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DISTINCT EMOTIONS AND THEIR REGULATION IN PROBLEM AND NON-PROBLEM GAMBLING

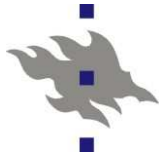
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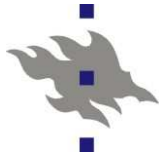
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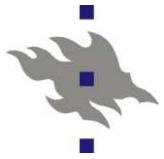
OUTLINE

1. Affective motivations of problem gambling
2. Previous research on distinct emotions in PG and non-PG
3. Previous research on emotion regulation in PG and non-PG
4. My hypotheses
5. Cognitive distortions about skill and control in gambling
6. Self-focused emotions and cognitive distortions
7. Players' challenges for emotion regulation
8. Self-focused emotions and tilt
9. Conclusions



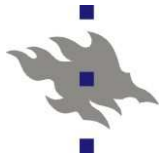
EMOTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Affective motivations of gambling: anxiety, stress, depression, boredom (e.g. Blaszczynski & McConaughy, 1989; Griffiths, 1995)
 - Individuals suffering from stress and anxiety prefer low-skill gambling, whereas depressed individuals prefer more skilled games (Coman et al., 1996)
- Gambling as emotion management (Ricketts & Macaskill, 2003; 2004)
 - Shutting off negative emotions
 - Need for intense arousal together with low tolerance of emotional distress
 - Need for (a sense of) achievement
- Little research on differences in the distinct emotions and emotion regulation strategies between problem and non-problem (either recreational or professional) gamblers **during** gambling.



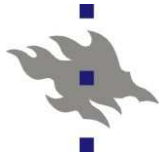
PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON DISTINCT EMOTIONS IN PROBLEM AND NON-PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Svartsjö et al., 2008: players at risk sought strong emotions from online poker, whereas players in the control group aimed at improving their skills and attaining long-term success.
 - Differences in HR and GSR before and after the play between players at risk and players in the control group.
 - No differences in the players' distinct emotions.
- Mageau et al., 2005; Ratelle et al., 2004: harmonious vs. obsessive passion for gambling.
 - Harmonious: feelings of amusement and fun, positive emotions
 - Obsessive: feelings of guilt, anxiety, negative emotions
- Yi & Kanetkar , 2011: Problem gambling severity associates more with experiences of shame than with experiences of guilt.
- Brochu et al., 2012: No differences between problem and non-problem gamblers
 - pleasure, excitement, pride, frustration, and stress among both



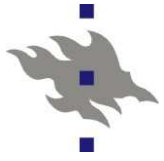
PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON EMOTION REGULATION IN PROBLEM AND NON-PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Scannell et al., 2000: Problem gambling associated with emotion-focused coping strategies
 - Coping with impaired control over gambling and emotions that motivate gambling, not with distinct emotions during gambling.
- Williams et al., 2012: Pathological gamblers reported less use of reappraisal as emotion regulation strategy and a greater lack of emotional clarity than healthy comparisons.
- Yi & Kanetkar, 2011: Problem gambling severity was more strongly associated with avoidant coping strategies after gambling loss than with non-avoidant coping strategies.
- Several studies associate problem gambling with impulsivity, which is characterized by a failure in self-regulation, including emotion regulation.



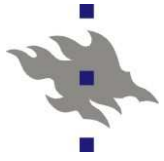
MY HYPOTHESES

- Problem gamblers differ from non-problem gamblers by having more frequent and/or intense ***self-focused*** emotions about themselves as ***winners*** or ***losers*** such as pride, shame, humiliation and anger in addition to ***game-focused*** emotions such as excitement, disappointment, and joy during gambling.
 - The self-focused emotions of problem gamblers associate with their cognitive distortions about skill and control that maintain and reinforce those emotions.
 - Negative self-focused emotions are more difficult and exhaustive to regulate than similar game-focused emotions as they demand either actual or symbolic undoing of the ‘harm’ inflicted on the self.
- Problem gamblers apply less adaptive emotion regulation strategies than non-problem gamblers during gambling.
 - Emotion-focused coping vs. problem-focused coping
 - Suppression vs. reappraisal among emotion-focused strategies
- Evidence from several separate studies



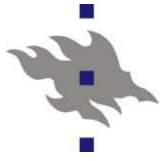
COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS ABOUT SKILL AND CONTROL

- A. Games of pure chance (e.g. roulette, lottery, EGMs): beliefs in skill and control are categorically irrational.
- B. Games of skill and chance (e.g. poker, sports betting): two types of cognitive distortions (Bjerg, 2010)
 - a) About the role of skill and chance in the structure of the game
 - b) About an individual player's skills in the game
 - Bjerg: problem gamblers may have a realistic conception of a) but an unrealistic (inflated) conception of b)
 - Some problem gamblers may have unrealistic conceptions of both a) and b)
 - A difficult issue for players to judge as researchers and poker coaches are divided about the relative significance of skill and chance in poker (e.g. Croson et al., 2008; Denonno & Detterman 2008; Berthed, 2010; Levitt & Miles, 2011; Meyer et al., 2012)
 - The existence of 'winning players' and regularly winning 'poker stars' as evidence on the (significant) role of skill in poker for aspiring players.



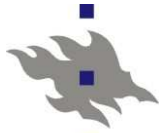
SELF-FOCUSED EMOTIONS AND COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

- Illusion of control and overestimation of skills
 - On the one hand, allow players to take credit and pride of their wins and beating their adversaries (Sulkunen & Rantala, 2011)
 - On the other hand, dispose players to anger, moral indignation, and humiliation upon prolonged periods of small losses or unlikely significant losses experienced as "insults" and/or "unfair" outcomes (Rosenthal, 1995; Palomäki et al., submitted)
 - Anger and humiliation dispose players to **tilting**, characterized by deteriorated decision-making, loss of control over gambling, and chasing (Browne, 1989; Palomäki et al., 2012)
 - Chasing is not merely directed at recouping monetary losses but also positive self-feelings by restoring a "fair balance" between wins and losses (Rosenthal, 1995; Palomäki et al., submitted)
- Striving for correct play can elicit anger at own mistakes and disappointment in own suboptimal play even without severe cognitive distortions (Palomäki et al., submitted).
 - Hypothesis: type of regulation distinguishes between problem and non-problem gamblers



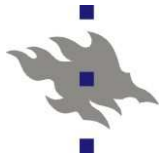
STRATEGIES OF EMOTION REGULATION

- Problem-focused vs. emotion-focused coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984)
 - Problem-focused coping: changing the eliciting situation of a negative emotion by own action or by seeking social support.
 - Emotion-focused coping: changing how the eliciting situation of a negative emotion is attended or appraised e.g. by distancing, denial, wishing well, or reappraisal.
- Emotion regulation as a process (Gross, 1998)
 - Antecedent-focused vs. response-focused strategies
- Significant differences in the adaptiveness of reappraisal and suppression (John & Gross, 2007).
 - Reappraisal permits the modification of the entire emotional sequence, including the valence and type of emotion, without notable physiological, cognitive, or interpersonal costs.
 - Suppression modifies only response tendencies without reducing the experience of negative emotion, while consuming cognitive resources from other tasks.



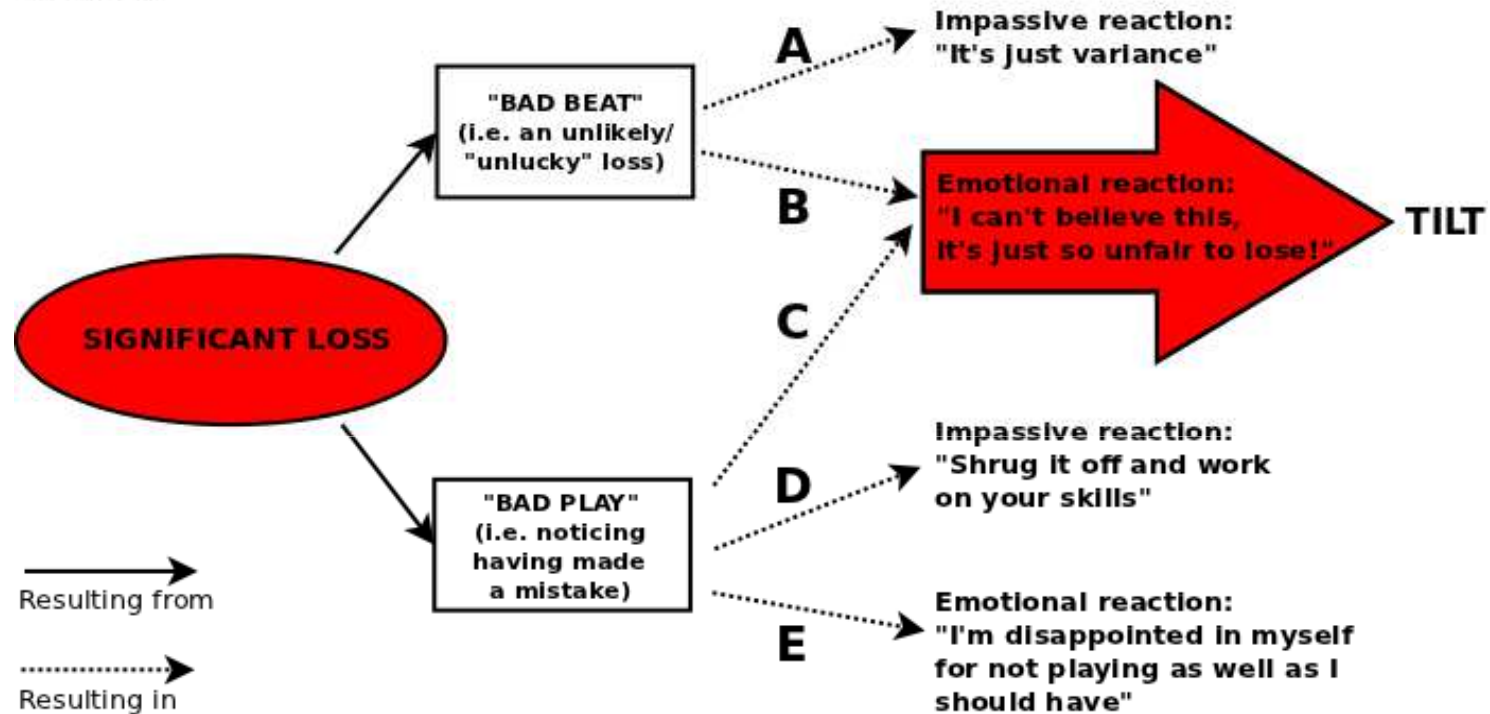
PLAYERS' CHALLENGES WITH EMOTION REGULATION

- ■ How to savour positive emotions about wins while adaptively regulating negative emotions about losses and mistakes?
- ■ Poker players have a systematic tendency to ascribe “wins to the superiority of their own skills and losses to ‘natural variance’, ‘a bad run of cards’, or simply ‘bad luck’” (Bjerg, 2011, 124).
 - An *early* reappraisal of loss as 'bad luck' protects the player from tilting in the short run. However, the strategy of attributing all losses to 'bad luck' is tilt-inducing in the long run as it results in an appearance that variance is always 'working against' the player (Tendler, 2011), which gives rise to moral indignation.
 - Reappraisal of loss in terms of 'bad luck' may be ineffective for players with inflated beliefs about skill. These players *first* feel angry or humiliated about their losses and *then* try to suppress these emotions by attributing losses to variance. Yet a *late* reappraisal amounts to suppression that increases the long-term risk of tilting.
 - A reappraisal of own mistake as an opportunity for learning may alleviate disappointment in self, especially when it is combined with problem-focused coping after the play session.



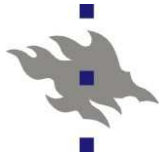
PATHWAYS FROM LOSING TO IMPASSIVE OR EMOTIONAL REACTION

FIGURE 2



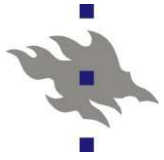
Source: Palomäki, Laakasuo & Salmela, submitted

- Pathways for inexperienced (and problem) players: B, C (for problem players also E with suppression)
- Pathways for experienced (and non-problem) players: A, D, E (with reappraisal)



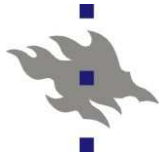
SELF-FOCUSED EMOTIONS AFTER TILT

- Disappointment in self, shame, depression, anxiety (Browne, 1989; Palomäki et al., submitted)
 - Arguably more common among problem gamblers who tilt more frequently and/or severely than non-problem gamblers
- Adaptiveness depends on the type of coping
 - Avoidant emotion-focused coping (e.g. suppression) increases the risk of tilting in the future as well
 - Associates more with problem than with non-problem gambling (Scannell et al., 2000; Yi & Kanetkar, 2011)
 - Problem-focused coping (e.g. active problem-solving; seeking social support) allows the subject to utilize emotions as motives for reflecting on his or her detrimental actions, thus promoting re-evaluation of future actions (Palomäki et al., submitted)
 - Associates more with non-problem than with problem gambling.



CONCLUSIONS

- Cognitive distortions about skill and controllability of games reinforce and maintain self-focused emotions that are more difficult to regulate than game-focused emotions during play.
- The more emotional credit a player takes for his or her wins, the harder his or her losses backfire in the form of negative self-focused emotions that increase the risk of chasing losses and positive self-feelings.
 - A pattern for problem gamblers who seek strong emotions from gambling and for players with skill-based identity.
- Cognitive-behavioural therapies correct erroneous or inflated beliefs about the controllability of games, thus reducing affective involvement with gambling.
 - Removal of self-focused emotions alleviates the task of emotion management during gambling.
 - Resemblance with Stoic therapy of the passions: treatment of emotions by the means of cognitive change.
 - Not recognized in cognitive-behavioural therapies of gambling.



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YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION