

Self-presentation in metaverse environments from a psychological perspective

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Review Article</p> <p>Received: 31 May 2024 Revised: 17 August 2024 Accepted: 5 September 2024</p> <p>Keywords: Metaverse, Self, Self-presentation, Psychology, Sociology</p>	<p>This research aimed to investigate the psychology-related factors of self-presentation in Metaverse environments using the keywords "Metaverse," "self," "self-presentation," and "psychology." The universe of the research is the research on Metaverse and self-presentation in Turkey and the world between 1902 and 2023 in YÖK National Thesis Center, Google Scholar, ProQuest, ResearchGate databases with the keywords "Metaverse," "self," "self-presentation," "psychology." 39 articles, books, and dissertation materials were selected as the research sample. In the research, a general research trend was revealed by examining the data of the information contained in the articles, books, master's and doctoral theses written about the concepts of "Metaverse" and "self" in the world and in Turkey as a result of the research, it is assumed that self-presentation in the Metaverse will occur through luxury consumption, new technologies such as avatars and NFT, and with the influence of digital consumer culture.</p>

1. Introduction

Metaverse, the future of the Internet, is still very new, and its conceptual framework and its relationship with self-presentation have yet to be fully drawn. The word "Metaverse" in Turkish means "beyond the universe" by combining the words meta "beyond" and verse "universe." Metaverse is associated with social psychology and interpersonal communication, so it can be predicted that it will open a new field in individuals' self-presentation (Nazlı et al., 2022). New technologies such as Web 3.0, augmented, virtual, and mixed reality, NFT, and new products of global brands that are necessary for the construction of the Metaverse and the presentation of the self are mentioned in terms of consumer culture. In the Metaverse, where interpersonal communication processes and all kinds of relationships will be perceived as if they were experienced in the physical world, users will present themselves with showcase performances to feel valuable, be recognized, belong, and experience all kinds of emotions. For this, they will express their status, socioeconomic class, etc., through NFTs. It can be said that they will construct their identities and images.

Metaverse can be expressed as a permanent and three-dimensional virtual world, which many people in the computer industry believe is the next stage of the Internet, where people live life in a way they cannot experience in the physical world and communicate with other digital twins, avatars, in a shared space (Baltacı, 2023). Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are two technological terms essential for developing the Metaverse concept. VR can be expressed as a simulated 3D environment that allows users to interact with the virtual environment in a way that approximates the reality perceived by their senses. With the advancement of AR and extended reality technologies, it can be predicted that the Metaverse environment will have a faster and more positive course (Nalbant & Uyanık, 2021). According to the research that examines a socialization process in which users create their status, socio-economic classes, identities, and images through their avatars in the Metaverse, it has been shown that the Metaverse provides an experience that is close to the perception of reality in the physical world, enabling individuals to transition more quickly to identity, role, and socialization (Türk et al., 2022).

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These high-fidelity devices, such as gloves, vests, and form-fitting tracksuits, allow users to interact more realistically in the virtual environment. The process works by adding digital layers to the real world through a lens. Meanwhile, users can interact with real-world environments. When the Metaverse, seen as the future of the Internet, is evaluated in terms of users' self-presentation, the ideal self is generally shaped in the direction that individuals want to be in real life (Türk et al., 2022). Technological devices such as VR, AR goggles, and lenses that provide access to the Metaverse are developing rapidly. At the same time, adequate bandwidth and interoperability standards, other critical components of the Metaverse, will likely take years to improve. It can be interpreted that the presence of essential industries in the Metaverse, such as virtual gaming, entertainment, education, marketing, and business, may increase the use of e-commerce.

Today, some companies use the term "Metaverse" to describe many advanced online environments. More than one three-dimensional technology is believed to be used together without a blockchain-based center. Interaction between virtual universes, data transfer, state integration, and user interfaces will be designed according to the most appropriate conditions for the Metaverse. The different temporal distances of virtual environments in the context of the Metaverse, the simulated self, and the authentic self of the participants. According to the research on the interaction between the selves, as the distance between the virtual world and the self in the virtual world increases, the attention span of the participants decreases, the simultaneous self-presentations of individuals in the Metaverse are related to their selves, and the differences are minimal in the context of the sustainability of the existence of individuals in the Metaverse (Jeon, 2022).

Social media, which has entered our lives with the development of Web 2.0 technologies, has significantly changed the structure of individuals' socialization and interpersonal communication with its constantly evolving structure and advantageous features. The content forms and interactive functions offered by social media platforms play an essential role in shaping users' behavior, helping them to express themselves, reconstruct themselves, and build their self-presentation. Thus, the development of systems, devices, and the Internet infrastructure with the new possibilities offered by technology are also transforming new social-digital communication environments. Networked virtual worlds are characterized by the ability of individuals in these environments to express themselves to other users in a virtual way with digital characters called avatars (Özkök-Şişman & Bilgici, 2023).

The self is a product of perception, shaped by the individual's mental processes, the data received from the outside world, and the material and spiritual characteristics that the individual possesses. The more an individual perceives with his/her sense organs, the more he/she will experience a perception closer to physical reality and will experience his/her self-presentation depending on this reality. Today, interpersonal communication processes and types, which have evolved from face-to-face communication to computer-based social media and to the Metaverse through virtual reality, have changed individuals' self-presentation. The new hybrid platform, which creates a third-dimensional feeling with depth perception and activates multiple sensory organs, creates a consumption for self-presentation, just like face-to-face communication, because it gives people a sense of physical reality. The Metaverse is where the physical and digital worlds coexist, where people can meet together and socialize, play games, do business, shop, and try on clothes, in other words, continue their daily routine life events through their avatar(s), who will be their digital representatives, independent of the concept of space-time. These are the new digital lives they can create.

The Metaverse will emerge; who will control it, what it will contain, and how much impact it will have on life is still debatable due to unknowns and a non-existent infrastructure system in the background. While the Metaverse is expected to have interesting aspects that will improve the daily lives of billions of people worldwide and provide good functionality, the situations in which it will have negative aspects should be considered and addressed. In general, this part of the study will explain what the concept of the Metaverse is, how emerging new technologies are transforming communication technologies, how the Metaverse is transforming the perception of reality, how self-representation works, and what changes are coming to the fore in the context of consumer culture.

In the following parts of this study, the relationship between self-presentation in Metaverse environments, especially from a psychological point of view, will be presented to the reader as a literature review. The information in the literature will be conveyed to the reader as definitions of self and self-presentation and explanations about the Metaverse will be made.

2. Self and self-presentation in the context of its relationship with the Metaverse

The self-concept, which was first conceptualized by William James (1963), represents the emotional, cognitive, and physical characteristics of individuals; it refers to the attitudes they acquire toward other individuals in social

life (Özkök- Şişman & Bilgici, 2023). While the self is the perspective the individual forms by interpreting his experiences, stimuli, and feedback, it is also mentioned as a systematic structure used to understand other people's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Serpil & Karaca, 2023).

As social beings, individuals can present themselves to others in the society in which they live, establish relationships, maintain communication, and so on. They strive to create a good impression of themselves in their voluntary actions. While "self" and subsequent "self-presentation" are essential concepts often discussed under social sciences, today, we see that they are discussed from a multidisciplinary perspective in articles based on current literature. Metaverse and self-presentation are explained through the relationship between semantic web concepts, virtual and AR, mixed reality and NFT, and consumer culture. Metaverse, considered the future of social media and mobile communication technologies, stands out with its NFT and virtual/AR technologies especially It is a concept that gains importance with the emergence of a new market for luxury brands (Türk et al., 2022).

Self-presentation can be expressed as the process of controlling how one is perceived by others (Araz, 1998). The concept of "self-presentation" can be mentioned in social sciences and today in multidisciplinary fields as the interpretation of the individual's emphasis on how others perceive him. The methods that individuals use to attract the attention of others outside themselves, to be liked, and especially to make a positive impression are included in self-presentation. As a result of the communication we have established with others while in society, we act with the desire to impress others and feel the need to control the impressions we give others (Deligöz, 2019). It can be interpreted that today's communication through electronic devices has moved away from the perception of reality. In self-presentation in digital environments, individuals reflect themselves to the other party through VR and feel free to present their dream (ideal) self, leaving aside the tensions and precautions they may experience in face-to-face communication. It can be said that concepts such as body, sense of identity, self-esteem, rational thinking, self-image, self-awareness, and recognition can be integrated into the self (Balıkçioğlu, 2016). It can be said that when communicating with others in real social life, the cues we give from ourselves are necessary to be consistent with ourselves for a healthy and accurate self-presentation. The purpose of the process of self-development is expressed as feeling the self as having continuity and sameness and living by it (Taylor et al., 2012). "In other words, the self is seen as the twin of society in a sense that is significantly influenced by what others think about the person" (Cooley, 1902; Balıkçioğlu, 2016).

In psychology, the "self" is the question of "what." It can be interpreted as descriptions in which he expresses himself and consciously defines his essence. The distinction between our relationships with people outside ourselves and when alone can clarify the self-concept (Deligöz, 2020). In the Metaverse environment where luxury brands exist, users are influenced by brand fanaticism, consumer culture, and fashion trends. They are willing to pay thousands of dollars for NFTs to construct their ideal self by having this luxury in such a universe (Türk et al., 2022). Metaverse environments in which the perfect self is used as a shared image lead to the conclusion that they may increase the risk of addiction among users.

Self can be expressed in "real self" and "ideal self." The real self is the self in which we currently exist and participate; the ideal self can be referred to as the self in our ideals, the self we feel the need to exist in, and the self we want to be. The difference between the real and ideal selves can cause changes in emotions, thoughts, and behaviors during self-presentation. The ideal self is formed by thoughts about what a person wants to be and what others want that person to be (Gülaçtı & Özen, 2010).

In self-development, the interaction of the physical and social environment and some associated emotions and values may be important for the individual in self-presentation and development. It has been stated that the self, which expresses the individual's state of conscious awareness about himself and is generally used instead of personality, is related to the individual's level of awareness, and the level of development of this process directs the concept of self (Bekiroğlu-Akçay & Hülür, 2016).

Individuals who use social media and digital environments tend to shape and share the rituals they perform during the day in VR as they wish. While his real self is a profile with an angry, grumpy, tense, unhappy mood, he can present his ideal self to social media users with a very affectionate, happy, friendly profile under virtual images. Many social media and digital users tend to share actions they cannot do in real life or ideal self-images they cannot have in VR and present themselves to others. The social self guides the socialized individual's behavior and reflects others' influence on the individual's consciousness (Çoştu, 2009). The social self can be associated with the virtual self (avatar) carried by individuals in digital network societies, the selves that users create in electronic environments, shaped by the filters offered by the Internet while wandering in the formal, imaginary world of the Internet, have become reconstructable.

Feedback and specific experiences gained through socialization and interaction with individuals in society provide essential resources for self-development. Socialization forms the essence of our early experiences, and the regularity of these experiences creates critical aspects of the self-concept (Taylor et al., 2012). It is important to remember that humans are accepted as social beings, that everyone is unique, that their self cannot exist without society, that the experiences they have throughout their lives shape the self, that they cannot continue their lives without rejecting the perceptions, opinions, and predictions of others with whom they communicate, and that all of these may be important in the presentation of the self. The concept of self, which is intertwined, has a complex structure in which many factors interact. While the self is a social phenomenon that develops through symbolic interaction and language, symbols that allow individuals to see themselves from the perspective of others are an essential tool for intertwining personality and society (Çoştu, 2009). Symbols and images in digital environments have a significant impact on the self-presentation and image development of individuals. In the literature, self-concept can be interpreted as the totality of a person's good or wrong beliefs about themselves. Our beliefs about our identity can be called self-concept (Taylor et al., 2012).

With high self-esteem, depending on their characteristics, they know what they can and cannot do, have positive beliefs and schemas about themselves, and set goals they can achieve to be at peace with themselves. They can engage in self-constructive activities in digital environments and protect themselves from negative thoughts about themselves. People with low self-esteem may have unclear perceptions of themselves, develop thoughts that often include negative comments about themselves, set unrealistic goals or avoid setting goals altogether, have a pessimistic outlook, develop adverse reactions to criticism, and tend to cope poorly with stress. These individuals may tend to create negative behaviors in digital environments and may be far from healthy Internet use.

The self develops throughout life; it is not something we are born with; on the contrary, it emerges through the individual's social experience and activity process and evolves over time and through their relationships with other individuals (Beeghley et al., 2013). In social life, when we present ourselves to others, we want to reflect ourselves to our environment as a whole, with the cues we give of ourselves being consistent. This attitude forms the basic building block of our relationships with others. Individuals in identity construction reshape their identities according to the information and transmissions they have learned through interactions (Çaycı & Karagülle, 2014). With advanced communication technologies, newly formed identities are formed in the virtual space on the digital world's axis and integrated into the community as image indicators. Today, it can be said that social media is one of the essential channels for individuals to express themselves, and social media users influence other individuals' perspectives of themselves (Çaycı & Karagülle, 2014). For individuals, being in the digital environment leads to mutual interaction.

When individuals are in socialization, the concept expressed as the "looking-glass self" considers the perspectives, impressions, and evaluations of others outside the individual and shapes the phenomenon described as the self. Individuals derive value from the opinions of others around them about the person. We get information from the comments, attitudes, and views of others and attribute meaning to ourselves. According to Lacan literature, the mirror stage, in which babies realize their selves when they see themselves for the first time in front of a mirror, has similar characteristics for users who present themselves through social media (Karaoğlu, 2015). The concept of the mirror, which is mentioned here in a representative way, provides digital media users with the opportunity to reach their ideal selves that they want to see and exist in a mirror in which they think they exist in front of themselves. The personal profiles of users circulating in digital environments, which they revise almost daily with new postings, can be considered mirrors. Digital virtual environments are practically indispensable in everyday life, allowing the easiest presentation of idealized selves.

Posts shared in virtual media lose their affiliation with us once they are shared, and because anyone can see them, they can easily be imposed by other users. Users of digital media who post can view their messages remotely, so the messages they share become an indicator. Users in the Metaverse will be able to reach the ideal selves they want to be in a practical and fast way, digitally. Emphasizing that language determines individuals' communication and relationships with themselves, others, and society can also be seen as establishing the self through language through social media (Karaoğlu, 2015). Since digital information technologies have entered our lives, self-presentation has been made through written communication under VR instead of real verbal communication. Digital media users make their self-presentation accessible to each other through written language through the photos, videos, status updates they share, or the comments they make on others' posts.

Today, identities resurrected in the Metaverse environment are presented through avatars that revolve around images waiting to be appreciated, loved, and admired by users. It is mentioned that people who meet electronically

and then meet face to face may sometimes be disappointed, that people in the virtual environment may reflect themselves differently than they are, and that those who try to get to know that person may idealize him/her in their minds (Tosun, 2017). Since avatars created in digital environments are idealized selves different from our everyday real selves, there is a distinction between reality and ideal. Individuals in society tend to hide attitudes that do not fit the ideal self-presentation they want to present in virtual social life. Based on this, individuals can live in the Metaverse world with completely idealized lives, but they will not have to think about the situations they do not want.

In the Metaverse, people try to embellish their ideal selves to make a better impression on others. Users who turn to selves other than their real selves present themselves to others as they wish to be in their dreams while turning the clothes and images of their avatars into indicators in the Metaverse. By using signs and symbols in our clothing that say something about who we are in our appearance, we present an external appearance and image to our environment, thus satisfying the need for self-aggrandizement with a more positive and exaggerated self-perception than our actual talent, competence, and social skills (Taylor et al., 2012). The concept that E. Goffman (2016) calls dramaturgical theory is the performance variables that play a role in people's communication with each other in everyday life practices, and the interaction is examined within the framework of a theatrical metaphor. In other words, dramaturgical theory explains how individuals create an idealized self-presentation in social life (Kavut, 2018). Individuals in society take on different roles in different situations and leave impressions of these roles on each other.

Dramaturgical theory can be expressed as the construction of the self and its presentation in everyday life (Esgin, 2008). Again, according to Goffman (2016), individuals have a social, private, and professional life. They present themselves by associating their idealized selves with different roles in environments where they have status. Users in Metaverse environments, where all kinds of relationships except interpersonal communication processes are perceived as if they were experienced in the physical world, share their selves in Metaverse environments with showcase performances to feel valued, recognized, belong, and experience all kinds of emotions (Türk et al., 2022). Goffman (2016) analyzes society and the interactions of individuals within society with each other, starting from dramaturgical terms such as self, face-to-face interaction, actor, performance, routine, team, front area, back area, regulation, actor's personal horizon, appearance, and form (Goffman, 2016; Koç, 2017).

In today's virtual media, self-presentation is shared through avatars and presented in an idealized form in other users' news feeds. Like the actors in question, Metaverse users present their emotional states, beliefs, and daily actions through their avatars using words, gestures, and facial expressions, using forms of communication other than verbal expression. Users of virtual media believe that the nicknames they choose in their profiles are related to their identities. It can be interpreted that users' names and even avatars are essential parameters for creating an impression on the Internet. The difference between young people's emphasis on self-presentation and new communication environments can be listed as online identities created through created profiles, avatars, and other online content and the ability to manage one's identity, social relationships, and lifestyle (Boz, 2012). Self-presentation strategies often involve expressing personal information and transforming specific details according to the ideal self (Boz, 2012). In Metaverse environments, users can transfer many factors to the virtual environment they can express in everyday communication.

Elements of personal performance include gender, age and racial characteristics, height, appearance, posture, speech patterns, facial and body expressions, etc. During the performance, appearance refers to stimuli that provide information about the social status of the actor at that moment (Goffman, 2016). These can now be shaped in virtual environments through avatars. It can be said that, on the one hand, it is difficult to search for the self emotionally and spiritually in the automated system of this world order while living in reality, and on the other hand, existing with the ideal self in the Metaverse will force individuals to reach the point of "self-knowledge" (Serpil & Karaca, 2023). Self-identity, necessary in the Metaverse environment, emphasizes the presentation of the self through consumer products in your expression, with the ability to customize your clothing and appearance according to your unique avatar (Türk et al., 2022). Metaverse users constantly tinker with their avatars to present themselves well to others, as profile owners may experience performance anxiety.

Metaverse users become the products they buy in luxury stores to decorate and shape their avatars and are perceived as how they construct them. Routine actions in everyday life have been moved into VR thanks to the Metaverse. Users in the Metaverse enhance their avatars with the luxury products they purchase and have the opportunity to construct their ideal selves. While in the physical world, people perform in front of a stage to present themselves, in the Metaverse, they carry all the elements that enhance their presentation, namely the illusion of depth perception and the third dimension. They do not hesitate to spend large amounts of money on products they can never physically touch or wear due to the illusion of reality (Türk et al., 2022).

As the Metaverse becomes more prevalent, on the platform where the illusion of reality is at its highest, users will be more inclined to purchase luxury products to showcase their performances while socializing. According to Erving Goffman (2016), self-presentation includes all the performances that individuals present to an audience that observes and influences them, as if they are on a stage, in a place where they are with others other than themselves, and where others shape the actions and attitudes they present in that place. According to the concept of self-presentation, an individual's behaviors and attitudes, which vary according to the situation, include the decision to act under one's gender concept, the environment, and the expectations of others.

Goffman (2016) compares everyday social life to a theater stage. Accordingly, he points out that performance is exhibited during self-presentation, which varies according to the environment, and that individuals need to have the self they present to the audience approved by them. The performance exhibited may vary according to the individual's position, social role, and status. Individuals can be categorized according to their roles in society. Man, woman, father, mother, child, employee, spouse, son, boss, etc. People have more than one social role and more than one performance. Goffman gave meaning to self and self-presentation and how interaction with others in daily life, interpersonal communication environments, and face-to-face relationships can affect the individual's self. Goffman examined the processes that unfold when a person is on stage and backstage, that is, with others and alone, and found that people present themselves with selective performances to meet the expectations of other people with whom they interact (Goffman, 2016).

Self-presentation can be described as a process by which individuals reflect and shape themselves, their bodies, and others as they perceive them. In virtual social networks, unlike face-to-face communication, self-presentation allows for the simultaneous presentation of multiple selves and identities. Users can present themselves according to their ideal perceptions by creating different profiles on social media, and they can participate in another self-performance with their bodies in the physical real world. For example, if the user is a real-life student, he can present himself as a professional in social networks. In face-to-face communication, the perception and focus are mainly on the individual's performance. Since the individual's body is outside of virtual social media and there is no direct control over the audience, the individual may have other concerns while presenting him/herself. In the Metaverse, thanks to developing technologies and AR, the change in depth perception creates an artificial reality. People are involved in almost realistic experiences due to the illusion of reality.

"Mead refers to the self-image that a person produces as a result of his or her behavior in a given situation as the 'social self.' In fact, the 'social self' represents the attitudes of others and society in general, as these influence the interpretation of the behavior displayed by the individual" (Beeghley et al., 2013: 492).

According to this social self-concept, Metaverse users generally equip their profiles with idealized avatars. Symbolic interactionism states that the formation of self and society is based on social interaction (Çoştu, 2009). The individual and the society are constantly influencing each other. Symbolic interactionists investigate what causes people's behavior and examine and analyze individuals' actions to get to know themselves and others outside themselves. The concept explores the interaction established with the symbols it contains and can interpret the actions of others based on the meanings derived from them. According to the essential conceptual acceptance of the symbolic interactionism view, identity and culture are built on social interaction (Boz, 2012; Oksman & Turtiainen, 2004). In the virtual world of the Metaverse, individual-society interaction can be achieved through avatars, and a virtual profile can be created that corresponds to the individual's true identity in the culture in which he or she lives. In the world of avatars (Metaverse), people can choose the self they want to show (the ideal self), not the real self, and since these selves are not recognized, this can cause crime rates to increase in the virtual environment (Göçen, 2022). Through self-perception, the individual aims to be accepted by reflecting the self he or she wants to be to others with the "mirror self" (Cooley, 1902; Türk et al., 2022).

Perception can be expressed as physical, neurological, and cognitive processes that enable a person to perceive, recognize, understand, and interpret stimuli from the external world and internal experiences through sensory organs. Each shapes his values, beliefs, desires, and needs with the new perceptions he gains from the outside world; in the process, he changes his self-perception depending on the new stimuli he acquires and uses them in his self-representation. We connect to the outside world through our senses and our body. The body is the area that can be observed and paid attention to in its most concrete form as individuals present themselves. The body is the center of the self and plays a major role in shaping the reality perception. While mental processes occur through the body, there is a transition from physical experiences and perceptions to experiences and perceptions of the outside world's reality.

The individual is mentally integrated with the body, image, and experiences he or she has had throughout his or her life and has a single, complete body-self sensation both physically and psychologically (Türk et al., 2022). A person's perspective on his or her image is also essential in self-presentation. His positive or negative perception will also affect the direction of his communication with his environment. The recent increase in interest in plastic surgery due to the influence of social media is due to the shaping of body perception between fashion trends and self-presentation (Türk et al., 2022). It can be interpreted that the virtual world triggers individuals' desire to shape their images that reflect their external appearance to create their ideal self. According to a study examining how self-presentation and personal image creation in the Metaverse affect user behavior in social media use, the Metaverse increases social anxiety in young participants. It causes young participants to view the virtual world as more important than the physical world (Wang et al., 2022).

In the Metaverse, users who want to be A+ digitally construct themselves through luxury products to achieve their ideal selves and create an image for others with their mirror selves. It can be said that users buy famous brands for their avatars that they cannot wear in the physical world and products that serve their ideal self-presentation in the Metaverse. Self-presentation, or the external reflection of the image that a person has created for the individual he or she is or wants to be, has become the field of experience of the created self as well as the real self, starting with social networks and evolving into the Metaverse (Ertürk & Eray, 2016). In the Metaverse, users can shop for the ideal selves they dream of and want to be with digital clothing and can give themselves new meanings. Metaverse technology, which can transfer the self-presentation, lifestyle, and communication of Internet users to the digital space as they are, is trying to prevent the Web 3.0 Internet evolution that is at its core.

The Metaverse ecosystem comprises avatars, a virtual economy, content, trust and accountability, security, privacy, and social acceptance (Damar, 2021). Metaverse environments are experiential three-dimensional virtual worlds where users can socialize and stay connected in real-time to create a user-owned Internet economy that permanently integrates the digital and physical worlds. The continuity of physical and VR can be expressed as mixed reality. Studies in the literature show that users are happier thanks to their avatars, which reflect their desired selves and are in line with their ideal self-frames. LGBT, disabled, ethnic, female, disadvantaged, and those with physical body issues reported that the idealized avatars they created protected them from bullying on social networks and made them feel freer (Türk et al., 2022). It can be interpreted that the Metaverse plays a role in individuals' self-presentation.

Especially in the real community, where there is exclusion, marginalization, stigma, etc. For individuals who buy the labels, the virtual world becomes a dream world where they can freely realize what they want to be in the real world. Metaverse users can experience pleasure in the physical world by perceiving the products they purchase as if they were wearing them through VR glasses or lenses, thanks to tools that activate their sensory organs. Many users want their online selves to feel similar to their real-life experiences. In virtual environments, users now value and invest more in their digital identities than their physical ones. Virtual shopping environments in the Metaverse continue to offer digital meanings and promise to influence users to present themselves similarly to those in the physical world. The use of social media, especially by young users, for meeting their entertainment needs, maintaining their friendships, resting, social activities, communication, and interaction are the sources of motivation for its use, revealed under various studies (Tutgun-Ünal & Tarhan, 2022). Young people, especially those interested in colorful, virtual, and entertaining media, such as the Internet and Metaverse, may feel enthusiasm and attachment because they can reach their ideal selves through their avatars. As a virtual culture of consumption emerges, users who make discoveries may develop a daily addiction to this colorful and virtual world and pass it on to those around them, forming a new community.

Today, people spend more and more time on the Internet every day. Digital properties, friendships, social spaces, multiple access to information, etc. A new ecosystem of virtual life has emerged. In digital spaces, users socialize and begin to perform real-world actions in virtual environments, such as working in a business environment and earning new income, shopping, and discovering new products. Individuals are trying to virtualize their identities and the factors they value. In particular, they put a lot of effort into better designing and presenting the virtual self they want to be. In the Metaverse, users want to bring the selves and social environments they want to be in their real lives into the virtual world.

Interpersonal communication can be expressed as a process that transforms with new communication technologies and changes and transforms the self-presentations of people who shape their perceptions according to these technologies. Users of the Metaverse can establish close relationships with the illusion of three-dimensional reality and will not compromise on excessive spending and luxury consumption for their self-presentation. In essence, the goal of people using social networking sites is to create a profile that matches the ideal self they want to be.

To quickly achieve their perfect selves, they follow products and services closely, transforming themselves into extensions of luxury brands that make them feel like they belong to the classes and criteria they want to be in.

People who want to show themselves A+ pose on social networks with luxury brands with brand logos and emblems on them, take photos in luxury places and share them, and make changes in their appearance with the help of photo and video editing programs or aesthetic interventions are an effort to reach the ideal self (Türk, 2022). Unfortunately, it can be said that luxury brands become a part of the individual's identity and self after a while. People's consumption styles have changed with self-presentation in the transition from face-to-face communication to virtual social networks. With the proliferation of virtual communication, the private sphere of individuals has moved into the public sphere. Thus, consumption fashions in virtual media develop and spread to transform the self whose image is constructed into a more extravagant one.

Desirable selves such as the beloved, beautiful woman, the charismatic, handsome man, the perfectly brilliant mother, the powerful, wealthy father, and the famous circle of friends can be presented in social media channels through social networks and consumer products. Everyone competes to be in the best shape and wants to show others they exist with the best products. The user who comes from a family with an average socio-economic level in society has reached a position where he emulates famous, rich celebrities with luxurious lives while living an ordinary life, and he discovers that he can be like celebrities thanks to social networks and tries to embellish his ideal self with luxury brands. The purchasing behavior of individuals in everyday life, influenced by social conditions and the influence of consumer culture, shapes the performance of individuals for their self-presentation. Based on this, Metaverse has contributed to the digital consumer culture by creating a new market opportunity for virtual reality. As media reach everywhere, it can be said that the radical change in the concept and perception of reality has emptied reality in the cultural industry, and an artificial environment is marketed as real by intertwining reality and simulation (Türk et al., 2022).

Metaverse on user identity presentation critically examines the Metaverse's promise of facilitating social life, which came to the fore with the Meta Corporation, in the context of the life form that the Metaverse offers parallel to physical life (Saker & Frith, 2022). The physical life we live in the future will be reconstructed in the Metaverse. Users who participate in this world will have the same experiences as they do in the physical world, carry the interpersonal communication they establish here into the Metaverse, and structure their self-presentations there. In the Metaverse, this will happen through luxury consumption, new technologies such as avatars and NFT, and the influence of digital consumer culture. For example, user-designed avatars can be used in social media and Metaverse environments. Metaverse users shop for the avatars they create and feel the need to create a virtual self in their relationships with friends, family, and social circles to present themselves in the best light and to be perfect and unique. Low self-awareness is expressed as users experiencing a minimal sense of self in 2D environments (Göçen, 2022). The desire to achieve the ideal perfect body forces today's individuals to make significant expenditures for the ideal self (Türk & Bayrakçı, 2019).

With Web 3.0, a personalized virtual world using artificial intelligence technologies has emerged today. The concept of Metaverse, which was first used in the world of digital video games, will play a significant role in the future of the Internet with the investments of Meta companies in this field. Today, the concept of Metaverse has become a term used to express the new version of the Internet. It offers users a three-dimensional virtual world with its avatars. Metaverse, which provides the opportunity to participate worldwide, uses social media and e-commerce, social environment, education, communication, digital video games, culture, art, sports, and health. It can be said that this is an essential development in terms of directing and perhaps addicting users to buy luxury branded products for their avatars.

Today, in the hyper-reality created by simulacra, it can be said that users in virtual environments have become incapable of thinking due to the illusion of reality in the human mind, and they experience their experiences through intermediaries, making their choices feel real but far from reality. Today, we see that the real universe has been replaced by VR and real human experiences can be experienced through copies. Metaverse users mimic the realities of the physical world with replicas of their bodies. Today, consumer culture stores a message in the minds of people trying to prove themselves with the products they consume in a language that commands people to consume constantly, and fashion trends and products are in collaboration with luxury brands that sell meanings that complete the self-presentation with a perfect profile. This consumer culture has constantly made it obligatory to buy and show things to others through virtual contexts. The message is clear: with fine-tuning, you too can be better, more (Niedzwiecki, 2011).

3. Methodology

This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, Singapore, July 22-24, 2010. Chapter 50 in: Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore". Since this is a Review Study, Ethics Committee Approval is not required. All responsibility belongs to the author.

This research aimed to investigate the psychology-related factors of self-presentation in Metaverse environments using the keywords "Metaverse," "self," "self-presentation," and "psychology." Studies in Turkish and international literature databases are discussed from the psychology perspective. The universe of research is the research on Metaverse and self-presentation in Turkey and the world between 1902 and 2023 in YÖK National Thesis Center, Google Scholar, ProQuest, ResearchGate databases with the keywords "Metaverse," "self," "self-presentation," "psychology." It was found by searching. The search yielded 45 articles, books, and master's and doctoral theses. 39 selected articles, books, and dissertations were used as the research sample. In the research, a general research trend was revealed by examining the data of the information contained in the articles, books, master's and doctoral theses written about the concepts of "Metaverse" and "self" in the world and in Turkey. The literature studied was explained, reinterpreted, and presented to the reader.

A literature review provides information on the subject of interest, a theoretical basis for research, and insight into the results of similar studies (Büyükoztürk, 2015). It starts by defining the research problem and determining the information and research results related to the subject and subtopics discussed in the research. After the research, the literature review is expanded again to discuss the results obtained (Eustace, 2003).

4. Result

The Metaverse ecosystem, which will treat the physical and virtual worlds together and allow individuals to exist in a three-dimensional virtual world with their avatars, will become increasingly important. The Metaverse will cause a significant break in the future of the Internet and social media world. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the interest in digitalization has increased, technological possibilities have been tried to be developed, and there has been an increasing demand for development. In recent years, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been understood that a large part of our identity is formed in the socio-digital world, and with virtuality increasing day by day, a complete break from it cannot be achieved (Serpil & Karaca, 2023). In today's age, our digital identity has become almost more important than our physical one. Especially with the Covid-19 pandemic, people spend more time online, and 70% of people have moved their work to the digital world. For this reason, 88% of users believe that their online selves should reflect their real-life effects instead of using fictitious digital nicknames (Türk & Dari, 2022).

In the Metaverse environment, users continue performing routinized behaviors in a digital world through avatars representing themselves. In this context, commerce, consumption, shopping, culture, communication, etc., occur just as in the physical world. VR also makes basic human elements available in the Metaverse ecosystem. In this environment, users present themselves through the personal avatars they create. The consumer self is a result of using these technologies, and a new self-project distributed in time and space becomes visible (Tutgun-Ünal & Tarhan, 2021). Meta-avatars can experience luxury brands' clothes in the store. It can be said that these innovations offered by users who have digital products with avatars aim to help them better express themselves and connect with others through their ideal selves. Through Meta-avatars with stores, individuals can easily access all kinds of opportunities in the Metaverse that are difficult to purchase in everyday life. It can be said that the digital products that individuals will purchase for their avatars will exist thanks to tools that allow them to reflect themselves better (ideal self) and be "unique." Meta Avatars Store aims to reveal the prominent elements in promotional activities aimed at convincing users to buy digital products so that their avatars can better reflect themselves and make a good self-presentation (Özkök-Şişman & Bilgici, 2023).

The Metaverse contains a large field of view where we cannot limit our thoughts like a game universe and contains a virtual world beyond universes that can contain all universes. So much so that individuals in this digital universe will continue their lives in the universe with easily wearable technologies such as VR goggles and lenses. Metaverse is a very new technology that is still in the development stage. Metaverse, an example of the pinnacle of today's technology world, can be interpreted as the future of social media, mobile Internet, and digital devices.

Today, how individuals present themselves in real life is being transformed by personal avatars created in virtual environments. While human beings are living beings who know how to think and question and who can

exist with their soul and emotions, they have now forgotten how to think and feel by turning themselves into objects with technology for the convenience of technology (Serpil & Karaca, 2023). Digitized virtual universes can reshape the concept of beauty, idealized selves, life dynamics, and social acceptance norms widely discussed in popular culture from the past to the present through the digital representations of users called avatars. Individuals in the virtual universe design an artificial and unreal world where they can have the ideal appearance they desire and manage their talents, hobbies, professional standards, physical characteristics, and personal lives as they wish. Individuals with anonymous identities may feel more accessible in virtual space than in everyday life. It is suggested that individuals are motivated by the desire to reflect their realities and ideals in their world due to their narcissistic tendencies and to liberate their bodies (Özkök-Şişman & Bilgici, 2023).

As users shape themselves into their ideal selves in the Metaverse environment, the desire to be perfect can also increase narcissistic tendencies in individuals. When they return to their real selves and leave the Metaverse environment, they may experience disappointment, depression, anxiety, and a desire to live constantly in the Internet environment, that is, in the ideal self-role in the Metaverse. Avatars, expressed as virtual characters that represent the individual in the virtual world, are considered a reflection of the user's body, thoughts, and existence in the physical world and can be interpreted as essential self-presentation tools (Özkök-Şişman & Bilgici, 2023).

The Metaverse can be interpreted as a world beyond our real world or universe. In the Metaverse, individuals have assets in the same real world; virtual property can be used, bought, or sold through avatars and services. Users in the Metaverse want their virtual existence to reflect their real self or the ideal self they want to be in the virtual world, and thanks to the Metaverse, users here experience a universe in the virtual world where they will have a real-life (Büyükbaykal-Ilgaz & Sönmezer, 2022; Türk et al., 2022). Metaverse and social media, self-presentation, social media, luxury brands, and Metaverse fields are described as the main topics (Özkök-Şişman & Bilgici, 2023). Metaverse can be described as a virtual world that provides a three-dimensional environment where billions of people live in the comfort of their own homes in the physical world, work in workplaces, shop in shopping malls, learn in their social circles, and interact with each other. It can be said that users will have one unique experience after another by getting their digital copies or avatars, identities, and money.

The concept of the Internet can express it as an extensive network consisting of billions of computers, millions of servers, and other electronic devices and equipment. When users are online, they can communicate with each other, view Web sites, and interact through the Internet. The Metaverse phenomenon is also based on the Internet. The Internet can be described as something that people surf and browse, but to a certain extent and time, life can be created and experienced in the Metaverse. The universal and global growth of the Internet brings many services to the fore, which pave the way for building the Metaverse. According to research that examines what information users present about themselves in the Metaverse, how they do so, their opinions in this context, and the factors that influence this situation, the self-presentation of Metaverse users as individuals may vary with the complex interactions of different contextual factors such as privacy and anonymity in the virtual environment. In this context, user concerns must be addressed now and in the future, and secure areas for privacy should be created in the design of the Metaverse (Sykownik et al., 2022).

In the Metaverse environment, users establishing partnerships with game companies and the sale of player avatars through the design of NFTs contribute to users building their individual and social identities against other users and presenting their ideal selves (Türk & Darı, 2022). By introducing new technological advantages and creating immersive and fascinating virtual worlds, the online gaming industry can make users addicted to these devices. Metaverse, based on the virtual applications that companies implemented to support remote work during the pandemic, has started to be tested in workplaces and is being widely used in companies and schools after the pandemic (Baltacı, 2023).

A study on self-presentation and Metaverse in the literature reveals the place of avatars in the future of the Metaverse and the role that luxury brands can play in presenting the self online, showing that having digital products for avatars, users' expression of self in the meta-brand discourse and the relationship between self-expression (Özkök-Şişman & Bilgici, 2023). Meta-avatars: This study investigates the relationship between avatars, self-presentation, and luxury brands. It can be said that it aims to examine it through the example of the store. Digital twins and examples of collaborative work can also be mentioned as other applications. The concept of digital twins is not only a trendy concept on social media and computer monitors. Still, it also makes a name for itself through artificial intelligence-based holograms. For example, a conference room, commercial presentation areas, art galleries, homes or properties, and various virtual environments can be rented or purchased.

5. Discussion

Users who exist with their ideal selves enjoy the Metaverse environment. Still, when they return to their real lives, they may not be satisfied with their identities and may even feel alienated. The avatars in the Metaverse have become essential to an individual's identity over time. This universe continues to exist in Metaverse environments with games and player avatars. Social networks are prepared for all users to have an AR experience, and users here meet and make friends with other users in AR games with secondary socialization, socializing, and then interacting with their idealized selves. They participate in this process (Türk & Darı, 2022). In these virtual environments, users may become too attached to their idealized selves and essentially experience alienation from their selves. These users, who are satisfied with their idealized selves in their Metaverse environments, will likely want to return to their idealized selves in the virtual environment when they return to their real lives.

New technologies such as Web 3, AR and Mixed Reality, NFT, and new products of global brands necessary for the construction of the Metaverse and how self-presentation takes place are mentioned in terms of consumer culture. In the Metaverse, where interpersonal communication processes and relationships are perceived as being experienced in the physical world, users will present themselves with showcase performances to feel valuable, be recognized, belong, and experience all kinds of emotions. For this, they will express their status, socio-economic class, etc., through NFTs. It was mentioned that they would construct their identities and images. The physical life we live in the future will be reconstructed in the Metaverse. Users who participate in this world will have experiences as they do in the physical world, carry their interpersonal communication into the Metaverse, and structure their self-representations there. VR and AR are two technological terms that are important for developing the Metaverse concept. The self-concept, on the other hand, is a perceptual product shaped by the individual's mental processes and the data received from the outside world, as well as the material and spiritual characteristics of the individual. Today, interpersonal communication processes and modes, which have evolved from face-to-face communication to computer-based social media and into the Metaverse through virtual reality, have changed the self-representation of individuals.

For future studies, the transformation of the concepts in this study into the literature, such as a research article on the relationship between self, self-presentation, and Metaverse, may make a significant contribution.

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Author contribution statements

The author carried out the research design and implementation, analysis, and writing of the article himself without using AI applications.

Disclosure statement

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