

# Fortune Tiger on target: interface design, user experience, and online gambling addiction

*Fortune Tiger no alvo: design de interface, experiência do usuário e vício em jogos de azar online*

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online gambling addiction

This article investigates, within the scope of information design, how interface and user experience design elements are employed in the *Fortune Tiger* app, popularly known in Brazil as “Jogo do Tigrinho”. Through an analytical description of the game’s screens, based on notions of the cognitive triangle and emotional design, we identify visual and interactive resources designed to stimulate users to remain in a continuous cycle of repeated betting, contributing to the development and maintenance of gambling addiction.

*design de interface,  
experiência do usuário,  
design emocional,  
triângulo cognitivo,  
ludopatia*

*Este artigo investiga, no âmbito do design da informação, como os elementos de design de interface e experiência do usuário são utilizados no aplicativo Fortune Tiger, popularmente conhecido como Jogo do Tigrinho. Por meio de uma descrição analítica das telas do jogo, com base em noções do triângulo cognitivo e do design emocional, identificamos recursos visuais e interativos projetados para estimular os usuários a permanecerem em um ciclo contínuo de apostas repetidas, contribuindo para o desenvolvimento e manutenção do vício em jogos de azar.*

## 1 Introduction

Six years after the legalization of betting houses in Brazil in 2018, it is estimated that 15% of the population has already engaged in online sports betting, as indicated by a Datafolha (2024) survey, in the “fixed odds” category, where the potential gain is shown at the moment the bettor places a wager on the platform. These bets also offer online games of chance, in which the user does not know how much they might win before making the initial bet. Among these, *Aviator*, known as “Jogo do Aviãozinho,” and *Fortune Tiger*, “Jogo do Tigrinho,” stand out (Figures 1 and 2). The latter has become famous on social media and, due to its widespread use, has seeped into pop culture, being used metonymically to refer to any type of online gambling game promoted on social networks.



**Figure 1** Main interface of the Portuguese version of the *Fortune Tiger* app, highlighting vibrant colors and visual appeal. Source: Promotional material on social media.



**Figure 2** Reward screen of the *Fortune Tiger* app, illustrating the variable reward mechanism and high visual stimulation. Source: Promotional material on social media.

The use of bets and online gambling led Brazilians to lose R\$68.2 billion between June 2023 and June 2024, according to research conducted by Banco Itaú (2024). Promises of easy winnings funnel individuals into becoming bettors through the power to “influence the feelings and behavior of another individual for their own interest or benefit” (Austin et al., 2007 apud Tornatore, 2023, p. 56), employing various psychological mechanisms to keep them playing and investing more money. Thus, this article seeks to preliminarily investigate, from an information design perspective, how resources related to interface and user experience design are used in the *Fortune Tiger* app, with the intention of producing stimuli to keep bettors in a loop of repeated rounds, fostering gambling addiction.

In this study, we analyzed the *Fortune Tiger* game, hosted on Superbet, a mobile platform regulated and authorized by the Brazilian Federal Government, since there is no official betting app, nor an official *Fortune Tiger* app in the Android or Apple stores (Figures 3 and 4). This RNG (Random Number Generation) slot machine game, where the algorithm randomly selects the winning numbers, was launched in 2016 by PG Soft, a Malta-based online gambling developer, with Malta being a Mediterranean archipelago.



**Figure 3** Promotional poster for the *Fortune Tiger* app (also known as “Jogo do Tigrinho” in Brazil), featuring the game’s mascot in a prominent, appealing pose. Source: Promotional material on social media.



**Figure 4** Close-up of the *Fortune Tiger* mascot, designed with friendly expressions and vibrant colors to enhance emotional engagement with players. Source: Promotional material on social media.

## 2 Theoretical framework: behavior and emotion

To understand how design stimulates user retention in a betting loop within the *Fortune Tiger* app, it is important to consider concepts such as the cognitive triangle, which describes the interrelation between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, according to Tornatore (2023). This is observed in the influence that visual and auditory elements of the interface exert on players’ thoughts, provoking near-wins, where most rounds result in almost-winning combinations, leading to a mistaken sense of progress and inducing hope that the next round will be a win, thus prompting repeated betting.

This dynamic creates an affective bond between player and machine, a crucial notion for this analysis, referring to a “cycle of actions and responses, where the game presents an environment causing an emotional stimulus, eliciting an emotion in response” (Tornatore, 2023, p. 48), through instant multimodal and sensory feedback (sounds, animations, vibrant colors) that encourage immediate action after the conclusion of the previous one. This prevents the player from articulating any rational decision, conditioning them to keep betting. Thus, design acts to avoid natural pauses, making the experience fast and impulsive, keeping the bettor in a deliberate alternation between pleasure (occasional wins) and moderate displeasure (near-wins), which directly contributes to compulsive behavior. Another relevant analytical tool is the octalysis framework, created by game designer Yu-kai Chou in 2014, a theoretical model explaining how different motivational elements influence behaviors and decisions through eight different cores:

epic meaning, achievement, creativity, ownership, social influence, scarcity, unpredictability, and loss aversion (Tornatore, 2023, p. 75). This model helps understand how multimodal interfaces manipulate players into compulsive betting, highlighting the scarcity and urgency, and unpredictability cores. The first is evident in the design through urgent and catastrophic action feedback, prompting the user to act instinctively, creating emotional urgency and leading to quick decisions. The second, unpredictable rewards, is mainly used in the near-win mechanic, keeping the bettor in a constant state of curiosity and expectation, thereby increasing engagement.

### 3 *Fortune Tiger*: analytical description and discussion

The use of warm and vibrant colors, such as red, gold, and orange, creates a sense of excitement and urgency, interacting with the visceral level described by Norman (2004).

The cognitive triangle can be observed in the central 3 × 3 game quadrant (Figures 5 and 6), where different visually attractive and colorful symbols



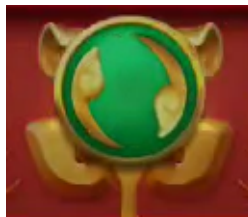
**Figure 5** Home screen of the *Fortune Tiger* app, showing the available game balance and key interface elements designed to attract user attention. Source: personal archive.



**Figure 6** Central quadrant of the *Fortune Tiger* app, highlighting symbolic elements and interface details designed to engage users. Source: personal archive.

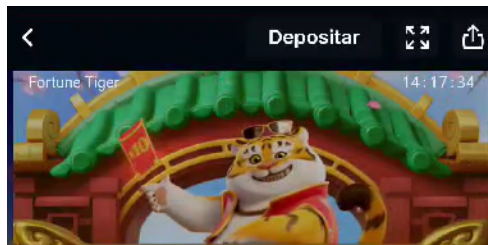
spin to combine in a random sequence. Often, these combinations are not winning by just one slot, resulting in near-wins, thus influencing the player's thoughts and feelings and encouraging repetitive betting.

The only functional element that does not follow the app's warm palette is the spin button (Figure 7), which is green and gold, colors traditionally associated with hope, tranquility, and good fortune, evoking positive feelings in the player. Among all platform buttons, this is the only one that follows the size guidelines recommended by the Material Design 3 guide (Google, 2025), and its traditional affordance facilitates interaction, naturally inducing the user to click.



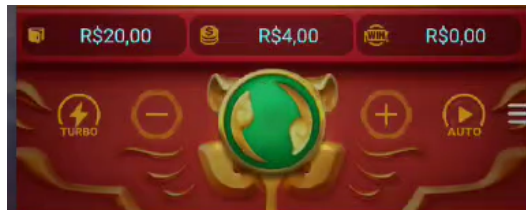
**Figure 7** Spin button of the *Fortune Tiger* app, visually designed to attract user interaction through color contrast and symbolic ornamentation. Source: personal archive.

Additionally, there is a highly contrasted and prominent “deposit” button at the top of the screen (Figure 8). Below, the hero (main highlighted area) of the app displays no logo, name, or relevant information, only a looping animation of the tiger holding a card and smiling mischievously, while petals fall, creating a playful and immersive atmosphere.



**Figure 8** Deposit button and, just below, the app's hero section featuring the *Fortune Tiger* mascot. This interface highlights quick access to payment options and the visual identity of the app. Source: personal archive.

Below, in the most accessible area, are the following fields: deposited balance, bet amount, and winnings balance, as well as buttons to increase and decrease the bet amount; “auto mode” for placing bets without user intervention; “turbo mode,” which wagers the entire balance at once; and a discreet menu button revealing further functions (Figure 9). All these buttons are small and lack ideal contrast, especially on low-resolution screens, such as those on low-cost mobile devices, which prevents users from exploring the interface, inducing automatic and repetitive navigation, minimizing any interruption that might make them reconsider their bets. This is reinforced by flashy and noisy animations typical of casinos and positive feedback after each round, regardless of the outcome.



**Figure 9** Input and balance area of the *Fortune Tiger* app, showing user credit, available bet options, and quick-access control buttons. Source: personal archive.

It is evident on this screen the use of dark patterns, as the only prominent action buttons are for betting and depositing. Meanwhile, essential functions such as transaction history and withdrawals, crucial for healthy app use, are hidden in complex and cluttered menus, making it difficult to view important information (Figures 10 and 11).



**Figure 10** Menu functions of the *Fortune Tiger* app, displaying key game controls, deposit options, and navigation buttons for user interaction. Source: personal archive.



**Figure 11** Payment history screen of the *Fortune Tiger* app, providing users with a record of transaction details and gameplay activities. Source: personal archive.

At the behavioral level, the design of the *Fortune Tiger* app is optimized for fluidity, as the user quickly learns to play. With just one click, the bet is placed, since “function comes first and is most important” (Norman, 2008, p. 92). However, this ease ends up placing the player in an illusory sense of control, as the game allows adjusting the bet amount, creating the false perception that the outcome can be influenced. Features like “turbo mode” and “auto bet” create the illusion of optimizing the chances of winning, when in reality, persuasive mechanics such as near-wins and variable rewards are used, alternating between small and large rewards randomly, using the same strategy as physical slot machines. This favors compulsive behavior, as the player never knows when the big prize will come.

Thus, the *Fortune Tiger* app involves the player in a symbolic narrative, creating associations between betting, luck, and strategy, as Norman states about the reflective level (2008, p. 107): “everything is about the message (...) everything is about the meaning of things.” Here, we see that the oriental aesthetic, the robust and charismatic mascot, and the symbols of prosperity contribute to the idea that persistence will lead to profit, reinforced by the concealment of negative statistics, such as loss percentage, preventing the player from reflecting on failures and winnings, and potentially experiencing regret. As Krug (2014) and Moma (2017) assert, a healthy user experience (UX) offers transparency, prioritizes user control, avoids manipulative reinforcement, promotes digital well-being, and reduces the risk of compulsion. The *Fortune Tiger* app, however, contradicts all these principles by hiding important statistics such as loss and success rates, deliberately introducing friction in the withdrawal process, and encouraging impulsivity through sounds and visual effects that create a false perception of victory. This increases addictive behaviors through variable rewards, without offering time limits or pauses for user reflection and mental rest, directly harming digital well-being and structuring the risk of dependency.

## 4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the design of the *Fortune Tiger* app is not merely a visual or functional tool, but also an intentionally designed mechanism to create compulsive behaviors. The use of emotional and sensory elements not only simplifies access but also directly manipulates bettors’ expectations and impulses, creating cycles of pleasure and frustration that induce continuous betting. Furthermore, dark patterns in the user experience, such as hiding important information and deliberately creating difficulties during withdrawals, deviate from the ethical principles recommended by best UX practices and traditional heuristics.

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