

# The magical realistic world of the virtual recreation

Özlem Güncan

## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Virtual reality,  
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The aim of the study is to seek an answer to the question of whether the concept of virtual recreation can be considered in the context of the magical realism. The study prepared for this purpose has been carried out from a conceptual point of the view. The data required for the research have been obtained by reviewing the relevant literature. The reviewing process has been carried out in the context of the concepts of "virtual recreation" and "magical realism" and the study has been limited to these concepts. The data obtained as a result of the reviewing the literature have been analyzed conceptually. The analyzes have been made by first evaluating the concepts of virtual recreation and magical realism, and then comparatively examining the findings obtained from these evaluations. After the evaluations, it has been concluded that the magical realism approach is compatible with the structure of the virtual recreation and it is possible to evaluate the virtual recreation experience in the context of magical realism approach.


## 1. Introduction

With the development of the digital technologies and the introduction of the virtual reality technology into daily life, many changes have occurred in the lives of societies (Aylan & Aylan, 2020). With these changes, the perception of time and space that individuals have has completely changed. This change took place in individual lives at first has reached a level that will affect the social life later on (Atar, 2019). This situation has also transformed the leisure habits of individuals (Aytaç, 2004). Thus, computer and video games, virtual tours and electronic activities have become a part of the leisure time of individuals in daily life (Nimrod & Adoni, 2012). Today, individuals whose lives are shaped around these new practices have been focused on living surreal experiences and have started to do this with virtual activities created in electronic environments (Williams & Hobson, 1995). Over time, these applications have become a means of entertainments, relaxation and pleasure for individuals (Özkeroğlu & Akyıldız Munusturlar, 2020). It is observed that this change has transformed the phenomenon of recreation as well as in other areas concerning social life. It is also seen that this change in the leisure time preferences of the society and the forms of participation in recreation has carried the recreation preferences of individuals from the physical environment to the virtual environment, and brought the concept of "virtual recreation" to the agenda.

It is known that virtual recreation requires the experience of the virtual reality technology, and gives the participant

a surreal activity experience. Considering this situation, it is seen that virtual recreation has some unique features and it is thought that these features are similar to the magical realism approach. In line with this idea, it is assumed that it will be possible to evaluate the virtual reality experience in the context of magical realism. However, it is seen that magical realism has been used in the fields of philosophy, painting and literature until today. Studies in these fields have been carried out in the context of defining magical realism, investigating its past from the painting to the literature, and examining the works considered as magical realism texts (Ulusoy Aranyosi, 2011). Considering the use of magical realism in other fields, it is seen that this concept is reflected in the literature with a very limited number of studies. So magical realism is discussed in augmented reality and virtual reality applications in several studies (Kelley, 1992; Klonowska, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2020). Since virtual recreation applications require the experience of the virtual reality technology, it is thought that magical realism is suitable for the structure of the virtual recreation and the virtual recreation should be considered and evaluated in the context of the magical realism. The aim of this study prepared in line with this idea has been determined as seeking an answer to the question of "can magical realism be used to explain the virtual recreation experience?" Therefore, the study will be conducted in the context of the virtual recreation and the magical realism concepts and some inferences will be made for the magical realistic world of the virtual recreation based on the findings to be obtained from the analyzes. At the end of the

Research paper

Özlem Güncan: Asst. Prof., Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Burdur, Türkiye, Email: ozlemozkeroğlu@mehmetakif.edu.tr, Orcid Id: 0000-0002-8974-9100 



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study, it is expected to find an answer to the research question and to clarify whether virtual recreation can be considered in the context of the magical realism.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### *Virtual Reality*

Postmodernism, which started to be used primarily to express new trends in art and architecture in the 1960s, has significantly affected the culture of period since then. Thus, with the postmodern period, society has entered a new period that differed from other periods in history. In particular, this period has separated from the modern era that preceded it and has made people feel that their times was unique (Ward, 2014). In this period, relations between people has turned into relations between things in capitalism. Although this expresses an objective phenomenon, there is a human reality behind it (Horkheimer, 1998). Therefore, in the society created by postmodernism, imitations, as models that prioritize “truth”, have begun to dominate the social order and form the society as “hyperreality” (Akkaya & Usman, 2012). Along with hyperreality, the indicators between “representation” and “reality” have gained importance (Pretes, 1995). In hyperreality, everything is a copy and most of the time, the imitation is perceived as more real than the real one (Urry, 2009). In this context, the expression “disappearance of reality” is accepted as a basic expression for hyperreality. The main factor behind this statement is that with the developing technology, the real and the unreal have become indistinguishable from each other (Aktaş Polat, 2015). Therefore, in this period when reality is lost, there are hyperrealities and the border between the real and the imaginary has disappeared (Akman, 2017b).

Hyperreality is used to represent the power of simulation in determining the reality, and it refers to the realization of deception, simulation or the dream of the real (Fırat, 1991). There are four stages to the transition to the world of hyperreality. In the first stage, signs, that is, words and images, are developed as reflections of reality. In the second stage, the signs begin to embellish, exaggerate and even distort reality, but there is no break with reality. Thus, signs continue to reflect and symbolize reality. In the third and fourth stages, signs and simulation replace reality, and the only reality that can be captured at this point is hyperreality (Güzel, 2015). The individual, who has passed through these stages and reached the world of hyperreality, is not even aware that what he/she perceives as real reality is actually simulation, although he/she is surrounded by simulations (Akman, 2017b). Baudrillard (2011) defined the concept of simulation mentioned here as the artificial reproduction of a device, a machine, a system, a phenomenon-specific way of working, through a model or a computer program, for the purpose of examining, showing or explaining. What Baudrillard means by

simulation here is to try to show something unreal as real, that is, to simulate what is real (Aktaş Polat, 2015).

In hyperreality and simulation, particular emphasis is placed on technology. The reason for this is that the act of simulating requires a certain technological infrastructure (Güneş, 2016). With the rapid development of digital technologies and their effective use in all areas of life, there has been as unprecedented progress throughout history (Brynjolfsson & Hitt, 2000). For example, after 1965, modern computer production started, communication channels in the digital environment increased and information sharing expanded (Özen & Gürel, 2020). Towards the end of the 1990s, the internet was introduced to the world culture and the computer became a necessary tool for the use of the internet. With the integration of computer and mobile technologies, the limitation of space for access via the internet has been removed. This situation has been accepted by the society in a short time and people’s use of social networks has increased rapidly (Onat & Aşman Alikılıç, 2008). By the 2000s, learning machines and smart devices were included in people’s lives (Göçoğlu, 2020) and artificial intelligence technology developed in this period. The developments in artificial intelligence, autonomous robots, driverless vehicles, internet of things, cyber security and new generation smart sensor technologies have led to the digital transformation revolution. In this period, one of the benefits of digitalization has been “virtual reality” (Zhou et al., 2015).

The word “virtual” in the concept of virtual reality comes from the Latin word *virtualis*, which means creation of the perception that it exists even though it doesn’t exist (Kuruüzümcü, 2007). This word has passed into English language as *virtual* and has been used to describe applications that are shown “as if it exists” using computer software (OLD, 2021). The word *virtual* has started to be used in Turkish language as well and this concept has been defined in the Turkish dictionary as designed in the mind without a place in reality (Dictionaries of the Turkish Language Institution, 2021). When looked at the use of the concept of *virtual* in the literature, it is seen that this concept was brought to the literature by Licklider in 1950 and is defined as *virtual memory* used as if it exists (Çavuşoğlu, 2004). According to Freud, reality is the individual’s learning that the world is independent of his/her own phantasies by recognizing the objectivity and resistance of the external world and adapting himself/herself to it (Horkheimer, 1998). The word *virtual* has been combined with the word *reality* and has created a new concept in the form of “*virtual reality*”. Some definitions have been made in the literature for the concept of the *virtual reality*. For example, Stone has defined *virtual reality* as a multimedia environment developed to increase communication between the human and the machine and appealing to human emotions. Oppenheim has defined *virtual reality* as the experience of a technology that is not only limited to the visual and the auditory communication, but also tries to increase the human-

machine interaction through feeling (Kurbanoglu, 1996). Guttentag has described virtual reality as the experience of a computer-generated three-dimensional environment that can result in a real time simulation of the participant's five senses, and that the participant can navigate and possibly interact with (Guttentag, 2010). On the other hand, Walser has stated that virtual reality is an emerging paradigm that redefines the relationship between the humans and the computers. According to Walser, this paradigm shows people that there are fictional spaces that provide virtual experiences in the three-dimensional worlds and offers them new experiences in these spaces. These fictional spaces are created with a combination of the visual, auditory and motion effects, where the virtual reality participant can see, hear and touch the images created in these spaces. These effects created in the fictional worlds make the participant believe in the reality of the images here (Williams & Hobson, 1995). Virtual reality offers participants a three-dimensional world where they can see, hear, change, interact with the virtual environment and feel the power fed by the background using computers and multimedia equipment such as video, audio and touch devices (Xiong et al., 2006). It includes hardware that allows participants to navigate this world, immerse themselves in the objects in these environments and interact with these objects (Greenleaf, 1996). This hardware is an advanced human-computer hardware that simulates a real environment, and the participants can act in the virtual world thanks to this hardware (Zheng, 1998). Therefore, it is understood that a participant experiencing virtual reality believes that the virtual images created in the fictional worlds are real and experiences "as if they were real" in his/her mind. In the virtual reality, the indicators between "representation" and "reality" gain importance and there are trips in the hyperreality in the world of these indicators. Therefore, the copy represents the real and the imitation is perceived as "real" in this world. Thus, physical reality ceases to be necessary (Pretes, 1995; Urry, 2009) and the border between the real and imaginary disappears (Akman, 2017a).

Regarding the subject, Milgram and Kishino (1994) have developed a model that they call "virtually continuum" by classifying the relationships between reality and virtuality. According to this model, the world in which the user interacts is placed on a continuum, developing on the amount of computer generated. While the real world is at one end of this continuum, the virtual world completely computerized is at the other end. As we move from the real world to the virtual world, the amount of virtual images increases and the connection with reality weakens (Billinghurst et al., 2001; Öztürk Göçmen, 2018). This continuum takes places in four stages. The first stage represents the real world, the second stage represents augmented reality, the third stage represents augmented virtuality, and the fourth stage represents virtual reality (Öngider, 2019). The real world refers to the world perceived by the naked eye without using any hardware

(Cankül et al., 2018). Augmented reality provides real-time interaction by combining real and virtual (Azuma, 1997). In augmented reality, the real environment is more dominant than the virtual environment, and the user perceives the virtual objects as integrated into the real world in the augmented reality environment (Öztürk Göçmen, 2018). Augmented virtuality refers to the transfer of the virtual world with real world artifacts, that is, the addition of real world components into the virtual world (Kılıç, 2017). There are no real objects in virtual reality, but virtual indicators represent real objects (Iriqat, 2020). In this context, it is possible to explain virtual reality with "reflection theory". Human senses form the basis of reflection theory. Horkheimer thinks that the reflection theory is the acceptance of what is given in sensory experience as real (Horkheimer, 1998). According to this, this is possible by creating a three-dimensional fictional environment in which the participant can interact with the virtual environment by using computers and various technological equipment (Xiong et al., 2006). With the creation of such an environment, the user is provided to immerse in the fictional world created on the computer, and interact with the artificial objects in this world (Greenleaf, 1996). Thus, the participant can act in the virtual world, and see this world from different angles (Zheng, 1998). This experience is created by the "virtual environment model", "software" and "hardware" components that make up the virtual reality. The virtual environment model creates the attributes, properties and interactions between the environment and the objects that make up the environment. The software defines the boundaries and nature of the interaction. The hardware determines the form of the relationship between the participant and the environment. The quality of creation and presentation of the fictional space created in the virtual environment depends on the software used in this process to allow this and the hardware owned to support this software (Kayapa, 2010; Kuruüzümcü, 2007). With the combination of these components, a degree of "reality" is created in the virtual experience and the higher the quality of each component the more realistic this immersion event in the virtual world becomes. With this perception of the reality created in the human mind, the participant is "deceived" and "believed" that this fictional world is real with this experience (Williams & Hobson, 1995).

The virtual reality experience can be explained with some theories and approaches in the literature (Güncan, 2021a). Accordingly, simulation theory is first mentioned for the virtual reality. This theory is used to explain the phenomenon that creates an artificial reality environment in people's minds and perceptions (Shanton & Goldman, 2010) by eliminating the difference between the real and the fake (Öz, 2009), and enabling them to believe in this artificial reality (Kılıç, 2017). On the other hand, immersion requires being "in" a virtual experience (Hudson et al., 2019), and enables the participant to get rid of the real world perception and to experience emotions

related to the virtual reality experience. The perception of presence enables the participant to believe that he/she “exists” in the environment in which he/she is immersed in the virtual world (Mestre, 2006), and explains the experience of “being there” (Bowman & McMahan, 2007). According to Csikszentmihalyi, flow theory refers to the participant’s involvement in an activity to such an extent that he/she cannot think of anything else (Liao, 2006). It is understood that each theory mentioned here deals with the reflections of the virtual reality experience in the mind of the participant. Thanks to the virtual reality, the participant leaves the real world perception and transitions to another world in his/her mind. In this world he/she lives surreal experiences that appeal to the world of dreams. It is thought that these theories used to explain the virtual reality also explain the virtual recreation, which requires experiencing activities related to the virtual reality. Accordingly, it is understood that the virtual recreation is experienced by going through the mental process of the participant, drags him/her into an imaginary world, makes him/her believe in the reality of this world, and gives him/her an imaginary experience with the virtual activities created in this world. The reality created in this world is so real that the participant immerses himself/herself in this reality, believes in it, navigates through the magical world of this reality, and experiences a mental virtual recreation.

#### *Virtual Recreation*

The concept of recreation is derived from the latin word “recreatio”, which means “recovery of health, renewal, refreshment” (Çakır, 2017). In English, the word “recreation”, which has the same meaning, is used for this concept (Sağcan, 1986), and there are various definitions for this concept in the literature. For example, Kraus, in his definition in 1966, defined recreation as activities or experiences that are voluntarily chosen by the participant in order to obtain direct satisfaction or to realize some personal or social values through recreation, generally entertaining and enjoyable, performed in leisure time (Ardahan et al., 2016). In his 1986 definition, Sağcan stated that recreation is the activities that people voluntarily participate in their leisure time with the impulses of entertainment and satisfaction (Sağcan, 1986). From this, it is understood that recreation is related to the activities that people participate in their leisure time outside of working hours and that they should experience these activities freely and voluntarily. Accordingly, activities such as reading a book, watching TV, going to an aquapark and having a hobby garden can be given as examples of recreation (Çakır, 2017).

In the literature, flow theory is used to explain leisure and recreation behavior (Munusturlar et al., 2017). Flow theory is a theory developed by Csikszentmihalyi and is defined as a situation in which people are so intensely involved in an activity that they consider nothing else important. According to the flow theory, the experience itself is so enjoyable that the individual incurs a great cost for this

experience (Liao, 2006), gets lost in this experience and doesn’t think about anything other than the experience (Akyol & Aksatan, 2013). In the flow experience, individuals enter an optimal state of thinking and act when they concentrate. While they are in the flow, they participate in the activity intensely and immerse themselves in the activity they are doing (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). There are five basic elements in the flow experience: clarity, centering, choice, commitment and challenge. These elements are necessary to create flow and meaning in one’s experience. Creating meaning involves bringing order to the mind’s content by integrating the individual’s actions into a unified flow experience. People who find their lives meaningful often have a purpose that is compelling enough to take all their energy and add meaning to their lives. This is called “reaching the goal”. However, it is not enough to find a goal, it is necessary to overcome its difficulties. It is also called “stability”. When an important goal is pursued with determination and one’s various activities fit into a unified flow experience, the result is “harmony”. In the flow theory, goal, stability and harmony unite and give meaning to the experience of activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

In the postmodern era, digital culture has dominated people’s leisure time (Silk et al., 2016; Valtchanov & Parry, 2017) and developing technology has transformed leisure activities (Lopez-Sintas et al., 2017). This has led to some changes in the recreation phenomenon, as in many areas (Aylan & Aylan, 2020). Accordingly, in today’s world, people are frequently exposed to electronic environments and digital applications, and they have started to spend their leisure time using electronic devices such as game consoles, virtual reality glasses, computers, tablets and mobile phones in their daily lives at home or outside the home (Nimrod & Adoni, 2012). In this context, many activities such as electronic sports activities, virtual tours, digital games and watching movies on the internet have become a form of leisure for people (Akoğlan Kozak & Özkeroğlu, 2018). This change in the ways of making use of leisure time has led to the transfer of many recreational activities performed in physical areas to the electronic environment (Aylan & Aylan, 2020). Accordingly, people have started to spend most of their time with electronic applications that they find more economical and enjoyable (Özkeroğlu & Akyıldız Munusturlar, 2020). These applications have become a part of daily life (Güncan, 2021c) and have revealed the concept of “electronic leisure”. This concept has been used in the literature as “cyber leisure”, “virtual leisure” (Nimrod & Adoni, 2012), “online leisure” (Green & Adam, 2009) and “digital leisure” (Bae, 2013; Chiribuca & Teodorescu, 2020; Grimley, 2012; Lehman, 2020; Lopez-Sintas et al., 2017; Rangaswamy & Arora, 2016; Redhead, 2016; Schultz & McKeown, 2018; Sharaievska & Hodge, 2018; Silk et al., 2016; Tham, 2019; Valtchanov & Parry, 2017; Wood et al., 2019). It is seen that the concept of

“metaleisure” (Bayram, 2022) has also entered the literature regarding the subject.

The concept of virtual recreation has emerged as individuals participate in and experience electronic leisure activities in their leisure time (Günca, 2021b). It is seen that the terms “online recreation” (Whitty & McLaughlin, 2007) and “digital recreation” (Aylan & Aylan, 2020) are also used for this concept in the literature. The concept of virtual recreation is a new subject that has been reflected in the literature in recent years and studies have been started on this subject. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are several studies describing virtual recreation. In this regard, the study of Akoğlan Kozak and Özkeroğlu (2018) draws attention. In the study, the authors discussed whether today’s virtual world activities should be evaluated in terms of tourism or recreation. At the end of the study, they concluded that these activities should be considered in the context of the virtual recreation. The authors also tried a definition of virtual recreation. Accordingly, the authors defined virtual recreation as all of the experiences that can be realized voluntarily and without the obligation to pay a fee, without the dependence of time and place, providing extraordinary experiences by creating a real feeling in people. On the other hand, it is seen that another study investigating the types of virtual recreation is reflected in the literature and the authors introduced a new definition to the concept of virtual recreation in the study. So the authors stated that virtual recreation is the activities that people participate the activities such as doing sports, competition, traveling or sightseeing, reading books, playing games and artistic activities with technologic tools such as computers, smartphones, VR-BOX 3D glasses, game consoles and joysticks for various purposes such as making use of free time, resting, rejuvenating physically and mentally and spending quality time in the virtual environments or on platforms where real environments and virtual applications are combined (Aylan & Aylan, 2020). According to these definitions, virtual recreation affects the participants mentally thanks to the activities created in fictional spaces, takes them away from the real world for a certain period of time and draws them into a virtual experience. Therefore, it is understood that the reality phenomenon has been changed in the virtual recreation activities and the participants experience the virtual reality and a surreal activity in their minds thanks to these activities.

Özkeroğlu and Akyıldız Munusturlar (2020) have indicated the diversity of virtual recreation applications and gathered these applications under three categories. The authors have made these categories in the form of online electronic leisure applications, digital games and virtual reality applications. According to this categorization, all activities such as online shopping, reading books online, sending e-mail, watching movies online, downloading music and using social networks are shown as examples of online electronic leisure activities. In the category of digital games, there are target shooting games, arcade games,

action/adventure games, racing games, social media games, simulation games and computer games, and console games such as Playstation, Nintendo Wii and Xbox Kinect. Virtual reality applications consist of wearable smart devices, head mounted display systems, virtual reality glasses, virtual reality applications that can be downloaded from PlayStore and AppStore, Cardboard glasses developed by Google, virtual reality realized with state-of-the-art devices such as Jump camera setup and various digital games and virtual activities created in virtual environments.

From the explanations made so far regarding the virtual recreation, it is understood that the virtual recreation has some unique features because it requires virtual reality experience and provides surreal experiences to the participants. Günca’s study on this subject draws attention. In her study, Günca (2021b) tried to determine what the basic elements that make up the virtual recreation and the unique features of this concept are. At the end of her study, the author revealed that virtual recreation has some elements such synchronous and asynchronous participation, temporal and spatial infinity, virtual reality experience, internet interaction and invisibility. Depending on these factors, she stated that virtual recreation provides the participant with a virtual reality experience, allows simultaneous in the virtual activities, and is carried out independently of the perception of time and space. On the other hand, she also stated that virtual recreation allows the participant to interact with the others through electronic media and provides an invisibility to the participant while doing this. From this, it is understood that virtual recreation has some features related to the virtual reality technology. In addition, thanks to these features, it is seen that the participant has an extraordinary experience by creating a perception that is different from the real world, but as if it were real.

### *Magical Realism*

The concept of the magical realism was first used in 1798 by the German romantic poet and philosopher Novalis (Warnes, 2005) by writing about the “magical idealist” and the “magical realist” in the philosophy (Asayesh & Arargüç, 2017). This concept was later seen in the title of the German art critic Franz Roh’s work *Magischer Realismus*, in which he analyzed the history of art, in 1925 (Reeds, 2006; Zamora, 2002), and re-emerged with this work (Warnes, 2005). Roh used this concept to show the arrival of post-expressionist German aesthetics in the visual arts (De La Campa, 1999). The most important representative of the concept of the magical realism in the field of the literature was the Italian writer and critic Massimo Bontempelli. Bontempelli, in his journal published in 1926, suggested a style of expression, which found miracles in the middle of ordinary and daily life, and called this style of expression “magical realism” (Warnes, 2005). However, the first person to name this concept was Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier (Toyman, 2006). In his

article published in 1955, Carpentier used the concept of “marvelous reality” for the first time, and tried to distinguish this concept clearly from the surrealist meaning (De La Campa, 1999). According to Carpentier, the magical realism is not only a literary fabrication, but is also used to express a concept that represents the belief of people in Latin America in supernatural, miracles and ghosts even today (Hart, 2004). So the magical realism has typically been seen as the drive to create a fictional world that can somehow compete with the “insatiable fount of creation”, which is the real history of Latin America (Conniff, 1990). This concept has been used to describe the works of authors such as Jorge Luis in Argentina, Gabriel Garcia Marquez in Colombia, Isabel Allende in Chile, Günter Grass in Germany, Italo Calvino in Italy and John Fowles in England (Mouileno, 2006). Today, in the wide geography of the world literature, many writers such as Paul Auster, Haruki Murakami, Juan Rulfo and Salman Rushdie continue to use the magical realist narrative style in their works (Başer Çoban, 2011). Therefore, it is understood that the magical realism is a concept belonging to the postmodern period and represents a trend that has been seen especially in the field of the painting and the literature until today.

The concept of the magical realism is used with names such as “magical realism”, “magic realism” and “marvelous realism” in the literature. It is seen that the word magic, which gives the meaning of this concept, expresses the unknown and the mysterious. On the other hand, the word realism in the concept is used to express the existing and the usual. When these two words are combined, they form the concept of the magical realism, which has a more holistic and new meaning (Kalemci, 2021; Tanrıtanır & Çalışkan, 2017). There are some definition studies developed for this new concept in the literature. For example, Angel Flores has argued that the magical realism consists of the fusion of the real and the fantastic. A. Valbuena Briones has claimed that the magical realism is a universal phenomenon that presupposes a vision of the reality in which fantasy and myth world coexist with the real world (Merrel, 1975). In addition, the magical realism has been basically seen as a narrative style that naturalized the supernatural. In other words, the magical realism has been expressed as a narrative style in which the real and the fantastic, the natural and the supernatural are consistently represented (Warnes, 2005). Therefore, the magical realism states that miracles and extraordinary events are perceived as ordinary events. It also states that people are endowed with imaginary features beyond the valid laws of the real world. Elements with this feature show situations, events or heroes that are impossible to happen in life as if they were normal in the real life, and present everything naturally by combining the reality and the fantasy. Everything that takes place in this fictional world is accepted as a habitual life by the characters in this world. No matter how extraordinary the events taking place here are, this situation is presented as normal. It is this feature

that makes fictional worlds magical (Toyman, 2006). For this reason, it is accepted that the most important feature of the magical realism is the meeting of the real and the unreal in a certain balance and harmony (Türkmenoğlu, 2015). Accordingly, real and unreal elements mix, and can be located on the same place (Ergeç, 2020). Thus, the reader believes that these magical elements in the magical realism actually have no problems with the real thing and that they are “real” (Akman, 2017b). Thus, illogical and unbelievable events in the magical realism are depicted without questioning their accuracy and without any explanation, and the events described in the text are accepted as they are (Onay, 2011). From this, it is understood that the magical realism combines the real and the unreal, creates a harmonious fictional world, and makes him/her believe in the reality of this fictional world by creating the perception of the real in the reader.

The explanations made so far regarding the concept of the magical realism and the definition of this concept show that the magical realism has some features. It is also seen that some features related to this concept are stated in the literature. For example, the famous critic Ronald Walter has stated that the first condition of the magical realism is to combine the real with the surreal, and put the real into a magical form (Emir & Diler, 2011). According to this, it is understood that the magical element in the literary texts is described in amazement as if the ordinary object were seen for the first time and that it is the presentation of the unreal as if it were a normal event (Kekeç, 2011). Although ghosts, disappearances and surreal scenes are included, magic is not encountered in this narrative style. On the other hand, the existing realism universe should have some surreal elements of the scene of the surreal events. These surreal elements or events should be placed in the text so well that the reader should see it not as an unreality but as a magical and natural part of the reality (Başer Çoban, 2011). Therefore, these elements are perceived as a part of the reality although the universe in the magical realism has some surreal elements. That is, the relationship of unreal elements with the reality is not questioned and the author approaches the events in a way that does not harm the harmonious integrity of the real and the unreal (Bars, 2012). This indicates the silence of the author, which is another important feature of the magical realism. According to this feature, the narrator only tells the events and the actions of the characters, doesn't add his/her own interpretation to the event, and doesn't make any explanation. Otherwise, the reader will begin to question the surreal and other rules of the magical realism will be violated (Emir & Diler, 2011). Therefore, the events and the heroes described in the text should not make the reader question the relationship surrealism and reality and the reader shouldn't doubt the reality of the event narrated by reading both the realistic and the magical elements in the text at a common truth level. Cuddon and Preston have stated that another of the main features of the magical realism is the shifts in time, the existence of intertwined

stories, fairy-tale events and surrealistic depictions (Başer Çoban, 2011). So there is no real time perception normally known in the magical realism. In other words, time in the magical realism isn't linear and chronological and there is a timeless fluidity. That is, there are going back, going forward and getting lost in time in the magical realism (Önder, 2013). All these explanations about the magical realism show that this concept has its own features. From this, it is understood that the magical realism is a concept that mostly incorporates unreal events into the reality without drawing attention to their unreality. In addition, it is seen that this concept hosts a fictional place and fictional events, and the events in this fictional space create a different perception of time independent of the real time perception.

### 3. Related Studies

When the literature on the magical realism is examined, it is seen that the studies on this concept have been carried out in the context of defining magical realism, investigating its past from the painting to the literature, and examining the magical realism texts so far (Ulusoy Aranyosi, 2011). A very limited number of studies have been found in the literature regarding the subject of this study. The first of these studies was Kelley's doctoral thesis in 1992. In this study, the author investigated the factors that affect the viewer's perception of what constitutes reality, and focused on the closeness between the virtual reality and the magical realism (Kelley, 1992). The magical realism was investigated in Polish films in another study published in 2010 (Klonowska, 2010). In another study, the authors tried to explore whether augmented reality could improve young people's interaction with archives and literature. For this, they used augmented reality technology and magical realism writings in the study (Reynolds et al., 2020). These studies show that the magical realism can be used to explain the experience of augmented reality and virtual reality applications. Since the phenomenon of the virtual recreation is based on the virtual reality technology and requires the virtual reality to be experienced, it is thought that this phenomenon can be explained in the context of the magical realism approach. However, when looked at the literature, it is noteworthy that there is no study that discusses and evaluates the subject of the virtual recreation in the context of the magical realism. The fact that such a subject hasn't yet been examined is seen as an important gap in the relevant literature. So this study is prepared to fill this gap identified in the literature. It is aimed to bring the magical realism approach to the recreation literature with this study. Thus, the magical realism approach will be used to explain the imaginary effect of the fictional worlds created in the virtual recreation applications and the surreal experiences in these worlds.

## 4. Methodology

### *Purpose, Scope and Importance of The Study*

In the study, the question of "can the magical realism approach be used to explain the mental effect of the surreal experiences in the fictional world of the virtual recreation on the participant?" has been asked, and seeking an answer to this question has been adopted as the aim of this study. The study prepared for this purpose has been limited to the concepts of the virtual recreation and the magical realism, and has been carried out within the framework of these two concepts. The study is considered important in terms of explaining the effect of the virtual recreation applications on the participant in the context of the magical realism approach. In addition, the study is also considered important in terms of bringing the magical realism approach used in the fields of painting and literature to the recreation literature.

Marx clearly defined the conditions that allow a relationship to be established between theory and practice. According to this, it is not enough for the thought to strive for self-realization, and the reality has to strive towards the thought. When consciousness is in such a relationships with reality, it is possible to combine theory and practice (Horkheimer, 1998). Therefore, in this study, virtual reality applications are tried to be explained in the context of magical reality and it is thought that this study will contribute to the literature in terms of theory. With the connection to be established between virtual recreation and the concept of magical reality, magical realistic elements in virtual recreation applications will be determined. Thus, it will be possible to focus on issues such as to what extent magical realistic elements will be included in new applications on virtual recreation and to what extent these elements can be expanded.

### *Data Collection*

A conceptual point of the view has been adopted, and the study has been carried out in line with this point of the view in the study. The data necessary for the conduct of the research have been obtained through literature review, so the needed sources have been reached by reviewing the literature. The literature review is the synthesis of the findings and results of the studies on a particular subject (Snyder, 2019), and aims to summarize the latest situation on the subject (Rowley & Slack, 2004). Thus, it provides the researcher with the opportunity to make inferences from the previous studies about the researched subject according to the chronological order (Akoğlan Kozak & Özkeröglü, 2020). Thanks to these advantages that it provides to the researcher, the literature review constitutes one of the most widely used data collection techniques in research design in the field of the social sciences (Neuman, 2016). In this context, the advantages of this technique for the researcher have been taken into consideration while

creating the research design of this study. Therefore, the literature review has been used as the data collection technique and secondary sources have been used for this in the study. The literature on the conceptual framework was reviewed by the researcher herself between April 1 and September 15, 2021. Secondary sources, both national and international, was included in the review and the reviewing was carried out through the electronic sources on the internet and the printed sources. The reviewing process has continued until an adequate background was provided for the research, and has been terminated when the obtained data were deemed sufficient.

### Data Analysis

After the data collection process was completed, the data analysis process has been started. The analyzes have been made in the context of the concepts of “the virtual recreation” and “the magical realism”, which are explained in detail in the conceptual framework of the study. The analyzes have been carried out by following a number of stages. In the first stage, the concept of the virtual recreation has been evaluated, and the virtual reality experience forms the basis for virtual recreation applications has been explained. In the second stage, the concept of the magical realism has been discussed and the basic features of this concept have been tried to be determined based on the relevant literature. In the last stage, the findings obtained from these evaluations have been evaluated with a holistic perspective. At the end of this evaluation, the mental effect of the virtual recreation experiences on the participant has been tried to be explained in the context of the magical realism approach. In this way, some inferences have been made about the surreal experiences in the virtual recreation applications.

### 5. Findings

After the concepts given in the study were analyzed from a conceptual point of the view, some findings related to these concepts have been obtained and these findings have been included under this title. The findings have been classified based on the explanations given about the concept of the virtual recreation and the magical realism approach in the study. So this classification has been made in two stages as firstly findings related to the concept of the virtual recreation and secondly findings related to the magical realism approach.

In the first stage, the findings obtained from the evaluations related to the concept of the virtual recreation are included. As a result of the evaluations, it has been found that the concept of the virtual recreation has some unique features. Accordingly, the virtual recreation allows the participant in the virtual activity synchronously and asynchronously and to interact with other participants through electronic media, and provides the invisibility. In addition, it is among the findings that the virtual recreation experience is realized independently from the perception of time and space. However, it has been seen that the most prominent finding

regarding the features of the virtual recreation is that the virtual recreation applications provide a “virtual reality experience” to the participant (Güncan, 2021b). When these features of the virtual recreation are examined, it is understood that all of these features are based on the virtual reality technology. So, at this point, the features of the virtual reality experience also gain importance. Accordingly, it is found that the virtual reality is realized in fictional spaces created in three-dimensional worlds, and that the participant has surreal experiences in these fictional spaces. One of the findings is that the images created in these fictional spaces make the participant believe in the “reality” of the experience. Thus, the participant experiences the events in his/her mind as if they were real (Williams & Hobson, 1995). These findings show that the participant has an experience beyond the reality in functional worlds with the virtual recreation. It is also obtained from here that the participant mentally performed this experience, and believed in the reality of this experience.

In the second stage of the findings, the findings obtained from the evaluation of the magical realism approach are presented. Evaluations of this approach has revealed that there are some features that form the basis for the magical realism. For example, it has been found that the magical realism is created in the fictional worlds that appeal to the minds (Emir & Diler, 2011), makes the person perceive the surreal as real (Warnes, 2005), and makes him/her believe in the “reality” of the unreal elements in these worlds (Akman, 2017b). It is also among the other findings that the fictional world should have some surreal and fantastic elements, but the elements that would completely contradict reality are not included in the magical realism (Başer Çoban, 2011). On the other hand, another finding at the end of the study is that the magical realism creates a fluid time perception independent of the real time perception (Önder, 2013). These findings regarding the magical realism approach reveal that this approach hosts surreal events created in the fictional worlds, and creates a perception of the reality for these fictional events in the people’s minds. Accordingly, it is also learned that the magical realism presents unreal elements to individuals as if they were real, and makes them believe in the reality of these elements.

### 6. Discussion and Conclusion

Both the concept of the virtual recreation and the magical realism approach have been subjected to conceptual analysis in this study, in which the virtual recreation is discussed in the context of the magical realism. While analyzing the data, an analytical approach has been adopted in order to reach the correct findings and the analysis of the data has been carried out by following some stages. The first of these stages has been the evaluation of the concept of the virtual recreation, and the determination of the basic features of this concept. In the second stage, the magical realism approach has been conceptually examined and the elements formed the basis of this



approach have been determined. As a result of these evaluations, some findings regarding these two concepts have been reached. In the next stage, the findings obtained from the evaluation of these two concepts have been examined comparatively. With this evaluation, the concept of the virtual recreation has been interpreted in the context of the magical realism approach and some inferences have been made for the magical realistic world of the virtual recreation.

From the explanation given in the framework of the study, it has been learned that the virtual recreation activities are created in the electronic environments by simulating the real world objects and/or events, and provide a virtual reality experience to the participant. It has been seen that the magical realism approach first emerged in the field of philosophy, and then began to be used in the fields of painting and literature in the form of examining the surreal elements revealed in painting and literary works. As a result of the evaluations, it has been found that the virtual recreation takes the participant mentally to the “fictional worlds” created in three-dimensional digital environments. It has also been learned that the virtual recreation enables the participant to be involved in “surreal” activities in these fictional worlds, gives him/her “as if it were real” an activity experience in his/her mind, and makes him/her “believe” in the reality of these activities. It has been found that the magical realism is created in the “fictional worlds”, hosts “surreal” events in these worlds, creates the perception of “reality” in one’s mind, and “convinces” him/her to believe in the reality of these events, as well. In addition, it is another remarkable finding that the virtual recreation experience is carried out independently of real time perception, and that the participant experiences the activity without being limited to a certain time. In the same way, it is learned that the magical realism creates a different perception of time from the real time perception, and makes the person experience the events in the fictional world in a time period other than real time. However, another feature that should be emphasized in relation to the subject of the magical realism is the fact that fantastic elements are included in the magical realism and an event has a magical feature thanks to these fantastic elements. Therefore, it is understood that one of the main features that makes an event magically realistic is that it should be enriched with the fantastic elements in the event.

When the concept of the virtual recreation and the magical realism approach are evaluated together, it is seen that both the concept and the approach have common features. It is revealed that these common features are “fictional worlds, surreal events, perception of reality, credibility of events and independence from real time perception”. From this, it is concluded that the virtual recreation experience has the same features as the magical realism elements. Based on this result, it is thought that it is possible to evaluate the virtual recreation in the context of the magical realism approach. Although the magical realism approach has taken its place in the fields of painting and literature, it

is assumed that the use of this approach will not be limited to these fields, and will be adopted by different fields. Some studies on the virtual reality and the augmented reality in the literature (Kelley, 1992; Klonowska, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2020) also support this assumption. As a result of the study, which has been prepared based on this assumption, it is argued that the magical realism approach is compatible with the structure of the virtual recreation, and that this approach can be used to explain the virtual recreation experiences. However, while making such an argument, the fact that there are fantastic elements in the magical realism should not be ignored. Thus, in order to explain the virtual recreation experience in the context of the magical realism approach, it is necessary to search for the fantastic elements in this experience, and to determine what the fantastic elements that make up this experience are. It is thought that these elements will add a magical feature to the virtual recreation experience and thus it will be possible to explain this experience in the context of the magical realism approach. Movies like *Avatar* and *Lord of the Rings*, TV series like *Game of Thrones*, digital games of these movies and TV series, and digital games like *World of Warcraft* can be given as examples of the virtual recreation activities that contain magical realism elements. Fantastic characters such as giants, dwarves, elves, creatures, fire-breathing dragons and the walking dead are featured, and a world where these characters come to life and which has surreal elements is shown in these movies, series and games. According to the result obtained from the study, these and similar applications are experienced “independent of real time perception” in “fictional worlds” created in electronic environments, and host “surreal” events. The surreal events in these worlds contain “fantastic elements”. When these activities enriched with fantastic elements are experienced, the participant perceives the surreal events in these activities as “real”, “believes” in their reality and does not question this reality. The fantastic elements add a “magical” feature to this activity. Thus, the participant has a virtual recreation experience that contains fantastic elements, yet is in harmony with the real world perception and does not contradict the existing perception of the reality in his/her mind in a fictional world created in the electronic media. Such an experience opens the doors to the magical realistic world of the virtual recreation for the participant. At this point, there is an answer to the research question posed at the beginning of the study. Accordingly, it is concluded that “it is possible to benefit from the magical realism approach in explaining the surreal experiences have in the virtual recreation activities.”

It has been seen that there are studies that focus on the affinity between virtual reality and magical realism (Kelley, 1992), examine magical realism in the context of film (Klonowska, 2010), and examine augmented reality and magical realism writings (Reynolds et al., 2020). These studies have shown that magical realism can be used to describe the experience of augmented reality and virtual

reality applications. Since virtual recreation is also based on virtual reality technology and requires virtual reality to be experienced, the idea that virtual recreation can be explained in the context of magical realism has been put forward in this study. However, when the relevant literature is examined, it is noted that there is no study that provides an explanation for virtual recreation in the context of magical realism. Therefore, this study differs from the existing literature in this respect and is original in terms of bringing the magical realism approach to the recreation literature. Accordingly, at the end of the study, it is suggested to use the magical realism approach to explain the imaginary effect of virtual recreation applications created with fantastic elements and the surreal experiences in these worlds. If this suggestion is taken into account in future studies on virtual recreation and future studies are carried out in this direction, it is expected that the concept of magical realism will be brought to the recreation literature.

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**INFO PAGE**

## The magical realistic world of the virtual recreation

**Abstract**

The aim of the study is to seek an answer to the question of whether the concept of virtual recreation can be considered in the context of the magical realism. The study prepared for this purpose has been carried out from a conceptual point of the view. The data required for the research have been obtained by reviewing the relevant literature. The reviewing process has been carried out in the context of the concepts of "virtual recreation" and "magical realism" and the study has been limited to these concepts. The data obtained as a result of the reviewing the literature have been analyzed conceptually. The analyzes have been made by first evaluating the concepts of virtual recreation and magical realism, and then comparatively examining the findings obtained from these evaluations. After the evaluations, it has been concluded that the magical realism approach is compatible with the structure of the virtual recreation and it is possible to evaluate the virtual recreation experience in the context of magical realism approach.

**Keywords:** Virtual reality, Virtual recreation, Magical realism

**Authors**

Full Name	Author contribution roles	Contribution rate
<b>Özlem Güncan:</b>	Conceptualism, Methodology, Validation, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing	100%

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**This paper does not required ethics committee report**

**Justification:** The methodology of this study does not require an ethics committee report.