

SKRIPSI

**THE MAGIC GATHERS: SOCIAL PRESENCE IN
COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION DURING
COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY MAGIC: THE GATHERING
COMMUNITY IN JAKARTA**

Written as a partial to fulfilment of the academic requirements
to obtain the degree of *Sarjana Ilmu Komunikasi*

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**COMMUNICATION SCIENCE STUDY PROGRAM
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES
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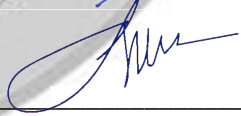
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ABSTRACT

Christy Mathew (01041180110)

THE MAGIC GATHERS: SOCIAL PRESENCE IN COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY MAGIC: THE GATHERING COMMUNITY IN JAKARTA

(xxi+64 pages:2 pictures)

Keywords: *Magic: The Gathering, social presence, computer-mediated communication.*

Magic: The Gathering (MTG) pioneered the gaming genre of trading card games (TCG), which combines elements of competition, collection, and social navigation into a single game. The Commander format of MTG is especially social in nature given its more casual play and accommodation of up to 4 players. This makes the lockdowns during COVID-19 pandemic a big hurdle for MTG players, especially those who play Commander, driving players to find other playing methods. In Jakarta, a thriving city for the TCG scene that was hit by the pandemic lockdowns, one of such methods is remote play or CMC (computer-mediated communication). While past research has shed light on social presence over CMC, none has yet looked into highly social contexts of CMC, such as a game of Commander MTG. This paper found that there are particular differences in how social presence is perceived in a remote play of Commander MTG compared to FTF play, and found other factors that may influence social presence over CMC, including duration of interaction and the social sphere of the users, among others.

ABSTRAK

Christy Mathew (01041180110)

THE MAGIC GATHERERS: KEHADIRAN SOSIAL DALAM KOMUNIKASI BERMEDIA KOMPUTER SELAMA PANDEMI COVID-19 BY MAGIC: THE GATHERING COMMUNITY IN JAKARTA

(xxi+64 pages:2 pictures)

Kata Kunci: *Magic: The Gathering, kehadiran sosial, komunikasi yang dimediasi komputer.*

Magic: The Gathering (MTG) merintis jenis permainan *trading card games* (TCG) yang menggabungkan elemen kompetisi, koleksi, dan navigasi sosial dalam satu permainan. Format *Commander* terutama adalah format main yang sangat sosial dikarenakan kompetisi yang lebih kasual dan akomodasi yang lebih besar, mengakomodasi hingga 4 pemain. Karena itu, perintah pembatasan sosial selama pandemi COVID-19 merupakan sebuah rintangan besar bagi komunitas MTG, salah satunya di Jakarta. Para pemain *Commander* MTG mencari cara lain untuk bisa terus bermain, salah satunya melalui komunikasi bermediasi komputer (*CMC/computer-mediated communication*). Walaupun penelitian terdahulu sudah meneliti presensi sosial melalui CMC, belum ada riset yang meneliti konteks sosial tinggi seperti di tengah permainan *Commander* MTG. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa ada perbedaan khusus tentang persepsi presensi sosial dalam permainan *Commander* MTG yang dimainkan secara daring, dan bahwa terdapat faktor yang memengaruhi presensi sosial tersebut, di antaranya durasi interaksi dan lingkaran sosial pengguna.

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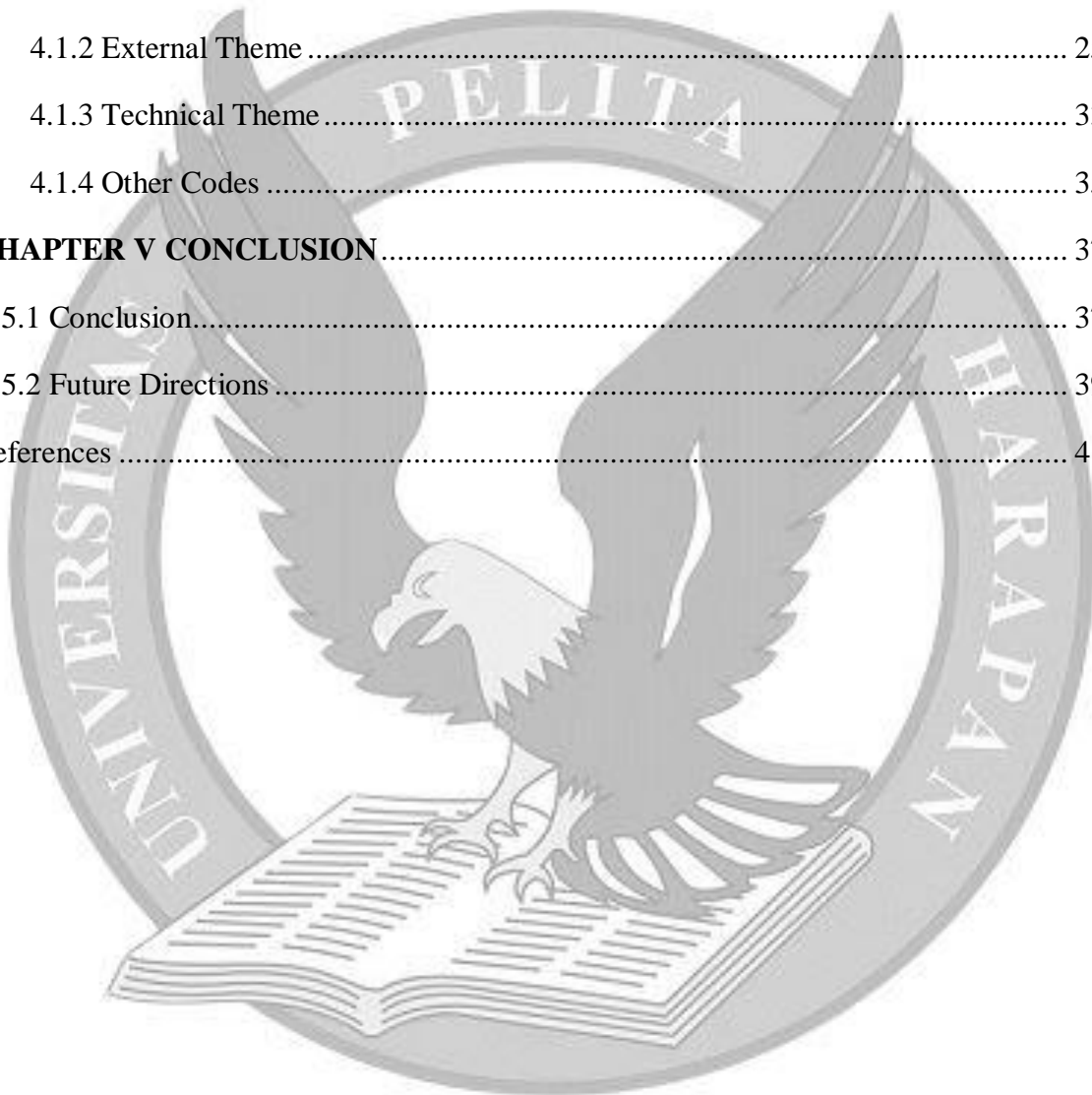
Jakarta, July 2023

Researcher

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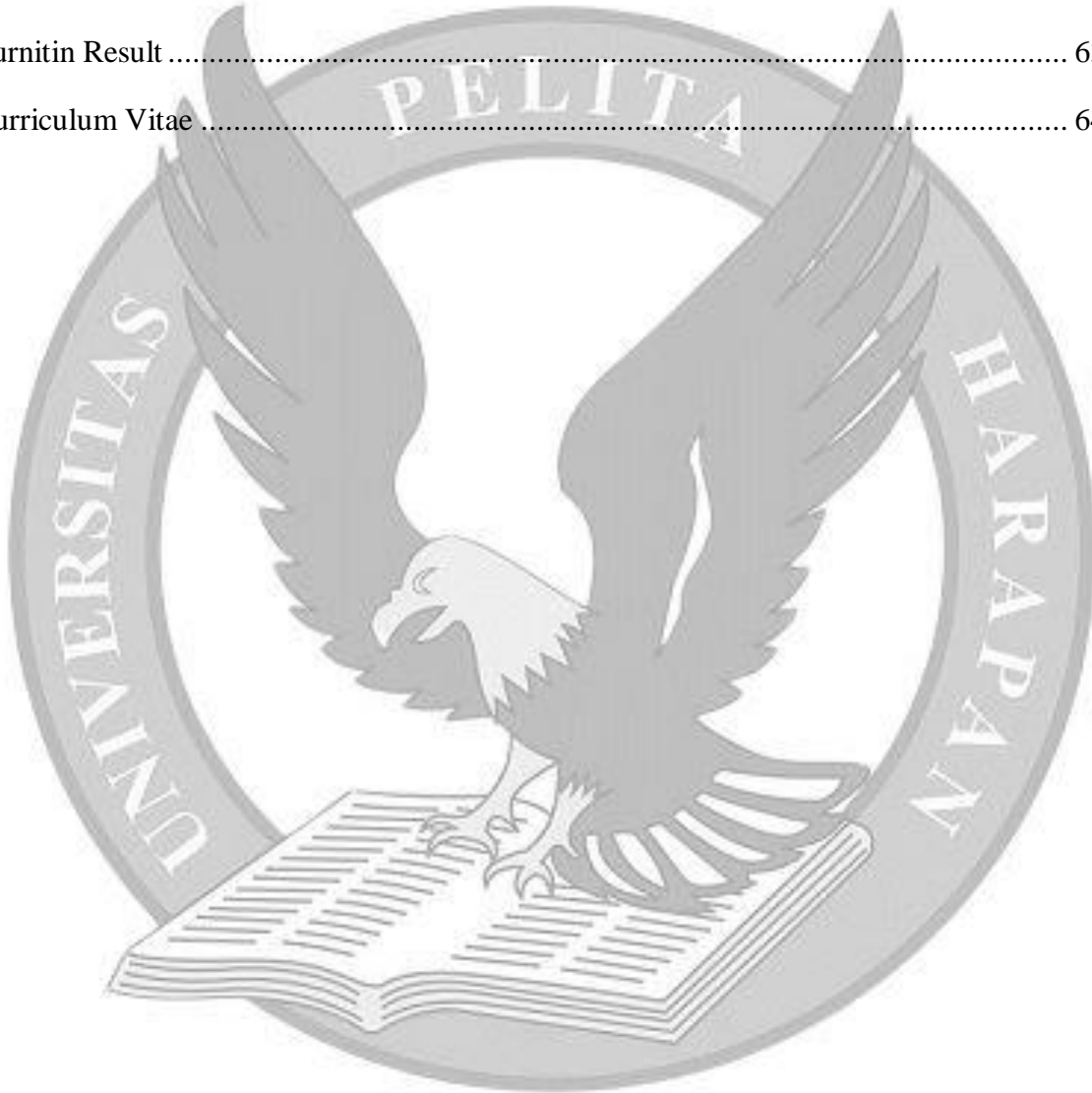
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Interpersonal communication, which involves the interplay and sharing of ideas, knowledge, feelings etc. between two or more people, is a key component of human interaction. The process is intricate and incorporates both verbal and nonverbal indicators, such as language, tone, facial expressions, and body language. To establish and sustain relationships, resolve disagreements, and accomplish personal and professional objectives, interpersonal communication is essential (Knapp & Daly, 2011). This form of communication and relationship maintenance play a crucial role in playing trading card games.

Trading card games (TCGs) are a type of game that involves players using decks of collectible cards to compete against one another. TCGs have become increasingly popular in recent years, with games like *Magic: The Gathering*, *Pokémon TCG*, and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* attracting millions of players worldwide. TCGs are more than just a game, however; they are a unique combination of social activity, skill-based gameplay, and collectible hobby (Kuhlemann & Klimmt, 2019). With tons of revenue brought in annually (Khan, 2022), the industry shows no signs of stopping in its growth. Indonesia is not an exception: TCG thrives in Indonesia, with various regions joining in national competitions as evident in the nationwide *Pokémon TCG* tournament (Yuniar, 2022).

Among other elements, the social aspect of TCGs contributes to their appeal (Johnson, 2019). TCGs often require players to gather in person, which can result in the development of tightly-knit communities revolving around the game. The emergence of friendships, rivalries, and even love connections may result from this social factor. TCGs also provide a distinctive fusion of collectible hobby and skill-based gaming. To build a powerful deck and outsmart their opponents, players must employ strategic thinking and decision-making while simultaneously partaking in the pastime of collecting and trading cards (Lenhart, *et al.*, 2008). TCGs as a genre of tabletop gaming began with the advent of *Magic: The Gathering*.

Magic: The Gathering, sometimes known as MTG, is a well-known TCG brand that served as a model for future brands. With its commercialization and collecting strategy, it established the norms for others that came after. The game gained enormous traction (Duffy, 2015) and inspired a ton of other trading card games, such *Pokémon TCG* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, both of which later rivaled their predecessor in terms of popularity (Dornbush, 2021). The game blends a deep strategic layer with fun gameplay elements. MTG has made a name for itself as a social pastime that encourages face-to-face interactions between players, fostering friendship and community development (Woods, 2012).

The game has various formats, each one following different sets of rules and restrictions despite using mostly the same card pool. Elder Dragon Highlander (EDH), sometimes called Commander, is an MTG format that emphasizes the social aspect specifically. In the multiplayer game of EDH, which is often played with four players, each player gets a deck of 100 unique cards, the commander of which is a legendary monster. Players bargain, form alliances, and chitchat as part of the social interactions that are fundamental in EDH. The community spirit and regulations of EDH encourage a setting that values social interaction just as much as the game itself (Voida, *et al.*, 2010).

Additionally, MTG, and more especially the EDH format, has proved helpful in promoting interpersonal interactions and social skills. Players gain strategic thinking abilities via gaming interactions, as well as bargaining and communication skills. Local gaming shops that organize MTG tournaments serve as social centers and are important gathering places where players may trade cards, discuss strategy, and form relationships (Carter, *et al.*, 2012). The friendships and communities formed around MTG, especially EDH, go beyond the confines of the game and provide players with a feeling of community and shared identity.

To comprehend how people engage and communicate across diverse channels, it is essential to understand the foundational idea of social presence theory. Initially, the Social Presence Theory (Short, *et al.*, 1976) proposed that the medium itself significantly influenced how people felt linked to or present with others during communication. Since then, the notion has developed, and it is now viewed in the context of online and remote interactions as the capacity to present oneself socially and emotionally as a “real” person in a mediated setting (Richardson & Swan, 2003). Adding to this, Biocca (2003) defined social presence as the feeling of being with someone else, which is impacted by both technology and the dynamics of the relationship.

In contrast, the field of computer-mediated communication (CMC) examines human communication using computers or other networked devices. Social interactions within CMC might take the form of audio-video conferencing or text-based communications. CMC has changed over time, and new technological developments have produced more immersive forms of communication that enable a higher level of social presence (De Paolis, 2017). Understanding social presence over CMC is also not an untreaded ground for research, as Gunawardena (1995), Garrison, *et al.* (2000), and Ziegler (2015) noted. However, most researches about social presence over CMC have been focused on directional interactions for ease of control, and research has yet to be done in highly social contexts, such as a gaming session.

The importance of social presence cannot be overstated in the context of gaming, and more especially in the case of Elder Dragon Highlander (EDH), a format within Magic: The Gathering. EDH is essentially social and frequently entails subtle player engagement and communication. In addition to game mechanics, the multiplayer aspect of EDH involves a substantial number of social interactions such as alliance formation, bargaining, and psychological dynamics (Drachen, *et al.*, 2010).

Communication is an essential component of the social structure of gaming communities, as noted by Waskul and Douglass (1996), giving players the ability to

negotiate common meanings and behaviors. In MTG, players must work together to build a shared knowledge of the game's intricate game rules. Among other things, a perception that drives people is their understanding that they are in the presence of other people, which is also known as social presence (Biocca, *et al.*, 2003). In playing a game of MTG, especially the highly social Commander format, social presence is a key component to its enjoyment; however, due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, measures were taken by governments worldwide to curb the spread, one of which is enforced social distancing that made it difficult for players to come and play face-to-face. As a result, players resorted to other methods, including computer-mediated communication.

By investigating how the crucial function of interpersonal communication is replaced in *Magic: The Gathering* and how the community that plays it in Jakarta worked around the hurdle caused by COVID-19 pandemic to achieve the social need to play the game, this thesis seeks to uncover how social presence is felt in these workarounds, how player experiences are influenced by these methods, and at the same time expand knowledge of how social presence is experienced over CMC in highly social contexts, which no previous researches have investigated.

1.2 Problem Identification

Indonesia is a thriving bedrock for TCGs (Yuniar, 2022), and MTG is not an exception. There are various stores and community areas where players gather to play games of MTG with each other along with various other TCGs (Susanti, 2020). With the number of matches, both casual and competitive, the popularity that this genre of tabletop games has in Jakarta cannot be understated. Various tournaments and events are held in TCG stores across the country every year, and the game has a thriving

Facebook market community that allows it to have a local economy in the sale and purchase of cards.

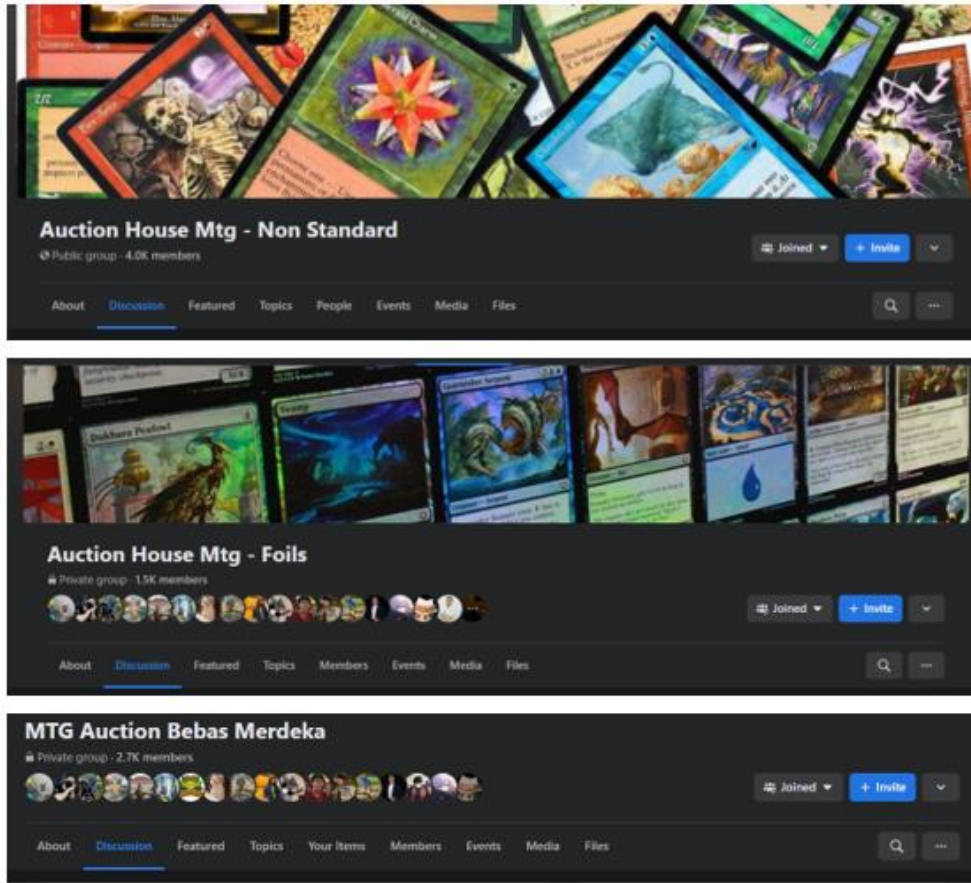


Figure 1. Facebook groups for the sale of MTG cards. Each group has thousands of members and counting. Source: Author, 2023.

Understanding this, it is unsurprising to find that MTG is regularly played in face-to-face (FTF) setting in aforementioned stores all over the country, especially in the capital city of Jakarta. Moreover, due to its highly popular Commander format, which typically involves up to 4 players, MTG is among the most social TCG games there is.

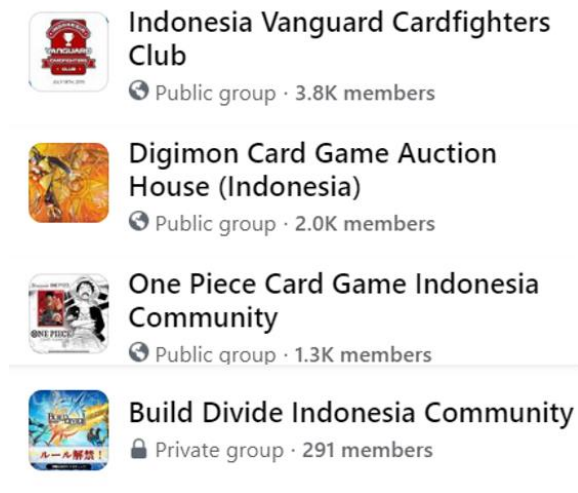


Figure 2. Groups of other trading card games in Indonesia. Note that the number of members are below Indonesian MTG groups. Source: Author, 2023.

The format requires that each player's deck carries a specific 'Commander' card. The 4-player format makes the game highly social and even political, in which players may work together to eliminate powerful players first and keep the balance of the board stable, allowing for talking and negotiation. This results in a game that heavily favors direct, face-to-face interactions (Hall, 2020), even considering its turn-based competitive gameplay typical of the genre (Yuniar, 2022).

This heavy social element of the game makes social presence a very vital component to its enjoyment, especially thanks to the reduced competitiveness of the format and its focus on the more social and political elements of the gameplay that emerged as the play went (McWhertor & Hall, 2021). In other words, Commander MTG is a highly social game with intense engagements and high social context that could influence not only how a game goes, but also how the game is enjoyed. This element of social presence found no issue in FTF games; however, this changed with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic displaced a lot of industry economically and socially (Aditantri, *et al.*, 2021). Unprecedented alterations to daily life brought on by

the COVID-19 epidemic include social isolation policies that have severely reduced face-to-face social connections. The use of electronic media for social connection, such as social networking, video conferencing, and online gaming significantly increased because of the epidemic (Meier, *et al.*, 2021).

Through the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in this manner, however, different people may experience different forms of social presence (Gunawardena, 1995). This particular form of communication may influence the way they experience the very social game that is Commander MTG, and while it is widely known that Commander MTG is a very social game that favors interpersonal interactions (Hall, 2020), there has yet been research into this form of competitive, yet social, form of gaming, specifically through computer media. As such, it is currently unknown whether interacting through CMC provides the necessary experience of social presence that is pivotal in a game of Commander MTG.

Due to its multiplayer character, where politics and diplomacy are as important as the cards themselves, EDH, commonly known as Commander, differs from other MTG formats (Carter, *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, a key aspect of the EDH experience is social presence, which is defined as the degree to which people sense the presence of others in mediated communication (Biocca, *et al.*, 2003). Traditional face-to-face EDH games are replete with social clues, such as verbal exchanges, nonverbal cues, and quick feedback, all of which enhance social presence. As a result, players frequently cite EDH's community and social connections as some of the format's most alluring aspects (Volda, *et al.*, 2010).

The development of technology and the accompanying ascent of online gaming platforms, however, have put traditional notions of social presence to the test. This was made clearer by the COVID-19 epidemic, which compelled people to engage in more online communication. To continue playing EDH, players resorted to a variety of online services, including Discord, SpellTable, and MTG Online (Whiteside, 2015). These systems provided a variety of communication options, including text-based chat and

audio-video conferencing. The change brought up important issues regarding the EDH gaming experience and the degree to which social presence can be maintained or duplicated in a mediated environment.

This topic is suitable for investigation because there is little research particularly examining social presence within the EDH group. Communication technologies can promote social presence to varied degrees, according to earlier research on online gaming (Skalski, *et al.*, 2011). The distinctive environment presented by EDH, with its focus on politics and negotiation, creates a unique setting that may affect how social presence is perceived. For instance, it is typical for players to establish alliances or influence others to conduct certain acts in an EDH game. The absence of non-verbal cues in text-based communication may make it more difficult for a player to participate successfully in such social dynamics.

Additionally, a big part of the EDH experience is the sense of community, which is frequently aided by recurring encounters with the same people in nearby game shops or groups (Carter, *et al.*, 2012). These communities might grow or contract thanks to online channels. On the one hand, they can link together players from various areas, opening possibilities for a wider range of interactions. On the other hand, the fleeting nature of online contacts could impede the growth of the kind of committed bonds that are frequently at the heart of EDH networks.

MTG as a game, and social presence over CMC, are paths that have been academically treaded before. However, unlike past research, this research specifically aims to understand the experience of online communication, specifically social presence through CMC, in a casual competitive game that heavily favors social interaction, which is MTG of the Commander format.

1.3 Problem Statement

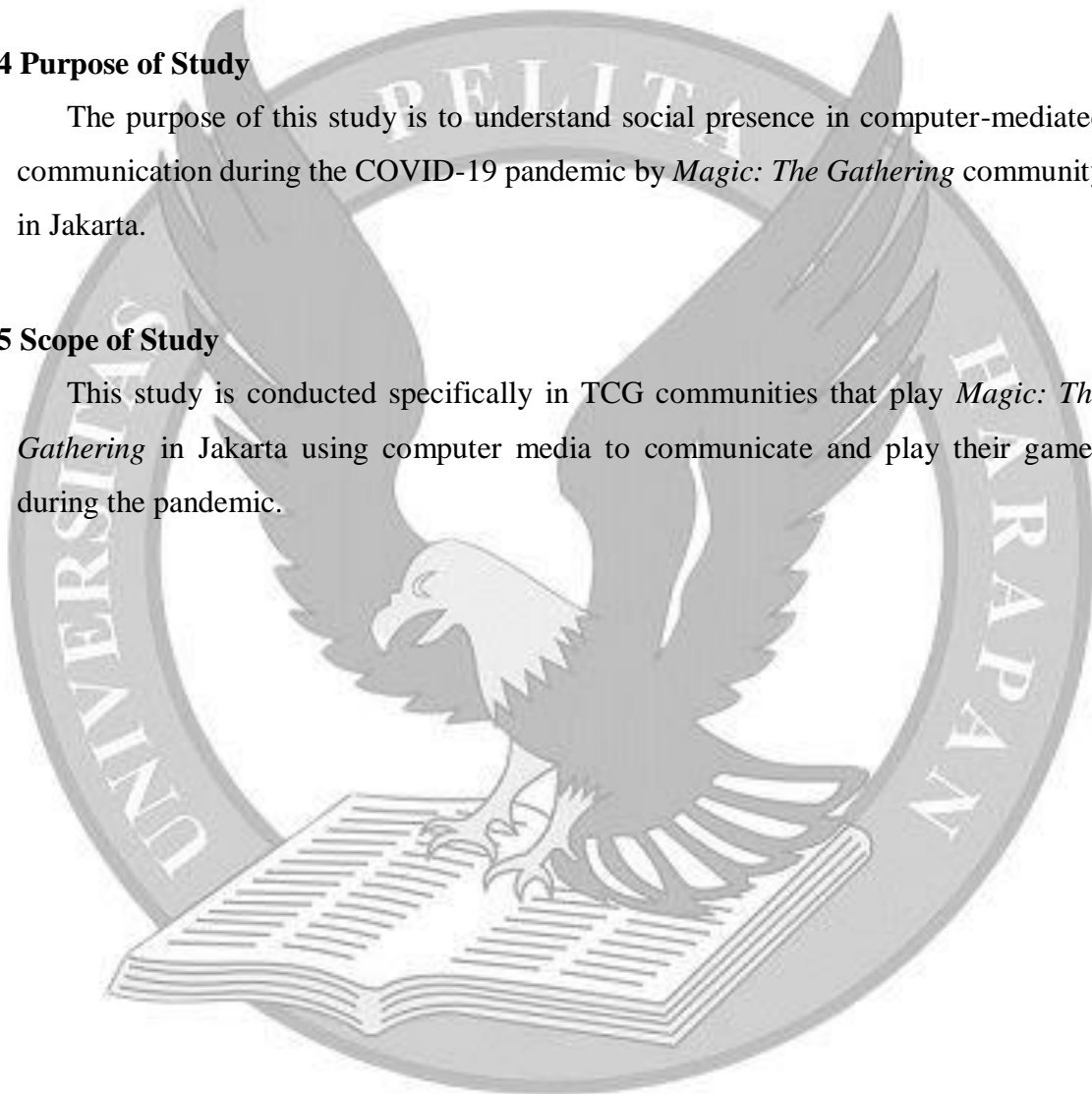
This paper seeks to address the following question: how is social presence experienced through computer-mediated communication in remote plays of *Magic: The Gathering* during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.4 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand social presence in computer-mediated communication during the COVID-19 pandemic by *Magic: The Gathering* community in Jakarta.

1.5 Scope of Study

This study is conducted specifically in TCG communities that play *Magic: The Gathering* in Jakarta using computer media to communicate and play their games during the pandemic.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Communication

The emergence of mass communication technology, which enhanced the requirement of comprehending and formalizing how messages are transmitted and perceived, is said to have been the catalyst for the development of communication theory in the early 20th century (McQuail, 2010). The work of Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver dominated this early theoretical investigation. The sender, message, channel, and receiver were first established in the Mathematical Theory of Communication, which Shannon and Weaver developed in 1949. This theory is sometimes referred to as the linear or transmission model of communication.

In the years that followed, there was a widening of viewpoints and models in an effort to address the complexity of human communication. A slightly more nuanced perspective was offered by Wilbur Schramm (1954), who focused on the reciprocal nature of communication, where the roles of sender and receiver are interchangeable, and the effect of messages on the recipient was considered. Like this, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) put out the two-step flow theory and questioned the direct impact of the media on the public by proposing the idea of opinion leaders.

As communication theory developed, academics realized how important societal and cultural circumstances were in influencing communication. The social constructionist approach of Berger and Luckmann (1966) expanded the framework beyond the dissemination of information to encompass the construction of shared meanings. They believed that reality itself is formed via human communication. Moreover, Harold Lasswell's (1948) approach argued that communication must address the questions: Who? What Says? What Channel is this? From Whom? How Does It Affect? These concepts emphasized how communication affects how we perceive the world.

McLuhan famously stated that “the medium is the message” in 1964, which focused attention on the function of the media in communication. He put up the theory that various media appeal to various senses, which influences how the message is received and

interpreted. McLuhan's work served as the foundation for a wide range of media impact theories, such as the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, *et al.*, 1974), which examined the reasons behind and methods by which individuals actively seek out certain media to meet their needs.

The use of technology in communication has been extensively studied in the digital era. The network society hypothesis developed by Castells in 2000 has provided insight on how digital networks have evolved into a crucial component of the communication environment. Additionally, researchers are now paying close attention to social media platforms and how they affect communication, with people like Boyd and Ellison (2007) looking at how these platforms affect society.

In conclusion, communication theory is a dynamic and varied science that has developed to take into account the complexity of interpersonal interaction in a variety of circumstances. It offers a framework for comprehending how humans communicate and perceive information and how a variety of elements, such as the medium, cultural norms, and technology developments, affect these processes.

2.1.1 Interpersonal Communication

The theory of interpersonal communication explains the complexity of interpersonal communication as well as the factors that shape these interactions. The breadth of interpersonal communication theory is broad and diverse, ranging from early conceptualizations that concentrated on message transmission and reception to more modern approaches embracing socio-cultural factors, psychological processes, and relationship dynamics. The 1902 publication “Human Nature and the Social Order” by Cooley, which studied the idea of the “looking-glass self” and how social interactions affect self-concept, is one of the oldest but fundamental works that analyzed communication via an interpersonal lens. This viewpoint was advanced by symbolic interactionism, which was founded by Mead in 1934 and emphasizes the significance of symbols, particularly language, in communication. Symbolic interactionism holds that people generate meanings via their interactions with others.

The study of interpersonal communication increased in the middle of the 20th century, and researchers started to create models and theories that were more descriptive of human communication processes. For instance, Argyle (1967) proposed that interpersonal communication is a cyclical process that includes message sending and receiving as well as message interpretation and feedback. His writings gave interpersonal communication a psychological viewpoint and emphasized the value of social skills in effective communication.

The Social Penetration Theory, developed by Altman and Taylor in 1973, was a well-known theory that came into being at this time. It described how social intimacy develops through self-disclosure in layers and compared it to peeling back the layers of an onion. This is closely connected to Berger and Calabrese's (1975) Ambiguity Reduction Theory, which proposed that the main purpose of communication in the early phases of a relationship is to minimize ambiguity about the other person through information-seeking behavior and self-disclosure.

The study of non-verbal communication is a prominent subfield of interpersonal communication. Examples of this include Hall's (1966) research on proxemics, the study of how people utilize space, and Birdwhistell's (1970) work on kinesics, the study of body movement as a kind of communication. These findings shed light on the crucial role that non-verbal cues play in communication, especially when it comes to expressing emotions and fostering social ties. Interpersonal communication theories have also been altered by the development of technology and social media. For instance, Walther's (1992) Social Information Processing Theory describes how individuals create connections in online settings, which may use different cues and timeframes than in-person encounters.

Interpersonal communication theory, in conclusion, is a broad and varied topic that includes a wide range of viewpoints, including psychological, socio-cultural, and relational dimensions. The discipline continues to be a thriving area of research and growth, from early understandings concentrating on social interactions and self-concept to subsequent complexities of self-disclosure, non-verbal communication, and internet communication.

2.2 Social Presence and Computer-Mediated Communication

2.2.1 Social Presence

Social presence theory began from social psychological theories of interpersonal communication (Sallnas, *et al.*, 2005). Although it was originally developed for non-mediated communication, due to its use to analyze telecommunications by Short, *et al.* (1976), the theory today is often used to discuss mediated communication (Cui, *et al.*, 2012).

Social presence refers to how a human entity feels ‘being with another’, in the same vein as humans recognize the sense ‘of place’ or spatial presence (Biocca, *et al.*, 2003). In more technical terms, social presence is how an individual represents other sentient individuals within their range of interaction. There is evidence, both neurological and behavioral, that this representation cannot be fully accounted for with only spatial presence (Biocca & Harms, 2002), such as in communications that occur through virtual media.

Lin (2004) reevaluated the framework developed by Short (1975), identifying three dimensions in social presence: *participation in group situation*, *social comfort and expression of affect*, and *social navigation*. Participation in a group situation refers to how included one feels in a particular group, which implies that the person recognizes the presence of others as a cohesive group (i.e., social presence). Social comfort refers to how adjusted a person feels, which influences how comfortably they express their affect and emotions, both of which are pivotal cues in social interactions. Finally, social navigation refers to how a person makes decisions in light of the decisions and other factors that interplay during communication with other people, which can only be achieved by a high sense of social presence.

Biocca, *et al.* (2003) proposed that social presence theory could be used to account for the social and psychological woodworks behind communication media. Specifically, the authors proposed that social presence theory could be used to assess the performance of what they dubbed *social presence technologies*, which are defined

as technologies designed, engineered, and manufactured to increase social presence. Social presence theory could be used to evaluate how ‘connected’ a user feels with another by using these technological means, while also cautioning that communication media that successfully increased social presence also comes with other risks common to communication or, sometimes, unique to the media of communication (Biocca, *et al.*, 2003). Under this definition, social presence theory serves as a main principle for studies revolving around computer-mediated communications (CMC) (Shen, *et al.*, 2010).

It is no surprise that many studies regarding the virtual world and others such as it uses social presence theory. The research by Biocca, *et al.* (2001) is one case study pertinent to your topic that shows the application of Social Presence Theory. The goal of the study was to investigate how social presence cues affect perceived credibility and trust in online communication. Participants in the experiment completed a task using computer-mediated communication. The amount of social presence that participants felt was altered by the researchers by varying the presence of visual and auditory stimuli. They used a self-report questionnaire to gauge trust, and perceived credibility was evaluated by asking participants to rate the communicators' credibility. According to the study's findings, more social presence cues—such as video and audio—led to higher levels of perceived credibility and trust in the context of online communication (Biocca, *et al.*, 2001).

Rovai (2002) carried out another pertinent case study that examined the impact of social presence on online collaborative learning. In an asynchronous online course, the researcher looked at how social presence affected students' views of learning and satisfaction. 115 college students taking an online psychology course were participants in the study. The Social Presence Scale (Short, *et al.*, 1976) was modified to measure social presence, and self-report questionnaires were used to gauge students' views of learning and satisfaction. According to the study's findings, social presence and students' opinions of their learning and satisfaction are positively correlated. Increased

perceived learning and greater satisfaction with the online course were related to higher degrees of social presence (Rovai, 2002).

In addition, Kang and colleagues' (2015) case study investigated how learners' cognitive engagement in a virtual learning environment was impacted by social presence. The researchers enrolled 70 graduate students in an online course that included discussion boards and video-based lectures as social presence components. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, which includes cognitive presence as one of its components (Garrison, *et al.*, 2000), was used to evaluate social presence. Through the use of a validated questionnaire, cognitive engagement was assessed. According to the study's conclusions, social presence and cognitive engagement are positively correlated. In the online learning environment, participants who felt more socially present showed better levels of cognitive engagement (Kang, *et al.*, 2015).

The social presence hypothesis explains how important it is to feel “together” when communicating (Short, *et al.*, 1976). This is extremely important in the context of *Magic: The Gathering* (MTG), particularly the Elder Dragon Highlander (EDH) or Commander format, because of how social and engaging the game is by its very nature. The characteristics and indicators of social presence theory that are pertinent to the EDH format will be discussed in the section that follows.

The way that players communicate is the first factor in the social presence theory. Face-to-face play of traditional EDH games allows for deep dialogue (Hall, 2020). However, with the development of technology and issues like the COVID-19 pandemic, participants have tended to use Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) methods such online forums and video conferencing more frequently (Meier, *et al.*, 2021). As such, the indicators for this would be physical vs virtual communication, richness of the medium, and accessibility and availability of communication tools.

Players frequently need to build alliances and plan strategies as a group in EDH games, which calls for a feeling of community. Depending on the medium and how well

the participants know one another, the degree of interpersonal connection can change (Gunawardena, 1995). The indicators for this would be frequency and length of social interactions, degree of mutual understanding, as well as emotional attachment and rapport among players.

Immediacy refers to how quick and in-the-moment player interactions occur. For the gameplay experience in EDH, prompt reactions and immediate dialogues can be essential (Biocca, *et al.*, 2003). Indicators of this variable would include latency in communication channels, speed of response decision making, and the synchronicity of interactions.

Social presence is greatly influenced by non-verbal indicators such as gestures, facial expressions, and voice tonality. Reading non-verbal cues from rivals can help with strategy and bargaining in EDH (Riggio, 2014). With that said, the indicators relevant to this would be frequency and diversity of non-verbal cues, players ability to interpret non-verbal cues, and how the non-verbal cues affect decision making.

2.2.2 Social Presence through Computer-Mediated Communication

Apart from how an individual perceives themselves as being with another person in CMC, there is also the angle of how they perceive the communication itself through the media. Gunawardena (1995) discovered that although CMC is low in social context cues, such interaction can still be perceived as stimulating and interesting by the parties involved. The author also further claimed that rather than the medium, perception of interaction and social presence rely more heavily on the skills and techniques of the communicator. This sentiment is echoed by Ziegler (2015), who compared language learning through synchronous CMC and face-to-face (FTF), finding that there was no significant difference between the two media.

The evolution of social signals in the online world is a crucial component of social presence in CMC. People may convey their feelings and intentions more easily when they use social indicators like emoticons, likes, or unique linguistic phrases (Walther,

1992). Through the adaption and development of these social cues, Walther (1992) proposed that individuals may, given enough time, achieve similar degrees of social presence in CMC as in face-to-face conversation. Furthermore, collaboration and learning in CMC depend on social presence. According to Richardson and Swan (2003), greater social presence is associated with better learner satisfaction and perceived learning in online learning settings. This is because students are more likely to connect with and put effort into the learning process when they experience a sense of community and view their teachers and peers as “real” (Garrison, *et al.*, 2000).

In summary, social presence in computer-mediated communication refers to the idea that people might be seen as real in virtual spaces. It is crucial for successful communication, teamwork, and learning and is impacted by the communication medium and the evolution of social signals.

2.3 Magic: The Gathering

Magic: The Gathering, also known colloquially as MTG, is a trading card game developed by Wizards of the Coast (WotC) in 1993 and is the first trading card game in the world. The game was based on fantasy staples popularized by other games such as *Dungeons and Dragons*, but also introduced the elements of card collection and personalization. The game was designed so that each player may craft their own decks from a large, consistently updated card pool, which could be used to express part of their identity (Jahromi, 2018).

The Standard MTG format is a duel between two players, in which each player brings their deck of 60 cards and starts with 20 Life Total. Played in turns, players play Land cards to pay the ‘cost’ of other cards, called Spells, which effects could influence the game board or other players. Although they are called Spells, these cards encompass what the players (called ‘Planeswalkers’ in the game) can ‘summon’ from ‘other worlds’, so they include magical phenomena, monsters, and other characters. Using strategic interactions between Spells, a player seeks to win the game by chipping their opponent’s Life Total to zero (Hall, 2020).

With the massive card pool that the game has, players could heavily personalize the Lands and Spells they wish to bring in their decks. This personalization element of the game allowed many community-based feedback to be officially recognized. One such element was the gameplay format Commander, originally developed by Adam Staley and played by his community in Alaska in the late 1990's, until it later gained recognition and was officiated commercially by WotC in 2011 (Hall, 2020). Unlike Standard MTG where matches are one-on-one, the Commander format is popularly played with four players (Porlock, 2021), but also supports up to six or more (McWhertor & Hall, 2021). The format also increases the deck size standard from 60 cards to 100, increases the starting Life Total from 20 to 40, and restricts such that each deck can only contain one copy of any card (Johnson, 2021). This extends playtime and also makes the game distinctly personal (McWhertor & Hall, 2021) and social compared to the usual MTG game, which was deliberately designed to be over more quickly for professional matches (Hall, 2020).

WotC has also released electronic media for MTG players to compete online, such as internet video games *Magic: The Gathering Online* (MTGO) and *Magic: The Gathering Arena* (MTG Arena). Outside of official support, numerous other online media developed by the community also allowed them to keep track of their cards or facilitate rudimentary play, such as *Apprentice*, *Magic Workstation*, *Untap.in*, and more (Moher, 2020). WotC also developed *SpellTable*, an app designed specifically to play MTG remotely with each player's physical cards (The SpellTable Team, 2020).

The uniqueness of MTG has not only spawned numerous other trading card games with similar ideas of personalized deckbuilding and card collection elements, but also warranted past academic research in various subjects, such as psychology (Martin, 2004), economics (Lucking-Reiley, 1999), and even mathematics and information technology (Churchill, *et al.*, 2019). This research aims to tackle the underexplored angle of *communication* in MTG, as social interactions and communication is one of the things disrupted and changed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Westgarth, 2021).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most if not all TCG matches are played offline, with direct FTF matchups between players in various places where players gather (Susanti, 2020). As of currently, however, approaches to remote playing have been found in various TCG communities, including MTG (Moher, 2020). Given how deeply social a game of Commander MTG could be (Hall, 2020), this paper aims to apply social presence theory, regarding computer-mediated communication, in understanding the modes of communication used by MTG communities in Jakarta during the pandemic.

Elder Dragon Highlander (EDH), or Commander as it is formally known, is a format included in the famous collectable card game Magic: The Gathering, which was first released in 1993 (Wizards Team, 1993). According to Carter, Gibbs, and Harrop (2012), the focus on social interaction and intricate strategic gameplay make EDH special. Each player in EDH starts with a deck of 100 cards, of which one serves as the commander and the remaining 99 make up the player's library (Woods, 2007). The deck's color scheme must match the mana colors used in the commander's casting cost and regulations. Apart from basic lands, one distinctive feature of EDH is that every card in the deck must have a unique name, emphasizing diversity and originality in deck construction. EDH promotes social interaction because it is typically played in multiplayer settings and grants each player 40 lives from the beginning (Carter, *et al.*, 2012). Along with card play and battle strategy, players can engage in alliance building, diplomacy, and negotiations.

The commander, which begins in a particular place called the command zone and may be cast numerous times throughout the game, is essential to gameplay. But for each time it was cast from the command zone earlier in the same game, each future casting costs an extra two colorless mana. The commander's presence provides continuity in tactics and is crucial to the result of the game. Since the greater deck size, higher life totals, and multiplayer dynamics create an environment rich in potential interactions and plays, EDH games are renowned for their duration and intricacy. Players of EDH develop a feeling of community where exchanging knowledge and experiences is popular due to the variety of deck-building choices and in-game tactics (Woods, 2007).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and Methodology

This research aims to understand the circumstances surrounding social presence and computer-mediated communication during COVID-19 pandemic in Jakarta MTG community. Keeping that in mind, it means the research will primarily approach the topic in an attempt to peer into existing experiences as described by those who go through them to peer into the social reality of the topic. This approach is the definition of a qualitative research (American Psychological Association, n.d.), which will be the approach this research is taking.

As this research aims to describe the existing social reality of the topic, this research does not formulate a prior hypothesis, and mainly does not aim to explore or provide possible solutions to existing problems, but rather to explain phenomenon that has occurred. It also does not seek to establish causal relationships, but rather investigate the experiences of the subjects involved with the topic and elucidate an account of occurrences. Following these characteristics, this research is best described as descriptive research (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013).

This research is designed to best peer into the social reality of the topic by interacting directly with subjects involved. This will allow for the in-depth explanation of experiences of people around the specific phenomenon (Christensen, *et al.*, 2010). The personal recounts will also expose the subjects' personal worldviews (Pathak, 2017), which should also help with understanding of the human experience within that group of people (Creswell, 2012). As such, the design best suited for the purpose of this research is phenomenological research (Albertazzi, 2018).

For paradigm, this research will mainly investigate through the perspective of social presence theory. Social presence is how an individual represents other sentient individuals within their range of interaction (Biocca & Harms, 2002), and the theory accounts for how humans perceive themselves in a situation where they socially feel

the presence of other people (Biocca, *et al.*, 2003). As the topic strictly discusses computer-mediated communication (CMC), social presence theory will be used to understand the perception of social presence among participants during computer-mediated (Shen, *et al.*, 2010) plays of MTG.

3.2 Research Data

To collect data, interviews were conducted with members of the Jakarta MTG community. The interviews are semi-structured in nature, with questions mainly pertaining to not only computer-based methods of play during pandemic isolations, but also with their social experiences during the use of said methods. These questions are derived from the three factors of social presence measurement, originally developed by Short (1976) and later evaluated for effectiveness by Lin (2004), which are *participation in group situation*, *social comfort and expression of affect*, and *social navigation*. The questions are open to allow greater degree of flexibility in descriptions and higher degree of intimacy with interviewees, which are expected to help in collecting more detailed and more accurate answers than fully rigid, structured interviews (Stuckey, 2013; Moore, 2014). Data collection is restrained to only members of Jakarta MTG community, and only those who play with computer-based methods of remote play during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically the Commander format of MTG.

Data reliability is tested using triangulation (Denzin, 1970), specifically data source triangulation (Heale & Forbes, 2013), in which multiple firsthand sources are used to ensure the reliability of data obtained during collection. Data triangulation is expected to increase credibility and reduce personal biases without compromising the results of the interviews (Denzin, 2012).

In analyzing data, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith & Osborn, 2007) is used to explore in detail how participants make sense of their personal and social worlds. As this study aims to understand social presence, which is a social

phenomenon rooted on individual perception, IPA is best suited for analyzing the data of this research.

3.2.1. Unit Analysis

In a qualitative study, the main item or thing being investigated is referred to as the unit of analysis. The interactions and experiences of players participating in a game of Elder Dragon Highlander (EDH), a format of *Magic: The Gathering*, would be the units of analysis for research concentrating on the value of social presence to the game. This can include both verbal and nonverbal cues, as well as how players feel and perceive social presence while playing.

3.3 Key Informants

To ensure specificity of experience, individuals from the Jakarta MTG community were conveniently sampled for interview. Apart from being members of the community, the sample pool is further refined by adding the following criteria:

- participant must have experience in playing MTG with physical cards,
- participant must have experience in playing the Commander format,
- participant must have played MTG with physical cards over the internet during the pandemic,
- participant must have played the Commander format over the internet during the pandemic, and
- participants' online plays during the pandemic must have been facilitated by a computer or computer software.

From these criteria, the consideration for data source triangulation (Heale & Forbes, 2013) and the number of participants necessary for interpretative phenomenological analysis (Reid, *et al.*, 2005) results in the gathering of data from three participants, henceforth referred to as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), and Participant 3 (P3). In accordance to ethical concerns regarding individual details in qualitative research, for confidentiality, their identities will not be revealed (Kaiser, 2009) and shortform placeholders P1, P2, and P3, respectively, will be used.

3.3.1 Key Informant Profiles

3.3.1.1 Participant 1 (P1)

P1 is the owner of a card shop in Jakarta, operating mainly in regards to popular card games and TCGs, including MTG. As a shop owner, P1 is also an organizer to regular card game tournaments in their shop, and as such, has to be well-versed both in the game, in the community, and in facilitating play so that business could be retained. With a 15-year experience in the game and 7 years of experience running the shop, both as event organizer for the regular tournaments and as a referee for official matches, P1 is active and relatively well-known in the Jakarta MTG community.

3.3.1.2 Participant 2 (P2)

P2 introduced themselves as a ‘card game enthusiast’ and has played many TCGs apart from MTG regularly, including various Japanese TCGs such as *Vanguard*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, and *Pokémon Card Game*. P2 is often considered a veteran player by both the MTG and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* communities, having had 10 years of experience in the games, and actively contributes to discussions in the community or to the outreach of new players outside the community. As a veteran player, P2 is viewed as a key opinion leader within both communities, and has valuable input for new players when trying the games for the first time.

3.3.1.3 Participant 3 (P3)

P3 is a relative newcomer in the TCG scene, with 3 years of experience under their belt. P3 only plays MTG exclusively as far as TCGs go, and is currently most active within the EDH/Commander community. As the pandemic lockdowns began when P3 was getting into MTG and their personal interest was high, P3 actively played online to make up for the lack of offline plays they could afford under the circumstances, and is often seen in the Jakarta’s MTG community forums on Facebook.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis

Analyzing the data is performed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2007). The technique works ‘bottom-up’ (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006) and seeks to establish meaning (‘meaning-making’) by first coding personal interviews, and later finding emergent ‘themes’, which researchers can then use to interpret and find out how their subjects interpret their experiences with the aspect of reality being researched (Smith, 2011).

In accordance with this technique, although the leading questions used during interview were based on previously existing theoretical framework, the following analysis will be divided by the emergent themes found from the three interviews conducted rather than based on each theoretical dimension, because we found that the interviews produced relevant data that went further than the scope of social presence over CMC in a game of Commander MTG.

4.1.1 Internal Theme

4.1.1.1 Perception of Social Presence over CMC

A key element to the definition of social presence is how an individual perceives the presence of others, i.e., feeling like they are ‘being with other people’ (Biocca, *et al.*, 2003). In regard to online plays of Commander MTG, all participants reported a clear difference between the experience of online or remote play and direct, face-to-face play.

For instance, P1 reported that, “We joke to play around while playing and that is missing from the online game.”, which is echoed in sentiment by P2, who felt that “[...] it didn’t feel as immersive as in-person play.” P3 also reported a difference between the two media, expressing that, “[...] presence of other players online definitely feels

different from in-person interactions [...].” P3, however, added with an emphasis that the presence of other players is, “[...] not necessarily lesser, just different.”

From these excerpts alone, we can say that not only is the experience between the two media different, but different people may experience different social presence as well over CMC. P2 specifically mentioned immersion as a key difference, which by P3 is interpreted as ‘presence of others’, in lieu of the way the question was worded, which specifically mentions ‘[...] the presence of other people [...]’.

The direction and duration of the game, however, surprisingly played a role in how social presence was perceived, which was not mentioned on previous research on the topic. P3 mentioned that, “Once the game gets going, [...]”, focus on the game’s elements, such as strategizing, or other social elements of the game, such as bantering, “[...] makes the feeling of distance less significant.”, where one would, “[...] start to forget that [they’re] interacting through screens and start feeling the presence of [their] opponents as if they were across the table [...]”. In other words, as the interactions increase and the game goes, the ‘immersion’, as P2 mentioned it, also increases P3’s perception of social presence over CMC.

In general, a change in the perception of social presence is reported with the change of media. However, although the change is acknowledged by all participants, the extent of the change, along with the form of change, is remarkably different between individuals, and there are other factors not yet accounted, such as length of interaction, that may influence this perception of social presence.

4.1.1.2 Self-Expression and Comfort during Play

As if with their perception of social presence, as an important element in social interaction, P1 and P2 reported differences in their self-expression and comfort during CMC play. However, this is accompanied by further nuance to the statement by P1, and P3 reported that although they were, “[...] worried that some of this personal expression

would be lost.”, they felt in the end that, “Instead, [playing MTG remotely] offered new possibilities.”.

P2 was forward in the source of the problem with expressing themselves over a remote game. Although they noted that, “I didn’t really feel nervous playing a game online [...]”, they also added that it was, indeed, “[...] just a bit more difficult to express yourself without the presence of facial expressions.”. Despite not taking an issue with this personally, they noted that it was a problem that is more specific to the MTG community, because, “[...] [they] are [a] very nerdy community, many of the other players can be quite introverted type of people.”, and that it could get frustrating when other players, “[...] [don’t] feel confident or comfortable expressing themselves verbally to the others.”, because it, “[...] can lead to a lot of miscommunication and even confusing board states [...]”, meaning that not only does the media interfere with individual self-expression and comfort, it hindered social communication such that it could even get in the way of the game. It is worth noting again, however, that Commander MTG is less competitive and more heavily social-casual (Hall, 2020), meaning a change in communication mode is bound to affect the game in general.

Although P1 stated that, “[they] had no issues expressing [themselves] while playing online.”, they explained the cause immediately, which was, “[...] having known the other players beforehand [...]”, which, “[...] brought [them] security [...] to express [themselves].”. Upon this topic, they have also mentioned that they, “[...] didn’t find many issues in comfort.”, but that other people “[...] had a sort of negative experience as they didn’t know each other well [...]”, which further pressed the point on how the social environment of the play is relevant to the comfort of many in their self-expression, including P1 themselves.

In other words, although the change in media facilitated a difference in how the participants expressed themselves during a game (either by means of communication or other technical angles, such as gameplay choices), the people that the participants

were playing with played a larger role in determining their comfort expressing themselves.

4.1.1.3 Social Navigation during Play

Participants answered questions regarding social navigation, i.e., how someone perceives, understands, processes, and responds to social interaction from others in their present social group (Short, 1976). In this regard, a participant's emotional state and/or state of mind during play is also counted as part of the interaction, so the current section will also discuss statements that pertain to the topic.

Similar to the other two internal theme aspects, all participants raised that they felt social navigation over CMC to be something different compared to FTF. P1 expressed various grievances about socially navigating the medium, criticizing that they, "[...] love to joke around while playing, and that is missing from the online game.", further explaining that due to the limitations presented by technical issues with Indonesian internet, the players, who, "[...] aren't used to having to express [their] annoyances verbally all the time [...]", would have to explain everything through voice. As a result, they would often face problems such as talking over each other, lagging behind, or having to do long-winded explanations for actions, which could, "[...] lead to awkward situations.". P1 noted that the emotional situation during play, "[...] wasn't as much fun, as there are certain drawbacks to just verbally saying a joke as you can't show your face and body to express it in different ways."

In order to get around this awkwardness, P1 explained that, during online plays, they would, "[...] [not] really concern ourselves much with how to respond and just continue to play.", so that all actions would just be focused on the state of the game instead of the social aspect of the game. This apparently backfired, as, "[...] there were a lot less negotiating that helps influence other people's actions while playing online.", causing tension that, "[...] can lead to a player getting more annoyed and either leaving the board after one or two game or sometimes quitting in the middle of the game, which can be disruptive."

Although P2 first stated, “I didn’t mind [playing remotely] as much.”, they did end up reporting that, “[...] it was definitely a learning curve and something to get used to [...]”. Echoing the sentiment explained by P1, P2 explained that, “One of the best parts about playing MTG in person is the human interaction.”, that their emotions are, “[...] clearly visible.”. However, when shifting to CMC, “[...] it was harder to perceive these emotions. [They] were no longer in the same place, and reactions that were easy to read became harder to gauge.”. They also attributed technical problems as the cause that they tended to avoid negotiating during a game of Commander MTG, “[...] which led to a less fun game all around sometimes.”.

In contrast to the sentiment expressed by P1 and P2, P3 seemed to express a liking to remote play. They attributed the positive view to two reasons. The first was that, due to the limits of CMC, they had to express themselves purely through their plays, so they, “found [themselves] being more adventurous and creative with [their] play.”. They also found that, “This was a great way to express [themselves], and it made the game even more fun.”. The second reason was that online play connected them to a global community of MTG, which was, “[...] something I couldn't get from playing in person.”. P3 also made full use of the provided online accompaniments to playing MTG so that they weren’t restricted to only playing the cards they physically have. In their words, they, “[...] had access to more cards than [they] ever would in real life.”, which meant “[...] [they] could build more diverse decks and try out new strategies.”, which was part of their self-expression through the game.

Therefore, although they felt like there were things that they missed through playing over CMC, “like seeing people's reactions and the feeling of cards in my hands.”, in the end of the day, they still, “found that playing MTG remotely was a good experience. It offered new ways to express [themselves] and connect with others.”.

In conclusion, there is a variance in sentiments expressed regarding social navigation in a game of MTG when played through CMC. While some, such as P1,

found it to be a generally negative experience, others take it in stride, such as P2, and others found it to be a positive experience, such as P3. It's worth noting that all participants expressed difficulties in social navigation since they couldn't perceive the expressions of others as they would in FTF games, but while P1 and P2 found this to be a hindrance, P3 decided to fully focus on the technicalities of the game (i.e., deckbuilding) to get over the wall. However, while this aided P3's self-expression, both P1 and P2 noted that this made the game much less social than it originally should be when played FTF.

4.1.2 External Theme

4.1.2.1 Participants' Social Sphere

All participants brought up their playmates at various points in the interview. P1 mentioned their social sphere when asked about whether they felt the social presence of their playmates through CMC, and mentioned it again when asked about their comfort with expressing themselves online through CMC. P2 brought the topic up when asked about self-expression, and P3 brought it up when asked about social presence and self-expression, similar to P1.

When asked about self-expression, P1 prefaces with, "Since I was playing with people that I've already played with before, I felt no issue with their presence while playing online.", further elaborating that, "[...] I only played games with people I already knew and rarely played with strangers, I didn't find many issues in comfort while playing.", which showed that P1 evaluated how their social sphere influenced their comfort in self-expression during a game of Commander MTG. P3 explained that playing MTG online was, "[...] one of the best options you could choose to stay connected with your friends.", pointing out once more the significance of social connection in the game.

While the topic in common they raised is about social sphere, it is also worth noting, however, that P1 and P3 both talked about their playmates in the context of comfort. P1 elaborated that, "[...] other players had a sort of negative experience as they didn't know each other well [...]", and quoting this as the reason they had no problems feeling

comfortable playing online, since, “[...] [they] only played games with people [they] already knew and rarely played with strangers [...]”. This sentiment is echoed by P3, who mentioned that, “[...] since [they] [were] playing with the same group of friends, [they] didn’t find it that hard to get into [their] comfort zone [...]”.

In regards to self-expression in the face of their social sphere, P1 mentioned that, “The comfort of having known the other players beforehand brought security to me being able to express myself [...]”, stating that other players are less likely to be offended by “[...] certain plays on the board.”, which is an emotional response to the game state. P2, who, “[...] was mostly playing with randoms [they’ve] never met or played with before, [...]”, found that, “[...] it can be frustrating when another person doesn’t feel confident or comfortable expressing themselves verbally to the others.”, because it can, “[...] lead to a lot of miscommunications [...]”, which made them more reserved in expressing themselves online.

P3 reported a different experience, however. Although they mainly played, “[...] with the same group of friends [...]”, they found that playing MTG over the internet allowed them to, “[...] meet players from around the world.”, which, “[...] brought a new social aspect to the game.”. They mentioned that this global connection, “[...] felt like being part of a larger community [...]”, which was, “[...] something [they] couldn’t get from playing in person.”.

P1 also mentioned that they, “[...] miss the closeness of the local community and the shared excitement of playing together in person.”, again pointing towards the ‘closeness’ (i.e., comfort) of their playing social sphere. P2, echoing P1’s sentiment, said that they needed an active effort to maintain the familiarity of face-to-face social environment, which was, “[...] a big draw for players because MTG gets very social sometimes [...]” and that they were, “[...] afraid of losing that connection.”. In the other hand, when referring to, “[...] virtual playgroups [...]”, that they play with, P3 says, “The social environment feels more relaxed and laid-back [...]”, in line with their previous comment about being comfortable playing with global playerbase.

Despite differences in their comfort or self-expression, all participants noted that their social sphere during CMC play of MTG influenced the way they interact, whether they were playing with their known group of friends or with strangers over the internet. P1 and P2 found it more comfortable to express themselves with their friends, and although both P2 and P3 play online with strangers, P2 found it uncomfortable while P3 found it as a new opportunity and method to express themselves. Therefore, it can be concluded that one's social sphere determines one's self-expression, which is one of the dimensions that define social presence. In other words, one's social sphere determines one's experience of social presence.

4.1.2.2 Perception of Others' Emotional States

All participants mentioned that the lack of visual contact with one another robbed them of perceiving each other's intents and emotional states during CMC plays. P1 extensively talked about the topic, mentioning at first that, "[...] it is a bit harder to read other players' feelings and intent as you cannot see facial expressions and other cues [...]", that it was, "[...] harder to distinguish how they really felt a lot of the times [...]", further saying that, "[...] not being to read body language and facial expressions [...]", had, "[...] led to certain awkward moments, as [they] weren't able to tell how the other players felt [...]". They explained that, "[...] there are certain drawbacks to just verbally saying a joke as you can't show your face and body to express it in different ways.", such as making faces or other expressions to clarify between sarcasm and something malicious. They found that they could not solve this issue, instead opting to be, "[...] more careful in what we say or trying not to read too much into what other players say, for fear of misreading it."

P2 mentioned something to the same effect, saying that they, "[...] can't really tell how they're all feeling at moments.", that it would, "[...] take them 2 or 3 games before I can fully read and understand what another player is like [...]", while, "[...] a similar situation in in-person game would usually only take me one game [...]". They explained that, since the MTG community is, "[...] very nerdy community [...]", many of the

players, “[...] can be quite introverted [...]”, which meant it could be an obstacle when another player, “[...] doesn’t feel confident or comfortable expressing themselves verbally to the others.”, which was a necessity over CMC due to various technical limitations. It was to the point that, “Sometimes it felt like playing against a computer rather than a person.”

In contrast, while P3 agreed that, “[...] it's tougher to pick up on subtle emotional cues online [...]”, they found that, “[...] players still express their emotions, excitement, or frustration pretty openly.”. The only difference was that, “[...] reactions had to be communicated differently.”, such as using the mic or chat feature, instead of facial or bodily expressions, which necessitated more verbal interaction. They also used the game itself to respond, stating that if they were impressed by a play another player made, they would, “respond with a clever counter move.”, because, “This kind of strategic response was another way to express my feelings about the game.”, which could lead to, “[...] more thoughtful interactions.”, enriching the game experience.

In terms of navigating these perceptions of others’ emotional states, P3 was more focused on how they played the game. They would adjust their plays based on how the other player plays and mainly that alone. For example, “If a player tends to be aggressive or risky, [they] may be more cautious in how [they] play against them.”. In the other hand, “If someone is a bit more casual or social, it can make the game feel more relaxed and fun.”; there is less of a perception of emotions, and more a focus on playstyle as consequence, because P3 has stated that they also considered the game as part of their communication.

However, as P2 noted, communicating through gameplay alone could still be extremely limiting. Although, like P3, they, “[...] just react based on gameplay decision based on what’s on the board.”, they, “[...] didn’t take other player’s behavior or attitude into account as much as [they] did in in-person play [...]”, because of the technical limitations of CMC, leading to “[...] a less fun game all around sometimes.”.

In other words, while it was not impossible for one to express themselves through gameplay, there is a difference in perceptions regarding this form of expression and communication specifically, which could lead to a general disconnect. Social communication is therefore impeded in MTG plays via CMC, mainly due to the lack of cues that one required to read the mood of others and socially navigate, which also impeded their game since Commander is a very social format (Hall, 2020).

4.1.3 Technical Theme

4.1.3.1 Technicalities of Playing MTG

As was expected from the theme, various technicalities to playing MTG was raised. P1 mentioned that Commander was a casual format, making the social interactions more important than the game itself. They also attempted to use board state as a method to read the feelings of other players. They also pointed out that one of the reasons Commander was difficult to play remotely, apart from the general mood-reading, was because, “[...] a lot of in-person play relies on you being able to sometimes show your card to a player without the others seeing [...]”, which could help them negotiate temporary alliances. This was missing in CMC plays.

P2 mentioned that the various miscommunications caused by the limitations of CMC also adversely influenced the game, leading to confusing board states, “[...] meaning the current creatures and effects on the board that you must be mindful of, as sometimes a player won’t express what their cards do as not everyone knows every card.”. P2 also mentioned about balancing the board state, playing cards against the ‘king of the board’, which they defined as, “[...] player with most health [*sic*] and best chance of winning [...]”, *health* here being a slang for the Life Total. They further mentioned that there was no element of negotiation that enhanced this ‘balancing’ end of the gameplay, due to limits on CMC.

P3 mentioned a number of technicalities of MTG, mainly pertaining to how personalized the game is, crediting as a tool that also aids with their self-expression due to how customizable it is. They were also happy about electronic accompaniment of the

game, since it allowed them to access more cards than they could have in real-life, allowing them to, “[...] build more diverse decks and try out new strategies.”.

While there were various contexts to how the technicalities of MTG were raised as a topic, they were generally tied to how the players perceived their situations regarding playing the game through CMC; as various elements of the game, from self-expression, customization, to negotiating and socially navigating, were integral to the game’s experience.

4.1.3.2 Technicalities of Computer-Mediated Communication

All participants mentioned the technical flaws of CMC to be the cause of the various negative experiences they had with playing MTG over CMC. P1 mentioned the various media that could be used to play MTG over CMC, and later explaining the technical limitation of having only 4 webcams, all pointed to the game board, as one of the causes it’s difficult to gauge the reactions of other people:

“[...] it is a bit harder to read other players’ feelings and intent as you cannot see facial expressions and other cues as the camera is only pointed towards the cards on the table. It would be incredibly difficult and expensive to have a setup that was both pointed towards the mat and the face, as most people were only recording on their phones. Since the Commander format required 4 people to play a single game, that would mean 8 cameras would need to be used to be able to see both cards and the faces of the players, and it simply wasn’t viable.”

They then also explained that, “[...] [Indonesian] internet is not the best.”, which could cause lagging and talking over, which could be infuriating for the players involved. This would later be cited as the cause they didn’t express themselves much, since they could only express themselves verbally.

P2 would bring up the same points; that Indonesian internet made it difficult to communicate online due to lag risk, and that the lack of webcams pointing at the

players' faces made it difficult to gauge their emotional states and react appropriately. They also, however, mentioned that there was a chat feature they could use, where, "[...] players could express their feelings more explicitly [...]". They said the feature was, "[...] different, but it did offer a new way to understand and connect with others."

P3 only brought up the mic and chat feature as the things they could use to express themselves directly over a game via CMC, while acknowledging the same general limitation of being unable to see the faces of other players. However, to P3, people could express themselves through the mic or chat just fine, or express themselves through gameplay which everyone could see.

4.1.4 Other Codes

4.1.4.1 Mention in Relevance to the Pandemic

P1 and P2 mentioned the pandemic in passing as the reason they had to play MTG through CMC. P1 said that it was so that they could, "[...] continue to play [MTG] during the pandemic.". P2 found that playing online Commander, or Elder Dragon Highlander (EDH), the original name of the format before it was commercially officiated by WotC (Hall, 2020), during the pandemic was interesting. P3 did not mention the pandemic by name, only that the experience of playing through CMC and FTF are different.

4.1.4.2 Perception of the MTG Community

P2 and P3 brought up what they thought of the MTG community in passing. P2 described them as, "[...] very nerdy community [...]", and that many of the others are, "[...] quite introverted type of people [...]". In the other hand, P3 found that the MTG community (especially on the Commander format), are, "[...] generally welcoming and respectful.", and that, "It's a fun space to engage in competition and camaraderie.". While seemingly contradictory, introverts could still be welcoming and competitive, or they could simply be exposed to different parts of the community, given how big the MTG community is internationally.

4.1.4.3 Frequency of Play

All participants brought up frequency of play. All participants mentioned playing MTG as often as they could, or as often as their schedules would allow. This would indicate that all participants are invested in the game, and that their opinions of the game should then be personally motivated.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The feeling of social presence over CMC in a game of Commander MTG, at least among members of the MTG Community of Jakarta, was best described as different to experience of social presence in FTF communication. There was no way to directly see the faces and physical cues of others, so everything had to be verbally expressed, which shouldn't have been a problem, if not for the limitations of Indonesian internet.

In this regard, it was difficult to socially navigate the environment precisely, given how little social cues people get through CMC. However, CMC did not necessarily get in the way of self-expression and comfort. Participants reported that they could generally express themselves comfortably, only being held back by the same technical limitations above. Their comfort and self-expression, in fact, were more influenced by their social spheres rather than the medium: participants all reported that their comfort with their present social sphere influenced their comfort with expressing themselves.

In terms of immersion and the feeling of otherness, all participants agreed that it was 'different', with some feeling that it was a much less immersive experience. However, it was also noted that as time went on, with more interactions going on in the table and everyone adapting to the medium, it became increasingly more immersive and acceptable, with much less obstacles in understanding each other, more so if the people had been previously acquainted. In summary, participants' duration of experience was more of a key component in determining their immersion, which helps them overcome the limitations of the medium.

In the very social and context-heavy setting of Commander MTG, social presence is a vital component of the gameplay, and current technological limitations of CMC hampered not only this element, but also various other communication elements in

general that would have facilitated social presence. However, as it was found, one's social sphere and duration of interaction could help overcome this difference of media and increase immersion. It can be therefore argued that one's feelings of comfort and consistency of communication, regardless of medium and its limitations, could influence one's perception of social presence in a context-heavy environment.

In terms of practical understanding, based on these findings, it can be said that heavily social situations that are held over CMC could bring up better experience of social presence when they're performed with the involvement of one's comfortable social sphere and over an extended period of time with consistent activity to maintain attention in the social interactions occurring over CMC.

Recognizing the importance of social presence can highlight the need for maintaining social interactions among remote teams. Managers should encourage the use of video conferencing and collaborative tools that facilitate face-to-face communication to reduce feelings of isolation and promote employee engagement. Managers should invest in virtual team-building activities and initiatives to foster a sense of community among remote workers. This can include virtual coffee breaks, team games, or online workshops that encourage team members to connect beyond work-related tasks.

Given the prevalence of digital communication, it's essential for managers to provide training on effective online communication and collaboration. This could involve teaching employees how to convey emotions and empathy through text, video, or audio-based communication. Remote work during the pandemic may blur the boundaries between personal and professional life, potentially leading to burnout. Managers need to be vigilant in monitoring signs of burnout, and they should encourage work-life balance while respecting employees' need for downtime. Understanding social presence can help managers assess employee satisfaction and identify potential areas for improvement. Regular surveys or feedback sessions can gauge how employees feel about the current communication practices and the overall work environment.

For businesses dealing with customers online, understanding social presence can be crucial in building strong customer relationships. Companies should focus on personalized communication, active listening, and prompt responses to make customers feel valued and heard. Not all communication platforms offer the same level of social presence. Managers should select tools that facilitate natural and interactive communication, allowing employees to feel more connected and engaged.

Social presence can vary across different cultures and may influence communication preferences. Managers should be sensitive to these cultural differences to ensure effective and respectful communication within diverse teams. Managers must develop virtual leadership skills to effectively lead remote teams. This includes being approachable, communicative, and demonstrating empathy to create a supportive virtual work environment. Managers should encourage creativity and innovation by fostering a psychologically safe environment for online brainstorming and idea sharing. When team members feel connected and supported, they are more likely to contribute their ideas openly.

In summary, recognizing the importance of social presence in computer-mediated communication during the COVID-19 pandemic can help managers create a positive and supportive virtual work environment, improve employee well-being and engagement, enhance customer relationships, and foster innovation and collaboration among remote teams.

5.2 Future Directions

As this research was done in a qualitative manner to determine the phenomenology of social presence over CMC in a particularly social setting of Commander MTG, research of similar nature in other social contexts may be due. Such resulting researches could then be compared to see how social context influence perception of social presence.

Further academic pursuit in a more quantitative manner may also help with confirming the differences or measuring the exact variance of social presence in various contexts, including the context used here. It would very much help if a generalized measurement tool for social presence could be developed, since the measurement tool we have presently was mainly used for online educational setting (Lin, 2004).



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APPENDIX

Thesis Monitoring Form

	LEMBAR MONITORING BIMBINGAN TUGAS AKHIR AJR-16/FRM-03/REV-02
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Nama Mahasiswa : Christy Mathew
 NPM : 0101180110
 Jurusan : IKIP
 Fakultas : FISIP
 Semester : Genap

Nama Dosen Pembimbing/Co-Pembimbing : Sr. Sigit Ramungkas

Minggu Ke-	Hari	Tanggal	Materi yang didiskusikan	Tanda tangan Dosen Pembimbing / Co-Pembimbing *)	Catatan
1	Tuesday	28/02/23	Chapter 1 discussion		
2	Tuesday	7/03/23	Chapter 1 Revisi		
3	Tuesday	14/03/23	Chapter 2 discussion		
4	Tuesday	28/03/23	Further revisions to chapter 1		
5	Tuesday	11/04/23	Revisions for chapter 2		
6	Tuesday	18/04/23	Chapter 3 theory		
7	Tuesday	2/05/23	Chapter 3 revision		
8	Tuesday	9/05/23	Chapter 4 discussion		
9	Tuesday	16/05/23	Chapter 4 revisions		
10	Tuesday	30/05/23	Chapter 5 and overall discussion		
11	Tuesday	6/06/23	Revisions overall and formatting		
12	Wednesday	14/06/23	Final revisions discussion.		

*) Coret yang tidak perlu

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Interview Transcript

Interviewee : P1 (Key Informant)
P2 (Informant)
P3 (Informant)

Interviewer: : Christy Mathew

Date of Interview : P1 (May 4th, 2023), P2 (May 6th, 2023), P3 (May 6th, 2023)

Location of Interview : Google Meets

P1 (Key Informant)

Q. How often do you play MTG online?

I generally try to play MTG online at least once a day, sometimes more if I have free time. It's become a fun and engaging hobby that I really enjoy, and I find that playing regularly helps keep my skills sharp and sparked.

Q. How do you feel about the presence of other players through the net?

Since I was playing with people that I've already played with before, I felt no issue with their presence while playing online. Some of us google meet, discord or even just Whatsapp call to play. Just like how a lot of businesses and schools were moving to play online, we also decided to take our game online to continue to play it during the pandemic. When playing online it is a bit harder to read other players' feelings and intent as you cannot see facial expressions and other cues as the camera is only pointed towards the cards on the table. It would be incredibly difficult and expensive to have a setup that was both pointed towards the mat and the face, as most people were only recording on their phones. Since the commander format required 4 people to play a single game, that would mean 8 cameras would need to be used to be able to see both cards and the faces of the players, and it simply wasn't viable. As Commander is a casual game, the interaction is more important

than the gameplay itself. We play to have fun with the other players and the social aspects of it can't be downplayed. We love to joke around while playing and that is missing from the online game. We can still talk and all, but other players don't feel as present while playing it online. Since I only played games with people I already knew and rarely played with strangers, I didn't find many issues in comfort while playing. I heard a lot of other players had a sort of negative experience as they didn't know each other well, so they were more likely to get more annoyed and take things personally during gameplay.

Q. How do you feel about expressing yourself when playing MTG remotely?

Again, since I play with friends, I had no issues with expressing myself while playing online. The comfort of having known the other players beforehand brought security to me being able to express myself, as we all knew each other personally and knew the others wouldn't get that mad or annoyed at certain plays on the board. But because of not being able to read body language and facial expressions it led to certain awkward moments as we weren't able to tell how the other players felt and didn't feel as immersive as in-person play. It wasn't as much fun, as there are certain drawbacks to just verbally saying a joke as you can't show your face and body to express it in different ways. Such as making a face when saying a sarcastic comment so that the other players don't confuse it as something malicious, and there were a lot more explanation of my jokes or certain comments as a result.

Q. How do you feel about other players' feelings when playing MTG remotely?

When playing remotely, it's always harder to distinguish how they really felt a lot of the times as the limitations of playing remotely in Indonesia is that our internet is not the best. So sometimes a player can accidentally talk over another or just lag in the middle of them asking a question or explaining what they're doing in the game, that tends to get on my nerves or the other players nerves, which can lead to awkward situations. But most of the time, simply being able to express yourself verbally is not enough, as it doesn't allow for a lot of nuances in reading someone's intent in a social context. So we were more careful in what we say or trying not to read too

much into what other players say, for fear of misreading it. We usually must read it into the way a player reads to know how they feel about the board or about another player, such as targeting their cards more or cancelling their plays in a targeted manner. When you play in person, you can usually see from facial expressions and body cues how a player feels, such as annoyed or they're tired of a certain players turn taking too long, so we aren't used to having to express our annoyances verbally all the time, which, I think, is one of the main reasons we didn't express ourselves verbally during online play either.

Q: How do you respond to other people's actions during remote play?

Sometimes it is visible when a player is annoyed with you by the way he plays, but most of the time it is hard to discern so we don't really concern ourselves much with how to respond and just continue to play. This sometimes can lead to a player getting more annoyed and either leaving the board after one or two game or sometimes quitting in the middle of the game, which can be disruptive. As a lot of in-person play relies on you being able to sometimes show your card to a player without the others seeing, to negotiate a temporary alliance by offering a card they need or to help them out for a few turns and they do the same for you, there were a lot less negotiating that helps influence other people's actions while playing online. Most times we end up playing more blindly and allowing the board dictate it without much politicking as we usually do when we play it face to face.

Q: Do you consider MTG Online as a way of maintaining social connection with your friends during periods when you cannot meet in person?

Absolutely! Playing MTG online is a great way for me to stay connected with my friends and fellow players. It not just allows us to engage in fun and exciting games together, but to catch up about each other's lives through chat and voice communication. We often don't have that much time to talk when we're meeting each other in real life, but during a game that could last for hours, we literally could talk about anything in the middle of the game.

Q. How do you feel about the social environment when playing MTG remotely?

Playing Magic remotely has been a bittersweet experience for me. On one hand, I miss the closeness of the local community and the shared excitement of playing together in person. On the other hand, remote play has allowed me to reconnect with old friends from different parts of the country. It's heartwarming to see how the community has adapted and continued to support one another, even during these challenging times.

Q. Overall, do you feel comfortable playing MTG remotely?

It's a fifty-fifty experience for me. I do miss meeting my friends face to face, and it just felt different to play only with decks, instead of seeing them face to face. But in the same time, being able to play with my friends without leaving the comfort of my own home is totally a win. I appreciate the convenience and flexibility of playing whenever I want, and the difference formats and games mode available keeps it fresh and exciting. Plus, the ability to easily test out different decks and card combinations allows me to continue learning and improving my skill as a player. So overall, I find playing MTG online satisfy both my love for the game, and my need to socialize, I do prefer to play it offline though.

P2 (Informant)

Q. How often do you play MTG Online?

I would say that on an average week, I play MTG Online maybe 2-3 times. I have a busy schedule with work, family, and other TCG games, so I don't always have the time to play as often as I might like. But when I do play, I make sure to savor the experience and enjoy catching up with my online friends.

Q. How do you feel about the presence of other players through the net?

I feel their presence less, honestly. There is a lot of limitations when playing it online, and it feels like there's a degree of separation between you and the other player.

But since we were playing during the pandemic, it was the closest thing we could get to playing it in person, so it wasn't a bad compromise. It was a necessary thing, so I didn't mind it as much. While I'll always prefer playing it in person, it was a welcome alternate way to play the game during a difficult time. As a result of this, we didn't really mind the separation that much, but it wasn't as immersive as in-person play. With how bad Indonesian internet can be, lag and other issues can lead to communication being difficult or sometimes miscommunication happening that leads to other's presence feeling even more muted as a result.

Q. How do you feel about expressing yourself when playing MTG remotely?

I didn't really feel nervous playing the game online, but it was just a bit more difficult to express yourself without the presence of facial expressions. You don't feel as confident or comfortable speaking your mind but I personally didn't have much issue with expressing myself. The issue is since we are very nerdy community, many of the other players can be quite introverted type of people, and since I was mostly playing with randoms I've never met or played with before, it can be frustrating when another person doesn't feel confident or comfortable expressing themselves verbally to the others. This can lead to a lot of miscommunication and even confusing board states, meaning the current creatures and effects on the board that you must be mindful of as sometimes a player won't express what their cards do as not everyone knows every card. And without the presence of a face cam, we can't really tell how they're all feeling at moments. With so many different personalities out there, we can't always judge how a person feels immediately. It would take me 2 or 3 games before I can fully read and understand what another player is like and how they would react to certain tactics and strategies, while a similar situation in in-person game would usually only take me one game to reach the same outcome. So it was definitely a learning curve and something to get used to when playing the game online.

Q. How do you feel about other players' feelings when playing MTG remotely?

Playing Magic: The Gathering or MTG, specifically Elder Dragon Highlander, online during the pandemic was an interesting experience. It changed not only how I played the game, but also how I perceived the feelings and reactions of other players. One of the best parts about playing MTG in person is the human interaction. You can see a person's face, hear their voice, and read their body language. When someone is happy, excited, frustrated, or disappointed, it's clearly visible. This direct feedback adds a whole new layer to the game that is enjoyable and helps build a sense of shared memories. When we shifted to playing online, it was harder to perceive these emotions. We were no longer in the same place, and reactions that were easy to read became harder to gauge. Without the visible cues, it was challenging to know how others were feeling. Sometimes it felt like playing against a computer rather than a person. On the other hand, playing online also offered some new insights into the feelings of other players. With the chat function, players could express their feelings more explicitly, whether it was excitement about a great card they drew, frustration over a bad move, or simply chit-chat about their day. This form of communication was different, but it did offer a new way to understand and connect with others.

Q. How do you respond to other people's actions during remote play?

I personally don't really concern myself too much with how other people felt during gameplay as it was almost impossible to discern it without facial expressions being there to read, so I just react based on gameplay decision based on what's on the board. If a player is targeting me specifically, I would reply in kind to get him to back off, or if a player is getting too confident with the cards he's putting and becoming the king of the board, player with most health and best chance of winning, I would play cards that encourage others to help me get him down a peg to balance the board back out again. This wasn't as fun as in-person play, as there are usually verbal negotiations and alliances can form but since online play wasn't always smooth sailing here, it was a hassle I chose to avoid doing a lot. I didn't take other player's behavior or attitude into account as much as I did in in-person play, which led to a less fun game all around sometimes.

Q. Do you consider MTG Online as a way of maintaining social connection with your friends during periods when you cannot meet in person?

Honestly, during harsh period of Covid, MTG online has been one of the best ways for me to maintain social connections with friends during times when it's difficult or impossible to meet up in person. Sure, the feeling is totally different. The energy and the way you interpreted people's behavior online is different compared when you played with them face to face, yes. But it's refreshing, and we don't feel as tied up because we can do things that we couldn't do in offline gathering.

Q. How do you feel about the social environment when playing MTG remotely?

The face-to-face playing environment was a big draw for players because MTG gets very social sometimes, and I was worried about losing that connection. However, we worked hard to set up virtual hangouts to maintain the social aspect. While it's not the same as being together physically, I'm glad that our community still has a place to gather and interact during these tough times.

Q. Overall, do you feel comfortable playing MTG remotely?

Yeah, somehow playing MTG online have provided me a sense of routine and structure to my days while spending more time at home. I can feel like I have a routine and have a normal life, even though I'm sitting all day long in front of my computer at home. The fact that I have a routine, social life, and a hobby that I can easily engage in at any time, has helped me feel more productive and fulfilled.

P3 (Informant)

Q. How often do you play MTG Online?

It depends on the week and what's going on in my life, but I try to play MTG as much as I could. I find it as a great way to unwind and relax after a long day, and it's always fun to connect with other players and test out new strategies and decks. Overall, I

enjoy playing MTG online whenever I can, but I still need to find out a good balance between that and other important things in my life.

Q. How do you feel about the presence of other players through the net?

The presence of other players online definitely feels different from in-person interactions, but I've found that it's not necessarily lesser, just different. Once the game gets going, the focus on strategy, decision making, and the playful banter that comes with it makes the feeling of distance less significant. You start to forget that you're interacting through screens and start feeling the presence of your opponents as if they were across the table from you. Once the game starts and everyone's in the 'zone', it does feel like the others are right there with me. It's an immersive experience. The MTG community, especially within the EDH format, is generally welcoming and respectful. It's a fun space to engage in competition and camaraderie. And since I was playing with the same group of friends, I didn't find it that hard to get into my comfort zone and engage in playing however I wanted to.

Q. How do you feel about expressing yourself when playing MTG remotely?

I feel quite comfortable expressing myself while playing MTG online. The game is a very personalized thing, so you feel like you're constantly expressing yourself as it is, from the deck you choose to how you play it. The online platform has never hindered that for me. In person, MTG is a very social game. You can show your personality through your deck, your style of play, and even the accessories you use, like card sleeves and deck boxes. I used to love this part of the game. So when we switched to playing online, I was worried that some of this personal expression would be lost. But to my surprise, playing MTG remotely didn't limit my expression. Instead, it offered new possibilities. Online, I had access to more cards than I ever would in real life. This meant I could build more diverse decks and try out new strategies. I found myself being more adventurous and creative with my play. This was a great way to express myself, and it made the game even more fun. Another cool thing about playing online was getting to meet players from around the world. This brought a new social aspect to the game. We could chat, discuss strategies,

and share experiences, all from our own homes. This global connection was something I couldn't get from playing in person. It felt like being part of a larger community, and it was a great way to express and share my love for MTG. Sure, playing online wasn't the same as playing in person. There were things I missed, like seeing people's reactions and the feeling of cards in my hands. But overall, I found that playing MTG remotely was a good experience. It offered new ways to express myself and connect with others.

Q. How do you feel about other players' feelings when playing MTG remotely?

While it's tougher to pick up on subtle emotional cues online, I've found that players still express their emotions, excitement, or frustration pretty openly. By using the mic, we have a way to express these feelings to the other players. Since we're all playing the same game and experiencing the same highs and lows, so it's relatively easy to empathize with each other. Perhaps the only struggle comes from the lack of facial expressions to read but otherwise, since we vocally expressed ourselves, we had no issue with expressing ourselves. Everyone has their unique play style, their own reactions, and ways of communicating. That individuality certainly comes through, even in an online setting. I didn't find myself struggling to reply or respond to their behavior, considering their actions as part of the overall game strategy. It's not that different from how I'd respond in a face-to-face game. Behavior can certainly influence decisions. If a player tends to be aggressive or risky, I may be more cautious in how I play against them. If someone is a bit more casual or social, it can make the game feel more relaxed and fun. It adds an extra layer of strategy and fun to the game, even when we're playing remotely.

Q. How do you respond to other people's actions during remote play?

One thing about face-to-face play was that we could see someone's immediate reaction. When we moved to playing online, some of that was lost. We couldn't see each other, so reactions had to be communicated differently. But as someone who's comfortable expressing themselves, I didn't find this to be a problem. I just had to find new ways to do it. One way was through chat. If someone made a good move, I

could quickly type "Nice play!" or "Wow, didn't see that coming!". If I was surprised or confused, I could ask questions or make comments. This was a new kind of interaction, but it still allowed us to communicate and react to each other. Another way was through the game itself. I could show my reaction to other players' actions through my own moves. If someone made a big play, I could respond with a clever counter move. This kind of strategic response was another way to express my feelings about the game. Playing online also gave us more time to think and respond. In person, reactions are often immediate and instinctive. But online, I could take a moment to think about my response. This often led to better strategic play and more thoughtful interactions.

Q. Do you consider MTG Online as a way of maintaining social connection with your friends during periods when you cannot meet in person?

Yes, without a doubt. Social media has been probably an essential part for all of us to stay socially connected with our friends during covid, but playing game online is something that's totally different from playing social media. You do everything in real time, you can talk anytime you want, you could make remarks anytime you want, but in the same time you have more time to think and response, sometimes the internet could lag, or you can accidentally mute yourself or others. There's so many things going on at the same time there, and I think it's one of the best options you could choose to stay connected with your friends.

Q. How do you feel about the social environment when playing MTG remotely?

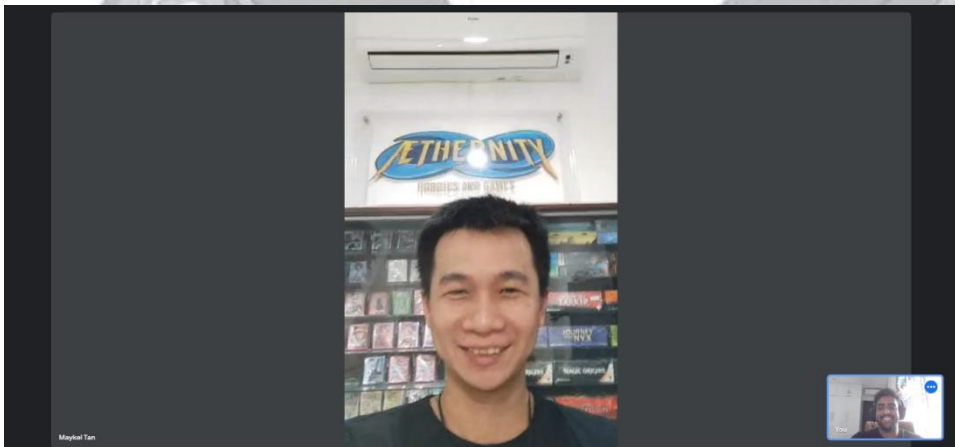
For casual games, playing remotely has been a blessing in disguise. It's so much more convenient, and I can easily join virtual playgroups without leaving my home. The social environment feels more relaxed and laid-back, which is perfect for casual games. I also like how we can chat and hang out on Discord even when we're not playing, fostering a stronger sense of community beyond the game itself.

Q. Overall, do you feel comfortable playing MTG remotely?

Very. It helped me deal with stress and anxiety of not having a chance to meet my friends in the real life. Being able to immerse myself in the game allows me to have a fun time where I'm free from the constant barrage of pandemic news. Plus, the camaraderie and community of other MTG players also provides comfort and support during these uncertain times. It provides a way to socialize, stay productive and alleviate stress, making it an important part of my daily routine.





Interview Documentation



Turnitin Result

My Submissions

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5
Title		Start Date	Due Date	Post Date
CEK TURNIT IN - Part 5		6 Jun 2023 - 09:50	16 Jun 2023 - 18:00	16 Jun 2023 - 18:59
Refresh Submissions				
View Digital Receipt	Submission Title	Turnitin Paper ID	Submitted	Similarity
View Digital Receipt	Soft File Thesis	2117030379	16/06/23, 10:01	4% 
			Submit Paper	



Curriculum Vitae



Christy Mathew

Student

INFO

Proactive and aspiring student currently studying Communications in Universitas Pelita Harapan. I am a collaborative team player with experiences working in various industries.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Feb 2017 - Jun 2017
Melbourne, Australia

JUNIOR WRITER AT **MOJO NEWS**

- Created and published news articles regarding social and political topics on their website.

Oct 2018 - Nov 2019
Tangerang, Indonesia

ENGLISH TEACHER ASSISTANT AT **YAYASAN MANDIRI KREATIF INDONESIA**

Teach English courses to adolescents.

Jan 2021- March 2021
Jakarta, Indonesia

VIDEO EDITOR INTERN AT **CINEMAHEADS**

Edited Youtube and TikTok and also came up with scripts for content.

April 2021 - Feb 2022
Jakarta, Indonesia

VIDEO EDITOR AND CREATIVE INTERN AT **WEBTVASIA**

Helped create the XYZ brand and edited their content on TikTok and Youtube.

October 2022 - Feb 2023
Jakarta, Indonesia

VIDEO EDITOR AND CREATIVE INTERN AT **BABAM**

Helped create and edit content for their various social media pages.

EDUCATION

Jun 2016 - Dec 2016
Jakarta, Indonesia

JAKARTA INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

Diploma of Arts.

Aug 2018 - current
Karawaci, Indonesia

UNIVERSITAS PELITA HARAPAN

Bachelors in Communications.

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COMMUNICATION SKILLS

ACADEMIC WRITING

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ADOBE PREMIERE PRO

LANGUAGES

- ENGLISH
- BAHASA INDONESIA
- HINDI
- MALAYALAM