

behavior control unit 48 also controls the character to behave in response to the behavior pattern selected by the behavior-pattern selection unit 47 while considering instructions given by a game player through the controller 33.

[0076] The demand-action determining unit 49 determines whether there is any predetermined demand, such as walking or feeding, from the character. That is, when a predetermined demand is made by the character, the behavior pattern corresponding to the demand is read from the dog-behavior pattern table stored in the storage unit, such as the recording medium 40, and the behavior pattern is displayed on the monitor 28.

[0077] For description, the elements between the monitor 28 and the bus 12 and the elements between the recording medium 40 and the bus 12 are omitted.

[0078] A brief description is given below of the content of the game to be executed by the video game machine according to the present invention.

[0079] The following game content is stored in the recording medium 40. One of the plurality of characters is selected and is caused to behave according to the elapsed time of the game. The temperament and the emotion setting of the selected character is changed in accordance with a predetermined condition, and the character is caused to behave according to the temperament and the emotion. The game player raises the character while communicating with it by giving instructions through the controller 33.

[0080] More specifically, the game played in this embodiment is a dog raising game in which a desired dog (for example, a three-month-old puppy) is selected (given) from a plurality of types of dogs, and is raised. The game player trains the dog for various actions, such as "give me your paw", "sit", "stay", "OK", "errand", and also raises the dog by feeding, walking, doing house-training, etc. In the meantime, it is checked how well the dog has been raised. For example, while the game player is walking the dog, the neighbors test whether the dog can do various actions, such as "give me your paw", "errand", etc., or check how faithful the dog is to the owner, i.e., the game player.

[0081] It is determined whether the dog can meet the requirements checked by the neighbors according to how well the game player has raised the dog so far. When the dog shows satisfactory results, the game player feels satisfied. In this manner, according to the game used in this embodiment, the game player is able to feel as if he/she actually kept a dog in a game space.

[0082] In most conventional character-raising games, the parameter values are increased by instructions from a game player, thereby providing specific characteristics for the character. In this game, however, it is set that the dog appears to behave by thinking by itself. Thus, the game player is required not only to provide specific instructions, such as increasing the parameter values, as has been performed in known art, but to

play the game while having a good relationship with the dog. Since the game constructed in accordance with this embodiment is different from conventional character-raising games, it has the following features indicated by (1) through (4).

(1) Changing the temperament setting

[0083] In this game, the setting of one of a plurality of types of temperaments, indicated by A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J, as shown in Fig. 6, of a given (selected) dog is changed during the period of the game, for example, every day, according to predetermined conditions. Any one of the temperaments is set when the dog is given, and is changed later according to the various operations of the game player while raising the dog.

[0084] According to the temperament setting changed in the above manner, an event or the dog's action (behavior) is varied, thereby providing the game with dynamic aspects and making it highly entertaining. In this game, it is not essential that all the temperaments shown in Fig. 6 are provided, and some of them may be selected or other temperaments may be added according to the content of the game.

[0085] The temperament setting is changed, for example, in the following manner. As partly shown in Fig. 7, certain numerical values (zero, positive, or negative values) used as indices are added to or subtracted from, according to the content indicated in the "conditions for increasing and decreasing the numerical value" column, the basic parameters a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, and i (merely indicated alphabetically for convenience), which count towards determining the temperament. According to the resulting cumulative value, the temperament is selectively determined. In this embodiment, the cumulative value of each parameter after being added or subtracted is set in such a manner that the center value is, for example, 0, and the absolute upper maximum and the lower maximum are, for example, 100.

[0086] The "conditions for increasing and decreasing the numerical value" for the basic parameters a, b, c, and d are shown in Fig. 7. The conditions for the other basic parameters are suitably set, and the index values corresponding to the conditions are also provided.

[0087] When the game player performs a predetermined action, such as "praising" or "stroking", on the dog, a predetermined numerical value corresponding to the action is added to the index value in accordance with the current dog's temperament, as indicated by the parameter/temperament tables shown in Figs. 8A and 8B. It is now assumed that the current dog's temperament is A, and that the "praising" action is done. For example, concerning the basic parameter a, the numerical value -2 is read from the parameter/temperament table by the numerical-value providing unit 451. Concerning the basic parameter c, the numerical value +1 is read from the parameter/temperament table by the numerical-value providing unit 451.