

# Cultural Examination of Beliefs About Luck and Gambling Behaviours Among Chinese-heritage and Euro-Canadian Students

Shirley Yiu and Jessica Dere

University of Toronto Scarborough

## INTRODUCTION

- **Gambling** is commonly described as any activity in which something of value is risked on the outcome of an event - when the probability of winning or losing is less than certain (Korn and Shaffer, 1999).
- **Pathological gambling** as classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) refers to a condition in which an individual shows persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behaviour, which may result in dysfunctions in the areas of work, studies, and social and family relationships.
- **Problem gambling** refers to a condition in which an individual's gambling behaviours are less severe than required by the diagnostic criteria of the DSM.
- Cross-cultural gambling research has tended to focus on groups of Chinese heritage. A number of studies have found greater problem and pathological gambling rates among Chinese samples, compared to other groups (e.g., Oei & Raylu, 2009).
- Recent research has shown that cultural factors such as beliefs, values, and the process of acculturation (Kim, 2012), and beliefs about luck, also influence gambling behaviours (Darke & Freedman, 1997).
- In order to better understand the factors that may promote elevated gambling behaviours among Chinese-heritage individuals, we examined the association between beliefs in luck, acculturation, and gambling behaviours among both Chinese-heritage and Euro-Canadian undergraduate students.

## METHOD

### Hypotheses:

- Chinese-heritage students will have higher levels of gambling behaviour compared to Euro-Canadian students
- Beliefs in luck will be positively correlated with levels of gambling behaviour
- Mainstream acculturation will be negatively associated with gambling behaviour among Chinese-heritage students.

### Participants:

- Undergraduate students recruited from the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC).
- Self-identified Chinese or Euro-Canadian ethno-cultural background

## Participants

	Chinese-heritage	Euro-Canadian
n	108	43
Sex (% female)	66.7	72.1
Age (years): mean (SD)	19.16 (1.60)	18.88 (1.57)
Born in Canada (%)	40.7%	90.7%
Mother born in Canada	0.9%	67.4%
Father born in Canada	0.9%	58.1%

## Measures

### Gambling measure

**The South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS;** Lesieur & Blume, 1987)

### Belief in luck measures

**The Gambling Beliefs Questionnaire (GBQ;** Steenbergh, Meyers, May, & Whelan, 2002)

**The Belief in Good Luck Scale (BIGLS;** Darke & Freedman, 1997)

**The Personal Luck Usage Scale (PLUS;** Wohl, Stewart & Young, 2011)

### Acculturation measure

**The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA;** Ryder, Alden & Paulhus, 2000)

## RESULTS

### Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha)

	Chinese-heritage	Euro-Canadian
	$\alpha$	$\alpha$
BIGLS	0.71	0.79
Personal luck subscale	0.80	0.70
General luck subscale	0.77	0.80
GBQ	0.86	0.87
Luck subscale	0.84	0.83
Illusion subscale	0.79	0.70
SOGS	0.75	0.67
PLUS	0.81	0.86
VIA	--	--
Heritage subscale	0.85	0.88
Mainstream subscale	0.82	0.87

### Group comparison on the SOGS total score

- A significant group difference was found on the SOGS total score, with the Chinese-heritage group ( $M=1.93$ ,  $SD=2.37$ ) reporting higher levels of overall gambling behaviours than the Euro-Canadians ( $M=0.60$ ,  $SD=1.20$ ),  $t(141)=4.52$ ,  $p < .001$ .

## Group comparisons in beliefs in luck on the BIGLS, GBQ Luck, and PLUS

	Chinese-heritage		Euro-Canadian		Comparison	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	df
<b>BIGLS</b>						
Personal Luck	13.39	3.58	11.74	3.40	2.59*	149
General Luck	16.56	4.22	14.09	4.20	3.24*	149
<b>GBQ Luck</b>	35.1	11.58	28.93	9.97	3.04*	149
<b>PLUS</b>	32.54	6.93	26.10	7.31	5.08*	149

## Bivariate correlations between gambling behaviour and beliefs in luck

Results revealed a significant correlation between SOGS total score and the BIGLS personal luck score, GBQ luck score, and the PLUS score for the Chinese-heritage participants. A correlation was found between SOGS total score and GBQ luck score among Euro-Canadian participants.

**Mediator model:** The GBQ luck score partially mediated the effect of group membership on gambling behaviour.

## DISCUSSION

- Our first two hypotheses were supported. Chinese-heritage students reported higher levels of gambling behaviours than the Euro-Canadians. Chinese-heritage students also endorsed higher beliefs in both general and personal luck. Chinese-heritage students possess gambling-related beliefs that luck is a personal quality that can be utilized to influence gambling outcomes.
- Our third hypothesis was not supported; acculturation showed no significant association with gambling behaviour.
- Limitations of the current study include the use of a convenience sample and small sample size.
- The current findings suggest that there is a significant association between stronger beliefs in luck and elevated gambling behaviour among Chinese-heritage students.

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