

IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING GAMBLIFIED EXPERIENCES AMONG HIGGS DOMINO ISLAND USERS IN MAKASSAR CITY

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Abstract- The term gamblification has recently become increasingly popular in studies of gambling, video games, and online media. Gamblification is often represented as the convergence of game play and gambling. Higgs Domino Island is an online gaming application that applies the concept of gamblification by bringing gambling experience into its product services. Currently, Higgs domino island is very widely played by people in Makassar City. This study aims to identify and evaluate the five concepts of gamblified experiences felt by users of the Higgs domino Island online game in Makassar City. This research uses a conceptual framework developed by Josep Macey, Juho Hamari, and Martin Adam to identify and evaluate gamblified experiences. The method used in this research is a mixed method through two stages, namely with a qualitative approach and a quantitative approach. The results of research with a qualitative approach illustrate that people in Makassar City experience gambling experiences on five concepts of gamblified experience applied in Higgs Domino Island. The results of the qualitative approach show that of the five core concepts of gamblified experiences, only the concept of ethical concern does not have a balanced proportion in each component. In conclusion, users of Higgs Domino Island in Makassar city feel the experience of playing gambling based on the five concepts of gamblified experiences. However, from the results shown in the radar chart, Higgs Domino Island is still considered ethically unfavorable in its product services.

Keywords: Gamblification, Gamblified experiences, online game, Convergence

I. INTRODUCTION

The practice of gambling has been part of human history for thousands of years. Ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Greece, and Rome, engaged in various forms of gambling, ranging from dice games to betting on animal fights. Historical sources show gambling to be one of the few social activities that occurs in almost all cultures and in every time period (McMillen, 2005).

Gambling is narrowly defined in relation to a financial transaction (risking money) or an item of economic value, with an uncertain outcome of a future event (McMillen, 2005). (Lakoro et al., 2020) defines gambling as the deliberate betting of a value or something that is considered valuable by realizing

certain risks and expectations on the events of games, matches, competitions and events that are not or have uncertain outcomes.

The convergence of gambling and gaming has been boosted in recent years by the advent of digital and online technologies (King et al., 2015). Gamblification is often represented as the convergence of gaming and gambling. The term Gamblification was first used to define how the sports industry was co-opted and used as a means to promote gambling (McMullan & Miller, 2008). One online application that combines gaming and gambling in its product is Higgs Domino Island (HDI). In Higgs Domino Island, users do not bet with real money. Instead, they bet and win a simulated currency that essentially cannot be used outside the game or converted into real money. This is confirmed by HDI's statement regarding the prohibition of misuse of its game application in any form of gambling. This statement emphasizes that the game in the HDI application is only a form of entertainment, as well as the digital money in the application is used for entertainment in the game.

Although it is known that the main mechanism of gambling activities is uncertain conditions or results, an act cannot be declared as an act of gambling if it does not have a combination of the other two components, betting and reward. Thus, games in the HDI do not fall under the definition of gambling, as is the case with social casino games (SCGs). SCGs remove the player's ability to cash out any winnings, so they are not covered by the legal definition of gambling, despite the fact that they directly replicate gambling activities such as poker, roulette and slot machines (Abarbanel & Rahman, 2015).

Higgs Domino Island (HDI) applies the concept of gamblification by bringing the gambling experience into its games. HDI not only provides slot gambling games, in the application there are also about 35 other types of games, ranging from dice, billiards, cards, chess, checkers, cocky, to puzzles. To play in this application, a special payment tool (coin or chip) is required as a betting tool. The way to get coins can be by buying directly in the application. Each player can bet against the bookie or fellow users) application.

Online gambling games on the Higgs Domino Island application are currently trending among various groups in the city of Makassar. Higgs Domino Island has penetrated into the government sector, schools, and campuses. The Minister of Communication and Information, Budi Arie Setiadi, revealed that local government officials and state civil servants (ASN) were also infected with online gambling (CNN Indonesia, 2023). Students, while filling the time waiting for the arrival of lecturers, often play slots on the sidelines of class time. Slot

gambling and chip buying and selling activities are also rife in coffee shops and youth hangouts. Even slot gambling has far reached rural areas. As many as 2.2 million online slot gambling players are students, housewives and farmers (Septiani & Widjajanti, 2023).

This study aims to identify and evaluate the five concepts of gamblified experiences experienced by users of the online game Higgs Domino Island in Makassar City.

II. METHOD AND PARTICIPANTS

This study uses a conceptual framework developed by Josep Macey, Juho Hamari, and Martin Adam to understand and identify gamblified experiences. The method used in this research is a mixed method through two approaches. First, it uses a qualitative approach where various aspects of gamblification are identified and described, providing information about the nature of the elements used and identifying areas of particular concern for individual users. Secondly, the quantitative approach provides an evaluation of the service or product, allowing comparison between different examples and visual presentation of information.

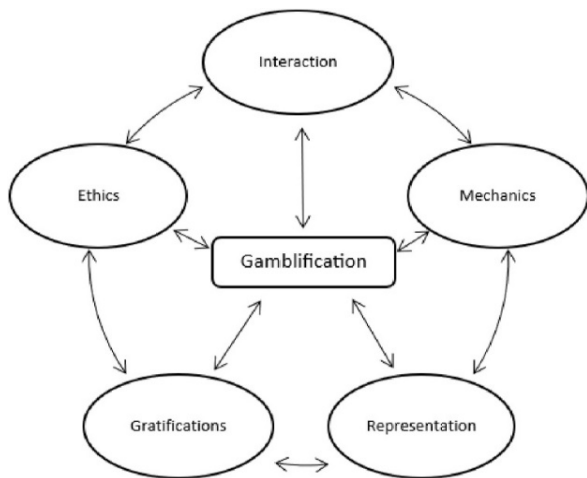


Figure 1. The five concepts of gamblified experience. (Macey et al., 2024)

The qualitative approach was conducted using observation and interview techniques with users of the higgs domino island application. Informants consisted of

eleven people aged 18 years or older and have used the higgs domino island application for at least one year.

Initials Informant	Age	Length of time as a Higgs domino island user
MD	36 Years	1 Year
SJ	42 Years	5 Years
IJ	39 Years	3 Years
ZR	19 Years	1 Year
AK	38 Years	2 Years
AG	20 Years	2 Years
MA	38 Years	3 Years
AA	21 Years	2 Years
MS	21 Years	1 Year
AR	19 Years	2 Years
FA	29 Years	3 Years

Table 1. List of Informants

(Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024)

The quantitative approach involved filling out a questionnaire with 30 respondents, using a series of scales to evaluate the five core components of illustrated experiences.

User Interactions	1. No interaction/pasive consumption 0	2. Minimal interactions single session 0	3. Minimal interactions single session 0	4. Multiple interactions extended period 0	5. Multiple interactions extended period 0
Gambling Fidelity	1. No gambling elements 0	2. Uncertain event plus staking or reward 0	3. Uncertain event plus staking or reward 0	4. All elements 0	5. All elements 0
Gambling Privacy	1. Optional, add-on 0	2. Integrated 0	3. Integrated 0	4. Sole 0	5. Sole 0
Role of Gambling - Promotions	1. Gambling is neither promoted, nor promotes other products/services 0	2. Gambling promotes other products/services 0	3. Gambling promotes other products/services 0	4. Gambling is being promoted 0	5. Gambling is being promoted 0
Role of Gambling - Engagement	1. Negligible effect 0	2. Engagement somewhat strengthened 0	3. Engagement somewhat strengthened 0	4. Engagement notably strengthened 0	5. Engagement notably strengthened 0
Role of Gambling - Monetization	1. Negligible effect 0	2. Profitability somewhat increased 0	3. Profitability somewhat increased 0	4. Profitability notably increased 0	5. Profitability notably increased 0

Figure 2. Scale for assessing concept 1: Interaction Context.(Macey et al., 2024)

	1. Supports Pro-social or positive outcomes	2	3. Outcomes are unclear/mixed	4	5. Outcomes are detrimental
<i>Impact</i>	0	0	0	0	0
	1. System is transparent and fair to all	2	3. Not all users are treated the same	4	5. System exploits specific users' vulnerabilities
<i>Exploitation</i>	0	0	0	0	0
	1. There is no potential for harm to users	2	3. There is the potential for minor harm to users	4	5. There is potential for significant harm to users
<i>Potential for Harm</i>	0	0	0	0	0
	1. Young or otherwise vulnerable users are fully protected	2	3. Young or otherwise vulnerable users are somewhat protected	4	5. Young or otherwise vulnerable users are not protected
<i>Protection</i>	0	0	0	0	0
	1. System is secure	2	3. System is somewhat secure	4	5. System is insecure
<i>Trust</i>	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 3. Scale for assessing concept 2: Ethical Concerns.(Macey et al., 2024)

<i>Gambling References - Language/Terminology</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Gambling References - Imagery</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Gambling References - Audio</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Tolerance</i>	1. Gambling is presented negatively	2	3. Gambling is presented neutrally	4	5. Gambling is presented positively
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Marketing</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 4. Scale for assessing concept 3: Representational Characteristics. (Macey et al., 2024)

<i>Motivations - Chance to Win</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Motivations - Dream of Jackpot</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Motivations - Social Rewards</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Motivations - Intellectual Challenge</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Motivations - Mood Change</i>	1. None	2	3. Moderate amount	4	5. Very Large Amount
	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 5. Scale for assessing concept 4: Gambling Motivations Gratified.(Macey et al., 2024)

<i>Staking Conditions</i>	1. Restricted entry	2	3. Conditional entry	4	5. Unrestricted entry
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Stake Type</i>	1. Intangible asset	2	3. Virtual item/currency	4	5. Tangible asset (e.g. currency)
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Event format</i>	1. No resemblance to established activity	2	3. Resembles established activity	4	5. Established activity
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>User Influence</i>	1. Individual cannot influence outcome	2	3. Moderate level of influence	4	5. Significant influence on outcome
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Reward Type</i>	1. Intangible asset	2	3. Virtual item/currency	4	5. Tangible asset (e.g. currency)
	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Reward Pool</i>	1. Individual Only	2	3. Restricted pool	4	5. Public pool
	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 6. Scale for assessing concept 5: Gambling Mechanics.(Macey et al., 2024)

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The results of the qualitative approach to the five core concepts of gamified experiences are as follows:

a. Interaction Concept

The level of user interaction in the HDI application is very high. Users are not passive by simply pressing a button, then watching the game until it is over. In certain games in HDI, users can invite each other to join a game room. Users can move from one room to another within a single betting game. Similarly, users can move from one game to another in real-time. This application is also equipped with a conversation feature in the form of text (chat).

The game form in this application is a replication of conventional gambling games. The appeal of the game comes from the gambling experience that is simulated into the game play. The gambling experience is both the main service and an additional element in the game. The main service comes from the form of user bets in the game, while the additional element comes from the lucky spin event or the spinning wheel game. The concept of the spinning wheel game is similar to the loot box game in online games in general. A loot box is an in-game item that

distributes rewards to players using random numbers (Macey & Hamari, 2019).

b. Ethical Concern Concept

Betting activities are inseparable from the games available in Higgs domino island. The effect of betting is an attraction in this game, even though the bet is in the form of virtual money. The results of interviews with eleven informants show that all users stated that they play this game as a recreational activity and fill their spare time. However, the majority of them shifted from recreational activities in gambling simulation games to actual gambling activities due to trading coins (chips).

From the interview results, some people also admitted to being pathological gamblers. Informant IJ (2024), for example, stated that he had experienced severe addiction to playing slots at Higgs Domino Island. He played without knowing the time, in a day almost all his time was spent playing slots. His income from his monthly salary was never given to his wife. He uses his entire salary just to bet in the slot room. The effect of this addiction has an impact on his household relationship to be less harmonious. This was also experienced by informant AI (2024) who spent all the money he earned from the harvest in just a short time playing slot gambling. In fact, he obtained the harvest after waiting for four months.

The "terms of use" section of the HDI app states that the service is only intended for people aged 18 years and above, but no age verification procedure is provided. Similarly, there is no warning about the consequences of playing the game for too long. In addition, the information provided by HDI in the "terms of use" section states that the service complies with all relevant privacy and data protection laws based on the user's location. However, there is no detailed mention in the "terms of use" of the encryption technology used.

c. The concept of Representational characteristics

This app uses terminology commonly found in conventional gambling games. Terms such as bet, big win, mega win, super win, or jackpot are widely used in the game. The use of audio in the game stimulates adrenaline with the sound of falling coins, the sound of shuffling cards, and the sound of slot machine rotation. The visualization displayed in the HDI game uses currency symbols and characters that are synonymous with gambling. The atmosphere constructed in the game

presents an experience like playing gambling in a real casino.

HDI promotes separate services/products, and specific gambling products/services are also promoted in the app. In contrast, HDI is promoted in some games and content on social media. From the interviews with informants, the majority of users have seen content promoting HDIs both in online game content and on social media.

According to informant FA (2024), there are people who are not officially affiliated with Higgs Domino Island who promote HDI through live streaming on social media. They promote HDI by posting live streaming content of online gaming videos, such as slot games on YouTube and Facebook. In the live streaming content, they buy and sell coins and reap a lot of profits from these activities.

d. Concept of Gratification of Gambling Motivation

The opportunity to win is the main motive for gambling and is an attraction for users. Higgs Domino Island periodically sends data on the user's game screen regarding the wins obtained by other users. This will have an impact on increasing the user's desire to play and win. In addition, the jackpot amount in the game is large enough to motivate users to play for a long time. As stated by informant SJ (2024), early morning is the best time to play slots. Therefore, he is willing to stay up all night to get the winnings and jackpots.

Winning in HDI games is not only limited to earning coins or financial rewards (if exchanged for real money), but also a feeling of pride for beating other users or hitting the jackpot. According to informant AA (2024), winning the game creates its own pride. There is a feeling of pride if you hit the jackpot (MA, 2024). Informant AK (2024), said that he felt proud if he won, especially if he won up to 1 T. The winning results will be conveyed and shared with friends (IJ, 2024). Sometimes they even post the winnings on social media (MS, 2024).

e. Gambling Mechanics Concept

As mentioned earlier, gambling consists of three main elements, namely betting, uncertain outcomes, and rewards (Williams et al., 2021). Therefore, the mechanism of gamblification in HDI can be seen from the components that are inseparable from these three main elements, such

as staking conditions, point bet types, event formats, user influence, reward types, and reward pools.

Staking conditions in HDI are not limited to special memberships. Users can participate or bet in the game as long as they have virtual currency or coins (chips). Users can also earn bonuses in addition to the bets won on certain games, such as mission bonuses in domino games. The bonus is in the form of nominal rupiah, but still cannot be exchanged for real money, it can only be exchanged in the form of free credit or coins. In addition, there are several virtual goods in the form of diamonds that can be exchanged for features contained in the application.

The event format or form of gambling in HDI mostly resembles traditional forms of gambling, such as domino (gagle) games, qiuqiu, playing cards, ludo, slots, etc. The other games are new forms of games that are not traditional. Other games are new forms of games that are not the same as games that are generally recognized by the community. However, all games in HDI require users to bet.

As with any gambling game, the user's chances of making a profit depend on luck, as well as being better trained or more skilled. Some of the games in HDI require at least one of the following: numeracy skills, strategic thinking, quick analysis, and the ability to make decisions in changing situations. Although in most games, such as slot games, only luck created by a limited set of complex computer instructions is required. As informant FA (2024) said, slot games have been organized based on algorithms, so no special skills and time are needed to play. In contrast to FA's statement, informant AA (2024) stated that there are best times to play slots, namely from midnight to dawn. These moments are the times with the highest probability of winning and often get jackpots (SJ, 2024).

2. The results of the quantitative approach from 30 respondents obtained the following measurement data:

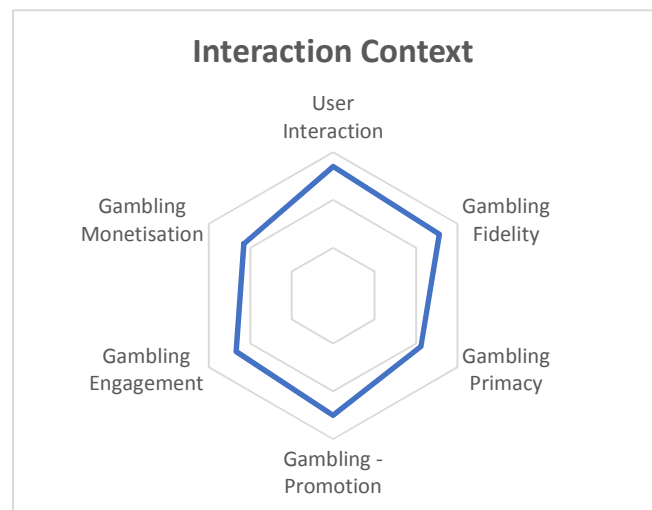
Concept		Assessment
1	Interaction Context	
	User Interaction	135
	Gambling Fidelity	128
	Gambling Primacy	106
	Role of Gambling - Promotion	125
	Role of Gambling - Engagement	117

	Role of Gambling - Monetisation	108
2	Ethical Concerns	
	Impact	137
	Exploitation	127
	Potential of Harm	131
	Protection	135
	Trust	130
3	Representational Characteristics	
	Gambling References - Terminology	127
	Gambling References - Imagery	132
	Gambling References - Audio	119
	Valance	100
	Marketing	118
4	Motivations Gratified	
	Chance to Win	125
	Hit the Jackpot	121
	Social Rewards	95
	Intellectual Challenge	89
	Mood Change	119
5	Gambling Mechanics	
	Staking Conditions	123
	Stake Type	90
	Event Format	111
	User Influence	82
	Reward Type	90
	Reward Pool	110

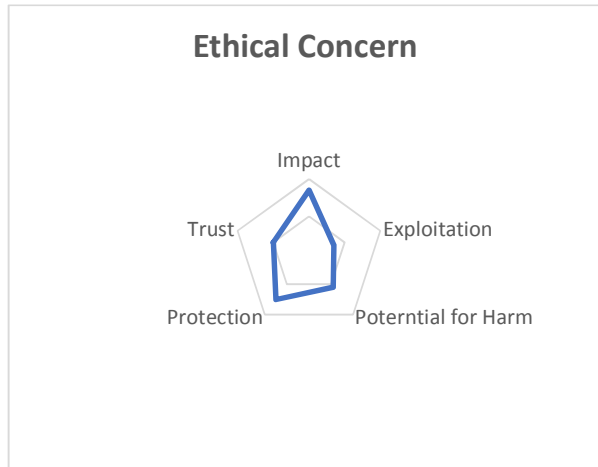
Table 2. List of assessments that have been conducted

(Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024)

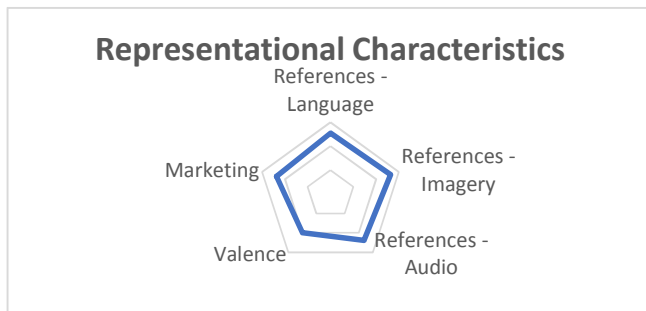
The data above is presented in a radar chart as follows:



Assessment of the Interaction Context concept
(Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024)



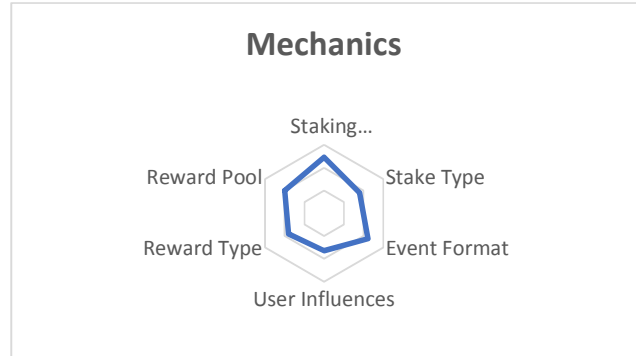
Graph 2. Assessment of the Ethical Concern Concept
(Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024)



Graph 3. Assessment of the Concept of Representational Characteristics
(Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024)



Graph 4. Assessment of the Motivation Gratiified Concept
(Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024)



Graph 5. Gambling Mechanics concept assessment
(Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024)

Higgs domino island uses gamblified experiences and interactions as well as promotions as a means to attract users. Similarly, the event format or form of gambling in HDI is very familiar to users as it largely resembles traditional forms of gambling. The use of gambling terms, sounds and visuals in higgs domino island creates a gambling experience that resembles a genuine gambling atmosphere. Higgs domino island makes good use of the desire-to-win and jackpot factors to increase users' motivation to play. And finally, there are issues in terms of exploitation and protection of users, adverse impacts, and a fairly low level of trust.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, users in Makassar city feel the gambling experience applied by higgs domino island based on the five concepts of Gamblified experiences. However, from the results shown in the radar chart, Higgs Domino Island is still considered ethically poor in its product services.

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