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# INVOLVEMENT IN HIGGS DOMINO ISLAND AND ITS PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL IMPLICATIONS IN GAMPONG LAMDINGIN, BANDA ACEH

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**Abstract**

Digital games that incorporate betting mechanisms and allow virtual chips to be exchanged for money may develop from recreational activities into forms of online gambling. This study examines the factors associated with residents' involvement in Higgs Domino Island and the perceived implications of such involvement for religious routines, social relations, education, productivity, and economic management in Gampong Lamdingin, Banda Aceh. The study employed a descriptive qualitative case-study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation involving 13 purposively selected informants consisting of players and individuals who interacted closely with them. The data were analyzed through repeated familiarization, coding, thematic grouping, comparison across accounts, and interpretive synthesis. Credibility was strengthened by comparing information across informants and data-collection techniques. The findings indicate three recurring pathways of involvement: peer and environmental exposure, repeated play that became increasingly difficult to control, and expectations of rapid economic gain. Some informants also described a gap between awareness of the religious prohibition of gambling and effective behavioral restraint. Reported implications included delayed worship, disrupted sleep and productivity, interpersonal discomfort or conflict, borrowing money or requesting salary advances to purchase chips, and reduced attention to educational activities. The intensity and form of these implications varied across cases. The study does not establish causal effects or clinical diagnoses; rather, it presents context-specific accounts of involvement and perceived behavioral change. The findings suggest that prevention should combine digital and financial literacy, family and peer support, contextual religious education, restrictions on chip-related financing, and access to appropriate counseling.

**Keywords:** *Online Gambling; Higgs Domino Island; Behavioral Implications; Religious Routines; Community Context*

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## A. Introduction

The development of digital technology has transformed how people obtain entertainment, build social relationships, and conduct economic transactions. Smartphones, social media, and digital payment systems have made online games accessible with few spatial or temporal limitations (Ghelfi et al., 2024). This transformation has created a social environment in which games initially understood as entertainment may incorporate betting mechanisms, randomized outcomes, purchases of virtual assets, and the exchange of chips for money. Under these conditions, gaming

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involvement cannot be understood solely as an individual preference. It may also be shaped by habitual use, peer-group influence, economic expectations, religious norms, family relationships, and social control (Marionneau et al., 2023). From a public-health perspective, gambling-related harm may include financial, relational, educational, occupational, and health-related consequences, without being limited to individuals who meet the clinical criteria for gambling disorder (World Health Organization, 2024).

Higgs Domino Island represents a relevant case because its virtual-chip system has allowed the game to be associated with monetary transactions and gambling-like practices. Easy smartphone access enables players to participate repeatedly and to continue playing immediately after winning or losing. Online gambling environments are characterized by continuous availability, interactivity, rapid transactions, and limited physical barriers, all of which may intensify repeated involvement and reduce opportunities for reflection before further play (Fisher et al., 2025; Marionneau et al., 2023). The social significance of the game therefore extends beyond its technological features. Its use is embedded in everyday interactions through which people learn how to play, exchange information about winning, obtain chips, and interpret the risks and possible economic benefits of participation.

Previous research on online gambling and digital games containing betting mechanisms has developed around three related areas: factors associated with involvement, behavioral and social consequences, and prevention or control. Research on risk factors shows that gambling involvement is shaped by both individual characteristics and wider relational and contextual conditions. These include impulsivity, economic motivation, online access, participation in multiple forms of gambling, peer influence, and perceived social norms (Ghelfi et al., 2024; Parrado-González et al., 2023). Studies of peer-group dynamics in Indonesia likewise indicate that friends may introduce, normalize, and sustain online gambling behavior, although peer groups can also provide support for stopping (Abrori et al., 2025). Observing other players' reported success may reinforce the belief that gambling is common, acceptable, and potentially profitable, particularly when stories of winning circulate more frequently than accounts of loss.

A second body of research emphasizes self-control, behavioral repetition, and the characteristics of digital access. Research on adolescent users of Higgs Domino Island has identified an association between self-control and problematic involvement (Fahrezi & Simbolon, 2024). International studies similarly show that online access, economic motivation, repeated play, and previous gambling experience are relevant to at-risk or problematic gambling patterns (Ghelfi et al., 2024; Krotter et al., 2025). Winning may reinforce further play by creating an expectation that success can be repeated, whereas losing may encourage attempts to recover money already spent. Financial literacy is also relevant because inaccurate perceptions of probability and risk may contribute to repeated expenditure and poor financial decision-making (O'Connor & Ivory, 2025). Frequent gambling involvement has additionally been associated with financial stress among young adults (Mohan, 2025). These findings indicate that continued participation cannot be explained solely by lack of knowledge or individual weakness. It may develop through

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interactions among social influence, digital accessibility, economic expectations, behavioral reinforcement, and limited self-regulatory capacity.

A third research tendency concerns the consequences of gambling for players and people around them. Gambling-related harm may include conflict, emotional neglect, loss of household resources, disrupted routines, and declining wellbeing among family members, partners, friends, and other affected parties (Tulloch et al., 2022). Children exposed to parental gambling may also experience financial, relational, and psychological harm (Suomi et al., 2023). Among young people and university students, gambling has been associated with academic difficulties, reduced concentration, financial stress, and problems in managing debt or other obligations, although the strength of these relationships varies according to research design and context (Allen et al., 2025; Mohan, 2025). The consequences of gambling may therefore extend beyond individual players through the diversion of time, attention, and shared financial resources.

Research on prevention increasingly argues that gambling-related harm cannot be addressed through individual education alone. Multilayered responses may require preventive education, restrictions on access and transactions, family involvement, community support, and regulation of digital gambling environments (Clune et al., 2024; Fisher et al., 2025; Marionneau et al., 2023; Monreal-Bartolomé et al., 2023). Studies of children and young people show that intervention evidence remains uneven and that many programs continue to focus primarily on individual knowledge and behavior (Davis et al., 2025). Research also emphasizes the importance of involving people with lived experience and affected parties in the design of prevention and support programs so that interventions do not become detached from the practical conditions faced by players, families, and communities (Davis et al., 2025; Jenkins et al., 2024). Family and peer environments may either reinforce gambling practices or become sources of supervision, behavioral restraint, and support for disengagement (Smith et al., 2026).

Despite these developments, several gaps remain. First, previous studies have often examined risk factors and behavioral consequences separately, making it difficult to understand how pathways into gambling become connected with subsequent changes in everyday routines. Second, many studies focus on players, adolescents, or university students without integrating the perspectives of people who interact directly with them. Third, relational and community-level conditions remain less frequently examined than individual risk factors, even though gambling-related harm may spread through families, friendship networks, workplaces, educational settings, and local communities (Ghelfi et al., 2024; Tulloch et al., 2022). Fourth, the relationship between religious prohibition and actual behavioral restraint has received limited attention in localized studies of online gambling. Awareness that gambling constitutes *maisir* does not necessarily explain whether religious knowledge becomes effective behavioral control when play has been normalized through peer relations, economic expectations, and continuous digital access.

These gaps are particularly relevant in Aceh, where gambling is publicly understood through religious, legal, and moral frameworks, but digital platforms may enable gambling-like practices to enter everyday social environments in less visible

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forms. In a close-knit gampong setting, workplaces, friendship groups, residential spaces, and educational environments can become channels through which stories of winning, information about chip transactions, and gaming practices circulate. The local context therefore provides an opportunity to examine not only why individuals begin or continue playing, but also how those around them perceive changes in religious routines, social relations, educational participation, productivity, and economic behavior.

Accordingly, this study examines involvement in Higgs Domino Island in Gampong Lamdingin, Banda Aceh. It addresses two questions: (1) What factors are associated with residents' involvement in Higgs Domino Island? and (2) What perceived implications does such involvement have for religious routines, rest and productivity, social relations, educational activities, and economic management according to the informants' experiences? The term "perceived implications" is used deliberately because the qualitative case-study design does not measure effect magnitude, establish causal relationships, or diagnose gambling disorder. Instead, it interprets patterns of experience and behavioral change reported by players and individuals who interacted directly with them.

## B. Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case-study design to examine involvement in Higgs Domino Island within the bounded social context of Gampong Lamdingin, Kuta Alam District, Banda Aceh City. A case-study design was appropriate because the research sought to understand pathways of involvement and their perceived behavioral implications within a specific community setting rather than to measure effect magnitude, establish causal relationships, or generate statistical generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019). The units of analysis were the experiences, actions, and social interactions associated with Higgs Domino Island. These included pathways into play, peer and environmental exposure, experiences of winning and losing, repeated involvement, chip-related transactions, expectations of economic gain, awareness of religious prohibitions, and perceived changes in religious routines, rest and productivity, social relations, educational activities, and economic management.

Thirteen informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement as players or their close and repeated interaction with players. They comprised one civil servant, three university students, two school students, and seven other community members. The sample was intended to capture variation in social position and experience within the bounded case rather than to represent the population of Gampong Lamdingin. Informant identities were protected through the use of codes and the removal of identifying details from the presentation of findings.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. The interviews explored how informants became acquainted with Higgs Domino Island, their reasons for beginning or continuing to play, experiences of winning and losing, patterns of chip purchase or exchange, attempts to control or discontinue play, awareness of religious prohibitions, and perceived

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implications for everyday routines and relationships. Interviews were supported by an interview guide and audio recording. Non-participant observation focused on relevant community settings, player-related activities, patterns of interaction, and responses from people who interacted with players. The researcher did not participate in gaming or chip transactions. Documentation consisted of field notes, interview records, and supporting materials related to the social context of the study. Because transaction records, time-use logs, and academic performance data were not available, claims concerning financial expenditure, playing duration, and educational consequences were treated as informants' accounts rather than independently verified measurements.

Data analysis followed an iterative thematic procedure. First, interview records and observation notes were read repeatedly to develop familiarity with the material. Second, relevant segments were assigned initial codes, including peer invitation, stories of winning, economic expectations, repeated play, difficulty controlling play, chip purchases, delayed worship, disrupted sleep, borrowing money, reduced productivity, and limited attention to study. Third, related codes were grouped into broader themes concerning pathways of involvement and perceived behavioral implications. Fourth, accounts were compared across informants to identify recurring patterns, variations, and cases that did not conform to the dominant tendency. Fifth, the themes were interpreted in relation to the literature on social influence, self-control, social control, financial risk, gambling-related harm, and community prevention.

Credibility was strengthened through source and technique triangulation. Accounts from players were compared with those of people who interacted directly with them, while interview data were compared with observational and documentary information. Interpretive consistency was checked across informants, and contrasting cases were retained rather than excluded from the analysis. The findings are presented primarily as analytical paraphrases of informants' accounts rather than as verbatim quotations because the analysis focused on thematic patterns and because the wording of the original statements was condensed for clarity. The study was conducted with attention to confidentiality because it concerned potentially sensitive and unlawful behavior. Informant codes were used throughout the article, and personal details that could enable identification were omitted. The analysis does not diagnose gambling disorder, determine legal guilt, or claim that the reported experiences represent all residents of Gampong Lamdingin or other communities in Aceh.

## C. Results and Discussion

### 1. Results

#### 1) Pathways into Higgs Domino Island Involvement

The informants described several pathways through which players became involved in Higgs Domino Island. These pathways included exposure through coworkers or friends, stories of financial gain, early winning experiences, the desire to fill spare time, previous experience with gambling, and the accessibility of the game through smartphones.

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M first encountered Higgs Domino Island through coworkers and social-media advertisements. After playing for a period of time, he concluded that the money and time spent were not commensurate with the returns obtained. This assessment contributed to his decision to stop playing. S became interested after hearing stories that small amounts of money could produce substantial returns. His interest intensified after an early winning experience, which encouraged him to continue playing in the expectation that the same result could be repeated. MZ reported a similar pathway. Other players' stories of winning initially attracted his attention, and an early win strengthened his belief that the game could provide repeated financial returns. This expectation contributed to his continued involvement. A initially regarded the game as a way to fill spare time. However, the availability of the game through a smartphone made it possible to play repeatedly and without fixed spatial or temporal limitations. B had previous experience with other gambling practices before becoming involved in Higgs Domino Island. He regarded smartphone access as making gambling-like activity easier, faster, and more continuously available.

Some players also associated their involvement with everyday economic needs. They viewed the game as a possible means of supplementing income because they believed that a relatively small amount of money could be multiplied through winning. In these cases, economic pressure did not operate independently but intersected with stories of success, access to chip transactions, and the expectation of obtaining rapid returns.

Cross-informant comparison showed that involvement did not emerge through a uniform pathway. Social exposure was important in several cases, but it did not always result in prolonged participation. M stopped after evaluating the imbalance between expenditure and return, whereas S and MZ continued because early wins reinforced their expectations of future success. A's account emphasized spare time and ease of access, while B's account indicated the relevance of prior gambling experience. These variations suggest a general sequence of exposure, experimentation, winning or losing, chip-related expenditure, and possible repetition, although the sequence did not develop identically across all cases.

**2) Factors Associated with Continued Involvement**

The informants' accounts identified three broadly recurring factors associated with continued involvement: normalization within the social environment, repetitive play that became increasingly difficult to control, and expectations of rapid economic gain. Some informants also described a fourth tendency: awareness of the religious prohibition of gambling did not consistently result in effective behavioral restraint.

B reported that he understood gambling to be religiously prohibited. Nevertheless, frequent interaction with friends who played and the development of habitual participation made the activity appear increasingly normal. In his experience, knowledge of the prohibition remained present but did not automatically lead him to stop.

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S described winning as an important reason for repeating the game. An initial win created the expectation that another win could occur if he continued playing. MZ expressed a comparable perception, explaining that stories of profit and his own winning experience strengthened his belief that the game could provide money quickly. For some players, losing did not immediately lead to disengagement. Instead, losses could produce an intention to play again in order to recover money already spent. Some informants described situations in which funds intended for everyday needs were treated as temporary gaming capital because players expected a subsequent win to produce a larger return.

The accounts suggest that social normalization performed two related functions. First, friends and other players provided information about how to play and obtain chips. Second, the visibility of other players made participation appear socially familiar rather than exceptional. Stories of winning circulated more prominently than accounts of loss, contributing to an uneven perception of the likelihood of financial gain. Repetitive play was also facilitated by continuous smartphone access. Players did not need to travel to a particular location or wait for a specific occasion. The game could be accessed during spare time, after work, or late at night. This ease of access made repetition possible after both winning and losing.

Economic expectations were especially important when players viewed the game as a potential source of supplementary income. The use of funds intended for daily needs was sometimes justified by the belief that the money would be recovered or multiplied. These accounts indicate that economic motivation involved not only financial need but also expectations of rapid return and an incomplete assessment of the possibility of loss. The relationship between religious knowledge and behavior varied across informants. The findings do not show that all players lacked awareness of religious prohibition. Rather, some accounts indicate that religious knowledge did not consistently operate as behavioral restraint when combined with habitual play, peer normalization, easy digital access, and expectations of recovering previous losses.

**3) Perceived Religious, Social, Educational, Productive, and Economic Implications**

The perceived implications of involvement were reported across five domains: religious routines, rest and productivity, social relations, educational activities, and economic management. These implications were not experienced or observed with the same intensity in every case. In the religious domain, some players reportedly continued playing until worship was delayed. Prayer was mentioned as one routine that could be postponed when players remained focused on the game. The data do not establish that every player neglected worship, but some informants associated more intensive involvement with disruption to religious routines.

Rest and productivity were also affected in several accounts. Gaming sessions sometimes continued late into the night, reducing sleeping time. Informants associated insufficient rest with tiredness, reluctance to work, and lower productivity the following

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day. The degree of disruption appeared to depend on the frequency and duration of play. Social implications included noise, harsh speech, and discomfort among people nearby, particularly after players experienced losses. Informants described cases in which players spoke loudly or reacted emotionally when the outcome of the game did not meet their expectations. These reactions could produce interpersonal tension or make family members, friends, coworkers, or other people in the surrounding environment uncomfortable.

Educational implications were reported in relation to student players. Informants who interacted with students described cases in which late-night play was followed by sleeping in the morning, missing classes, or paying less attention during learning activities. These reports were based on informants' observations and experiences rather than academic records or formal measures of educational achievement. Economic implications were visible in the use of money to purchase chips and in efforts to obtain additional funds after losses. Some informants reported that players borrowed money from friends to continue playing. In workplace contexts, there were accounts of players using salaries to purchase chips and later requesting salary advances after money intended for daily needs had been depleted.

The perceived economic consequences therefore extended beyond the players themselves. Borrowing money or requesting salary advances transferred part of the financial pressure to friends, family members, or employers. However, the study did not obtain transaction records, expenditure logs, or verified data concerning the amounts of money involved. These findings should therefore be understood as reported patterns of financial behavior rather than independently measured losses.

Cross-case comparison showed that the perceived implications varied according to the intensity of involvement, the informant's proximity to the player, and the type of behavior directly observed. Some informants reported substantial disruption, while others did not observe serious consequences. The findings consequently do not support the conclusion that every player experienced identical outcomes. They indicate that more frequent and sustained involvement was perceived as being associated with greater diversion of time, attention, and financial resources from ordinary responsibilities.

The results identify a process beginning with social or digital exposure and developing through experimentation, experiences of winning or losing, chip-related expenditure, and repeated play. Continued involvement was associated with social normalization, increasingly repetitive play, expectations of rapid gain, and, among some informants, a gap between religious awareness and effective behavioral restraint. The perceived implications extended across religious routines, rest and productivity, social relations, education, and economic management, although their form and intensity varied across cases.

## 2. Discussion

The findings indicate that involvement in Higgs Domino Island developed through interconnected social, behavioral, technological, and economic pathways. Peer

exposure, stories of winning, early experiences of gain, continuous smartphone access, previous gambling experience, and expectations of rapid profit operated differently across cases. This pattern supports research showing that online gambling involvement cannot be explained solely as an individual choice but emerges through interactions among personal motivations, social relationships, product accessibility, and contextual conditions (Ghelfi et al., 2024; Marionneau et al., 2023). Within Gampong Lamdingin, friends, coworkers, and everyday social networks served as channels through which information about playing, chip transactions, and winning experiences circulated.

Peer environments appeared to function both as sources of introduction and as mechanisms of normalization. Stories of financial gain made the activity appear accessible and potentially profitable, especially when winning experiences were discussed more frequently than losses. This finding is consistent with evidence that peer norms and perceived participation by others may influence gambling initiation and continued involvement (Abrori et al., 2025; Parrado-González et al., 2023). However, exposure did not produce a uniform outcome. M stopped after evaluating the imbalance between expenditure, time, and return, whereas S and MZ continued because early wins strengthened expectations that success could be repeated. These contrasting cases show that players retained agency, although their decisions were shaped by social influence, previous experience, economic expectations, and digital accessibility.

Winning and losing sustained involvement through different processes. Winning reinforced expectations of further gain, while losing could encourage attempts to recover money already spent. Continuous smartphone access made repetition possible with few temporal or spatial barriers, including after both positive and negative outcomes (Fisher et al., 2025; Marionneau et al., 2023). Economic motivation also involved more than the desire for profit. Some players reportedly treated money intended for daily needs as temporary gaming capital because they expected it to be recovered or multiplied. This pattern corresponds with research linking gambling behavior to financial literacy, probability assessment, and financial stress (Mohan, 2025; O'Connor & Ivory, 2025). Nevertheless, the present study did not independently verify transaction values or financial losses, so these findings remain based on informants' accounts.

The study also reveals a tension between awareness of religious prohibition and effective behavioral restraint. Some informants recognized gambling as *maisir*, yet this awareness did not consistently lead them to stop. Religious knowledge appeared less effective when play had become habitual, normalized within peer relationships, easily accessible, and connected to expectations of recovering losses. This finding does not suggest that religious knowledge was irrelevant. Rather, it indicates that normative awareness may require support from self-regulation, family supervision, peer control, and practical restrictions on access. Research on religiosity and self-control similarly suggests that religious orientation may become more behaviorally effective when accompanied by stronger self-regulatory capacity (Billah et al., 2025).

The findings can therefore be interpreted through the complementary perspectives of social learning, self-control, and social control. Social learning is reflected in exposure

to friends and stories of successful play; self-control concerns the ability to limit expenditure or stop repeated involvement; and social control refers to the role of family, peers, workplaces, religious institutions, and community norms in either constraining or normalizing behavior. These dimensions interacted rather than operating independently.

The perceived implications extended across religious routines, rest and productivity, social relations, education, and economic management. Informants associated more intensive involvement with delayed worship, reduced sleep, lower attention to work or study, interpersonal discomfort, borrowing, and salary advances. These findings are consistent with the concept of affected others, which recognizes that gambling-related harm may extend to families, friends, coworkers, and other people connected to the player (Suomi et al., 2023; Tulloch et al., 2022). However, the findings do not show that every player experienced identical consequences. Their form and intensity varied according to frequency of play, prior experience, economic conditions, and relational proximity.

The results suggest that prevention should not rely solely on moral prohibition or individual education. Digital and financial literacy may help residents understand probability, financial risk, and signs of difficulty controlling play, but these measures should be accompanied by family communication, peer support, restrictions on loans or salary advances used for gaming, contextual religious education, and access to counseling. Community and regulatory responses may also need to address chip-related transactions and the continuous accessibility of gambling-like digital products (Clune et al., 2024; Fisher et al., 2025; Jenkins et al., 2024). These measures remain recommendations derived from the findings rather than interventions evaluated by the present study.

The contribution of this study lies in connecting pathways of involvement with perceived behavioral implications within a specific gampong context and in considering both players' accounts and the experiences of people who interacted directly with them. The findings remain limited by the small purposive sample, the focus on one community, and reliance primarily on reported experiences without transaction records, time-use logs, academic records, or clinical assessment. They should therefore be interpreted as context-specific patterns rather than causal relationships or representations of all communities in Aceh.

## D. Conclusion

This study found that involvement in Higgs Domino Island in Gampong Lamdingin developed through several interconnected pathways, including peer and environmental exposure, repeated play, expectations of rapid economic gain, and, among some informants, a gap between awareness of the religious prohibition of gambling and effective behavioral restraint. The perceived implications extended across religious routines, rest and productivity, social relations, educational activities, and economic management. Informants associated more intensive involvement with delayed worship, reduced sleep, lower attention to work or study, interpersonal discomfort, borrowing

money, and requests for salary advances. These implications varied across cases and were not experienced uniformly.

The study contributes a context-specific and process-oriented account that connects pathways of involvement with perceived behavioral implications and considers both players' accounts and the experiences of people who interacted directly with them. The findings suggest that social learning, self-control, and social control provide complementary perspectives for understanding involvement in online gambling within a local community. However, the study does not establish causal relationships, provide clinical diagnoses, or permit statistical generalization because it involved a small purposive sample in one gampong and relied primarily on reported experiences without supporting transaction records, time-use logs, academic records, or productivity measures. Prevention efforts may therefore combine digital and financial literacy, family and peer support, contextual religious education, restrictions on loans or salary advances used for gaming, closer supervision of chip-related transactions, and access to counseling. Future studies should compare multiple communities and combine qualitative accounts with verified financial, educational, or time-use data.

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