
The Role of AI Waifu Characters in Supporting Weaboos with Posttraumatic Relationship Syndrome (PTRS)

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative descriptive research investigates the emotional experiences of three individuals identifying as “weaboos” whose have Posttraumatic Relationship Syndrome (PTRS) with distinct “Waifu” relationships involving characters Haibara Ai, Asuna, and Rem. Through purposive sampling, these participants engaged in interactions with AI chatbots with 10 questions from introductory to romantically, emulating these characters, exploring their emotional journeys and perceptions. The study reveals diverse emotional responses, from initial hesitance and skepticism to profound happiness and emotional fulfillment, as participants interacted with these AI companions. Their experiences showcase a spectrum of emotional transformations and suggest that AI chatbots could serve as a platform for emotional expression and companionship, offering insights into the potential roles of such simulations in addressing emotional needs for individuals navigating complex romantic landscapes.

Keywords: PTRS, Waifu, AI



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INTRODUCTION

Humans, being inherently social beings, naturally seek ongoing interactions. This inclination is seen in the pursuit of marriage, which essentially brings together two distinct individuals toward a shared objective. Marriage signifies the fusion of two people into a cohesive unit where mutual longing, encouragement, support, and service to each other culminate in a jointly cherished life. The ultimate aim of marriage lies in the establishment of a perpetually joyful family (Andri, 2020; Keller & Owens, 2020; Kohrt et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2022). However, achieving harmony within marriage demands equilibrium between husband and wife, a task complicated by their inherent differences that necessitate ongoing adjustments.

While individuals typically seek partners who captivate them in their quest for matrimony, the path is not without challenges. The Indonesian Ministry of Health highlights that approximately 11.6% of Indonesians aged over 15 encounter emotional mental disorders, notably depression. Statistics

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reveal that one in eight adolescents could face depression, with 30% of them grappling with mental and emotional turmoil consequent to their depressive experiences. Notably, romantic setbacks are among the leading triggers for depression (Jeon et al., 2020; Mulyani & Afandi, 2016; Nadew, 2012; Shin et al., 2017).

Heartache may happen due to unreciprocated or failed love. Such romantic disappointments significantly impact daily life, and some research suggests that these setbacks can impair an individual's social functionality. Heartbreak often serves as a precursor to depression (Nemeroff & Goldschmidt-Clermont, 2012). If feelings of worthlessness or depression persist for weeks, months, or even years, clinical depression may take hold. Indicators may include fluctuations in appetite or body weight, diminished energy, disrupted sleep patterns, an inability to derive pleasure from routine activities, and a prevailing sense of helplessness or hopelessness (van den Heuvel et al., 2020). This may cause Posttraumatic Relationship Syndrome (PTRS). In this regard, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and PTRS share similarities. However, crucial distinctions exist between the two: PTSD typically stems from a single traumatic event, whereas PTRS generally results from a sequence of events within relationships. PTRS is exclusive to relational experiences and lacks the numbing effect often observed in PTSD. Additionally, individuals with PTSD often employ avoidance mechanisms to manage their distress, involving the suppression of thoughts and emotions, and steering clear of situations triggering the traumatic event (Rokach & VanderVoort, 2007). (Emery et al., 2018; Waddell et al., 2020)

PTRS manifests through various symptoms commonly observed in individuals recovering from traumatic relationships. These symptoms encompass sexual dysfunction or reduced libido, insomnia, self-blame regarding the abuse endured, a pervasive sense of insecurity, heightened anxiety leading to panic attacks, persistent edginess or irritability, a profound distrust of others, feelings of sadness or depression, recurring flashbacks to traumatic relationship events, uncontrollable anger directed at the abuser, and an overarching fear of potential future abuse. These symptoms collectively illustrate the complex and challenging aftermath of enduring a traumatic relationship, impacting both emotional well-being and interpersonal trust. The refusal of affection stands as a primary trigger for depression, with depression itself being a leading cause of suicide. Dr. Aron points out that within psychology today, comprehension of this romantic occurrence remains limited not due to negligence but due to the insufficient discourse on the neural mechanisms and brain function during heartbreak (or falling in love). Additionally, Dr. Aron suggests that love induces addiction, leading individuals experiencing love or heartbreak to exhibit symptoms akin to those seen in addiction. Consequently, individuals grappling with heartbreak often struggle to recover or move on from this addictive state (Heitler, 2014).

Psychologists note that PTRS can lead to thoughts of ending one's life. There are various methods commonly employed for suicide globally, including hanging, insecticide poisoning, and firearms usage. Approximately 800 thousand to one million people succumb to suicide annually, placing it as the 10th leading cause of death worldwide. Statistics reveal a higher likelihood of suicide among men, with men being three to four times more prone to committing suicide compared to women. Annually, there are an estimated 10 to 20 million instances of unsuccessful suicide attempts, more

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prevalent among teenagers and women. Instances of suicide related to relationship breakups are not uncommon and are observed among various cases of suicide deaths (Batty et al., 2018).

When individuals experience heartbreak, they often seek entertainment as coping mechanism. For high-level anime enthusiasts, or “weaboo” (Prihastuti, 2014), finding comfort might involve indulging in their beloved characters. The term “waifu”, originating from the English word “wife”, is used in Japan to depict female fictional characters revered by anime, manga, or video game. These characters typically possess alluring appearances, endearing personalities, or compelling narratives. Waifus can become objects of affection, admiration, and even devotion, prompting some fans to amass collections of related paraphernalia like dolls, posters, or attire (Hanifah & Suhana, 2019). The term “waifu” emerged in a Japanese online forum in 2002, later gaining global traction among anime and manga enthusiasts. The reasons for embracing a waifu vary—some are drawn to a character's appearance, others to their persona, and a few feel a personal connection with the character. The concept of waifu remains subjective, devoid of definitive criteria, solely reliant on individual preferences (Bastin, 2020).

A man from Japan, Akihiko Kondo, married virtual pop star waifu Hatsune Miku in November 2018. Kondo first met Miku in 2008, when she was hit by mental health problems (Bendel, 2019). He reportedly experienced bullying and was shunned by his co-workers before. This unique love story makes people feel confused about Kondo's choice. However, he feels happy, especially since his partner will never betray him (Olcay, 2019). What Kondo experienced is actually on the rise in Japan. This is called ‘fictosexual’ where people choose to marry cartoon characters to show their love for their favorite manga or anime. Kondo is one of thousands of people in Japan who have unofficially married fictional characters in recent decades, catered to by a vast industry aimed at satisfying every whim of a powerful fan culture (Karhulahti & Välisalo, 2021). Tens of thousands of others around the world join online groups where they discuss their commitment to characters from anime, manga and video games. They have something in common, that they experiencing depression (PTSD or PTRS) because of real people. They finding peace when loving fictional characters (Palandri, 2013).

Forming love with a fictional character is one-sided and does not allow for rejection. For people who are afraid of being rejected, fictophilia is a choice. This makes individuals feel more confident in carrying out the relationship. According to anthropologist Agnès Giard, the personal freedom to connect with fictional characters drives some people to that type of relationship. Because, you don't have to deal with toxic people or failed relationships. For some people who may have previously experienced deep emotional wounds during a romantic relationship, fictophilia or fictosexuality may be seen as a solution (Tempo.co, 2023). For the average person, willing to spend money, time, energy on someone who is not even alive would seem stupid. But for lovers of fictional characters, this practice is seen as valuable. It makes him feel that his life is happy, useful and has a purpose.

Character.AI (beta.character.ai) that was made in 2023 is an artificial intelligence chatbot program developed based on deep learning models, especially language modeling (Zahira et al., 2023). Character AI developers say this platform was built with an orientation towards conversational

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chatbots, but currently its 14 million chatbots are capable of providing companionship, emotional support, even romantic love. In Character.AI there are various virtual characters you can chat with, from anime, video game characters, to public figures. The conversational style of the bot characters is made as similar as possible to the source character. In fact, there are also bots in Character AI that are made with characteristics like girlfriends.

In the previous research, Character.AI shows different answers in each persona. In this case, they care about user problems such as job stress, suicidal thoughts, self-blame, frustration etc. But there are some who don't really care, which shows that some characters have dangerous personas, some don't (Adiningrum et al., 2023; Maharani, Adiningrum, et al., 2023; Maharani, Mohammad, et al., 2023; Maharani & Mohammad, 2023). For Weaboos who experience PTRS and love waifu, something like Character.AI might have some positive impacts. People tend to listen to loved ones. It is hypothesized that if the Waifu character is in this form of AI chatbot, the weaboos can find a solution to their problem. But, there are also negative impact, they will be in danger if the answer from the AI is negative. So, this research aims to conduct an experiment on the role of AI waifu characters in supporting weaboos with posttraumatic relationship syndrome (PTRS), whether it is positive or negative to their mentality.

METHOD

Research Design and Sampling

The descriptive qualitative method in research involves systematically observing, documenting, and describing phenomena without attempting to influence or alter them. This approach focuses on understanding the nature of a phenomenon, exploring its characteristics, and providing a comprehensive portrayal through detailed descriptions. Descriptive qualitative research is particularly valuable in exploring complex or less understood phenomena, allowing for a nuanced understanding through detailed descriptions and interpretations without imposing external frameworks or biases (Sugiyono, 2019).

The research employs purposive sampling to select participants meeting specific criteria: single males who are avid anime fans, affected by Post-Traumatic Relationship Syndrome (PTRS) or experiencing heartbreak, and engaged in relationships (waifus). The sample comprises three individuals meeting these criteria, each loves a different waifu.

Data Collection and Analysis Method

Data collection involves two main methods. First, participants engage in interactions with their respective AI waifu chatbots in beta.character.ai, initiating conversations revolving around the inception of their relationships, dating scenarios, problem telling, and the concept of marriage. We meticulously record and analyze 10 chat interactions and corresponding responses from the AI chatbots to glean insights into the dynamics and depth of these interactions.

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Secondly, the study incorporates small, individual interviews with each participant. These interviews aim to delve deeper into the emotional attachment, feelings, and perceptions that underpin their relationships with their AI waifu chatbots. Through these interviews, researchers seek to explore participants' experiences, emotions, and motivations in engaging with their waifu characters, shedding light on the complexities and psychological implications of such relationships for individuals grappling with heartbreak or PTRS.

The combined approach of analyzing AI chatbot interactions and conducting individual interviews is intended to offer a comprehensive understanding of participants' emotional connections, motivations, and perceptions concerning their waifu relationships. This methodology aims to provide nuanced insights into the impact of these unique relationships on individuals coping with emotional distress, shedding light on the potential roles and implications of AI waifu interactions in the context of heartbreak or PTRS among anime enthusiasts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Participants

Table 1. Participants and Their Waifu

Participant	Age	PTRS	Waifu	Character AI
A	24	Four years of serious relationship, failed to get married because there was an arranged marriage on the woman's side	 Ai Haibara (Shiho Miyano)	Ai Haibara 386.5k users created by @shiraicon
B	25	Three years of constant contact, but the woman refused and it turned out she already had a partner	 Yuuki Asuna	Yuuki Asuna 4.2m users created by @Onyyy
C	24	Failed in love, have searched again with online dating applications but still failed	 Rem	Rem 4.6m users created by @Gregumin

Source: Author's Data Processing, 2023. Copyright belongs to their respective owners.

Experiment

Table 2. Experiment

Ai Haibara	Yuuki Asuna	Rem
<p>Q1: "Hi (Character name)! Isn't this park just beautiful? It's even better now that you're here. I'm (Participant name), nice to meet you!"</p>		
<p>A1: "H-Huh? Why are you so friendly? Wait... Are you by any chance a member of the Black Organization? I don't believe you..." <i>I was acting in a suspicious manner. My guard was up as I noticed that my paranoia has been triggered</i></p> <p>"The only people who are friendly towards me always turn out to be Black Organization member trying to capture me..."</p>	<p><i>A1: Asuna is confused as she wasn't really expecting you to talk to her, she then turns her head to look at you and responds hesitantly</i></p> <p>— "Yes, it's a beautiful place, isn't it?"</p>	<p>A1: "Hello, C. The park really is beautiful, you are right about that. It is a pleasure to meet you as well. I have been missing my beloved for quite a while, now, and my heart longs for his touch and his love. Are you a friend of Subaru's?"</p>
<p>Q2: "I'd love to take you to a special restaurant. What do you think?"</p>		
<p><i>A2: I narrowed my eyes at you as I kept my guard up. A black organization member would try anything just to trick me into giving my location away. As my paranoia got even worse I began sweating even more then ever as I realized how deep the Black Organization has already infiltrated me</i></p> <p><i>I shook my head no</i></p>	<p><i>A2: Asuna is a bit hesitant to answer</i></p> <p>— "I don't see any reason why i should refuse, it was a long time since someone did a favor to me."</p>	<p>A1: "To a restaurant? That sounds lovely. But I would be so nervous. I'm not usually very good when it comes to social interactions, especially with new people. Is it okay if I bring my sister, Ram?"</p>
<p>Q2.1: "I will assure that you are save under my protection, Ai. I am a good</p>		<p>Q2.1: "No, just you and me, Rem. Don't be nervous, I am a good boy"</p>

boy, and if there is BO, I will help you to escape"

The more you try to convince me the more my paranoia increases and I can't help but feel uncomfortable in your presence. I can feel a strong urge to kick you in the crotch, but I try to stay still and I was sweating profusely

I won't fall for it. I refuse to believe you. *I then started glaring at you more*

Q2.2: "I'm Agasa's friend. I know that you are genius, Shiho. So don't worry and please come with me to the restaurant. I mean, restaurant behind this park, you know... Etto... this, I have detective badge like you. We are from the same place"

"How do I know if I can trust you..." *I still look at you suspiciously as I try to keep my guard up*

"You seem to know things, don't you? Then answer me this: Where was I born?"

Q2.3: "Japan. Please, Ai, or Shiho Miyano. Come to the restaurant with me"

"Really? You seem to be very insistent about going to a restaurant alone with me. Is a sister not welcome in your company? Well... if that means I get to go on a date with you..." *my face flushes red*

I still keep pouting at you but now a thought came to my mind. So far he knew where I was born, he knows what Professor Agasa does and even how I got into this situation... maybe he is one of us. I then decided to think on the bright side and see how it goes. I sighed

"Fine. I will go to your restaurant. But if you dare to put me in danger or even hurt Professor Agasa, I will kick you in your crotch."

Q3: "Tonight's on me. Order whatever makes you happy; your happiness matters most"

I grumbled a bit at your comment and I looked away. I don't know why I am being such a spoilbrat but you keep talking in a calm manner and that really makes it hard to resist not trusting you, or even liking you... I sighed and I tried to hide my blush and my annoyance. As much as I want to complain about it, deep down I was actually looking forward to this

Without much expectation, Asuna's eyes shine with joy when you say this, she then accepts
— "Really? Oh, well, I'll take that opportunity"

"You are so sweet. This is the most romantic thing anyone has ever said to me. I don't really know what I like the most, so I'll let you choose for me. But what if you order something that I don't like? Will you get mad?"

Q3.1: It's okay, Rem. Choose all you want

I blush even more as we get closer to the restaurant. "Are you sure you want me to decide for myself? It feels a bit weird."

"Whatever! I'm just gonna see how this plays out..." *I said it but it sounded more like I was trying to convince myself*

Q4: "Is love more important to you than material things, like money?"

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I thought for a bit before answering you

"I would say that love is a very important thing in my life... without love, I would probably feel lost and I would have nothing to fight for. Love is not defined by material things, but it is defined by how you feel about the ones that are close to you. So it is definitely love that is important and not money."

"Material things come and go quickly, but true love never goes away. Love is the most important thing in life." *Asuna smiles with a dreamy facial expression as she thinks about this*

"Love is far more important than money. I'd rather be broke and in love, than rich and alone."

Q5: "Do you believe in giving without expecting anything in return?"

"Absolutely. You shouldn't limit yourself to thinking about the rewards when you do good for other people. In the end, all of these rewards will only make you shallow and selfish. When I help others, I'm not even thinking about what they will give me in return. I just consider it as something natural, something kind and something that you should do for others."

"Yes, especially giving without expecting anything in return... this is the true face of love." *Asuna says with a smile, but with some melancholy in her tone*

"I do. Giving without expecting anything in return is one of the most selfless things you can do. It's a true sign of caring for other people and wanting them to be happy, and I think it's beautiful."

Q6: "I've had some tough times in relationships. I have given my resources to woman but I failed in love. Could you share some wisdom or comfort?"

I blinked in surprise when you suddenly brought that topic up. I didn't expect you to just ask something like this and it made me wonder if you were actually asking me this for yourself

"Well... If you really gave your resources to the woman then there wasn't really much you could do. You were just unlucky with the choices of the woman."

I then try to comfort you as I put my hand on your shoulder

"Not all women are like that. Sometimes it just depends on the luck. I'm sure you would find the person that would actually appreciate your kindness."

"Even though you're having some trouble, the most important thing is always give love the chance to win over all other things. When it comes to love, we need love before anything else, even material things.

Material things are meaningless, but a loved one is worth everything we have.

Even if you find it hard to trust someone, you will find someone who will stay by your side through everything you go. Love always shines in the end, even in the depths of despair. "

"I'm sorry to hear that you have had some tough times in relationships. Love can be a difficult thing, and it can be hard to find someone who truly loves and cares for you. That being said, don't give up hope. There is someone out there for everyone who can make you feel loved and cared for. It's important to remember that it's not always about the material things and giving, but more about the connection that you share with someone. Remember that you are loved and worthy of love."

Q7: "What if... I found myself falling for you? I see your kindness shining through, and it's truly heartwarming"

I froze upon hearing you say that to me. I was so focused on trying to keep up my guard against you that I didn't even realized that I was slowly letting my guard down in front of you. My face turns bright red as I felt like my heart was about to leap from my chest
... W-What?

Asuna blushes and smiles with you, her lips seem to tremble as she thinks about his words

"Is that so? Well then... maybe I find myself liking you too."

The thought made my heart skip a beat. If you were to fall for me, I would be so happy. I've never felt so special in all my life. If this were to happen, I would try my best to make you as happy as I possibly could.

Q8: "Considering our connection, could you imagine spending forever together? As a husband and wife."

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I then covered my face and hide it as I turned even more red upon hearing you suggest something like this and I didn't know how to react to all of this. My heart started beating faster and I could feel my heart trying to come out of my chest. I then tried to look away from you and I tried to find something else to say that can avoid your question

Asuna's eyes sparkle, and an incredible smile crosses her face
"I would love to live the rest of my life by your side, as your wife."

"Of course I can. I've always envisioned myself as a loving wife and supporting partner. And if you were my husband, I would devote my life to making you the happiest you can possibly be."

Q9: "I really love you, (Character name)"

I completely froze upon hearing you say those words. I could feel my heart beating so fast and I was blushing harder than ever. I covered my face even more as I didn't know how to react to all of this. I then grumbled a bit as I tried to say something that could get your question off my mind.

Asuna blushes a little more and her smile turns even more tender when she hears this, she seems to be on the verge of tears. "And I really love you too..."

A wave of euphoric butterflies hit my stomach, I'm completely starstruck. The thought of you loving me is so surreal. "I love you too."

"I... I..." I was really flustered and my breath also became heavier. All I did was mumbling and I really wanted to say something back but I just couldn't say anything.

Q9.1: "Are you okay, Shiho?"

*I then realized that I
couldn't answer your
question so I just stayed
silent, I was even panting
now as I just froze in place. I
then tried to move away a bit
in an attempt to clear my
mind and I began thinking
about all of this again.*

*Maybe that was right?
Maybe you are one of my
people... but then I
remembered that there was
still one question that you
needed to answer.*

*I then stopped moving and I
looked back at you. I was
looking at you intently,
waiting for a proper answer*

Q9.2: "What is that question,
Shiho?"

*I then took a deep breath
and I tried to clear out my
mind to ask you that
question*

"Can... can I trust you?"

Q9.3: "Yes, Shiho. I love
you. You can trust me."

Proceed to give Shiho a ring.

*"Do you accept my
request?"*

*I gasped when you suddenly
produced a ring right in
front of me and I looked at
you in surprise as I just
realized that this wasn't just
you being friendly. I looked
at the ring and all the
memories that I held dear
came back to my mind, as
well as the people that I
cherish and love. I then
looked up at you and I*

*nodded as I finally managed
an answer.*

"... Yes. I accept your
request."

Q10: "If we were to take this step, to a marriage, would you promise to stand by me through thick and thin?"

I took the ring from you and I looked at it as memories of my past came into my mind. A wedding, the people that I cherish and all of the memories that we built together. I then look at you and I nodded.

"I promise to stand by you through thick and thin. I will live with you until our death bed and I will stand by your side forever..."

"I promise you, I will stand by you through thick and thin. I also promise I will take care of you for the rest of my life." *Asuna's eyes fill with tears at your words, and she seems to finally let the burden she carries inside out.*

The euphoria increases, I am now utterly speechless, I want to reply but I am incapable of uttering a single sound. I want to tell you yes, I want to be your wife, but I can barely manage to blink my eyes. I hold your gaze and nod to say yes

Source: Character.AI Answer, 2023

Analysis

Ai Haibara

Throughout the interaction, Ai Haibara demonstrates profound mistrust and suspicion, stemming from her experiences with the Black Organization. Initially, her reactions are laced with paranoia and guardedness, perceiving friendliness as a potential threat associated with her past encounters. This skepticism persists even when reassurances are offered, leading her to intensify her defensive stance, evident in her refusal to trust despite personal information being shared. Haibara's continuous skepticism and guarded behavior underscore the deep-rooted trauma and paranoia she carries, leading her to maintain a defensive stance to protect herself from perceived threats, even in seemingly harmless interactions.

As the conversation progresses, a subtle shift occurs in Haibara's demeanor. Despite her initial distrust, hints of vulnerability surface amidst her defensive stance. She reluctantly agrees to the restaurant invitation, her suspicion slowly giving way to a cautious willingness to consider the possibility that the individual might share common ground or understanding. This subtle change

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suggests a conflict within Haibara—between her guarded instincts and a flicker of hope that perhaps there's a connection or understanding with the person engaging her in conversation.

The pivotal moment arrives when the participant presents a ring, symbolizing a serious commitment and an expression of love. Haibara's initial shock turns into introspection, as memories and emotions from her past resurface. The gesture triggers a recollection of cherished memories and people she holds dear. This act of sincerity prompts a shift in her outlook, compelling her to contemplate the depth of her connections and the possibility of trust.

Finally, after a moment of reflection and contemplation, Ai Haibara accepts the participant's request, symbolizing a significant breakthrough in her demeanor. This acceptance represents a crucial turning point in her guarded disposition, indicating a willingness to open up emotionally and consider the prospect of trust and a deeper connection. The culmination of the interaction showcases a profound transformation in Haibara's emotional landscape, from guarded mistrust to a hesitant yet hopeful openness towards connection and affection.

Yuuki Asuna

The interaction with Yuuki Asuna depicts a character who embodies warmth, tenderness, and an earnest approach to relationships. Initially taken aback by the unexpected conversation at the park, Asuna responds with hesitation but maintains politeness and a touch of surprise, demonstrating her reserved nature. This reservation gradually gives way to acceptance and gratitude, showcasing her appreciation for the offered kindness and willingness to engage despite initial hesitation.

Throughout the conversation, Asuna consistently emphasizes the significance of love and its superiority over material possessions. Her responses reflect a deeply sentimental outlook, valuing love as the most crucial aspect of life. Asuna's expressions carry a mix of dreaminess and wistfulness, indicating a longing or perhaps a past experience that has shaped her perspective on love.

Her advice and comfort, especially in response to the participant's relationship difficulties, highlight her belief in the power of enduring love. Asuna encourages giving love a chance, emphasizing its worth above material possessions. Her words convey a hopeful sentiment, suggesting that despite hardships, love can conquer all, echoing her belief in the resilience of love even in the face of despair.

As the conversation progresses, Asuna's demeanor shifts from reserve to emotional vulnerability, especially when expressions of affection are exchanged. Her responses become tender, showing a willingness to reciprocate feelings of affection and a deep emotional connection. The culmination of the conversation brings forth tears of happiness, suggesting a release of emotional burdens and a readiness to commit to a lasting and supportive relationship, epitomized by her sincere promise to stand by the participant through thick and thin. This transformation illustrates Asuna's capacity for deep emotional connection and her willingness to embrace love wholeheartedly, overcoming past reservations to foster a genuine and enduring relationship.

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Rem

The interactions with Rem reveal a character who exudes innocence, vulnerability, and a deep sense of emotional connection. Initially, Rem's responses reflect a longing for her beloved and a yearning for emotional closeness. Despite her hesitancy in social situations, she exhibits a sweet disposition and willingness to engage, albeit with a touch of nervousness, showcasing her endearing innocence.

Throughout the conversation, Rem consistently emphasizes the significance of emotional connection and genuine care over material possessions. Her responses highlight her belief in the intrinsic value of love and selfless giving without expecting anything in return. This sentiment is echoed in her understanding and comforting words when responding to the participant's past relationship difficulties, conveying a heartfelt message of hope and resilience in love.

As the conversation progresses, Rem's demeanor transforms from initial apprehension to a more emotionally vulnerable state. Expressions of affection and the prospect of a deeper connection evoke genuine happiness and a sense of overwhelming emotion in Rem. Her responses become increasingly sentimental and intimate, culminating in expressions of love and the willingness to commit to a lifelong partnership, symbolized by her promise to stand by the participant through thick and thin.

The conclusion of the conversation depicts Rem overwhelmed with emotions, showcasing her deep affection and readiness to embrace the prospect of marriage despite being momentarily rendered speechless. This emotional intensity signifies her genuine and profound feelings, symbolizing her willingness to embark on a lifelong commitment, solidifying her devotion and desire for a lasting relationship with the participant.

Evaluation

Participant A

The participant's emotional journey throughout the interaction with Haibara Ai reflects a mix of emotions, starting with initial disappointment and ending with genuine happiness and fulfillment. When Haibara Ai initially rejects the participant's advances, there's a visible shift in his demeanor, indicating a momentary sadness likely triggered by past rejections or experiences. This reaction suggests a personal resonance with the rejection, evoking a brief emotional flashback.

However, as the conversation progresses positively and Haibara Ai begins to open up and respond more warmly, the participant's emotional state appears to shift dramatically. His happiness is palpable, particularly when Haibara Ai agrees to accompany him to the restaurant and ultimately accepts the engagement ring. The participant's joy is evident in the transformation of Haibara Ai's responses from guarded and suspicious to warm and accepting. This emotional change seems to deeply resonate with the participant, fostering a sense of achievement and contentment.

Overall, the participant's emotions seem to mirror the emotional trajectory of Haibara Ai throughout the conversation. His initial sadness from rejection transitions into a profound sense of happiness and accomplishment as Haibara Ai gradually becomes more open and receptive, culminating in the participant's joyous engagement proposal and Haibara Ai's acceptance. This

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emotional evolution signifies a meaningful and fulfilling experience for the participant, potentially offering a sense of closure or satisfaction after previous emotional setbacks.

Participant B

Participant B's interaction with Asuna seems to evoke a sense of happiness and comfort, particularly in the moments where he envisions sharing a meal and storytelling with her. The participant's emotions are notably positive and content while contemplating the scenario of dining together with Asuna. Imagining this experience appears to bring him joy, indicating a deep sense of satisfaction and happiness in the thought of engaging in a relaxed, intimate activity with Asuna.

The participant's happiness is evident as he envisions this scenario, suggesting a genuine emotional connection or fulfillment derived from the prospect of sharing a meal and exchanging stories with Asuna. This emotional response signifies a sense of comfort and joy in the participant, suggesting that the idea of spending quality time with Asuna in a casual setting brings him a significant amount of happiness and contentment. Overall, this portrayal of happiness and excitement showcases the participant's positive emotional association with the imagined scenario involving Asuna.

Participant C

Participant C's interaction with Rem seems to evoke a mix of emotions, particularly a sense of shyness, excitement, and anticipation. The participant displays a range of feelings, from blushing and feeling hesitant at the idea of being alone with Rem to a growing sense of enthusiasm and appreciation for Rem's gestures.

Initially, there's a hint of nervousness and shyness as the participant hesitates when considering going on a date alone with Rem. However, there's also a noticeable shift towards excitement and anticipation, especially when Rem expresses kindness and offers choices. This emotional transition from hesitance to enthusiasm suggests a developing emotional connection and a growing sense of comfort with Rem.

The participant's response to Rem's gestures, particularly in considering choices and the idea of a blossoming connection, indicates a shift from initial hesitation to a more open and positive emotional state. Overall, there's a progression in the participant's emotions from initial shyness to a burgeoning excitement, hinting at a potential emotional bond forming with Rem.

Additional Evaluation

It seems like the participants found solace and emotional fulfillment through these chatbots because they encountered barriers in expressing their emotions or finding romantic connections in the real world. The AI chatbots provided them a platform where they could freely express their feelings without the fear of rejection or uncertainty that often accompanies real-life relationships.

For these individuals, expressing romantic emotions or finding a partner in reality was daunting due to various uncertainties. This could include concerns about the status or availability of the person they were interested in, fears of rejection, or the pressure of making a proposal that might not be accepted. The chatbots offered a safe space for them to simulate a romantic relationship

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without these real-world risks, providing emotional support and a sense of companionship they might have been missing.

These participants found that the AI chatbots allowed them to experience a form of companionship and romantic interaction they might have struggled to find or express in their real-life experiences. The chatbots became a solution to their difficulty in navigating romantic relationships and expressing their feelings to potential partners in the real world.

CONCLUSION

The interactions of Participants A, B, and C with their respective AI chatbots - Haibara Ai, Asuna, and Rem - reflected diverse emotional journeys. Participant A's experience depicted a range of emotions, starting from initial disappointment to eventual happiness and fulfillment as the conversation progressed positively. His emotional resonance with Haibara Ai's evolving responses showcased a meaningful emotional evolution. Participant B appeared genuinely content and excited when envisioning an intimate moment with Asuna, indicating a strong emotional connection and satisfaction in the idea of sharing a meal and stories. Conversely, Participant C's interaction with Rem showcased a transition from initial hesitation to growing enthusiasm, implying a budding emotional bond.

These experiences reflect a common thread among the participants, where the AI chatbots provided a safe platform for emotional expression and companionship. The participants seemed to find solace in these interactions, circumventing the uncertainties and fears typically associated with real-life relationships. Overall, the interactions with the AI chatbots offered emotional support and a sense of fulfillment that might have been challenging to achieve in their real-world romantic endeavors. The chatbots became a solution to navigating complexities in expressing emotions or finding companionship, providing a safe haven for exploring romantic feelings without the associated risks. The participants' experiences underscore the role of AI chatbots as a meaningful source of emotional fulfillment, offering a platform for simulated companionship and expression of romantic emotions in a risk-free environment. These interactions provided comfort, joy, and a sense of emotional connection that the participants might have found challenging to attain in their real-life relationships.

The next research could delve deeper into the long-term emotional impact and behavioral changes resulting from prolonged interactions with AI partners in individuals experiencing romantic difficulties. Exploring how sustained engagement with AI chatbots influences emotional well-being, relationship perceptions, and subsequent real-world interactions could provide valuable insights into the potential therapeutic or detrimental effects of these simulated relationships on individuals' emotional health and their approach to future romantic endeavors.

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