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Research Article

Metaverse Minds: Unravelling Cognitive Dissonance in Virtual Experiences

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Abstract: The vast landscape of the metaverse evokes interest from all spheres, academic and corporate alike. Despite various studies prevalent, there exists a gap in the knowledge in dealing and understanding the nuances of cognitive dissonance in the nonphysical scenario. This study aims to investigate the negative aspects of the metaverse, focusing on the complex relationship between cognitive dissonance and areas such as self-concepts, persona branding, social commerce, and impulsive purchase. This research explores the hitherto untapped area of cognitive dissonance in the metaverse, providing insight into its complex forms and consequences. This research attempts to investigate the conflicts that occurs due to gap between the expectations and reality and the route of escapism an individual takes and the influence of various factors contributing to the differences in logical understanding, the cultural environment, the responsibility of forced compliance in one's behaviour and the experience of an individual in the nonreal world. It demonstrates the complex interaction between opposing ideas and experiences in virtual settings. Moreover, it examines the profound influence of virtual contacts on people' self-perceptions, emphasising the dynamic process of constructing identity and the surfacing of repressed negative features that are not often expressed in real life. In addition, this study attempts to relate cognitive dissonance and purchase behaviours which are impulsive in the nonphysical scenario bringing into the fore the differences in the perceived value pre and post purchase. On the foundation of the above, this research develops a framework helpful in the reduction of cognitive dissonance and ways to navigate the world of ever growing metaverse. Bridging a gap in the existing literature this study attempts to aid the experiences of the users and satisfaction in the virtual world.

Keywords: Cognitive dissonance, Immersive worlds, Impulsive purchase, Marketing techniques, Metaverse, Self-concept, Social commerce, Virtual identity.

INTRODUCTION

The metaverse, an immersive digital reality enabled by Web 3.0 and blockchain technology, has emerged as a powerful catalyst in influencing social, economic, and cultural environments. Leading companies such as Nvidia Omniverse, Horizon, Facebook, and Coca-Cola are actively investigating metaverse ecosystems, enabling users to create distinct cultures, behaviours, and value systems inside alternative virtual realities. This hybrid experience merges the virtual and physical realms, enabling people to not only socialise but also cohabit with the actual world (Neves, et.al., 2024). It becomes imperative for the players to understand the changing demands of the consumers and develop and offer experiences satisfying their needs, however the expanse and contradiction of the knowledge available may result in confusion as they explore the virtual world (Yahya & Sukmayadi, 2020). The differences occurring in a persons' belief, behaviour and action known as cognitive dissonance in the world of Metaverse is of great importance as users' transverse from the virtual and the actual world which may give rise to unwanted stress. (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019). The mental trauma arising due to the idealised world of metaverse and the stark reality of the actual world is of importance for operating in the virtual world (Vîrjan, et.al., 2022). Owing to the above-mentioned differences leading to stress in the world of metaverse should work towards proactively handling to mitigate the psychological issues by matching the customer expectations in both the real and the virtual world ensuring the smooth transition.

The objective of this work is to provide insight into cognitive dissonance in the metaverse. Although there is current research on consumer behaviour in the metaverse, there is still a significant gap, since no studies have particularly focused on the problem of cognitive dissonance in this particular environment. This study aims to explore the negative aspects of the metaverse, specifically focusing on its ability to cause cognitive dissonance and subsequent psychological disorders. The research is structured as follows: the first portion explores how the metaverse might act as a catalyst for cognitive dissonance, analysing its sources and consequences. Subsequently, the research investigates how people' self-concepts change in the metaverse and examines the cognitive dissonance that arises from impulsive purchase

behaviours and social commerce activities. The later part of this study highlighting the future and practical directions attempts to contribute to the knowledge of behaviour of consumers and attempts to resolve the cognitive dissonance in the world of metaverse in meta platforms opening up as an avenue to escape form the struggles of the real world has to be resolved.

Cognitive dissonance may occur when people, who have deeply engaged in the virtual reality of the Metaverse, go back to the physical world. As the differences of the struggles of the real world and the fantasies of the virtual world becomes apparent the users of the metaverse world may face psychological issues. Within this framework, inconsistencies may arise when users transition between the appeal of the Metaverse and the actualities of their daily existence (Somu, et al., 2024). The need to alternate between the virtual and physical realms might heighten the discordance, as users struggle with the disparity and possible clashes between their virtual getaways and the obligations of their concrete, actual encounters. The interaction between the idealised Metaverse and the challenges of the actual world highlights the significance of acknowledging possible cognitive dissonance in the wider discussion on immersive technology and virtual worlds (Henz, 2023).

Cognitive dissonance in the metaverse arises from several factors, each contributing to an intricate interplay of contradictory beliefs and feelings. Logical inconsistency is a factor that arises from opposing ideas or reasoning inside the metaverse. For example, in the metaverse, someone may have faith in the ability of virtual reality to provide an immersive experience, but at the same time, question the feasibility of developing avatars that can interact in a lifelike manner. The second determinant is the cultural values inside the metaverse, where an individual's cognitive viewpoint in one virtual setting may differ from that of another. Imagine a metaverse situation in which avatars from one community prioritise working together and sharing ideas to solve problems, whereas avatars from another group tend to focus on individual techniques. The disparity in virtual cultural norms might lead to cognitive dissonance for users as they navigate through various Metaverse environments. For example, an avatar that is used to thinking and working together with others could feel a sense of conflict while interacting with avatars who prioritise their own particular goals and interests.

Forced Compliance Behaviour is the third element of dissonance in the metaverse. In the world of metaverse there might be instances of forced compliance behaviour wherein an avatar deeply committed to sustainability might be promoting non-sustainable pursuits owing to professional commitments. This dissonance may occur as a result of being compelled to participate in actions that are not in line with the virtual ideals of the avatar. One's previous virtual experiences are the last aspect that contributes to dissonance in the metaverse. Cognitive dissonance witnessed owing to differences when avatar experiencing and recommending the new virtual space only to be contradicted by another dissatisfied avatar wherein the differences may prompt reconsidering the choice of consciously considering the future recommendations of the avatar (Yahya & Sukmayadi, 2020).

Cognitive dissonance and self-concepts

Regularly interacting with an avatar separate from one's physical body in a virtual world has the potential to lead to a shift in self-understanding (De Felice, et. al., 2023). The self – perception formed by the individuals owing to their avatars is governed by the interactions, skills and the environment of the virtual space which will be a modified version of ones' identity as advocated by " objective self-awareness theory" . The world of metaverse enabling the individuals opting for a different entity portraying a different persona to the world may portray a different social picture. (Ambika, et al., 2023). As the interactions in the virtual universe facilitates multiple and various modifications effecting the perception which may lead to multiple re-evaluations by the other avatars in the space. The world of metaverse ungoverned by boundaries of the actual world and their framework may result in anarchy by the non-existence of norms and rules, and free non-repressed portrayal of individuals which may result in misconception with respect to beliefs and standards resulting in cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance may result as the world of metaverse provides for a space for individuals to express oneself without any inhibitions or with fear of consequences which might give rise to differences in the minds of people in the context of morality, standards with respect to society, personal values, beliefs etc.

While users in the metaverse participate in activities that go against the accepted standards, they may experience dissonance while trying to reconcile these acts with their real-world ideals. This may lead to internal conflict and emotional anguish. The Protheus effect, which posits that digital avatars may affect real-life attitudes and behaviours, suggests that actions witnessed in the metaverse may also appear in the physical world. The interaction between the virtual and physical realities leads to cognitive dissonance, as people struggle with the repercussions and ethical implications of their activities in both settings. The immersive and lifelike quality of the metaverse amplifies this discord, obscuring the distinctions between the physical and digital realms and heightening the mental turmoil felt by users (Dwivedi, et al., 2023). Psychological research suggests that people have an inherent tendency to portray themselves in a more favourable manner, with the goal of improving and favourably assessing their own self-image. The allure of virtual worlds stems from their capacity to provide an idealised realm where people may construct a character that corresponds to their preferred self-image. Nevertheless, if people progressively choose to embrace a virtual life, the juxtaposition with their genuine, flawed lives may result in a pessimistic picture of their own selves. The discrepancy between the idealised online identity and the reality of their existence might have adverse consequences for their self-assurance and self-worth. This phenomenon corresponds to the notion of persona branding or self-concept, when people deliberately or inadvertently cultivate an image that may deviate from

their own selves. Opting for a virtual life amplifies this phenomenon, as people try to sustain a coherent and idealised character inside the virtual domain. Owing to the differences in the virtual and the physical world individuals enter into a state of conflict in understanding their ones' self (Dwivedi, et al., 2023).

Cognitive Dissonance and Persona Branding

Within the metaverse, our presence undergoes a shift from the tangible world to digital domains as we assume and repeatedly adopt different identities via avatars. By using software like as Photoshop and obtaining customisable "skins" and accessories, we have a considerable amount of control over how we seem visually online. This enables us to express our creativity while yet preserving some similarity to our actual appearance. By creating an avatar that accurately represents our gender, age, and race establishes a psychological and physiological link, promoting a feeling of identity (Mertz et.al., 2023). The extensive flexibility in customising avatar bodies inside the Metaverse has given rise to the concept that these virtual representations encapsulate our ideal, potential, or ambitious selves—a platform where we may explore and test out many identities. Within virtual domains, humans surpass their physical characteristics; the ordinary may become glamorous, the old can seem youthful, and the young can exhibit more maturity. The economic standing becomes flexible, as those with minimal financial resources decorate themselves with intricate jewels. Individuals with physical limitations, such as mobility impairments, are able to overcome these challenges and improve their social attractiveness. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that virtual worlds sometimes lack a wide range of representations, with only a limited number of avatars depicting those who are very overweight, old, or physically disabled. While users have the ability to visually express themselves in many ways, the lack of variety in avatar representation raises concerns about inclusion and the degree to which virtual worlds accurately reflect the wide range of human experiences and identities (Belk, 2013).

Within the Metaverse, a persona transcends the basic act of role-playing, as the player effortlessly transforms into the character. There is a lack of clear delineation between the player and the character, identity and existence, or self and persona. At the avatar level, users control their virtual creatures as if they were puppets, projecting their own personalities into the game. As the identity develops, the gamer reaches a point where they can no longer differentiate between themselves and the avatar, making them indistinguishable. In the Metaverse, the growth process evolves from controlling puppets to a smooth integration of oneself and an avatar. This means that the virtual identity becomes an extension and representation of the player (Belk, 2013). Individuals exhibit several personalities and display different aspects of their character based on the social group or circumstance. An avatar serves as a conduit for individuals to express and manifest their identities inside virtual realms. As the avatar progresses, the user's bond strengthens, resulting in heightened engagement in the metaverse. Furthermore, it has been noted that a decrease in interest and a feeling of bewilderment arise due to excessive absorption and addiction, leading to a disconnect from reality. The correlation between the authentic individual and their virtual representation as an avatar is crucial for comprehending the intricacies of their interaction. (Dwivedi et al., 2022).

Metaverse users get uninterrupted access to virtual settings that provide limitless content and interaction possibilities. The metaverse experience enables the personalization of the avatars increasing the belongingness. Owing to the fulfilment of the interactions with personas in the virtual world which diminishes the boundaries of the virtual and the physical world and the satisfaction generated between the virtual and real might result in a cognitive dissonance. The conflict arising from the actual identity and the created avatars results in cognitive dissonance. This can also occur when the virtual identity is not inline to the accepted social norms and also in line with comparable avatars in the metaverse universe. The dissatisfaction resulting form the presence in the virtual world may result in the misalignment in the values resulting from the differences in ones' principles, norms and beliefs. (Bojic, et al., 2024).

The process of transitioning from one's original self to desired selves by creating personas inside the Metaverse may lead to cognitive dissonance as people manage the complex interaction between their virtual and real identities. There are other ways in which cognitive dissonance may appear in this particular circumstance, such as: The discrepancy between a person's real-world identity and their idealised or aspirational virtual persona and the disparity between the avatar's augmented characteristics and the individual's tangible features may result in psychological turmoil. For instance, when an individual who is physically little in reality creates an avatar in the virtual world with an exaggerated, strong body, it might cause a sense of disharmony owing to the glaring difference between their genuine look and the idealised virtual depiction. Social Comparison Dissonance occurs when users in the Metaverse compare themselves to other avatars. Cognitive dissonance may be triggered when individuals become aware that their online identity does not meet the expected standards or social norms in the virtual realm. For instance, an avatar who aspires to become a well-known fashion influencer, evaluates themselves by comparing their lifestyle and fashion choices to those of other avatars who seem to have more glamorous lives. The dissonance occurs when a person has feelings of inadequacy or dissatisfaction with their virtual social status. The consequent discord caused by insufficient and discontentment with one's social status in the virtual realm might lead to the following situations. When the behaviours and behaviours of the avatar in the Metaverse contradict an individual's fundamental principles, ethical norms, or personal convictions, it may lead to cognitive dissonance. The dissonance arises from the lack of harmony between the virtual and real-world value systems. For instance, a person who strongly values the environment develops an avatar that participates in actions that cause damage to virtual ecosystems inside the Metaverse. The dissonance arises when a person struggles with the discrepancy

between their actual ideals in the real world and the acts performed by their virtual avatar. Interpersonal dissonance may arise in the Metaverse when the dynamics of virtual connections, whether it is friendships or romantic involvements, conflict with an individual's real-life relationships or societal conventions. This can result in cognitive dissonance. Two persons who have strong real-life connections get involved in a virtual fight inside the Metaverse because they have different ideas or alignments in a virtual group. The dissonance arises when the virtual dynamics disturb the harmony of their interaction in the actual world. Temporal dissonance may arise when people experience a discrepancy between their original identity and their desired identity when transitioning between the real world and the virtual reality of the Metaverse. The dynamic nature of virtual identities and the continuous adjustment to new desired traits may lead to internal tensions over consistency and authenticity. For instance, a person who first embraced a carefree and adventurous virtual persona progressively develops a more guarded and cautious personality as time goes on. The dissonance emerges when individuals contemplate the changing nature of their virtual self and doubt the stability of their virtual identity over time.

Cognitive Dissonance due to Impulsive Buying

The customer experience inside the metaverse enables more contact and closeness with brands, hence enhancing their perceived worth and involvement. Research suggests that digital media, such as the metaverse, has a tendency to stimulate a greater proportion of impulsive buying behaviour. Cognitive dissonance may also result due to the above when individuals engage into purchasing activities not considering their individual financial goals which might differ with individual personality, with type of purchase, and with the environment. (Neves et al., 2024). The difference in the immediate responses and the internal beliefs might lead to psychological distress. Various tactics like justification, collecting information and playing down on the action are witnessed to reduce the dissonance. Situations where in the performances not conferring to the expectations in the virtual world may result in the disconfirmation where in the confirmation of the performance with the expectations may reduce the psychological stress and the dissonance. The level of discordance experienced depends on the extent of difference between the original cognitive expectations and the cognition produced after using technology in the virtual world (Marikyan et al., 2023).

Cognitive dissonance and social commerce

The designing of the avatars concentrates on the portrayal of stylish images which might be different from the actual images. (Kaur et.al., 2023). The desire to engage in virtual transactions is driven by the need to demonstrate social status, exhibit digital affluence, and associate with particular interest communities inside the Metaverse. Research indicates that younger generations are more likely to engage with completely immersive realities, and their purchasing choices are primarily influenced by a desire for membership and integration into brand groups and communities. The social commerce environment offers varied options for the youth to be involved in the same, making it essential to be a part of the social environment of the metaverse universe. In this scenario both the interactions being interconnected the concept of being involved and accepted becomes very pertinent. Young customers, motivated by a need for social interaction, often base their buying choices on the endorsements, evaluations, and associations found inside these immersive environments.

The younger generation highly esteems digital collections in the metaverse, recognising their scarcity, distinctiveness, and prominence (Arya, et al., 2023). This tendency provides the foundation for premium businesses to create a presence in the metaverse. Buyers find virtual luxury products, which are typically made in limited amounts, very appealing when they obtain a non-fungible token (NFT) as a virtual proof of ownership. The Non -Fungible token identifies the originality restricting the access as noted in the case of Gucci which overperformed its actual pricing in the metaverse world. This underscores customers' propensity to amass scarce commodities not alone for personal gratification but also for the purpose of showcasing their identity. The expansion of this trend into the metaverse presents a profitable marketing prospect for high-end businesses to leverage the need for special and distinctive digital assets among the younger generation (Koohang et al., 2023).

The impact of peer influence is heightened in the Metaverse, particularly among adolescents as they navigate their developing virtual personas. The phenomena of copying continues to be influential, resulting in a virtual representation of conformity—the inclination to assimilate with established digital standards. This uniformity arises from a fear of being judged and rejected, especially in online social circles and larger digital networks (Alessandro, 2023). For instance, an adolescent in the Metaverse might be swayed by the avatars of their classmates, opting to acquire virtual accessories or clothing items that correspond with the dominant fashion trends in their digital social groups. The impulse to conform in the virtual realm reflects the tendency in the actual world to seek social approval and avoid deviating from the norm (Vîrjan et al., 2022).

However, the tendency to engage in social commerce and make hasty purchases inside immersive settings might lead to cognitive dissonance. Owing to the spur of the moment purchase decisions in the virtual world, which might result in disparity in the beliefs thereby resulting in cognitive dissonance. The psychological discomfort highlights the intricate relationship between the social elements of immersive reality, consumer behaviour, and the resulting cognitive difficulties linked to impulsive purchasing in the digital environment. There are several ways in which cognitive dissonance may become apparent in this particular environment. Adoption of the phenomenon as a result of the existing influence in the metaverse environment despite their individual tastes and by imbibing a trend witnessed in the metaverse just to confirm to the social norm might lead to cognitive dissonance ,with

respect to their individual tastes and with respect to online preferences ,which is also referred as peer influence dissonance. Whereas the creation of virtual identity and attempting to shed the individuality to avoid negativity and to get acceptance is known as digital social judgement dissonance, wherein the concept of not expressing the individuality in the virtual context to avoid displeasure in the social context might also give rise to cognitive dissonance. Conflict between conformity and individuality, occurs wherein differences occur in situations wherein conflict arises between social norms accepted and individual preferences. For example, a someone who want to adhere to the virtual norms of a certain group while still desiring to differentiate themselves with a distinct avatar look may experience emotional turmoil.

Exploring the notion of prosumption, in which a person assumes the twin roles of consumer and producer for certain things, is worthwhile. An exemplary example of virtual commerce is the production and exchange of virtual goods inside online games and social virtual environments, such as Second Life. By implementing various digital tools in all steps to develop customization in offerings and the reasons associated with the above can be studied with respect to both psychological and technical issues. The state of prosumption in the metaverse universe may result owing to the cognitive arising from the dual positioning of being associated in production and consumption. The disparity between their positions as producers and consumers in the virtual environment and the conventional consumer-producer dynamic in the real world might lead to a conflict in their comprehension of value, contribution, and identity. The presence of cognitive dissonance underscores the intricate nature of managing the changing dynamics of prosumption in the metaverse (Shen, et al., 2021).

AREAS OF FUTURE INVESTIGATION

This research aims to investigate the nonpositive face of the universe of metaverse and occurrences of various psychological issues owing to cognitive dissonance, and this study attempts to ponder into the aspects of cognitive dissonance and to contribute to the gap in the digital world. This study also attempts to study the intricate relationship between the metaverse and cognitive dissonance. Future study may aim to pinpoint certain characteristics inside the metaverse environment that function as catalysts for cognitive dissonance. This study involves a thorough examination of contradictory information, simulated experiences, and social interactions that contribute to the psychological stress experienced by users navigating virtual worlds. An interesting area of research is analysing how the distinct attributes of the metaverse enhance cognitive dissonance when compared to conventional online or real-world environments. Researchers may explore the fundamental origins of cognitive dissonance in the metaverse by examining logical contradictions, confrontations across cultures, pressures to conform, and the lasting effects of previous virtual encounters. The objective is to examine the consequences of these identified factors on users' psychological well-being, cognitive decision-making processes, and overall contentment within the complex settings of virtual worlds. This comprehensive method aims to reveal the intricate processes occurring inside the metaverse, providing vital insights into our comprehension of cognitive dissonance in this expanding digital domain.

Another area of study might thoroughly investigate the influence of interacting with avatars and virtual interactions on people' self-perceptions in the metaverse. This study seeks to understand the complex interaction between real-world and virtual identities, specifically examining how this discrepancy leads to cognitive dissonance. An essential aspect of our study is a comprehensive examination of the psychological mechanisms at play when people adjust and harmonise their self-perceptions inside the immersive metaverse. This study aims to clarify the transformational characteristics of virtual experiences and their significant consequences on users' self-perceptions. The upcoming studies in arena of cognitive dissonance in the universe of metaverse may concentrate on the disturbances in the psychological realm of the users by studying the applicable and arising differences in the expectations and reality.

A well-rounded understanding of the non-linear emotional landscape of the users in the universe of metaverse and ways of abating the nonpositive effects of cognitive dissonance encompassing various interventions both theoretical, instructive and customized means which would if implemented efficiently aid in the users' expectations abating the disturbances. This research attempts to suggest various applicable ways which would aid in reduction of the difficulties arising from the cognitive dissonance. Future research by studying the intricate association of unplanned purchases and associated cognitive dissonance, the influence of social influence , buying experiences in the virtual world, availability of the information on the associated outcomes all of which would facilitate the consumer mind that would influence the buying process in the virtual world. Future researchers may also attempt to study the influence of cognitive dissonance on various facets of marketing like brand loyalty, customer retention and other marketing dynamics which would be beneficial in exploring the influence of cultural diversity on cognitive dissonance in the virtual universe.

Research may investigate whether individuals from differing cultural origins exhibit distinct patterns in experiencing and managing cognitive dissonance. This study seeks to reveal the intricate ways in which cultural values influence perceptions, behaviours, and the overall experience of the metaverse, therefore fostering a more comprehensive knowledge of user interactions. Exploring the evolution of cognitive dissonance over time inside the metaverse is an intriguing field of study that may be conducted via longitudinal research. Analysing users' experiences, actions, and changes in self-perception across repeated sessions might uncover patterns, trends, and possible variables that can help reduce negative effects. This study path seeks to provide a thorough knowledge of the ever-changing nature of cognitive dissonance in the constantly expanding virtual environment.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

The researchers investigated the relationship between cognitive dissonance and the intention to continue using a specific application. This research identified that a nonpositive influence exist on the continuation intent of users indulging in the app owing to cognitive dissonance (Zhang & Pan, 2023). A separate research investigating the link between cognitive dissonance and customer loyalty found that cognitive dissonance had a negative effect on customer loyalty. These studies emphasise the need for marketers to pay attention to cognitive dissonance in user interactions. Marketers are increasingly responsible for actively addressing and reducing cognitive dissonance in order to promote consumer pleasure and loyalty (Zhang & Pan, 2023). Given that the primary goal of almost all metaverse apps is to enhance user experience, it is reasonable to analyse metaverse marketing applications by considering the "consumer experience" rather of merely relying on technology (Giang Barrera & Shah, 2023).

Within the metaverse, individuals express their identities by means of avatars, which act as a representation or manifestation of their true selves. The cognitive process of redefining or expanding one's identity via customised digital representations has noteworthy consequences for patterns of purchasing which might result in loss of individual identity in the world of metaverse (Koohang et al., 2023), which calls for a tool which would aid in customizing avatars to minimize the cognitive dissonance associated. By implementing the above tool and customizing the various marketing efforts the marketers might attempt to trace and evaluate the return on the marketing efforts and expenses by the virtue of which acquiring and retain the customers and minimizing the associated cognitive dissonance. This alignment is achieved by considering the specific traits and preferences of the consumers represented by the avatars (Bélisle & Bodur, 2010). The marketers may provide clients with a vast array of choices to personalise their avatars according to their preferred self-image. These possibilities include several attributes, including look, clothes, accessories, and even personality qualities.

Being transparent is identified as an important factor for the operators in the metaverse universe and implementing a continuous and a sustained way of communications both in the physical and non-physical operations. To mitigate cognitive dissonance resulting from disparities between expectations and actuality, marketers have to provide comprehensive details on virtual goods or services. This aids in reducing cognitive dissonance associated with brand perception and expectations. By using these marketing tactics, firms may effectively address the unique issues of the metaverse, guaranteeing a favourable user experience and minimising cognitive dissonance among consumers.

CONCLUSION

The metaverse's hyper-immersive nature erases the distinction between virtual and real-life encounters. This may lead to perplexity and cognitive dissonance as users attempt to reconcile their esteemed virtual achievements and friendships with their tangible real-life experiences. The task of ascertaining the true worth or importance of anything may result in dissatisfaction, discontentment, and a consequent decrease in overall life satisfaction or pleasure. Although the metaverse presents exceptional possibilities, it also entails many possible consequences that stakeholders must cautiously traverse. To summarise, the captivating and all-encompassing nature of the metaverse necessitates careful examination of its effects on users' welfare and the wider consequences it presents.

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