

Social Rejection and Motivation for Risk-Taking: The Role of Personality Factors



Presenter:
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Background

- **Social rejection** may trigger **risky behaviors** as individuals try to re-establish connections and regain control.
- It stems from **a motivational conflict** between **approach** and **avoidance**.
- This approach-avoidance balance is shaped by **personality traits**.
- Traits like **anxiety** proneness, **depression** symptoms, insecure **attachment** patterns, and low **resilience** can predispose people to heightened avoidance motivation after rejection.
- Experiencing social rejection can **negatively** color **one's perceptions**, amplifying feelings of anxiety and stress.

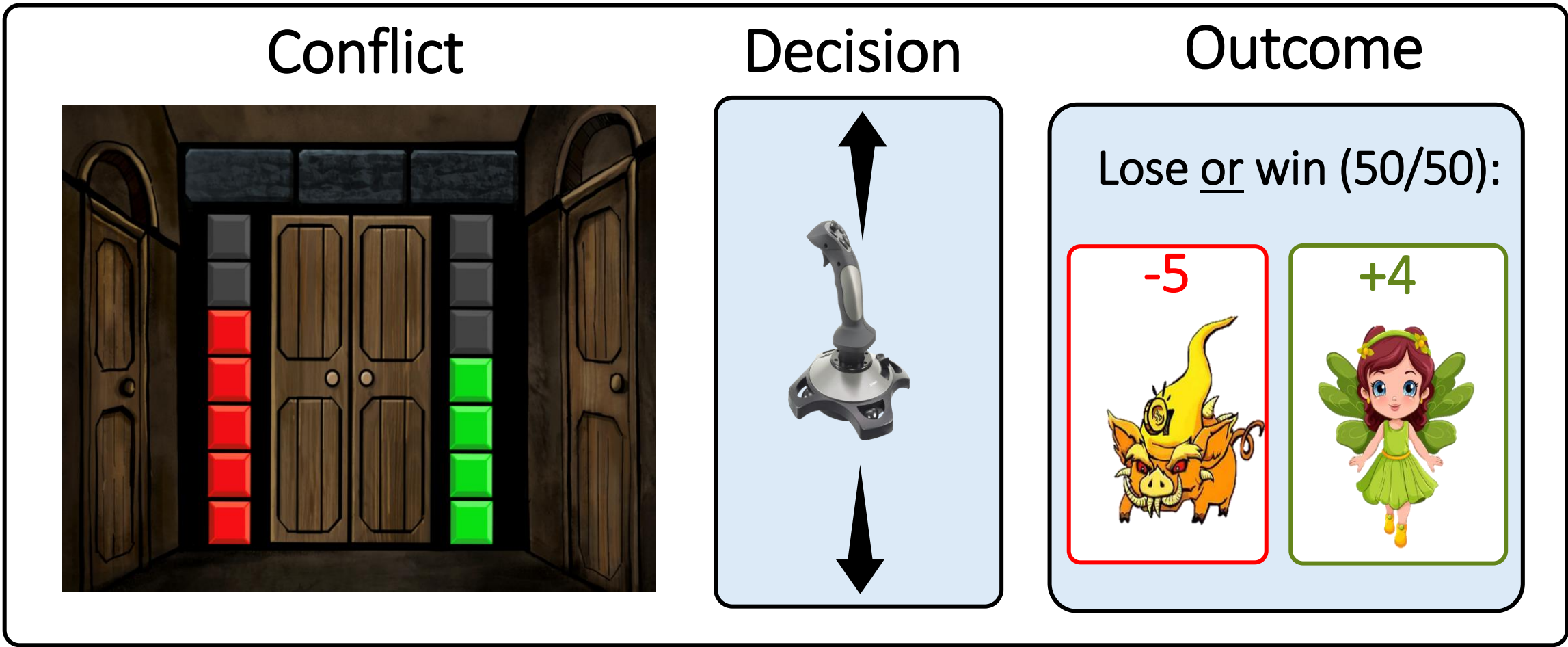
Aims

1. Develop novel approach-avoid task ; individual quantification of motivations.
2. Understand how rejection affects risk-taking motivations.
3. The relationship between personality traits and risk-taking motivations in the context of social rejection.

Methods

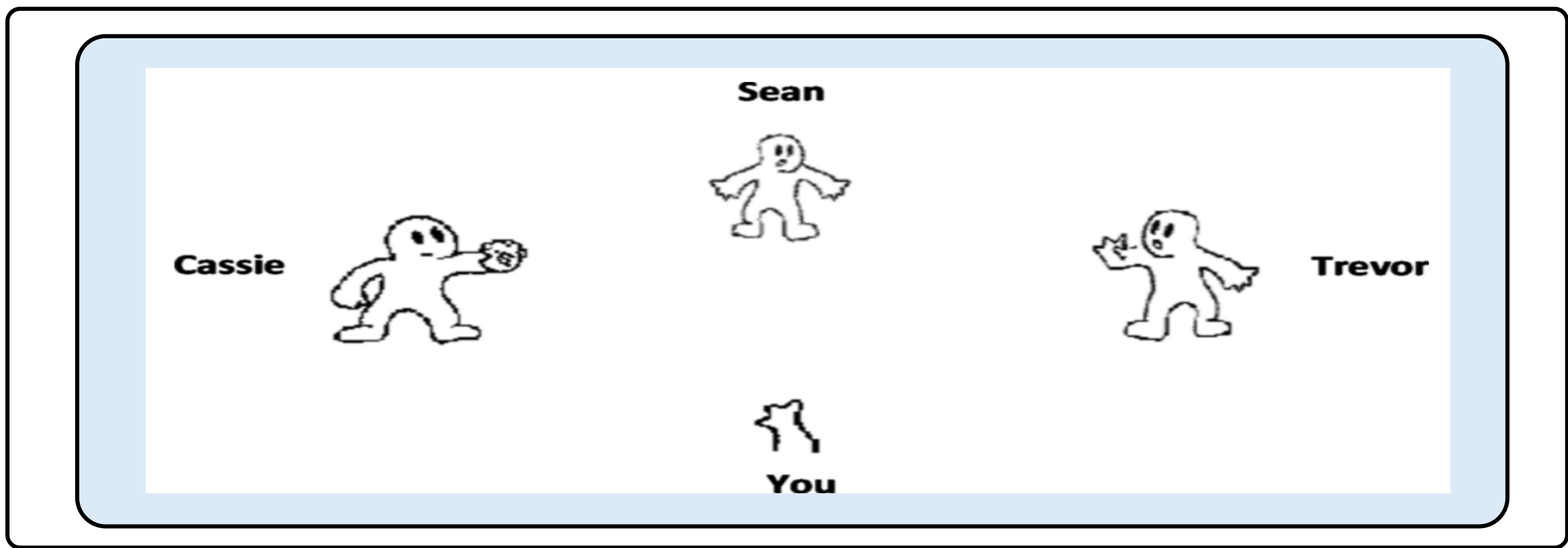
Task 1 – Doors- Take Risks

- **Premise:** Walk through castle; monetary potential loss vs potential gain.
- **Aim:** Collect as many coins as possible (= money).
- **Rules:**
 - Conflict: potential **punishment** (1-7) and potential **reward** (1-7).
 - Decision: joystick to move (0-100); closer to door: increase % it will open.
 - Outcome: if door opens – lose or win (50/50 each).



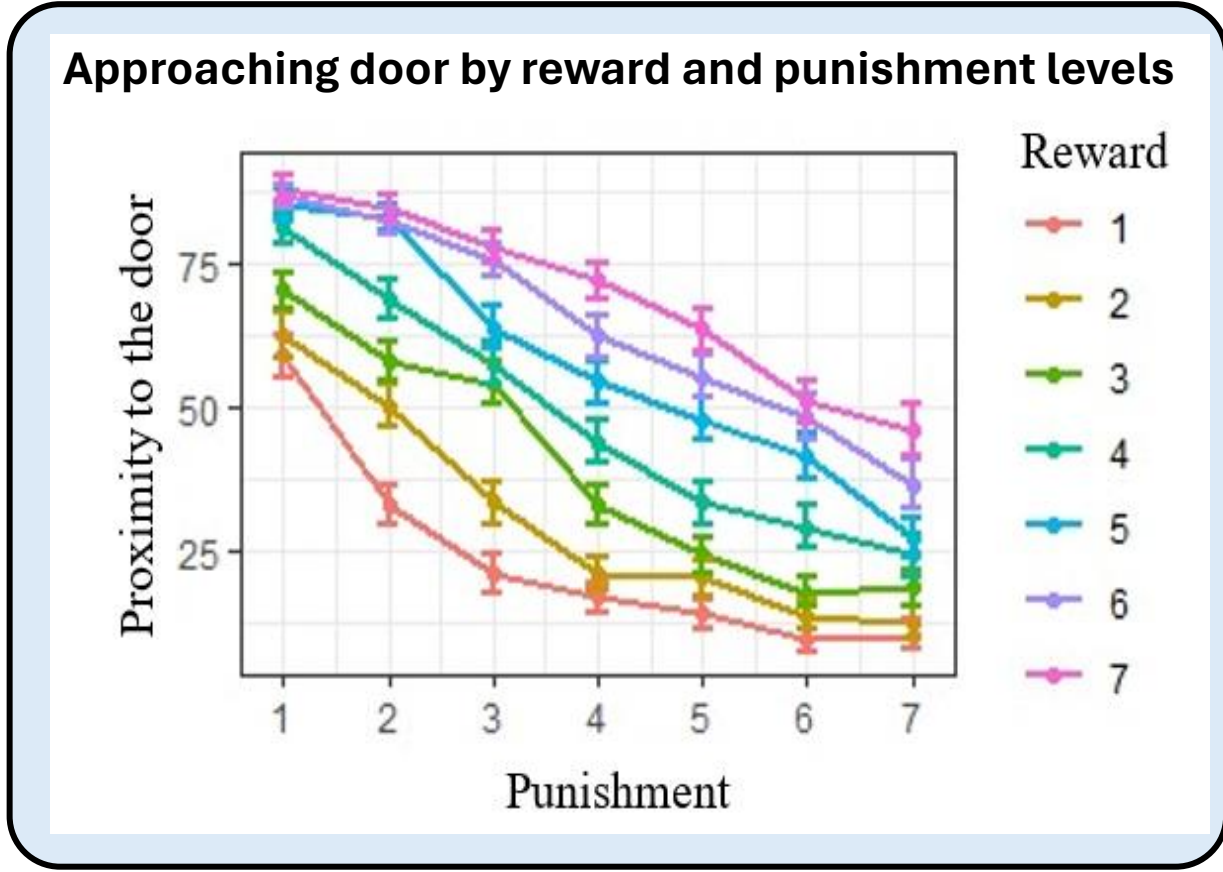
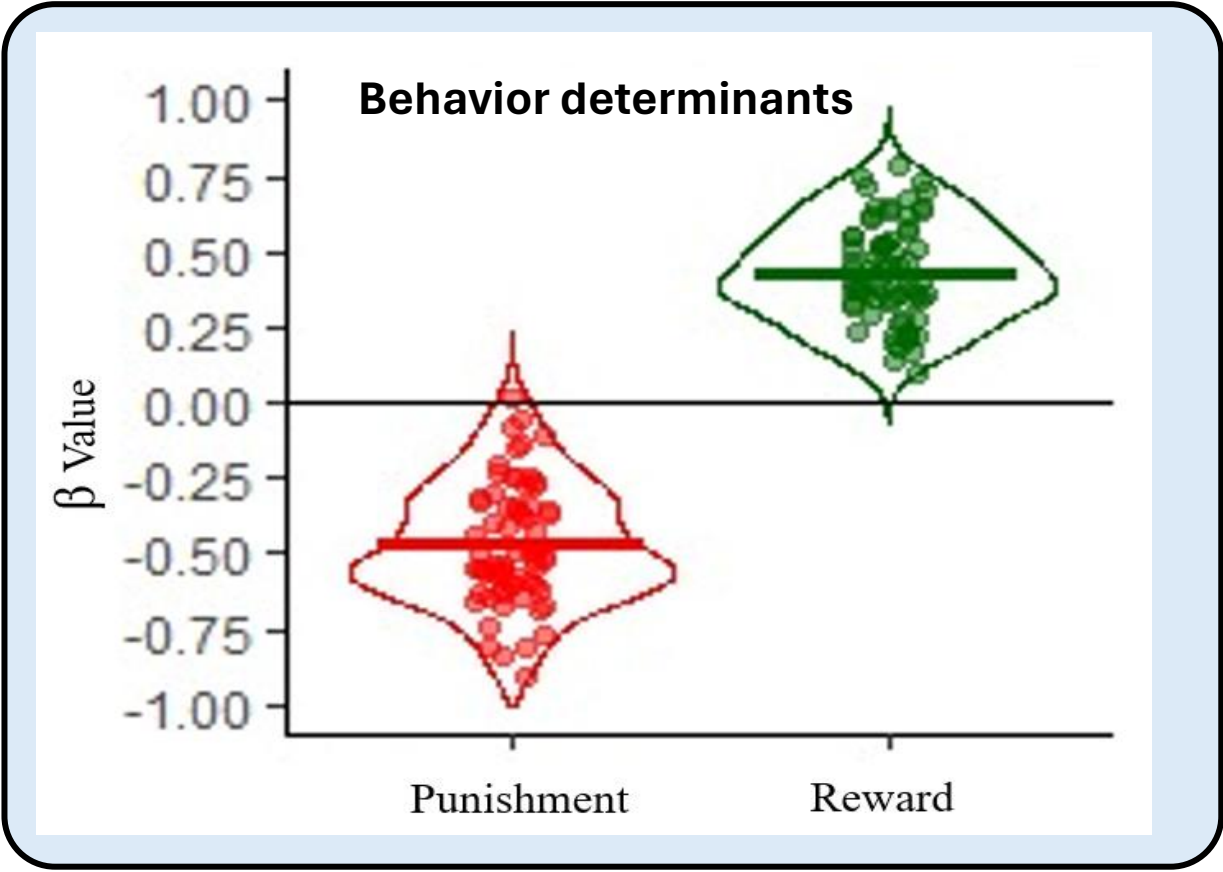
Task 2 - Cyberball

- **Aim :** Experimentally manipulate experiences of social rejection and assess psychological responses.
- **Rules:**
 - 4 players.
 - 30 ball passes.



Results

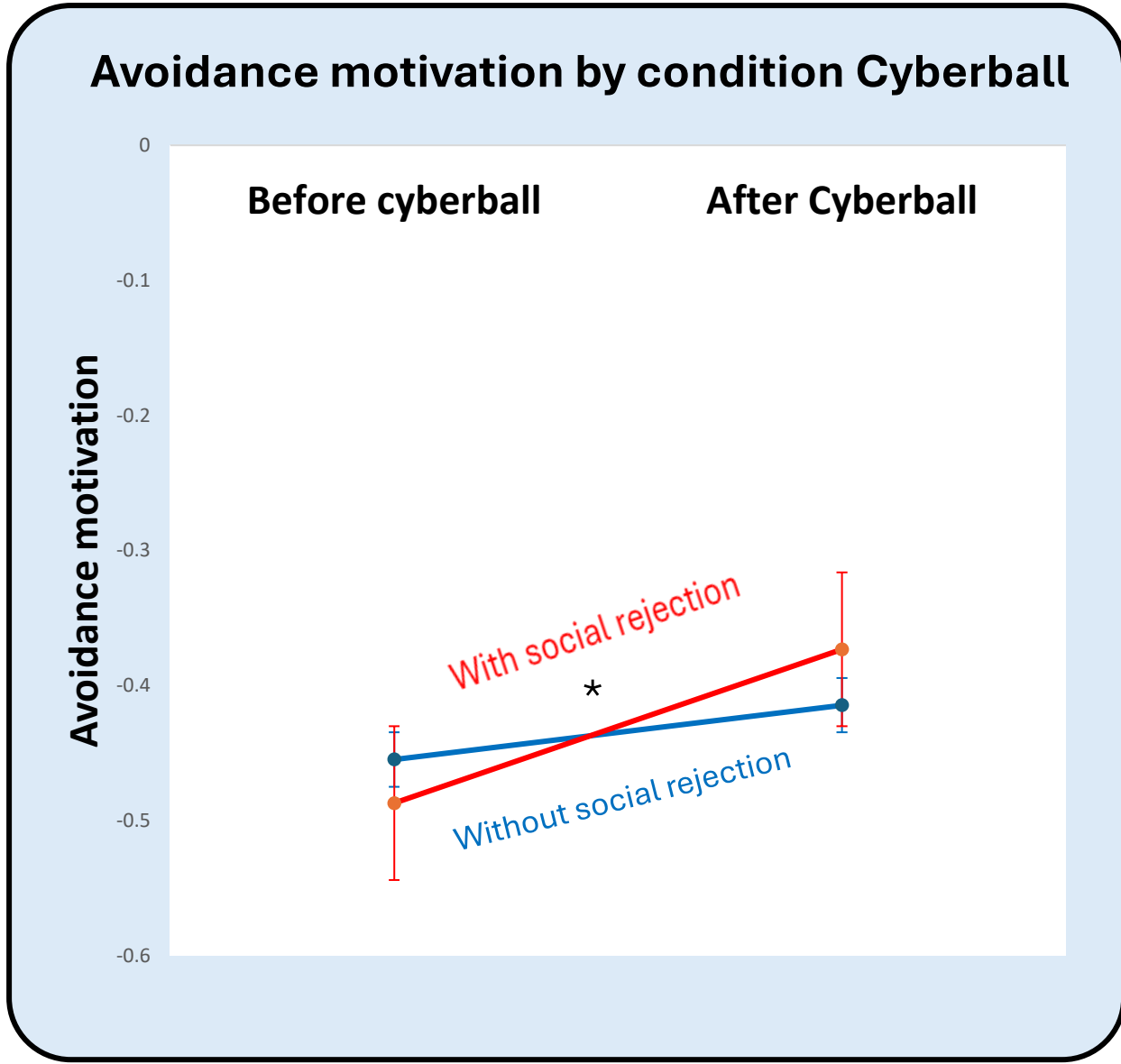
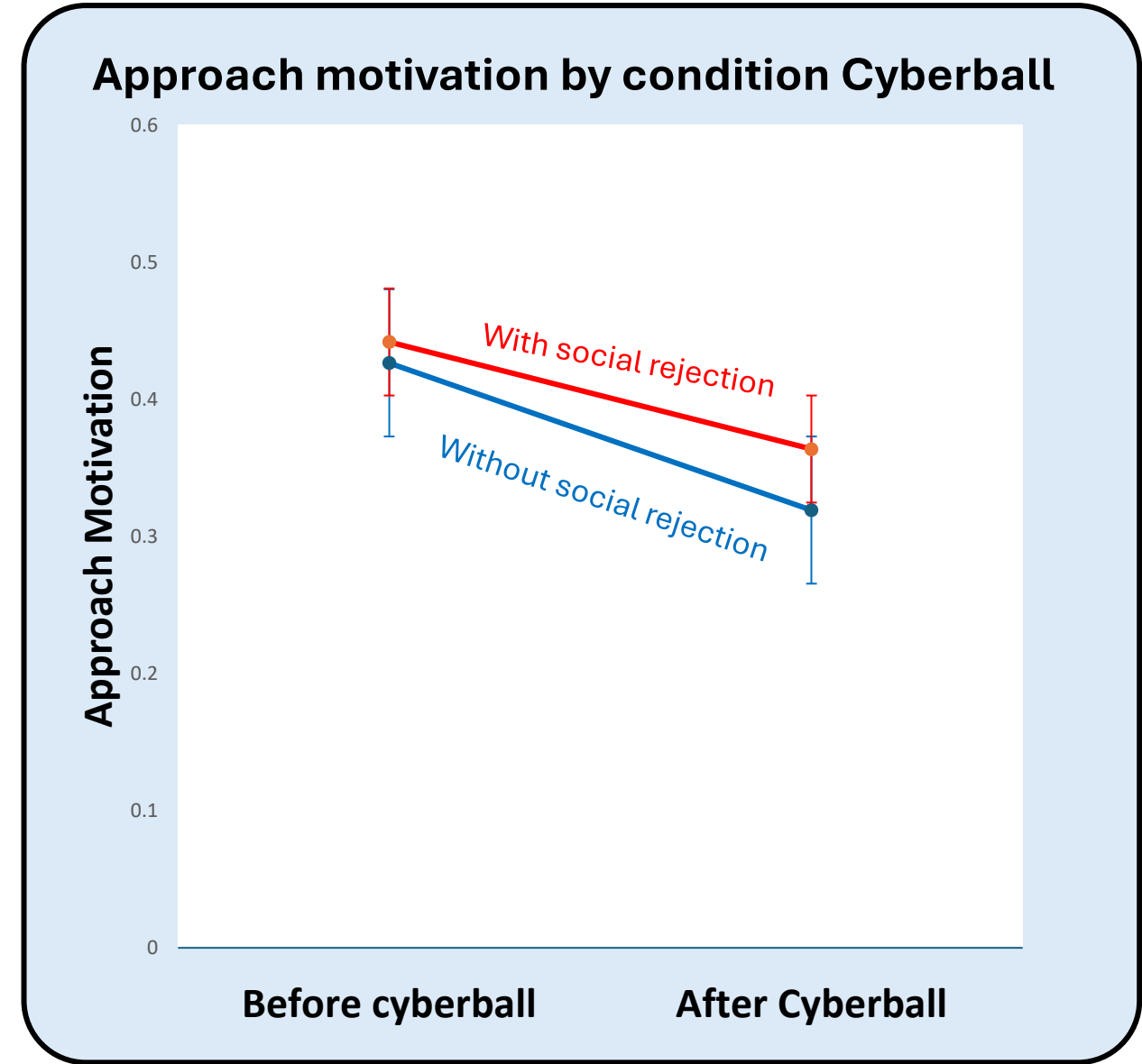
Sample : Undergrads (N=69; M_{age}=21.83 y; 13 F); Doors; 2 task runs



Hypothesis 1:

- Greater potential gains → **closer** proximity to the door → increased **approach behavior**.
- larger potential losses → predicted greater **distance** from the door → increased **avoidance behavior**.

Cyberball; 1 task run; Without (N= 36) \ With (N=33) social rejection



Hypothesis 2:

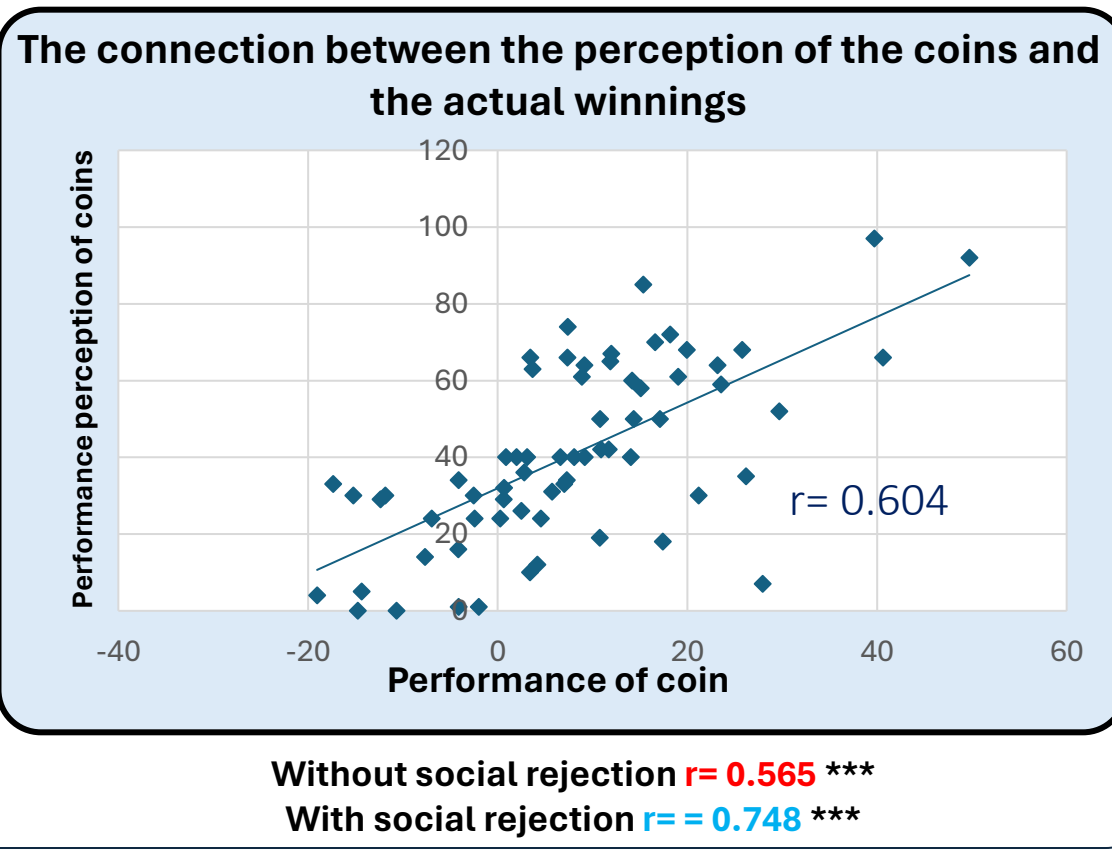
- **Contrary** to predictions, approach motivation decreased post-cyberball across all conditions.
- **Contrary** to predictions, rejected participants showed reduced avoidance motivation compared to non-rejected participants.

Hypothesis 3:

- **As predicted**, the results show that **anxiety**, **depression** and **avoidant attachment** are **associated** with change with **approach** motivation.
- **Anxiety** and **depression** are **associated** with change with **avoidance** motivation.

Relationships between personality questionnaires and changes in motivations for risk-taking				
	Resilience	Avoidant Attachment	Depression	Anxiety
Δ Approach Motivation	-0.103	-0.250*	-0.310**	-0.319**
Δ Avoidance Motivation	-0.134	0.057	0.145	0.256*
Δ Avoidance Motivation after rejection	-0.165	-0.173	-0.397*	-0.303

More anxiety/depression/avoidant attachment ⇔ less change in approach motivation p<0.05*, p<0.01**
More anxiety ⇔ more change in avoidance motivation
More depression ⇔ less change in avoidance motivation after rejection



Conclusion

- Informs mechanistic research on motivated behavior.
- A significant change in people's avoidance motivation occurs after experiences of social rejection.
- Higher attachment anxiety leads to a greater gap between performance perception and the actual number of coins earned to play.

