

The realization effect is fragile in gamblers

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Objective

- To design and evaluate a gambling intervention to reduce loss-chasing, as a ‘responsible gambling’ tool.
- Does ‘cashing out’ reduce risk-seeking behaviour after losses in experienced gamblers?

Background

Loss-chasing: the gambler continues betting in order to recover prior losses (e.g., increase bet size over the course of a losing session).

- At-risk gamblers: 50.7% are chasers
- Gamblers with problems: 75.9% are chasers\textsuperscript{1}

When does loss-chasing occur?

From a failure to re-reference between bets, and ‘close the associated mental account’.

Methods

Realization effect: encouraging money exchange between (mental) accounts (e.g., gambler’s wallet to the casino) induces re-referencing\textsuperscript{2}.

Cash-out vs. Feedback

| Participants: Amazon MTurk & Prolific. |
| Gamblers without problems, at-risk, gamblers with problems. |

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Procedure: 9 successive bets framed in 2 brackets.

- Cash-out: the participant cashed out from game 1 (e.g. ‘PrimeMax’) and switch to game 2 (‘LottoLuck’) after the 3rd or 6th bet.
- Feedback: the participant received their outcome but did not switch games.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exp 1</th>
<th>Exp 2</th>
<th>Exp 3a</th>
<th>Exp 3b</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-PG</td>
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<td>At-risk</td>
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Financial transactions (‘cashing out’) may have distinct effects in people with gambling problems, which may not follow the realization effect.

Re-referencing may be challenging among gamblers if they are ‘immersed’ in gambling.