

## The Public Communication Campaign Strategy of The Ministry of Communication and Digital in Combating Online Gambling in Indonesia

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**Abstrak.** Online gambling is a growing social problem in the digital era, negatively impacting society. The Ministry of Communication and Digital (Kemkomdigi) plays a significant role in addressing this issue through public communication campaigns. This study aims to analyze the campaign strategies implemented by Kemkomdigi, the planning processes involved, and the challenges faced. A qualitative research method was employed, with in-depth interviews conducted with informants from Kemkomdigi, the public, and communication experts. The findings indicate that collaboration with various stakeholders and the implementation of appropriate campaign strategies are key to combating online gambling. The study reveals that while multi-channel communication approaches have proven effective in raising public awareness, challenges related to disinformation, limited digital literacy in rural areas, and budget constraints continue to hinder the overall effectiveness of the campaigns. These findings have significant implications for developing more targeted, data-driven, and adaptive public communication strategies to address social issues in the digital era. It is recommended that Kemkomdigi continue to strengthen digital literacy and engage the community in eradicating online gambling through more operational and measurable program designs.

**Keywords:** Campaign; Online Gambling Prevention; Public Communication; Ministry of Communication; Digital

### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of online gambling in Indonesia has shown a significant increase and requires serious attention, particularly alongside the rapid development of digital technology that facilitates easier access to gambling practices. Reports from the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK) indicate that the value of online gambling transactions reached IDR 327 trillion in 2023, with cumulative transactions since 2017 amounting to IDR 517 trillion. This sharp rise reflects a substantial escalation in online gambling activities, which not only harm individuals but also pose serious threats to social and economic stability within society (Kolandai-Matchett & Abbott, 2021; Langham et al., 2015; Mykhailov, 2024; Wardle et al., 2021).

Online gambling generates complex and multidimensional impacts, including unemployment, addiction, and various forms of criminal activity, leading to growing public concern. The spread of online gambling affects all layers of society, including children, who have become increasingly vulnerable targets (Igomu et al., 2024). Published data reveal that approximately 80,000 children under the age of ten have been exposed to online gambling activities. The negative consequences—ranging from economic losses to psychological effects such as stress and depression—underscore the urgent need for more effective prevention efforts (Galea et al., 2020; Nie et al., 2024; Shern et al., 2016).

In the global context, online gambling has emerged as a transnational issue that

governments across multiple countries have sought to address through regulatory and communicative interventions. The World Health Organization (2019) has classified gambling addiction as a behavioral disorder, while the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021) has identified online gambling as one of the key facilitators of cybercrime networks in the Asia-Pacific region. In the Southeast Asian context, countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand have implemented varying approaches—from outright prohibition to regulated frameworks—in combating the proliferation of online gambling (Intansari et al., 2024). Indonesia, with its prohibition-based legal stance under Law No. 7/1999 and Law No. 11/2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, occupies a unique position in which public communication campaigns serve as a critical complement to legal enforcement.

Research on public communication campaigns in the context of social issues has been examined from multiple perspectives. Gregory (2018) provided a foundational framework for understanding the planning and management of public relations campaigns, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning, audience segmentation, and message adaptation in campaign design. Ademolu (2022), Zhao (2020) dan Ballantyne (2016), further elaborated on communication theory from multiple perspectives, underscoring the role of constructivist approaches in understanding how audiences interpret and respond to communicative messages. Reese (2017) explored the multidimensional nature of communication, arguing that effective public communication requires an integrated understanding of the social, cultural, and technological contexts in which messages are disseminated.

In the specific domain of online gambling prevention, Asriadi (2020) conducted a case study on online gambling addiction among students in Maros Regency, finding that a lack of digital literacy and awareness among young people constituted a primary vulnerability factor. Intansari et al. (2024) examined the role of digital literacy extension programs in eradicating online gambling practices and concluded that community-based approaches combined with digital education were more effective than top-down communication strategies alone. However, these studies have focused primarily on individual vulnerability factors or community-level interventions, without comprehensively examining the institutional campaign strategies employed by the government at the national level (Costa et al., 2022; Park et al., 2020; Seddiky et al., 2020).

A notable gap in the existing literature concerns the analysis of the Ministry of Communication and Digital's campaign strategies as an integrated communicative phenomenon. While studies on government communication campaigns in Indonesia have addressed health communication (e.g., during the COVID-19 pandemic) and environmental awareness, the specific domain of online gambling prevention has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. Furthermore, the interplay between multi-stakeholder collaboration, digital platform utilization, and campaign effectiveness in the Indonesian regulatory context remains insufficiently explored. This study seeks to address these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of Kemkomdigi's campaign strategies, planning processes, and the challenges encountered during implementation.

In response to this issue, the Ministry of Communication and Digital has implemented various public communication campaigns aimed at enhancing digital literacy and raising public awareness of the dangers of online gambling. Through a series of social initiatives, the Ministry seeks to achieve preventive objectives and strengthen public consciousness regarding the risks

associated with online gambling. However, questions remain regarding the effectiveness of these strategies and the challenges encountered during their implementation.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of public communication campaign strategies employed by the Ministry of Communication and Digital in addressing online gambling, as well as to examine the challenges faced in executing these campaigns. Academically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of communication studies, particularly in the context of issue-focused public communication campaigns. Practically, the findings are anticipated to provide concrete recommendations for policymakers and related institutions to formulate more effective communication strategies and policies, while also fostering greater public awareness and participation in combating online gambling.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative research method to obtain an in-depth understanding of the public communication campaign strategies implemented by the Ministry of Communication and Digital (Kemkomdigi) in addressing online gambling. The research adopts a constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as constructed through human interaction and interpretation. In this paradigm, the researcher serves as the primary research instrument, responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data. The constructivist approach is particularly appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to explore how campaign messages are constructed by institutional actors and interpreted by various audience segments, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the communicative dynamics at play.

### **Informant Selection and Sampling**

Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on predefined criteria relevant to the research objectives. The total number of informants involved in this study was 12, distributed as follows:

**Table 1.** Informant Selection and Sampling

<b>Category of Informant</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Selection Criteria</b>
<b>Ministry of Communication and Digital Officials</b>	4	Directly involved in campaign planning and implementation
<b>Community Members</b>	5	Individuals who have been exposed to or affected by online gambling issues
<b>Communication Experts</b>	3	Academics or practitioners with expertise in public communication campaigns

The selection of officials from Kemkomdigi was based on their direct involvement in the design, coordination, and execution of anti-online-gambling communication campaigns. Community members were selected to represent diverse demographic segments, including urban and rural populations, as well as different age groups, to capture a broad range of perspectives. Communication experts were included to provide critical analytical insights into the effectiveness and design of campaign strategies. This triangulation of informant categories ensures the credibility and comprehensiveness of the data collected.

## **Data Collection**

Data were collected through structured and semi-structured interviews to ensure both consistency and flexibility in exploring the research issues. Structured interviews were conducted with officials from the Ministry of Communication and Digital (Kemkomdigi) to obtain systematic information regarding campaign planning processes, objectives, and implementation timelines. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with community members and communication experts to allow for a deeper exploration of their perceptions, experiences, and critical assessments. Each interview was recorded with the informed consent of the participants and subsequently transcribed for analysis. This approach enabled the researcher to capture diverse perspectives related to campaign planning, implementation, and public response.

In addition to interviews, documentary data were also collected, including official campaign materials, press releases, social media content, and policy documents issued by Kemkomdigi. These documents served as supplementary data sources to triangulate and contextualize the information obtained through interviews.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, which involves the following sequential steps: (1) data reduction — the process of summarizing and condensing raw data into concise and focused notes that capture the core meaning; (2) data display — the organization of reduced data into structured matrices or narratives to facilitate pattern identification; and (3) drawing conclusions — the interpretation and validation of patterns and themes identified through the analysis process. Themes were identified inductively from the data, guided by the research questions. Key themes that emerged included campaign strategy design, stakeholder collaboration, challenges in implementation, and public response to campaign messages. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from multiple sources and perspectives. This process helps validate the data and strengthens the reliability of the research results.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Campaign Strategy**

The Ministry of Communication and Digital implements various strategies in its public communication campaigns to address online gambling. These strategies include socialization activities through social media platforms as well as face-to-face forums, both designed to increase public awareness of the dangers of online gambling. Through the “Together Stop Online Gambling” campaign, the Ministry has successfully reached diverse audience segments, ranging from young people and parents to educators and community leaders. The use of multiple communication channels enables the campaign to disseminate messages more broadly and adapt them to different audience characteristics.

From a theoretical perspective, the multi-channel approach adopted by Kemkomdigi is consistent with the integrated communication model proposed by Liliweri (2011), which emphasizes the necessity of utilizing diverse communicative channels to maximize reach and effectiveness across heterogeneous audiences. The campaign's reliance on both digital platforms—particularly social media—and traditional face-to-face forums reflects an

understanding that different audience segments respond to different communicative modalities. Social media platforms, in particular, serve a dual function: they enable rapid and widespread dissemination of campaign messages while also facilitating interactive engagement with younger demographics, who are more vulnerable to online gambling exposure (Intansari et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the “Together Stop Online Gambling” campaign demonstrates the application of a participatory communication framework, in which the target audience is not positioned merely as passive recipients of information but as active participants in achieving the campaign's objectives. This approach aligns with the constructivist paradigm adopted in this study, as it acknowledges that public understanding of online gambling risks is shaped through interactive processes of meaning-making between institutional actors and community members (Suciati, 2017). The involvement of community leaders, educators, and parents as campaign intermediaries further strengthens the credibility and resonance of the campaign messages within their respective social spheres.

### **Stakeholder Collaboration**

A key finding of this study concerns the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in enhancing campaign effectiveness. Interviews with Ministry officials revealed that Kemkomdigi has collaborated with a range of partners, including law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and digital platform providers, in designing and implementing anti-online-gambling initiatives. This collaborative approach is significant because online gambling is a multidimensional issue that cannot be effectively addressed through communication campaigns alone; it requires coordinated efforts spanning regulatory enforcement, technological intervention, education, and public awareness.

Gregory (2018) emphasized that the success of public communication campaigns is contingent upon the establishment of strategic partnerships that amplify the campaign's reach, credibility, and sustainability. In the context of this study, stakeholder collaboration has manifested in several concrete forms, including the co-development of educational materials with academic institutions, the coordination of platform-level content moderation with digital service providers, and the integration of campaign messaging into school curricula and community programs. These collaborative efforts have been instrumental in extending the campaign's impact beyond the immediate reach of Kemkomdigi's own communication channels.

### **Challenges Faced**

Despite the positive outcomes achieved, significant challenges remain. The widespread circulation of disinformation on social media and the delayed public awareness regarding the risks of online gambling continue to pose major obstacles. In addition, budget limitations affect the scope, intensity, and sustainability of the campaign initiatives, ultimately influencing their overall effectiveness.

These challenges can be analyzed through several theoretical and practical lenses. First, the issue of disinformation reflects a broader phenomenon within the digital information ecosystem, wherein the speed and scale of social media dissemination make it difficult for institutional actors to maintain narrative control (Suciati, 2017). Online gambling operators and affiliated networks actively exploit social media platforms to promote their activities, thereby creating a competitive informational landscape in which Kemkomdigi's campaign messages

must contend with well-resourced counter-narratives. This dynamic underscores the need for more adaptive and responsive communication strategies, including real-time monitoring of social media discourse and rapid counter-messaging mechanisms.

Second, the disparity in digital literacy levels across different regions and demographics constitutes a structural barrier to campaign effectiveness. Discussions with key informants confirm that efforts to improve accessibility to accurate information about online gambling must be continuously strengthened, particularly in rural areas where digital literacy levels remain relatively low. Asriadi (2020) similarly identified limited digital literacy as a primary vulnerability factor among young people, suggesting that literacy-enhancement programs must be integrated as a foundational component of any comprehensive anti-online-gambling strategy.

Third, budget constraints represent a systemic challenge that affects not only the scale and intensity of campaign activities but also the capacity for sustained long-term engagement. This study indicates that a data-driven approach to designing and implementing public communication campaigns would enhance their effectiveness, as it allows strategies to be tailored more precisely to audience needs, risk profiles, and regional contexts. The application of big data analytics and social media sentiment analysis, for instance, could enable Kemkomdigi to allocate resources more efficiently and design campaigns that are more responsive to evolving public perceptions and behaviors.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study reveals that the public communication campaign strategies implemented by the Ministry of Communication and Digital (Kemkomdigi) in addressing online gambling have achieved several positive outcomes, including the successful dissemination of awareness messages across diverse audience segments through multi-channel approaches and participatory engagement. Collaboration among various institutions and active public participation have emerged as key factors in enhancing campaign effectiveness. However, the study also identifies significant challenges, including the proliferation of disinformation on social media, disparities in digital literacy across regions, and budget constraints that limit the scope and sustainability of campaign initiatives. To address these challenges, it is recommended that Kemkomdigi adopt the following operational and measurable strategies: (1) develop and implement a real-time social media monitoring and counter-messaging system to combat disinformation, with measurable targets for reducing the dissemination rate of pro-gambling content within a defined timeframe; (2) design and roll out region-specific digital literacy programs in rural and low-literacy areas, with clear indicators of participation rates and knowledge improvement outcomes; (3) adopt a data-driven campaign planning framework utilizing audience analytics and behavioral data to inform resource allocation and message customization; and (4) establish formal inter-agency collaboration protocols to ensure sustained coordination among law enforcement bodies, educational institutions, and digital platform providers. Looking forward, continuous improvement in digital literacy and greater use of adaptive communication platforms are essential to ensure that campaign messages reach all segments of society effectively.

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