Discuss whether you believe that the use of loot boxes purchasable by microtransactions is ethical.

Kantianism

Talk about the logic of the universal statement loot boxes should be used in games.

If it is morally OK to have loot boxes in game we assume all games will have paid loot boxes in them where possible. What would this cause?

That most games would be funded through the purchasing of loot boxes. Or at least some of their funding would be from this source.

Utilitarianism

Calculations, try to find happiness of people that play game with loot boxes.

There has been some quantitative work to date to investigate more complex motivations

for loot box engagement. In one survey that allowed for open-ended answers, only 16% of

purchasers reported opening loot boxes for “the fun, excitement and thrills of opening the

box itself.”39 In the study, this was the category used to describe motivations connected to

gambling or addiction, as for example in one player’s confession that opening loot boxes

“scratches my gambling itch.” However, even combined with the answers that were not

related to gambling as such, this category of motivations was only the third most common

one in this sample. Out of the other seven motivation categories reported, most involved

personal or practical reasons like wanting to gain competitive advantages from loot (21.9%)

or wanting to collect all of the prizes (19.2%). Ranked fourth were “cosmetic reasons,” at

15.3%. These results are exactly what we should expect given that these goals can often

only be accomplished by finding unique loot in a loot box. At the same time, 10.7% of

respondents reported buying loot boxes as a way to support the developers of free-to-play

*38 See, for instance, A. Drummond, J.D. Sauer, C.J. Ferguson, and L.C. Hall, “The Relationship between*

*Problem Gambling, Excessive Gaming, Psychological Distress and Spending on Loot Boxes in Aotearoa*

*New Zealand, Australia, and the United States—A Cross-National Survey,” PloS ONE 15, 3 (2020),*

*e0230378, pp. 11-12.*

*39 Zendle, Meyer, and Over, “Adolescents and Loot Boxes,” p. 13.*

games.40 And around 9.8% believed loot box rewards provided good value for their money.41

These results cut against the idea that gambling-like features of loot boxes are consciously

the main reason for their popularity. In fact, similar studies suggest that problem gamblers

are bigger spenders on a variety of content, not necessarily on loot boxes specifically.42

40 See also J. Macey and M. Bujić, “The Talk of the Town: Community Perspectives on Loot Boxes,” In Modes

of Esports Engagement in Overwatch, eds. Maria Ruotsalainen, Maria Törhönen, and Veli-Matti Karhulahti.

Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 199-223, pp. 205-207.

41 Zendle, Meyer, and Over, “Adolescents and Loot Boxes,” pp. 13-14.

42 Drummond et al., “The Relationship between Problem Gambling, Excessive Gaming, Psychological

Distress and Spending on Loot Boxes in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and the United States.”

Social Contract Theory