

THE METAVERSE: EXPLORING CONSUMER'S EXPECTATIONS, THEIR ATTITUDES, AND IT'S MEANING TO THE FASHION INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *The following paper aims to find out consumers' expectations and attitudes towards the innovation „Metaverse“. It will also be explored which role the Meta Group plays in mass adaption and how the company influences consumers' possible use and opinion on the project. These results are connected to the fashion industry, further exploring new types of products and a possible distribution channel. Therefore, this study is useful to developers of Metaverses and AR/VR products, the Meta Group, and fashion companies. The main results of this research are: Meta and the Metaverse are seen as critical, the required technology has not yet reached mainstream use, but interest is present. Digital fashion had participants divided, some not willing to spend any money and some already having spent over 100€, although the Metaverse's influence on future purchases is little. The Metaverse could serve as a new distribution channel for clothing products. To conduct this research Google Forms was used. The research is classified as survey-based. The biggest limitation is the nonexistence of the Metaverse as envisioned by Meta, making it hard for participants to answer some of the questions asked.*

Keywords: Metaverse, digital clothing, virtual reality, augmented reality.

METAVERSE: ISTRAŽIVANJE OČEKIVANJA POTROŠAČA, NJIHOVIH STAVOVA I ZNAČAJA ZA MODNU INDUSTRIJU

Apstrakt: *Ovaj rad ima za cilj da sazna očekivanja i stavove potrošača prema inovaciji „Metaverse“. Takođe će se istražiti koju ulogu Meta Group ima u masovnoj adaptaciji i kako kompanija utiče na moguću upotrebu i mišljenje potrošača o projektu. Ovi rezultati se vezuju za modnu industriju, dalje istraživanje novih vrsta proizvoda i mogućih kanala distribucije. Stoga je ova studija korisna za programere Metaverse-a i AR/VR proizvoda, Meta Group i modne kompanije. Glavni rezultati ovog istraživanja su: Meta i Metaverse (Metaverzum) se vide kao kritični, potrebna tehnologija još nije dostigla opštu upotrebu, ali interesovanje je prisutno. Digitalna moda je podelila učesnike, neki nisu voljni da potroše novac, a neki su već potrošili preko 100 evra, iako je uticaj Metaverse-a na buduće kupovine mali. Metaverse bi mogao da posluži kao novi kanal za distribuciju odevnih proizvoda. Za sprovođenje ovog istraživanja korišćen je Google Forms. Istraživanje je klasifikovano kao zasnovano na anketama. Najveće ograničenje je nepostojanje Metaverzuma kako ga je zamislio Meta, što otežava učesnicima da odgovore na neka od postavljenih pitanja.*

Ključne reči: Metaverse, digitalna odeća, virtuelna stvarnost, proširena stvarnost.

1. INTRODUCTION

In late October of 2021 Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced the rebranding and renaming of the social media giant at its annual Connect conference. A new logo and name "Meta" was presented. But more importantly, with this name change the parent company of the biggest social media platforms in the world put a strong emphasis on their newest and biggest project yet: The creation of a so-called "Metaverse". Described by Zuckerberg as a digital platform, where you can do all the things you can do in real life but online, using a digital avatar resembling your real-life self. The list of possible activities includes going shopping, watching movies, trying on clothes, or going to concerts. But not only leisure activities are possible: office meetings or interacting and meeting co-workers to plan and structure office days are part of the many possible uses [1]. The name-change and empathize Zuckerberg put on this platform additionally gives consumers and companies alike a glance at how serious and promising this project could be. The company has already backed this up with an investment of ten billion dollars in their virtual reality and augmented reality division "Reality Labs" in 2021 [1].

The second topic of this research paper is the growing consumption of fashion goods and the change of preferred distribution channels. The market has steadily increased in trading volume and increased number of sales. In 2013 the sales volume amounted to 1.127.040 Mio Dollars and increased to 1.413.412 Mio Dollars in 2019, the last year before all global market crashed due to Covid-19. It's also interesting to note that the choice of distribution channel changed in the last few years, with online sales numbers making up to 24,2 % of all sales in 2019. This number is expected to grow to 43,1 % by 2025, underlining that consumers see less need in a traditional way of shopping and their shopping behavior becoming more and more digital [2]. But seeing a change to the way of consumption of real-life fashion products isn't the only evolution happening in the fashion market: There is also an increasing and already successful market for "digital outfits and clothes" with one example provided by the video game "Fortnite", already described by some to be a smaller less developed version of a Metaverse [3] and its successful sale of so-called "skins", which changes the player's outfit when playing the game. One version of these skins, released as a part of a collaboration with the NFL (National Football Association), grossed 50 million dollars for developer Epic Games. The price one had to pay to play in their favorite team's jersey was 15 dollars each [4].

The goal of this term paper and study is to find out how big the acceptance and expectations of the idea of the Metaverse is and which influence it has on fashion consumption. Consumers' attitudes towards buying digital fashion goods for their digital self in a digital retail place are an essential part of this study, as well as consumers using their digital self to go shopping for real-life fashion products. The conclusion of this study provides the reader with an overview of the acceptance of the Metaverse itself, the acceptance of the used technology, possible concerns they have with the project, and particular buying preferences and habits based on consumers' expectations towards the fashion market and its connection to the Metaverse.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Due to the announcement of Meta's Metaverse only a couple of months ago and with very vague information about the functionality has been released publicly, the number of research and studies about the expectations and acceptance of the project is limited. Because of that a selection of studies and real-life cases will be presented that focus on the current use and acceptance of the required technology and already existing examples of smaller Metaverses and their implementation of fashion goods. The role of fashion in the Metaverse will also be presented, with possible future cases of adaption and use being portrayed. The term "Metaverse" will also be explained to ensure a stable basis of research and discussion, supported by an existing example to illustrate the functionality and number of possible activities a Metaverse can provide.

This research, therefore, covers the gap between the existing attitude of consumers towards the parameters stated above and specifically connects them with the Metaverse project, to see the influence of the Meta company and its effect on mainstream exposure, acceptance, and use. Besides that, this study shows if and to which price consumers are willing to buy digital fashion goods, their attitude towards fashion as a whole, and their current consuming behavior. Their self-expected use of the Metaverse to consume fashion is also part of this research.

2.1. Explanation Metaverse

2.1.1. Definition

The term "Metaverse" was first popularized in the 1992 novel "Snow Crash" by Neal Stephenson and describes a "three-dimensional world inhabited by avatars of real people" [5]. This definition can still be used

to describe the current idea of a metaverse, though it is very vague. The reason behind this is, that the current state of the term Metaverse more resembles a thought construct than a definition that is set in stone [6]. One author compares the current state of the term "Metaverse" to the term "internet" in the 1970s, where the ground stone of a new form of communication was built and possible uses were recognizable, but no one could tell how and in what magnitude it would be used [7]. Although no general description has been agreed on yet, this research paper relies on the definition given by the former head of strategy for Amazon Studios and co-founder of Ball Metaverse Research Partners Matthew Ball: "The Metaverse is a massively scaled and interoperable network of real-time rendered 3D virtual worlds 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" [8].

2.1.2. Current consumer knowledge and concerns about the Metaverse

The unclear definition and comparable small amount of information being released to the public about the Metaverse results in a lot of possible consumers/users not understanding the concept of the platform. In a survey, in which participants from the US and UK were asked about their thoughts on the project, 33% of UK and 29% of US residents said they still don't understand what the Metaverse is about. Only 17% (UK) and 23% (US) claimed they want to spend more time exploring the Metaverse [9]. Besides these problems, which can be related to any Metaverse, no matter who oversees technical infrastructure and development, consumers have specific concerns about Meta's plans on its platform. A recent study shows that three out of four people don't want Meta to develop the Metaverse because they have strong concerns about their private data and its safety. This fear is only enhanced when thinking about the recent Cambridge Analytica incident. Participants of the study rather preferred a decentralized version, running on Blockchain technology like Ethereum or Cardano, which would result in no "controlling" the Metaverse and therefore keeping user data not profitable to one source [10]. A more positive outlook is given by looking at the following numbers: in the last year, 5,4 million online mentions of the Metaverse could be tracked with a 29% positive brand sentiment. It is already visible, who is the main target group of this new technology: 90% of the said conversations

were held by members of Generation Z and millennials, therefore making it possible for companies to get in touch with a group that is often considered hard to get in touch with [11]

2.1.3. Example of existing Metaverse

The following example of "Decentralland" gives potential consumers and investing companies an idea of how many activities are possible in the Metaverse and how fast the adaption of a digital world with similar opportunities as in real life is making progress: In this virtual world, users can use the cryptocurrency "MANA" to buy land, which the owners then can build on, with some land prices ranging up to multiple hundred thousands of dollars. What the owner builds on his land then decides which activities the users (with their avatar) can take part in when being active in "Decentralland" (e.g., fashion stores). There are already famous owners of land and activities mimicking real life: The auction house "Sotheby's" already owns an art gallery which users can visit, or it is possible to gamble in a casino. The croupiers working there are real and are paid in "MANA", which then can be traded to real money [12] [13]. The acceptance of this project can be seen in its growing number of users: currently, the project has around 300,000 monthly and 18000 daily users, with its growth being 10x in the last few months as stated by co-founder Ari Meilich [14]. The price evolution for MANA on the cryptocurrency market also backs these statements, with its price increasing by 1317% within one year [15].

2.2. Metaverse and fashion

As one can see: Meta isn't the first company attempting to create a Metaverse or in other words: the term and the idea of a Metaverse wasn't created by Zuckerberg and his company. There are already, although notably smaller, Meta-verses that already show the possibilities and a certain degree of acceptance of the project. On top of that, it is interesting to see, that these existing Metaverses already attract attention from the fashion world's biggest global players. One recent example is the collaboration of fashion brand Ralph Lauren and Online-Gaming-Platform "Roblox", which enabled players to go shopping in a virtual Ralph Lauren shop to buy the designer's clothes for their avatar. Prices for these pieces of clothing ranged between three to five dollars. Keeping in mind that Roblox currently has an active user base of 47 million per day, it is very obvious why Ralph Lauren chose the gaming platform as their digital collaboration partner. Roblox on the other hand can

profit from Ralph Laurens's prestige and legendary status in the fashion industry resulting in gaining more mainstream exposure and opening doors for similar collaborations [16]. Another recent example of fashion companies venturing into the market of digital fashion goods is provided by 2021 announced and later realized collaboration between already mentioned video game (and predecessor of a Metaverse) "Fortnite" and high-end-luxury brand Balenciaga. The French luxury house created an exclusive set of apparel for users to buy within the game to change their character's appearance while play-



Figure 2: Balenciaga and Fortnite (real-life) (Epicgames, 2021)



Figure 1: Balenciaga and Fortnite (ingame)[17]

ing. Although no sales and revenue numbers are being released to the public, the success of these kinds of collaboration can be seen by the example provided at the beginning of this term paper.

It's interesting to note, that although Balenciaga offers luxury pieces (with matching prices) in real-life, the prices for the digital clothes in "Fortnite" did not differ from previous collaborations with other, non-luxury partners. A set of clothing could be bought for 1200 "V-Bucks", the game's currency, up to 1500 "V-Bucks", which roughly converts from 12€ to 15€ [18]. But this partnership not only consisted of digital clothes: Balenciaga offered their products at the launch of the collaboration, this time adjusting the prices accordingly to the rest of their portfolio. The cheapest piece of clothing that could be acquired was a baseball cap, sitting at 375\$, with prices going up to 1290\$ for a jacket made from Japanese denim. Design-wise some of these products looked exactly like the ones that could be bought in "Fortnite", making

it possible for gamers and consumers to match their character's outfits with their real-life ones. Although these steep price points, some pieces of the collaboration sold out within a couple of hours, further underlining the increasing importance of the relationship between digital and real-life worlds and its role for fashion products [19].

Sportswear giant Nike also increased its involvement in the Metaverse by acquiring NFT-developer RTKFT. An NFT (non-fungible-token) to put it simply, is a certificate that one owns something digital, with the owner being the sole possessor of said medium. The term gained huge popularity over the last couple of years, resulting in Collins Dictionary awarding it with word of the year 2021, justified with the use of the abbreviation rising by 11000% [20]. How this NFTs look depends on their creator, in the case of Nike this results in collectible versions of digital sportswear and sneakers [21]. The application of these collectibles (or other forms of digital clothing in general) could see an even bigger increase, depending on the development of corresponding technology like augmented reality, which would make it possible for owners to "wear" their digital clothing. To clarify this use, think of the following scenario given by fashion magazine GQ: the user wears AR-Glasses while walking down the street and sees another person wearing a dress going up in flames. When taking their glasses off, they see that said person is only wearing a white T-shirt and a pair of sweatpants [22].

Besides buying digital clothes for the user's avatar, the Metaverse opens up a new distribution channel for retailers and fashion companies alike when shopping for real-life goods. The user can also use the three-dimensional versions of clothing stores in the Metaverse to shop for fashion products for his re-

al-life persona. This way a more robust shopping experience can be created, which has characteristics of both real-life and online shopping. The user can move through the three-dimensional representation of the store as if visiting its real-life counterpart, while also not having to leave his home and order products directly to his doorstep. This way he can go shopping with friends and store personnel can track his movement throughout the store, providing him with added product information and advice, depending on his product of interest, therefore creating a service that cannot be replicated in the current state of online shops [23]. Instead of reading transaction logs or tracking how the consumer moves through the site, his interaction with desired products can be seen and tracked, making it possible for marketers to analyze virtual shopping behavior as it is happening [24].

2.3. Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality

A possibly crucial part of the potential success of Meta's project is the adaption of virtual and augmented reality devices and services. There is currently no information on whether or not these devices are necessary to enter Metaverse, but it will likely enhance the user's experience. The whole concept of the project is intended to be used with virtual and augmented reality technology because they help to blend real-life with digital worlds [25]. Meta has already set a ground stone for their endeavor into virtual and augmented reality by buying virtual reality headset developer "Oculus" back in 2014. Back then Zuckerberg already claimed that these devices are part of a completely new communication platform [26].

Augmented reality can be defined as a technology that connects virtually with real environments, which "can interact with the immediate surrounding and register and connect real and virtual objects" [26]. Other authors add, that Augmented reality is able "to integrate digital information with live video on the user's environment in real-time" [28]. The most common form of product, that can provide these services, are glasses the user wears when interacting with the real world, with one of its most famous examples being "Google Glass". Although smartphones are also able to use and display augmented reality, a prime example is Instagram's filters [29,30].

Virtual reality, on the other hand, is described as an artificial, digital, and three-dimensional world, that can be experienced with corresponding hard- and software, which enables the user to interact with this described virtual world, in this case, the Metaverse.

Currently, virtual reality products consist of "glasses" (or more spicily a crossover between glasses and headset) and a controller [31]. The current cost for a virtual reality headset by market leader oculus is 350 euros [32]. Virtual reality is expected to increase its revenue from 4,48 billion dollars to 22,37 billion dollars in the next five years, underlining its possible importance in the future of human interaction and exploration of digital worlds [33]. It's also interesting to note, that Meta's "Oculus" is currently the world's biggest seller of virtual reality hard-and software, with their product, the "Oculus Quest 2", selling around one million units in Q4 of 2020, almost ten times as much as their closest competitor [34]. Looking at the consumer's interest in these products, the numbers of expected use, increased from 17% in 2018 to 41% in 2021 [35].

When looking at expected and current problems with the adaption of VR and AR technology user experience is the biggest factor: 19% of VR and 32% of AR users have a problem with the bulky design of the hardware or the technology not working accordingly. Another big factor is the lag of content offerings, with 27% of industry experts stating that there is not enough content or the quality of accessible content not being of good quality. 18% said this about AR technology. Other smaller factors are the costs, the legal risks, and consumer and business reluctance to embrace VR and AR technology [36].

It is yet unclear what impact the Metaverse has on the use of these technologies, which further increases the relevance of the results of this research paper, in which these two components are connected.

The following hypothesis was developed:

- Consumers don't know enough about the Metaverse, therefore making judgment more difficult,
- Meta entering the Metaverse increased interest in the topic,
- Users have strong concerns about parts of the Metaverse,
- The required technology is not mainstream ready (main reason: design, price, and possible use),
- The Metaverse will increase the interest in digital clothing and its willingness to consume said goods,
- The distribution channel Metaverse will be strongly accepted, especially when compared to Online-Shopping,
- Participants have already spent money on digital clothing.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research, that has been conducted for this paper, can be classified as survey-based research. Survey-based research is defined as "a collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" [37] and is typically used when researching consumer behavior and patterns. This research mostly uses questions that can be classified as quantitative (e.g. questions with numerical rated items) and a smaller amount as qualitative (e.g. open-ended questions) [37,38]. Most questions that were asked in this research have the answering options of "yes" or "no". A smaller part of the questions wants the consumer to give reasons, which are given by the author, towards the corresponding topic depending on the chapters, with the possibility to add own reasons when considered as necessary. The last and only two questions are open-ended questions allowing the participants to state their reasons for acceptance or rejection without the author giving predetermined answers. The research itself is divided into five different chapters, which are the following: In the first chapter, the participants are asked about their gender identity and their age, having the purpose to give the creator of this survey a small overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants. The second chapter focuses on the attitude the participants have towards the Meta Group and the innovation of the Metaverse, followed by the third chapter, in which the main topic is about consumers' point of view towards the required technology to use the Metaverse in full potential (AR and VR). The fourth chapter topic is about the described use and possible consumption of digital fashion goods, while the fifth chapter fathoms the possible new way of distribution for real-life fashion goods. To create an even ground for all participants, small texts were written and published within the survey, containing the information gathered in chapter 2 "Literature review and hypothesis development". This was necessary because the idea of the metaverse and its possibilities are yet not widely known but were needed to ensure a better quality of results. The research was created by using Google's survey tool "Google forms" and was distributed by copying the survey link and sending it to the participants. Because the Metaverse target and interest group, as stated in chapter 2.1.2, mostly consists of members of either Generation Z or Millennials, most of the participants can be assigned to them. Most of the questions asked were mandatory and could not be skipped, with the only exceptions being questions that either was connected to the previous one and, as already stated above, the last two questions. In total

39 people participated the survey. The survey's results will be attached to this term paper and can be found at the end.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of the survey will be presented in the order of the chapters mentioned before. In the first chapter, it can be seen that the ratio to male and female participants is almost even with 53,8% being male and 46,2% female. 92,3% of the participants stated that they are aged between 18-25, therefore representing the main target group of the Metaverse.

In the second chapter, in which the main topic is about consumer's attitude towards the Metaverse and Meta Group, the following answers were given: When asked about their point of view towards the Meta Group, 56,4% said, that they are set very critical or critical. 38,5% said that they are neither set critical nor positive and only 5,2% of participants have a positive attitude towards Zuckerberg's company. These results are particularly interesting when comparing them to the consumer's current use of Meta Group services with 100% stating that they are using at least one of the company's networks. This could result in a lot of people using Meta's version of the Metaverse, despite their concerns about the project's parent company. When asked specifically about their attitude towards the innovation Metaverse, 46,1% reject the idea, with 17,9% even being strongly against it. Again, a lot of participants (38,5%) also stated that they are neither critical nor positive towards the innovation, which could be reasoned in the yet unknown possibilities and use, further underlining the research results of chapter 2.1.2. This assumption is even more plausible when looking at the following numbers: 53,8% have not done their research about the Metaverse, with this survey being their first contact point. 48,7% are not influenced by the announcement of Meta entering the "Metaverse-Market", saying that it will neither increase their interest nor potential use. Additionally, 35,9% said, that the announcement only increased their interest and 15,4% saw an increase of interest and potential use. When asked about the potential risk of a Metaverse, a clear result can be seen: none of the participants saw any risks in the project and 25,6% said, that they don't know enough about the project to comment on this question. 74,4% see risks and when asked about particular ones, the most common answers were the declining relation to real life and losing contact with one's real self. The participants also saw a big risk to their privacy and a small number of big companies gaining more

power. The decline of real human interaction was also seen as a potential risk factor. This outcome lines up with the research results of Tidio [39] with their participants having similar concerns about the innovation (e.g., mental health, addiction to virtual reality).

The third chapter focuses on the corresponding technology of augmented and virtual reality. In the first question of this chapter, participants were asked if they are interested in AR and VR technology, no matter the project Metaverse. 71,8% answered this question with "yes" and 28,2% with "no". When connecting their interest in these technologies with the idea of the Metaverse 53,8% strongly declined, that the innovation has any influence on their interest in these products. Only 15,4% stated that the Metaverse influences their interest, either strongly or normally. Despite a lot of the participants being interested in the VR and AR products only one of them answered, that they already own said technology, hence it is interesting to see, what prevents consumers to buy these products: Besides lack of interest, already been established in the previous question, a lot of participants are not willing to buy AR and VR products at their current price point. They also don't see many possible opportunities for use. These results mostly match with the reasons previous surveys collected, but one disparity is the bulky design of the products. In this survey, only 3 people said that the bulky design is the reason behind their nonexisting ownership.

The fourth chapter explores the participant's relationship and attitude towards digital clothing products. 43,6% of the participants said, that they already bought digital pieces of clothing. When asked about how much they have already spent on these pieces of clothing, two clear groups can be seen. 30% stated that they have already spent more than 100€ and 40% only spent 0€-20€. 15% spent 20€-50€ and the other 15% spent 50€-100€. A possible entering of established brands into the digital fashion market and the Metaverse don't affect 56,4% when asked about their possible increase of consumption of digital clothes. Again 33,3% claimed, that they are not ready yet to give a clear answer due to the lack of knowledge about the Metaverse. In a possible scenario of the participant's preferred brand of clothing entering the Metaverse and digital fashion market, 61,5% are willing to spend 1€-5€ for one piece of clothing. 23,1% are willing to spend between 5€-15€. The remaining 15,4% are ready to spend 30€-50€ or 50€-100€, with the percentage being equally divided to these possible answers. These results show that most consumers are willing to pay the same prices for their digital clothing as they are already charged by video games

like "Fortnite" or "Roblox". In connection to AR technology, 64,1% could not see themselves wearing digital pieces of clothing in real life, with 43,6% even strongly disagreeing with the idea. 20,5% would use the technology to wear their digital clothing.

In the last chapter the possibilities of the Metaverse being used as a possible distribution channel for real-life clothing pieces, 41% would use this way of shopping and 59% wouldn't. 69,3% can see this way of shopping not replacing the traditional, real-life way of shopping in a clothing store. 17,9% are indecisive and only 12,9% could see this way of shopping as a replacement, with only one participant being very fond of this idea. When being asked about this way of shopping replacing online shopping 23,1% were open to this idea and 41% were against it. It's interesting to see that 35,9% were indecisive, the possible reason being, that this way of shopping could not be imagined and experienced yet. In the last two questions, participants had the opportunity to state the advantages and disadvantages of the meta-verse-shopping experience. Examples for advantages are less expensive, better advise by personnel can be given, products can be examined better. Examples of disadvantages are less real human interaction, buying process longer and more complicated than online shopping, security of private data.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude the term paper, the following results have been accomplished. Based on the research results it can be seen that consumers and potential users are not yet or partly ready for the Metaverse, with some being decisively objective against the idea. Users are concerned about the security of private information, the decline of human interaction, and possible mental health issues, like losing touch with reality. The role of the Meta Group in the further development and potential provider of the infrastructure for the Metaverse has also been explored: Although all participants use services by Meta, the company itself isn't highly regarded. The entering of Meta, however, sparked interest and possible use for/in the project, but it's a struggle and ongoing scandals about the security of private data could hinder the successful launch of the project. When looking at corresponding and required technology, most consumers are interested in the topic, but prices for current products and missing possibilities of use restrict them from buying the required technology. To ensure mass adaption of the Metaverse these points must be considered and should be changed by companies in charge. The adaption and the current attitude of digital clothing have also been established:

Already some consumers are willing to pay for digital clothes, some even spending a total of over 100€ on said products. The price points for a piece of digital clothing should range somewhere between 1€-20€, therefore matching with current prices for skins in videogames like "Fortnite" and "Roblox". How prices in these video games and "pre-Metaverses" influence the overall perception of pricing points for digital clothing should be further examined. But overall, this research showed that the adaption of consuming digital clothing still has a long way to go, with most consumers opposing the idea. The same could be set about wearing digital pieces in real-life using AR technology, with only a few participants being fond of the idea. The possibility of the Metaverse opening a new distribution channel has also been discussed: the acceptance of this channel remains to be seen, with participants almost being divided 50/50 when asked about their possible use. A conclusion, that can already be made however is, that it won't replace the experience of shopping in real life. Looking at online shopping on the other hand shows a more indecisive picture, with almost one-third not opposing nor praising the idea. Fashion companies should have an eye on the further development and news around the Metaverse, with some big names already acting accordingly and laying a groundstone for possible future opportunities.

Limitation and study forward

The biggest limitation of this study is the non-existence and comparability of the Metaverse as described by Mark Zuckerberg. Although smaller examples already exist, the financial power and therefore impact on the technology can not be seen as of now. This makes it hard for the author and research participants to formulate clear points of view, due to the topic they talk about or must comment on not being existent. This counts for both, the Metaverse as an innovation itself and its possible impact on the fashion industry. For example, the distribution channel and going shopping in a virtual clothing store, with store personnel as an advisor and friends is not yet possible on the scale, that is intended for the future. Another limitation lies in the number of survey participants. The number should be increased further, possibly into the thousand to ensure a more representative result. As stated in the conclusion, the importance of gaming and current Metaverses on pricing points for digital clothing should also be further discussed, to see the impact their pricing has on the overall perception of how much a digital piece of clothing should cost. Another limitation, that must be mentioned is that this survey had a very regional participant base, with all

of them living in Germany. Adding to that the participants are all aged equally: This on one hand can be seen as an advantage, because the target group of the Metaverse is represented. On the other hand, it would be interesting to see, what different age groups' opinions would look like, especially when looking at possible prices or willingness to spend money on digital fashion products. Their income could be significantly higher, therefore different price points could be established.

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