Correspondence

Virtual reality in Metaverse for future mental health-helping profession: an alternative solution to the mental health challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

ABSTRACT

Currently, Metaverse has become a hot topic of conversation everywhere. Therefore, this can also be an accurate solution to the mental health challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully in the future, mental health workers can make the best use of it.

Keywords Metaverse, mental health, helping profession, COVID-19

Dear editor,

In response to the latest article on the topic of virtual reality for public health: a study on a VR intervention to enhance occupational injury prevention.[1] This topic is very relevant to what is happening in the world today. Currently, virtual reality in Metaverse has become a hot topic of conversation everywhere. Neal Stephenson used the Metaverse for the first time in literature in his 1992 dystopian novel Snow Crash.[2] The book presents the Metaverse as the ultimate evolution of the internet.[3,4] A type of virtual reality in which any virtual interaction can directly impact the real world as well.[5] Metaverse began as an add-on feature in online games and as a bet by big tech on virtual reality.[6]

Metaverse is growing in popularity, as evidenced by the presence of different metaverses in the digital world, such as the game Sandbox. Various significant corporations are currently investing in the Metaverse through land purchases. Billboards have been placed in the Metaverse, and even well-known fashion brands have sold clothing there. Facebook has introduced a concept that is expected to attract 3 (three) billion Facebook members.

These developments sparked fresh ideas for creating a Metaverse in the counseling sector. As a result, the Metaverse that will be established later is envisioned as a counseling service bureau that will be raised and sold in the Metaverse through virtual reality. Virtual reality as a tool for counseling has been around for a long time. Virtual reality is a complex imaginative system that can bridge fantasy and reality.[7] Pre-service teachers' learning practice has been designed for use in the Metaverse during its development.

The micro-teaching environment is created in a virtual world that resembles a natural field, with a sense of the Metaverse's spatial and social interaction qualities added. Pre-service teachers undertake microteaching, participate in virtual classrooms as avatars, and help facilitators and other learners enhance their capacity to cope with classroom settings by asking questions or making ideas that can be used in a real classroom.[8] The concept is thought to be applicable in counseling, particularly in the helping profession.

Online/tele-counseling is becoming more popular in the realm of helping professions.[9,10] Virtual reality (VR) therapy and some forms of distance service are in the works, as are other developments. In a prior study, participants used virtual reality (VR) to conduct internal dialogue by occupying two different virtual bodies simultaneously.[11] Virtual reality in counseling services has been used to help workers in Japan overcome various traumas and psychological illnesses based on SAT counseling. This application is deemed effective because it just takes 5–10 minutes. As a result, if virtual reality is created, particularly in the Metaverse, it can benefit mental health among workers and students, and society as a whole.

Various groups have been drawn to the creation and advancement of technology in this subject. As a result, the authors believe that it will rise in the future. The authors expect that in the Metaverse, which provides places, two-way interactions, and virtual sessions that are genuinely lifelike, there will be openings and possibilities to take up the area of delivering counseling and therapeutic services. This is considered suitable since a virtual neuropsychological

evaluation was carried out to be able to undertake it in the Metaverse, based on the results of prior studies.[12]

President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, recently stated that Indonesia must be prepared to participate in the Metaverse. Several significant global companies have begun to join Metaverse to satisfy the need for development and preparation in this area. Helpers must be prepared to enter the Metaverse's VR-based future ministry. We formed the Virtual Reality Counseling and Therapy Association in Southeast Asia, which became the precursor of the Virtual Reality movement for the Helping Profession in Southeast Asia and the excellent prospects for future development. We hope that, with our movement, we will be the first contributors in world history to offer counseling services on the Metaverse.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this paper.

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