
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Configuring the World of Work: A Resonance-Based Critique of Focus-Oriented Idle Games: The Case of Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story

Zhaolu Chen¹ and Xinyang Liu²

¹² College of Arts and Media, Tongji University, Journalism and Communication

Corresponding Author: Zhaolu Chen, **E-mail:** galaxyforlu@163.com

ABSTRACT

Focus-oriented idle games remain open while users work or study, offering music, adjustable scenery, and a digital companion. Drawing on Hartmut Rosa's theories of social acceleration and resonance, this article presents a qualitative analysis of *Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story*, combining the game's text, play records, and Steam reviews. The game gives everyday tasks sensory, bodily, and relational significance through audiovisual environments, shared timing, and character narratives. Players describe feeling accompanied, attending to fatigue, and reconsidering how they spend their time. Timed unlocks and character dialogue, however, also frame continued concentration as a contribution to knowing the character and sustaining the relationship. Reviews that judge the game by how well it supports further work treat companionship, rest, and environmental settings as resources for remaining productive. The game translates aspirations for a good life into matters of individual configuration and management, concentrating responsibility for coping with time pressure on users themselves. The analysis shows how richer conditions for resonance can accompany stronger demands for self-management. The critical question is whether the needs acknowledged through companionship can change workloads and working rhythms, and who bears responsibility for making those changes.

KEYWORDS

Focus-oriented idle games, digital companionship, resonance, social acceleration, quantified self

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 10 September 2026

PUBLISHED: 02 October 2026

DOI: 10.32996/smj.2026.4.2.3

1. Introduction

When the timer starts, Satone, the young woman on the screen, lowers her head and resumes writing. Off-screen, the player works on a paper, answers emails, or attends to other tasks. Typing sounds, rain, and lo-fi music sustain a quiet setting. Coordinated periods of concentration and rest let the player feel accompanied even when Satone is silent. As the player's recorded focus time accumulates, the game unlocks conversations and story episodes through which the player gets to know Satone. The game supports task completion while turning hours spent working or studying alone into time shared with a digital character (Figure 1).



Figure 1
The Game Scene and User Interface



Note. The screenshot shows the focus timer, break duration, and session count. Satone's subtitle reads, "What should I do?" Screenshots from *Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story* (Nestopi, 2025).

Recent games such as *Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story* and *gogh: Focus with Your Avatar* are designed to remain open while people work or study. They use character activities and timers to accompany the rhythms of everyday tasks through low-intensity interaction that makes few demands on attention. We refer to these titles as *focus-oriented idle games*. They retain the automatic operation and intermittent input associated with idle games (Deterding et al., 2022), while generating forms of background play, or even play through not playing (Zhou & Li, 2023). The game becomes part of the atmosphere of everyday life, and players maintain contact and affective attachments through occasional interaction (Leorke, 2021).

The popularity of focus-oriented idle games reflects the increasing involvement of digital media in work and study, as well as the demand for greater efficiency under time pressure. Hartmut Rosa, a German sociologist associated with the fourth generation of Frankfurt School critical theory, describes this condition through the concept of *social acceleration*: social processes speed up, individuals must handle more within limited time, and greater efficiency becomes necessary to maintain their existing position (Rosa, 2005/2013). Efficiency consequently becomes a central criterion for organizing work and study. When the world is approached as a collection of objects to be mastered and made available, people may remain in constant contact with things and others while struggling to establish a meaningful connection with them. Rosa calls this unresponsive relationship to the world *alienation* (Rosa, 2010). His concept of *resonance* describes a relationship in which subjects are affected by the world, respond to it, and change through the encounter (Rosa, 2016/2019). Resonance remains uncontrollable: media can provide conditions for it, but cannot guarantee that it will occur.

Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story (hereafter *Chill with You*) makes work and study perceptible as shared activities through an adjustable environment and a persistently present character. Companionship is available while a task remains unfinished, and the conversations unlocked through accumulated focus time give that time relational significance. Access to further conversations and developments in the relationship, however, depends on completing additional timed sessions. The prospect of learning more about Satone can make another work session worth starting. Whether this connection changes the player's relationship to the world depends on the game's specific design and how players experience it.

This qualitative case study examines *Chill with You* through resonance theory, drawing on the game's text, researchers' play records, and Steam reviews. It asks: How do focus-oriented idle games create conditions for resonance during work and study? To what extent do these technological arrangements address Rosa's critique of life in an accelerating society?

2. Literature Review

Focus-oriented idle games bring work, study, play, and character companionship into the same stretch of everyday time. Three strands of research help explain this practice: studies of games in work and learning, accounts of digital companionship, and critiques of how social acceleration changes people's relationships to everyday life.

Games in Work and Study

Games have conventionally been treated as a domain separate from, and sometimes opposed to, work and study. Recent research challenges this division by identifying multiple relationships between them (Tan et al., 2026). An important distinction concerns whether games directly participate in everyday tasks and whether play serves an explicit purpose beyond the game.

Much of this research examines gamification as a means of supporting work and learning. By introducing game design elements such as tasks, rewards, recognition, and feedback into nongame contexts, gamification changes how activities are experienced and carried out. Researchers have explained its operation through self-determination theory, flow theory, goal-setting theory, and theories of gamified learning (Reuter et al., 2026; Warmelink et al., 2020). Informational and affective pathways can enhance motivation and performance, with visibility, comparability, and immediacy playing important roles (Cardador et al., 2017; Torresan & Hinterhuber, 2023). These effects nevertheless depend on particular conditions. A meta-analysis reports positive effects on cognitive, motivational, and behavioral outcomes, while showing that their strength varies with design, context, and research method (Sailer & Homner, 2020). Points, levels, and leaderboards may increase the number of tasks completed without increasing intrinsic motivation (Mekler et al., 2017). Adding game elements without attending to players' psychological experiences may amount only to rhetorical or poorly realized gamification (Landers, 2019). Butler and Spoelstra (2024) examine a further ethical difficulty: even apparently voluntary forms of workplace play can entail costs that their celebratory framing obscures.

Games also shape work and study beyond tasks assigned by organizations. From the perspective of technological mediation, tools participate in how users understand and evaluate themselves (Bergen & Verbeek, 2021). When games combine with digital time management, quantification extends from performance to time and to the self expected to govern it. Tasks that differ in purpose and substance are converted into homogeneous, linear units of focus time; applications allow people to quantify themselves, pursue efficiency, and reorganize time into ordered sequences (Cao & Fang, 2022; Sun, 2021). Such practices can be understood as enhancing individual autonomy, particularly temporal autonomy (Feng & Jiang, 2026; Kristensen & Ruckenstein, 2018). Critics, however, argue that quantified selves and data relations introduce new forms of control, compromise the integrity of the self (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Moore & Robinson, 2016), and translate structurally imposed workloads and time scarcity into problems of personal concentration (Hu & Wang, 2025). Ranganathan and Benson (2020) describe *auto-gamification*, in which workers spontaneously turn quantified work into a self-contained individual game. Where tasks are relatively simple, metrics can capture performance adequately and increase productivity. As work becomes more complex, those same metrics may obscure its substantive demands and become counterproductive.

Idle games offer another way for games to enter everyday life. Their automatic operation allows players to return intermittently to organize progression (Zhou & Li, 2023). Running in the background of devices and at the margins of attention, these games sustain affective attachments (Keogh & Richardson, 2018). Whereas idle games often offer a fantasy of assets increasing without active labor (Deng, 2023), focus-oriented idle games tie progression to time spent concentrating on activities outside the game. Recorded focus time opens scenes, content, and character dialogue, giving everyday activity perceptible consequences and a narrative interpretation within the game world.

Research has explored the ambivalence of gamification, quantified self-management, and the organization of background play, but has paid less attention to their combination in a single game. Focus-oriented idle games support ongoing tasks while making sustained concentration a condition of narrative development. Their involvement in work and study therefore operates through a mediated relationship. To understand that relationship, we must also consider how a digital character becomes a persistently present companion.

Companionship Through Digital Media

People use media for companionship as well as information and entertainment (Li & Hu, 2021). A relationship with a digital character can provide that sense of company.

Horton and Wohl (1956) introduced *parasocial interaction* (PSI) to describe audience responses to media personae that resemble everyday conversation. Later work distinguishes the apparent mutual awareness experienced during a particular encounter from a more enduring *parasocial relationship* (PSR) that persists across situations (Dibble et al., 2016). Parasocial relationships can extend social relationships rather than substitute for them (Tukachinsky et al., 2020); attachment to a digital character therefore does not, in itself, indicate compensation for inadequate offline relationships. Attitude, eye contact, direct address, and bodily orientation can strengthen parasocial interaction, while repeated encounters may extend emotional attachment beyond individual episodes of media use (Beege et al., 2017; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Tsay-Vogel and Schwartz (2014) explain how parasocial theory applies to media figures that differ in depiction, fictional status, form, and traits. In a study of livestreaming, Ma et al. (2020) associate parasocial relationships with satisfaction and subjective well-being. Studies of online learning show why the kind of companion and the comparison condition matter. Ren et al. (2025) found lower perceived pressure and higher task accuracy with study-with-me videos than with a physical companion, but no significant advantage over studying alone. In a separate study of virtual teachers in instructional videos, Zhao et al. (2025) found that parasocial interaction was positively associated with learning satisfaction but negatively associated with learning outcomes.

Companionship need not depend on intensive interaction. In research on transnational families, Madianou (2016) uses *ambient co-presence* to describe how continuously available media allow people to sense distant relatives' everyday actions and rhythms. Chinese research on livestreamed shared study, often called *cloud study*, similarly identifies a form of micro-presence produced through connected spaces, overlapping study times, and intermittent interaction (Yu & Wu, 2025). In game studies, cozy games are associated with gentle rhythms, familiar settings, and soft audiovisual styles that offer shelter from everyday pressure (Krzywinska et al., 2026; Waszkiewicz & Bakun, 2020). Bódi (2024) argues that their comfort can nevertheless reproduce neoliberal demands for self-optimization and carry a disciplinary force. Idle games have also been situated within this broader landscape of cozy play (Buerger, 2024).

Shared activity also depends on how media coordinate time. Research on multiple temporalities treats time as plural and examines the practices through which different times are compared, coordinated, and adjusted (Jordheim, 2014). Synchronization involves work undertaken to coordinate shared life and depends substantially on technical arrangements. Media synchronization connects past and present, here and elsewhere, allowing different activities to acquire related rhythms (Jordheim & Ytreberg, 2021).

Programmed responses can further sustain relationships with digital characters. In human–chatbot relationships, self-disclosure, varied interaction, and ongoing involvement in everyday life can support attachment, while technical failures or system changes may damage or interrupt it (Skjuve et al., 2022). Research on *Undertale* shows how non-player characters respond differently to players' choices and preserve their consequences in later episodes, establishing a shared history and a limited sense of reciprocity (Elvery, 2023). Players' feelings are real, although their intensity and meaning depend on the interaction. Studies of livestreamers and social robots also show how platform structures and commercial conditions shape digital intimacy, including its asymmetries and risks of rupture (Han et al., 2021; Zhang & Miao, 2021).

This research explains why players feel accompanied, how shared time takes shape, and how character relationships persist through repeated encounters. For the present study, the further question is what players allow that companionship to change. They may persist because Satone is working, pause because she appears tired, or reconsider an activity through her story. These responses connect companionship to how people treat their tasks, bodies, and surroundings.

Alienation and Resonance in an Accelerating Society

Evaluating companionship's significance for modern life requires locating it within the social organization of time. Rosa distinguishes three dimensions of social acceleration: technological acceleration, the acceleration of social change, and the acceleration of the pace of life. Technologies shorten the time required for production, transport, and communication; institutions, knowledge, and relationships remain stable for shorter periods; and individuals attempt to fit more actions and experiences into limited time (Rosa, 2005/2013, pp. 71–80). Together, these processes sustain a social environment in which efficiency becomes an increasingly important criterion of action (Dong, 2019).

The institutional basis of this process is *dynamic stabilization*: modern institutions depend on continued growth, innovation, and acceleration to reproduce their existing socioeconomic and institutional arrangements (Rosa, 2017, pp. 439–442). Rosa relates this structure to a cultural orientation he calls the *triple A approach to the good life*. People accumulate resources and develop capacities in the hope of making the world available, accessible, and attainable (Rosa, 2017, pp. 443–445). Securing whatever resources one might need for a desired life becomes a cultural imperative (Rosa, 2017, p. 443). Subjects are encouraged to improve their conditions for action continually, while the life they hope to lead may be repeatedly deferred. Rosa’s criticism concerns the displacement of living by the continual accumulation of resources for life. Once improving capacities and conditions becomes an end in itself, the question of why an activity matters gives way to the demand to remain ready to act. The value of working, studying, or planning must still be assessed through the subject’s relationship to the particular activity.

This orientation also changes how people relate to the world. Rosa uses *alienation* to describe estrangement in relationships to space, things, actions, time, oneself, and others (Rosa, 2010, pp. 83–97). He characterizes alienation as “a relation of relationlessness”: subjects remain functionally connected to the world while struggling to be affected by it or to experience a response (Rosa, 2016/2019, p. 184). Wen (2022) extends this account to digital space and time, the digital lifeworld, and the digital self. Under conditions of digital acceleration, experiences become brief, stimulating, and fragmented; people have little time to make sense of them or develop identification, and may become increasingly indifferent and rigid rather than closer to a good life.

Resonance offers a way to assess the quality of these relationships. Rosa identifies four elements: affection, self-efficacy, transformation, and uncontrollability (Rosa, 2016/2019, pp. 145–191). Affection means being touched or moved by someone or something; the subject responds in their own voice and experiences that response as making a difference. Rosa therefore insists that “resonance is not an echo” (Rosa, 2017, p. 450): the other must speak in a voice of its own. Art and the material world, as well as people, can become objects of resonance. With a scripted character, players encounter another life expressed through a work. The character’s experiences and commitments may make demands on them and unsettle their initial expectations. The analytical question is how that difference affects the player and changes their understanding and actions. Digital devices, bodies, and material surroundings jointly constitute the field of experience (Wilde et al., 2025), while time pressure, competition, and insecurity can diminish openness to resonance (Hollstein & Rosa, 2023). Institutions and technologies may establish favorable conditions, but the outcome of a resonant encounter remains open (Rosa, 2023).

Anderson (2023) asks how experiences that offer temporary relief and restoration can acquire politically transformative force. Discussing rituals and habits, Rosa (2023) stresses resonance’s capacity to exceed established expectations and to include refusal from within the relationship. Related studies bring this tension into digital media research. Zeng and Sobande (2026) show how the slow atmosphere of *Lofi Girl* offers emotional shelter and helps users manage the anxieties of acceleration. Sommerer (2026) argues that AI companions commodify responses that are continuously available, adaptable, and reproducible, and that commercial promises of resonance may intensify acceleration. Tu and Li (2025) propose an account of resonance through engagement with technology in which openness, listening, and self-adjustment allow technological experiences to contribute to personal growth while retaining differences between people and technologies. The critical issue is whether the needs revealed in such encounters can alter the demands governing work and life. Relief can help someone resume an established routine; fatigue, curiosity, or concern for another can also give them reasons to question it.

Existing studies explain how games enter everyday tasks, how digital characters become companions, and how acceleration can damage relationships to the world. Less attention has been given to the combination examined here: work and study are conditions of game progression while also acquiring affective and narrative significance through environmental design and character responses. Players can receive recognition within a story before achieving results in their tasks, and their attachment to that story may encourage another timed session. The program links these sensory and relational experiences to a record of completed focus sessions. We examine how conditions for resonance are configured as support for work, and how far this arrangement addresses Rosa’s critique of modern life under social acceleration.

3. Research Design

Case Selection

Developed and published by Nestopi, *Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story* was released on Steam on November 16, 2025 (Nestopi, 2025). It places the player’s tasks and the digital character’s activities within a shared timed session. While the player works or studies,

Satone—a young novelist who won an award as a teenager—writes at her own desk. Players set the number of focus sessions, their duration, and the breaks between them. Satone writes while the timer runs; during breaks, she may make coffee, turn the pages of a book, walk around, or lean back in her seat. Completing timed sessions earns experience points (XP) and virtual currency. XP raises the player's level and unlocks new story episodes. Customizable scenes and soundscapes become available as the story progresses, and currency can purchase additional decorations.

The narrative centers on communication between the player and Satone. Within its science-fiction premise, the connection is sustained by the player's theta waves during concentration. As shared focus time accumulates, the player learns about Satone's writing, studies, and decisions about further education. Rain, wind, and scene themes such as cherry blossoms and hot springs can also be selected. These sounds and images enter the player's physical surroundings through the screen and speakers, bringing timing, environmental settings, and character interaction together in the experience of work or study.

Materials and Selection

The materials comprise a complete audio transcription of the game's story dialogue, records of play and game mechanics, and public Steam reviews. The play records document experience with version 1.15.0 from July 27, 2026, covering the main story, epilogue, and everyday interactions. On September 6, 2026, 170 reviews were saved consecutively in a single collection, using Steam's all-time filter and its "Most Helpful" ranking. They are identified as C001–C170. Following a complete reading, we organized the material around work settings, timed progression, character interaction, and evaluations of everyday life. Close reading focused on passages that described concrete circumstances of use and expressed contrasting judgments. Review identifiers are retained throughout. Quotations from non-English reviews and the Chinese-language game transcript are rendered in English for this article.

Analytical Approach

The study combines systematic game analysis with qualitative textual analysis in a theoretically guided, interpretive single-case design. Following qualitative game analysis approaches to objects, interfaces, interaction, and gameplay logs (Consalvo & Dutton, 2006), we repeatedly played and documented the game's main story, epilogue, and everyday use. We also drew on the walkthrough method's step-by-step examination of interfaces, functions, and action sequences (Light et al., 2018), recording startup and exit, environmental settings, character interaction, rewards, and unlocks. Rosa's account of resonance served as a sensitizing concept in the analysis of Steam reviews (Blumer, 1954). Repeated readings examined how players describe and interpret working or studying alongside a digital character, attending to both correspondences and tensions between their accounts and the theoretical concepts.

Each type of material contributes differently to the analysis. Game texts establish the actions and narrative outcomes provided by the program. Play records reconstruct how these arrangements operate in use. Steam reviews show how players experience, interpret, and evaluate them. Comparing the three makes it possible to examine convergences as well as conflicts.

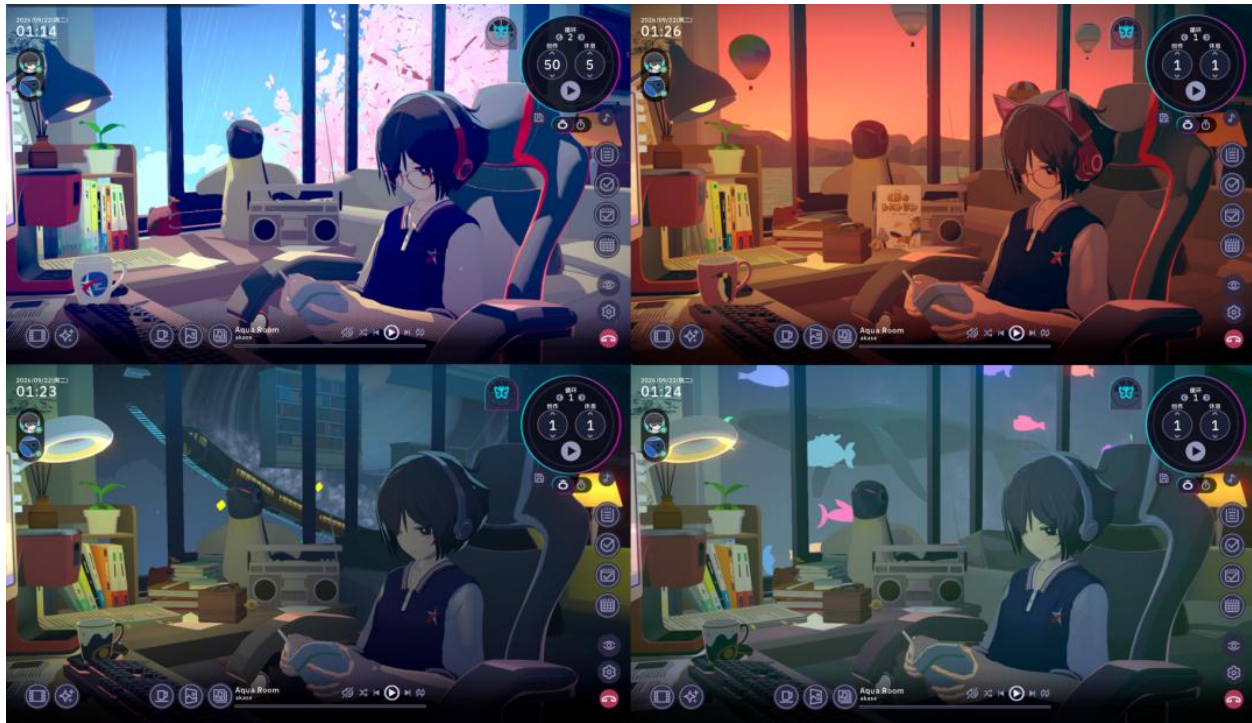
4. The Mediated Construction of Conditions for Resonance

Resonance cannot be produced to specification, but media can shape how people encounter environments, perceive others, and respond (Rosa, 2016/2019, pp. 174–184). *Chill with You* places everyday tasks within an ongoing simulated video call. Its audiovisual settings alter the experience of the player's surroundings; Satone's actions provide a reference for work and rest; and her story gives shared time a history. This section examines how these arrangements affect players and, in some instances, prompt them to change what they do.

Configuring Space and Engaging the Senses

The program presents startup as the beginning of a video call. During loading, the player waits for Satone to connect; once the image appears, she adjusts her camera. When the player exits, she says goodbye and ends the call. Opening and closing a program thereby take the form of meeting and parting. Her desk, lamp, mug, and coffee machine suggest a room that someone inhabits. Players can customize the view outside the window and combine rain, wind, birdsong, and lo-fi music. Images and sounds connect this room to the player's physical surroundings (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Customizable Scenes and Environments



Note. Examples of the game's customizable scenery and audiovisual environment. Screenshots from Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story (Nestopi, 2025).

C118 draws the curtains in their own room, leaves a single small lamp on, and studies with the game's rain and music. During breaks, they talk briefly with Satone, describing the resulting setting as "the best little nook to have all to myself." The reviewer creates that nook with physical curtains and a lamp, together with the game's sounds, images, and on-screen companion. Studying, listening to rain, and brief conversations can occur in the same place. A study period previously defined chiefly by its task now includes experiences worth having in the present.

Sound also changes the perceived distance between spaces. C159 finds that Satone's typing and their own keyboard sounds "blend together," as if another person were working beside them. The two activities occupy different spaces but unfold within one auditory environment. Another's activity enters the player's workplace without requiring continuous visual attention. Wilde et al.'s (2025) account of postdigital resonance helps explain why this company is felt at the actual desk: the player hears both keyboards while physically typing on one of them. Devices, bodies, and material surroundings participate in the same encounter.

For C157, the problem with the rain sound is where it seems to place the listener. The reviewer wants the layered, distant sound of rain heard through walls: a sound that locates the listener indoors, sheltered by a building. Lowering the volume changes loudness, whereas distance, acoustic layers, and occasional drops striking metal establish where the listener feels situated. The reviewer judges the available sounds against memories of hearing rain from inside a room, asking for a particular sense of shelter.

Objects also acquire meaning through repeated encounters. Satone remarks that she looks at a favorite mug between tasks and is reminded to drink. The mug becomes associated with her habits and bodily needs. Some scenes and sounds become available after related story episodes, so selecting them again may recall her accounts of writing or everyday life. The environment carries traces of a shared history. Returning to the same room means returning to a place where conversations, rest, and work have already occurred. Its audiovisual form gives players a sensory basis for being affected by the surrounding world.

Rhythms of Action and Bodily Response

When a focus session begins, Satone alternates between bending over her writing and typing. During breaks, she may drink water, make coffee, eat a biscuit, or briefly leave her seat. While the player writes a paper, prepares for an examination, or handles a professional task, Satone works on her novel and research. Different activities become points of reference for one another through coordinated starts, pauses, and resumptions. Media synchronization allows heterogeneous activities to be related in this way (Jordheim & Ytreberg, 2021). The timer therefore does more than display remaining minutes: it marks time that the player and character are still spending together (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Satone Shows the Player Her Late-Night Snack



Note. Satone's subtitle reads, "I can't write on an empty stomach." Screenshots from Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story (Nestopi, 2025).

Companionship persisted for C063 even while the game was out of view. The reviewer had struggled to continue using an ordinary Pomodoro timer. Seeing Satone still at work encouraged them to make a further effort. They kept the game in a small window, sometimes covered by other windows, and brought Satone back into view when work became difficult. Background typing, occasional visible movements, and the knowledge that Satone was still working sustained the sense of companionship. Her presence also changed how the reviewer understood self-imposed demands. With Satone still working, the remaining ten minutes became something they imagined enduring together. Persisting with the task could express commitment to a companion. The game kept that commitment perceptible during work, shaping how the reviewer judged their own conduct (Bergen & Verbeek, 2021).

Character movements may also redirect attention toward the body. C141 had routinely ignored an ordinary timer's break notifications. With Satone present, the reviewer began to worry that continuing to work might push her too hard: "If I keep working any longer, will I be making her overdo it?" and "She's drinking water too; I need to drink some water." Concern for the character encouraged more serious attention to previously neglected needs for rest and hydration. Satone also tells the player: "Maybe we've both been building up fatigue without noticing. Let's not push ourselves too hard." Her displayed bodily needs give rest a concrete form, allowing players to notice their own condition through concern for another.

Rosa uses *patience* to describe a capacity for active receptivity: allowing oneself to be affected by what one encounters (Rosa, 2023). A player who drinks, rests, or postpones another session in response to Satone lets the encounter alter an existing plan. An ordinary timer signals a temporal boundary; Satone's body connects that boundary to a particular other. C063 sees her still working and decides to persist, whereas C141 worries about her fatigue and becomes willing to pause. Continuing and stopping can both become responses to a shared activity. Rest takes a bodily form as someone puts down their work, picks up

a cup, or leans back in a chair. Whether players follow that rhythm depends on how they understand the encounter. As the relationship develops, her movements acquire a personal history, and the question of why she is sitting there writing becomes worth hearing about.

Character Narratives and Changing Relationships

Shared time gains substance through a character whose life extends beyond the immediate interaction. Satone writes, reads, and organizes research materials; she may end a conversation when inspiration prompts her to return to work. Clicking on her during a focus session usually elicits a brief response such as “You haven’t finished yet, have you?” or “You’re distracting me,” after which she resumes her task. These actions give her objects of attention of her own. For Rosa, resonance involves another voice rather than an echo of the subject’s wishes (Rosa, 2017, p. 450). Satone’s experiences, interests, and limited refusals present the player with someone to get to know over time.

Her story gives this difference particular content. After winning a literary award at seventeen, Satone finds that people increasingly see only a novelist and expect new work to confirm that identity. An earlier achievement becomes a standard that subsequent writing must maintain. A different orientation emerges when she analyzes anomalous communication logs: initial frustration gives way to curiosity about what remains unknown. In conversation, she describes both research and writing as “romantic”—pursuits animated by wonder and imagination—and adds, “As I talk with you, I feel as though I’m finally getting clear about how I feel.”

The story distinguishes two reasons for continuing. External recognition asks Satone to sustain an established identity, while the appeal of research and creative work helps her discern which difficulties are worth enduring. The player hears Satone work out what matters to her. Dialogue gives Satone a setting in which to make sense of her experiences, and it exposes the player to her judgments about life. Her questions, interests, and choices can consequently influence how players understand their own activities, alongside her more immediate functions of reassurance and encouragement.

Accumulated focus time gradually unlocks dialogue. Satone thanks the player for the time they have spent together and, after finishing her novel, calls them her “partner.” The science-fiction premise of theta waves produced through concentration further explains how their connection is maintained. Work and study enter the character’s story as part of the relationship’s history. The growing record can now mean that their presence has helped Satone complete something she cares about. The narrative supplies experiential cues for what Rosa calls responsive self-efficacy: the character recognizes the player’s participation as meaningful.

Reviews show how this narrative can change a player’s understanding of the relationship. C099 initially expected a customizable “digital girlfriend” or “digital daughter.” As the story developed, they came to regard Satone as a friend and realized that they had “become the listener.” Her particular experiences revised the player’s expectations and directed attention toward her feelings and choices. Other reviewers describe remembering long-abandoned ambitions to write or resuming reading and discovering new meanings in familiar books (C049, C100). C099 nevertheless remained enthusiastic about achievements and further story content. Receptiveness to a character’s difference and pursuit of measurable progress can coexist in one person’s play. Caring about Satone may even strengthen the desire to obtain more content. Once her story has value in its own right, the conditions under which the program grants access to it become consequential.

Space, embodiment, and narrative give value to time in which results are still pending. Before a task is finished, players can already feel settled, accompanied, and newly attentive to their bodies and activities. These are conditions for resonance. Meanwhile, further story episodes and developments in the relationship depend on accumulating focus time, making companionship a reason to keep the timer running. Their transformative potential depends on whether concern for Satone, attention to fatigue, or interest in an activity can change when players work, how long they work, or what they work for.

5. Conditions for Resonance and the Reproduction of Accelerated Life

Chill with You can improve how people experience work and study, giving rise to meaningful feelings and changes in action. These experiences nevertheless take shape within the constraints of both game rules and everyday tasks. New story content depends on focus time; companionship is frequently valued for helping players persist; and time pressure is addressed primarily by adjusting the individual’s state. Together, these features hold out a promise that continuing to work will bring companionship and meaning to an otherwise lonely or tedious process. That promise gives players reasons to persist. It also makes their willingness and ability to keep working the main focus of efforts to relieve pressure.

Focus Time and Relational Progression

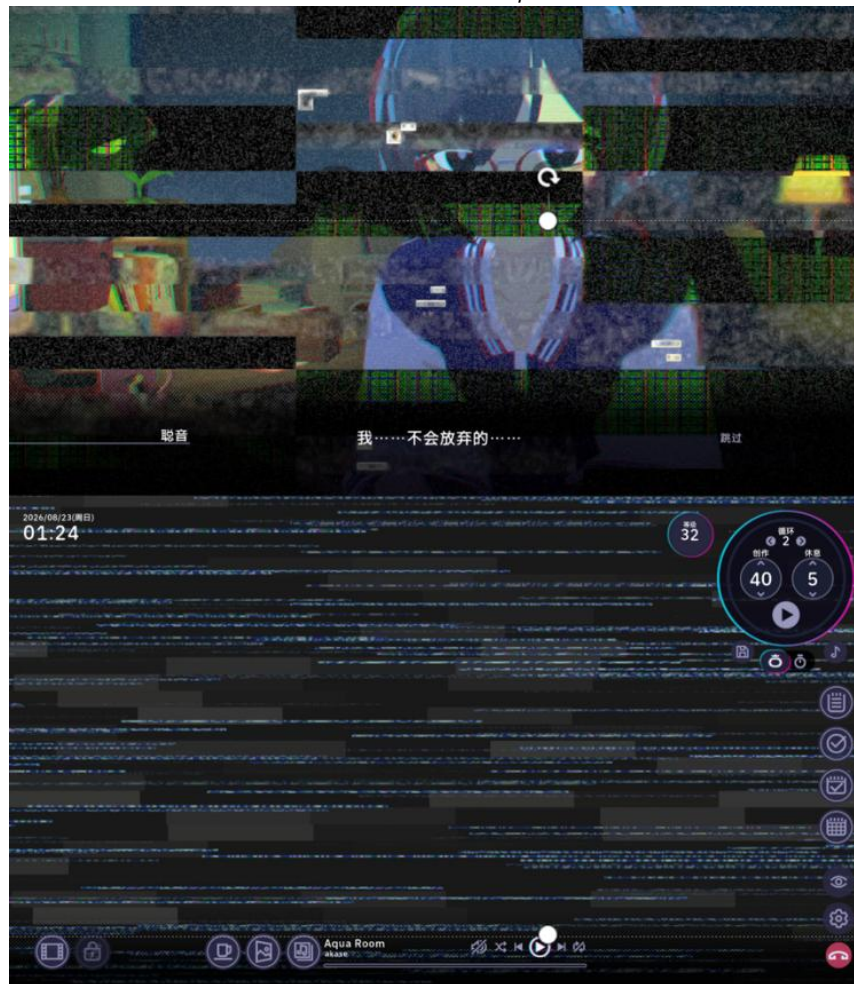
Everyday companionship and main-story progression follow different rules. Players can leave Satone on-screen without starting the timer and revisit conversations they have already unlocked. New episodes, however, open through levels attained by earning XP from completed focus sessions. Results outside the game do not determine these rewards. A wrong answer, an unfinished paper, or a passage that leaves the reader puzzled does not prevent a completed focus session from receiving its normal credit. The to-do list is for the player's reference; marking tasks complete has no effect on XP. Quantification selects and reorganizes what is recorded, shaping evaluation and resource allocation (Espeland & Stevens, 2008). Here, the program places focus time spent on different tasks within one progression system and makes it the main basis for gaining new dialogue, scenes, and decorations. Spending time with Satone may include listening, resting, or simply leaving the window open, but completed focus sessions have a privileged role: they open the next conversation.

The arrangement can affirm time that has yet to yield results. A paper may remain unfinished and an exercise unsolved, but XP still increases and further acquaintance with Satone remains possible. Her story gives this accumulation relational significance. After completing her novel, she tells the player, "If I'd been on my own, I'm sure I couldn't have finished it," and calls them her "partner." Theta waves produced through concentration are likewise presented as the energy sustaining communication. The program first makes concentration a condition of access; the narrative then interprets the same effort as a shared contribution to helping Satone and maintaining the connection.

The outcomes of everyday tasks are uncertain, whereas access to new story episodes follows programmed conditions. Players can therefore obtain a narrative response even when their work stalls or they feel discouraged. Interest in the character becomes part of the motivation to keep recording time. The program can determine when a conversation becomes available; its significance to a player depends on what they bring to it and what they do afterward. Rosa emphasizes that resonance cannot be stored or accumulated, and that increasing the number of accessible objects does not guarantee a better relationship to them (Rosa, 2017, p. 451). Players may value the story for reasons that emerge as they get to know Satone, yet the program grants further access according to the time recorded.

The loss of connection near the ending makes this tension visible. After interference disrupts communication, Satone urges the player not to give up concentrating. The signal then fails, and visual static replaces the character, her room, and its surroundings, while the timer remains usable. In the recorded playthrough, reconnecting required focus time equivalent to approximately two level increases. Players must continue concentrating without the visible companion whose presence had supported them. The narrative presents that effort as a contribution to their reunion (Figure 4). C021 recalls, "I really liked the focus-energy sequence at the end. I was genuinely concentrating on my work." C159, by contrast, values the way their typing sounds "blend together, as if a coworker doing overtime were sitting next to me," but asks, "Could we have a skip option for the disconnection and black-screen episode? I don't want to get worked up grinding out time." Both reviewers value the companionship; they disagree about whether its temporary withdrawal makes working worthwhile. One accepts present waiting as part of the story of reunion; the other wants already established company to remain available now. The latter objection exposes the cost of the threshold: to regain a valued working environment, the player must first keep working in its absence. Attachment supplies both an incentive to record time and a reason to challenge that requirement.

Figure 4
Connection Failure and the Subsequent Static Screen



Note. The upper panel shows communication breaking down; Satone says, “I... won’t give up.” The lower panel shows visual static while the timer controls remain available. Screenshots from Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story (Nestopi, 2025).

Suspense in this episode comes from not knowing when the connection will return. Resonance’s uncontrollability concerns something different: whether an encounter affects the player and how it changes their understanding and conduct (Rosa, 2017, pp. 450–451). Even though the program fixes the route to reconnection, players evaluate that route through concerns that have developed within the relationship. C159 asks for companionship to be restored without further grinding, challenging a condition set by the game. Rosa (2023) is skeptical that a robot cat can possess a voice of its own because its responses are algorithmic. Satone raises a related question about the relation between an authored work and its interface. Her established experiences and commitments give players a life to interpret, while her direct address and expressions of gratitude place them within that story. We locate the possibility of resonance in the encounter with this narrative work and in the changes it prompts in the player. The interface then determines which responses can affect the course of the game. At the disconnection, the program recognizes continued concentration as the contribution that restores contact. A request to skip the wait leaves the unlock conditions unchanged. For the player’s objection to affect those conditions, developers would have to change the design.

Evaluating Companionship Through Efficiency

The value assigned to the game’s environments and relationships often depends on what they do for tasks outside the game. Several reviews begin by praising its capacity to sustain concentration, extend study time, or increase work completed. C128 describes timed sessions, unlocked content, and renewed effort as a “virtuous cycle.” New scenes and conversations encourage

“more and longer” use, and the music is valued for not interrupting work. Here, support for task completion is the principal criterion for judging the design.

Adapting an environment to an activity can help people engage with its content. Reading, writing, and calculation require different conditions of attention, and suitable sounds can support each. An environment can be judged by how well it suits a particular activity. A different standard appears when longer focus time becomes the measure of improvement across activities. Under that standard, rest and companionship earn their place by helping the player continue, while bodily feelings matter chiefly as signs of readiness for more work.

C020’s account of preparing for China’s postgraduate entrance examination makes this relationship particularly clear. The reviewer describes fear of the examination and of missing another opportunity, then writes:

I don’t get anxious when I get a calculus problem wrong. If I can’t remember the English vocabulary, I just keep studying it—after all, it means she’ll stay with me longer. We keep at it little by little into the early hours, and I don’t even feel tired.

The unfinished study session still offers time with Satone, and studying longer becomes pleasurable. The reviewer understands this change as courage to face loneliness under pressure, while continuing to study becomes a way to enjoy that relief. Wanting her company gives the reviewer a further reason to keep studying into the night.

A different judgment emerges when the game does not improve efficiency. C103 writes: “I clearly study more efficiently with the computer off, but I keep opening Satone without thinking. Am I trying to fill a need for companionship? I feel pretty pathetic for being like this.” The reviewer first treats studying more efficiently as the preferable choice, then judges the desire for company against it. The word “pathetic” turns a comparison between tools into a negative judgment of the self. Once companionship loses its justification as a study aid, acknowledging the need becomes difficult. C087 describes a related conflict: after finishing the day’s work, hearing Satone say that she wants to keep going or is falling behind makes the reviewer feel more exhausted. The character who supports shared concentration can also recall the player to work just when they are ready to stop. For C087, the reminder to continue arrives after the reason for working has ended.

In discussing rituals and habits, Rosa treats transformation as exceeding established expectations and stresses the possibility of saying no within a resonant relationship (Rosa, 2023). Earlier examples show such adjustments: C141 becomes attentive to fatigue through Satone’s breaks, while C100 selects music according to the book being read and turns attention toward the novel itself. The game can support revised plans and renewed engagement with an activity’s meaning. What matters is whether rest, interest, and bodily experience can actually influence decisions to continue, pause, or finish.

Support can make an existing course of action easier to sustain. When rest, sensory comfort, and companionship are valued chiefly for restoring concentration or prolonging work, they serve that course. Resonance provides a more demanding criterion: the encounter must also leave room to reconsider what makes the activity worth pursuing.

Individual Adjustment Under Social Time Pressure

Everyday tasks are usually already in place when players open the game. Paper deadlines, examination requirements, client demands, and work schedules come from schools, families, and organizations. The game gives users ways to adjust their sound environment and activity rhythm and to manage how they feel while working. These options make the individual’s immediate surroundings and routines adjustable. The critical question is who has to make the adjustment, and who continues to set the tasks and deadlines.

C086, an IT worker based at home, thanks Satone and the developers for helping them cope when dissatisfied clients and excessive tasks provoke anger. C023 recounts extra schoolwork, rankings, and conflicts over study space during high school. Their family would consider providing access to an off-site study room only after they ranked among the top ten students in their year. The reviewer objects: “They weren’t going to find me a study room first and then make me leave if I failed to reach the top ten. I had no room to maneuver at all.” Later, at university, studying successfully for four or five hours with the game prompted a retrospective thought: “Perhaps if my family had agreed to find me a study room for evening study back then, or if this game had come out earlier, I wouldn’t have been kicked out of the advanced class in such humiliation.” The account retains a criticism of resource allocation while placing the game alongside the study room once sought: both are expected to help the student meet existing requirements. The circumstances differ from those of C086, but the technological answer is similar. Both reviewers value help in meeting demands whose terms are set elsewhere: by clients, educational competition, or family decisions about study space.

These evaluations locate the remedy for pressure in the person experiencing it. Client demands, homework targets, and ranking systems become problems of anger, fatigue, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating. Players can respond by changing sounds, setting a timer, or seeking Satone's company. They judge the result by whether they can finish tasks and recover confidence. The relief is real, but the people who set workloads and deadlines remain outside this process of adjustment.

Some reviews already treat the game as a tool for managing life. C031 wants a "work tool" that encourages work and study to become a "life management tool," enabling users to acquire habits "painlessly." The proposed tool would serve people with different lives by helping all of them schedule their time more smoothly and follow plans more reliably. Removing the discomfort of management leaves intact the expectation that life requires continual management. C050, meanwhile, stopped using the game when everyday demands became pressing. On returning and seeing a hundred-hour achievement, the reviewer speculated that they might have developed habits that made the software unnecessary, while acknowledging that other demands still disrupted their routine. Success here means that management habits outlast the tool. Both visions value more consistent self-management. Its worth nevertheless depends on the activities that plans serve and on the capacity of bodies, interests, and circumstances to alter those plans.

This pattern speaks to Rosa's critique of modern life organized around accumulating resources for future use. Dynamic stabilization requires continuing growth, innovation, and acceleration; individuals continually acquire resources and renew capacities to meet an uncertain future. Focus-oriented idle games make this effort more bearable through persistent companionship, which helps explain their appeal. When players judge characters, environments, and rest primarily by how well they sustain concentration or extend working time, keeping oneself able to work can become a goal in its own right. Alongside each task comes the further obligation to manage attention, mood, and energy so that another task can follow. Greater efficiency in individual tasks need not reduce how much there is to do. When demands grow faster than the time saved, increased efficiency can accompany a faster pace of life (Rosa, 2005/2013). The relevant form of preparation is this ongoing maintenance of the ability to work. The game makes managing attention, mood, and surroundings rewarding. Where those improvements are valued chiefly for enabling further effort, maintaining that ability continues to govern how time is spent.

The game's epilogue provides another reference for evaluating self-management. Having clarified why research and writing matter to her, Satone discusses the greater independence required to organize postgraduate life. She plans her time so that she can pursue the research and writing she has come to value. The value of timing and planning consequently depends on which activities they support and whether those activities can change the plan. If continued effort becomes a requirement detached from particular purposes, the tool may instead come to govern the interests it was meant to serve.

Individuals can stop a timer, change music, or take a break. Altering workloads and deadlines involves schools, employers, clients, and families. Resonance's social significance therefore concerns who has authority over time and whether claims arising from bodies, creative works, and relationships can influence that authority. Developers set game thresholds; schools, employers, clients, and families negotiate or impose everyday demands. Rosa's account of acceleration explains the broader pressures under which these decisions are made. The game helps users handle externally imposed tasks through timers, adjustable environments, and companionship. Users can then assess themselves by how well they cope. Reducing a workload or changing a deadline, however, requires those who assign the work to respond to the needs that emerge while doing it. The political question is how such needs enter shared decisions about time: who makes demands, who can refuse them, and who secures the time needed to sustain a life?

Chill with You fulfills part of its promise at the level of lived experience. It gives work and study a perceptible environment and offers companionship while tasks remain unfinished. It responds locally to the condition Rosa criticizes, but operates primarily on how individuals accommodate existing tasks. In these accounts, intervention centers on the individual's capacity to cope, while workloads, deadlines, and competitive evaluation remain governed by the institutions and relationships that generate them. Conditions for resonance can improve life under acceleration and can also be absorbed into it as support for continued effort. The relationships players experience matter; addressing the broader temporal predicament requires extending responsibility beyond the adjustment of personal states to collective decisions about working conditions.

6. Conclusions and Implications

This case study of *Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story* has examined how focus-oriented idle games establish conditions for resonance and how those arrangements respond to accelerated life. Spatial settings, bodily rhythms, and character narratives give value to time in which work has not yet yielded results. Timed unlocks and Satone's gratitude give players reasons to complete

further focus sessions, while reviews that prize efficiency judge companionship by its contribution to work. The game meets needs for a place to settle and for company at work, while making the relationship itself a reason to keep working.

The case extends Rosa's critique of accumulating resources in preparation for life to the design of digital companionship. Continually improving resources and capacities can allow preparation for life to displace living. Here, music, rest, and company already make working time worth experiencing, yet their value can still be measured by how well they sustain further work.

This arrangement also shapes the distribution of responsibility for time pressure. Social relationships organize tasks and deadlines, whereas the game's interventions primarily address individual surroundings, attention, and emotion. Users can immediately improve how they work; changing workloads or evaluative rules requires engagement with schools, employers, clients, and families. Because personal adjustment is convenient and effective, it can become the default response to difficulty and come to stand as a sufficient solution. Digital companionship can obscure the social organization of time pressure by directing remedial effort toward those who endure it. Users may still recognize and criticize the sources of pressure, yet spend their efforts improving their own capacity to cope.

A critique grounded in resonance must therefore ask whether needs acknowledged within these encounters can change the conditions of work. Fatigue, interest in an activity, and concern arising within a relationship should inform decisions about when to continue and when to stop, and enter negotiations over workloads, deadlines, and temporal resources. Evaluating digital self-management technologies requires moving from improvements in individual states toward the responsibilities of those who organize work. Once life has been brought into work, work must also become answerable to the demands of living fully.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

- [1] Anderson, A. (2023). The moral and political challenges of Hartmut Rosa's theory of resonance. *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 10(1), Article 6. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-023-00182-9>
- [2] Beege, M., Schneider, S., Nebel, S., & Rey, G. D. (2017). Look into my eyes! Exploring the effect of addressing in educational videos. *Learning and Instruction*, 49, 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2017.01.004>
- [3] Bergen, J. P., & Verbeek, P.-P. (2021). To-do is to be: Foucault, Levinas, and technologically mediated subjectivation. *Philosophy & Technology*, 34(2), 325–348. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-019-00390-7>
- [4] Blumer, H. (1954). What is wrong with social theory? *American Sociological Review*, 19(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2088165>
- [5] Bódi, B. (2024). The duality of cozy games: Cozy agency, neoliberalism, and affect. *Replay. The Polish Journal of Game Studies*, 11(1), 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.18778/2391-8551.11.04>
- [6] Buergi, J. (2024). Idle games: A cozy genre turned exploitative. *Replay. The Polish Journal of Game Studies*, 12(1), 73–86. <https://doi.org/10.18778/2391-8551.12.02>
- [7] Butler, N., & Spoelstra, S. (2024). Redemption through play? Exploring the ethics of workplace gamification. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 193(2), 259–270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05584-w>
- [8] Cao, P., & Fang, H. (2022). "Zhuanzhu de yangcheng": Lianghua ziwo yu shijian de meijiehua guanli shijian ["Cultivating concentration": The quantified self and practices of mediated time management]. *Guoji Xinwenjie*, 44(3), 71–93. <https://doi.org/10.13495/j.cnki.cjjc.2022.03.002>
- [9] Cardador, M. T., Northcraft, G. B., & Whicker, J. (2017). A theory of work gamification: Something old, something new, something borrowed, something cool? *Human Resource Management Review*, 27(2), 353–365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2016.09.014>
- [10] Consalvo, M., & Dutton, N. (2006). Game analysis: Developing a methodological toolkit for the qualitative study of games. *Game Studies*, 6(1). https://gamestudies.org/0601/articles/consalvo_dutton
- [11] Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. (2019). Data colonialism: Rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject. *Television & New Media*, 20(4), 336–349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476418796632>
- [12] Deng, J. (2023). "Fangzhi RPG" pipan: Dangdai youxi de shehui xiangxiangli wenti [A critique of "idle RPGs": The problem of social imagination in contemporary games]. *Wenyi Yanjiu*, (10), 124–135.
- [13] Deterding, S., Andersen, M. M., Kiverstein, J., & Miller, M. (2022). Mastering uncertainty: A predictive processing account of enjoying uncertain success in video game play. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 924953. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.924953>
- [14] Dibble, J. L., Hartmann, T., & Rosaen, S. F. (2016). Parasocial interaction and parasocial relationship: Conceptual clarification and a critical assessment of measures. *Human Communication Research*, 42(1), 21–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12063>
- [15] Dong, J. (2019). Jiasu, xin yihua he gongming: Haertemute Luosa yu shehui jiasu pipan lilun [Acceleration, new alienation, and resonance: Hartmut Rosa and the critical theory of social acceleration]. *Shandong Shehui Kexue*, (6), 21–28.
- [16] Elvery, G. (2023). Undertale's loveable monsters: Investigating parasocial relationships with non-player characters. *Games and Culture*, 18(4), 475–497. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554120221105464>
- [17] Espeland, W. N., & Stevens, M. L. (2008). A sociology of quantification. *European Journal of Sociology*, 49(3), 401–436. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975609000150>
- [18] Feng, Q., & Jiang, D. (2026). "Fei zizhu" de shijian zizhuxing: Kaoyan qunti "beidongxing shuzi duanlian" shijian yanjiu ["Non-autonomous" temporal autonomy: Passive digital disconnection among postgraduate entrance examination candidates]. *Xinwen Jizhe*, (3), 86–100. <https://doi.org/10.16057/j.cnki.31-1171/g2.2026.03.005>
- [19] Han, X., Zhang, H., He, K., & Ma, S. (2021). Meijie yilai de zheyen xiaoying: Yonghu yu shejiao jiqiren de zhun shehui jiaowang chengdu yue gao yue gandao gudu ma? [The masking effect of media dependency: Does greater parasocial interaction with social chatbots make users feel lonelier?]. *Guoji Xinwenjie*, 43(9), 25–48. <https://doi.org/10.13495/j.cnki.cjjc.2021.09.002>

- [20] Hartmann, T., & Goldhoorn, C. (2011). Horton and Wohl revisited: Exploring viewers' experience of parasocial interaction. *Journal of Communication*, 61(6), 1104–1121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01595.x>
- [21] Hollstein, B., & Rosa, H. (2023). Social acceleration: A challenge for companies? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 188(4), 709–723. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05506-w>
- [22] Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049>
- [23] Hu, Y., & Wang, Z. (2025). Pipanxing fansi shijian guanli APP dui shuzi fuzhi de zhaihua: Yi Fanqie ToDo wei li [A critical reflection on the narrowing of digital well-being by time-management apps: The case of Tomato ToDo]. *Zhongguo Bianji*, (5), 67–74.
- [24] Jordheim, H. (2014). Introduction: Multiple times and the work of synchronization. *History and Theory*, 53(4), 498–518. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.10728>
- [25] Jordheim, H., & Ytreberg, E. (2021). After supersynchronisation: How media synchronise the social. *Time & Society*, 30(3), 402–422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X211012507>
- [26] Keogh, B., & Richardson, I. (2018). Waiting to play: The labour of background games. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 21(1), 13–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549417705603>
- [27] Kristensen, D. B., & Ruckenstein, M. (2018). Co-evolving with self-tracking technologies. *New Media & Society*, 20(10), 3624–3640. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818755650>
- [28] Krzywinska, T., Brown, D., Ma, M., Belinskiy, A., & Bhui, K. (2026). Coziness in games: Second homes, audiences, and aesthetics. *Games and Culture*, 21(5), 1170–1188. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554120241310920>
- [29] Landers, R. N. (2019). Gamification misunderstood: How badly executed and rhetorical gamification obscures its transformative potential. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 28(2), 137–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492618790913>
- [30] Leorke, D. (2021). Post-casual play: Affect, demand and labour in digital gaming. *Digital Culture & Society*, 7(1), 53–72. <https://doi.org/10.14361/dcs-2021-0105>
- [31] Li, W., & Hu, B. (2021). Wei “peiban” maidan? Zhun shehui guanxi shijiao xia yinpin zhishi fufei juece yanjiu [Paying for “companionship”? Decisions to purchase audio knowledge content from a parasocial relationship perspective]. *Xiandai Chuban*, (6), 10–18.
- [32] Light, B., Burgess, J., & Duguay, S. (2018). The walkthrough method: An approach to the study of apps. *New Media & Society*, 20(3), 881–900. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816675438>
- [33] Ma, Z., Ge, J., & Zhou, X. (2020). Wangluo zhibo yonghu de chixu shiyong xingwei ji zhuguan xingfuguan: Jiyu qiwang queren moxing ji zhun shehui guanxi de lilun shijiao [Continued use and subjective well-being among livestreaming users: Perspectives from the expectation-confirmation model and parasocial relationships]. *Xinwen yu Chuanbo Pinglun*, 73(2), 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.14086/j.cnki.xwycbpl.2020.02.003>
- [34] Madianou, M. (2016). Ambient co-presence: Transnational family practices in polymedia environments. *Global Networks*, 16(2), 183–201. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12105>
- [35] Mekler, E. D., Brühlmann, F., Tuch, A. N., & Opwis, K. (2017). Towards understanding the effects of individual gamification elements on intrinsic motivation and performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 71, 525–534. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.08.048>
- [36] Moore, P., & Robinson, A. (2016). The quantified self: What counts in the neoliberal workplace. *New Media & Society*, 18(11), 2774–2792. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815604328>
- [37] Nestopi. (2025). *Chill with You: Lo-Fi Story* [Video game]. Steam. <https://store.steampowered.com/app/3548580/>
- [38] Ranganathan, A., & Benson, A. (2020). A numbers game: Quantification of work, auto-gamification, and worker productivity. *American Sociological Review*, 85(4), 573–609. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122420936665>
- [39] Ren, N., Reynolds, B. L., & Rusk, B. V. (2025). Virtual companionship or flesh and blood: The effects of study-with-me (SWM) videos on learners' intrinsic motivation, perceived pressure, and performance. *Computers & Education*, 228, Article 105243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2025.105243>

- [40] Reuter, J., Ferreira Dias, M., & Souza, M. J. (2026). The role of games and gamification in business and training: A systematic review. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 34(4), 2590–2608. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2025.2547270>
- [41] Rosa, H. (2010). *Alienation and acceleration: Towards a critical theory of late-modern temporality*. NSU Press.
- [42] Rosa, H. (2013). *Social acceleration: A new theory of modernity* (J. Trejo-Mathys, Trans.). Columbia University Press. (Original work published 2005)
- [43] Rosa, H. (2017). Dynamic stabilization, the triple A approach to the good life, and the resonance conception. *Questions de communication*, 31, 437–456. <https://doi.org/10.4000/questionsdecommunication.11228>
- [44] Rosa, H. (2019). *Resonance: A sociology of our relationship to the world* (J. C. Wagner, Trans.). Polity. (Original work published 2016)
- [45] Rosa, H. (2023). Resonance as a medio-passive, emancipatory and transformative power: A reply to my critics. *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 10(1), Article 16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-023-00195-4>
- [46] Sailer, M., & Homner, L. (2020). The gamification of learning: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(1), 77–112. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09498-w>
- [47] Skjuve, M., Følstad, A., Fostervold, K. I., & Brandtzaeg, P. B. (2022). A longitudinal study of human–chatbot relationships. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 168, Article 102903. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2022.102903>
- [48] Sokolova, K., & Kefi, H. (2020). Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, Article 101742. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.011>
- [49] Sommerer, T. (2026). Artificial resonance: AI companions as agents of social acceleration. *AI & SOCIETY*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-026-03179-3>
- [50] Sun, W. (2021). Zi zhuzhong, shujuhua he shejiaoxing: Yidong hulian shidai de shijian guanli [Self-tracking, datafication, and sociability: Time management in the mobile internet era]. *Xiandai Chuanbo* (Zhongguo Chuanmei Daxue Xuebao), 43(7), 158–163.
- [51] Tan, K.-L., Li, J., Guo, Z., Hii, I. S. H., Nguyen, D. H., Ting, H., & Rosalin, S. (2026). From gamification to work performance: A two-wave, two-study examination of psychological needs and meaningful work of employees in China and Singapore. *International Journal of Manpower*, 47(10), 213–236. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-08-2025-0688>
- [52] Torresan, S., & Hinterhuber, A. (2023). Continuous learning at work: The power of gamification. *Management Decision*, 61(13), 386–412. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-12-2020-1669>
- [53] Tsay-Vogel, M., & Schwartz, M. L. (2014). Theorizing parasocial interactions based on authenticity: The development of a media figure classification scheme. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(2), 66–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034615>
- [54] Tu, L., & Li, H. (2025). “Zai xina zhong gongming”: Shuzhi shidai wenhua shengchan yu chuanbo de yihua ji qi chaoyue [“Resonating through engagement”: Alienation in cultural production and communication in the age of digital intelligence and its transcendence]. *Fujian Shifan Daxue Xuebao* (Zhexue Shehui Kexue Ban), (6), 67–78, 171.
- [55] Tukachinsky, R., Walter, N., & Saucier, C. J. (2020). Antecedents and effects of parasocial relationships: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 70(6), 868–894. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaa034>
- [56] Warmelink, H., Koivisto, J., Mayer, I., Vesa, M., & Hamari, J. (2020). Gamification of production and logistics operations: Status quo and future directions. *Journal of Business Research*, 106, 331–340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.09.011>
- [57] Waszkiewicz, A., & Bakun, M. (2020). Towards the aesthetics of cozy video games. *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds*, 12(3), 225–240. https://doi.org/10.1386/jgvw_00017_1
- [58] Wen, X. (2022). Cong shuzi yihua dao shuzi gongming: Shuzi ziben zhuyi shehui jiasu de shuangchong huanxiang: Yi Luosa de shehui jiasu pipan lilun wei shijiao [From digital alienation to digital resonance: The dual illusions of social acceleration in digital capitalism through Rosa’s critical theory]. *Xinwenjie*, (9), 55–65. <https://doi.org/10.15897/j.cnki.cn51-1046/g2.2022.09.007>
- [59] Wilde, L., White, C., & Jandrić, P. (2025). Postdigital resonance. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 7(2), 359–368. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-024-00516-x>

- [60] Yu, J., & Wu, J. (2025). "Wei zaichang": Shuzi jishu chonggou hudong yishi de shijian luoji: Yi "yun zixi" zhibo wei li ["Micro-presence": How digital technology reconstructs interaction rituals in shared-study livestreams]. *Xinwen Jizhe*, (3), 54–71. <https://doi.org/10.16057/j.cnki.31-1171/g2.2025.03.002>
- [61] Zeng, N., & Sobande, F. (2026). Lofi Girl, cultural politics, and dichotomies of digital slowness and productivity. *Journal of Gender Studies*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2026.2642073>
- [62] Zhang, J., & Miao, Q. (2021). "Qinmi guanxi" de goumai? Jiehexing qingjing zhong wangluo zhubo de lei shehui guanxi yanjiu [Purchasing "intimacy"? Parasocial relationships with livestreamers in articulatory contexts]. *Guoji Xinwenjie*, 43(12), 29–52. <https://doi.org/10.13495/j.cnki.cjjc.2021.12.002>
- [63] Zhao, Y., Zheng, Q., & Shen, X. (2025). Xuni shuzi ren dui yonghu zaixian xuexi xiaoguo de yingxiang yanjiu [The effects of virtual digital humans on users' online learning outcomes]. *Xiandai Qingbao*, 45(1), 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1008-0821.2025.01.006>
- [64] Zhou, S., & Li, Y. (2023). "Rang youxi ziji wan": Fangzhi youxi yu chaoji ziwo ["Let the game play itself": Idle games and the super-self]. *Nanjing Shehui Kexue*, (3), 114–122. <https://doi.org/10.15937/j.cnki.issn1001-8263.2023.03.012>