Despite the low odds of winning and high potential cost, many people choose to gamble. Why? Potential losses seem to impact our decision making more than possible wins (Liberman, Idson & Higgins, 2005), and we tend to avoid situations that result in losses (Kahneman & Tversky, 1982).

Many researchers attribute high affinities towards gambling to personality differences in thrill seeking (Chiu & Storm, 2010), but could there be an underlying distortion in our subjective experience?

**Methods**

Over two experiments, participants took part in a digital card game and completed one of two memory tests.

*Participants.* 106 (62% female, \( M_{age} = 31 \)) in Experiment 1 and 192 (52% male, \( M_{age} = 32 \)) in Experiment 2 were recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk.

*Procedure.* Participants before beginning the card game, participants were told that this games was either **harder** or **easier** to win compared to other casino card games.

**The Incongruity Effect (and Person Memory)**

Hastie & Kumar, 1979

**Higher-order trait**

\[ \text{Jack (A)arrogant} \]

\[ \text{Win behavior} \]

\[ \text{Holds a door} \]

**Behaviors**

\[ \text{Nine} \]

\[ \text{Team} \]

\[ \text{Player} \]

\[ \text{Chips} \]

**The Incongruity Effect (and Gambling)**

**Higher-order trait**

\[ \text{Expectancy} \]

\[ \text{dose} \]

**Outcomes**

\[ \text{Lose} \]

\[ \text{Win!} \]

\[ \text{Lose} \]

\[ \text{Push} \]

**The Incongruity Effect**

\[ \text{I Won (as far as I remember)! Broad Implications of the Incongruity Effect} \]

Collin Scarince & Michael C. Hout

**Indicate Bet**

(10-100)

**Outcome presented**

**Brief Sensation Seeking Scale (BSSS; Hoyle et al., 2002)**

**Past gambling experience and attitudes towards the game**

**Recall memory task (Exp 1)**

**Recognition memory task (Exp 2)**

**Results**

**Experiment 1**

**Experiment 2**

**Conclusions**

- Participants were able to recognize past gambling experiences, but they poorly estimated the number of times they won or lost.
- Low saliency trials (pushes) were estimated to occur fewer times than wins or losses and were poorly recognized.
- Sensation seeking was not a strong predictor of gambling behavior (\( pr = .989 \ exp1, pr = .178 \ exp2 \)).

**Future directions**

- Add stakes
- Be more explicit about the expected outcomes of the game.