Chapter 3
Gamified and Gamble Effect on Children and Rise in Crime

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the psychological and behavioral impact of gamified and gambling-like elements in digital games on children, examining their potential role in the rise of juvenile crime. The study explores how design mechanisms such as loot boxes, reward loops, and in-game purchases mimic traditional gambling and exploit developmental vulnerabilities. Using AI and ML models, we propose predictive systems for early risk detection and outline a novel behavioral screening method, the Child and Adolescent Gamified Gambling Behavior Index (CAGGBI). This multidisciplinary research offers a comprehensive strategy for reducing the

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risks associated with children's exposure to digital gambling by integrating data science, psychology, and public policy.

INTRODUCTION

Childhood experiences have been drastically altered by digital surroundings in the twenty-first century. The incorporation of design aspects that simulate gambling into online games, mobile applications, and virtual economies has raised concerns among psychologists, educators, and regulators. The rise of digital entertainment has led to the widespread adoption of gamification strategies in various platforms, particularly video games (Demetrovics et al., 2025). While these strategies enhance engagement, they also introduce elements resembling gambling, such as loot boxes, randomized rewards, and micro transactions. Over the past decade, the intense growth of digital amusement has made available to children a universe where gaming and gambling increasingly overlap. Gamification—the use of game-like features like points, reward, and competition in non-gaming contexts—has become a pervasive element in computer games. Although originally created to improve engagement and motivation, most of those gamified elements have now started to integrate mechanics that bear strong resemblance to gambling(wardle et al,.2024). Mechanics like loot boxes, in-game currencies, and randomized reward mechanisms have turned video games into video game platforms with psychological and behavioral dynamics similar to gambling. These mechanics can exert deep and wide-ranging impacts for children, whose cognitive and affective development continues to unfold.(Han, et al,. 2025)

The psychological impacts of the gambling-like mechanisms are well-studied. Research has established that kids who are exposed to such systems have an increased likelihood of developing addictive habits, impulsivity, and sound money management problems (Király et al., 2017; Zendle & Cairns, 2018). The intermittent reinforcement by loot boxes and other similar mechanisms takes advantage of the reward system in the brain, encouraging compulsive behavior and decreasing the capacity to delay gratification (Griffiths, 2019). In addition, the normalization of gambling-like mechanics in video games can make children less sensitive to the dangers of gambling, leading to future gambling issues (Wardle, 2024).Nonetheless; the effects of these mechanics go beyond psychological damage. There is mounting evidence that overindulgence in gambling-like systems in video games is connected to an increase in juvenile delinquency. Kids, motivated to get virtual content or advance at games, have been known to resort to robbery, scams, and even internet crime to cover their gaming lifestyle (Wardle, 2024; Király et al., 2017). Not only are these actions illegally and financially bad, but they also represent an unsettling change in the way that children understand and navigate digital worlds.