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## Administrative and Legal Aspects Related to Combat Gambling and Computer Addiction in Young People

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to determine the forms, types and factors of computer addiction and gambling in young people, as well as propose ways to counteract their negative impact. The methodological basis of the study is sociological research, analysis of state policy and regulations; methods of classification and generalization. Results: the authors have proven that Government policy should be aimed to improve the information culture of users of the global network, the formation of skills for safe work in cyberspace and mastering the rules and norms of behaviour in cyber reality. The main ways to counteract the negative impact of computer addiction on young people are suggested, in particular, encouraging public organizations to identify people addicted to gambling and provide them with information on rehabilitation centers and forms of rehabilitation; limiting the time minors spend in play areas; establish information security standards in the activities of the organizers of games for money, and promote the principles of responsible gambling.

KEYWORDS: Addiction; Computer Games; Information Society; Young People; Gambling; Government Policy; Ludomania; Legal responsibility; Social Responsibility.

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## Aspectos administrativos y legales relacionados con el combate al juego y la adicción a la computadora en jóvenes

### RESUMEN

El objetivo del estudio es determinar las formas, tipos y factores de la adicción a la computadora y el juego en los jóvenes, así como proponer formas de contrarrestar su impacto negativo. La base metodológica del estudio es la investigación sociológica, análisis de la política y normativa estatal; métodos de clasificación y generalización. Resultados: los autores han comprobado que la política del gobierno debe estar dirigida a mejorar la cultura de la información de los usuarios de la red global, la formación de habilidades para el trabajo seguro en el ciberespacio y el dominio de las reglas y normas de comportamiento en la realidad cibernética. Se sugieren las principales formas de contrarrestar el impacto negativo de la adicción a la computadora en los jóvenes, en particular, alentar a las organizaciones públicas a identificar a las personas adictas al juego y brindarles información sobre centros y formas de rehabilitación; limitar el tiempo de permanencia de los menores en las áreas de juego; establecer estándares de seguridad de la información en las actividades de los organizadores de juegos por dinero, y fomentar los principios del juego responsable.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Adicción; juegos de computadora; Sociedad de información; jóvenes; juego; Política gubernamental; ludomanía; responsabilidad legal; Responsabilidad social.

### Introduction

Within the frames of the formation of the information society, the most active users of the Internet and various modern information-oriented devices (facilities) are adolescents and young people. The problem of the spread of gambling addiction has always been and still is relevant due to its social and individual psychological danger among various segments of the population. The peculiarities of this problem include the fact that the development of the game industry leads to the formation of new types and transformation of existing ones of gambling addiction, its acquisition of unique forms and ways of expression. This is facilitated by the relative accessibility and promotion of gaming products in the society and the youth environment, which, in turn, creates such forms of gambling, which in many cases can be eliminated only by providing professional medical and psychological care.

The history of gambling goes back to the distant past, when a person felt the urge to get a thrill from winning over an opponent while playing. It should be noted that gambling in

various forms has existed in many societies and cultures as the desire to receive strong feelings, emotional outbursts and pleasure in some cases prevails any rational of a person. That is why the current global crises lead to a sharp economic polarization of the population, which contributes to their search for easy income. At the same time, the younger generation is losing touch on cognitive, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and other motivations, cultivating physical strength, thirst for easy enrichment, impunity and the power of money, the latter in the minds of many can and should be achieved easily. And all this against the background of aggressive introduction of gaming technologies into everyday life and popularization of slot machines and casinos, under the auspices of legalization of the gambling business to help fill the budget and fight the shadow economy, determine the scale of the shadow gambling sector and more. All this is exacerbated by the active entry of gaming technologies into public life associated with the development of Internet resources and various technical capabilities. At the same time, all this is beautifully decorated enhancing the effect of the suggestive possibility of easy winnings in a short time. It was found that the number of people who see a doctor with such complaints is much less than their actual number, which is due to lack of public awareness of the disorder, the actual lack of medical institutions and specialists studying and treating gambling addiction – or, as it is also called - ludomania (from the Latin "ludus" - game), or pathological gambling (Koroliak, 2013: 4).

That is why there is a picture of increasing dependence of Ukrainian youth on gambling: lotteries, slot machines, casinos and computer games. Thus, according to the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 33% of Ukrainians gamble at least once a month, and 3% of Ukrainian citizens have become avid gamblers. But most experts are concerned that almost 5% of teenagers spend all their free time in game and computer clubs instead of playing sports, socializing with friends or parents (Filipenko, 2008). That is, the problem of youth addiction is gradually taking over civilized society and is a threat to national security.

Problems of combating gambling and computer addiction have been studied by many scientists in various fields of knowledge: T. Bolbot, O. Drozdov, V. Dorchynets, O. Litovchenko, O. Postova and others. Socio-psychological factors of computer dependence formation were

studied by V. Moskalenko, S. Bereznyi, V. Poltavets etc.; Symptoms and stages of addiction were considered by A. Voykunska, N. Altukhov, A. Kotlyarov, and others. Clinical aspects, classifications and typologies of addictive behaviour are presented in the works of N. Budyanskyi, T. Dubrova, V. Loskutova. The interaction of children and adolescents with the computer is reflected in the works of M. Cole, O. Arestova and others. However, despite all the variety of work on the problems of addiction and gambling of young people, there is currently no clear answer how to counteract this phenomenon, especially in the current pandemic of COVID-19, when there is much more free time by this category of people.

The *purpose* of the study is to determine the forms, types and factors of computer addiction and gambling in young people, as well as to propose ways to counteract their negative impact.

## 1. Methodology of Research

The research methodology is based on a comprehensive interdisciplinary study of social, psychological and legal phenomena. The key methods in the study were: sociological analysis, with the help of which the groups of young people and the types of their dependence were identified; the formal dogmatic method served to analyze concepts and phenomena; methods of classification and identification contributed to the definition of types of gambling, computer games, addictive behavior of gambling people; forecasting and modeling methods helped to identify and describe the possible behaviors of young people and the consequences of the negative impact at gambling addiction.

## 2. Results and discussion

### 2.1. Ludomania and youth gambling as an object of legal research

Studying the problem of gambling addiction among young people, the scientists claim that addiction is a gambling addiction, a disease which last stage is blackout and insanity. The Internet (virtual casinos) has given a special development to gaming mania. This problem, compared to other addictions to psychoactive substances (alcohol or drugs), has no direct consequences for physical health, but causes significant damage to the moral and mental condition and financial situation of the addict (Oliynychuk & Khomyuk, 2020: 97). Continuing

this view, other scholars emphasize that it is a pathological addiction to gambling, which according to modern qualifications of diseases is considered a mental disorder and requires treatment. According to experts, every player is at risk of addiction, but the degree of risk depends on individual characteristics. According to Yu. Galanin, taking into account the mentality and features of the Slavic peoples, such as recklessness, passion, breadth of soul, envy, we can say that gambling has found fertile ground in us (Galanin, 2004: 2).

It should be noted that the pathological predisposition to gambling (addiction, gambling addiction) is the frequent recurrence of episodes of gambling that dominate human life and lead to the decrease in social, professional, material and family values, such a person does not pay due attention to responsibilities in these areas. Gambling is a common socially acceptable and legal activity in most cultures of the world. It can be a game with a bet on something valuable (usually money) or on the fact that an event will take place, which outcome is unpredictable and is caused by fortune. Gambling – so the games are called, which result, in contrast to commercial, depends solely or mainly on chance, not on the agility or art of players, and the main interest lies not so much in the process of the game, but in its result (Brockhaus ed., 1907; Manulik & Konon, 2016). That is why the World Health Organization has included addiction in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) under the code F63.0 "Pathological gambling addiction". Accordingly, where it is determined, this addiction, as well as gambling is frequent episodes of gambling, dominates in the life of a person and leads to the decrease in social, professional, material and family values, not giving due attention to responsibilities in this area. Earlier, the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-9) recognized pathological gambling (code: 313.31) as the same type of disease along with kleptomania, pyromania, trichotillomania, and was characterized by the inability to refrain from actions that lead to negative consequences for themselves or their loved ones; high internal tension before committing this event; - a sense of satisfaction and relief during this action. There were no other explanations in ICD-9. At the same time, in the DSM III classification, this violation was described as follows: chronic progressive inability to resist impulse games, behaviour that endangers, violates and destroys personal, family and professional status. Typical problems are large debts and subsequent their non-payment, family

quarrels, fraud and illicit financial activities (ICD-10). Based on this, more than 100 countries have recognized ludomania and pathological gambling as a psychological disorder.

Today, scientists and practitioners, who study addiction, identify factors that contribute to gambling addiction: improper upbringing in the family, participation in games of parents and acquaintances, desire to play since childhood (dominoes, cards, monopoly, etc.), reassessment of material values, tendency to buying things disorderly. Fixed attention to financial opportunities, envy of wealthier relatives and acquaintances, the belief that all problems can be solved with money.

The obsessed player usually goes through four stages: the winning stage - the game from time to time, dreams of winning, rising bets, big wins; stage of losses - the game alone, leaves from work, large loans, unpaid debts, re-mortgages, lies; phase of despair - damaged reputation, break with family, friends, remorse, shifting the blame on others, panic, job loss, illegal actions; hopeless stage - feelings of hopelessness, thoughts of suicide and possible attempts, arrests, alcohol, emotional accident and symptoms of insanity (BSHI, n/d). In the renewal of these states there is an all-encompassing desire to win the game. This is extremely important for the player, it is a way for him to prove that he is worth something, and it brings him moral satisfaction. However, he feels it only if he has achieved the desired results on his own, and not with someone else's help. Such self-regulation is a symbol of business qualities, power, ability to dominate for the player. The impetus for the game in the beginning is curiosity, for company's sake, for fun, recreation, an easy way to avoid problems, as well as to earn money (but this is not the main motive). Many beginners seek to relax from daily worries, get rid of loneliness, boredom and monotony of existence, to experience unusual emotions. Of course, there is a motive for receiving a monetary reward during the game. However, many do not think that the stake in a dramatic, passionate game is not so much money as mental health, and sometimes life.

Ts.P. Korolenko, T.A. Donskyi & K.V. Aïmedov distinguish features that are inherent by gamblers: 1) constant involvement, increase in the time spent in the game situation; 2) changing the range of interests, displacing the former life motivations of the game, constant thoughts about the game, the superiority and imagination of situations related to game combinations; 3) "loss of control", which is objectified in the inability to stop the game, both after a big win and

after constant losses; 4) a state of psychological discomfort, irritability, anxiety, which develop in a relatively short period of time after the next participation in the game; it coexists with an insurmountable desire to start playing again (such states in a number of ways resemble states of abstinence in addicts; they are accompanied by headaches, sleep disturbances, anxiety, low mood, impaired concentration); 5) is characterized by a gradual increase in the frequency of participation in the game, the desire for increasing risk; 6) periodically occurring states of tension, accompanied by a game "drive", the desire to find the opportunity to participate in gambling, even if it can be overcome; 7) rapidly increasing decline in the ability to resist the temptation, expressed in periodic final decisions "once and for all" "to go straight", which are completely incapable of the slightest provocative situations (meeting with old familiar players, talking about the game, the presence of a gambling establishment nearby etc.) (1988; 2012: 34).

## 2.2. Classification and features of ludomania and gambling in young people

In the world, the gaming market is represented by various types of gambling. Today there are many approaches to their classification. According to Canadian analysts, there are 4 categories of gambling: 1) regular games, including local lotteries, bingo, casino. These include running bets, sports betting and video lotteries; 2) different money and bets between friends and colleagues. These can be sports, political, card, billiards and absolutely any bet, which occupy a significant place in the cultural and social life of the population; 3) bets from illegal bookmakers, illegal gambling establishments for playing cards and roulette, online casinos; 4) gambling, which is in the nature of gambling, not professional duty (Lukomska, 2021: 274-275). To this classification can be added: 5) games on devices (some experts use this term as a name for the whole group of gambling addiction); 6) computer, electronic, video games, etc.; 7) dependence on electronic toys and devices - Tamagotchi, etc.; 8) Internet addiction, etc.

In her turn, the American scientist Kimberly Young, T. Matsoha are identifies five main types of Internet addiction today: 1) computer addiction: obsessive passion for computer work (programming, games or other activities); 2) compulsive network navigation (net compulsions): compulsive search of information in remote databases; 3) information overload: pathological predisposition to Internet-mediated gambling, online auctions, e-shopping; 4) cybersexual addiction: addiction to "cybersex", i.e. visiting pornographic sites, discussing sexual topics in

chat rooms or closed groups "for adults"; 5) cyber-relational addiction: dependence on communication in social networks, forums, chats, group games and teleconferences, which can lead to the replacement of real family members and friends with virtual (Yang, 2000; Matsoha, n/d).

It should also be noted that computer games are classified as non-role and role-playing. Non-role-playing computer games are divided into logic, arcade, reaction or intelligence games, card games, and simulation games. Role-playing computer games allow to fully enter the virtual world and create a complete dependence on the chosen character. Their main feature is a significant impact on the player's psyche, the depth of entry into the game, as well as the motivation of gaming activities, which is based on accepting a certain role and escape from real life. Psychologists divide role-playing games into separate types: by the nature of their influence on the player; by the force of "delay" in the game; by the degree of "depth" of psychological dependence (Shton, 2017).

Role-playing games are built in such a way that a gamer has the opportunity to "try on" any role and satisfy the desires and needs associated with it, to live another life in the virtual world. In this case, the player is able to perform actions that may have a number of social taboos and restrictions in real life, and this is what allows you to experience "virtual freedom" and a variety of sensations. Enhancing identification with the character is facilitated by the process of "pumping", i.e. the ability to improve its qualities, such as 16 "magical" properties or physical capabilities. That is, in the world of computer gaming, an alternative environment is being created for a gamer, where the "I am virtual" dominates, and that, when overzealous, may lead to a crisis of human self-identification in real life. The result of this crisis may be escanism - the replacement of real life activity by its simulation and the dominance of the world of virtual reality. In addition, role-playing computer games mimic the solution of imaginary problems, thus eliminating the need to solve problems in real life (Pyrig & Kuranova, 2018).

Any gambling has symptoms in accordance with the addictive behaviour of gamblers. These include: 1) Constant involvement, increasing the time spent in the game situation; 2) Changing the range of interests, displacing the former motivations of the game, constant thoughts about the game, the predominance and perception of situations related to game

combinations; 3) "Loss of control", which is expressed in the inability to stop the game both after a big win and after constant losses; 4) A state of psychological discomfort, irritability, anxiety, which develop in a relatively short period of time after the next participation in the game, with an irresistible desire to start the game again. Such conditions in a number of ways resemble the state of abstinence by the addicts; they are accompanied by headaches, sleep disturbances, anxiety, low mood, impaired concentration; 5) Characterized by a gradual increase in the frequency of participation in the game, the desire for increasing risk; 6) Periodically there are states of tension, accompanied by a game "drive", an increasing desire to participate in gambling; 7) Rapidly increasing decline in the ability to resist temptation. This is expressed in the fact that, having decided once and for all to "go straight", at the slightest provocation (meeting with old acquaintances, talking about the game, the presence of a gambling establishment, etc.) the game dependence is restored (Nemchenko, 2008). All these games lead certain individuals to pathological dependence, which is manifested through: recurrence (two or more) episodes of gambling during the year, which are renewed, despite the lack of material benefits; the presence of subjective suffering and impaired social and professional adaptation; inability to control the intense urge to play and stop it with willpower; constant fixation of thoughts and imagination on gambling and everything connected with; constant immersion in the game; displacement of previous interests; state of discomfort outside the situation of the game, irritability, anxiety. Enthusiasm for the game is detrimental to work, financial status and family relations: there is a debt to relatives, friends; lying about spending time and money spent; inability to stop, continuing the game in order to win even more (Zaytsev, 2000; Mendelevych, 2003; Popov, 1997).

Unfortunately, the current realities of technological and telecommunications development contribute to the emergence of new forms of dependence, in particular - computer dependence. Its features are as follows: 1) it is subject to all age categories, including young children; 2) maximum proximity - the computer is in almost every family; 3) problems of determining the beginning of pathological dependence; 4) the inability to exclude the means of telecommunications from our daily lives (Yegorchenko, 2014: 21). In Ukraine, according to a survey, the following picture is observed: more than 55% of Ukrainians under the age of 21 spend

time on social networks every day, another 26.9% visit their virtual pages several times a week, and 8.1% - a few once a month; among 16-18-year-olds the share of "net-dependent" is about 60%, and among the age group 19-21 - a little more than a half. At the same time, only 7% of young men and women do without the Internet; moreover, the study found that 32.6% of young people "do not imagine life without the Internet at all", "29.7% do not imagine rather than imagine". And only 13.6% can boast of no internet addiction; 23.3% of girls and 18.5% of boys cannot do without social networks, 22.1% and 19.3%, respectively, experience noticeable discomfort. 30.8% of the stronger sex and 23.6% of the weaker sex easily do without virtual communication (Yegorchenko, 2014: 22). Current research indicates that there are many more young players than older people. Many of them are students, children. Experts believe that 8% of children aged 14-15 have a high risk of becoming a pathological player. It should also be noted that this dependence most often occurs by men aged from 15 to 49 years. Thus, the risk of developing addiction is higher among men and young people (HEALTHUKR, n/d).

There are certain symptoms that allow to state that young people are addicted to computer games: loss of control over the time when a young person is sitting at a computer; loss of interest in life in society; sloppy appearance; irritability and aggression, if for some reason there is no access to the computer; bouts of unmotivated anxiety and fear, frequent nightmares. The consequences of gambling addiction are similar to the effects of chemical addiction. By any gamblers degradation, disintegration of the person begins. Family, environment, creativity, sports and all the former values of life first recede into the background, then cease to play any role in the life and give way to a machine, a card table. The social consequences of gambling are no less severe than those of drug and alcohol abuse. These are crimes (Kryshevych, 2021), lost jobs, abandoned families. Loss of interest in real life, avoidance of urgent life problems. Depression as a result. Deterioration of physical health from endless sitting at the computer: the development of scoliosis, impaired vision (Yegorchenko, 2014: 22). With concomitant malnutrition, diseases of the gastrointestinal tract develop, there is excess weight. There is a drop in concentration, distractibility, forgetfulness. Loss of interest in learning, slowing down of the development. As a result, the chances of further education and career growth were lost. Sociophobia is actively developing - the fear of communicating with people. Persons lock in

themselves, they are only interested in the game. Accordingly, the psyche of the addicted person suffers. Aggression and unpredictable antisocial behaviour may develop when playing games with cruel undertones.

In the modern world, quite effective technologies for primary prevention of gambling addiction have already been developed and implemented: 1) Information - publications, hotline, psychological service, social support; 2) Educational - educational programs, training programs for parents, training programs for teachers, psychologists, social workers, training programs for computer club employees, educational programs for students of schools, lyceums, colleges; 3) Employment - club work, additional training, temporary employment; 4) Correction of family relations - the formation of relationships that promote the full upbringing of a child, the common interests of all family members, emotional support, psychological protection; 5) Religious - the culture of religious feelings, awareness of the highest spiritual and moral strength (Dubova ed., 2011: 86).

### 2.3. Countering ludomania and gambling of young people by legal means

All these preventive measures take a more effective meaning when they receive regulatory status and regulations. That is why it should be noted that today in Ukraine with the adoption of the law "On state regulation of activities for the organization and conduct of gambling" dd. July 14, 2020, No. 768-IX the main types of gambling business were legitimized. In particular, now casinos, online casinos, bookmakers, including the Internet, slot machines and online poker are able to operate legally, provided that they meet the established list of requirements. In addition, to obtain a 5-year license, all gambling establishments must pay a license fee, ranging from UAH 23.6 million for online poker up to 283.4 million UAH for a physical casino in Kyiv. In addition, casinos are required to pay an annual fee: 826.5 thousand UAH - for a table with roulette, 425 thousand UAH - for a table without roulette, 28.3 thousand UAH - for a slot machine. At the same time, the law introduces a fairly coherent system of organizational bases for gambling, in particular: special requirements are set for the conformity of gambling equipment used for gambling in accordance with generally accepted international standards; bases are created for the introduction of restrictions on the activities of operators who are not registered in Ukraine and do not have the appropriate license; requirements are set for players

and their identification, which will help to prevent negative consequences of gambling, including persons under the age of 18, and severe financial penalties for non-compliance with such requirements; a register of self-restricted persons and persons subject to other restrictions is created, which makes it possible to restrict the participation in gambling of an individual for a period of 6 months till 3 years; the principle of "responsible gambling" is introduced, which provides for the implementation of gambling measures by the organizer to prevent and minimize the negative consequences of the participation of individuals in gambling and creates mechanisms to combat gambling addiction; the restrictions are set on the places of gambling and amendments are made to the Law of Ukraine "On Advertising", which introduces restrictions on gambling advertising; financial, administrative and criminal liability for violation of the legislation of Ukraine in the field of gambling, etc. is established (Law, 2020). The law stipulates that the industry will be controlled by a special Commission for the Regulation of Gambling and Lotteries. It will consist of 7 people. Civil servants will be appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine based on the results of competitive selection. A state online monitoring system will also be set up to keep track of establishments, operations and players. According to the law, the Authorized Body forms and maintains the following registers: Register of gambling organizers in casino gambling establishments; Register of casino gambling organizers on the Internet; Register of organizers of bookmaking activities; Register of gambling organizers in slot machine halls; Register of poker organizers on the Internet; Register of persons with limited access to gambling establishments and / or participation in gambling. These registers (except for the Register of Persons Restricted to Access to Gambling Facilities and / or Gambling) are open to free public access to them and are posted on the official website of the Authorized Body. This online monitoring system will work in 2.5 years after legalization.

At the same time, it should be noted that this law, unfortunately, has not reduced the problem of youth addiction in Ukraine, which rate is growing every year.

## Conclusions

In order to prevent the development of such a negative phenomenon as youth addiction, the following measures to regulate the gambling business in Ukraine are considered appropriate,

based on successful global experience in combating the spread of gambling addiction among young people:

firstly, the state should give the public administration the extended special powers to control addiction in general and youth addiction in particular;

secondly, to impose harsh sanctions on illegal business;

thirdly, to implement international experience in controlling the dependence of young people on slot machines;

fourthly, to ban gadgets at schools while studying;

fifthly, to introduce social compensation and the creation of appropriate funds;

sixthly, to introduce licensing of slot machines and control over those who play (inspections of gaming halls by the bodies of control over the work and compliance with the conditions of operation of gaming halls);

seventhly, to direct state funding for psychological programs from addiction and rehabilitation centres;

eighthly, to encourage public organizations to identify people who are addicted to gambling and provide them with information about rehabilitation centres and ways;

ninthly, to introduce preventive work on the dissemination of information among young people about the threats and risks of gambling addiction, contacts of rehabilitation centres and psychologists;

tenthly, to limit the time spent by minors in gambling areas;

eleventhly, to eliminate or neutralize the factors of the family, immediate social environment and society as a whole, leading to the formation of maladaptive qualities, the tendency to avoid problems, focus only on certain activities, encourage passive, consumerist life position, stimulate specific types of addictive behaviour;

twelfthly, to establish standards of information security in the activities of game organizers for money and the principles of responsible gaming;

thirteenthly, to impose certain restrictions on the scenario of certain games, to exclude mechanisms of influence on players, or to exclude the possibility of separation from real life and to prohibit games that promote antisocial attitudes;

fourteenthly, to promote the formation of a wide range of interests, critical thinking, active life position by young people, their integration into socially positive communities.

Youth gambling addiction is a serious disease along with drug addiction and alcoholism, which has psychological roots. That is why it is important for Ukraine to recognize ludomania as a negative factor both for a person and his/her family, and for the state as a whole, its economic security, social development, socio-political relations. Therefore, a rational and comprehensive solution to this problem is important for our country at the present stage of its development. Accordingly, it should be aimed at improving the information culture of users of the global network, the formation of skills for safe work in cyberspace and mastering the rules and norms of behaviour in cyber reality. This will create the safest conditions for Internet users and will be a significant obstacle to the formation and development of dependencies of non-chemical origin.

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