

*A Phenomenological Study on How Cosplay Affects the Self-Presentation of Cosplayers*

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**Abstract**

“A Phenomenological Study on How Cosplay Affects the Self-Presentation of Cosplayer” focused on (1) determining Cosplayer’s level of Self-Monitoring, (2) identifying how Cosplayers present themselves a) in a fan group and b) as an individual in a real-world setting, (3) defining the correlation of Self-Presentation and Cosplay, (4) enumerating the factors that affect their self-presentation as individuals and as Cosplayers; and (5) validating the Uses and Gratification Theory of Katz and Blumer. Through snowball and stratified sampling, 93 (59 females and 36 males) cosplayers within the ages of 15 to 25 in Batangas City were chosen to participate in this study. The Self-Monitoring Scale and Jenshin’s Cosplay Questionnaire were administered. With the use of Pearson Correlation, the researchers were able to conclude that there is a significant correlation at 0.05 level (2-tailed) with the Cosplayer’s level of Self-Monitoring and Cosplay.

Keywords: Cosplay, Self-Monitoring, Self-Presentation, fandom, fan group

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## Introduction

“Cosplay is translated from Japanese コスプレ. It is a Wasai-Eigo, English word coined in Japan in 1980s, based on the original idea of Costume Play, コスチューム・プレイ. Nobuyuki Takahashi, a Japanese editor, first used the term Cosplay to stand for Costume Play in a Japanese sci-fi magazine published in 1981, to specially represent Costume playing as characters from fictions.” (He, 2012). However, the art of Costume Play was not originally invented in Japan. Instead, the ever first time when people Costume Play characters from fictions, was at the First World Science Fiction Convention (WorldCon) in New York in 1939.

Moreover, He mentioned also that Forrest J Ackerman, the future editor of Famous Monsters of Filmland, a genre-specific film magazine started in 1958, dressed as a rugged looking star pilot recreated from the classic 1933 sci-fi film Things to Come. The way he dressed created a buzz among the attending writers, artists and fans at WorldCon. It injected a fanciful, imaginary quality into the convention's overly serious nature. The following year, 1940, a dozen of fans turned out in their own Sci-Fi apparel in the second WorldCon.

Philippines, like other countries, has become one of the active countries which has Cosplay Conventions happening almost every week. Proving its popularity in the Philippines, the country has an international cosplayer named Alodia Gosiengfiao that has always been a representative of the country to different international cosplay competitions. Alodia is not the only cosplayer who has become famous in this hobby. Ashley Gosiengfiao, Jin Joson and Hye Nim also made it into the international scene of Cosplay. Because of this, some Filipino teenagers entered the cosplay community as a passion and love for arts although some people used this as a stepping stone in reaching fame and popularity. They tend to share their passion and thus creating a circle of friends. Although it is very popular among teens, this hobby doesn't require age. These cosplayers sometimes chose the character to cosplay to whom they can relate their personality or traits in order to act or portray the character right. This reason somehow affect the cosplayer's self-presentation even if he/she is inside or outside of the cosplay or the anime community resulting to be seen as weird or geeks among the outsider's eye .

Jenkin's conception of Fandom is the state of being a fan or all that encompasses fan culture and fan behavior in general, or the study of fans and fan behavior (Jenkin 1992). Higher level anime fans express their Fandom further in a community where they can interact with other fans, such as in cosplay conventions, online forums, friends and fan clubs. Anime fans are influenced by their interaction inside these communities. The fan community allows fans to behave like other fans do—behavior that some fans find difficult to apply in the real world. However, as exposure to a fan community increases, fans become more expressive in their Fandom, as reflected in their distinct physical appearance. In effect, anime fans on higher levels of Fandom incorporate anime influences into their personalities.

Studies of Fandom (Lewis, 1992; Sanders, 1994; Gray et al., 2007; Booth, 2010) can provide valuable information and a general framework for academic research into cosplay. In Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World, Gray et al. (2007) explain how every one of us is a fan in some regard, whether through

following celebrities on the internet, pre-ordering the newest book in a favorite series, or dedicating time to catch the new episode of a favorite TV show. Booth (2010) describes this same idea and goes further to say that this common group helps us to relate to other fans, and therefore suggests that studying fans allows us to study ourselves. Gray et al. (2007) explain how the word “Fandom” gives the fans and practices that create fan cultures significance for scholarly researchers. Fandom is so present in our lives that Jenkins (2007) explains that media companies are being run differently today due to the increased visibility of Fandom and participatory culture. The economic and cultural impact and influence that “fan cultures” are having on consumer industries has led some media analysts to describe members of these communities “prosumers.” As prosumers, “participants both produce and consume cultural products” (Olin-Scheller, 2010, p. 41). These communities, of which cosplay can be considered a part, are locales where fans bond within larger communities and share knowledge and opinions, pool information, and develop a greater consciousness about their commonalities and similar interests. He believes this is resulting in a new kind of cultural power and consumer influence.

Self-presentation builds on Goffman’s (1959) theories of identity and social performance. Goffman’s thesis is that self-presentation is the intentional and tangible component of identity. Social actors engage in complex intraself negotiations to project a desired impression. This impression is maintained through consistently performing coherent and complementary behaviors (Schlenker 1975,1980; Schneider 1981). . Goffman (1959) terms this process impression management. Thus, impression management relies on corporeal display, what Mauss (1973) labels body techniques, to communicate the desired identity, or self. The social actions required for self-presentation are consumption oriented and depend upon individuals displaying signs, symbols, brands, and practices to communicate the desired impression (Williams and Bendelow 1998).

The proponents engage themselves in this study for Cosplay, as a fast growing community, has become an arena for social interaction among adolescents, youth and adults who love or who are fans of anime, manga or video game series. And Philippines have been one of the active countries in the Cosplay industry within the past years.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This research will examine the influence of cosplay on selected cosplayers’ self-presentation in and outside a cosplay community by focusing on: (1) determining cosplayers’ level of self-monitoring, (2) identifying how cosplayers present themselves a) in a fan group, and b) as an individual in a real-world setting, (3) defining the correlation of self-presentation and cosplay, (4) enumerating the factors that affect their self-presentation as individuals and as cosplayers; and (5) validating the uses and gratification theory of Katz and Blumer.

### **Theoretical Basis**

One influential tradition in media research is referred to as 'uses and gratifications' (occasionally 'needs and gratifications'). This approach focuses on *why* people use particular media rather than on content. In contrast to the concern of the 'media effects' tradition with 'what media do *to* people' (which assumes a homogeneous mass audience and a 'hypodermic' view of media), U & G can be seen as part of a broader

trend amongst media researchers which is more concerned with 'what people do *with* media', allowing for a variety of responses and interpretations. However, some commentators have argued that gratifications could also be seen as effects: e.g. thrillers are likely to generate very similar responses amongst most viewers. And who could say that they never watch more TV than they had intended to? Watching TV helps to shape audience needs and expectations.

U & G arose originally in the 1940s and underwent a revival in the 1970s and 1980s. The approach springs from a *functionalist* paradigm in the social sciences. It presents the use of media in terms of the gratification of social or psychological needs of the individual (Blumler & Katz 1974). The mass media compete with other sources of gratification, but gratifications can be obtained from a medium's content (e.g. watching a specific programme), from familiarity with a genre within the medium (e.g. watching soap operas), from general exposure to the medium (e.g. watching TV), and from the social context in which it is used (e.g. watching TV with the family). U & G theorists argue that people's needs influence how they use and respond to a medium. Zillmann (cited by McQuail 1987: 236) has shown the influence of *mood* on media choice: boredom encourages the choice of exciting content and stress encourages a choice of relaxing content. The same TV programme may gratify different needs for different individuals. Different needs are associated with individual personalities, stages of maturation, backgrounds and social roles. Developmental factors seem to be related to some motives for purposeful viewing: e.g. Judith van Evra argues that young children may be particularly likely to watch TV in search of information and hence more susceptible to influence (Evra 1990: 177, 179).

An empirical study in the U & G tradition might typically involve audience members completing a questionnaire about why they watch a TV programme. Denis McQuail offers (McQuail 1987: 73) different classifications of common reasons for media use. These classifications of common reasons include information, personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment. People use media for information to find out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the worlds, to seek advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices, to satisfy curiosity and general interest, to learn or to have self-education, and to gain a sense of security through knowledge.

Another reason is for personal identity where people utilize media to find reinforcement for personal values, to obtain reinforcement for personal values, to realize models of behavior, to identify with valued other (in the media) and to gain insight into one's self. In addition to these reasons, people also use media for integration and social interaction to achieve insights into circumstances of others or for social empathy, to characterize with others and gain a sense of belonging, to distinguish a basis for conversation and social interaction, to have a substitute for real-life companionship, to help in carrying out social roles, and to enable one to connect with family, friends and society. And lastly, people use media for entertainment to escape or divert their problems, to get intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment, for filling time, for emotional release and for sexual arousal.

Blumler & Katz (1974) argued that audience needs have social and psychological origins which generate certain expectations about the mass media, leading to differential patterns of media exposure which result in both the gratification of needs and in other (often unintended) consequences. This does assume an active audience making motivated choices.

## Methods

This section discussed the research methodology of the study in terms of research design, participants of the study, instrument used, data gathering procedure and data analysis.

## Participants



Figure 1 - Percentage of Participants

A total of 93 cosplayers in Batangas City was used in this study. These cosplayers range from 16 - 25 years age group who are certified cosplayers or cosplayers who have done costume plays and attended cosplay conventions. 34 or 37% of the participants were male while 59 or 63% cover the female respondents.

## Research Design

This study which is entitled “A Phenomenological Study on How Cosplay Affects the Self-presentation of Cosplayers”, makes use of quantitative and qualitative methods and snowball, and stratified sampling in determining how cosplay affects the self-presentation of cosplayers in and outside the cosplay community and choosing the respondents. Qualitative research methods include both subjective and objective in predicting and coming up with such factors that affect the self-presentation of the cosplayers. On the other hand, quantitative research methods make use of statistical tools in measuring the how cosplay affects the self-presentation of cosplayers in and outside the cosplay community of a given sample of population. It employs numerical data in the process.

The researchers used various kinds of samplings in choosing the participants for this study. First is the Snowball sampling (Babbie 2012) where the researchers asked for assistance from the participants to help identify people with a similar trait of interest. The process of snowball sampling is much like asking your subjects to nominate another person with the same trait as your next subject. The researcher then observes the nominated subjects and continues in the same way until the obtaining sufficient number of subjects. After this, all of the participants are now closely studied to acquire the necessary or the participants that are certified cosplayers through stratified sampling.

## **Measures**

Through the course of this study, the researchers used series of questionnaires and interview questions to measure and know how cosplay affects the self-presentation of cosplayers in and outside the cosplay community. The first questionnaire is the Self-Monitoring Scale. It was developed by Mark Snyder (1974). The Self-Monitoring (SM) Scale is a 25-item questionnaire that measures the extent to which you consciously employ impression management strategies in social interactions with T or F scale (T = true or mostly true, F = false or not usually true). Basically, the scale assesses the degree to which you manipulate the nonverbal signals that you send to others and the degree to which you adjust your behavior to situational demands. The total score on the Self-Monitoring Scale of the participant is measured according to the following norms: High score = 15 – 22, Intermediate score = 9 – 14 and Low score = 0 – 8.

The second questionnaire used is the Jenshin's Cosplay Questionnaire. It is comprised of 26 items that assesses a cosplayer's attitude. And lastly, is the interview questions drawn out from the previous questionnaire and scale to obtain more needed information for this research.

## **Procedure**

The researchers first pass proposed topics for the research, presented this topic to the adviser and waited for the approval of the topic. This study entitled "A Phenomenological Study on How Cosplay Affects the Self-presentation of Cosplayers" has been passed for the approval of the adviser.

The researchers then gathered related literature to strengthen its foundation. As a requirement, a pilot study will be administered to ten random cosplayers before proceeding to the research proper. A pilot study should be carry out first to assess the feasibility of the study, develop adequacy of the research instruments, to collect preliminary data and to identify potential problems following the research procedure. During the research proper, participants or cosplayers will be first asked to read the consent form, agree to the conditions and sign with their complete name in order to gather data correctly and also as a formal way of starting the study. After agreeing to be part of this research, two different questionnaires such as Jenshin's Cosplay Questionnaire and The Self-Monitoring Scale are distributed to the participants. Afterwards, participants were interviewed by the researchers using the interview questions drawn out from the previous questionnaire and scale to draw more information needed in this research. The data that will be obtained from this study will be then recorded and tabulated for computations.

## **Analysis**

After all the data has been gathered, the acquired information were analyzed and computed in ways that will answer the said objectives of the study. Textual presentation and tabular presentation of data were both employed in this study. Textual presentation was used to present statements with numeral or numbers to describe data. Furthermore, this was used to focus attention on some important data and to supplement tabular presentation. Tabular presentations of data were used in terms of statistical table or simple table to systematically arrange essential data on the study.

## Results

This section includes the results of the paper. Tables and graphs present the summary of data gathered for the objectives of this study. The quantitative data was analyzed through the use of Pearson r Correlation.

Table 1.1 Cosplayers' level of self-monitoring

Number of Characters Cosplayed	N	Mean	Interpretation
1	68	10	Average
2	10	10	Average
3	5	11	Average
4	2	14	Average
5	1	16	High
6	3	12	Average
7	1	11	Average
14	1	4	Low

Here, table 1.1 explains that, if a cosplayer has cosplayed a lot of characters, the lower they scored in Mark Snyder's self-monitoring scale is. It is interpreted that a cosplayer who has a higher number of cosplayed characters resulted in a low score in self-monitoring, which is, these cosplayers controls their own beliefs and attitudes regardless of any social interactions they may encounter. May it be inside the fan or cosplay community and in a real world setting. In other words, they are less observant to their social interactions and express themselves the way they wanted.

People who scored high in the self-monitoring scale are the cosplayers who has a low number of cosplayed characters. They are the cosplayers who are concerned with how they present themselves in their social interactions. High scores were interpreted as people who wants to impress others by making or projecting an image that results to positive feedback.

Table 2.1 Self – Presentation of Cosplayers in a Fan Group based on Cosplay Character

Domain	Category	Frequency
Personal Preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I only pick the characters that I really love since ung true essence of cosplay is portraying a character that you really love.</li> <li>kung sino lang ung gusto ko, kase hindi naman kailangan na kung ano ung bagay sayo. Siyempre, ikaw ba, ikocosplay mo ba ung character na hindi mo gusto di ba? (7)</li> </ul>	Typical
Personality Trait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unang una ung mejo malapit sa sarili ko. Dahil feel ko mas kaya ko silang iportray dahil malapit sila sa sarili ko.</li> <li>Dapat malapit sa character mo, kung ano ung ugali mo para hindi mahirap iportray.</li> <li>Pag nakikita ko yung sarili ko sa kanila. (7)</li> </ul>	Typical

Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By budget.</li> <li>• Yung di gaanong kailangan ng wig tapos madaling iportray.</li> <li>• Kase hindi naman pwede na magpapatahi ka tapos bigla kang titigil kase hindi mo na kaya.</li> <li>• Yung available na kaya ng budget ko. (5)</li> </ul>	Variant
Popularity of Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depende sa mga napapanuod kong animes.</li> <li>• Depende sa preference ng mga nasa paligid ko. Mahirap kasing magcosplay ng character na di kilala ng audience ko. (3)</li> </ul>	Variant

In Table 2.1, seven of the informants the characters whom they love and idolize when it comes to cosplaying. They Cosplay their favorite characters for they love and adore them. On the other hand, another seven informants stated that personality is the first thing they consider when choosing what character to cosplay. They prefer the characters whom they see themselves and who has a personality like theirs. Budget is another factor that some of the cosplayers think through. Five have said that they prefer cosplaying the characters whose costumes are not costly and are available at present. And lastly, few of them choose their character according to what is within the trend and being watched by those who are around them for they think that fans could easily appreciate and recognize their character ifr they choose the popular characters to cosplay.

Table 2.2 Self – Presentation of Cosplayers in a Real – World Setting

Domain	Categyory	Frequency
Cosplay as a Hobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hobby sya para sa akin. Kasi dun ko nilalagay yung passion ko sa drawing at photographs.</li> <li>• Hobby sya at part din as a fullfillment of dreams.</li> <li>• Kase ang cosplay para sa ken, there’s a time and place for cosplay. Hindi ikaw si Myrtle na kailangan araw araw nakacostume ka palage.</li> <li>• Para sakin hindi. Kase makikita mo naman un sa dedication ng cosplayer e. And usually lumalabas un through photographs. Dun mo makikita kung true coser sya or not.</li> <li>• Ung aken kase more of a hobby lang, pag may event andun kame. (11)</li> </ul>	General
Cosplay as a Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle. Kasi iba yung buhay ng cosplay sa buhay natin ngayon kaya parang lifestyle na din sya.</li> </ul>	General



- lifestyle? Hmm.. Oo, meron kasing mga tao na continuing cosplay kahit normal life. Na parang part of their fashion sense na din.
- Parang naapektuhan na rin nya ung kung paano ako manumit so lifestyle na rin.
- There's some aspects of cosplay na iniintegrate ko minsan sa style ko base on the way I dress. (10)

Generally, Cosplayers take Cosplay as a hobby. It is where they place and express their passion in drawing and photography. They even see it as a fulfillment of their dreams for they see their favorite characters in front of them and also gives them a chance to do cosplay on their favorite and dreamed character. Moreover, Ten of the informants, as seen in Table 2.2, see Cosplay as a lifestyle for they integrate it also on how they present themselves on their day-to-day living.

Table 3.1 Correlation between Cosplayer's Self – Presentation and Cosplay

Variable	1	2
COSPLAYER'S		
1. Self - Presentation	1	.251*
2. Cosplay	.251*	1

Note: \*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Table 3.1 shows that Cosplayer's Self – Presentation and Cosplay have a significant correlation at the 0.05 level (2 tailed). As the number of times of the cosplayer cosplayed increases their level of self – monitoring decreases, meaning, they present themselves whether in a fan group or in a real – world setting, through the way they wanted to and do not mind what others may say.

Lastly, as seen in Table 1.1 and 1.2, the participants express themselves whether in a fan group or in the real-world setting through the way they wanted to. They seldom put other's preference first. They do and live their passion uniquely and according to how they desired it to be.

## Discussion

This study examined the influence of cosplay on selected cosplayers' self-presentation in and outside a cosplay community.

Mark Snyder's Self-Monitoring Scale was used to measure the cosplayer's or the participant's extent to which they consciously employ their impression management strategies in social interactions like being a cosplayer in a fan community or cosplay community and being an ordinary person in the real world setting. Researchers concluded that the higher the number of the characters they have cosplayed, the lower their level of self – monitoring. They even resolved that Cosplayers self – presentation

in a fan group somehow differs with how they present themselves in a real – world setting. Most of them express themselves and their passion in a fan group rather than in a real – world setting. In addition to that, the researchers have defined a positive correlation between Cosplayers' Self – Presentation and Cosplay at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

The researchers even established the factors that affect how their respondents present themselves in a fan group and in a real – world setting. Their respondents usually present themselves the way they want to and seldom have they taken the preference of the people around them. And all of these support the Uses and Gratification of Katz and Blumer.

The researchers suggest the future examiners (1) to use another type of questionnaire to thoroughly measure the cosplayer's self – presentation, (2) to have an observation list to see how life goes in a fan group, and (3) to study a greater number of respondents.

### **Authors Note**

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Consent Form

I agree to take part in a research study titled “*A Phenomenological Study on How Cosplay Affects the Self-presentation of Cosplayers in and outside the Cosplay Community*” which is being conducted by Dior Grita De Torres and Roma Angelica Victoriano of the Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas under the direction of Professor Miriam Grace Aquino-Malabanan of College of Education Arts and Sciences. I understand that I do not have to take part in this study, and I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed. The purpose of this study is to test How Cosplay Affects the Self-presentation of Cosplayers.

In order to make this study a valid one, some information about my participation will be withheld until after the study. Again if I am uncomfortable with what I see during the course of this experiment, I understand that I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I understand that any information which could personally be connected to me will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone outside the research group. This personal information can only be released with my permission. If information about me is published, it will be written in a way that I cannot be recognized. However, research records may be obtained by court order. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, after the experiment proper. I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Dior Grita F. De Torres  
Roma Angelica P. Victoriano  
Researchers

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant/ Date

Noted By:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof. Miriam Grace Aquino-  
Malabanan

#### Demographic Profile

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Cosplay Conventions attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Cosplayed Characters: \_\_\_\_\_

Year when you started Cosplaying: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Self-Monitoring Scale

#### DIRECTIONS:

The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement carefully before answering. IF a statement is TRUE or MOSTLY TRUE as applied to you, shade the "T" next to the question. If a statement is FALSE or NOT USUALLY TRUE as applied to you, shade the "F" next to the question.

- (T) (F) 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.
- (T) (F) 2. My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.
- (T) (F) 3. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.
- (T) (F) 4. I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.
- (T) (F) 5. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
- (T) (F) 6. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.
- (T) (F) 7. When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.
- (T) (F) 8. I would probably make a good actor.
- (T) (F) 9. I rarely seek the advice of my friends to choose movies, books, or music.
- (T) (F) 10. I sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than I actually am.
- (T) (F) 11. I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.
- (T) (F) 12. In groups of people, I am rarely the center of attention.
- (T) (F) 13. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
- (T) (F) 14. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.
- (T) (F) 15. Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time.
- (T) (F) 16. I'm not always the person I appear to be.
- (T) (F) 17. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.
- (T) (F) 18. I have considered being an entertainer.
- (T) (F) 19. In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else.
- (T) (F) 20. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.
- (T) (F) 21. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.
- (T) (F) 22. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
- (T) (F) 23. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite as well as I should.
- (T) (F) 24. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).
- (T) (F) 25. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

## Appendix C

### Jenshin's Cosplay Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire formulated to measure your qualities as a cosplayer.  
Please mark your chosen answer.

1. Do you consider yourself a 'fan' of something?  
Yes                      No
2. Do you feel that you relate better to people who are fans in comparison to general people?  
Yes                      No
3. Are your friends' fans?  
Yes                      No
4. Do you watch anime at all?  
Yes                      No
5. Do you find yourself able to sympathize and relate to characters in anime, video games or live action?  
Yes                      No
6. Have you ever had someone start a conversation with you because of something the person saw you wearing?  
Yes                      No
7. Have you ever started a conversation with someone because of something you saw that person wearing?  
Yes                      No
8. Do you role play?  
Yes                      No
9. Do you consider yourself an artist?  
Yes                      No
10. Do you like crafting with your hands?  
Yes                      No
11. Do you like to sew?  
Yes                      No
12. Do you feel that it is rare for someone to share your interests?  
Yes                      No
13. Is it rare for people among the general public to have your same interests?  
Yes                      No
14. Do you get excited when you find someone who thinks like you?  
Yes                      No
15. Have you ever met someone you relate to by going to some kind of convention or event?  
Yes                      No
16. Is an event or convention is a valid medium for finding friends?  
Yes                      No
17. Is the internet a valid medium for finding friends?  
Yes                      No
18. Can you speak any Japanese?  
Yes                      No
19. Do you find yourself wishing a character was real?  
Yes                      No



20. Would you date a character if he or she were real?  
Yes                      No
21. Do you make comparisons between made up characters and real life people or situations?  
Yes                      No
22. Do you make up new stories about characters from movies/anime?  
Yes                      No
23. Is the word Fangirl or Fanboy a negative label?  
Yes                      No
24. Do you remember an author's name more often than a character's name?  
Yes                      No
25. Do you enjoy anime and/or manga?  
Yes                      No
26. Do you consider yourself a geek/dork/nerd?  
Yes                      No

## Appendix D

### Self-Monitoring Scoring Scale

1. False	6. True	11. True	16. True	21. False
2. False	7. True	12. False	17. False	22. False
3. False	8. True	13. True	18. True	23. False
4. False	9. False	14. False	19. True	24. True
5. True	10. True	15. True	20. False	25. True

## **Appendix E**

### **Interview Guide**

1. Do you know any Japanese? Manga and cosplay are of course originally Japanese phenomena. Do you connect it to something especially Japanese still?
2. How, when and why did you get interested in cosplay?
3. Is cosplay a lifestyle for you, in the same way as it is for people who are interested in cosplay?
4. Do you attend conventions? Can you describe what makes conventions interesting for you? How did you get to attend a convention for the first time?
5. How do you choose who you want to cosplay as? Why do you choose a specific character? Do you identify with the character you choose?
6. Do you think that there are differences between cosplay and other styles of dressing up?
7. Who is your cosplay idol?
8. Do you feel as though you are a part of a group since you are interested in cosplay? How does it feel to be a part of an activity as cosplay with other fans?
9. If you were given a chance to make a permanent cosplay codename, what would it be and why?
10. What are the unique behaviors or characteristics of a cosplayer?

## **Appendix F**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Definition of Cosplay**

Bainbridge and Norris (2009) described the Japanese term cosplay (コスプレ, kosupure) as a contraction of the English words 'costume' and 'play' and refers to the taking on of a particular character from manga (comic), anime (animation), movie, game or (less frequently) other media from Japan.

According to Lamerchis (2009), cosplaying is a form of appropriation that transforms, performs and actualizes an existing story in close connection to the fan community and the fan's own identity.

Celia Pearce (2009) published a book on online fan cultures of Uru and the types of play they engage in. There is certainly a good reason to view fan practices as play. They are unproductive in that they gain no obvious financial profit from this and that the activity itself is central. Though insightful, theories on play tend should always by nuanced to more specific modes of play. She used two notions to theorize cosplaying: transformative play and imaginative play, which is elaborated upon by the notion of performance. First, cosplaying can be defined as a type of play that changes the context of existing fiction, such as a videogame. In a narrow sense transformative play refers to play that alters the rules of the game that generates emergence (Salen and Zimmerman, 2004, 305). As she rightly notes, play inspires other playful activities, such as making figurines, hosting events or indeed, designing costumes. Reception here entwines with production or creative game play. "Play can become an engine for a high level of creativity and innovation, which can take a variety of forms through both leveraging and subverting software affordances". What is established in a media text such as a video game is now played out through a costume.

Second, cosplaying is an example of imaginative play (Sutton-Smith, 1997): play of make-belief, pretend, also described in Caillois' (1961) typology of play as mimicry. This type of play involves adopting or mimicking other roles, usually in a distinct play setting such as a theater, a children's playground, a role-playing setting or indeed, a fan convention.

Davis (2008) said that cosplay allows a temporary change in identity and allows fans to experiment with other personalities or to just be more assertive than usual. Along with this, the positive reinforcement of thousands of other fans at conventions, makes cosplay a popular pastime for anime fans. Cosplaying is a very social activity; the encouragement of other fans at the masquerade or just having their picture taken adds to a cosplayer's sense of character. At times the cosplayer will roleplay as the character they dressed up as and will often approach other people with costumes from the same anime series to either chat or to act more like their chosen character.

In cosplaying, there is a mutual exchange between the player and fiction. In this sense, the relation between players and characters is similar to that between gamers and their characters. Game theories often stress that the avatar—the main playable character in a game—is not just a protagonist that can be read, but also an enabling

character that the player controls. The character-player relationship has been described by De Mul (2005) as "ludic identity" and by Gee (2007) as "projective identity." Both concepts highlight that a player establishes his or her own identity while interacting with a game and its avatar. This interaction also shapes our interpretation of the fictional material. In cosplay, a similar thing happens. Players identify in multiple ways with the characters they portray. Some relations may be very personal while others more general.

In addition to this, Aoyama and Cahill (2003) defined Cosplay primarily as a social activity associated with various activities and conventions, where cosplayers gather to share their passions for anime and manga characters. While the social settings for cosplay may vary greatly, conventions are often the primary space where large numbers of cosplayers gather, socialize and perform.

On the other hand, Eastman (2005) stated that "cosplayers are a unique group of people who choose to dress in costumes of characters in hopes of finding a community that will recognize their membership of a fandom". This leads to bonding and friendship between cosplayers and other enthusiasts who share the same interests.

## **Fandom**

In late 2007, a book by Susan Napier was published to cover how Japan has been seen through the eyes of the West since the country was opened to European and American influence. She has extensive sections on anime fandom including information on the commonalities among fans she interviewed. The commonalities Napier described are mostly generic attributes, like a love of reading and greater interest in different cultures. However, Napier then delves into what anime fandom means to fans. To her, the most important parts of fandom are its interactivity and what she calls "subcultural capital" (2007: 150). Subcultural capital, as Napier explains, is how a fan's knowledge (either of anime fan conventions, anime trivia, or Japan) allows a fan to gain status within the fandom. Both interactivity and subcultural capital engages fans and further encourages participation in the fandom.

Moreover, the U.S. anime fan community is a primary example of this phenomenon. Experts largely consider anime to be a niche market in the United States, yet the members of the market make up in enthusiasm for what they lack in numbers. Though collegiate anime clubs have been a mainstay of U.S. anime fandom since its earliest days, the Internet has emboldened the anime fan community, who use the Internet's capacities to put otherwise geographically disparate fans into a state of constant connectedness. These factors have contributed to the growth of a phenomenon that subverts the traditional means of entertainment media consumption. Anime fandom has engendered a decentralized, non-commercial anime distribution network that in turn spurs demand for imported entertainment media that is considerably removed from the mainstream in terms of content and corporatized distribution. This phenomenon has implications for academic study of marginalized subcultures in an age of digitized social relations. The Internet allows these subcultures more flexibility to assert autonomy within a media context that would otherwise be more limiting.

The phenomenon of anime fandom in the United State had begun with the release of the first full-length anime series worldwide, Tetsuwan Atomu, or Astro Boy as was known in the U.S. in the mid-1960s (Napier 2001), and Speed Racer during that same period. Few Americans had known that they originally came in Japan since their U.S. releases were dubbed in English. Series such as Lupin III and Mobile Suit Gundam gained popularity in the U.S. in the 1970s and by the early 1980s, anime accounted for 56% of all Japanese television exports (Stronach, 1989), most of which had been exported to the United States.

Organized fandom gradually developed in the late 1980s, when the first Usenet newsgroup devoted to anime, rec. arts. anime appeared in 1988 and when anime fan conventions began appearing in the United States in the late 1980s which were separate from more traditional science fiction conventions.

Academic acknowledgement of anime fandom began in roughly the same period with the first ever conference on Japanese Popular Culture held in 1989 (Napier 2001), and has received steady but little attention by the academy ever since. However, the examination of general U.S. media fandom published in 1992 entitled “Henry Jenkins’ Textual Poachers” remains an influential text for scholars who wish to examine anime fan subculture.

### **Self-Presentation**

The art of self-presentation is both a manipulation of signs (Wiley 1994) and an embodied representation and experience (Brewer 1998) to impart identity. Goffman (1959) asserts that the presentation of self is contextual, based on a specific setting and facing a definable and anticipated audience.

Leary (1996) explained Self-Presentation as the process by which people convey to others that they are a certain kind of person or possess certain characteristics. More specifically, self-presentation is a kind of impression management, which is the management of others’ impressions of a social unit such as people or organizations.

In addition to this, Self-presentation was described as the “self” people presented to others. Based on Goffman (1959), the “dramaturgical approach” was stressed that people’s daily self-presentation was like stage acting. In other words, self-presentation was the present of self that individuals tended to perform intentionally and desired to be seen by others. The perception by others was to be controlled was called self-presentation (Leary and Kowalski 1990). People were found to act intentionally with the awareness of the self in order to convey an optimal image in front of others. Hence, people would act differently according to different situations (Vohs, et al.2005). There were various kinds of self-presentation in different ways of classification. Leary (1996) introduced several self-presentation tactics in everyday life such as self-descriptions, attitude statements, nonverbal behaviors, social associations, conformity and compliance, aggression and risk-taking. These tactics were involved in direct and subtle self-presentation, which aimed at conveying impressions of an individual to others. Apart from Leary (1996), five strategies including ingratiation, competence (self-promotion), intimidation, supplication and exemplification were identified by Jones (1990) for face-to-face interaction in early study.