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RESPONSIBLE MARKETING AND ADVERTISING IN GAMBLING: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Marketing and advertising play a significant role in the adoption of attitudes and societal norms, which have been shown to have a direct impact on behavioural intentions, ultimately leading to behavioural execution. Concurrent with other attempts to inform policy strategy with respect to harm minimisation in gambling there is a paucity of evidence pertaining to the impact that gambling advertising has on gambling behaviour, gambling-related harm, and the efficacy of advertising regulations to minimise harm. There appears to be an overwhelming portrayal of gambling as a normative, legitimate social activity, at the expense of highlighting the potential risks involved. Furthermore, new marketing techniques utilising the social media platform are able to instil emotive and positive attitudes towards gambling brands and products, as well as enabling consumers to widely share and recommend gambling products across their online community, sometimes exposing under-age and vulnerable populations to gambling. The following paper critically reviews existing research investigating the impact of current gambling advertising and marketing campaigns on both vulnerable (i.e. adolescents and problem gamblers) and normal adult populations, looking specifically at the impact of exposure, the positive framing of gambling, and the transparency of marketing techniques. It is concluded that marketing and advertising in gambling needs to facilitate more informed choice for consumers, and a more balanced approach in the framing of gambling. It is suggested that risk information is presented asynchronously to gambling promotions, as opposed to being delivered as peripheral information, and moreover future strategies need to be based on robust empirical evidence demonstrating the impact of responsible gambling advertising and marketing on behaviour.

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1 INTRODUCTION: CURRENT EVIDENCE AND CHALLENGES

Attempts to inform policy and strategy regarding harm minimisation in gambling need to account for the potential impact of gambling behaviour and gambling-related harm. It is widely accepted that behavioural intentions, shaped by attitudes and social norms, have a direct impact on behaviour execution, and that marketing and advertising specifically, play an important role in attitude adoption and social norms (Luo, Chen, Ching, & Liu, 2011). As a result, it is unsurprising to see research studies focusing on the impact of marketing on gambling behaviour. However, due to fundamental methodological limitations in the scarce research that does exist, there is significant risk in applying the current limited evidence-base to inform regulator policy for the marketing of gambling (Binde, 2014).

Advertising is conceptualised as an environmental variable in terms of its relationship and impact on gambling behaviour. However, measuring the specific impact of advertising on an individual's, and indeed, wider societies', gambling behaviour is inherently challenging given that advertising is a single factor integrated within a myriad of other environmental variables, simultaneously presented in a regulatory framework and social-cultural context (Binde, 2014; Planzer & Wardle, 2011). Indeed, changes in advertising regulatory laws can often coincide with broader regulatory changes, making it hard to pin down the specific impact of advertising policy on gambling behaviour. For example, when measuring the prevalence of problem gambling in Britain pre- and post- implementation of the 2005 Gambling Act, to assess change as a result of relaxation of gambling advertising laws would be of limited informativeness, as relaxation of advertising laws was just one of many changes to the regulatory environment. Planzer and Wardle (2011) also noted that there was not a sizeable increase in problem gambling in Britain since deregulation implementation in 2007, but that any positive or negative effects would only likely manifest after a significant temporal lag following any change to policy. Furthermore, the impact of advertising on gambling behaviour is unlikely to be direct and linear, as its impact will likely be moderated by other structural and environmental factors (Binde, 2007).

Beyond the challenge posed by trying to measure the impact of one environmental factor in isolation, existing studies exploring the impact of advertising on gambling behaviour suffer from significant validity limitations with regards to measurement and sampling. Grant and Kim (2001) for example, reported that 46% of a sample of treatment-seeking problem gamblers self-reported television, radio, and billboard advertisements as triggering an urge to gamble. With reference to this particular study, Binde

(2007) highlighted that the impact of advertising may not be consciously understood by the participant, making self-report data limited as a tool for understanding the impact of advertising on gambling behaviour, yet it is a highly prevalent research method across the few existing empirical studies in this field.

The use of non-representative and self-selecting samples is another factor constraining the wider application of research findings. Lee, Lemanski, and Jun (2008) for example, used a small sample (229) of undergraduate students to assess the role of gambling media exposure on behaviour. Not only was the sample heavily skewed in terms of age, but was also heavily skewed towards females (79.5%). Overall, such methodological limitations in the handful of empirical studies leave us with little understanding regarding the impact of marketing and advertising on gambling behaviour and gambling-related harm.

2 IMPACT OF GAMBLING ADVERTISEMENT EXPOSURE

There is a primary emphasis on the need to limit the negative impact of gambling advertising on vulnerable groups within the population, most notably, children and adolescents (Planzer & Wardle, 2011). First however, evaluation of the impact on non-problem gamblers and adults is required, as a fundamental concern regarding the mass provision of gambling advertisement is the potential increase in participation and the anticipated increase in gambling-related harm that may increase as a result.

It must be noted that the impact of gambling advertising campaigns in a specific jurisdiction will likely vary as a function of the existing market and other elements of the regulatory framework. Binde (2007) noted that gambling advertising expenditure in Sweden increased substantially between 1995 and 2006, but remains reticent in attempting to identify a one-dimensional impact on gambling behaviour. Rather, Binde (2007) highlights that the impact of mass gambling advertising in a mature gambling market will more likely create a gambling product or brand transfer as opposed to an overall increase in participation; an impact that may be distinct from that on an immature market where there are fewer opportunities to gamble.

From a public health perspective, gambling advertising is seen to be a societal risk factor encouraging gambling participation (Shaffer, LaBrie, & Laplante, 2004), where the greater the level of exposure may leave a greater segment of the population at risk of experiencing problem gambling (Shaffer, et al., 2004). While the challenges of measuring the impact of a specific advertising campaign on gambling behaviour has been acknowledged, Shaffer et al. (2004) argued that increased advertising, or increased exposure in general, would stimulate new interest in gambling and increase overall participation. Therefore, an increase in advertising in an immature market is more likely to lead to a gambling participation increase, but this effect would likely be moderated based on the Social Adaptation Model (Shaffer et al., 2004), where it is argued that social adaptation would occur as individuals

begin to experience negative consequences associated with gambling, causing participation to return to pre-exposure levels (Binde, 2014; Shaffer et al., 2004). In sum, the impact of advertising will likely vary between mature and immature gambling markets, but it is also possible that even with an initial uptake in gambling participation, it will unlikely lead to an increase in gambling-related harm across non-vulnerable populations.

2.1 The Normalisation of Gambling through Advertising

As a result of deregulation, gambling has become more readily available in the environment and more prominent in media content. Indeed, one of the most prominent impacts of the Gambling Act 2005 was presenting gambling as a viable and socially acceptable leisure activity, and in response to deregulation, industry engaged in a process of legitimising gambling as socially and culturally acceptable (Johnson, Dowd, Ridgeway, Cook, & Massey, 2006). Humphreys (2010) argued that two further forms of legitimacy were required to create growth in a new market after establishing regulatory frameworks; normative and cultural-cognitive legitimacy. 'Normative legitimacy' refers to a congruence between a product and the social values within a community (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975), whereas 'cultural-cognitive legitimacy' extends further, and rather than an activity being tolerated, the behaviour is considered to be adopted pre-consciously, and reinforced within one's individual schema through cultural processes and representations (Scott, 1995). An example would be the introduction of new technologies into society, such as cellular phones, where initially there is tentativeness in adopting the new technology, but as the product becomes highly prevalent in society the tentativeness dissipates.

Legitimacy is driven through a diffusion mechanism; therefore, mass advertising and the growth in participation leading to diffusion through word of mouth will lead to activity adoption (Humphreys, 2010). Put simply, repeated exposure to gambling through advertising is likely to increase social acceptance and the legitimacy of gambling as a leisure pursuit. The process has been likened to a complex exercise of social construction (see e.g. Strang & Chang, 1993), rather than simply widely disseminating information about the activity and anticipating an adoption of the behaviour. However, it must be emphasised that an increase in social acceptance and participation in gambling may not directly lead to an increase in harm for non-vulnerable populations; rather, gambling-related harm may be determined by the content of the information being presented.

2.2 Positive Framing of Gambling via Advertising

It has been argued that one of the most prominent arenas where gambling is being normalised via cultural-cognitive legitimisation is through professional sport (McKelvey, 2004; Thomas, Lewis, Duong, & McLeod,

2012). Turco (1999) argued that the prohibition of advertising revenue streams from tobacco created a commercial vacuum in professional sports which gambling advertising is filling. The sponsorship of professional sports teams by the gambling industry is ultimately creating a shift in public perception of gambling from a vice to a socially acceptable leisure pursuit (Claussen & Miller, 2001). In a case study assessing the frequency and content of both broadcast and terrestrial advertising strategies on a single professional sport, Thomas et al. (2012) identified a saturation of sporting advertisements at both the sporting venue and broadcast marketing, and also argued that the marketing techniques employed represented gambling as an intrinsic feature of professional sport and an inherent part of the fan experience. The authors also acknowledged no attempt to balance the positive messages and framing of gambling.

While the alignment of betting marketing with professional sports is an obvious pairing given the overlap between the two activities, there is also evidence of other attempts to integrate gambling within other cultural domains. Dyall, Tse, and Kingi (2009) highlighted that sponsorship of certain sporting events may result in targeting specific ethnic groups, resulting in increased exposure to gambling advertisements within such groups. Dyall et al. (2009) extend their concern beyond sporting sponsorship, by outlining the active promotion of gambling to Maori groups through the integration of Maori cultural symbols within gambling products and venues. This highlights the need for gambling advertising regulations and codes of practise to extend beyond concern for vulnerable populations such as problem gambler and adolescents, to safeguard against exposure to specific ethnic groups and the usage of cultural symbols or processes that may further legitimise gambling to that specific group.

Despite a lack of valid empirical evidence for the causal relationship between positive gambling attitudes and behavioural intention, there is concern that content of the advertisements may create a distorted perception of the realities of gambling (Friend & Ladd, 2009). Existing research does however indicate that gambling advertisements overtly present the activity as a fun and entertaining leisure pursuit (McMullan & Miller, 2008; 2010) and is routinely presented as a harmless activity (Monaghan, Derevensky, & Sklar, 2008). Lee et al. (2008) proposed that gambling exposure via media, including advertisements, results in positive attitudes leading to behavioural intent. There were however, significant limitations within this study, such as an unrepresentative sample of female college students from one location, limiting the external validity of the results thus highlighting the need for further empirical research assessing the link between framing of gambling advertising, perceptions of gambling, and behavioural intent.

3 THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING IN ENABLING INFORMED CHOICE

From a British regulatory framework and cultural perspective, gambling is accepted as a credible form of leisure and entertainment. This assumes the principle that gambling, at least in moderation, is not inherently harmful. Therefore, from such a socio-political perspective, the objective is not to minimise gambling but rather to present it as an activity intrinsically associated with risk and an activity requiring self-regulation and control. As a result, policy should not necessarily be aimed at limiting gambling participation in general, via strategies such as advertising restrictions, as advocated by several academics (e.g. Korn & Shaffer, 1999; Livingston & Adams, 2010; Williams, West, & Simpson, 2007), instead, individuals are required to approach gambling as a choice (Blaszczynski, Ladouceur, & Shaffer, 2004). This would however, require stakeholders, including the industry, to provide detailed and accurate information in a timely fashion that enables an individual to make a fully informed choice (Blaszczynski, 2010; Blaszczynski, Ladouceur, & Shaffer, 2004).

Regarding the overwhelming positive presentation of gambling within advertisements, Friend and Ladd (2009) argued that while positive attitudes towards moderate gambling are not inherently problematic, it is an absence of public health messages regarding the risks of gambling that may lead to potential harm through distorted perceptions of gambling. The problem may not necessarily lay with an absence of public health messages; it may be that such messages are disproportionately outweighed against the positive presentation of gambling as pleasurable entertainment (Friend & Ladd, 2009; Lee, Lemanski, & Jun, 2008).

Indeed, in a Canadian context, McMullin and Miller (2010), via a content analysis of broadcast advertisements, observed public health messages pertaining to the risks of gambling were present in the majority of adverts, but were presented as peripheral ‘small print’, and unlikely to be attended to by the consumer. The Gambling Industry within the British context has acknowledged the need for a balanced approach regarding positive representation of gambling within advertising codes, and has recommended the use of a responsible gambling awareness message within marketing strategies. The standardised social responsibility message provided is the web address of an independent source of information and advice about responsible gambling, and where to find help if one is experiencing gambling-related harm (www.gambleware.co.uk). The need to keep responsible gambling messages peripheral in contrast to promoting one’s product and brand and therefore the inconspicuous placement of the responsible gambling message leaves it more likely to be ignored by the consumer. Whilst empirical evidence is lacking, Binde (2014) suggests the use of eye-tracking research to evaluate the effectiveness of embedded responsible gambling messages, in terms of how much attention they actually receive from customers.

There remains an absence of evidence demonstrating the efficacy of the Gamble Aware campaign as a harm minimisation strategy. Furthermore, in a review of similar mass media responsible gambling awareness campaigns, Williams, West, and Simpson (2012) identified that such an approach would be relatively ineffective as a primary strategy to reduce problem gambling, due to the fact that research indicates that non-problem gamblers often do not pay attention to and retain the information.

Because of the need to make responsible gambling awareness within gambling advertisements peripheral due to the primary objective of focussing attention towards the product and brand, it is intuitively reasonable to consider presenting responsible gambling awareness messages independently. While there is an absence of an evidence-base to support this proposal, it is apparent that there is an imperative need to assess the effectiveness of the current Gamble Aware campaign, as well as the impact of stand-alone public health messages in counter-acting the overwhelmingly positive portrayal of gambling within advertisements.

4 IMPACT OF EXPOSURE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

There appears to be a consensus that research regarding the impact of advertising on gambling behaviour should focus upon the impact on vulnerable groups, such as non-adult and problem gambler populations (Planzer & Wardle, 2011).

Research with adolescent populations has tentatively demonstrated a link between exposure to gambling advertisements and both intention to, and participation in, gambling. Based on the existing empirical evidence, Planzer & Wardle (2011) summarised that adolescents are at risk of erroneous schema formation regarding gambling, based on the positive framing of gambling within advertisements. Monaghan, Derevensky, and Sklar (2008) argued that adolescents who were exposed to gambling advertisements were more likely to have intentions to gamble, and ultimately partake in gambling, as the advertising led to the normalisation of gambling as a harmless leisure activity, where the central message being extracted from the advertisements is that gambling leads to winning money and fun. More research is required before such conclusions can be validated, indeed, Planzer and Wardle (2011) raise concern about the validity and quality of literature used to make such conclusions, and emphasise the notion that gambling may not be inherently harmful, where participation is not synonymous with developing problem gambling.

Further research has postulated that the primary effect of advertising exposure on adolescent gambling attitudes and behaviour was that it reinforced and maintained already existing gambling schemata and behavioural patterns (Derevensky, Sklar, Gupta, & Messerlain, 2010). Fundamentally, Derevensky et al. (2010) observed that adolescents with

higher levels of gambling-related harm were more readily able to recall the content of advertisements, and more importantly, the advertisements would stimulate further gambling behaviour. As already highlighted, caution must be taken when using self-report methods to measure the impact of advertising on behaviour, but the general findings from existing empirical studies suggests a possible positive correlation, due to the positive representation of gambling within advertisements creating erroneous and unrealistic gambling schemas (Deverensky et al., 2010; Fried, Teichman, & Rahav, 2009; Monaghan et al., 2008).

There is also a paucity of empirical evidence demonstrating the impact of advertising on individuals with a problem gambling disorder, with existing research suffering from the same methodological limitations already highlighted, such as the limited use of self-report data limiting the validity of findings. In an attempt to moderate such limitations, Binde (2009) conducted an in-depth qualitative assessment of the role of advertising as a trigger to gamble for problem gamblers, enabling a more detailed capture of the complex relationship between advertising, motivation, and behaviour. After interviewing 25 treatment-seeking problem gamblers Binde (2009) found that the vast majority of participants felt that advertising, at best, had a marginal impact on behaviour. Most of the sample indicated advertising may have moderately stimulated interest in a gambling activity, and might stimulate further involvement. Of note however, 20% claimed exposure to advertising created strong gambling impulses leading to deterioration in behavioural control with respect to gambling.

Binde (2009) and Derevensky et al (2010) both acknowledge that problem gamblers will be more sensitive and aware of gambling advertisements, or indeed be in environments where gambling advertising is more prevalent. One would therefore expect a problem gambler to attend more to gambling advertisements given their relevance and familiarity in comparison to non-problem and non-gamblers in general. This must be acknowledged in future research designs exploring the impact of advertising on intention to gamble, namely, problem gamblers will more likely acknowledge and attend to gambling advertisements than control groups.

5 THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR

It is reasonable to propose the online gambling market in Britain is approaching saturation. McCole (2004) specifies that traditional marketing approaches focus on securing customer satisfaction and approval, whereas modern marketing will seek to create an emotional attachment between product or brand and the consumer, particularly within a saturated market. Consumer experiences that are made personal, emotional, memorable, and most importantly engaging, are effective in shaping positive consumer

attitudes and loyalty (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Poulsson & Kale, 2004; Pullman & Gross, 2004).

Information technology and social media are becoming increasingly integrated with marketing in order to create consumer loyalty and expansion in a mechanism known as 'Virtual Experiential Marketing' (VEM; Luo et al., 2011). Through the use of IT and social media, VEM creates an immersive experience for consumers by enhancing their interaction with the operator, aiming to create a sense of membership and positive attitude (Luo et al., 2011). In addition to creating this sense of membership, VEM also enables operators to profile customers within their databases more efficiently with respect to consumer needs and preferences (Chaffey, 2007).

Social media also likely acts as an effective agent in normalising and providing legitimacy to gambling as a leisure activity. Foux (2006) has argued that social media is becoming perceived as a more trustworthy source of product information in comparison to traditional broadcast advertisement. Positive attitudes towards information represented within social media advertising is effective because it engages in a *pull marketing* process where consumers voluntarily choose to learn more about a product or brand (Chaffey, 2007). Social media marketing instils emotional reactions in consumers via the use of engaging and often amusing advertising that is shared by an individual across their online community (Keller & Fay, 2012; Tripodi, 2011), which acts to improve product credibility and reduce mistrust for the brand (Chu & Kim, 2011; Keller & Fay, 2012). While such peer-endorsed advertising with social media is unlikely to be intrinsically harmful, consideration must be given to the impact of exposure of such information to non-adult populations, as well as the need to balance the positive representation of gambling. While it is true that safeguards are put in place on social media that restrict the sharing or provision of gambling advertisements to an age group prohibited from gambling, a recent study conducted by the Advertising Standards Agency (2013) demonstrated that children regularly inflated their age on social networking sites, leaving them exposed to product marketing inappropriate for their age group, including gambling. It is clearly evident that social networking sites must focus on improving age verification systems to prevent the inadvertent marketing of gambling to children and adolescents.

While there is concern that marketing through social media will lead to an overall increase in gambling participation and potential gambling-related harm, the increased consumer to operator and indeed, consumer to consumer interaction, create further opportunities to promote responsible gambling messages and behaviour. Social media provides the opportunity for instant feedback via a heavily monitored social media interface, enabling consumers to rapidly identify themselves to operators as experiencing gambling-related harm and in need of external assistance for problem gambling. Social media may also be an effective platform for responsible gambling awareness for selected populations (e.g. adolescents), particularly given the positive attitude

and trustworthiness attributed to information presented in social media marketing (Foux, 2006), and its effectiveness in word of mouth advocacy (Luo et al., 2011).

It is widely accepted that corporate social responsibility acts as a tool for brand differentiation in saturated markets (Kesavan, Bernacchim, & Mascarenhas, 2013). With this in mind, gambling operators may wish to utilise social media as an effective platform for disseminating their responsible gambling strategies and attempts to enable genuine informed choice surrounding gambling for their customers.

6 IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL MARKETING ON GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR

Whilst advertising is the largest element within marketing, Planzer and Wardle (2011) argue that the impact of different marketing approaches to promote the brand or product, or incentivise the consumption of a brand or product, is also an important area of research. It is argued that different marketing strategies, outside of generic advertising, will impact gambling attitudes and behaviour different across various groups in the population and that such relationships must be understood in order to inform policy (Planzer & Wardle, 2011).

6.1 Impact of Disproportionate Incentives on Gambling Behaviour

Gambling promotional marketing via incentives or offers is regulated by a range of codes and practices to ensure gambling behaviour that is socially irresponsible or could lead to harm is not encouraged. As a result, operators must be cautious that their provision of promotional marketing, which is fundamental to remaining competitive in a saturated market, does not reward excessive or disordered gambling behaviour. Despite the clearly delineated instruction, there is a lack of transparency regarding how such regulations and codes of practice are monitored and enforced beyond customers raising complaints, and perhaps more importantly, there is a lack of transparency regarding how gambling operators can gauge legitimate and socially responsible levels of incentive and reward in relation to customer behaviour.

In terms of online marketing and provision of promotional incentives, Jolley, Mizerski, Lee, and Sadeque (2012) highlighted that permission based emails containing gambling promotional offers were positively received and stimulated retention and therefore further play and expenditure. 'Permission based' marketing relates to marketing where customers agree to receive promotional offers and are viewed more positively than interruption marketing. Provision of one's email address is often a requirement when registering with an online gambling site, and a request for permission to send marketing material is usually embedded within the registration form, making it likely that online retailers will retain an effective method of presenting

promotional offers via permission based emails. This makes it easier to tailor specific promotional offers to specific subgroups that are more likely to respond positively to the offers, based on customer profiles within the data base, therefore, it is argued that mechanisms should be put in place to ensure vulnerable subgroups are not disproportionately targeted as part of a marketing strategy.

6.2 Transparency of Promotional Offers

If gambling is to be conceptualised as a leisure activity to be engaged in as an individual choice, as proposed in the Reno Model (Blaszczynski et al., 2004), then it is fundamental that the individual is presented with all relevant information, in a timely fashion, in order to make an informed choice. As a result, it is integral that gambling promotions do not mislead customers about the potential benefits to be awarded, and operators must make reasonable attempts to remove any ambiguity about the nature and process of the promotional offer.

The primary concern is that marketing promotions are conducted in a socially responsible manner that enables redemption and participation to be an informed choice. Even a superficial assessment of some promotional offers available from online gambling operators indicates there is almost certainly a violation of regulatory guidelines. For example, while being presented as a relatively uncomplicated reward for casino or sportsbook patronage, such as the highly prevalent *100% sign up bonus*, the rules of redemption are often substantial and exceedingly complex, with the full offer terms and conditions sometimes exceeding 1000 words, presented in language not necessarily readily understood by all populations.

Whilst the need to engage in promotional marketing to increase market share is a necessity in a saturated market, currently available gambling promotions appear to contravene existing regulatory frameworks and from a British perspective, codes of practice for marketing, by limiting the capacity of consumers to make rational and informed gambling choices. Arguably, the current regulatory framework for socially responsible gambling marketing is ineffective in providing clear reference points to which gambling operators should adhere, and that it is insufficient to prohibit the use of complex terms and conditions, misleading offers, or indeed disproportionate targeting of specific populations, without the provision of clear benchmarks and examples of socially responsible practice.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is widely accepted that advertising is only one of several environmental factors that may influence gambling behaviour simultaneously, making it challenging to attempt to determine the specific impact of advertising on

gambling-related harm. The impact of advertising is not likely to be overt, making measurement through observational or self-report methods of limited value. It is concluded that longitudinal research that observes the impact of changes in regulation (where advertising is one component) on gambling behaviour and gambling-related harm over the long term is likely to be the most informative approach in terms of determining future policy. In addition, it is acknowledged that there will likely be differential effects of advertising in mature and immature gambling markets, and whilst it has been suggested that the impact of gambling advertising in an a mature market, such as Great Britain, will be minimal, there is a risk that prevalent advertising will lead to the normalisation of gambling as a socially acceptable leisure pursuit, though this may not necessarily lead to an increase in gambling-related harm.

Content analysis of gambling advertisements unsurprisingly concludes that gambling is overwhelmingly portrayed as a positive, enjoyable leisure activity, and while this may be the case for many individuals, there is a need to balance this portrayal with indications that there is potential for harm and that self-control is required. In Great Britain, while the majority of gambling advertisements make reference to responsible gambling guidelines, primarily GambleAware, it is concluded that such messages are likely to be dismissed when coupled with the predominantly positive portrayal of gambling elsewhere in advertisements. As a result, it is proposed that attempts to balance the representation of gambling in advertising should be performed asynchronously rather than simultaneously.

New forms of gambling advertising via social media that provoke a positive response for a customer, such as humour, can stimulate the customer to share advertisements with their social network, creating positive attitudes and peer-endorsed credibility for the product. There is however, the threat that gambling advertisements may appear on under-age social media accounts given the ineffective enforcement of age verification mechanisms. It is also recommended that social media also present a balance of the positives and risks associated with gambling, and social media may be particularly useful in promoting responsible gambling messages and features.

This highlights a priority for future research. Namely, how social media can encourage the use of social responsibility player tools, and the effectiveness of advertising the range of responsible gambling services that the operators can provide to customers who self-identify themselves as experiencing harm on social media. Finally, it is prudent to engage in explorative research comparing the impact of embedded responsible gambling messages, in comparison to asynchronous messaging, in terms of the impact on player gambling intentions and attitudes.

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