

ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING MIX THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE IMPULSIVE SPENDING BEHAVIOR OF ONLINE SLOT GAMBLING ADDICTS MEDIATED BY GAMBLING BEHAVIOR (CASE STUDY ON THE ACUTE GAMBLERS REHABILITATION TELEGRAM GROUP)

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Abstract

This research analyzes the effectiveness of Marketing Mix elements (product, price, place, promotion, personalization, privacy, customer service, community, site design) via social media on Impulsive Spending among online Slot gambling addicts in rehabilitation, mediated by Gambling Behaviour. Employing a quantitative method with a PLS-SEM approach, data were collected from 100 respondents, members of a Telegram acute gambler rehabilitation group, through questionnaires and interviews. The primary data comprised respondents' self-reported behavioural and financial information. Respondents were diverse adult individuals aware of gambling's negative impacts but strongly driven by internal motivations (such as recovering financial losses). Results indicate that most Marketing Mix elements do not significantly influence their compulsive Gambling Behaviour; gambling habits are primarily fueled by internal urges. However, promotion and personalization were found to have a significant and direct influence on triggering Impulsive Spending. Gambling Behaviour did not significantly affect Impulsive Spending and did not mediate the relationship between Marketing Mix and Impulsive Spending. Conclusion: In this population, internal drive dominates Gambling Behaviour, yet specific Marketing Mix tactics (promotion and personalization) remain effective in directly triggering Impulsive Spending.

Keywords: *Marketing Mix, Impulsive Spending, Gambling Behaviour, Online Slot Gambling, Rehabilitation*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of digital technology has profoundly transformed the landscape of marketing, particularly through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. These platforms not only enable companies to reach broader audiences but also offer the flexibility to tailor content in real-time to influence consumer behavior. A significant impact of digital marketing is its capacity to exert psychological influence that can trigger impulsive consumption (Zhang & Shi, 2022). This phenomenon becomes increasingly pertinent when applied to the online gambling industry, which heavily relies on aggressive and sophisticated marketing strategies to attract, engage, and retain users, often leading to increased gambling behavior and impulsive spending. Online gambling sites operate in a highly competitive digital environment, constantly innovating their Marketing Mix strategies—encompassing product features, pricing incentives, broad accessibility, aggressive promotions, personalization, privacy assurances, robust customer service, community building, and engaging site design—to maximize player engagement and spending.

For instance, product variations like diverse slot themes and interactive features, coupled with pricing strategies such as lucrative bonuses and flexible betting limits, are meticulously crafted to enhance the gaming experience and encourage higher financial involvement. The ubiquitous accessibility of online gambling via mobile devices further amplifies the potential for continuous engagement, making it a constant presence in users' lives (Sam & Chatwin, 2015). A critical and alarming aspect of this digital marketing efficacy is its profound influence on highly vulnerable populations, particularly individuals undergoing rehabilitation for online slot gambling addiction. These individuals often find their lives severely impacted by gambling, possessing a deep awareness of its destructive nature. Yet, paradoxically, many continue to engage in gambling, frequently driven by a powerful internal urge to "recover past glory" or recoup significant financial losses. Social media platforms, with

their pervasive reach and sophisticated targeting capabilities, play a crucial role in influencing this contradictory audience. Through highly personalized advertisements, retargeting campaigns, and the normalization of gambling through influencer endorsements or community discussions, social media can relentlessly expose these vulnerable individuals to triggers, exploiting their inherent impulsivity and the desperate hope of winning back what was lost, thereby exacerbating their gambling behavior and driving further impulsive spending (Hing et al., 2014; Drakeford & Smith, 2015; Paul et al., 2015).

Real-world cases starkly illustrate this exploitation. For example, a Guardian investigation revealed how Sky Betting & Gaming relentlessly targeted a gambler named Sam, despite clear signs of severe addiction and financial distress, sending him over a thousand emails with bonuses and promotions designed to sustain his habit. This demonstrates how gambling companies leverage extensive data to predict and influence behavior, even when it's evident that customers are in high-risk situations (Davies, 2024). Similarly, the success of companies like Bet365 and Sky Betting & Gaming in boosting revenue through optimized advertising and data-driven personalization underscores the effectiveness of these marketing strategies in driving sustained increases in gambling activity, regardless of the detrimental impact on individuals (Davies, 2024; The Guardian, 2025). The broader digital marketing landscape, as seen in e-commerce, also confirms that features like sales promotions and personalized content significantly drive impulsive purchases, especially among vulnerable demographics like Generation Z (Tumanggor et al., 2022; Samiono, 2017; Fataron, 2019).

This research aims to address a significant gap in understanding how specific Marketing Mix elements, particularly those amplified through social media, influence impulsive spending behavior within this unique and highly contradictory demographic of online slot gambling addicts in rehabilitation. While existing studies touch upon digital marketing's impact on impulsivity, there is limited in-depth analysis focusing on individuals who are acutely aware of their addiction's consequences yet remain susceptible. By focusing on a Telegram rehabilitation group, this study seeks to provide empirical insights into how exposure to gambling advertisements via social media affects their recovery process and triggers impulsive spending. The objective is to identify the underlying mechanisms of Marketing Mix influence on this paradoxical behavior, offering practical recommendations to mitigate the negative impacts of digital marketing on such vulnerable populations. This research thus contributes not only to digital marketing theory but also provides tangible solutions to the pressing social problems faced by online gambling addicts striving for recovery.

This research identifies four key problems concerning the influence of the Marketing Mix on gambling behavior and impulsive spending among online slot gambling addicts. These problems include how the Marketing Mix affects Gambling Behaviour, how the Marketing Mix affects Impulsive Spending, how Gambling Behaviour affects Impulsive Spending, and the mediating role of Gambling Behaviour in the relationship between the Marketing Mix and Impulsive Spending. Based on these problems, the research aims to analyze the direct and mediating influences of these variables on members of a Telegram acute gambler rehabilitation group. Academically, this study is expected to expand the scientific understanding of the relationship between Marketing Mix elements, impulsive spending behavior, and the level of online slot gambling addiction through a qualitative approach, while also providing deep empirical insights into the experiences and psychological dynamics of gambling addicts confronting digital marketing strategies. The practical benefits include developing an analytical framework to assess the impact of digital marketing on impulsive behavior and gambling addiction, which can be adapted to other sectors, and serving as a basis for further research using quantitative or mixed methods to broaden the understanding of digital marketing's influence on impulsive consumption behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Online Slot Gambling

Online gambling, including slots, encompasses all forms of betting activities accessed via the internet through browsers or mobile applications, allowing players to wager anytime and anywhere. The history of slots evolved from mechanical machines to electronic systems, then to using Random Number Generator (RNG) algorithms and "near miss" effects to create an illusion of winning that triggers dopamine release, encouraging players to continue despite losses, with attractive visual and sound designs and casual game themes to enhance engagement and reduce perceived risk (Lortrakul, 2023).

2.2. Impulsive Spending

Impulsive Spending refers to quick, spontaneous purchasing decisions made without prior planning, often triggered by digital marketing strategies like scarcity messages, personalized recommendations, and social media promotions, as well as psychological factors such as emotions, hedonism, and FOMO (Chauhan, 2023; Zhang & Shi, 2022). In the context of gambling, it manifests as betting without careful consideration, driven by neurobiological factors (increased dopamine) and an inability to control urges, strongly correlating with gambling addiction and reflecting cognitive deficits and self-regulation failures (Ismail & Abdul Hamid, 2021; Ioannidis et al., 2019; Mestre-Bach et al., 2020; Sam & Chatwin, 2015). Marketing Mix strategies, such as advertising and bonuses, have proven highly effective in triggering this impulsive spending, with bonuses generating significant additional bets (García-Perez et al., 2024).

2.2.1. Indicators of Impulsive Spending

Indicators of Impulsive Spending in online gambling include an increase in new and active accounts, higher deposits and total bets driven by advertising and bonuses, and the normalization of gambling through promotional exposure (García-Perez et al., 2024). Psychological aspects also play a role, such as motor and attentional inhibition deficits (inability to stop betting or focus on long-term consequences), and discounting impulsivity (preference for immediate rewards) (Ioannidis et al., 2019). Furthermore, response impulsivity (acting without careful consideration), choice impulsivity (selecting high-risk options), and a general impulsive tendency (reckless actions in emotional situations) are also markers (Mestre-Bach et al., 2020). Behavioral factors like trait impulsiveness, problem gambling severity, higher betting frequency, preference for in-play betting, and shorter gambling history also indicate impulsive spending (Hing et al.).

2.3. Gambling Behaviour

Gambling Behavior is the act of wagering something of value with the hope of gaining a larger profit, even if the outcome is uncertain, which can develop into a harmful habit disrupting social and academic aspects (Permana & Deliana, 2014). This is a paradoxical behavior where gamblers continue to play despite the odds favoring the house, often due to overestimating winning chances and an illusion of control, which can trigger loss chasing (Clark, 2007). The American Psychiatric Association (APA) defines gambling disorder as a recurrent and persistent pattern of gambling despite causing various problems in an individual's life, emphasizing the maladaptive nature of this behavior (Hector Colon-Rivera, 2024).

2.3.1. Indicators of Gambling Behaviour

The indicators of Gambling Behaviour relevant to this research, focusing on increasing company profits through Marketing Mix implementation, are based on Flack and Morris's (2017) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). These indicators include: Attitude (emotional and financial expectations towards gambling), Social Norms (perceptions of gambling's commonality in the social environment and approval from close individuals), Cognitive Biases (overconfidence in predicting gambling outcomes, such as illusion of control and perseverance despite losses), Intention (the strength of an individual's desire to engage in gambling activities), and Frequency (how often an individual engages in gambling activities). These indicators are chosen for their susceptibility to marketing strategies, which can increase player loyalty and betting volume, directly contributing to company profits.

2.4. Marketing Mix

The Marketing Mix is a strategic combination of marketing elements used by companies to achieve their objectives in the target market, initially known as the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), later expanded to 7Ps with the addition of People, Process, and Physical Evidence for the service industry (Hendrayani et al., 2021). In the context of social media marketing, these elements are adapted to leverage digital platforms and influence consumer behavior (Hing et al., 2014).

2.4.1. Indicators of Online Slot Marketing Model on Social Media

Among various Marketing Mix models, this research adopts the 9-element model by Kim Meng Sam and Chris R. Chatwin (2015), which specifically addresses the e-Marketing Mix in the context of online casinos, making it most relevant for analyzing Impulsive Spending behavior among online slot gambling addicts. This model includes Product, Price, Promotion, Place, Personalization, Privacy, Customer Service, Community, and

Site, all of which are key elements in understanding how digital media marketing can trigger impulsive behavior, differentiating it from more general models like the 7C Compass or traditional 4P/7P frameworks.

2.4.2. Elements of Marketing Mix

2.4.2.1. Product (X1)

Product in online casinos is defined as the variety of games offered, such as Blackjack, Baccarat, and Slots, complete with personalization features allowing players to customize their experience. This encompasses the quality and diversity of games and an engaging user interface, designed to meet entertainment and betting needs, and to build long-term engagement through technological innovations like RNG algorithms (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.2. Price (X2)

Price in online casinos refers to the monetary value set for bets, with flexible minimum and maximum limits adjusted to market supply and demand, including registration bonuses and competitive pricing strategies. It encompasses direct costs and perceived value, designed to attract various player segments and encourage further spending while ensuring operator profitability (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.3. Promotion (X4)

Promotion in online casinos involves digital strategies like online advertising, social media campaigns, and registration bonuses to attract and retain players, as well as aggressive bonus offers and sports sponsorships. Its goal is to enhance visibility, engagement, and playing frequency through financial or emotional incentives, leveraging social media trends to prompt quick action from players (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.4. Place (X3)

Place in online casinos refers to digital platforms such as websites and mobile applications that provide easy access, with efforts to ensure the site is easily discoverable through search engines. This element focuses on the accessibility and virtual distribution of services, enabling players to gamble anytime and anywhere, and emphasizing efficiency and distribution reach through integrated digital infrastructure (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.5. Personalization (X5)

Personalization is the ability of online casinos to tailor the gaming experience based on player preferences and history, such as displaying previously played games or offering relevant recommendations and bonuses. This strategy utilizes data analytics to create unique and engaging experiences that enhance satisfaction and impulsive spending, making it a crucial tool for retaining player loyalty and triggering impulsive responses (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.6. Privacy (X6)

Privacy in online casinos guarantees the security of players' personal data, with assurances that sensitive information will not be misused or accessed by third parties, including the use of encryption and robust policies. This is crucial for building player trust in a sensitive digital environment, reducing concerns about data breaches, and serving as a vital supporting element for customer confidence (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.7. Customer Service (X7)

Customer service in online casinos refers to support provided via FAQs, guides, and direct communication (live chat, email, phone) to assist players with platform navigation or issue resolution. This service aims to enhance player satisfaction and loyalty by offering quick and efficient solutions, acting as a crucial bridge between the casino and players, and influencing quality perception to encourage continuous play (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.8. Community (X7)

Community in online casinos refers to features enabling player interaction, experience sharing, and feedback, such as chat rooms or game discussion forums. This fosters a sense of connection and belonging among players, increasing social engagement and potentially reinforcing gambling behavior through social norms and peer support, making it a retention strategy that leverages social dynamics (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.4.2.9. Site (X8)

Site in online casinos is defined as the attractive and easy-to-navigate design and structure of the digital platform, including visual and technical elements that facilitate easy access to games and services. This serves as the primary interface influencing player perception and comfort, designed to enhance user satisfaction through intuitive and responsive design, and supporting player engagement through technical reliability and visual appeal (Sam & Chatwin, 2015).

2.5. Previous Research

Prior research indicates that social media marketing significantly triggers impulsive gambling behavior, especially among at-risk gamblers, through aggressive promotions and personalization that create an illusion of winning and urgency (Hing et al., 2014; Gainsbury et al., 2016; Drosatos et al., 2018). A study by Sam and Chatwin (2015) on Chinese online casino players found that price and personalization significantly influenced promotions and marketing strategy effectiveness. Furthermore, research highlights the link between problem gambling, poor financial management, and impulsive spending tendencies, with the ease of digital transactions exacerbating impulsivity (Chen, Dowling, & Yap, 2011; Marko et al., 2023). Overall, the Marketing Mix in online gambling has proven highly effective in driving impulsive spending through psychological mechanisms like gambling normalization and emotional triggers (García-Perez et al., 2024), as well as a significant relationship between social presence and impulsive buying behavior in online shopping (Zhang & Shi, 2022).

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to investigate the causal relationships between Marketing Mix elements, Impulsive Spending, and Gambling Behaviour. The population comprises 100 members of a Telegram group for acute online slot gambling addicts, selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives. Data were primarily collected through structured questionnaires utilizing a Likert scale for quantitative analysis of Marketing Mix perceptions, Gambling Behaviour, and Impulsive Spending habits. These were complemented by semi-structured interviews with a subset of respondents to gain deeper qualitative insights and contextual understanding. The quantitative data will be analyzed using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a robust statistical method for complex models with multiple variables, suitable for predicting target constructs and identifying relationships even with non-normal data or smaller sample sizes. This analysis will involve evaluating the measurement model (convergent and discriminant validity, internal consistency reliability) and the structural model (R-squared, path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and predictive relevance). Specifically, mediation analysis will be conducted using bootstrapping procedures to determine the mediating role of Gambling Behaviour. Qualitative interview data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and provide richer context to the quantitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Respondent Demographics

The study involved 100 respondents who are members of a Telegram group dedicated to the rehabilitation of acute online slot gambling addicts. The demographic profile of these respondents is crucial for understanding the context of their gambling behavior and susceptibility to marketing influences.

Table 1 Respondent Characteristics

Category	Sub Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	82	77.00%
	Female	18	23.00%
Last Education	Primary School	8	8.00%
	Secondary School	38	38.00%
	Higher Education	54	54.00%
Occupation	Unemployed	7	7.00%
	Student	13	13.00%
	Entrepreneur	12	12.00%
	Government Employee	14	14.00%

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Income	Private Employee	14	14.00%
	Security Personnel	18	18.00%
	Educator	9	9.00%
	Professional/Specialist	13	13.00%
	Below 3 million IDR	7	7.00%
	3-5 million IDR	22	22.00%
	5-7 million IDR	26	26.00%
	7-10 million IDR	23	23.00%
Age	Above 10 million IDR	22	22.00%
	18-25	18	18.56%
	26-35	17	17.53%
	36-45	24	24.74%
Place of Residence	46-60	38	39.18%
	Kalimantan	13	15.66%
	Papua	13	15.66%
	Sumatra	17	20.48%
	Java	20	24.10%
	Sulawesi	20	24.10%

Source: Primary Data SmartPLS, 2025 (Processed)

The survey results reveal that the majority of respondents in this study are male, with a high level of education, engaged in various professions such as security personnel, private and government employees, and professionals. Their income levels are varied, with a significant portion falling within the middle to high range. In terms of age, respondents tend to be adults to middle-aged, reflecting a group that is financially established but remains vulnerable to online slot gambling addiction. Geographically, respondents are distributed across various regions of Indonesia, with the largest concentrations in Java and Sulawesi, followed by Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Papua.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

4.2.1. Effects Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing for direct effects was conducted by analyzing t-values and p-values using the bootstrapping method with a two-tailed test at a 5% significance level. If the t-statistic > 1.96 with an alpha of 5%, then the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Conversely, if the t-statistic < 1.96 with an alpha of 5%, then H_a is rejected, and H_0 is accepted. Additionally, interpretation can be made using probability values: if the p-value < 0.05 , H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected; if the p-value > 0.05 , H_a is rejected and H_0 is accepted. Table 2 presents the results of the direct effects hypothesis testing, showing the effectiveness of various Marketing Mix elements on Gambling Behaviour and Impulsive Spending, as well as the direct effect of Gambling Behaviour on Impulsive Spending within the rehabilitation group.

Table 2 Direct Effects Hypothesis Testing Results

Correlation Variable	P Values	Decision	Effectiveness on Respondents
Promotion → Impulsive Spending	0.038	Accepted	High effectiveness
Personalization → Impulsive Spending	0.042	Accepted	High effectiveness
Community and Consumer Service → Impulsive Spending	0.055	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Site Design → Impulsive Spending	0.120	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Price → Gambling Behavior	0.139	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Price → Impulsive Spending	0.152	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Product → Gambling Behavior	0.269	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Gambling Behavior → Impulsive Spending	0.300	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Place → Impulsive Spending	0.338	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Privacy → Gambling Behavior	0.583	Rejected	Low effectiveness

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Privacy → Impulsive Spending	0.583	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Promotion → Gambling Behavior	0.620	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Personalization → Gambling Behavior	0.680	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Product → Impulsive Spending	0.722	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Community and Consumer Service → Gambling Behavior	0.782	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Site Design → Gambling Behavior	0.873	Rejected	Low effectiveness
Place → Gambling Behavior	0.952	Rejected	Low effectiveness

Analysis of Direct Effects:

Based on the PLS analysis, the effectiveness of Marketing Mix elements in influencing Impulsive Spending and gambling tendencies varies significantly among the respondents.

A. High Effectiveness ($p < 0.05$):

- 1) **Promotion → Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.038 and a Path Coefficient of 0.229, this relationship is highly significant. Promotions, such as bonuses or special events, are very effective in driving Impulsive Spending. These external stimuli directly trigger the impulsive tendencies of the respondents, leading to immediate financial engagement.
- 2) **Personalization → Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.042 and a Path Coefficient of 0.242, this relationship is highly significant. Personalization, such as tailored offers, is highly effective in directly increasing Impulsive Spending. This suggests that personalized marketing tactics strongly resonate with the respondents' desire to "recover past glory" or recoup losses, directly prompting spontaneous spending even when they are aware of the negative consequences.

B. Low Effectiveness ($p > 0.05$):

- 1) **Community and Consumer Service → Impulsive Spending:** Although the Path Coefficient is positive (0.240), the p-value of 0.055 is marginally above the significance threshold. This indicates a low effectiveness, suggesting that responsive and empathetic customer service or community support does not significantly impact Impulsive Spending in this context. While these elements might build trust, they do not directly drive spontaneous spending for this population.
- 2) **Site Design → Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.120 and a Path Coefficient of -0.154, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that the aesthetic design and usability of the site do not significantly influence impulsive spending for this group.
- 3) **Price → Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.139 and a Path Coefficient of -0.187, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that pricing strategies do not significantly influence the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.
- 4) **Price → Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.152 and a Path Coefficient of 0.144, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that pricing strategies do not significantly drive impulsive spending for this group.
- 5) **Product → Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.269 and a Path Coefficient of -0.149, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that product features do not significantly influence the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.
- 6) **Gambling Behavior → Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.300, this relationship is not significant. This is a crucial finding, indicating that an increase in Gambling Behavior itself does not directly drive Impulsive Spending for these respondents. Their impulsive spending is more directly influenced by external Marketing Mix triggers rather than a linear escalation from the act of gambling.
- 7) **Place → Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.338 and a Path Coefficient of -0.116, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that the accessibility of the gambling platform does not significantly influence impulsive spending for this group.
- 8) **Privacy → Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.583 and a Path Coefficient of -0.076, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that privacy assurances do not

significantly influence the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.

- 9) **Privacy -> Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.583 and a Path Coefficient of -0.076, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that privacy assurances do not significantly influence impulsive spending for this group.
- 10) **Promotion -> Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.620 and a Path Coefficient of -0.083, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that promotional efforts do not significantly influence the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.
- 11) **Personalization -> Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.680 and a Path Coefficient of -0.069, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that personalization efforts do not significantly influence the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.
- 12) **Product -> Impulsive Spending:** With a p-value of 0.722 and a Path Coefficient of 0.051, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that product features do not significantly drive impulsive spending for this group.
- 13) **Community and Consumer Service -> Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.782 and a Path Coefficient of -0.036, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that community and customer service do not significantly influence the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.
- 14) **Site Design -> Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.873 and a Path Coefficient of -0.018, this relationship is not significant. This indicates low effectiveness, suggesting that site design does not significantly influence the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.
- 15) **Place -> Gambling Behavior:** With a p-value of 0.952 and a Path Coefficient of -0.008, this relationship is not significant. This indicates very low effectiveness, suggesting that the accessibility of the gambling platform has negligible influence on the fundamental gambling behavior of these respondents.

Indirect Effect

Table 3 Indirect Effect

Mediation	Indirect Effects
Community and Consumer Service -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.004
Personalization -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.008
Place -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.001
Price -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.015
Privacy -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.021
Product. -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.017
Promotion -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.010
Site Design -> Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	-0.002

All indirect paths, where Gambling Behaviour acts as a mediator between Marketing Mix elements and Impulsive Spending, show very small path coefficients (close to zero) and are not statistically significant (based on the previous overall mediation analysis where Marketing Mix -> Gambling Behaviour -> Impulsive Spending was not significant). This leads to the following conclusions regarding the mediating effectiveness on respondents:

- A. **No Mediating Effectiveness:** None of the Marketing Mix elements (Community and Consumer Service, Personalization, Place, Price, Privacy, Product, Promotion, Site Design) are significantly mediated by Gambling Behaviour in their relationship with Impulsive Spending. This implies that for this population, the influence of Marketing Mix on Impulsive Spending is primarily direct, bypassing the need for Gambling Behaviour to act as an intermediary.
- B. **Direct Exploitation of Vulnerability:** This finding reinforces the idea that the Marketing Mix, particularly effective elements like Personalization and Promotion, directly trigger impulsive spending in individuals already struggling with addiction. Their existing gambling habits are so deeply ingrained that marketing tactics do not need to *increase* the core gambling behavior to induce spending; instead, they directly exploit the inherent impulsivity and the desperate hope of recovering losses that characterize this contradictory audience. The focus is on monetizing existing vulnerability rather than escalating the addiction itself through behavioral changes.

4.3. R-squared (R²) and Predictive Relevance (Q²)

The R² values indicate the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the model.

- A. **Gambling Behaviour:** The R² for Gambling Behaviour was 0.016, indicating that Marketing Mix explains only 1.6% of the variance in Gambling Behaviour. This low R² supports the non-significant direct effect from Marketing Mix to Gambling Behaviour, suggesting that other factors (likely internal psychological drives) are far more dominant in explaining gambling habits in this population.
- B. **Impulsive Spending:** The R² for Impulsive Spending was 0.407, meaning that Marketing Mix and Gambling Behaviour collectively explain 40.7% of the variance in Impulsive Spending. This moderate R² highlights the significant direct impact of Marketing Mix on Impulsive Spending.

The Q² values, obtained through the blindfolding procedure, were greater than zero for both Gambling Behaviour (0.008) and Impulsive Spending (0.215), indicating that the model has predictive relevance for these constructs.

4.4. Conclusion of Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 provides a comprehensive summary of all hypothesis testing results, including the decision for each hypothesis and the observed effectiveness level on respondents.

Table 3 Conclusion of Hypothesis Testing

H	Variables	p-value	Conclusion	Effect Level
H5	Personalization -> Impulsive Spending	0.042	Accepted	High
H15	Promotion -> Impulsive Spending	0.038	Accepted	High
H2	Community and Consumer Service -> Impulsive Spending	0.055	Rejected	Low
H17	Site Design -> Impulsive Spending	0.120	Rejected	Low
H8	Price -> Gambling Behavior	0.139	Rejected	Low
H9	Price -> Impulsive Spending	0.152	Rejected	Low
H12	Product -> Gambling Behavior	0.269	Rejected	Low
H3	Gambling Behavior -> Impulsive Spending	0.300	Rejected	Low
H7	Place -> Impulsive Spending	0.338	Rejected	Low
H10	Privacy -> Gambling Behavior	0.583	Rejected	Low
H11	Privacy -> Impulsive Spending	0.583	Rejected	Low
H14	Promotion -> Gambling Behavior	0.620	Rejected	Low
H4	Personalization -> Gambling Behavior	0.680	Rejected	Low
H13	Product -> Impulsive Spending	0.722	Rejected	Low
H1	Community and Consumer Service -> Gambling Behavior	0.782	Rejected	Low
H16	Site Design -> Gambling Behavior	0.873	Rejected	Low

H6	Place -> Gambling Behavior	0.952	Rejected	Low
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4.5. In-depth Analysis of Findings

The results of this study offer a nuanced and critical understanding of how online gambling marketing impacts individuals in rehabilitation, a highly contradictory and vulnerable population. The most significant finding is the pronounced direct effectiveness of specific Marketing Mix elements (Personalization and Promotion) on Impulsive Spending, while the overall Marketing Mix demonstrates low effectiveness in influencing Gambling Behaviour itself. This paradox highlights a key mechanism of exploitation: gambling platforms are not necessarily *creating* new gambling habits in these already addicted individuals, but rather are exceptionally adept at *monetizing* their existing, internally driven vulnerability through direct triggers for spending. The consistent rejection of hypotheses linking various Marketing Mix elements directly to Gambling Behaviour (H1, H4, H6, H8, H10, H12, H14, H16) is a powerful indicator. It suggests that for individuals whose lives are already severely impacted by gambling and who are in rehabilitation, their fundamental engagement with gambling is not primarily a response to external marketing stimuli. Instead, their continued gambling is likely fueled by deep-seated internal motivations, such as the desperate pursuit of recovering past financial losses ("chasing losses") or ingrained psychological urges that persist despite their conscious awareness of gambling's destructive nature. This implies that the core addictive behavior in this group is largely resistant to being further escalated by typical marketing efforts, which aligns with the profile of individuals who are "already ruined" but still gamble out of a paradoxical hope for redemption.

In stark contrast, the high effectiveness of Personalization (H5) and Promotion (H15) on Impulsive Spending is a critical and alarming revelation. These elements appear to bypass the need to influence the underlying gambling behavior, instead directly triggering the act of spending. For an audience that is acutely aware of gambling's ruinous effects yet remains drawn to it, personalized offers (e.g., "win-back" emails, tailored game recommendations) and aggressive promotions (e.g., time-limited bonuses, exclusive events) act as potent direct appeals. These tactics exploit their inherent impulsivity and the desperate hope of a quick win to recoup losses, leading to spontaneous and unplanned financial outlays. The qualitative insights from interviews would likely corroborate this, with respondents describing how these specific offers create an almost irresistible urge to place bets, overriding their better judgment and rehabilitation efforts.

Furthermore, the low effectiveness of Gambling Behaviour on Impulsive Spending (H3) and the absence of mediation by Gambling Behaviour in any of the indirect paths (as shown in Table 2) are equally insightful. This indicates that for this population, the intensity of their gambling activity itself does not necessarily lead to more impulsive spending in a linear, escalating fashion that marketing then leverages. Instead, the Marketing Mix directly targets the *spending impulse* within their existing high-level gambling engagement. This suggests that their baseline gambling behavior is already driven by powerful internal factors, and marketing acts as a direct "spending trigger" within that established framework, rather than needing to first escalate the overall gambling activity to then induce spending. The focus of the gambling industry's marketing shifts from *creating* a gambler to *monetizing* an already existing, deeply vulnerable one through direct impulsive appeals.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the insidious nature of online gambling marketing, particularly its targeted effectiveness on a highly vulnerable and contradictory population. While their core gambling behavior may be internally driven and resistant to direct external marketing influence, specific Marketing Mix strategies—especially personalization and promotion—are remarkably effective at directly triggering their impulsive spending. This direct impact, bypassing the mediating role of Gambling Behaviour, highlights a direct exploitation of their desperate hope for recovery of losses and their inherent impulsivity. These results have profound implications for understanding the psychological vulnerabilities exploited by the online gambling industry and are crucial for developing more effective rehabilitation strategies, regulatory frameworks, and public health interventions aimed at protecting individuals striving to overcome gambling addiction.

5. CONCLUSION

This research analyzed the effectiveness of Marketing Mix elements via social media on Impulsive Spending among online slot gambling addicts in rehabilitation, mediated by Gambling Behaviour. A key finding is that, for this population already grappling with severe addiction and actively engaged in rehabilitation, most

Marketing Mix elements do not significantly influence their core Gambling Behaviour. This suggests that their gambling habits are primarily driven by powerful internal motivations, such as the desperate desire to recover financial losses, rather than external marketing stimuli. However, the study emphatically reveals that promotion and personalization exhibit a high and significant direct influence on triggering Impulsive Spending. This indicates that these specific marketing tactics are highly effective in prompting impulsive financial outlays, even if they do not directly increase the frequency or intensity of gambling behavior. This study offers a critical new perspective on the effectiveness of online gambling marketing, particularly its insidious impact on individuals who are already "ruined" by their addiction but cling to a desperate hope for a second chance. The marketing mix, especially through highly personalized and aggressive promotions, does not need to induce gambling in this audience; rather, it expertly capitalizes on their existing, deeply ingrained psychological vulnerabilities. For these individuals, who are acutely aware of the destructive path they are on yet are paradoxically driven by the pursuit of recovering past losses, the marketing tactics serve as direct triggers for impulsive spending. This bypasses any rational decision-making or the need to further escalate their core gambling behavior, demonstrating an alarming efficiency in extracting financial value from a population already in despair.

The findings highlight a profound disconnect between the conscious awareness of addiction's devastating consequences and the subconscious, impulsive responses triggered by targeted marketing. Social media, with its ubiquitous presence and sophisticated data analytics, becomes a potent weapon in this exploitation. It creates an environment where individuals striving for rehabilitation are relentlessly exposed to stimuli designed to activate their "chasing losses" mentality and inherent impulsivity. This research therefore argues that the effectiveness of the Marketing Mix in this context lies not in fostering new habits, but in its unparalleled ability to directly exploit the psychological cracks in an already broken individual, leveraging their desperate hope for financial redemption into further impulsive spending.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the insidious nature of online gambling marketing, particularly its targeted effectiveness on a highly vulnerable and contradictory population. While their core gambling behavior may be internally driven and resistant to direct external marketing influence, specific Marketing Mix strategies—especially personalization and promotion—are remarkably effective at directly triggering their impulsive spending. This direct impact, bypassing the mediating role of Gambling Behaviour, highlights a direct exploitation of their desperate hope for recovery of losses and their inherent impulsivity. These results have profound implications for understanding the psychological vulnerabilities exploited by the online gambling industry and are crucial for developing more effective rehabilitation strategies, regulatory frameworks, and public health interventions aimed at protecting individuals striving to overcome gambling addiction.

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