

An Approach of AI as a Practice of Escapism

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Received: August 4, 2025 / Revised: December 26, 2025 / Accepted: January 15, 2026

Abstract—This paper examines the phenomenon of AI-mediated escapism by clarifying its scope, risks, and implications for design. The primary objective is to conceptualize how artificial intelligence reshapes traditional forms of escapism through personalization, immersive interaction, and adaptive feedback. Using a conceptual synthesis approach, this work integrates insights from human-computer interaction, psychology, and media studies. The analysis highlights three key findings: 1) AI intensifies escapism by enhancing interactivity, empathy simulation, and agency; 2) the spectrum of AI-mediated escapism ranges from therapeutic and time-bound uses to problematic patterns associated with misinformation, avoidance, and excessive immersion; and 3) ethical design principles—such as transparency, time-awareness, and emotional boundary safeguards—are essential to mitigate risks. The implications extend to HCI, UX design, and policy, suggesting that responsible frameworks can balance the benefits of AI-driven escapism with its potential harms. Limitations include the conceptual and narrative scope of this review, which does not provide empirical validation. Future research should apply empirical methods to test and refine the proposed framework. Overall, this study provides a structured understanding of AI-mediated escapism and offers design guidelines for creating safer, more ethical interactive systems.

Index Terms —Artificial Intelligence (AI), Escapism, Virtual Reality (VR), Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), AI Ethics, Digital Addiction, Chatbots, Mental Health, Technological Impact

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming how people interact with information, entertainment, and social platforms. Beyond being a technical advancement, AI represents a cultural shift that redefines everyday practices in communication, learning, and leisure. Its applications span from personalized media feeds and adaptive game mechanics to emotionally responsive virtual assistants.

These developments can expand opportunities for personalization, creativity, and new forms of human-machine interaction. Yet, alongside these possibilities, AI also carries significant risks when used to shape perceptions, behaviors, and decision-making. In recent years, AI has been misused to generate fake news, manipulate information flows, and even interfere with democratic processes such as elections [1], [2]. Such cases illustrate the darker side of AI's capacity to mediate human experience, raising questions not only about individual vulnerability but also about collective trust and societal resilience.

This duality directly connects to the concept of escapism. On one hand, AI-powered systems provide safe spaces, immersive narratives, and therapeutic interventions that allow users to temporarily disengage from stress, hardship, or dissatisfaction in the real world. Escapism in these contexts may serve restorative and adaptive purposes, offering cognitive relief and emotional regulation. On the other hand, when such systems are misused or overrelied upon, AI-mediated escapism can blur the boundaries between reality and simulation, erode trust in information sources, and entrench users in harmful cycles of avoidance or misinformation. In these cases, what begins as a coping mechanism risks becoming maladaptive, with consequences for both individual well-being and the wider information ecosystem [1], [2].

Moreover, the rise of AI introduces ethical and societal concerns that extend beyond personal escapist behavior. Scholars and policymakers warn that rapid automation may significantly alter the labor market, with machines increasingly replacing human workers in domains such as customer service, data processing, and logistics [3], [4]. While some argue that AI will create new categories of work and augment human capabilities, others caution that large-scale displacement could lead to economic insecurity and social unrest. These uncertainties further reinforce the appeal of escapism, as individuals seek distraction or refuge from anxieties about technological disruption, inequality, or loss of agency. At the same time, they underscore the urgency of responsible AI development and deployment, ensuring that

technologies are designed with transparency, fairness, and safeguards against misuse.

This article adopts a conceptual review with a design framework. To ensure transparency and rigor, relevant literature was systematically identified through Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The search was conducted using combinations of the keywords “*AI escapism*,” “*ethical AI design*,” “*presence*,” “*agency*,” “*affect*,” and “*dependence*,” covering the publication years 2015-2024. Peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings were included, while non-academic sources such as news articles, blogs, and opinion pieces were excluded. The final selection focused on studies that explicitly addressed AI-mediated experiences, escapism motives, or ethical and mental health implications, thereby providing the conceptual foundation for the proposed design framework.

Against this backdrop, this paper sets out to explore the spectrum of AI-mediated escapism, identify its associated risks, and propose ethical design principles to guide responsible innovation. The purpose of presenting this research is to provide a structured conceptual framework that clarifies how AI reshapes escapist practices, while highlighting unique risks and opportunities that have not been systematically addressed in prior literature. Unlike earlier studies that examine escapism primarily in digital media or gaming contexts, this article specifically focuses on AI-driven affordances such as interactivity, personalization, and empathy simulation. By anchoring escapism in established theoretical lenses and mapping how AI-specific features alter underlying mechanisms, the paper offers distinct insights into the emerging field of AI-mediated experiences and design-oriented contributions relevant to the HCI, UX, and policy communities.

II. THEORY INTEGRATION: ESCAPISM AND AI AFFORDANCES

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has already begun to alter the ways people live and work, introducing structural transformations that touch nearly every sector. Tasks once performed exclusively by humans—such as customer service, data entry, and even specialized medical procedures—are increasingly automated [3]. This shift has prompted debates: some argue that AI will inevitably lead to widespread unemployment as machines outperform human workers in speed and efficiency, while others believe that these disruptions will also generate new roles, especially in system design, oversight, and governance [4]. Such tensions reflect the uncertainty of AI’s impact and provide an important backdrop for understanding how individuals may increasingly turn to escapism as a coping mechanism.

At the same time, broader analyses emphasize that AI represents not merely a technological upgrade but a cultural shift. Reports suggest that AI adoption in organizations increased by 270% between 2018 and 2020 (McKinsey), while over half of surveyed companies reported integrating AI into operations or services (Deloitte). Predictions by the World Economic Forum estimate that AI could add as much as \$13 trillion to global GDP by 2030. Pew Research surveys indicate that 72% of Americans anticipate AI will perform many human tasks in the near future, with 77% predicting a mostly positive societal impact [5]. These figures illustrate both the scale of adoption and the mixed perceptions of its consequences. Against this backdrop, escapism emerges as a psychological mechanism for navigating anxieties surrounding technological change, labor displacement, and social reorganization.

Yet, AI’s influence is not confined to productivity. The technology has also been misused for disinformation and manipulation. Scholars document its application in generating fake news, spreading misinformation, and interfering in elections [6]. Such developments heighten collective anxieties and reinforce the appeal of escapist practices, as individuals seek refuge in alternate realities or mediated experiences that feel more manageable than a fragmented and manipulated information environment.

Escapism itself has long been theorized as “the tendency to seek distraction and relief from reality or routine through absorption in entertainment or fantasy” [7]. Within the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) framework, media consumption fulfills specific needs—entertainment, relaxation, or social connection. AI amplifies these gratifications through personalization: adaptive recommendations on streaming platforms, tailored narratives in gaming, and curated social feeds. These affordances increase immediate satisfaction but also risk narrowing exposure and reinforcing avoidance loops. For instance, individuals may rely on AI-powered chatbots for companionship, thereby satisfying social needs in ways that bypass face-to-face interaction—an example resonating with Compensatory Internet Use Theory (CIUT), which highlights the role of media in offsetting personal or social deficits [8], [9].

Self-Determination Theory and the notion of flow provide another useful lens. Escapism can fulfill psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, with flow states offering deep immersion and a sense of reward. AI systems accelerate this by dynamically adjusting game difficulty levels, personalizing content in real time, and enabling virtual environments that feel increasingly seamless. Jane McGonigal’s claim that “Reality is broken. Game designers can fix it”

underscores the possibility that AI-mediated environments may offer meaningful, structured alternatives to real-world dissatisfaction. However, when flow states are constantly optimized by adaptive AI, disengagement becomes more difficult, and escapism risks shifting from healthy stress relief to compulsive immersion [9]-[11].

Problematic Use and Addiction frameworks extend this analysis by warning of maladaptive reliance. Traditionally, escapism linked to substance use—alcohol or drugs—provided temporary relief but carried high risks of dependence [8], [12], [13]. In contemporary digital contexts, AI introduces new pathways: affective computing and emotionally responsive interfaces simulate empathy, companionship, and care. Such features can reinforce compensatory use and, in some cases, foster emotional over-dependence. For example, emotionally intelligent chatbots may meet users' needs for support, but repeated reliance could deepen avoidance of real-world problem-solving. Research further indicates that while fantasy-based media consumption, such as gaming or binge-watching, may temporarily elevate mood, chronic engagement is correlated with higher anxiety, depression, and reduced life satisfaction [14]-[16].

Escapist behaviors are diverse and context-dependent. Some individuals prefer books, films, or television to detach from reality, while others gravitate toward interactive games or immersive VR experiences [9]. In moderation, such behaviors can provide mental relief and serve as healthy coping mechanisms. However, excessive reliance undermines resilience and can exacerbate the very issues people seek to escape. For example, habitual reliance on immersive fantasy environments parallels earlier findings in addiction studies, where avoidance-oriented coping evolves into dependence [10], [11], [17], [18].

When viewed through these frameworks collectively, it becomes clear that AI does not introduce wholly new mechanisms of escapism but rather shifts and amplifies existing ones. U&G must now account for algorithmically driven personalization that shapes not just media selection but also perception of needs. CIUT requires extension to incorporate affective computing and empathetic simulations that alter compensatory dynamics. Flow theory must recognize adaptive immersion as both a strength and a risk factor in sustaining engagement. Addiction frameworks must be updated to reflect how algorithmic reinforcement, affective loops, and constant availability increase the potential for dependency. The integration of these theories demonstrates that AI-mediated escapism sits at the intersection of opportunity and risk. On one hand, personalization, interactivity, and affective computing

may provide valuable tools for stress relief, social connection, and psychological well-being. On the other hand, these same affordances heighten the risks of maladaptive use, disconnection from real-world responsibilities, and broader societal harms, as illustrated by AI-driven misinformation [6]. Understanding these dynamics is essential not only for scholarly analysis but also for informing ethical design principles. Anchoring escapism within established frameworks while mapping AI's unique affordances offers a conceptual foundation for balancing benefits and risks [19].

III. IMPACT ON ESCAPISM WITH TECHNOLOGY

Escapism used to be mostly passive—reading a book, watching TV, or daydreaming. In the digital era, with Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and other interactive media, escapism has become more interactive, more personalized, and easier to access. People no longer only consume fixed stories; they also co-create experiences with systems that learn from their preferences and emotional states in real time [3], [20]. This shift brings real benefits for short breaks and mood regulation, but it also introduces new risks when use becomes prolonged or heavily tailored to the individual [14], [16].

At a societal level, the same technologies that make experiences engaging can also undermine trust. AI has been used to generate fake news, shape information flows, and even interfere with elections—reminders that the environments people “escape into” can also carry misleading or manipulative content [2]. These realities call for balanced, responsible design and informed use.

AI-Escapism Spectrum of Interaction			
Escapism Level	AI Technology	Description	Risk Level
Light	AI-generated music, chatbot small talk	Casual relief	Low
Moderate	VR meditation, AI storytelling	Emotional immersion	Moderate
Deep	Virtual AI companions, full-day VR	Life avoidance	High

Fig. 1. AI-Escapism Spectrum of Interaction—from light, restorative use to deep immersion. Risk rises as personalization, interactivity, and affective features combine and sessions become longer or boundary-less [3], [14], [18], [20], [21]

Fig. 1 Idea: The spectrum shows how AI/VR can support different depths of escapism—from light, time-bounded relief to deep immersion that may displace real-world roles. Risk tends to rise when systems combine personalization, real-time interactivity, and emotional responsiveness, especially

during long, unbounded sessions or under stress [7]-[10], [11]-[15].

- Light

Examples: AI-generated music, chatbot small talk

What it feels like: Short, casual relief; quick reset
Risk level: Low when time-bounded and intentional [17].

- Moderate

Examples: VR meditation, AI-guided storytelling, or games

What it feels like: Emotional immersion; stronger engagement

Risk level: Moderate—long sessions can displace sleep, study, work, or in-person contact [11]-[13], [18]

- Deep

Examples: Virtual AI companions, full-day VR routines

What it feels like: Ongoing life avoidance; hard to disengage

Risk level: High, especially when personalization + interactivity + affective feedback all converge [11]-[15]

TABLE I
A COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND AI-BASED ESCAPISM, SHOWING INCREASING LEVELS OF INTERACTIVITY, EMOTIONAL SIMULATION, AND RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH AI-DRIVEN SYSTEMS

Dimension	Traditional Escapism (e.g., TV, Books)	AI-based Escapism (e.g., Chatbots, VR, Generative AI)
Interactivity	Passive consumption	Real-time interaction and responsive feedback
Personalization	Generic content, same for all users	Tailored content based on user data, preferences, and emotion
Emotional Simulation	Fictional empathy through characters	Simulated empathy via AI (chatbots, avatars, affective computing)
Agency and Control	Limited influence on outcomes	Users can shape narratives, environments, and feedback loops
Risk of Addiction	Moderate tends to be time-bound	High, immersive, and emotionally adaptive environments
Boundary Clarity	Clear separation from reality	Potential for blurred lines between the real world and the virtual self

Table I shows the comparison of shifts in interactivity, personalization, emotional simulation, agency, risk, and boundary clarity. Explain why AI-based escapism can feel both more meaningful and harder to put down.

- Interactivity moves from one-way consumption to continuous two-way feedback. Systems respond to choices, performance, and micro-behaviors (pauses, retries), creating a sense that the environment “notifies” the user and adapts accordingly. This responsiveness strengthens presence and engagement loops, which can lengthen sessions [11]-[15], [17].

- Personalization replaces one-size-fits-all content with tailored sequences keyed to history, preference, and mood. Because the fit is closer, gratifications (relaxation, competence, relatedness) arrive more quickly and reliably, increasing the likelihood of return and session depth [11]-[15], [17].

- Emotional simulation extends empathy from fiction (identifying with characters) to simulated empathy (chatbots, avatars, affective computing). Users can feel attended to in real time, strengthening parasocial bonds that make re-engagement feel rewarding even in the absence of offline interaction [11]-[15], [17].

- Agency shifts from limited control to user-shaped worlds and narratives. The more outcomes feel contingent on user action, the more salient the “one more step” dynamic becomes (finish a quest, resolve a dialogue, perfect a level), which sustains attention [11]-[15], [17].

- Risk of addiction rises when these ingredients combine. Immersive, emotionally adaptive environments make it easy to extend sessions, replace offline activities, and normalize longer dwell time—as the table indicates [11]-[15], [17]. Boundary clarity weakens as realism, presence, and social simulation increase. The virtual self begins to carry emotional weight comparable to that of everyday identity, which can complicate detachment and re-entry into offline roles [11]-[15], [17].

These changes do not imply that AI-based escapism is inherently harmful; rather, they clarify why it can feel richer—and why self-regulation may be more important than before [11]-[15], [17].

What the data says

There is no single metric for “positive escapism,” but current indicators show a large base of participation alongside non-trivial risk. The Entertainment Software Association reports that 65% of American adults play video games, and the average gamer is 35 years old; 73% of Americans say games can be a positive way to relax and escape (Pew). At the same time, the World Health.

The Organization estimates 3.6% of the global population meets the criteria for gaming disorder. Read together, these figures capture both the scale and the trade-offs of digital escapism: Widespread use and perceived benefit on the one hand, diagnosable overuse among a subset on the other [17].

- How AI changes the picture

AI-powered applications—such as emotionally responsive chatbots, narrative assistants, and algorithmic content generators—enable adaptive, two-way experiences in which the system learns and adjusts. Users can interact with AI avatars that simulate empathy or enter worlds that evolve in response to their choices and emotions. The same properties that make these experiences soothing (fit, feedback, felt understanding) can also increase reliance when gratifications are constantly optimized [3].

VR intensifies these dynamics. Head-mounted displays deliver high presence and embodied interaction, combining story, agency, and simulation. In therapeutic contexts, clinicians use controlled simulations and guided exposure to help with anxiety, PTSD, or isolation, showing that immersion can be directed toward skill building and symptom relief [18]. Still, the very immersion that makes VR effective can also raise the cost of disengagement for some users, aligning with patterns seen in problematic use research [11]-[13].

Another possibility discussed in the literature is that as automation removes repetitive and high-stress tasks, people could gain more time for hobbies, relationships, and service. Work may shift from necessity to self-expression, nudging some escapist activity from avoidance toward a creative outlet [22]. Whether that outcome scales depends on policy, education, and access, which influence whether saved time becomes renewal or simply more screen time [3], [4], [6].

- Benefits and risks

Used with intention, escapism can be healthy. Short, time-bounded sessions help with rest, mood regulation, and resetting attention. Immersive experiences can foster inspiration and practice (e.g., VR rehearsal, guided reflection) when they are purposeful and scaffolded [17], [18].

Overuse, especially when driven by hyperpersonalization, instant feedback, and affective cues, can be harmful: displaced sleep and duties, reduced face-to-face contact, and emotional dependence. Mechanistically, reinforcement loops (tailored rewards, “just one more” prompts) and high presence can make sessions hard to end, especially under stress or loneliness [11]-[15], [23].

Practical Balance Involves:

- Clear time boundaries (planned session lengths, scheduled breaks);
- Regular offline check-ins (sleep, meals, movement, in-person contact);
- Mindful content choices (purpose-linked use, avoiding aimless scrolling) [17]-[20].

Designers and platforms also matter. Transparency about personalization and affective features helps set expectations; gentle time prompts support self-regulation; and content-integrity safeguards reduce exposure to manipulative or misleading material—an issue already visible in broader information ecosystems [2]-[6]. These steps keep the benefits of AI-enabled escapism while limiting risks, consistent with the broader call for responsible AI.

IV. DESIGNING ETHICAL ESCAPISM THROUGH AI

As AI technologies evolve into emotionally intelligent companions and immersive virtual environments, embedding ethical safeguards into their design is essential to ensure that escapist uses remain restorative rather than harmful [24]. Ethical principles must move beyond abstract discussion and translate into actionable guidelines for developers, policymakers, and researchers. Building on prior frameworks, five interrelated principles can guide responsible innovation:

Time Awareness and Use Limits. AI applications—particularly those involving VR immersion or emotionally engaging chatbots—should incorporate reminders and session boundaries. Empirical studies show that timed prompts can mitigate digital fatigue and improve self-regulation without substantially reducing user satisfaction [25].

1. Emotional Boundaries: While simulated empathy enhances comfort, over-mimicking reciprocity risks anthropomorphism and excessive attachment. Systems must acknowledge their artificial nature to preserve emotional clarity and prevent dependency [26].

2. Context-aware Content Recommendations: By leveraging behavioral indicators and sentiment analysis, AI can encourage constructive uses of escapism—for instance, recommending reflective or skill-building activities rather than reinforcing avoidance. Research indicates that context-sensitive suggestions support emotional regulation and healthier coping [25].

3. Transparency and User Control: Clear disclosure of system capabilities, data practices, and algorithmic limitations is critical. Providing opt-out choices and customizable settings helps users retain agency over their digital experiences [26].

4. Therapeutic Integration and Referral Pathways: For vulnerable populations, AI platforms should incorporate referral mechanisms, such as links to counseling services or mental-health resources. Evidence from digital interventions suggests that subtle referrals increase help-seeking behavior and reduce risks of crisis escalation [26].

TABLE II
ETHICAL AI–ESCAPISM DESIGN CHECKLIST

Principle	Literature Base	Practical Implementation	Potential Metrics
Time Awareness & Use Limits	Digital nudges, self-regulation studies [23]	Gentle reminders, auto-pause prompts, usage dashboards	Break acceptance rate; average session duration before/after nudges
Emotional Boundaries	Anthropomorphism and addiction frameworks [24]	Explicit disclosure of AI identity; limit simulated reciprocity	% of users recognizing AI as artificial; attachment scale scores
Context-aware Recommendations	Adaptive HCI and emotion-aware systems [25]	Promote constructive content (learning, reflection) instead of avoidant loops	Ratio of constructive vs. avoidant recommendations; mood-change surveys
Transparency & User Control	Responsible AI and algorithmic ethics [26]	Data use disclosures, customizable settings, and opt-out features	% of users accessing transparency panels; customization uptake
Referral Pathways	Digital health and intervention research [26]	Embedded links to helplines, crisis referral prompts, and API-based support integration	Click-through rates to resources; follow-up help-seeking reports

• Explanation of Table II

Table II translates abstract ethical principles into a practical checklist for designing AI-mediated escapism. Each guideline is explicitly grounded in peer-reviewed literature [23]–[26] and paired with clear implementation pathways. For instance, *time awareness* can be operationalized through session dashboards or auto-pause prompts that help users regulate engagement [23]. Similarly, *emotional boundaries* can be preserved by explicitly disclosing AI identity and limiting reciprocal simulations that heighten anthropomorphic attachment [24].

The checklist also incorporates empirical metrics to enable validation. Break acceptance rates, attachment scale scores, or click-through rates to support services provide measurable indicators of whether safeguards are functioning as intended [25], [26]. This evidence-driven design ensures that interventions are not only theoretically justified but also testable in practice.

By consolidating ethical principles into actionable items, the checklist fulfills a dual purpose: 1) a design tool that guides developers in embedding safeguards into interactive systems and 2) a research framework that enables scholars to systematically assess the impact of ethical interventions. This structured approach elevates the rigor and real-world applicability of AI ethics in the domain of digital escapism.

• Ethical Commentary

The application of this checklist highlights a central paradox: the same affordances that make AI appealing—personalization, presence, and empathy simulation—also heighten the risk of dependency. Case studies such as Replika and VRChat exemplify this duality. These systems provide comfort, creativity, and social connection, yet they may foster anthropomorphic attachment and blur the boundaries between virtual and real-world identities [18], [19].

Embedding safeguards such as time limits, transparency disclosures, and referral pathways transforms escapism from a potentially harmful

coping mechanism into a time-bounded, transparent, and therapeutically constructive practice [22]–[26]. In doing so, ethical design not only mitigates risks of psychological entrapment but also strengthens the legitimacy of AI systems in health, education, and entertainment contexts.

Ultimately, by formalizing ethical guidelines into a validated checklist, this study shifts from conceptual critique to practical implementation. The result is a framework that provides actionable strategies for developers, measurable indicators for researchers, and policy-relevant insights for safeguarding user well-being in AI-driven environments.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper conceptualized AI-mediated escapism by integrating perspectives from human–computer interaction, psychology, and media studies. The study sought to clarify how AI reshapes escapist practices, what risks and opportunities arise from this transformation, and which ethical design principles may mitigate harms.

Answers to Research Questions and Contributions. First, the analysis demonstrates that AI reshapes traditional escapism by amplifying interactivity, personalization, and affective simulation. Unlike books or television, AI-driven platforms provide *real-time feedback*, *adaptive narratives*, and *simulated empathy* through chatbots, avatars, and immersive VR, thereby making escapism feel more engaging and harder to disengage from [11]–[15], [17].

Second, the proposed AI–Escapism Spectrum captures both opportunities and risks. At the lighter end, short time-bounded use—such as chatbot small talk or AI-generated music—can provide restorative relief with relatively low risk [17]. At the deeper end, prolonged immersion in adaptive VR environments or with AI companions increases the likelihood of emotional dependency, sleep disruption, or blurred

boundaries between online and offline identity [11]-[15], [18]. This spectrum offers a conceptual tool for mapping where therapeutic, balanced uses may shift into problematic patterns of avoidance or addiction [7], [8].

Third, the paper advances ethical design principles—time awareness, emotional boundary safeguards, transparency, context-aware recommendations, and referral pathways—that can guide developers in embedding safeguards directly into AI-mediated systems [22]-[26]. These principles contribute to the literature by moving beyond descriptive accounts of escapism to a design-oriented framework that explicitly connects risks to actionable mitigation strategies.

- Limitations

This work remains conceptual and narrative in scope. While drawing on diverse theoretical frameworks and case studies (e.g., Replika, VRChat, hikikomori contexts) [18]-[20], it does not provide empirical validation of the proposed spectrum. The evidence base is also skewed toward Western and East Asian contexts; cultural variations in how escapism manifests remain underexplored. Furthermore, the study does not measure outcomes quantitatively, such as the relative impact of time prompts or transparency features on reducing problematic use.

- Future Work

Several avenues can extend this framework.

- Empirical validation of the AI-Escapism Spectrum through surveys, longitudinal studies, and experiments to determine whether risk escalation correlates with combinations of personalization, interactivity, and affective computing.

- Controlled trials to evaluate interventions such as *ethical prompts* (e.g., transparency disclosures) and *time-boundary nudges* (e.g., gentle reminders, auto-pause features), testing their effectiveness across different user populations and use cases.

- Cross-cultural comparisons to assess how social norms, policy frameworks, and demographic factors (e.g., age, socio-economic background) shape the adoption and risks of AI-based escapism.

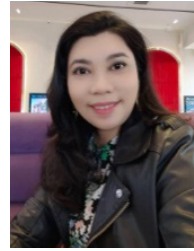
- Longitudinal policy and design research to study how regulatory interventions, platform governance, or educational programs can foster healthier relationships with AI-mediated experiences over time.

In conclusion, this study contributes a structured understanding of AI-mediated escapism by (i) mapping how AI transforms escapist practices, (ii) proposing a conceptual spectrum of risks and opportunities, and (iii) advancing ethical design principles to balance benefits with safeguards. Although limited in empirical breadth, the work lays a foundation for future interdisciplinary research and design practice that ensures AI-powered escapism remains a supportive tool for well-being rather than a source of harm [11]-[20], [22]-[26].

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