequality is what magnifies the gap between the speed of adaptation of actors and the state's response capacity. Without a comprehensive institutional transformation, the effectiveness of the law will continue to be in an inferior position compared to the dynamics of digital crime.

However, the problem of online gambling in Makassar can not only be understood from a legal and technological perspective. This phenomenon also has a significant social dimension, especially since the majority of users come from productive age groups with low levels of digital literacy and high psychological attraction to online games (Rahmawati & Yusuf, 2022; Griffiths & Nuyens, 2017). The behavioral reliance on instant rewards and the illusion of quick profits creates a cycle of digital addiction that strengthens the gambling market. This condition shows that digital literacy-based prevention and socio-religious intervention have a strategic role in breaking the chain of vulnerability (Hidayat, 2021; Nugraha et al., 2023).

The involvement of religious institutions and community leaders in prevention efforts is currently still sporadic and not integrated with government policies. In fact, within the framework of *siyasah syar'iyah*, the state has the legitimacy to involve moral authority as part of efforts to protect the public interest and prevent harm (Al-Qaradawi, 2018; Al-Faruqi, 2019). This approach has proven effective in other contexts in Southeast Asia, where the involvement of socio-religious institutions expands the scope of state policies and strengthens their normative legitimacy (Rahman, 2022). In the context of Makassar City, strengthening cooperation between religious institutions and the government can be an essential catalyst for building a sustainable prevention ecosystem.

From an economic perspective, the results of this study also show the existence of a semi-organized structure in the online gambling ecosystem, especially in chip buying and selling activities and e-wallet transactions that are difficult to track. This characteristic shows similarities to shadow economy patterns that are often associated with cross-border money laundering activities (Liu, 2022). Therefore, online gambling countermeasures cannot be separated from stronger financial tracking systems, including the integration of suspicious transaction reporting systems and cooperation with monetary authorities. In the international literature, the integration of law enforcement with financial tracking has been proven to increase the effectiveness of handling cybercrime (Setiawan, 2021; Tan & Goh, 2020).

Comparisons with international policies also show significant strategic differences. In countries such as South Korea and Singapore, online gambling countermeasures include AI-based domain surveillance, international cooperation in financial intelligence, as well as national digital literacy campaigns (Wang & Lim, 2019; Chen, 2020). This multi-layered approach has succeeded in suppressing the growth of the online gambling market consistently. In Indonesia, a similar approach is still hampered by institutional fragmentation and technological limitations. This gap shows that strengthening technology governance is a must, not just a policy choice.

In addition, the study highlights the importance of building a law enforcement strategy that is adaptive to technological dynamics. When actors are able to take advantage of regulatory and technological loopholes quickly, the state must develop adaptive mechanisms that are equal to or even faster. In this context, the use of AI technology for automated and real-time domain monitoring can be one of the realistic solutions. The latest literature also supports the importance of automation in tackling digital crime because it is able to speed up responses and reduce the manual workload of law enforcement officials (Prasetyo et al., 2022; Park et al., 2022).

However, a technological approach alone is not enough if it is not accompanied by improvements in institutional and regulatory aspects. The fragmented coordination structure between police agencies, the Ministry of Communication and Digital (Komdigi), the Financial Services Authority (OJK), and local governments must be replaced with an integrated mechanism that allows for data exchange and rapid action across sectors. The experience of several Asian countries shows that the success of multi-level policies is highly dependent on institutional interoperability and real-time response (Tan & Goh, 2020; Wang & Lim, 2019). Indonesia needs to accelerate the formation of this kind of coordination structure if it wants to match the speed of adaptation of online gamblers.

Indonesia's socio-cultural context also provides its own complexity in efforts to counter online gambling. Although religious norms and positive laws both prohibit the practice of gambling, the penetration of digital media and public perception of online gambling as "light entertainment" creates a social paradox. Many perpetrators do not feel that they are involved in a criminal act because the transaction is done through a personal device and not physically in a casino or gambling establishment. This phenomenon is similar to the findings of studies of online gambling user behavior in several Southeast Asian countries, which show that there is moral and legal ambiguity in people's perceptions of online activities (Nguyen & Lee, 2020; Rahman, 2022).

Thus, one of the biggest challenges in online gambling prevention policies in Makassar City is to build strong legal and social awareness at the community level. Without a change in public perception, legal and technological strategies will only touch the surface, not the root of the problem. Legal literacy and digital ethics are an integral part of long-term policies in controlling these activities (Hidayat, 2021; Nugraha et al., 2023).

From the point of view of Islamic law, the *siyasah syar'iyah* approach offers a strong normative foundation to encourage state involvement in protecting society from the social damage caused by online gambling. The principles of *maslahah* and *dar'u al-mafāsīd* (preventing harm) emphasize the importance of preventive and repressive measures on a broad social scale (Al-Qaradawi, 2018; Al-Faruqi, 2019). The integration between positive legal approaches and Islamic law can strengthen the legitimacy of public policy, especially in areas that sociologically have a strong religious base, such as Makassar City.

By combining empirical findings and theoretical frameworks, it can be emphasized that tackling online

gambling requires a multidimensional approach in the form of strengthening adaptive technologies, institutional reforms, social interventions based on digital literacy and religious values, and firm but inclusive legal policies. The complexity of this issue also suggests that a single strategy will not be adequate in the face of a phenomenon that moves quickly and crosses jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore, the development of a multi-level and collaborative approach is a logical and urgent policy direction.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the practice of online gambling in Makassar City is a form of digital crime that is adaptive, complex, and transnational. This adaptivity is reflected in the ease of domain rotation, the use of encrypted communication channels, and the use of digital payment systems that make it difficult to track the law. The government's current countermeasures strategy, which currently relies on a repressive approach through site blocking and legal action, is short-term and has not touched the root of the problem. Field findings and literature synthesis show that policy effectiveness is highly dependent on technological capacity building, cross-sectoral institutional coordination, and the participation of non-state actors, especially religious institutions and local communities.

The main contribution of this research lies in the integration between the positive legal framework and the principles of *siyasah syar'iyah* in analyzing online gambling prevention policies. This approach enriches the treasures of legal and public policy science in Indonesia by expanding the normative, technological, and social dimensions in an analytical framework. The practical implications include the need to strengthen AI-based digital monitoring, the establishment of an integrated cross-agency coordination mechanism, and the integration of religious approaches in prevention strategies. The study also opens up further research opportunities focusing on the development of adaptive governance models, measurement of long-term policy effectiveness, and cross-border comparisons in online gambling countermeasures.

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