Gambling pathways development of triad members, female sex workers, male sex workers and taxi drivers: A summary of four qualitative studies on gambling deviant subcultures in Hong Kong.

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Contents

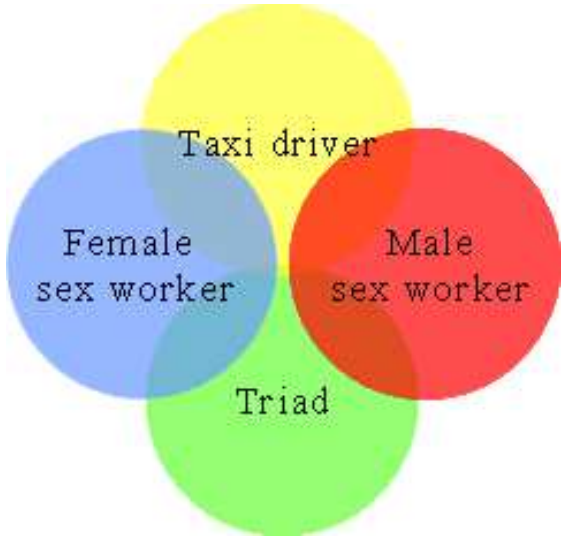
- Introduction
- Research aim and hypotheses
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Limitation
- Recommendations

Introduction (deviance general)

- Deviance is universal and exists in every society. It can range from minor traffic violations, to prostitution, sexual assault, and crime.
- However, while universal, deviancy does vary from culture to culture.
- Examples of subcultures and deviant cultures includes:
  - Drug users
  - Sex workers
  - Cults
  - Sexual sadists
  - Skinheads

Introduction (deviance in HK)

- Hong Kong has its share of deviant subcultures as well.
  - Sex workers – Male (Kong, 2009) and female (Ling, Wong, Holroyd, & Gray, 2007)
  - Triads/Gangs (Wong, 1992)
  - Drug users (Chan, 1997; Wong, 1998; Ho, 2001)



Introduction (deviance link with gambling)

- People's participation in specific subcultures involves the following (Prus and Grills, 2003):
  - Achieving a fluency with the language of the group
  - Coming to terms with emotionality of and within the group
  - Acquiring shared perspectives
  - Developing shared identities
  - Engaging in similar relationships
  - Making similar commitments and becoming adept at the activities of hand.

- One of these activities, commonly, is gambling (e.g. in the Triad/gang cultures)

Introduction (gambling HK)

- Pathological and problem gambling problems are evident worldwide. Prevalence rates worldwide for these gambling severities range from 0.2-3% (Hodgins, 2011), depending on geographical location, public view of gambling, and opportunities to gamble.

- In Hong Kong, there are many opportunities to gamble: Horse racing, legal gambling houses, mahjong houses, social gambling venues, Mark 6, etc.

- In Hong Kong, 1 in 20 people have a gambling disorder (Hodgins, 2011).

- In Hong Kong, past prevalence studies indicate that the prevalence rate for pathological gamblers range from 1.8-1.85% (Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2001; 2003) and problem gamblers prevalence rate stands at about 4.0% (Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2003)

Introduction (gambling+deviance in HK)

- The field of research investigating deviant subcultures and the misguided obsession of gambling is under-studied.
  - In HK:

  1) Triad members (Paul et al., 2011) (Kelvin et al., 2012) (Kelvin et al., 2012) (Paul et al., 2012) (Tiffany et al, 2012)
  2) Female sex workers (Chine et al., 2012) (Chine et al., 2012) (Paul et al, 2012)
  3) Male sex workers (Paul et al, 2012)
  4) Taxi drivers (Paul et al, 2012)

  - In other countries conducted by other researchers:

  1) Gambling and offenders (Blaszczynski & McConaghy, 1992; Rosenthal & Lorenz, 1992; Sakurai & Smith, 2003)
  2) Gambling and drug/substance abusers (Petry, 2001; Petry, 2007; Grant et al., 2002)

Introduction

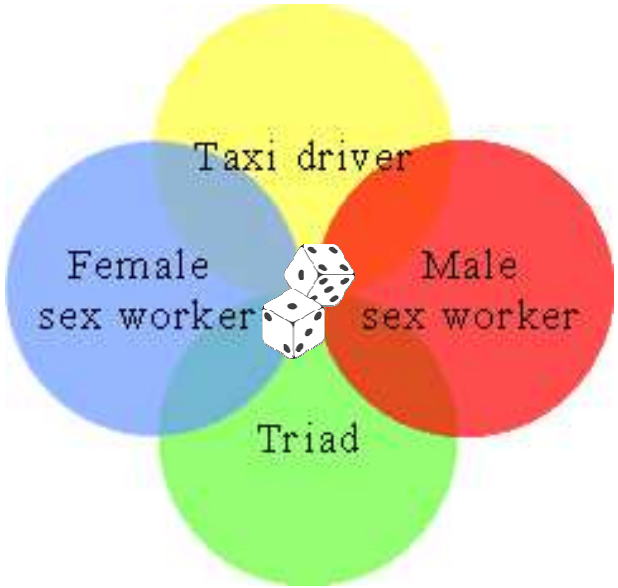
- About the project.
  - Qualitative.
  - The aim of this project is to establish a comprehensive profile on gamblers acculturated in triad, sex-working, and taxi-driving deviant subcultures. Moreover, the yielded results are hoped to be able to clear any previously held biases against them in society, and inspire effective health and treatment messaging targeted to them.
  - The purpose of this project is to bring the gambling specifics of individuals acculturated in deviant subcultures into light.

Research aim and hypotheses

- The authors hypothesized the following:

→ There are differences in gambling motivation and habits between the four researched deviant subcultures.

→ The pathways development of the participants in this study will support the pathways model proposed by Blaszczynski & Nower (2002).



Methodology and procedures

1) **Establish interview appointments**

2) **Administer two psychological assessment tools**

- Problem Gambling Severity Index of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (Ferris & Wynne, 2001)
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 4th Edition diagnostic criteria for Pathological gambling (American Psychiatric Association, 2000)

3) **Semi-clinical interview**

4) **Ethnographic follow-up**

- Observer
- Observer-as-participant

Participants

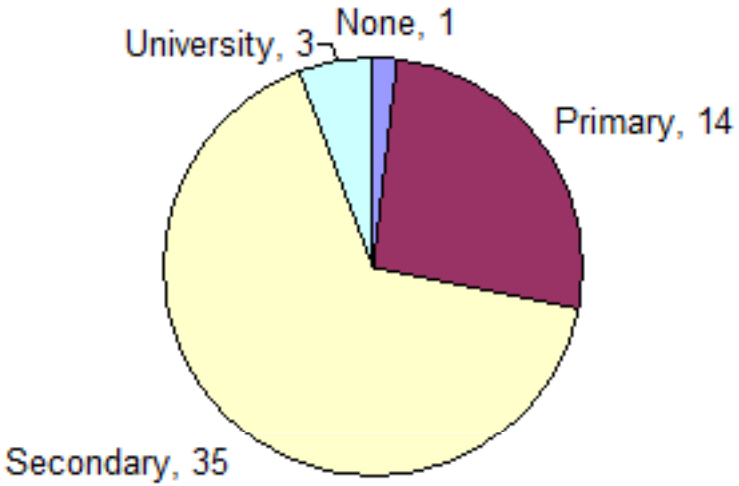
- 53 participants were recruited over a period of nearly 2 years.
  - Triad members (n=21)
  - Sex workers – Female (n=20) and male (n=2)
  - Taxi drivers (n=10)

- Age:
  - Range: 20-70 years old
  - Average age: 30-40 years old

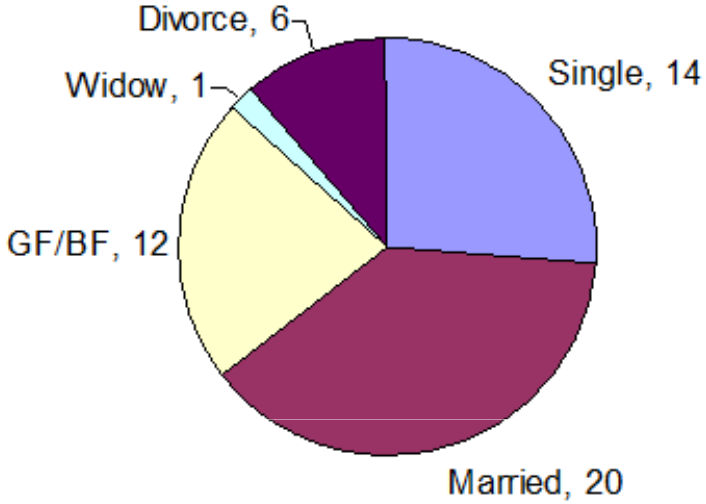
Gender:
- Males (n=33; 62.2%)
- Females (n=20; 37.8%)

- Inclusion criteria:
  - Active in their subcultures
  - Active gamblers
  - Chinese ethnicity
  - Over the age of 18 years of age

Participants



Education levels

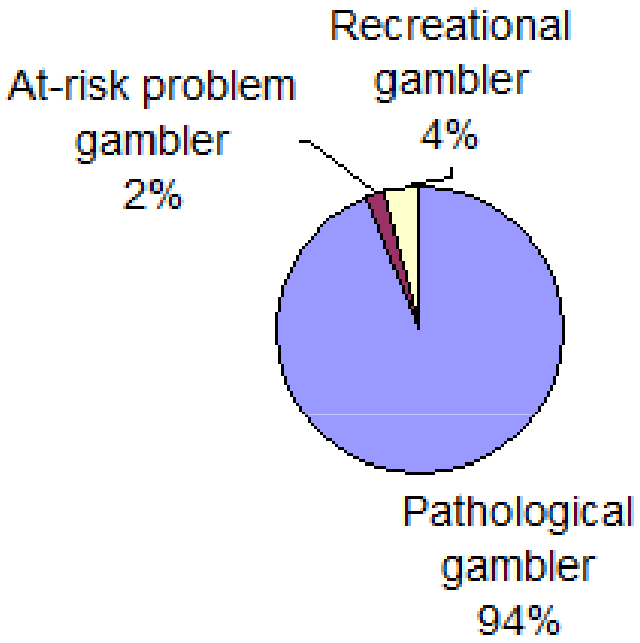


Relationships

- Notes:
  - Majority of the participants who reported ‘secondary level education’ dropped out of secondary school (e.g. in F.1, F.3, and F.5)
  - Others = combination of more than 1 relationship status

Results

- Average Years of gambling:
  - Triad: 28 years
  - Sex workers: 15 years
  - Taxi drivers: 21 years



- Note:
  - Triad: All PGs
  - Sex workers: 1 At-risk PG female sex worker
  - Taxi drivers: 3 Recreational gamblers

Results

	Average DSM-IV scores	CPGI
Triad-related members	5.3	5.4
Taxi drivers	5.5	9
Female sex workers	6.5	10
Male sex workers	6	6.5
Overall	5.8	7.8

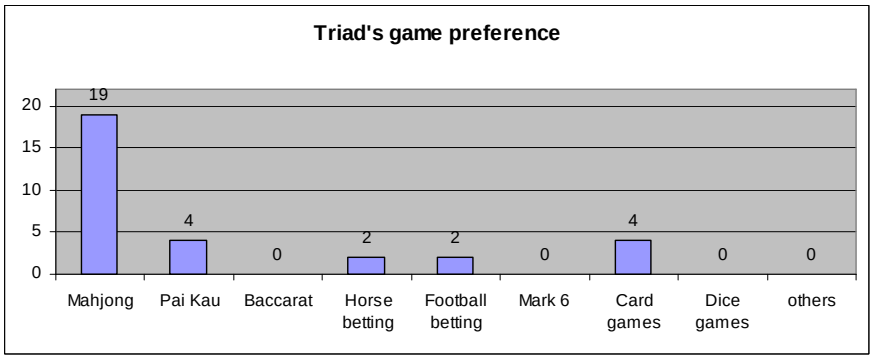
Results

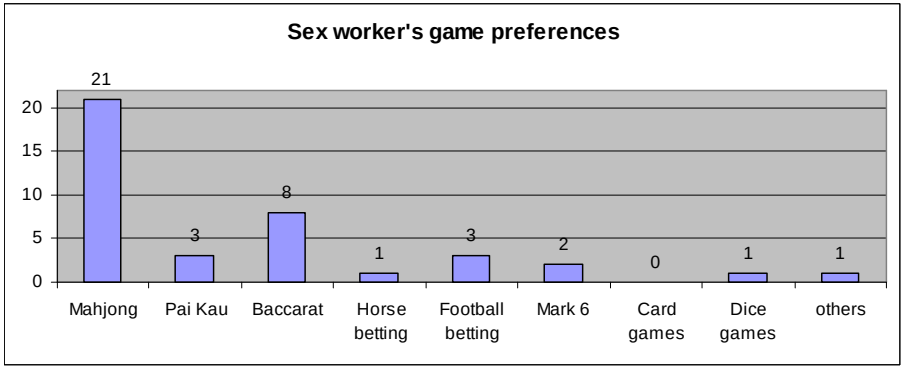
- Adoption of gambling habits
  - Triad:
    - Family: 6 (28.6%)
    - Friends/Peers: 5 (23.8%)
    - Friends/Peers (from subculture): 10 (47.6%)
  - Female sex workers
    - Family: 6 (30%)
    - Friends/Peers: 5 (25%)
    - Friends/Peers (from subculture): 9 (45%)
  - Male sex workers
    - Family: 0
    - Friends/Peers: 0
    - Friends/Peers (from subculture): 2 (100%)
  - Taxi drivers
    - Family: 4 (40%)
    - Friends/Peers: 0
    - Friends/Peers (from subculture): 6 (60%)

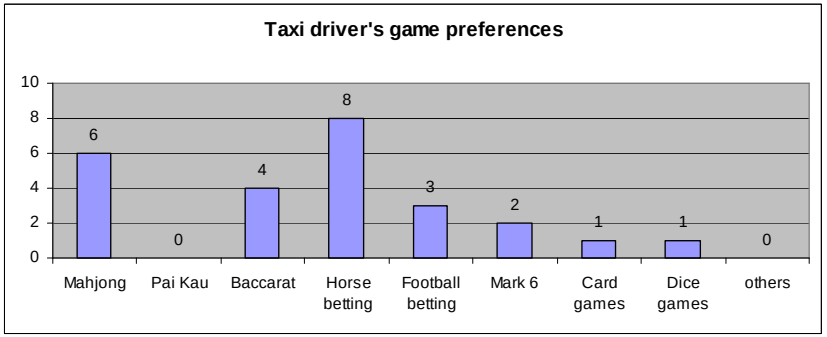
→ Majority of the participants (50.9%)adopted gambling habits as a result of influence from their peers who were acculturated in the deviant subculture; subculture which the respective participants would be later acculturated in too.

Results

- Preference of gambling games

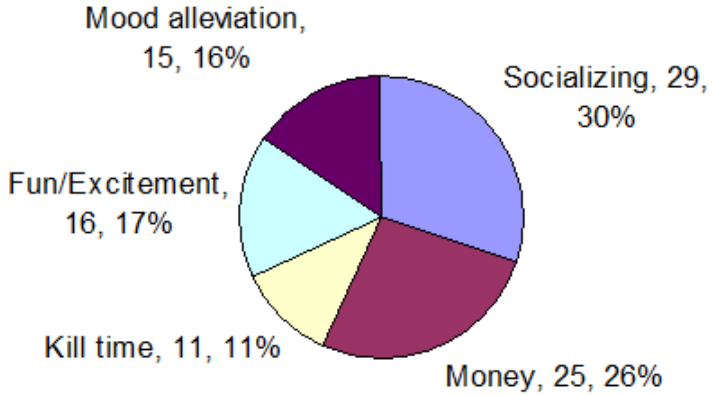






- Triad: ‘Mahjong…I can control the game and my wins.’
- Female sex workers: “When gamble I feel I am alive, it’s the only way I may earn fast money and no need to sell my body.”
- Male sex workers: “It is for socialization and excitement”
- Taxi drivers: “Driving is so free, we can just park the car and go to gamble.”

Results



Socializing: Triad (100%); F. sex workers (25%);M. sex workers (0%); Taxi drivers (30%)
Earn money: Triad (47.6%); F. sex workers (55%); M. sex workers (50%) Taxi drivers (30%)
Excitement: Triad (28.6%); F. sex workers (20%); M. sex workers (100%); Taxi drivers (40%)
Kill time: Triad (14.3%); F. sex workers (30%); M. sex workers (50%); Taxi drivers (10%)
Mood alleviation: Triad (14.3%); F. sex workers (35%); M. sex workers (50%); Taxi drivers (30%)

- Triad: 'Face work…it is important to socialize and with the other members and retain face work.'
- Female sex workers: "I take drug, sleep with man, gamble when wake up, it has been many year like that."
- Male sex workers: 'I enjoy gambling for the fun and thrill of it…It keeps me excited'
- Taxi drivers: "During rainy days, very low mood, driving is not save, especially want to gamble."

Results

- Addictions

  - Process addictions (e.g. addiction to shopping, sexual behaviors, internet usage, and tanning oneself)

→ 3 out of 21 Triad members reported having process addictions

  - Pharmacological addictions (e.g. cocaine, marijuana, heroin, ice, alcohol, smoking)

→ 17 out of 21 Triad members reported having an addiction to a drug/substance - mostly alcohol.

→ 16 out of 20 Female sex workers reported regularly abusing drugs.

→ 4 out of 10 taxi drivers reported having an addiction to a drug/substance – notably alcohol and cigarettes.

Results

- Superstitions
  - The entire sample could be divided into two groups, in regards to superstitions..
    - Individuals with adopted superstitions based on self-beliefs (100% Triad,, 100% Male sex workers; 20% of taxi drivers)
    - Individuals with adopted superstitions based on norms (100% Female sex workers; 10% of Taxi drivers)

- Triad: ‘It is bad luck for someone to talk behind me or touch my shoulders when I am gambling…I pray to the Gods before gambling for luck.’
- Female sex workers: “You would learn to observe, whether people are good luck, you find those good lucks and follow them to bet on baccarat, but for mahjong it is better I seat on a feng-shui seat, or I have better luck than others. When getting bad luck, I change seat or change table to meet the other group in order to try some new luck.
- Male sex workers: ‘I pray to God before gambling for luck’
- Taxi drivers: ‘I would not take-in any passengers when I am placing a bet on a horse and it is running its race. If I do, then it is bad luck’

Results

- Prison experience
  - 60.4% (n=32) reported having experience in prison and an active criminal record in Hong Kong.
  - Of the 32 that reported so,
    - 100% (21 out of 21) were Triad
    - 45% (9 out of 20) were female sex workers
    - 1 of them was a male sex worker

- The most prevalent charge for the prison sentence was drug-related (with ties back to the Triad)

Results

- Treatment
  - Triad: None
  - Sex workers (Male and female): only 2 had try some sort of treatment, but drop off quickly.
  - Taxi drivers: None

  - Triad: ‘I would never seek treatment…I don’t see it as a problem, my friends and family don’t see it as a problem, so why should I stop?’
  - Female sex workers: ‘You don’t understand, I am hopeless not worth you to bother.’
  - Male sex workers: ‘Never thought of it.’
  - Taxi drivers: ‘My gambling does not harm anyone…Gambling is fun and very common…I would not seek treatment’

Taxi drivers
(n = 8)

Years of gambling:
21 years (Average)

Gambling frequency:
2-7 days a week (70%)

Game preference:
Horse betting (80%)

Gambling motivation:
Excitement (40%)

Drugs/Substances addictions:
Yes (40%); Alcohol

Prison experiences:
None

Superstitions:
Yes (20%)

Triad-related members
(n = 21)

Years of gambling:
28 years (Average)

Gambling frequency:
Everyday (85.7%)

Game preference:
Mahjong (90.5%)

Gambling motivation:
Socializing (60.9%)

Drugs/Substances addictions:
Yes (90.0%); Alcohol

Prison experiences:
Yes (100%)

Superstitions:
Yes (100%)

Female sex workers
(n = 20)

Years of gambling:
16 years (Average)

Gambling frequency:
Everyday (65%)

Game preference:
Mahjong (95%)

Gambling motivation:
Earning money (55%)

Drugs/Substances addictions:
Yes (80%); Hard drugs

Prison experiences:
Yes (45%)

Superstitions:
100%

Male sex workers
(n = 2)

Years of gambling:
15.5 years (Average)

Gambling frequency:
2-7 days a week (100%)

Game preference:
Mahjong (100%)

Gambling motivation:
Excitement (50%)

Drugs/Substances addictions:
None

Prison experiences:
Yes (50%)

Superstitions:
Yes (100%)

Discussion

- It is common for members of a deviant subculture to share in behavioral or personality patterns with its other members.
- In a study by Petry (2001), it was found that being both a substance abuser and a pathological gambler, as opposed to being a non-pathological substance abuser or non-pathological non-substance abuser, increased the likelihood of being more impulsive (e.g. making decisions without sense of delayed gratification)
- Numerous studies have found a much higher prevalence rate of disordered gambling among offending populations than the general populations (Anderson, 1999; Abbott, McKenna, & Giles, 2000; Walters, 1997)
- Problem gamblers are at a high-risk for participating in criminal activities, and vice-versa, rather than non-pathological gamblers (National Institute of Justice, 2004; Brown, Killian, & Evans, 2005).

Discussion

- Reflecting on the results with Gottfredon's and Hirschi's general theory of crime, also known as the self-control theory, (1969), it becomes apparent that the theory speaks well to deviancy as well:
  - Impulsivity
  - A preference for a simple task
  - Risk-seeking
  - Self-centeredness
  - A bad temper

Discussion

- Individuals involved in deviant and risky subcultures, e.g. drug abuse and criminal engagement, are more likely to meet the criteria for pathological gambling than the conventional gambler in society (Brañas-Garza, Georgantzís, & Guillen, 2007; Tochkov, 2010).

- For example, as a result of peer influence, participants in the Triad culture reported gambling frequently and being more likely to engage in more than 1 gambling activity.

- In a study by Brown, Killian, and Evans (2005), a strong correlation between gambling frequency and criminal behavior was found – thus, suggesting that criminal activity may be related to financing gambling.

Discussion

- There are differences in gambling motivation and habits between the four researched deviant subcultures.

- The Theory of Reasoned Actions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) explains that:
  - Behavioral intention (planned action) is created by 2 factors:
    - Our attitudes
      - Belief strength
      - Evaluation
    - Our subjective Norms
      - Normative beliefs (what others expect me to do)
      - Motivation to comply
- Thus, our environment plays a big role in how we behave and how our actions are planned.

Discussions

- Preliminary results indicated that individuals with greater gambling severity, independent of subculture, were more likely to have lower education levels, poor family background, and longer history of gambling.

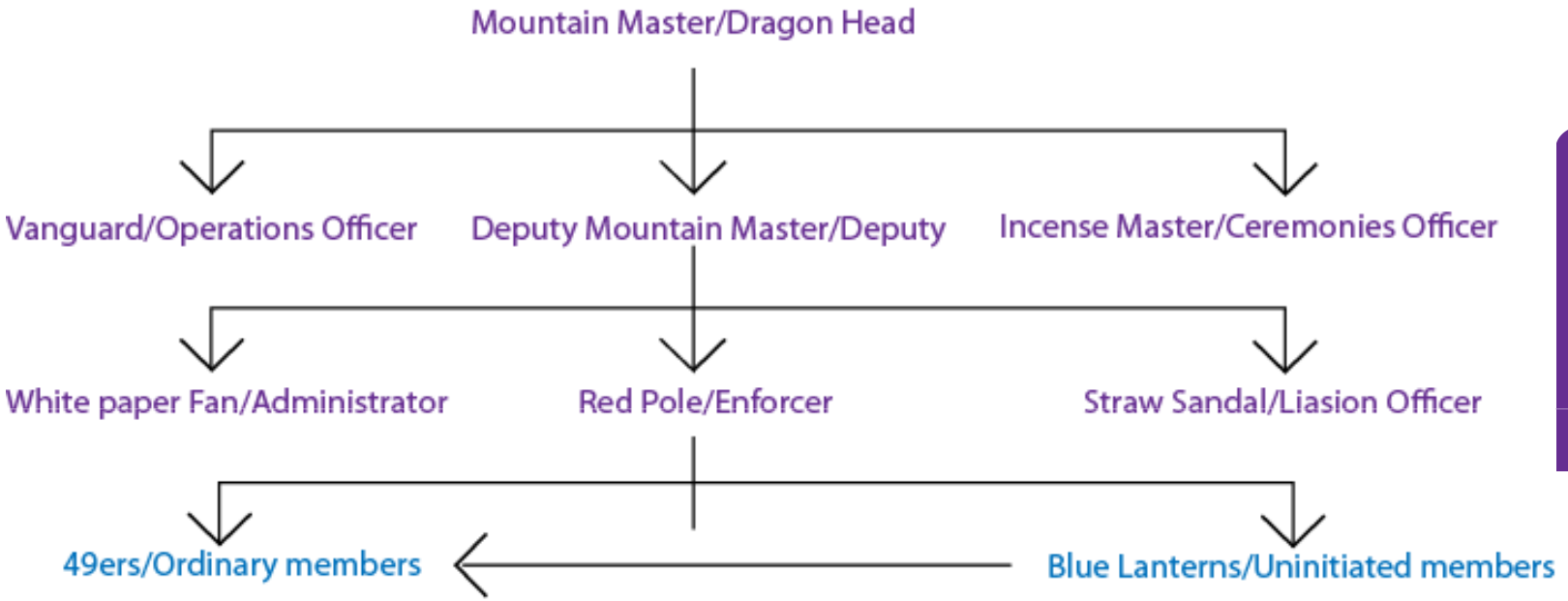
- Moving forward, results from the study revealed that with greater gambling severities came increased criminal and impulsive tendencies, co-morbid addictions, and prison experience. Superstitions, significant peer influence to gamble.

Discussion

- The pathways development of the participants in this study will support the pathways model proposed by Blaszczynski & Nower (2002).

- Blaszczynski & Nower's (2002) Pathway development model of problem and pathological gamblers explains:
  - There are 3 pathways to which any problem gambler or pathological gambler can be characterized as of following:
    - Behaviorally-Conditioned gamblers
    - Emotionally-Vulnerable gamblers
    - Antisocial-Impulsive gamblers

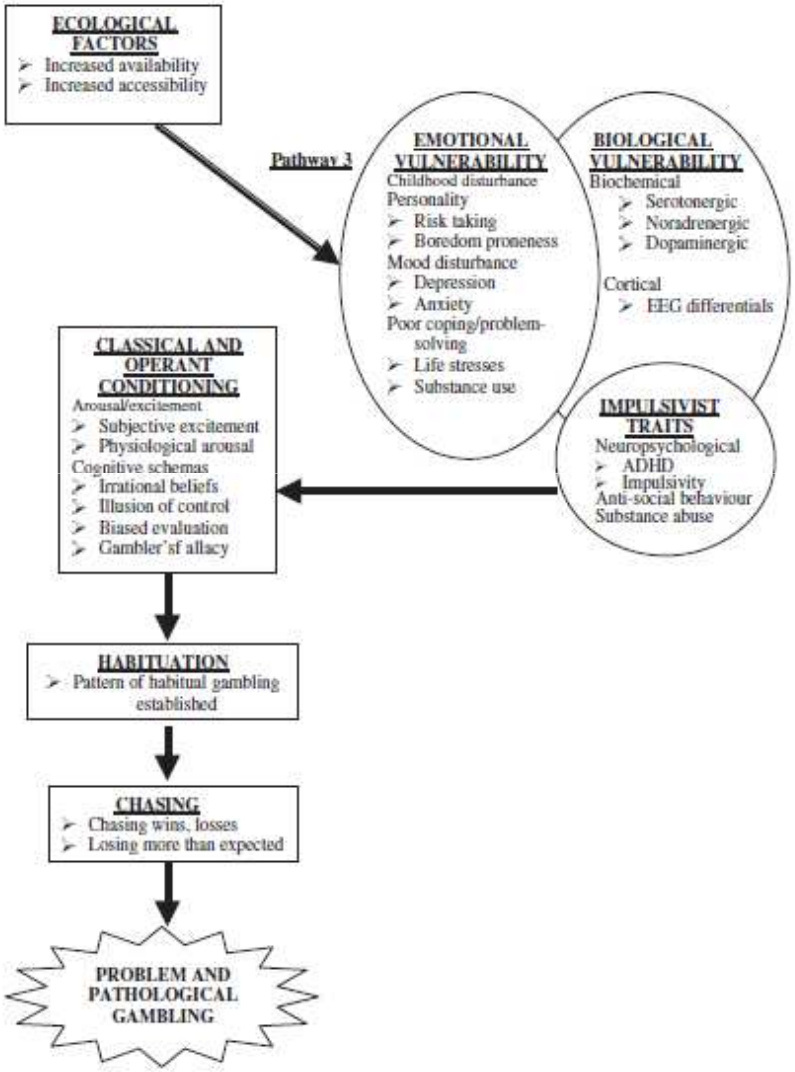
Discussion


Mountain Master/Dragon Head
Vanguard/Operations Officer
Deputy Mountain Master/Deputy
Incense Master/Ceremonies Officer
White paper Fan/Administrator
Red Pole/Enforcer
Straw Sandal/Liasion Officer
49ers/Ordinary members
Blue Lanterns/Uninitiated members

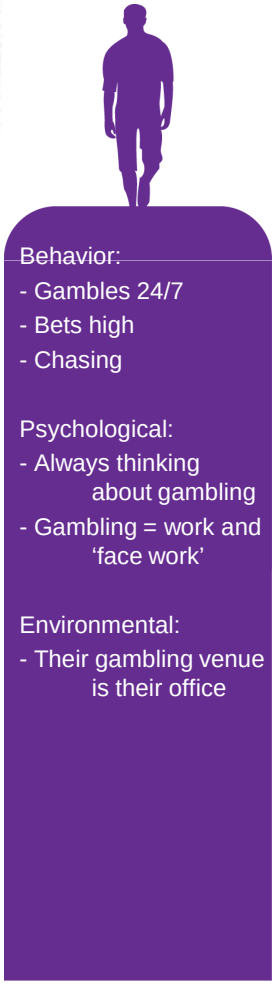
(N=14)

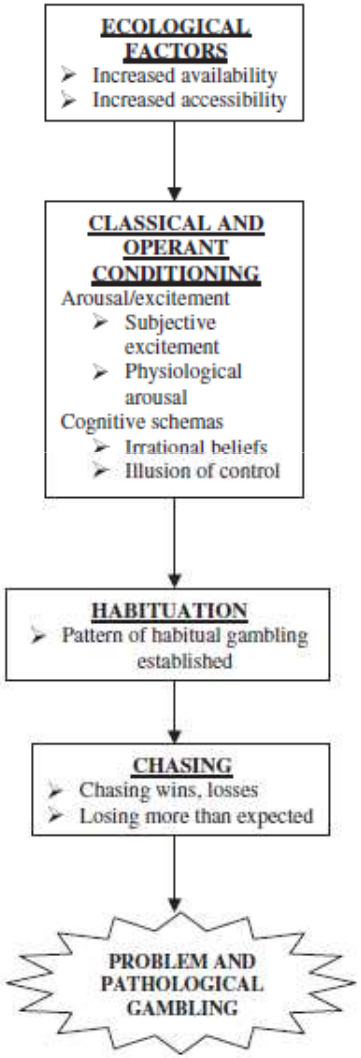
(N=7)

Discussion



Pathway III





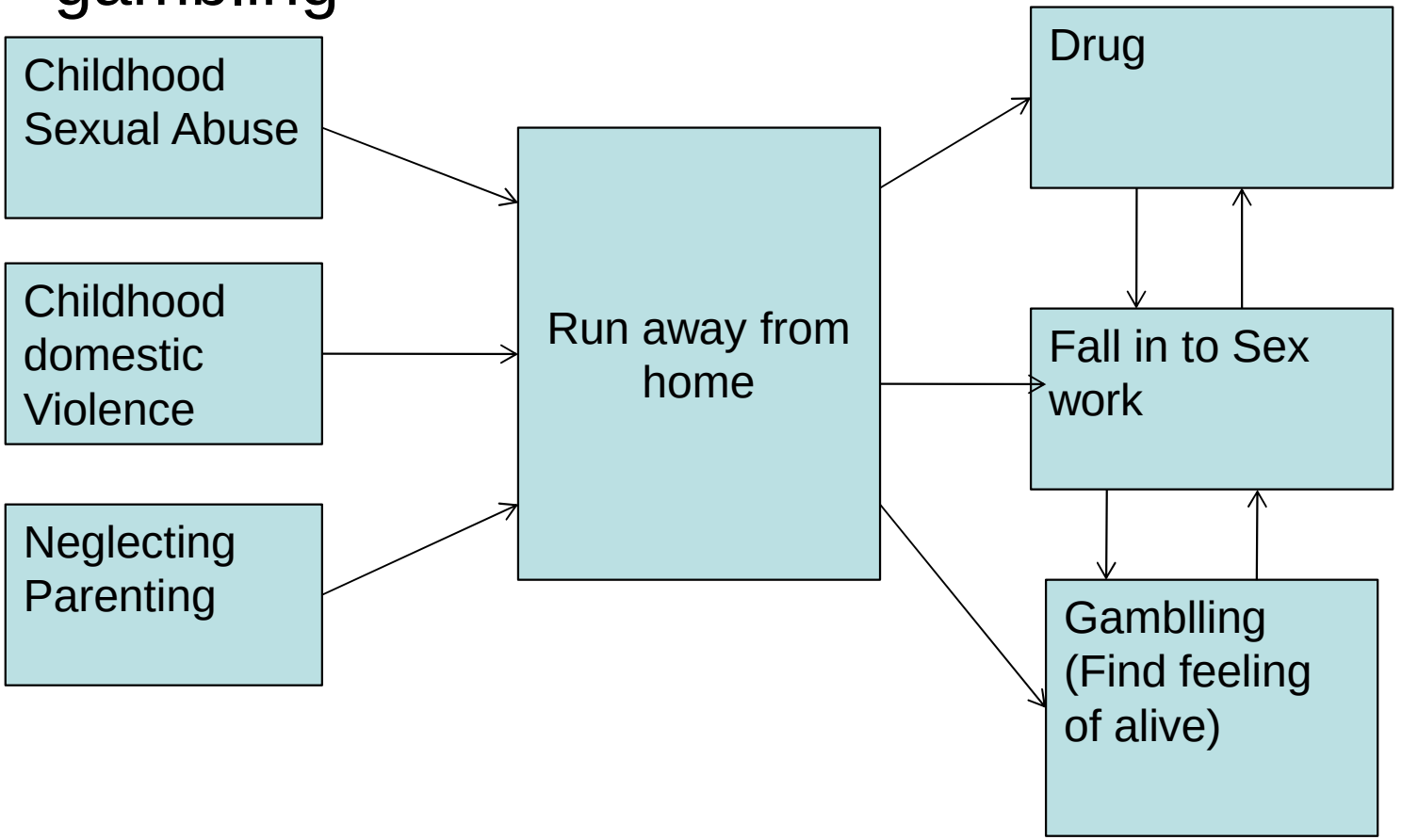
Pathway I

Discussion

- The sex workers include “direct” or “indirect” depending on whether or not the worker involved provides solely sex service.
- Direct sex worker ----- those work from a villa, in an apartment or one-woman brothel, unlicensed massage places, call centre, streets or escort company.
- Indirect sex workers ----- working in karaoke bars, nightclubs and licensed massage places.
- Some work as “mama sang” managing or being agent of a team of younger women sex workers.
- Some sex workers may be working either part-time or full-time, and may be classified as either direct or indirect sex workers.

Discussion

Model pathways of Sex workers involve in gambling



Discussion

Behavior:

- Gambles based on emotion and opportunity
- Chasing

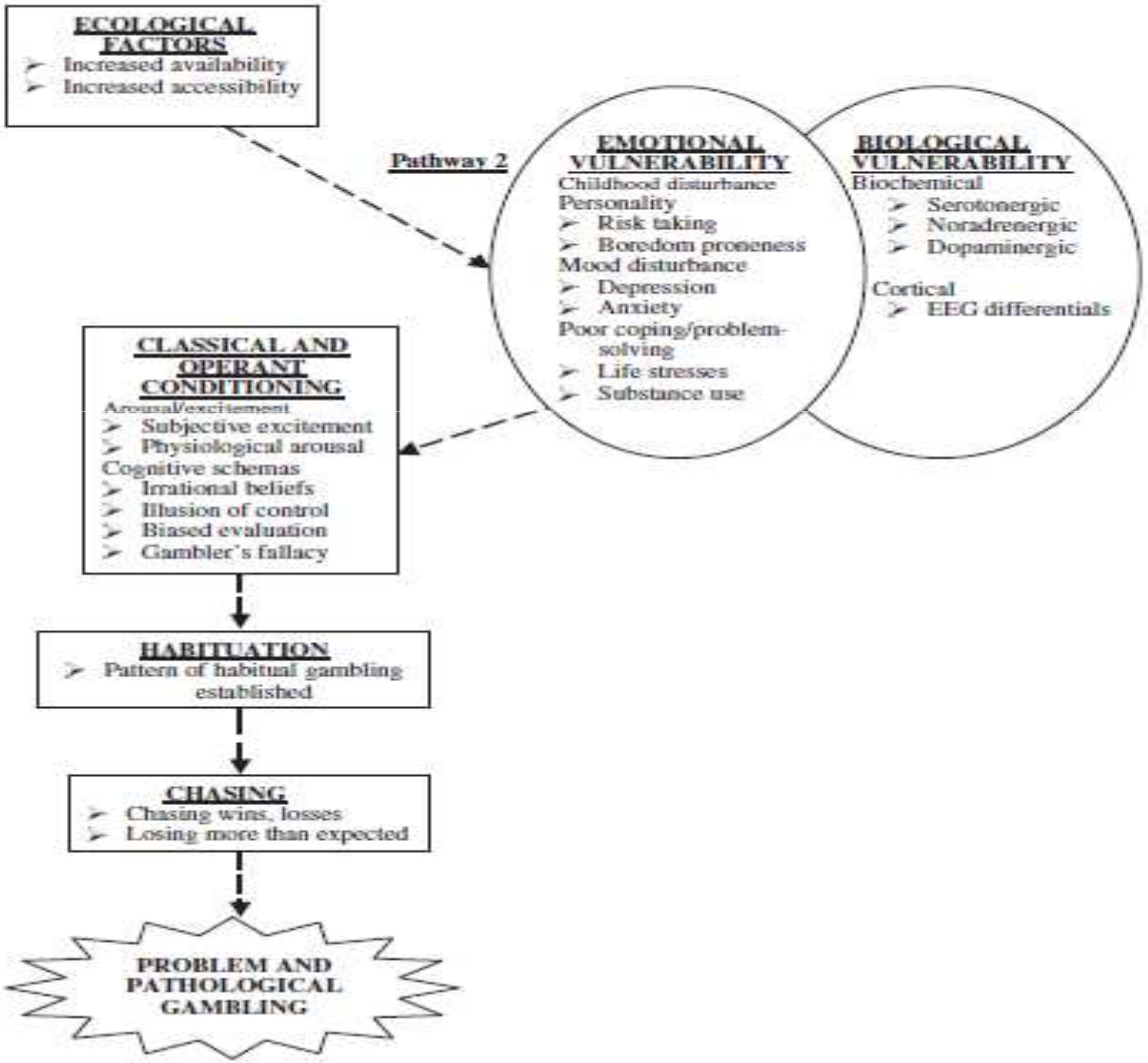
Psychological:

- Gambling = the 'hope of escape'
- A 'Behavioral drug'
- Time killing

Environmental:

- Gambles in Mahjong houses

Female Sex Worker Pathway



Pathway II (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002)

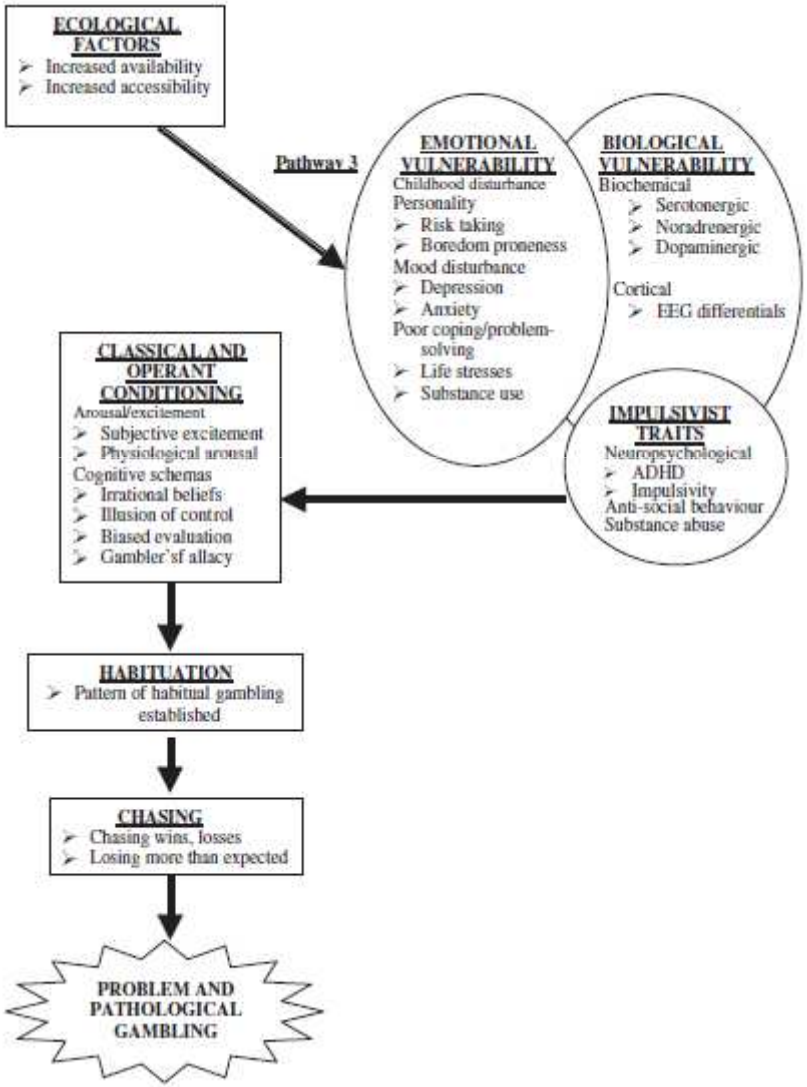
Discussion

Behavior:
- Gambles based on opportunity
- Chasing
- Deceit
- Chasing

Psychological:
- A 'Behavioral drug'
- Time killing
- Gambling = money

Environmental:
- Gambles in legal and illegal venues (given opportunity)

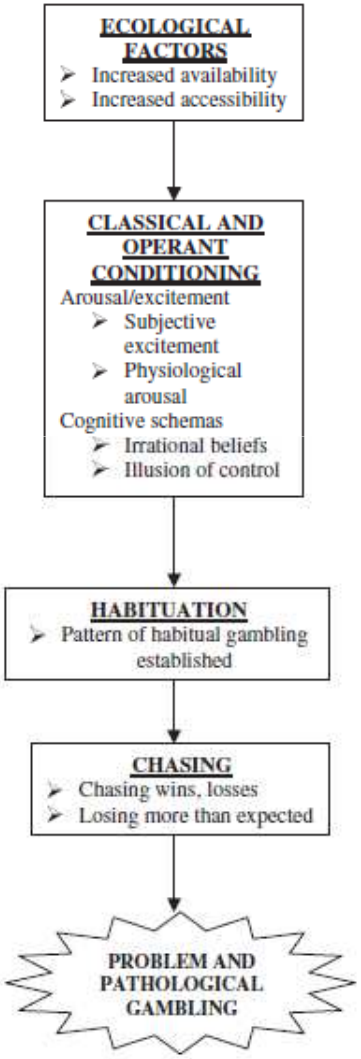
Male Sex Worker Pathway



Pathway III (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002)

Discussion

Taxi Driver Pathway



Pathway I (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002)

Limitations

- The stringent criteria for recruitment of participants may limit the possibility of replication for future studies, and its yielded implementations may only be applicable to concerned bodies that place an emphasis on the criterions mentioned.

- Because the participants are active in their subculture and actively gamble, recent news and events that occurred within the last two years – for example drug busts, criminal arrests, and raids by law enforcement officers – increased the likelihood of them not participating in the study, citing that they would not prefer to be involved in the project unless conditions have subsided or appeased.

Recommendations

- The authors of this study suggest treatment centers to modify their health messaging strategies to increase its efficacy.
- Change some assessment tool questions to better suit individuals from deviant subcultures.
- The authors recommends future studies to conduct similar qualitative studies in other parts of the world; similar in that the studies involve the elements of investigating active members of deviant subcultures and gambling behaviors.

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THANK YOU! FLOOR IS OPEN FOR Q&A! ☺