Designing in such a way that closely mimics reality can create a fun experience in games. As Huizinga stated in the Nature and Significance of Play, “Ritual proves to be formally indistinguishable from play” [1] and Play and Ambiguity, the notion of play dated way back before the dawn of human society. And thus, human behaviors are flooded with characteristics of playing. Game design mainly focuses on ways to create fun experiences and since human behaviors are very similar to play, designing to closely resemble reality could achieve the effect.

Sandbox games, by definition, is a style of game in which minimal character limitations are placed on the player, allowing them to roam and change a virtual world at will. [2] By becoming a popular game genre it no doubt creates tons of fun experience. This type of game focuses on the player’s actions and their interactions with the virtual world. Its core idea is to mimics human behaviors, whether abstractly or closely. In Minecraft, players can interact with blocks that resemble real-world objects. The interactions always have a resemblance in the real world. Using a crafting table imitates human’s greatest gift -- crafting tools; Picking a stone block copies the action of mining; Putting wood blocks together represents building a shelter in real life. Normally speaking it would be boring to repeat in a game what players do in real life since most players yearn for liberation while playing games. However, Minecraft succeeded, bringing millions of players to have fun doing what humanity had struggled to do tens of thousands of years ago. This seemingly contradictory result could be explained perfectly with Huizinga’s theory, that human’s behaviors are closely related to playing. If Huizinga’s statement is true, then designing to mimic real life could indeed create an engaging experience, like Minecraft, or any other successful sandbox games did, since human activities are fun in essence.

Huizinga’s argument gives one explanation as to why sandbox game design concept is fun in its core. But sandbox games are made of many more elements that result in the enjoyment, such as open-world or no goal. There are still much to analyze.

Reference:

[1] Johan Huizinga, 1955, *Nature and Significance of Play,* pp. 20.

[2] No Author, Techopedia, URL: <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/3952/sandbox-gaming>, online, available.