

Responsible Gambling and the Communication to Customers through Casino Websites

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Abstract

The gambling industry is growing at a fast pace due to the proliferation of internet and digital media. Both online and offline gambling businesses are becoming recognized more and more around the globe. However, gambling brings the dilemma of social, political and financial problems at the individual as well as the collective level. This research study seeks methods of preventing the gamblers from social and economic destructive effects by controlling the gaming attitude. 52 websites referring to casino companies operating in North America and Europe were analyzed using a qualitative approach. The analysis included various strategies used by the companies regarding the incorporation of responsible behavior of gambling in promotion and marketing. Results show that the responsibility in gambling behavior could be induced through raising awareness of the consequences when the addiction to gambling takes over the control of individuals. Instead of playing with their patrons' imagination by promising fun and large sums of money, casinos should communicate in a more serious manner by promoting ways to minimize the addiction.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Gambling refers to the huge gaming industry in which the players take risks on certain events, scenarios, items physical games, etc. to win money. It is formally defined as betting money on some uncertain situations of events and involves high degree of uncertainty and risk that attracts and fascinates a huge number of people (Ladouceur, 2001). For most of the people, gambling is related to fun, pleasure and relaxation. They seek excitement by giving their luck a chance in one way or another. They do not take huge risks in such gambling to lose a lot of money. It is often thought that the gambling that does not encounter significant loss doesn't have any catastrophic effects on the psychology or financial considerations of the players. However, gambling addiction can appear at any stage; the gambler doesn't necessarily have to take huge risks with big amounts of money to get addicted.

Considering the destructive consequences of the gambling addiction, the term "Responsible Gambling" started getting more attention by psychological researchers. This concept refers to playing games at Casinos and other places by taking risk to the safe extent. Many advantages can be drawn from this, such as minimizing the risk of loss by taking calculated risks in casino gaming and reducing the negative emotions and behavior that cultivates among players due to excessive gaming.

Due to the recent growth of the gambling industry in Canada and USA and its potential negative impacts on the social and economic aspects, the idea of responsible gambling is spreading fast. The term of "Problem Gambling" is also found in literature to associate the negative social, economic, and psychological impact of excessive gambling on the person and society as a whole. The consequences of problem gambling are not limited to the gambler only, but they also spread to the immediate social circle including partner, parents, siblings, relatives, and friends.

The concept of "Responsible Gambling" was introduced to point out the ethical use of casinos and gambling. This term refers to the controlled gambling in which the severity of the consequences is controlled through various methods. First, the gamblers themselves implement responsible gambling. They must understand the overall face of the game and tradeoff excitement, fun and enjoyment with risk and uncertainty of the game. He must forecast the consequences of this addiction on his

social and family circle. Moreover, the gamblers have to limit the amount of money they spend on such games to cut off their individual expenses. The increase in per capita cost of the gambling industry is also an ominous sign for a country. In order to reduce such cost, the industry must consider the individual financial impact of gamblers and overall economic influence and act accordingly.

Responsible gambling is also associated with the self-control at the individual level. An addiction to casinos and lottery gaming could be reduced through controlling emotions. The elements of fun and excitement in these games must be distinguished from the risks of failures and their potential adverse effects on one's economic and social outlooks. Myths and rumors surrounding the games have to be avoided by gamblers and involvement must be kept limited.

The theory of responsible gambling is associated with the psychological factors of preventing addiction through various methods. Avoiding an environment that flourishes such negative ideas might be the most difficult part when the gambler shows the potential of an addiction. A person who belongs to a circle of friends addicted to gambling and other gaming will eventually fall trap to their activities. He or she could avoid the attraction of these games during the first few days, but the influence of the environment might eventually drag him into a deep cycle of gambling that is very difficult to escape.

Intervention features may also be involved in the theory of responsible gambling. The gambling industry itself plays a significant role in controlling the effects of the addictive games. It is their responsibility to design games considering the financial and social impacts on people. The rules and regulations of the games must consider the perspective of the loss and limit the opportunities for players so that they cannot go beyond a certain boundary. The plot and uncertainties of the game could be manipulated to reduce the risks of too much loss or too much benefit for players, as huge benefits can act as a trap to motivate the players to return and keep playing.

Apart from the rules and regulations, the role of the gaming industry and companies is very important in communication with the customers. They could use various elements and strategies to prohibit players from taking too much risk to put their social, psychological health at stake. They could warn or alarm the players about the dark side of the picture and intervene, if required, to reduce the loss for addicted

players. The nature of the game must be designed to a realistic level instead of taking players to the heights of imagination. It is the responsibility of the gaming industry leaders to design policies to raise awareness among gamers about ethical considerations in gambling. Moreover, the websites of online gaming must display messages to warn players about various gambling elements and their associated effects.

In addition to the management of the gambling industry, the government of a country also carries significant responsibility in educating young and old people about gambling and its positive and negative aspects. Through healthy gaming, the players can contribute towards gaming industry, but too much involvement in uncertain situations and risks will lead to loss at individual and mass level. The psychological and social aspects will weaken the core of social development in the country. The government should intervene through proper education and social media channels to raise awareness about responsible gambling and problem gambling.

1.1 Background of Gambling

According to a famous psychologist, risk taking is part of the nature of humans and gambling provides one of the manifestations to this nature (Bellringer, 1999). The addiction for taking risks has forced people around the globe to take interest in gambling games and plots. Since the 1970s, the USA and Canada have seen enormous growth in the gambling industry (Shaffer, 1999). Before 1969, most of the gambling games were illegal in Canada (Wiebe, 2002). However, in 1969, regulations approved for casinos and lottery companies who got license of operation from the government. The regulations were updated in 1985 to incorporate more innovation in the gambling industry by using special types of machines such as video lottery terminals and slot machines (Smith, 1997). The vast growth of gambling during the early stages of the modern century led to inclusion of this game as one of the most prolific sources of revenue generation in overall economy (Azmier, 2000). However, the growing rage of gambling also increased the overall expenditure per person that had severe social and

economic consequences. It became quite tough for individuals to meet the desire of gambling and risky lottery gaming due to involvement of huge amounts of money.

Considering the growth and spreading of gambling in countries like Canada and the USA, research efforts have been conducted to minimize the destructive effects caused by the games of risk. The research is quite diverse in this field and includes statistical, psychological, and economic aspects of theoretical investigations. The gambling industry could be helpful for the country's economy, but not at the stake of the mental health, social deformation, and individual financial declination.

Gambling is really not an innovation of the modern era, but its history could also be dated back to the ancient civilizations (Bellringer, 1999). The Middle East, India, and ancient Greece report traces of gambling as old as 4000 years (Ladouceur, 2001). The negative effects of gambling like social tragedies and large debts have also been associated in these nations. Moreover, history of gambling has been associated with the alternation of conservative and liberal behaviors. Due to the dark aspects of the gambling, the legalized game was banned in many countries. However, it was still used in some other games to collect money for charity in the form of prize bonds. Moreover, many humanitarian and voluntary organizations rely heavily on the money earned through the gambling industry. The positive and negative aspects of gambling have created a huge dilemma over its legal framework for different countries (Myrseth, 2011).

The decade of 1990s is worth mentioning for the gambling industry due to the liberalization in some countries. The accessibility towards gambling was promoted while the rule of maximum prizes was eliminated in Norway. The attitude and behavior of people and governments changed towards this game and it appeared in innovative forms. During this decade, the gambling market in Norway really revolutionized with the introduction of the electronic gaming machines (Myrseth, 2011). Norway rose as one of the fastest growing gambling nations with more gambling machines per capita than many other countries (Myrseth, 2011). In 2002, the number of electronic gambling machines was 23,000 (one machine per 200 people) that is far more than the gambling machines per capita for Denmark and Sweden added together (Myrseth, 2011). The concept of problem gambling is also associated with such aggressive games. The machines used in Norway provided opportunity for dealing with huge amounts of

money in short durations. This means that players could lose significant amounts of money within a very short timeframe. However, many Norwegian people enjoyed the uncertain gaming and risk taking for large amounts of money irrespective of the consequences. Norway also innovated gambling by introducing the game through SMS and it pioneered in this technology among Nordic countries. The overall gambling framework made Norway one of the most liberal countries in the world (Fekjær, 2002).

The problems and terrible results of gambling started becoming more obvious during the beginning of the modern era in Norway. The government had to take serious actions against gambling to prevent this industry from eating social and economic conditions. Funds were issued for prevention, treatment, and research work towards addressing dark sides of gambling in Norway (Fekjær, 2002).

Overall, the risks of negative effects on social and economic wellbeing of the country reigned over many countries including USA, Canada, Denmark, and Norway during the previous decade. Some of these countries have legalized gambling by defining rules and regulations based on the responsible attitude and self-control. The communication with the players is very important in this regard. The casinos and gaming clubs should monitor all gambling activities and take measures to mitigate the harmful aspects of this game on both, social and economic sides.

1.2 Presentation of the Problem

In this thesis, an innovative direction in the responsible gambling industry is chosen by searching and exploring ways to develop awareness of the potential risks gamblers could face when simple entertainment turns into serious problems. Various methods and approaches used by casino websites to attempt communication with their customers will be explored in this research study. The strategies and elements used by the websites to attract patrons towards interesting games will be explored in depth. The research will take direction of exploring the realistic versus imaginative nature of the gambling websites to hold and acquire the interest of gamblers. The implementation of the awareness about responsible gaming will be studied in detail. Overall, this research study will develop the theoretical framework and model of the

responsible gambling and the behaviors associated with it to lead towards social and economic well being for individuals as well as nations as a whole.

1.3 Aim of the Thesis

The aim behind this thesis is to explore the perspective of ethical or responsible gambling. Various casino websites that sponsor gambling and other related games will be reviewed. Rules, regulations and ethical considerations of gambling websites will be analyzed. Moreover, the communication methods of website owners with clients will be reviewed. Various elements and methods to prevent negative aspects of gambling will be assessed in detail. A research will be conducted regarding communication of casino management with players regarding expectations whether they are imaginative or realistic.

1.4 Method of Analysis

The methodology of this study is qualitative contents analysis. The sample will consist of casino websites, especially their advertisement. Different categories will be created based on how casino websites communicate and coordinate with their customers. Furthermore, the aspects, elements and strategies will be explored regarding prevention of addiction of gambling and promotion of responsible features in casino games. The analysis will explore features and dimensions of the known casino websites to categorize the measures taken to promote ethical gambling.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Gambling Literature

The act of gambling may have had a longer history than most people would assume. Studies have shown that approximately 3000 B.C., ancient Egyptian mythology has mentioned gambling between the different gods, and around the same time in Mesopotamia (now northern Iraq), the first known six-sided die was crafted (Polsson, 2007). From that time onwards, many cultures around the world have developed their own forms of betting and gambling, making use of items of chance such as dice or cards. Most of the common modern games of chance, such as Blackjack, Roulette, Keno, or Poker were created by civilizations in Europe or China (“Gambling History, from the beginning”, 2000).

Gambling is an entertainment-based game with the focus of staking money on uncertain events driven by chance, with the potential to win more than staked, but with the ultimate certainty that gamblers as a group will lose over time, as stated by the Australian Government’s Productivity Commission in 2010. The definition itself is relatively similar to its shorter versions mentioned earlier, with the exception that it highlights the fact that gamblers as a group will surely lose in the long term, thus confirming the infamous saying “the house always wins”.

2.2 Problem Gambling, Gambling Addiction, and Pathological Gambling

2.2.1 Problem of Gambling Demographics

Problem gambling (ludomania), also known as pathological gambling, gambling disorder, or compulsive gambling, is defined by many different labels. The different

descriptions exist to let researchers make a distinction between the different levels of a gambling addiction. A “problem gambler”, for example, may have put themselves in difficult situations as a consequence of his/her gambling, but may still not meet the criteria of a “pathological gambler”, or a gambler with “gambling disorder”, which is the most severe form of problem gambling. According to the American Psychiatric Association, the term is defined as “repeated problematic gambling behavior that causes significant problems or distress” (Wang, 2016).

Most people will never experience any problems with gambling; they typically place their bets without exceeding the amount they can afford to lose. They may lose or win, but they go back to their normal lives after playing. Regrettably, this is not true for every individual and can cause severe problems in some cases (“What is Gambling?”, 2018). A portion of gamblers might be very successful with their initial gambling experience, which may lead to illusions of additional future success and, consequently, they believe they have outsmarted the system (“Compulsive Gambling”, 2001). As these individuals continue to gamble, they increasingly convince themselves that they are either smarter or luckier than other gamblers, until they result in financial or self-esteem problems. Wang (2016) describes the effects of gambling as similar to those of individuals with an alcohol or drug addiction leading to difficult situations regarding work, family, and even legal concerns. At this point, the individual with a gambling disorder commences to hide their malicious behavior by spreading lies to people around him/her and perhaps asking others for financial support to feed their addiction (Wang, 2016). Problem gamblers will eventually think about going out of their ways, such as stealing, to obtain money to keep playing or pay back debts (Segal, et al., 2017).

Lange (n.d.) suggests that researchers have uncovered some patterns in demographic characteristics. A study conducted by Lange (n.d.) in Ontario, 1995, consisted of a sample size of over 3000 adults and found that “males were overwhelmingly represented”. Different studies confirm this as they revealed that roughly two thirds of all problem gamblers tend to be men, though the gap seems to be closing at a fast rate (“Understanding PG”, 2013). Among the entire sample size, “the age groups of 18-29 and 40-49 were more likely to report gambling problems”, with people of age 50 or above having the least problems (Lange, n.d.). Furthermore,

the study discovered that most individuals with gambling problems tend to be single, and/or show a significant relationship between substance use (mainly alcohol) and higher levels of spending on gambling. Problem gambling can also affect individuals regardless of their education or occupation (“Understanding PG”, 2013).

Humans have developed a sense of control of our impulses or urges, allowing us to think twice about situations or actions, rather than undergoing them without realizing the consequences. However, even though most people take this skill for granted, individuals with impulse control disorder have difficulties controlling their urge to “do something harmful to themselves or others” (Ploskin, 2016).

2.2.2 3 Types of Problem Gamblers (Traditional, Heavy, and Skill Game Problem Gamblers)

Problem gambling is a form of impulse control disorder and as mentioned in the article by D. Ploskin (2016), the disorder “includes addictions to alcohol or drugs, eating disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania” and other compulsions that may satisfy their instant desires. Before undertaking the act, Ploskin (2016) indicates that the individual begins to feel growing tension or stimulation. As the person starts to give in to their impulse, he/she will most likely have positive feelings, such as pleasure or even relief, until the act comes to an end, where the affected individual begins to blame themselves or regret their actions (Ploskin, 2016).

Bjerg (2001) describes three types of problem gamblers: traditional, heavy and skill game problem gamblers. The traditional problem gamblers are most likely to play the bank games of chance such as slot machines, roulette, scratch cards, etc. The research study revealed that this category comprises 39% of the total share of problem gamblers (Bjerg, 2001). This type of gamblers represents the class with the least debt among other categories of problem gamblers due to involvement of less risks and uncertainties. The education level of this category is higher than those of heavy gamblers, but less than the skill game problem gamblers.

Heavy problem gamblers have significant likelihood of taking part in different gambling games like bank games of pure choice, bank games of skill, and combination of bank skill with bank chance (Bjerg, 2001). This class has the highest probability of

not obtaining a higher education, a high probability of debt, and the maximum proportion of substance abuse and crime out of all three classes. The term “heavy” does not refer to the extent of gambling; it rather indicates the worst nature of social circumstances in general for this category of gamblers. The generalized trends of this category reveal that they are most socially deprived among all categories of problem gamblers. They are often surrounded by debts and other social problems in families.

The third class of problem gamblers has drastically different characteristics from the first category in terms of behavior and interests (Bjerg, 2001). This category has the least probability of taking part in only games of chance like roulette, slot machines, and scratch cards, etc. (Bjerg, 2001). The most surprising fact about problem gamblers of the skill game category is that they are 99% male (Bjerg, 2001). This may be due to a male tendency to compete which fits better to games of skill as compared to games of pure luck. This class of gamblers is also younger as compared to the other categories. The educational background of this category is the highest. They generally have good qualifications to develop skill for gambling of this category (Bjerg, 2001). The influence of skill game problem gamblers on their social circle tends to be better than the heavy problem gamblers. However, when compared to the social domain of the traditional problem gamblers, the influence on their social circle shows more complexity. The skill game gamblers indicate a smaller proportion of gambling problems within their family and they show little to no substance abuse background (Bjerg, 2001).

2.2.3 Superstition and Gambling

Superstition, commonly known as “a widely held but irrational belief in supernatural influences, especially as leading to good or bad luck, or a practice based on such a belief” (Superstition, n.d.), plays a big role in casinos around the world, where these beliefs have a favorable setting to develop (Guttentag & Havitz, 2010). In other words, individuals may be convinced that they can influence or predict certain events of chance due to “an irrational belief in the existence of causality between two completely unrelated events of actions” (Foster & Kokko, 2009, p. 5). Superstitions may have many attributes or characteristics that formed from an individual’s

experience connecting with coincidental events. They are often personally motivated superstitions that individuals have their own association with, such as a lucky birth date. The person may have chosen this 'lucky' number because they are convinced their birth date brings them luck, or they bought a winning lottery ticket on that day (Guttentag & Havitz, 2010). Moreover, there are superstitious beliefs that are socially shared and have entire cultures believing in them, some of them with religious background or beliefs about the paranormal (Scheibe & Sarbin, 1965; Vyse 1997). "If there is a universal truth about superstition, it is that superstitious behavior emerges as a response to uncertainty – to circumstances that are inherently random and uncontrollable" (Vyse, 1997, p. 201).

As the act of gambling is based on unpredictability and randomness, it is evident that gamblers are very superstitious individuals (Vyse, 1997). According to the study of Toneatto (1999), there are three types of gambling superstitions: A "talismanic superstition", which relates to objects (a lucky item) or its attributes (the object's color, for example), "behavioural superstition", where the action or a ritual plays a role while gambling (playing on a particular slot machine, or doing a certain hand gesture before pressing the button), and "cognitive superstition" by which the mental state (such as confidence) is the focal point of the player. It would be impossible to name all gambling superstitions, as there are unlimited ways of coming up with such beliefs, but Guttentag (2010) mentions some of the most common ones, such as "blowing on dice, throwing dice harder or softer for higher or lower number, finding 'hot' or 'paying' slot machines, using lucky bingo dabbers, and timing the placement of roulette bets" (Gutten & Havitz, 2010, p.6).

2.3 Perception of Chance

2.3.1 Perception of Probability, Randomness, Risk

The world consists of constant change deriving from random events, making it difficult for individuals to predict the future. In the study by Gallistel et al. (2014), it is mentioned that under at least some circumstances, both human and nonhuman animals adapt their behavior to situations in the most possible optimal way in a short period of time. In other words, creatures have developed a sense of predictability

“that yield reasonably accurate perception of simple probabilities, even when those probabilities are not stationary” (Gallistel et al., 2014). By way of explanation, the brain has the ability to recognize current probabilities and create assumptions on future probabilities. This notion may explain the psychological origin of the Gambler’s Fallacy (Gallistel et al., 2014).

2.3.2 Gambler's Fallacy

The gambler’s fallacy, often also called the Monte Carlo fallacy, “is a mistaken belief about sequences of random events” (Hahn, 2015). It describes the wrong, yet appealing assumption that a “streak” of particular outcomes lowers the chance of that outcome to appear again on the next trial. The most notorious case dates back to 1913, where the ball of a roulette table in Monte Carlo landed on black with an incredible streak of 26 times in a row, making gamblers lose millions as they were betting against black. Gamblers mistakenly kept believing that the probability of red increases as black outcomes appear, even though the odds never changed (Connor, 2014). Similar to a coin toss, events are completely independent from each other and have no systematic connection between trials (Hahn, 2015). The gambler’s fallacy is an example of a concept called representativeness heuristic, where individuals have the tendency to judge the outcome of events based on the outcomes of past similar events (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974)

2.3.3 Attribution Theory

The attribution theory attempts to explain how individuals interpret the origins of behaviors and circumstances. In other words, people are trying to make sense of the world by combining certain causes and events, even if they have no relationship (McLeod, 2012). This theory is closely linked with the gambling industry due to outcomes, risks, and uncertainties. Individuals who have difficulties with gambling have a likelihood of losing a significant amount of money and develop certain social and psychological problems. The attribution theory asserts that the emotions and feelings associated with losers are inherent to their psychology.

2.3.4 Locus Of Control

The meaning of locus of control in psychology refers to the skills and abilities of the person to affect and influence the feelings of happiness, achievement, and other aspects. The people who perceive that they can control their life events and other associated emotions are said to have the internal locus of control. On the other hand, the people who consider that their life is manipulated and maneuvered by others are considered to have external locus of control (Moore, 1999). The research efforts in the field of locus of control in relation with gambling are not vivid (Kusyszyn, 1985). The reason could be the lack of concreteness in relationship between locus of control and gambling.

Elements of gambling such as whether to play a certain game, how much money to risk for an uncertain event, which type of games to try, are all controllable by individuals. It depends on the self-control and responsibility of the gamer him- or herself to control his actions with respect to the addiction-like gambling. The internal locus of control in this niche allows responsible gambling and saves players from the harmful effects of a social and economic downfall. The people with strong internal locus of control have a tendency to gamble without problematic aspects (Kusyszyn, 1985).

Another aspect of the locus of control is the perception of lack of control on most of the gambling situations. While playing games like the lottery, you have to chance your luck without any control. In such situations, it is wise to bid low to prevent high loss. The locus of control suggests that you cannot take high risks in situations in which you have ample control. It is much better to quit gambling or take part in such games with low risk of financial loss (Kusyszyn, 1985).

The illusion of control is another form of the locus of control. It is a psychological behavior in which the gambler will conceive the control over the situation which is really not the case in practical situations. The gambler perceives to control the plot and is therefore able to put high risk on his money. The illusion of control provides false explanations of events and happenings and drags gamblers away from the reality of significant loss (Kusyszyn, 1985). The consequences are severe and

places the affected individuals in situations of worse social and financial considerations.

The research study shows that irrational control beliefs were associated with the problem gambling (Kusyszyn, 1985). The locus of control for gambling makes players believe that they need money and they could get it through chancing their luck by manipulating the risks and game scenarios. Younger individuals are more likely to fall trap to the illusion of internal locus of control. This group of people carry the belief that they can beat the system and earn much more money through gambling. In reality, they are deceiving themselves by investing money and taking huge amounts of risk. Thus, the internal locus of control with illusion effects is strongly linked with the problem gambling and it must be eradicated for building responsible behavior (Kusyszyn, 1985).

Illusion of control

Superstition, according to Guttentag et al. (2010), is a concept that shares many characteristics with the idea of “illusion of control”, which is defined as “over-estimations of the personal capacity to influence outcomes, so that people have a subjective probability of winning that is greater than the objective odds” (Lambos & Delfabbro, 2007, p. 158). Illusion of control can sometimes contribute to the origin of a superstition. The previously presented example, of throwing dice harder to get higher numbers, is a perfect illustration of a superstition that also embodies an illusion of control (Vyse, 1997). It is not clear whether gambling is the cause of the creation of superstitious belief, or that superstitious belief causes more gambling, but according to Joukhador et al. (2004), studies show a positive correlation. Articles have also shown that the belief of superstition and other irrational thinking may inspire gambling and “it would not be surprising if individuals that hold erroneous beliefs about chance events and their ability to control them might be drawn towards gambling activities more strongly than individuals that do not, and that once individuals begin to gamble that their levels of erroneous beliefs are affected by their gambling experiences” (Strickland et al., 2006, p. 52).

Understanding the concept of the illusion of control is an important ability to hold for any individual, as it does not only occur in gambling but in our everyday lives (Orgaz et al., 2013). Many studies, such as on individuals believing they have control

over uncontrollable lights or internet users trying to score points in an uncontrollable game, have shown that it is fairly simple to fall under an illusion of control (Orgaz et al., 2013). “The illusion of control is also well-known among athletes and sports players, who often feel that a given ritual or lucky charm is necessary for success” (Bleak & Frederick, 1998). However, the study by Orgaz et al. (2013) suggests that the illusion of control is much stronger for problem gamblers than it is to non-problem gamblers. Pathological gamblers will believe they have an influence in the outcome of a completely random event, and whenever they are given the sense that they are controlling something, may it be rolling dice or flipping a coin, then their illusion of control increases exponentially (Houghton, 2006).

Numerous gamblers like to believe that their game is skill-based and enjoy blaming unrelated factors or come up with other creative explanations for their losses (Griffiths, 2013). Many experiments have tried to analyze a gambler’s thought process by using a ‘thinking aloud’ method, in which gamblers are told to vocalize their thoughts during games on a slot machine. Most of these results show “that erroneous and irrational perceptions of the gambling activity far outnumber the logical and rational perceptions” (Griffiths, 2013). The author also mentions his own experiment with such a method and observed that slot players who win will believe it was based on their skill, and when they lose it was due to some external reason that usually holds no influence of changing the odds, such as other people distracting them or having a bad day. A pathological gambler’s perception of their gambling is in general very distorted and the illusion of control is just one out of many psychological factors influencing such thought processes (Griffiths, 2013).

Another interesting aspect of illusion of control is its strong association with the belief for controlling the circumstances that was referred to as internal locus of control in the last subsection. Many gamblers have a wrong perception of having the ability to maneuver the circumstances as their wish, but this is certainly not the case for gamers who enjoy lottery and gambling. The theory of internal locus of control cannot be applied to gambling with success due to high risk situations and prevailing uncertainties.

2.3.5 Early Win Hypothesis – Recent Wins Influence Future Betting

It is widely thought by attribution theorists that “people’s early learning experiences are responsible for their later personality development and related behavior” (Aasved, 2002, p.121). This can be seen on individuals who win, by chance, at early trials and therefore relate to personal causation. However, in the case of early losses, individuals have the tendency of blaming external influences, for example bad luck (Aasved, 2002). When an individual does win early, they are more inclined to develop an expectation of success, therefore encouraging them to return to gambling in future sessions and setting a fertile ground for problem gambling. As mentioned earlier, losses of early winners are commonly blamed on something unrelated to the game, but since many of them adopted this internal locus of control (people who believe they are responsible for their success), they are convinced they can defeat their bad luck with persistence and determination, which, again, promotes continuous play (Aasved, 2002).

Various researchers believe that the initial experience of extensive joy and happiness an individual gets from alcohol leaves such an influential impression on them, that this alone could be accountable for the development of alcoholism. This is easily comparable to the “early win”, sometimes also “early *big* win” or “reinforcement history”, hypothesis as the procurement of these winnings are happening at an essential development stage of the player and can cause gamblers to chase this feeling, unavailingly attempting to re-experience the moment with all of its intensity (Aasved, 2003). “Many [pathological gamblers] are trying to repeat a never forgotten ‘peak experience’, perhaps of a big win after a long series of losses or quite often of the special feelings which accompanied their first big win” (Brown, 1987, p.117).

However, it is also of importance to point out that not every pathological gambler begins as a winner, as it is evident with lottery players since very few people have a significant win occur and those who do tend not to develop gambling problems (Aasved, 2003). A study mentioned in the book by Aasved (2003) concluded that “the amount won is not a factor in subsequent betting” (p. 141). Subjects who had an equal number of wins and losses were more alert when betting, whereas “frequent winners and frequent losers began to bet more recklessly” (p. 141). Researchers believe that gamblers act this way due to their cognitions. The individuals who won frequently

were convinced their luck would stay, while the ones who lost frequently believed their bad luck would leave them (Aasved, 2003).

2.3.6 Near Miss Effect

The so-called 'near miss effect' can have several meanings, but in the gaming literature it is originally defined as "a special kind of failure to reach a goal, one that comes close to being successful" (Reid, 1986, p.32), which was then simplified to "failure that was close to a win" (Harrigan, 2008, p. 353). Harrigan (2008) argues that it would be more logical to call the effect a "near win" situation.

A near miss can be of much use in a game that requires skills, such as shooting, because the previous rounds may give information that can be used for future rounds to increase the probability of success (Reid, 1986). Games of pure chance, such as slot machines or lotteries, on the other hand, give absolutely no information that gamblers can use for future predictions, even though they would like to think so. According to Reid (1986), some common examples of gamblers trying to influence their luck include "whispering to dice, throwing gently for a lower number, choosing a lottery carefully by using family dates of birth..." (p. 32). Gamblers take these near misses as a verification of their gambling strategy and, consequently, commence to build hope for future winnings (Reid, 1986). They perceive a near miss as a close win and believe that they are "learning" the game and getting better at it, even though it is based on pure randomness (Sundali, Safford & Croson, 2012). Moreover, it has also been mentioned that near misses promote gamblers to keep playing as they attempt to prove their acquired skill by gambling even more (Sundali et al., 2012).

In the study by Reid (1986), it is suggested that a near miss would lead individuals to be "encouraged", whereas others felt a "frustration" or "irritation" and some reported both, being encouraged as well as frustrated. Additionally, Griffiths (1991) noted that near misses caused gamblers (especially pathological gamblers) to increase their length of play because almost winning made them "physiologically aroused". On top of that, another experiment suggests that, due to frustration, individuals showed a faster heart rate acceleration when confronted with a near miss, rather than an actual win or loss (Clark et al., 2010). Dixon et al. (2011) indicated that

“near misses result in a state of “frustrated arousal”, and the desire to escape this unpleasant emotional state is the mechanism that prolongs play”. Findings show that experiencing a near miss on a slot machine will keep players interested and they will therefore keep playing, either because they believe their odds of winning have changed, or the player has become aroused and wants to sustain or disregard this feeling (Sundali et al., 2012).

2.3.7 Personal Choice

The question of being independent and being free is quite complicated in the setting of problem gambling (Bjerg, 2001). Personal choice in the perception of chance is very important from the point of view of self-control and responsible gambling. Due to the fact that gambling itself is a game of chance in which you risk your money against uncertain events, it is up to the gamblers to play the game and risk their money. The choice of game, type of game, amount of money, and the nature of risk are all personal choices.

However, the extent of control in the form of illusion or internal locus of control does not provide the concrete picture of the situation. A gambler may be overly optimistic about his or her luck and success. The extent of controlling the emotions and feelings in gambling is associated with the determination of the person (Bjerg, 2001). The attitude towards gaming and practical nature could stop him or her from taking too many risks. However, individuals who are emotionally weak could easily fall trap to illusions. A possible cognition could be that by taking a lot of risks, a lot of money can be made. Personal choice in gambling is associated with the psychology of self-control and emotional behavior. The addiction of gambling can mask the effects of practical and real scenarios on the mind of gamblers. Problem gamblers do not think beyond certain boundaries in which they feel illusion of hidden success. They tend to play more and more games, and as a result, lose money.

The extent of personal choice in gambling is controlled by the emotional and psychological behavior of the players. The game of gambling and chance fascinates their inner-self to give it a try at least. When people enter into this deep marsh, the matter of personal control decreases due to increase in level of addiction. The self-

control and regulation of emotions is at maximum during the beginning of the addiction in which the person could make choices about his actions. However, later on, the personal choices are all overcome by the fun, enjoyment, excitement, illusion, and taste of risk-studded situations and scenarios. The mindset for a number of players is tuned for games to an extent that they cannot think wisely and prevent the negative aspects.

2.3.8 Win/Loss Alters Perception

Dedicated gamblers believe chance, skill and luck are completely different phenomena and tend to create their own definitions. They may thoroughly understand the concept of chance following the laws of probability, yet conclude irrational ideas about luck. For a majority of them, luck is either a personal trait encoded in human beings or a “personalized animistic force”, such as Lady Luck, that can “cause” specific outcomes (Aasved, 2002). In his book, the author quotes that “players regard luck as a concept that refers to a person, whereas chance refers to the event of the outcome. Some people may be luckier than others, whereas chance is the same for everyone” (Pritchard & Smith, 2004). A rather well-known description of such magical and irrational thinking dates back to the 1950s and, as Aasved (2002) stated, can be applied to any dedicated gambler:

“In the highly scientific and realistic twentieth century United States, the gambler is among the last practitioners of superstition. He throws spilt salt over his left shoulder, knocks on wood, avoids black cats and goes out of his way to give a beggar money on route to the races or his dice games. He has an old hat, a necktie or a tie pin that brings him good luck, and if bad luck sets in he chases it by walking three times around a chair. He begs, cajoles and pleads with the dice, talking to them more tenderly than he talks to his wife. He can feel in his bones when a slot machine is about to drop a jackpot or when the red is going to come up at roulette, and when the feeling turns out to be wrong he looks at the machine with the aggrieved expression of a man deceived by his best friend. He dreams the winning numbers of horses and sees visions of a lottery killing in the license of a taxicab that brushes him at a street corner.

No matter how many times he has failed, today is always the day.” (Havemann, 1950, p. 108)

Another incident describes the good luck of a “storefront preacher” and his relationship with the bible. According to Aasved (2002), other players witnessed the preacher getting lucky and since he was always associated with the bible, they, too, started reading the bible for good luck. Superstitious individuals believe in an idea called “mana”, which they define as “a player’s personal spiritual ‘power’” (Aasved, 2002, p.134), and it was thought that the storefront preacher’s bible was the source of his mana.

It was commonly believed that different players had different levels of mana, which led gamblers to bet accordingly against others. For example, players would place smaller bets against people with more mana and bet more against people with little mana. Since mana seems to be a finite resource, gamblers think they can restore it by placing larger bets after each throw in order to gain back control of the dice (Aasved, 2002).

Superstitious and magical beliefs have diverse origins and it will never be certain what these origins are, but as they are developed they often transform into rituals and are therefore easy for cultures to be passed on (Aasved, 2002). Studies have shown that human beings are social animals, meaning most of our behaviors are learned through social interactions. In order to shape or support one’s behavior, including superstition and rituals, human beings tend to observe and learn from the reactions of their peers (Aasved, 2002)

2.3.9 Entrapment and Near Miss

The phenomenon of Entrapment and Near Miss is closely correlated with gambling and its pathological disorder (Karlsen, 2010). Entrapment is a concept in which gamblers find themselves caught in a situation of continuous play (continuing to be “invested”) in spite of losing a lot of time or money. This is due to the arising sense of feeling that they could recover money or that it is too far to turn back (Karlsen, 2010). The entrapped gamblers spend their time and money even though they are aware of the negative aspects of the game. This effect also indicates a psychological

illusion in which the mind gets trapped into thinking that the continuous play will eventually pay off. The concept of Near Miss, however, employs the idea that gamblers miss the winning streak by just a small margin, which keeps the player interested (Karlsen, 2010).

The phenomenon can be seen in a significant amount of lotto players as they tend to bet on the same numbers each week in the hopes that 'their' numbers will hit at some point, or individuals playing the same electronic gambling machines for longer periods of time as their superstitious belief suggests them that this machine is 'due' to pay out (Karlsen, 2010). This particular way of thinking could be exemplified by the massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) World of Warcraft, in which players get entrapped into activities such as raiding, where participants come together in the hopes of acquiring powerful items based on a randomized dropping chance. According to Karlsen (2010), these groups of people can spend several months killing the same bosses in hopes of getting these items. The opportunity of coming close to the reward multiple times keeps the players and gamblers interested no matter how much time is spent on this activity. Similar to gambling, the randomness of the games keeps the players entangled in the thoughts about success and failures, which, in turn, keeps them motivated to take chances in order to avoid missing out on the win (Karlsen, 2010).

2.3.10 Luck vs. Skill

Luck and skill are both common terminologies used in the gambling industry. The cognitive distortion is an important step towards realizing the development and maintenance of the problem gambling (Cowie, 2017). The literature identifies two kinds of mental distortions associated with gambling: one is luck and the other is skill. These distortions affect the thinking patterns of the gamblers and their behavior towards gaming and other decisions which influences their social and financial considerations. Taking chances and putting money at stake tends to originate from these false concepts and beliefs, which can be observed in a wide range of players (Cowie, 2017).

The motivation for gambling comes from the monetary gain through application of skills in a game of chance (Cowie, 2017). The gamblers have to put some money on risk to be able to win more money based on their chances. They could strategize in order to increase the likelihood of winning the game. Dedicated players try to understand the plot of the game in terms of randomness, attribution of skill, perceived control over the game, and they get deceived. The continual involvement in the game results in addiction and affected players cannot refrain themselves from taking risks and chancing their luck to win huge amounts of money (Cowie, 2017).

The superstitious beliefs in fate, culture, chance, and other similar notions are common in many cultures. These aspects come from myths and religious understandings (Dickins, 2016). The effect of these beliefs surrounds the envelope of gambling. When one plays a lottery game, they chance their luck to win the jackpot, but the likelihood of winning is very slim. Believing that luck will favor them eventually in a large setting of games, keeps one interested in putting more money on lottery and casino games and websites (Cowie, 2017).

Superstitious beliefs exist in various nations, including China. A research study reported that Chinese people were found calling out special phrases in the hope of getting bigger cards during gambling games at a Casino in Macau (Lam, 2007). The players seemed to be under high level of illusion or mythical influence since their mind forced them to believe that they could control the plot of the game. In terms of psychology, the behavior of problem gamblers was even more distorted as compared to the non-problem gamblers (Cowie, 2017).

The research on chance and luck suggested that such kind of behavioral distortions were strongly correlated with the problem gambling attitudes (Cowie, 2017). It was found to be that the skill and attitude distortion of problem gamblers was correlated to the lesser extent. The behaviors of skill/attitude and chance/luck are both dangerous to the psychological development of the problem gambling. The elements of self-control and responsibility are mostly missing in such behaviors.

2.3.11 Loss Chasing

Another rather influential psychological factor that applies to pathological gamblers is the chasing of one's losses, usually accompanied by larger bet sizes to make up for the losses (Bibby, 2016). Reports unfold that loss chasing can appear at a much earlier stage than other indicators and it is said to be one of the biggest factors contributing to the development of problem gambling (Bibby, 2016). An experiment conducted by Breen and Zuckerman (1999) observed a gambling session to categorize those who were "chasers". The game was set up to make losing unavoidable in the long run, punishing the continuation of play. Roughly one third of the participants resulted in being categorized as chasers. According to the study, the only difference between chasers and non-chasers is the difference in perception of rewards and punishments, whereas the latter is ineffective when trying to diminish loss chasing (Breen & Zuckerman, 1999). Loss chasing is a "spiraling commitment" as gamblers perceive it as a chance to get even. A problem gambler cannot live with the fact that they have lost money and self-esteem and will therefore continue chasing, in order to regain both. As the gambler continues to lose, he/she may borrow more money and "the more money borrowed, the greater the commitment to more gambling as the only possible means of gaining enough money to pay off the debt" (Compulsive Gambling, 2001).

Bibby (2016) also suggests that there is some evidence that loss chasing has a link to alexithymia, a personality construct that makes it difficult for individuals to identify or describe their own or other's feelings. Pathological gamblers with alexithymia have difficulties understanding their losses and are less sensitive to them, putting nothing in the way of continuous play (Bibby, 2016).

2.3.12 Myths: Lady Luck

Lady Luck is a character that is assigned to good fortune and luck. This term is rigorously used in gambling when players refer to Lady Luck for inducing luck and success elements in their game. The common term of "Lady Luck smiling on them (players)" is used when players are making good money in gambling. It is assigned to any streak of positive events in which probability of success is high. The gamblers also

use this concept as a myth or superstitious belief when they are losing and need to recover from heavy defeat. While players can win games through skill, the elements of luck and chance always exist and turn tables. So, when all efforts of the gamblers go in vain, they start following various myths hoping that luck will favor them eventually.

2.4 CSR

Corporate Social Responsibility in the gambling industry arises within the concept of responsible gambling, in which the corporations give problem gamblers a greater sense of self-control over gaming. The responsible gambling behavior is also used as a tool for marketing of casino websites. For example, Macau gambling companies post CSR in their annual reports to include the elements of responsibility in their gaming (Luo, 2017). Elements of CSR in the gambling setup include customers, employees, shareholders, community, environment, and government (Luo, 2017). By promoting CSR practices in the gambling industry, it is possible to eliminate the harmful effects related to social and financial considerations (Luo, 2017).

Another research study regarding CSR as the voluntary responsibilities in addition to the rules and regulations imposed by a country (Tetrelová, n.d.). It uncovers that CSR must cover five basic areas: ethical, environmental, social, economic, and philanthropic. Specific indicators are provided by the gambling industry to measure these aspects and overall CSR (Tetrelová, n.d.). Some responsible behaviors can be found in gambling, which provide qualitative and quantitative aspects of measuring CSR. The gambling game should be based on personal choice by respecting the rules of the game in a positive spirit. Participating individuals must know their limits and shouldn't borrow money from others for their leisure. An element of CSR in the gambling industry which shows of great importance, if not the most important, is that gambling should be considered as a way of entertainment instead of earning money. Therefore the limits of the game should be respected and the player must pull out if he exceeds these limits (Tetrelová, n.d.).

2.5 Responsible Gambling

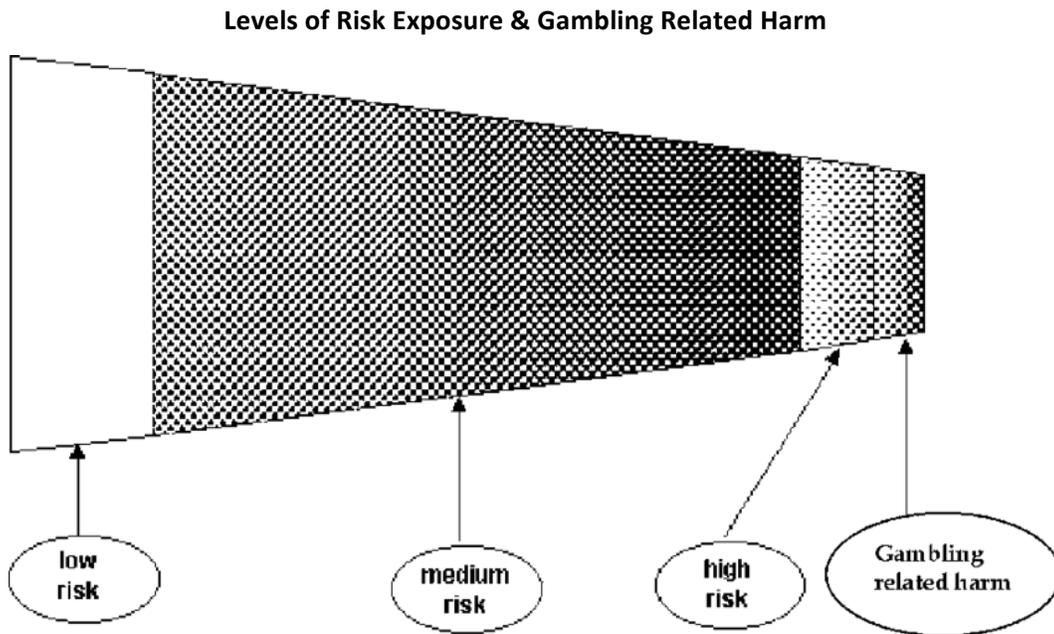
The gambling industry has shown a rapid expansion in the past century and different researchers, social scientists and consumers took initiative to better understand the industry and effects of gambling and the problems that arise with it. Over the years, it has become increasingly noticeable that problem gambling is a growing threat to public health. Stakeholders are therefore responsible to cooperate and identify potential harms in order to reduce or remove them completely, while also highlighting the possible benefits of gambling (Blaszczynski, Ladouceur & Shaffer, 2004). The most prominent stakeholders, such as “consumers, gambling industry operators, health service and other welfare providers, interested community groups (i.e., including those in favor and opposed to legalized gambling) as well as governments and their related agencies...” (Blaszczynski et al., 2004, p. 303) are all responsible to set up a framework that protects the society. This, however, leads to multiple complications as different parties have different perspectives and seem to show different interests toward a responsible gambling concept. As Blaszczynski et al. (2004) mentions, consumers look for entertainment and recreational activities, operators promote the recreational activity by supplying a wide variety of options for consumers to enjoy, and the health sector and other similar groups tend to promote the negative social effects of excessive gambling. This lack of clarity is due to scientists, the industry and the public all having different perspectives on problem gambling. As mentioned earlier in the study, “pathological gambling” is the term used to describe the most extreme form of the rather broad and unclassified category “problem gambling” (Blaszczynski et al., 2004). Investigations and experiments are not able to differentiate between the two groups due to their wide variety of characteristics, but Blaszczynski et al. (2004) suggests that in order to set up a sophisticated structure for responsible gambling, stakeholders must come together, define the terms and communicate with the public.

Even though the gambling industry has existed for a long time, it is only recent that responsible gambling practices are being developed and implemented. Governments, welfare organizations and related industries are attempting to enforce various strategies to introduce this relatively new concept. There was never any industry-wide definition or “code of conduct” for the concept and it is, consequently,

based on personal belief and common sense. Additionally, some parts of the industry may be concerned that this may interfere with its business practices as there is no clear and effective way of identifying and preventing problem gambling (Blaszczynski et al., 2004).

2.5.1 What Responsible Gambling Is

To define responsible gambling, one must take into consideration that the concept refers to the reduction and ultimately prevention of possible harms linked with gambling. It consists of interventions directed to draw attention to consumer protection, educate stakeholders and allow access to according treatment (Blaszczynski et al., 2004). The fundamental goal of responsible gambling “is about reducing the rate of the development of new cases of harm or disorder that is gambling-related” (p. 308).



(Figure 1)

Figure 1 above, presented by Blaszczynski et al. (2004, p. 310), represents four groups with varying risk exposure towards harmful gambling. Even though most individuals tend to gamble responsibly (shown by the “low risk” and “medium risk”

sectors), some do eventually develop a harmful gambling behavior and ought to be the focus of a responsible gambling strategy, as the author suggests. The “low risk” sector represents individuals who do not gamble and have almost no risk of developing gambling problems, whereas the “medium risk” and “high risk” segments contain players who gamble frequently and occasionally play more than initially planned. Nevertheless, these players have an overall attitude towards gambling that lets them stay out of the harmful gambling segment. Players at the far right of the “high risk” spectrum, indicated by thicker and darker markings, have a higher risk of falling into the “gambling related harm” segment. This spectrum covers individuals who experience severe problems with gambling, such as losing control over time and money when playing. Blaszczynski et al. (2004) quote that “responsible gambling strategies should primarily target gamblers in the high-risk cell, with the aim of preventing migration to the gambling related harm cell” (p. 310). It is also of importance for a responsible gambling program to inform gamblers of various treatment services, because individuals who do have a gambling disorder necessitate professional help.

2.5.2 What Casinos have to/should/can provide

The study concludes two fundamental principles any responsible gambling strategy should include. Firstly, it should give the individual the final choice of whether or not to gamble, as this represents personal freedom and the right for human beings to have a choice. Secondly, for them to make this decision, individuals must be able to inform themselves. However, it has to be underlined that in a program of responsible gambling, vulnerable players must not be exploited or taken advantage of if they show any form of problem gambling (Blaszczynski et al., 2004). Blaszczynski et al. (2004) state that responsible gambling should highlight this “informed choice” because “this concept is a fundamental principle of human rights policies” (Blaszczynski et al., 2004, p. 312). It is also mentioned that informed choice assures individuals to form a decision based on correct rather than misleading information. Moreover, the industry should, according to Blaszczynski et al. (2004), meet certain ethical standards when advertising

“by not presenting misleading information or misrepresentations of the chance of winning” (p. 312).

2.5.3 How Responsible Gambling gives Players more Self Awareness

The notion of responsible gambling and CSR provides self-control over the emotional behavior and psychological factors. The concept of responsibility in gambling asserts that the players must look at the game as a source of fun and entertainment, and not for earning money as the primary purpose. It is the responsibility of casinos and governments to raise awareness about positive and negative aspects of gambling. The concept of CSR also emphasizes the construction of voluntary legitimacy in the gambling industry (Han, 2011). The responsibility in this domain aims at removing guilt, tension, myths, and superstitious beliefs.

The components of CSR such as environment, players, organizers, and governments come together to form ethical behavior in gambling. When players use their skills and luck to a controlled extent, they learn how to enjoy the game rather than unnecessarily taking risk on high amounts of money. Arguably, the construction of responsibility cannot be initiated solely by laws and regulations. The support of CSR and responsible behavior is required to ensure the positive spirit in the game (Han, 2011). In spite of governmental regulations, the players must develop a sense of responsibility and self-control to avoid negative implications of gambling.

Treating gambling in an unethical way may arise consequences that are severe. The negative impacts of gambling on social, economic, and political aspects in the western countries could be analyzed as the view of the gambling industry moved from a pure source of entertainment to a socially undesirable behavior (Reith, 2007). Moreover, the importance of legitimacy in pure form of law and also in ethical terms in gambling must be heavily emphasized to avoid a game becoming a source of harmful outcomes.

2.6 Loyalty Programs in Casinos

The loyalty program is a marketing strategy of the casinos for promoting their brand and keeping their patrons interested. There is a significant potential in generating huge amounts of revenues for the gambling industry if customers are attracted in a reasonable fashion. As a marketing strategy, the majority of casino companies tend to offer various discounts and other deals to their loyal customers (Barsky, 2010). They must engage the returning customers with suitable packages and gifts so that the industry flourishes in a positive manner. Cost-cutting strategies increase the number of customers due to highly attractive packages and deals (Barsky, 2010). The casino management observes and understands the behavior of the gamblers and introduces packages to keep their interest at peak (Barsky, 2010).

The loyalty programs boost the fascination and attraction of gamblers to take part in casino games and online gambling websites. Through loyalty programs, the customer base of the brand increases, leading to increase in revenues. However, the real dilemma with gambling is ethical or responsible behavior that must be ensured by gambling companies in their promotion. Apart from rules and regulations, the environment of gaming should induce sense of control and responsibility among players. They could use some type of quotes of custom messages on their websites or advertisements to encourage responsible behavior and attitudes in gambling. The communication of the casinos with their clients regarding ethical behavior is very important and with the correct communication, loyalty programs can monitor the activities and playing skills of the players and intervene accordingly.

The aim behind loyalty programs is building more worth with less money (Crofts, 2011). These programs could be an effective source of nurturing responsible behavior among gambling players to prevent the dark sides. Discounts on various items, priority dining opportunities and other facilities keep the interest of the players in a healthy frame and they do not portray the unethical image of gambling. The motivation, attraction and fascination of players are utilized in exploring the opportunities and packages of membership rather than simply taking risks with money. Casino guests could tradeoff the fun of risking money with entertainment opportunities provided by brand marketing of companies.

2.7 Consumer Protection

Consumer protection is a concept that is central to responsible gambling (Bonello, 2017). The rules and regulations of the casino websites include consumer protection measures that care for the financial considerations of the players who must be protected from harmful aspects of the game through laws as well as initiation of responsible behavior among them. The biggest innovation in the gambling industry is the introduction of responsible gambling tools and measures by the companies themselves. Measures taken by the casino websites are numerous and diverse. The research studies evaluated the ethical aspects mentioned in the communication of gambling websites with their customers and measured plenty of inconsistencies due to diversity (Bonello, 2017). Most of the ethical considerations are strong, but still some others need further improvement.

The extent of problem gambling is more likely to grow in online gambling because websites offer plenty of mood-modifying experiences, including immersion, dissociation and escapism (Bonello, 2017). These aspects can lead towards unpredictable gambling behaviors. However, these websites could also be used to infuse responsible behavior among clients by using proper marketing tools and the implementation of ethical considerations in customer protection. Due to online nature of the electronic gambling, the online and gaming behavior of the clients could be recorded and used to protect clients from negative effects of the game (Bonello, 2017).

Consumer protection in gambling is also the responsibility of the state. On one hand, the state promotes the lottery system for raising charities and other similar programs, and on the other hand, they have to take measures to make people aware about self-control in gambling and related games (Bonello, 2017). The online gambling websites have to ensure protection of customers to ensure reputation of their brands. The greater the brand loyalty, the higher will be the customer base, and thus the company has to engage customers through marketing and their protection. Attracting clients in the gambling world so that they invest money to play while still protecting them is a conflict of interest which seems to be the biggest challenge for casinos today (Bonello, 2017).

One of the recommended methods to ensure consumer protection for online and offline gamblers is to include a three-way model including the gambling operators, government, and third party people who advocate minimization of harm for other people (Bonello, 2017). Due to extremely high risk of gambling and conflict of interest, the issue of consumer protection should be prioritized to all other stakes. The aspect of responsible gambling like spreading awareness and education among players, information about games, instructing players to limit themselves for financial consideration, must be strictly practiced in online and physical gambling shops.

The research suggested some areas of improvement in promoting CSR among gambling operators including customer service feedback, age verification, and direct marketing to customers (Bonello, 2017). Due to the tremendous growth of Internet and online gambling, the participation in this game is likely to grow. Thus, the aspects of consumer protection are gaining significant importance in gambling to avoid social and financial predicament in this world overwhelming the players. The gambling operators must devise strategic frameworks in collaboration with governmental agencies to incorporate the protection mechanisms in the form of ethical or responsible gambling. It is possible to minimize the socio-political influence of gambling with comprehensive and strategic insight by gambling operators and management. The consumer protection might seem to be a burden on gambling operators, but they will eventually see the benefits of ensuring responsibility in gambling in the form of greater proportion of retention of customers. Various advantages of consumer protection could be visualized in the broader picture by promoting the brand that provides security to the gamblers. In this manner, the gamblers with greater deal of self-control will take part in games.

Chapter 3. Scientific Question

The research questions that are aimed to be addressed in this thesis are:

- How do casinos interact with their customers and how do they treat responsible gambling?
- Do casinos play with the customer's imagination, or do they try to keep communication on a realistic level?
- What elements and measures are taken by casino websites to ensure responsible gambling?
- To what extent do rules and regulations of the games aid in keeping gambling within controlled limits and promote self-control among players?
- How or to which extent do casinos ensure consumer protection and CSR?

These research questions follow from the literature review findings reported in the previous chapter. Additionally, the research domain of responsible gambling, problem gambling, and pathological gambling addresses the mentioned investigations. This thesis aims to answer these questions by considering the casino websites and the material available on them.

The scientific questions provide the starting point of our research. A framework or model of responsible gambling will be built in order to find satisfactory answers to these questions. They will attempt to cover the ethical aspects of problem gambling. To approach these questions, an exploration and analysis of casino companies is required. The online casino websites could be analyzed to investigate the practices related to responsible gambling and the associated behavioral tools. Furthermore, it is also of importance to delve into the communication tools gambling companies use to intervene when players have gone too far and when it becomes evident that they have spent more than they should. The information about the rules and regulation will be helpful in gaining insight into the ethical aspects of online gambling websites. Other loyalty programs and consumer protection schemes will be analyzed.

Chapter 4. Methods

The research design of this study is based on searching different online casino websites and acquiring information about their communication methods. European and North American casino websites were chosen as these regions are relatively famous for gambling and operating such establishments. Motivation for including gambling organizations of these continents was provided by the growth and dedication shown by the elected countries. While countries in other continents tend to also show similar growth rates and dedication, perhaps some even more than others, as the autonomous region of Macau demonstrated, it seemed logical to contrast European and North American websites as they showed interesting relations and parallels.

The casino website searching methodology is based on exploring the database of the World Casino Directory. Numerous casino websites around the globe are registered on this website, where the highest rated casinos are listed, with just a few exceptional cases from the UK. Websites were included in the study if they had at least some of the categories mentioned below. The casinos were chosen from independent operators. This is due to the fact that the casinos operating under the same management will have the uniform set of rules and regulations.

The methods of advertising and marketing of websites are different and they will provide insight into the strategies adopted for responsible gambling. The websites assign categories to players to win their interest and fascinate them for playing games. Some example categories are:

“The Winner”: this category refers to websites attempting to convince their readers that they are winners. These potential customers can be expected to gain confidence and motivation that they are superior in luck to others as it is suggested to them that they will win some game. Keywords such as “Lucky One” and “Winner” are mostly employed. A strategy such as this assumably raises the morale of the player to play more games. The aim behind this strategy seems to be providing the kick start to the novice players.

“Recreational”: this category belongs to the promotional measure to provide opportunities of fun, enjoyment, and entertainment to players. The aspects of recreation may keep the readers engaged in attractive packages and offers. The

readers do not necessarily take part in the game, but they will like spending some time in such recreational activities.

“Payout Suggestion”: this category of gaming addresses another type of motivation to players, which is to win a huge bonus or prize if they follow certain directions. The payout suggestions are usually in the form of huge amounts of money as a jackpot or similar. The company could be offering prizes like cars or vacation trips. The establishment games potentially provide opportunities to risk money for jackpots. This attraction could lead to difficulties with problem gamblers as they only see what they can win, but not what they could lose.

“Mythical”: superstitious beliefs and myths are commonly found in different kinds of players, as explored in Chapter 2. This category of attraction refers to such theories of gamblers. Artificial creatures or imaginative characters are used that mostly fascinate people. Some examples are Lady Luck, the number 13, leprechauns, clover leaves, etc. This category expresses the association between control of game and mythical considerations. The gambling websites seem to utilize weaknesses of players to their advantage and invite them to reinvest.

“Availability Heuristic”: This category of the gambling strategy is based on feedback related to potential memories of the customers. The websites have the complete record and profile of the customers and they try to engage them with available heuristics such as “Remember the last time you won...” or “Would you like to play your favorite table game?” and many more. The casino knows the choices of the players from their previous performance and gambling skills. This strategy attempts to draw the interest of the players within a specialized domain. The expertise of the players is utilized in a certain direction of gambling, while the mind of the players is focused on certain fields in gambling.

In this research thesis, we will consider the marketing and advertising methods by referring to the categories presented above and using site-specific terms also. The casino websites are sorted based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria: Websites which belong to the countries of North America and Europe and promote their gambling business online.

Exclusion Criteria: Redundant online casino websites providing gaming opportunities under the same operator and/or casino websites that offer gambling online instead of promoting the location.

Based on these criteria, multiple websites that showed popularity and sophistication were chosen and their policies and communication strategies were visited. The database of the World Casino Directory was utilized to search plenty of casino websites. Personal experience and the Google searching algorithm, with the usage of keywords such as “popular casinos” in various countries, were also utilized for finding gambling websites.

These websites will provide opportunities to search for measures and actions taken by websites to promote responsible and ethical gambling. The general trend of promotion is in the form of quotes or short flickering messages on websites that catch the reader’s interest. Warning signs and symbols are available to make one careful about strategies and choices. The aim of ethical and responsible gambling is to make the game a personal choice for recreation and entertainment rather than following some addiction. Due to conflict of interest of websites with ethical and responsible gambling, the operators have the choice to promote such notions in a strategic manner so as not to affect the revenue generation from gambling, while preventing the players from getting deep into trouble.

The methodology of qualitative content analysis is adopted for the exploration of websites and their material. Advertisements, policies, regulations, messages, notifications, etc. are included in the sample for further analysis. Sample messages will be analyzed using the framework of the scientific questions. To answer all issues included in the scientific questions, the results will be evaluated and discussed.

Chapter 5. Results

This part will illustrate the results obtained from the qualitative study of the casino websites.

5.1 Description of the Sample

Samples of websites containing the promotion of opportunities of gambling are included in this study, where the websites have been obtained from Google searching, personal knowledge, and the World Casino Directory. The sample websites and the results obtained from them related to the concept of strategic responsible gambling will be discussed. A total of 51 casino websites were analyzed, whereby 33 are based in North America and 18 in Europe.

5.2 Interpretation of Created Categories

The categories of the websites are created depending on their location. European based casino websites are analyzed independently from those based in North America. The responsible behavior reflected in the promotional behavior and attitude of the websites will be discussed briefly. Each website will be analyzed through its messages, communication methods, ads and gaming opportunities.

5.3 Analysis of Responsible Gambling on Websites: Europe

Aspers Casino Newcastle

This casino website provides various promotional offers for gamblers who are either new or already members. One ad (Figure 2) shows that Aspers World Members playing Blackjack have a chance of 98% to win a free spin on their Super Wheel. The entire ad seems to be written very objectively. Furthermore, the website used the word “cool” to describe the prize. This word derives from the colloquial language and attempts to catch the reader’s attention by portraying a friendly message that has a

familiar sound to it, resulting in the ad hinting slightly towards a recreational marketing strategy and thus indicating a relatively realistic image of the prize.



(Figure 2)

Moreover, the website also promotes their member club by offering deals for slot players (Figure 3). Participants can collect £200 worth of slot deals by using their member card. To draw the attention of returning patrons, the website uses a payout suggestion by promising an amount of money every month for all of their qualifying members.



(Figure 3)

Figure 4 is an ad directed not only to the members, but every potential visitor of the casino. The statement “less earning, more winning” can be interpreted as the dream of having to work less, yet making more money by winning. The ad invites

patrons and promises them an easy life by suggesting that they do not need work to be successful.



WE'VE
LAUNCHED A
WORLD OF
LESS EARNING,
MORE
WINNING.

(Figure 4)

The ads shown below, Figure 5 and 6, both share similar characteristics. They both promise a reward by “simply” hitting a Royal Flush, or playing 750 hands within a calendar month. These examples focus on an unrealistic invitation to try the casino games, as hitting a Royal Flush is very unlikely and therefore not as “simple” as the ad suggests. Additionally, the Aspers Cash Poker League (Fig. 5) states that patrons “win their share of an estimated £13,000 every month”. Here, the website guarantees a win, relating to the category of “the winner” including a payout suggestion.



**ASPERS CASH POKER
LEAGUE**

WIN YOUR SHARE OF AN ESTIMATED £13,000 EVERY MONTH*

Simply play 750 hands on any cash game table, in any calendar month, to qualify for the Final Free Roll Tournament.

(Figure 5)



(Figure 6)

Broadway Casino

The website of the Broadway Casino in the United Kingdom presents itself in a rather recreational sense, as most of their ads suggest.

OUR GAMES

From American Roulette to Three Card Poker there is something for everyone at Broadway Casino. Learn more about the exhilarating games we have to offer by clicking on the links above and below.

(Figure 7)

By using the word “exhilarating” to describe their games in Figure 7, the casino implies that their location offers a fun and exciting experience.

GAMING

The renowned gaming floor, with its lavish bar and vast selection of gaming classics, sits at the heart of Broadway Casino and is a hive of activity.

Try your hand at one of our 7 roulette tables or enjoy the excitement of Blackjack, Mini Punto Banco or Three Card Poker with its new progressive jackpot. We also have 30 Electronic Roulette terminals which are connected to 2 live tables and 2 auto wheels as well as 16 slot machines with jackpots of a staggering £10,000 – 6 of which are linked to an additional progressive jackpot of up to £12,000.

The gaming floor has a chic and modern décor and is the perfect place to relax with friends and enjoy everything the floor has to offer.

'The Restaurant' also offers **Party Packages**. A delicious **Canape Menu (£12.50pp)** the **Ace Experience (£35pp)** and **King Experience (£20pp)** set menus. These allow diners the chance to combine great food, a refreshing drink, expert casino table training and a fantastic gaming voucher to give them the ultimate Broadway Casino experience. Click [here](#) to see the menus and how to book.

(Figure 8)

Figure 8 uncovers several communication methods. The majority of this example refers to a recreational approach as the words “relax” and “enjoy” can be recognized, as well as the description of an “ultimate Broadway Casino experience”. Additionally, on top of their recreational gambling games description, the website indicates two payout suggestions of their slot machines in the form of jackpots.

If you've always wanted to be James Bond then this is the game for you! In the old Bond movies, Punto Banco was 007's game of choice, although he played a slightly different version of the game.

(Figure 9)

By using the imaginative character of James Bond, the ad tries to gain attention of the reader and associate the game of Punto Banco with superstition. As James Bond is known for playing and being very fortunate at Punto Banco, the ad attempts to give the reader a false sense of confidence making him or her believe he or she can be as successful as the notorious character.

Do you enjoy the simplicity of Roulette, but prefer the comfort and privacy of playing on your own screen? If so then Touchbet roulette is the game for you. Thanks to technology at Broadway Casino you can place your bets and collect your winnings easily at the touch of a finger. Don't forget that minimum bets can start from just 25p!

(Figure 10)

Availability Heuristic, a rather less frequently used category, can be seen in Figure 10. The ad hints that it knows what the reader prefers and attempts to engage them with potential memories. Furthermore, the ad also mentions the collection of "your winnings easily", making it seem easy to win at gambling.

Holland Casino

One of the main characteristics of this casino website appears to be their numerous offers and packages, as they are common throughout the website. They are usually accompanied by very bright and colorful images and often represent cheerful and happy fictional characters, indicating the use of mythical elements. As figure 11 shows, the website takes these elements and combines them with others, such as a simple payout suggestion in this case.



(Figure 11)

On the other hand, the website also makes use of a visually neutral text promoting their “Mega Millions Jackpot”. This example, as seen in figure 12, exploits aspects of payout suggestions with relatively high sums of money. The use of the words “try” and “could” imply that the ad attempts to stay on a realistic level, as it is not promising the reader anything directly. However, the title “become a millionaire with one press of a button” implies that it is simple to become rich, hence leaning away from the realistic approach.



BECOME A MILLIONAIRE WITH ONE PRESS OF A BUTTON

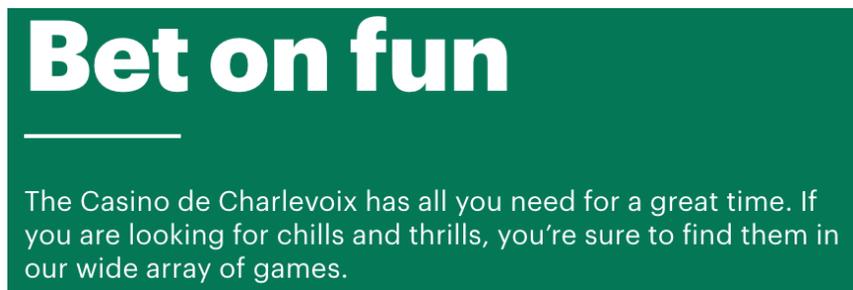
Try your luck on the new Mega Millions Jackpot slot machines. You could win an amazing 5 jackpots, with prizes of €75,000 up to the highest jackpot of at least €1,000,000. Play the new Mega Millions Jackpot slot machines at all branches*. The Mega Millions Jackpot slot machines are available from opening to closing in your favorite casino.

(Figure 12)

5.4 Analysis of Responsible Gambling on Websites: North America

Casino Charlevoix

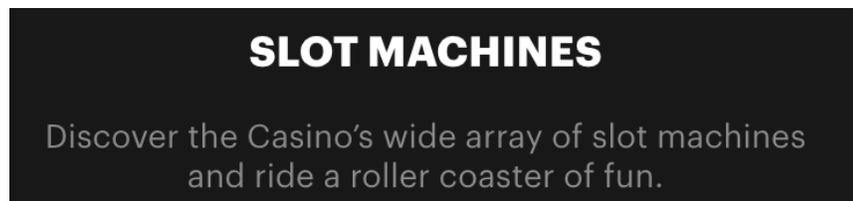
This casino website particularly focuses on the elements of recreation. Most of the ads observed tend to exploit the words such as “chills and thrills”, “adventure” or phrases such as “you’ll experience a whole range of emotions” and “ride a roller coaster of fun” or “a great opportunity to spend good times with friends”. These ads can be seen below (figures 13 to 15).



Bet on fun

The Casino de Charlevoix has all you need for a great time. If you are looking for chills and thrills, you’re sure to find them in our wide array of games.

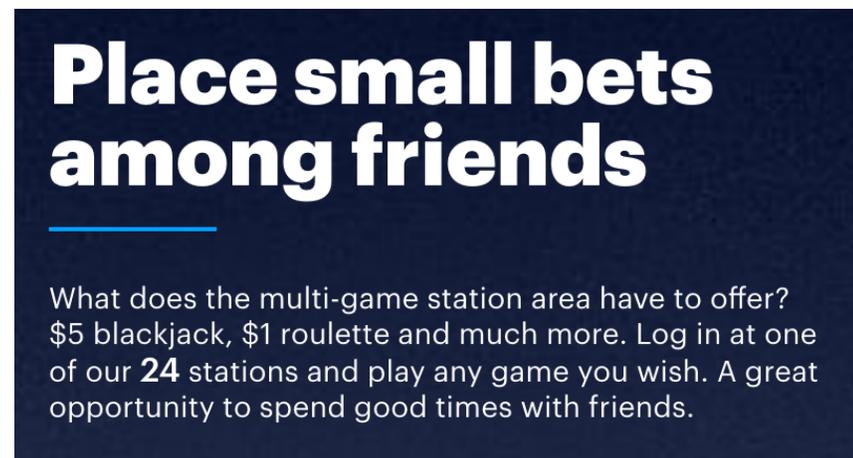
(Figure 13)



SLOT MACHINES

Discover the Casino’s wide array of slot machines and ride a roller coaster of fun.

(Figure 14)



Place small bets among friends

What does the multi-game station area have to offer? \$5 blackjack, \$1 roulette and much more. Log in at one of our **24** stations and play any game you wish. A great opportunity to spend good times with friends.

(Figure 15)

The three examples provided above strongly hint towards recreational approaches towards patron communication. The titles “Bet on fun” and “Place small

bets among friends” all imply that the casino offers a fun and attractive place for entertainment, with less than usual risk as the casino offers games with lower wagers.

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Biloxi

This casino website uses multiple marketing strategies to draw the attention of their readers. The exploitation of the words such as “enjoy, thrill and action” or “leisurely gaming, fun and relaxation” strongly suggest that this casino focuses on the fun and recreational elements.

THE ACTION IS ALWAYS HOT AT HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO BILOXI

Enjoy the thrill of the stakes climbing higher and the windfalls striking like lightning at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Biloxi. From table games to slots, our state-of-the-art casino has it all.

(Figure 16)

However, some elements of mythical characters can be found as well, as one of the ads (fig. 17) uses Lady Luck facilitating a surreal thought process by suggesting them to engage in a conversation with a fictional creature.

ROCK HARD AT THE TABLE GAMES

Ready for some action? Have a talk with Lady Luck and head over to our wide array of happening table games where the action gets better and the wins get bigger. Make it to 21 in a fast-paced game of Black Jack, or roll the dice at the craps table. Take a spin on Roulette, or enjoy a game of Mississippi Stud in the place where it was born. If you're looking for something a little different, spice it up with a game of Baccarat or Pai Gow. Whatever your game, we have 50 tables for you to choose from. So get in the game.

(Figure 17)

On top of this, the website uses a very informative writing style by describing their range of gambling games. It mixes objective information with other categories such as recreation and mythical elements, but also reflect payout suggestions, as one of their ads is a BMW car giveaway (fig. 18). This draws attention to the reader, as the value of this car is relatively high to usual prizes at a giveaway.



(Figure 18)

The casino website continues the use of payout suggestion seen on the figure below. With this ad, the casino promises a share of up to \$1,000,000 “Xtra Credit” to the player. This request to win can also be interpreted as a way of the casino naming the reader a winner, thus suggesting that the reader’s luck is superior to others.

WIN YOUR SHARE OF UP TO \$1,000,000 XTRA CREDIT!

(Figure 19)

Elements of “Availability Heuristic” can also be seen within this casino website. An ad (fig. 20) suggesting propositions such as “your favorite classic slots” and “take a seat, have a drink, and take the slots for a whirl. The next jackpot could be yours” connecting to the reader’s potential memories with a hint of hope and therefore creating a sense of familiarity.

SETTLE IN & HAVE SOME FUN

Cash in and cash out for hours of endless slot machine enjoyment with over 1,200 of your favorite classic slots, newly released slots, video poker and electronic table games. So take a seat, have a drink, and take the slots for a whirl. The next jackpot could be yours.

(Figure 20)

The Golden Gates Casino

In most of their ads, this casino homepage promotes its location as a recreational destination, where the gaming experience is at the top priority. However, it illuminates a style of writing that is extremely direct. The first bullet point “rack up the points & rake in the cash” demonstrates this precisely, as it is giving the reader instructions as if he/she already won.

CASHBACK SUNDAYS

- **RACK UP THE POINTS & RAKE IN THE CASH with 2X cashback!**
- Swipe at the kiosk to receive **5X Points on Sundays** and **8X Points on Thursdays.**
- Then, cash in your points on **SUNDAYS, JULY 2, 16 & 30** for 2X the regular cash back.*
- 10,000 points = \$5

(Figure 21)

Moreover, payout suggestions can be observed throughout the entire website. The rewards are relatively high, going up to a \$1.2 million prize pool per tournament. Furthermore, the casino mentions “life-changing cash at stake” and calls it “serious business” (fig. 22), further amplifying the effect of having a big sum of money as a payout suggestion.

HOME OF THE COLORADO POKER CHAMPIONSHIP

Golden Gates Casino and Poker Parlour is founder and home of the **Colorado Poker Championship**, a tournament that boasts a prize pool of approximately \$500,000. We are also home to the internationally-televised Heartland Poker Tour and its whopping \$1.2 million prize pool per tournament.

With so much life-changing cash at stake, playing here is serious business! Stop by today and throw in your hand for a chance to win big in the tournament of a lifetime.

(Figure 22)

The ad seen below reveals a small hint of the mentioned category “availability heuristic”. The text tries to associate with the reader by suggesting that they have “perfected the ultimate poker face and developed [their] winning strategy”. By attempting to call forth memories from a poker player with at least some experience, he/she gets thrown into a thought process that feels familiar and therefore creates a comfortable connection.



(Figure 23)

The results related to the elements of responsible gambling in various casino websites and their communication with customers will be used in the next chapter for discussion and evaluation. The websites contain diverse sets of ads and promotional offers and they will be analyzed deeply with respect to ethical limitations. The invitation and attractions for websites show their attitude towards gambling.

Chapter 6. Interpretation, Discussion and Prognosis

This chapter deals with the analysis of results obtained from the qualitative study of the casino websites. The analysis and discussion aspects highlighted in this chapter will revolve around two aspects:

- To the extent to which the websites take the responsible behavior into account and the extent of realistic nature of promotional offers and marketing strategies in the light of research questions.
- The planning to keep loyalty programs to an extent that they avoid problem gambling.

6.1 Reflection of Responsible Behavior

From detailed analysis of the gambling websites in North America and Europe, it is revealed that they take responsible behavior and attitudes to some extent, yet with room to improve. Some websites mention that the gambling business is just for fun but rarely mention that gambling must not be taken too seriously to disturb the social life balance. Ethical considerations are met in some of the ads with the exception of some cases that contain invitations for patrons to prioritize gambling over work or similar, as one of the ads states that “we’ve launched a world of less earning, more winning” (Figure 4). The websites provide a lot of opportunities for fun and entertainment for people of all ages (18 years of age and above) and the responsible gambling behavior is reflected in the promotional sense of the messages communicated by these websites to the customers. Some websites even offer a dedicated section for gamblers to inform themselves of responsible gambling and the possible steps to take if one is affected by problem gambling.

The promotional strategy to invite gamblers for playing games is realistic only to a certain extent. In most cases, the ads do not mention things out of the extreme ordinary situations. Even though deals, prizes, and rewards can be high, they tend to stay quite realistic. Some websites include interesting figures to make people believe that they can win money in an effortless way, indicating a less responsible behavior.

The fun and entertainment opportunities are highlighted, which is an attempt to keep players on the ground instead of fantasizing about large sums of money. Rather, websites tend to combine entertainment with superstitious concepts attempting to bring the reader into a surreal way of thinking, making it easy to fall trap to offers proposed by the websites. By exploiting certain words relating to the recreational aspects of gambling, such as “thrilling” or “exciting” and “relaxing”, the expectations of the players are raised to a certain degree of imagination so that players could enjoy thinking about features and chances in gambling. However, this raises the potential danger of letting the mind get lost in an imaginative world, where it is difficult to keep an overview of the individual’s expenses.

A more detailed analysis indicates that only about 25% of the inspected websites show little to no signs of the mentioned problem categories, implying that the communication to the visitor stays on a realistic level. 43% of the websites present at least some categories, whereas 31% tend to have multiple signals of problematic categories. Additionally, the analysis also revealed a difference in communication between the two continents. 12 out of the 33 North American casino websites display more problematic categories as European ones, where only 4 out of 18 websites were classified as such. However, the majority of websites from both, Europe and North America, had at least some ambiguous categories.

The content of ads is often, but not always, chosen in a careful way to promote the game as a leisure activity. The prizes, deals, and packages are oriented towards recreation rather than the serious act of money making, while some websites do tend to advertise themselves with exactly this strategy by showcasing large payout suggestions, such as bulky jackpots. Choosing content for ads is very difficult, as the gaming opportunities are quite wide and diverse. Optimally, the gambling operators have to attract clients for making profit while also preventing them from the negative aspects of the game. As a result, the gambling website operators face a predicament of purposely promoting their services in a manipulated fashion or to show the ethical face of something very risky and uncertain which could lead to severe consequences.

The key concepts used by websites include mythical characters, payouts and other features to keep the players interested and excited in gambling activities. In order to attract more potential patrons and to avoid the pure theme of gambling

business, the side programs of dining, restaurants, drinking, and other miscellaneous offers promote the fun aspects rather than displaying a pure money-making regime. The services and facilities of gambling games are chosen carefully to accompany the games being played by individuals. They offer an attractive incentive to visit the locations and open the possibility for patrons to stay longer. The generalized entertainment opportunities are available for all players and promotional offers, packages, and game plots are suited to newcomers as well as serious gamers. People are attracted towards availing their leisure time in an environment studded with elements of extreme fun and entertainment.

6.2 Controlling Loyalty Programs

One of the more appealing sensations on the gambling websites are the loyalty programs. They refer to the packages and deals available only for the loyal customers. The returning and permanent clients are motivated by exceptional rewards and jackpots. The memberships are awarded to the clients so that they can benefit various chances of enjoyment that are not available to the normal customers. The membership features are made interesting with respect to the winning chances so that the new clients benefit membership features as soon as possible.

The loyalty programs are central to the aim of casinos to earn money through returning customers. They use these customers to maintain a certain database of clients and initiate expansion by running innovative and attractive ads on their websites. The returning clients are the biggest source of revenue for gambling operators and thus, they have to retain them by offering fascinating winning offers, dining, gaming, or drinking opportunities.

The loyalty program of the gambling websites promotes the returning behavior of the customers. However, the true sense of responsibility must also be ensured while launching the loyalty programs. The only problem with these offers seems to be that the returning customers could develop an addiction of gambling games and they eventually move towards the harmful results with respect to social and financial considerations. On one hand, the gambling websites have to promote their business to earn money and raise finance for various activities. For this purpose, they use cost cutting strategies to offer great services in less rates. On the other hand,

the gambling operators have to follow the socio-political rules of keeping the games to the ethical grounds as much as possible. Prevention of illegal gambling is one of the major goals of the CSR in the gambling industry.

The conflict of interest generated by the two facets of situations mentioned above demands careful strategic planning by the gambling websites. They have to take measures to promote their loyalty programs to a certain extent only so that returning customers know their boundaries and limits. The loyal customers must respect the nature and elements of the game and keep the gambling for the sake of fun and enjoyment only. The analysis of the websites in the previous chapter shows that the loyalty programs are chosen logically. They incorporate the packages by focusing on leisure opportunities rather than making money on a serious note. The gambling ideas and plots are carefully chosen to include interesting packages to a relatively responsible extent.

The analysis and interpretation of the results in the light of research questions reveal that the overall responsible behavior of the casino websites is dependent on their promotion strategies through ads. They offer packages and deals for gambling that mostly include money, food, recreation, or holiday leisure opportunities. The plot, content, and ideas of the ads are very important. The strategic management must resolve the conflict of interest for gambling operators so that they generate sufficient revenues without making people falling prey to illegal and irresponsible behavior and attitudes. The awareness about self-control and responsible gambling behaviors should be spread through casino websites and social media forums.

In order to minimize potential harms of addiction and problem gambling, they must be understood clearly. The main reason of addiction in gambling is lack of control and desire of earning money through high risk situations. The responsible behaviors are required in any gambling experience to control the financial and social implications. It is up to the players who have to decide about their personal choices and set boundaries for playing gambling games. If they go beyond their predefined boundaries, they are likely to fall victim to the never-ending addiction of playing with money. Due to being highly accessible, web contents therefore have great potential to remind of the harmful consequences of gambling addiction.

6.3 Limitations and future research

A critical research analysis of gambling websites through their promotional offers and website contents has been conducted, however, categorizing the different problematic associations to problem gambling may be objective to some extent, as these associations can vary from person to person. Additionally, it is not clear to what degree the websites intend to exploit these categories. Furthermore, this study has limited the data samples to the casino websites of North America and Europe. Other regions, such as countries in Asia, where gambling has been part of the culture for a long time, or developing countries in Africa, where gambling tends to have a different image overall, are worth exploring in future research. Since the world seems to be moving towards globalization and digitalization at a rapid rate, gambling businesses have the opportunity to use this for their advantage and approach parts of the world that would otherwise be very difficult to reach. Future investigations could induce responsible behavior in gambling on an international level in which websites take measures to motivate self control beyond national boundaries to set up a uniform approach against gambling addiction. Moreover, it would also be worth scrutinizing the correlation of extent of responsible behavior on casino websites and the number of loyal customers these businesses display.

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Appendix

Casino Websites Used

Europe

Aspers Casino Newcastle

<https://www.aspersnewcastle.co.uk/>

Broadway Casino

<https://www.broadwaycasino.co.uk/>

Casino 36

<https://casino36.co.uk/>

Casino Austria

<https://www.casinos.at/en/casinos-austria>

Casino Bad Ragaz

<https://www.casinoragaz.ch/en.html>

Casino Lisboa

<http://www.casino-lisboa.pt/en/>

Casino Peralada

<https://www.casinoperalada.com/en>

Castle Casino

<http://www.castlecasino.co.uk/>

Empire Casino

<https://www.thecasinosq.com/>

Genting Casino

<https://www.gentingcasino.com/>

Grand Casino Basel

<https://grandcasinobasel.com/>

Hippodrome Casino

<https://www.hippodromecasino.com/>

Holland Casino

<https://www.hollandcasino.nl/de/>

Les Croupiers Casino

<https://www.les-croupiers.co.uk/>

Napoleon's Casinos

<https://www.napoleons-casinos.co.uk/>

Rainbow Casino

<https://rainbowcasino.co.uk/>

The Clermont Club

<http://www.theclermontclub.com/>

Victoria Gate Casino

<https://www.victoriagatecasino.co.uk/>

North America

Agua Caliente Casino

<https://www.hotwatercasino.com/>

Ameristar Casino

<https://www.ameristar.com/>

Aria Casino

<https://www.aria.com/en.html>

Atlantis Casino

<https://www.atlantiscasino.com/>

Bellagio Las Vegas

<https://www.bellagio.com/en.html>

Borgata Casino

<https://www.theborgata.com/casino>

Caesars Palace Las Vegas

<https://www.caesars.com/caesars-palace>

Cascades Casino Kamloops

<http://www.cascadescasinokamloops.com/>

Casino Charlevoix

<http://www.tourisme-charlevoix.com/en/attractions/casino-de-charlevoix/>

Casino Dene

<https://www.casinodene.com/>

Casino Edmonton

<https://www.purecasinoedmonton.com/>

Casino Nanaimo

<https://www.casinonanaimo.com/>

Century Casino Central City

<https://www.cnty.com/central-city/>

Empire City Casino

<https://www.empirecitycasino.com/>

Graton Resort & Casino

<https://www.gratonresortcasino.com/>

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Biloxi

<https://www.hrhcbiloxi.com/>

Isle of Capri Casino Hotel

<https://www.islelakecharles.com/>

Isleta Resort & Casino

<http://www.isleta.com/>

Jack Cincinnati Casino

<https://www.jackentertainment.com/cincinnati/>

Triple Crown Casinos

<https://www.triplecrowncasinos.com/>

Monarch Casino Black Hawk

<http://www.monarchblackhawk.com/>

Mystic Lake Casino

<https://www.mysticlake.com/>

Pechanga Resort Casino

<https://www.pechanga.com/>

Potawatomi Casino

<https://www.paysbig.com/>

Grand Z Casino Hotel

<https://grandzcasinohotel.com/>

Saratoga Casino Black Hawk

<https://www.saratogacasinobh.com/>

Sky Ute Casino

<https://www.skyutecasino.com/>

Stratosphere Casino Hotel

<https://www.stratospherehotel.com/>

The Golden Gates Casino

<https://www.thegoldengatescasino.com/>

The Lodge Casino

<http://thelodgecasino.com/>

The Venetian Casino Las Vegas

<https://www.venetian.com/casino.html>

Valley Forge Casino Resort

<https://www.vfcasino.com/>

Victory Casino Cruises

<https://victorycasinocruises.com/>