

Dear Prof Zoltan Dienes,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit a revised version of this stage 2 registered report to *Peer Community In Registered Reports (PCI RR)*.

I include the relevant texts of the editorial and reviewer comments in *black italics*; my point-by-point responses in **purple**; and newly added text in **blue** below.

In the interest of open science, I intend to publicly archive the review history for this manuscript regardless of publication outcome.

Yours sincerely,  
Leon Y. Xiao

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#### **Editorial Comments of Prof Zoltan Dienes, dated 7 April 2025**

*Sorry for the delay in getting back. We do have one review; and based on my own reading this is sufficient as you have followed the guidelines for a Stage 2 very well. The reviewer asks you optionally to consider wording in a few [places].*

*best  
Zoltan*

**Response 1: Thanks to the Editor for arranging for the review. I have revised the writing as suggested by Prof Chambers.**

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#### **Review of Prof Chris Chambers, dated 12 February 2025**

*I enjoyed reading this completed Stage 2 submission, having served as a (non-specialist) reviewer at Stage 1. In my view, the report already comes very close to meeting the [Stage 2 criteria](#) -- the authors adhered faithfully to their preregistered protocol, and as best as I can tell have documented all deviations very thoroughly and transparently. The reporting of the results is clear, with appropriate robustness tests where required, and the conclusions are justified by the evidence.*

*The judgment of findings and their importance does not form part of Stage 2 evaluation, so the following is pure commentary, but I do want to note for the record that I found the lack of compliance - and the apparent toothlessness of the relevant regulators - quite dispiriting, even if unsurprising. It is hard to see these findings and draw any conclusion other than that the regulation of loot boxes in the UK has failed. I hope this work has an impact in stimulating the necessary reforms.*

**Response 2: Thanks to Prof Chambers for taking the time to review this manuscript. These results are indeed unfortunate. I hope that this study will help to ensure evidence-based policymaking.**

*I have one stylistic suggestion that I believe would further increase the impact of this work - although the authors may disagree and it will be the recommender's decision as to whether*

*my comment falls within the purview of Stage 2 evaluation. At various places in the Stage 2 manuscript, I recommend replacing emotive/superlative language with more dispassionate phrasing, and keeping interpretations strictly in line with the evidence. Some examples (and there may be others) include "incredibly low", "compliance is abysmal", "feel betrayed", "destroyed their own reputation", etc. These opinions are understandable, but the eventual Stage 2 RR will be harder for regulators and politicians to ignore if it meets the highest standards of discipline and sticks to the facts and their evidence-based [interpretation] - whereas emotive language may let them off the hook by pointing to the work as advocacy or a personal attack rather than what it is: rigorous preregistered scientific research. The more emotive language would be better suited, in my view, to an op-ed or other news-style article that the authors may want to write at a later date once the RR is recommended.*

Response 3: Prof Chambers is right to note this. Ukie has responded to these findings denying the results and the motivations for conducting the research:

<https://mobilegamer.biz/accusations-fly-as-researcher-claims-uk-loot-box-regulations-are-failing/>.

I doubt more euphemistic language would have led to a more productive response. Nonetheless, I take the point and have revised the language used.

Further, I added section 6 which is postscript briefly making clear that this assessment is independent of the PUBLIC study commissioned by the UK Government and briefly outlining and referencing what Ukie has said in reply to these results for the sake of balance.

Minor points

Lines 1098-1105 – this is a very long sentence that I found difficult to parse; I suggest rephrasing or breaking into two sentences for clarity.

Response 4: This sentence has been broken into multiple parts.