

Online Gambling: Nemesis or Opportunity for Thai Society

Supit Boonlab

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Thailand

E-mail: supit_b@rmutt.ac.th, supitboonlab@gmail.com

Sarinthorn Mungkhamanee

Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Thailand

E-mail: m_sarinthorn1@hotmail.com

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Abstract

The aim of this investigation is to explore the effects of online gambling and other associated business on Thai people and the society as a whole. Through technology websites such as line administrators and lottery and gambling sites have opened another avenue in people's ability to have an opportunity to earn money. This survey uses a qualitative method of random sampling. The sample group is the gambler who joined the online website. They were selected by snowball technique total 10 participants. The findings identify that line application administrators can earn profits through this new business channel. Facebook and line application can be very influential to online gambling in different forms that were previously used in online gaming sites. The new pro forma allows gamblers to purchase memberships which administrators profit from as well as supporting the website through advertising. Improvements in technology now allow on line banking and the ability to transfer funds electronically thereby increasing convenience to gamblers.. the goal of the website is to of course increase the frequency and amounts that each gambler wagers. Another trend discussed was the government role in current and future roles in the online gambling industry.

Keywords: Online Gambling, Traditional Lifestyle, Gambling Behavior, New Business

Introduction

In Thailand, as well as almost every country, people are always searching for new ways to earn more money. With the ever changing advances in the internet and technology the online world is becoming much more than just a place to sell a line of products. With internet banking and electronic transfers being available many investment and opportunities are now available. Most Thais have grown up in a risk oriented society and so gambling is merely an extension of what is considered a normal practice in life. Gambling is not considered an adverse behavior unless it is affecting the well being of the family. According to studies by Devereux in 1949 it is an acceptable social behavior. It creates an atmosphere for fun social interactions as well as venting inner emotion through the thrill of winning (Bloch, 1951) and online gambling affects the intention in action as well (Abarbanel, Bernhard, Singh, & Lucas, 2015)

History shows that gambling probably spread throughout Thailand through trading with the Chinese which started some 70 decades ago. Initially it was gambling through horse racing, ox racing (Yongsawat, 2017) and other events. Some legal and others not. With the invention of the internet on line gambling has burgeoned rapidly. The technological advances,

endurance, and legitimacy of online gambling make the growth of the online gambling industry grow fast reached US\$29 billion in 2012 (H2 Gambling Capital, 2013). The newest form is LINE application in which many Thai people are currently subscribing to as an additional way to earn money. Therefore, this study concentrates in the affects of Line application and the management of individuals businesses in this new realm. Otherwise, Yuan found in China that the gamblers realize the lottery represent an unreasonable belief because it has a huge influence on the winning record but they are more likely to attend the lottery if they have a recommendation by a higher rate of returns (2015).

Line application associates the risk/reward factor using tools to motivate perspective gamblers. It will show that it is an acceptable behavior in the very risk tolerant Thai society. Thus convincing new members to join with no side effects of cultural dismissal while allowing the opportunity to make money. Providers offer online gambling services to improve the game through the Internet or even makes it easier to perform, and to promote a positive image among consumers (Humphreys & Perez, 2012). Internet gambling is mostly available worldwide depending on local laws.. it is an extremely lucrative business for owners and some governments prosper greatly through the taxation of these industries. Scenarios also exist for an individual to be both an investor and a gambler. This study will investigate the perceived risk of online gambling as well as making the comparison to Thai people both past and present. It will also identify new pathways and opportunities in the online gambling sector.

Perceived Risk

The perceived risk approach has two facets; uncertainty and consequences. Risk has an indirect influence through trust and a higher influence in the consumer decision making process of using online gaming services (Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2007; Mitchell, 1992; Fortes, Moreira, and Saraiva, 2016). There are six separate categories in perceived risk; performance, finances, opportunity/time availability, safety and social and psychological loss (Cunningham, 1967). This study was focused on associating the technological environment with the traditions and culture of the Thai people. The six dimensions were studied and there was finding to show anxiety (Dowling and Staelin, 1994) and forms of psychological discomfort (Zaltman and Wallendorf, 1983). Players who continued to raise their bets were perceived to be more confident but demonstrated less control than players who kept their wager levels the same (Blaszczynski and Nower, 2007).

Traditional Lifestyle vs Gambling

For generations the Thai people have had a deeply imbedded belief in "Ho ai " or the lottery system. Gambling is not perceived as being inherently bad and is actually a routine practice especially in rural areas. The risk of losing is commonly understood but there is no stigma attached to it and they are still quite willing to play the game. The games were found to promote lavish dreams and images with the possibility of winning but did not demoralize them when losing (Holtegraves, 1988). Players still displayed dignity and calm reactions even when they lost. Before the first Gambling Act of 2473 (Kampeeranon, 2015) the Thai people sought the benefits of gambling and didn't look to prohibit or control it through government. Even though the Act has been in existence for quite some time it has not diminished any social values and has spread throughout all classes of people. In fact, online gaming is predicted to increase as much as 18.3% (Kampeeranon, 2015). On the other hand, active user members of who were available in social networking sites previous, approximately 1.47 billion people around the global is expected to grow to 2.6 billion users by 2018 (eMarketer, 2013), now increase to 4 billion people users (social media users 3 billion, mobile phone

users 5 billion) around the world using internet (Kemp, 2018). Most popular messaging apps worldwide monthly active users in Thailand as Facebook Messenger 1300 and LINE 203 in millions (Statista, April 2018).

Facebook is the social networking site to be offered (Gainsbury et al., 2014a; Zainzinger, 2012) through the people can be helped friend and family stay in touch so that why social casino games was among the top rated games available. This point is the idea key that online gambling has become big changing to Thai people behavior gambling.

The Thai people have always enjoyed fun social interactions with gambling and the lottery even when they lost their bets. Wan & Chiou stated that online gambling tend to provide the non addicts with a sense of satisfaction rather than a sense of dissatisfaction (2006). For these reasons it would be reasonable to ascertain that gambling will continue to be a normal and acceptable part of the Thai lifestyle.

Gambling Behavior

Online gambling is easy, convenient and simple and can be accessed from anywhere at any time as long as there is an Internet connection (Williams and Wood, 2007). This is in stark contrast to the traditional "brick and mortar " casino buildings. Casinos are morphing into online sites because of the lure of higher profitability ensured by lower costs of maintaining buildings with employees. Secondly gamblers can quickly switch gaming sites with the click of a button and there a gamblers identity and personality are hidden from public view. This allows some gamblers to feel more at ease and at times perhaps even willing to make larger wagers. There are two main types of in line gambling.. casino style games and betting such as horse racing (Boontawirod and Wongsurawat, 2015; Manzin and Biloslavo, 2008) and ox racing (Wua Laan) (Yongsawat, 2017).

Fun, excitement and an expectation to possibly prosper are the main reasons that people gamble.. the downside of this is that some people cannot control their emotions and gamble excessively (Lee et al., 2007). At times this may cause them to even borrow money in order to recoup prior loses but generally leads in a downward spiral where much more is lost than they can reasonably afford (Stewart and Zack, 2008; el-Guebaly et al., 2012; Lister, Wohl, & Davis, 2015).

Line application is a readily available and popular internet venue in Thailand. Most people that use it have a strong understanding of a gamblers behavior and use this knowledge to profit even more. Therefore, we would like to study line application and its correlation to gamblers behaviors as well as how it creates another stream to earning money.

Please see the framework below.

According to above, the author has designed conceptual framework to investigate online lottery gambling network which associated to perceived risk, traditional lifestyle, gambling behavior, online investment business, and gambler, website, Line Application. In addition, how these statements influence to each other in term of the making benefit.

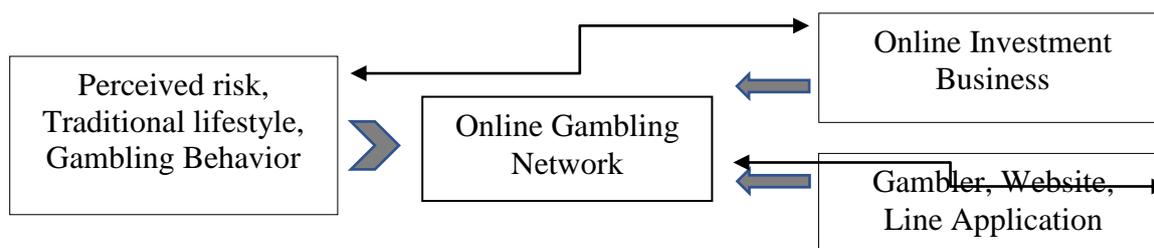


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This research used qualitative in-depth research using 10 key informants. All informants were active in online gaming sites but for varying amounts of times. The snowball technique and survey were utilized in findings. The interview was performed via video call with 7 questions. The participants were from ages 26-55 and were job holders with various occupations. The survey questions can be found in appendix A.

Procedures and Measures

The informants were interviewed using a video call format. The snowball technique was also used in order to obtain additional information. 10 key informants, due to the purpose of this survey that is the causes and why those players were motivated to join online gambling in term of using technology media as line and Facebook. Further, to survey the connection network among gamblers, online website, and business group (Line administrator and Facebook owner) which is new opportunity for Thai society that changed from previous. Therefore, the informants must already be member to the online website.

Result

The investigation and surveys and interviews found that there are three distinctive types of online gambling users. The website owner who was an investor and business person, the Line application or Facebook administrator and the gamblers themselves. There are currently more than 30 online gambling sites that can be accessed in Thailand. The gambling network is shown in the graphic below.

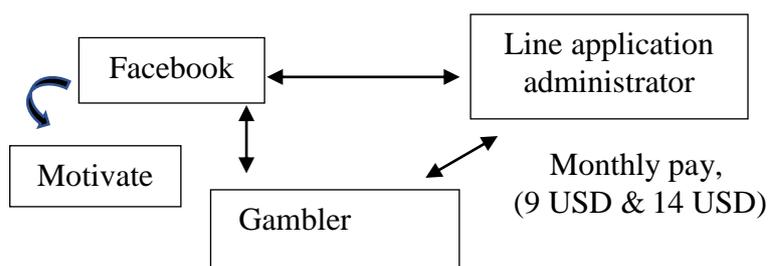


Figure 2 The relationship between gambler and interest group from online gambling

The sequence of events that are generally used is as follows; the line administrator will use much advertising about winners and even allow the prospective gambler to play a few games for free. Baiting him. When the gambler then sees that the site was correct and he could have won real money he then follows the administrator's advice in going to a private site. At this point the gambler can purchase a monthly or yearly subscription to the site. Membership price range from 9-14 USD per month so that if an administrator has 300 members they could have the potential of earning up to 50,000 USD per year.. this is a very large salary to the average Thai person.

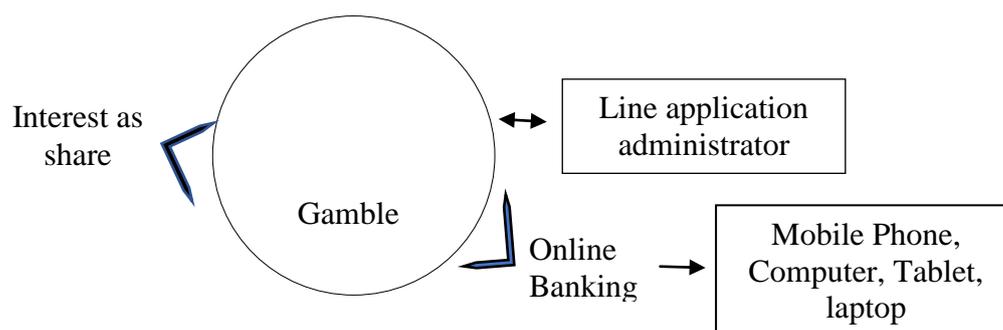


Figure 3 The online lottery gambling network among interest groups

Another way that line administrators broaden their memberships is by offering incentives to current members to recruit additional members for them. The gambler that successfully recruits others is given a percentage of the new gamblers revenue that is given to the administrators. The incentives and percentages vary because competition is very strong to secure new members.

A line application administrator will also try to get the gamblers to open bank accounts via online banking. The reasoning is that it is virtually impossible to gamble online without an account. This is an incentive for banks to advertise on these sites because they can get more accounts opened at their banks.

Discussion

It was found through the participants that the average gambler wagers approximately 29 USD per day when accessing internet gambling sites. Gambling is quite widespread as recent estimates showed nearly 33 million users have used on line gambling or line application in an effort to earn more money. As previously stated there is no stigmatism against wagering in Thailand because it is a long held cultural norm to take risks.. With the easy accessibility to these site through computers or tablets or phones these numbers will increase.. Of course online banking makes it all possible and very simple for prospective gamblers.

To answer research questions; how the perceived risk of online gambling, comparison between past and present as well as identify new pathways and opportunity in the online gambling industry. There are two things that results from online gambling, namely nemesis and opportunity.

Nemesis, it reveals the gambler only losing even they tried to gamble different technique (Miller and Currie, 2008). For opportunity, definitely to both website and line application administrator work very well. Previous, it is only gambling sites can make business but now another group can do profit as well. Should education and working hard be stressed more in society than the dream of get rich quick schemes? All gambler should consider this point but as long as they remain believe on perceived risk and live on atmosphere around traditional lifestyle of Thai people, they will not change behavior (Stewart and Zack, 2008; el-Guebaly et al., 2012) from stated that:

“If I lose this time, I would win next time because online gambling websites we could gamble many times every day so it is the good chance for us rather than previous. I fail today then I will success tomorrow. If you want to get more, you should invest more as twice in the next time. It will make you more excited and fun”

Moreover, does gambling cause family problems? It is a big issue to take into consideration for them and also society although nation’ effect (Lister, Wohl, & Davis, 2015). Should the government tax earnings from gambling? There are many gambling sites obvious spread all over, it is wonder why the government ignored. They should inspect how much website and

line administrator earn as general personal income. There is nothing changed so far. It may be because of Thai society' perspective though news presentation on every channel, they do report how lottery going on with significance. On the other hand, if the person who disadvantage from the business, he will make a complaint particular through media to warn the government management.

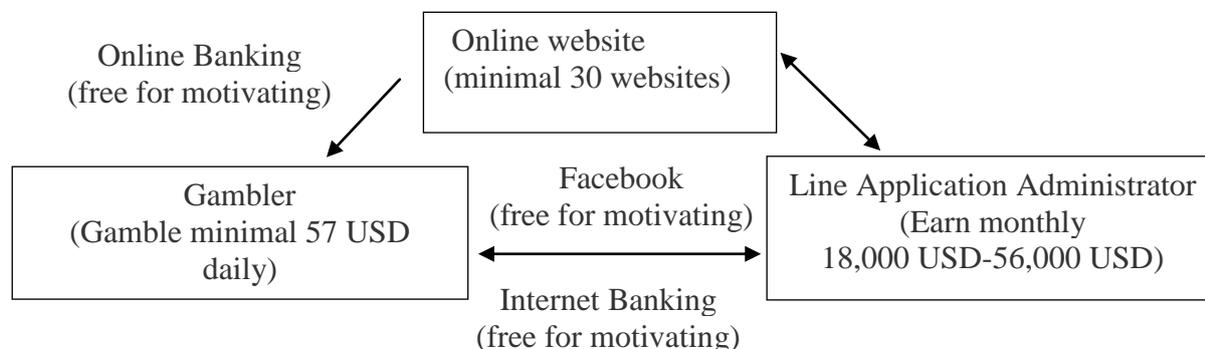


Figure 4 Online gambling network for new business

As the figure 4, what the progress of online gambling that is changed from previous is the influence of Line application and Facebook, they are another tool for people earning on perceived risk and traditional lifestyle of Thais. Furthermore, another point is the online banking that gambler use to gamble.

Should education and working hard be stressed more in society than the dream of get rich quick schemes.. or should Thai people be educated further on monthly investments enriching their retirements rather than taking chances with your future? These statements are interesting further for new opportunity and get away from nemesis that destroy the future of gambler (Stewart and Zack, 2008; el-Guebaly et al., 2012; Lister et al., 2015).

Due to criminal, for this case, it was not found that those gamblers would be cause of society problem because they have known how to play protecting themselves from big terrible lose. Also, they hold in job such as seller, officer, own business, housewife, public official even though some of them had debt but they can handle it that is contrast to another finding case (Yongsawat, 2017).

Conclusion

The author found that new path of earning of Thais current walking on perceived risk, traditional lifestyle, and gambling behavior, further the internet banking system also very important point to the online gambling business for gambler. Due to traditional lifestyle in Thailand that they never think gambling negative perspective all over in their society (Kampeeranon, 2015) as social value. Otherwise, Line application is very influence to the business network in term of the center of the communication among website, gambler, and administrator and they gain interest together. The reason online gambling become rich business in Thailand, because of Thai gambling behavior. In the past, Thais started gambling over the country but they were in limited group and environment and present the gambler is changed into other level such as educated group who like to gamble but they want to hide themselves from public. Therefore, the online gambling using mobile phone that access to internet and internet banking become to new path for business investor, i.e., website and Line Application Administrator.

It is a phenomenon that occurs in Thai society due to the behavior of the Thai people. It is likely to expand in the near future, with the convenience of accessing this type of online

business. In addition, the government's cost reduction plan includes: National E-payment, PromptPay. Therefore, that is the way to encourage the online gambling into low class group who is majority of gambler in the past.

Research Implementation

In the future, the gambling online will be wider to people particular in Thailand situation because of the government trying to change monetary system spending. They are trying to support changing how Thais spend money via internet banking as using barcode transferring to seller without cash so that means the people likely getting opportunity attending to circle of gambling online business over all level soon. Furthermore, what Thai government performance nowadays is encouraged into gambling online business. This research finding might more news to others who never know and they are looking for a chance to risk as well. The good point to consider for next case is to survey how the people know the online gambling changed and very simple to access and the trends of players in the future.

Limitations

This investigation lacks of deep information that is exactly assure how much the online lottery gambling website gain from the business because the author could not enter to them. Moreover, author could not reach players who are teenage so the results may not cover other ideas from them. Some persons who is introduced, they were refusal to provide information as well. On the other hand, what various people perspective think to online gambler who has educated and holding a good job and how they know about online lottery gambling network.

Compliance with Ethical Requirements

This study was officially approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Rachaburi, the Ministry of Public Health coded as BCNR 2017/0005.

Conflict of Interest

This study does not have any conflict of interest. This study was funded by Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi¹⁶. The budget sponsor gives full authority to researcher to make use the data and to publish it. The author can fully access and responsible to the data and analyze it as well as to publish.

Research involving Human Participants

Statement of human rights: Respondents were interviewed after verbal consent was agreed. The interview was done by trained enumerator in order to ensure the data quality collection. The next step was the interview guided by an interview form. An interview was considered finished when a respondent had answered all questions or withdrew his/ her participation from this study. Incomplete questions were excluded from the study.

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¹⁶ This research is supported by Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi and the participants who has given willing deeply information.

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Appendix 1

The interview form:

1. Why are you interested in online gambling? How long have you been doing it?
2. How did you first learn about Line Application administrator website? Why are you willing to pay to be a member?
3. How do online gambling sites motivate gamblers and get more members?
4. Whether you lose or win, why do you still continue to gamble?
5. Have people attitudes towards you changed since they discovered you have become a gambler?
6. What is the advantage of being a Line Application Administrator compared to basic online gambling?
7. What are the barriers and inconveniences to online gambling?