

Law Enforcement Against Online Gambling Advertising on Social Media: An Empirical Study of Polres Sidoarjo

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital technology has enabled online gambling operators to exploit social media platforms as primary channels for advertising illegal services, posing significant challenges to law enforcement in Indonesia. This study examines how the Sidoarjo District Police (Polres Sidoarjo) identify and respond to criminal acts involving the promotion of online gambling sites through social media, and what law enforcement measures are applied against perpetrators. Employing an empirical legal research design, primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with the Head of the Special Crime Sub-Unit (Kasubmit Tipiter) of Polresta Sidoarjo, supplemented by secondary data drawn from statutory instruments and academic literature. The findings indicate that Polres Sidoarjo relies primarily on cyber patrol conducted in coordination with the Cybercrime Polda Jatim to detect and flag gambling-related promotional content across major social media platforms. Enforcement, however, is constrained by a structural bifurcation of authority between the police and the Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika (Kominfo), limited digital forensic capacity at the local unit level, and the transnational character of illegal gambling operations. In response to these limitations, the unit has institutionalized weekly community education programs as a demand-side complement to criminal prosecution. These findings confirm and empirically specify prior scholarly conclusions regarding the persistent gap between Indonesia's legal framework on online gambling and its practical enforcement, underscoring the urgency of sustained inter-agency coordination and institutional capacity building at the local policing level.

Keywords: *Cyber Patrol, Law Enforcement, Online Gambling, Social Media Advertising, Sidoarjo Police*

Penegakan Hukum terhadap Iklan Judi Online di Media Sosial: Studi Empiris pada Polres Sidoarjo

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan teknologi digital yang pesat telah membuka peluang bagi pengelola judi online untuk memanfaatkan platform media sosial sebagai sarana utama promosi layanan ilegal, sehingga menimbulkan tantangan serius bagi aparat penegak hukum di Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengkaji cara Kepolisian Resor Sidoarjo (Polres Sidoarjo) dalam mengidentifikasi dan menangani tindak pidana penyebaran iklan situs judi online melalui media sosial, serta upaya penegakan hukum yang diterapkan terhadap pelakunya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan penelitian hukum empiris, data primer diperoleh melalui wawancara semiterstruktur dengan Kepala Subbagian Tindak Pidana Tertentu (Kasubmit Tipiter) Polresta Sidoarjo, yang didukung oleh data sekunder berupa peraturan perundang-undangan dan literatur akademik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Polres Sidoarjo mengandalkan mekanisme patroli siber yang dilaksanakan bekerja sama dengan Cybercrime Polda Jatim untuk mendeteksi dan menandai konten promosi judi online di berbagai platform media sosial. Namun demikian, efektivitas penegakan hukum terhambat oleh pemisahan kewenangan antara kepolisian dan Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika (Kominfo), keterbatasan kapasitas forensik digital di tingkat satuan, serta sifat transnasional dari operasi perjudian ilegal. Sebagai respons atas keterbatasan tersebut, satuan ini telah melembagakan program edukasi masyarakat mingguan sebagai pelengkap sisi permintaan terhadap penuntutan pidana. Temuan ini mengonfirmasi dan mempertegas secara empiris kesimpulan para ahli sebelumnya mengenai kesenjangan yang persisten antara kerangka hukum judi online di Indonesia dan pelaksanaannya, serta menegaskan urgensi koordinasi antarlembaga yang berkelanjutan dan penguatan kapasitas kelembagaan di tingkat kepolisian daerah.

Kata kunci: *Iklan Media Sosial, Judi Online, Kepolisian Sidoarjo, Patroli Siber, Penegakan Hukum*

INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of criminal activity, giving rise to new forms of offenses that transcend physical boundaries.¹ Among these, online gambling has emerged as one of the most pervasive and legally complex phenomena in contemporary Indonesian society.² Unlike conventional gambling, which requires physical presence at a designated venue, online gambling operates through internet-based platforms, enabling participants to engage in wagering activities at any time and from virtually any location using a *smartphone* or computer.³ This technological accessibility has significantly lowered the threshold for participation, thereby widening the demographic reach of gambling activities and intensifying their associated social harms.⁴⁵ In regions such as Sidoarjo, East Java, the proliferation of online gambling has been closely linked to rising rates of financial indebtedness, petty crime, and social disintegration within affected communities.

A particularly concerning dimension of this phenomenon is the role played by social media platforms in facilitating the promotion and distribution of online gambling sites. Operators of illegal gambling services have increasingly turned to platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) to disseminate advertisements and recruit potential users, often employing *influencers* and sponsored content to circumvent regulatory detection.⁶ These promotional campaigns are deliberately constructed to appeal to economically vulnerable segments of the population, offering promises of substantial financial returns in exchange for minimal initial investment. The targeting of lower-income groups through algorithmically curated content has been identified as a key driver of gambling participation among individuals with limited

¹ Naeem AllahRakha, "Transformation of Crimes (Cybercrimes) in Digital Age," *International Journal of Law and Policy* 2, no. 2 (February 25, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.59022/ijlp.156>.

² Adi Fahrudin et al., "Online Gambling Addiction: Problems and Solutions for Policymakers and Stakeholders in Indonesia," *Journal of Infrastructure Policy and Development* 8, no. 11 (October 18, 2024): 9077, <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i11.9077>.

³ Nerilee Hing et al., "How Structural Changes in Online Gambling Are Shaping the Contemporary Experiences and Behaviours of Online Gamblers: An Interview Study," *BMC Public Health* 22, no. 1 (August 26, 2022): 1620, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-14019-6>.

⁴ Michela Ghelfi et al., "Online Gambling: A Systematic Review of Risk and Protective Factors in the Adult Population," *Journal of Gambling Studies* 40, no. 2 (November 14, 2023): 673–99, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-023-10258-3>.

⁵ Agus Nugroho and An An Chandrawulan, "Research Synthesis of Cybercrime Laws and COVID-19 in Indonesia: Lessons for Developed and Developing Countries," *Security Journal* 36, no. 4 (December 11, 2023): 651–70, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-022-00357-y>.

⁶ Johannes Singer, Andrea Wöhr, and Steffen Otterbach, "Gambling Operators' Use of Advertising Strategies on Social Media and Their Effects: A Systematic Review," *Current Addiction Reports* 11, no. 3 (March 15, 2024): 437–46, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40429-024-00560-4>.

financial literacy.⁷⁸ This pattern is consistent with what has been observed in Sidoarjo, where online gambling advertisements continue to circulate widely across multiple social media channels despite existing legal prohibitions.

The Indonesian legal framework expressly prohibits both the conduct and promotion of online gambling. Article 27 paragraph (2) of Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (*Undang-Undang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik* or UU ITE), as most recently amended by Law Number 1 of 2024, criminalizes the intentional distribution, transmission, or facilitation of access to electronic content containing gambling material. Violations of this provision are subject to criminal penalties of up to ten years of imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Rp1,000,000,000 (one billion rupiah) as stipulated under Article 45 paragraph (3) of the same law. Additionally, Article 303 *bis* of the Indonesian Criminal Code (*Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana* or KUHP) provides the foundational prohibition against gambling in any form. Notwithstanding this legislative framework, the practical enforcement of these provisions remains constrained by technological barriers, cross-jurisdictional complications, and the persistent adaptability of illegal operators.⁹¹⁰

Prior studies have addressed the legal and sociological dimensions of online gambling from various angles. Winarsih and Salsabila examined the phenomenon of online gambling addiction in the Probolinggo region, finding that the addictive properties of online platforms, combined with the absence of adequate digital literacy education, contribute significantly to compulsive gambling behaviors among young adults.¹¹ Their study underscored the insufficiency of criminal sanctions alone in addressing the demand side of online gambling, and called for a more comprehensive approach that integrates public education and psychological support services. This finding resonates with broader scholarship indicating that punitive law enforcement, while necessary, is not sufficient to dismantle the structural incentives that drive participation in illegal online gambling.

Complementing this perspective, Nugroho and Chandrawulan conducted a synthesis of Indonesian cybercrime legislation and concluded that the existing legal architecture, including the UU ITE, suffers from implementation deficits attributable to limited technological competency among law enforcement personnel, insufficient

⁷ Singer, Wöhr, and Otterbach.

⁸ Fahrudin et al., "Online Gambling Addiction: Problems and Solutions for Policymakers and Stakeholders in Indonesia."

⁹ Sigid Suseno et al., "Cybercrime in the New Criminal Code in Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2439543>.

¹⁰ Nugroho and Chandrawulan, "Research Synthesis of Cybercrime Laws and COVID-19 in Indonesia: Lessons for Developed and Developing Countries."

¹¹ Nining Winarsih and Sofia Salsabila, "The Phenomenon of Internet Addiction Disorder Online Gambling In Probolinggo," *ENTITA: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 4, no. 2 (December 15, 2022): 183–96, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v4i2.6782>.

inter-agency coordination, and the transnational character of cybercrime networks.¹² Their research highlighted the necessity of building institutional capacity within the police force as a prerequisite for effective cybercrime enforcement, a conclusion that is directly applicable to the policing of online gambling promotion. Together, these studies establish a theoretical foundation for examining not only the legal instruments available to law enforcement but also the institutional and structural conditions that determine whether such instruments are effectively mobilized.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines the efforts of the Sidoarjo District Police (*Polres Sidoarjo*) in addressing criminal acts related to the advertising of online gambling sites through social media platforms. Specifically, this research seeks to analyze two interrelated questions: first, how the police identify and investigate cases involving the dissemination of online gambling site advertisements on social media; and second, what law enforcement actions have been taken against individuals found to have distributed or promoted such content. The significance of this study lies in its empirical grounding, drawing on direct interviews with law enforcement officials at Polres Sidoarjo, and its contribution to the growing body of literature on cybercrime policing in the Indonesian context.

The findings of this study carry both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they contribute to an understanding of how the enforcement of digital criminal law operates at the local institutional level, where resource constraints and jurisdictional limitations shape the boundaries of what is possible. Practically, they offer evidence-based recommendations for strengthening inter-agency cooperation between the police, the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (*Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital*), and other relevant stakeholders in combating the spread of online gambling advertising on social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of gambling as a criminal offense in Indonesia is rooted in a long-established legal tradition. Under Article 303 and Article 303 *bis* of the *Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana* (KUHP), gambling in any form is categorized as a criminal act against public morality, carrying penalties of up to ten years of imprisonment for organizers and four years for participants. According to Stetzka and Winter, gambling constitutes an act of deliberately placing something of value at risk against an uncertain outcome, driven by the hope of disproportionate gain.¹³ This foundational definition

¹² Nugroho and Chandrawulan, “Research Synthesis of Cybercrime Laws and COVID-19 in Indonesia: Lessons for Developed and Developing Countries.”

¹³ Robin Maximilian Stetzka and Stefan Winter, “How Rational Is Gambling?,” *Journal of Economic Surveys* 37, no. 4 (September 13, 2023): 1432–88, <https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12473>.

remains relevant in the digital context, as online gambling retains all essential characteristics of conventional gambling while operating through electronic media. The philosophical basis for criminalizing gambling in Indonesia, rooted in the values of Pancasila and religious morality, continues to underpin contemporary legislative approaches to both offline and online gambling activity.¹⁴ Notably, the Indonesian legal system has consistently treated gambling not merely as a moral transgression but as a structural threat to social order and economic stability, a position reinforced by Law Number 7 of 1974 on Gambling Control, which unambiguously declared all forms of gambling contrary to national interests.¹⁵

The emergence of online gambling as a distinct criminal category necessitated legislative adaptation beyond the KUHP's original scope. Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE), subsequently amended by Law Number 19 of 2016 and again by Law Number 1 of 2024, brought online gambling explicitly within the purview of criminal law. Article 27 paragraph (2) of the UU ITE prohibits the intentional distribution or transmission of electronic content containing gambling material, while Article 45 paragraph (3) prescribes criminal penalties of up to ten years of imprisonment and a fine of up to Rp1,000,000,000 for violations. The successive amendments to the UU ITE reflect an ongoing legislative effort to keep pace with the rapid evolution of digital crime.¹⁶ The dual applicability of the KUHP and the UU ITE to online gambling cases has also produced interpretive challenges in prosecutorial practice, with enforcement authorities frequently defaulting to the older KUHP provisions due to procedural difficulties in applying the UU ITE's evidentiary requirements.¹⁷

The phenomenon of online gambling promotion through social media platforms represents a particularly complex dimension of this legal landscape. Operators of illegal gambling services have developed increasingly sophisticated promotional strategies that exploit the algorithmic architecture of social media platforms to maximize audience reach. A key mechanism in this regard is the use of *influencers* and *social media celebrities* — commonly referred to as *selebgram* on Instagram — to endorse gambling sites in exchange for financial compensation. Nono et al. examined this practice and found that *selebgram* who knowingly promote online gambling sites

¹⁴ Lewiandy Lewiandy et al., “THE PROHIBITION OF ONLINE GAMBLING IN INDONESIA: A LAW AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS,” *Indonesia Law Review* 14, no. 2 (August 31, 2024): 3, <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/ilrev/vol14/iss2/3>.

¹⁵ Davin Gerald Parsaoran Silalahi, Ismunarno, and Diana Lukitasari, “Pengaturan Hukum Positif Di Indonesia Terkait Promosi Judi Online Di Media Sosial,” *Aliansi: Jurnal Hukum, Pendidikan Dan Sosial Humaniora* 1, no. 2 (March 25, 2024): 317–30, <https://doi.org/10.62383/aliansi.v1i2.150>.

¹⁶ Suseno et al., “Cybercrime in the New Criminal Code in Indonesia.”

¹⁷ Hisam Ahyani et al., “Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Online Gambling Practices in Indonesia in Supporting the Achievement of SDGs,” *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review* 5, no. 1 (November 28, 2024): e03686, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n01.pe03686>.

through their accounts are subject to criminal liability under Article 27 paragraph (2) of the UU ITE, as their endorsement activity constitutes intentional distribution of gambling-related electronic content.¹⁸ Their study further demonstrated that the commercial nature of such endorsements, where compensation is exchanged for promotional content, strengthens the prosecutorial basis for establishing criminal intent, a finding that carries direct implications for law enforcement practice in Sidoarjo and beyond.

Complementing this normative analysis, Silalahi et al. conducted a comprehensive review of Indonesian positive law as it pertains to the regulation of online gambling promotion on social media.¹⁹ Their study concluded that while the existing regulatory framework, encompassing the UU ITE, the KUHP, and related ministerial regulations, is in principle sufficient to address online gambling promotion, its implementation is severely undermined by structural and institutional deficiencies. These include the limited capacity of local police units to conduct independent digital investigations, the absence of real-time coordination mechanisms between the police and the *Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika* (Kominfo), and the low rate of successful prosecution relative to the volume of reported violations. Ahyani et al. in their study evaluating law enforcement effectiveness against online gambling through the lens of Sustainable Development Goals, further corroborated these findings by demonstrating that existing enforcement strategies — centered on account freezing, illegal transaction blocking, and platform takedowns — remain insufficient without sustained inter-institutional cooperation between law enforcement agencies and digital regulators.²⁰ The authors emphasized that effective enforcement requires not only legal instruments but also sustained institutional investment in digital forensic capabilities and cross-agency coordination.

Taken together, the reviewed literature establishes a coherent theoretical framework for understanding the problem addressed in the present study. The criminalization of online gambling and its promotion is legally well-grounded in Indonesian law, yet the translation of these legal norms into effective enforcement practice remains problematic. Lewiandy et al. have additionally demonstrated through a law and economics analysis that the persistence of illegal online gambling in Indonesia generates significant negative externalities, including black markets, lost state revenues, and social welfare costs, all of which underscore the urgency of

¹⁸ Ignasius Yosanda Nono, Anak Agung Sagung Laksmi Dewi, and I Putu Gede Seputra, “Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Selebgram Yang Mempromosikan Situs Judi Online,” *Jurnal Analogi Hukum* 3, no. 2 (September 30, 2021): 235–39, <https://doi.org/10.22225/ah.3.2.2021.235-239>.

¹⁹ Silalahi, Ismunarno, and Lukitasari, “Pengaturan Hukum Positif Di Indonesia Terkait Promosi Judi Online Di Media Sosial.”

²⁰ Ahyani et al., “Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Online Gambling Practices in Indonesia in Supporting the Achievement of SDGs.”

strengthening law enforcement at all institutional levels.²¹ The persistence of online gambling advertising on social media, despite prohibitory legislation, reflects a structural gap between legal formulation and institutional capacity that existing scholarship has consistently identified but not yet fully resolved at the local law enforcement level. This study seeks to contribute to that gap by examining, through empirical means, how Polres Sidoarjo operationalizes its legal mandate in practice, and what barriers it encounters in doing so.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs an empirical legal research design, a methodological approach that situates law not as an abstract normative system but as a living social phenomenon shaped by the practices of real institutions and communities.²²²³ This approach departs from purely doctrinal legal research methods by drawing on field-based data as the primary evidentiary foundation, making it particularly well-suited to studies of criminal law enforcement where the distance between statutory prescription and institutional practice is frequently significant.

Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with Mr. Ipda Bambang Edy, Head of the Special Crime Sub-Unit (*Kasubmit Tipiter*) of Polresta Sidoarjo, conducted in February 2024. The decision to employ semi-structured expert interviews reflects a deliberate methodological choice to capture the practice-based knowledge of law enforcement professionals that is not readily accessible through documentary sources alone.²⁴ Secondary data were gathered through a systematic review of relevant statutory instruments and academic literature, including Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions as amended by Law Number 1 of 2024, Article 303 and Article 303 *bis* of the KUHP, and *Peraturan Kapolri* Number 12 of 2014. The integration of primary interview data with secondary documentary sources follows a triangulation logic, which enhances the validity and depth of findings by cross-referencing institutional accounts with independently gathered material.

²¹ Lewiandy et al., “THE PROHIBITION OF ONLINE GAMBLING IN INDONESIA: A LAW AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.”

²² Agus Budianto, “Legal Research Methodology Reposition in Research on Social Science,” *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology* 9 (April 5, 2022): 1339–46, <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.154>.

²³ Dr. Suyanto Suyanto, *Metode Penelitian Hukum Pengantar Penelitian Normatif, Empiris Dan Gabungan* (Gresik: Unigress Press, 2022).

²⁴ Stefanie Döringer, “‘The Problem-Centred Expert Interview’. Combining Qualitative Interviewing Approaches for Investigating Implicit Expert Knowledge,” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 24, no. 3 (May 4, 2021): 265–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1766777>.

The research site was purposively selected as Polres Sidoarjo, East Java, driven by the documented prevalence of online gambling and social media-based advertising in the region, as well as the institutional accessibility of its officials. Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method, involving systematic coding and thematic organization of interview transcripts alongside analytical review of statutory sources. This approach seeks to identify the substantive content of enforcement practices, the institutional constraints that shape them, and the normative implications arising from the gap between legal prescription and practical application.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Police Identification and Investigation of Online Gambling Advertising on Social Media

The enforcement of criminal law against online gambling advertising in Indonesia operates within a layered institutional structure, in which local police units such as Polres Sidoarjo function as the frontline of detection and investigation, while technical enforcement actions such as site blocking remain within the exclusive authority of higher-level agencies. Based on interviews conducted with Mr. Ipda Bambang Edy, Head of the Special Crime Sub-Unit (*Kasubmit Tipiter*) of Polresta Sidoarjo, the primary investigative mechanism deployed by the unit is *cyber patrol*, a structured digital monitoring activity carried out in coordination with the Cybercrime Unit of the East Java Regional Police (*Cybercrime Polda Jatim*). Through this mechanism, designated personnel actively scan social media platforms for accounts and content containing indicators of online gambling promotion, including embedded referral links, bonus scheme advertisements, and direct endorsements by *influencers*. The objective of *cyber patrol* is not merely reactive but preventive, aimed at detecting and flagging illicit content before it achieves broad audience penetration.²⁵

The operational scope of *cyber patrol* encompasses all major social media platforms currently active in Indonesia, including Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X. Monitoring activities are conducted on a scheduled basis, with findings reported through internal coordination channels to the *Cybercrime Polda Jatim* for further technical assessment. Where an account or piece of content is confirmed to contain gambling-related promotional material, the unit initiates a preliminary investigation procedure involving the documentation of digital evidence, identification of the responsible account holder, and assessment of criminal intent pursuant to Article 27 paragraph (2) of the UU ITE. The evidentiary threshold for criminal prosecution under

²⁵ Jumriani Nawawi et al., “The Law Enforcement Related to Cyber Crime by Involving the Role of the Cyber Patrol Society in Achieving Justice,” *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum Dan Keadilan* 11, no. 3 (December 26, 2023): 437–47, <https://doi.org/10.29303/ius.v11i3.1289>.

the UU ITE requires demonstrating that the act of distribution or transmission was carried out intentionally and without legal authorization, conditions that are frequently difficult to establish when promotional content is attributed to third-party *influencers* acting under informal contractual arrangements with gambling operators.²⁶ In practice, the unit reported that a significant proportion of identified cases are resolved through administrative warnings and content takedown requests coordinated with platform providers, rather than through full criminal prosecution.

Inter-Agency Cooperation and Institutional Constraints

A consistent finding emerging from the interview data is that effective enforcement against online gambling advertising is structurally dependent on inter-agency coordination, particularly between the police and the *Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika* (Kominfo). According to Kalele and Israhadi, the authority to block gambling-related websites and social media accounts rests exclusively with Kominfo, placing the police in a position where their capacity to respond operationally is contingent on the timeliness and responsiveness of a separate governmental body.²⁷ This structural bifurcation between detection authority held by the police and blocking authority held by Kominfo creates an operational lag that allows flagged content to remain accessible for extended periods following its initial identification. *Peraturan Kapolri* Number 12 of 2014 on community policing provides a normative basis for inter-agency coordination through mechanisms including intensive two-way communication, constructive partnerships, and direct community engagement, but the translation of these principles into real-time coordination with digital regulatory agencies remains inconsistent in practice.

Beyond inter-agency coordination, the interviews revealed a pattern of resource constraints at the local unit level that limits the scale and sophistication of *cyber patrol* operations. Polres Sidoarjo's Special Crime Sub-Unit operates with a personnel complement and technological infrastructure that was not originally designed to address the volume and complexity of digital criminal activity now encountered on social media platforms. The rapid proliferation of online gambling advertising, driven in part by the ease with which new accounts can be created following takedowns, routinely outpaces the unit's monitoring capacity. This asymmetry between enforcement resources and the scale of the problem is compounded by the transnational dimension of many gambling operations, where website operators and financial

²⁶ Ahyani et al., "Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Online Gambling Practices in Indonesia in Supporting the Achievement of SDGs."

²⁷ Verdy Hengky Kalele and Evita Isretno Israhadi, "Optimization of Police Authority as Gatekeepers in the Prevention and Eradication of Gambling Crimes," *Journal of World Science* 3, no. 12 (December 15, 2024): 1618–26, <https://doi.org/10.58344/jws.v3i12.1246>.

networks are headquartered outside Indonesian jurisdiction and are therefore beyond the reach of local enforcement action.²⁸ The net effect is that enforcement at the local level functions primarily as a demand-side intervention targeting Indonesian-based promoters and *influencers*, while the supply-side infrastructure of illegal gambling remains largely intact.

Community Education as a Complementary Enforcement Strategy

Recognizing the limitations of purely punitive enforcement, Polres Sidoarjo has developed a complementary strategy centered on community education and public awareness. According to the interview, the unit conducts regular weekly socialization activities directed at residential communities, schools, and local organizations, with the aim of building public understanding of the legal risks associated with online gambling participation and promotion. These activities are framed explicitly around the criminal liability provisions of the UU ITE and the KUHP, informing participants not only of the dangers of gambling addiction but also of the legal consequences of sharing, endorsing, or otherwise facilitating the spread of gambling site advertisements on personal social media accounts. The unit also maintains an online public reporting channel through which community members can submit information about suspected gambling-related content, functioning as a crowdsourced extension of the *cyber patrol* system.²⁹ Targeted warnings have additionally been issued to *influencers* who are found to have promoted gambling content through their personal accounts, signaling that criminal liability extends to endorsers and not solely to platform operators.

The empirical findings of this study are broadly consonant with the conclusions drawn by Silalahi et al. and Ahyani et al. in the Introduction, both of whom identified structural enforcement gaps as the principal obstacle to effective suppression of online gambling promotion in Indonesia.^{30,31} The experience of Polres Sidoarjo confirms that local police units operate within precisely the kind of institutional environment described by these authors, one where the legal basis for enforcement is clear but the institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, and jurisdictional reach required to act on that basis are systematically limited. The present study thus contributes empirical specificity to a conclusion that prior scholarship had largely reached through normative

²⁸ Lewiandy et al., “THE PROHIBITION OF ONLINE GAMBLING IN INDONESIA: A LAW AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.”

²⁹ Nawawi et al., “The Law Enforcement Related to Cyber Crime by Involving the Role of the Cyber Patrol Society in Achieving Justice.”

³⁰ Silalahi, Ismunarno, and Lukitasari, “Pengaturan Hukum Positif Di Indonesia Terkait Promosi Judi Online Di Media Sosial.”

³¹ Ahyani et al., “Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Online Gambling Practices in Indonesia in Supporting the Achievement of SDGs.”

and doctrinal analysis, grounding that general diagnosis in the concrete operational realities of a specific law enforcement institution.

Where this study adds a dimension not fully developed in earlier literature is in its documentation of community education as an institutionalized component of the enforcement strategy. Ghelfi et al. and Singer et al., cited in the Introduction, demonstrated that demand-side factors including limited financial literacy and susceptibility to algorithmically targeted advertising are primary drivers of online gambling participation.³²³³ The community education activities undertaken by Polres Sidoarjo represent a practical, if modest, attempt to address precisely these demand-side vulnerabilities through targeted public awareness interventions. While the effectiveness of these activities was not formally evaluated as part of the present study, their existence signals a growing institutional recognition at the local policing level that purely reactive criminal enforcement, without a corresponding investment in prevention and education, is insufficient to achieve meaningful long-term reduction in online gambling activity and its associated social harms.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the efforts of Polres Sidoarjo in addressing the criminal promotion of online gambling through social media platforms, with findings drawn from empirical interview data and secondary legal sources. The investigation reveals that while the Indonesian legal framework, encompassing Article 27 paragraph (2) and Article 45 paragraph (3) of the UU ITE alongside Article 303 *bis* of the KUHP, provides a sufficiently robust normative basis for criminalizing online gambling advertising, its practical enforcement at the local institutional level remains considerably constrained. The primary mechanisms deployed by Polres Sidoarjo, namely *cyber patrol* in coordination with *Cybercrime Polda Jatim* and regular community education sessions, represent meaningful institutional responses to the problem, yet their effectiveness is structurally limited by the bifurcation of detection and blocking authority between the police and Kominfo, insufficient digital forensic resources at the unit level, and the transnational character of gambling operations that places the supply-side infrastructure beyond local jurisdictional reach.

These findings carry implications that extend beyond the Sidoarjo context. The structural conditions documented in this study, including the gap between legal prescription and enforcement capacity, the dependence on inter-agency coordination as a prerequisite for operational effectiveness, and the recognition that demand-side

³² Ghelfi et al., “Online Gambling: A Systematic Review of Risk and Protective Factors in the Adult Population.”

³³ Singer, Wöhr, and Otterbach, “Gambling Operators’ Use of Advertising Strategies on Social Media and Their Effects: A Systematic Review.”

interventions through public education are necessary complements to criminal prosecution, are likely characteristic of local police units across Indonesia confronting comparable cybercrime challenges. Strengthening the enforcement of online gambling prohibitions therefore requires not only a reaffirmation of legislative intent but sustained institutional investment in digital forensic infrastructure, formalized real-time coordination mechanisms between the police and Kominfo, and the integration of community education into standard policing protocols as a recognized and resourced enforcement activity rather than a supplementary one.

Future research should extend the empirical scope of this inquiry by examining enforcement practices across multiple police jurisdictions in Indonesia, enabling comparative analysis of institutional variation and the identification of best practices that may be transferable across contexts. Quantitative assessments of the relationship between *cyber patrol* intensity, inter-agency coordination quality, and online gambling prevalence would also contribute valuable evidence to inform evidence-based policy development in this area. As digital platforms continue to evolve and online gambling operators develop increasingly sophisticated circumvention strategies, the adaptive capacity of law enforcement institutions will remain a critical determinant of whether Indonesia's legal prohibitions on online gambling promotion translate into meaningful social outcomes.

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