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LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA

FROM PIXELS TO IDENTITY: How Fashion Consumption in Metaverse Environments Constitutes Children's Fashion Identity

APOIO: CAPES

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Doctoral thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Business Management in the Graduate College of Management at the State University of Maringa (PPA/UEM).

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To Luiz Antônio,
the spark of my wonder,
the heart of my journey,
the soul of my inspiration.

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"Sou livre neste mundo e posso abrir qualquer caminho, mas escolho, porque quero, toda vereda que me leve ao estado de amor." (Socorro Acioli, Oração para Desaparecer)

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"Era tudo tão lindo que nem coube nos seus pequenos sonhos. Ela precisou aprender a sonhar mais." (Socorro Acioli, A Cabeça do Santo)

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"Not for you," Lila replies ardently, "you're my brilliant friend, you have to be the best of all, boys and girls." (Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend)

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"O importante não é ser o primeiro ou primeira, o importante é abrir caminhos." (Conceição Evaristo, Roda Viva)

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"Receita de família não se copia, se inventa. A gente vai aprendendo aos poucos, improvisando e transmitindo o que sabe no dia a dia." (Francisco Azevedo, O Arroz de Palma)

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"Para as rosas, escreveu alguém, o jardineiro é eterno." (Machado de Assis, Quincas Borba)

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"Cada um só enxerga o que vê da própria janela." (Carla Madeira, Tudo é Rio)

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"Tudo é questão de despertar sua alma." (Gabriel García Márquez, Cem Anos de Solidão)

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"Felicidade é a certeza de que a nossa vida não está se passando inutilmente"
(Érico Veríssimo, Olhai os Lírios do Campo)

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"O que dá o verdadeiro sentido ao encontro é a busca, e é preciso andar muito para se alcançar o que está perto." (José Saramago, Todos os nomes)

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"Eu canto porque o instante existe e a minha vida está completa."
(Cecília Meireles, Antologia Poética)

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(Adélia Prado, Poesia Reunida)

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"A vida é combate, que aos fracos abate, que aos fortes e bravos só pode exaltar"
(Gonçalves Dias, Canção do Tamoio)

To my students, you are the reason I teach, learn, and sometimes question my life choices – but mostly in a good way! Thank you for keeping me on my toes, for your endless curiosity, and for proving that teaching is never a one-way street.

"Palavras são, na minha nada humilde opinião, nossa inesgotável fonte de magia."
(JK Rowling, Harry Potter e as Relíquias da Morte)

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"Nas palmas de tuas mãos leio as linhas da minha vida." (Cora Coralina)

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“Na vida só vale o amor e a amizade. O resto é tudo pinoia, é tudo presunção, não paga a pena...” (Jorge Amado, Dona Flor e seus dois maridos)

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"O amor-próprio não pode florescer em isolamento. Não é uma tarefa fácil amar a si mesmo."
(Bell Hooks, Tudo sobre o amor)

To God, for the light that shines upon my path.

"Mas a vereda dos justos é como a luz da aurora, que vai brilhando mais e mais até ser dia perfeito."(Provérbios 4:18)

And finally, to myself: You did it!

"Se aprendesse qualquer coisa, necessitaria aprender mais, e nunca ficaria satisfeito."
(Graciliano Ramos, em Vidas Secas)

“E andavam para o sul, metidos naquele sonho.
Uma cidade grande, cheia de pessoas fortes.
Os meninos em escolas, aprendendo coisas difíceis e necessárias. (...)
Chegariam a uma terra desconhecida e civilizada, ficariam presos nela.
E o sertão continuaria a mandar gente para lá.
O sertão mandaria para a cidade homens fortes, brutos, como Fabiano, sinhá Vitória e os dois meninos.”
(Graciliano Ramos, em Vidas Secas)

“A vida é feita de palavras, elas explicam e fazem nascer e morrer. Se ninguém pronuncia um nome este ser está morto, mesmo que respire e leve um coração batendo no peito. Estar vivo é ser palavra na boca de alguém.”
(Socorro Acioli, em Oração para desaparecer)

ABSTRACT

This study examines how fashion consumption in metaverse environments constitutes children's fashion identities. Through a bricolage qualitative inquiry endeavor, it explores how children engage with digital self-expression, navigate hybrid fashion spaces, and interact with influential agents. The findings reveal that metaverse fashion is more than an extension of physical fashion – it is a key site of identity negotiation, social belonging, and consumer behavior. The introduction outlines the research problem, objectives, and significance, questioning how digital fashion influences children's physical-world identities. The theoretical framework draws on consumer culture theory, identity theory, and digital consumption literature, introducing Phygital Fashion Identity as a fluid continuum between physical and digital self-expression. The empirical framework analyzes children's interactions within metaverse platforms such as Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft, revealing widespread uncertainty about the metaverse's definition. The materials and methods section details the study's digital phyginographic approach, incorporating participant observation, in-depth interviews, visual research, and documentary analysis. The study applies Bezerra et al.'s analytical protocol and the Gioia methodology to examine digital fashion's role in identity formation. The analysis identifies four fashion identity profiles: Expressive Creators, Digital Conformists, Analog Rebels, and Restricted Players, illustrating diverse self-expression patterns. It also highlights agents of influence, including parents, peers, YouTubers, and educators, who co-construct children's digital fashion choices. Additionally, it examines commercialization strategies within metaverse platforms and their impact on children's perceptions of value and style. The conclusion synthesizes contributions, emphasizing the metaverse as a space where digital and physical fashion identities merge. It calls for greater digital literacy, ethical regulations in virtual marketplaces, and further research on Phygital fashion identity. While acknowledging limitations, the study provides a foundation for future research on the psychological, economic, and sociocultural dimensions of digital fashion consumption. Ultimately, this thesis asserts that digital fashion plays a crucial role in children's identity constitution. As digital and physical realities become increasingly intertwined, understanding Phygital fashion identity is essential for anticipating the future of fashion and digital consumption.

Keywords: Digital Fashion. Metaverses. Fashion Consumption. Phygital Identity. Children.

RESUMO

Este estudo investiga como o consumo de moda em ambientes do metaverso constitui a identidade de moda infantil. Por meio de uma abordagem qualitativa bricolada, explora como as crianças se envolvem com a autoexpressão digital, navegam por espaços híbridos de moda e interagem com agentes influenciadores. Os achados revelam que a moda no metaverso vai além da mera extensão da moda física – ela é um espaço essencial de negociação identitária, pertencimento social e comportamento de consumo. A introdução apresenta o problema de pesquisa, os objetivos e a relevância do estudo, questionando como a moda digital influencia a identidade fashion das crianças no mundo físico. O referencial teórico fundamenta-se na teoria da cultura do consumo, na teoria da identidade e nos estudos sobre consumo digital, introduzindo o conceito de Identidade Fashion Phygital como um contínuo fluido entre a autoexpressão física e digital. O arcabouço empírico analisa as interações das crianças em plataformas do metaverso, como Roblox, Fortnite e Minecraft, revelando uma incerteza generalizada sobre a definição do próprio metaverso. A seção de materiais e métodos detalha a abordagem figinográfica (física e digital) adotada, incluindo observação participante, entrevistas em profundidade, pesquisa visual e análise documental. O estudo aplica o protocolo analítico de Bezerra et al. e a metodologia Gioia para examinar o papel da moda digital na formação identitária. A análise identifica quatro perfis de identidade fashion infantil: Criadores Expressivos, Conformistas Digitais, Rebeldes Analógicos e Jogadores Restritos, evidenciando diferentes padrões de autoexpressão. O estudo também destaca os agentes de influência, como pais, colegas, YouTubers e educadores, que coconstroem as escolhas de moda digital das crianças. Além disso, examina estratégias de comercialização dentro das plataformas do metaverso e seus impactos na percepção infantil sobre valor e estilo. A conclusão sintetiza as contribuições do estudo, enfatizando o metaverso como um espaço onde as identidades fashion digitais e físicas se fundem. O estudo reforça a necessidade de maior alfabetização digital, regulamentações éticas para os mercados virtuais e novas pesquisas sobre Identidade Fashion Phygital. Apesar das limitações, a pesquisa fornece uma base sólida para investigações futuras sobre as dimensões psicológicas, econômicas e socioculturais do consumo de moda digital. Por fim, esta tese afirma que a moda digital desempenha um papel crucial na constituição da identidade de moda infantil. À medida que as realidades digitais e físicas se tornam cada vez mais interligadas, compreender a Identidade Fashion Phygital é essencial para antecipar o futuro da moda e do consumo digital.

Palavras Chave: Moda Digital. Metaversos. Consumo de Moda. Identidade Phygital. Crianças.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CCT	Consumption Culture Theory
COPEP	Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos
DVC	Digital Virtual Consumption
FOMO	Fear of Missing Out
NFT	Non-Fungible Token
VW	Virtual Worlds

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PROLOGUE

"Mom, what is a thesis?". This question came from my son, a simple curiosity from a child who watched his mother immerse herself in writing for years. In the final months of this journey, I found myself trying to quantify for him something that was deeply qualitative. "How many pages are left, Mom?" he would ask. "About 50, my dear," I would reply. But the real answer was more complex. A thesis is not just about pages; it is about thoughts, questions, and discoveries unfolding over time.

Being both a researcher and a mother presented unique challenges. Balancing academic rigor with the demands of daily life required resilience. This journey was not just about analyzing the metaverse and its influence on children's fashion identity but also about navigating my own identity as a scholar, a mother, and a thinker in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

Throughout this process, I participated in two doctoral consortia (ANPAD/SEMEAD). In one of them, Professor André Maranhão reminded me of the responsibility of being a student at a public university – to think carefully about the social contributions of this thesis. That moment reinforced my commitment to ensuring this research extends beyond academic boundaries and reaches those who can benefit from it most. This perspective was further expanded when I took a course called "Communication of Science", which opened my eyes to the importance of disseminating scientific knowledge beyond the walls of academia. This realization culminated in the creation of a podcast, Cultura e Consumo Pod, which I co-founded with my colleague Melissa. Through this platform, we sought to bring discussions on culture and consumption to a broader audience, bridging the gap between academic insights and everyday conversations.

"Why is it in English, Mom?". My son asked one day. His question made me reflect on the global nature of my academic conversations. Despite actively participating in leading conferences in Brazil, I found only two papers addressing the metaverse. The most significant discussions on this topic were taking place outside the country, making English a necessary bridge to those dialogues. So, I embraced this language with the hope of amplifying the Brazilian voice in global academic discussions and ensuring that our perspectives are heard beyond national borders.

This thesis was crafted through an interplay of senses, making it a living, breathing process. Literature played a fundamental role in shaping this research. My gateway into the

metaverse was Snow Crash, a book that introduced me to cyberpunk narratives – an often-overlooked but deeply influential genre. The books I read since the beginning of my doctoral journey were not only academic but also an escape. They allowed me to travel beyond my immediate reality, keeping my mind engaged and fostering the creativity necessary for this work. Thanks to Booklovers Club, my beloved book club, for embracing me and keeping me breathing and warm through each turning page. Music, also, was my refuge; I curated a playlist that accompanied my writing sessions, setting the rhythm for my thoughts. In moments of tension, I found solace in small rituals – bathing with a Caudalie oil gifted by my friend Ana or lighting a coconut-scented candle handmade by my friend Fran. I wrote with wine and edited with coffee, each sip marking a different stage of the writing process. The presence of my dogs, Firica (*in memoriam*) and Castanha, brought me comfort in times of solitude. Their warmth was a reminder that I was never truly alone in this journey. On days when loneliness crept in, I found refuge in unexpected places – like a supermarket with a beautiful view of Lake Igapó. Sitting there with my headphones on, immersed in the hum of passing strangers, I felt connected to the world as I wrote. Speaking of dogs, I am immensely grateful to my dear friend, Dr. Priscila Fajardo, for offering me a table during her shifts at the University Veterinary Hospital of UEL. "Come write your thesis here during my shift, my friend; that way, you won't feel alone and can focus," she would say. Those moments of shared space and quiet camaraderie made a difference.

A doctoral journey changes you. At the beginning, I saw this work as the endpoint; now, I understand it as just another step in an ongoing process. Every conference I attended, every paper accepted or rejected, contributed to shaping who I am and what I am capable of producing. That is why, at the end of this work, I include appendices (Appendix L) detailing what has been done, what is currently being developed, and what I plan to explore further – because this research is alive. Much of this work was built within a research group, alongside my colleague Anne and my advisors Olga and Karin. Their support exemplifies the power of collective knowledge production. Finding the right collaborators makes all the difference.

In an era dominated by artificial intelligence, I wanted to ensure that my voice – Lair's voice – remained present throughout this work. I want readers to hear me. My cohort, the class of 2021, (probably the last class to course disciplines and writing thesis without a massive use of IA) started this journey amid the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. We experienced online classes, uncertainty, and profound challenges. Yet, through it all, qualitative and quantitative methods, alongside epistemological discussions, became anchors of sanity in an otherwise chaotic world.

This thesis is more than an academic exercise – it is a deeply personal endeavor that reflects not only my intellectual pursuits but also my lived experiences. It is a testament to the resilience, passion, and curiosity that have driven me throughout this journey. And, perhaps one day, when my son asks again, "Mom, what is a thesis?" I will tell him: " A thesis is how we push the boundaries of science. A thesis, also, is a story – a story of discovery, of persistence, and of learning how the digital world constitutes who we are.", Let’s tackle this last part!

"Can I win a VR headset for Christmas?" (Luiz Antonio, age 7)

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this section is to introduce the theme developed throughout this research. It presents the topic and what is relevant in the context so the reader can understand the research gap, the research problem, and the research objectives. It also introduces aspects related to the philosophy of science and the general structure of this work.

1.1 Theme, Context, Gap, and Research Problem

The purpose of this study is to understand **how fashion consumption in metaverse environments constitutes children[1]'s fashion identity in the physical world.** According to the initial thought in the prologue, the interest in this topic arises from personal concerns about the world that surrounds the researcher, be it physical or digital.

I feel fortunate to engage daily with a variety of generations (Ortiz-Pimentel et al., 2020), each offering unique perspectives. My grandparents, granduncles, and grandaunts belong to the Silent Generation (1928-1945), while my parents, uncles, aunts, professors, and many colleagues fall within the Baby Boomer (1946-1964) category. I work and socialize with numerous individuals from Generation X (1965-1980), and I am part of Generation Y (or Millennials) (1981-1995). At the university, I teach Generation Z (1996-2010) and have the privilege of being a parent to a Gen Alpha child (2010-and foward) (Ziatdinov & Cilliers, 2021). More than that, I take pleasure in observing, talking, and understanding the references of each generation, striving to grasp how they each perceive and construct their version of the world – specially what and how they consume.

The definition of childhood has evolved across generations (Mabry et al., 2007), shaping how individuals engage with technology. Baby boomers experienced childhood as a period of responsibility with minimal digital exposure (Bonvalet et al., 2015). Generation X, raised in an analog world, saw the rise of personal computers and video games, approaching

[1] According to Vygotski (1996), child development is segmented into distinct phases: the first year, early childhood (1-3 years old), preschool age (3 to 7 years old), and school age (8 to 12 years old). While Vygotski's framework extends through puberty and adolescence (up to 18 years), this work will focus on the school-age phase (8-12 years) due to its relevance to the research problem. This period is characterized by the formation of theoretical thinking (Asbahar, 2020), an enhanced ability to engage in verbal communication (Karbach & Kray, 2007), and the increasing importance of peer relationships in shaping motivation and social development (Asbahar, 2020).

technology pragmatically (Buckingham & Willett, 2013). Millennials grew up during the digital revolution, with the internet shaping their identity and interactions (Palfrey, J., & Gasser, 2011). Generation Z, as digital natives, seamlessly integrate social media and immersive online spaces into daily life (Milanesi et al., 2024). Generation Alpha, immersed in an increasingly immersive-driven world, may see it as ordinary as television was for baby boomers (Ziatdinov & Cilliers, 2021). This spectrum of childhood experiences across generations reveals how each group's interaction with the metaverse will differ – ranging from cautious curiosity to seamless integration – based on the technological landscape that defined their early years.

Amid various research avenues, my background guided me to refine my focus. First, I was drawn to Consumption Culture Theory (CCT) as a crucial lens for understanding how individuals and societies express values, identities, and social dynamics (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020). This intersection reflects both personal choices and broader consumption trends, making it essential in contemporary, and specially Brazilian, research (de Souza et al., 2013).

Second, the emerging metaverse captivated me for its potential to blend physical and digital realities (Batat, 2022). These virtual spaces are rapidly evolving as arenas for social interaction, commerce (Jungherr & Schlarb, 2022), and self-expression (Jain et al., 2021), reshaping identity and consumer culture (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Third, raising a child deepened my interest in identity constitution. Observing how children navigate both traditional and digital influences, I became aware of the complexities in shaping a child's sense of self (McLean & Syed, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2011), especially as real and virtual boundaries blur (Batat, 2022; Hadi et al., 2023; Ku et al., 2021).

Finally, fashion identity emerged as a natural focus, shaped by generational influences, my academic advisor (thanks, professor Olga), and key texts from my master's and doctoral studies. Fashion is a dynamic (Blanchard-Emmerson, 2022) and visible marker of identity (Huopalainen & Satama, 2020), offering insights into how different generations negotiate their place in society through visual and material/immaterial objects (Meyer, 2012).

I was first introduced to the concept of the metaverse when my son requested a virtual reality headset, in 2021. This request piqued my curiosity and led me to explore this phenomenon. As I delved into books (Cline, 2012; Stephenson, 2003), movies (Moore et al., 2012; Spielberg, 2018), and other media (Wu, 2022), I began to realize that one of the most expansive yet often overlooked entry points (like portals) into the metaverse is through gaming environments (Jungherr & Schlarb, 2022; Zuo & Shen, 2024).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of these virtual spaces became even more pronounced. As physical interactions were limited, gaming environments provided a crucial space for social connection (Davies & Hjorth, 2024; Oh et al., 2023; Wiederhold, 2021), entertainment (de la Cruz et al., 2023; Medina & Medina, 2024), and even education (Alfiras et al., 2023; Mistretta, 2022; Tlili et al., 2022). In my household, this shift was palpable. Metaverse games like Roblox[2], Fortnite[3], and Minecraft[4] became essential platforms for my son to interact with friends and family, offering a semblance of normalcy in a time of unprecedented disruption.

At home, I observed how these games were not just about to play: they became social lifelines (Allouzi & Alomari, 2023; CNN Brasil, 2022; Jun, 2020; Reza et al., 2022). My son connected with cousins and friends through these platforms, bridging the social gap imposed by the pandemic. Our household dynamics evolved as we adapted to this new interaction. Watching YouTubers exploring metaverse spaces further blurred the lines between entertainment, education, and socialization, shaping both his interactions and our family's connections across generations.

These experiences revealed the metaverse as more than a virtual playground – it was a cultural and social space. YouTubers and content creators (Hadi et al., 2023; Tingelhoff et al., 2024) shaped my son’s interests, language, and family interactions. The pandemic accelerated this shift, making the metaverse central to gaming, socializing, and learning. What began as a request for VR glasses led to a deeper understanding of how digital spaces reshape technology use and familial relationships.

How these metaverse game spaces have evolved in terms of consumption is also multifaceted: from the influence of youtubers and the pursuit of likes, to the purchase of skins and games (Reza et al., 2022), to the time spent online versus going out (Ferreira et al., 2021), and the shift in entertainment preferences. Those platforms have become hubs for broadcasting competitions (Chen, 2023), events (Flavián et al., 2024), concerts (Çelik, 2023), and even virtual museum tours (Longo & Faraci, 2023; Sánchez-Amboage et al., 2023), creating new spaces for this type of programming. This surge in digital consumption within metaverse environments has not only captivated users but also drawn significant attention from academic

[2] Roblox is a gaming platform that allows you to play dozens of user-created games or create games through Roblox Studio (Garrett, 2023);
[3] Fortnite is a world of many games and other experiences, made by different creators including Epic Games (Epic Games, 2024).
[4] Minecraft is a game made up of blocks, creatures, and community (Landin, 2023).

literature (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Firmansyah & Umar, 2023; Kim, 2021; Trunfio & Rossi, 2022), recognizing its growing impact on cultural and consumer behaviors.

The concept of the metaverse, though rooted in science fiction (Ng, 2022), gained significant traction when companies like Facebook rebranded to Meta (Kelly, 2021), signaling a major shift toward virtual and augmented realities. This move was accompanied by ambitious market forecasts (McKinsey & Company, 2022) predicting the metaverse as the next frontier of digital interaction, where socializing, working, and entertainment would converge in immersive, interconnected spaces. However, the path to realizing these projections has been marked by volatility, with market instability and the rapid rise of AI technologies shifting the landscape (Capoot, 2024). While AI has dominated recent technological advancements (Estadão Conteúdo, 2023), the vision of the metaverse remains a potent possibility (Ramanathan, 2023). The history and evolution of the metaverse reflect both the excitement and challenges of building a digital universe that, despite uncertainties, continues to inspire innovation and speculation.

While Belk's (1988) concept of the extended self – and its 2013 update to incorporate digital environments – offered crucial insights into how individuals use possessions, both physical and virtual, to construct and express identity, the internet and modes of consumption have since evolved in unprecedented ways. The emergence of immersive platforms, metaverses, and hybrid realities has given rise to a phygital context, where physical and digital experiences are not merely parallel but deeply entangled. Despite Belk's recognition that digital tools extend the self beyond material possessions, there remains a significant gap in understanding how identities are shaped simultaneously through tangible and intangible assets in this new phygital terrain. This research advances this theoretical discussion by proposing a methodological and conceptual update to study identity as a dynamic interplay between physical and digital consumption practices, particularly in the context of childhood fashion and self-expression.

In this research, understanding the context (metaverse) is as vital as understanding the object of study itself – in this case, fashion identity. Identity is inherently socially constituted, shaped by interactions across various environments. For researchers and other key participants, a deep understanding of context enriches the exploration of how identities are formed and expressed (Goulding et al., 2002). According to Dilley (1999), context can be categorized into three types: (a) external, linking the phenomenon to broader societal structures; (b) internal, focusing on relationships within the phenomenon; and (c) psychological, examining the link

between signs and meaning. Navigating these layers is complex, and neglecting them can create significant methodological challenges.

Why focus on fashion identity? Identity is multifaceted, embedded in social spaces, and shaped by personal commitments, roles, and group memberships (Schwartz et al., 2011). It also connects to material goods and a sense of belonging. Examining fashion identity goes beyond individual expression – it reflects broader social dynamics.

Among the many identities that people possess (McLean & Syed, 2015; Schwartz, Luyckx & Vignoles, 2011), fashion identity is a key aspect of self-expression, shaped by clothing and style choices (Davis, 1994). It offers insights into how personal and collective identities are influenced by cultural and social factors. Davis (1994) introduced "identity ambivalence," highlighting conflicting emotions in fashion identity, while Crane (2000) explored how social class and gender shape fashion meanings. Their work deepens the understanding of identity constitution through fashion.

In contrast, studies on fashion consumption in metaverses and its role in identity constitution have been relatively narrow (Dwivedi et al., 2022; Joy et al., 2022; Sayem, 2022; Shen et al., 2021). This narrow focus has led to a gap in understanding how fashion in digital spaces informs new meanings (Schöps et al., 2020), consumption processes (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010), and identities (Hadi et al., 2023), linking not only to traditional consumption processes but also to cybercultural issues such as the Right to Privacy (Onitiu, 2022), and other emerging digital concerns (Trunfio & Rossi, 2022).

According to Barnard (2014), we cannot have a pre-cultural experience or understanding of ‘our’ bodies. Therefore, who we are is represented by what we wear, which suggests that identity is a product of consumption; we are what we consume. This connection between consumption and identity makes consumption a sensitive and highly motivated area. If identity is constituted through what one consumes and is the means by which one relates to and differentiates from others, then the potential for highly charged and contested political struggles is evident (Barnard, 2014).

While there is a notable lack of research on fashion identity in the context of metaverses, this gap is even more pronounced when we focus on children (John et al., 2024). This absence is not only evident in fashion theory but also in CCT and cyberculture studies (Belk, 2023; Hadi et al., 2023). Researching children's fashion identity, particularly in digital environments like metaverses, presents unique challenges due to ethical considerations. However, existing studies indicate that parental and peer group approval are crucial factors in children's decision-

making processes (Grant & Stephen, 2005), with a strong emphasis on products being perceived as "cool".

Having said that, I started to wonder: how does the consumption of items in metaverse games contribute to the constitution of children's fashion identity? How do we define the role of digital fashion choices in a child's self-expression? What functions do these virtual items serve in the broader context of identity constitution? What characteristics make those items significant? Is it about aesthetic preference, social status within the game, or the influence of peer groups and Youtubers influencers? Can we or should we compare virtual fashion consumption to traditional fashion to determine if they belong to the same category of identity markers? There are numerous possibilities for comparison – both in terms of similarities and differences – between these two forms of fashion consumption (in the metaverses games and in the physical world), but I believe that simply comparing their characteristics may not fully capture their influence on a child's fashion identity. This can involve exploring how children construct and negotiate meanings around fashion in both contexts (including more than one metaverse game space), examining the interplay between virtual and physical fashion choices, and analyzing the consumption process in both environments.

Observing these debates, I've realized that answers vary widely across generations – Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Y, Z, and Alpha. Why does this matter? It reveals our position in consumer culture amid a cultural conflict, particularly in cyberculture and digital spaces. As society adapts, identity formation evolves, reflecting shifting generational perspectives in a digital world. Focusing on children's evolving spaces of belonging, I examine how fashion identity, intertwined with consumption, emerges as a localized phenomenon. This involves exploring how children's identities are constituted by fashion and consumer culture within cyber-influenced digital environments. Using these theories, I analyze fashion consumption's role in identity formation, uncovering its meanings and social implications.

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), as coined by Arnould and Thompson (2005), emphasizes that understanding consumption requires a deep exploration of its cultural and symbolic meanings rather than viewing it as a homogeneous system. This perspective aligns closely with cyberculture, where cyberspace is not merely a network of computers but a rich, symbolic environment where identities and cultures are constructed and negotiated (Bell, 2006). Just as CCT acknowledges the heterogeneous distribution of meanings across cultural groups (Chalmers Thomas et al., 2013), cyberculture reveals that our experiences in cyberspace are shaped by a dynamic interplay of material and symbolic elements (Kim, 2009). This intertwining of consumption and cyberspace highlights how both are rooted in cultural

narratives (Hadi et al., 2023; Nagy & Koles, 2014), influencing and being influenced by the stories and metaphors (Belk, 2023) that emerge from our interactions with technology and each other. Thus, CCT and cyberculture together provide a framework for understanding the complex, culturally embedded nature of consumption in the digital age (including in metaverse), where the boundaries between the material and the symbolic are increasingly blurred.

Fashion Theory, also, offers a valuable framework for understanding how fashion, as both a cultural and symbolic phenomenon, contributes to identity constitution (Davis, 1994). According to Barnard (2014), fashion extends beyond mere clothing to encompass all that is worn on or done to the body, functioning as a medium through which cultural values and beliefs are communicated. Fashion operates as a form of cultural expression, where meanings are shaped by the cultural context of both sender and receiver (Barnard, 2020a). This aligns with CCT's focus on how individuals interpret and constitute identity through fashion. Influenced by cultural values and experiences, fashion serves as a key space for negotiating and expressing identity within consumer culture.

My focus is exploring how fashion identity is constituted within cyberculture, aiming to uncover the relationships shaping fashion and consumption today. Different generations engage with cyberspaces uniquely, attaching varying meanings to consumption. This shift raises a key question: **How does fashion consumption in the metaverse influence children's fashion identities in the physical world?** By examining this, I seek to understand the role of virtual spaces in shaping children's fashion identities in the digital age.

My thesis is that the consumption of products in metaverse game environments is a significant process in the constitution of children's fashion identity, where children's aesthetic choices and purchasing behavior are shaped by a combination of digital, social, and cultural influences. These environments, which blend the playful with the commercial, serve as platforms for experimenting with identities, especially in relation to fashion, allowing children to explore and adopt styles that reflect both current trends and their personal aspirations. The metaverse is more than entertainment; it is a space where children's fashion is negotiated and redefined. This perspective aligns with Marketing discipline, examining how metaverse consumption shapes children's fashion at the intersection of technology and culture.

The consumption experience in the metaverse involves various market agents, including platform developers, digital creators, players, communities, and fashion brands, making it relevant to Marketing. This study focuses on children's fashion identity as a social construct within digital spaces, linking consumer culture and identity formation. While identity

is often examined at individual, relational, and collective levels (Sedikides et al., 2013), these perspectives remain underexplored in metaverse game environments. This gap presents an opportunity for further analysis of emerging dynamics in digital fashion consumption.

This study takes an interdisciplinary Marketing approach to examine how metaverse consumption shapes children's fashion identity. Using Consumer Culture Theory – particularly cyberculture – and fashion theory, it explores how these digital spaces influence socialization and identity. With their global cultural and economic impact, metaverse games and children's fashion are key to Marketing. My approach highlights the agents shaping fashion identity, moving beyond traditional vs. digital fashion comparisons to explore their intersection in contemporary society. Additionally, I draw on psychology, sociology, and anthropology, a common practice in Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) research to understand consumption as a cultural and social process (Belk & Sobh, 2019). In line, fashion theories provide a rich theoretical foundation for analyzing identity constitution (Davis, 1994).

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 General Objective

Given the above, the primary objective of this work is to understand how fashion consumption in metaverse game environments contributes to the constitution of children's fashion identities.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

To achieve this main goal, I stablished specific objectives, that are:

- Comprehend how fashion consumption on Metaverse’s games affects fashion consumption in the physical world.
- Investigate the similarities and differences between children's fashion consumption in the metaverse’s games and in the physical world in constituting children's fashion identities.
- Describe the perceived influences of fashion consumption in metaverse games on children's fashion identity in the physical world.

1.3 Justification

This section justifies the study on two fronts: first, by explaining the focus on children's fashion identity in metaverse games, and second, by outlining the approach grounded in Fashion Theory and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), with an emphasis on cyberculture.

This research is timely, addressing topics of growing market importance that are attracting both researchers and practitioners. A review of the past decade's literature in leading consumer journals reveals a significant gap in studying fashion identity within consumer culture (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Firmansyah & Umar, 2023; Hadi et al., 2023; Kim, 2021; Trunfio & Rossi, 2022). Understanding fashion identity is essential across sectors. For brands, it informs product development, market segmentation, and customer loyalty, aligning collections with consumer aspirations. Researchers explore its social and cultural dimensions, while consumers use it for self-expression and belonging. Governments and policy makers leverage it to promote sustainability and inclusion, and in digital spaces, platforms and developers create personalized experiences in metaverses and e-commerce. Fashion identity, therefore, is a powerful tool for addressing social, cultural, and technological demands in an integrated way.

This research aims to fill that gap and contribute to the legitimization of fashion as a vital academic field. Elevating fashion beyond aesthetics or commerce positions it as a multidisciplinary area with significant social, cultural, economic, and environmental implications. Fashion shapes identities, reflects societal values, and influences cultural and economic systems. Studying it scientifically uncovers consumer behavior patterns, social stratification, sustainability challenges, and globalization's impact. This legitimization also bridges theory and practice, fostering innovation in design, marketing, and production. Moreover, treating fashion as a scientific discipline promotes solutions to issues like waste reduction, ethical labor, and inclusivity, reinforcing its relevance to global challenges.

The metaverse is emerging as a transformative force, comparable to the internet and social media. In just the first five months of 2022, investments surpassed $120 billion – more than double the $57 billion invested in all of 2021 (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Major industry players recognize its potential to reshape business landscapes, as seen in Microsoft's planned $69 billion acquisition of Activision. Far beyond gaming, the metaverse blends digital and physical experiences, driving innovation in employee engagement, customer experience, product development, and omnichannel marketing. With real-time interactivity, user agency, and cross-platform interoperability, it is expected to create new business models and revenue streams, potentially generating up to $5 trillion by 2030. This positions the metaverse as a key

driver of growth in sectors like e-commerce, virtual learning, advertising, and gaming, with global industry-shaping potential.

According to Schmidt et al. (2024), Brazil plays a pivotal role in the global gaming industry, being the largest powerhouse in digital games in Latin America and the second largest in the Global South, surpassed only by South Korea. This highlights the sector's growing impact on Brazil's economy, driven by game sales, in-app purchases, and e-sports. It fosters innovation, supports startups, and enhances digital infrastructure. Additionally, gaming serves as a cultural export, showcasing Brazilian creativity globally.

The metaverse's value extends beyond economics, reshaping social interactions and community building. Its immersive nature, powered by VR and AR, enhances social experiences by creating environments that feel real. This transformation could redefine how people interact, work, and socialize, positioning the metaverse as a central hub for personal and professional activities. Companies like Meta have embraced this vision, aiming to transcend 2D screens with immersive technologies. Nations like the U.S., China, Japan, and South Korea, alongside European luxury brands, are exploring its applications across business, gaming, arts, and social affairs. However, its success hinges on addressing technological, ethical, and inclusivity challenges, requiring collaboration from businesses, governments, and communities to ensure a responsible and equitable digital future.

The metaverse is emerging as one of the most promising spaces for innovation on the Brazilian scene, reflecting the country's potential for disruption and growth (Palis, 2023). This digital shift draws interest from Brazilian professionals and businesses, positioning Brazil as a key player in shaping new interactions and experiences. Events like Meta's Creative Minds Roundtable (Nov. 2022) showcase this role, bringing together experts like Luciana Haguiara, Nina Silva, and Konrad Dantas to discuss the metaverse's future. Their diverse perspectives highlight Brazil's importance in building this digital landscape. Haguiara, for example, mentioned that the meeting provided an invaluable exchange of views on how the metaverse can be developed in the country (Palis, 2023).

The impact of the metaverse can already be seen in different areas. A striking example is the Metaverse Fashion Week, held in March 2022 on the Decentraland platform. This event, which attracted more than 108,000 participants and featured major fashion brands, was the brainchild of Brazilian Giovanna Graziosi Casimiro (Palis, 2023). This initiative demonstrates how Brazil is at the forefront of digital innovation, especially in sectors such as fashion and technology.

In addition, Brazil has stood out in terms of its adoption of the metaverse. According to Wilson Cardoso, chief technology officer for Latin America at Nokia, the rate of intention to use the metaverse in Brazil is significantly higher than the global average (Nokia, 2022). This indicates that Brazilian companies are not only exploring, but also implementing use cases for this emerging technology.

The metaverse is also revolutionizing tourism in Brazil. In January 2024, Embratur launched the country's first tourism metaverse during the International Tourism Fair (Fitur) in Madrid (Vaz, 2024). This initiative, featuring musician and activist Carlinhos Brown as a virtual guide, offers an interactive tour of Brazilian destinations like Salvador, Jericoacoara, Recife, and Olinda. Visitors can explore Brazil's culture, gastronomy, and landscapes through an innovative virtual experience. These examples show that Brazil is not just following global metaverse trends but leading initiatives that showcase its culture, creativity, and innovation. The metaverse emerges as a key platform for Brazil's digital transformation, connecting people, promoting culture, and driving new businesses.

For the theoretical approach, I draw on Fashion theories and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), particularly cyberculture. CCT has traditionally examined how consumers constitute identities through consumption in both physical and digital spaces. However, with the rise of metaverses, extending CCT into these domains is essential. By analyzing how children engage with fashion and identity in virtual worlds, this research advances CCT's understanding of identity constitution and consumption in the digital age, where virtual spaces play an increasingly significant role in consumer behavior.

Fashion Theory, traditionally focused on the physical world, faces new challenges in the metaverse, where fashion operates under different rules. This research examines how virtual fashion consumption reflects, diverges from, and connects to traditional practices, strengthening Fashion Theory by exploring its role in digital environments. Everyday actions – like choosing an avatar's outfit or engaging with social media in the metaverse – offer insights into identity constitution. By analyzing these practices, this study uncovers how virtual fashion shapes self-concept and social interactions, enriching both Fashion Theory and CCT.

According to Ning et al. (2021), identity modeling and addressing serve as a bridge between the real world and metaverses. This research examines how identities are constituted, maintained, and negotiated between physical and virtual realities, where the boundaries between real and digital life are increasingly blurred. Understanding this shift offers key insights into identity evolution in the metaverse. Beyond personal expression, the metaverse is a growing commercial platform, with major corporations investing in virtual goods. This study

explores the commercial movements of virtual fashion consumption, providing insights into consumer engagement. Grounded in CCT, it offers a comprehensive view of the cultural and economic significance of virtual consumption.

Understanding advertising in metaverses is key to navigating this digital landscape. This research examines micro-level processes and connections, focusing on advertising strategies. Through the lens of CCT, it provides insights for marketers while addressing challenges unique to the Global South, as highlighted by Araújo (2022).

As users engage with virtual worlds, the digital extended self becomes increasingly relevant. This research explores how virtual possessions and avatars shape children's identity, expanding beyond Northern contexts to include Brazil and the Global South. By broadening perspectives on virtual identity, it contributes to a more global understanding of the extended self. The findings have implications for both theory and technology. Emerging innovations like 3D printing and nanotechnology will further blur the boundaries between virtual and physical possessions. This study lays the foundation for future research on identity, consumption, and technology, ensuring Fashion Theory and CCT remain adaptable amid digital transformation.

Lastly, while research highlights its novelty, **broader significance must be considered.** Childhood is crucial for identity constitution, influenced by cultural and technological artifacts like immersive games. These spaces impact self-expression, social norms, and creativity, raising questions about their long-term influence on values and behaviors. By analyzing these dynamics, the study offers insights for academics, parents, educators, and policymakers, helping assess whether these experiences foster collaboration or encourage superficial identities, shaping future generations and social development.

1.4 Positioning in the Philosophy of Science

This thesis adopts an interpretativist paradigm within the Philosophy of Science, contrasting with positivism by emphasizing the complexity, context, and subjectivity of human experience (Rosemberg, 2012). This paradigm is particularly suited to Marketing and consumer research (Scussel, 2017), where symbolic and experiential aspects are central to understanding consumer behavior (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020).

The interpretativist paradigm draws heavily on Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), which explores the symbolic, contextual, and experiential dimensions of consumption (Joy & Li, 2012). It highlights the role of sociocultural factors and the interpretative processes shaping consumer engagement with products and brands (Scussel, 2017), highlighting the value of negotiation and representation in consumer research (Valtonen & Moisander, 2006).

Furthermore, the interpretativist paradigm engages with broader philosophical debates about the fallibility of science and the sociocultural influences on scientific inquiry (Gutting, 1984). By emphasizing inductive theorizing and qualitative methodologies, this perspective allows researchers to derive insights directly from data (Kuczynski & Daly, 2003), enabling a nuanced and context-sensitive understanding of consumer culture (Scussel, 2017). This thesis contributes to the growing body of interpretativist research, advancing our comprehension of the complexities of contemporary consumption and challenging the narrow focus on rational decision-making in traditional Marketing studies (Belk, 2014).

1.5 Structure of the Work

This work is organized to present the logical progression leading to the proposed thesis. In this **Introduction**, I have outlined the research question and thesis, set the objectives needed to reach the research conclusions, explained the research gap, the justificatives, and identified the paradigmatic stance that will guide the development of this thesis.

Chapter two is the Empirical Framework. This chapter grounds the research in real-world data, bridging theoretical concepts with tangible examples. By introducing the empirical framework early, the study ensures it is not purely speculative but anchored in actual metaverse dynamics, enhancing credibility and reliability. Metaverses are ever-evolving digital spaces where user behavior, social interactions, and economic activities constantly shift. Analyzing these dynamics provides a clearer picture of how metaverses shape identity, social norms, and consumer behavior. It also enables comparative analysis across different metaverses, identifying unique features and common patterns. This approach offers deeper insights into how metaverses influence fashion identity and consumption, highlighting their broader societal impact. Each metaverse game space has its own distinct culture, making this analysis crucial for understanding their role in contemporary digital life.

Chapter three outlines the **Theoretical Framework** in three key parts: Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and cyberculture, Identity Constitution in Children, and Fashion Theory with a focus on fashion identity. The first section explores how CCT, particularly within cyberculture, helps explain how metaverses shape consumer identity. It examines how children, as digital natives, navigate these spaces where consumption and social interactions blend into daily life. This section highlights how cyberculture merges online and offline experiences. The second section focuses on identity constitution in children, analyzing how they develop a sense of self through interactions in both physical and digital spaces. The third

section addresses Fashion Theory, emphasizing how fashion contributes to identity construction. It explores how children engage with fashion in both real and virtual spaces, shaping their self-perception and social positioning. Virtual fashion choices reflect cultural trends and personal expression, influencing how children see themselves and are seen by others. By linking these perspectives, the chapter provides a comprehensive view of how digital consumption, identity constitution, and fashion intersect in children's experiences within metaverses.

Chapter four, Materials and Methods, outlines the bricolage qualitative approach used in the study. It details the materials, data collection, and analysis techniques, ensuring alignment with the research's interpretative focus and the unique nature of the metaverse. What I call Phyginography enables an immersive exploration of digital environments, capturing participants' nuanced experiences and behaviors in both – physical and digital universes. Prioritizing qualitative methods allows for rich, contextual insights into identity constitution in these spaces. The chapter explains the rationale behind methodological choices, ensuring the research remains attuned to the cultural and social dynamics of the metaverse, particularly in relation to children's fashion identities.

In chapter five, I present the Analysis and Results, meticulously aligned with the objectives established to support the proposed thesis. This chapter synthesizes the empirical findings, examining how the data supports or challenges the thesis. Each section connects observed behaviors to theoretical concepts, building a cohesive argument around the research question. The analysis highlights key trends and their implications for understanding metaverses' role in influence children's identities, reinforcing the study's contribution to the field.

Finally, **chapter six, Final Considerations**, summarizes the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of the study, reinforcing its focus on how metaverse environments influences children's fashion identities. It also reflects on research limitations and provides suggestions for future studies on digital consumption, identity, and fashion in virtual worlds. The chapter concludes with bibliographical references and appendices, ensuring transparency and supporting future research in the field.

"It won't pay the rent, but that's okay — when you live in a shithole, there's always the Metaverse, and in the Metaverse, Hiro Protagonist is a warrior prince." (Stephenson, 2003, p.52)

2 EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents an empirical framework to explore metaverses and in-game dynamics, synthesizing existing literature and historical developments. By capturing their evolving nature – shaped by user behavior, social interactions, and economic activities – this framework provides a foundation for analyzing their impact on identity, social norms, and consumer behavior. In CCT, the context really matters (Arnould; E. J. et al., 2006; Askegaard & Linnet, 2011; O'Sullivan & Shankar, 2019).

A foundational understanding of Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft is essential, with a comparative analysis highlighting shared and unique aspects to identify patterns beyond theoretical insights. This approach clarifies how metaverses shape fashion identity and consumption practices. The study examines transactions involving skins, in-game currency, and digital assets, alongside the role of streaming platforms like YouTube in gaming consumption. By offering insights for parents, educators, policymakers, and industry professionals, this research strengthens the understanding of virtual worlds and their broader social implications.

2.1 Metaverses

Metaverse is still a concept that is constantly evolving (Weinberger, 2022), and different participants are enriching its meaning in their own ways (Ning et al., 2021). Meira (2022) explains that metaverse is a combination of the prefix meta – which expresses the idea of greater generality, of a higher level – with universe, characterizes a supposed synthetic environment connected to the physical world.

But is necessary to explain that there is no one metaverse, but Metaverses. That's why in some situations I will say metaverse (singular) and sometimes I will say metaverses (plural). Besides that, the final project is to aggregate ALL Metaverses in ONE Metaverse (Meira, 2022). In my thesis, "metaverse" will be lowercase when referring to the general concept of a collective virtual shared space created by the convergence of physical and virtual reality. However, when referring to a specific product or branded metaverse, such as Meta's Metaverse, I will capitalize the "M" to indicate it as a proper noun.

Ball (2021) conceptualizes metaverse as:

> …a massively scaled and interoperable network of real-time rendered 3D virtual worlds and environments which can be experienced synchronously and persistently by an effectively unlimited number of users with an individual sense of presence, and with continuity of data, such as identity, history, entitlements, objects, communications, and payments. (Ball, 2021, p. 10)

A more simple definition is given by Davis: "Metaverses are immersive three-dimensional virtual worlds (VWs) in which people interact as avatars with each other and with software agents, using the metaphor of the real world but without its physical limitations" (Davis et al., 2009). According to Boulos and Burden (2007) the metaverse consists of four key technologies: mirror worlds (digital replicas of the physical world), virtual worlds (digital spaces, real or imagined), lifelogging (data capture of people and objects), and augmented reality (digital overlays on real or virtual environments).

To Friedman (1998) this cyberspace functions as an immersive chat room, where earphones and goggles enable users to interact through avatars in a digital world. Papagiannidis et al. (2008) say that metaverses emphasize business activities and commercial applications within virtual worlds. Simply put, the metaverse is a parallel digital network to the real world (Ning et al., 2021) or an embodied internet where you are in the experience, not just looking at it (Meta, 2021). Table 1 summarizes those definitions.

Table 1

Definitions of the Term Metaverse

Main Point	Author(s)	Definition
Etymological Concept	Meira (2022, p. 1)	A combination of "meta" (greater generality) and "universe" characterizing a synthetic environment connected to the physical world.
Conceptual Framework	Ball (2021, p. 10)	A massively scaled and interoperable network of real-time rendered 3D virtual worlds, experienced synchronously by an unlimited number of users, maintaining continuity of data such as identity and communications.
Avatars Role	Davis et al. (2009, p. 91)	Immersive three-dimensional virtual worlds where people interact as avatars, using real-world metaphors without physical limitations.
Emerging Technologies	Boulos & Burden (2007, p.2)	Constituted by four technologies: mirror worlds, virtual worlds, lifelogging, and augmented reality, representing a digital domain parallel to our physical lives.
Glorified Chat Room	Friedman (1998, p.85)	Describes cyberspace as a chat room with total-body surround capabilities, allowing users to interact through avatars in a virtual environment.
Commercial Site	Papagiannidis et al. (2008)	Focuses on business activities and commercial applications that can be hosted in virtual worlds, emphasizing the metaverse as a network world parallel to the real world.
Embodied Internet	Meta (2021)	An embodied Internet experience, where users engage directly rather than merely observing.

Source: Created by author

So, it is possible to see that, even though the current definitions of the Metaverse have many commonalities (Weinberger, 2022), “they are fuzzy and not always definitive” (Ritterbusch & Teichmann, 2023, p. 12375). Also, through those definitions it is possible to see the three main characteristics (Ning et al., 2021) of the metaverses: 1) Multitechnology, using multiples hardware and software to allow metaverses experience; 2) Sociability, once metaverses are spaces to work, socialize, trade, play, and consume (Araújo, 2022), also these environments have potential for rich and engaging collaboration (A. Davis et al., 2009), and 3) Hyper Spatiotemporality, that means metaverses provide virtual team members with new ways of managing and overcoming geographic and other barriers to collaboration (Davis et al., 2009). Figure 1 demonstrates the relation between the definitions and characteristics (Ning et al., 2021) of the metaverses.

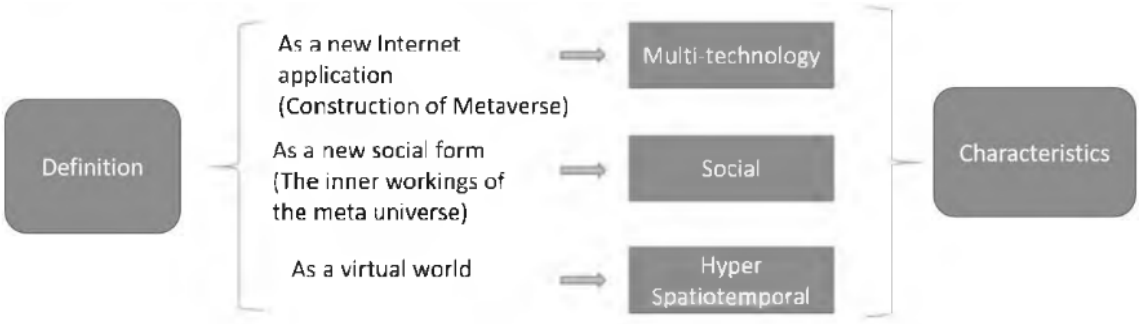


Figure 1
Characteristics of the Metaverses
Source: Ning et al. (2021)

Also, important concepts like persistence and avatars are key to deepening the understanding of how metaverses function and the technologies that power them. In traditional web environments, registering a domain name (e.g., mysite.com.br) is fundamental to establishing a presence. In the metaverse, this concept evolves into registering coordinates (x, y, z) within a virtual platform, allowing users to claim space within the digital landscape (Zhang et al., 2022). This introduces the concept of persistence, a cornerstone of the metaverse, ensuring that every object, avatar, and element within that coordinate system remains consistent and synchronized for all users (Ng, 2022).

Another key component of the metaverse is the role of avatars. Avatars are more than mere graphical representations of users: they are embodiments of one’s virtual identity, determining how a person interacts and is perceived in digital space (Davis et al., 2009; Nagy & Koles, 2014; Peck & Gonzalez-Franco, 2021). This sense of embodiment allows for a deeper connection between the user and the virtual world (Dwivedi et al., 2022), enhancing the social and collaborative nature of metaverses. Together, these concepts – persistence and avatars –

shape how individuals interact, trade, and establish their identities in metaverses, pushing the boundaries of virtual experiences beyond what was previously possible in traditional online environments.

The metaverse emerged from science fiction, evolving through technological progress, cultural imagination, and economic innovation. From text-based virtual worlds to today's expansive digital frontier, it has transformed with graphical environments, multiplayer games and decentralization. Defined by multitechnology, sociability, and hyper spatiotemporality, the metaverse reflects decades of innovation and creativity.

2.1.1 The History of the Metaverse

The history of the metaverse is deeply rooted in science fiction (Araújo, 2022) and technological evolution (Kayakoku, 2023). The term "metaverse" was first coined in Neal Stephenson's 1992 science fiction novel Snow Crash (Stephenson, 2003), where he depicted a digital reality that could be accessed through virtual avatars. This concept, while fantastical at the time, drew inspiration from earlier works, such as William Gibson’s Neuromancer (1984), which introduced the idea of a virtual world, and inspired Ernest Cline's Ready Player One (2011), which portrayed a fully immersive virtual society. Alongside these literary works, movies like The Matrix series, beginning in 1999, played a significant role in shaping the popular imagination of virtual realities and parallel digital worlds. These narratives provided a cultural foundation (Kayakoku, 2023) for what would eventually be recognized as the metaverse. Figure 2 shows a compilation of the covers of these cultural products.

From a technological perspective, the metaverse evolved in tandem with the development of the internet and communication tools. Ning et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of understanding communication methods when analyzing the metaverse. The internet's rise in the late 20th century, and the development of online conversation channels such as chat rooms and early forums (Kayakoku, 2023), set the stage for more immersive digital environments (Lacity et al., 2023). The launch of Snow Crash was a pivotal moment in popularizing the idea of the metaverse (Bell, 2006), as it coincided with the early days of the web and the proliferation of online social interactions.

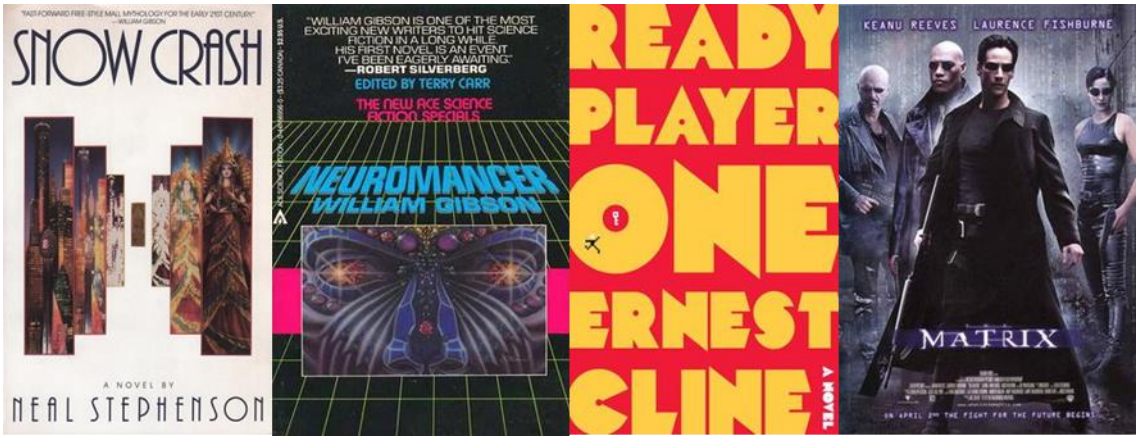


Figure 2
Cultural Foundation of the Metaverses
Source: Google Images

Over the next few decades, events like the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which accelerated the need for remote and virtual communication (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Hadi et al., 2023; Trunfio & Rossi, 2022), and Facebook's rebranding to Meta in 2021 (Rospigliosi, 2022), further pushed the metaverse concept into the mainstream (Kim, 2021; Ng, 2022). Kayakoku (2023) reflects on Facebook's rebranding to Meta in 2021, highlighting that while the metaverse seemed novel to the public, it has deep historical roots. This shift drew significant media and academic attention (Rospigliosi, 2022). Understanding its evolution – from science fiction to modern technology – is essential for predicting its future impact.

The concept of virtual worlds, which is now synonymous with the metaverse, has evolved over several stages (Kayakoku, 2023). Virtual environments simulate physical worlds, enabling real-time interaction. **An early example, Colossal Cave Adventure** (1976) (Figure 3), used text commands to explore a cave, laying the groundwork for modern virtual reality and shared digital spaces, which allowed players to explore a simulated cave system through text commands. While rudimentary by today's standards, this game laid the foundation for future developments in virtual reality, where players would navigate complex environments and interact with others in a shared digital space (Kayakoku, 2023).

Figure 3
First Phase: Text Based Experiences - Colossal Cave Adventure
Source: Google Images

The second phase in the development of virtual worlds began with the launch of Habitat in 1986. Created by Lucasfilm for the Commodore 64, Habitat was one of the first graphical virtual worlds. It allowed multiple users to interact in a 2D environment, each represented by an avatar (Figure 4). The use of avatars, digital representations of users, became a defining feature of virtual worlds and the metaverse (Kayakoku, 2023). Although Habitat was limited by the technology of its time, it represented a significant leap forward in creating shared digital environments where people could socialize, collaborate, and play together. This concept of avatars would later be expanded upon in more advanced virtual worlds, eventually becoming a staple of metaverse platforms (Davis et al., 2009).

Figure 4
Second Phase: Early Example of Avatars and User Interaction in Lucasfilm's Habitat (1986)

Source: Google Images

By the mid-1990s, virtual worlds evolved to a **third phase, with better graphics and interactivity**. Web World (1994) introduced user-generated content, a key metaverse feature. Worlds Chat (1995) advanced 3D environments, enabling social interactions and events, highlighting virtual worlds as spaces for cultural expression (Kayakoku, 2023). In 1996, OnLive! Traveler (Figure 5) became the first public 3D virtual environment to feature voice chat, further enhancing the realism and interactivity of virtual worlds (Kayakoku, 2023).

Figure 5
Third Phase: OnLive! Traveler (1996) – First 3D Virtual Environment with Voice Chat

Source: Google Images

The fourth phase of virtual world development began in the early 2000s with the commercial success of **online multiplayer role-playing games** and virtual worlds like Second Life (Kayakoku, 2023). Released in 2003, Second Life allowed users to create their own digital personas, buy and sell virtual real estate, and interact with others in a fully immersive environment (Yates, 2022). Second Life (Figure 6) introduced the concept of a virtual economy, (Wyld, 2010) where users could earn and spend virtual currency, which could be exchanged for real-world money. his innovation enabled play, socialization, and economic activity, shaping future metaverse economies.

Figure 6
Fourth Phase: Second Life (2003) – Introduction of a Virtual Economy and Immersive Social Interactions

Source: Google Images

The rise of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies in the 2010s further expanded the possibilities for immersive virtual experiences (Ng, 2022). VR headsets like the Oculus Rift, released in 2016, allowed users to fully immerse themselves in 3D virtual environments, interacting with digital objects and avatars as if they were physically present (Egliston & Carter, 2022; Jungherr & Schlarb, 2022).

The fifth and most recent phase of metaverse development has been driven by the integration of blockchain technology and **decentralized platforms** (Kayakoku, 2023). Blockchain enables the creation of digital assets that are owned and traded by users, providing a new layer of economic activity within the metaverse (Frizzo-Barker et al., 2020). Platforms like Decentraland and The Sandbox have emerged as decentralized metaverse platforms (Jungherr & Schlarb, 2022), where users can buy, sell, and trade virtual real estate and digital

goods using blockchain-based cryptocurrencies (Belk et al., 2022). These platforms represent a new frontier in metaverse development, where users have true ownership of their digital assets and can engage in economic activities.

Figure 7
Fifth Phase: Decentraland – A Decentralized Metaverse Platform
Source: Google Images

While many examples of metaverse platforms, such as Second Life and Decentraland, have a strong connection to gaming, the concept of the metaverse extends far beyond gaming environments. For example, virtual workspaces like Meta's Horizon Workrooms and Microsoft Mesh offer professional environments where people can meet, collaborate, and conduct business in real time through virtual reality (Chen, 2024); educational platforms such as Engage VR (Cooper et al., 2019) provide virtual classrooms, and the first metaverse Fashion Week, that took place in March 2022 on Decentraland (Pozzo, 2024).

The metaverse is evolving beyond entertainment into a diverse ecosystem encompassing social, economic, professional, and educational activities. Its history reflects technological progress, cultural imagination, and economic innovation. From science fiction origins to a dynamic digital frontier, advances in computing and connectivity continue to shape its future, with the potential to transform how we interact, work, and engage with digital and physical spaces.

2.2 Games in Metaverses

The metaverse's growth is closely tied to video games, which have long served as shared virtual spaces for interaction (de la Cruz et al., 2023; Lacity et al., 2023; Mistretta, 2022; Rospigliosi, 2022). Senra and Vieira (2022) note that the consumption of electronic games is a social and cultural phenomenon, shaped by the time and society in which they are produced. Multiplayer online games, from early text-based MUDs in the 1970s to graphically immersive worlds like Roblox (2006) and Minecraft (2009), have paved the way for user-generated content and discussions on metaverse development (Kayakoku, 2023). Games have become a strategic gateway into metaverses, leveraging their familiarity, engagement, and social appeal (Jungherr & Schlarb, 2022; Tingelhoff et al., 2024). Companies integrate metaverse-like elements into gaming platforms, fostering spaces where millions of users interact, express creativity, and engage in economic activities (Belk et al., 2022; Hadi et al., 2023). Titles like Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite exemplify this trend, each attracting users through different strategies yet collectively expanding the metaverse concept (Jungherr & Schlarb, 2022).

Multiplayer modes, collaborative building, and shared objectives mirror the communal aspects of virtual worlds, encouraging players to engage in broader metaverse activities such as buying virtual goods (Joy et al., 2022), attending virtual events (Yung et al., 2022), or creating content for others to enjoy (Tingelhoff et al., 2024).

Given the young demographic focus of this study, Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite stand out as key platforms where children socialize, create, and explore metaverse-like environments. While other games like Brawl Stars, FIFA, and Free Fire may capture interest, they lack the same level of immersion and social interaction. Therefore, this study concentrates on these three dominant platforms, analyzing their role in shaping the metaverse experience.

2.2.1 Roblox: A User-Generated Universe

Roblox, originally launched as "Dynablocks" in 2004, officially opened to the public on October 1, 2006 (Rocket, 2018). Created by David Baszucki and Erik Cassel, Roblox is an online multiplayer platform (it is not just a game) where users can design their own virtual worlds, called "experiences" or "places" (Wikipedia, 2022). Roblox carries an ESRB[5] rating of T for Teen (13+), labeled with a Content Descriptor for Diverse Content: Discretion Advised,

[5] PEGI (Pan European Game Information) and ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board) are a self-regulatory organization that assigns age and content ratings to consumer video game.

indicating some content may be unsuitable for all ages. Roblox has millions of user-created games, but some content may be unsuitable for kids. With a PEGI 7+ rating, parental controls adjust settings based on the child's age for a safer experience.

During its early development, the currency was Roblox Points, which was later renamed Robux (formerly denoted by R$) (Roblox Wiki, 2023). According to Roblox Wiki (n.d.), on November 21, 2019, Roblox replaced the "R$" symbol with a rounded hexagonal icon, and the color was changed to gold. Roblox discouraged the use of the "R$" abbreviation after the change, likely due to its association with the Brazilian real. In Roblox, players use Robux to buy virtual items (Figure 8), including avatar accessories, gear, and game passes that enhance gameplay. Customizable clothing, hairstyles, and skins allow for self-expression, while special perks and developer products offer exclusive in-game advantages. These purchases reflect status, creativity, and personalization within the Roblox metaverse.

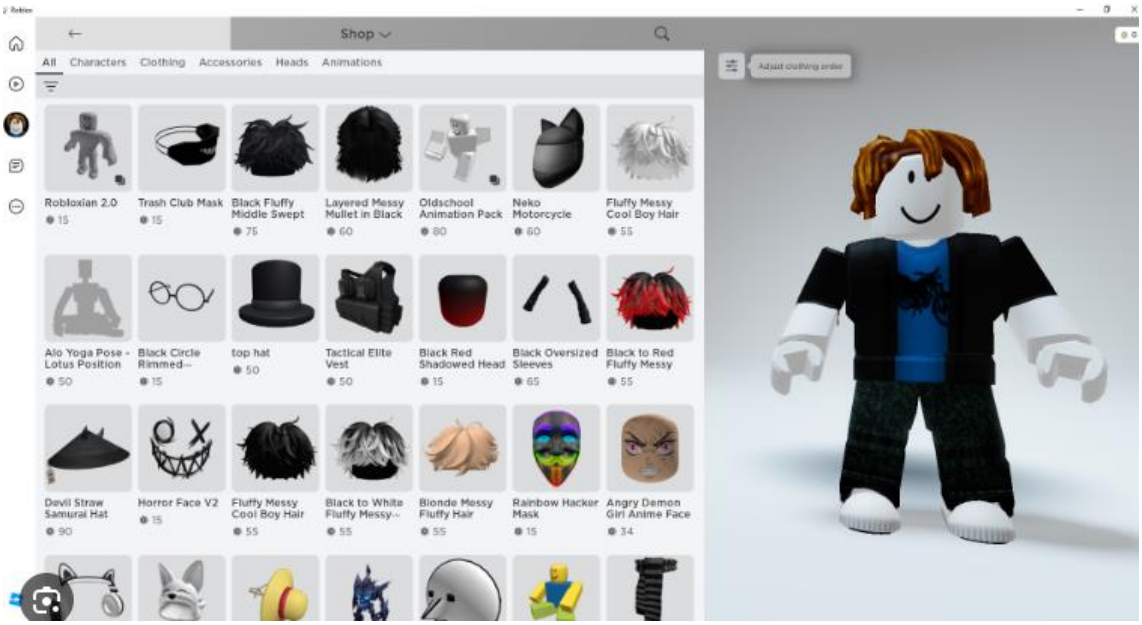


Figure 8

Avatar in Roblox Store and Digital Items for Sale in Robux Currency

Source: Google Images

Between 2006 and 2007, Roblox introduced key features like messaging, search, and character customization, along with badges for user engagement and COPPA compliance for child safety. It has since grown to over 500,000 creators and 207 million monthly users logging 300 million gameplay hours (Singh, 2024; Wikipedia, 2022). Expanding across platforms, Roblox launched on iOS (2012), Android (2014), Xbox One (2015), and PlayStation (2023). By 2011, users had created over 5.4 million games, fostering a strong creative community. Builders Club (now Roblox Premium) debuted in 2007, offering membership perks. Despite

challenges like a 2012 hacking incident, Roblox reached 100 million active users by 2019, cementing its status as a leading platform with partnerships, including Microsoft rewards programs (McKinsey & Company, 2022). In 2021, Roblox introduced Spatial Voice, further improving in-game communication.

Roblox extends beyond gaming, fostering creativity, social interaction, and user-generated content. Users explore diverse genres, attend virtual concerts like Lil Nas X's (Conor3D, 2020), and participate in meetings, conferences, and cultural experiences, such as virtual tours of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2023) (Figure 9). With clubs, hangouts, and game development tools, Roblox promotes social connections and creative expression.

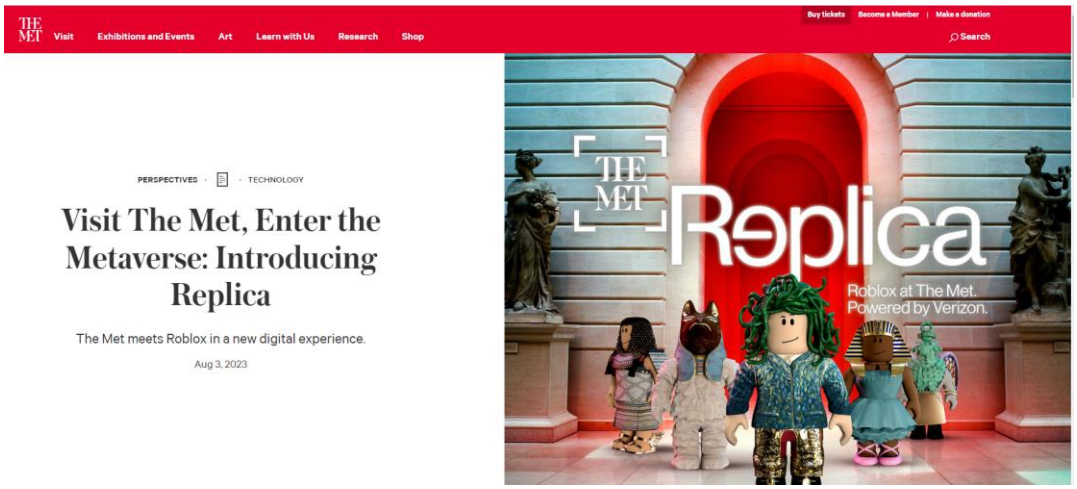


Figure 9
Visiting The MET in the Metaverse Roblox
Source: The MET Website (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2023)

Roblox's evolution into a metaverse-like platform was highlighted by its public offering in 2021, with a market valuation exceeding $40 billion (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Academically, there are some researches involving Roblox. Research by Levina and Arriaga (2014) explores the social dynamics within Roblox, applying Bourdieu's theory of cultural production to highlight the social hierarchies that form based on game quality. This underscores Roblox's role as a space for cultural exchange and social interaction, beyond just entertainment.

2.2.2 Minecraft: A Sandbox for Creation

Minecraft, created by Mojang Studios, is a phenomenon that has sold over 200 million copies globally and saw over 166 million monthly active users in Jan. 2024 (Shewale, 2024a). Minecraft is a block-based game that allows players to explore, build, and interact with other "minecrafters". According to Landin (2023) Minecraft is a sandbox game with no set

objectives, allowing players to shape their experience. In Creative mode, they build freely with unlimited resources, while Survival mode challenges them to gather materials, craft tools, and face threats. With a PEGI 7 and ESRB 10+ rating, its blocky visuals (Figure 10) ensure a family-friendly experience. Available on multiple platforms, Minecraft supports both solo and multiplayer play.

Figure 10
Visual Graphics in the Metaverse Minecraft
Source: Google Images

Released for the first time in 2009 (Ning et al., 2021), Minecraft has since expanded beyond its original function of being a game and has become a serious tool in the classroom (Landin, 2023; Mistretta, 2022). Minecraft's open-ended nature fosters creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork, making it popular in education. Players mine resources, craft tools, and build structures, engaging in complex problem-solving. As a one-time purchase with optional expansions, its success has drawn interest from consumer culture scholars.

Minecraft aligns with metaverse concepts, allowing users to create, build, share, and explore. Large servers function as mini-metaverses where players interact, trade, and collaborate. Research shows players engage with friends, seek online resources, and often separate their in-game avatar from their offline identity (Matthews, 2019). This virtual economy, though not as structured as Roblox's, is still a big part of the metaverse ecosystem and the Minecoins are the currency used to purchase content within the Minecraft Marketplace (Figure 11). The store offers skins, texture packs, and mash-ups for character and world customization. Players can buy community-created worlds, adventure maps, mini-games, and mods, enhancing creativity and gameplay in Minecraft.

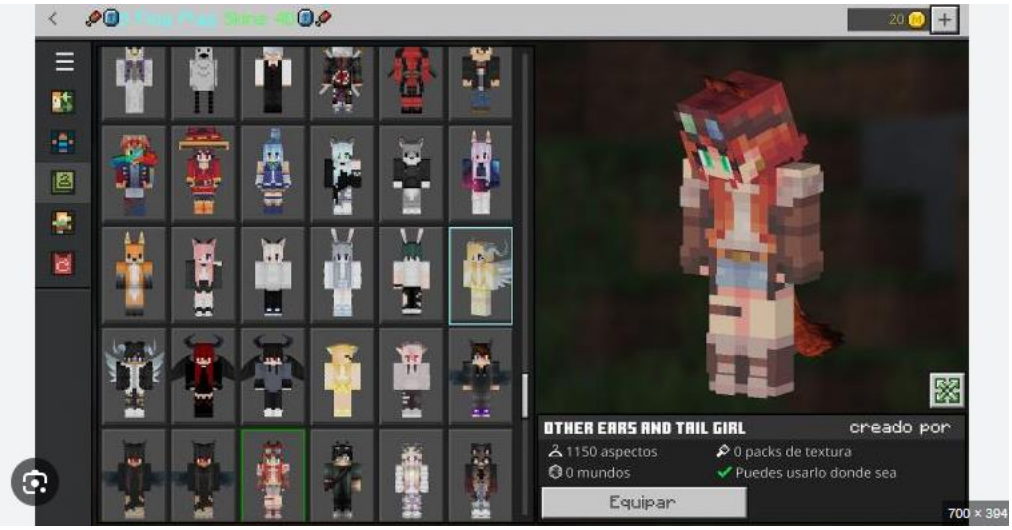


Figure 11

Minecraft Store

Source: Google Images

In Minecraft, there are many activities beyond just playing the game, including educational and creative uses. Players can use Minecraft as a tool for learning, especially in subjects like math, coding, and geography through the Minecraft Education Edition (Mistretta, 2022). Additionally, players offten watch or create content about the game on platforms like YouTube (Pellicone & Ahn, 2018) and Twitch, where they share tutorials, gameplay series, and creative builds, expanding the Minecraft experience into a global culture. In conclusion, Minecraft is a cultural phenomenon, blending entertainment, education, and academic interest. Its sandbox flexibility fosters creativity, while its role in the metaverse continues to grow.

2.2.3 Fortnite: From Battle Royale to Social Platform

Fortnite, developed by Epic Games and released in 2017 (Wikipedia, 2024), has become a cultural phenomenon, captivating more than 650 million of players worldwide (McKinsey & Company, 2022) and 221 million monthly active players (Shewale, 2024b) with its blend of gameplay mechanics, social interactions, and continuous content updates (D. Pereira, 2024). Fortnite is rated ESRB and PEGI 12+ for moderate violence without realistic effects. This rating isn't easily found on Epic Games' FAQ. Privacy laws require parental consent for underage players, restricting communication, purchases, and non-Epic downloads until approved.

It is a multiplayer battle royale game (Figure 12) and due to its quick popularity surge, many studies have been conducted on the game's effects on social interaction (Albarello et al.,

2021; Carter, Moore, Mavoa, Gaspard, et al., 2020; Navarro, 2021), playing behavior (de la Cruz et al., 2023; Shoshani & Krauskopf, 2021), and consumer involvement (Cai et al., 2019; D. L. King et al., 2020; Micallef et al., 2024; The Economist, 2019; Y. Zhang et al., 2023). Fortnite's colorful graphics and exciting gameplay attract a diverse player base. Available on PC (Epic Games Store), PlayStation, Xbox, and Nintendo Switch, it also runs on Android via the Epic Games app. Though unavailable on iOS, players can access it through cloud gaming services.

Figure 12
Battle Map of Fortnite and Characters in Action
Source: Google Images

It's also interesting to note the game's social aspect and community building (Marlatt, 2020; Shoshani & Krauskopf, 2021), with many players going into live streams, just to game, and spend money just to socialize and make the game experience better. In fact, studies show that the social capital earned from these types of relationships provides the player with a sense of belonging (Li et al., 2020) and community which is essential in the world of online gaming. Fortnite also has a lot of events (Moritzen, 2022) and collabs (Cheah & Shimul, 2023) that make the game feel more like a community and makes the players feel more involved. Fortnite goes beyond gaming, becoming a hub for cross-media experiences. With virtual movie premieres and collaborations featuring Marvel, Star Wars, and sports leagues, it blends pop culture into a unified virtual world, reinforcing its metaverse appeal.

Fortnite's gameplay elements, specifically its building and fighting mechanics, have been a topic of many analyses (Burroughs & Slaney, 2024; Shoshani & Krauskopf, 2021). It

has a unique playing style that appeals to a wide audience and thus a wide variety of play styles are represented from hardcore competitive play to casual (Li et al., 2020). This variety in player involvement also leads to the reasons for playing Fortnite and how these reasons vary among different generations (Gil et al., 2019). Furthermore, the competitive nature of Fortnite raises questions about its psychological effects on players, including its impact on self-esteem, motivation, and overall gaming satisfaction.

Fortnite extends beyond gameplay, offering virtual spaces for socializing, live events, and non-combat activities, reinforcing its role in the metaverse. By blending social, economic, and entertainment elements, it showcases the potential of digital worlds. In the Fortnite Item Shop (Figure 13), players use V-Bucks to buy skins, emotes, back blings, pickaxes, gliders, and wraps, often featuring pop culture collaborations. Bundles offer multiple items at a discount, allowing for character customization without affecting gameplay.

Fortnite's business model (involving the purchase of in-game items and collaboration with various brands) has attracted the attention of researchers studying consumer behavior in games (Hadi et al., 2023; R. King & de la Hera, 2020; Pereira, 2024). The fact that the game can make money off of cosmetics and seasonal events is a testament to how games can make money nowadays without losing the player's interest. There is a significant lack of literature, however, regarding the effects of Fortnite's economic structure on the spending habits of players and the possibility of exploitation of consumers through microtransactions. Further research needs to be directed towards the moral implications of in game purchases and the consequences these purchases have on consumers' spending habits and enjoyment of the game.

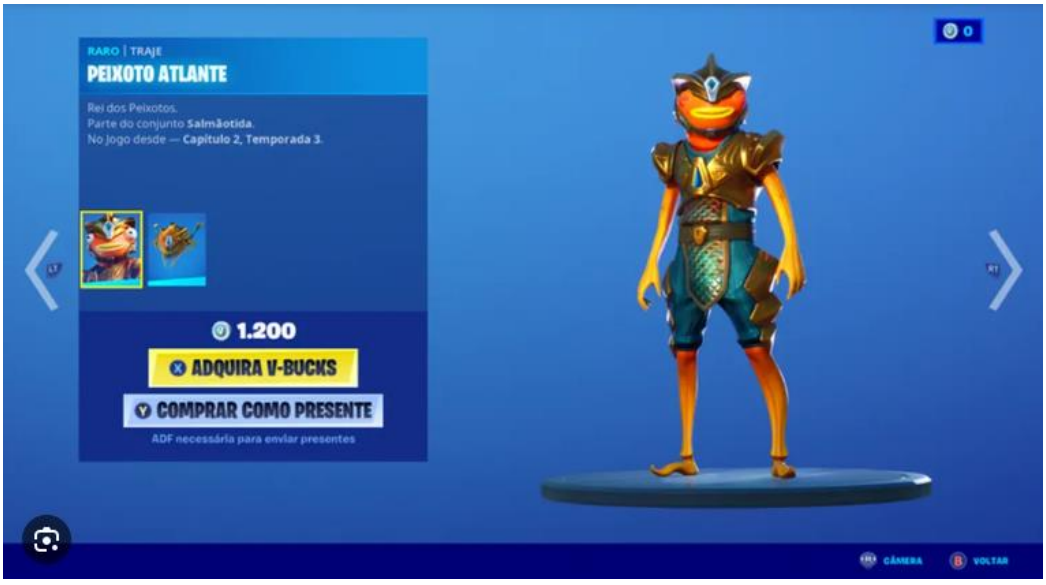


Figure 13
Fortnite Store

Source: Google Images

2.2.4 Cross-Cultural Comparison: Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft as Distinct Digital Worlds

Fortnite, Roblox, and Minecraft share key metaverse traits, including gaming, social interaction, and virtual economies. All three-support user-generated content, allowing players to build, create, and customize experiences, while monetizing digital goods reflects the rise of virtual consumption. However, they differ in focus. Fortnite prioritizes entertainment through brand collaborations and large-scale events, while Roblox and Minecraft emphasize player-driven interaction. Economically, Fortnite has a structured in-game currency, whereas Minecraft relies on external marketplaces. Understanding these similarities and differences highlights the evolving role of metaverse platforms in consumer culture. Table 2 compares their key features. When comparing Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft through a netnographic, cross-cultural lens, similar to the study by (Salehi et al., 2024), these platforms can be seen as distinct digital cultures, much like separate countries. Each metaverse has unique norms and social structures shaping user behavior.

Table 2

Comparison of Key Features in Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft

Feature	Roblox	Minecraft	Fortnite
Age to Play	ESRB rating of T for Teen (13+) PEGI 7+	ESRB 10+ PEGI 7+	ESRB 12+ PEGI 12+
Developer	Roblox Corporation	Mojang Studios	Epic Games
Launch Year	2006	2009	2017
Gameplay Style	User-generated games, creativity-focused	Sandbox, building and exploration	Competitive battle royale
Market Information	207.14 million monthly active users in Sept. 2024	166 million monthly active users in Jan. 2024	221 million monthly active players in Mar. 2024
Revenue Model	Free to play with in-game purchases	One-time purchase with expansions available	Free to play with cosmetic purchases
Currency	Robux	Minecoins	V-Bucks
Main Partnerships	Collaborations with various brands	Partnerships with educational organizations	Collaborations with pop culture icons
Stores	Customizable avatar accessories like clothing and hats, as well as gear like tools and weapons to enhance gameplay. The store also offers game passes and developer products for special abilities or perks, with skins and cosmetic items.	Skins for character customization, texture packs to alter game visuals, and mash-up packs combining skins, textures, and custom worlds. Community-created worlds with custom maps and mini-games are also available.	Skins, allowing character customization, and emotes, which add fun animations. Other items include back blings, pickaxes, gliders, and wraps, with discounted bundles sometimes available.
Country of Success	Popular worldwide, strong in the US	Global popularity, significant in Europe and the US	Global popularity, particularly in the US
Player Base in Brazil	Growing popularity among younger audiences	Popular among various age groups	Very popular with Brazilian gamers

Source: Created by author

As these games evolve into complex metaverse platforms, they offer a unique perspective on consumer culture. Virtual goods – skins, currency, and user-generated content – shape identity and social interaction, mirroring real-world consumption. In Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite, personalization and digital economies highlight the growing role of virtual consumption in self-expression and social status. Players engage not just for entertainment but as participants in economic and social activities that define their virtual identities. This reflects broader consumer culture trends, where goods signal identity and community belonging. The next section explores how metaverse consumption influences status, identity, and social structures.

2.3 Consumer Culture in Metaverses

Commodities and market-based experiences provide opportunities for elaborate consumer daydreams that sustain desire on the basis that they may be actualized via material consumption (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010). The market's embrace of the metaverse became apparent when Roblox went public on the New York Stock Exchange on March 10, 2021 (Kim, 2021) and representative companies in different countries started to have their typical products/services connected to the Metaverse:

> …the United States, as the pioneer of Metaverse, has a relatively extensive Metaverse layout, which is applied in many fields such as business, games, arts and social affairs. China has a large market and strong Internet enterprises and Internet applications. Domestic Internet companies have successively introduced business, video games, and art in the Metaverse. Japan, with its cumulative advantages in the ACG industry and rich IP resources, is focusing on its application areas in animation and video games, while South Korea is government-led and driven by the idol industry. German and Italian luxury brands are trying to make more people their customers through virtual products, etc. (Ning et al., 2021, p. 6).

According to Meta’s Report 2021, their mission is “to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. All of our products, including our apps, share the vision of helping to bring the metaverse to life” (Meta, 2021, p. 7). This statement shows how the development of the Metaverse is a central core to Big Techs such as Meta.

The intersection of metaverses and consumer culture theory (CCT) is a fascinating area of study. In a Scopus database search on "Metaverse" the most cited article was "Extended Self in a Digital World" by Russel Belk (Belk, 2013), one of the leading CCT theorists. This points to the importance of examining the metaverse from the perspective of consumer culture theory. This is "digital virtual consumption" (DVC) which is different from ordinary virtual or

imaginary consumption in that the object of consumption is not merely in the mind of the consumer but is experienced as actually possessed and used in particular digital virtual places (Denegri-Knott et al., 2022; Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010).

In regards to metaverses, DVC is different from material consumption in that the object of consumption is immaterial and therefore has no place in material reality (Belk et al., 2020). For instance, a digital virtual sword cannot cut, and a digital virtual car cannot be used to transport its owner (Belk, 2013; Lehdonvirta, 2013). This ontological standing of the digital virtual as an "in-between" realm may possibly facilitate experimentation outside of "normal" user subject positions (Thompson & Thompson, 2019). But then again, the consumer is also playing the part of wizard, felon, producer, entrepreneur, and these roles may feed back into the physical markets in very complicated ways.

When metaverses characteristics are crossed with CCT studies, some studies also emerge. The idea of dematerialization (Bachmann-Medick et al., 2020; Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010; Leung et al., 2022) has been especially prevalent in the context of metaverses, because in metaverses digital goods and services are gradually replacing physical items (Belk, 2013). Even global companies like Gucci, Burberry, Ralph Lauren, and Louis Vuitton are using NFT to verify the authenticity of digital images that they sell (Joy et al., 2022). This fad is leading into digital fashion where people can actually own and sell digital clothes and accessories (Wyld, 2010).

In line with Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), the metaverse offers fashion brands a space where the relationship between lived culture, social resources, and consumption is mediated through markets (Joy et al., 2022; E. Lee & Jeon, 2024). Digital design and e-prototyping (College et al., 2017; Sayem, 2022) allow brands to engage consumers not only through physical garments but also through virtual apparel, reshaping how products are promoted and experienced. Consumers now participate in immersive experiences like virtual fashion shows (Zhang et al., 2023), which reflect the symbolic and material resources that define identity and self-expression in the metaverse. These digital experiences challenge traditional notions of identity (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Kozinets, 2015b; Schwartz et al., 2011), as consumers negotiate how their virtual personas align with their real-world identities (Papagiannidis et al., 2008), echoing CCT’s focus on the symbolic meanings attached to consumption.

Also, is important to highlight that, according to Jiaxin and Gongjing (2022), the metaverses are social spaces. Then, the metaverse as a space where social and cultural relations are mediated through markets, amplifies the intersection of identity and consumer culture

(Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017; Horppu, 2023; Thompson & Thompson, 2019). According to CCT, identity constitution is closely tied to consumption (Griffiths, 2000; Venkatesh & Meamber, 2008), and in the metaverse, this is evident through the creation of digital credentials that define self-identity (Nagy & Koles, 2014). These credentials may reflect real-life personas or entirely new identities, showing the fluid nature (Bell, 2006; Randers et al., 2021) of self-construction in virtual spaces.

Self-expression, a core tenet of CCT (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Bachmann-Medick et al., 2020; Kozinets, 2008), is amplified in the metaverse, where individuals use consumption to project their desired identities (Cheremnykh, 2024; Edholm, 2024; Papagiannidis et al., 2008). As consumers customize avatars, digital apparel, and virtual environments, the metaverse becomes a space for self-identity creation that transcends real-world limitations. This digital self-fashioning reflects CCT's emphasis on how consumers use goods to symbolize their social standing, values, and ideals (Kravets et al., 2018). In the metaverse, virtual goods and artifacts are purchased not only for functionality (Dwivedi et al., 2022; Tingelhoff et al., 2024) but also to communicate personal identity, raising questions about authenticity and the symbolic nature of consumption in digital spaces where reality and fiction blend.

The metaverse introduces a new dimension to ownership and community (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Thompson et al., 1994), both central to CCT's exploration of consumer culture. In this digital realm, consumers actively co-create (Poncin et al., 2022) and own virtual goods, driving innovation in digital apparel and smart e-technology (Tikkanen et al., 2023). This ownership challenges traditional notions of property, as virtual items become part of a digital economy that mirrors real-world marketplaces (Burroughs & Slaney, 2024; Hadi et al., 2023). Additionally, these consumer interactions foster new types of communities, where social engagement is shaped by shared consumption experiences (Poncin et al., 2022). The co-creation and exchange of virtual assets in the metaverse reflect CCT's focus on the evolving relationship between consumption, identity, and community-building in modern consumer culture.

"See, the world is full of things more powerful than us. But if you know how to catch a ride, you can go places" (Stephenson, 2003, p. 374)

3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework, which is structured into three key sections: Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and Cyberculture, Children's Identity Constitution, and Fashion Identity in Children. The first section, Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and Cyberculture, explores how digital environments, particularly metaverses, shape consumer identity. Drawing from CCT, this part examines how children, as digital natives, navigate virtual spaces where consumption and social interactions are deeply intertwined. By analyzing how cyberculture facilitates the merging of online and offline experiences, this section highlights the role of fashion digital consumption in children's fashion identity constitution.

The second section, Children's Identity Constitution, delves into the processes through which children develop their sense of self in contemporary digital and social contexts. This part considers both theoretical perspectives on identity construction and empirical insights into how children negotiate their identities within digital spaces. It explores the interplay between personal agency, peer influence, and cultural norms in shaping children's perceptions of themselves and their social positioning.

The final section, Fashion Identity in Children, focuses on fashion as a key element of identity expression. Here, the discussion centers on how children's engagement with fashion contributes to their self-perception and social interactions. Together, these three sections provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the intersection of digital consumption, identity constitution, and fashion within children's experiences in metaverses.

3.1 Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and Cyberculture

"Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation" (Gibson, 1984, p. 54)

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the symbolic, social, and experiential dimensions of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Askegaard & Linnet, 2011; Askegaard & Scott, 2013), not only in physical worlds, but also in digital environments (Belk et al., 2020; Denegri-Knott et al., 2022; Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010). Also, CCT can be considered an autonomous marketing school of thought

within the field of consumer research (Gaião et al., 2012). Rooted in Sociology, Anthropology, and Marketing, CCT explores how consumption extends beyond economic transactions to become a means of self-expression, identity formation, and social belonging.

The digital world has transformed the way individuals consume, interact, and construct identities. Cyberculture, as part of CCT studies, examines the relationship between technology and cultural practices (Bell, 2006; Kozinets, 2008), shedding light on how digital environments create new forms of self-expression and consumption. Hine (2000) conceptualizes cyberspace both as culture and as a cultural artifact, emphasizing its material, symbolic, and experiential dimensions. This aligns with CCT by illustrating how digital environments serve as both products of culture and producers of culture, shaping behaviors, identities, and meaning-making processes.

One thing that must be observed is the consumption journey in younger generations. This process is shaped by both emotional and rational factors, deeply intertwined with consumer experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). According to Mele et al. (2021), the Phygital customer journey is a cyclical process consisting of four key stages: connect, explore, buy, and use and can be defined as "the path a customer takes by interacting with the company in a synergetic physical and digital context to have a seamless and personalized experience" (Mele et al., 2021, p. 390). Each stage reflects a combination of emotional, behavioral, and social responses, demonstrating how online and offline interactions merge in consumption process. Since Millennials effortlessly blend digital and physical experiences, they adapt their actions dynamically in response to shifting emotions and interactions.

So, thinking about the consumption journey in cyberspaces (through CCT spectrum), I would like to observe some key concepts that influence digital consumer behavior and how they shape identity constitution and participation in digital environments:

- **Peer Influence, Branding, and Marketing:** Children's purchasing behaviors are significantly shaped by social media trends, in-game marketing strategies, and peer interactions within gaming communities (Bushell, 2022). These influences blur the line between personal preferences and socially constructed trends, reinforcing the social dynamics of digital consumption.
- **Symbolic Consumption and Social Capital:** The symbolic nature of consumption in digital spaces is closely linked to social capital. Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital suggests that individuals gain prestige and recognition through their consumption choices and participation in specific social fields.

- **Algorithmic Culture and Influencer Marketing:** The digital economy is increasingly shaped by algorithm-driven recommendations and influencer culture (Belk et al., 2020). Platforms such as YouTube amplify digital fashion trends, promote in-game purchases, and normalize spending on virtual items. Influencers serve as cultural intermediaries, guiding children's fashion choices and reinforcing digital aesthetics that merge with real-world consumer habits.
- **Metaverses as Multifunctional Spaces:** Digital spaces are no longer limited to gaming and entertainment. Metaverse platforms now host competitions, events, concerts, and virtual museum tours (Çelik, 2023; Chen, 2023; Flavián et al., 2024; Longo & Faraci, 2023). These expanded functionalities integrate virtual consumption into everyday life, making metaverses central hubs for both commercial and cultural experiences.
- **Mere Exposure Theory and Digital Attachment:** The emotional attachment to digital items aligns with mere exposure theory (Zajonc, 1968), which suggests that repeated interactions with specific stimuli enhance preference and attachment. In digital environments, the frequent exposure to virtual fashion items and branded digital goods reinforces their desirability, making them integral to identity construction and social interactions.
- **Economic and Social Factors in Digital Fashion Consumption:** The structure of digital currency systems and microtransactions plays a crucial role in virtual consumer behavior (Belk et al., 2022). These transactions also highlight the financial investment required to participate fully in digital communities.

These concepts illustrate how digital consumption is deeply intertwined with cyberculture and CCT. Understanding these theoretical foundations is essential for analyzing how children constitute their identities in a Phygital world.

Gen Alpha children, as digital natives (Evans & Robertson, 2020), engage with virtual spaces differently from older generations. They do not simply consume digital goods: rather, they actively construct their online identities through fashion choices, avatar customization, and in-game purchases (Nagy & Koles, 2014). The concept of Phygital consumption – where physical and digital consumption blend seamlessly – further illustrates how metaverse experiences integrate into everyday life (Mele et al., 2023). For instance, children often create avatars that reflect their real-life clothing choices, aspirations, and personal styles, demonstrating how their physical-world experiences shape their virtual self-expression. According to Nagy and Koles (2014), avatars are constructed based on real-life experiences,

combined with dreams, fantasies, and aspirations that often extend beyond real-world conditions. Cyberculture challenges traditional notions of identity by enabling fluid, dynamic self-representations.

3.2 Children's Identity Constitution

The consumption journey in digital spaces is deeply intertwined with identity constitution, as children navigate virtual environments where self-expression is shaped by interactions with technology, social influences, and platform algorithms. The term **identity constitution** is intentionally used over identity formation or identity construction to emphasize the ongoing, dynamic, and participatory nature of identity in both physical and digital contexts. While formation implies a linear, developmental process with a definitive endpoint, and construction suggests a deliberate act of building identity from predefined elements, constitution captures the interplay of various social, cultural, and technological forces that continuously shape identity (Vygotski, 1996).

Understanding children's identity constitution requires analyzing the interplay of personal commitments, social interactions, and self-perceptions. Identity is not merely an inherent trait but a dynamic process shaped by family, peer relationships, and media exposure (Schwartz et al., 2011). To Pessoa and Costa (2014) the subject is constituted in and through interactions. Social relationships, as the foundation for knowledge construction and human development, materialize within networks of interactions embedded in distinct cultural contexts. In this regard, Vygotsky (2000) conceptualizes human beings as "a social personality, that is, the sum of social relations embodied in the individual (psychological functions constructed by the social structure)" (p. 33). Thus, individuals grasp the meaning of human activities within their culture through lived experiences with others, through the objects that substantiate previous activities, and through their own history of action in relation to these objects and people. In digital environments, this becomes even more complex, as children engage with virtual personas and online communities, constructing identities that are simultaneously personal and socially mediated.

In the metaverse and other digital environments, identity is not simply formed or built; it is co-created through interactions with avatars, virtual possessions, peer networks, and algorithmic influences. This perspective aligns with theories that view identity as an evolving negotiation rather than a static state (Hall, 2000). Digital spaces enable fluid and adaptive self-representation, where children engage in iterative identity performances influenced by

consumer culture, media, and technological affordances. By using constitution, this study acknowledges that identity is not merely a product of individual agency but a relational and systemic process that is perpetually redefined through digital and physical interactions. Unlike in physical spaces, where identity markers such as gender, age, and social status tend to be more rigid, online environments allow for constant experimentation and reinvention. Stuart Hall (2000) argues that identity should be understood as an ongoing process rather than a fixed state, shaped by historical, social, and technological contexts.

For Wallon (2000), the initial interactions between a child and their environment are primarily affective. Communication occurs through tonic dialogue, meaning it is initially emotional and takes place in a state of continuity, where the child remains fused with others, blending their sense of self with caregivers, people, and the surrounding environment. Through interaction, the child gradually differentiates between the "self" and the "other," a crucial process for identity constitution. Importantly, this differentiation is not always a seamless transition. Often, the "other" does not fulfill a role of continuity, failing to fully merge with the child's desires. This disruption, characterized by moments of frustration and challenge, plays a fundamental role in shaping the child's emerging identity, pushing them toward greater autonomy and self-awareness.

Unlike traditional notions of identity, which are often linked to stable personal traits, digital identity is fluid and adaptive. In these spaces, children continuously construct and reconstruct their self-representation through avatar customization, virtual fashion, and in-game purchases. Mele et al. (2021) argue that this process involves multiple independent narrative selves, allowing children to experiment with different facets of their personalities across platforms. This dynamic reflects how identity is no longer a singular entity but a co-constructed experience influenced by various digital interactions.

The linguistic and cultural codes embedded in digital spaces further contribute to identity constitution. Ensslin (2012) describes gamer language as a specialized sociolect, where in-group terminology and communication styles reinforce community belonging (Ensslin & Balteiro, 2019). This aligns with Dilley's (1999) framework, which categorizes identity construction into external, internal, and psychological dimensions. Also, between the ages of eight and twelve, children begin to develop a more intentional sense of identity, transitioning from passive consumption to more active self-expression (Côté, 1996). This phase is particularly relevant in the context of digital consumption, as children engage with virtual goods that serve both personal and social functions.

Belk's (1988) theory of the extended self has undergone a profound transformation in the digital age, as digital possessions increasingly replace or supplement physical ones in shaping identity. His revised framework (Belk, 2013) identifies five fundamental shifts that redefine how individuals interact with their possessions and, by extension, how they construct their sense of self in digital spaces:

- **Dematerialization** refers to the transition from tangible, physical possessions to intangible, digital assets. Traditional markers of identity, such as clothing, toys, or collectible items, now have virtual counterparts in the form of in-game skins, avatars, NFTs, and other digital goods. These virtual possessions hold symbolic and emotional significance, much like their physical counterparts, yet they exist purely within digital environments, challenging conventional notions of ownership and material attachment.
- **Re-embodiment** highlights the ways in which individuals use digital platforms to experiment with and project different facets of their identity. Avatars and digital personas provide a flexible and customizable medium for self-expression, allowing users;
- **Sharing** in digital spaces extends beyond traditional ownership models, as online platforms facilitate collaborative consumption and collective validation of digital possessions. Unlike physical objects, which are typically privately owned, digital items – such as skins, outfits, or virtual experiences – can be shared, displayed, or even co-owned within gaming and social networks. Social media further amplifies this dynamic, where digital possessions gain meaning through visibility, likes, and engagement, reinforcing the social capital associated with consumption in digital spaces.
- **Co-construction** of self underscores the participatory nature of digital identity. Unlike in the physical world, where identity formation is often a personal or familial process, digital identities are increasingly shaped by interactions with other users, algorithmic recommendations, and curated digital content. This means that children's identity constitution is not solely an individual endeavor but is continuously influenced by the broader digital ecosystem, including peers, influencers, and gaming environments. Algorithms play an especially powerful role in this process by curating content and suggesting in-game purchases that align with previous behaviors, reinforcing certain identity markers.
- **Distributed memory** refers to the way digital technologies externalize and archive personal history, contributing to an evolving sense of self. Cloud storage, social media

> timelines, and game histories function as digital memory banks, preserving past interactions, choices, and experiences. Unlike physical possessions, which can be lost, degraded, or discarded over time, digital possessions and identities leave lasting traces that can be revisited and reshaped. This creates a more persistent yet malleable identity record.

These five transformations illustrate how digital consumption transcends traditional ownership models, moving beyond mere possession to a more participatory, interactive, and social identity constitution process. In metaverse environments, the extended self is no longer confined to physical objects but is instead shaped by virtual assets, algorithmic influences, and networked interactions.

This evolution highlights the necessity of rethinking how digital possessions contribute to identity; particularly as younger generations increasingly engage in hybrid physical-digital experiences. As digital consumption becomes an increasingly dominant force in childhood socialization, it is essential to consider the broader cultural, social, and economic factors that shape identity constitution. Fashion Theory provides a valuable space where children identity can be studied.

3.3 Fashion Identity in Children

The concept of fashion extends beyond clothing, encompassing body adornments, modifications, and self-presentation. Barnard (2014) explains that fashion is both a verb and a noun, meaning it is not only what we wear but also how we shape our identities through consumption.

> "Fashion can be understood as everything that is worn on the body and that is done to or with the body: all the dress, clothing, adornment, modification, and so on that happens on and to the body" (Barnard, 2014, p.17).

Another common perspective on fashion is to view it through the lens of design. According to Barnard (2014), considering fashion as design means recognizing its function or a set of functions. Seeing fashion as functional positions it as a tool, and in turn, understanding fashion as a tool suggests its role as a prosthetic. A prosthetic is something that is not us but which we use, which is added to us, and without which we would consider ourselves incomplete. To Barnard (2020) if the prosthetic addition is what forms us in the first place, the technological cannot be a de-formation.

Fashion exists within a social context, shaping and being shaped by the structures and hierarchies of society (Miranda & Monçores, 2013; Reilly, 2020). Social groups form around shared traits such as class, profession, or cultural background, reinforcing bonds and collective identities. In this sense, fashion serves as both a means of distinction and belonging, operating as a visual language that signals one's place within a social framework. It becomes particularly relevant in societies with complex social stratification, where individuals use dress and style to navigate systems of status and recognition (Barnard, 2014).

Historically, fashion has been closely linked to capitalism and modernity (Simmel, 1957). Unlike traditional or indigenous societies, where dress serves functional and ritualistic purposes, fashion in capitalist societies reflects economic and social divisions. The need for differentiation and emulation, as described by Simmel (1957), fuels the cyclical nature of fashion trends, where individuals oscillate between the desire to stand out and the desire to conform. This paradox exemplifies the socializing and differentiating impulses that drive fashion consumption.

Here, I make a break to define fashion consumption as a form of high-involvement purchasing, where consumers select products to construct and communicate a desired self-image (McCracken, 1988). It serves as a medium for self-expression, allowing individuals to showcase their personalities through clothing and accessories, which can be perceived as extensions of the self (Belk, 1988). Beyond mere acquisition, fashion consumption encompasses behaviors such as seeking fashion-related information, purchasing fashion products, and adopting new trends. According to Lin and Xia (2012), these behaviors reflect consumers' willingness to engage with and incorporate emerging fashion items into their personal style, reinforcing the dynamic relationship between identity and fashion choices. When discussing children's fashion identity, we are primarily engaging with fashion theory, as fashion consumption can be analyzed from multiple perspectives – it can be seen as a system, an art form, a creative process, or a fundamental element in identity constitution. This work focuses on this last perspective.

In this sense, fashion identity plays a crucial role in the broader process of identity formation, as it serves as both an expression and a negotiation of self within social and cultural contexts. Identity, in its broadest sense, is a dynamic construct shaped by personal experiences, social interactions, and cultural influences. It encompasses multiple dimensions, including gender, ethnicity, nationality, and personal interests, all of which contribute to an individual's sense of self. Within this framework, fashion identity emerges as a specific aspect of identity that is communicated through clothing, accessories, and aesthetic choices.

However, the distinction between fashion identity and broader identity formation must be carefully considered to avoid conceptual overlap. While fashion identity is an important mechanism through which children express themselves, it is only one of the many ways in which identity is constituted. Other forms of identity – such as social identity, psychological identity, and cultural identity – operate alongside fashion identity, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. These layers interact in complex ways, making it essential to analyze fashion identity as part of a larger identity formation process rather than as a separate or isolated category.

Children's identity formation is shaped by multiple forces, including family, education, media, and peer interactions, all of which contribute to their sense of self. Fashion plays a role in this process by providing children with tools to experiment with self-representation, develop personal tastes, and navigate social belonging. However, identity extends beyond fashion choices, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions that are not solely dictated by appearance. For example, a child's identity is also shaped by their values, language, relationships, and lived experiences, which may or may not be directly reflected in their fashion choices. Therefore, while fashion identity is an important and visible marker of self-expression, it should be analyzed in relation to other identity-forming elements rather than being conflated with the entirety of a child's identity. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how fashion interacts with broader identity dynamics, acknowledging its significance while situating it within a larger and more complex identity framework.

For children, fashion choices are particularly significant as they navigate their evolving sense of self and group belonging. Through clothing preferences, children negotiate their identities within peer groups, family dynamics, and cultural expectations. Fashion provides a means for both individuality and social integration, demonstrating the intricate balance between personal identity and collective affiliation (Barnard, 2014).

Beyond social stratification, time plays a crucial role in fashion’s evolution. Fashion operates on cycles, constantly redefining itself in response to cultural, technological, and economic shifts (Miranda & Monçores, 2013). The relationship between fashion and time highlights its transient nature, reinforcing its role as both a historical artifact and a marker of contemporary values. Each era reflects specific aesthetic and ideological concerns, demonstrating how fashion is deeply embedded in temporal and societal dynamics (Reilly, 2020). In childhood, fashion identity emerges as a way for children to explore self-expression, navigate social belonging, and internalize cultural symbols, shaping their evolving sense of identity from an early age.

Fashion is also inherently symbolic, functioning as a non-verbal form of communication (Barnard, 2014). Clothing choices convey identity, beliefs, and affiliations, often aligning with broader social and cultural references. Symbolic consumption allows individuals to express their uniqueness while simultaneously adhering to shared codes of meaning. The richness of symbolic interpretation in fashion highlights its deep entanglement with personal and collective identity formation (Silva et al., 2023) and the children are aware of this meaning (Kallioharju et al., 2023).

The function of fashion extends beyond aesthetic appeal, fulfilling multiple roles, including protection, modesty, and seduction (Barnard, 2014; Teunissen, 2014). However, its most profound role is communicative, as it conveys messages about an individual's social position, cultural background, and personal identity. The complexity of interpreting fashion underscores the limitations of traditional communication models, as meanings are fluid and subject to various contextual interpretations (Barnard, 2014).

Digital fashion in the metaverse represents an evolution of traditional fashion consumption, blending self-expression, social status, and brand engagement within virtual environments (Cristina et al., 2024). Younger generations, particularly Gen Z, are at the forefront of this shift, displaying a strong inclination toward using digital fashion items as a means of identity construction and participation in online communities (Milanesi et al., 2024). As gaming and metaverse platforms increasingly serve as social spaces, fashion brands recognize the opportunity to establish a presence, leveraging digital fashion to connect with consumers in immersive, interactive ways (Cristina et al., 2024). The demand for virtual clothing mirrors real-world fashion consumption patterns, where aesthetics, individuality, and cultural trends play significant roles in shaping purchasing decisions.

A key driver of digital fashion adoption is the strategic use of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) as a marketing tool. Limited-time offers, exclusive skins, and event-based collections create a sense of urgency, compelling players to continuously invest in virtual fashion to maintain their status and relevance within gaming communities (Cheremnykh, 2024; Dwivedi et al., 2023). This cycle of digital consumption extends beyond mere aesthetics; it reinforces social belonging and signals prestige in virtual spaces, where avatars and skins function as representations of personal style and identity. As a result, children and young players develop an attachment to digital fashion items, integrating them into their broader self-concept and everyday social interactions.

Beyond individual self-expression, digital fashion reflects broader cultural trends and the globalization of style. The incorporation of global fashion brands into metaverse platforms,

such as Fortnite and Roblox, introduces younger audiences to international aesthetics, merging physical and digital fashion influences (Dwivedi et al., 2023). These collaborations redefine traditional fashion markers, as digital-first aesthetics gain prominence and influence real-world trends. The gaming industry serves as a powerful bridge (Cristina et al., 2024), shaping how younger generations perceive fashion and style, reinforcing the idea that virtual fashion is not just a trend but an integral component of contemporary consumer behavior.

The presence of fashion brands in gaming environments is perceived positively by players, who view these collaborations as strategic and reputation-enhancing for the companies involved (Milanesi et al., 2024). Skins and digital apparel are not simply aesthetic choices; they embody emotional connections and personal identity, reinforcing the value of virtual fashion as a marketable commodity.

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) provides a valuable lens for understanding fashion's role in children's identity constitution and cultural expression. It emphasizes the experiential, symbolic, and ideological dimensions of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), making it particularly relevant for fashion studies. CCT's multidisciplinary approach aligns with the evolving academic discourse on fashion, challenging the notion that fashion is trivial or lacking theoretical depth (Barnard, 2014). The interpretivist paradigm offers critical insights into the ways consumers assign meaning to clothing, positioning fashion as a rich field of study within consumer research.

Both CCT and fashion studies share a struggle for academic legitimacy. Early consumer culture theorists faced skepticism regarding the theoretical contributions of context-driven research (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Similarly, fashion scholars have had to contend with perceptions of their field as superficial or lacking rigor. However, the integration of philosophical, sociological, and marketing perspectives into fashion studies has strengthened its academic foundation, allowing for deeper inquiries into consumer behavior and symbolic meaning (Celso de Miranda & Pépece, 2023).

Ultimately, fashion identity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses self-representation, social belonging, and the negotiation of cultural norms. It manifests through the choices individuals make when dressing, styling their hair, or modifying their bodies, reflecting both personal expression and societal expectations. This performative aspect of fashion allows individuals to highlight or obscure aspects of their identity, signaling affiliation with particular groups or differentiating themselves from others. Social contexts play a crucial role in shaping fashion identity, as individuals often adjust their appearance to align with professional, cultural, or situational expectations. Deviating from established norms can result in social exclusion or

criticism, while adherence can facilitate acceptance and group identification. Beyond mere impression management, fashion identity is deeply embedded in how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others, intertwining personal preferences with broader cultural narratives. It reveals the tensions between individuality and conformity, illustrating how fashion operates as a medium for constructing, communicating, and negotiating identity in dynamic social landscapes.

"A river of words flowed between us." (Cline, 2012, p. 131)

4 MATERIALS AND METHODS

In chapter four, I outline the research methodology, emphasizing its bricolage qualitative nature and positioning it as an Phyginographic endeavor. My main objective in this work is to understand **how what is consumed in metaverse environments acts on the constitution of children's fashion identity.** My thesis is that **the consumption of products in metaverse environments is a significant process in the constitution of children's fashion identity, where children's aesthetic choices and purchasing behavior are shaped by a combination of digital, social, and cultural influences.** I detail the material employed and specific methodological procedures and techniques for data collection and analysis, ensuring they align with the interpretative needs of the research and the unique characteristics of the study's subject matter.

This phyginographic approach allows for dialogical conversation between physical and digital worlds, capturing the nuanced experiences and behaviors of direct and indirect participants. By focusing on qualitative methods, the research prioritizes rich, contextual insights that are essential for understanding the complex processes of identity constitution. The chapter provides a comprehensive account of how these methods were chosen and applied, ensuring that the research remains closely attuned to the cultural and social dynamics of the cybercultures, specifically in the metaverses.

This chapter explores research in Phygital worlds, highlighting methodological approaches suited to hybrid environments. It defines the research scope, detailing the operationalization of objectives and the precise object of study. The chapter follows an bricolage qualitative approach, with a strong emphasis on ethical considerations, particularly regarding children’s participation and data privacy. It describes the materials used, including equipment, platforms, and analytical tools, and outlines the data collection process, explaining the techniques for gathering rich, contextual information. The data analysis process is then discussed, focusing on how identity constitution within metaverse environments is interpreted. Finally, the study addresses validity and reliability, ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of its findings.

4.1 Researching in Phygital Worlds

The concept of Phygital, where physical and digital worlds converge (Mele et al., 2024), has transformed research methodologies (Batat, 2023), demanding new approaches to understand hybrid environments (Batat, 2024). As the boundary between physical spaces and digital platforms blurs, researchers must adapt their methodologies to capture the fluidity (Batat, 2024) and complexity of Phygital experiences (Mele et al., 2021, 2024).

In Phygital worlds, traditional research methods may fall short due to the dynamic interplay between online and offline behaviors (Batat, 2024; Mele et al., 2021). Methodologies that solely focus on one environment – either digital or physical – often miss the nuances that arise from their convergence (Batat, 2024; Cavusoglu & Belk, 2024; Mele et al., 2024). The challenge for researchers lies in integrating data collection tools (Batat, 2023) that are adaptable and versatile (Batat, 2024), capturing interactions across both spheres.

Phygital research is inherently multisite (Batat, 2023), involving both digital and physical settings where the phenomenon unfolds. A typical Phygital study might examine consumer behaviors that begin in a physical store and continue online or vice versa (Batat, 2022, 2023, 2024). Thus, research tools must account for this fluid transition between sites.

Ethnographic techniques, for instance, must adapt to encompass both physical ethnography, where observation occurs in tangible spaces, and digital ethnography, which captures online behavior (Batat, 2023). Kozinets (2015a) advances this discussion explaining that online ethnography is a broad category that encompasses a wide range of different research practices. To him, there are numerous forms of online ethnography, and some researchers even describe simple observation or data collection from the internet as ethnographic work – even when it lacks the core element of participant observation, which is traditionally seen as central to ethnography. Netnography, on the other hand, is a distinct type of online ethnography that emphasizes active participation, often involving direct interaction and dialogue with participants. While it may include in-person conversations, a true netnography cannot consist solely of face-to-face interviews.

In this research, I propose the term phyginography to describe the methodological approach adopted throughout the study. This neologism merges the physical and the digital (phy- + digi-), reflecting the hybrid nature of the fieldwork, which unfolded simultaneously in material and virtual environments. While netnography has been widely used to study online cultures through digital immersion, phyginography emphasizes the inseparability of physical

and digital interactions in contemporary social life, particularly in contexts where identities, practices, and experiences are co-constructed across both spheres. The approach acknowledges that participation, observation, and engagement today often happen in blended spaces – Zoom calls and in-person meetings, WhatsApp chats and classroom conversations, virtual platforms and physical bodies. By coining phyginography, I seek to highlight the methodological need to move beyond binary distinctions between online and offline, capturing the fluid, entangled, and situated nature of contemporary ethnographic work.

Experiential immersion is a key methodology for researching in Phygital contexts (Batat, 2023). Researchers need to immerse themselves in both environments to fully grasp how participants experience Phygital spaces. This involves engaging with the participants' digital experiences while also being physically present in their real-world activities. Such immersion requires flexibility and the ability to shift seamlessly between digital and physical realms (Batat, 2023).

Data collection in Phygital worlds often necessitates a multimethod approach (Batat, 2024). Combining qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations, with quantitative tools, such as surveys and digital analytics, allows researchers to build a more holistic picture of the phenomenon under study (Çelik et al., 2023) – and that’s why I classify as a bricolage. At the same way, multiple qualitative methods are particularly effective in Phygital contexts, as they capture the full spectrum of participant experiences across both physical and digital touchpoints (Mele et al., 2021).

So, the dynamic nature of these environments requires researchers to be adaptable, ready to change their data collection strategies as new challenges arise. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many researchers had to shift their physical data collection methods to digital formats (Batat, 2023). Phygital research, by its nature, prepares researchers for such shifts, as it inherently involves multiple modes of interaction.

Moreover, Phygital research is participant-centric (Batat, 2022), requiring researchers to focus on the participant’s journey through both worlds. This journey is often non-linear (Mele et al., 2021, 2024), characterized by shifts between online and offline activities. Therefore, longitudinal studies are critical for understanding how experiences evolve over time (Batat, 2024). By tracking participants across multiple touchpoints, researchers can uncover patterns and changes in behavior that might otherwise go unnoticed in a single-site study.

4.2 Research Delimitation

4.2.1 Operationalization of the Objectives

To support the thesis that consuming fashion products in metaverse environments is intrinsically linked to the formation of children's fashion identity, I developed the following specific objectives: (i) to understand how children consume fashion in the metaverses; (ii) to comprehend how fashion consumption in the metaverse influences consumption in the physical world; and (iii) to investigate the similarities and differences between fashion consumption in the metaverse and the physical world in shaping children's fashion identities.

To operationalize the first objective, (i) understanding how children consume fashion in the metaverses, I explored the various platforms where these interactions occur, - Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft. These environments allow children to experiment with virtual fashion in ways that go beyond traditional consumption, as they actively participate in the creation and customization of avatars (Cheremnykh, 2024; Nagy & Koles, 2014), selecting clothing, accessories, and styles that represent their digital identities. I also detailed the steps that structure the consumption process.

To address the second objective, (ii) comprehending how fashion consumption in the metaverses influences consumption in the physical world, I explored the link between children's digital and physical fashion identities. Children’s choices in the metaverse often reflect or inform their preferences in the physical world (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2016). This connection highlights how digital consumption becomes a testing ground for real-life aesthetic decisions, where children may feel more empowered to explore styles they encounter first in the virtual world.

In investigating the third objective, (iii) analyzing the similarities and differences between fashion consumption in the metaverse and the physical world in constituting children's fashion identities, one must first recognize the unique affordances of each environment (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Kim, 2021). In the metaverses, children are offered an unprecedented level of creativity and freedom in curating their fashion identity, unrestricted by real-world limitations such as cost, practicality, or (some) societal norms. This allows for more fluid expressions of identity, where children can experiment with fantastical or avant-garde looks that might be impractical or inaccessible in the physical world. The metaverse thus serves as a sandbox for identity exploration, distinct from the more constrained nature of real-world fashion.

4.2.2 Object of Research

Before conducting a bricolage qualitative study, it is essential to have a preliminary understanding of the context in which the research will be situated (Mariampolski, 2006). This initial comprehension serves as a theoretical lens, allowing the researcher to grasp the basic dynamics of the field, even if superficially (Mariampolski, 2006). In my case, early observations of how my son and his friends interact with games in the metaverses provided valuable insights.

The macro-object of this research is the intersection between children's identity formation and the metaverse as a consumer space, examining how fashion consumption within these digital environments influences and reflects children's fashion identity. Initially, I delimited the social spaces of interest to focus on the platforms where children's fashion choices and purchasing behaviors were most visible: Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite. These platforms became focal points for data collection only after initial contact with the field, when I observed that they are the spaces where the dynamics of digital fashion are most evident. Within these metaverses, children engage with various elements, such avatars, skins, and customization options, which provide fertile ground for examining how fashion consumption occurs and its impact on identity constitution.

Identity constitution is central to my research, and the relationship between digital environments and the constitution of children's identities is particularly critical. Children, especially from Generation Alpha, are growing up in a world where their real-world and digital selves are deeply interconnected (Ziatdinov & Cilliers, 2021). Their engagement with metaverse platforms allows them to explore and experiment with different aspects of their identity, from appearance to social behavior, in ways that may not be possible in the physical world.

Consumption plays a key role in identity constitution (Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., & Vignoles, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2011), particularly in a digital context where children are not only consumers of fashion but also co-creators of their digital personas (Cavusoglu & Belk, 2024). **Fashion consumption is central to identity constitution**, both in physical and digital spaces. The metaverse enhances self-expression, allowing children to customize avatars in ways that may differ from their real-world style. This agency in digital fashion shapes how they are perceived, reinforcing identity as a negotiated process. As Generation Alpha navigates blurring physical and digital boundaries (Mele et al., 2021, 2024), virtual fashion becomes a distinct identity marker, influenced by social circles, digital communities, and personal aspirations. Figure 14 illustrates the delimitation.

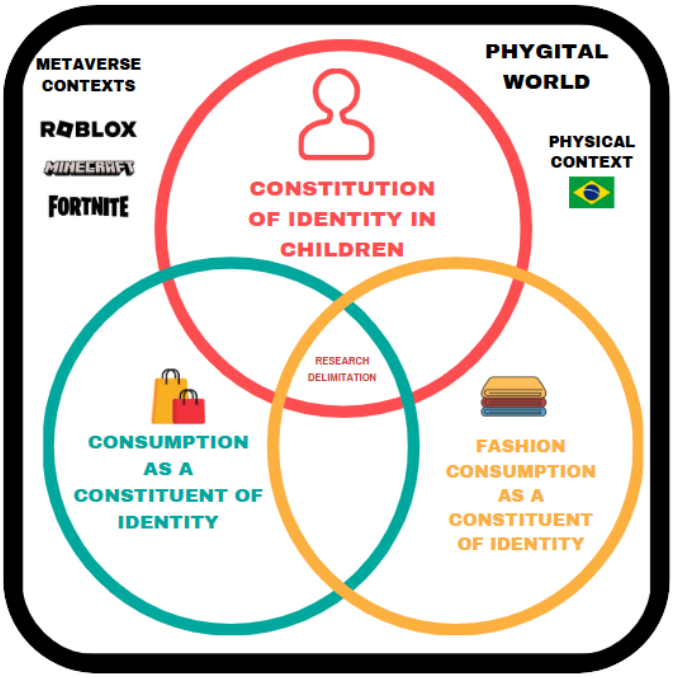


Figure 14
Research Delimitation: Layers of Identity Constitution in Children

Source: Created by author

Although this research was conducted in Brazil (mainly Londrina – PR) and data collected in Portuguese, it spans Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite, each with distinct digital cultures and fashion norms. This cross-platform approach enriches the analysis of digital fashion's role in identity constitution. Despite its localized data collection, global fashion trends, YouTube, and social media shape metaverse fashion, making it a transnational space where children co-create digital fashion norms, adding complexity to identity formation.

Children have agency in shaping their own life stories (Watson et al., 2020), but they do not exist in isolation. They are deeply interconnected with the material world and the people

around them, engaging in experiences and interactions that are mapped and observed through various technologies and measurements.

According to Oswell (2013), while children's bodies and well-being are often under surveillance, they also serve as sites for negotiation and experimentation, where agency is shaped by social, technological, and cultural forces. Understanding identity constitution requires engaging with multiple agents of influence, each offering a unique perspective on how children navigate metaverse platforms and digital fashion choices. To achieve this, I conducted in-depth conversations with children, parents, psychologists, teachers, and YouTubers, each playing a key role in shaping children's digital and physical fashion identities. Although friends and game developers also play significant roles, they were not part of the interviews and will be further explored in the analysis and results chapter.

4.3 Type of Research

This research is **qualitative**, aiming to understand the complexity of children's fashion identity constitution. Qualitative research is characterized by its interpretive (Hackley, 2019), naturalistic approach (Belk, 2006), where researchers observe and interact with participants in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018b). This methodology is ideal for examining phenomena like consumption behavior in digital spaces (Bryda & Costa, 2023; D. J. Lee et al., 2024), where subjective experiences (Yao et al., 2024), meanings (Thompson et al., 1994), and social interactions (Belk, 2006) play a key role in constituting children's choices and identities.

A qualitative study can move from a specific unit of analysis to a broader frame by gradually expanding the scope of contextualization (Spiggle, 1994). Starting with a focused unit, such as an individual agent, the researcher delves deeply into their experiences and perspectives, which provides detailed insights into micro-level interactions. As the study progresses, these findings can be layered and compared with others, broadening the context to include groups, communities, or organizations. This progressive elaboration allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the larger, macro-level dynamics (Swedberg, 2014), such as societal trends or neglected perspectives like those of children. By synthesizing individual insights with broader patterns, qualitative research enables a nuanced view of the collective experience within a larger social framework (Batat, 2024; Seregina & Weijo, 2016).

Fashion consumption in Generation Alpha is particularly marked by the convergence of digital and physical influences (Kaplan-Berkley, 2022). Qualitative research is ideal for examining the dialogical relationship between children's virtual and physical fashion choices.

Its interpretive approach enables a deep analysis of how children engage with Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite, metaverses rich in symbolic and cultural meanings (Dwivedi et al., 2022). By immersing in these spaces and engaging with children, parents, teachers, and influencers, this study uncovers the underlying processes shaping children's fashion identities.

According to Belk (2006) an **interpretive approach** is essential for understanding interactions with goods, specially virtual goods (Arnould et al., 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018b). Interpretivism focuses on the meanings individuals ascribe to their experiences. This approach allows the research to delve into the nuanced, often unspoken influences that shape children's preferences and self-expression in the digital realm.

Qualitative methods are a central aspect of this research, as they enable a close examination of children's behavior and interactions in metaversal environments. Phyginography involves the systematic observation and participation in the daily lives (physical and digital lives) of research subjects, making it an ideal method for studying how children's fashion identity is constituted through their engagement with virtual worlds. These practices transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and reminders.

The ideal length of time for conducting a classical ethnography is challenging to pinpoint, as it depends on the specific context and goals of the research (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). Wolcott (2005) suggests that about two years of fieldwork is a standard benchmark, influenced by the success of Malinowski's extended fieldwork among the Trobrianders. Earlier anthropologists often aimed for a minimum of 12 months to capture complete annual cycles, such as agricultural seasons in rural settings (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). While doctoral students may commit to extended fieldwork, tenured academics often face time constraints due to professional responsibilities. Thus, ethnographic research durations should align with each study’s objectives and limitations. My immersion began in May 2022, allowing for deep engagement with participants, observing behaviors, interactions, and routines over time. Conducting research amid post-pandemic shifts presented challenges but also provided critical insights into the evolving study landscape, forming a strong foundation for analysis.

The researcher's immersion in both physical and digital environments was shaped by the dynamics of family life, with Luiz Antônio, my son, as the central figure. This is predominantly documented in the field notes, which provide detailed observations of his interactions, behaviors, and experiences, offering valuable insights into the interconnected nature of these spaces and their influence on his daily life.

Belk and Casotti (2014) highlight the potential growth of consumption ethnography and market research in Brazil, emphasizing the need to expand cultural and historical perspectives within Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). Brazil's diverse socio-cultural landscape fosters a rich array of consumption practices, spanning urban groups, virtual communities, and grassroots movements, offering fertile ground for CCT research and to apply phyginography.

This research is also classified as **descriptive research**. According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2006) descriptive research aims to understand and interpret reality without interfering to change it. In this sense, descriptive research is interested in discovering and observing phenomena, seeking to describe, classify and interpret them. It exposes the characteristics of a given population or phenomenon, but is not committed to explaining the phenomena it describes, although it serves as a basis for such an explanation. (Vieira, 2002).

To Malhotra et al. (2016), descriptive research is crucial for documenting consumer behaviors and "specifies the methods for selecting the sources of information and for collecting data from those sources" (Malhotra et al., 2016, p. 73). In the case of this research, it involves detailed observations and recordings of children's interactions, choices, and expressions of identity within these virtual spaces. The descriptive nature of this study provides a rich, contextualized understanding of how digital consumption influences children's fashion preferences and self-perception. By observing children in their digital and physical environments, this research captures the fluid interplay between these spaces in identity constitution.

4.4 Ethical Aspects

Ethical considerations are of utmost importance in research, especially when children are involved as participants (Hopkins & Bell, 2008; Morrow & Richards, 1996). This is particularly true for studies exploring Phygital environments that merge physical and digital spaces, where privacy, consent, and data security present unique challenges (Dwivedi et al., 2022).

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the State University of Maringa Human Research Ethics Committee (Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos - COPEP) under reference number **71894223.0.0000.0104**, ensuring transparency and participant protection. Working with vulnerable populations such as children demands adherence to strict ethical standards, as highlighted by Malhotra et al. (2016). This approval

underscores a foundational commitment to respecting the rights and well-being of all participants.

In compliance with Brazilian ethical guidelines, such as the Resoluções Normativas 466/2012-CNS and 510/2016-CNS, the study prioritized the protection of children through a robust consent process. For adult participants, a Free and Informed Consent Form (Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido) was signed, ensuring their voluntary and informed participation. For children, a specialized assent form (Termo de Assentimento) was utilized, as per the guidance of the Ethical Committee of Universidade Estadual de Maringá (COPEP/UEM). This approach aligns with the understanding that respect for human dignity requires research participants, or their legal representatives, to express their consent in a free, autonomous, and enlightened manner.

Additionally, the research adhered to SEI/MS – 0019229966 (25/02/2021) – Comunicado, addressing the ethical considerations of studies conducted in digital and virtual spaces. The project ensured compliance with both national regulations and international ethical standards.

Phygital research merges public and private spaces, creating complex challenges in safeguarding participants' rights in both realms (Johnson & Barlow, 2024). When children are involved, innovative approaches to obtaining informed consent become essential. Methods such as child-friendly leaflets and activity packs, which present research details in accessible terms, have proven effective, as highlighted in Thomas and O'Kane (1998) participatory study. In this research, all participating children were literate and able to read the assent form presented in a clear, topic-based format. These strategies empower children, ensuring they can make informed decisions about their participation in the research process.

When conducting research in domestic settings, privacy concerns become especially significant. Researchers must carefully balance the need to collect observational data with the obligation to respect the intimate dynamics of family environments (D. Valentin & Gomez-Corona, 2018). Allowing participants to control recordings and decide when to share games, outfits, or physical items empowers them and respects their privacy. Managing sensitive disclosures requires clear ethical protocols to ensure participant welfare and data protection (Thomas & O'Kane, 1998). Additionally, ethical research involving children requires a child-centric approach, recognizing them as competent social actors who can provide meaningful insights. This perspective aligns with Christensen and James' (2017) emphasis on valuing children's agency in the research process.

Parental involvement in research serves as both a facilitator and protector, ensuring ethical integrity while preserving children's autonomy. Ethical guidelines emphasize informing parents about the study while allowing children to express their views freely (Alderson, 1995; Alderson & Morrow, 2011). To balance security and independence, one parent remained nearby but uninvolved in interactions. Researchers must also navigate objectivity and empathy, maintaining professional detachment while respecting children's emotions (Venkatesh et al., 2017). Power imbalances require strategies like assuring participants there are no “right or wrong” answers and allowing them to withdraw consent at any time (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Thomas & O’Kane, 1998).

Finally, I need to address another topic in ethical realm. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic writing is increasingly becoming a natural part of contemporary research. Since my research focuses on digital environments and their impact on identity and consumption, it feels natural to incorporate AI tools to enhance my writing process. As a non-native English speaker, writing an academic thesis in English presents additional challenges, particularly in ensuring clarity, coherence, and academic rigor. AI-assisted writing serves as a valuable tool in bridging linguistic gaps, refining arguments, reducing costs, and improving the overall structure of my work.

Throughout the writing process, I used ChatGPT and Copilot as revision tools rather than content generators. My approach was highly intentional, using AI to refine clarity, improve transitions, and ensure logical coherence without compromising my authorship. I provided specific prompts tailored to my needs, such as "Can you help me refine this paragraph to improve clarity while maintaining an academic tone?" and "How can I make this argument more concise and impactful without losing meaning?". Additionally, I sought AI assistance in enhancing methodological explanations, synthesizing sources into figures and tables, and avoiding unintentional plagiarism while preserving meaning (Sampaio et al., 2024). AI served as a support system, allowing me to focus on content while ensuring my arguments were effectively communicated.

Despite using AI, I firmly believe that my research remains original and personal. Even if another researcher from a different country were to explore the same topic, the output would differ because the input – the theoretical choices, field experiences, and analytical lens – was uniquely mine. The AI did not generate new ideas or arguments; rather, it functioned as an editorial assistant, refining my existing thoughts. Every AI-assisted revision was reread, adjusted, and finalized by me, ensuring that my academic voice remained at the forefront.

4.5 Materials

Conducting research in the metaverse requires careful planning, not only in terms of methodology but also in ensuring the necessary technological resources. Unlike traditional research environments, digital spaces demand specialized tools, including gaming platforms, software, and high-performance hardware with gamer-specific features such as fast processors, powerful GPUs, sufficient RAM, and high-refresh-rate monitors to ensure seamless gameplay. Without proper hardware, games may lag, graphics may be compromised, and the overall experience may not accurately reflect typical player interactions, potentially impacting research observations.

Beyond hardware and software, in-app currencies such as Robux (Roblox), Minecoins (Minecraft), and V-Bucks (Fortnite) were essential for studying virtual consumption behaviors. These currencies allowed for the purchase of skins, accessories, and game passes, which are key identity markers in metaverse environments. While these purchases increased research costs, they were crucial for immersive engagement and a deeper understanding of digital consumer experiences. Importantly, I only provided virtual currencies for my children, not for interviewed participants, ensuring ethical research boundaries.

Furthermore, software licenses for data analysis, screen recording tools, subscriptions to gaming platforms, and internet services were integral to the project's financial requirements. Together, these components reflect the resource-intensive nature of metaverse research, with total costs estimated to be approximately 12,000 reais. All expenses were carefully documented to maintain transparency and accountability in project budgeting. These expenditures highlight the resource-intensive nature of metaverse research and underscore the importance of adequate funding to ensure the study's successful execution. Notably, VR headsets were excluded from the study due to their cost and the fact that the children in the research context did not have access to such technology. This section comprehensively outlines the material and financial resources required for robust and ethically sound research in digital environments.

4.6 Data Collection

This section introduces the data collection methods used in the study, highlighting the application of multiple qualitative approaches to comprehensively address the research problem. Bricolage qualitative methods were selected for their capacity to uncover the depth

and complexity of human behavior, interactions, and cultural practices within specific contexts. As Anderson (2009) emphasizes, ethnography is not just a method but a strategic approach. High-tech companies, in particular, have employed the majority of corporate ethnographers in recent years, recognizing ethnography's value in deeply understanding customers and adapting to rapidly evolving markets. Building on this perspective, I argue that advancing this technique to encompass phyginography (the blend of physical and digital experiences) and fully digital dimensions can be especially valuable. In a world where human interactions increasingly traverse online platforms and physical spaces simultaneously, a hybrid ethnographic approach offers deeper, more context-sensitive insights into behaviors, meanings, and cultural dynamics.

First, observations were carried out over six months within online gaming environments, including Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite, where participants' interactions with virtual fashion items were meticulously documented. These observations were complemented by semi-structured interviews conducted with children, parents, school teachers, psychologists, and gaming YouTubers, offering valuable insights into both individual and collective perceptions of virtual identity constitution. Recognizing the visual nature of contemporary culture (Rose, 2014), artifact analysis was also employed, focusing on virtual fashion items such as skins and accessories to examine their design, branding, and symbolic meanings.

Each method presented unique challenges, including restricted access to specific in-game features and ethical concerns related to working with minors. These were carefully managed through participant agreements and continuous consultations. The collected data – including observational field notes, interview transcripts, and visual documentation of digital artifacts – was systematically coded and analyzed. This process ensured the identification of meaningful themes and patterns, resulting in a robust and nuanced exploration of the research problem.

The rationale for employing multiple qualitative methods lies in their ability to collectively capture the complexities of the phenomenon under study. This section will detail each method individually, explaining its implementation, the specific contexts in which it was applied, and the measures taken to overcome any limitations. By breaking down each method, the discussion aims to provide a clear understanding of how they collectively enriched the overall data collection strategy through diverse and complementary perspectives. A comprehensive table (Table 3) outlines the key aspects of each method, including the period of implementation, locations, rationale, participants and procedures, limitations, agreements with participants, outputs, and analytical strategies.

These methods were carefully selected to align with the study's objectives (Feixa et al., 2020), but more importantly, they reflect a clear epistemological commitment to understanding the complex identity processes shaped by consumption within metaverse environments. Since the main subjects of this research are children, gaining access to their perspectives poses significant methodological challenges for an adult researcher. Uncovering what goes on in the symbolic world of children requires structured and sensitive approaches—ones that not only accommodate the communicative limitations of childhood but also address the ethical boundaries established by research ethics committees. Therefore, the chosen methodologies aim not only to capture diverse viewpoints but also to ensure that the data collected responsibly and meaningfully reflects the intricate interplay between children's metaverse consumption practices and the constitution of their fashion identities. The integration of observation, interviews, and artifact analysis enabled a triangulated approach, enhancing the credibility of findings by corroborating data from multiple sources (Golafshani, 2003). In next subtopics I detail each method of the table.

Table 3 *Bricolage Qualitative Methods Design*

Bricolage Qualitative Methods Design - Phyginographic Inquiry

Method	Period	Where	Why	How	Limitation	Agreement	Output	Analysis
Participant Observation (Bentzen, 2012; Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011)	May 2022/July 2024	In the home of the researcher and the children interviewed and in the virtual environments Roblox, Fortnite and Minecraft.	Immersive engagement, capturing authentic interactions and behaviors in both physical and virtual environments, offering a holistic understanding of children's experiences and identity constitution in metaverses.	Field notes.	The researcher's presence may influence participants' behavior, and limited expertise in playing these games may restrict full access to and understanding of all aspects of virtual environments and interactions.	Parental consent and child assent.	27 single-spaced pages in a Word doc.	Atlas.ti (9.0); Content Analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b)**;**
In-depth interviews (Arsel, 2017)	Jan 2024/July 2024	**Childrens** - In presence, at the Children's home.	To understand how children consume fashion on metaverses and comprehend how fashion consumption on metaverses affects consumption in the physical world.	Individual audio and video recorded interviews using a semi-structured form (Appendix G) with **31** Children (Age 8 – 12). (Table 4)	Researcher presence may have influenced responses, and the focus on children aged 8–12 limits generalizability to other age groups and broader identity dynamics.	Children's Term of Assent together with his/her parent's Term of Consent.	The interviews were transcribed with Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in 31 Word docs, totalizing 884 single-spaced pages.	Atlas.ti (9.0); Content Analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b)**;**
	Jan 2024/July 2024	**Parents** - In presence, at the Children's home.	To understand how children consume fashion on metaverses and comprehend how fashion consumption on metaverses affects consumption in the physical world.	Individual audio recorded interviews using a semi-structured form (Appendix H) with **25** Parents. (Table 5)	Self-selection bias, potential response influence from the home environment, and the complexity of analyzing diverse qualitative data, especially when they have more than one kid.	Children's Term of Assent together with his/her parent's Term of Consent.	The interviews were transcribed with Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in 25 Word docs, totalizing 248 single-spaced pages.	Atlas.ti (9.0); Content Analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b)

	Feb 2024	**Teachers** - In presence.	To understand their perspectives on how children's interactions with fashion in metaverses influence learning, identity, and social behaviors in educational settings.	Individual audio recorded interviews using a semi-structured form (Appendix J) with **11** Teachers. (Table 6)	A small sample size, potential self-reporting biases, and contextual influence from the in-person interview setting.	Term of Consent.	The interviews were transcribed with Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in 11 Word docs, totalizing 213 single-spaced pages.	Atlas.ti (9.0); Content Analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b)**;**
	July 2023/Aug 2023	**Psychologists** - In presence or On-line (Google Meet)	To gain insights into how children's interactions with fashion in metaverses influence their psychological development, self-identity, and social interactions.	Individual audio or video recorded interviews using a semi-structured form (Appendix I) with **5** Psychologists. (Table 7)	Potential bias from psychologists' theoretical orientations, a small sample size, and the challenge of isolating metaverse-specific influences from broader developmental factors.	Term of Consent.	The interviews were transcribed with Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in 5 Word docs, totalizing 73 single-spaced pages.	Atlas.ti (9.0); Content Analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b)**;**
	July 2023/Dec 2023	**Youtubers** - On-line (Google Meet)	To understand their role in shaping children's consumption behaviors, preferences, and identity constitution within metaverses through content creation, influence strategies, and engagement dynamics.	Individual audio or video recorded interviews using a semi-structured form (Appendix K) with **6** Youtubers. (Table 8)	Potential bias from self-presentation or branding strategies, small sample size, and difficulty generalizing findings due to variations in content styles and audience demographics.	Term of Consent.	The interviews were transcribed with Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in 6 Word docs, totalizing 88 single-spaced pages.	Atlas.ti (9.0); Content Analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b)**;**
Visual Research (Belk &	Jan 2024/July 2024	On-line, at the Children's metaverse space (Roblox, Fortnite or Minecraft).	To Understand how children consume fashion on metaverses;	Capturing videos and photos showcasing the virtual skins and avatars.	Privacy restrictions, and potential biases introduced by the selective representation of virtual identities.	Children's Term of Assent and with his/her parent's Term of Consent.	The 1868 minutes of images were analyzed totalizing 123	Atlas.ti (9.0); Bezerra et al., (2020) addapted

							single-spaced pages.	
	Jan 2024/July 2024	In presence, at the Children's home.	To Comprehend how fashion consumption on metaverses affects consumption in the physical world.	Capturing photos of children's favorite outfits from their wardrobe.	Influence from parents, and biases in cultural and socioeconomic representation, making data subjective and context-dependent.	Children's Term of Assent together with his/her parent's Term of Consent.	The 192 pictures were analyzed totalizing 91 single-spaced pages.	Atlas.ti (9.0); Bezerra et al., (2020) addapted
Documental (Junior et al., 2021)	May 2022/Sep 2024	Books, Novels, Websites.	To understand the references, lexicon, last news, and examples shared by the users.	Analyzing books, novels, and websites	Outdated information, author bias, and cultural or regional disparities in language use; websites may lack credibility, and books might not reflect current trends.	Not Apply	30 pdf archives	Atlas.ti (9.0); Content Analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b)**;**

Source: Created by author

4.6.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation, as outlined by Dewalt and Dewalt (2011), served as a cornerstone of this research, enabling an immersive and nuanced exploration of children's experiences within metaverses. This method involved engaging directly in the daily lives and interactions of children both in their homes and virtual environments such as Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft. Between May 2022 and July 2024, the researcher adopted this approach to uncover implicit and explicit cultural elements, which, according to Spradley (1980), are integral to understanding the routines and practices of any group. By participating in the activities of children and their families, the researcher was able to capture the subtleties of their identity constitution and social interactions that might have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Observation allowed access to what is often left unsaid, what lies between the lines of verbal communication, and in the Phygital spaces of interaction (Mele et al., 2023). This was particularly relevant when studying children, as Bentzen (2012) emphasized that children do not approach formal test procedures with the seriousness of adults and generally feel less threatened when being observed informally. The immersive nature of participant observation facilitated a natural setting where children could express themselves authentically, enabling the researcher to observe behaviors, preferences, and dynamics that aligned with their developmental stages.

Ethical considerations were central to this study, ensuring parental consent, child assent, and participant confidentiality (my own son, Luiz, also signed the assent term and my husband and me, the parental consent). Observations were structured to prioritize comfort and respect, with participants excluded if they did not meet inclusion criteria or expressed discomfort. Participants included children (8–12 years old) engaged in virtual environments and parents willing to discuss decision-making, ensuring relevant and comprehensive data. The researcher actively participated in children's digital and real-world activities, playing alongside them and independently exploring games to gain firsthand insights into social dynamics, mechanics, and theoretical connections within metaverse environments.

The data collection process was rigorous and systematic. Detailed field notes were taken throughout the observation period, culminating in 27 single-spaced pages. While conducting participant observation, I did not adhere to a structured observation guide, as I aimed for a more flexible and open-ended approach to capture the nuances of the observed interactions. These notes were later analyzed using Atlas.ti (9.0) software and the content analysis method proposed by Gioia et al. (2013). This analytical approach allowed for the

synthesis of observational and interview data, ensuring a rich and layered understanding of the phenomena under study.

One of the key strengths of participant observation was its ability to capture nuances that interviews alone could not. For instance, observing children's interactions in metaverses revealed how their choices of avatars and skins served as tools for self-expression while also being influenced by peer dynamics. These observations provided a deeper understanding of how children negotiate their identities in these virtual spaces, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and lived experiences.

The researcher's son played a pivotal role in fostering rapport with participants. As Dewalt & Dewalt (2011) noted, the presence of children in fieldwork can ease interactions and make the researcher more relatable to participants. In this study, the researcher's own child participated in activities alongside the participants, facilitating a natural and trust-filled environment. This dynamic not only enriched the observational data but also mirrored the social contexts in which children naturally interact.

However, participant observation was not without its challenges. The presence of the researcher in the field had the potential to influence participants' behaviors, a limitation inherent to this method. Additionally, the researcher's limited gaming expertise occasionally restricted access to more complex aspects of the virtual environments, which may have impacted the depth of certain observations. Despite these limitations, the method's strengths far outweighed its constraints, providing invaluable insights.

4.6.2 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are a vital tool in qualitative research, offering unparalleled profoundness and nuance in understanding human behavior, experiences, and decision-making processes. Unlike quantitative methods that rely on breadth and generalizability (Arnould; E.J. et al., 2006), in-depth interviews prioritize the richness of detail (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018a), capturing the complexity of individual perspectives.

However, conducting high-quality in-depth interviews is not without its challenges. To Arsel (2017) designing and executing these interviews requires a careful balance between preparation and adaptability. Researchers must craft thoughtful questions that guide the conversation while leaving room for unexpected insights (Busetto et al., 2020). The preparation phase involves creating an interview protocol – a flexible outline that includes key topics, potential probes, and transitions (Arsel, 2017). This document serves as a foundation but must

be treated as a living guide that evolves with each interview. According to Arsel (2017) adjusting to the flow of dialogue and tailoring questions to individual participants is essential for fostering a natural and productive conversation.

One of the most significant hurdles in conducting interviews is establishing trust and rapport with participants (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011; Hill, 1997; Malhotra et al., 2016; Venkatesh et al., 2017). The success of an interview often hinges on the participant's willingness to share their thoughts openly and honestly (Alvesson, 2003; Arnould et al., 2006; Belk, 2006). To build this trust, researchers must clearly communicate the purpose of the study, ensure participants' informed consent, and create a comfortable environment (Arsel, 2017). To this author, initial moments of the interview, often considered "warm-up" questions, play a dual role: they both build rapport and set the stage for deeper exploration.

I had the advantage of researching children who were the same age as my own, which helped me understand their references, from games and influencers to trends in fashion. This familiarity allowed me to engage naturally with participants, ask relevant follow-up questions, and create a comfortable environment where children, mothers, and teachers felt understood. Mothers, for instance, often expressed relief in discussing their concerns with someone who shared their perspective, while teachers appreciated my grasp of school-age dynamics, which enriched the conversations.

A recurring challenge in qualitative research is determining how many interviews are "enough" to achieve data saturation (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Guest et al., 2006; Hagaman & Wutich, 2017; Hennink et al., 2017). Saturation refers to the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from additional interviews (Hennink et al., 2017). While there is no universal rule for reaching saturation, studies suggest that themes often begin to stabilize after 12 to 16 interviews for homogeneous groups (Guest et al., 2006). However, in studies involving diverse populations or cross-cultural contexts, the number may range from 20 to 40 interviews (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017). The challenge lies in balancing the need for depth and detail with the practical constraints of time and resources. Researchers must remain flexible, using preliminary analysis to assess when saturation is approached (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017; Spiggle, 1994).

The iterative nature of qualitative research requires constant reflection and adaptation (Arsel, 2017). After each interview, researchers should evaluate the effectiveness of their questions (Bryda & Costa, 2023), the clarity of their probes, and the depth of the data collected (Guest et al., 2006). This iterative process not only enhances the quality of subsequent interviews but also allows for the refinement of theoretical frameworks (Bryda & Costa, 2023).

By treating the interview protocol as a flexible tool rather than a rigid script (Bajde & Gopaldas, 2019; Malhotra et al., 2016), researchers can respond to emerging themes and ensure that their study evolves organically.

Another important aspect of in-depth interviews is the sampling process. Unlike quantitative studies, which often rely on random sampling, qualitative research uses purposive sampling to select participants with relevant experiences or perspectives (Etikan, 2016). For this study on children's fashion identities, the sample includes children, parents, psychologists specializing in child development, teachers, and Youtubers. Each group offered unique insights into the phenomenon, and understanding their perspectives requires familiarity with their contexts and terminologies.

The complexity of interviewing multiple agents of influence lies in tailoring the questions and approach for each group. For instance, conversations with parents focused on their decision-making processes and cultural influences, while interviews with children explored their preferences and self-expression. Psychologists provided expert insights into developmental aspects, and influencers discussed the cultural narratives they promote. Each interview was customized to align with the participant's role and perspective, ensuring that the data collected was both relevant and meaningful.

The richness of data collected through in-depth interviews often leads to substantial analytical challenges. Researchers must sift through detailed narratives, identifying patterns and themes while preserving the individuality of each participant's story (Baker & Edwards, 2012). This process requires both analytical rigor and creative interpretation (Bajde & Gopaldas, 2019), as researchers seek to weave disparate accounts into a coherent and meaningful narrative.

In this study, we aimed to explore the multifaceted constitution on children's fashion identity by interviewing five key groups of participants. Each group represents a unique perspective, contributing to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. By separating these agents of influence – children, parents, psychologists, teachers, and influencers – we can delve deeply into their specific roles and interactions.

4.6.2.1 Children: Voices of Identity

Between January and July 2024, in-depth interviews were conducted with **31 children aged 8 to 12** to explore their engagement with fashion consumption within metaverses and its influence on their preferences and behaviors in the physical world. The participants were

recruited through various networks, including the researcher's personal connections, friends of the researcher's son (peers from school and extracurricular activities like taekwondo), and relatives of friends. A **saturation criterion** was applied to ensure that data collection continued until new themes ceased to emerge, enhancing the robustness of the findings (Etikan, 2016; Robinson, 2014).

The interviews were conducted in person, primarily at the children's homes, fostering a sense of familiarity and comfort. Following Alderson's (1995) guidance, care was taken to create a child-friendly environment. Interviews took place in quiet, private settings, with the researcher sitting at eye level to reduce intimidation. Permission was obtained for note-taking and recording, and children could review their videos to build rapport. Using clear, engaging communication, maintaining eye contact, and responding attentively encouraged openness and trust (Alderson, 1995).

A semi-structured interview (Appendix G) format was used to balance structure with flexibility. While key themes guided the conversations – such as identity, self-expression, and peer influences – the children were encouraged to share freely, often leading to unexpected but highly relevant insights. As Alderson (1995) notes, letting children "ramble" can reveal unexpected insights. The researcher followed their lead, addressing their interests before gently refocusing the discussion, ensuring a richer, more authentic exploration of their experiences.

The ethical dimensions of working with children were meticulously considered. Drawing on Hopkins and Bell (2008) the researcher's moral and ethical motivations informed every stage of the process. Each child signed a Term of Assent (Appendix A), while their parents signed a Term of Consent (Appendix B), ensuring that participation was voluntary and well-informed. Care was taken to respect the children's comfort levels, with the option to pause or terminate the interview at any point. Ending interviews on a positive note, as suggested by Alderson (1995), was also prioritized, ensuring that participants felt valued and respected.

Interviews were recorded using audio and video to capture verbal and non-verbal cues in both physical and digital environments. Videos showed children's surroundings and game screens, enriching the data with body language and expressions. Transcribed via Adobe Premiere Pro, the **31 documents (totaling 884 pages)** provided a comprehensive foundation for analyzing children's perspectives on fashion and identity across physical and digital spaces.

The analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti (9.0) and grounded in the principles of Content Analysis as outlined by Gioia et al. (2013). This systematic approach allowed for the identification of patterns, themes, and variations in how children engaged with fashion

consumption within metaverses and how these experiences shaped their real-world preferences.

The **inclusion criteria** required children aged 8 to 12 years, boys or girls, who had signed the Child Assent and whose legal guardians had signed the Informed Consent form. The children needed to feel comfortable receiving the researcher at home, recording videos, and presenting both virtual and physical items. Additionally, child avatars analyzed had to be presented by the children and include some skins for evaluation. The **exclusion criteria** ruled out children who had not signed the CAF/ICF or who refused to receive the researcher at home, record videos, or present virtual and physical objects. Avatars that were not part of metaverse environments, such as games outside this context, were also excluded.

Despite its strengths, the methodology had challenges. The researcher's presence may have influenced socially desirable responses, while home-based interviews, though comfortable, could reflect family biases. Additionally, focusing on 8-to-12-year-olds limits generalizability to younger children, adolescents, or other demographics.

The geographical and social contexts of the research also played a significant role, as Hopkins and Bell (2008) highlight the importance of location in shaping the research process and its outcomes. The home environment provided insight into children's lives but required interpreting findings within localized contexts. Family involvement, direct or indirect, added complexity, highlighting the interplay of individual, familial, and cultural influences. The interviewed children attended both public and private schools, reflecting Brazil's educational divide. Of the 31 participants, 8 were in urban public schools, often facing infrastructure and resource challenges, while 23 attended private schools, which offer smaller classes, technology access, and diverse pedagogical models. The five private schools studied varied in approach, including traditional, bilingual, constructivist, and holistic models, highlighting the diversity of educational options sought by families. Table 4 summarizes participant demographics.

Table 4

Childrens Profile

ID	Gender	Age	School	Chosed Game	Device	Where	Recruitment
CHD1	Male	9	Private	Fortnite	Playstation Console + TV	Bedroom	My son’s friend
CHD2	Female	9	Private	Roblox	Own Laptop	Bedroom	My Son's School
CHD3	Female	9	Private	Roblox	Parent’s Cellphone	Livingroom	My Son's School
CHD4	Male	8	Private	Roblox	Parent’s Cellphone	Livingroom	My Son's School
CHD5	Male	9	Private	Minecraft	Xbox Console + TV	Livingroom	My Son's School

CHD6	Male	10	Private	Roblox	Own Cellphone	Livingroom	My Son's School
CHD7	Male	9	Private	Minecraft	Nintendo Console + TV	Livingroom	My son’s friend
CHD8	Male	8	Public	Roblox	Own Ipad	Bedroom	My son’s friend
CHD9	Female	8	Public	Fortnite	Own Cellphone	Bedroom	My son’s friend
CHD10	Female	9	Public	Roblox	Parent’s Cellphone	Livingroom	My son’s friend
CHD11	Female	10	Public	Minecraft	Xbox Console + TV	Bedroom	My son’s friend
CHD12	Female	11	Private	Minecraft	Own Cellphone	Livingroom	My son’s friend
CHD13	Male	12	Private	Fortnite	Own Laptop	Bedroom	My son’s friend
CHD14	Male	8	Public	Roblox	Own Cellphone	Livingroom	Child of a friend of mine
CHD15	Male	10	Public	Minecraft	Xbox Console + TV	Livingroom	My friend’s kid
CHD16	Female	12	Public	Fortnite	Xbox Console + TV	Livingroom	My friend’s kid
CHD17	Male	11	Private	Minecraft	Playstation Console + TV	Game Room	My friend’s kid
CHD18	Male	9	Private	Fortnite	Xbox Console + TV	Bedroom	My friend’s kid
CHD19	Male	9	Private	Fortnite	Xbox Console + TV	Bedroom	My friend’s kid
CHD20	Male	9	Private	Fortnite	Xbox Console + TV	Bedroom	My friend’s kid
CHD21	Male	12	Private	Fortnite	Playstation Console + TV	Livingroom	My Son's School
CHD22	Male	8	Private	Fortnite	Parent’s Cellphone	Livingroom	My friend’s kid
CHD23	Male	12	Private	Fortnite	Xbox Console + TV	Game Room	My friend’s kid
CHD24	Male	9	Private	Roblox	Xbox Console + TV	Game Room	My Son's School
CHD25	Male	12	Private	Minecraft	Xbox Console + TV	Game Room	My Son's School
CHD26	Female	11	Private	Roblox	Xbox Console + TV	Game Room	My Son's School
CHD27	Male	12	Private	Fortnite	Playstation Console + TV	Bedroom	My son’s friend
CHD28	Male	8	Private	Fortnite	Own Laptop	Livingroom	My son’s friend
CHD29	Female	11	Public	Minecraft	Parent’s Cellphone	Livingroom	My friend’s kid
CHD30	Female	10	Private	Minecraft	Parent’s Cellphone	Game Room	Taekwondo with my son
CHD31	Female	8	Private	Roblox	Own Laptop	Bedroom	Taekwondo with my son

Source: Created by author

4.6.2.2 Parents: Navigating Choices and Influences

Between January 2024 and July 2024, **in-depth interviews were conducted** at the places of the children’s parents. A total of **25 individual in-person** interviews with parents were carried out using a semi-structured interview form (Appendix H). The parents were **recruited through various networks**, including friends within my son’s social circle, his school community, and extracurricular activities, such as Taekwondo. Specific recruitment sources included: my son’s school (9 participants), friends of my son’s network (11 participants), referrals from friends (2

participants), and personal acquaintances (10 participants). The **inclusion criteria** for the parents were their direct involvement in decision-making about their children's digital activities and purchases. The **exclusion criteria** excluded parents or guardians without daily contact with the children (e.g., those living in different cities). Some parents had more than one child participating in the study, leading to a dataset covering 31 children – exceeding the number of parents interviewed.

Each interview was audio-recorded for accuracy and subsequently transcribed using Adobe Premiere Pro, producing **25 Word documents totaling 248 single-spaced pages**. The data was analyzed using Atlas.ti (9.0) software, employing content analysis principles (Gioia et al., 2013). All parents signed a Term of Consent (Appendix C).

Despite its contributions, the study faced limitations. The sample consisted solely of families willing to participate, potentially introducing self-selection bias. Additionally, conducting interviews in the home environment may have influenced responses, as participants could tailor their answers to align with social expectations. Lastly, coding and analyzing qualitative data from a diverse respondent group required an iterative process to ensure reliability and validity. Parents demographics are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5

Parents Profile

ID	Interviewed	Child	Civil Status	Age(s)	Generation	Profession(s)
PRT1	Mother/Father	CHD1	Married	38/41	Both Gen Y	Journalist/Entrepreneur
PRT2	Mother	CHD2	Married	44	Gen X	Nurse
PRT3	Mother	CHD3/ CHD4	Married	43	Gen Y	Professor at University
PRT4	Mother	CHD5	Married	41	Gen Y	Entrepreneur
PRT5	Mother	CHD6	Married	46	Gen X	Professor at University
PRT6	Mother	CHD7	Married	39	Gen Y	Photographer
PRT7	Mother	CHD8	Divorced	37	Gen Y	Public servant
PRT8	Mother/Father	CHD9/ CHD10	Married	37/38	Gen Y	Psychologist/Computer engineer
PRT9	Mother	CHD11	Married	36	Gen Y	Teacher (High school)
PRT10	Mother	CHD12/ CHD13	Divorced	39	Gen Y	Doctor
PRT11	Mother/Father	CHD14/ CHD15/ CHD16	Married	42/45	Gen Y /Gen X	Doula/ Computer engineer
PRT12	Mother	CHD17	Married	42	Gen Y	Entrepreneur
PRT13	Mother	CHD18	Married	40	Gen Y	Professor at University
PRT14	Mother	CHD19	Married	43	Gen Y	Teacher (Elementary school)

PRT15	Mother	CHD20	Married	48	Gen X	Veterinary
PRT16	Mother	CHD21	Married	43	Gen Y	Entrepreneur
PRT17	Mother	CHD22	Married	44	Gen X	Entrepreneur
PRT18	Mother	CHD23	Married	35	Gen Y	Entrepreneur
PRT19	Mother	CHD24/ CHD25	Married	44	Gen X	Physiotherapist
PRT20	Mother	CHD26	Married	40	Gen Y	Human Resource Analyst
PRT21	Mother	CHD27	Married	42	Gen Y	Entrepreneur
PRT22	Mother	CHD28	Married	39	Gen Y	Entrepreneur
PRT23	Mother	CHD29	Married	36	Gen Y	Public Servant
PRT24	Mother	CHD30	Divorced	41	Gen Y	Lawyer
PRT25	Mother	CHD31	Divorced	40	Gen Y	Dentist

Source: Created by author

4.6.2.3 Educators: Shaping Perspectives in Social Spaces

In February 2024, in-depth interviews were conducted in person with **11 teachers**. A **semi-structured interview** form (Appendix J) was employed to guide discussions, balancing predefined questions with flexibility for teachers to elaborate on their experiences and insights.

The interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the accurate capture of responses and contextual nuances, with the teachers providing informed consent through a signed Term of Consent (Appendix D) prior to participation. Transcription of the interviews was completed using Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in **11 Word documents totaling 213 single-spaced pages** of qualitative data. The content was systematically analyzed using Atlas.ti (9.0) software, adhering to Gioia's et al. (2013) principles of content analysis.

This methodology revealed digital fashion’s impact on peer dynamics, self-expression, and classroom interactions. However, limitations included a small sample size, potential self-reporting bias from teachers, and the school setting's influence on response depth and openness. All participants were **teachers from the same school**, and the interviews were arranged through coordination. These interviews took place individually over two days during the teachers' planning periods at the beginning of the academic year. In return for their participation, I agreed to provide feedback in the form of a professional development session titled “Cultura e Consumo nos Metaversos: Dialogando com o Ambiente Escolar”, delivered to teachers at Colégio Interativa de Londrina on March 4, 2024, with a total duration of six hours.

The **inclusion criteria** focus on selecting teachers who engage with children aged 8 to 12 years in educational settings that emphasize technological integration in their curricula. This

ensures the study or initiative targets professionals actively involved in environments where technology plays a significant role in education, reflecting current trends and innovations. The study **excludes** teachers with minimal student interaction and schools lacking technological infrastructure to ensure relevant insights into technology-enhanced education. This refines the scope, maintaining consistency and comparability in the findings. Further details regarding participant demographics are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Teachers Profile

ID	Gender	Age	Generation	Personal Information		Professional Information	
				Civil Status	Children	Graduation	Experience Time
Tch1	Female	32	Gen Y	Divorced	1 boy, age 9	Pedagogy	13 years
Tch2	Female	26	Gen Z	Married	1 boy, age 2	Biology	4 years
Tch3	Female	23	Gen Z	Single	No	Literature /Pedagogy	3 years
Tch4	Female	52	Gen X	Married	2 girls, age 25 and 22	Pedagogy	30 years
Tch5	Female	42	Gen Y	Married	2 girls, age 13 and 11	Literature	18 years
Tch6	Female	37	Gen Y	Married	1 boy, age 5	Biology	4 years
Tch7	Male	39	Gen Y	Married	No	Literature, Master	11 years
Tch8	Female	31	Gen Y	Divorced	1 boy, age 3	Literature	20 years
Tch9	Female	25	Gen Z	Single	No	Literature, Master	4 years
Tch10	Female	40	Gen Y	Married	1 boy, 1 girl, age 9 and 7	Pedagogy	24 years
Tch11	Female	57	Gen X	Divorced	1 boy, age 29	Pedagogy	35 years

Source: Created by author

4.6.2.4 Psychologists: Decoding Development and Expression

Between July and August 2023, in-depth interviews were conducted with **five child psychologists**. The interviews took place either in person (2 interviews) or online via Google Meet (3 interviews). The purpose was to explore how children's interactions with fashion in metaverses influence their psychological development, self-identity, and social interactions.

Using a semi-structured interview format (Appendix I), the study allowed for focused discussion on predefined themes while giving psychologists the flexibility to share nuanced insights based on their professional experiences. Each interview was audio or video recorded to ensure the accurate capture of verbal and non-verbal cues, with all participants providing

informed consent through a signed Term of Consent (Appendix E). Transcriptions were completed using Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in five Word documents totaling **73 single-spaced pages.**

The transcribed data was analyzed using Atlas.ti (9.0) software, employing Gioia et al. (2013) content analysis methodology to identify key themes, recurring patterns, and unique insights related to the psychological impact of digital fashion consumption on children. Hennink et al. (2017) emphasize the role of well-defined saturation criteria. In this study, code saturation – where the range of thematic issues across data becomes identifiable – was expected to be reached between nine and fifteen interviews. However, achieving this benchmark was not feasible due to stringent inclusion and exclusion criteria. The **inclusion criteria** focused on child psychologists who work with children in private practices (clinics). Conversely, **exclusion criteria** ruled out those working exclusively in public institutions, those not working with the selected age group, those specializing solely in neurodivergent children (e.g., autistic, Asperger), and those unfamiliar with the metaverse.

The study included five psychologists, not as primary subjects but as contributors to understanding children's experiences. Their insights helped structure interviews and guide observations. Limitations included a small sample size, limiting generalizability, and potential biases from theoretical orientations. Isolating metaverse influences from broader developmental factors also posed challenges. Despite this, the findings offer valuable insights into digital consumption and child psychology. Participants were cisgender, White, Christian women with psychology degrees, all married except for one, residing in Londrina. These professionals were identified through the snowball sampling technique (Robinson, 2014). Detailed participant demographics are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Psychologists Profile

ID		**Psy1**	**Psy2**	**Psy3**	**Psy4**	**Psy5**
Age		34	46	34	26	38
Generation		Gen Y	Gen X	Gen Y	Gen Z	Gen Y
Mother?		Yes (1 boy, 6 years old)	Yes (3 boys_6, 9, and 20 years old)	Yes (2 girls_4 and 9 years old)	No	Yes (1 boy, 4 years old)
Professional	**Postgraduate level**	Specialist in Neuropsychology	Master in Behavior Analysis	Specialist in Neuropsychology	-	Specialist in Neuropsychology/Master in Behavior Analysis

	Theoretical Approach	Behavior Analysis	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Humanistic Analysis	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
	Experience Time	10 years	22 years	4 years	2 years	12 years

Source: Created by author

4.6.2.5 Youtubers: The Architects of Trends

From July to December 2023, **in-depth interviews** were conducted online **via Google Meet with six YouTubers** who produce content related to children and metaverse environments. A semi-structured interview (Appendix K) format was used to balance pre-determined topics, such fashion consumption in metaverses, influence strategies, and engagement dynamics, with the flexibility for YouTubers to share their unique perspectives and practices in content creation. Each interview was audio or video recorded to ensure accuracy, and participants provided informed consent through a signed Term of Consent (Appendix F). The interviews were transcribed using Adobe Premiere Pro, resulting in six Word documents that totaled **88 single-spaced pages**.

The transcribed data was analyzed with Atlas.ti (9.0), employing (Gioia et al., 2013b) content analysis methodology to identify recurring themes and distinctive insights. The analysis explored how YouTubers influence children, focusing on engagement strategies, metaverse fashion, and their impact on identity and consumption habits. Despite valuable insights, limitations included a small sample size, restricting generalizability. Children recommended key YouTubers, but outreach efforts – including 60+ emails and social media messages – received little to no response.

Given these challenges, the most effective sampling technique employed was **snowballing** (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018b; Parnwell & Meng, 2024), where one YouTuber recommended others. This approach proved invaluable for navigating the networked nature of the YouTuber ecosystem, though it still presented limitations in scope and response rates. The study included YouTubers mentioned by children, ensuring relevance and influence within the target demographic. Priority was given to those who agreed to recorded interviews, while creators focused on non-metaverse games were excluded to maintain a clear research scope.

Potential bias arose from self-presentation and branding, as YouTubers curate their public personas. Variations in content styles and audience engagement also made identifying universal patterns challenging. Despite these limitations, the findings highlight YouTubers'

significant role in shaping children's metaverse interactions. None of the YouTubers has a job other than creating content. Further demographic details are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Youtubers Profile

ID	Gender	Age	Generation	Experience Time	Educational Level	Number of subscribers/followers		
						Youtube	Instagram	Twitch
You1	Female	27	Gen Z	5 years	Completed Higher Education	322K	86K	55.1K
You2	Male	24	Gen Z	4 years	Completed Higher Education	457K	18.9K	-
You3	Male	31	Gen Y	4 years	Completed Higher Education	-	21.3K	25.5K
You4	Male	30	Gen Y	5 years	Incomplete Higher Education	514K	13.7K	60.2K
You5	Male	28	Gen Z	6 years	Incomplete Higher Education	3.73K	15.9K	211.6K
You6	Female	28	Gen Z	5 years	Completed Higher Education	1.15K	65.2K	144.8K

Source: Created by author

4.6.3 Visual Research

Visual research methods refer to the use of visual technologies and images in research to capture behavior and provide insights into the **contextual** and **interpretive** aspects of human actions (Pink, 2007). These methods, including photography and videography, allow researchers to document cultural practices, social phenomena, and consumer behaviors in some situations, enriching the understanding of the research context (Basil, 2011).

Photography, often seen as a simpler and more familiar medium in consumer research (Shin Rohani et al., 2014), is widely used for its straightforward approach to capturing specific moments. Conversely, videography, though more complex, offers dynamic representations of social artifacts and cultural inventories (Shin Rohani et al., 2014), making it a powerful yet underutilized tool in ethnographic consumer research (Belk, 1998; Belk & Kozinets, 2024). In anthropology and sociology, cultural inventories have utilized visuals extensively to decode cultural meanings and messages (Mitchell, 2006), as visual data can effectively depict everyday routines, rituals, and symbolic events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Swedberg, 2014).

Visual methods also provide unique advantages for exploring consumer behavior. They offer: i) profound insights into contexts that are difficult to verbalize; ii) enable the study of sensitive social issues, and iii) equip marketers with a deeper understanding of consumer preferences in real-life settings. By integrating visual data into research, scholars can expand theoretical frameworks, particularly in consumer culture theory, while also offering practical applications for public policy and marketing strategies (Belk & Kozinets, 2005).

4.6.3.1 Video Analysis

This study used videography to examine children's fashion consumption in Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft from January to July 2024. A video setup recorded **31 children playing, capturing both their physical surroundings and device screens (TV, cellphone, or computer), generating 1,868 minutes of footage and 123 pages of insights** on identity, style, and social interactions in metaverse environments. The analysis went beyond gameplay, focusing on how skins, avatars, and accessories shape self-expression and social engagement. Videos documented avatar customization, player interactions, and virtual world navigation, highlighting how digital items foster social connections and community building.

This study focused on virtual identity choices, analyzing how avatars, skins, and accessories reflected personalities and aspirations. Items like hats, backpacks, and virtual pets enriched digital self-representation, while game-specific assets (e.g., pickaxes in Fortnite, blocks in Minecraft) highlighted the link between personal expression and gameplay mechanics. Recordings revealed consumption patterns, including the excitement of acquiring new items, social dynamics like sharing, trading, and competition, and emotional responses tied to item use in social or competitive contexts. Ethical considerations were paramount, requiring child assent and parental consent. Privacy restrictions introduced potential biases, as selective avatar representation made it difficult to fully capture children’s broader fashion preferences and cultural influences. Analytical tools such as Atlas.ti (9.0) and Bezerra et al. (2020) analytical protocol was applied to identify patterns and themes in digital fashion consumption.

To adapt Bezerra's et al. protocol (Bezerra et al., 2020) for analyzing fashion in video scenes to encompass the dual environments of the metaverse and the physical world, as well as the unique aspects of digital fashion, I introduced elements that connect virtual and physical interactions among children. Table 9 illustrates a comparison between Bezerra's et al. original

protocol, the modifications I implemented to study fashion within metaverse contexts, and the justification for each of these changes.

Table 9

Adaption of Bezerra's et al (2020) Protocol

Existing Elements	Bezerra's et al Protocol	Adaptation to this Study		Justification
		Digital Clothing	Physical Clothing	
Form	Shape, the clothing's description in the video scene.	Analyze the shape and structure of avatars and virtual items, including proportions and customization options.	Description of the clothing's shape and structure in the real world.	Highlights the connection between virtual and real-world fashion design, focusing on how children perceive and recreate styles in both environments.
Color	Color details in the video scene.	Examine color choices in the digital space, including skins, accessories, and their emotional or status implications.	Detailed analysis of clothing colors in the real world, including preferences and trends.	Color serves as a key element of self-expression and identity in both digital and physical spaces, making it essential to compare across environments.
Material	The type of material of the clothing in the video scene.	Focus on virtual textures and their representation of real-world materials (e.g., metallic, fabric-like, or fantastical). Assess realism (e.g., Fortnite vs. Minecraft styles).	Examine the actual material types of physical clothing worn by children.	Investigates the tactile and visual contrasts between virtual representations and physical realities, bridging perceptions of quality and realism.
Composition	Instruments or objects that create the scene.	Analyze the combination of elements (e.g., accessories, weapons, tools) that create a cohesive look in metaverses.	Study how clothing items, accessories, and additional objects combine in real-world outfits	Explores the layered approach children use to create "complete" looks, emphasizing creativity and the blending of influences from both realms.
Gestures	Actions of characters in the video scene.	Observe avatar gestures and actions in metaverses (e.g., emotes, movement patterns).	Analyze physical gestures and posture while wearing certain clothing styles in real life.	Highlights how body language and movement are expressed differently in virtual and physical spaces, reflecting children's self-presentation.
Audio and Interaction	Not specifically included.	Dialogue or sounds from the child (e.g., discussions about virtual items) and in-game sounds (e.g., chat, music).	Conversations about physical clothing choices and external comments or feedback received.	Shows how social interactions and auditory elements shape the child's perception of their clothing, both in metaverses and the real world.

Frame	General shot, close-up, medium shot of the scene.	Examine video game scene surroundings (e.g., type of game, battle/construction context, alone or with friends).	Analyze real-world surroundings (e.g., bedroom, playground) where clothing is worn.	Contextualizes how environments influence clothing choices and their portrayal in virtual and physical scenarios.
Camera Movements	Zoom, horizontal/vertical panorama, close-up.	Study game camera movements such as zoom in/out, velocity, and the player's skill in navigating views.	Examine children's physical movements, such as gestures while using controllers or navigating spaces.	Investigates the interaction between movement and visual presentation of fashion, exploring the dynamics of digital versus real-world displays.
Physical Actions	Not specifically included.	Analyze how children project their physical actions (e.g., button presses, joystick movements) onto their avatars.	Observe how physical actions correspond to their real-world experience of wearing clothes.	Connects the embodiment of virtual fashion with physical sensations and actions, providing insights into immersive experiences.

Source: Created by author

This approach illuminated the relationship between virtual identity constitution and consumption, while also addressing the ethical and methodological complexities inherent in the process. Like Bezerra et al. (2020), I analyzed the **connotation and denotation** of each criterion, but instead of employing mythification, I introduced the concept of **translation**. This concept refers to the dialogical comparison between the physical and digital worlds, emphasizing the interplay and mutual influence between these two spheres.

4.6.3.2 Photo Analysis

Photo analysis complements videography by providing a focused and static visual perspective, often used to capture specific moments or details (Rose, 2014). Between January and July 2024, I captured **192 photographs** of children's favorite outfits from their physical and metaverses wardrobes, generating 91 pages of detailed analysis.

The study emphasized ethical protocols, obtaining both the child's Term of Assent and the parent's Term of Consent. The findings revealed intricate dynamics, where parental influence significantly shaped children's real-world fashion choices, often contrasting with their autonomous virtual expressions. External factors such as cultural norms and socioeconomic conditions also introduced biases, influencing both wardrobe selections and the interpretation of data.

Using tools like Atlas.ti (9.0) and Bezerra et al. (2020) analytical protocol, the analysis uncovered patterns and thematic connections between virtual and physical fashion consumption. These insights provided a nuanced view of how children navigate identity and style across digital and real-world contexts, despite challenges in data interpretation. To address metaverse dynamics, I adapted Bezerra's protocol to better capture the virtual-real interplay. By combining video and photo analysis, this study demonstrates how visual methods enhance our understanding of consumer behavior, identity constitution, and the digital-physical connection.

4.6.4 Documentary Research

Between May 2022 and September 2024, an extensive analysis of books, novels, and websites was undertaken to explore the references, lexicon, recent developments, and examples commonly shared by users in discussions related to cultural and consumer trends in fashion consumption in the metaverses. The dataset comprised **30 PDF archives** (detailed in Appendix L), encompassing a range of literary and digital materials that were methodically analyzed using Atlas.ti (9.0) and Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013b) content analysis framework. This approach allowed for the identification of recurring themes, terminologies, and narratives that inform user perceptions and communication styles.

The analysis faced limitations, including outdated information in static texts, authorial bias, and language barriers that may not fully capture regional or cultural nuances. Website credibility varied, with some sources lacking robust evidence or presenting oversimplified perspectives. While books like Ready Player One (Cline, 2012) and Snow Crash (Stephenson, 2003) offer rich cultural depth, they may not fully reflect current trends or user diversity. Despite these gaps, these dystopian narratives provide critical insights into speculative futures, bridging past and potential realities.

4.7 Data Analysis

In this study, I applied the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013) to analyze qualitative data, as it provides a structured yet flexible framework for interpreting complex, unstructured datasets – particularly relevant for research on metaverses (Ferrigno et al., 2023; Hadi et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024; Tingelhoff et al., 2024). This method, known for its rigor and theoretical depth, maintains a close connection to raw data while allowing theoretical insights

to emerge organically. The analysis follows an iterative process: identifying 1st-order concepts (participant-driven), grouping them into 2nd-order themes (emergent patterns), and distilling them into aggregate dimensions (higher-level theoretical constructs), culminating in a data structure that visually maps how raw data transforms into insights. Originally tested in organizational identity research (Corley & Gioia, 2004), this approach is particularly well-suited for Phygital contexts, where identity and consumption dynamics evolve through the interplay of digital and physical interactions.

Complementing this, I analyzed game videos using Bezerra's et al. analytical protocol (Bezerra et al., 2020) (Table 9 *do item 4.6.3.1 Video Analysis*), which I adapted to address the specificities of the metaverse environments. This dual approach, integrating well-established qualitative methodologies, ensured a robust and multi-dimensional exploration of the data.

Analyzing qualitative data, especially in the context of metaverses, requires an intertwined process of interviewing and analysis. As Langley (1999) and others have noted, these processes are often inseparable, with the researcher iteratively cycling between data collection and interpretation. In this study, the **early stages** of analysis yielded a plethora of informant terms, codes, and categories – a phenomenon akin to Corbin and Strauss's (2008) concept of open coding. This phase was both exhilarating and overwhelming, as the initial emergence of 221 or more first-order categories quickly made the dataset appear chaotic. This sense of disarray, however, was not only anticipated but embraced, reflecting the complexity of the field. The objective at this stage was not to impose order prematurely but to faithfully capture the diversity of informant perspectives, laying a solid foundation for subsequent analytic phases.

As the analysis progressed, I moved into the **axial coding phase**, seeking relationships and patterns among the initial codes. This step involved grouping similar categories and identifying overarching themes, which gradually reduced the number of codes to a more manageable subset. Retaining informant terms wherever possible, I sought to preserve the authenticity of the participants' voices while also beginning to conceptualize the data at a higher level of abstraction. The transition from first-order categories to second-order themes marked a critical shift in the analysis, moving from descriptive coding to interpretive theorizing (Giesler & Thompson, 2016). During this phase, I began asking broader theoretical questions, such as "What underlying processes or dynamics are reflected in these themes?" and "How do these dynamics relate to existing theories or open new conceptual avenues?"

Developing second-order themes was a gateway to identifying aggregate dimensions, **the highest level of abstraction** within the Gioia framework (Corley & Gioia, 2004). This process involved distilling the theoretical insights from the data into broad, integrative constructs that could explain the phenomena under investigation. A hallmark of this stage was the creation of a data structure diagram, a visual representation mapping the journey from raw data and the thematic blocks to abstract theoretical insights (Figure 15). This diagram served not only as a heuristic tool for organizing the findings but also as a means of demonstrating the methodological rigor of the study. By systematically linking the raw data to the emergent themes and aggregate dimensions, the data structure underscored the transparency and validity of the analytic process.

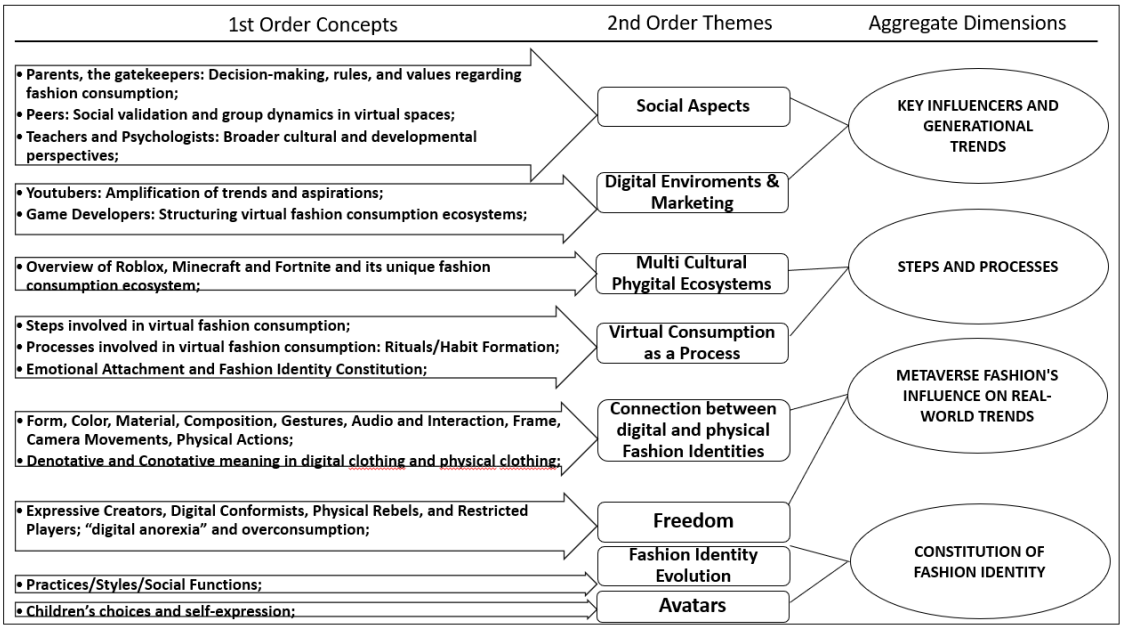


Figure 15
Analysis – Data Structure Diagram

Source: Created by author

To manage the complex qualitative dataset, I used Atlas.ti (9.0) software, which facilitated the generation of initial codes and their organization into thematic categories. The software proved invaluable in handling the vast array of informant terms and in ensuring the systematic coding of the data.

Achieving data saturation was a pivotal milestone in this study. Saturation was attained after analyzing approximately 79% of the dataset, at which point no new significant themes emerged. This achievement validated the comprehensiveness of the analysis and assured that the findings accurately represented the dataset. Additionally, it highlights the unique challenge

of conducting interviews with children, as reaching saturation in this context required more time and effort due to the complexity and nuances involved.

Bezerra et al. (2020) pioneered an analytical protocol for examining clothes in videos within in movies, focusing on the visual and narrative elements unique to these contexts. This framework incorporates a semiological analysis inspired by Barthes' matrix, which operates across the denotative, connotative, and mythical levels. It also integrates Gemma Penn's concepts of sign interpretation for still images, Maciel and Miranda's (2009) costume analysis framework, and Jullier and Marie's (2012) descriptive and interpretative model of shots and camera movements.

However, analyzing content within the metaverse demanded further refinements to accommodate its complex, interactive, and immersive nature. I developed an enhanced framework tailored specifically to the metaverse as previously seen in Table 9.

By integrating this approach with the Gioia methodology, I was able to explore not only the textual and thematic dimensions of the data but also the multimodal aspects that are critical to understanding user experiences in metaverses. Importantly, I followed Gioia's advice to adopt a stance of "semi-ignorance" of the literature during the early stages of analysis (Gioia et al., 2013b). This deliberate suspension of preconceptions helped to mitigate confirmation bias and enabled the discovery of novel insights. As the analysis advanced, I revisited the literature to contextualize the findings and explore their theoretical implications.

4.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the degree to which the methods used can lead to accurate and justifiable conclusions (Franklin et al., 2010). Reliability, on the other hand, relates to the consistency of the research process and the ability to replicate the study to obtain similar results (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Although these concepts originated in quantitative research, there has been substantial debate about their applicability in qualitative inquiries (Franklin et al., 2010; Kirk & Miller, 1986). Scholars like Golafshani (2003) argue that qualitative research can achieve validity and reliability through alternative strategies that ensure trustworthiness and rigor.

In this research, to ensure credibility, I engaged in prolonged interaction with the data, iteratively analyzing and refining emerging themes using Atlas.ti (9.0) software. Triangulation was achieved by integrating multiple data sources, including observations, interviews, video and photo analyses, documentary research, and theoretical frameworks. Thick descriptions of the research process, participant context, and coding frameworks supported transferability,

allowing other researchers to evaluate the applicability of the findings to new settings (different metaverses or different countries). Dependability was addressed through meticulous documentation of the coding process, iterative revisions of themes, and inter-coder reliability assessments, which ensured a consistent and systematic approach. Confirmability was achieved through reflexivity and validation from independent coders, reinforcing the alignment of the findings with the data.

Thomas and O'Kane (1998) argue that validity and reliability in qualitative research can be enhanced by empowering participants – in their case, children – through participatory methods that respect their perspectives and ways of understanding the world. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) caution that strategies for rigor in qualitative research must be purposefully chosen and contextually applied. Rigor is not a one-size-fits-all construct but rather a tailored set of practices that reflect the complexity and depth of the inquiry.

Finally, to finish Materials and Methods chapter, is important highlight that balancing motherhood and doctoral research is an intricate, often unpredictable journey that requires resilience, adaptability, and a strong support system. As Utami (2019) describes, student mothers constantly navigate competing demands, refining their approaches in real-time. Focusing on children in my research allowed me to integrate personal and academic responsibilities, with my son Luiz accompanying most data collection sessions. This dual role posed logistical challenges, like keeping him engaged, but also fostered a comfortable environment for participants. However, academic motherhood required flexibility, especially during unexpected disruptions, such as Luiz falling ill mid-session. These experiences reinforced the necessity of "pathway thinking" (Utami, 2019), where adapting to unforeseen challenges became an integral part of the research journey.

At the core of this balancing act was the network of women who provided invaluable support, advice, and encouragement. Their presence transformed interruptions from setbacks into opportunities for connection, mentorship, and shared resilience. As Brown (2013) notes, vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change. Academic motherhood is a collective journey, strengthened by support and collaboration. Embracing imperfection, setting boundaries, and open communication were key to balancing roles. This experience highlights the need for inclusive academic spaces that accommodate parenting scholars. By sharing my journey, I hope to inspire others to pursue academia while navigating its challenges and rewards.

"Well, all information looks like noise until you break the code." (Stephenson, 2003)

5 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The chapter Analysis and Results serves as a fundamental section of this research, providing a comprehensive exploration of how children's fashion identities are constituted through the interplay between what is consumed in metaverse environments and the physical world. This chapter examines the roles of various influencers in shaping children's fashion choices, the unique consumption patterns within metaverse platforms, the relationship between digital and physical fashion practices, and how virtual fashion consumption contributes to fashion identity formation.

It investigates the key stakeholders influencing children's fashion consumption decisions, emphasizing the generational shifts in how fashion is perceived and consumed. The interplay between different actors, including parents, peers, content creators, game developers, and educators, shapes children's fashion sensibilities.

This chapter also provides an in-depth analysis of fashion consumption within major metaverse game platforms, including Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite, and their unique ecosystems. Each platform offers distinct avenues for fashion engagement, from avatar customization to exclusive digital collections. The role of virtual currencies, social status, and brand integration in fashion consumption is examined, revealing the implicit economic stratifications present in these virtual spaces. The acquisition, exchange, and utilization of virtual fashion items demonstrate a structured engagement with digital fashion, often paralleling physical-world consumption behaviors.

The bidirectional relationship between digital and physical-world fashion choices is explored, assessing how experiences in virtual spaces influence physical fashion preferences. The ways in which children's virtual self-representation impacts their physical-world clothing choices and vice versa are considered, as well as how the ability to experiment with virtual fashion fosters confidence and autonomy in personal style choices outside of gaming environments. The influence of metaverse fashion choices on social interactions, peer recognition, and cultural perceptions in the physical world is analyzed.

The final section examines how digital fashion consumption plays a role in constitutes children's broader fashion identities, considering individual self-expression and the social functions of fashion. The chapter analyzes the cultural significance of fashion within metaverse communities and its implications for children's identity constitution. A deeper look is given at

how avatar customization serves as a medium for personal expression and experimentation. By synthesizing these insights, this chapter constructs a cohesive understanding of how children's engagement with fashion in metaverse environments contributes to their evolving sense of identity, cultural belonging, and consumer behavior. The findings reinforce the significance of digital platforms as transformative spaces for creativity, social interaction, and self-representation.

5.1 People Involved in Co-construct Children's Fashion Identities and Generation's Discussion

The consumption of fashion in metaverse environments is shaped by diverse influences, including parents, peers, YouTubers, game developers, teachers, and psychologists. These groups shape children's fashion identities through cultural, psychological, and generational dynamics. Parents act as gatekeepers, setting rules on access, screen time, and spending, reflecting evolving values. While older generations prioritize practicality, younger ones embrace digital trends, influencing children's choices. Peers and YouTubers amplify trends, fostering social validation and aspirations, while game developers design systems that mirror physical-world consumption. Teachers and psychologists highlight digital fashion's role in creativity and self-expression. These interactions show that children's fashion identities are deeply rooted in shifting cultural and generational contexts.

5.1.1 Parents, the Gatekeepers: Decision-making, Rules, and Values Regarding Fashion Consumption.

Parents are central figures in shaping children's fashion identities, both in physical and digital contexts. From an early age, children's clothing is often chosen by their parents (Pasdiora & Brei, 2014), reflecting a mix of cultural, practical, and personal values (Reilly, 2020). As children engage with metaverse platforms, parents extend their influence by **setting rules around digital purchases and online engagement** (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2016)**.** However, findings from interviews and field notes suggest that many parents are only beginning to grasp the significance of virtual fashion in their children's self-expression. As one mother noted, "I didn't think much about what my child was doing online until I saw her spending hours customizing her avatar." (PRT20).

The decision-making process surrounding children's fashion consumption often involves a blend of practicality and values (Kallioharju et al., 2023; Rawlins, 2006). Parents reported balancing **affordability, durability, and appropriateness when selecting physical clothing:** “Ahhh, I look at the cost-benefit ratio and I buy it big, so it lasts.” (PRT14). The note field observation suggests that parents exhibit a stronger utilitarian approach when selecting clothes for their children than for themselves. This implies that while they may consider aesthetics or personal preferences in their own clothing choices, their children's fashion is primarily dictated by functionality and cost-effectiveness, reflecting a sense of duty and responsibility over personal style or trends.

In the digital realm, **these considerations shift toward controlling spending on virtual items, setting limits on screen time, and monitoring content**. “It's just that I'm really bothered by the whole thing of spending on something virtual... Yeah, I think it's a generational thing...” (PRT1). This tension reflects generational shifts in consumption practices, where older generations value frugality while younger ones prioritize digital trends. A mother also said: “It's like a scale, all the time thinking about how long he is playing, what he is seeing... then you take a little bit from here and there and you're in this negotiation.” (PRT6). Parents do not realize that virtual fashion mirrors physical fashion in its role as a marker of identity and social belonging. To them, it is just about playing games (FIELD NOTES).

In this sense, **rules and boundaries are central** to how parents mediate their children’s engagement with digital fashion. Field notes highlighted diverse strategies, from strict restrictions on spending and screen time to more open-ended approaches based on trust. Also, the conflict time spent online versus going out (Ferreira et al., 2021) is something that emerged. One family reported that their rules required children to complete homework before playing games (PRT16). Others admitted to struggling with enforcement, as one parent said, “I don’t even know how to disable the option to buy V-Bucks and tal online.” (PRT19). These variations underscore the complexities of parenting in a digital age, where knowledge gaps can influence decision-making. About this topic, I also noted in filed notes that to parents some rules are clear or obvious, while for children this is unclear. This question came up when I asked what the “agreements” in the house were and most of the time the answers were divergent or the child couldn't say any, while the parents listed various things that were obvious to them.

Parents also **grapple with the commercial pressures** embedded in both physical and virtual fashion (Geffen, 2023; Matthews, 2019). Many expressed concerns about the pervasive influence of advertising and peer pressure, especially as children grow older and demand more autonomy: “Wow, Youtubers are terrible. Everything they advertise children want to buy.”

(PRT25). Despite this observation, I noted in field notes that they do not perceive in game marketing strategies.

Generational perspectives also emerged in the data, with some **parents reminiscing about their simpler childhoods, contrasting them with their children's highly mediated experiences**. One parent said: "We used to play in the street, it was cooler, we didn't need money for anything. Now, if you let them, they spend the day here." (PRT7). In other hand, one father remarked, "When I was young, we played with action figures; now my son customizes his Fortnite avatar. It's the same idea, just in a digital form, right?" (PRT11). This intergenerational dialogue reveals how parents can navigate the evolving nature of identity formation, recognizing continuities while adapting to new contexts.

Parents also play a vital role in passing on **values related to consumption, ethics, and self-presentation.** Interviews revealed that parents can use both physical and virtual fashion choices as teaching moments. For example, one parent (PRT16) shared: "His grandparents gave him a thousand reais as a present. I try to talk a lot to help him know how much he can spend online. And so, if he goes to the movies, I discount that money, so he knows how much things cost." This aligns with literature emphasizing parents as key agents in transmitting ethical, financial, and cultural norms (Pugh, 2009; Su & Tong, 2020).

Despite their influence, **parents also expressed frustration at feeling outpaced by their children's digital expertise.** Several participants noted that their children were far more knowledgeable about gaming platforms, making it challenging to monitor or understand their online activities (FIELD NOTES). One parent (PRT5) reflected: "One day, I don't remember what game he was playing, and I saw that he was talking. I said of course, what's he talking to? Then I went to see, he was talking to another child, I said guys, that's when I went after him and he had been my friend for a long time, that's when I went after him, I found out that there was a way to block all this.". This highlights the need for greater intergenerational dialogue and digital literacy to bridge the gap between parents and children. Family needs to understand the space in order to make a regulation (Carter, Moore, Mavoa, Horst, et al., 2020).

Psychologists provided additional insights into the parent-child dynamic in digital fashion consumption. They emphasized that the process of customizing avatars or choosing virtual outfits allows children to experiment with identity, often in ways that align with developmental milestones (FIELD NOTES). "Sometimes, those same children are not allowed by the family to make choices in physical world." (PSY1). However, these activities also raise questions about materialism and self-worth. Parents noted moments of tension when children equated their self-esteem with their virtual appearance: "He didn't want to play because he

didn't have the same outfit as his team's game there, it was a shooting game and everyone had to be the same." (PRT23). This echoes concerns from researchers like Belk (2013) about the attachment to digital personas and possessions.

Parents, often from a pre-digital generation, may find it challenging to understand the depth of their children's connection to virtual fashion. One children said: "Fashion is fashion, it doesn't matter if it's in the real world (physical world) or in a game... it's how people look at us. I think so." (CHD26, age 11). These tensions suggest that parents' limited digital literacy and differing value systems can create friction, potentially hindering their ability to support their children to understand consumption in a health sense. These generational dynamics emphasize the need for increased parental awareness and adaptation. Parents must strike a balance between maintaining their values and engaging with their children's digital experiences in meaningful ways. By doing so, they can better support their children in constituting their identities while fostering mutual understanding across generational divides.

5.1.2 Peers: Social Validation and Group Dynamics in Virtual Spaces.

Peers play an indispensable role in shaping children's fashion identities (John, 1999), especially within virtual environments (King et al., 2020; Matthews, 2019; Nannini, 2020). In metaverses games friends and classmates provide **constant feedback on clothing choices, validate styles, and influence preferences**.

Social validation is often achieved through explicit or implicit peer feedback. Children use digital fashion items as a way to fit into peer groups or stand out as unique, depending on their social dynamics. Field data highlights that most children care about what their friends think, while another emphasized the importance of individuality: "I don't choose skins just to please others; I pick what feels right to me." (CHD7, age 9). This illustrates how children navigate the balance between external validation and personal expression. These findings align with existing literature that highlights the tension between conforming to social norms and asserting individuality, particularly in how girls resist dominant narratives of "coolness" while negotiating their own identities (Paechter & Clark, 2016). Many children described scenarios where they would consult with friends before buying a skin or show off their avatars during group gameplay. One interviewee shared, "We meet up online to play, and sometimes we compare our skins to see who has the coolest one." (CHD12, age 11). These interactions create a **social hierarchy** where possession of popular or exclusive items translates to increased status among peers. However, they also foster collaboration, as children often exchange strategies

and tips to earn or select items together (FIELD NOTES), showcasing how digital fashion serves both competitive and cooperative dynamics.

Peer influence **extends beyond immediate friend groups, with older siblings and role models acting as trendsetters.** Field notes frequently captured situations where younger children were introduced to metaverses by their siblings, adopting their styles as a way to connect. One child remarked, “She showed me how to customize my avatar, and now I always ask her if my choices look good.” (CHD4, age 8). This intergenerational influence highlights how children not only seek approval from their immediate social circles but also look up to familial figures for guidance in shaping their fashion identity. Children with older siblings tended to have more flexible rules, likely due to parents adopting a more relaxed approach over time (Aslanova et al., 2024; John, 1999). Having already navigated similar experiences with their older children, parents may adjust their expectations and regulations, allowing younger siblings greater autonomy in areas such as fashion choices, digital engagement, and consumption habits (Aslanova et al., 2024).

The significance of **social interactions** at school cannot be overstated. Conversations about **digital fashion often continue in physical spaces,** where classmates discuss their in-game experiences and style choices, as many teachers interviewed said. The children use these discussions to gauge what is trending and adjust their preferences accordingly (FIELD NOTES). This interaction shows how digital and physical worlds blur, with peer dynamics seamlessly transitioning between them. In this sense, games like Fortnite, that name the avatars/accessories, seems to be more discuted than items “without name” like generic skins in Minecraft and Roblox, showing an interesting aspect to be perceived by the games platforms.

Interestingly, **conflicts also arise within peer relationships, particularly when virtual items are involved.** Field data recorded a case in which a child borrowed a skin from a friend but never returned it, leading to a dispute that escalated to the parents. One mother involved in this situation (PRT9) shared how this situation created tension between families, highlighting how digital possessions carry physical-world emotional and social weight. While such disputes can strain friendships and family relationships, they also serve as opportunities for children to develop conflict resolution skills, understand accountability, and set boundaries in their digital interactions.

Virtual spaces like Roblox are particularly conducive to forming new friendships, broadening the scope of peer influence. One interviewee shared, “It’s easy to make friends on Roblox because lot of people play this game and have fun.” (CHD9, age 8). These new connections often amplify the importance of digital fashion, as children find themselves

interacting with diverse groups that may prioritize different styles or trends. This dynamic pushes children to expand their fashion identities beyond their immediate social circles (Blumer, 2024).

Group dynamics within these virtual environments also **reveal nuanced power structures.** Some children emerge as leaders, setting trends and influencing others' choices. One child proudly mentioned how their friend was always the first to try new skins and became the "style expert" of their group: "She is pro." (CHD30, age 10). Field notes showed that a hierarchy based on skill and influence shapes social interactions. Pros are highly skilled players, respected for their expertise. Noobs are beginners, often teased but sometimes guided by the community. Hackers are exceptionally skilled, sometimes seen as suspiciously good. God players are nearly flawless, dominating games with unbeatable performance. Admins hold the highest authority, as creators or moderators who control the game's structure. This hierarchy reinforces status and competition, influencing how children navigate digital communities and social validation.

The influence of peers **is not limited to consumption but extends to collaboration.** During gameplay, children often share strategies for acquiring specific skins or virtual items. For example, field notes recorded instances where friends collaborated via Google Meet while playing Roblox, exchanging tips and celebrating each other's achievements. This camaraderie emphasizes how digital fashion can also foster positive group dynamics, deepening friendships through shared experiences.

Generational differences also impact how children interpret peer interactions and social validation. Many parents interviewed expressed **difficulty understanding the social pressures** their children face in virtual environments. One parent remarked, "I don't see why they care so much about what their friends think – it's just a game!" (PRT12). Some generations are more attached to tangible aspects (Belk, 2013). This generational disconnect can lead to a lack of parental support, as parents may undervalue the significance of digital fashion in their children's lives.

These generational gaps highlight a critical challenge: while children view virtual spaces as integral to their social identities, their parents often struggle to adapt to this shift. For children, digital fashion is not merely about consumption but a way to connect with peers, assert individuality, and navigate social hierarchies. Parents must recognize this reality to better support their children, bridging generational divides and fostering an environment where children can explore their identities while feeling understood and validated.

5.1.3 Youtubers: Amplification of Trends and Aspirations

YouTubers are powerful agents in shaping children's fashion identities within virtual spaces. These creators **operate as aspirational figures** (Arthurs et al., 2018)**, leveraging their massive online visibility to amplify specific fashion trends.** For instance, mainly through platforms like Roblox and Fortnite, YouTubers showcase exclusive skins, accessories, and customization features, which children then perceive as desirable status symbols. "Sometimes, you might buy a skin without even knowing it's part of a collaboration – any people don't care about the outside content, but if the skin looks good, they get it anyway; I've seen it happen with the Eminem and Travis Scott skins, where people said, 'I'm not a fan, never heard of him, but I liked the skin and bought it." (YOU2). This amplification creates a cultural loop where items featured by influencers gain value not only because of their aesthetics but also due to the social capital associated with owning them.

Interviews and field observations highlight the pivotal role YouTubers play in establishing what is considered "cool" or fashionable. A young participant in this study, frequently referenced his favorite YouTubers when discussing his avatar customization choices. He mentioned how a popular gaming influencer once showcased a rare Fortnite skin, prompting him and his peers to discuss its significance extensively. This underscores how YouTubers do not merely display trends but actively drive conversations among children, reinforcing their impact on digital fashion identity.

Moreover, YouTubers often **employ storytelling techniques** (Pereira et al., 2018; Vlahović et al., 2023) that enhance their influence. By weaving narratives around the acquisition of certain items or completing specific in-game challenges, these creators cultivate an aspirational image. For example, Field notes observed that one popular Roblox YouTuber frequently narrates her journey to acquire limited-edition items, framing the process as an adventure. Children interviewed during the study revealed that they admired such stories and often emulated them in their gameplay, further integrating these trends into their digital personas. "These YouTubers not only teach you how to play better, but also entertain you with challenges and funny games." (CHD13, age 12). This helps understand why many professors and psychologists said that many children say that they want to be a youtuber in the future: it is a cool, inspiring and admired profession (FIELD NOTES).

The **aspirational nature of YouTubers** extends beyond digital fashion to influence broader aspirations (Hadi et al., 2023; Tingelhoff et al., 2024). For instance, children often expressed a desire to emulate their favorite influencers not just in style but also in lifestyle.

One interviewee, when asked said: “I want to be like flakespower [flakspower is the name of a YouTuber], playing games and making people laugh.” (CHD9, age 8). This aspiration underscores the multifaceted impact of YouTubers, who serve as role models for children navigating their identities in an increasingly digital world.

Field notes also indicate how YouTubers **foster a sense of belonging** among their followers (Akbas & Gursel-Bílgin, 2022; Balleys et al., 2020), including during Covid-19 pandemic (Niu et al., 2021). By creating communities centered around shared interests, these influencers extend their impact beyond fashion, shaping group dynamics and peer relationships. Children reported forming friendships with classmates who watched the same YouTubers, reinforcing a collective identity built around these digital icons.

Field notes revealed that children who are not allowed to play metaverse games often find alternative ways to engage with gaming culture, demonstrating how social belonging extends beyond direct participation. Many of these children watch YouTube videos of gameplay, tutorials, and influencer discussions, allowing them to stay informed about in-game trends, strategies, and updates. Despite not actively playing, they engage in conversations with peers, sharing insights and opinions as if they were active participants. This indirect involvement helps them integrate into gaming communities, maintain social connections, and navigate discussions about the game, effectively blurring the line between players and non-players. This dynamic highlights how YouTubers act as cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984), connecting children across geographic and generational divides.

Language and behavior modeled by YouTubers significantly amplify their influence, introducing cultural codes that children eagerly adopt. From signature catchphrases to celebratory dances, these elements transcend screens and shape physical-world interactions. During one observation, children were seen mimicking a YouTuber’s victory dance after completing a game challenge (FIELD NOTES), repeating the same expressions and reinforcing the impact of digital content on their social behaviors.

According to Ensslin (2012) gamer language, or gamer slang, consists of multiple layers of linguistic knowledge and expertise (Ensslin & Balteiro, 2019). While it is not classified as a technolect, some gaming languages share similarities with the terminology used by game developers. Ensslin (2012) introduces the term ludolect – derived from the Latin *ludus* (“game”) and the Ancient Greek λέγω (lego, “I say”/“I speak”) – to describe how gaming languages are governed by specific rules and constraints (Hsu, 2018). She argues that gamers must learn specialized in-group codes, or sociolects, which are often more complex and multimodal than familiar everyday language. This in-group language allows players to

communicate efficiently in both face-to-face interactions and computer-mediated conversations, reinforcing their sense of belonging within the gaming community (Ensslin & Balteiro, 2019).

This specialized language, however, has also raised concerns in educational settings. Teachers report an "epidemic" of inappropriate language in schools: "It's a question I talk to the coordination team about directly. We're living through an epidemic of bad language, okay?" (TCH7). The psychologists note that some gaming jargon and slang are difficult for adults to understand: "The language they use... one day, for example, a child was saying plugged in. The other day, for the first time, I heard a child say, "Auntie, it's bugged, that one's bugged, Auntie". And I said, what's buggy? It's broken, auntie. Ahhh...." (PSY2). These linguistic shifts highlight how digital culture influences young gamers' communication styles, strengthening their group identity but sometimes creating barriers between them and non-gaming adults. One parent said: "What's worrying are these youtubers who are older and sometimes pass themselves off as young... the guy is 40 and talks like a teenager, it's retarded" (PRT1).

Many parents interviewed expressed difficulty understanding the value their children placed on their attraction for Youtubers, and worse, by virtual items promoted by influencers. As a parent noted, "These guys who come in through YouTube get into children's heads, you know?" (PRT1). It happens, in part, because **YouTubers normalizing these digital assets.** This shift challenges traditional notions of consumption and identity, compelling parents to rethink how they engage with their children's interests. For instance, some parents in the study began watching gaming content to bridge the gap (FIELD NOTES), illustrating how YouTubers indirectly shape family dynamics.

5.1.4 Game Developers: Structuring Virtual Fashion Consumption Ecosystems

Game developers and digital designers play a central role in **shaping virtual fashion consumption ecosystems**, influencing children's fashion identities in significant ways. In platforms like Roblox, independent creators are given the tools to design and sell their own fashion items (MIT Technology Review Brasil, 2023). This decentralized model fosters the emergence of micro-trends and niche styles within the platform, showcasing the diversity of children's fashion preferences and their desire for self-expression. As one interviewee noted, "For example, if I'm wearing a dragon skin, my friends know that I like dragons and magical things. Skins can also be a way to stand out and show off something you've achieved in the game" (CHD8, age 8). This aligns with global marketing strategies, as developers create

environments that encourage players to experiment with identity, often mirroring the dynamics of fast fashion (Pacete, 2022). Also, interestingly, the collaborative nature of platforms like Roblox and Minecraft **empowers children as co-creators**.

The role of developers extends beyond creating tools for customization. In Fortnite, curated skins often result from collaborations with major brands or pop culture icons (Hawkins, 2022). These partnerships **expose young players to global fashion trends** while subtly linking personal identity with consumer culture. Field notes reveal that children recognize brands even when they are not explicitly stated, identifying elements like Adidas' triple stripes, Balenciaga's distressed designs, and Gucci's signature animal prints.

Developers play a crucial role in shaping virtual self-representation, acting as "ghost influencers" – a term that captures their invisible yet powerful influence over players' choices and perceptions. Unlike traditional influencers who directly promote brands and trends, developers shape fashion and identity through the very structure of the gaming environment. By designing avatars, customization options, and in-game economies, they set the parameters for how players engage with fashion, subtly guiding their decisions without explicit persuasion. They control which clothing items are available, how they are priced, and the level of rarity attached to them, creating digital hierarchies that mimic physical-world fashion economies. Limited-edition skins, brand collaborations, and tiered rewards encourage players to conform to in-game fashion norms, reinforcing consumerist behaviors. Moreover, the aesthetics of different games – whether futuristic cyberpunk, medieval fantasy, or urban streetwear – determine the fashion landscape that players navigate, influencing their self-expression within predefined boundaries. This indirect but powerful control means that developers shape not just what players wear in virtual spaces but also how they perceive fashion. By continuously updating content, introducing exclusive collections, and integrating physical-world fashion trends, developers ensure sustained engagement, making digital fashion an evolving ecosystem where self-representation is both curated and constrained by the game's underlying mechanics.

Field data highlights how game-specific ecosystems influence children's fashion identities, demonstrating that cross-cultural fashion studies can be explored within virtual universes. In Roblox, for example, children frequently transition between different games, each with distinct aesthetics and fashion norms. This constant movement exposes them to diverse styles, reinforcing the idea that digital fashion is as dynamic and trend-driven as its physical counterpart. Interestingly, some children displayed physical-world behavioral adaptations linked to in-game environments, such as carrying a blanket to the living room while playing in

cold-themed scenarios (FIELD NOTES), showing that immersion occurs even without VR glasses, for example.

Despite the sophisticated design of these virtual ecosystems, developers face criticism for **inadequate regulation** (Mooij & Tushuizen, 2024), particularly in ensuring child safety and addressing ethical concerns. During an interview with a girl in a Roblox environment, I witnessed her being virtually harassed by a stranger she had added at his request. Concerned about the situation, I discussed it with my advisor and took immediate action by reporting it to her mother. This experience highlighted the critical need for digital literacy, online safety awareness, and parental supervision in virtual spaces.

Field notes show that while Roblox heavily invests in moderation to create a child-friendly environment, platforms like Fortnite rely more on user reporting and reactive measures, resulting in inconsistent enforcement. Parents, teachers, and psychologists often remain unaware of these regulatory gaps, highlighting a disconnect between digital spaces and those responsible for children's well-being.

In Brazil, legislation addressing digital rights and virtual environments is still evolving. The *Lei dos Direitos Autorais* (Copyright Law) protects original works, including virtual assets, and grants creators exclusive rights over their content, allowing them to take legal action against unauthorized reproductions. Similarly, Intellectual Property Laws play a crucial role in preserving the rights of creators in the metaverse, particularly concerning NFTs and virtual goods. Additionally, Contract Law applies to agreements made within the metaverse, ensuring that virtual transactions – such as the sale or lease of digital assets – are legally binding. Criminal Law extends to virtual environments, covering civil offenses, emotional distress, and property damage within digital spaces. Furthermore, tax regulations are beginning to encompass virtual assets, with authorities considering taxation on NFT transactions and digital property sales. As the metaverse continues to expand, regulatory discussions will become increasingly critical in balancing innovation, consumer protection, and legal accountability. The Law Project nº 2.175/2023, currently under discussion, proposes a regulatory framework for the metaverse, establishing principles, guidelines, and norms for virtual transactions and governance.

In conclusion, game developers are not just technical architects but cultural influencers who significantly shape how children consume and perceive fashion. By curating experiences that blend creativity, branding, and social interaction, they create ecosystems that impact both individual identity and generational dynamics. As platforms continue to evolve, developers will remain central to the intersection of technology, fashion, and identity.

5.1.5 Teachers and Psychologists: Broader Cultural and Developmental Perspectives

The insights provided by teachers and psychologists brings broader cultural and developmental perspectives. Field data collected during interviews and observations reveal the complexity of these influences.

Teachers frequently **note how children use clothing and gaming narratives to express themselves.** One literature teacher (TCH3) noted that "Clothing and avatars often act as tools for storytelling" allowing children to convey aspects of their identity that they may not articulate verbally. Teachers' awareness of these dynamics enables them to foster discussions about individuality and respect for diversity, for example, and help children with a more articulated verbal expression.

The role of teachers extends beyond observation to active influence. **They often serve as role models, shaping students' values regarding identity and culture** (Edwards & Edwards, 2017). Several educators in the field emphasized that they strive to teach children about the balance between self-expression and peer influence. One teacher (TCH1) shared how she incorporates discussions about ethical consumption and representation in gaming, helping students critically evaluate the narratives they encounter.

From a developmental perspective, **psychologists offer essential insights into how children's self-concepts evolve**. Between the ages of eight and twelve, children begin to form more complex understandings of themselves (Côté, 1996), influenced by their interactions with peers, family, and media (Lüders et al., 2022). A psychologist interviewed noted, "This is a critical period where children experiment with different identities, both in real life and through avatars." (CHD1, age 9). The ability to customize avatars in games like Roblox and Minecraft provides children with a sandbox for identity exploration, enabling them to test boundaries and roles in a relatively safe environment.

According to interviews, the **emotional impact of fashion and gaming is another area of concern for psychologists.** Social comparisons, driven by peer interactions and online communities, can significantly affect children's self-esteem (Emes, 1997; Fumagalli et al., 2024). One psychologist (CHD2, age 9) highlighted the risks, stating, "When children are exposed to idealized representations – whether through a friend's expensive skin or a popular YouTuber's avatar – they may feel inadequate or pressured to conform.". This pressure is compounded by the immediacy of digital interactions, which amplify feelings of exclusion or inadequacy when children lack the same resources as their peers.

Identity and self-expression are deeply intertwined (Bozkurt & Tu, 2016), and psychologists often interpret the link between virtual avatars and personal identity as both an opportunity and a challenge. Sometimes, children blur the boundaries between their physical identity and their avatar. One compelling example comes from a psychologist who described a child who fully identified with and represented himself through his avatar (Figure 16). This suggests that digital self-representation can serve as an extension of personal identity, shaping how children perceive themselves and navigate both virtual and physical environments. A psychologist analyzing a child's clothing choices viewed fashion as more than just a superficial layer, recognizing it as a meaningful reflection of self-expression, social belonging, and emotional state. However, this perspective contrasts with research indicating that players often differentiate their in-game avatars from their offline identities, engaging with friends, seeking online resources, and maintaining a degree of separation between their virtual and real-world selves (Matthews, 2019).

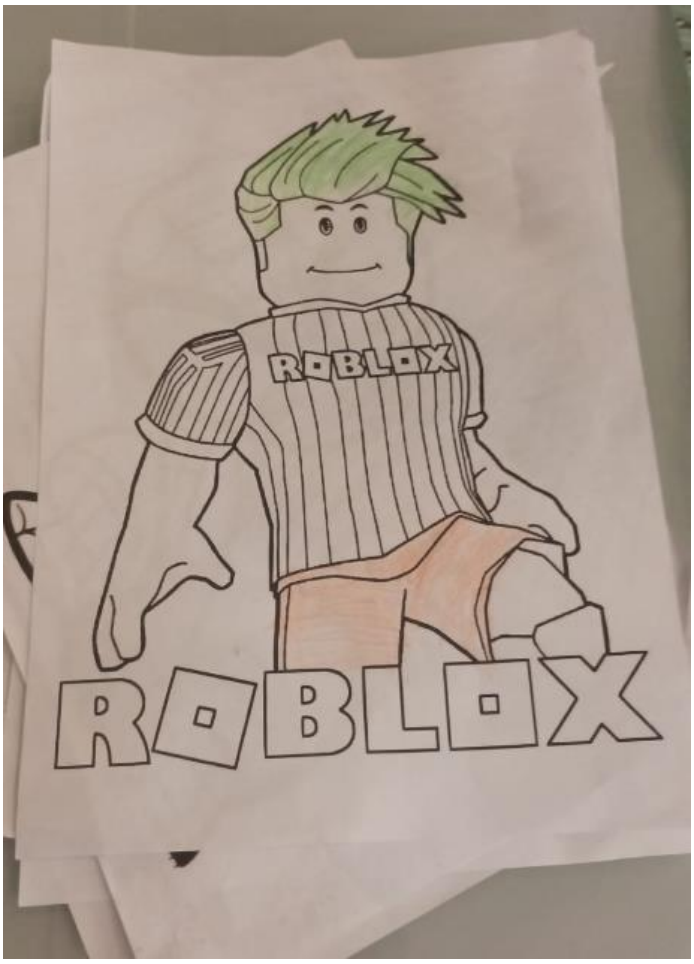


Figure 16
Children Representation of Himself

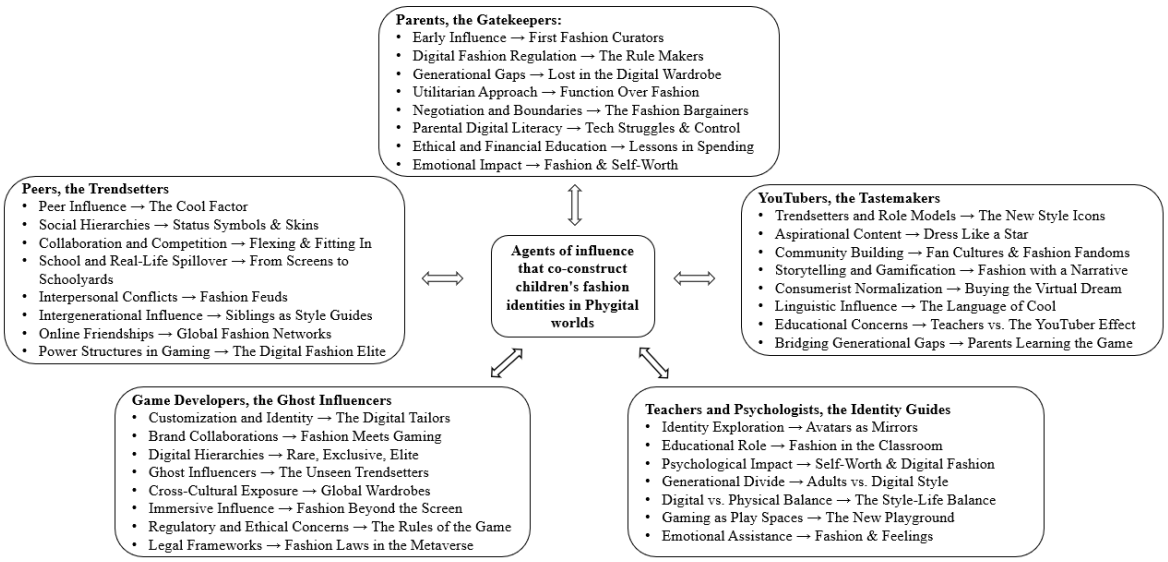
Source: Psychologist 2 Archives

Psychologists also emphasize the need for careful monitoring of children's engagement with the metaverse games. They point out that while these environments offer opportunities for creativity and socialization, they also pose risks such as overexposure to consumerist values and a loss of reality from education, work and society (Rospigliosi, 2022) and the potential for cyberbullying (Dwivedi et al., 2022). One psychologist remarked, "We need to teach children to critically engage with these platforms, recognizing both their benefits and their pitfalls." (PSY4). This balanced approach ensures that children can enjoy the positive aspects of gaming and fashion without succumbing to their more harmful effects.

However, **generational gaps often create challenges**. For example, one teacher remarked, "That's it, they keep getting influenced by something that isn't real to me, that isn't real." (TCH1). This generational divide underscores the importance of equipping educators with the cultural literacy needed to bridge these gaps. This disconnect underscores the need for ongoing professional development to help teachers navigate these new cultural landscapes effectively. A participative a dialogical approach can be a avenue: "We studied the Vila Nova neighborhood and we wanted to understand all the problems, in short, of the neighborhood's streets, to interview the residents. So, we built it in Minecraft, they actually built more of an ideal neighborhood, so it was their idea, they wanted to...I was thinking of making a scale model (maquete)" (TCH9).

The same sentiment was echoed by the psychologists interviewed. While some expressed hesitation toward this new digital landscape, one psychologist observed: "I believe it's a healthy relationship because, in many ways, games have become the modern equivalent of the backyard or the street. With increasing concerns about violence and the shrinking availability of safe outdoor spaces for play, children and teenagers are turning to these virtual environments as their playground." (PSY2). In this context, emotional support from psychologists can play a crucial role in helping children make informed decisions, maintain a healthy balance between their digital and physical lives, and emerge as a growing trend both now and in the future.

In summary, Figure 17 illustrates the agents of influence discussed in this subtopic that co-construct children's fashion identities in both, digital and physical worlds.



Notes: Figure shows the agents of influence that co-construct children's fashion identities in Phygital worlds. Arrows reflect inducements offered to and contributions made by each agent.

Figure 17

Agents of Influence that Co-construct Children's Fashion Identities in Phygital Worlds

Source: Created by author

5.2 Understanding How Children Consume Fashion on Metaverses

This section is structured into three subtopics. First, it reviews major metaverse platforms and their fashion ecosystems. Next, it explores economic and social influences, including digital currencies, virtual status symbols, in-game marketing, and brand integration. Finally, it outlines how children acquire, customize, and engage with digital fashion. This analysis aims to bridge gaps in the literature, highlighting the impact of virtual fashion on identity, culture, and consumer behavior.

5.2.1 Overview of Metaverse Platforms (Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite) and their Unique Fashion Consumption Ecosystems.

The metaverse has emerged as a space for children to explore identity and fashion, with platforms like Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite shaping distinct modes of consumption. While Roblox emphasizes a creator-driven economy, Minecraft prioritizes creativity, and Fortnite integrates exclusivity and branded collaborations, each platform shapes unique ecosystems that significantly impact children's engagement with fashion.

Roblox stands out as a hub for democratized fashion consumption. Its user-generated content system (Kang et al., 2024) enables independent creators to design and sell (Reay &

Wanick, 2023) digital outfits, fostering a grassroots approach to virtual fashion. This structure allows children to access an extensive array of customizable options, often tied to specific games within the platform. Field interviews reveal that children value this variety, as it empowers them to align their avatars with their personal styles and social groups. One child noted: "I like Roblox because I can mix and match outfits for every game I play.... I like to create my avatar with clothes and colors that suit me, but I also like to change depending on the mood or what my friends are wearing. " (CHD31, age 8). This flexibility reflects a broader trend among Gen Alpha, who prioritize individuality and dynamic self-expression.

Minecraft, also uses a user-generated system, but, in contrast, offers a slower and less personalized approach to fashion consumption. However is deeply rooted in maker culture (Niemeyer & Gerber, 2015). Players design and share mainly worlds and maps, so the skins have less space for creation. Yet, according to interviews, some children view combining unique Minecraft skins (from different worlds) as a form of artistic expression: “I love to mix a skink from the nether and the forest and throw it, I don't know, in the water. it leaves everyone bugged.” (CHD29, age 11). A parent remarked: "My child spends hours crafting new skins for their character...it’s like a digital art project. In the beginning I thought they came in to play, but now I understand that changing clothes in the game is also part of it, and sometimes they go on for a long time and just do it." (PRT2). This approach resonates with players who value autonomy and craftsmanship over trends, making Minecraft an appealing option for those seeking to differentiate themselves in a crowded digital space.

Fortnite occupies a middle ground, blending creativity with exclusivity through branded collaborations and in-game events. The platform regularly partners with fashion houses, celebrities, and entertainment franchises (Sidorenko-bautista et al., 2025), making skins and emotes aspirational status symbols (Belk et al., 2022; Nagy & Koles, 2014). Children frequently mentioned the excitement of acquiring limited-edition skins during interviews, with one child stating, "When I wear my Marvel skin, everyone notices – it feels like I’m special." (CHD28, age 8). This reflects how Fortnite intertwines fashion with social validation and competition.

Economic factors further shape the metaverse fashion ecosystems. Roblox’s reliance on digital currencies like Robux empowers children to make purchasing decisions, teaching them financial literacy within a controlled environment. In Fortnite, the cost of branded skins reinforces notions of value and exclusivity, often prompting children to save their allowances or request gift cards. Minecraft, while less monetized, encourages resourcefulness, as players

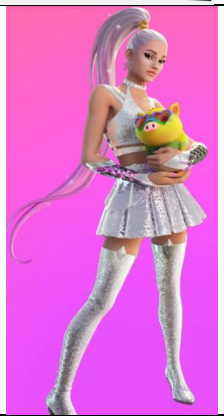
often design their own skins or collaborate with others to create unique looks. This variety in economic models reflects the platforms' adaptability to diverse consumption patterns.

In other words, each game functions as its own universe with a distinct culture, including unique fashion dynamics. Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite offer distinct ecosystems that shape how children engage with fashion, reflecting broader cultural and economic trends. These platforms not only enable self-expression and creativity but also mirror physical-world hierarchies, aspirations, and values. By examining these dynamics, we gain deeper insight into the relationship between technology, identity, and fashion among younger generations.

Algorithmic culture was observed across all three platforms demonstrating how digital economies are increasingly shaped by algorithm-driven recommendations and influencer culture (Belk et al., 2020). In these environments, players' fashion choices, in-game purchases, and social interactions are guided by recommendation systems that curate content based on engagement patterns. Additionally, as said previously, developers play a crucial role in shaping virtual self-representation, acting as "ghost influencers". Table 10 summarizes the main points about those three games.

Table 10

Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite and their fashion consumption ecosystems

	ROBLOX	MINECRAFT	FORTNITE
			
Key Focus	Democratized fashion through user-generated content and extensive customization for aligning avatars with personal styles.	Creativity and originality in custom skin designs slower, more personalized fashion approach.	Blends creativity with exclusivity through branded collaborations and limited-edition skins.
Fashion Dynamics	Flexibility in mixing outfits for different games influenced by peer recommendations and game-specific contexts.	Artistic expression through crafting unique skins focus on community-driven trends and resourcefulness.	Aspirational fashion through branded skins driven by social validation, competition, and seasonal events

Economic Model	Relies on Robux for purchasing; teaches financial literacy within a controlled environment.	Less monetized encourages resourcefulness and collaboration for creating unique looks.	Emphasizes exclusivity and value through costly branded skins, often linked to allowances or gift cards.
Cultural Aspects	Hosts events with physical-world designers exposes children to diverse fashion trends and cultural aesthetics.	Allows recreation of iconic designs fosters appreciation for artistry and design history.	Partnerships with brands like Nike and Balenciaga bridges digital and physical fashion concepts.

Source: Created by author

To understand (a) external context – which connects the phenomenon to broader societal structures – it is essential to examine the metaverse platforms (Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite) and their distinct fashion consumption ecosystems. This analysis will also provide insights into (b) internal context, which explores relationships within the phenomenon, and (c) psychological context, which examines the link between signs and meaning. According to Dilley (1999), these three contextual layers are interwoven, making their navigation complex; failing to consider them can result in significant methodological challenges.

5.2.2 Digital Fashion and Economic Hierarchies in the Metaverse: The Role of Virtual Currencies, Social Status, and Brand Integration

The consumption of virtual fashion in metaverse games environments is intricately tied to economic and social factors. Digital currencies, such as Robux, V-Bucks, and Minecoins, serve as the backbone of these ecosystems, enabling children to purchase items that enhance their avatars' appearance and functionality.

Economic structures in metaverse platforms have evolved to accommodate diverse financial capacities (Cheah & Shimul, 2023; Ritterbusch & Teichmann, 2023), allowing children to engage in virtual fashion consumption regardless of socioeconomic background. Gift cards and allowances serve as critical enablers of virtual fashion consumption, particularly during holidays or special occasions. Beyond parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts also play a significant role in this gifting dynamic. Many family members opt for gift cards instead of traditional toys, recognizing children's preference for digital goods over physical ones. This shift highlights how virtual fashion and in-game purchases have become integral to children's experiences, reinforcing the value they place on customization, status, and self-expression within digital spaces.

Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite all offer gift cards. These gift cards can be purchased at a variety of retail locations, making them easily accessible (and tangible!) for who want to give them as gifts (Horne & Bendle, 2016; E. K. Valentin & Allred, 2012). Also, those gift cards are a good option when adults don't know which gift offer to a kid. "They love win gift cards" (PRT6). Most children also expressed children also showed excitement at the thought of winning a gift card as a present.

Belk et al. (2022) discuss how digital currency systems and microtransactions play a crucial role in accessing possessions in the digital world. Building on this perspective, this thesis specifically highlights the role of gift cards, an aspect not explicitly emphasized in Belk's analysis. Gift cards function as a key mechanism within digital economies, influencing consumption patterns, access to virtual goods, and the perception of ownership in metaverse game environments.

Adults can find these gift cards in supermarkets, electronics stores, convenience stores, and major retailers such as Kalunga, Angeloni (Figure 18) and Carrefour. They are also available at online through platforms like Mercado Livre (Figure 19), Amazon, and the official websites of each game.

Figure 18
Roblox Gift Card at Angeloni Supermarket

Source: Photograph from the author's personal collection

Figure 19
Roblox Gift Card at Mercado Livre
Source: Screenshot taken by the author

However, interviews with parents also revealed concerns about overspending and dependency. One parent explained, "We limit how much they can spend, but they always want more – it's a never-ending cycle."(PRT1). In contrast, some families do not permit they spend money in digital assets: “If he wants a new game, ok, we invest in it...but to buy things inside the game, no. They must play with what is free” (PRT4). This highlights the tension between enabling digital engagement and managing its financial implications.

Field data shows that children from private schools often receive gift cards or allowances to spend on in-game purchases, while those from public schools may rely on free items or peer-sharing to access digital fashion. However, a teacher noted, "Even students from the same school, but with different economic backgrounds approach these purchases differently, but they all place value on having something unique or trendy." (TCH1). This distinction highlights how economic resources shape access to virtual goods.

Digital currencies also influence how children perceive value. Unlike tangible purchases, virtual items often lack physical permanence, challenging traditional notions of ownership. Parents expressed concerns during interviews about their children's spending habits, with one stating, "My child doesn’t grasp the idea of real money being converted into Robux – it feels limitless to them." (PRT21). Psychologists emphasize that this disconnect can create misunderstandings about financial responsibility, necessitating guidance to help children navigate these systems correctly (Johnson & Barlow, 2021).

Finally, economic dynamics also intersect with in-game progression systems. In Fortnite, for example, completing challenges can earn players V-Bucks, which they often save for specific purchases. A child explained, "I do missions to earn V-Bucks because then I can buy what I really want without asking my parents."(CHD23, age 12). This gamified earning system introduces children to financial decision-making, blending play and responsibility in ways that extend beyond the game.

These items, often perceived as status symbols, play a critical role in establishing social hierarchies within these platforms (Belk et al., 2022). The allure of acquiring these items reflects broader patterns of consumer behavior, where ownership signifies not only personal style but also social standing among peers (King et al., 2020). Peer influence drives much of the decision-making process (King et al., 2020), as children often choose items based on what their friends or favorite influencers deem "cool." A 9-year-old shared, "I like to buy what my friends have so we can match in the game," illustrating the communal aspect of virtual fashion. This phenomenon mirrors physical-world consumption patterns, where social approval validates purchasing decisions (Matthews, 2019).

The role of virtual fashion as a status symbol is deeply embedded in the social fabric of metaverse platforms. Rare or exclusive items confer prestige, much like luxury goods in the physical world. However, this also creates challenges, such as feelings of exclusion among those who cannot afford these items, emphasizing the social inequalities present even in digital spaces (Shoshani & Krauskopf, 2021).

In-game marketing intensifies these social dynamics by emphasizing exclusivity and time-limited offers to drive urgency and desirability. Instead of calling these items "luxury," children describe them as "rare," "mythic," or "limited edition," reflecting their unique status in the game. Limited-time releases and collaborations with physical-world brands often turn these digital items into highly sought-after possessions, reinforcing their value as symbols of prestige within virtual spaces. For instance, a child recounted their excitement about the idea of acquiring a Travis Scott skin in Fortnite, saying, "I wish I could have one...It felt special because not everyone had it." (CHD16, age 12). These strategies exploit children's fear of missing out (FOMO) to drive engagement and sales (Cheremnykh, 2024; Dwivedi et al., 2023), a tactic that has raised ethical questions among parents and educators.

The integration of physical-world brands and globalized aesthetics into metaverse game platforms understand and consume fashion. These platforms blend digital and physical worlds, allowing children to interact with global fashion trends through their avatars. This convergence not only expands their exposure to international styles but also redefines the cultural and

symbolic meanings of fashion in digital spaces (Dwivedi et al., 2022). By interacting with branded virtual items, children take part in a unique form of cultural exchange, where digital fashion becomes a means of expressing a globalized identity. Field notes showed that, even if they don't recognize brand names like Balenciaga or Adidas, they instinctively identify iconic design elements, such as the "destroyed" sneaker aesthetic or the signature three stripes. This recognition underscores how branding transcends labels, embedding itself in visual and stylistic cues that children absorb and replicate in their virtual fashion choices.

While the integration of physical-world brands into virtual spaces offers cultural and social benefits, it also raises questions about commercialization and inclusivity. Parents and educators expressed concerns about children feeling pressured to own branded items to fit in, potentially exacerbating social inequalities. A teacher remarked, "Not all students can afford these items, which can create divides even in a virtual space." (TCH10). By examining this phenomenon through the lenses of Consumer Culture Theory and Fashion Theory, it becomes clear that virtual fashion serves as both a cultural artifact and a tool for identity constitution. This dual role underscores the transformative potential of metaverse platforms in shaping how future generations understand and engage with fashion.

5.2.3 Steps and Processes Involved in Virtual Fashion Consumption

The process of virtual fashion consumption in metaverse platforms like Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite is intricate, involving multiple steps shaped by emotional, social, and economic factors. Children's choices in this digital domain are influenced by gaming rituals, parent-child collaboration, and psychological attitudes tied to self-expression and peer validation. Field observations and interviews reveal that these platforms function as "third spaces" where children blend their virtual and physical identities. From a fashion point of view, it's like a virtual fitting room. This section unpacks the steps and processes underlying this phenomenon, drawing from field data, interviews, and existing literature.

Children's journey into virtual fashion in metaverse games often begins with **exposure to metaverse platforms (1)** through peers, family, or digital media like YouTube. Interviews with parents and children reveal that younger players, around ages 8 to 9, are typically introduced to these platforms by older siblings or friends. A parent observed: "My child started Minecraft because their school friends were playing and showing off their little figures (avatars)." (PRT24). To Zajonc (1968) that mere repeated exposure of the individual to a

stimulus object enhances his attitude toward it. This perspective was found in another study involving avatars (Nagy & Koles, 2014) and confirmed in this one.

This social entry point creates an initial awakening of virtual fashion, sparking curiosity about digital self-representation. As children explore these platforms, they begin **building awareness through gameplay and media**. This step, however, does not function in isolation – it is heavily shaped by **exploration and peer influence (A)** and **economic considerations and parental involvement (B)**. YouTube and live-streaming platforms play a key role in shaping preferences, with many children citing influencers as primary sources of fashion inspiration. One child explained, "I saw a YouTuber wear a banana Fortnite skin, and I really wanted it." (CHD18, age 9). This media exposure often triggers a deeper engagement with the in-game marketplace (Lee & Jeon, 2024), especially when combined with peer interactions (King et al., 2020).

Once they gain awareness, children actively explore virtual fashion options within the game, often relying on peers for social validation. A ranking of influence emerges, with close friends and gaming communities at the top, followed by YouTubers and older siblings. Field notes indicate that children frequently discuss popular skins during gameplay or through platforms like WhatsApp or Google Meet. A 10-year-old shared: "I check what my friends are wearing so I don’t feel left out." (CHD15, age 10). Social pressure, combined with the desire to stand out, shapes decision-making in these early stages.

However, these choices are not made in a vacuum. Economic considerations and parental involvement create boundaries for children’s consumption behaviors (Harrington & O’Connell, 2016). Parents often regulate spending through allowances or direct purchase approval, leading to negotiations about digital currencies. A parent noted, "We give her a monthly limit, but she always tries to convince us for more." (PRT2). This step adds an extra layer of complexity, as children learn to navigate digital economies while managing their personal desires and bargain power. Also, the decision power of the parents are crucial: “the economic interest of gatekeepers...and users is becoming ever more challenging for social and e-commerce platforms” (Dwivedi et al., 2022, p. 11).

The **decision-making and journey customer process (a)** involves both emotional and rational factors (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Children weigh aesthetics, rarity, in-game advantages, and peer validation before committing to a purchase. A psychologist explained: "Children associate virtual items with self-expression and status, which can make the decision-making process highly emotional." (PSY2) Some digital fashion items are free, making them accessible, but premium or exclusive items often hold greater social value.

Once a purchase is made, the process of **acquisition and customization (b)** becomes a moment of creative self-expression. According to Barnard (2014): “The same digital technology that makes online purchasing of items so easy, also makes it possible for the unique customization of styles and the DIY creation of individual style” (Barnard, 2014, p. 167). Many children describe this process with excitement, emphasizing how mixing and matching different outfits allows them to create a unique look. Field notes highlight their enthusiasm for customization. Interestingly, this creative expression can also translate into financial gains. One family reported receiving 1,200 reais in their bank account after their 9-year-old son sold a rare, customized skin for that price.

Following customization, virtual fashion is **integrated into gameplay and social interactions (c)**. This stage reinforces the emotional and symbolic value of digital fashion. A teacher observed, "Students love comparing their avatars and talking about the stories behind their skins." (TCH64). This social display leads directly to **peer feedback and validation (d)**, which strengthens the cycle of engagement. A 9-year-old remarked, "When my friends say my avatar looks cool, I feel proud of what I chose." To John (1999) children are avid consumers and become socialized into this role from an early age and it can be observed both in digital and physical worlds.

These repeated actions contribute to the **formation of rituals and habits (3)**, emerging through peer influence, decision-making, customization, and social validation. Family involvement is also a crucial factor – not only in the initial stage of building awareness through gameplay and media but also in shaping long-term rituals and habits. Field data reveals that children develop structured routines, such as regularly checking in-game stores, saving digital currency for future purchases, or strategizing around special events. This underscores the importance of using photographs and videos to capture the interpretive dimension – shedding light on how individuals focus on, perceive, and internalize their behaviors and rituals (Basil, 2011).

Parental and family collaboration (C) extends beyond economic considerations, often involving shared gameplay and discussions about digital fashion choices. While only a small number of parents actively engage in these spaces, those who do view them as meaningful bonding opportunities. This involvement became especially prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic. One parent shared: "I play Minecraft with my son, and we talk about the skins she creates – it’s a bonding experience." (PRT6). Grandparents and other family members, who may not feel the daily pressure of parenting, can also foster these connections. One child expressed how much she loves customizing avatars with her grandmother’s help (CHD31, age

8). This level of family involvement can shape children's perceptions of digital fashion, particularly when parents provide guidance on both financial and aesthetic choices.

However, the most critical stage of this journey is **emotional attachment and fashion identity constitution (4)**. Over time, children develop deep emotional connections to their avatars and virtual fashion items (Nagy & Koles, 2014). These digital representations become extensions of their identity (Belk, 2013), shaping how they see themselves (Bozkurt & Tu, 2016) and interact with others (Lüders et al., 2022). A psychologist noted, "Virtual fashion helps children explore who they are in a low-stakes environment, fostering creativity and self-expression." (PSY4). However, the emotional stakes can be high – field notes document cases where children felt embarrassed or excluded due to not having certain skins, highlighting the strong social dimension of virtual fashion. One child shared, "I didn't want to play because I didn't have the same outfit as my team." (CHD18, age 9). At the same time, virtual fashion can also help children navigate social differences. Another child expressed resilience, saying, "I don't care what people say, I'm here to play, and we know that bullying friends isn't okay." (CHD5).

As **trends evolve (5)**, children continuously adapt their preferences and purchasing behaviors. This dynamic engagement keeps them invested in the platform, eagerly anticipating new releases. One child explained, "I save my Robux for when something new and exciting comes out." (CHD2, age 9). However, field notes and parental testimony indicate that the majority of children spend their digital currency almost immediately, suggesting a lower perception of money's value in digital spaces. Also, when the platform fails to meet their expectations, they may quickly lose interest and shift to other games. The ongoing cycle of digital fashion trends mirrors physical-world consumer behavior, reinforcing concepts of scarcity and exclusivity.

Throughout this process, **reflection and learning (6)** take place. Children begin to recognize the value of their digital purchases, sometimes feeling regret or pride in their past decisions. Field notes highlight instances of frustration over impulse buys, demonstrating an early awareness of financial literacy. However, most children emphasize that their skins were "paid for" with time, viewing time as the true currency. For them, losing their skins would be deeply upsetting – not just because of the monetary cost, but because of the significant time investment they represent.

The final stage of this journey involves **community building and sharing (7)**, where children exchange fashion tips, trade virtual items, and collaborate on creative projects. These

interactions further cement digital fashion as a core part of their social identities (Dominici et al., 2017).

Ultimately, this journey does not follow a linear path – it operates as a **continuous cycle**. Each experience with virtual fashion reinforces previous learnings and influences future choices. Children repeatedly engage with digital fashion in an evolving loop of awareness, exploration, customization, and emotional attachment, solidifying it as a key component of their identity formation.

Mele et al. (2021) outline four key stages of digital consumption – connect, explore, buy, and use – which were verified among Millennials but have been slightly amplified in Generation Alpha within the context of Phygital reality. This younger generation engages with digital consumption in a more immersive and integrated manner, blending their online and offline experiences seamlessly. Their consumption behaviors reflect a fusion of identity with digital possessions, where emotional attachment to virtual goods plays a crucial role in the construction of fashion identity. Through algorithm-driven recommendations, social interactions, and in-game economies, Generation Alpha not only adopts but also personalizes digital fashion as an extension of their self-expression in both virtual and physical spaces.The following schematic figure (Figure 20) illustrates the steps and processes involved in virtual fashion consumption. This representation emphasizes the iterative and evolving nature of these interactions within the metaverse games.

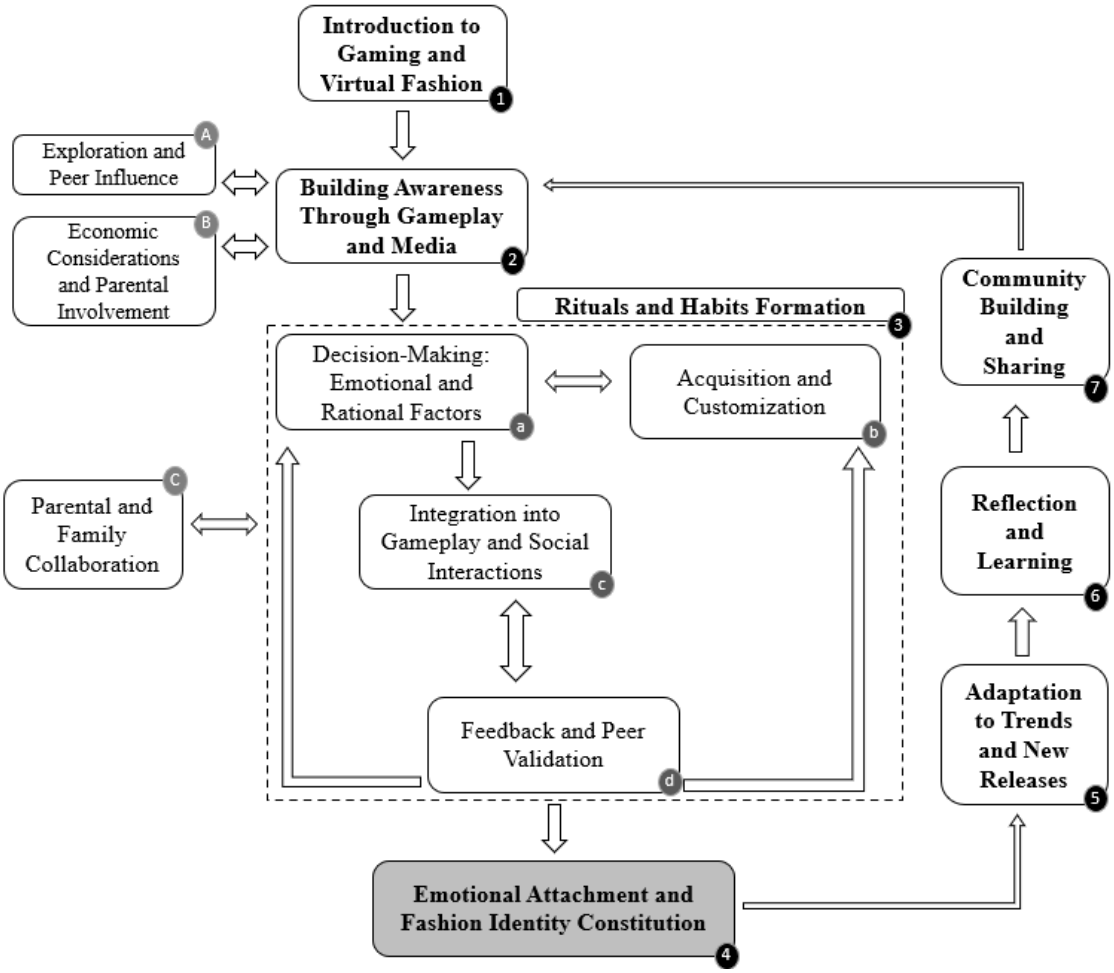


Figure 20

Steps and Processes in Virtual Fashion Consumption

Source: Created by author

5.3 How Fashion Consumption in Metaverses Affects Physical-World Consumption

Children's fashion identity is shaped by a dynamic interplay between their physical environment and the digital spaces they inhabit. At home, parents establish the initial framework for clothing choices, guided by practicality, budget, and cultural values (Pugh, 2009; Su & Tong, 2020). However, as children engage with metaverse platforms like Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite, they gain autonomy over their digital fashion identities. In these environments, they can select, customize, and experiment with outfits free from parental restrictions, exploring aesthetics that might not be accessible or allowed in real life (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2016). This separation between digital and physical fashion choices highlights a crucial shift: the metaverse is not merely a reflection of the physical world but an active space where identity and style are not constituted independently.

The connection between digital and physical fashion becomes evident when children attempt to translate their online preferences into offline wardrobes. The creative freedom they experience in virtual environments fosters a sense of individuality, leading them to seek similar expressions in their physical-world attire. In some cases, this can result in resistance to parental authority over clothing choices – what can be described as a form of "children's boycott" when they refuse to wear garments bought by their parents that do not align with their digital personas. The work of Ning et al. (2021) suggests that identity modeling in virtual spaces serves as a bridge between digital self-expression and physical-world identity formation, reinforcing the idea that what is worn in the metaverse influences what is desired outside of it.

The impact of metaverse fashion extends beyond individual choices, influencing broader trend adoption cycles and social interactions. Digital metaverse games communities generate trends that migrate into mainstream fashion, as seen in the rise of styles inspired by popular online avatars. This transition is fueled by the visibility of virtual fashion on social media and gaming platforms, where children and teenagers discuss, compare, and aspire to embody the looks they admire in digital spaces. Additionally, peer interactions in both virtual and physical settings play a significant role in reinforcing or challenging fashion choices. Social validation within these online worlds often translates into physical-world preferences, demonstrating how metaverse fashion is not an isolated phenomenon but an influential driver of contemporary youth fashion trends. As pointed by Senra and Vieira (2022), consumption is a social and cultural phenomenon, shaped by the time and society in which they are produced. In the following sections, I provide a detailed exploration of each aspect.

5.3.1 Connection between Digital and Physical Fashion Identities

Understanding the connection between digital and physical fashion identities is crucial for exploring how fashion consumption in metaverse environments influences physical-world choices. To analyze this interplay, Bezerra's et al. (2020) protocol for video scene analysis was adapted, focusing on how children express their fashion identities in both digital and physical spaces, particularly within gaming environments. This adaptation accounts for the unique aspects of virtual spaces, incorporating elements such as audio and interaction – how children describe their fashion choices in-game – physical actions, which explore how they engage with their digital avatars versus their physical-world clothing, and social interactions, highlighting the influence of peers and gaming communities on their preferences. This strategy was fundamental to frame the fluidity and density of Phygital experiences (Batat, 2024).

The study involved asking children to showcase their favorite in-game skins and then select their favorite clothing items from their physical wardrobe, allowing for a direct comparison between their virtual and physical-world fashion expressions. I collected a broader archive of children's virtual fashion identity. Given the fluid and highly visual nature of cyberculture, videography and photo analysis techniques play a crucial role in capturing the nuances of digital fashion identity (Belk & Kozinets, 2024; Belk & Kozinets, 2005). Unlike traditional qualitative methods, which rely primarily on written observation, video recordings allow for an in-depth examination of embodied interactions within virtual spaces, preserving details such as avatar movement, customization sequences, and peer engagement. Similarly, photography provides a static yet powerful means of documenting physical-world fashion choices, enabling direct visual comparisons between digital and physical expressions of identity.

These techniques not only enhance the depth of analysis but also align with the immersive nature of metaverse environments, where self-presentation is constantly performed, negotiated, and reinterpreted. The integration of videography and photography ensures a more comprehensive understanding of how children experience fashion across multiple dimensions, reinforcing the idea that digital and physical identities are interconnected rather than separate. The findings, illustrated in three tables (Table 11, Table 12, and Table 13) using examples from Fortnite, Minecraft, and Roblox, demonstrate how children navigate and negotiate their fashion identities across both digital and physical spaces, while also highlighting the methodological importance of visual documentation in cybercultural research.

Table 11 reveals how children's digital and physical fashion identities interact, demonstrating a clear parallel between their virtual and physical-world self-expression. The futuristic ninja skin in Fortnite conveys power, innovation, and precision, while the anime-themed T-shirts reflect trend-setting and cultural affiliation. Both choices emphasize a sense of identity shaped by aspirational aesthetics, whether through high-tech, glossy textures in the digital space or the tangible comfort of cotton fabrics with recognizable pop culture references in the physical world.

Basic yet precise – just like in the game – fashion choices communicate a sense of belonging to a specific aesthetic. The print could have featured Marvel superheroes or traditional childhood figures from previous generations, such as teddy bears or ponies, but instead, it avoids characters with a high-tech appearance. Additionally, cotton provides comfort, allowing for unrestricted movement. This also relates to the idea of "precision" in movement - cotton enables children to move freely in the physical world, without the

restrictions imposed by fabrics like denim. Similarly, in the game, the priority is performance, where flexibility and responsiveness are key to an optimal experience. The alignment between digital and physical fashion choices suggests that children curate their style with an awareness of belonging to a trend or fandom, reinforcing that fashion – both virtual and real – is a medium of self-expression. While digital fashion allows for imaginative material choices unrestricted by physical-world limitations, physical clothing is still rooted in tactile familiarity and everyday practicality. The presence of bold compositions and curated collections in both contexts further highlights a shared mindset of customization and identity-building. The interaction and engagement with fashion also differ based on the medium. Digital fashion is more dynamic and performance-oriented, with attention poses, fluid motion, and camera movements enhancing immersion and control. In contrast, physical fashion fosters social engagement, with playful gestures and personal storytelling shaping its significance. The documentation process itself reinforces this distinction – video captures the interactive and animated nature of digital clothing, while photography is sufficient for preserving physical outfits as static, symbolic representations. This suggests that digital fashion enables a different kind of embodiment, where identity is not only worn but actively performed. Ultimately, this analysis highlights how children navigate fashion as a fluid concept, shifting between digital and physical spaces while retaining key elements of creativity, power, and social belonging.

Table 11

Children 1 – Fortnite

	Digital Clothing		**Physical Clothing**	
Video/Photo				
Elements	**Denotation**	**Connotation**	**Denotation**	**Connotation**

Form	Futuristic ninja	Power, innovation	Modern animes t-shirts	Trend-setting
Color	Metallic gold with blue and neon highlights	Technological advancement, excitement	Black	Discrete
Material	Sleek, glossy surfaces, well adjusted	Sophistication, precision	Cotton fabrics with animes prints	Basic but trendy
Composition	Combined with holographic accessories	Boldness, creativity	Part of a Collection	Power, dominance
Gestures	Atention poses	Concentration	Playful tech-inspired gestures	Joy, confidence
Audio and Interaction	Futuristic sound effects, no dialogue with peers	Immersion, focus	*	*
Frame	Close-ups on gadgets	Attention to detail	Organization	Attention to detail
Camera Movements	Rotational angles during power-ups; see himself	Immersion, control, mirror	*	*
Physical Actions	Quick, fluid motions	Agility, dominance	*	*

Note: *Items marked with * were not recorded by the video camera; they were documented through photographs.*

Source: Created by author

The second table of this section (Table 12) highlights the contrasts and parallels between digital and physical fashion identities, demonstrating how a 10-year-old girl expresses herself in both virtual and physical-world settings. The digital clothing in Minecraft, despite being a male-coded skin, follows the game's nostalgic and simplistic visual language while allowing for extensive customization. The chosen skin, with its striking red and blue split-color scheme and elemental motifs on the sleeves, symbolizes duality, individuality, and creative expression, showing that the child values strong, bold aesthetics that may not necessarily align with traditional gender norms. In contrast, her physical outfit – a São Paulo FC soccer jersey paired with distressed denim shorts – conveys a connection to sports culture, fandom, and casual sporty aesthetics. The digital skin emphasizes adaptability within the game's virtual environment, where identity can be fluid and experimental, whereas the physical clothing prioritizes comfort, durability, and cultural association with soccer, a sport often linked to collective experiences within families and communities. Despite the gendered distinction between her digital and physical fashion choices, both serve as statements of identity,

reinforcing a sense of belonging, whether to a digital gaming space or a physical-world sports community, confirming the Crane's (2000) statement that social class and gender shape fashion meanings.

Beyond the aesthetic differences, the way these outfits are experienced also varies based on interactivity and engagement. In Minecraft, the digital clothing is animated, with smooth player movements across landscapes, creating a sense of control, patience, and focus in gameplay. The fact that the child chose a male skin suggests that gender presentation in digital spaces is secondary to other aspects of self-expression, such as power, agility, and character design. Physical clothing, on the other hand, is rooted in materiality, with the jersey serving as a symbol of loyalty and pride in soccer fandom, often tied to conversations within the family. The transition between digital and physical spaces demonstrates how fashion is more than just aesthetics; it is an extension of identity, emotion, and social belonging, with digital environments providing an additional layer of freedom where traditional gender expectations may not be as rigid.

Table 12

Children 15 – Minecraft

	Digital Clothing		**Physical Clothing**	
Video/Photo				
Elements	**Denotation**	**Connotation**	**Denotation**	**Connotation**
Form	Blocky, pixelated humanoid figure	Consistent with Minecraft's visual aesthetic, nostalgic, and simplistic. Remembering soccer players in the beginning of the game.	Short-sleeved striped soccer jersey and distressed denim shorts	Casual, sporty, and youthful outfit, commonly associated with fandom and activewear

Color	Contrasting colors: red and blue hair, white hoodie, black pants, gradient flames on sleeves	Symbolism of duality (fire and ice), individuality, and creative expression	Red, black, and white jersey; light blue denim shorts	Strong club identity (São Paulo FC), passion, team spirit; casual and relaxed vibe from denim shorts
Material	Digital, low-resolution texture mapped onto a blocky model	Suggests adaptability and customization in virtual spaces	Synthetic, breathable fabric for jersey; cotton denim for shorts	Sports performance and comfort, durability for casual wear
Composition	Symmetrical, split-color theme (blue vs. red), elemental patterns on sleeves	Represents balance, possibly inspired by opposing forces or character themes	Contrasting textures: structured jersey vs. soft, frayed denim	Mix of sporty and streetwear styles, balancing function and fashion
Gestures	Neutral stance, slightly angled perspective	Readiness, confidence, showcasing the skin's details	*	*
Audio and Interaction	Soft game music	Calmness, focus	Conversations about the fact that she loves soccer	Passion
Frame	Close-up shot, character centered in the frame	Focuses on the custom skin details, highlights the aesthetic choices	This clothe was in the laundry, and the mother said that she uses a lot.	Self-expression, pride
Camera Movements	Smooth pans over landscapes; she doesn't see herself.	Serenity, grandeur	*	*
Physical Actions	Mining, building	Focus, patience	*	*

*Note: Items marked with * were not recorded by the video camera; they were documented through photographs.*

Source: Created by author

Finally, table 13 highlights the connection between the child's digital and physical fashion choices, both of which emphasize softness, playfulness, and personal expression. The Roblox avatar's pastel aesthetic aligns with the child's preference for cute, cozy, and nostalgic clothing, featuring soft colors, character prints, and layered textures. The presence of Snoopy-themed clothing suggests an attachment to recognizable pop culture symbols, much like the stylized avatar in the digital space. While the digital clothing is idealized, smooth, and uniform,

the physical clothing prioritizes comfort and material diversity, reflecting physical-world practicality. The static nature of both images focuses on presentation rather than movement, suggesting that the child sees fashion as a way to curate identity rather than purely for action or performance.

Table 13

Children 2 – Roblox

	Digital Clothing		**Physical Clothing**	
Video/Photo				
Elements	**Denotation**	**Connotation**	**Denotation**	**Connotation**
Form	Blocky humanoid figure with a rounded face, large eyes, and exaggerated accessories (hat and pet)	Cute, stylized, cartoonish aesthetic emphasizing softness and innocence	Casual, pastel and Snoopy-themed clothing, mix of cropped and long-sleeve styles	Playful, cozy, and expressive fashion reflecting a mix of trends and personal identity
Color	Soft pastel palette (white, orange, blue), warm tones, and a gradient effect	Feminine, dreamy, and comforting, evoking a childlike, fantasy-inspired aesthetic	Pastel colors (mint green, tie-dye, white, light pink), and black accents	Soft, delicate, romantic, and trendy, aligning with youthful fashion and pop culture references
Material	Digital texture, smooth and glossy surfaces with no visible fabric grain	Clean, idealized, and perfect representation of clothing free from material constraints	Cotton and knitted fabrics, soft and breathable, layered textures	Comfort-focused, tactile, and playful, emphasizing coziness and warmth
Composition	Layered elements: oversized hat, soft dress, matching accessories, additional pet figure	Coordinated aesthetic with a focus on cuteness, cohesion, and self-expression	A mix of coordinated pieces, featuring character prints, textures, and patterns	Fashion experimentation, blending childhood nostalgia with contemporary styling

Gestures	Hands folded in front, neutral and relaxed stance	Politeness, warmth, and a welcoming posture	Laid out on the bed, with the child's hand visible resting on the side	Casual display, suggesting a sense of pride or selection process
Audio and Interaction	Soft game music, no verbal interaction in the frame	Calmness, cuteness, immersive fantasy setting	Conversation about favorite characters and clothing choices	Emotional attachment to fashion, personal storytelling
Frame	Close-up shot, slightly tilted angle	Highlights the character's details and outfit aesthetics	Top-down perspective, showing multiple clothing pieces together	Organized but spontaneous, showcasing variety and selection
Camera Movements	Static, centered on the avatar	Focuses on details and aesthetic choices	Still image, wide view of outfit selection	Suggests a moment of decision-making or display of favorites
Physical Actions	No movement in the frame, only pose	Emphasizes self-presentation and aesthetic curation	Placement of clothing	Reflects a moment of choice or preparation

Source: Created by author

Analyzing those three examples, is possible observe that fashion consumption in both physical and metaverse environments presents distinct yet interconnected opportunities and challenges. In the physical world, fashion choices are shaped by structured social norms, economic constraints, and practical considerations, reinforcing identity within established societal frameworks. In contrast, digital fashion within metaverse platforms provides unprecedented freedom for self-expression, allowing children to experiment with styles beyond the limitations of their physical lives. As digital natives (Evans & Robertson, 2020), children navigate these spaces differently, leveraging the metaverse as a creative playground where affordability and parental influence play a less restrictive role. However, a key commonality across both realms is the significance of social validation – whether through peer recognition in schools or admiration within gaming spaces – demonstrating the fluid relationship between physical and virtual fashion influences.

Analysis of video and photo data, along with interviews with children and parents, revealed that the motivations and constraints shaping fashion consumption differ between these two environments. In the physical world, as emphasized by the majority of parents, fashion is dictated by practical concerns such as weather, budget, and social norms. Conversely, digital fashion prioritizes creativity, fantasy, and immediacy, as seen in games like Roblox, Fortnite,

and Minecraft, where children express themselves through avatars, treating fashion as an extension of their identity. This aligns with cyberculture theories that position virtual spaces as immersive realms for self-construction (Bell, 2006). Interviews with children further highlight the contrast between real-life limitations – such as hand-me-downs or parental restrictions – and the autonomy they experience in the metaverse, where they can curate their ideal identities without external interference.

In gaming and metaverse environments, digital fashion and avatar customization function as markers of status and belonging, much like branded clothing in the physical world, at least to children researched. The ability to acquire exclusive skins, accessories, or items within digital spaces reinforces hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1984), validating how consumption contributes to identity formation and social stratification in digital cultures.

Dilley's (1999) contextual framework helps explain how children engage with fashion in both physical and virtual spaces. From an external perspective, physical and digital fashion are influenced by broader societal structures, including economic access, technological developments, and cultural trends. The internal context highlights how fashion choices function within specific social environments, whether in schools or gaming communities, where peer dynamics and validation play crucial roles. Finally, the psychological dimension examines how children assign meaning to fashion, connecting virtual and physical clothing to self-expression, status, and identity formation.

Despite the creative possibilities of digital fashion, many children still value the tactile and emotional aspects of dressing in the physical world. However, parents often struggle to grasp the significance of virtual fashion, viewing it as financially impractical. This generational disconnect underscores how digital and physical fashion serve complementary roles in identity constitution. The ability to instantly switch styles in digital environments fosters a sense of playfulness and experimentation, which psychologists recognize as essential for childhood development. Ultimately, both realms contribute to a hybrid fashion identity, where children navigate self-expression across multiple dimensions, continuously shaping their evolving sense of self in the digital age.

5.3.2 How Freedom in Digital Environments Inspires Physical-life Fashion Exploration

The freedom offered by digital environments provides children with a platform to explore and express their **fashion preferences in ways that may not be possible in the physical world.** This dynamic creativity significantly influences physical-life fashion exploration.

Apparently, metaverse games provide children with the freedom to experiment with bold and imaginative outfits (Dwivedi et al., 2022) (Dwivedi et al., 2022) , facing fewer societal constraints than they would in the physical world. Interviews with children revealed that they enjoy creating avatars with exaggerated or unconventional styles, which in turn inspires them to try new clothing combinations in physical life. As one child explained: "In Minecraft, my avatar represents the most creative part of me, because in the real world I am not creative...I don't know how to paint, or draw or anything like that" (CHD29, age 11) highlighting how the freedom to design virtual clothing translates into a willingness to explore creativity in their physical wardrobe.

Children's digital identities often act as a **testing ground for physical-life fashion** choices, particularly in terms of color preference. Parental surveys reveal that children who favor neon colors and futuristic aesthetics often request similar clothing styles in physical-life. One child who customizes their avatar with neon green and electric blue outfits may later, for example, seek sneakers, jackets, or accessories in those same shades. This demonstrates how digital fashion experimentation influences physical-world preferences, allowing children to bridge the gap between imagination and practicality in their physical wardrobe. The freedom they experience in digital spaces, where they can experiment with bold, imaginative outfits, can inspire them to express themselves similarly in physical life (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2016; Matthews, 2019).

As digital environments become deeply embedded in children's daily lives, their choices in virtual fashion continue to shape physical-world preferences. This process fosters creativity and self-confidence, reinforcing the connection between digital and physical identities. Field notes suggest that children who experiment with bold colors in virtual spaces become more confident in wearing expressive outfits in physical life. Whether through cyberculture, digital fashion serves as a powerful tool for self-expression, encouraging children to explore new styles and aesthetics beyond traditional norms.

Moreover, the influence of metaverse consumption on physical-world behavior is evident in how children perceive trends. The rapid pace at which fashion trends are adopted and shared within metaverses platforms (Cheremnykh, 2024; Kim, 2021) impacts how quickly children desire similar items in real life. For example, a popular virtual accessory or outfit might lead to a demand for the same or similar items in stores. This cycle of trend adoption (Tingelhoff et al., 2024), originating in digital environments and spreading to the physical world, underscores the growing importance of virtual spaces in shaping consumer behavior among younger generations.

The impact of metaverse consumption extends to the social dynamics of fashion in the real world. Children who participate in fashion choices in metaverses often bring the social currency of their digital avatars into physical interactions. This can manifest in discussions about virtual fashion choices, the comparison of digital and physical fashion items, and even pressure to own real-world versions of popular virtual goods. Understanding how these virtual-to-physical dynamics influence children's fashion consumption behaviors is crucial for grasping the full extent of the metaverse's role in shaping modern consumer patterns.

The ability to design and personalize avatars allows children to explore and **express their identities in ways that may not always be socially accepted in physical-life** settings. Psychologists highlight that this creative freedom often boosts children's confidence, encouraging them to experiment with unique styles and reinforcing a positive self-image. However, they also acknowledge a gap in their professional training to effectively integrate these digital environments into therapeutic practices. As one psychologist noted: "We should be using these environments in therapy, it's fascinating, right? But we don't yet know how to utilize these tools." (PSY1). This highlights the need for further research and professional development to harness the potential of digital spaces in psychological support and identity formation.

In this sense, the metaverse games serves as a **creative sandbox**, allowing children to experiment with fantasy-themed, futuristic, and culturally inspired fashion. This digital exploration often extends beyond clothing, as parents report a noticeable increase in requests for themed outfits, accessories, and even culturally significant items inspired by their children's favorite games. However, the impact goes much further.

Field notes and parent interviews indicate that children's engagement with digital environments sparks curiosity beyond fashion, leading to greater interest in ethnic foods, cultural references, artworks, museums, and music. Many children appear to develop a broader cultural awareness, demonstrating a desire to explore and understand global aesthetics and traditions. This trend suggests that metaverse experiences foster a deeper appreciation for diverse cultures, shaping their physical-world preferences in meaningful ways. Interestingly, this pattern was observed regardless of school type – both public and private school children displayed similar levels of curiosity and cultural engagement. While the study focused on children from financially stable backgrounds, the findings suggest that access to digital spaces can act as an equalizing force, expanding children's cultural exposure and shaping their identities in ways that transcend socioeconomic differences. For example, some children

develop a curiosity for traditional Japanese attire after encountering it in games, leading them to seek out similar garments in physical life.

In digital spaces, **children are more willing to take aesthetic risks**, experimenting with clashing colors, unconventional patterns, and bold accessories. This creativity often extends to physical life, where they gain confidence in wearing expressive outfits inspired by their virtual experiences. By interacting with digital fashion, children develop an understanding of layering, color coordination, and accessorizing, skills that teachers note are increasingly applied to their physical-world clothing choices at school (FIELD NOTES).

The interplay between digital and physical fashion significantly shapes how children express themselves across both environments. Depending on the level of fashion freedom they experience in each realm, children fall into four distinct identity categories: **Expressive Creators, Digital Conformists, Analog Rebels, and Restricted Players**. These categories offer valuable insight into how digital experiences influence self-perception and physical-world fashion confidence. While some children fluidly navigate both spaces, others face restrictions that impact how they express themselves. Understanding these differences helps educators, brands, and parents support children's evolving fashion identities.

Expressive Creators (High Digital, High Physical Freedom) embrace both digital and physical-world fashion experimentation, allowing their virtual experiences to inspire real-life clothing choices. These children use metaverse games to create bold and unique avatars, reflecting their aesthetic preferences. Since they also enjoy significant freedom in physical fashion, they often incorporate unconventional colors, futuristic designs, and layered styles into their everyday wardrobe. Expressive Creators tend to set trends within their peer groups, influencing others through their confidence in self-expression. Their parents typically encourage creativity in both digital and physical spaces, fostering a sense of autonomy in fashion choices.

Digital Conformists (High Digital, Low Physical Freedom) thrive in digital fashion but face constraints in real life due to parental restrictions, school dress codes, or financial limitations. These children invest in avatar customization, designing expressive digital outfits that they may not be allowed to wear in reality. For example, a child wears a cropped outfit in Roblox but was limited to conservative clothing in their physical environment. For Digital Conformists, metaverse spaces act as a creative escape, allowing them to express aspects of their identity that physical-world circumstances may suppress. However, the gap between their digital and physical fashion freedom can sometimes lead to frustration, as they feel restricted from fully realizing their personal style outside of virtual spaces.

On the other hand, **Analog Rebels (High Physical, Low Digital Freedom)** experience significant freedom in physical-world fashion choices but show little interest in digital fashion. They prefer expressing themselves through tangible clothing, experimenting with thrifted styles, subculture fashion, or brand-driven aesthetics rather than customizing avatars in virtual spaces. While they may play games like Fortnite, they do not see the appeal of investing in digital skins or accessories, but they love a Nike's jersey. In contrast, **Restricted Players (Low Digital, Low Physical Freedom)** have limited access to both digital and physical fashion expression due to economic factors, strict parental regulations, or lack of access to gaming platforms. These children rarely engage in fashion experimentation and often admire trends from a distance, passively observing the styles of peers and influencers without actively participating. Figure 21 shows those categories.

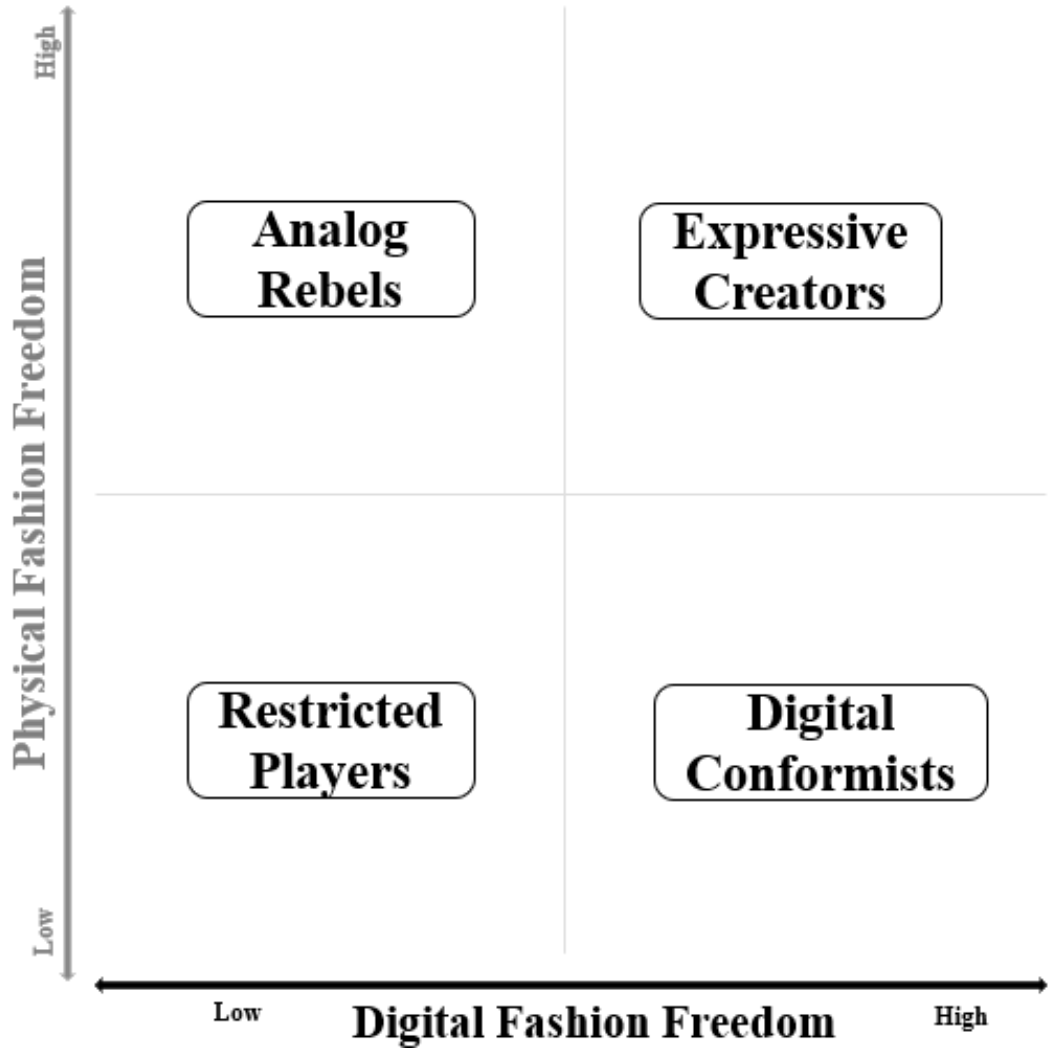


Figure 21

Fashion Freedom in Phygital Worlds

Source: Created by author

My field immersion revealed two additional groups of children who were not represented in this categorization: **those experiencing what I call "digital anorexia" and those exhibiting overconsumption of digital spaces**. Children with digital anorexia are strictly forbidden from accessing games and virtual environments, often due to parental restrictions or ideological beliefs that reject digital engagement. These children observe digital fashion trends from the outside, sometimes experiencing social exclusion as they struggle to relate to peers who participate in metaverse culture. On the other hand, children with overconsumption of digital spaces immerse themselves so deeply in virtual environments that they reject the physical world, showing little interest in physical-world fashion, social interactions, or responsibilities beyond their digital presence.

Recognizing these two additional groups, along with the four main categories, helps brands, educators, and parents better understand how digital fashion influences children's self-expression and social interactions. While Expressive Creators fluidly navigate both digital and physical fashion, Digital Conformists rely on virtual spaces for self-exploration. Analog Rebels focus on physical-world creativity but disengage from digital fashion, whereas Restricted Players have limited engagement in both domains. Meanwhile, children with digital anorexia are excluded from the digital ecosystem altogether, and those with overconsumption tendencies become trapped within it, resisting engagement with the physical world.

5.4 How Fashion Consumption in Metaverses Constitutes Children's Fashion Identities

To Gen Alpha, fashion consumption in metaverse environments plays a crucial role in shaping children's fashion identities, serving as a digital extension of physical-world style preferences, social interactions, and self-expression. Identity, in this context, is understood as a confluence of personal commitments, characteristics, and self-perceptions – some actively chosen, others ascribed by external influences (Schwartz et al., 2011). The digital realm offers children unprecedented opportunities to explore and experiment with fashion in ways that may not be as accessible or socially acceptable in the physical world. By selecting and customizing virtual outfits, children engage in a process of identity formation that extends beyond aesthetics, incorporating elements of social belonging, aspiration, and cultural capital. This topic discusses how the consumption of fashion items in metaverse games contributes to the constitution of children's fashion identities by analyzing consumer practices, group dynamics, and digital hierarchies that shape these experiences.

By focusing on metaverse fashion consumption as a form of identity constitution, this chapter builds on existing fashion theories that position clothing and self-presentation as integral to identity formation (Crane, 2000; Davis, 1994). The metaverse, with its unique blend of digital interaction and consumption, presents a compelling space where children can craft and negotiate their identities in real time. Practices such as avatar customization, participation in virtual fashion events, and engagement with influencers reflect broader cultural trends that influence self-expression. Through an analysis of children's choices and self-representation in digital spaces, this chapter explores how their virtual wardrobes become tools for experimentation, empowerment, and social positioning. Importantly, this discussion bridges the divide between digital and physical fashion, demonstrating how experiences in virtual environments influence physical-world fashion preferences and vice versa. In the end, the integration of virtual and physical fashion consumption reveals the complex, multilayered nature of identity formation in an era where digital and material worlds increasingly overlap.

5.4.1 Practices, Styles, and Social Functions of Fashion Identity Development

Understanding the evolution of fashion identity in the Phygital era requires examining **three core dimensions: key practices, dominant styles, and social functions**. These elements define how individuals interact with fashion across digital and physical spaces, shaping their self-expression and engagement within both realms. This exploration ultimately provides insights into the broader trajectory of **fashion evolution**, highlighting how digital environments function not only as cultural products but also as active producers of culture (Bell, 2006; Kozinets, 2008; Hine, 2000). Unlike traditional fashion, which is bound by materiality, cost, and social constraints (Barnard, 2020b), digital fashion provides a fluid and experimental realm where individuals – particularly children – engage in constant reinvention. Through customization, collecting, and curating digital fashion, avatars become both an extension of self and a means of social communication. Interviews with children highlight the joy of experimenting with different skins and accessories, frequently shifting their appearance based on mood, game environments, or peer influences. However, parents express concerns about the financial implications of digital consumption, as virtual fashion increasingly carries physical-world economic and psychological weight.

One of the most defining **practices** in Phygital fashion is **customization**, which allows users to design avatars, curate looks, and create unique fashion expressions. Unlike physical clothing, digital fashion eliminates the constraints of fit, material durability, and production

costs, enabling boundless creativity. Customization is closely tied to the practice of **collecting**, as individuals acquire skins, outfits, and accessories across different platforms, much like sneaker culture enthusiasts amass limited-edition footwear. Some children described the excitement of acquiring rare skins, comparing it to the thrill of unboxing a coveted physical item. This sense of ownership and exclusivity strengthens attachment to digital fashion, making it a core part of their self-identity. Additionally, **hybrid dressing** – where digital aesthetics influence physical-world clothing choices – illustrates how fashion fluidly crosses between virtual and physical realities. Parents and teachers report that children frequently reference metaverse fashion styles when selecting outfits in real life, bridging the gap between imagination and materiality.

While digital fashion is highly diverse, three **dominant styles** shape the way individuals engage with Phygital aesthetics: Phygital maximalism, Phygital minimalism, and trend-driven adoption. **Phygital maximalism** thrives in metaverse spaces such as Roblox, where vibrant, exaggerated, and highly personalized avatars reflect an uninhibited approach to self-expression. This aesthetic often features neon colors, oversized accessories, and futuristic themes, offering a sense of fantasy and escape. In contrast, **Phygital minimalism** focuses on subtle integrations of digital fashion into everyday life, where small digital cues – such virtual accessories – blend seamlessly with physical-world fashion. The third style, **trend-driven fashion**, emerges from social media, gaming communities, and influencer culture, where individuals adopt styles that gain traction online. Platforms such as Fortnite drive this phenomenon, as exclusive collaborations with celebrities and high-fashion brands create aspirational aesthetics that shape in-game and physical-world fashion behaviors.

Fashion in the Phygital era is more than just aesthetic – it serves **social functions** related to identity expression, status signaling, and community belonging. Digital fashion enables individuals to craft and **project identities** in ways that transcend physical-world limitations, allowing for fluid experimentation with gender, cultural references, and personal style. The metaverse provides children with opportunities to explore different aspects of their personalities, creating multiple versions of themselves across platforms. This aligns with Hall's (2011) concept of identity as a site of negotiation, where digital self-expression serves as both a medium for personal exploration and a response to broader cultural influences.

However, this freedom is accompanied by **social hierarchies**, where certain skins or digital outfits become status symbols that reflect gaming proficiency, financial investment, or cultural capital. The ideal social self-concept is about more than being accepted, it's about being admired (Bezerra et al., 2020).

For instance, in Fortnite, exclusive collaboration skins with Marvel or Balenciaga elevate a player's social standing, mirroring Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Additionally, fashion acts as a tool for **community bonding**, where individuals coordinate their avatars' aesthetics to reinforce group identity. Online field observations confirm that children match skins in Fortnite squads or Roblox role-playing games, reinforcing their social cohesion through shared aesthetics.

The convergence of digital and physical fashion is most evident in how consumption habits seamlessly transition between metaverse environments and real life. **For Generation Alpha and future generations, there is no longer a distinction between the digital and physical worlds – everything exists as a unified Phygital experience**. Children increasingly seek physical versions of virtual styles, favoring outfits that resemble their digital avatars. Some even prioritize digital fashion over physical fashion, citing its creativity, accessibility, and dynamic nature. This reinforces Barnard's argument that identity is constituted through what one consumes, suggesting that virtual goods now hold cultural value comparable to physical ones (Barnard, 2020b).

Additionally, the rise of fashion collaborations within metaverse platforms accelerates this phenomenon, with major fashion brands designing digital collections that influence young consumers' physical-world preferences. By analyzing key practices, dominant styles, and social functions, it becomes clear that fashion identity in the Phygital world is evolving through multiple layers of influence. Gaming communities, social media influencers, and digital marketplaces drive the adoption of new aesthetics, reinforcing digital-first fashion trends that translate into physical fashion behaviors.

Brand collaborations play a pivotal role in this process, as luxury fashion houses, sportswear brands, and entertainment franchises increasingly blur the lines between digital and physical fashion spheres. Beyond commercial influences, continuous experimentation with AR filters, digital skins, and wearable tech is shaping how individuals constitute and interact with their evolving fashion identities. Many brands, like Gucci, Nike, Zara, and Adidas, are simultaneously launching fashion twins, showcasing their collections in both the physical world and the metaverse. Figure 22 shows Adidas products available in physical and digital form.

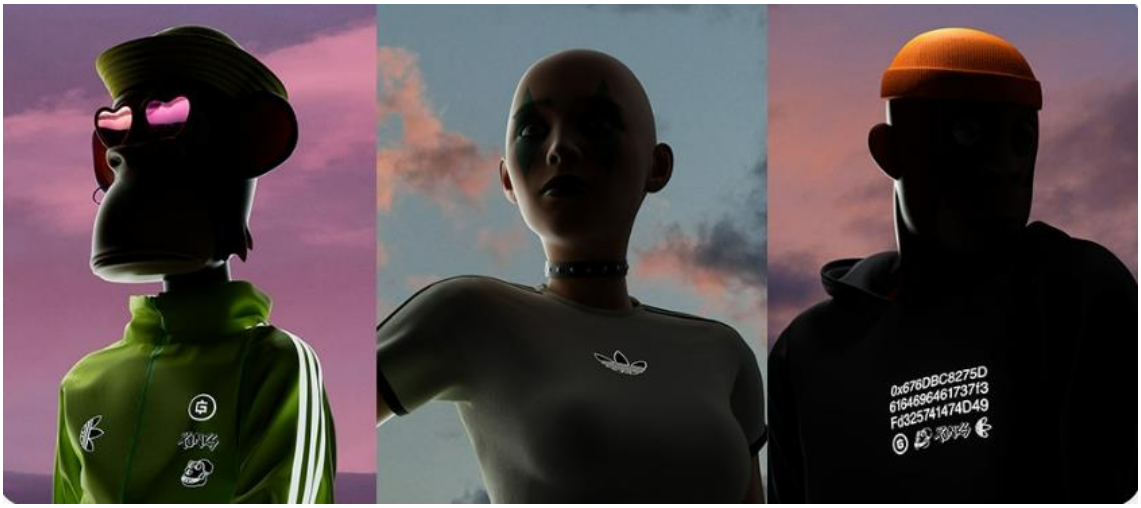


Figure 22

Adidas Originals campaign: "Into the Metaverse"

Source: Adidas Originals campaign: "Into the Metaverse"

Ultimately, the **evolution of fashion in the Phygital era** challenges traditional notions of identity, self-expression, and social belonging. Understanding these dynamics is essential for unpacking the future of identity, consumption, and fashion identity evolution in digital age. Figure 23 presents those three questions to understand the evolution of fashion in the Phygital era.

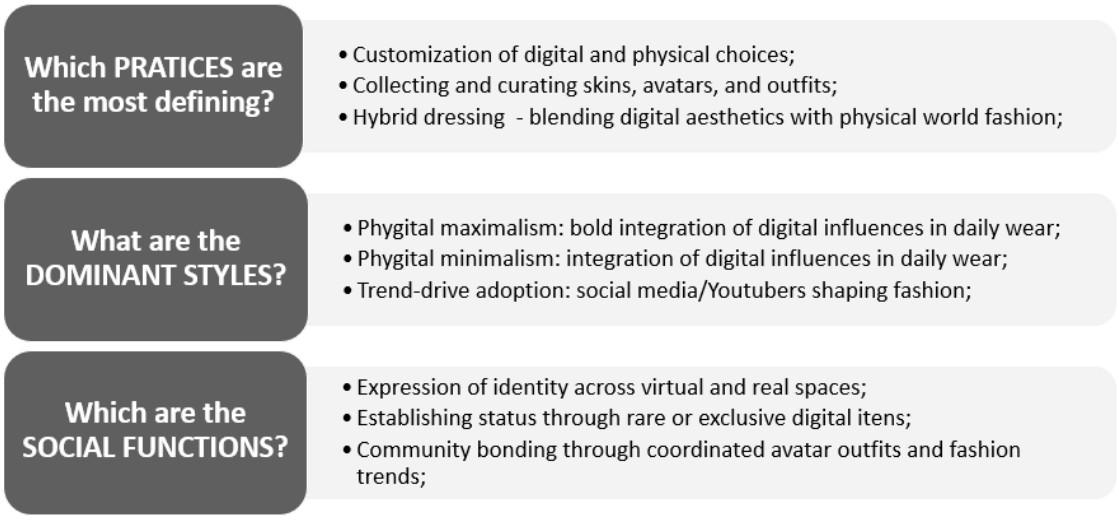


Figure 23

Three questions to understand the evolution of fashion in the Phygital era

Source: Created by author

Basically, the constitution of children's fashion identity in the metaverse is an intricate interplay of creativity, social belonging, cultural participation, and digital consumerism. The

practices of customization, collecting, and curating reveal how children actively engage with digital fashion as a means of self-expression and social navigation. While these practices mirror traditional fashion behaviors, the metaverse introduces new dynamics that reshape the ways children perceive and perform fashion identity. As digital spaces continue to evolve, understanding these transformations will be crucial in unpacking the future of fashion, identity, and cultural consumption in the digital age.

So, I propose that **Phygital Identity as a multi-layered, adaptive construct that emerges from the continuous interaction between physical presence, digital self-expression, and space mediation (be it physical or digital).** This identity framework recognizes that individuals do not just exist in digital and physical worlds – they actively constitute themselves through them. Phygital Identity is therefore not a dual existence, but a continuum of identity expressions, where boundaries between "real" (literatures brings as real but, in this thesis, I call physical, once virtual seems very real to me) and "virtual" selves dissolve, giving rise to a new, interconnected form of being. This concept demands a reconsideration of traditional identity formation models, acknowledging that in a Phygital world, identity is performative, interactive, and algorithmically influenced by the platforms. It is not only shaped by personal experiences and social roles but also by the interfaces, platforms, and technologies through which individuals engage with the world. Phygital Identity thus represents a new paradigm for understanding selfhood, one that fully embraces the complexities of identity in an era where digital and physical realities are inseparable.

Building on the concept of Phygital Identity as a fluid and interconnected self-construction process, I propose **Phygital Fashion Identity as an adaptive, multi-layered fashion expression that exists at the intersection of physical presence, digital self-styling, and platform-mediated aesthetics.** In this framework, fashion is no longer constrained by materiality or limited to a single reality. This concept acknowledges that individuals do not merely consume fashion separately in digital and physical spaces; instead, they actively curate, remix, and redefine their style across these interconnected realms.

Phygital Fashion Identity is not a binary between the tangible and the virtual, but rather a continuously evolving spectrum of sartorial choices shaped by social environments, technological interfaces, and mediated cultural trends. The interplay between gaming skins and physical clothing reflects the way individuals experiment with different personas, aesthetics, and identities in response to digital affordances and physical-world influences.

The performative nature of fashion is heightened in the Phygital world, where individuals continuously refine their digital and physical wardrobes based on platform

interactions, influencer trends, and platform recommendations. In this sense, Phygital Fashion Identity is both personal and collective, shaped not only by individual agency but also by peer validation, social platforms, and brand collaborations that dictate emerging styles.

Fashion in the Phygital era extends beyond the physical body (Barnard, 2014), encompassing all forms of self-representation and modification that occur both on and through the body in digital and physical spaces. It includes traditional dress, clothing, adornment, and bodily modifications, as well as virtual skins, avatars, digital accessories, and algorithm-driven aesthetic choices. Fashion is no longer confined to material garments but is co-constructed through digital environments, social media filters, in-game customizations, and augmented reality. In this expanded view, fashion becomes a fluid and dynamic expression of identity that operates across both tangible and virtual dimensions, blurring the boundaries between what is worn, displayed, and experienced in hybrid realities.

To advance Belk's (1988, 2013) discussion of the extended self in digital environments, particularly in Phygital worlds and metaverses, it is necessary to consider new elements that reflect the evolving nature of consumption, identity, and self-extension in these hybrid spaces. Belk's (2013) five key changes – dematerialization, re-embodiment, sharing, co-construction of self, and distributed memory – were found in the analyzed data, as Table 14 shows:

Table 14

Belk's 2013 Elements and Examples Found

Belk's 2013 Elements	Examples Found in Data Analysis
Dematerialization	• Virtual clothing replacing physical fashion purchases (FIELD NOTES); • Digital accessories valued as much as physical (CHD6, age10); • Preferring digital skins over new real-world (CHD2, age 9);
Re-embodiment	• Using avatars to express personal (CHD15, age 10); • Experimenting with identity through digital outfits (CHD22, age 8); • Using digital wardrobes to curate self-expression (CHD31, age 8);
Sharing	• Kids gifting skins to friends in Roblox (FIELD NOTES); • Sharing in-game fashion experiences at school (TCH8); • Families buying gift cards for in-game fashion (PRT25);
Co-construction of Self	• Customizing avatars to fit group aesthetics (FIELD NOTES); • Collaborating on outfit choices in gaming communities (CHD11); • Youtubers and Game Developers shaping digital fashion trends (FIELD NOTES);
Distributed Memory	• Memories linked to digital fashion collections (FIELD NOTES); • Avatars reflecting past fashion choices over time (FIELD NOTES); • Game archives storing past looks and purchases (FIELD NOTES);

Source: Created by author

In this sense, those five elements seem to remain relevant, however, the Phygital nature of contemporary consumption introduces new dynamics that warrant further refinement and expansion. So, I suggest the following fundamentals (Table 15).

Table 15

Refinement and expansion of Belk's 2013 Elements

Element 1	
Refinement or Expansion Element	Hybrid Materiality
Justification: The Persistence of the Physical in Digital Ownership Belk's **dematerialization** describes how possessions shift from tangible objects to digital assets, such as virtual fashion, NFTs, and in-game items. However, in Phygital spaces, the boundary between material and digital possessions is increasingly blurred. Unlike purely digital objects, many virtual items have a physical counterpart or an offline impact, such as AR-enhanced clothing or gaming merchandise that integrates with metaverse avatars. Future research should consider how consumers negotiate value and attachment in hybrid material contexts, where digital and physical goods exist as interdependent forms of ownership.	
Examples Found in Data Analysis	• Phygital Fashion Purchases: A child buys a real-world hoodie because it matches a limited-edition outfit available for their Roblox avatar. (CHD6, age 10) • NFTs with Physical Counterparts: A collector purchases a virtual sneaker NFT that comes with an exclusive, matching physical sneaker. (DOCUMENTAL) • Augmented Reality (AR) Fashion Integration: A gamer buys a T-shirt embedded with an NFC chip that, when scanned, unlocks a special edition skin in their favorite metaverse game. (DOCUMENTAL)
Element 2	
Refinement or Expansion Element	Persistent Identity
Justification: Beyond Re-embodiment to Cross-Platform Continuity Belk's re-embodiment highlights how individuals extend their identity through avatars and digital self-representations. However, in Phygital metaverses, identity is no longer confined to a single platform. Consumers develop persistent identities across multiple interconnected spaces, where avatar styles, digital wardrobes, and even achievements are transferred between platforms. This challenges the traditional notion of self-extension being limited to a single environment and raises questions about cross-platform identity management, digital reputation, and the interoperability of possessions.	
Examples Found in Data Analysis	• Cross-Platform Avatar Consistency: A player maintains a consistent avatar style across Roblox and Fortnite, ensuring their digital identity remains recognizable across different virtual spaces; (CHD2, age 9); • Interoperable Digital Wardrobe: A user purchases a branded digital outfit in one game (e.g., a Nike hoodie in Fortnite) and later unlocks the same outfit for their avatar in another platform, reinforcing a unified personal style across metaverses. (DOCUMENTAL) • Cross-Platform Achievements and Reputation: A gamer builds a reputation in one virtual world (e.g., as a skilled designer in Roblox's UGC marketplace) and leverages this status in another platform to gain credibility and social capital. (DOCUMENTAL)
Element 3	
Refinement or Expansion Element	Programmable Ownership

Justification: Belk described **sharing** as a defining feature of the digital extended self, where possessions are collectively validated and distributed among online communities. In Phygital consumption, ownership is becoming increasingly programmable through blockchain technologies, enabling new forms of controlled sharing via smart contracts, fractional ownership, and tokenized assets. Unlike traditional digital sharing, which is often temporary or tied to platform policies, programmable ownership allows consumers to set conditions on how their digital possessions – such as skins, fashion, or collectibles – can be accessed, used, or resold.	
Examples Found in Data Analysis	• Smart Contract-Enabled Digital Fashion: A user purchases a limited-edition digital jacket as an NFT, which can only be worn by avatars whose wallets hold the verified token. (DOCUMENTAL) • Fractional Ownership of Virtual Collectibles: A group of players collectively owns a rare in-game fashion item through blockchain-based fractional ownership, allowing each member to use or trade their share. (DOCUMENTAL) • Resale-Controlled Digital Assets: A designer sells a metaverse-exclusive dress with a smart contract that ensures they receive a percentage of resale profits every time the item is traded. (DOCUMENTAL)
Element 4	
Refinement or Expansion Element	Algorithmic Self
Justification: The Influence of AI in the Co-Construction of Identity While Belk's co-construction of self recognizes that identity is collaboratively shaped by online interactions, the role of AI-driven algorithms in shaping self-representation has become increasingly prominent. In Phygital spaces, algorithms curate fashion choices, recommend avatar customizations, and even influence digital social capital through AI-generated content. The algorithmic self-expands Belk's idea by emphasizing how consumers do not merely co-construct identity with other users but also with machine-learning systems that adapt and personalize digital consumption experiences.	
Examples Found in Data Analysis	• AI-Driven Avatar Customization: A player receives personalized outfit recommendations for their avatar based on past in-game purchases and interactions, shaping their digital style. (FIELD NOTES); • Algorithmic Fashion Trends in Metaverses: An AI system analyzes popular skins and suggests trending items to users, influencing their virtual fashion choices and social perception. (FIELD NOTES); • AI-Generated Digital Influence: A metaverse platform ranks and promotes certain avatars based on engagement metrics, reinforcing specific fashion aesthetics and identity norms. (FIELD NOTES);
Element 5	
Refinement or Expansion Element	Temporal Self
Justification: Beyond Distributed Memory to Dynamic Identity Evolution Belk's distributed memory highlights how digital storage externalizes identity through saved possessions, past interactions, and social media histories. In phygital environments, this process is evolving into a more dynamic, temporal self, where past digital possessions are constantly updated, reskinned, or replaced. Unlike traditional static memory archives, metaverse identities are fluid and constantly re-edited, reflecting ongoing changes in status, trends, and personal growth. This raises new questions about digital ephemerality, identity curation, and the psychological impact of continuous reinvention.	
Examples Found in Data Analysis	• Evolving Avatar Styles: A player frequently updates their avatar's outfit and accessories to match new trends, seasons, or personal milestones, reflecting an evolving digital identity. (YOU1);

	• Reskinning and Upgrading Digital Possessions: Users replace old skins with newly released versions, keeping their virtual appearance up-to-date while discarding past digital items. (YOU6); • Time-Limited Fashion Items: Exclusive event-based outfits in games like Fortnite or Roblox disappear after a season, pushing users to continuously redefine their digital selves through new acquisitions. (FIELD NOTES);

Source: Created by author

Toward a “Phygital Extended Self Framework” the Phygital world refines and extends Belk’s original and revised frameworks by introducing hybrid materiality, persistent identity, programmable ownership, the algorithmic self, and the temporal self. These elements highlight how the extended self is increasingly shaped by platform interconnectivity, AI mediation, and evolving ownership models. Understanding these dynamics will be critical for future research into metaverse consumption, digital identity formation, and the intersection of virtual and real-world self-extension.

5.4.2 Children’s Choices and Self-expression Through Virtual Avatars

On one hand, avatars provide children with a unique space to explore and experiment with different aspects of their identity in ways that may not be possible in the physical world. As one child expressed: "I can be anything" (CHD1, age 9), highlighting the limitless potential of digital self-representation. On the other hand, an over-reliance on avatars for self-expression can create a disconnect between digital and physical selves, leading to potential identity conflicts. A psychologist (PSY5) interviewed cautioned that “the danger lies in children equating their worth with their virtual personas, potentially leading to dissatisfaction with their real-life identities.”.

During my field immersion, when I created a Roblox account, the very first question I encountered was: "Who do you want to be?" This seemingly simple prompt carries profound philosophical implications, as it grants children full control over their body shape, height, skin color, and overall appearance – elements that, in the physical world, are often externally imposed rather than self-determined. In this context, digital identity is not only fluid but can also be passed down as a legacy. One psychologist (PSY2) shared the case of a child who inherited a deceased cousin’s Fortnite account, treating the avatar with deep emotional significance. The child meticulously preserved the digital identity, demonstrating how virtual

personas can hold sentimental value and serve as extensions of memory, family ties, and personal history.

In metaverse games spaces, avatars function as extensions of the self (Nagy & Koles, 2014), embodying a mix of physical-world preferences, aspirational identities, and peer influences. Interviews with children reveal that they meticulously select skins and accessories to communicate their tastes, whether through colorful, playful designs in Roblox or sleek, high-status outfits in Fortnite. Some children even described their avatars as more "authentic" than their physical-world selves, highlighting the ways in which digital self-representation can transcend physical limitations.

The ability to customize avatars fosters a sense of agency, giving children control over their digital self-image. The data collected from field observations indicates that this customization is not purely aesthetic but deeply tied to emotional expression. One child (CHD 7, age 9) interviewed stated that they change their avatar's style depending on their mood, wearing bright, whimsical outfits when feeling happy and darker, more aggressive designs when frustrated or competitive. This aligns with Davis's (1994) theory of identity ambivalence, where fashion becomes a medium through which individuals negotiate conflicting aspects of their personalities. Avatars, therefore, serve as dynamic representations of the self, adapting to shifting emotions, social contexts, and in-game experiences.

The intersection of fashion and social belonging is especially evident in multiplayer games, where coordinated outfits signal group identity. In Fortnite, squads often dress in matching skins to assert unity, while in Roblox, themed outfits are common in role-playing communities. Field notes indicate that this practice extends beyond simple aesthetic coordination; it reinforces friendships and social hierarchies. This is fitted with Barnard's (2014) assertion that identity is constituted through consumption, where access to specific fashion items dictates social positioning.

The role of gender in avatar customization is another key aspect of self-expression, revealing how digital fashion both replicates and challenges traditional gender norms. Reilly (2020) argues that cultural markers of gender are inscribed onto the body through fashion, a concept that is mirrored in virtual spaces. The field data suggests that metaverse fashion offers greater flexibility in gender expression than the physical world, yet certain platform biases persist. In Fortnite, for instance, female skins often emphasize stylized femininity with exaggerated proportions, whereas male skins favor bulkier, militaristic designs. However, in Roblox, children frequently experiment with nontraditional gender expressions, mixing elements typically coded as masculine and feminine. This suggests that while gendered

aesthetics are present, metaverse spaces provide opportunities for children to subvert and reimagine these norms.

One particularly interesting finding is how children negotiate gender presentation through digital fashion. A boy interviewed (CHD20, age 9) mentioned that he prefers to play with female skins, that are skinner. These experiences illustrate how avatars act as experimental zones where children can test and explore different aspects of their identities without physical-world consequences.

Avatars also serve as social tools that facilitate interaction and communication. Children often initiate conversations based on their avatar choices, using fashion as an icebreaker. In interviews, children described complimenting each other's skins as a way to build rapport and establish friendships. This reinforces the idea that fashion is not just about self-presentation but also about social engagement. In this way, digital fashion mirrors physical-world practices, where clothing choices influence first impressions and social dynamics.

The transience of digital fashion adds another layer to its significance in self-expression. Unlike physical clothing, which may be worn repeatedly, digital outfits are often switched out frequently, reflecting the evolving nature of online identity. One child explained that they enjoy changing their skin daily to match different gaming moods, treating their avatar as a living, evolving entity. This fluidity contrasts with physical-world fashion, where economic and practical constraints limit frequent outfit changes.

This finding expands upon *My Avatar and Her Beloved Possession* (Nagy & Koles, 2014), representing a theoretical advancement by demonstrating that the relationship between the physical and digital is increasingly reciprocal. It is not just the physical world shaping digital identities, but digital aesthetics, trends, and self-representation actively influencing real-world behaviors and choices. A clear example is Luiz's decision to model his haircut (Figure 24) after his avatar's appearance, illustrating how virtual identity can extend into physical self-expression. As digital experiences become more embodied, the boundary between these two realms continues to blur, reinforcing the deep integration of digital possessions into personal and cultural identity.

Figure 24
Luiz Antonio haircut along time – 2019/2023/2025
Source: Photograph from the author's personal collection

At last, children's digital fashion choices in the metaverse offer valuable insights into their evolving identities. Whether through curated brand affiliations, experimental gender expressions, or peer-driven aesthetic trends, avatars serve as multifaceted representations of selfhood. The interplay between corporate influence, grassroots creativity, and social validation underscores the complexity of fashion identity in virtual spaces. As digital and physical fashion continue to converge, the study of children's self-expression through avatars will become increasingly relevant. Understanding these behaviors sheds light on broader questions of identity, agency, and consumer culture in a world where digital representations hold as much significance as their physical-world counterparts.

"Shit, if I took time out to have an opinion about everything, I wouldn't get any work done." (Stephenson, 2003)

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter presents the final considerations of this study, summarizing the key theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions. It reflects on the implications of the findings, highlighting how metaverse environments constitutes children's fashion identities. Furthermore, it acknowledges the study's limitations and proposes directions for future research, particularly regarding the evolving nature of digital consumption, identity constitution, and the integration of digital and physical fashion.

The majority of interviewees struggled to define what the metaverse is, revealing a significant gap in understanding even among those actively engaged in digital environments. This lack of clarity extends across different groups, including psychologists, children, parents, teachers, and even YouTubers, as shown in the table (Table 15). Despite this uncertainty, game companies have successfully integrated players into metaverse-like experiences through strategic game design, immersing them in a digital world they themselves cannot fully articulate. This raises critical questions about digital literacy and the ways in which individuals navigate and engage with a concept that remains largely undefined, even as it shapes their interactions, identities, and consumption habits.

Table 16

What is Metaverse to you?

	Some Answers	Concept emerged from their perspectives
Psychologists	"This universe is like the garden of play." (PSY2) "For me, the metaverse is those glasses. Yes, when people put on those glasses and see a virtual environment, you know?" (PSY4) "It's not something I research and chase, right? It's what I hear from the children themselves, right? So, what I believe it to be is as if it were actually a parallel universe, as if there were a virtual reality beyond our real reality, as if it were another world, even a world two." (PSY5)	The Metaverse is a parallel universe where children and adolescents immerse themselves in a digital reality as meaningful as the physical world. Described as a "play garden," it fosters exploration, identity formation, and social interaction while presenting new challenges. Some view it through the lens of VR headsets, while others see it as the evolving online spaces children navigate daily. Though not fully understood, it is increasingly shaping younger generations, highlighting the need for new psychological and educational approaches.

Teachers	"I think it's a parallel thing, a parallel universe. I've been watching Spider-Man with my son and he goes all over the metaverse, Multiverse the same thing. I don't know." (TCH1) "Nothing, nothing. No idea where it's going." (TCH2) "But perhaps in my perception, it's a virtual reality, as if it were the world built in a space that isn't material." (TCH3) "In my perception, it's a virtual reality in which people have managed to imprint some of their own characteristics, which aren't necessarily true, but which they might like to have and so on. And now we're able to earn money, for example" (TCH6)	The Metaverse as a parallel online universe, often linked to gaming. While some recognize it as a virtual space for avatars, interactions, and commerce, most struggle to define it clearly. Students primarily reference games rather than the broader concept, highlighting its vague and evolving nature. There is awareness of its role in identity experimentation and social interaction, though some express skepticism. Overall, teachers acknowledge its presence but lack a concrete understanding of its impact.
Parents	"I think it's a parallel digital world in which you can take part in activities. And create a new reality within this digital process. " (PRT1) "A parallel life on the internet, right? We have the life we want to dream of... there are no illnesses." (PRT6)	The Metaverse as a parallel digital world for participation, creation, and idealized experiences, mainly within gaming. Some see it as an integration of multiple virtual spaces, while others perceive it as an escape from reality. Their understanding remains abstract, shaped by their children's interactions with digital platforms.
Youtubers	"Dude, I think the term metaverse is new, but it's always existed with the internet and games, I remember when I was 13-14 years old I already had my computer and the screen was a tube and I was there talking to my friends inside a game and we related...inside the game, there was real friendship, I even had a virtual boyfriend inside the game, you know it was really a life, so the word is new but it's always existed. You know, having a virtual relationship with the person and the background is using the game as a background" (YOU1). "And I'm trying to think of. For me, the definition of a metaverse would be the combination of data ideas totally focused on the virtual." (YOU4) "I think it's a virtual parallel world for me. It's a reality, only on a computer." (YOU6)	The Metaverse as a virtual parallel world, closely tied to gaming and digital interactions. Many see it as an extension of long-existing online experiences, where friendships and activities mirror real life through avatars. Some describe it as a digital replica of reality, while others note its declining buzz due to AI. Despite varying perspectives, they agree it's an evolving space where the virtual and real seamlessly blend.

Children	"Like the multiverse?" (CHD5, age 9) "I don't know exactly what the Metaverse is, but I think it must be something really cool, like a place where you can do lots of different things like in the games I like to play" (CHD9, age 8) "Apart from Fortnite, I play FIFA, which isn't exactly a Metaverse, but has a very strong online aspect where you can compete with people from all over the world. I like to create my team and challenge other players." (CHD13, age 12) "Metaverse is like a place within the internet where you can be whoever you want and do whatever you want. I think Fortnite is a little piece of that, because there you have an avatar, talk to people and even take part in shows. It's like a parallel world." (CHD22, age 8)	The Metaverse as a virtual playground where they can play, explore, and socialize, much like Fortnite, Roblox, and Minecraft. Some view it as a space for creativity and self-expression, while others highlight in-game events as immersive experiences. Though not all are familiar with the term, those who are see it as the future of digital connection and entertainment.

Source: Created by author

As digital and physical identities become increasingly intertwined, this study positions fashion in metaverse environments not merely as entertainment but as a meaningful site of identity constitution, social belonging, and consumer behavior. The research findings suggest that the metaverse functions as both a space of creative freedom and an arena where traditional consumerist pressures are reinforced. By analyzing children's interactions with digital fashion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of Phygital identity and its implications for self-expression, social status, and market dynamics.

6.1 Theoretical Contributions

This research advances ongoing discussions in consumer culture, identity theory, and digital consumption by conceptualizing Phygital Fashion Identity – a construct that acknowledges the fluid and dynamic interplay between physical and digital self-expression. This study demonstrates that fashion identity is performative, adaptive, and shaped by spaces mediation and affordances, and peer validation. This finding aligns with the general objective of understanding how fashion consumption in metaverse game environments contributes to the constitution of children's fashion identities.

The first theoretical finding expands on Phygital Identity as a multi-layered, adaptive construct emerging from the continuous interaction between physical presence, digital self-

expression, and space mediation (whether physical or digital). This study challenges the notion of dual existence, suggesting instead a continuum of identity expressions, where boundaries between "real" (physical) and virtual selves dissolve. This directly contributes to the specific objective of investigating the similarities and differences between children's fashion consumption in the metaverse and the physical world in constituting children's fashion identities.

The second theoretical finding introduces Phygital Fashion Identity, which frames fashion as an adaptive, multi-layered expression at the intersection of physical presence, digital self-styling, and platform-mediated aesthetics. Unlike traditional fashion paradigms constrained by materiality, this study highlights how children curate, remix, and redefine their styles across interconnected digital and physical spaces. This insight directly contributes to the specific objective of comprehending how fashion consumption in metaverse games affects fashion consumption in the physical world.

The third theoretical finding identifies the agents of influence shaping children's fashion identities in Phygital worlds. Parents, peers, YouTubers, game developers, teachers, and psychologists each contribute to the development of children's fashion preferences. While parents act as gatekeepers setting boundaries, peers and influencers amplify trends, and game developers create ecosystems that mirror real-world consumption. These findings align with the specific objective of describing the perceived influences of fashion consumption in metaverse games on children's fashion identity in the physical world.

The fourth theoretical finding outlines the steps and processes in virtual fashion consumption within metaverse platforms like Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite. This process involves multiple stages, including exposure to metaverse platforms, social influences, economic considerations, decision-making, customization, and emotional attachment to digital fashion. These findings reinforce the broader general objective of understanding how fashion consumption in metaverse game environments constitutes children’s fashion identities.

The fifth theoretical finding explores fashion freedom in Phygital worlds, categorizing children into four identity groups: Expressive Creators, Digital Conformists, Analog Rebels, and Restricted Players. Depending on the level of fashion freedom they experience in digital and physical spaces, children develop distinct self-expression patterns. Understanding these variations is critical for educators, brands, and parents to support children's evolving fashion identities. This finding aligns with the specific objective of investigating the similarities and differences between children's fashion consumption in the metaverse and the physical world.

The sixth theoretical finding proposes three key questions to understand the evolution of fashion in the Phygital era: (1) What are the key practices? (2) What are the dominant styles? (3) What are the social functions? Examining these dimensions provides deeper insights into how digital and physical fashion spaces interact, shaping identity formation. This analysis supports the specific objective of comprehending how fashion consumption in the metaverse influences children's physical-world fashion consumption.

By establishing Phygital Fashion Identity as a conceptual lens, this study offers a new paradigm for understanding selfhood in a digital age – one that fully embraces the complexities of identity formation in an era where digital and physical realities are inseparable.

6.2 Methodological Contributions

This research offers a methodological advancement through the introduction of phyginography – a conceptual and practical innovation that integrates traditional qualitative approaches with digital immersion techniques. By bridging physical and digital spheres of interaction, phyginography enables a more comprehensive and situated understanding of contemporary social phenomena, particularly in contexts where identity constitution and consumption practices unfold across hybrid environments. The study employed participant observation, in-depth interviews, visual research (screenshots, videos, and avatar analysis), and documentary analysis – a bricolage, offering a comprehensive understanding of how children engage with metaverse fashion. This methodological innovation contributes to the general objective by ensuring a holistic analysis of fashion consumption in metaverse environments.

Additionally, the study adapted the Gioia methodology with Bezerra’s et al. analytical protocol, enabling a structured approach to categorizing themes related to digital fashion consumption, identity formation, and social belonging. This methodological contribution supports the specific objective of describing the perceived influences of fashion consumption in metaverse games on children's fashion identity in the physical world. To analyze this interplay, Bezerra’s et al. (2020) protocol for video scene analysis was adapted, focusing on how children express their fashion identities in both digital and physical spaces, particularly within gaming environments. This adaptation considers unique aspects of virtual spaces, incorporating elements such as audio and interaction and physical actions. By applying this refined methodological approach, this study sets a foundation for future research, allowing scholars to expand on this work by integrating AI-driven sentiment analysis or conducting longitudinal studies to track how children’s fashion identities evolve over time. This

methodological contribution directly supports the study's specific objectives by offering deeper insights into the interplay between digital and physical fashion consumption.

6.3 Contributions to Practice

The findings offer valuable insights for brands, educators, policymakers, and digital platform designers. For fashion brands, the study highlights the importance of bridging digital and physical fashion. While luxury brands like Gucci and Balenciaga have already entered the metaverse, the study suggests that mainstream fashion retailers (e.g., Renner, C&A) could further explore Phygital collections, offering both digital wearables and their physical counterparts. Brazilian brands, in particular, have been slow to capitalize on this trend, presenting an opportunity for market expansion.

For educators and parents, the study underscores the need for digital literacy programs that address the social and economic implications of digital fashion. As children increasingly express themselves through avatars, conversations about self-worth, financial literacy, and social influence in virtual spaces become essential. Educators should integrate discussions about consumer behavior, social status, and identity negotiation in digital fashion spaces into curricula, preparing children to navigate these environments critically.

Despite the vast potential of metaverse platforms, children primarily use them for play and social interaction, rather than exploring their broader possibilities. The ability of these spaces to host competitions, events, concerts, and virtual museum tours (Çelik, 2023; Chen, 2023; Flavián et al., 2024; Longo & Faraci, 2023), remains largely untapped by young users. This presents a significant opportunity for families, educators, and schools to guide children toward engaging with these platforms in more meaningful ways. By fostering awareness of their educational and creative potential, children themselves can begin to navigate these digital environments not just as entertainment spaces, but as arenas for learning, cultural exploration, and personal development.

For policymakers, this research highlights critical concerns regarding the commercialization of childhood in the metaverse. Unlike physical fashion, which is subject to regulatory frameworks such as child labor laws in garment production, digital fashion operates in a largely unregulated space. This raises ethical issues related to in-game purchases, targeted advertising, and exploitative monetization strategies. The study underscores the need for future regulations that prioritize data transparency, fair pricing models, and robust consumer

protection policies for young users. Addressing these technological, ethical, and inclusivity challenges will require a collaborative approach among policymakers, industry stakeholders, and digital platforms.

The metaverse has emerged as a space for children to explore identity and fashion, with platforms like Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite shaping distinct modes of consumption. While Roblox emphasizes a creator-driven economy, Minecraft prioritizes creativity, and Fortnite integrates exclusivity and branded collaborations, each platform shapes unique ecosystems that significantly impact children's engagement with fashion. Understanding these ecosystems is essential for brands, educators, and policymakers to navigate and leverage digital fashion's evolving landscape.

6.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

While this study offers significant contributions, it has certain limitations. The research primarily focuses on children from financially stable backgrounds, which may not fully capture the experiences of children from lower-income families with limited digital access. Future research should explore how socio-economic factors influence engagement with digital fashion.

The study found few Brazilian brands participating in the metaverse fashion economy, limiting the analysis of local market trends. Expanding the study to include more regional brands and emerging designers could provide a broader perspective on global and local digital fashion dynamics. The research primarily examines Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft, but other digital spaces such as VRChat, Decentraland, or Meta’s Horizon Worlds may have different social and economic structures that influence digital fashion consumption. A comparative study across multiple platforms could enhance understanding. While the study includes insights from psychologists and educators, a longitudinal psychological analysis of how digital fashion impacts self-esteem, body image, and social relationships would be valuable.

The study did not incorporate VR glasses, which could provide deeper insights into immersive experiences and digital embodiment within the metaverse. Future studies should integrate VR technology to explore the full spectrum of Phygital fashion engagement. By addressing these limitations, future research can build on this study’s findings to develop a more comprehensive understanding of digital fashion’s evolving role in identity formation and consumer behavior.

Despite extensive efforts to engage influential YouTubers in the metaverse gaming space, our research faced significant challenges in obtaining direct responses, with over 60 invitations sent without success. This highlights a common difficulty in studying digital influencers, who receive high volumes of communication requests, selectively interact with academic inquiries, and may be reluctant to participate in research that scrutinizes their influence and monetization strategies. To navigate these challenges, data collection was conducted in collaboration with Anne Santos, a member of my research group, through systematic analysis of gaming YouTubers who shape children's digital consumption and identity formation. While this approach provided valuable insights, the dynamic nature of digital platforms and the constant emergence of new influencers present ongoing limitations to structured academic research in this area. Future studies could benefit from alternative methodologies, such as ethnographic content analysis, audience-focused research involving children and parents, or collaborations with industry professionals to access relevant data. Additionally, automated tracking tools and longitudinal studies could help monitor trends and influencer dynamics over time, offering a broader and more objective perspective on their role in shaping digital consumer culture.

Future research could explore how global brands shape digital fashion aesthetics and whether these platforms reinforce existing Eurocentric beauty and style norms, a phenomenon that can be conceptualized as metaverse colonialism. Understanding the mechanisms through which dominant Western fashion standards are embedded into virtual environments would provide insights into digital inclusivity and the representation of diverse cultural aesthetics. Additionally, there is a need to investigate how young content creators, particularly YouTubers, experience fashion anxiety in digital spaces. The pressure to maintain a curated virtual identity and meet influencer expectations can lead to stress, impacting their self-image and emotional well-being. Examining these psychological aspects could help in designing healthier digital consumption practices.

Another avenue for future research is a comparative analysis of generational fashion identity, contrasting the Phygital fashion habits of Gen Alpha with Millennials and Gen Z. This comparison would shed light on evolving consumer behaviors and provide insights into the long-term impact of digital fashion on identity formation. Additionally, developing new research methodologies to study digital fashion’s lasting influence on personal identity and consumption behaviors is crucial. Expanding metaverse research frameworks, including longitudinal studies and AI-driven sentiment analysis, could enhance understanding of how

digital fashion evolves over time and how it shapes identity across different demographic groups.

Concluding remarks

This study underscores that digital fashion is no longer a niche phenomenon but a key site of identity formation and social interaction for younger generations. The metaverse is both an extension of the internet and a new social form, shaping how children constitute their sense of self. Fashion is not merely a tool for decoration; in the digital world, it is a language of belonging, aspiration, and social mobility.

As the metaverse continues to evolve, its impact on consumer culture, fashion, and identity will deepen. Whether this leads to greater creativity and self-expression or new forms of digital exploitation and status anxiety depends on how industries, policymakers, and educators navigate these changes. Future research should continue investigating the long-term effects of metaverse fashion on personal identity and social relationships, ensuring that digital spaces remain inclusive, empowering, and culturally diverse.

Ultimately, the integration of digital and physical fashion is not a passing trend but a structural shift in how identity is negotiated in contemporary society. As children grow up navigating Phygital spaces, their consumer habits, social behaviors, and self-expression patterns will redefine the future of fashion and identity. Understanding these dynamics is essential for anticipating the next evolution of consumer culture in a world where digital and physical realities are no longer separate but seamlessly interconnected.

This thesis has already begun to bear fruit, and much more is yet to come, as knowledge must be communicated and widely disseminated. The impact of this research extends across multiple domains, generating cultural products, social initiatives – such as training programs for educators and lectures for children – and academic contributions. My work is not limited to theoretical discussions but actively translates into tangible outputs that foster engagement and understanding. I have compiled a table with over 30 projects (Appendix L), spanning past, present, and future initiatives, demonstrating the breadth of this research and its potential for continued expansion. By bridging academia with practical applications, this thesis reinforces the vital role of knowledge production in shaping both scholarly discourse and real-world change.

Phygital Girl (to the tune of "Material Girl")

(Adapted from Madonna, Material Girl, Like Virgin Album (1984), with a little help from my friend GPT Chat)

Verse 1

Some boys text me, some boys game me, I think they're okay,
But if they don't send cool emojis, I just log away.
They can flex and they can stream,
But they can't load my vibe (that's right),
'Cause the boy with the rarest skin, Is always worth my time.

Chorus

'Cause we are living in a phygital world,
And I am a phygital girl,
You know that we are living in a phygital world,
And I am a phygital girl.

Verse 2

Some boys FaceTime, some boys go live, That's all right with me,
If they don't match my aesthetic, Then I have to let them be.
Some boys flex, and some boys check,
But I don't click reply (no way),
Only boys who build my metaverse,
Make my Wi-Fi fly.

Chorus

'Cause we are living in a phygital world,
And I am a phygital girl,
You know that we are living in a phygital world,
And I am a phygital girl.
(2x)

Bridge

VR dreams and AR screens, Filter life so bright,
From Roblox skins to Fortnite wins, I'm glowing in the light.

Verse 3

Boys may swipe and boys may type, And that's all fine, you see,
But experience has made me rich, Now they all follow me!

Chorus

'Cause everybody's living in a phygital world, And I am a phygital girl,
You know that we are living in a phygital world,
And I am a phygital girl.

Final

A phygital, a phygital, a phygital, a phygital world,
Living in a phygital world (phygital),
Living in a phygital world (ah-ah),

Living in a phygital world (phygital),
Living in a phygital world!

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APPENDIX A – Termo de Assentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TALE)

(a ser assinado pelo participante menor de 18 anos ou para participante legalmente incapaz)

Deve ser acompanhado pelo TCLE assinado pelos responsáveis legais

Nome do Estudo: CRIANÇAS, CONSUMO DE MODA E O PROCESSO DE CONSTITUIÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE: UMA ABORDAGEM INTERPRETATIVISTA NOS METAVERSOS.

Assistente de pesquisa: LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA

Pesquisador Responsável: Profa. Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece

Vínculo Institucional: Universidade Estadual de Maringá

Telefone para Contato com o investigador principal: 43-991313974/43-30640110

E-mail do investigador principal: lair_rocha@hotmail.com

Olá, tudo bem? Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar de um estudo científico, sendo que as informações sobre o mesmo estão descritas nos itens que se seguem. É importante que você leia, ou que alguém leia para você, esse documento com atenção e, em caso de qualquer dúvida ou informação que não entenda, peça ao pesquisador responsável pelo estudo ou a seus pais ou responsáveis que expliquem a você. Você poderá participar desse estudo se seus pais ou responsáveis concordarem e também se você de fato quiser.

Se eles não deixarem ou se você não quiser participar não tem problema algum. Não precisa ficar triste ou chateado com isso, combinado?

Se você aceitar, irá assinar este documento, que é um Termo de Assentimento Livre e Esclarecido, sendo que um dos seus pais irá assinar outro documento, chamado Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido, que é onde ele vai confirmar que deixa você participar.

Para você saber, este estudo **foi aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da Universidade Estadual de Maringá**, sob protocolo **71894223.0.0000.0104** que avaliou o estudo e as condições necessárias para a sua proteção e o respeito aos seus direitos como participante da pesquisa. Um Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa (também conhecido como CEP) é um órgão responsável pela avaliação e acompanhamento dos aspectos éticos de estudos que envolvem seres humanos, com o objetivo de assegurar a dignidade, os direitos, a segurança, a proteção e o bem-estar de todos os participantes. Parece complicado, mas fique tranquilo(a) que já explicamos tudo isso certinho para seus pais. Agora vamos explicar para você o que estamos propondo, o que você terá de fazer se quiser participar deste projeto de pesquisa.

Por que este estudo está sendo realizado? *Precisamos compreender como os Metaversos (Roblox, Minecraft, por exemplo) te inspiram e te motivam a se vestir, a se relacionar com seus amigos, e a ser quem você é.*

Se eu quiser participar, o que terei de fazer? *Primeiramente vamos fazer um desenho juntos, onde você me mostrará como você se veste e como você gostaria de se vestir. Em seguida, vamos entrar nos Metaversos que você mais costuma jogar, através do seu computador, tablet ou celular. Em seguida, você vai me apresentar o seu Avatar, suas Skins e os seus acessórios. Vamos conversar um pouco sobre eles. Na sequência você irá jogar por um tempo de 30 min, comigo ou com algum colega. Nosso jogo será filmado. Por último, você irá me mostrar seu guarda-roupa, seus itens de escola, seu quarto, para que eu possa fotografar. Vamos conversar um pouco sobre a relação destes objetos com os Metaversos.*

Se eu participar, há algum risco à minha saúde? *Não. Você irá jogar usando os seus equipamentos, na sua casa, no seu aconchego. Do jeito que você sempre faz. Pode ser que você fique um pouco envergonhado com a gravação do jogo, mas ela é muito importante para eu conseguir fazer os estudos no futuro. Tomaremos alguns cuidados como deixar você a vontade, parar de jogar ou a gravação no momento que você quiser.*

Se eu participar vou ganhar alguma coisa? *A participação é voluntária. Nem você e nem seus pais ou responsáveis irão ganhar dinheiro com isso, mas você ajudará a entender o significado das skins e acessórios dos ambientes de Metaverso para você e para outras crianças.*

Se eu quiser desistir, eu posso? *Você pode sim, a qualquer momento.*

As pessoas vão saber se eu aceitar ou recusar participar do estudo? *Fique tranquilo(a) que ninguém ficará sabendo se você não quiser participar da pesquisa. Se aceitar, vamos também manter seus dados em segredo. Somente seus pais e as pessoas envolvidas na pesquisa é que saberão quem você é. Para os outros, prometemos não contar sua identidade. Você escolherá um nome misterioso para que só nós saibamos quem é você. Poderemos usar as informações que você nos der, mas nunca colocando seu nome ou dados que permitam que outras pessoas te identifiquem, combinado?*

Se eu tiver dúvidas ou algum problema, devo falar com quem? *Em caso de alguma dúvida ou de algum problema, fale sempre primeiro com seus pais ou responsáveis. Eles irão procurar pela ajuda* ***necessária****.*

Garantimos acompanhamento para sanar dúvidas e assistência no que diz respeito aos resultados da pesquisa a ser prestada aos participantes, caso seja necessário (Resolução CNS n.° 510, de 2016, Artigo 17, Inciso V).

Guarda dos dados e material coletados na pesquisa

As entrevistas serão transcritas e armazenadas, em arquivos digitais, mas somente terão acesso às mesmas o pesquisador assistente e o responsável.

Ao final da pesquisa, todo material será mantido em arquivo, por pelo menos 5 anos, conforme Resolução CNS nº 466/12. Após 20 anos os dados serão permanentemente destruídos (GRAVAÇÕES E TRANSCRIÇÕES).

Em caso de quaisquer perguntas, preocupações ou reclamações com relação aos seus direitos como participante do estudo, seus pais poderão entrar em contato com o Programa de Pós graduação da Universidade Estadual de Maringá (sec-ppa@uem.br) ou *Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa envolvendo Seres Humanos da UEM (COPEP): Av. Colombo, 5790, PPG, sala 4, CEP 87020-900. Maringá-Pr. Telefone: (44) 3011-4597, e-mail: copep@uem.br. Atendimento: 2ª a 6ª feira das 13h30 às 17h30. O atendimento ocorrerá preferencialmente por telefone ou e-mail. Para atendimento presencial, o COPEP solicita a gentileza de agendar horário.*

TERMO DE ACEITE *

Eu, _____,

declaro que quero participar desta pesquisa.

_____ _____

Assinatura do menor de idade participante *Data*

Declaro que forneci todas as informações necessárias da pesquisa ao participante.

_____

Nome do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

_____ _____

Assinatura do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido *Data*

*O TALE será elaborado em duas vias, e o participante de pesquisa receberá uma via do documento, assinada pelo participante de pesquisa e pelo pesquisador, rubricada em todas as páginas por ambos.

APPENDIX B – Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

(TCLE para responsável por menor de idade ou maior com incapacidade)

Nome do Estudo: CRIANÇAS, CONSUMO DE MODA E O PROCESSO DE CONSTITUIÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE: UMA ABORDAGEM INTERPRETATIVISTA NOS METAVERSOS.

Assistente de pesquisa: LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA

Pesquisador Responsável: Profa. Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece

Vínculo Institucional: Universidade Estadual de Maringá

Telefone para Contato com o investigador principal: 43-991313974/43-30640110

E-mail do investigador principal: lair_rocha@hotmail.com

Seu filho(a) está sendo convidado(a) a participar de um estudo científico, sendo que as informações sobre o mesmo estão descritas nos itens que se seguem. É importante que você leia, ou que alguém leia para você, esse documento com atenção e, em caso de qualquer dúvida ou informação que não entenda, peça ao pesquisador responsável pelo estudo que explique a você. Você não é obrigado(a) a dar seu aval para que seu(sua) filho(a) participe desta pesquisa, ficando a seu critério dar ou não a sua permissão. Caso decida dar seu consentimento, você assinará esse Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido em duas vias, sendo que uma delas deverá ficar com você. Caso precise de mais tempo, você poderá levar este Termo para casa, para revisar e discutir com a sua família. É importante também que saiba que você pode retirar o seu consentimento a qualquer momento, sem ter que dar maiores explicações, não implicando em qualquer prejuízo a você ou seu filho.

Este estudo **foi aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da Universidade Estadual de Maringá**, sob protocolo **71894223.0.0000.0104** que avaliou o estudo e as condições necessárias para a sua proteção e o respeito aos seus direitos como participante da pesquisa. Um Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa (também conhecido como CEP) é um órgão responsável pela avaliação e acompanhamento dos aspectos éticos de estudos que envolvem seres humanos, com o objetivo de assegurar a dignidade, os direitos, a segurança, a proteção e o bem-estar de todos os participantes.

Por que este estudo está sendo realizado? *Seu filho(a) foi convidado a participar deste estudo para nos ajudar a compreender como os itens consumidos em Metaversos (como as roupinhas dos avatares no jogo Roblox, por exemplo) se relacionam com a constituição da identidade dele (a). Isso é importante pois assim como a família e a escola, os Metaversos são espaços que as crianças estão inseridas.*

Se eu der meu consentimento, a que procedimentos meu filho(a) estará sendo submetido(a)? *Este estudo envolve a coleta de dados junto à criança da seguinte forma: pediremos que eles façam um desenho mostrando como se vestem e como gostariam de se vestir. Em seguida, irei jogar ou presenciar seu filho (a) jogando com uma outra criança. Assim, poderei conhecer os itens do avatar do seu filho e as dinâmicas que envolvem o jogo.*

Por último, tiraremos fotos de itens físicos dos seu filho (a) que têm relação com estes Metaversos. Tudo ocorrerá no ambiente doméstico da criança e usando os dispositivos eletrônicos que ele sempre usa.

Se eu der meu consentimento, quais os Riscos e Desconfortos previstos para meu filho(a)? *Seu filho irá jogar usando os seus equipamentos, na sua casa, do jeito que você sempre faz. Pode ser que ele fique um pouco envergonhado com a gravação do jogo. É possível ainda, que após me apresentar os itens do seu avatar ele deseje adquirir mais itens. Tomaremos alguns cuidados como deixar a criança a vontade, parar de jogar ou a gravação no momento que ela quiser. Ainda, será trabalhada a linguagem de uma forma que não estimule o consumo, mas que busque compreender o significado para a criança.*

Se eu der meu consentimento, teremos algum benefício? *A participação é voluntária. Nem você e nem seu filho irão ganhar dinheiro com isso, mas você ajudará a entender o significado das skins e acessórios dos ambientes de Metaverso para a sua e para outras crianças.*

Se eu der meu consentimento, quais os meus direitos do meu filho(a)? *Se depois de ler este Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido até o final, ou ele ter sido lido para você por alguém, e ter todas as explicações dadas pelo(s) pesquisador(es) e todas as dúvidas sanadas por este(s) você der seu consentimento para seu filho(a) participar do estudo, deverá assinar as duas vias deste documento, entregar uma para o pesquisador e levar outra para casa. Se precisar de mais tempo, você poderá levar este Termo para casa para revisar e discutir com a sua família ou que outras pessoas que possam te ajudar na decisão. Garantimos acompanhamento para sanar dúvidas e assistência no que diz respeito aos resultados da pesquisa a ser prestada aos participantes, caso seja necessário (Resolução CNS n.° 510, de 2016, Artigo 17, Inciso V).*

Meu filho(a) terá a identidade mantida em segredo? *Sim. Durante a participação de seu filho(a), a equipe envolvida nesta pesquisa coletará algumas informações pessoais suas. Essas informações serão utilizadas somente para os fins desta pesquisa. Todos os dados coletados durante o estudo serão identificados através de iniciais, número de seleção e número do participante, ou de outra forma como pseudônimos de forma que não seja possível saber quem é seu filho(a), garantindo a confidencialidade e o sigilo nas informações coletadas. Nenhum dado capaz de identificá-lo(a) será publicado. Sua identidade será mantida em segredo quando os resultados do estudo forem publicados. Ao documentar os resultados deste estudo, garantimos também o sigilo de sua identidade. O acesso às informações pessoais, assim como todos os documentos do estudo que o(a) identificarem, serão mantidos em sigilo, conforme exigido pelas normas brasileiras. Se algum dado for relatado em publicações ou discussões científicas, seu filho(a) não será em momento algum identificado(a). O mesmo é válido para os vídeos e imagens coletadas.*

Mesmo tendo dado meu consentimento, posso mudar de ideia depois? *Mesmo tendo assinado este documento, você pode optar por retirar o consentimento para que seu filho(a) participem do estudo, a qualquer momento. A sua decisão não implicará em quaisquer penalidades ou perda de benefícios que vocês tenham por direito.*

Além disso, o pesquisador responsável poderá, em alguma eventualidade, interromper o estudo a qualquer momento. Neste caso ele deverá notificar você após ter informado o ***Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da Universidade Estadual de Maringá,*** *que avaliou e aprovou o estudo.*

<u>Guarda dos dados e material coletados na pesquisa</u>

As entrevistas serão transcritas e armazenadas, em arquivos digitais, mas somente terão acesso às mesmas o pesquisador assistente e o responsável.

Ao final da pesquisa, todo material será mantido em arquivo, por pelo menos 5 anos, conforme Resolução CNS nº 466/12. Após 20 anos os dados serão permanentemente destruídos (GRAVAÇÕES E TRANSCRIÇÕES).

Em casos de dúvidas para quem eu devo ligar?

Em caso de dúvidas ou perguntas, ou caso deseje retirar o consentimento para que seu filho(a) participem da pesquisa, você deverá entrar em contato com um dos pesquisadores abaixo:

Doutoranda Lair Barroso Arraes Rocha Silva, lair_rocha@hotmail.com, 43-991313974.

Profa. Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece, omcpepece@uem.br

Em caso de quaisquer perguntas, preocupações ou reclamações com relação aos seus direitos como participante do estudo, seus pais poderão entrar em contato com o Programa de Pós graduação da Universidade Estadual de Maringá (sec-ppa@uem.br) ou *Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa envolvendo Seres Humanos da UEM (COPEP): Av. Colombo, 5790, PPG, sala 4, CEP 87020-900. Maringá-Pr. Telefone: (44) 3011-4597, e-mail: copep@uem.br. Atendimento: 2ª a 6ª feira das 13h30 às 17h30. O atendimento ocorrerá preferencialmente por telefone ou e-mail. Para atendimento presencial, o COPEP solicita a gentileza de agendar horário.*

TERMO DE ACEITE *

Eu, _____, declaro que dei meu consentimento para que meu filho(a) _____ participe desta pesquisa.

_____ _____

Assinatura do responsável legal pelo participante *Data*

Declaro que forneci todas as informações necessárias da pesquisa ao participante.

PELO M

_____

Nome do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

_____ _____

Assinatura do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido *Data*

*O TCLE será elaborado em duas vias, e o participante de pesquisa receberá uma via do documento, assinada pelo participante de pesquisa e pelo pesquisador, rubricada em todas as páginas por ambos.

APPENDIX C – Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

(TCLE para entrevistas com pais ou responsável pelas crianças participantes da pesquisa)

Assistente de pesquisa: LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA

Pesquisador Responsável: Profa. Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece

Vínculo Institucional: Universidade Estadual de Maringá

Telefone para Contato com o investigador principal: 43-991313974/43-30640110

E-mail do investigador principal: lair_rocha@hotmail.com

Prezado(a) participante,

Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar da pesquisa CRIANÇAS, CONSUMO DE MODA E O PROCESSO DE CONSTITUIÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE: UMA ABORDAGEM INTERPRETATIVISTA NOS METAVERSOS.**,** desenvolvida por LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA, discente de Doutorado em Administração da Universidade Estadual de Maringá sob orientação da Professora Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece.

Objetivo central

O objetivo central do estudo é compreender como o consumo de moda no Metaverso atua na constituição da identidade da criança.

Por que você está sendo convidado (critério de inclusão)

O convite a sua participação se deve à importância que a família exerce nos cuidados com a criança e pelo fato de a família ser fundamental no processo de constituição da identidade da criança.

Entretanto, é importante dizer que a sua participação é voluntária, isto é, ela não é obrigatória, e você tem plena autonomia para decidir se quer ou não participar, bem como retirar sua participação a qualquer momento. Você não será penalizado de nenhuma maneira caso decida não consentir sua participação, ou desistir da mesma. Contudo, ela é muito importante para a execução da pesquisa.

Serão garantidas a confidencialidade e a privacidade das informações por você prestadas

Mecanismos para garantir a confidencialidade e a privacidade

Qualquer dado que possa identificá-lo será omitido na divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa, e o material será armazenado em local seguro.

A qualquer momento, durante a pesquisa, ou posteriormente, você poderá solicitar do pesquisador informações sobre sua participação e/ou sobre a pesquisa, o que poderá ser feito através dos meios de contato explicitados neste Termo.

Procedimentos detalhados que serão utilizados na pesquisa

A sua participação consistirá em responder perguntas de um roteiro de entrevista à pesquisadora do projeto. A entrevista será gravada em áudio ou vídeo, se online.

Tempo de duração

O tempo de duração da entrevista é de aproximadamente uma hora.

Guarda dos dados e material coletados na pesquisa

As entrevistas serão transcritas e armazenadas, em arquivos digitais, mas somente terão acesso às mesmas o aluno e seu professor orientador.

Ao final da pesquisa, todo material será mantido em arquivo, por pelo menos 5 anos, conforme Resolução CNS nº 466/12. Após 20 anos os dados serão permanentemente destruídos (GRAVAÇÕES E TRANSCRIÇÕES).

Benefícios

O benefício relacionado com a sua colaboração nesta pesquisa é o de nos ajudar a identificar como espaços virtuais de metaverso atuam na constituição da identidade de uma criança, o que pode ser importante na condução das escolhas relacionadas a consumo no ambiente familiar e no cuidado com as crianças.

Previsão de riscos ou desconfortos

Toda pesquisa possui riscos potenciais. Pode ser que você se sinta constrangido em conversar sobre as dinâmicas familiares e que possa se sentir em uma posição de julgamento. Mas é importante dizer que os pesquisadores estão focados apenas em identificar como as ações ocorrem na realidade, sem julgamentos morais. Os pesquisadores se comprometem a não insistir em quaisquer perguntas que possam gerar desconforto. *Garantimos acompanhamento para sanar dúvidas e assistência no que diz respeito aos resultados da pesquisa a ser prestada aos participantes, caso seja necessário (Resolução CNS n.° 510, de 2016, Artigo 17, Inciso V).*

Sobre divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa

Os resultados serão divulgados em palestras dirigidas ao público participante, através de mecanismos para divulgação da ciência, artigos científicos e na própria tese em si.

Observações:

1. **Este Termo** é redigido em duas vias, sendo uma para o participante e outra para o pesquisador;
2. Todas as páginas deverão ser rubricadas pelo participante da pesquisa e pelo pesquisador responsável;

Em caso de quaisquer perguntas, preocupações ou reclamações com relação aos seus direitos como participante do estudo, seus pais poderão entrar em contato com o Programa de Pós graduação da Universidade Estadual de Maringá (sec-ppa@uem.br) ou *Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa envolvendo Seres Humanos da UEM (COPEP): Av. Colombo, 5790, PPG, sala 4, CEP 87020-900. Maringá-Pr. Telefone: (44) 3011-4597, e-mail: copep@uem.br. Atendimento: 2ª a 6ª feira das 13h30 às 17h30. O atendimento ocorrerá preferencialmente por telefone ou e-mail. Para atendimento presencial, o COPEP solicita a gentileza de agendar horário.*

TERMO DE ACEITE

Eu, _____,
declaro que quero participar desta pesquisa.

_____

Assinatura do Participante

Declaro que forneci todas as informações necessárias da pesquisa ao participante.

_____ _____

Assinatura do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Lacal e Data

APPENDIX D – Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

(TCLE para entrevistas com professores da educação infantil)

Assistente de pesquisa: LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA

Pesquisador Responsável: Profa. Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece

Vínculo Institucional: Universidade Estadual de Maringá

Telefone para Contato com o investigador principal: 43-991313974/43-30640110

E-mail do investigador principal: lair_rocha@hotmail.com

Prezado(a) participante,

Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar da pesquisa CRIANÇAS, CONSUMO DE MODA E O PROCESSO DE CONSTITUIÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE: UMA ABORDAGEM INTERPRETATIVISTA NOS METAVERSOS.**,** desenvolvida por LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA, discente de Doutorado em Administração da Universidade Estadual de Maringá sob orientação da Professora Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece.

Objetivo central

O objetivo central do estudo é compreender como o consumo de moda no Metaverso atua na constituição da identidade da criança.

Por que você está sendo convidado (critério de inclusão)

O convite a sua participação se deve à importância que o ambiente escolar exerce nos cuidados com a criança e pelo fato de a escola ser fundamental no processo de constituição da identidade da criança.

Entretanto, é importante dizer que a sua participação é voluntária, isto é, ela não é obrigatória, e você tem plena autonomia para decidir se quer ou não participar, bem como retirar sua participação a qualquer momento. Você não será penalizado de nenhuma maneira caso decida não consentir sua participação, ou desistir da mesma. Contudo, ela é muito importante para a execução da pesquisa.

Serão garantidas a confidencialidade e a privacidade das informações por você prestadas

Mecanismos para garantir a confidencialidade e a privacidade

Qualquer dado que possa identificá-lo será omitido na divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa, e o material será armazenado em local seguro.

A qualquer momento, durante a pesquisa, ou posteriormente, você poderá solicitar do pesquisador informações sobre sua participação e/ou sobre a pesquisa, o que poderá ser feito através dos meios de contato explicitados neste Termo.

Procedimentos detalhados que serão utilizados na pesquisa

A sua participação consistirá em responder perguntas de um roteiro de entrevista à pesquisadora do projeto. A entrevista será gravada em áudio ou vídeo, se online.

Tempo de duração

O tempo de duração da entrevista é de aproximadamente uma hora.

Guarda dos dados e material coletados na pesquisa

As entrevistas serão transcritas e armazenadas, em arquivos digitais, mas somente terão acesso às mesmas o aluno e seu professor orientador.

Ao final da pesquisa, todo material será mantido em arquivo, por pelo menos 5 anos, conforme Resolução CNS nº 466/12. Após 20 anos os dados serão permanentemente destruídos (GRAVAÇÕES E TRANSCRIÇÕES).

Benefícios

O benefício relacionado com a sua colaboração nesta pesquisa é o de nos ajudar a identificar como espaços virtuais de metaverso atuam na constituição da identidade de uma criança, o que pode ser importante na condução das escolhas relacionadas ao ensino e aprendizado e no cuidado e orientação junto as crianças.

Previsão de riscos ou desconfortos

Toda pesquisa possui riscos potenciais. Pode ser que você se sinta constrangido em conversar sobre as dinâmicas na escola e que possa se sentir em uma posição de julgamento. Mas é importante dizer que os pesquisadores estão focados apenas em identificar como as ações ocorrem na realidade, sem julgamentos morais. Os pesquisadores se comprometem a não insistir em quaisquer perguntas que possam gerar desconforto. *Garantimos acompanhamento para sanar dúvidas e assistência no que diz respeito aos resultados da pesquisa a ser prestada aos participantes, caso seja necessário (Resolução CNS n.° 510, de 2016, Artigo 17, Inciso V).*

Sobre divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa

Os resultados serão divulgados em palestras dirigidas ao público participante, através de mecanismos para divulgação da ciência, artigos científicos e na própria tese em si.

Observações:

1. **Este Termo** é redigido em duas vias, sendo uma para o participante e outra para o pesquisador;
2. Todas as páginas deverão ser rubricadas pelo participante da pesquisa e pelo pesquisador responsável;

Em caso de quaisquer perguntas, preocupações ou reclamações com relação aos seus direitos como participante do estudo, seus pais poderão entrar em contato com o Programa de Pós graduação da Universidade Estadual de Maringá (sec-ppa@uem.br) ou *Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa envolvendo Seres Humanos da UEM (COPEP): Av. Colombo, 5790, PPG, sala 4, CEP 87020-900. Maringá-Pr. Telefone: (44) 3011-4597, e-mail: copep@uem.br. Atendimento: 2ª a 6ª feira das 13h30 às 17h30. O atendimento ocorrerá preferencialmente por telefone ou e-mail. Para atendimento presencial, o COPEP solicita a gentileza de agendar horário.*

TERMO DE ACEITE

Eu, _____,
declaro que quero participar desta pesquisa.

_____

Assinatura do Participante

Declaro que forneci todas as informações necessárias da pesquisa ao participante.

_____ _____

Assinatura do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Lacal e Data

APPENDIX E – Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

(TCLE para entrevistas com psicólogos infantis)

Assistente de pesquisa: LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA

Pesquisador Responsável: Profa. Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece

Vínculo Institucional: Universidade Estadual de Maringá

Telefone para Contato com o investigador principal: 43-991313974/43-30640110

E-mail do investigador principal: lair_rocha@hotmail.com

Prezado(a) participante,

Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar da pesquisa CRIANÇAS, CONSUMO DE MODA E O PROCESSO DE CONSTITUIÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE: UMA ABORDAGEM INTERPRETATIVISTA NOS METAVERSOS**,** desenvolvida por LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA, discente de Doutorado em Administração da Universidade Estadual de Maringá sob orientação da Professora Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece.

Objetivo central

O objetivo central do estudo é compreender como o consumo de moda no Metaverso atua na constituição da identidade da criança.

Por que você está sendo convidado (critério de inclusão)

O convite a sua participação se deve à importância o psicólogo exerce na mediação de conflitos durante o período de constituição da identidade da criança e pelo fato de ser uma ponte entre a criança e a família.

Entretanto, é importante dizer que a sua participação é voluntária, isto é, ela não é obrigatória, e você tem plena autonomia para decidir se quer ou não participar, bem como retirar sua participação a qualquer momento. Você não será penalizado de nenhuma maneira caso decida não consentir sua participação, ou desistir da mesma. Contudo, ela é muito importante para a execução da pesquisa.

Serão garantidas a confidencialidade e a privacidade das informações por você prestadas

Mecanismos para garantir a confidencialidade e a privacidade

Qualquer dado que possa identificá-lo será omitido na divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa, e o material será armazenado em local seguro.

A qualquer momento, durante a pesquisa, ou posteriormente, você poderá solicitar do pesquisador informações sobre sua participação e/ou sobre a pesquisa, o que poderá ser feito através dos meios de contato explicitados neste Termo.

Procedimentos detalhados que serão utilizados na pesquisa

A sua participação consistirá em responder perguntas de um roteiro de entrevista à pesquisadora do projeto. A entrevista será gravada em áudio ou vídeo, se online.

Tempo de duração

O tempo de duração da entrevista é de aproximadamente uma hora.

Guarda dos dados e material coletados na pesquisa

As entrevistas serão transcritas e armazenadas, em arquivos digitais, mas somente terão acesso às mesmas o aluno e seu professor orientador.

Ao final da pesquisa, todo material será mantido em arquivo, por pelo menos 5 anos, conforme Resolução CNS nº 466/12. Após 20 anos os dados serão permanentemente destruídos (GRAVAÇÕES E TRANSCRIÇÕES).

Benefícios

O benefício relacionado com a sua colaboração nesta pesquisa é o de nos ajudar a identificar como espaços virtuais de metaverso atuam na constituição da identidade de uma criança, o que pode ser importante na condução da vivência clínica e no suporte oferecido à crianças, pais e escolas.

Previsão de riscos ou desconfortos

Toda pesquisa possui riscos potenciais. Pode ser que você se sinta constrangido em conversar sobre as dinâmicas familiares e que possa se sentir em uma posição de julgamento. Mas é importante dizer que os pesquisadores estão focados apenas em identificar como as ações ocorrem na realidade, sem julgamentos morais. Os pesquisadores se comprometem a não insistir em quaisquer perguntas que possam gerar desconforto. *Garantimos acompanhamento para sanar dúvidas e assistência no que diz respeito aos resultados da pesquisa a ser prestada aos participantes, caso seja necessário (Resolução CNS n.° 510, de 2016, Artigo 17, Inciso V).*

Sobre divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa

Os resultados serão divulgados em palestras dirigidas ao público participante, através de mecanismos para divulgação da ciência, artigos científicos e na própria tese em si.

Observações:

1. **Este Termo** é redigido em duas vias, sendo uma para o participante e outra para o pesquisador;
2. Todas as páginas deverão ser rubricadas pelo participante da pesquisa e pelo pesquisador responsável;

Em caso de quaisquer perguntas, preocupações ou reclamações com relação aos seus direitos como participante do estudo, seus pais poderão entrar em contato com o Programa de Pós graduação da Universidade Estadual de Maringá (sec-ppa@uem.br) ou *Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa envolvendo Seres Humanos da UEM (COPEP): Av. Colombo, 5790, PPG, sala 4, CEP 87020-900. Maringá-Pr. Telefone: (44) 3011-4597, e-mail: copep@uem.br. Atendimento: 2ª a 6ª feira das 13h30 às 17h30. O atendimento ocorrerá preferencialmente por telefone ou e-mail. Para atendimento presencial, o COPEP solicita a gentileza de agendar horário.*

TERMO DE ACEITE

Eu, _____,
declaro que quero participar desta pesquisa.

_____

Assinatura do Participante

Declaro que forneci todas as informações necessárias da pesquisa ao participante.

_____ _____

Assinatura do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Lacal e Data

APPENDIX F – Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

(TCLE para entrevistas com Youtubers)

Assistente de pesquisa: LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA

Pesquisador Responsável: Profa. Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece

Vínculo Institucional: Universidade Estadual de Maringá

Telefone para Contato com o investigador principal: 43-991313974/43-30640110

E-mail do investigador principal: lair_rocha@hotmail.com

Prezado(a) participante,

Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar da pesquisa CRIANÇAS, CONSUMO DE MODA E O PROCESSO DE CONSTITUIÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE: UMA ABORDAGEM INTERPRETATIVISTA NOS METAVERSOS**,** desenvolvida por LAIR BARROSO ARRAES ROCHA SILVA, discente de Doutorado em Administração da Universidade Estadual de Maringá sob orientação da Professora Dra. Olga Maria Coutinho Pépece.

Objetivo central

O objetivo central do estudo é compreender como o consumo de moda no Metaverso atua na constituição da identidade da criança.

Por que você está sendo convidado (critério de inclusão)

O convite a sua participação se deve à importância que os Youtubers exercem no processo de aculturação das crianças no metaverso.

Entretanto, é importante dizer que a sua participação é voluntária, isto é, ela não é obrigatória, e você tem plena autonomia para decidir se quer ou não participar, bem como retirar sua participação a qualquer momento. Você não será penalizado de nenhuma maneira caso decida não consentir sua participação, ou desistir da mesma. Contudo, ela é muito importante para a execução da pesquisa.

Serão garantidas a confidencialidade e a privacidade das informações por você prestadas

Mecanismos para garantir a confidencialidade e a privacidade

Qualquer dado que possa identificá-lo será omitido na divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa, e o material será armazenado em local seguro.

A qualquer momento, durante a pesquisa, ou posteriormente, você poderá solicitar do pesquisador informações sobre sua participação e/ou sobre a pesquisa, o que poderá ser feito através dos meios de contato explicitados neste Termo.

Procedimentos detalhados que serão utilizados na pesquisa

A sua participação consistirá em responder perguntas de um roteiro de entrevista à pesquisadora do projeto. A entrevista será gravada em áudio ou vídeo, se online.

Tempo de duração

O tempo de duração da entrevista é de aproximadamente uma hora.

Guarda dos dados e material coletados na pesquisa

As entrevistas serão transcritas e armazenadas, em arquivos digitais, mas somente terão acesso às mesmas o aluno e seu professor orientador.

Ao final da pesquisa, todo material será mantido em arquivo, por pelo menos 5 anos, conforme Resolução CNS nº 466/12. Após 20 anos os dados serão permanentemente destruídos (GRAVAÇÕES E TRANSCRIÇÕES).

Benefícios

O benefício relacionado com a sua colaboração nesta pesquisa é o de nos ajudar a identificar como espaços virtuais de metaverso atuam na constituição da identidade de uma criança, o que pode ser importante na condução das escolhas relacionadas ao ensino e aprendizado e no cuidado e orientação junto as crianças.

Previsão de riscos ou desconfortos

Toda pesquisa possui riscos potenciais. Pode ser que você se sinta constrangido em conversar sobre as dinâmicas na escola e que possa se sentir em uma posição de julgamento. Mas é importante dizer que os pesquisadores estão focados apenas em identificar como as ações ocorrem na realidade, sem julgamentos morais. Os pesquisadores se comprometem a não insistir em quaisquer perguntas que possam gerar desconforto. *Garantimos acompanhamento para sanar dúvidas e assistência no que diz respeito aos resultados da pesquisa a ser prestada aos participantes, caso seja necessário (Resolução CNS n.° 510, de 2016, Artigo 17, Inciso V).*

Sobre divulgação dos resultados da pesquisa

Os resultados serão divulgados em palestras dirigidas ao público participante, através de mecanismos para divulgação da ciência, artigos científicos e na própria tese em si.

Observações:

1. **Este Termo** é redigido em duas vias, sendo uma para o participante e outra para o pesquisador;
2. Todas as páginas deverão ser rubricadas pelo participante da pesquisa e pelo pesquisador responsável;

Em caso de quaisquer perguntas, preocupações ou reclamações com relação aos seus direitos como participante do estudo, seus pais poderão entrar em contato com o Programa de Pós graduação da Universidade Estadual de Maringá (sec-ppa@uem.br) ou *Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa envolvendo Seres Humanos da UEM (COPEP): Av. Colombo, 5790, PPG, sala 4, CEP 87020-900. Maringá-Pr. Telefone: (44) 3011-4597, e-mail: copep@uem.br. Atendimento: 2ª a 6ª feira das 13h30 às 17h30. O atendimento ocorrerá preferencialmente por telefone ou e-mail. Para atendimento presencial, o COPEP solicita a gentileza de agendar horário.*

TERMO DE ACEITE

Eu, _____,
declaro que quero participar desta pesquisa.

_____

Assinatura do Participante

Declaro que forneci todas as informações necessárias da pesquisa ao participante.

_____ _____

Assinatura do pesquisador que aplicou o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Lacal e Data

APPENDIX G – Roteiro de Observação – Crianças/Avatares das Crianças

a. **Informações Pessoais a serem coletadas:**

- Pseudônimo:
- Idade:
- Raça:
- Escolaridade:
- Com quem mora:

b. **Roteiro de Observação e Entrevistas – Crianças/Avatares**

- Montar sessão de observação onde jogue as crianças joguem umas com as outras por 30 minutos;
- A sessão será filmada;

- **<u>Crianças</u>**
- Quais os ambientes de Metaverso elas acessam.
- Quanto tempo passam por dia.
- Quais horários mais jogam
- Quais os combinados com os pais
- Quando escolhe o que jogar (Roblox, Minecraft, etc)
- Conversar Online com outras pessoas
- Qual a emoção associada, sobre quais skins as crianças mais falam, porque isso emociona mais;
- Observar se a criança quer mostrar mais a quantidade ou a qualidade (por exemplo, uma peça única que implica distinção);
- Os processos individuais e coletivos - como isso aparece na fala;
- Ser igual a outros: dói ou é legal?
- Conseguem reconhecer marcas? Quais?
- Quais youtubers acompanham
- Quando têm alguma dúvida, onde buscam informação.
- Quem tem mais influência? As relações de poder se sobressaem? Como se dá essa relação de poder como isso é percebido?

- **<u>Avatares</u>**
- Qual o nome dos avatares no metaverso.
- Pedir para olhar o Avatar;
- Fazer conexão de amizade com o meu avatar;
- Como os itens conquistados (posse de skins) se apresentam;

APPENDIX H – Roteiro de Entrevista – Pais/Responsáveis

a. **Informações Pessoais a serem coletadas:**

- Pseudônimo:
- Idade:
- Filhos/Idade:
- Renda:
- Raça:
- Escolaridade:
- Religião:

b. **Questões:**

- Como é a sua relação com a internet? Como e onde você usa a internet?
- Você sabe o que é o metaverso? Utiliza algum ambiente de Metaverso?
- Tempo que deixa criança usar? Quais os combinados com as crianças?
- Como a família percebe o comportamento da criança em relação ao avatar no metaverso e no mundo físico? Eles se contrapõem? Ou se complementam? Comparar roupas mundo físico x roupas avatares.
- O quanto investe financeiramente nesses ambientes.
- Quais são ou youtubers que seus filhos acompanham? Qual espaço youtubers, tik tokers etc têm?
- Quem tem mais influência? As relações de poder se sobressaem? Como se dá essa relação de poder como isso é percebido?
- Quem tem celular ou não? Onde jogam? O que jogam? De quem são os dispositivos?
- Impactos na pandemia
- Se tiver mais de um filho como percebe essa diferença? (influência como uma rede)
- Quais as preocupações?

<u>Consumo:</u>

- Roupas e Ornamentos
- Material Escolar
- Festas aniversario: o convite influencia na compra de presentes de aniversário? Geralmente são coisas mais caras?
- E na roupa das crianças, como isso transborda?
- Marcas e Metaverso: como se dá essa associação. Você consegue pensar em marcas específicas?
- A família já se viu escolhendo coisas por conta dessas marcas?
- Como se dá os assuntos? As crianças falam muito sobre isso? Em que momento/frequência? Como se dá a presença disso na fala?
- Tem algo que ele aprendeu no Metaverso que trouxe para a vida física?

- Nos pais com mais de um filho, observar se no discurso existem construções sociais de gênero
- Observar aspectos dialéticos
- As entrevistas serão gravadas e transcritas

APPENDIX I – Roteiro de Entrevista – Psicólogos

a. **Informações Pessoais a serem coletadas:**

- Pseudônimo:
- Idade:
- Renda:
- Raça:
- Escolaridade:
- Religião:

b. **Questões:**

- Como é a sua relação com a internet? Como e onde você usa a internet?
- Você sabe o que é o metaverso? Utiliza algum ambiente de Metaverso?
- Como você percebe a relação das crianças com o Metaverso?
- Como as crianças trazem os elementos vividos no metaverso para o consultório? E as famílias, como trazem essa questão?
- Você consegue incluir ou não esses elementos nas dinâmicas do consultório? Se sim como, se não por quê?
- Como você percebe a influência desses elementos nas crianças?
- Como é o desdobramento dessa influência na constituição da identidade da criança?
- Quais as preocupações?

APPENDIX J – Roteiro de Entrevista – Professores

a. **Informações Pessoais a serem coletadas:**

- Pseudônimo:
- Idade:
- Renda:
- Raça:
- Escolaridade:
- Religião:
- Como é a sua relação com a internet? Como e onde você usa a internet?
- Você sabe o que é o metaverso? Utiliza algum ambiente de Metaverso? Fale um pouco sobre o que você sabe desses espaços.
- Fora da escola, você tem contato com esses ambientes? (Filhos, sobrinhos)

b. **Questões:**

- Como é a sua relação com a internet? Como e onde você usa a internet?
- Você sabe o que é o metaverso? Utiliza algum ambiente de Metaverso?
- Como você percebe a relação das crianças com o Metaverso?
- Como as crianças trazem os elementos vividos no metaverso para a escola? (Por exemplo, mochilas, durante o recreio, nos materiais, na fala, nas escritas e produções de texto, no ambiente, etc);
- Você consegue incluir ou não esses elementos nas dinâmicas de aprendizado? Se sim como, se não por quê?
- Como você percebe a influência desses elementos nas crianças? Alavanca ou sufoca o aprendizado?
- Como é o desdobramento dessa influência na constituição da identidade da criança?
- Como é o desdobramento no ambiente escolar?
- Quais as preocupações?

APPENDIX K – Roteiro de Entrevista – Youtubers

a. **Informações Pessoais a serem coletadas:**

- Pseudônimo:
- Idade:
- Renda:
- Raça:
- Escolaridade:
- Religião:

b. **Questões:**

- Como é a sua relação com a internet? Como e onde você usa a internet? Me conte um pouco da sua história.
- Qual a compreensão que você tem sobre os Metaversos? O que você pensa sobre isso? Quais ambientes você conhece e utiliza?
- Como se dá a construção de parcerias envolvendo o Metaverso?
- Como você acha que as marcas de moda (através dos itens e das skins) podem construir relações com as famílias (Ex. Rezendog na ExpoLondrina);
- Outros elementos associados (Por exemplo, desenhos animados, especialmente os animes x Blox fruit do Roblox)
- Superação – Como você vê o seu papel de mediação?
- Responsabilidade do youtuber
- Responsabilidades das plataformas

o Rede de conexão

APPENDIX L – PDF Archives | Thesis Products

Social Products (SP)				
What	**Where**	**When**	**Target Audience**	**Why**
SP1 - Lecture to Professors (See in link Thesis Products)	Colégio Interativa (Londrina-PR)	04/03/2024	25 teachers	A lecture for teachers is important because they play a critical role in shaping young minds. By understanding how digital consumption in metaverse environments influences children's fashion identity, educators can integrate this knowledge into their teaching. It helps them foster discussions about digital self-expression, critical consumption, and cultural trends, equipping students with the skills to navigate both digital and real-world identities responsibly.
SP2 - Lecture to Students (See in link Thesis Products)	Colégio Interativa (Londrina-PR)	18/10/2024	Nearly 150 students (age 11 to 13)	To explore how the metaverse offers opportunities beyond gaming, such as immersive learning, creative expression, global social interaction, career exploration in digital fields, and access to virtual cultural experiences like museums and concerts. Emphasizing safety ensures they navigate these spaces responsibly, maximizing benefits while avoiding risks.
SP3 - Parents' Brochure "Navigating Children's Phygital Wardrobes: A Guide for Parents"	Ebook (english/portuguese) Printed version (if sponsored)	To be done	Parents and caretakers	This product empowers parents with the knowledge and tools to navigate their children's experiences in the metaverse responsibly. As virtual spaces shape children's identities and social interactions, it helps parents understand safety, digital consumption, and balance with real-world values, ensuring their well-being while minimizing risks. **Suggested Brochure Content:** The brochure introduces the metaverse and its relevance to children, covering popular platforms like Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft. It emphasizes safety, including age-appropriate access, privacy settings, and risk prevention. Highlighting creativity and learning, it explores skill development, individuality, and digital fashion. It also addresses digital consumption, focusing on virtual currencies, ethical purchasing, and screen time management. Encouraging open dialogue, it connects digital experiences to real-world values. Finally, it provides practical tips to help parents guide their children in responsible and meaningful engagement with the metaverse.
SP4 - Teachers' Brochure "Phygital Culture in the Classroom: Understanding Children's Fashion	Ebook (english/portuguese) Printed version (if sponsored)	To be done	Teachers (children education)	This brochure helps teachers bridge digital cultures and traditional education by providing insights, activities, and tools to understand the metaverse. It enables educators to foster critical thinking, explore individuality, and address virtual environments' social impacts, preparing students for a balanced digital and physical world. **Suggested Brochure Content:** The brochure introduces teachers to the metaverse, highlighting its influence on children's identity and its relevance to education. It provides strategies for promoting digital literacy, fostering

Choices to Understand Identity Constitution"				individuality, and encouraging critical thinking about digital influences. It also addresses social impacts like peer influence and collaboration. Practical classroom tools, including exercises, discussion prompts, and case studies, help integrate these concepts into teaching.
SP5 - Psychologists' Brochure "Phygital Identity and Child Development in the Metaverse"	Ebook (english/portuguese) Printed version (if sponsored)	To be done	Psychologists (children specialists)	This brochure explores the metaverse's impact on children's development and identity formation, helping psychologists understand its influence on individuality, self-esteem, and social behaviors. It provides insights, strategies, and resources to support children and families in navigating digital experiences, fostering healthy identity development, and balancing virtual and physical realities. **Suggested Brochure Content:** The brochure introduces psychologists to the metaverse, explaining its key platforms and appeal to children. It explores identity formation in digital spaces, the impact of virtual fashion on self-esteem, and the balance between digital and physical identities. Developmental considerations include virtual consumption, peer dynamics, and managing conformity and creativity. Practical strategies offer tools for therapy discussions and supporting families in fostering healthy digital habits. A curated list of readings, tools, and case studies enhances psychologists' understanding of this evolving field.
SP6 - Youtubers' Brochure "Content Creation in the Metaverse: Engaging and Protecting Young Audiences"	Ebook (english/portuguese) Printed version (if sponsored)	To be done	Youtubers (gamers)	This brochure helps Youtubers understand their influence on children's engagement with the metaverse. It provides tools to create ethical, inclusive, and engaging content that fosters creativity and positive behavior while promoting responsible virtual consumption and ensuring audience safety and well-being. **Suggested Brochure Content:** The brochure introduces the metaverse, highlighting its appeal to children and digital culture. It emphasizes safety, responsible virtual consumption, and ethical content creation. Strategies focus on fostering creativity, individuality, and social values while avoiding toxic influences. Topics include virtual currencies, microtransactions, and age-appropriate themes. Youtubers are encouraged to promote inclusivity and positive behavior. The brochure concludes with resources, collaboration opportunities, and tools to enhance responsible engagement with young audiences.
SP7 - Coordinators and Principals' Brochure "Integrating the Metaverse into Education: Opportunities and Challenges"	Ebook (english/portuguese) Printed version (if sponsored)	To be done	Coordinators and Principals (children education)	This brochure helps school coordinators and principals integrate the metaverse into education by addressing its opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities. It provides insights on leveraging virtual environments while ensuring safety, inclusivity, and alignment with educational goals. The brochure equips administrators with tools to support staff, engage parents, and create a balanced digital and physical learning environment. **Suggested Brochure Content:** The brochure introduces the metaverse's relevance to education and child development, outlining its applications in schools. It highlights opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and curriculum alignment while prioritizing safety, inclusivity, and healthy digital habits. It explores social and cultural impacts, including individuality, consumption, and peer dynamics. The brochure concludes with practical tools for administrators, such as staff training guidelines, parent engagement strategies, and case studies on successful metaverse integration in education.

SP8 - Card Games	Printed	To be done	Children	To Be Developed
Cultural Products (CP)				
What	**Where**	**When**	**Target Audience**	**Why**
CP 1 - Cultura e Consumo Pod https://open.spotify.com/show/7AoK7yvahLT51HG7Qqxlfs?si=e04ec7b070c449d6	Cultura e Consumo Pod plataforms	In production (1st semester 2025)	Podcast Audience	A podcast season about the metaverse for Cultura e Consumo Pod is essential for bridging academic insights, cultural analysis, and everyday experiences. It offers a dynamic platform to engage parents, educators, psychologists, and digital enthusiasts in discussions about how virtual spaces shape children's identity, consumption, and social behaviors. Through expert dialogue, real-life examples, and exploration of ethical and cultural dimensions, the season delivers accessible, thought-provoking content that fosters critical engagement with this evolving digital phenomenon. **Suggested Season Content:** This podcast season explores the metaverse's impact on children's culture and consumption, starting with its relevance and appeal to young audiences. Episodes cover safety concerns, ethical virtual consumption, and creative opportunities like identity formation and digital self-expression. Social and cultural influences, including peer dynamics, language, and the connection between digital and physical lives, are examined. Expert guests—educators, psychologists, and industry professionals—offer insights on developmental and ethical challenges. The season concludes with actionable advice, providing both knowledge and practical strategies.
CP 2 - Documentary "Skins and Selfhood: Fashion Identity in the Digital Playground"	ACR 2026 – Chicago https://acrwebsite.org/events/future/	September 24-27, 2026	Academics and General Public	Visual storytelling that follows children as they navigate virtual worlds and their real-world influences. Interviews with children, parents, and educators.
CP 3 - Fashion Exhibition "From Patterns to Pixels: Children's Fashion in the Metaverse"	To de Determined – (Suggestion: Colóquio de Moda)	2027	Academics and General Public	Interactive displays of virtual clothing and skins. VR experiences to explore metaverse environments. Panels and talks about the implications of digital consumption.
CP 4 - Illustrated Novel/Graphic Story Temporary Title: "Avatar Dreams: A Journey Through Digital Identity"	To de Determined	2028	Children	A fictional story exploring how a child discovers self-expression through virtual fashion. Themes of peer pressure, creativity, and balancing digital and real-life choices.

CP 5 - Novel	To de Determined	2029	Families	To Be Developed - Inspired In “A Geração do Quarto”, de Hugo Monteiro Ferreira
Academic Products (AP)				
What	**Where**	**When**	**Target Audience**	**Why**
AP1-Doctoral Consortium (See in link Thesis Products)	XLVII Encontro da ANPAD	2023, Published	Senior Mentors	Participating in a Doctoral Consortium provides valuable feedback from experienced scholars, enhances academic networking, and refines research through interdisciplinary discussions. It fosters critical insights, improving the theoretical and methodological depth of the dissertation.
AP2-Doctoral Consortium (See in link Thesis Products)	XXVI SEMEAD	2023, Published	Senior Mentors	Participating in a Doctoral Consortium provides valuable feedback from experienced scholars, enhances academic networking, and refines research through interdisciplinary discussions. It fosters critical insights, improving the theoretical and methodological depth of the dissertation.
AP3-Promoting An Expanded View Of The Context In Cct Research: A “Dig-To-The-Side-Approach” Inspired On Critical Studies. (See in link Thesis Products)	XLVII Encontro da ANPAD	2023, Published	Academic	https://anpad.com.br/pt_br/event/details/125 This paper was build on my thesis's theoretical essay. After my thesis qualification, I refined the study to focus solely on an interpretative approach. Initially, I aimed for a metaparadigmatic work, crossing Critical Studies and Interpretivism. However, this paper emerges before that shift.
AP4 - Promovendo uma ferramenta metodológica ampliada para análise do contexto na pesquisa em CCT: a dig-to-the-side.	Blind Review – Qualis A2	In submission process – with authors to revision	Academic	This paper was build on my thesis's theoretical essay. After my thesis qualification, I refined the study to focus solely on an interpretative approach. Initially, I aimed for a metaparadigmatic work, crossing Critical Studies and Interpretivism. However, this paper emerges before that shift.
AP5 - Moda e Jogos Eletrônicos Imersivos: Um Estudo Sobre O Consumo De Skins (See in link Thesis Products)	X Encontro de Marketing da Anpad	2024, Published	Academic	https://eventos.anpad.org.br/pt_br/event/details/128 To explore how virtual fashion rule in self-expression and consumption in gaming. It examines skins' cultural, social, and economic roles, contributing to discussions on digital consumption, branding, and the connection between virtual and physical identities.
AP6 - Moda e Jogos Eletrônicos Imersivos (See in link Thesis Products)	Revista Projética – Qualis A2	2024, Published	Academic	https://www.ojs.uel.br/revistas/uel/index.php/projetica/article/view/50005 DOI: 10.5433/2236-2207.2024.v15.n2.50005 - To explore how virtual fashion rule in self-expression and consumption in gaming. It examines skins' cultural, social, and economic roles,

				contributing to discussions on digital consumption, branding, and the connection between virtual and physical identities.
AP7-What We Talk About When We Talk About CCT (See in link Thesis Products)	XXVI SEMEAD	2023, Published	Academic	This text is derived from my theoretical essay, where I explored What We Talk About When We Talk About CCT. It reflects my analysis of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) as a lens to understand my research GAP.
AP8- What We Talk About When We Talk About CCT	Blind Review – Qualis B1	2024, Submitted	Academic	This text is derived from my theoretical essay, where I explored What We Talk About When We Talk About CCT. It reflects my analysis of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) as a lens to understand my research GAP.
AP9- Mapeamento de investigações sobre ambientes de Metaversos: Uma revisão da literatura	Blind Review – Qualis B1	2025, Submitted	Academic	This text is derived from my theoretical essay, where I detail the main research strategies that have been employed to research in the metaverses.
AP10-Possibilidade Estratégica de Comunicação para Marcas de Moda	18º Coloquio de Moda	2023, Published	Academic	This paper has managerial insights and aligns with the Colóquio de Moda by exploring strategic communication possibilities for fashion brands, contributing to the understanding of identity building and market positioning in the industry.
AP11-Consumo de Moda e a Aplicação Da Teoria Trickle: Estudos Passados e Proposição de Agenda de Pesquisas	18º Coloquio de Moda	2023, Published	Academic	The text examines the application of the Trickle Theory in fashion consumption, connecting past studies and proposing a research agenda, a relevant aspect for academic discussions at the Colóquio de Moda.
AP12- Consumo de Moda e a Aplicação Da Teoria Trickle: Estudos Passados e Proposição de Agenda de Pesquisas	Blind Review – Qualis A2	2025, Submitted	Academic	The text examines the application of the Trickle Theory in fashion consumption, connecting past studies and proposing a research agenda, a relevant aspect for academic discussions at the Colóquio de Moda.
AP13-Protecting and Empowering Child Consumers in the Metaverse Games: Building Networks for Digital Citizenship	**Event:** ACR Latin America 2025 – São Paulo/SP https://acr.insper.edu.br/	Submited: 31/01/2025 Event: 25/06/2025 to 27/06/2025	Waiting Notification of acceptances	To investigate how a collaborative approach involving networks—such as parents, schools, platforms, and influencers—can effectively protect children and empower them to develop digital citizenship, fostering ethical and responsible behavior in metaverse environments. **Suggested Journals:** Journal of Business Ethics (https://link.springer.com/journal/10551) Journal of Macromarketing (https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jmk) Ethics and Information Technology (https://link.springer.com/journal/10676)

AP14-From Pixels to Identity: How Consumption in Metaverse Environments Constitutes Children's Fashion Identity	**Event:** Enanpad 2025 – Aracaju/SE https://eventos.anpad.org.br/pt_br/event/details/142	Submition: Waiting Event: 01/10/2025 to 03/10/2025	Waiting for dates to be announced	To explore how digital aesthetics, such as avatars and skins, influence children's fashion identity and self-expression. **Suggested Journals:** Journal of Consumer Research (https://consumerresearcher.com/) Fashion Theory (https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rfft20)
AP15-Ethical Dimensions of Researching Children in Metaverse Environments	**Event:** Enanpad 2025 – Aracaju/SE https://eventos.anpad.org.br/pt_br/event/details/142	Submition: Waiting Event: 01/10/2025 to 03/10/2025	Waiting for dates to be announced	To evaluate ethical challenges in children's fashion identity and consumption within metaverse spaces. **Suggested Journals:** Journal of Empirical Research On Human Research Ethics (https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jre)
AP16-Historical Evolution of Children's Fashion and Its Digital Transition	Event: Colóquio de Moda 2025 – São Paulo/SP https://coloquiomoda.com.br/	Submition: Waiting Event: 30/09/2025 to 03/10/2025	Waiting for dates to be announced	To trace the transition of children's fashion from physical to digital spaces and its implications for fashion identity formation. **Suggested Journals:** Fashion Studies Journal (https://www.fashionstudiesjournal.org/) Journal of Interdisciplinary History (https://direct.mit.edu/jinh)
AP17 - Consumer Behavior and Fashion Choices: the influence of Metaverse Platforms on Children	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To analyze the influence of metaverse platforms on children's purchasing decisions and fashion preferences.
AP18-Virtual Runways: Children's Fashion Identity in the Age of the Metaverse	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To present key findings on children's digital fashion identity and propose future research directions.
AP19-The Influence of Youtubers as Agents of Children's Digital Fashion Identity	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To analyze how Youtubers shape children's fashion choices and cultural perceptions in virtual spaces.
AP20-Children's Virtual Fashion Identity Archive	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To develop an open-access repository documenting children's virtual fashion choices and their cultural significance.

AP21-Case Studies of Specific Metaverse Environments and Their Cultural Impacts	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To document cultural and social dynamics within specific metaverse platforms and their effects on children's identity and consumption.
AP22-Social and Cultural Dynamics of Cybercultures in Metaverses	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To explore the sociocultural interactions and behaviors emerging within children's metaverse environments.
AP23-Phygital Worlds and Identity: A Methodological Approach	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To adapt phygital ethnography methods for studying hybrid consumption practices in metaverses.
AP24-Dialogical Conversations Between Physical and Digital Worlds	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To propose methodologies for researching the interplay between children's physical and digital fashion environments.
AP25-Validity and Reliability in Researching Kids and Metaverses	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	To enhance methodologies for qualitative and participatory research with children in digital environments.
AP26-I choose you: how children choose skins	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Explores how children select skins based on identity expression, peer influence, and in-game economies. Analyzes the emotional and cultural significance of these choices in digital consumption.
AP27-Agents of Influence Shaping Children's Fashion Identities in Phygital Worlds	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Explores the key figures influencing children's fashion choices in digital and hybrid spaces.
AP28-Digital Fashion and Economic Hierarchies in the Metaverse: The Role of Virtual Currencies, Social Status, and Brand Integration	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Investigates how digital fashion constructs economic and social status through virtual currencies and branded content.
AP29-Steps and processes involved in	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Details the user journey in acquiring, using, and disposing of virtual fashion items.

virtual fashion consumption.				
AP30-Teachers' Perceptions of the Metaverse	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Analyzes educators' awareness, attitudes, and integration of metaverse technologies in teaching.
AP31-How Freedom in Digital Environments Inspires Physical-Life Fashion Exploration	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Examines how virtual fashion choices inspire personal style and physical-world fashion decisions.
AP32-Parents' Perceptions of the Metaverse	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Investigates parents' perspectives on their children's engagement with digital fashion and virtual economies.
AP33-Psychologists' Perceptions of the Metaverse	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Explores how mental health professionals perceive the impact of metaverse fashion on identity and behavior.
AP34-Language, Behavior, and the Metaverse	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Analyzes linguistic and behavioral shifts associated with metaverse engagement.
AP35-Autoethnography in Metaverse	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Applies autoethnographic methods to document personal and social dynamics in phygital consumption.
AP36-Snow Crash: Novel Analysis in Consumer Research	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Explores the cyberpunk classic's influence on contemporary consumer research in digital spaces.
AP37-Snow Crash vs. Brave New World: Dystopian Narratives and Consumer Culture	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Compares dystopian visions of consumerism and control in metaverses and physical-world economies.
AP38-Children Without Access to Metaverses: Implications for Identity Formation	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Examines how children without metaverse access form identities differently from their connected peers.
AP39-Identity and CCT Studies with Children	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Links Consumer Culture Theory to children's identity formation in digital and hybrid environments.

AP40-Practices, Styles, and Social Functions of Fashion Identity Evolution	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Identifies evolving practices and social roles that shape children's digital fashion identity.
AP41-Refinement and Expansion of Belk's 2013 Elements in Digital Self	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Expands on Belk's conceptualization of the extended self by integrating metaverse elements.
AP42-Children's choices and self-expression through virtual avatars.	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Investigates children's avatar choices as a means of identity exploration and self-expression.
AP43-Trend Adoption Cycles from Digital to Physical Spaces	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Explores how trends migrate from virtual spaces to real-world fashion cycles.
AP44-Hierarchies and Power Structures in Metaverse Games	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Analyzes in-game social structures that dictate fashion choices and status within digital worlds.
AP45-Similarities and Differences Between Metaverse and Physical Fashion Consumption	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Compares motivations, consumption habits, and brand influences across metaverse and physical fashion.
AP46-Researching Culture and Consumption with Children: The Brazilian Case	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Provides insights into Brazilian children's digital consumption habits and their cultural implications.
AP47-Video Analysis Protocols in Metaverses: Advancing Bezerra et al.'s Method	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Proposes advancements to existing video analysis protocols for studying metaverse interactions.
AP48-Mothers Doing Research: Expanding Utami's Model	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Expands Utami's research on maternal involvement in children's digital consumption.
AP49-TCR Consumer Researchers' Role in Supporting Families	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Explores how consumer researchers can contribute to educational practices in family and school contexts.

and Teachers in Children's Education				
AP50-Implicit and Explicit Brand Influence: Recognizing Skins and Developers' Strategies	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Analyzes brand recognition in young audiences through both direct and subtle marketing tactics.
AP51-Children as a Future Market: Brand Perspectives	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Investigates how brands position children as long-term consumers through digital experiences.
AP52-Ghost Influencers: The Role of Game Developers in Digital Consumption	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Examines game developers as hidden influencers shaping children's fashion preferences.
AP53-Development of a Protocol to Measure Phygital Identity (In partneship with a Neuropshycopedagogist)	To de Determined	To be done	Children Neuropshycopedagogists	The protocol measures phygital identity by bridging digital and physical self-perception. In partnership with a neuropsychopedagogist, it integrates cognitive, behavioral, and cultural factors to assess identity formation in hybrid spaces. This interdisciplinary approach aids research in consumer behavior, education, and digital psychology.
AP54-The Role of Digital Aesthetics in the Constitution of Children's Fashion Identity	To de Determined	To be done	Academic	Explores how aesthetics in virtual spaces influence children's fashion identity formation.
Call of Papers/Editals				
International Journal of Fashion Studies Emerging Scholar Award 2025 edition				https://www.intellectbooks.com/asset/89898/1/INFS_Emerging_Scholar_Award_2025.pdf
Coletânea Sesc de Contos Infantis				
Cultural Influence on Decision Making and Marketing. *Editorial Timeline* • Pre-submission webinar: January 2026 • Submission portal opens: February 1, 2026 • First submission deadline: April 1, 2026 Publication: July 2027				For a list of submission ideas editor bios, please see the call for papers here.
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