My God, Recreate Me! Self Reflections From The Metaverse World To The Real World
Tanrım, Beni Baştan Yarat! Metaverse Dünyasından Gerçek Dünyaya Benlik Yansımaları

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Abstract: The number of studies in the literature that examine the reflection of the self-reflection in the context of virtual reality and especially the metaverse is extremely scarce. Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the dimensions that reveal self-reflections in the context of the Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse game/application. This approach, which depicts the situation of self-reflection in the metaverse world, is capable of filling the gap in the literature. Using the purposeful sampling method, in-depth interviews were conducted with 21 people who experienced the Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse game, in accordance with the nature of the grounded theory method. In determining the number of experiencers to be interviewed, the saturation point approach, used in many qualitative studies, was adopted. The embedded theory method was used in data analysis, and the data was analyzed using constant comparative analysis. Creswell's criteria, which have an important place in the validity and reliability/trustworthiness of qualitative research, were used in this research. Analyzes made as a result of the interviews show that the experiences obtained from participation in the metaverse game Cyberpunk 2077 can be grouped under eight main themes. These; Illusory Being, Mirror, Instant Mood, Fashion and Visual Pleasure, Personal Equipment, Imagination World, Integration, Desire/Request. These findings show that digital games, which have a big place in our lives and are played for reasons such as having a good time, getting away from stress, and socializing, have started to be played for new purposes such as self-reflection, fashion creation, integration, and diving into the world of dreams, with the Metaverse. This study, which reveals the dimensions or factors that constitute self-reflection, contributes to the existing literature. Namely, in addition to factors such as instant pleasure, flow, escape, and illusionary existence that represent self-reflections, factors such as fashion creation, dream world, integration, use of personal equipment, and personality reflections that emerged in the study provide a theoretical explanation. In addition, the results of the research will provide guidance on how metaverse practitioners or designers can integrate the subject of self into their own strategies.

Keywords: Virtual world, self-reflection, digital game.

Özet: Bu çalışmanın amacı Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse oyunu/uygulaması bağlamında benlik yansımalarını ortaya koyan boyutların belirlenmesidir. Benlik yansımasının metaverse dünyasındaki durumunu tasvir eden bu yaklaşım literatürdeki boşluğu doldurabilecek bir niteliktedir. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse oyununu deneyimleyen 21 kişi ile gömülü teori yönteminin doğasına uygun biçimde derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşme yapılacak deneyimleyici sayısının belirlenmesinde pek çok nitel araştırmada kullanılan doyum noktası (saturation point) yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Veri analizinde gömülü teori yöntemi kullanılmış olup, veriler sürekli karşılaştırmalı analiz kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Nitel araştırmaların geçerliliği ve güvenilirliğinde/inandırıcılığında (trustworthiness) önemli bir yere sahip Creswell"in kriterleri bu araştırmada kullanılmıştır. Gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler neticesinde yapılan analizler Cyberpunk 2077 adlı metaverse oyunu katılımından elde edilen deneyimlerin sekiz ana tema altında gruplandırılabileceğini göstermektedir. Bunlar; İllüzyonel Varlık, Ayna, Anlık Duygu Durumu, Moda ve Görsel Haz, Kişisel Donanım, Hayal Alemi, Bütünleşme, Arzu/İstektir. Benlik yansımasını oluşturan boyut veya faktörleri ortaya koyan bu çalışma var olan litaretüre katkı sağlamaktadır. Şöyle ki benlik yansımalarını temsil eden anlık haz, akış, kaçış, İllüzyonel varlık gibi faktörlere ilave olarak çalışmada ortaya çıkan moda oluşturma, hayal alemi, bütünleşme, kişisel donanımların kullanımı, kişilik yansımaları gibi faktörler teorik bir açıklama sağlayıcı niteliktedir. Ayrıca araştırmanın sonuçları metaverse uygulayıcılarının veya tasarımcılarının benlik konusunu kendi stratejilerine nasıl entegre edebilecekleri konusunda yol gösterici olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sanal dünya, Benlik yansıması, Dijital oyun.

INTRODUCTION

Lee (2021) states that every decade there is a paradigm shift in information and communication technologies; He states that communication with computers in the 1990s, the web in the 2000s, and mobile in the 2010s changed and that the keyword of the paradigm of the 2020s is Metaverse. People have always searched for different universes and finally, the concept of "Metaverse", which takes people from their homes to different universes, has come to the fore. This digital platform called Metaverse, which contains multiple universes, has managed to attract the attention of many sectors, especially the production sector, architecture and sports. Metaverse is a realistic virtual platform where avatars act as the user's alter ego and interact with other users in an "immersive" 3D virtual environment. Metaverse is a concept formed by the combination of the words 'meta', meaning transcendence, and 'universe', meaning the real world (Bojic, 2022). The most common expression used regarding the concept of metaverse is virtual reality. However, considering that this statement is not sufficient to explain the concept of Metaverse, it is thought that it would be appropriate to first explain its historical development. Although the Metaverse has been on the agenda since 2010, its existence was revealed in 1992 by Neal Stephenson. It is expressed in his novel "Snow Crash " and is treated as a three-dimensional virtual world inhabited by avatars of real people (graphic bodies in the virtual environment) (Lee, 2021).

In order to understand the emergence of the concept of metaverse, it is first necessary to know the developments in the internet environment. The emergence of this concept is primarily due to the development of Web 3.0 technology. Considering the inadequacies of the web, the ever-expanding information cloud, the speed at which information emerges, and the need to access information, it is becoming increasingly difficult to understand and verify the information we encounter on the internet. It is thought that this problem can be overcome by structuring information and making sense of data and the connections between data by using computers with high processing power. For all these reasons, web 3.0, which is considered the new web era, aims to provide more sensitive and accurate access to the information field and to present information to people in a more understandable way. Tim Berners-Lee has determined two main visions for the future of the web. The first goal is to ensure that the internet becomes an environment where more togetherness is achieved. The second goal is to ensure that the desired operations are carried out and analyzed by computers and

that the data is more understandable. These new visions will enable the internet to move to the web 3.0/semantic web dimension. Web 3.0 aims to create more understandable, intelligent, and well-connected web pages and web applications as a result of the evaluation of data by machines with high processing capacity (Baltacıoğlu, 2023).

The recent proliferation of cryptocurrencies created and established on block chain technology (blockchain technology), which was recently available with Web 3.0, has given an idea about the transformation that will take place in the internet field.. It is also inevitable that other universe projects, which have been known for a long time but have come to the fore recently and whose main source is the logic of open world action games, will gain serious functionality. Other universe projects prepared in this direction are increasing day by day and new ones are being added to existing projects. The connection between qualified intellectual property titles (NFT) and other universe projects, which started to be developed with blockchain technology, has a serious place in shaping the predictions about the point where the web 3.0 era, the new era in the evolution of the internet, can progress. In addition to all these, the preparations of technology companies and social media platforms regarding the expected arrival of web 3.0 and developments regarding other universes are important. Because these preparations can be thought of as a struggle to acquire a new body in this new universe (Baltacıoğlu, 2023).

These developments in the information age started with the gaming industry in the past and are mostly effective in the gaming industry today. As of 2021, the number of gamers in the world has exceeded 2.5 billion. With this increasing usage rate, more attention is paid to three-dimensional games, and it has been announced that there is a decline in the development of the console game market. The global gaming market is expected to reach a usage of $256.97 billion by 2025 (Campaign Turkey, 2021).

Some researchers think that the Metaverse concept has become firmly established in our lives, especially during the pandemic period, with the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on digitalization. Trends The states that COVID-19 has accelerated the transition to the digital world, which offers solutions without depending on the physical world and different variables (Kang, 2021). On the other hand, justified the rise of the Metaverse with the continuity of non-face-to-face communication during the COVID-19 pandemic period. In addition, the concept of 'metaverse', which is thought and imagined to bring many innovations, has taken its prominent place in the search report graphics of the Google search engine since September 2021 (Google Trends, 2023).

Today's digital world offers every individual many ways to present themselves (Yee, 2006). Virtual environments clearly allow people to change their identities. More importantly, many studies point to a situation known as the Proteus Effect, where people begin to choose identities for themselves based on their profiles in the virtual environment. There are two theories explaining the emergence of the Proteus Effect; Self-perception theory and identity uncertainty theory (Deindividuation Theory) (Yee, Bailenson and Ducheneaut, 2009).

Emerging from Self-Perception Theory (Fox, Bailenson and Tricase, 2013). Proteus Effect is the person's development of behaviors and attitudes according to his/her avatar and finding these attitudes and behaviors correct (Yee, 2007). Proteus Effect is the situation in which an individual manifests the desired behaviors based on the physical appearance of his/her avatar, depending on the way he/she perceives himself/herself.

As can be understood from the self-perception theory, a person observes himself as if he were observing someone from outside and creates a perception of his own attitudes and feelings according to his behaviors, and in the virtual environment, it is easier for a person to see his avatar from the outside and create a perception of himself accordingly (Yee, 2007). Therefore, when the Proteus Effect occurs, the person develops attitudes and beliefs within himself towards the appearance of the avatar that does not resemble his own physical characteristics, and the person develops personality according to the appearance of the avatar, not according to his own real appearance (Fox et al., 2013). In this case, the Cyberpunk game allows its users to create avatars as they wish and to do whatever they want in the virtual world with these avatars. During the game, users see themselves as a whole with their avatars and experience emotions that they cannot experience in real life. Thus, it also creates a desire in players to transfer what they can do in the game to real life.

According to the Identity Ambiguity Theory, when an individual hides his real name (anonymity) in the virtual environment, identity ambiguity (deindividuation) adapts the person's individual identity to the identity of the society rather than to his own individual identity. In other words, the person assumes the identity of the social group he enters (Yee, Bailenson and Ducheneaut, 2009). According to Identity Ambiguity Theory, identity is either destroyed or blocked in a certain group. In identity uncertainty, the person behaves as if he has no self-regulation (Reicher, Spears and Postmes, 1995).

In short, Proteus Effect, which comes from the god Proteus in Greek mythology, who has the ability to easily disguise himself, is mentioned in Yee's 2007 thesis "Proteus Effect: Behavioral modification; ViaTransformation of Digital Self-Representation ". It is based on his doctoral thesis. Proteus Effect is used in the sense of ordinary people easily changing their identity in the virtual environment. An ordinary person can choose the avatar he wants in the virtual environment and the person exhibits behaviors depending on the appearance of the avatar he chooses in the virtual environment. For example A man who chooses a female avatar exhibits more feminine behavior, and a woman who chooses a male avatar exhibits masculine behavior. However, a person can choose the avatar he wants in the virtual environment with a single click, thus changing his identity as well as changing his shape (Sherrick, Hoewe and Waddell, 2014).

The concept of metaverse is a concept that is especially emphasized during the pandemic, but since it is still in its infancy, the scarcity of studies on this subject draws attention. The number of studies in the literature that examine the reflection of the self-reflection in the context of virtual reality and especially the metaverse is extremely

scarce. Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the dimensions that reveal self-reflections in the context of the Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse game/application. This approach, which depicts the situation of self-reflection in the metaverse world, is capable of filling the gap in the literature.

LITERATURE

Metaverse

The foundations of the Metaverse concept began to be laid in 1970 with various science fiction books. A literary precursor to the Metaverse is William Gibson's VR cyberspace called Matrix in the 1984 science fiction novel Neuromancer (Dionisio, Burns and Gilbert, 2013). The technology was prepared by mentioning the existence of a virtual environment that can be used by more than one user, and according to Dionisio et al., the online and multiplayer game called 'Habitat', which was released in 1987 and constitutes the second stage of the history of virtual worlds, is called the first Metaverse game in history. The Habitat game is considered to be the first example of a virtual world developed by Lucas Art and created with graphics. The word 'Avatar', which is used to describe the locals of the virtual world, was also first used in this game. In 1995, a virtual environment with 3D graphics, World Inc. It was created by. Users are given the opportunity to socialize in this 3D environment.

In the 2000s, game producers produced many games in this style, but since very powerful computers were required for the games produced, it took a while for them to become widespread. A modern literary reincarnation of the Metaverse is the OASIS, illustrated in the 2011 science fiction novel Ready Player One authored by Ernest Cline. OASIS is a massively multiuser online VR game that evolved into the predominant online destination for work, education and entertainment. It is an open game world, a constellation of virtual planets. Users connect to OASIS with headsets, haptic gloves and suits (Mystakidis, Fragkaki and Filippousis, 2021). Nowadays, Metaverse has rapidly integrated into our lives thanks to the availability of high-end computers and consoles (Dionisio et al., 2013). With the significant increase in user-based virtual environments such as Blue Mars and Second Life, the final stage of virtual worlds has been reached. These applications have become a platform used not only by individuals but also by businesses, non-profit organizations and even universities. With the development and evolution of these virtual universes, the final stage of virtual universes continues.

As mentioned above, the term metaverse was first used by Neal. Snow by Stephenson It was used in the novel Crash . Metaverse refers to a next-generation internet where users can interact with each other as avatars and in a three-dimensional virtual world through software applications. There is approximately 30 years of development behind the evolution of this term. Although the Metaverse is a virtual world considered human-centered computing, it shows significant positive impacts in terms of accessibility, diversity, equity, and humanity (Shackelford and Maxwell, 2012). According to Mozumder et al. (2022), these positive examples are; Remote surgery, telepresence, augmented reality surgery , 3D human anatomy models for education, visualization diagnosis, and planning , Architectural design for healthcare facilities, Preventive medicine and patient education, Haptic aided rehabilitation, Visualization of massive medical databases, Treatment planning, Medical therapy, Pain control, Psychotherapy through Virtual Reality, Virtual patients, Surgery simulation.

The original metaverse depicted in Stephenson's book is presented as a virtual world created with three-dimensional graphics created and used in the computer environment. Here, users are represented by avatars, which are used to represent real people in virtual environments. In Stephenson's metaverse environment, all content, including structures and characteristics, is created by software users. Although the novel attracted the imagination of individuals to the idea of the metaverse, in the early 1990s, it was not yet technically possible to realize this idea (Ondrejka, 2005).

Grider's definition, "Metaverse is a set of interconnected, experiential, three-dimensional virtual worlds in which people anywhere can socialize in real time to create a permanent, user-owned internet economy spanning the digital and physical worlds" (Grider, 2021). Considering Metaverse applications, the virtual environments known by the community are Roblox , Second Life, Zepeto , Fortnite , Gather. Town can be sorted in Minecraft format. Although these examples are mostly in the category of virtual game worlds, they also include applications such as education, economy and social activities. The mentioned platforms provide a virtual world-oriented user experience with their advanced 3D graphics, and virtual universes and events continue to be created with many registered users from different countries. For example, on the game platform called Fortnite, developed by Epic Games, a concert event was held with Travis Scott in April 2021, which can be considered the most famous concert in the Metaverse environment (Göçen, 2022).

Especially in a period when online alternatives have emerged in many areas due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the increasing popularity of this beyond-the-internet concept and its support with various investments also increases its importance (Jeon, Youn, Ko and Kim, 2022). In 2020, with COVID-19 locking everyone in their homes all over the world and living in quarantine environments, the obligation to spend time in a physically closed area has given people new skills in communicating and using the internet environment, and at the same time strengthened their level of existence in virtual reality environments. In the light of the latest developments in the internet, the concept of Metaverse, which emerged as the new generation internet, has created an agenda with interactions beyond virtual reality that have not existed before (Akturan, 2023).

The experiential dimension of entering these areas, especially with virtual reality glasses, brings the concept of Metaverse to a different dimension for users. Among the reasons why large-scale companies such as Meta and Microsoft are inclined to invest in the Metaverse field is the ability to offer unique experiences for users (Smith, 2021).

Metaverse turns into a platform that affects all human processes and creates the perception of all processes in the

physical world as if they are actually happening in this universe, by strengthening the illusion of reality, with equipment that will stimulate all sensory organs of people as they develop. This causes users to construct their selves according to the experience in this universe, as if they were having real experiences (Türk, 2022).

Self Reflection

Discussions about the self first emerged with symbolic interactionists James (1911), Cooley (1902) and Mead (1964). Mead, just like Cooley, emphasizes that the self and the individual cannot be considered independent of society and separate from the process of interaction. The way to be an individual or to have a self depends on the interaction established through meaningful symbols. At this point, Mead makes a distinction between instinctive gestures and meaningful gestures. Mead shows that humans, unlike animals, can communicate through symbols and meanings, and that in this way, the individual can adapt his or her own behavior to society. (Gökulu, 2019). According to them, self is creating a self-perception based not only on the material and spiritual characteristics a person has, but also on the evaluations of others about him/her. Through self-perception, the person aims to be accepted by reflecting the self that exists or wants to be to others with the "mirror self" (Cooley, 1902). Perception is the whole of physical, neurological and cognitive processes that enable a person to notice, recognize, understand, interpret and define the stimulus patterns obtained through the sense organs from the outside world or internal experiences (Tutar, 1988). With perception, the person manages his/her self-identity process by making sense of the reality of the external world. Because the perceptions acquired from the outside world are effective in shaping the person's own values, beliefs, wishes and needs, and therefore, he changes, transforms and presents his self-perception depending on these stimuli. Perception plays a critical role in shaping self-perception, as individuals interpret external stimuli to construct their self-concept.

Tuescher (1998) states that Wilhelm Wundt was the first psychologist to study self-reflection and introspection in 1907, and that he called these "conscious human experience" (Tuescher, 1998). Self-reflection is the situation where people observe their own thoughts, feelings and behaviors by reflecting on how they act and feel in the face of certain events. This observation process provides feedback so that people can self-regulate and improve their performance (Grant, Franklin and Langford, 2002).

Self-reflection is the evaluation of one's feelings, thoughts and behaviors; insight ; It is the awareness of one's behavior and comparing these behaviors with expected standard behavior. Thus, one looks at oneself from the outside; It can successfully achieve its goal by evaluating its development (Carver and Scheier, 1998).

Individuals can do self-reflection in many different ways to increase their awareness of the outside world. For some individuals, self-reflection is an automatic evaluation process. Individuals either require little or no effort for this process (Ekman, 1992).

It has been observed that people with self-reflection have more detailed self-schemas and express themselves better when asked to describe themselves than people with low self-schemas (Burnkrant and Page, 1988).

There are two types of self-reflection. The first of these is the productive problem-solving or solution-oriented approach, and the second is the individual-oriented approach. In a productive problem-solving or solution-oriented approach, people do whatever they can to achieve their goals. In the individual-focused approach, people try to understand and eliminate their negative emotions, cognitions and behaviors rather than acting to achieve their goals. In some cases, individuals can use both approaches together (Grant et al., 2002).

Reflection refers to the process of analyzing the individual's behaviors, decisions and the process of revealing them (Dowie and Elstein, 1988). According to Schön (1987), there are three types of reflection: reflection on action, reflection in action, and reflection for action. Reflection for action is a more preferred type of reflection than the types of reflection mentioned above. According to Schön (1987); Reflection for action is when individuals discover a new path with a new situation resulting from action (Dowie and Elstein, 1988).

In the current study, people's reflection in action was at the forefront.

METHODS

Research Model and Purpose of the research: This study aims to determine the dimensions that reveal self-reflections in the context of a metaverse game/application. For this reason, grounded theory approach was adopted as the research method. Grounded theory allows flexible data collection and theory to emerge from the data. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain: Theory derived from data is more likely to resemble 'truth' than theory derived from experience-based combination of a set of concepts or by pure speculation. Because grounded theories are derived from data, they are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action.

Research Group: Using the purposeful sampling method, 21 people who experienced the Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse game and the In-depth interviews were conducted in accordance with the nature of grounded theory method (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Selecting the participants who will form this sample group; It was based on both the accessibility of the researchers conducting the research to the participants and the participation and volunteerism of the virtual reality events. The saturation point used in many qualitative studies to determine the number of experiencers to be interviewed point approach was adopted (Glaser, 1978). In other words, data collection was stopped when newly collected data did not generate new insights into the phenomenon.

Data Collection: In the study, in-depth interview technique was used as the data collection method and an interview form based on user reporting was used. In the study, in-depth interviews were conducted with participants who experienced the Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse game between

20 May and 10 June 2023. These interviews lasted between 33 and 62 minutes. "The goal of qualitative research is to represent as accurately as possible what was said or done in data collection" (Shaw, 2015). For this reason, notes were taken to ensure that context was not lost, and the interviews were professionally transcribed to ensure accuracy.

Analysis of Data: It was used in data analysis , and the data was analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). After the data was collected from the participants, participant verification (member check) was done and checked again by the researcher. Then, while the data was collected, the researcher also made interpretation and comparison. Themes that could emerge from the data were determined. Finally, after all the data were collected, a check was made once again for thematic analysis. Creswell's (1998) criteria, which have an important place in the validity and reliability/credibility of qualitative research, were used in this research. These criteria have been included in the literature as the gold standard. Lincoln and Guba (1985) grouped the criteria for credibility under four main headings: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. It is recommended to specify one or more of these strategies to check the accuracy of the findings in a study (Creswell, 2003). In this study, metaverse experience was examined inductively in the context of self-reflections, and the context involving the respondents was also taken into account. The analysis was carried out through the integration of research findings with the theoretical framework, studies or literature (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The themes that emerged in the interview data and relevant literature were continually questioned and revised through the process of interpretation, collaboration between researchers, and this thematic structure developed throughout the process. Participants were asked about the nicknames they used in the games, and their approval was obtained after being informed that these nicknames would be used.

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Section	Experience	Meeting Duration
NoBodyDoesItBetter	M	23	Bachelor's	Cinema TV	Y	42 min.
ironclad	M	23	Bachelor's	Electrical-Electronics	N	38 min.
D3mon	M	18	Bachelor's	Software	Y	36 min.
gao	M	31	Associate Degree	Medical Imaging	Y	39 min.
Ritata	M	33	Bachelor's	Aviation	Y	59 min.
WenoM	M	27	Bachelor's	Public relations	Y	43 min.
eleagle	F	22	Bachelor's	Industrial design	Y	62 min.
Fadimilk	F	26	Bachelor's	Tourist Guidance	Y	47 min.
elmandarsen	M	31	High school		N	43 min.
insider	M	29	postgraduate	Sports Management	N	36 min.
G1.	F	26	postgraduate	Recreation	Y	41 min.
burak osama	M	24	Bachelor's	Sports Management	Y	37 min.
guckukgurba	M	18	High school		N	44 min.
katze	F	34	Postgraduate	Clinical Psychology	Y	46 min.
Modern Cowboy	M	27	Postgraduate	Clinical Psychology	Y	41 min.
silverberry	F	25	Bachelor's	Philosophy	Y	53 min.
MagoNegro	F	26	Associate Degree	Social services	Y	55 min.
Seto	M	23	High school		Y	33 min.
Ceronimo	F	23	High school		N	40 min.
Sue	F	28	Bachelor's	Recreation	N	43 min.
Yeliza	F	26	Associate Degree	Finance	N	38 min.

*F:Female, M:Male, Y:Yes, N:No

Cyberpunk 2077 Metaverse Game

Cyberpunk 2077, CD Projekt It is a role-playing video game developed by Red and published by CD Projekt in 2020. Adapted from the Cyberpunk series, the game takes place in Night City, a dystopian open world with six different regions. In the game played from a first-person perspective, players play the character V, who has options such as hacking, mechanical skills, ranged weapon use and melee combat.

Cyberpunk 2077 is played from a first-person perspective as V, a mercenary whose voice, face, hairstyle, body type and modifications, cyber equipment, and clothing can be customized. Character traits—Body, Intelligence, Reflexes, Technical Ability, and Cool Mind—are affected by the character classes players assume: Netwalker (hacking), Technician (engineering), and Solo (assault).

Cyberpunk 2077 received more than 8 million pre-orders, 74% of which were digital, generating more than $500 million in revenue on its release day. The game received a total of 8 million pre-orders across all platforms, making it the most pre-ordered game of all time. This record was previously held by Grand Theft Auto V, made by Rockstar Games, with 7 million pre-orders (Wood, 2020) Within twelve hours of release, the game had over one million concurrent players on Steam (Bayliss, 2020). In the statement made on April 14, 2022, it was announced that the number of copies sold was more than 18 million (Tolbert, 2022).

The Cyberpunk 2077 game offers its users much more opportunities to do whatever they want when designing an avatar than other metaverse games. The game offers many options for users to choose the gender they want, hair style, length, body lines, add tattoos, etc. This also provides the widest window for people to use their imagination to reflect

themselves when creating an avatar. For this reason, the Cyberpunk 2077 game was thought to be the best choice for people to reflect themselves in the research, and the Cyberpunk game was selected to be used in the research.

RESULTS

Analyzes made as a result of the interviews show that the experiences obtained from participation in the metaverse game Cyberpunk 2077 can be grouped under eight main themes. These; Illusory Being, Mirror, Instant Mood, Fashion and Visual Pleasure, Personal Equipment, Imagination World, Integration, Desire/Request. Figure 1 shows the main themes regarding the metaverse gaming experience in the context of self-reflections.
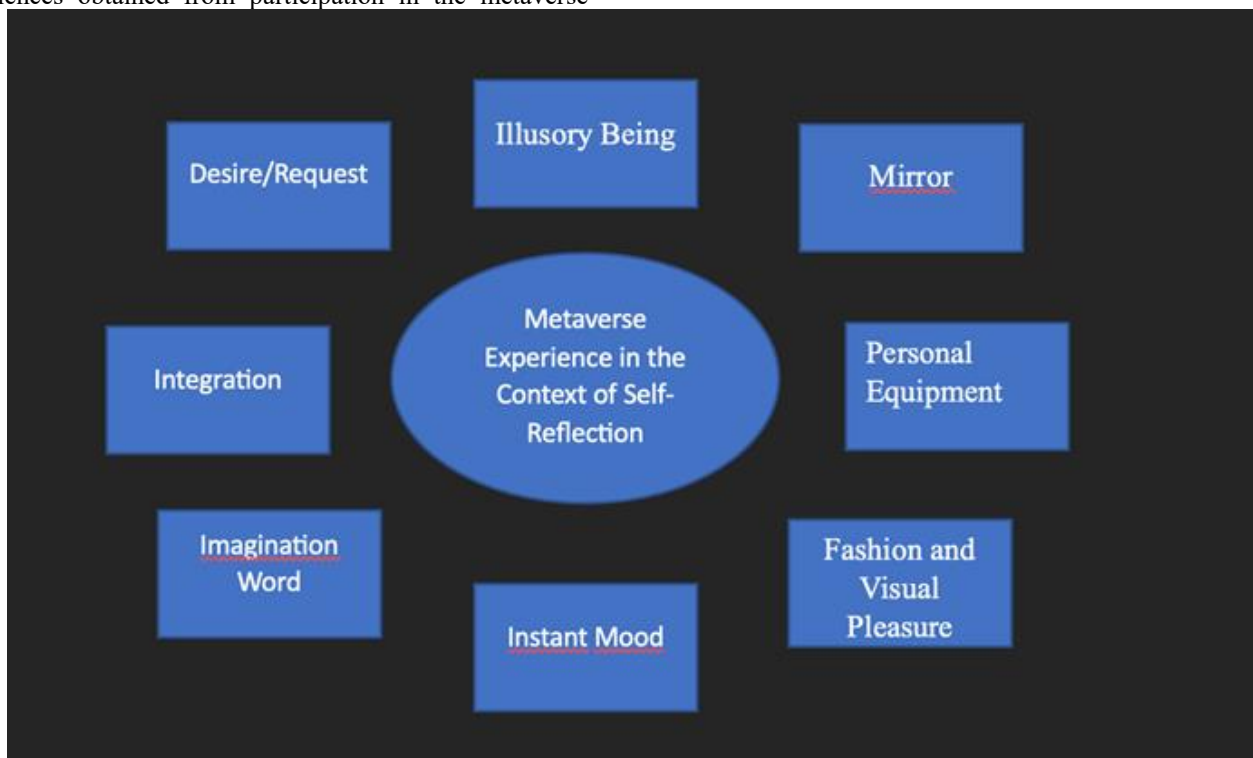

Figure 1. Metaverse experience in the context of self-reflections

Illusory Being

It refers to the feeling of being physically and with others in a virtual environment for Metaverse game users. The reason why existence is defined as an illusion is due to the participant's feeling of confusion and confusion. The sub-themes of this theme are detachment from reality, isolation from reality, and perceiving the virtual as real. The realization of this illusion is related to the user's level of isolating himself from the physical environment he is in and diving into the virtual world. The person's self-control regarding staying in the physical environment prevents him from getting caught up in emotions, which prevents him from diving into the reality in the virtual environment. In other words, immersion in the metaverse world of activity is considered to be related to the context of getting rid of being stuck between two worlds (physical-virtual) and integrating into the virtual world (Argan, Tokay Argan and Dinç, 2022). Participants used the following statements regarding this theme:

"I am having lifelike experiences with its successful animations and high graphic quality. "I feel like I have broken away from the boringness of routine life and moved into a new universe in the world of imagination." (Fadimilk , F, 26)

" The game is completely designed as a universe where I can live my dream world. Driving motorcycles that I normally want to drive but do not have the courage to drive, and cars that I cannot afford financially, creates a truly enjoyable situation for me. I love the environments in the game's inner world. Since I don't normally socialize with people much, this reflects my characteristics in the game and it draws me in even more. Activities such as the character being alone, riding beautiful cars and motorcycles, and traveling are the factors that connect me to the game and make me spend time in the game all the time." (Insider , M, 29)

"It started as a curiosity and turned into a passion. It was a very enjoyable activity for me, for which I devoted extra time. I now organize my daily tasks according to the game. The more time I spend in the game, the better it is for me. When I'm playing, I become a happier person than usual and more peaceful." (MagoNegro , F, 26)

Mirror

In the study, self-reflections is the theme most closely related to its scope. It refers to the way participants reflect themselves physically and psychologically. Participants reflect themselves in two ways. The first is that they reflect their own feelings and thoughts into the game, and the second is that they reflect the events in the game into their real lives. Participants used the following statements regarding this theme:

"First of all, I make the face part that is most similar to my own face. Additionally, I physically design my player in a

way that best reflects my own physical characteristics. But in addition, I make my player wear tattoos, scars, or clothes that I like that I don't have the opportunity or have in real life, which the game offers." (Gao , M, 31)

' ' The psychology of the player is reflected in everything in life, and of course it is reflected in the game. If I am pessimistic, I choose darker colors, but when I am in a good mood, I can choose more colorful things. I have done things like this in other such open world games, but I still try to adjust the game according to my emotional state at the time and of course it may change in this case. The most important factor is my emotional and psychological state at that moment." (WenoM , M, 28)

"I create my character according to my aesthetic concerns. I dress the character in a way that pleases my eye, using things I find beautiful. It needs to reflect me and be colorful." (Eleagle , F, 22)

' When I'm having a bad day or feeling angry, my avatars look tougher. For example, I prefer darker colors. On days when I'm in a good mood, they are colorful. The avatars I created entirely with my own design make me feel as if I own them. My self-confidence is increasing. I think I added a character from myself in all of them." (Fadimilk , F, 26)

"Someone I want to be is a reflection of me. "A character that I created everything the way I wanted, that reflects me spiritually and has the personality I want physically." (G1., F, 26)

"My own appearance and personal tastes are a factor that makes the game more interesting for me. I want my character to have my own physical appearance, and when I dress him, I choose what best suits my taste. I decide by thinking about which one I would choose if I were in real life. So, when I create the character at that moment, I create it according to my real life situation. Each game has a different detail in this regard. Cyberpunk 2077 also offers good options and makes it more exciting. As I explained above, yes, I reflect my real-life tastes. In this way, I aim for a gaming experience closer to reality." (Modern Cowboy , M, 27)

"Of course they are in frequency with each other. I can see the reflections of my mood, sometimes the colors follow each other and the other day they can carry complexity together. A strange adventure. As I mentioned before, corona has internalized this reflection in us, everything we see as far from reality has now become interconnected. While anger during the day sometimes made me make more soulless designs, a joyful day made me create more colorful designs." (Silverberrily , F, 25)

Instant Mood

This theme refers to the phenomenon of instantaneous feeling, which is one of the greatest characteristics of the age we live in. As pointed out by people who experience the Metaverse event, it refers to the positive and negative emotions they feel at the time of the event when they experience it. Participants made the following statements about this theme:

"It's nice to be able to express myself freely, but this still varies from person to person. I find it disturbing that +18 and sexual elements appear when designing. I didn't design characters of the opposite sex. And I was uncomfortable that the game allowed so much openness and nudity, so I didn't try it." (Ceronimo , F, 23)

"It is an enjoyable and effective way to spend time that has improved beyond my expectations. It is a surprisingly enjoyable content that is open to improvement and creativity." (NoBodyDoesItBetter , M, 23)

"Although I am a gamer in general, it took some time to get used to it because it is a different style of game. It has an absorbing structure, both in terms of graphics and gameplay. But due to the bugs in the game, I lost interest in the game for a while. But despite everything, I can recommend it to friends who haven't played it yet. It is a satisfying game thanks to its high future-oriented graphics." (Gao , M, 31)

"Since I enjoy designing avatars, sometimes I spend a lot of time on this part. "I create characters that I like by trying many of the tools offered to me and making different combinations, and I enjoy doing this." (Fadimilk , F, 26)

"Honestly, I couldn't even guess that it was so detailed until I played it. They included everything you can think of, even details you haven't thought of. For example, scar, body hair, genital area shape and size. What you decide is entirely up to you. This is truly an amazing experience. In fact, it was very nice to be offered many options that could completely reflect the character that I wanted to be in real life, but could not be. To give an example, one of the clear definitions that define the real me is physical strength, but while designing the avatar in the game, I can say that I equipped myself a little more mentally. For example, you can dismantle or hack the door while stealing the car. I, who cannot format in my real life, could hack almost anything I wanted in the game. This may seem strange to you, but it was very satisfying for me." (Elmandarsen , M, 31)

"A near-realistic experience where everything has been considered. The game draws you in while playing. I had so much fun playing it that I lost track of time. While playing games, it gives me pleasure to do something that I cannot do in real life, and it helps me to dream. "I make designs that fit my ideals." (G1, M, 26)

"In general, the story of the game and the fiction and functioning of this story are interesting. Also, the graphics are very nice and it is enjoyable to play. I had a lot of fun creating characters in the game, I've always loved games with such customization options. Having a wide range of options in this game and being able to do whatever I want also made me enjoy it." (Katze , F, 34)

"A virtual environment where we are presented with a universe that is both familiar and far away. And it makes us feel the existence of a near future, not a distant future. Corona is a clear example of this, even those who are far

away from the virtual environment have become unable to give up the existence of virtual reality during the pandemic period. Yes, we have all experienced this in some way. We were introduced to these types of games and they were the easiest way to have fun." (Silverberrily , F, 25)

Fashion and Visual Pleasure

This theme includes the participants' fashion perceptions and uses of fashion, as well as the visual effects and effects that form their fashion perceptions. It reflects the fashion elements that users pay attention to when creating their characters. In this theme, there are sub-themes such as creating fashion, being pleasing to the eye, and visual appreciation. Participants made the following statements about this theme:

"As long as I like it, I don't care about any external or active fashion and taste criteria, what matters is my taste and design integrity." (NoBodyDoesItBetter , M, 23)

"After making the character as similar to myself as possible, I try on the clothes among the options offered by the game and choose the one I like the most. Depending on my purpose in this game, sometimes it can be a suit, sometimes it can be sportswear. But I still dress my character by choosing the one I like best among these options. I choose clothes that I like. I don't follow fashion much and I'm not very interested in it. I choose the one I like best among those that catch my eye at that moment. Even though I am indecisive most of the time, I try to choose the one that suits me best." (Gao , M, 31)

"I like designing for the opposite sex more. There is no reason, but I do it because the images of men are generally better in games and they fit the environment better. I especially like colorful eyed, bearded and muscular men. This is pleasing to my eye. I constantly show my character in the game to the people I play with and get their comments, and these comments are generally positive. I create the character by choosing the best one, not according to fashion, but according to the opportunities offered. At that moment, I choose the one that looks aesthetically pleasing to my eyes." (Eleagle , F, 22)

"The transition of fashion to the gaming world is a kind of tulip era. As someone who is closely interested in fashion, I observe this process virtually, and in addition to having fun while designing, seeing the fashion process in games increases my inspiration and creativity. I can't say that I feel extreme emotions, but of course there are times when I design characters that I like based on my sense of fashion and it is exciting. In digital design, I like to dress the authentic, the things that no one else has. My priority is to be, to be, to be different from everyone else, to be different from everyone else." (Silverberrily , F, 25)

"Fashion is at a very important point today, we try to choose fashionable not only our clothes but also our house and car. That's why, when designing characters, we include whatever is most preferred and loved today, and it is enjoyable. It would not be nice to act limited in a place where there are unlimited opportunities. That's why the most important factor when designing is to be interesting and impressive, and the second factor is to dress in a

fashionable way. When these two combine, a perfect character is formed." (MagoNegro , F, 26)

"I designed a man (the opposite sex) so that I can do everything the way I want. I designed a strong, handsome male figure that appeals to me and appeals to the eye. Visuality is very important to me. That's why the character I make has to be attractive and liked by others. "I don't know if she is very interested in fashion or not, but I created my character in the way I liked best." (Sue , F, 28)

Personal Equipment

This theme refers to the characteristics that metaverse participants said they had when they experienced the game. It includes sub-themes such as originality, being free, creativity, ordinariness, variability, being different, realistic and marginal. When people play the game, they reflect their own characteristics into the game and their characters. Participants made the following statements regarding this theme:

"The characters I create are characters created according to my mood at that moment, so the characters I design change according to that moment. I like it when I design characters like this, I like designing characters and I enjoy it. I also like to change the characters I design later according to my mood." (d3mon, M, 18)

"Breaking the moral values prescribed by society, being different and experiencing different lives, breaking the so-called taboo rules in the virtual environment makes me excited to play this game. I don't dress like this in my daily life. "I design different designs according to whether they are compatible with the current avatar or what I feel at that moment." (ritata , M, 33)

"The interesting part is that I don't bear even the slightest resemblance to the character I created, I don't know what others would do, but I can definitely say that it is a very satisfying experience to reflect the character that I want to be but cannot be. I think I can at least reflect my free spirit in the play. My character was very satisfying for me and I paid attention to all the details while designing it, I can say that it took almost 2 hours, and it means very nice things because it carries a few parts of me." (Elmandarsen , M, 31)

"While creating the character, I take care to make him a little bigger and more muscular. I do it a little more than my own body characteristics. Even though I improve my body by doing sports, I cannot have my thin wrists and muscle mass as I dreamed. Afterwards, I try the hairstyles I like on the character. I try hair styles that are close to the hair styles I have seen in TV series or the hair styles of athletes I see as idols. But when I try on a hair style, I take my body measurements according to myself so that I can see how it will look. In fact, creating a kind of character serves as a way for me to look at myself from the outside. When I think about what it would be like to get a tattoo, I try them too. The interesting thing is that the game gives me what I want so much that you can even size the character's genitals as you wish. As for dressing; In fact, I spend a lot of time dressing because I am someone who attaches importance to combinations. Even though I don't spend time outside in my

daily life, there are times when I think about what to wear and what combination to wear when I go out. I constantly change styles in the game to see which combination would be better. That's why character formation and clothing parts take some time." (Insideman , M, 29)

"Due to the frequent use of male characters in recent games, I designed a female character for a different experience and I was pleased with it. Playing with different genders in the game did not spoil the atmosphere and did not compromise the enjoyment. I don't feel any feelings towards him. I do not have any emotional relationships with the characters in the game. I design characters that are contrary to life and have a high image that cannot exist in my real life." (gucukgurba , M, 18)

"If I have created a character that does not resemble me, rather than a character that can achieve things that I cannot achieve, it is only in terms of appearance. So I'm not making any changes to myself. "I'm making a completely different character, maybe a little bit marginal." (Katze , F, 34)

"The only thing I think about when designing an avatar is that I am free. It doesn't fit into any mold. There are no restrictions regarding gender, I can design a woman who is both strong and beautiful. So, I can design a muscular, strong and beautiful woman who is 1.90 tall. I don't have to give up existing features to add some features. My avatar can be both male and female. It seems complicated and ridiculous, but it's actually a lot of fun." (MagoNegro , F, 26)

Imagination Word

This theme is used to describe the use of imagination and expansion of perspective in the user. This theme, which consists of the sub-themes "Reflecting imagination", "Use of imagination", "Distance from reality", "Creating your dream partner", "Being contrary to reality", is another way that users create themselves while playing the game. It explains their finding in the universe or dimension. Thanks to the opportunities provided by the game, users had the opportunity to use their imagination to experience unreal features and situations and reflect them on their characters. Participants made the following statements about this theme:

"First of all, I wanted the avatar to be very different. A truly memorable avatar. I wanted everyone who sees it to be surprised and even find it strange at first, but I wanted it to be an avatar that will be loved and unforgettable over time. I can adjust skin color, height, weight and body lines as I wish. In fact, we can create an avatar just like drawing a picture on a canvas. We push our imagination or reveal what exists. " (MagoNegro , F, 26)

"It feels nice because I've created a new avatar based only on the criteria I want. "I don't think it affects my daily life much, maybe it triggers me to dream." (G1, F, 26)

"As a result, since the game takes place in the future, I try to make designs based on my imagination by thinking about the future. "Although the diversity offered by the game is sufficient for now, if it increases a little more in the future, it could be much better and more creative ideas may emerge." (WenoM, M, 27)

"Yes, there were times when I designed characters of the opposite sex. As someone who likes the opposite sex, I sometimes design a character with the features of my dream partner." (Fadimilk , F, 26)

"Actually, I would be lying if I said I didn't create the opposite sex. I created a character of the opposite sex. As for why I did this; I was wondering what my dream woman would look like. Clothing style, hair style, height, weight, body lines, etc. I created the woman of my dreams and continued playing with her for a while." (insideman , M, 29)

"Of course, I include possibilities that are difficult to realize in life when I design. I like to see the contradiction there in an extreme way. This enriches my imagination at the same time." (Silverberrily , F, 25)

Integration

The concept of integration in a sociological sense generally tries to explain the harmony or harmonious functioning between the elements that make up a society (Karaca, 2012). This theme includes integration with the game and integration with the character. It refers to users adopting and assimilating the characters they create by immersing themselves in the application in the metaverse universe. Participants made the following statements about this theme:

" While I like my character when I play when I'm happy, I can question my character when I feel a little worse psychologically. But in general, I love the characters I make and I feel close to them. "One of the most important reasons why the game draws me in is how much my character resembles me." (Gao , M, 31)

"When creating the avatar in the game, the variety offered by the game is quite sufficient. Having more options as the game progresses increases the gaming experience and helps the player to integrate with the characters. As you continue to play the game, it is possible to integrate with the characters." (WenoM , M, 27)

"The character helps me get into the game. I adapt to the story of the game more easily. I embrace the character and feel like I live in that world myself. I don't feel like I'm directing, I feel like I'm that person." (Eleagle , F, 22)

"If I have designed an avatar that looks like me, then I pay more attention to that game and start thinking about the game even when I am not playing during the day. When I create characters similar to myself, I integrate with the game and the characters. If I'm thinking about the game while getting ready for the day, the character I've created, etc., or if I'm immersed in the game at night and wake up in the morning, then I think about my avatar and prepare more carefully. I like to look alike with my avatar." (Katze , F, 34)

"In this game and all other character design games, I design the character based on my own physical appearance and clothing style. This way, I feel more integrated with the game." (ModernCowboy , M, 27)

"I see character as art and myself as an artist. That's why I take care, pay attention to the smallest detail, and internalize it." (Silverberrily , F, 25)

Desire/Request

This theme includes users' expectations and wishes from the opportunities offered within the Metaverse application. It shows what people can want when they have the opportunity. This theme, which consists of sub-themes such as "The desire to be attractive", "To be marginal", "The desire to complete their deficiencies", explains the changes that the users want to make to themselves with their completely free will. Participants made the following statements about this theme:

"I did not design a character of the opposite sex, it was more attractive for me to be able to reflect the character I wanted to be in everything." (Elmandarsen , M, 31)

"If I have created a character that does not resemble me, rather than a character that can achieve things that I cannot achieve, it is only in terms of appearance. So I'm not making any changes to myself. "I'm making a completely different character, maybe a little bit marginal." (Katze , F, 34)

"I may have created characteristics in my character that I do not have psychologically myself. So, I may have actually created such a character because I wanted to be strong and muscular. The character I create needs to be attractive and liked by others." (Sue , F, 28)

"While designing the characters, I designed many of the features that I found lacking in myself, with the feeling that I was creating myself from scratch. I made the game more enjoyable by reflecting the self I wanted to be on my character. We can say that I integrated all the missing features into the character. In general, I like being interesting both in reality and in the virtual world. That's why I designed my character to be liked and to be the center of attention while designing the character." (Yeliza , F, 26)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We examine how the users who experience the Cyberpunk 2077 game as a metaverse game perceive themselves within the metaverse universe, how they express their experiences, especially regarding this event, and to what extent the participants connect with the game and identify themselves with the game, specifically the concept of 'self-reflection' in this game. The results of this study pointed out dimensions that can be grouped under eight themes. These; Illusory Being, Mirror, Instant Mood, Fashion and Visual Pleasure, Personal Equipment, Imagination World, Integration, Desire/Request. The results of this study highlight some key factors in what metaverse user experiences include in terms of 'self-reflection', how they are defined by users, and how they connect them to the evolving metaverse platform. The important and original aspect of these research findings is related to terminological dimensions and content that can be expressed as specific to the metaverse universe. While some of these findings (Illusory Presence, Instant Emotion, Dream World) are similar to some studies in the literature (Argan et al., 2022), other new themes (Mirror, Personal Equipment, Fashion and Visual Pleasure, Integration) provide a theoretical explanation and It underlines the originality of this study and the themes that can contribute to

the literature. Although this new data obtained in the study is in the metaverse literature, it is possible to transfer it to other fields.

When we look at the studies conducted in the field, it is seen that Metaverse activity studies related to the phenomenon of 'self-reflection' are quite limited (Ayiter, 2012; Sungvaribudh and Nasongkhla, 2023; Deligöz, 2024). In this respect, the current study fills the gap in the literature. The study results draw attention to the subject of metaverse, a new digital activity channel where users can interact with each other in new and immersive ways, socialize, get pleasure, have a pleasant time and play games. As a result, it is expected that this study will be used as an important feedback for new changes in the leisure or activity-based metaverse market by clearly determining the experiences of consumers participating in metaverse activities in the leisure and entertainment industry (Argan et al., 2022).

Türk et al.'s study in 2022, the subject of metaverse and self-presentation was discussed, similar to the current study, and as a result of the qualitative compilation, users felt valued and approved in the metaverse universe, which is seen as the environment where not only interpersonal communication processes but also all kinds of relationships will be perceived as if they were experienced in the physical world. It has been concluded that they present their identities on this platform with showcase performances in order to belong and experience all kinds of emotions. In addition, on this platform, where interest in the metaverse universe is increasing day by day and where big brands, as well as participants, are competing to take part in this universe, and where luxury brands such as Gucci, Luis Vuitton and Channel are located, users are affected by brand fanaticism, consumption culture and fashion trends, some of them losing the comfort of their real lives. It has been stated that some people are willing to pay thousands of dollars for NFTs to carry and build their ideal self by having this luxury in such a universe.

Cairns et al. (2014) stated that when different psychological abilities such as attention, planning and perception are combined in a game, they create a combination that leads to a focused state of mind, and in this case, players are less aware of the world around them and become absorbed in the game. This result is similar to the "dream world" theme in the current study.

Although the research was conducted in the digital game area of Metaverse, it can also include sports and recreational activities such as concerts, entertainment, parks, etc. and can be considered to contribute to these areas. Although this study deals with self-reflections as the main research topic, the emerging themes generally emphasize the various interests that attract people to digital environments, enable them to have a fun time, and keep them in it and drag them along. From a broad perspective, the study findings reveal opportunities for additional research, both quantitative and qualitative, in addition to theoretical knowledge.

In the Metaverse field, the focus was mostly on technical issues and user experiences were generally put in the background, so it started to emerge later on. Although metaverse studies are almost non-existent in the field of

sports and recreation, there are many scientific examples (Ma and Zheng, 2011; Webel et al., 2013; ; Arıcı 2013; Smith et al., 2014; Lee and Kim, 2018; Hamilton et al., 2021; Emmelkamp and Meyerbröker, 2021). It is also possible to find examples in the field of literature (Durukan, 2017).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study expands the knowledge and literature regarding the experiences of individuals participating in virtual reality or metaverse activities. Theoretically, in the context of the game, Proteus contributes to the knowledge in the literature on the concept of effect. Viewed from a broad perspective, study findings reveal opportunities for additional qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research and theoretical knowledge. The findings of the research can also serve as an example for virtual reality studies in different disciplines. In addition, the study findings are guiding for researchers who want to work on similar topics in the future. The themes emerging as a result of the study may enable the development of virtual reality environments, Metaverse and leisure-based activities, and may reveal many potential research opportunities.

When using virtual reality technology and metaverse games for a recreational activity, basic virtual reality elements such as immersion, flow, dream world, and Proteus effect must be used in the most appropriate way. Regarding this, Argan et al. (2022) stated that the flow element can play a role in developing strategies to influence the current emotions of virtual reality users and enable them to stay in the environment and enjoy themselves without getting bored, thanks to proactive virtual editing criteria. In addition, leading organizations in the entertainment and gaming industry can take advantage of the opportunity to develop a brand new, holistically focused and culturally acceptable market to understand the service experience in the context of comprehensive next-generation technology. Game producers, who have to constantly improve themselves, can

also produce content that will meet users' requests regarding their future games in the light of the findings of the study.

Limitations and Recommendations

Although the current research has made significant contributions to the literature in the context of metaverse activities within the scope of 'self-reflection', it can be stated that, as in many qualitative studies, there are limitations regarding the size and representativeness of the sample consisting of a limited number of participants using the purposeful sampling method. The results of the study are limited due to the nature of qualitative research and the sample size. For this reason, similar studies can be conducted from different countries to reach more generalizable results. The research sample consisted of participants in Turkey. Different results may be obtained in places with higher technology acceptance levels.

Additionally, larger and generalizable quantitative studies using scales or creating new scales can provide a new perspective.

Cyberpunk 2077 game was used in this research because it offers a wide range of options and is an application where participants can express themselves freely. New research can be conducted on this subject as more perfect games and opportunities emerge in the future.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Çalışmanın Amacı

Literatürde benlik kavramının yansımasını temsil eden çalışmaların sanal gerçeklik ve özellikle de metaverse bağlamında incelendiği araştırma sayısı son derece kıttır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın amacı Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse oyunu/uygulaması bağlamında benlik yansımalarını ortaya koyan boyutların belirlenmesidir. Benlik yansımasının metaverse dünyasındaki durumunu tasvir eden bu yaklaşım literatürdeki boşluğu doldurabilecek bir niteliktedir.

Araştırma Sorusu

Metaverse oyunları kişilerin benliklerini sunma aracı olarak kullandıkları bir alan mıdır ?

Literatur Araştırması

Bir metaverse oyunu olarak Cyberpunk 2077 oyununu deneyimleyen kullanıcıların metaverse evreni içerisinde kendilerini nasıl algıladıkları, özellikle bu etkinlik ile ilgili olarak deneyimlerini nasıl ortaya koyduklarını ve bu oyun içerisinde 'kendini yansıtma' kavramı özelinde katılımcıların oyunu deneyimlerken ne derece oyun ile bağlantı kurup kendilerini oyun ile özdeşleştirdiğini incelediğimiz bu çalışmanın sonuçları, sekiz tema altında gruplandırılabilecek boyutları işaret etmiştir. Bunlar; İllüzyonel Varlık, Ayna, Anlık Duygu Durumu, Moda ve Görsel Haz, Kişisel Donanım, Hayal Alemi, Bütünleşme, Arzu/İstektir. Bu çalışma sonuçları, metaverse kullanıcı deneyimlerinin 'kendini yansıtma' özelinde neleri kapsadığı, kullanıcılar tarafından nasıl tanımlandığını ve bunları gelişen metaverse platformuna nasıl bağladığını gösteren bazı temel faktörleri vurgulamaktadır. Bu araştırma bulgularının önemli ve özgün tarafı metaverse evrenine özgü olarak ifade edilebilecek terminolojik boyutlandırmalara ve içeriğe ilişkindir. Bu bulguların bir bölümü (İllüzyonel varlık, Anlık Duygu, Hayal Alemi) literatürdeki bazı çalışmalarla benzerlik gösterirken ortaya çıkan diğer yeni temalar (Ayna, Kişisel Donanım, Moda ve Görsel Haz,

Bütünleşme) teorik bir açıklama sağlayıcı niteliktedir ve bu çalışmanın özgün tarafını ve literatüre katkı sağlayabilecek temaların altını çizmektedir. Çalışmada elde edilen bu yeni verilerin her ne kadar metaverse literatüründe olsa da diğer alanlara da transfer edilmesi mümkündür.

Alanda yapılan çalışmalara bakıldığında 'kendini yansıtma' olgusu ile bağlantılı Metaverse etkinlik çalışmalarının oldukça sınırlı olduğu görülmüştür. Bu yönü ile mevcut çalışma literatürdeki boşluğu doldurma niteliği taşımaktadır. Çalışma sonuçları, kullanıcıların birbirleriyle yeni ve sürükleyici şekillerde etkileşime girebileceği, sosyalleşebileceği, haz alabileceği, keyifli vakit geçirebileceği ve oyun oynayabileceği yeni bir dijital etkinlik mecrası olan metaverse konusuna dikkat çekmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın boş zaman ve eğlence endüstrisindeki metaverse etkinliklerine katılan tüketicilerin deneyimlerini net bir şekilde belirleyerek, boş zaman veya etkinlik temelli metaverse pazarındaki yeni değişiklikler için önemli bir geribildirim olarak kullanılması beklenmektedir. Türk vd'nin 2022 yılındaki çalışmasında mevcut çalışma konusuna benzer olarak metaverse ve benlik sunumu konusu ele alınmış ve yapılan nitel derleme sonucunda sadece kişilerarası iletişim süreçleri değil, her tür ilişkinin de adeta fiziksel dünyada yaşanıyormuşçasına algılanacağı ortam olarak görülen metaverse evreninde kullanıcıların kendini değerli hissetmek, onaylanmak, ait olmak, her tür duyguyu deneyimlemek adına benliklerini vitrin performansları ile bu platformda sundukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Yöntem

Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak Cyberpunk 2077 metaverse oyununu deneyimleyen 21 kişi ile gömülü teori yönteminin doğasına uygun biçimde derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşme yapılacak deneyimleyici sayısının belirlenmesinde pek çok nitel araştırmada kullanılan doyum noktası (saturation point) yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Veri analizinde gömülü teori yöntemi kullanılmış olup, veriler sürekli karşılaştırmalı analiz kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Nitel araştırmaların

geçerliliği ve güvenilirliğinde/inandırıcılığında (trustworthiness) önemli bir yere sahip Creswell'in kriterleri bu araştırmada kullanılmıştır.

Sonuç ve Değerlendirme

Gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler neticesinde yapılan analizler Cyberpunk 2077 adlı metaverse oyunu katılımından elde edilen deneyimlerin sekiz ana tema altında gruplandırılabileceğini göstermektedir. Bunlar; İllüzyonel Varlık, Ayna, Anlık Duygu Durumu, Moda ve Görsel Haz, Kişisel Donanım, Hayal Alemi, Bütünleşme, Arzu/İstektir. Bu bulgular artık hayatımızda büyük bir yere sahip olan ve hoş vakit geçirme, stresten uzaklaşma, sosyalleşme gibi sebeplerle oynanan dijital oyunların Metaverse ile birlikte kendini yansıtma, moda oluşturma, bütünleşme, hayal alemine dalma gibi yeni amaçlarla da oynanmaya başlandığını göstermektedir. Benlik yansımasını oluşturan boyut veya faktörleri ortaya koyan bu çalışma var olan litaretüre katkı sağlamaktadır. Şöyle ki benlik yansımalarını temsil eden anlık haz, akış, kaçış, İllüzyonel varlık gibi faktörlere ilave olarak çalışmada ortaya çıkan moda oluşturma, hayal alemi, bütünleşme, kişisel donanımların kullanımı, kişilik yansımaları gibi faktörler teorik bir açıklama sağlayıcı niteliktedir. Ayrıca araştırmanın sonuçları metaverse uygulayıcılarının veya tasarımcılarının benlik konusunu kendi stratejilerine nasıl entegre edebilecekleri konusunda yol gösterici olacaktır.