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Are Laws and Regulation Necessary for Microtransactions and Loot Boxes?

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MICROTRANSACTION AND LOOT BOXES... GOOD OR BAD?

ZACHARY JAMISON // UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

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MY EXPERIENCE

- Been playing games since I was 7
- Started with Pokemon and I now play League of Legends, Fortnite, Warframe, and many others
- Currently a Manager at Wendy's
- I love games that involve grinding for gear you want, and I genuinely like supporting developers
- I suffer from Dysthymia, chronic persistent depressive disorder

WHAT ARE MICROTRANSACTIONS AND LOOT BOXES

- Microtransactions are a system implemented in games where you spend real life money on a virtual currency. You can then use that currency to buy almost anything inside games.
- Loot boxes are a gambling mechanic placed in game and are closely involved with microtransactions. You get boxes and open them for a random item that can either be worth nothing or thousands of dollars.

THE RISKS

- Psychological being anxiety, depression, and compulsive or impulsive behavior.
- Financial practices that can lead you close to or being bankrupt.
- These are due to the feelings that come from the activity itself.

GAMBLING DISORDER

- Only medically sanctioned behavioral addiction according to the Diagnostic Manual of Mental Disorders
- Also known as compulsive gambling and repeating problem gambling
- Addiction similar to taking drugs because of the feeling you get when winning

DOES AGE AFFECT THE OUTCOME?

- The younger you are introduced to the issue, the more influenced you are
- Skin betting is very popular among players
- eSports betting is growing
- Younger adults are among the highest percentages of emerging adults with gambling disorders

LAWS

- Prohibiting Children from Abusive Games Act on May 25, 2019 (didn't get passed)
- Any games involving pay to win features or loot boxes would be banned
- In Japan, they have a law banning Gacha Games
- Gachas popularized spending money on free games in order to receive a rare item or character

CONCLUSION

- The younger the player, the more influenced they become
- They are put at risk for developing mental health issues and financial problems
- Gambling disorder is a serious issue
- Even though the bill wasn't passed, we can use it as an example to build a foundation for a new one and demand change.

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