



Balancing Today's Challenges and Preparing for Tomorrow: The Realities of the Gambling Terrain

¹Chingozha MP, ^{*2}Chingozha Y, ³Dr. Hlongwana J and ⁴Professor Extra Ord Mawere M

¹Student at Great Zimbabwe University, Harare, Zimbabwe.

^{*2}Student at University of Zimbabwe. Masvingo. Zimbabwe.

^{3,4}Lecturer, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

Abstract

The flip flops within the gambling landscape are apparent within many jurisdictions. The variables characterizing the gambling spaces continue to mutate and cause numerous regulatory challenges. To this, Cottier (2006) argues that, 'observing that past and present avenues have largely failed, it suggests the concept of progressive regulation...' The success stories of the yesteryear are seemingly failing to inform current decisions. The environments seem to be at the pole ends now, to the extent that what worked yesterday may not be relevant today.

The operating terrain is just worlds apart and only those who are aptly adaptive maintain their institutions as going concerns. Without the muscle or nerve to be responsive and adaptive survival becomes a nightmare. The study used the qualitative approach for which unstructured interviews were employed on 10 respondents.

Keywords: Gambling terrain, adaptive environments, jurisdiction, going concern, progressive regulation.

Introduction

The gambling trends and dynamics across many jurisdictions are now so confusing. They continue to flip flops, making traditional decision-making processes inadequate, irrelevant or unsound. Those that are sensitive to these realities are therefore motivated to always 'keep their ears to the ground and eyes wide open' so as not to miss any changes as the variables change.

Progressing regulations have to endeavor to keep active their research tools (Lawn *et al* 2020) ^[1]. Without research on virtually all fronts the strategies would be inadequate to address the contemporary challenges. These challenges are no longer borrowed from traditions and action research is the only way that helps to identify enduring interventions.

Through research, the regulators will be able to learn from lived experiences. This is consistent with the view that 'life is too short to learn from your mistakes alone.' Research therefore helps regulators to learn from others. There are now many regulators and like-minded experts in the gaming industry who now believe in the strength of information exchange. They now appreciate that 'no man is an island.' Indeed, no jurisdiction is an island and can operate as such in this volatile and unpredictable environment. Every progressive jurisdiction needs to understand or appreciate what is happening in other territories. The world is now a global village. The political boundaries can no longer restrict

countries to their specific geography.

The power for collaboration is a pillar that jurisdictions need to leverage on. Rowe *et al* asserts '... continued collaboration and ongoing commitment by all sectors of gambling industry to ensure the customers remains at the forefront of everything we do...' If the criminals realize gaps arising from no corroboration of jurisdictions they will exploit the gap. This is the last that jurisdictions should want to experience. They need a closed front due to seamless collaboration that identifies and flashes out ill and evil intentions from the criminal elements. Through the power of corroboration the jurisdiction will be able to deal with issues of and related to cyber security.

To guarantee the survival of the industry into the future there is a compelling need for data protection. Jurisdiction should therefore invest in data protection so as to protect the industry.

Regulators are also expected to institute internal controls within their institutions. These controls help to ensure that there is no room for crime and criminality. The controls would guarantee that the industry is not abused or choked by mischief. To this Redshaw and Nicolli (2010) ^[6] argue that cultivation of social responsiveness is needed to address some of the problems.

A serious challenge confronting many jurisdictions is filtering of gambling at an alarming rate to the vulnerable particularly

children in school. This takes a sad toll on them which negatively impacts their schooling. The regulation should be smart so as to keep these children away from gambling. The delays in instituting or promulgating interventions/provisions that control this development only worsens the growth and development of these children into responsible adults. While gambling is being accessed from many places including schools, it is particularly worse now in homes due to the development of technology and the availability of games through the virtual space. Many of these children now have access to smart phones, which phones allow then unhindered access to online gambling (Lawn *et al* 2020)^[1]

The collaborative effort that brings together all concerned groups should come together to define ways to control this access to gambling by young persons. The providers of such games should actually ‘play ball’ through developing software that help to restrict access by unqualifying individuals.

These regulators may also pursue aggressive awareness campaigns at schools to help children (Redshaw and Nicoli 2010)^[6] see that gambling that is taken this early in life may not be good for them. This approach will then help protect, empower and promote the industry (Nayavitis *et al*, 2003)

The gaming industry is continuously innovating. This should motivate the regulators and other industry experts to keep researching so as to always have enduring interventions that promote industry sustainability and keep track of all developments on the gaming terrain. Operators inevitably need to retain players so that they benefit from their long playing careers (Rowe *et al*, 217)

Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach. This was meant to appeal to issues at the heart of the respondents. A total of 10 respondents were interviewed during the CEOs forum in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa. The questions used for this study were unstructured and engaging. The respondents were quite supportive to the research study. The respondents availed themselves at odd hours since the study was undertaken on the sidelines of a conference.

Findings

The study revealed that:

- There was need for continuous learning so as to keep abreast of current trends within the industry. The regulators should invest in staff training so that their officers have the right skills set.
- Data protection is critical: For the industry to be sustained into the future there is need for ensuring that industry data is secure (Bygrave, 2010)^[7]. Data security is only possible with a deliberate investment drive.
- There is need for unadulterated collaboration: There is need for extra territorial collaboration. This helps to protect jurisdiction from cross border crime and criminality.
- There is need for alignment of regulation: Jurisdictions should always make efforts to align their regulation with current trends.
- There is need for awareness campaigns: Campaigns should be pursued with aggression so as to keep children away from gambling. The campaigns will also appeal to problem gambling to desist from excessive gambling. These sentiments were echoed by all responses. Respondent R8 actually said

- Vana vedu vanopera ne gambling iyi.: Vakuru ngavaite mitemo inochengeta vana vedu (our children will perish because of gambling. The authorities should have laws that protect our children from gambling harm.)
- There is need to fight unregulated market: The regulator should have deliberate programmes that are coordinated to fight the illegal market. According to the respondents a multi stakeholder engagement is central in ensuring the fight against the illegal operations. The illegal market if allowed to flourish has the impact of affecting the revenue for legitimate operators and tax levels for government. One respondent had this to say

‘The illegal market should never be allowed to flourish. Every effort must be pursued to account for these illegal operators. They make money at no cost at all while legitimate operators still have to pay for licenses, levies and taxes. This is not fair. It is unjustified and needs to be brought to an end.

- There is need for customer protection: The players are a critical component of the gambling ecosystem. They need to be protected from unlicensed operators, excessive gambling and misleading advertisement. The regulators must engage the operators to ensure that exclusive measures are instituted since many players now have access to gambling platforms through the use of various internet tools (Lawn *et al*.2020)^[1].

Conclusion

The gaming landscape is unpredictable as new trends continue to emerge. Continuous learning and research is therefore critical so that the players within the gaming ecosystem continue to be aware of emerging trends and innovations. This will help to ensure that products providing the highest utility are provided.

References

1. Lawn S, Oster C, Riley B, Smith D, Baigent M, Rahamathulla MA. Literature Review and Gap analysis Of Emerging Technologies and New Trends in Gambling. *International Journal on Environmental Research Public Health*. 2020; 17(3):744.
2. Houghton S, Boy F, Bradley A, James RJE, Ward H, Dyman S. Adapting in times of crisis. How social media marketing of gambling changed in response to major shifts in the gambling landscape. *Information, Communication Society*, 2025, 1-17.
3. Najavits LM, Grymala LD and George B. Can advertising increase Awareness of Problem Gambling?. A statewide survey of impact. *Psychology of addictive behaviors*. 2003; 17(4):324-327.
4. Cottier T. From progressive Liberalization to progressive regulation in WTO Law. *Journal of International economic law volume*. 2006; 9(4):779-821.
5. Rowe, Becky, De Ionna, Daimon, Holland, Jenny, Flude, Connie, Brodrick, Lily, Vincy, Adelaide, Mouts, Mathew. Responsible gaming. Corroborative innovation identifying and practice and inspiring change, 2017.
6. Redshaw S and Nicol F. Gambling drivers. Regulating cultural Technologies, Subjects, Spaces and Practices of Mobility, *Mobilities*. 2010; 5(3):409-430.
7. Bygrave LA. Privacy and Data Protection in an international perspective *Scandinavian Studies in two*. 2010; 56(8):165-200.