



**PUBLIC OFFICIALS' ACTIONS ON ONLINE GAMBLING AMONG
THEIR EMPLOYEES: BASIS FOR WORKPLACE POLICY
DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the actions of public officials regarding online gambling among their employees as a basis for workplace policy development. It specifically explored their experiences, the actions they employ, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they adopt in addressing the issue. A qualitative research design was used, involving ten (10) selected public officials. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that online gambling exists in the workplace but remains discreet and difficult to detect, often observed through indicators such as frequent mobile phone use and decreased productivity. Public officials primarily rely on informal and supervisory-based actions, including verbal reminders, monitoring, and reinforcement of workplace rules. However, these approaches are limited by the absence of specific policies and the challenges associated with monitoring due to privacy concerns. The study underscores the need for comprehensive and policy-driven approaches to effectively address online gambling in government workplaces.

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Keywords: *Online Gambling, Public Officials, Workplace Policy, Employee Behavior, Government Workplace*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has transformed the way people interact, conduct business, and access digital services. In recent years, internet connectivity, mobile applications, and online financial systems have become deeply integrated into everyday life, offering convenience in communication, commerce, and entertainment. However, alongside these developments, certain digital activities have emerged that raise social and administrative concerns, one of which is online gambling.

Online gambling refers to gambling activities conducted through internet-based platforms where individuals can place bets, play games of chance, and participate in wagering activities using mobile phones, computers, or other digital devices. The easy accessibility of online gambling platforms has increased participation across different sectors of society because such platforms operate continuously and often allow anonymous transactions through electronic payment systems. This accessibility has made online gambling a growing concern not only in households and communities but also within workplaces.

In the context of Public Administration, government institutions are expected to uphold ethical standards, accountability, discipline, and professionalism among employees because public service requires trust, integrity, and responsible conduct. Government employees are entrusted with duties that directly affect public welfare, and their behavior inside and outside

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the workplace may influence institutional credibility. For this reason, any emerging activity that may affect employee focus, productivity, attendance, financial stability, or professional judgment becomes an important governance concern.

The rise of online gambling presents a new challenge to workplace administration because digital gambling can be accessed discreetly through personal mobile devices even during working hours. Unlike traditional gambling activities that are physically visible, online gambling may be difficult to detect because employees can engage in such activities privately through smartphones, tablets, or computers connected to internet services. This creates a challenge for supervisors and administrators who are responsible for maintaining discipline and ensuring efficient delivery of public services.

Management concerns regarding online gambling go beyond simple rule violations. Prolonged engagement in gambling activities may influence employee concentration, decision-making, emotional stability, and financial responsibility. Employees experiencing gambling-related financial pressure may also become vulnerable to absenteeism, reduced performance, workplace distraction, and possible ethical risks. Because government institutions function within systems of accountability, even emerging digital habits that affect employee performance require administrative attention.

At present, many institutional policies focus broadly on employee discipline, conduct, and misuse of office time, yet specific policy provisions addressing online gambling remain limited in many public organizations. General administrative rules may prohibit activities unrelated to official duties during working hours, but digital gambling presents a more complex

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policy issue because it involves personal behavior, digital privacy, technological access, and workplace regulation. This creates uncertainty for management when determining how to identify, address, and regulate such behavior within acceptable administrative boundaries.

High-ranking officials such as department heads, division chiefs, administrative officers, and human resource managers occupy an important position in addressing workplace concerns because they directly supervise personnel, interpret institutional policies, and recommend interventions when disciplinary issues arise. Their perspectives are valuable because they represent leadership experience in balancing employee welfare, discipline, and institutional accountability.

Despite the growing relevance of online gambling in contemporary society, limited studies have focused on its implications within government workplaces, particularly from the perspective of senior management. Most available discussions focus on gambling as a social or personal issue, while fewer studies examine how public institutions respond to the issue as a matter of governance and policy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in the study, including the research design, research method, participants of the study, sampling design and technique, research instrument, validity of the instrument, data gathering procedures, and data analysis.

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The study utilized a qualitative descriptive design to explore the experiences of high-ranking management officials regarding online gambling among employees in selected public institutions in Iloilo City. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who have relevant supervisory and policy-related experience.

Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes. The methodology ensured that the data gathered were relevant, credible, and aligned with the objectives of the study, providing a solid foundation for the presentation and interpretation of findings in the succeeding chapter.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the experiences of high-ranking management officials regarding online gambling among employees within selected public institutions in Iloilo City.

A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives, observations, and governance practices within their organizational context.

According to John W. Creswell (2014), qualitative research is suitable for examining complex social phenomena that cannot be easily quantified. The design enabled the researcher to capture institutional insights, management responses, and policy-related considerations rather than numerical data.

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Research Method

The study utilized a qualitative method focusing on narrative data obtained from participants through open-ended responses. This method allowed the researcher to gather rich, detailed descriptions of management experiences, observations, and actions related to online gambling among employees. The approach emphasized understanding meanings, interpretations, and institutional practices from the perspective of management officials, making it appropriate for exploring governance-related issues in the workplace.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of ten high-ranking management officials from selected public institutions in Iloilo City. These included three department heads, three division chiefs, two administrative officers, and two human resource personnel who have supervisory authority and policy-related experience. These participants were selected because of their direct involvement in employee supervision, policy implementation, and decision-making processes.

The study focused solely on the experiences and perspectives of management officials. It did not directly investigate the personal gambling behaviors of employees but instead examined management observations, institutional concerns, and governance responses related to online gambling in the workplace.

Sampling Design and Technique

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research problem. Purposive sampling is appropriate

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in qualitative research as it allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals who can provide meaningful and information-rich data (Palinkas et al., 2015). The selected participants were those holding supervisory and administrative roles, ensuring that they have firsthand experience in managing employees and addressing workplace issues.

Research Instrument

The primary data gathering tool used in this study was an open-ended questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was designed to collect in-depth information from management officials regarding their observations, actions, and existing workplace policies related to online gambling among employees. The use of open-ended questions allowed participants to freely express their experiences and provide detailed responses, which are essential in qualitative research.

The instrument was aligned with the Statement of the Problem to ensure that all questions were relevant to the objectives of the study. It focused on areas such as management awareness, observed employee behavior, institutional responses, and policy gaps.

Validity of the Research Instrument

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to expert validation. It was reviewed by professionals with expertise in public administration, research methodology, and human resource management. Their feedback and recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions.

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Content validity was ensured by aligning the questionnaire items with the objectives of the study and the variables identified in the research problem. This process helped ensure that the instrument effectively captured the intended information from participants.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data collection process began with securing formal permission from the appropriate authorities in the selected public institutions. Upon approval, the researcher distributed the open-ended questionnaires to the identified participants through face-to-face or scheduled administration. The purpose of the study was explained clearly to the participants, and they were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire.

The researcher then collected the completed questionnaires and ensured that all responses were properly organized for analysis. Ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent were strictly observed throughout the data collection process to protect the rights of the participants.

Data Analysis

This study employed thematic analysis to systematically identify, analyze, and interpret patterns within the qualitative data gathered from participants. Thematic analysis is appropriate for understanding perceptions, experiences, and institutional responses, as it allows themes to emerge directly from the data.

Following the framework of Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006), the researcher first familiarized herself with the data by reading the responses multiple times. Relevant data segments were then coded and grouped into categories. These categories were further

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developed into themes such as management awareness, disciplinary actions, preventive measures, monitoring practices, and policy gaps.

The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure clarity and alignment with the objectives of the study. Finally, the findings were interpreted and presented based on these themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Thematic Analysis Procedure

The data from the interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Familiarization with the data – All responses were read repeatedly to gain a deep understanding of the content.
2. Generating initial codes – Meaningful segments of data related to public officials' actions, employee gambling behavior, and workplace responses were coded.
3. Searching for themes – Codes were grouped into potential themes such as disciplinary actions, preventive measures, monitoring practices, and policy gaps.
4. Reviewing themes – Themes were refined to ensure coherence and alignment with the research questions.
5. Defining and naming themes – Clear definitions were developed for each theme to reflect the core meaning of the data.
6. Producing the report – Final themes were organized and interpreted in relation to existing literature and the study objectives.

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This method ensured that findings were grounded in participants' actual experiences while maintaining analytical rigor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to examine the actions of public officials regarding online gambling among employees as a basis for workplace policy development.

Specifically, it explored the experiences of public officials, the actions they undertake, the challenges they encounter, the coping strategies they adopt, and the policy recommendations they propose.

Based on the thematic analysis of responses from ten (10) high-ranking management officials, the findings revealed that online gambling exists as a discreet but observable issue within the workplace. Public officials recognized its presence through behavioral indicators such as frequent mobile phone use, lack of focus, and reduced productivity, although it is not openly acknowledged or formally reported.

In addressing the issue, public officials primarily rely on informal and supervisory-based actions, including verbal reminders, monitoring, and informal counseling. These approaches are preventive and corrective in nature but lack consistency due to the absence of standardized procedures.

The study also found that public officials encounter significant challenges in managing online gambling, particularly due to its private and digital nature. The use of personal devices makes monitoring difficult, while ethical concerns regarding employee privacy limit

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enforcement. Furthermore, the absence of specific policies creates uncertainty and inconsistency in decision-making.

To cope with these challenges, public officials adopt adaptive strategies such as increased supervision, continuous reminders, and observation of employee behavior. However, these strategies remain limited in effectiveness due to the lack of institutional support.

Finally, there is a strong consensus among participants on the need for structured policies and preventive strategies. Public officials emphasized the importance of clear guidelines, awareness programs, improved monitoring systems, and active involvement of human resource management in addressing online gambling in the workplace.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

Online gambling exists in government workplaces as a hidden yet significant issue that affects employee performance, focus, and discipline.

Public officials primarily rely on informal and supervisory approaches, which are practical but limited in effectiveness due to the absence of standardized procedures.

There is a lack of specific policies addressing online gambling, resulting in inconsistent implementation and weakened governance.

Monitoring and enforcement are challenging due to the private and digital nature of online gambling, as well as concerns regarding employee privacy.

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Coping strategies adopted by public officials are adaptive but insufficient, highlighting the need for institutional support.

There is a strong need for comprehensive workplace policies and preventive measures to effectively address online gambling and ensure organizational efficiency.



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