

POKÉMON TRADING CARD GAME AS A MEDIUM FOR FOSTERING COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

By:

Julian Andretty¹

Darynaufal Mulyaman²

V.L Sinta Herindrasti³

Leonard Felix Hutabarat⁴

Nicholas Jevon Manuela Putra⁵

Teren Putri Agatanata⁶

Destini Natalia Situmorang⁷

Indonesian Christian University

Address: JL. Mayor Jenderal Sutoyo No. 2, Cawang, Kramat Jati, East Jakarta (13630).

Corresponding Authors: julian.andretty@uki.ac.id, darynaufal@uki.ac.id,
sinta.herindrasti@uki.ac.id, leonard.hutabarat@uki.ac.id, jaeczyuni@gmail.com,
Teren.agatanata@gmail.com, nataliadeity728@gmail.com

Abstract. *This study explores the use of Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG) as an interactive medium to foster communication and collaborative learning among university students. The activity involved 100 students from different academic disciplines and was conducted at Universitas Kristen Indonesia (UKI) on April 6–8, 2026. The study used a participatory and educational approach, with data collected through field observations, questionnaires, and reflective discussions. The activity was designed to provide students with an engaging learning experience through gameplay that encouraged cooperation, communication, and knowledge exchange. The findings indicate that Pokémon TCG activities provided opportunities for student interaction, information sharing, and peer learning. Through gameplay and group activities, participants were also provided with opportunities to communicate and engage in collaborative learning. These findings*

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suggest that Pokémon TCG has potential as an interactive, non-formal learning medium that can support communication and collaboration among university students. The study highlights the use of game-based activities as an alternative approach to creating engaging learning environments that emphasize student interaction and active participation.

Keywords: *Pokémon Trading Card Game, Communication, Collaborative Learning, Soft Power, Game-Based Learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication and collaboration are important aspects of the learning process, particularly in higher education, where students are expected to actively exchange ideas, share knowledge, and work with others. Learning is not only an individual process of acquiring information but can also develop through interaction among students. Through communication and collaborative activities, students have opportunities to express ideas, respond to different perspectives, and construct knowledge through interaction with their peers. Therefore, learning activities that encourage direct interaction and active participation can provide an alternative approach to supporting students' learning experiences.

The development of popular culture and interactive media has created opportunities to introduce alternative forms of learning that are more engaging for young people. Popular culture is no longer limited to entertainment but can also function as a medium through which individuals interact, build communities, and engage with shared interests (Clarke, 2016). This development is particularly relevant for university students who are familiar with interactive and participatory forms of media. Rather than relying solely on conventional learning activities, the use of familiar and engaging media can create opportunities for students to participate in learning through interaction and shared activities.

One form of interactive media that can be utilized in this context is the Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG). As a collectible card game, Pokémon TCG involves interaction between players through gameplay, discussion, strategic choices, and the

exchange of knowledge about the game. The game therefore provides an environment in which participants can communicate with one another while engaging in a shared activity. Beyond its recreational function, such gameplay can create opportunities for peer interaction and collaborative learning, particularly when students learn rules, strategies, and gameplay techniques together. Previous research has indicated that game-based learning can contribute to the development of students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Mao et al., 2022), while game-based approaches can also encourage active participation in learning activities (Azis & Angelina, 2025).

The potential of game-based activities is also relevant to the broader objective of providing accessible and engaging learning experiences. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning for all (United Nations, 2015). In this context, interactive learning activities can complement conventional educational approaches by creating spaces where students actively participate, communicate, and learn with their peers. The use of games as learning media can therefore be considered an alternative approach to developing learning environments that emphasize participation, interaction, and collaboration. Based on this context, the use of Pokémon TCG as an interactive learning medium provides an opportunity to examine how gameplay can facilitate communication and collaborative learning among university students. The activity discussed in this study was conducted at Universitas Kristen Indonesia (UKI) and involved students from various academic programs. Through gameplay, students were encouraged to interact, exchange knowledge, and participate in shared learning activities. Accordingly, this study focuses on the role of Pokémon TCG as a medium for fostering communication and collaborative learning among university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication in Learning

Communication is an essential component of the learning process because it enables students to exchange ideas, express opinions, ask questions, and respond to the perspectives of others. In a learning environment, communication does not only involve the transmission of information from educators to students but also occurs through interaction among students. Such interaction allows students to participate actively in the

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learning process and develop understanding through discussion and knowledge exchange. In this context, learning activities that provide opportunities for direct interaction can support students in becoming active participants rather than passive recipients of information (Alonemarera et al., 2023).

Interactive learning activities are particularly relevant in higher education, where students come from diverse academic and social backgrounds. Interaction among students can create opportunities to exchange different perspectives and experiences. Through communication with peers, students can clarify their understanding, share strategies, and respond to ideas presented by others. Therefore, communication can be understood not only as a supporting element of learning but also as part of the process through which students construct knowledge collectively.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning refers to a learning process in which individuals work together to achieve shared learning objectives. Rather than focusing solely on individual achievement, collaborative learning emphasizes interaction, knowledge sharing, cooperation, and participation among learners. Through collaborative activities, students can contribute their knowledge and abilities while learning from the experiences and perspectives of their peers. In the context of higher education, collaborative learning can provide opportunities for students from different academic backgrounds to interact and exchange knowledge (Holflod, 2023). Collaborative activities may also encourage students to discuss problems, negotiate ideas, divide tasks, and develop solutions together. The process therefore involves both individual participation and interaction with other learners. This perspective is relevant to game-based activities because gameplay can create situations in which participants need to communicate, share information, and interact with others while carrying out a common activity.

Game-Based Learning

Game-based learning refers to the use of games or game-related activities to support learning processes. Games can provide an interactive environment in which

participants learn through active involvement, decision-making, problem-solving, and interaction. Previous research has indicated that game-based learning can contribute to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Mao et al., 2022). Game-based approaches can also encourage students to participate actively in learning activities and provide learning experiences that differ from conventional classroom practices (Azis & Angelina, 2025).

The use of games in learning is particularly relevant to non-formal learning environments because it can create a more flexible and participatory learning experience. Instead of receiving information passively, participants can engage directly with the activity and learn through the process of playing. In multiplayer games, the learning process may also involve communication and collaboration because participants interact with other players, exchange information, and respond to different situations during gameplay. Thus, game-based learning provides a framework for examining how interactive games can support communication and collaborative activities among students (Faisal et al., 2022).

Pokémon Trading Card Game as an Interactive Learning Medium

Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG) is a collectible card game that involves interaction between players through gameplay, strategic decision-making, and the application of game rules. The multiplayer nature of the game creates opportunities for participants to communicate directly with one another while engaging in a shared activity. Players may need to discuss gameplay, understand the rules, observe their opponents' actions, and make decisions based on the situation during the game.

These characteristics provide a basis for considering Pokémon TCG as an interactive learning medium. The learning process does not necessarily occur through formal instruction but can develop through interaction, peer learning, and knowledge sharing during gameplay. Participants who have different levels of familiarity with the game can exchange information and strategies, allowing learning to take place through communication with peers. This corresponds with the broader understanding of game-based learning as an approach that can encourage active participation and interaction.

In addition, the use of Pokémon TCG among university students from different academic backgrounds provides an opportunity to create a shared learning environment.

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Participants can engage in the same activity while contributing different experiences and levels of knowledge. In this study, these characteristics are used as the theoretical basis for examining how Pokémon TCG can facilitate communication and collaborative learning among university students.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Location

This study used a participatory and educational approach to examine the implementation of Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG) as an interactive non-formal learning medium among university students. The approach positioned participants as active subjects in the learning process, allowing the activities to be conducted interactively and through two-way engagement. The activity was conducted at Universitas Kristen Indonesia (UKI), East Jakarta, from 6 to 8 April 2026. The activity was implemented as part of the “Pokémon TCG Academia Goes to Campus” program.

Participants

The activity involved 100 university students from various study programmes at Universitas Kristen Indonesia. Participants were involved in the introduction, training, gameplay, and evaluation activities. The diversity of participants' academic backgrounds provided opportunities for interaction and knowledge exchange during the programme. In addition to student participants, the programme was conducted in collaboration with PT Karya Bincang Sejahtera Chatterworks (Pokémon Indonesia). Representatives of the partner contributed to the implementation of the programme, particularly in relation to Pokémon TCG gameplay and community activities.

Data Collection

Data were obtained through questionnaires, observations during the activities, and reflection with participants and the programme partner. The questionnaire was used to obtain information regarding participants' understanding and responses to the Pokémon TCG activities and the implementation of the programme. Observations were conducted

throughout the gameplay, training, and interaction sessions to identify participants' engagement, strategic thinking, and collaboration. Reflective discussions were also conducted as part of the evaluation process to obtain participants' responses to the learning activities. The combination of these methods was used to obtain information regarding the implementation of Pokémon TCG as an interactive learning activity, particularly in relation to communication, participation, and collaboration among participants.

Activity Implementation

The programme was implemented through several stages. The first stage was planning, which involved coordination and initial discussions between the programme team and the partner. This stage included identifying participants' needs and level of understanding of Pokémon TCG and determining the learning materials and implementation strategies. The second stage was training on the basic rules of Pokémon TCG. Participants were introduced to the types of cards, game flow, and basic rules. The training was accompanied by direct gameplay simulations to allow participants to understand the rules through practical interaction. The third stage focused on points and gameplay strategies.

Participants received explanations regarding the scoring system, deck construction, card combinations, and strategies for achieving victory. Participants then applied the material through direct gameplay. The final stage was evaluation. Evaluation was conducted through observation during the activity, questionnaires, and reflection with participants and the partner. The evaluation focused on participants' understanding of the material, participation in the activities, interaction, strategic thinking, and collaboration. The results of the evaluation were used as a basis for assessing the implementation of the programme and identifying aspects that could be improved in subsequent activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Pokémon TCG Activities

The implementation of the Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG) activity at Universitas Kristen Indonesia involved 100 university students and was conducted

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through a series of gameplay-based learning activities. The activity was organized into 10 waves because each gameplay session lasted approximately 30 minutes. The training was conducted from 09.00 to 15.00, with participants arranged into six tables in each wave and two participants at each table. This arrangement allowed students to participate directly in gameplay while interacting with other participants.

The activity was part of the “Pokémon TCG Academia Goes to Campus” programme. The programme consisted of several stages, beginning with the University Roadshow, which introduced students to the basic rules and gameplay of Pokémon TCG. The programme was subsequently designed to continue through the Level Up Workshop, Campus Qualifier, and University Team League Finals. These stages provided a progression from basic gameplay introduction to strategy development and competitive activities. The implementation therefore positioned gameplay as more than a technical activity. The arrangement of participants in small groups created opportunities for direct interaction, while the learning process required participants to understand game rules, observe gameplay situations, and respond to the actions of other players. This setting provided a practical environment in which communication and interaction could occur alongside the gameplay process.

Communication and Interaction during Gameplay

Communication emerged as an important part of the interaction between participants during the Pokémon TCG activities. Because the activity was conducted through direct gameplay and discussion, participants had opportunities to interact with their peers while learning the rules and strategies of the game. The programme report describes the activity as a participatory learning space that encouraged active interaction among participants. The interaction was also supported by the different activities included in the programme. During the introduction and training stages, participants learned about gameplay rules and strategies, while the gameplay sessions provided opportunities to apply the information through direct participation. The process allowed participants to communicate about the game, exchange information, and respond to situations that emerged during gameplay.

This finding is relevant to the concept of communication in learning because communication in this activity was not limited to the delivery of instructional information. Instead, interaction occurred between participants as they engaged in the same activity. The learning environment therefore provided opportunities for students to exchange knowledge and participate actively rather than only receive information from an instructor. The potential for continued communication was also supported through the planned integration of Pokémon TCG within the campus environment. The programme proposed the establishment of a Pokémon TCG community or club where students could learn, practise, and discuss game strategies together. Digital communication platforms, including WhatsApp groups, social media, and online discussion forums, were also identified as means of sharing information and strategies and coordinating activities.

Collaborative Learning and Knowledge Sharing

The Pokémon TCG activity also created opportunities for collaborative learning through interaction and knowledge sharing among participants. The gameplay environment allowed students with different levels of familiarity with the game to participate in the same activity and learn through interaction with their peers. Rather than relying entirely on individual learning, participants could exchange information and discuss strategies during the learning process. The collaborative dimension was particularly visible in the programme's proposed campus integration. The establishment of a Pokémon TCG community or club was intended to provide a collaborative space for students to learn, practise, and discuss gameplay strategies. The report also identifies interaction across study programmes as one of the potential outcomes of this community, creating opportunities for broader social interaction within the academic environment.

The programme further included fun matches, strategy workshops, and internal tournaments as activities that could support continued participation. These activities created shared spaces in which students could practise gameplay, exchange strategies, and interact with other participants. In this context, collaboration was not necessarily limited to completing a single task together but could also take the form of peer learning, discussion, and shared participation in recurring activities. These findings correspond with the concept of collaborative learning presented in the theoretical review. Collaborative learning emphasizes interaction, knowledge sharing, cooperation, and

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active participation among learners. Pokémon TCG provides a practical setting for these processes because gameplay requires participants to engage with others while learning and applying game-related knowledge. The activity consequently demonstrates how a game-based environment can provide opportunities for learning through interaction and shared experiences.

Evaluation of the Learning Activity

The programme was evaluated through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A questionnaire distributed through Google Forms was used to assess participants' satisfaction, their understanding of Pokémon TCG rules and strategies, and the quality of the programme implementation. Qualitative evaluation was conducted through observations of participants during gameplay and discussions. The observed indicators included participation, strategic thinking, and cooperation among participants. The evaluation indicates that the activity functioned as an interactive learning environment in which participants were encouraged to take an active role.

The gameplay format provided opportunities for students to participate directly, communicate with peers, and engage in shared activities. The report also identifies communication and teamwork among the soft skills supported by the integration of Pokémon TCG in the campus environment. From the perspective of collaborative learning, the combination of gameplay, discussion, and continued community activities created opportunities for students to learn with and from their peers. The activity therefore demonstrates the potential of Pokémon TCG as a non-formal learning medium that emphasizes interaction and active participation.

Overall, the findings show that Pokémon TCG can function as an interactive medium for fostering communication and collaborative learning among university students. Its gameplay structure provides opportunities for direct interaction, knowledge exchange, discussion, and shared participation. The activity also demonstrates the potential for extending game-based learning beyond a single event through campus communities and digital communication platforms. The evaluation results were

subsequently intended to inform improvements in training methods, activity duration, and the sustainability of the student community on campus.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study examined the use of Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG) as an interactive medium for fostering communication and collaborative learning among university students. The implementation of the activity at Universitas Kristen Indonesia involving 100 students demonstrated that gameplay-based activities can provide opportunities for direct interaction, communication, knowledge sharing, and active participation among students. The findings indicate that Pokémon TCG can create a non-formal learning environment in which students interact with peers while learning and applying game-related knowledge.

Through gameplay, discussion, and shared activities, participants were provided with opportunities to exchange information and strategies and engage in collaborative learning. The integration of Pokémon TCG into campus activities also provided opportunities for continued interaction through student communities, workshops, matches, and digital communication platforms. Therefore, Pokémon TCG has potential as an interactive learning medium that can support communication and collaborative learning among university students. The use of game-based activities can complement conventional learning environments by creating opportunities for active participation, peer interaction, and shared learning experiences.

Suggestion

Based on the findings, future implementation of Pokémon TCG as a non-formal learning medium can place greater emphasis on sustained student interaction and collaborative activities. The development of student communities or clubs can provide a space for students to continue communicating, sharing knowledge, and practicing together after the initial activity. Future activities may also develop more structured gameplay-based learning sessions, including training, discussion, and collaborative activities that allow students with different levels of familiarity with Pokémon TCG to participate. In addition, digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups and

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social media can be utilized to support information exchange and coordination among participants. Further studies may examine the use of Pokémon TCG or similar game-based activities in other university contexts and with different groups of students. Such studies can provide broader perspectives on how interactive games can be utilized to support communication, collaboration, and non-formal learning in higher education.

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