

# **LADY LUCK: Understanding How Casino Players Perceive Their Luck**

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**Abstract.** This paper reports the findings of a qualitative exploratory study, which looked at the meaning of 'luck' for a group of Casino Rama players. The data were collected through a combination of in-depth open-ended interviews conducted with six regular 'Triple Action' poker players and participant observation. The research in this paper was aimed at improving our understanding of how players perceive lady luck and the kind of relationship they have with her. Results revealed that regular players had elevated perceptions of luck. The regular players also felt that they could change the outcome of the game by using certain routines and rituals. Implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

## **Introduction**

The Canadian Gambling Behavior and Attitudes summary report (Azmier, 2000) reveals that many Canadians gamble. Over seventy per cent of Canadians have participated in some form of gambling in the last year; seventeen per cent of those engage in slot machine gambling. About one quarter are "regular gamblers" who play their favorite game at least once a week.

According to Wohl, Young and Hart (2007) the definition of "games of chance" requires that outcomes are random. Winning and losing are thus by definition beyond a player's ability to control; however, most players still continue to be propelled by a false sense of personal control. There are many explanations rooted in the biology of gambling, the sociology of gambling and the psychodynamics and psychology of gambling that attempt to explain a gambler's perseverance even in the face of financial loss. Social-cognitive and attribution theories best explain not only the dynamics of

gambling but also how players might perceive their own ability to affect the likelihood of winning based on personal routines and luck.

Social-cognitive theory states that individuals will continue to gamble and increase their wagers because of the misplaced belief in their own ability to affect the outcome (Wohl, 2007). Cognitive psychologist Michael Walker (1992) examined socio-cognitive theory in relation to Australian poker machine players, testing the proposition that slot machine players would demonstrate more ‘irrational’ behaviors than any other type of player. Walker studied nine poker machine players using the “thinking aloud”<sup>1</sup> method, and concluded that the players were not gambling because of unconscious desires, guilt feelings, personality disorders or the need to increase or decrease arousal: rather the players were driven by irrational, wishful thinking and the strength of people’s fate in their false beliefs. Walkers (1992) findings also demonstrated that:

Gambling behavior is thought to be reinforced by beliefs in one’s own intellectual superiority or luck, by overestimating one’s chances for winning, by the gambler’s illusion that he or she can somehow control the outcome of play. (p.258)

The gambler’s illusion or fallacy – the idea that chance is a self-correcting process and hence that previous random results can affect future random results<sup>2</sup> -- is a concept that David Oldman (1978) researched in-depth to try and determine gambling persistence. Oldman found that a players experience contributes to a players’ faith in predicting a positive outcome. Oldman went even further to examine the correlation between the monetary amount placed on a roulette table and the specific numbers that a player picks.

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<sup>1</sup> Players are supplied with a recorder so that the thoughts they voiced during play could be recorded for analysis.

<sup>2</sup> For example, if a coin is flipped three times in succession and comes up heads, heads and heads, someone invoking the gambler’s fallacy would likely bet that “tails” would come up next because “tails are due.” In fact, if the coin is a fair coin and the flip is done fairly, the probability of a head or a tail on any given flip, no matter what happened previously, is .5 or ½.

Oldman found that two theories were present during play. The first is the “gambler’s fallacy”<sup>3</sup> which is based on the belief that the longer it has been since the last appearance of a specific number, sequence, color or combination, the more likely it is to appear in the future. The second theory is based on the assumption that outcomes of future plays will be similar to those previous.

Griffiths (1990) focused on a variety of methods when researching the skill involved in slot machine play. Using the “thinking aloud” method as well as observational techniques and semi-structured interviews he was able to capture whether there was element of skill in fruit machine slot playing was genuine or illusional and to evaluate the irrational thinking that occurs while gambling. Griffiths study sample comprised sixty university students who were observed in an actual casino setting. Half of the subjects were regular players and the other half were less experienced players. Both groups of players were given enough money for thirty plays and their behavior was observed throughout. Using the “thinking aloud” method it was found that the regular players<sup>4</sup> exhibited a greater degree of irrational thinking. For example the regular players were more likely to try and humanize the machine, curse, swear and talk to it. Many of the regular players also had certain techniques they would use such as: nudging the machine, holding the buttons, talking to and naming the machine. Griffith’s findings confirmed that regular players exhibit irrational thoughts and place more emphasis on skill.

There is a tendency in much of the gambling literature to neglect the subjective components to gambling which can provide more insight into the lives of the players.

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<sup>3</sup> This causes players to bet that the outcome of future plays will be different from those previous.

<sup>4</sup> Regular players are seen as the opposite of casual players. The regular players are those who gamble on a regular basis.

Objectively, chances of winning have no bearing on the successful outcomes of wagering. Wohl (2007) provides an example of the subjective neglect by looking at theories of attribution and luck. Wohl describes the concept of luck as “a random environmental factor that is independent of human volition or individual effort”. (p.44)

Attribution theory according to Aasved (2002) refers to,

The reasons and rationalizations gamblers give for their successes and failures. Those who ascribe the outcomes of events to such agencies as luck or fate are externally oriented; those who ascribe outcomes to their own skill are internally oriented. (p.188)

Attributional biases are a type of rationalization that the gambler uses to condone his or her spending. A gambler does not see a loss as a *real* loss; rather, they see it as bringing them one step closer to a win. Losing money is really not losing; rather, it is an investment in the win. Losses are often re-interpreted as near wins and wins are re-interpreted as signs of skill and success (H. Stanley, personal communication, April 1, 2008).

In contrast to the academic meaning of ‘luck’ there is a growing trend by researchers to explore how gamblers perceive themselves as being lucky and how they may be able to change their fate (Darke and Freedman, 1997). From a subjective standpoint, luck is seen as a quality or trait. Many players see this trait as a special gift they can use to maximize their profits. The players do not see themselves as behavioral scientists do and perceive their luck to be controlled though internal factors and basic routines and rituals. The lay person’s view of luck takes on many different forms but in most instances they do not adhere to the scientific definition of luck as uncontrollable and unstable (Wohl, 2007).

For a player who sees him or herself as ‘lucky’ there may be many different reasons why the individual makes the internal attribution. Two theories that are suggested based on the cognitive distortions model refer to the ideas of ‘magical thinking’<sup>5</sup> and ‘superstitious/ritual beliefs’<sup>6</sup>. Gamblers who believe that luck can be manipulated will engage in behaviors they believe have contributed to winning. These behaviors can be wearing a particular pair of socks that they had on when they last won or holding an object that they associate with winning (Wohl, 2007). Ritualistic behaviors include touching their nose, talking to the cards, walking around the chair, and/or wearing their lucky hat and socks. Such behaviors are quite common, as will be discussed later.

Other internal attributions include emotional reasoning, memory biases, and personalization. *Emotional Reasoning* is linked to feelings/beliefs that equate to a persons knowledge meaning that “if I believe it to be true it is true,” i.e., my belief is fact. *Memory biases* are often a type of selective memory which the gambler will always remember the win and attribute it to luck or something in their routine; losses are either ignored or seen as one step closer to the win. Finally, *personalization* is the gambler’s association with the machine where they will feel a personal connection or relationship with the game. The player will find a machine they believe “likes” them, which will in turn increase their likelihood of winning (H. Stanley, personal communication, April 1, 2008).

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<sup>5</sup> Magical thinking refers to the emotional attachment to the act and the gamblers perception of special power to manipulate their luck

<sup>6</sup> Superstitious/ritualistic behavior refers to the act itself and linking certain events as if they were causal

Despite the fact that the ‘house always wins,’ players continue to place their wagers believing that their luck will change. The purpose of this study was to try and understand individual player’s rituals and routines and how they perceive their own personal luck. Many socio-cognitive theories help to explain the phenomenon, and undertaking the exploratory study, conducting open-ended interviews and engaging in participant observation attempts to achieve just that.

## **Methodology**

### **The Sample**

All data collected were from Casino Rama in Orillia, Ontario. The data were collected over a period of one month using both participant observation and in-depth open-ended interview methodologies.

The interview data for this project were collected by using a purposive sampling technique with an emphasis on sampling as much as possible for diversity. The decision for using this particular technique was two-fold. Firstly, because of the proximity of the Casino to my place of residence, it was not difficult to find participants I knew and with whom I had already established a relationship. Secondly, this sampling method was chosen to ensure variation because of the small research group studied. The ages of the interview participants ranged from twenty-seven to fifty-nine. Three players were male and three female; all were Caucasian.

The ages of those whom I studied during my participant observation ranged from nineteen to approximately seventy-five. Both males and females participated; most players were Caucasian.

## **The Interviews**

Six in-depth open-ended interviews were conducted. Participants were informed of the general area of inquiry and were prompted for certain areas of discussion. Discussion began with the acquisition of typical demographic information and quickly moved onto different patterns and themes relating to 'luck'. Participants had the freedom to navigate during the interviews, moving from their personal experiences to their observations of other players. Throughout the interview process there was a healthy degree of reflexivity which enhanced the quality of the data that was obtained. While I came prepared with certain themes I was interested in hearing about and could use to generate discussion, I took an intentionally inductive approach to allow participants to tell their own stories and accounts of their experiences with very little researcher conceptual interference or imposition.

Participants who agreed to be interviewed were offered the choice as to where they would like to have the interview take place. Most participants chose to be interviewed in their own homes, which provided a level of comfort for the participants. Each interview took anywhere between two and three hours. Because the participants volunteered for the study they were honest and willing to fully participate throughout the entire process.

Confidentiality and anonymity were discussed before the participants agreed to engage in the research project. Two players did not feel it necessary to keep their identities confidential and agreed to be videotaped throughout most of their interview. The remaining participants were ensured strict confidentiality and assurance that their identities were not to be revealed at any point during or after the project completion.

Notes were taken verbatim; some of the participants wished to recant some of their statements, which was allowed.

## **Participant Observation**

Participant observation, unlike the traditional empirical research approach of understanding gambling behavior, has proven itself as an appropriate and effective method for studying gambling behaviors, rituals and experiences. According to Palys (1997) participant observation is when “the researcher spends extensive time in a setting trying to understand some aspect(s) of the setting from the perspective of those in it” (p.203). In my nine, one hour sessions at Casino Rama, the naturally occurring behavior of the players was captured through observation field notes. At no time were the identities of the players known. Each casino visit was approximately one hour in length. Most observations took place between 1:00pm and 8:00pm.

The roles of both participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant involve some observation and some participation, the difference being only in what role is emphasized more (Palys, 1997). In my research, both methods were valuable sources of first hand information. Traditional participant observational research has what Denzin (1970) referred to as a reactive effect since the group that the researcher is observing would know they are being watched, and might present a ‘degree of reactivity’. However because of the large Casino setting and the number of players involved, this did not have any effect on the research. As well, according to Palys (1997) using observational techniques minimized the ethical concerns of this research.

## Findings

### Perceptions of Personal Luck

A primary objective of this research was to try and understand how players perceive their own personal luck.<sup>7</sup> The six interview respondents all had one thing in common that became apparent when listening to their personal stories and experiences: they all perceived that they had the ability to change their own luck.

Although participants had unique views in terms of *how* they could personally change their own luck, all six nonetheless shared this common perception of control of luck. The perception did not correspond with the mainstream psychological definition of luck as a “random environmental factor that is independent of human volition or individual effort” (Wohl, 2007 p.44). Instead, all six interview participants believed that luck was a personal attribute and not a random occurrence and that they could change their own luck based upon their own behaviors. For example Theresa<sup>8</sup> stated:

I know it sounds cliché but I just feel it when I walk into the Casino. I feel whether or not it will be a lucky day. I start off by sitting at my favorite triple action machine I call ‘slow poke.’ I call it ‘slow poke’ because it seems to show the poker hands slower than most machines. I always start off by playing fifty cents at a time because that way it warms up the machine. If after a few hands I don’t make anything I change my bet because it usually helps. It sounds crazy but I know the way I play helps with my chances of winning. I think that I am a lucky person and I feel that I control my luck as well.

Although all participants believed that they were ‘lucky,’ each discussed their perceptions of luck in a different manner. One thing that was observed throughout the interview process was that the participants rarely discussed their losses but recalled in

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<sup>7</sup> The belief in luck as a personal resource or deployable skill that one can employ to manipulate chance events in specific gambling outcomes (Wohl, 2007)

<sup>8</sup> In order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms are used throughout this report.

detail when they had won. All six participants could describe the specific jackpots they had won and on what day but did not know how much they had to spend for the ‘big win’. The participants who did talk briefly about losing did so in a manner that explained their losses as circumstantial<sup>9</sup> or correctable shortcomings<sup>10</sup>. For example, Brian stated:

I was really lucky last Friday! I pulled \$900 dollars out of the triple action machine, right next to the one that doesn't sing. I usually play triple action because the jackpots are bigger than most other machines. The machine acts like normal but if you hit on three '3's' you go into triple action mode where you have nine chances to triple your money. I am always going into triple action so why wouldn't I play these machines? Today was OK but, I think on Mondays the machines have been overplayed during the weekend and they get cleaned out so much that it takes a while for them to get back on track. I couldn't really concentrate on the game today because I had to work at 11:00am so I could only play for three hours.

Five of the six participants believed that they had identified ‘lucky machines’. When asked what made a certain machine luckier than another the most common response was that there was a personal connection with a particular machine. Most of the participants had a special name for their lucky machine such as Jigger, Slow Poke, Gimme, and Geronimo. When the participants were asked why they had names for their ‘lucky machines’ one of the participants explained that they spend a great deal of time with the machine and “the machine will be good to you if you are good to it.” Another participant explained that “I don't only name machines but I also name people who are regulars at the casino, they don't know I have nicknames for them but I do.” Having a lucky machine did not mean that the participant would win each time they would play the certain machine; rather, they felt better sitting at their lucky machine before moving on to another. For example, Melissa stated:

I don't know what it is....when I walk into the casino I sit down at 'Jigger'

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<sup>9</sup> Meaning that the machine that the participant was playing needed to be serviced or was not calibrated properly

<sup>10</sup> Meaning that the participant needed to correct their own behavior such as: concentrate more on the game

that's what I call my favorite 'Triple Action' machine. It is almost like the machine knows me. It usually starts off with a few bad hands but then it slowly picks up. I know it sounds ridiculous but I have a personal tie to this one machine because it really sets the mood for the rest of my day at the casino. When I don't win on Jigger at all...like getting four of a kind or even a full house I know the rest of my day is shot. Jigger has been good to me more than once this week and I know it has to do with the fact that it has been a little while since my last jackpot. About a month ago they moved Jigger, I have a feeling that it was because they were catching on that I was winning so much and maybe others too. They moved it at the end of another row but I was able to find it.

### **Participant Observation**

How a person perceives their own luck is a difficult concept to observe and sometimes even harder to explain. Whether someone believes that they are lucky is hard to casually observe without listening and closely watching the player's actions. Attending the Casino on nine separate occasions some of the regular and casual players luck could be loosely observed.

On three separate occasions I observed individuals who were talking to players next to them saying things like, "I feel lucky today," "luck must be on my side," and "I'm on a run of luck." These statements might imply these players view luck as part of their personal identities. Upon observing the three players in thirty minute intervals, one of the players did win a few good hands where the payout was \$340; however, all lost more than they won. It was observed that someone might come to think that they are lucky, because of the degree to which they have benefited from recent chance events, however, noting that none of the losses were acknowledged ... only the wins.

Another interesting observation of luck took place on several occasions where a regular player would sit at 'their' machine and would begin to place their wagers. The perseverance of wagering when faced with continuous loss indicated to me that they believed in their ability to change their own luck. When observing this behavior it

appeared that the players had a sense of overconfidence in their ability to win. When observing the same regular players there appeared to be a sense of pride and accomplishment when they would win and, a sense of sadness when they would lose. It was observed that they were disappointed but it was unclear if they were upset at themselves or the machines.

### **Players Rituals/Routines**

According to Aasved (2002) it is no secret that gamblers are among the most superstitious and ritualistic people in the modern world. This statement is not surprising seeing that because gambling takes on so many different forms in our society and that winning occurs in such a random way that good fortune and luck be associated with entirely unrelated events. According to Havemann (1952):

The gambler is among the last practitioners of superstition and ritualistic behavior. He throws spilt salt over his left shoulder, knocks on wood, avoids black cats and goes out of his way to give a beggar money on route to the races or his dice game. He has an old hat, a necktie or tiepin that brings him good luck, and if bad luck sets in he chases it by walking three times around a chair. He begs, cajoles and pleads with the dice, talking more tenderly than to his wife. He can feel it in his bones when a slot machine is about to drop a jackpot and when the feeling turns out to be wrong he looks at the machine with an aggrieved expression of a man deceived by his best friend. (p.10)

Webster's Dictionary (2008) defines a ritual as "a ceremonial act or action, and or a series of acts regularly repeated in a set precise manner." When discussing the general area of behaviors at the Casino, four of the six participants acknowledged that they had a particular ritual that they did before, during and after play. Even though the outcomes of the four participants games were presumably random the players were nevertheless firmly convinced that their personal actions had the ability to influence them. Each of the four players had their own rituals that they performed and each of the players would

blame themselves when they had not won based on missing a step in the routine or forgetting to do something that would have increased their chances of winning. One of the participants described his ritual/routine as soothing and calming and that if performed in the right way it would reduce the anxiety of placing a larger wager. Todd stated:

Even before I get to the casino I have to do a little routine in the morning. I can't just eat one waffle or one piece of toast it has to be two. Everything in pairs is much more calming. I know it sounds ridiculous but it works! When I sit down at my machine I say a few words not loud enough for everyone to hear but just so that the machine knows. Once I'm on a roll I will make sure to play at the same speed and not change anything. This is what reduces my stress level when playing more than five dollars a hand. If my luck changes for whatever reason I usually can change it back by fooling the machine. I will take my players card out and put it back in six plays later. I think that the machine recalibrates. If this doesn't work I usually pull the handle on the machine for the next six plays instead of pushing the 'deal' button. If this doesn't work I usually go outside for a smoke and try my luck at another machine when I come back.

The many accounts described by the six interview participants was easily observed and verified during my observation visits at Casino Rama. Since the study was exploratory in nature it was interesting to see and report all types of behaviors and not just one's related to a specific area of interest. The one behavior that could be observed more easily was the player's routines and rituals. Casino Rama has over 2,500 slot machines so it was necessary to pick an area to play and observe that would be consistent with the interview participants. I choose to sit at the 'Triple Action' poker machines. Unsure of how to play at first I caught on quickly by observing other players. One thing that was clear was that if you were not playing and simply watching some of the players beside you would quickly notice and look annoyed or some would offer to help. While playing and observing the 'Triple Action' poker machines it became quite clear after the fourth visit that many of the players were regulars. The regular players displayed similar characteristics such as playing at a very fast speed, talking to the machines, performing

certain subtle actions that were part of the player's routine and also waiting for a particular machine. The casual players were less intense and moved along from machine to machine and few ritualistic or routine behaviors were observed.

### **Participant Observations**

The most common ritual or routine behaviors observed when the regular players had not won after a few hands and were presumably trying to change their luck were: taking their players card in and out of the machine, switching up from pressing the deal button to using the side pull bar, waving at the screen, going from a sitting to kneeling or a standing position, touching the screen to pick their cards rather than pushing the buttons, changing their wager, crossing one leg, leaving the machine and placing coin buckets on the seat only to return a few minutes later, pressing the buttons vigorously, slapping the machine, slowing down the play, shouting at the machine, whispers of 'please..please..please' or 'come on', switching hands to push the buttons, changing fingers pressing the deal button, taking a break and having a drink before going into triple action.

Observing the regular players was much more interesting because it appeared they had many more routine/ritual type behaviors that they employ with greater frequency than the casual players. I considered a player a "regular" if I saw them on more than three occasions. Many of the regular players who knew they were being watched continued to play the same machine even when they had been losing for quite some time until they won something; however, their routine/rituals were appeared to be more subtle. It also appeared that when the regular player knew they were being observed they stayed with

their machine until they won, presumably to show the bystander that they can win and they have the ability to change their own luck.

The noise of the machines made it hard to hear what was going on at times but you could often see players mouth words to the machines. While it was impossible to observe and take notes on everything that went on at the ‘Triple Action’ poker machines, participant observation worked well to capture significant episodes of player’s naturally occurring behavior. The following excerpt from my field notes is typical of the many events observed.

Casino session 6, Field Notes: (See Appendix A for additional field note observations)

Observation Note: Female (approx 30-35 yrs) is sitting at the end triple action machine. She appears to be having a long stretch of losing and now has gone into her purse four times for more money. She has been pulling the side bar instead of pressing the deal button for the last five plays and has taken her players card out twice in the past eleven minutes. The player has also interrupted her play to go to the restroom but has placed several coin buckets on her seat to save it. Upon her return she has won a few small hands but nothing significant.

My Notes: It appeared that the regular female player (30-35yrs) could not change her luck even after several failed attempts. It appeared that she tried everything in her routine but was unsuccessful. After twenty four minutes of losing the regular player got up and moved to a different machine. Interesting to note that I have observed this woman on three other occasions and she is wearing the same black fleece jogging suit. This might indicate a lucky outfit.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The purpose of this exploratory study was to provide insight into how a select group of players perceived their own personal luck and what behaviors were displayed that may change their luck. According to much of the literature, when a gambler views luck as a personal trait they become vulnerable to many of the cognitive distortion theories. Specifically, many of the interviews conducted displayed a ‘personalization’ perception where the participants felt an emotional connection to a particular machine, assuming that a relationship can exist with a game. This behavior was also observed on

many occasions where regular players would go ‘their’ machines and when they left for any reason they would hold the machine with coin buckets or they would wait behind someone until the machine was free to play. Another popular explanation of luck was through ‘memory bias’ and was displayed in both the interviews and during participant observation. Many of the regular players had selective memories of wins but did not discuss the losses. During the participant observations, players would continue to place wagers even after they had lost a significant amount of money. All six of the interview participants felt that their losses were just one step closer to the win and in most cases they did not discuss their losses at all. Two of the cognitive theories that were clearly demonstrated in both the interviews and the participant observational process were that of ‘magical thinking’ and ‘superstitious/ritualistic behavior’. During the interviews four of the six regular players explained in their own words how they had the ability to manipulate their own luck by using their own routines or rituals. The interview participants would go into detail about how they were lucky people and how they could change their luck on any given day. Many superstitious/ ritualistic behavior were observed throughout the course of this research. Throughout the nine sessions at Casino Rama behaviors such as waving at a machine, wearing the same clothing or taking the players card in and out of the machine was commonly observed.

This paper was not intended to pass judgment, medicalize, make generalizations or suggest treatment, rather it was to try and understand how a select group of players perceived their own luck and how they perceived their luck changing based upon personal routines and rituals. By using a combination of open-ended interviews and participant observations the information gathered accomplished those objectives.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

The major limitations in this study were the time constraints and only having the ability to interview six players. The number of interviews could be subject to scrutiny because of the limited number. As well, although efforts were made to include a diverse set of players in the sample, there was no ethnic diversity amongst the interview participants.

Further research, consequently, should focus on expanding the sample size and possibly using multiple sites to compare a more diverse population. Beyond the scope of this paper but nevertheless interesting for future research would be examining the correlation between a player's belief in personal luck and a possible gambling addiction.

Finally it would be interesting to clearly distinguish between those players who gamble for entertainment and those who gamble for the money. In sum, additional qualitative research using the 'thinking aloud method' may produce the most productive and promising research results regarding a player's relationship with lady luck.

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## **Appendix A**

(selected field note observations)

### **Casino session 1, Field Notes**

Observation Note: Male Caucasian (approx 40-45 yrs) has been playing the same machine for the past 27 minutes and has been winning small amounts up until the past 20 hands. The player has now decided to stand up and order a drink. Once he gets the drink he takes a few sips and resumes play. The player has continued to lose the next 12 hands.

My Notes: It appeared that the male player could not change his luck if that was indeed what he was trying to do. It appeared that he tried his routine but was unsuccessful. After twenty seven minutes of he continues to play the same machine with very little success.

### **Casino session 2, Field Notes**

Observation Note: A female (50-55 yrs) and male (60-65 yrs) player just sat down at the machine one of the interview participants called Jigger. The players start off with a low wager of 50 cents a hand. They start to win a few hands and after 22 plays they are now wagering \$2.00 a hand. The woman started off by sitting and every 20 hands they switch up and the male player sits and presses the buttons. They have gone into triple action 4 times in the course of 31 minutes and every time before they start the woman hits the 3's on the outside of the machine with her knuckles. She only does this when they go into triple action.

My Notes: It appeared that this couple often plays together and that they are comfortable with their routine. They took turns which I am not sure if it is part of their routine or simply taking turns. It did appear that they became more confident the more time they spent at the machine and placed a higher wager when they started winning.

### **Casino session 5, Field Notes**

Observational Note: A male (19-25yrs) was sitting at a machine when I arrived and quickly left the machine to play the one next to him. Several unsuccessful hands later he moved to the next machine in the 3<sup>rd</sup> row. 12 hands later he moved on to the Betty Bop machines next to the triple action machines.

My Notes: It was difficult to keep up to this player, it appeared that he did not have a preference in machines nor did he have a system/routine. It appeared that he was trying his luck at a new game and when he was unsuccessful he moved quickly along to the next machine and when that didn't work he left the triple action play area completely.

### **Casino session 7, Field Notes**

Observational Note: A male player (40-45 yrs) was in triple action when I arrived. He was up to 1073 tokens and was playing \$20.00 a hand. This player was very fast and took little time to contemplate what cards he was going to hold and which ones he was going to throw away. He pressed the buttons with such conviction it almost appeared that he was going to break them. The player was holding a coin in his hand the entire time he played.

My Notes: This player was a regular he has been at the casino on 4 other occasions and plays the same machine. He often wagers \$20 a hand which indicates that he is not interested in small earnings rather he is playing for the big jackpot of \$4000. The coin that the man holds in his hand I presume could be talismanic (a lucky object) because Casino Rama no longer dispenses coins.

### **Casino Session 8, Field Notes**

Observational Note: Female player (55-60yrs) have not observed her at the triple action machines before but it appears that she knows how to play. She plays slowly but with an air of confidence. She wagers \$2.00 a hand which is 8 coins at a time. The hand after she goes into triple action (happened twice) she wagers the max bet of \$20.00 a hand for the first 3 hands and then goes back down to \$2.00 a hand. She appears to have a routine that involves touching the screen every 10<sup>th</sup> play, she is waving her hand across the screen. Her winnings are small but consistent. She cashes out at \$120 and leaves the Casino.

My Notes: I had not observed this woman before but this is not to say that she wasn't a regular. She appeared to have a system of betting which was consistent with a regular player and not a casual player. She did display certain ritual/routine behaviors such as waving at the machine which seemed like she was trying to pass on her aura. She also placed larger wagers when she made some money in triple action which displayed some confidence in her system.