

Leisure Style in the Age of Streaming

STONE'S TEAM + IQIYI 2022

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Prelude

In the process of urbanization in China, major cities have continued to expand, becoming magnets for high-caliber talent and flourishing industries. This growth has sparked the emergence of sophisticated service industries. These cities draw in young people from less developed regions, who then contribute to a burgeoning service sector encompassing areas like beauty care, massage, fitness, food delivery, security, and catering.

Services in China are intricately woven into every facet of urban life, offering both sophistication and comprehensiveness. This development, however, comes with the cost of longer working hours and altered lifestyles for those employed in the service sector. To cater to the maximum number of customers, their work schedules often hinge on customer demand, leading to an 'on-call' working environment.

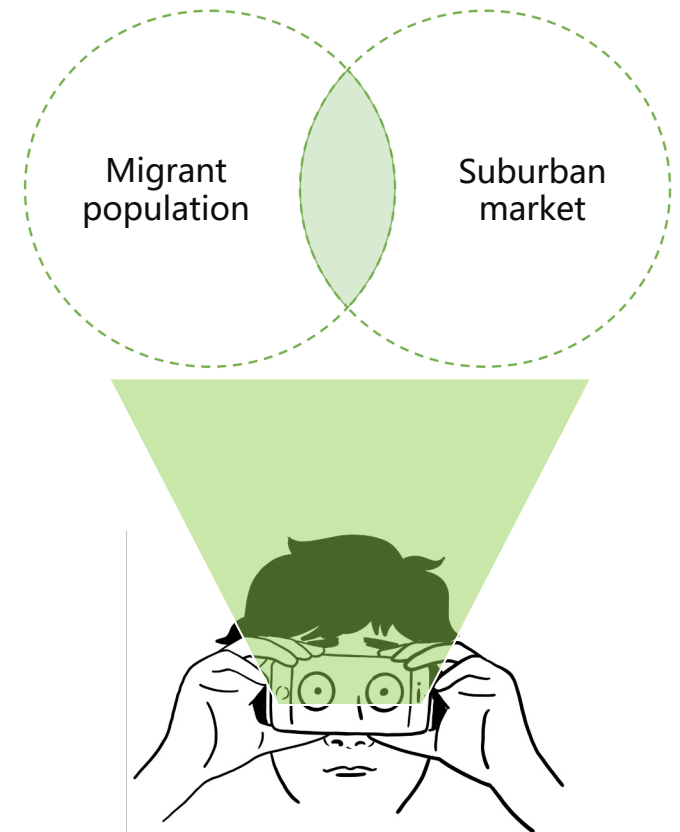
The rise of short-form video and streaming platforms, especially TikTok, in 2021 has spotlighted this segment of the population. Once unnoticed, these service workers gained visibility, highlighting the lives of a mobile and migrant workforce in urban China. This shift highlighted a significant market segment comprising the mobile and migrant worker population in China's major cities.

The “Ask”

iQIYI, a leading provider of online entertainment video services in China, focusing on a broad spectrum of video content, especially in professionally produced drama series and shows, wanted to get more knowledge about this group of mobile and migrant workforce in big cities.

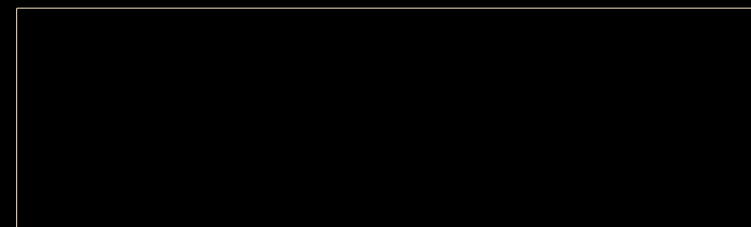
iQIYI:

Now that streaming is prevalent in 2021, what does the leisure life of the young urban transient population look like in the sinking market segment?





This study explores leisure patterns among young migrants in big cities, focusing on how streaming media shapes their leisure activities and examining the underlying reasons and influences.



A blurred, grayscale background image showing a pair of hands, possibly in a medical or scientific setting, with fingers slightly spread. The image is out of focus, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere.

1

Scope of the study

Research Subject



The new generation of migrant workers



- High occupational mobility, often engaged in "mobile" and unstable jobs.
- Migrating to cities post-education, with limited knowledge of agriculture and rural life.
- Seeking a high-quality urban lifestyle, with access to public services, facilities, and opportunities akin to those of city dwellers.
- Aspiring to assimilate fully into urban society.

Research Subject



Research Subject Definition Rules

Rule 1:

Geographical Mobility

- Involves changes between their current place of residence and their place of origin.

Rule 2:

Residence Instability

- Living situations include dormitories, shared rented rooms, or borrowed accommodations.
- No immediate or medium-term plans to purchase a home.

Rule 3:

Job Instability

- Limited clear career progression or upward mobility.
- High job substitutability and seasonal fluctuations in market demand.
- Income instability, often based on an hourly wage system.
- Jobs typically have low entry thresholds and do not require specialized knowledge.
- The work often has a low added value.

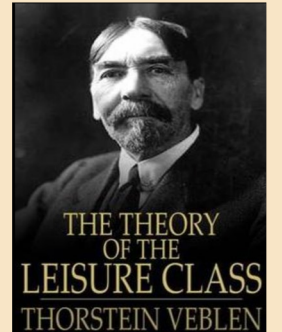
Research Reference

Explorations on the meaning of leisure

“

The term Leisure ... What it connotes is nonproductive consumption of time. Time is **consumed nonproductively** (1) from a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and (2) as an evidence of pecuniary **ability to afford a life of idleness**.
Unproductive consumption of goods is honourable, primarily as a mark of prowess and a perquisite of human dignity; secondarily it becomes substantially honourable to itself, especially the consumption of the more desirable things.

— *Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class*



“

John R. Kelly has defined leisure as **time, activity, experience, action, existential, and meaning**. He also defines recreation as voluntary non-work activity that is organized to achieve personal and social benefits, such as **restoration and social cohesion**

— *Leisure (4th ed.), by John R. (Jack) Kelly*

Research method

In-depth interviews

Detailed conversations exploring participants' typical day of life

Diary research

Participants kept a record of their daily activities, thoughts, or feelings over 2 weeks, providing insights into behaviors and experiences

Desktop research

Collect and analyze existing information from secondary sources like reports, articles, and databases

Observation method

Systematically watch and record behaviors and interactions as they occur naturally in their usual contexts



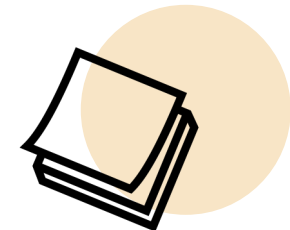
60+ hours
recorded interviews



39 days
Diary Studies



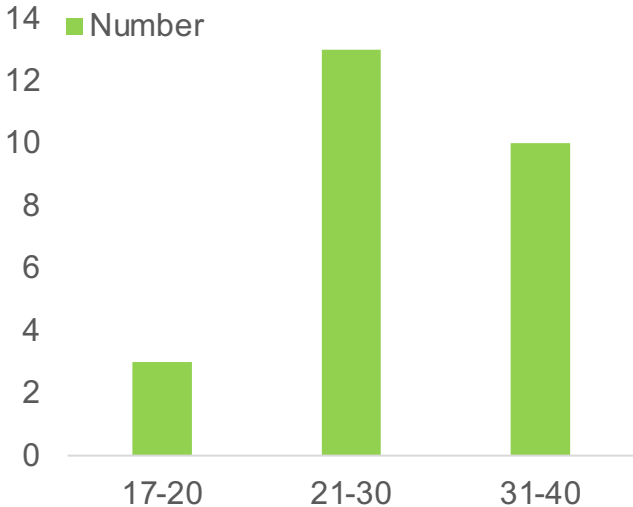
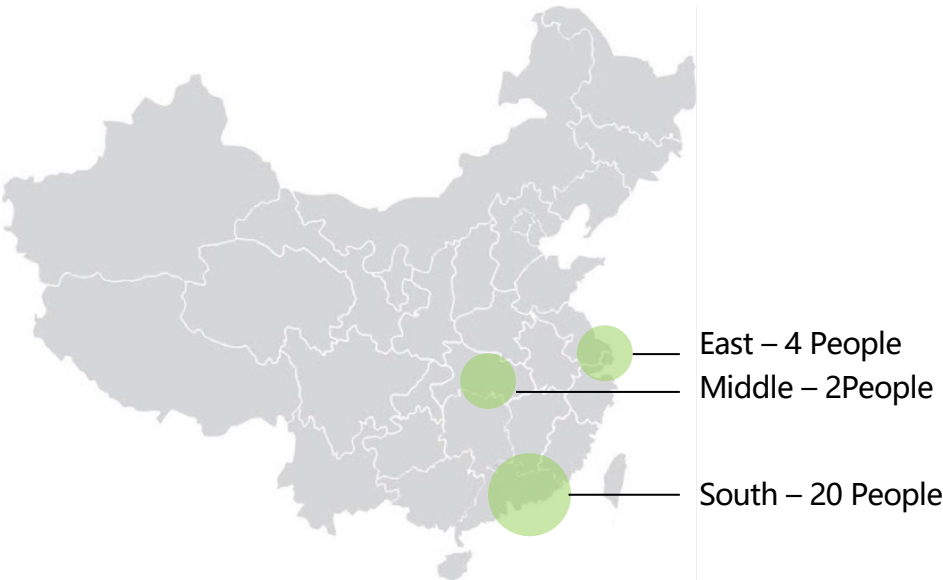
500+
Photos



100+
Question Cards

Research method

We interviewed 26 respondents in depth and selected 3 for a 39-day diary study. All data were anonymized with the permission of the interviewees.



Summary

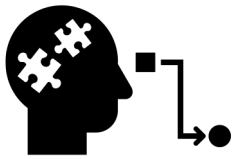
Profile of research subject



Participants were generally engaged in the **service industry** and **small business**, with **irregular working and rest hours**.

The “Why”

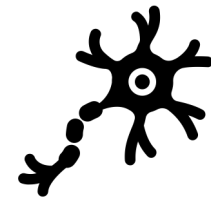
Exploring the formation of leisure lifestyles



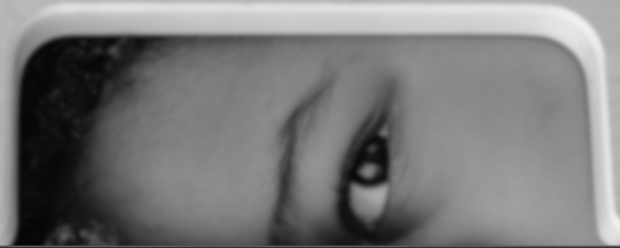
Psychological factors
and mindsets shaping
leisure experience



The intrinsic value of
various leisure activities



Deeper significance
behind individual choice
on leisure activities



2

Insights

**ATTENTION has become the
new currency in place of TIME**

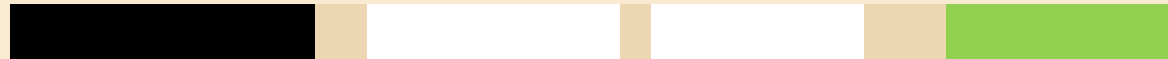
Attention = Resource

Redeploying attention between different activities

The cost of delivering high-quality service in major cities is the elongation of service workers' shifts. In sectors such as beauty, dining, and personal care, workers often exceed 10-hour days to accommodate the client-driven demand. These hours are not entirely devoted to work but to remain available for clients, interspersing periods of activity with breaks.

The 24-hour Workday

From a segmented time distribution with separate functions



To a more fragmented, multi-threaded time distribution



Attention jumps from one activity to another



Persona

One of our candidates was a beauty therapist she adjust her schedules to client bookings, resulting in variable work intensity and break times. This leads to a segmented daily structure, mirroring the trend of fragmented media consumption, a factor we consider when studying their leisure patterns.

April
Beauty Therapist



about

Renting a room with a friend and owning a room.
In a long distance from her boyfriend and meet him on some weekends.

AGE	20	YOE	3
LOCATION	Shanghai, CN	STATUS	Single
EDUCATION	High school	HOME	Middle China

goals

- Make money to buy nice things
- Be better looking through plastic surgery
- Find a beloved one and get married

feelings

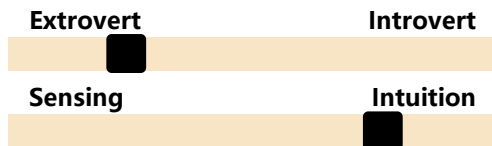
BUSY

STRESSFUL

EXHAUSTED

CARING

personality



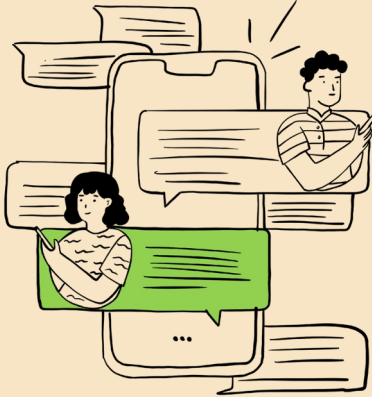
A Typical Day of a Beauty Therapist

VIRTUAL



8:30

9:00



10:00

PHYSICAL



Get up

Browse TikTok for a while



Go to work

Chat on WeChat on the way



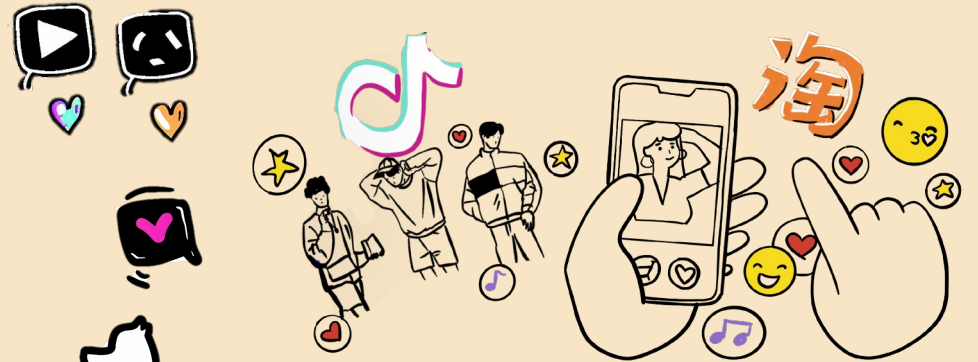
Serve the customer



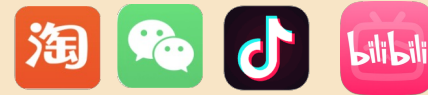
11:30



13:30



15:00



17:00

Lunch break

Browsing TikTok and Alibaba(Shein) while having lunch



Serve the customer



Take turns browsing Alibaba, WeChat, TikTok, and Bilibili(YouTube)



Order takeaway with a coworker



17:30



Enjoy takeaway food with the coworker

Watching a panel show on Mango TV(Netflix) together

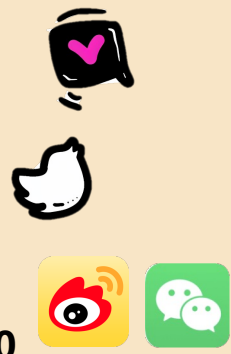


19:00

Serve the customer



20:00



Have a walk with the coworker after work

Browsing Weibo(Twitter) and WeChat



21:00

Personal time



24:00

Emersed in love stories in bed

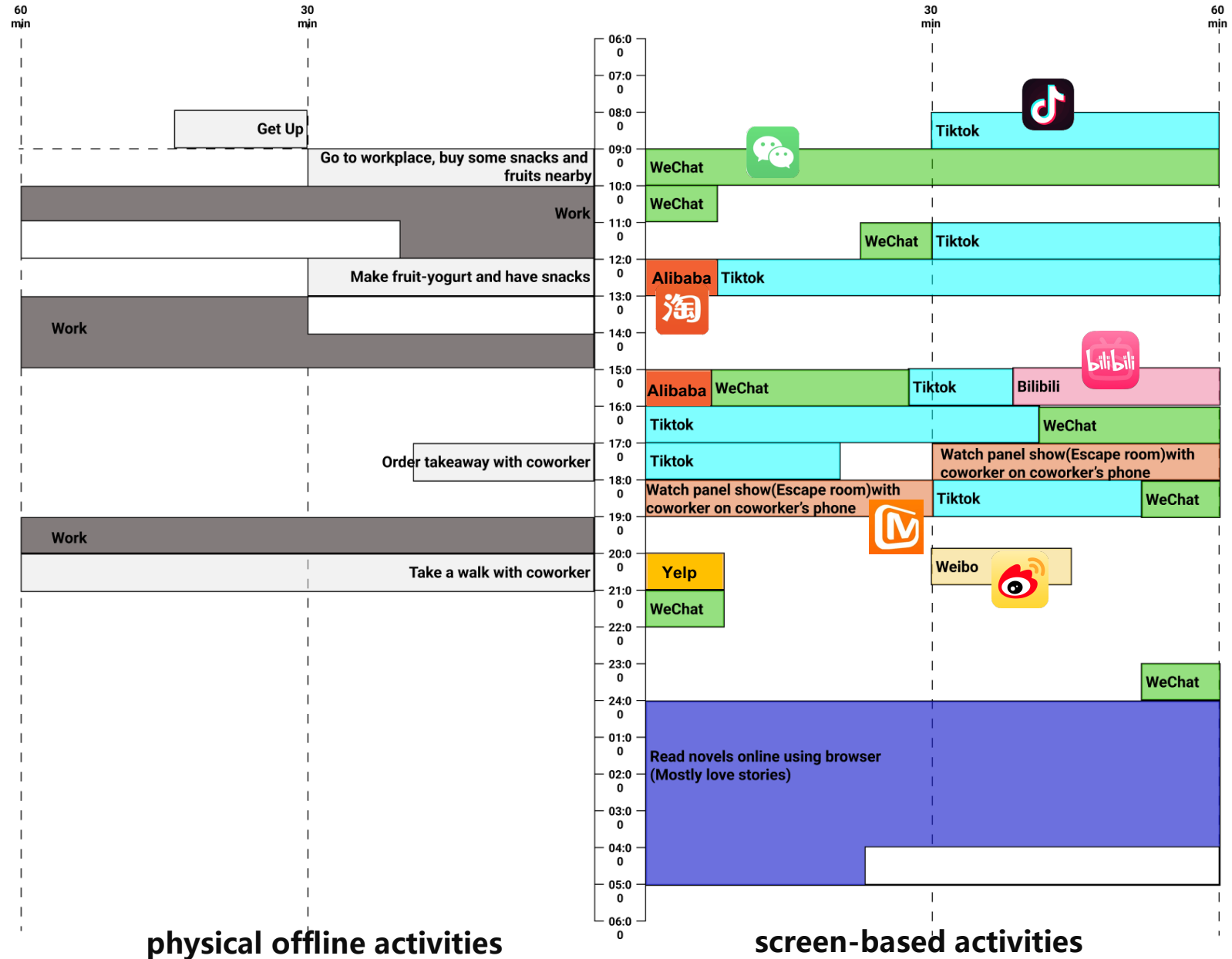


Attention exists apart from time and context

We created over 30 charts illustrating the daily activities of respondents, distinguishing between **physical offline activities**, positioned on the left, and **screen-based activities**, placed on the right.

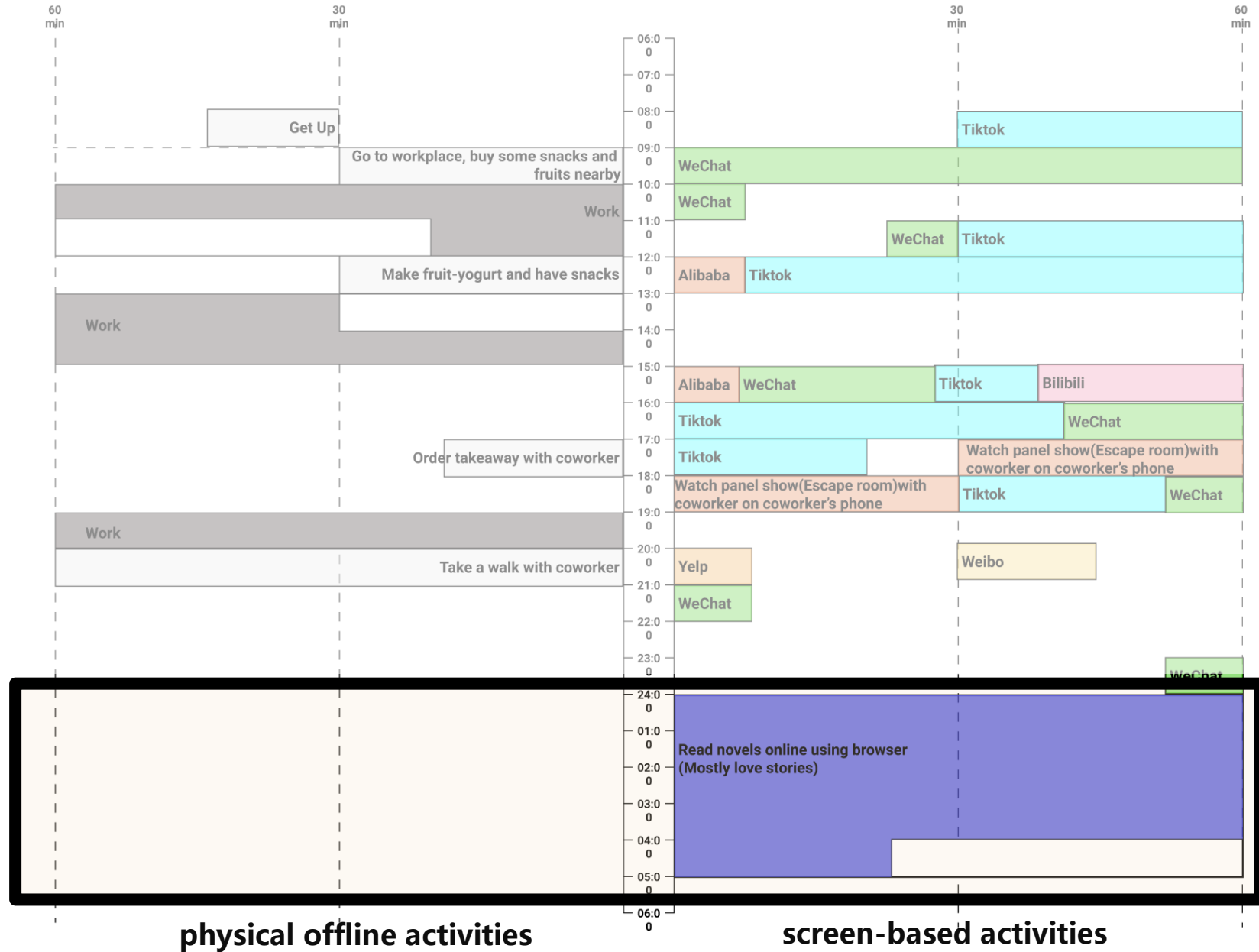
Using April's day as a case study, these charts demonstrate the correlation between the duration of her offline activities and her screen time.

The activities of April, 05/30/2021



The activities of April, 05/30/2021

Extremely focused time without interruption



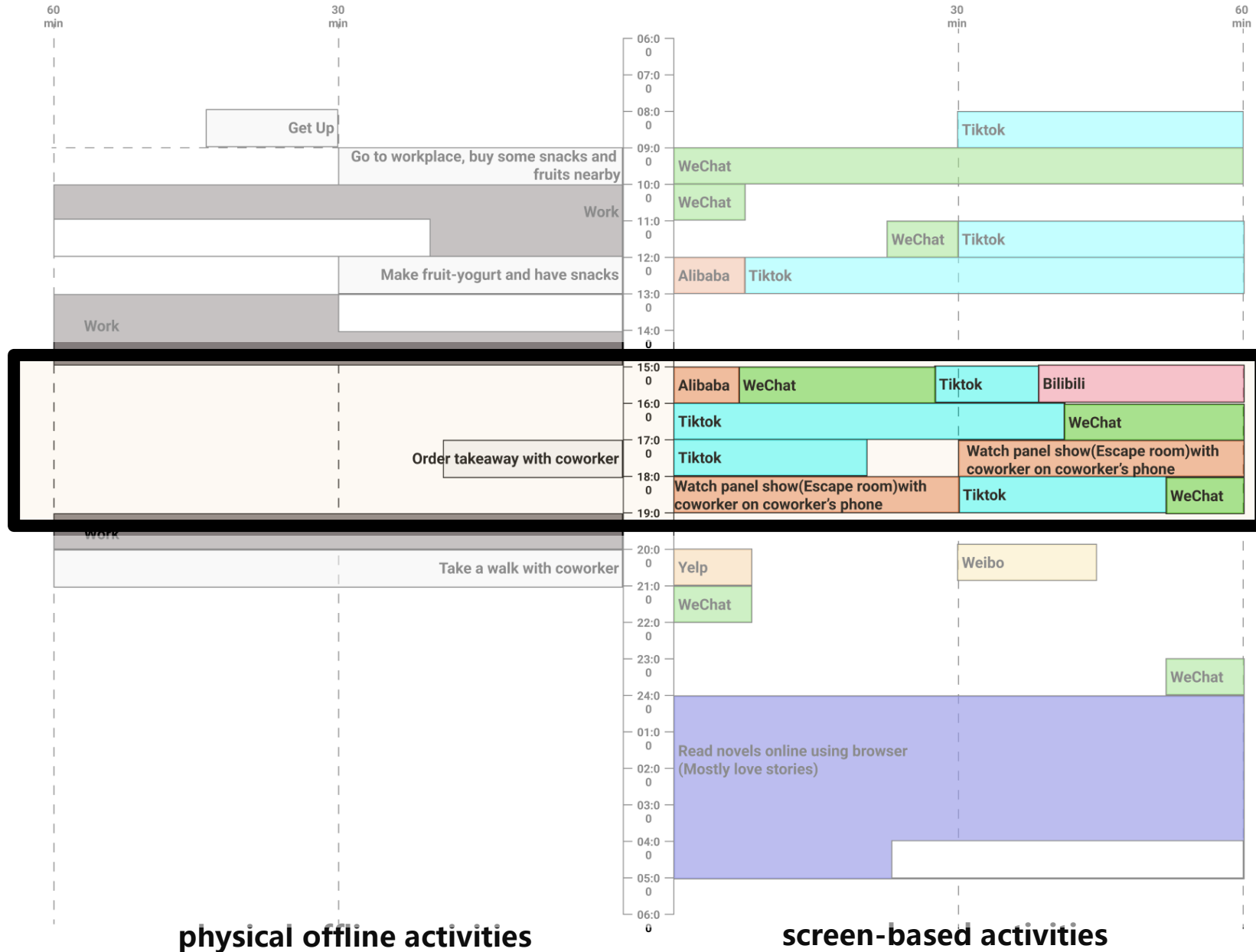
April had a 4.5-hour personal time in the mid night, during which she could be absorbed in her own interest: Reading love stories .

The activities of April, 05/30/2021

Multi-threaded switching of attention

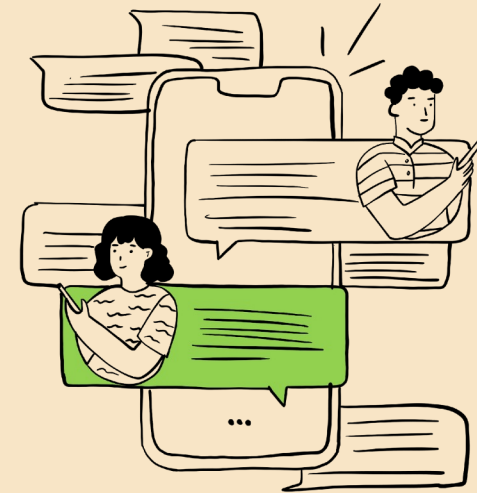
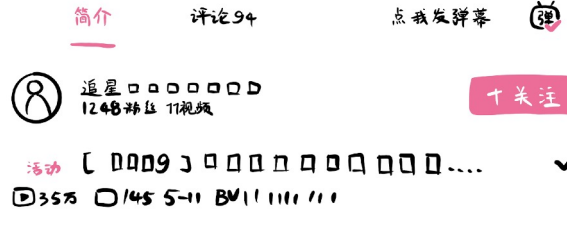
In the time waiting for customers, April has a long period of freedom, her attention cuts back and forth between apps.

A screen shot of using spited screen for both chatting and watching videos on mobile phone



Concentration of Attention

The percentage of attention people devote to something



The leisure life of young urban migrants has shifted from the consumption of **TIME** to the consumption of **ATTENTION**

Interview Quotations



I can't manage to read for two or three hours straight, but when I don't have classes, I'm able to read for 1-2 hours.

- Liu, Fitness Coach

The music we once listened to together often reminds me of my ex; hearing those songs triggers an immediate rush of memories.

- Wayne, Interior Decorator

Vivo phones have a split-screen feature. I can have Bilibili open on the top half of the screen and WeChat messages on the bottom, allowing me to watch videos while simultaneously replying to WeChat messages. For longer messages, I usually switch directly into the WeChat app to reply, but for shorter ones, I typically use the split-screen mode.

- April, Beauty Therapist



Since the nature of the work is quite sporadic, the time dedicated to browsing TikTok is also intermittent.

- Yan, Barber

if it's late at night and I'm soaking my feet, I'll play a mobile game for about twenty minutes during that time. Sometimes, I also play a bit when I'm applying a face mask.

- May, Factory Clerk

I occasionally check WeChat and browse through WeChat Moments, but I spend more time on TikTok. WeChat is mainly for chatting or for others to contact me about updates or store matters, so most communications are sent there. I stay logged in all the time; it's always open on my computer.

- Jone, Restaurant Manager

Redefine Leisure

Literature's Definition of Leisure

consumed nonproductively

time

activity

experience

non-work

Our new Definition of Leisure

Leisure is the process and experience of social activity, recreational rest, physical and mental conditioning that arises from the allocation of free attention

Leisure, too, has “RIGHTS”

Most respondents reported having a "limited" amount of leisure time.



☞ Always busy.

— Sisi, Beauty Therapist

☞ Engaging in this business likely means we will have reduced time for relaxation and leisure.

— Chen, 4S sales clerk

☞ Undertaking this job at our current age leaves minimal room for personal activities outside of work commitments.

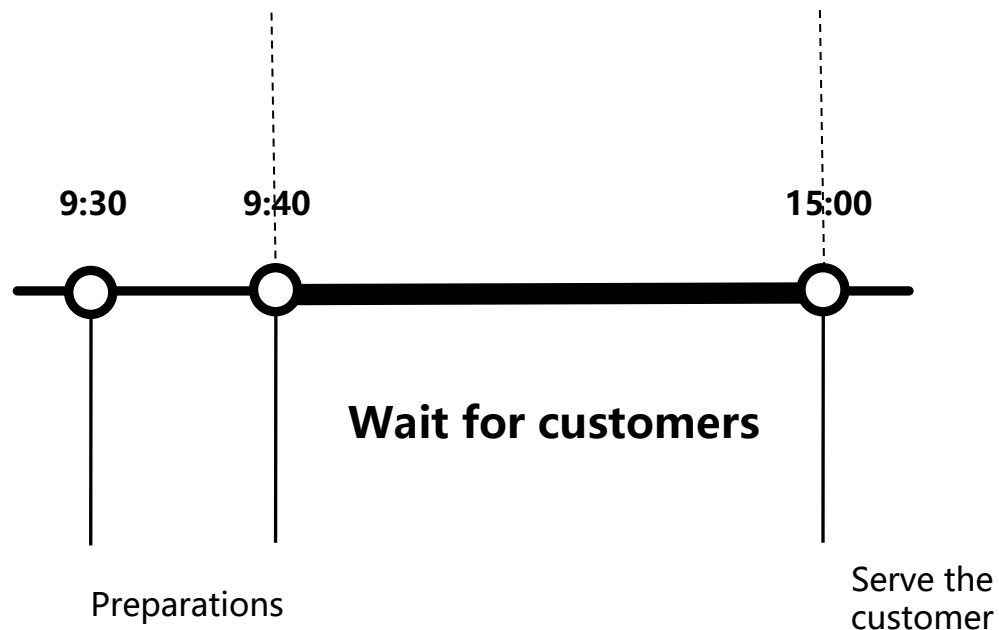
— Yizhuan, Roast chicken shop owner

However,

In reality, respondents frequently have either fractional segments or extended full periods of time at work that they can dedicate to personal activities.

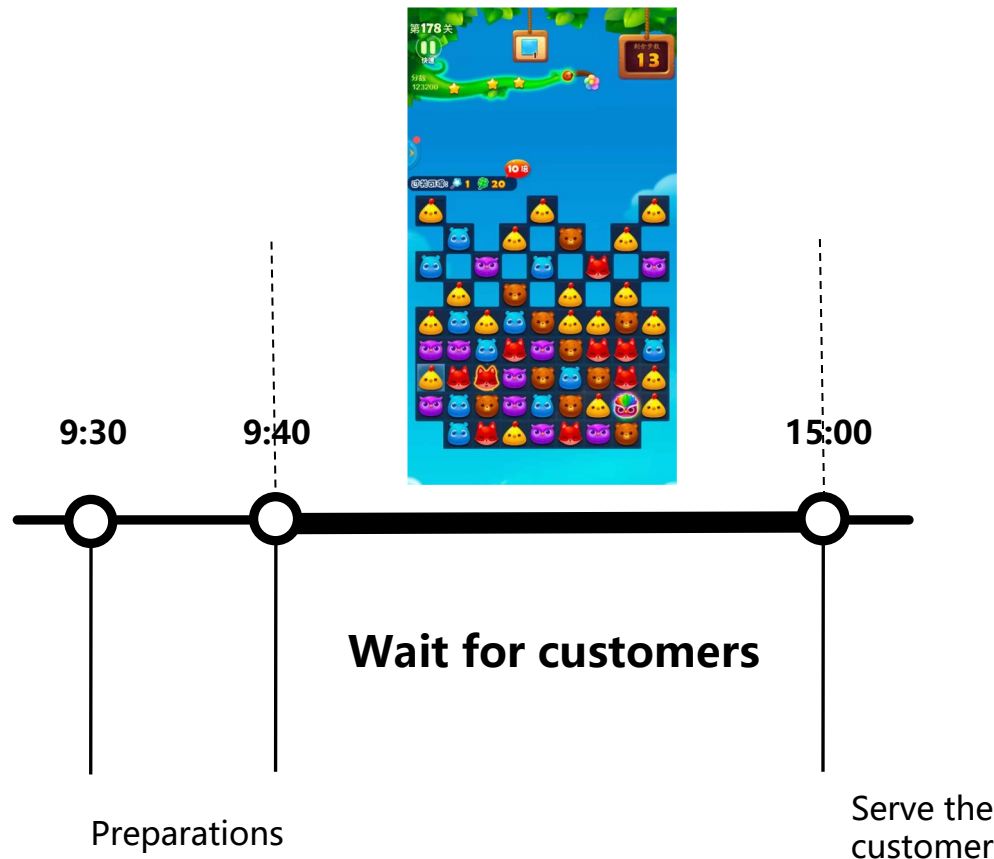
An Example of Fractional Segments

A beauty therapist often have to wait for customers for a long time.



Activities in the free time

However, some customers often do not come on time, and may be late for 10-60 min.
A quick game like Anipop is **SUITABLE** for the time as they can stop immediately when the customer come in.



Respondents reported that they can engage in these activities **only**



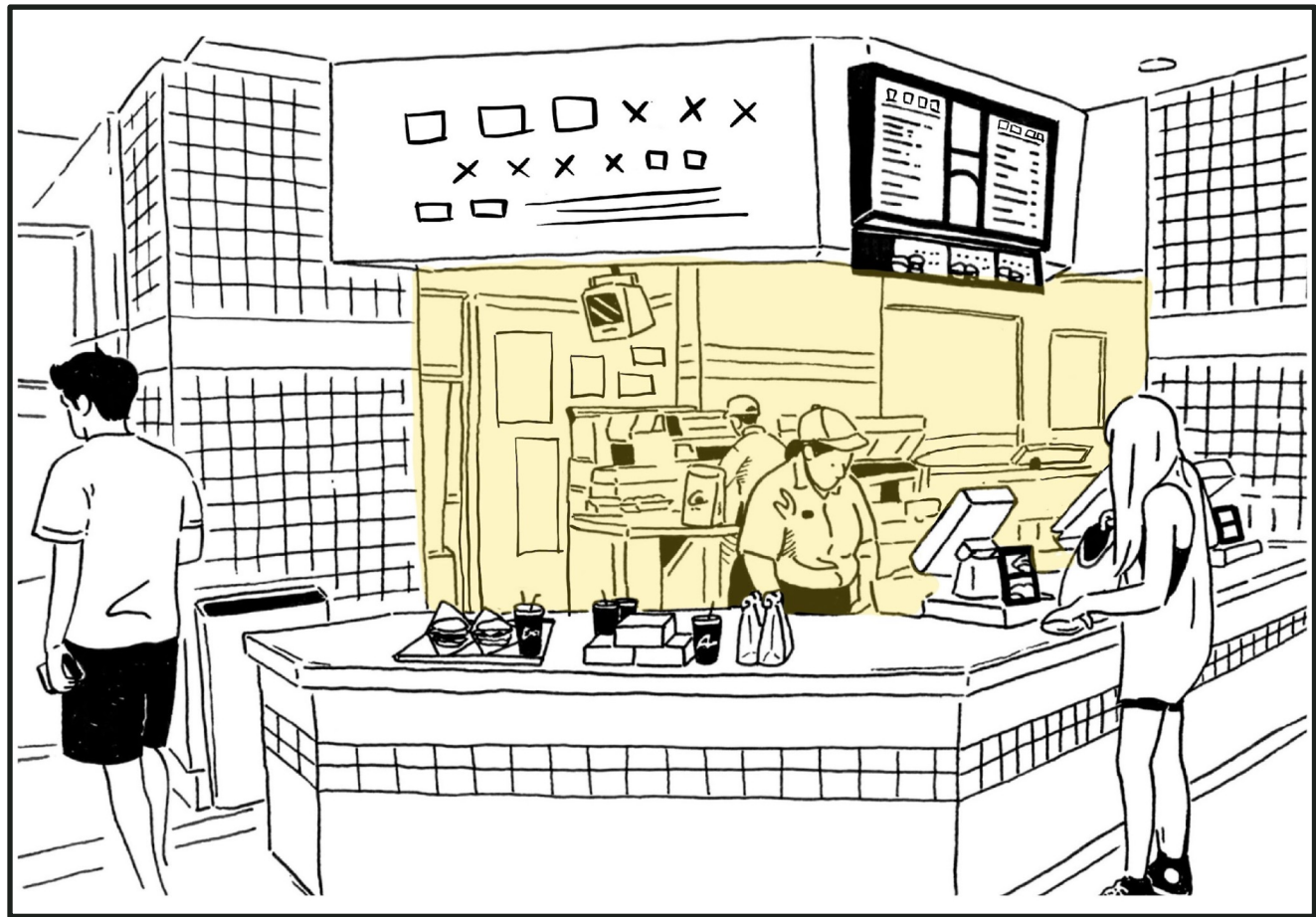
“ Because it's so short, I know that in half an hour I'm going to be busy again, and I'll just sit here and browse TikTok or whatever
— Aman, Fast food store owner

“ When there's not much going on, I usually just watch some videos on TikTok. And when customers come in, just put your phone away to greet them.
— Yan, Barber

“ I often play quick games during the time I'm waiting for customers because they don't take long. A session can be completed in just a few minutes, usually three to five minutes. This fits perfectly into the time I spend waiting for guests.
— Sisi, Beauty Therapist



Messages from customers



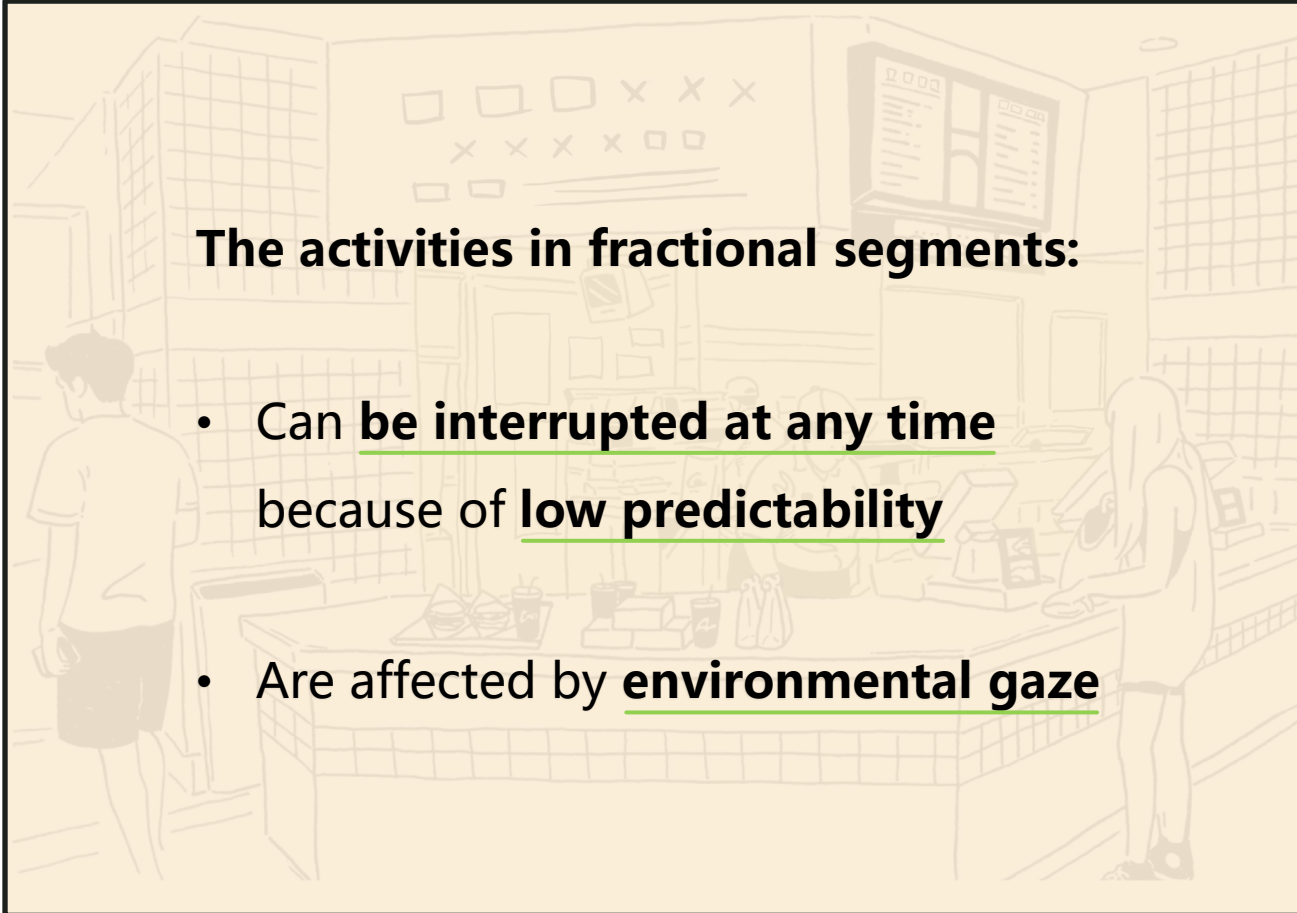
camera

Work Regulations 

Dress Code 

Fixed areas of activity 

Concern about uncertainty 



The activities in fractional segments:

- Can be interrupted at any time because of low predictability
- Are affected by environmental gaze

 Camera

 Customer messages

 Gaze of others

 On service

Work Regulations



Dress Code



Fixed areas of activity



Concern about uncertainty



 **Camera**

 **Customer messages**

 **Gaze of others**

 **On service**

Do they really enjoy their time off?

A real leisure includes mental relaxation and enjoyment.

“

Aristotle: That leisure is the center point about which everything revolves

- From Josef Pieper, Leisure The Basis of Culture P20

“

Free time – which is both idle time and time for higher activity

- Karl Marx, Grundrisse, Notebook VII – The Chapter on Capital

“

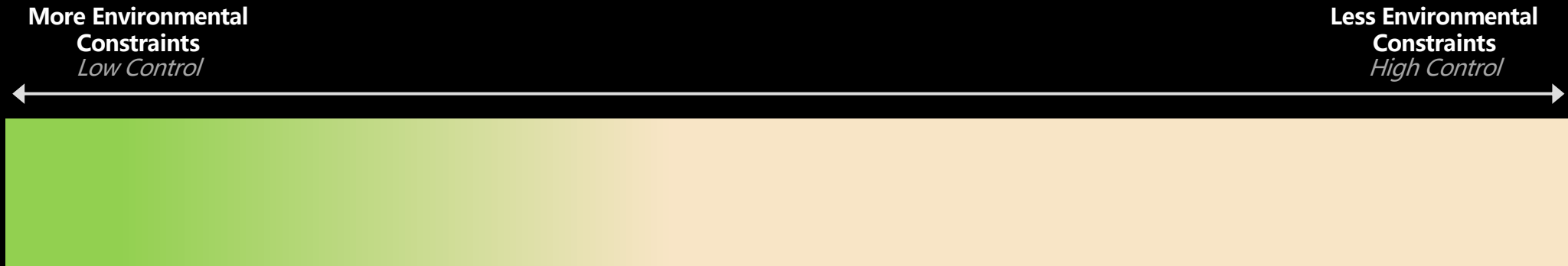
Time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free-play of his bodily and mental activity

- Karl Marx, Capital Volume I

Effective Leisure VS Ineffective Leisure

Initially, we assumed that our respondents have ample downtime during work when there were no customers to pursue their personal interests.

However, it turned out that various environmental constraints such as gaze of others, dress code, and nonprivate zone, significantly limited their ability to utilize this "free" time effectively, resulting in minimal opportunities for personal activities or attention.



Ineffective leisure:

There appears to be casual attention on the surface, but they do not have spiritual mastery of freedom

Effective leisure:

The subjective experience of feeling rested and relaxed

Not a real rest

Ineffective leisure refers to time spent in activities that don't lead to relaxation or a sense of freedom.

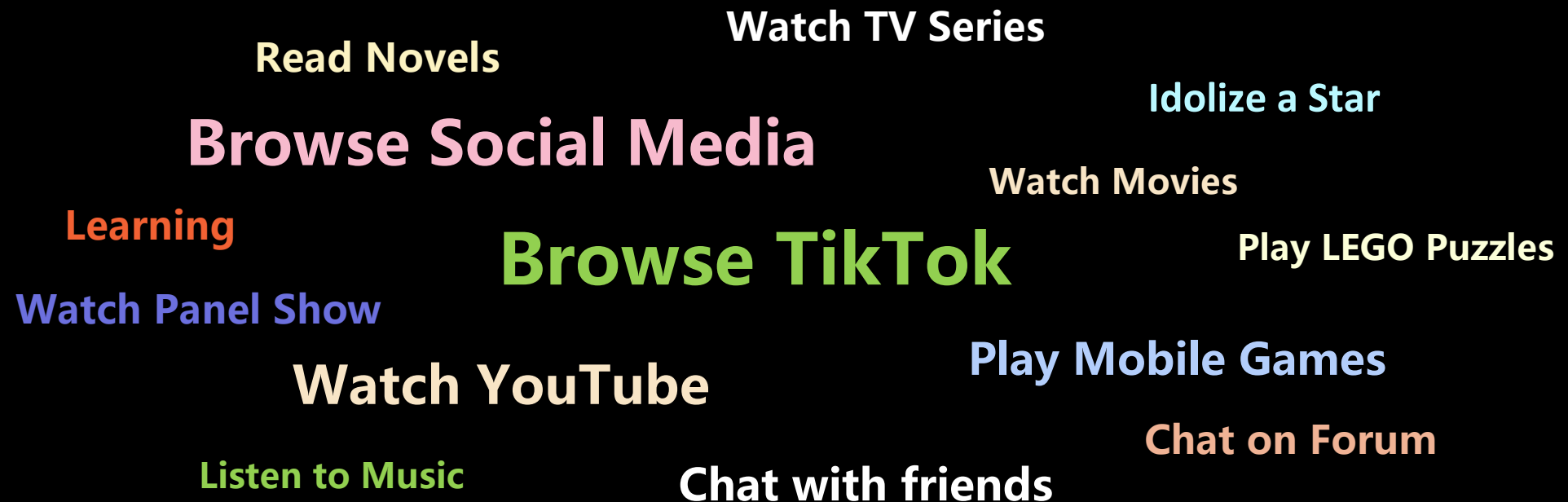
These activities are often perceived as meaningless or obligatory. As a result, people don't feel rejuvenated or relaxed after engagement

For some, browsing TikTok is a common activity of ineffective leisure as they feel tired after browsing it.



Categorization of leisure activities

We closely examined activities undertaken during leisure time and discovered patterns that intertwine motivation, environment, and unconscious instincts.



Time Filler Activities

Activities with no clear purpose but to fill in the gaps and kill the time.

Engaging in activities more as a way to kill time than from a genuine interest in the activity itself, possibly due to a lack of other options, often carried out unconsciously.



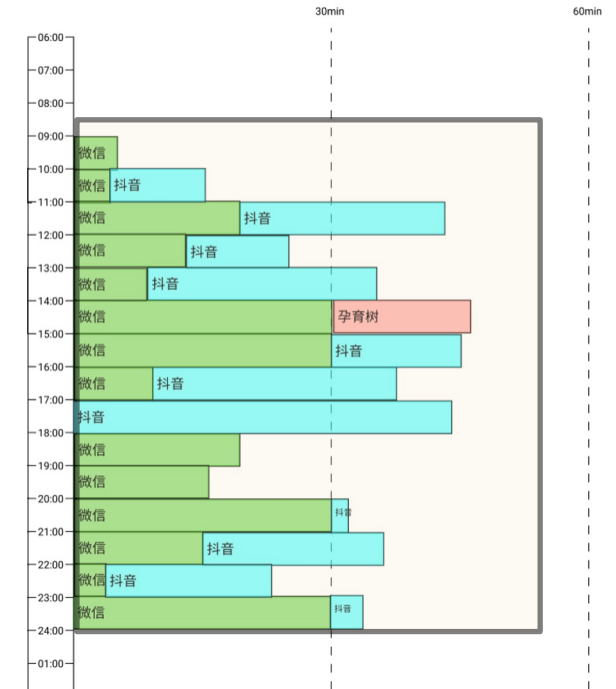
*Environmental
Constraints: Depends*



Attention Span: Lower



*The screen time in non-working day of the Restaurant Manager, Jone:
Switching between WeChat and TikTok*



The subway ride is quite long, so I browse TikTok to kill time, and WeChat as well.

— Chen, 4S sales clerk

I was not addicted to the game, just kill time if I was bored. Sometimes I was so bored that I end up playing on my phone without realizing what else I should be doing.

— Yu, Waiter

During this time, using TikTok can be considered a leisure activity, akin to 'popcorn time', it's like enjoying a popcorn movie. It's all about the fun without much thought

— Yizhuan, Roast chicken shop owner

Aimlessly browsing, like on Baidu for example, where there are features similar to TikTok, and I end up watching whatever videos appear.

— Qi, Beauty Therapist

I just click into WeChat without thinking, and then if there's nothing much, I exit. It feels just like a way to kill time.

— Jone, Restaurant Manager

Enhance relationship through shared experience

While engaged in interactions, split some attention on another task to make the experience more pleasurable.

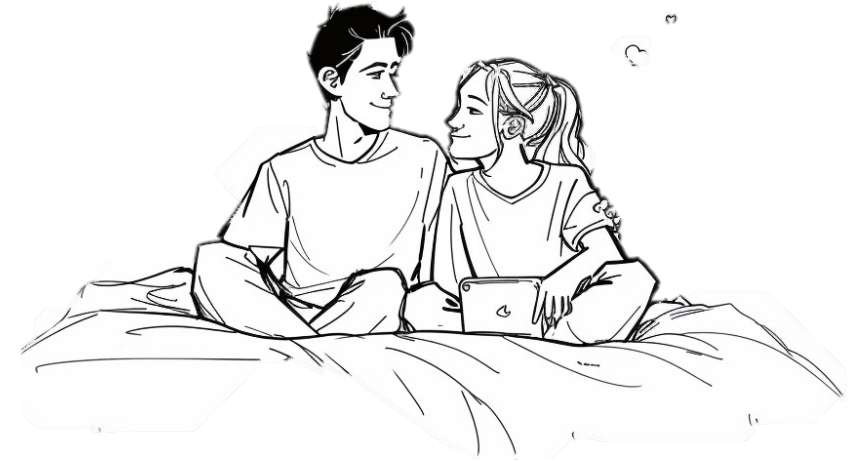
In situations where work and rest schedules are irregular, couples need to create opportunities to spend time together to maintain their intimate relationship, while singles can enhance their enjoyment of life by engaging in activities with colleagues or roommates.



*Environmental
Constraints: Low*



Attention Span: Higher



We talk for a while, then we tell each other what happened today. Then we wait for the kids to fall asleep, then we lie in bed, then we watch a movie and go to sleep afterwards. The movies are not always good, but spending time together is more important.

— Cheng, Car salesman

Getting together after a small separation might make everyone a little more tolerant of each other.

- Gong, Power plant worker

Belongingness-fostering Activities

While engaged in interactions, split some attention on another task to make the experience more pleasurable.

Participation in community activities based on shared interests or focuses, seeking a sense of belonging and identity recognition within like-minded groups.



*Environmental
Constraints: Lower*



Attention Span: Mid



I usually post in the lifestyle groups.

The lifestyle groups have a larger audience, so more people see your posts. If you want to understand something, you can also go to these groups to share and get insights from others. For example, yesterday I posted in a lifestyle group about the feasibility of renting small stools at hospitals during vaccine rollouts. I had to queue for vaccinations from early morning until noon once, and I wondered if a company could make money by renting out stools to those waiting. So, I posted this idea on Douban to gather various opinions.

– Wine, Bar Sales, an Avid Douban Enthusiast

Watching fan videos with the comment overlay is a must, feel like idolizing stars with a group of people.

– April, Beauty Therapist

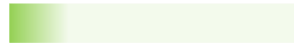
Rewarding & Compensating Activities

An activity to "treat" yourself after a hard day's work, release stress, and feel good

When the day is filled with work or other social commitments, many people carve out a bit of time for themselves after work.



*Environmental
Constraints: Low*



Attention Span: Higher



Revenge Bedtime
Procrastination



When I get home, I tend to dawdle a bit since the workday has been so busy. I usually scroll through some videos to give myself a moment of mindless happiness as a treat. After that, it's time for makeup removal and doing work summaries – all sorts of summaries – before finally going to bed.

– Qi, Beauty Therapist

Working under high pressure can be upsetting, especially when having to chat with clients, which is exhausting. During work hours, I seldom engage in conversations with coworkers unless it's about receiving payment, which brightens my mood. So, we save personal chats, like discussing family matters or recent clothing purchases, for after work hours.

– April, Beauty Therapist

Habit building Activities

Activities undertaken out of genuine interest or preference

These can evolve into habits, becoming regular, immersive, and planned. They typically require a dedicated block of time and energy.



*Environmental
Constraints: Low*



Attention Span: High



I believe that a significant part of personal growth currently comes from reading books. The material in books can change one's way of thinking, offering a depth of perspective that might not be as profound in other activities.

—Liu, Fitness coach

I set 2 hours learning the American NSCA coaching certification online courses everyday. I want to obtain a more professional qualification to improve my career.

- Joy, Fitness coach

Frequently, I spend hours at night doing editing photos for people. On one hand, earning extra income, on the other, practicing my Photoshop skills.

- Jiang, Photographer

Idea book

Following the rise of short video platforms, many people utilize their search functions, grabbing information as needed on the go.

By learning new skills and acquiring knowledge, individuals can achieve cognitive or skill enhancement. With the rise of new media, a novel pattern of knowledge acquisition has emerged, involving searching for content or seeking inspiration within various types of published material.



*Environmental
Constraints: Mid*



Attention Span: Higher



I habitually search online and, after reviewing the results, I combine them with the professional expertise taught by our company's instructors. Then, I compare and integrate this information to suit my own situation.

— Qi, Beauty therapist

I also focus on operations, including aspects like leveraging Weibo trending topics for my store. This involves strategies for improving conversion rates and other business management tactics.

— Yizhuan, Roast chicken shop owner

I watch videos from car repair experts about common and complex vehicle issues. In this field, if there's a question no one can answer, we often turn to searching on TikTok for solutions.

— Chen, 4S sales clerk

During the day, I mostly use TikTok, and at night, I switch to Weibo. Browsing Weibo is largely for learning purposes, like observing how others create good content. In contrast, using TikTok during the day is about 80% for entertainment.

— Jiang, Photographer

In my free time, I casually browse, and sometimes I use it for learning too. There are master-level hairdressing videos available, as well as many on customer communication.

— Yan, Barber

Coffee-Mate Activities

An activity that occurs alongside another main activity.

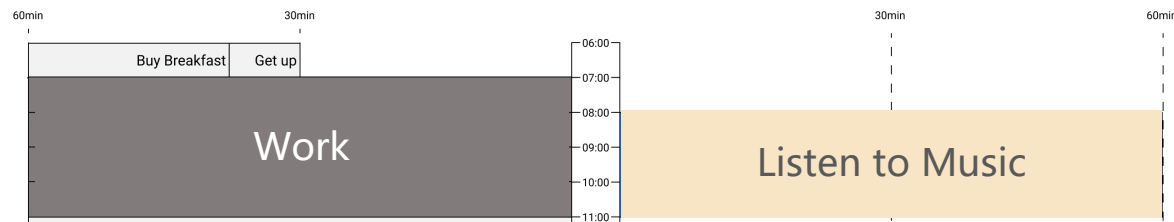
While engaged in one task, it involves using the remaining attention to make the experience more enjoyable, yet not affecting the progress of the primary activity.



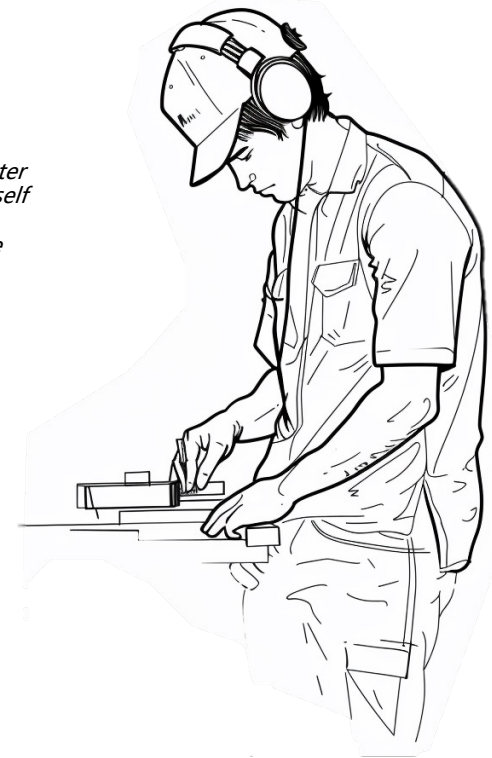
*Environmental
Constraints: Higher*



Attention Span: Low



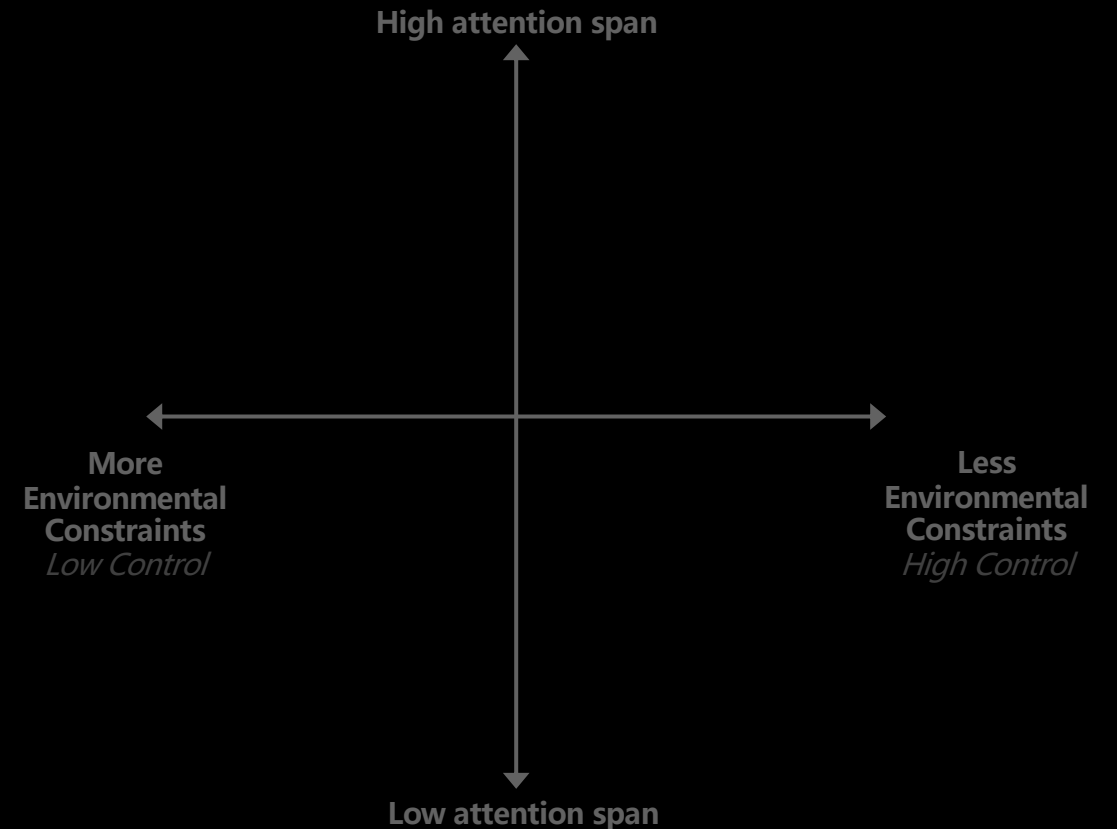
During renovation work, the carpenter Wayne listens to music to help himself concentrate. Gradually, Wayne's attention shifts completely from the music to his work.



On Wayne's morning, after working a while, he plays music

Structured interpretation of leisure activities and their underlying motivations

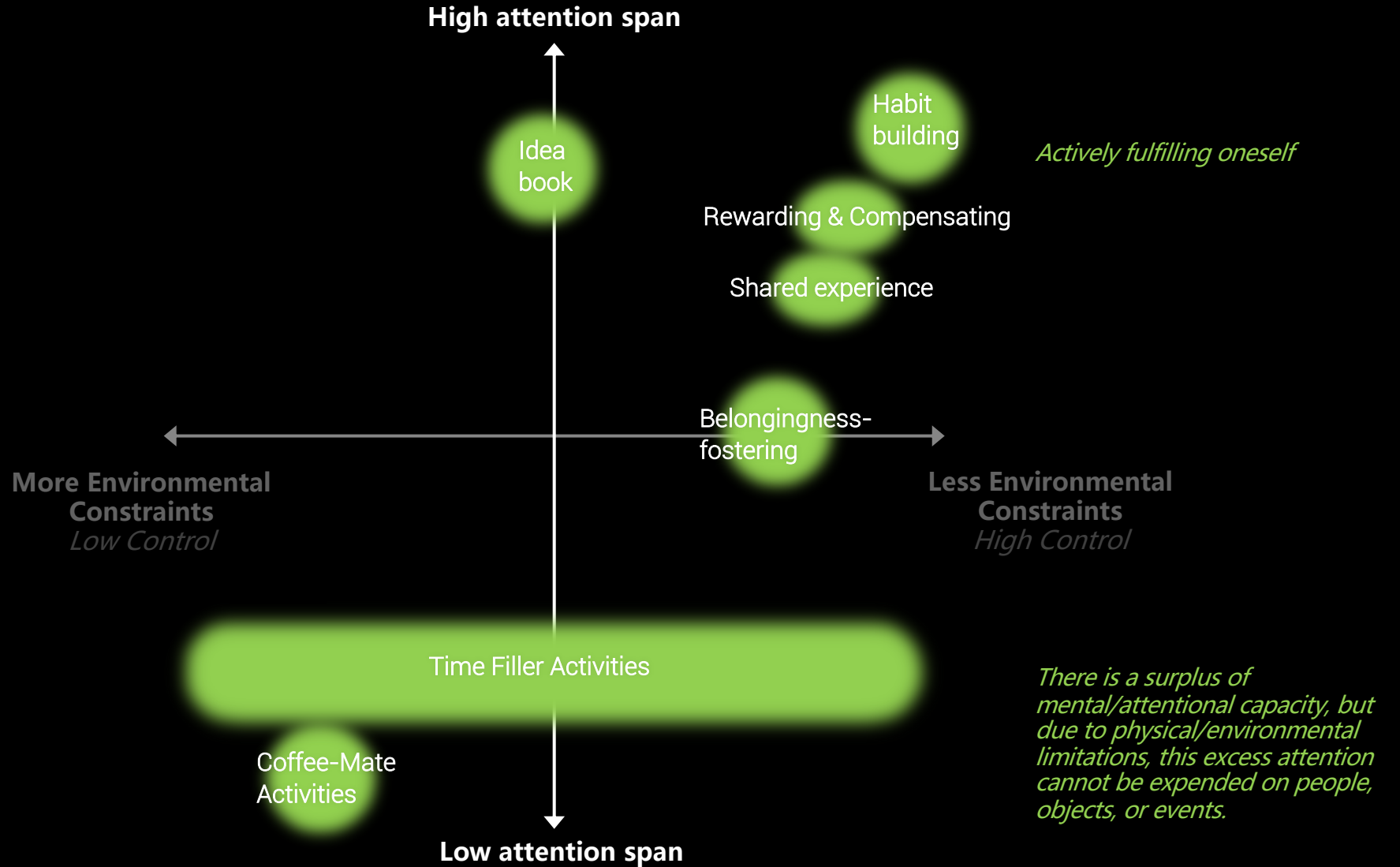
Classify and map activities based on attention span and contextual constraints, offering a clear view of how internal and external factors influence the leisure activities of respondents.



Active vs Passive

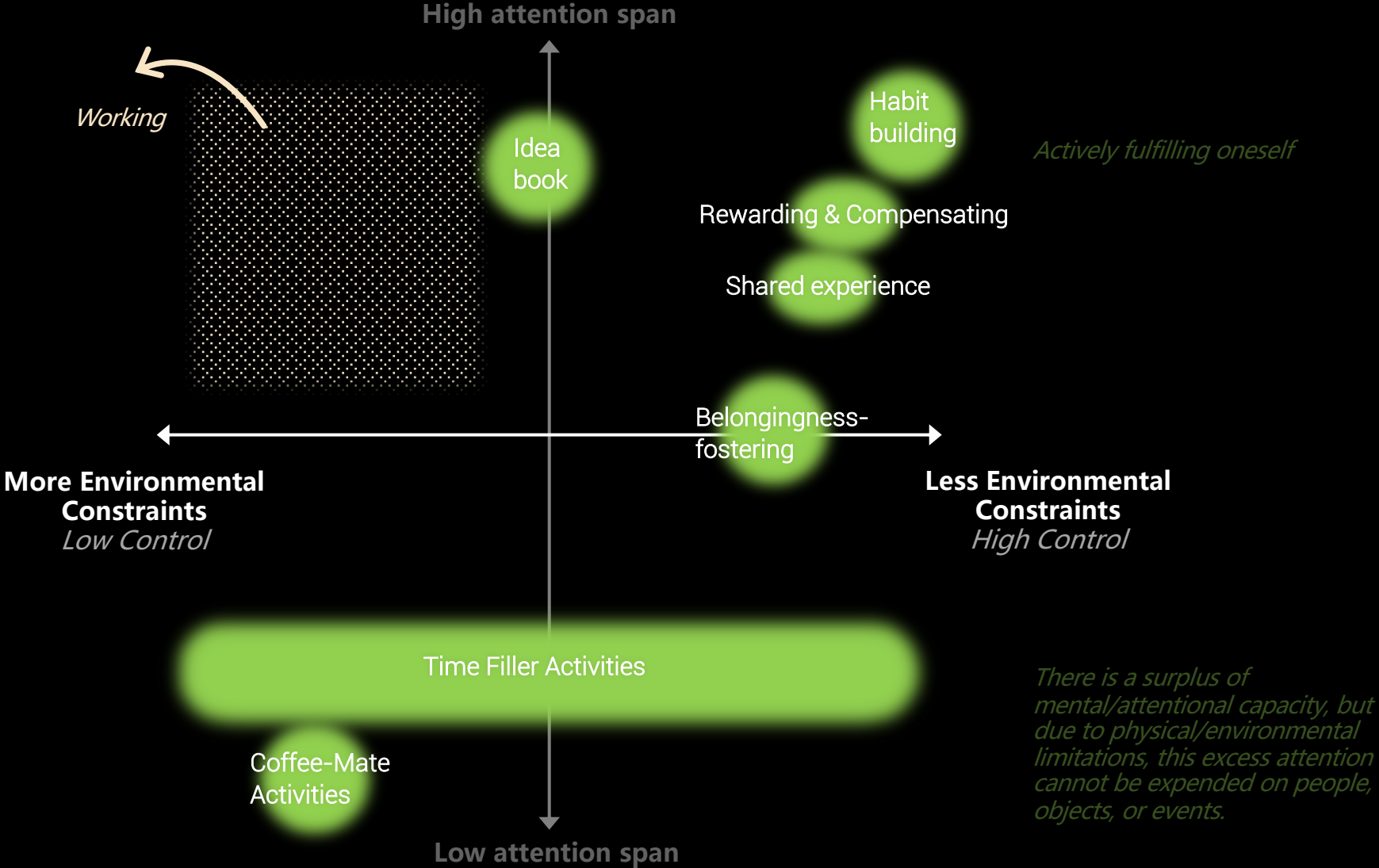
Activities with high attention span often involve respondents actively enriching themselves, pursuing interests and pleasure.

Conversely, activities with low attention span are more about passing time, utilized by respondents to expend their residual energy.



Contextual Constraints

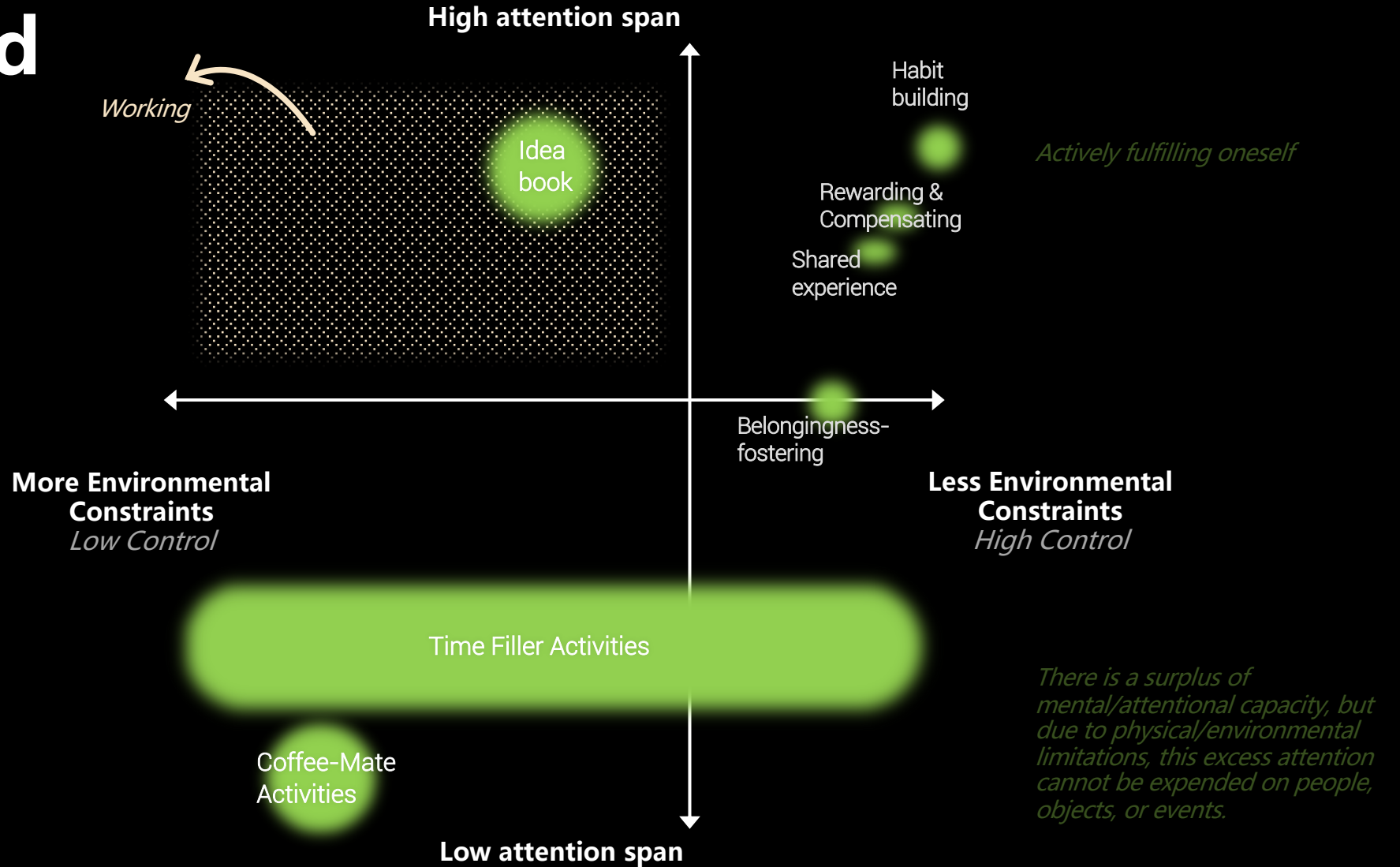
With more environmental constraints, our respondents have limited choices.



Compressed personal time

When work hours are excessively long and the stress is high, an individual's remaining attention capacity decreases.

This situation can lead to retaliatory addictions, diminishing personal fulfillment.



Addiction & Confrontation

Learning, and Confrontation to addiction and fragmentation

Almost all respondents reported using short video platform to get information and learn knowledge related to their professions.

This is a way they adapt their self-improvement to the age of streaming and short videos.

I can't sleep without scrolling through videos until I'm too tired to continue. The more I scroll, the more addictive it becomes, but I wouldn't say it's relaxing.

- Wen, Waiter

I avoid watching TV series because I know I get hooked easily. Once I start, I can't control myself and keep watching endlessly, even at the cost of losing sleep. It becomes quite bothersome.

- May, Factory Clerk

Because the information received is in a fast-paced format, there's a preference for visually stimulating content or stories that jump straight from the beginning to the end, bypassing any buildup. This reflects a lack of patience to sit through extended narratives or detailed setups.

...
Under such work pressure, your life's pace accelerates, and you may not want to spend time on fragmented activities like scrolling through TikTok. Instead, you seek an effective way to unwind. Often, this means turning to fitness and sports for relief.

— Yizhuan, Roast chicken shop owner



3

Summary

Summary

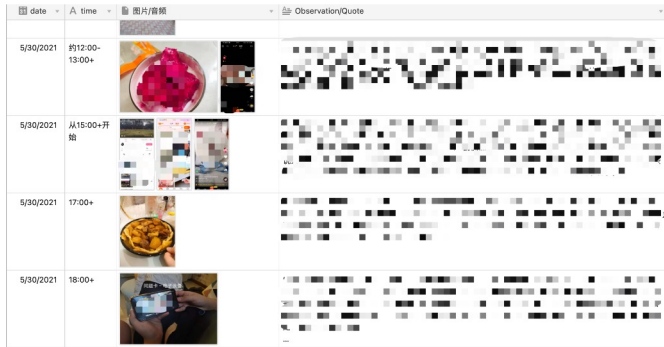


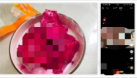

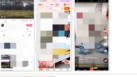



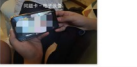

- **Leisure activities now prioritize attention concentration over mere time allocation.**
- **Environmental constraints impact time and attention control, leading to "effective" and "ineffective" leisure concepts.**
- **People's choices in leisure activities are subtly shaped by environmental constraints and how they focus their attention.**

Appendix

Analysis process

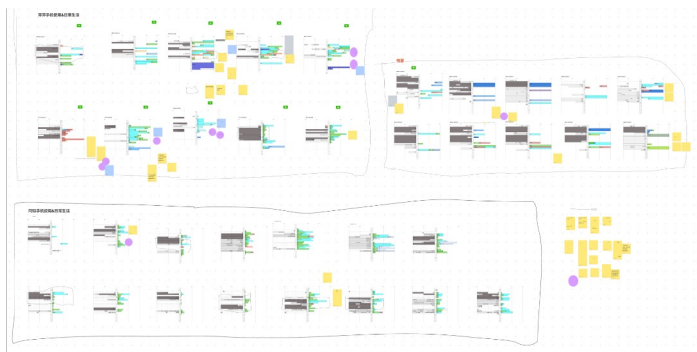
Data Collection, Entry, and Integration:



date	time	图片/音频	Observation/Quote
5/30/2021	09:12:00-13:00+		
5/30/2021	从15:00+开始		
5/30/2021	17:00+		
5/30/2021	18:00+		

Daily, we systematically gather log data detailing respondents' activities. This involves designing classification forms tailored to the data's characteristics. We then chronologically integrate records of users' varied behaviors and mental activities into uniform entries, complete with category labels. This process meticulously preserves the intricacies of users' complex actions and psychological dynamics, offering an accessible and efficient method for raw data retrieval to support comprehensive, multi-dimensional analysis.

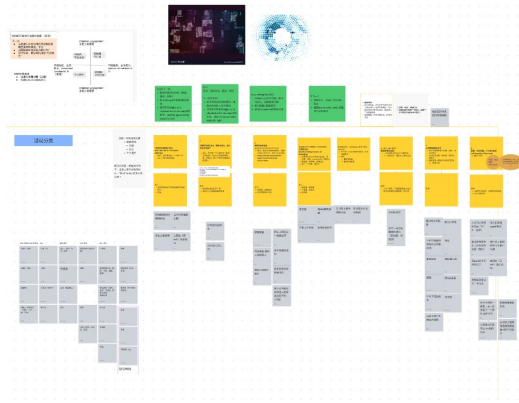
Visualization of User Behavior Activities



By analyzing user log data, we categorize activities into "online virtual activities" and "offline physical activities," modularizing common behaviors. Using a 24-hour day as the axis, we position "virtual activities" and "physical activities" on either side of this timeline. Users' daily activity modules are then populated based on the duration of each activity. This method of integrating, reorganizing, and visualizing data in time schedules enables us to effectively understand the characteristics and patterns in the time distribution of user activities, as well as the interplay between time and activity type.

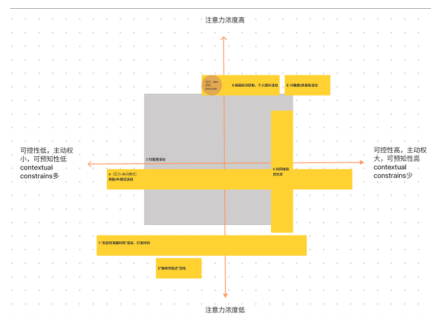
Analysis process

Integration of Affinity Diagram Information:



During data analysis, researchers meticulously document their insights, reorganizing and integrating information using affinity diagrams. This approach uncovers commonalities and unique aspects of the underlying data. By refining the core knowledge of the project and enhancing collaborative synergy, conventional and outdated perspectives are challenged. This broadens creative interpretations of target groups and their behaviors, offering innovative ideas for problem-solving and fostering breakthrough solutions.

Relational Model Derivation and Constructs:



Leveraging the multi-dimensional data integration and analysis from the earlier phase, and aligning it with the insights and conclusions drawn from the original data, we delve deeper into understanding user behavior and psychological activities. This involves highly abstracting these concepts and continually deducing the dynamic interplay among core elements of users' leisure behaviors and mental activities. From this, we derive and construct various relational models, offering structured interpretations of the leisure activities of migratory groups and the underlying motivations driving them.