

"Insert Coin to Continue"

Addictive designs in social media and digital games



Thomas Grieser, David Hertz and G. Hertz
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University of
Applied Sciences
Hamburg

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Addictive designs in social media and
digital games



Thematic Seminar: Social Media and Children's
Mental Health
4 June 2026

Markus Meschik, PhD



University of
Applied Sciences
St. Pölten









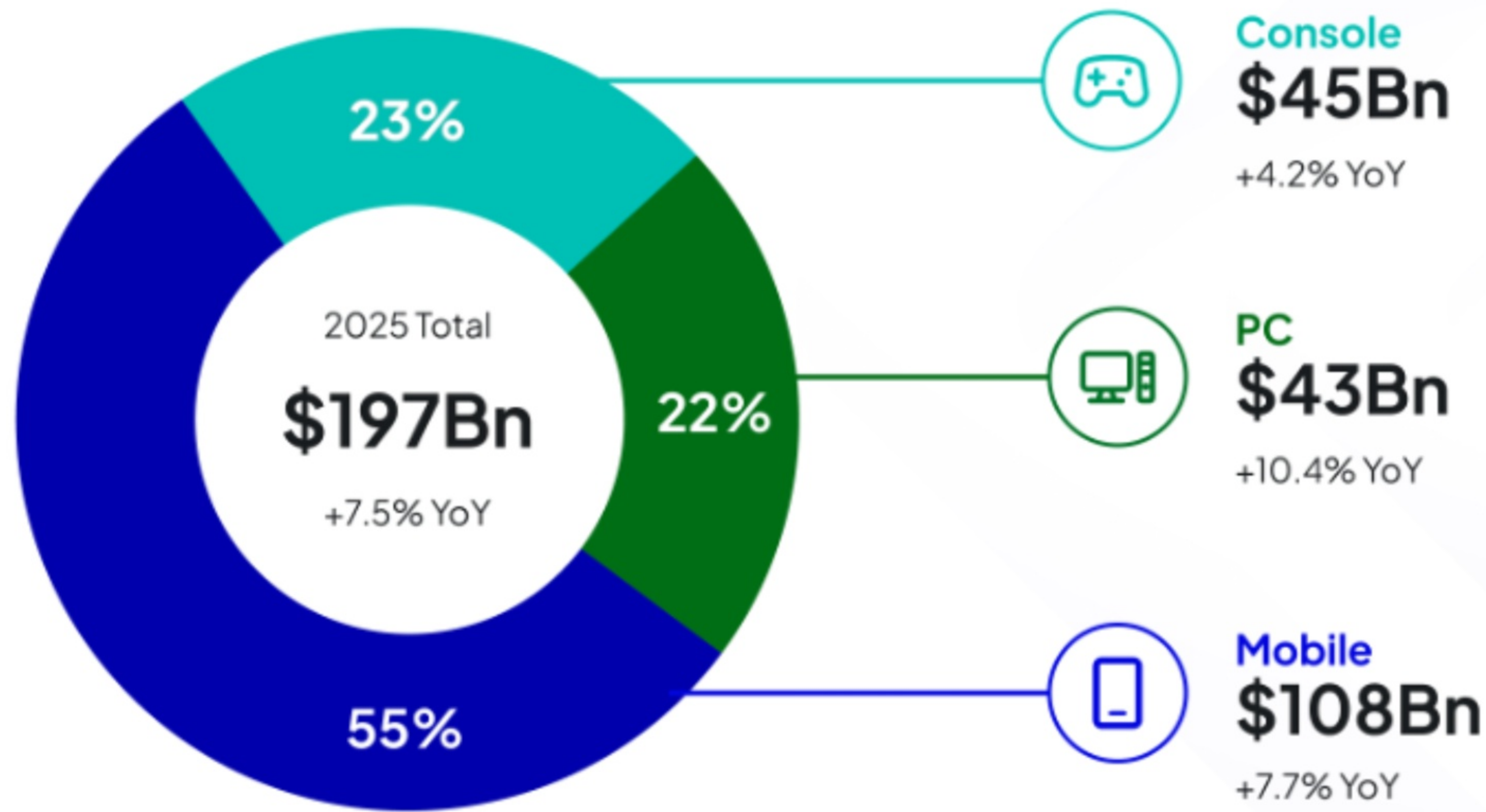




Global revenue by platform

As of 2025F

newzoo



"Dark Patterns"

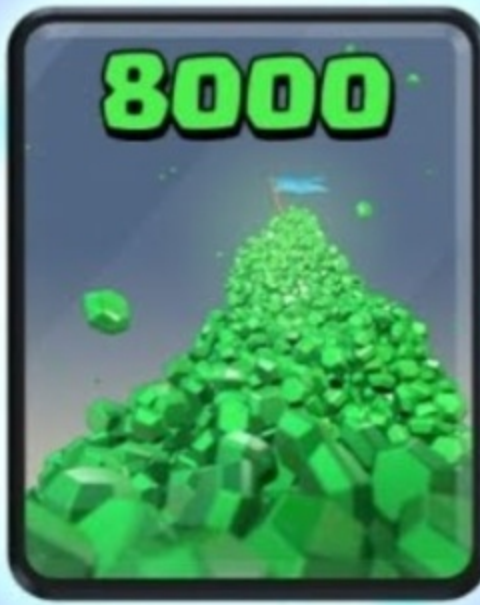
Zagal, 2013



Playing by Appointment

Das ist ein zeitlich begrenztes Angebot!

8 legendäre Königstruhen + Juwelen
Legendäre Arena

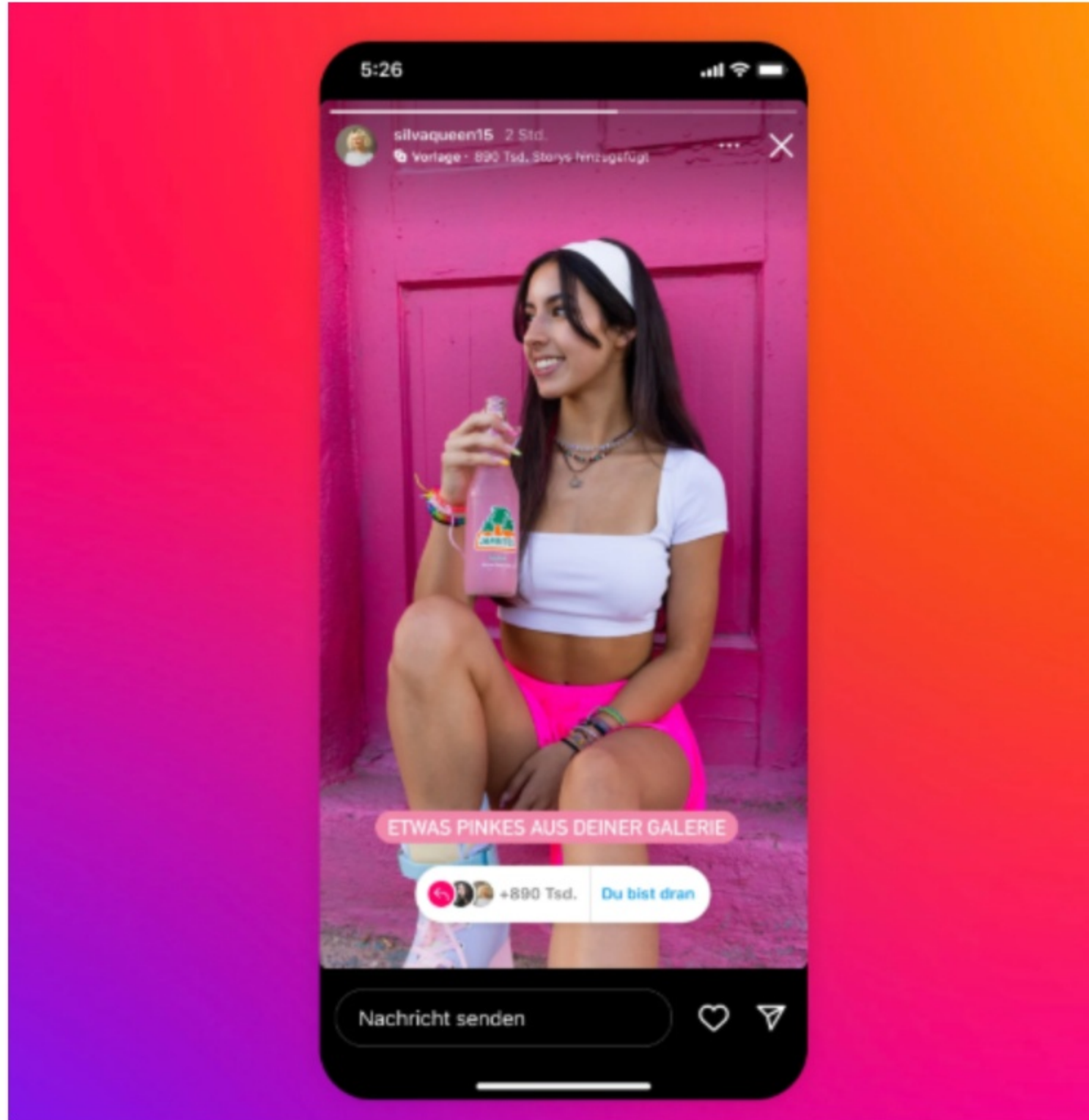
 +  **8000**

109,99 €

Endet in: 2H 55Min



Playing by Appointment



Daily Rewards



Habitualization



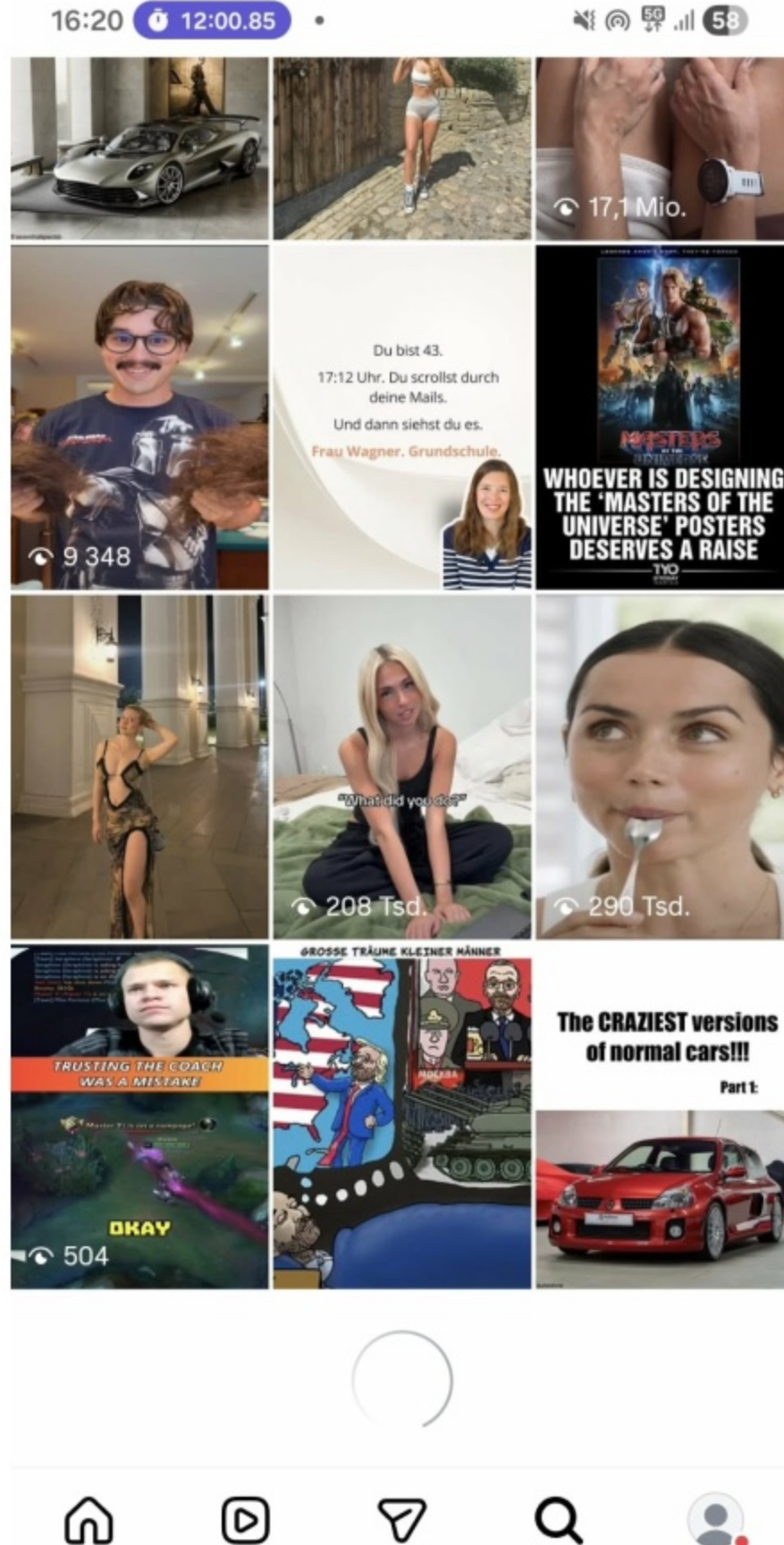
FRIENDS SELECTED		
	. Taylor Young	1000 🔥
	.nini 😊	937 🔥 😊
	.Anthony 😂❤️	639 🔥 😊
	.Shaun 🤘😊	917 🔥
	.@frizzy 💛	921 🔥
	.Daisy Lopez	940 🔥
	.Seth ⚡	915 🔥 😊



Infinite Treadmill



Endless scroll



Lootboxes



Intermittent reward



Influencers



Empfohlen

- Oaschwarz** 52
Fortnite
- Ice Poseidon** 13,619
Just Chatting
- majin** 17
Call of Duty: Warzo...
- ROSSTEIN** 8,326
Slots & Casino
- Classybeef** 2,299
Slots & Casino
- Loochy** 1,212
Call of Duty: Wa...
- Chopstix** 313
Fortnite
- MATTLAFF** 254
Call of Duty: War...
- SirGime** 247
Call of Duty: War...

Mehr anzeigen Weniger anzeigen

Stake

CASINO SPORTS

Favourites

Recent

- resdud: BITCOIN TENNEX
- Challenge: HECTOR TENNEX IS CALLING
- REAPERZ: HECTOR TENNEX IS CALLING
- Darth_Nosam: HECTOR TENNEX IS CALLING
- Maugs: This has to be the worst fcking slot
- YungJabba: 10x
- astal16: 10x
- calpune: CALL HECTOR TENNEX BROK EAVEN CALL HI
- CALL HECTOR TENNEX BROK EAVEN CALL HECTOR TE
- FedOnTheNight: CALL HECTOR TENNEX CALL HECTOR TE
- CALL HECTOR TENNEX CALL HECTOR TENNEX
- g00n: bitcoin
- PotatoKing600: putrid vile

4,721.19 USD

Total Bet: 50.00 USD

Fun Play Real Play

1:32:48



xQc

#ad 18+

CLICK DRAMA CLICK WOW GAMES VIDS WOW GAMES WOW WICKED WOW INCREDIBLE BIG LETS WIN

Slots & Casino English Glücksspiel

6,218 Aufrufe

Chat

TENNEX CRANKING CALL HECTOR TENNEX
Cranking CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking CALL
CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking CALL
HECTOR TENNEX Cranking CALL HECTOR
TENNEX Cranking CALL HECTOR TENNEX

2:08:50 all_jello: NEW HONEY RUSH NEW
HONEY RUSH NEW HONEY RUSH NEW
HONEY RUSH NEW HONEY RUSH NEW
HONEY RUSH NEW HONEY RUSH NEW
HONEY RUSH NEW HONEY RUSH NEW
HONEY RUSH

2:08:50 Jaskaran158: 25x bonus with a
10x 5x 1000x coin

2:08:50 leap: Weird how the headache isn't
bothering him anymore

2:08:51 iKillua: type 1 if ur gay

2:08:51 timgoescrazy: CALL HECTOR TENNEX
Cranking CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking
CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking CALL
HECTOR TENNEX Cranking CALL HECTOR
TENNEX Cranking CALL HECTOR TENNEX
Cranking

2:08:52 Ternex: i called he said yes

2:08:52 Darth_Nosam:
DogLookingSussyAndCute

2:08:53 mk_ua: TENNEX

2:08:54 PapaOD: NICE

2:08:54 gii_g: Cranking CALL HECTOR TENNEX
Cranking CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking
CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking CALL
HECTOR TENNEX

2:08:54 Grenlando: CALL HECTOR TENNEX
Cranking CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking
CALL HECTOR TENNEX Cranking CALL
HECTOR TENNEX Cranking



State of research (excerpt)

Zendle & Cairns (2019): Correlation with problem gambling

Li et al. (2019): Correlation with problematic gaming and gambling

Kristiansen & Severin (2020): Correlation with problem gambling

Larche et al. (2021): Loot boxes generate physiological rewards similar to gambling

Gonzalez-Cabrera (2022): Longitudinal study; correlation with gambling

Griffiths et al. (2022): Meta-study; correlation with gambling

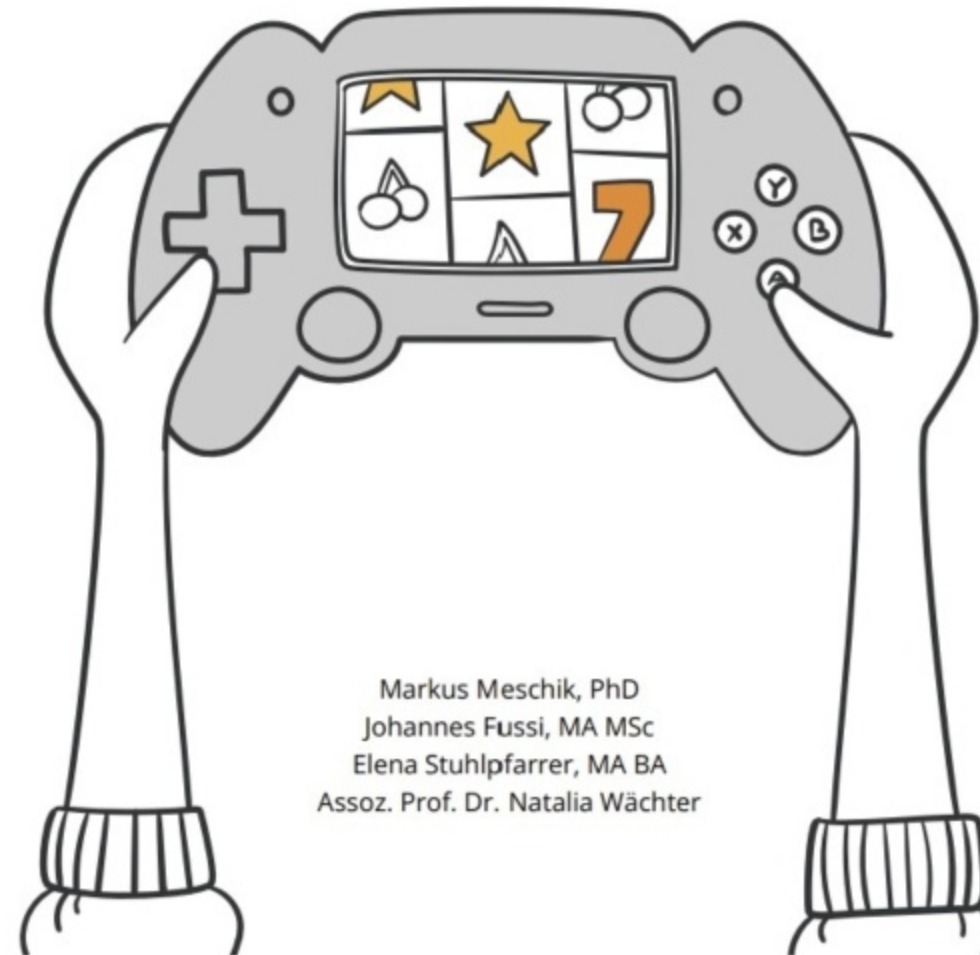
Müller et al. (2025): see above

Xiao & Park (2025): Compliance with legal regulation is better than with self-regulation

INSERT COIN TO CONTINUE

Nutzung aktueller Finanzierungsmodelle digitaler Spiele
von Kindern und Jugendlichen in Österreich

FORSCHUNGSBERICHT



Markus Meschik, PhD
Johannes Fussl, MA MSc
Elena Stuhlpfarrer, MA BA
Assoz. Prof. Dr. Natalia Wächter



Heavy Spenders in Digital Games: Expenditure Disparities and Associations between In-game Microtransactions, Gaming Disorder and Gambling Disorder among Adolescents

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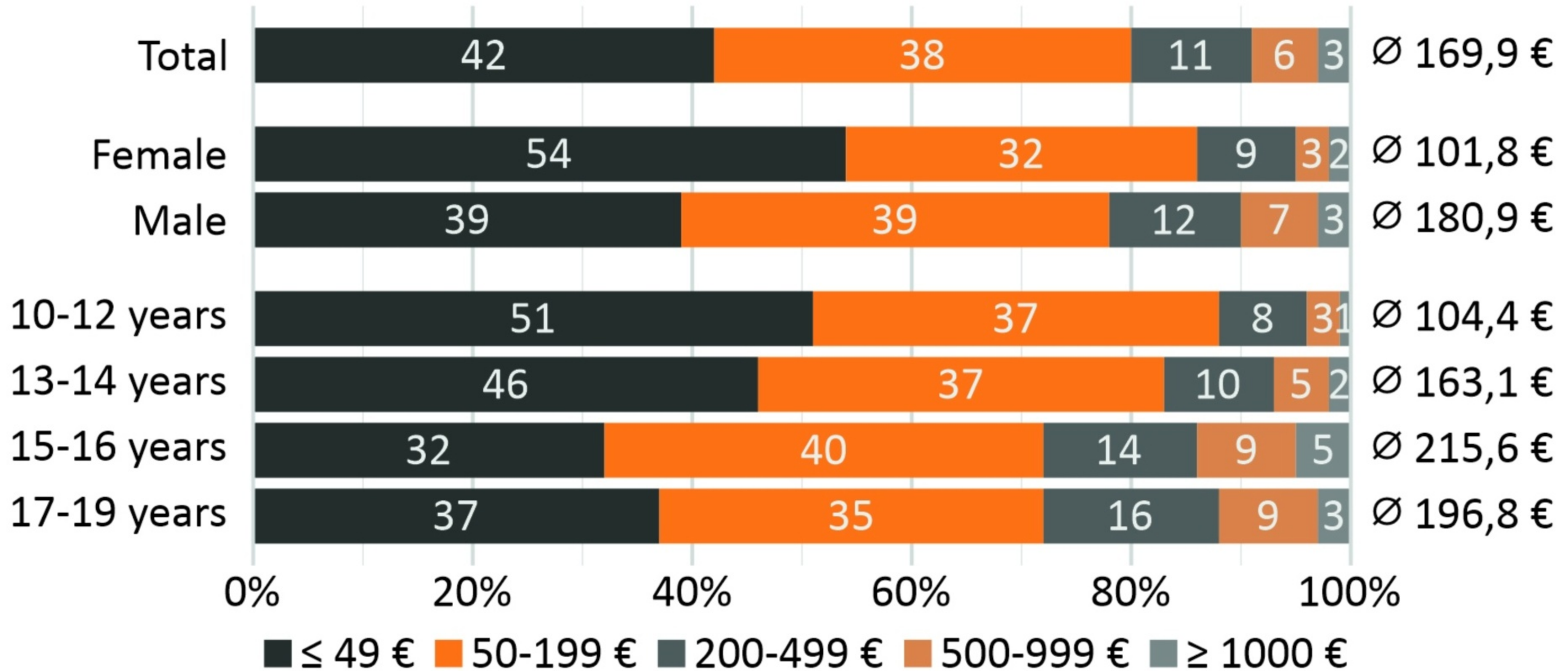
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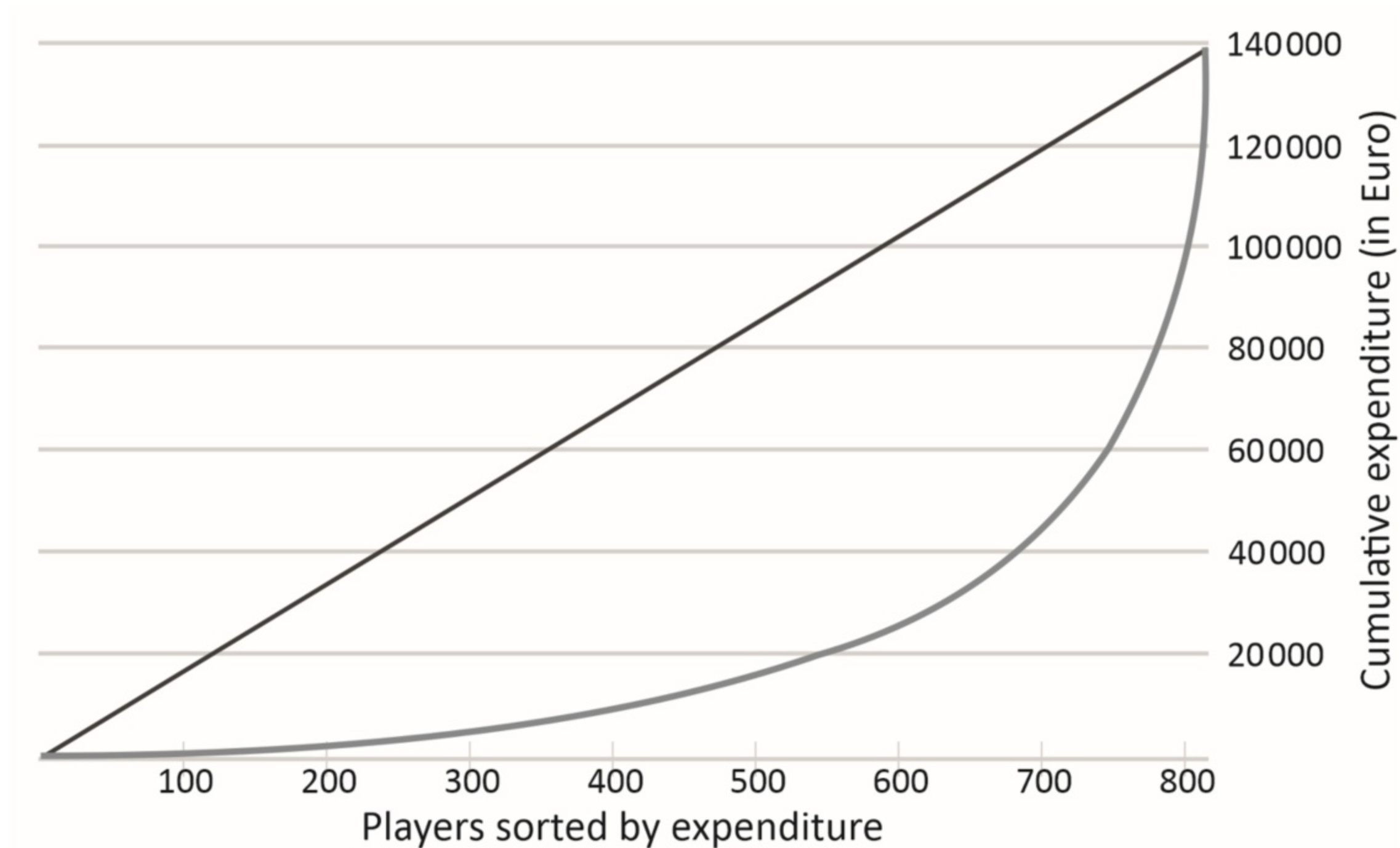
Revised on:
30 Apr 2026

Journal website link:

How much money have you spent on in-game purchases in the last 12 months? (n=818)



Concentration of spending



Distribution of cumulative spending on in-game purchases over the past 12 months;
n = 818 (adolescents who made in-game purchases in the past 12 months)

Heavy spenders ("whales")

- Predominantly male (82%)
- *FIFA (EA FC), CSGO2, Valorant* and *Genshin Impact* stand out
- Significantly higher prevalence of Gaming Disorder (9.4% vs. 1.8%)

Heavy users in SM

Celik & Gracia (2026): Negative associations are stronger for adolescents from low-socioeconomic-status families than for those from high-SES families

Fassi et al. (2024): Systematic review; association between social media use and anxiety and depression

Ahmed et al. (2024): Systematic review; associations between social media use, problematic use, mental health problems, and sleep difficulties

Suhag et al. (2024): Links to body dissatisfaction and eating-disorder symptoms

Young et al. (2024): Associations with higher rates of depression

Agyapong-Opoku et al. (2025): Scoping Review; links to depression and anxiety

Cabezas-Klinger et al. (2025): Systematic Review; associations to different mental health disorders



Policy recommendations

Policy recommendations

Self-regulation by the industry (e.g. PEGI, USK, IARC) is ineffective (Xiao & Park 2025)

Increase the inhibition threshold and decrease event frequency:

- Implement a cooldown period after a certain scrolling time; after a video; after a purchase
- Require platforms to explain why specific content is being recommended
- Provide data



THANK YOU MARIO!

BUT OUR PRINCESS IS IN
ANOTHER CASTLE!



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University of
Applied Sciences
Bremen

Zum Mitnehmen. Jederzeit wieder abrufbar.

Sie haben etwas vergessen? Möchten ein wenig tiefer eintauchen? Scannen oder klicken Sie unten, um diese Präsentation zu öffnen. Jederzeit, überall.

[Präsentation ansehen](#)

