

Manipal Academy of Higher Education

**Impressions@MAHE**

---

Manipal College of Health Professions, Manipal  
Theses and Dissertations

MAHE Student Work

---

Spring 6-21-2022

**"EXPLORING SENSE OF PRESENCE OF SIGNIFICANT OTHERS IN  
VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION BY EMERGING ADULTS APRIL 2022"**

NAEEMA NIJAS

Follow this and additional works at: <https://impressions.manipal.edu/mcph>



Part of the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

---

# **EXPLORING SENSE OF PRESENCE OF SIGNIFICANT OTHERS IN VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION BY EMERGING ADULTS**



**MANIPAL**  
ACADEMY *of* HIGHER EDUCATION

*(Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)*

**APRIL 2022**

**NAEEMA NIJAS**

**EXPLORING SENSE OF PRESENCE OF  
SIGNIFICANT OTHERS IN VIRTUAL  
COMMUNICATION BY EMERGING ADULTS**



**MANIPAL**  
ACADEMY *of* HIGHER EDUCATION

*(Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)*

**APRIL 2022**



**Naeema Nijas**



**MANIPAL**  
ACADEMY of HIGHER EDUCATION  
*(Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)*

**MANIPAL COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS  
MAHE, MANIPAL  
CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation on “**Exploring Sense of Presence of Significant Others in Virtual Communication by Emerging Adults**” has been completed by **Naeema Nijas** (201199019) under my supervision. I am satisfied with the work presented by the candidate towards the partial fulfillment of Master of Science in Clinical Psychology.

Guide details

Mr. Syam K. R.

Assistant Professor

Department of Clinical Psychology

MCHP, MAHE, Manipal

Date: 30.04.2022



**MANIPAL**  
ACADEMY of HIGHER EDUCATION  
*(Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)*

**MANIPAL COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS  
MAHE, MANIPAL  
CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation on “**Exploring Sense of Presence of Significant Others in Virtual Communication by Emerging Adults**” has been completed by **Naeema Nijas** (201199019) under supervision of **Mr. Syam K. R.** We are satisfied with the work presented by the candidate towards the partial fulfilment of Master of Science in Clinical Psychology.

**Dr. Sebastian Padickaparambil**  
Associate Professor and Head  
Department of Clinical Psychology  
MCHP, MAHE, Manipal

Head  
Dept. of Clinical Psychology  
Manipal College of Health Professions  
MAHE, Manipal

**Dr. G Arun Maiya**  
Dean and Professor  
MCHP,  
MAHE, Manipal

Dean  
Manipal College of Health Professions  
MAHE, Manipal - 576104

Date: 30.04.2022

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This prosperous journey from the beginning to the end was an ecstatic experience. First and foremost, praises and thanks to the Almighty for his blessing throughout the research work which has led to the completion of the research successfully.

Most importantly I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my guide, Mr. Syam K. R. for his utmost guidance and support towards me and my topic. I would like to thank him for his great involvement in my study as well as the motivation provided to not give up. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Mr. Dan Isaac Pothiyil for helping me in formulating the topic as well as for his great enthusiasm for qualitative research. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Sebastian Padickaparambil, Head of the Department of Clinical Psychology at Manipal Academy of Higher education, and the members of the staff who were a part of this process. I would also like to extend my thanks to the IRC and IEC departments for their contributions and suggestions that allowed me to strengthen the various aspects of my study.

This dissertation would not be complete without the help of my participants, who chose to share their lived experiences and insights about living away from significant others. I thank each and every one of them for their sincere contributions.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, and friends, Shreya, Tanishka, Ansitha, and Christina for their constant support and encouragement during stressful times and for providing clarity on my topic. And of course, the warmest regards to Samarin and Nadiya for their unconditional belief and trust in me as I conceptualized this topic.

**Naeema Nijas**

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page No</b>
Introduction	<b>01</b>
Review of Literature	<b>09</b>
Aim & Objectives	<b>17</b>
Methodology	<b>19</b>
Results	<b>24</b>
Discussion	<b>31</b>
Conclusion	<b>134</b>
References	<b>142</b>
Appendices	<b>161</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
5.1	Themes	25
5.2	Superordinate themes	28

## LIST OF APPENDICES

<b>Appendix No.</b>	<b>Appendix Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
A	IRC Certificate	163
B	IEC Certificate	164
C	Participant Information Sheet	165
D	Informed Consent	167
E	Socio-demographic Sheet	168
F	Checklist	169
G	E-mail for Interview Call	170
H	Interview Guide	171
I	Plagiarism Report	172

## **Abstract**

Sense of Presence is an intuitive process of 'being' and an important aspect of communication. During virtual communication, the experience of presence of others is different for different individuals. It varies drastically when compared to the experience of presence in real life while interacting with significant others. While the experience of presence has been studied in the virtual reality and virtual environment context, it gives out a fresh psychological perspective of presence with regards to virtual communication. The study aimed at exploring the experience of presence of significant others in virtual communication as well its perceived adequacy. Qualitative in design, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain the lived experience of individual's interactions with significant others through virtual modes. The study recruited emerging adults between the ages of 18-25 years, able to converse in English, having significant others as not a romantic partner, and living away from them for more than six months. The emerging data was analyzed by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which results in several themes pertaining to the perceived adequacy and inadequacy; experience of presence and virtual communication, and the importance of face-to-face interactions. Results of the study indicated the salient role of presence for effective virtual communication that leads to mutual understanding and emotional expressiveness as well as factors of autonomy, loneliness, and interpersonal dynamics that undermine such an experience.

*Keywords:* Virtual communication, Sense of presence, Perceived Adequacy, Significant others, Emerging Adults

# Introduction