Chapter 10
Terrestrial vs. Online Gamblers: An Empirical Study on Their Perceptions Towards E-Gambling

Vaggelis Saprikis
Technological and Educational Institute of Western Macedonia, Greece

ABSTRACT

It goes without saying that the advances of Information and Communication Technologies have brought many changes in various forms of traditional commerce including gambling industry. Nowadays, e-gambling has dramatically changed the way of wagering and is considered as one of the fastest growing sectors of contemporary e-commerce. Every day even more individuals are moving from terrestrial to online gambling venues or start wagering exclusively online taking advantage of the numerous playing options. Characteristically, the global internet gambling gross market is expected to exceed US$51 billion by 2018. Consequently, its dynamics has forced many researchers to investigate e-gambling scientific field from different perspectives trying to gain an improved insight into gamblers behavior in the cyberspace. This chapter aims to investigate the perceived advantages and disadvantages of terrestrial versus online gamblers towards e-gambling activities focusing on university students. Furthermore, it aims to identify possible similarities and differences between the two groups examined.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic gambling is defined as the process of gambling real money over the Internet. It is also referred as online gambling or internet gambling or remote gambling. According to Wood & Williams (2011), it characterizes all forms of wagering via the World Wide Web through varied media including personal computers, mobile phones, interactive television and mobile devices. Beginning in the early 1990s, as the Internet access expanded into private residences and workplaces, gamblers were introduced to a new-fangled area of Internet-based gambling opportunities. Moreover, it was boosted by the advancements of mobile technology and the exponential growth of smartphone and tablet technology, as well as the wide progress of networking technology. It is considered one of the most significant changes to the gambling environment in the past 15 years (Gainsbury et al., 2012; Wood & Williams 2011). As a...
consequence, any form of traditional gambling soon appeared in its electronic format and have since been easily reached to any person with an Internet connection and means of electronically transferring money (Wood & Williams, 2011). Sports betting, skill games such as poker and blackjack, lucky games such as slot machines roulette, as well as many other e-gambling games have been widely available offering numerous e-gambling features and playing options.

Nowadays, e-gambling is a highly profitable business with numerous websites varied from enterprises offering pure gambling choices to others providing relevant information, such as odds and payout rates. It is also characterized as one of the fastest growing sectors of e-commerce being forced by overcoming many of the restricted laws that were supposed to regulate gambling activity (Wood & Williams, 2007). Characteristically, the global internet gambling gross market is expected to exceed US$51 billion by 2018 (Statista, 2017). Furthermore, it seems to be outpacing casino gambling, growing at a rate of about 12% per annum, and represents an increasingly crucial sector (around 9%) of the gambling market (Global Betting and Gaming Consultants, 2010; Kelleher, 2010; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). However, in some countries online gambling market comprises more than 30% of the total gambling market. For example, online gambling industry accounts for 33% of all gambling in Britain (Gambling Commission, 2017). Hence, despite the fact that land-based gambling industry has experienced a decline, goings on e-gambling appears to be increasing (Gainsbury et al., 2012). Indicatively, according to Gainsbury et al. (2015a) online gamblers participate on a greater number of activities overall and more frequently.

E-gambling offers various advantages to both individuals and enterprises. On the consumer’s side, the three most commonly cited advantages have been the greater convenience, the 24h availability and the better payout rates. Moreover, the faster bidding and the fact that you do not have to move from your place are other two greatly mentioned factors that motivate individuals to gamble online (e.g., Gainsbury et al., 2012 & 2015b; Griffiths & Barnes, 2008; Griffiths, 2009; Griffiths et al., 2009; McBride & Derevensky, 2009; Wood & Williams, 2007, 2009, 2011). On the enterprise’s side, e-gambling has significantly changed the way firms present, advertise, sell and communicate with existing and potential customers. Furthermore, it offers them access to a much greater market that extends well beyond the traditional geographic markets serviced by their terrestrial venues.

Regarding Greece, e-gambling has been gradually emerged in the last years. According to Eltrun (2011), Greek e-gamblers were estimated to about 400,000 people in 2011; increased by 33% compared to 2010. Additionally, they have used the Internet and purchased online 20% more compared to the rest of Greek e-consumers. The annual gross market has been estimated between €210 million to €260 million and the annual amount of money that each person spent between €250 and €320 (Gambling Data, 2011). More recent studies presented that e-gambling services have been utilized by the 9% (Eltrun, 2013) and 13.5% (Saprikis, 2015) of the Greek e-shopping community.

Thus, in order to obtain a thorough point of view regarding gamblers’ perceptions towards e-gambling, this chapter aims to investigate e-gamblers and terrestrial gamblers perceptions towards e-gambling and reveals possible differences and similarities among them focusing on Greek university students. Specifically, the study examines their perceived advantages and disadvantages on e-gambling. By understanding gamblers’ behavior, the relevant websites, as well as potential e-gambling ventures would be able to incorporate suitable marketing strategies, moderate gamblers’ concerns and convince even more people being transferred from offline to online gambling. Furthermore, they would be able to persuade current e-gamblers increase the amount of money spent.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. In the first section, the related literature review and information about the current study are presented. This is followed by the methodology and the results