

# Beyond the Costume: A Phenomenological Study of Cosplayers' Identity Construction in Everyday Life and Conventions

Lara Estillo<sup>1</sup>, Mhel Gianan<sup>2</sup>, Rhyzac Mercado<sup>3</sup>, Jastine Suating<sup>4</sup>, Laiza Tumalak<sup>5</sup>, Kristine Cerenado<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</sup>General Education Department, Far Eastern University, Manila, Metro Manila, Philippines –1015

Email address: jastineann.suating31@gmail.com, laraestillo893@gmail.com, rhyzamercao.1905@gmail.com, tumaklaizassap@gmail.com, jessamhelgianan@gmail.com

**Abstract**— Cosplay, a global phenomenon combining "costume" and "play," from being an interest to a hobby, became a significant medium for the exploration of self-representation. The approach of the phenomenological study examined how cosplayers negotiate their constructed identities in both conventions and everyday settings. Focuses on the undergraduate students of Far Eastern University in Manila who are actively engaged in and part of the cosplay community. The study sought to reveal the real-life experiences of the cosplayers who participate in character representation at the convention. Through in-depth interviews and participant's statements, this qualitative study emphasized that cosplay functions not merely as escapism but as a useful tool for self-exploration, expression, and interpersonal relationships. The findings highlight how cosplayers differentiate their identity in the integration of fictional characters and their usual self that influence their confidence, behavior, and sense of belongingness. The study contributes to a deeper understanding in involving cosplay as a form of construction of identity that gives insights for the cosplayers, community vents, parents, and researchers about the cultural, social, and psychological implications.

**Keywords**— Cosplayers; dual persona; expression; identity; self-discovery.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Established in Japan in 1970 and 1980's the cosplay has been heavily influenced by the love of people in manga, animes, and science fiction however in 20th century it gained a popularity that spread worldwide that creates an even more big community for everyone to join namely what they called "convention" [17]. Cosplay has become a growing global trend embraced by many people as a space for creativity, self-expression, and community engagement. However, beyond its artistic surface, Cosplay also brings unique challenges related to identity construction. As an individual shifts between their everyday roles and other persona that they portray, many experiences internal tensions in maintaining a consistent sense of self. This dual persona can lead to questions about belongingness and how identity is expressed and perceived in different settings. According to Karen, K.E. (2023), cosplay allows individuals to "dress" differently enabling self-expression but also complicating their understanding of who they truly are. This study explores these complexities, emphasizing that cosplay is not just a form of art but also a psychological and social process of identity construction.

Cosplay has become a global phenomenon, that derived from the words "costume" and "play," which allows individuals to express and showcase their creativity by choosing from their favorite fictional characters in the movies, animes, comics and many more by creating detailed costumes and practicing role-plays and performances [15]. Furthermore, other than wearing costumes and portraying the characters, the cosplayers themselves make this as their journey towards the realm of their imagination and adopt certain mannerisms, behaviors and personalities that are interconnected as a form of self-expression [6]. Overtime, the hobby of cosplaying becomes part of the mainstream media, forming conventions and virtual communities that allow individuals to explore themselves [9]. The significance of cosplay is more than just entertainment because it enhances individuals' creativity and craftsmanship and can give opportunities to be a professional in the field of artistry. With their passion, they build confidence, challenge societal norms and develop a stance for their self-expression [8]. According to Dinatha and Dewi (2021), In regard to cosplay worldwide spread, it is often misinterpreted as just escapism; however, for other cosplayers, it is them having a personal identity construction [7]. The people who participated in events experienced a shift in self-image, expected societal behaviors, and interaction with others that depended on daily settings or cosplay conventions [7].

This research matters for a deeper understanding of cosplay, which adds a unique lens for studying identity construction. The study seeks to explore cosplayers as an individual, how they form self-identity construction in everyday settings and their social roles in interaction by using the phenomenological approach that examines lived experiences of cosplayers. Understanding the experiences of each cosplayer can provide valuable insight into self-expression, representation, and identity through cosplay, having their character choices from their personal point of view and a shared experience that showcases their unique traits and connecting with their cultural representation that aligns with their background catering sense of belongingness from the support of larger groups [1]. Cosplay has a significant impact on identity formation by allowing each cosplayer to explore different aspects of themselves through portraying different characters. According to Travers, M. (2024), Cosplay is more than just dressing up; it is a form of

self-expression, escapism, and community engagement. In the community of cosplayers they find joy and satisfaction in this lifestyle where they can embody or portray their favorite fictional character [18]. Study shows that cosplay allows individuals to explore different sides of their identity, where they can temporarily transform into characters that reflect their ideal self. Research also shows that self-expression is connected with greater life satisfaction by adopting new personas, cosplayers integrate their character into their real-world identities, influencing their true self and how they interact with other people. According to Muller (2021), Study shows that wearing a costume has an influence in a cosplayers behavior [13]. Muller also stated that researchers at Northwestern University found people who do cosplay show enjoyment during social connection, cosplayer reports that the enjoyment of dressing as another identity gave them motivation. Cosplayers express their emotions through cosplay as cosplaying gives them the ability to portray the fictional character that they want. In the study of Ellard A. (2023), Morgan Looney a special effect makeup artist stated "The main reason why I love cosplay so much is because it provides some sort of escape from reality" wherein cosplaying shows that many cosplayers use cosplaying to express the hidden parts of themselves.

Despite the academic interest increasing because of cosplay, the other existing literature focused on the purpose during the event or conventions. Few studies assessed how cosplay influenced the cosplayer's identity beyond the convention. A lack of qualitative research that explored how cosplayers negotiated their constructed identities in everyday social interaction in different contexts such as school, home and events. With how their experiences shaped their personal development. The study addressed the gap by examining the transitions from the cosplayer's daily setting and their cosplay identity in a phenomenological approach.

### *1.1 Statement of the Problem*

The research is intended to examine the experiences, identity shifts, and interpersonal relationships of cosplayers. In particular, the research aims to examine the way cosplayers negotiate exploration of the self, consolidate a continuous sense of self, and regulate the tension between their cosplay identity and their ordinary social roles. Therefore, the research is interested in answering the following research questions:

1. *What are the experiences and preparations for cosplaying a character for self-exploration in daily life?*
2. *How do cosplayers maintain a sense of self when transitioning between their everyday persona and the character they portray through cosplay?*
3. *How does the interaction between cosplayers' cosplay identity and their everyday social roles impact their personal and social relationships?*

### *1.2 Scope and Limitations*

The study focused on exploring the identity construction of cosplayers in their everyday lives and convention settings. It aims to understand how cosplayers navigate their identity in real-world settings and the characters that they portray. Participants of this study are focused on undergraduate students

from Far Eastern University (FEU) who participated and attended cosplay conventions. Using a qualitative approach, researchers used semi-structured interviews to collect the data and observe to understand the participants' experiences. The research aimed to show how cosplay influences self-expression and the participants' sense of belongingness.

The study focused on cosplayers who actively engaged in convention. The sample size is limited to four (4) participants from Far Eastern University, which may not fully represent all cosplayers with different backgrounds and experiences. The research is also limited due to time constraints, which may affect the data collection and analysis. Additionally, it will not cover the financial aspects of cosplay, such as professional opportunities, sponsorships, or financial background. The research aimed to provide useful insights on how cosplay helps cosplayers to shape their identity, self-expression, and social interactions.

### *1.3 Significance of the study*

**Cosplayers.** This research study will help them understand the concept of cosplay in contributing to their identity and self-expression. Furthermore it delivers valuable insights benefitting the social and psychological aspects of cosplay from their sense of belonging and increase of self-esteem.

**Future Cosplayers.** This research study will guide them on how cosplay can create a form of self-expression. With this it helps them in directing challenges like choices of characters, public acceptance, and community interactions.

**Parents.** This research study will help the parents in educating them about the cosplay impacts on an individual's growth, creativity, and self-confidence. Furthermore, it helps in gaining knowledge about cosplay, which is not just dressing up but building self-expression and social participation. Creates a form of supportive parenting on how cosplay helps in enhancing skills in identity development.

**Future Researchers.** This research study will serve as a guide for future studies about cosplay as a form of self-expression, discovery, and identity formation. Furthermore, it contributes to qualitative data about the studies of social, cultural, and psychological representation. Helps in creating diversified research about cosplay in the modern era of society.

**Cosplay Communities.** This research study encourages to have a good understanding of inclusivity in the cosplay communities by emphasizing the diverse ways of interacting with people. With this, it promotes a healthy environment by the organizers and leaders to support every cosplayer. Builds a foundation of the sense of belongingness with the members by creating an importance for the cosplay beyond conventions.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### *A. Research Design*

The research aimed to understand how cosplayers developed their identity and their experiences at conventions using qualitative research. This approach, as explained by Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger (2020), provided insights into the "why" and "how" of human experiences [4]. Information from Loyola Marymount University (n.d.) described how qualitative research examined human emotions, social

interactions, and motivations behind actions and behaviors. The study employed the phenomenological approach to explore how students who participated in cosplaying comprehended their identity and conventions [11]. The focus was on grasping the core of their life experiences, as McLeod (2024) discussed [12]. Neubauer et al. (2019) emphasized that this method yielded profound insights into individuals' perspectives on their experiences [14].

### B. Participant and Sampling

The participants were undergraduate students of Far Eastern University–Manila enrolled in any course. The study involved 4 students, selected for their ability to provide detailed and personal insights while allowing patterns to emerge with a smaller group. Participation was open without regard for gender or age. Participants were chosen deliberately to delve into cosplayers' identity creation, with emphasis on those actively engaging in cosplay and attending conventions inside or outside the university. This approach ensured that the study gathered pertinent information aligned with its objectives.

### C. Data Collection

Data were gathered through participant observation and detailed, semi-structured interviews. This approach allowed for flexibility while addressing significant aspects of identity creation. Interview questions were open-ended, encouraging participants to share their views freely. The interviews occurred in private settings chosen by participants, lasting 45 to 60 minutes. With participants' consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for accurate data analysis. Privacy was ensured by using pseudonyms or codes for participants and omitting locations and affiliations that could reveal identities. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely in protected files accessible only to authorized researchers. Confidentiality agreements were signed to uphold accountability. Access to raw data was limited to safeguard privacy, and audio recordings were deleted after the study concluded, while transcripts were kept securely.

### D. Data Analysis

The analysis began by selecting participants who met the criteria. Participants are asked to sign an informed consent to participate after reviewing the study's objectives, risks, and confidentiality measures. Interviews were scheduled in controlled locations chosen by the participants. The flexible, semi-structured interviews ensured essential themes were covered. Recordings were transcribed word-for-word, and participants had the chance to verify these for accuracy. Phenomenological thematic analysis was used to interpret the data. Transcripts were read multiple times to deeply engage with and identify key statements about participants' experiences. These statements were organized into thematic clusters highlighting different facets of identity construction among cosplayers. The process was iterative, allowing refinement of themes to depict how cosplayers formed identities in daily life and at conventions. A narrative was developed, integrating themes to illustrate how cosplayers experienced and expressed their identities beyond costumes.

### E. Ethical Considerations

To maintain research integrity and protect participant rights, strict ethical guidelines were followed. Participation was entirely voluntary, and detailed information regarding these protocols was provided to potential risks and benefits of the study. They are also reassured that they can withdraw from the study at any moment without facing consequences. To guarantee that participants are completely aware of their involvement, informed consent was provided prior to the start of any data collection. All personal identifiers are made anonymous and replaced by codes or pseudonyms in transcripts and reports to ensure strict confidentiality and protect individual identities. To further secure privacy, researchers signed confidentiality agreements and saved all audio recordings and transcripts in password-protected, encrypted files that are only accessible by the study group. All sensitive data is protected during the research process by securely storing anonymized transcripts and permanently deleting audio recordings at the end of the study.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *The Experiences and Preparations for Cosplaying a Character for Self-Exploration in Daily Life*

TABLE I. Thematic Analysis of Negotiating Personal Identity through Character

	Significant statements	Initial Code	Core Theme
Participant 1	"Lowkey kamukha ko kapag pinagsama ko ung wardrobe, people would say oh you're literally her." Translation: "I lowkey resemble the character when I combine wardrobe pieces and people would say, 'Oh, you're literally look like her.'"	Character Visual Resemblance	Negotiating Personal Identity through Character Selection.
Participant 3	"I go with the character i'm comfortable with and resonated with the same attitude as mine"	Selecting roles based on personal fit	
Participant 4	"I think the character na medyo nag-resonate sa akin is from Genshin Impact din, from that game, Lynette. Because she has the same personality as me. Medyo maypagka-introvert and di masyadong very into socialization." "Ako usually, it depends po if I like the design of the character and also the personality and if I like the character itself. Sometimes, I see a pattern na medyo similar yung personalities ng kinocoplay ko." Translation: I think the character that resonated with me is from Genshin Impact, Lynette. Because she has the same personality as me- somewhat introverted and not very into socializing.) (Usually, it depends if I like the design and personality of the character. Sometimes I see a pattern where the characters I cosplay have similar personalities.	Character portrayals through similar personalities and design	

Theme 1. Negotiating Personal Identity through Character Selection. Many cosplayers are attracted to characters who

show similar personalities like them, characters whose personalities mirror their own such as being introverted, calm,



or socially reserved. This alignment shows how cosplayers express parts of themselves more comfortably in public, making cosplay a form of self-reflection and emotional connection. There are also some cosplayers who intentionally choose characters that have opposite traits. By doing this, it creates a space for them to challenge themselves and explore unfamiliarities. This becomes a process of stepping out of their comfort zones and trying new things. According to Rahman, O (2012) the image and identity of an cosplayer is never stagnant, wherein cosplay offers a playful yet meaningful way to experiment with identity, encouraging both reflection and transformation. Cosplay can be an [16]. expensive hobby that is why budget is another important factor that shapes the cosplay experience of a cosplayer. Some cosplayers rely on clothing they already have or creatively reuse items to match a character's appearance. Even without expensive costumes, cosplayers can manage to show characters effectively in their own creative way. In this way, it reflects how expression through cosplay is not limited by financial problems but can be

supported with creativity, resourcefulness and passion. In the Filipino cosplay community, affordability often inspires cosplayers to invent something great and something creative, allowing people to stay authentic even with limited resources [10].

Moreover, cosplaying also affects how individuals behave. Some cosplayers notice a change in their behavior whenever they are cosplaying, they become more confident, talkative, or more expressive, which contrasts with how they behave in daily life. This transformation shows how cosplayer becomes a tool to explore different social identities or to improve social interaction with other people. As Baudin, J. (2025) points out, cosplaying allows people to show different versions of themselves, which deepens their understanding of their personal identity and social presence [2]. In summary, The participants experiences shows that cosplay helps cosplayers connect, express, and sometimes reshape their identities through their character choices. It becomes a journey of personal self discovery and self expression.

TABLE II. Thematic Analysis on Connecting Characters to Actual Self

	Significant Statements	Initial Code	Core Theme
Participant 2	"I actually consider yung element na if the character that I'm cosplaying is comfortable on my end... hindi naman ako yung parang nag co-cosplay lang for the sense of ah clout." Translation: "I actually consider the element of the character I'm cosplaying whether it's comfortable on my end.. as I do not cosplay just for the sense of clout."	Character Comfort and Relatability	Connecting Characters to Actual Self
Participant 1	"I just behave the way I do" "I act very silly" "I don't give a care really, kasi I'm just dressing up as a character." Translation: "Like I just wing it..behave the way I do, act very silly like I don't really care since I'm just dressing up as a character."	Realness in Identity Traits	
Participant 3	"For me the character that resonates closest would be "Loid Forger" from the Spy Family. You're someone who showed kindness and compassion but at the same time, no matter how difficult it is, I would continue to persevere kahit na nahihirapan na ako." Translation: "For me the character that resonates closest would be "Loid Forger" from the Spy Family..someone who showed kindness and compassion but at the same time, we have this kind of perseverance in keeping determination."	Relating Deeply with Character Traits	

Theme 2: Connecting characters to actual self. This theme captures how cosplayers connect their characters with their actual self, valuing the cosplayers comfort, identity expressions, and emotions. Cosplay is not just about dressing up as a specific character for fun or gaining attention from other people. For cosplayers, it is a way to express themselves and explore their identity through character portrayal. This theme shows how cosplayers choose characters based on what they feel inside, how they act in real life, or what they are going through emotionally.

Participant 2 explained the importance of comfort and self-alignment in choosing which character to cosplay. They said: "I actually consider the element of the character I'm cosplaying, whether it's comfortable on my end... I do not cosplay just for the sense of clout." This statement shows how the participant prioritizes the inner connection over external recognition. Cosplayers choose characters that align with their personality rather than choosing characters simply because they are popular. As stated by Baudin, J. and Chavez M. (2025) cosplay serves as a tool for identity affirmation, allowing cosplayers to express their real selves through fictional roles where their characters "mirrors" their real identity [3]. This shows that

cosplaying is not all about dressing up but it is a personal expression.

Participant 1 has the same idea but took a more carefree answer in expressing their identity through cosplay. They said: "I just behave the way I do... I act very silly... I don't give a care really, kasi I'm just dressing up as a character." This answer shows that cosplay serves as a space for natural self-expression and the participant is being true to themselves rather than gaining attention. The participants focus on how well the character fits their personality and what feels natural for them. As Dwitama and Dewi (2021) state, cosplay is used as a means of identity exploration and self-expression where people can explore and verify elements of themselves through role-playing. Their research supports that cosplay can meet psychological needs for self-identity, especially in the case of people who want to present sides of themselves that are not accepted in their daily settings.

Participant 3 Relates with the character traits saying: "For me the character that resonates closest would be 'Loid Forger' from the Spy Family. You're someone who showed kindness and compassion but at the same time, no matter how difficult it is, I would continue to persevere kahit na nahihirapan na ako."

This shows the important emotional connection between the cosplayer and the character, with the character embodying the traits of the cosplayers values. According to Rahman et al. (2022), cosplay can be a therapeutic process where individuals align themselves with characters that mirror their own struggles, virtues, or aspirations, helping them navigate their own personal challenges [17].

The participants' narratives show that cosplay is not merely a hobby or form of escapism, but a form of self-expression and

identity affirmation. Through careful selection of characters, cosplayers pick their character based on their personal values, traits, and emotional needs.

### *Cosplayers Maintaining a Sense of Self When Transitioning Between Their Everyday Persona and the Character They Portray Through Cosplay*

TABLE III. Thematic Analysis on Turning Between Reality And Role In Cosplay

	Significant Statements	Initial Code	Core Theme
Participant 4	<p>"I usually manage like kailangan ko may breaks or rest days or weeks na not all the time naka-cosplay ka. Kasi minsan medyo draining din yun if you're, since it kind of takes time para mag-cosplay magsuot ka ng everything like wigs, cosplay. Medyo draining din yun sa part ko since graduating student din ako and it's kind of hard to balance, try to be in cosplay for like maybe every week or every other week. So I usually cosplay if I feel like it. Kasi minsan mahirap din i-prioritize, since may mga priorities ako na kailangan ko gawin like studies first. And I need like, kailangan may balance talaga. So lately I think yun yung pinapractice ko ngayon."</p> <p>Translation:</p> <p>"I usually manage, like if I need breaks or rest days or weeks where not all the time you're cosplaying because sometimes it's draining you, since it's it kind of takes time to cosplay..so it looks draining on my part since I'm a graduating student and it's kind of hard to balance.. so I usually cosplay if I feel like it because sometimes it's hard to prioritize as I have my own priorities such as studies first.. so balancing is what I need."</p>	Balancing identity and character portrayals through breaks	Turning between reality and role in cosplay
Participant 2	<p>"I just want people... to know me na 'ah magaling to magreport, magaling to maglead...' and people in cosplay field to know me... magaling mag cosplay, magaling mag model."</p> <p>Translation: "I just want people to know the types of me where they could say I'm good at reporting, in leading and people in the cosplay field to know me as good at cosplaying and modeling."</p>	Maintaining Separate Identities in Different Contexts	
Participant 3	<p>"Participant 3 is more personal... Minuet is the one who would show or express it."</p>	Establishing Boundaries Between Personas	

This theme obtains the dynamic measure that cosplayers experience by shifting between their identity in cosplay and in their everyday life roles. The participants emphasize this form of transition as both emotionally, physically and mentally demanding that requires boundaries, conscious effort in maintaining authentic self and the need for balance, particularly when real-life demands intensify.

With the interview, almost all participants showed consciousness between their daily life identity and their cosplay persona, approach to exhaustion, knew their priorities, and just a tool for expression. This means that almost all of the participants can easily shift between personal roles and cosplay persona. It highlights how they don't lose themselves in the character they select as they consciously govern their identity, time, and energy which enable participants to enjoy the creative freedom cosplay gives with the presence of self-awareness grounded in their responsibilities and personal values.

Three participants mentioned that cosplaying helped and used to express and explore parts of themselves which are usually not shown in their daily lives while three participants

responded that by cosplaying, they perceive both real life and cosplay personas and switch them situated in the environment. These components encompass how the participants maintain a stable sense of self in the cosplay experience.

As stated by Baudin and Chavez (2025), young Filipino tend to cosplay not just for entertainment or hobby practice but a transformative for identity development by cosplaying enabling individuals for emotional growth, construction, explore and expressing various factors of themselves, while also allowing them to establish emotional connections with characters, build skill, and help in self-discovery which suggests that cosplaying contributes significantly in shaping one's sense of self and fulfilment [3]. Additionally, the cosplay community gives a supportive space which contributes to cosplayers confidence, creativity and happiness as it facilitates their identity development through cosplay.

### *The Interaction Between Cosplayers' Cosplay Identity and Their Everyday Social Roles Impact Their Personal and Social Relationships*

TABLE IV. Thematic Analysis On Challenging Norms Through Character Play

	Significant Statements	Initial Code	Core Theme
Participant 1	<p>"I make sure na parang it's appropriate for them or if it's not appropriate for them, edi wala"</p> <p>"mahilig sila mag slut shaming and pahiya na parang 'oh you are not supposed to be into this because you are a grown ass woman'"</p>	Disapproval from family	Hiding Self to Fit In
Participant 2	<p>"...you need to hide na cosplayer ka... there's a certain type of generalizations... mga makukulit mga yan..."</p>	Social Perception and Stigma	

	Translation: "In social situations, there are times when I feel like I need to hide that I'm a cosplayer. There are generalizations—like people thinking it's just for kids or assuming cosplayers are immature or too playful."		
Participant 3	in a conservative environment, it is kind of very limiting and ahh... don't get the judgment na ahh "ay baka revealing naman yung character na cino-cosplay mo" and ahh with that, I chose to speak na lang about yung aking artistic side when I was asked to." Translation: "I chose to hide my other cosplays because ahh.. in a conservative environment, it is kind of very limiting and ahh... don't get the judgment that ahh "may be revealing the character you are cosplaying." and with that, I chose to speak only about my artistic side when I was asked to."	Withholding True Self Due to Social Expectations	
Participant 3	"to add on to that having this kind of dual personality ahh just like what he said. In this country na very conservative ahh there is ahh to portraying itself that only can show with limitations ahh not all would have this kind of openness on accepting their passion so therefore cosplaying give us free way of expressing the actual self that you can not really show of without being judge on portraying yourself to others in this kind of conservative na country." Translation: "to add on to that having this kind of dual personality ahh just like what he said. In this country that is very conservative ahh there is ahh to portraying itself that only can show with limitations ahh not all would have this kind of openness on accepting their passion so therefore cosplaying give us free way of expressing the actual self that you can not really show of without being judge on portraying yourself to others in this kind of conservative country."	Balancing Self-Expression in Conservative Spaces	
Participant 4	"Pag sa social media kasi I think may separate accounts kasi ako for personal and cosplay account. So I guess I would say na parang mas comfortable ko mag-share ng any information na for example yung likes and dislikes ko pagdating sa games or movies or other things. Mas comfortable ako na mag-share ng information about that pagdating sa cosplay accounts ko compared sa personal ko na very limited yung sinasabi ko or I don't post that much." Translation: "On social media, I have separate accounts for personal stuff and cosplay. I'm definitely more comfortable sharing things like my interests in games or movies on my cosplay account. On my personal account, I rarely post and keep things more private."	Dual persona depends on context/environment	

Balancing cosplay with regular life isn't always super easy — it's like trying to walk a tightrope. A lot of cosplayers shared that slipping into costume is a way for them to show sides of themselves they normally keep hidden away. Sometimes it's an outlet to show off parts of their personality that don't really fit into their everyday routines. But that feeling of freedom isn't without its obstacles. Outside of conventions and cosplay events, many people feel a bit of pressure to tone it down, feeling worried about how others might judge them for expressing those same traits in more normal settings.

Certain participants shared experiences with social disapproval from family and peers. For instance, Participant 1 highlighted the stigmatization and "slut-shaming" they experienced because of their costume choices, which were perceived as inappropriate or immature by others around them. This rejection reflects the tension between personal self-expression via cosplay as well as the expectations of one's everyday social identity. Even with these judgments, the act of cosplay was described by participant 1 as deeply fulfilling and validating, which does indicate that it acts as a powerful medium for self-affirmation in the face of criticism.

This theme additionally reveals the emotional labor involved within managing such a dual identity. Participant 2 expressed a need during interactions to withhold or filter aspects from their cosplay identity in general social interactions, caused by the stigma surrounding cosplaying, specifically the assumption that it exists only for children, or the lack of seriousness. This suggests that cosplayers must often evaluate their social context to determine the extent to which their cosplay identity can be revealed. That dynamic underscores the negotiation of self between authenticity as well as social conformity.

The data indicates that cosplay can serve as a tool for resistance and empowerment. Cosplay has helped individuals become more self-assured and socially expressive suggesting

that role play provides chances to practice and represent more assertive or genuine versions of oneself. The distinction between character and clothing becomes less clear when people start to absorb characteristics or self-assurance from the parts they play.

Participants want to keep their cosplay world separate from their everyday life, so they come up with clever ways to manage their identity—like having different social media accounts. Participant 4 mentioned that their cosplay profile is like a cozy, safe little corner where they can really be themselves and share what they love without fear of judgment. On the flip side, their personal account is more carefully managed to suit what's expected in daily life. This kind of setup shows how cosplayers often make deliberate choices to protect different parts of themselves, so they can easily switch between their different social worlds without stress.

At its core, cosplay isn't just about dressing up or celebrating fandom — it's a pretty powerful way for people to explore who they really are. For a lot of people, it's been a constant tug-of-war between feeling totally free and feeling like they're held back, between showing their true selves and hiding parts away. Cosplay gave them the guts to let out sides of themselves they usually keep quiet, to push back against what society sees as "normal," and to build a stronger sense of who they are. Of course, it wasn't always smooth sailing. There's been some real fear of being misunderstood, judged, or even shamed — especially by family, friends, or coworkers who just don't get it. Their stories show that cosplay acts like a safe space where people can try out different parts of themselves and figure out who they're becoming. But how much that self-expression from cosplay actually makes its way into everyday life really depends on what society's okay with. That's why cosplay ends up being more than a fun way to get creative — it's this constant game of balancing staying true to yourself with

what others expect, and honestly, that can be a real rollercoaster of feelings sometimes.

TABLE V. Thematic Analysis On Empowering Personal Growth

	Significant Statements	Initial Code	Core Theme
Participant 1	"Cosplaying helped me na maybe I could try wearing this, I could try wearing that... kasi sobrang insecure ako nung bata ako..."	Made for self-expression	Empowering personal growth
Participant 2	"It makes you more into who you are. Like, na hanap ko na yung sarili ko."	Empowerment and Personal Growth	
Participant 3	"My experience in cosplaying was fun... I love it. I don't give up my freedom on my actual self of expression."	Enjoying Personal Growth and Creative Freedom	
Participant 4	"Overall I think it did help me gain some confidence... I think I'm still on the road to building that confidence."	Boosting Self-Confidence	

The theme focuses on the role of cosplay in empowering personal growth. For participants, cosplay practice extends beyond the creative performance, it becomes a reframing tool for self-expression, self-discovery, and confidence.

Participant 1 reflects on how cosplay challenges long-held insecurities: "Cosplaying helped me na maybe I could try wearing this, I could try wearing that... kasi sobrang insecure ako nung bata ako..." Cosplay serves as a liberating platform where individual experiments with appearance. Trying different kinds of costumes becomes a symbol for breaking free from the doubts and exploring identity with freedom.

Participant 2 directly links the self-realization from the experiences: "It makes you more into who you are. Like, na hanap ko na yung sarili ko." This statement conveys the role of cosplay as an affirming identity. Rather than merely portraying someone else, the participant implies the embodiment of different characters leads to an in-depth understanding of self. With this, cosplay is not just an escape from reality but a good way for clarification and self-acceptance

The participants show that cosplay gives an empowering practice that supports personal growth. Catering the exploration and affirmation of the cosplayer's identity gives a safe place for the room of creative self-expression and self-confidence. Cosplaying is not just a hobby but it can be a transformative and personal experience.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this phenomenological study provides the insights into cosplaying describing how participants select character elements mirroring to their own aspirations, values, struggles, subscribing to be both explorative to their personal identities and means to affirm emphasizes the dynamic interplay through lived experiences between their everyday social roles and cosplay persona. The narrative of cosplaying as a space for momentarily or even continuously for enablement to embrace facets of the participants themselves that may be restrained in conventional settings highlights the consciousness and empowerment in shifting—demonstrates emotional resilience and self-awareness. Furthermore, the sense of agency as they oscillate through the liberation of character embodiment and of everyday life encompass the existat of compelling boundaries. Participants articulated that they tend to engage and immerse themselves with characters which provokes societal norms in regards to the behavior, appearance, gender-bending and preparations underscores the autonomy

over their bodies, expressions, stories and ritualistic practices of self exploration.

This study sheds light on how students who participate in cosplay at Far Eastern University develop their identities. Cosplay is more than just entertainment; it is a platform for self-expression, personal growth, and social interaction. The research discovered that cosplayers intentionally select characters that either mirror their own personalities or encourage them to explore different traits. Engaging in cosplay provides a setting for emotional healing, discovering suppressed aspects of oneself, and empowerment, particularly when societal norms restrict personal expression. Cosplayers demonstrate the ability to alternate between their everyday selves and their cosplay characters. This reflects a strong understanding of themselves, clear boundary-setting, and emotional strength. However, while cosplay can give a personal development and enhance confidence, it also attracts criticism and misunderstanding, especially from conservative family members and peers. Despite these challenges, cosplay facilitates meaningful social interactions and skill development that extend beyond costumes and conventions.

The study suggests that future research should explore how cosplay influences gender identity, mental health, and community belonging across different demographics. It also highlights the need for more inclusive environments in educational and community settings, recognizing cosplay as a valid means of self-exploration. Furthermore, cosplay is not just "playing dress-up." It is a dynamic form of self-expression that helps individuals navigate their identities in an ever-changing world.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, The researcher would like to express their deepest gratitude to God for granting them the strength, wisdom, knowledge, and perseverance to accomplish this research.

The researchers would also like to extend their sincere appreciation to their research professor, Cerenado, Kristine A., for her valuable guidance, insightful feedback, and unwavering support throughout the completion of this study. Her expertise and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping the good outcome of this research.

The researchers are also grateful to the participants of this study, whose honest and willing to share their experiences that made this research possible.



To the family of the researcher, thank you for the endless love, unwavering support, prayers, and understanding. Your support has been the foundation of their success.

Finally, the researcher are grateful to one another for believing not only in their selves as individuals but also in their strength as a group. They deeply appreciate the unwavering dedication, collective effort, and continuous moral support we gave to each other. All those sleepless nights will not be in vain, for it was our determination that made it possible for us to successfully complete this research

## REFERENCES

- [1] V. Asimos, Cosplay and the dressing of identity. [Online]. Available: <https://www.vivianasimos.com/incidental-mythology/cosplay-dressing-identity>
- [2] J. Baudin, A narrative inquiry into self-discovery, social and emotional development among young adults through cosplay, IJSSeRS, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://ijssers.org/a-narrative-inquiry-into-self-discovery-social-and-emotional-development-among-young-adults-through-cosplay/>
- [3] J. A. Baudin and M. A. Chavez, A narrative inquiry into self-discovery, social and emotional development among young adults through cosplay, 2025. [Online]. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388528260\\_A\\_Narrative\\_Inquiry\\_into\\_Self-Discovery\\_Social\\_And\\_Emotional\\_Development\\_among\\_Young\\_Adults\\_through\\_Cosplay](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388528260_A_Narrative_Inquiry_into_Self-Discovery_Social_And_Emotional_Development_among_Young_Adults_through_Cosplay)
- [4] L. Busetto, W. Wick, and C. Gumbinger, How to use and assess qualitative research methods, 2020. [Online]. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341672281\\_How\\_to\\_use\\_and\\_assess\\_qualitative\\_research\\_methods](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341672281_How_to_use_and_assess_qualitative_research_methods)
- [5] Culture M283 Arabia, The rise of cosplay: From niche fandom to mainstream. [Online]. Available: <https://m283arabia.com/en/entertainment-and-hobbies/the-rise-of-cosplay-from-niche-fandom-to-mainstream>
- [6] G. Danielle, The art of cosplay: Crafting your identity at anime conventions, Medium, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://medium.com/@giacco.danielle/the-art-of-cosplay-crafting-your-identity-at-anime-conventions-5f6134463841>
- [7] V. O. D. Dinatha and F. I. R. Dewi, Self-identity and needs of cosplayer in role playing, Atlantis Press, 2021. [Online]. Available: [https://linter.untar.ac.id/repository/penelitian/buktipenelitian\\_10797002\\_6A100222155442.pdf](https://linter.untar.ac.id/repository/penelitian/buktipenelitian_10797002_6A100222155442.pdf)
- [8] A. Ellard, When escaping reality helps define identity: Expression and empowerment in the cosplay community, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://folklife.si.edu/magazine/cosplay-community>
- [9] A. Kamal, The rise of cosplay: From niche fandom to mainstream pop culture, M283 Arabia, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://m283arabia.com/en/entertainment-and-hobbies/the-rise-of-cosplay-from-niche-fandom-to-mainstream>
- [10] N. Lamerichs, Practices of belonging in cosplay performance, DiGRA, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://dl.digra.org/index.php/dl/article/download/658/658/655>
- [11] Loyola Marymount University, Qualitative research and approaches. [Online]. Available: <https://academics.lmu.edu/irb/qualitative-research-and-approaches/>
- [12] S. McLeod, Phenomenology in qualitative research, 2024. [Online]. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381926205\\_Phenomenology\\_In\\_Qualitative\\_Research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381926205_Phenomenology_In_Qualitative_Research)
- [13] R. Muller, Becoming another person through cosplay, Psychology Today, Dec. 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/talking-about-trauma/202112/becoming-another-person-through-cosplay>
- [14] B. E. Neubauer, C. T. Witkop, and L. Varpio, How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others, 2019. [Online]. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332238571\\_How\\_phenomenology\\_can\\_help\\_us\\_learn\\_from\\_the\\_experiences\\_of\\_others](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332238571_How_phenomenology_can_help_us_learn_from_the_experiences_of_others)
- [15] North Star News, Cosplay subculture: Bringing fictional characters to life, Medium, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://medium.com/@NorthStarLight/cosplay-subculture-bringing-fictional-characters-to-life-87415ff5c9d7>
- [16] O. Rahman, Cosplay: Imaginative self and performing identity, 2012. [Online]. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265140961\\_Cosplay\\_Imaginative\\_Self\\_and\\_Performing\\_Identity](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265140961_Cosplay_Imaginative_Self_and_Performing_Identity)
- [17] O. Rahman, L. Wing-sun, and B. H. Cheung, Cosplay: Imaginative self and performing identity, Fashion Theory, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 273–294, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2016.1173342>
- [18] M. Travers, 3 motivations behind “cosplaying,” according to a psychologist, Forbes, Mar. 25, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/traversmark/2024/03/25/3-motivations-behind-cosplaying-according-to-a-psychologist/>

## APPENDIX

### Appendix A

#### Experiences and Methods in Cosplaying for Self-Exploration

1. How did you first get into cosplay, and what drew you to it?
  - *Was there a specific moment of inspiration that made you want to start cosplaying?*
2. Can you share an example of a character that resonated deeply with you?
3. How do you prepare to fully embody the character through cosplay?
  - *Do certain characters require more preparation than others? Why*
4. What aspects of a character do you consider when cosplaying?
  - *Is there certain types of characters you often cosplay (e.g. Villains, heroes, *sidekicks*)?*
5. What characteristics of your real identity do you often incorporate into your cosplay portrayal?

#### Maintaining a Dual Persona and Social Interaction

1. How would you define the concept of a dual persona through exploring its implications on social interactions?
2. How has cosplaying shaped the way you see yourself and your personal development?
  - *Have you noticed any changes in your confidence or self-expression since you started cosplaying?*
  - *In what ways do these choices reflect aspects of your personality?*
3. How does cosplaying help you express parts of yourself that you don't usually show in daily life?
  - *Has cosplaying ever influenced your behavior or personality outside of conventions? If so, how?*
  - *Are there particular emotions or traits you feel more comfortable expressing in cosplay?*
4. Do you find it challenging to balance your cosplay persona and your everyday identity? If so, how do you manage it?
5. Do you ever struggle with feeling like you're "losing yourself" in a character?



6. When embodying a character, how do you cope up in maintaining a balance between staying in character and preserving your true self? How do you manage this adjustment?
  - *Are there certain traits or behaviors you adopt only while cosplaying, and how do you distinguish them from your everyday actions?*
7. How has maintaining a dual persona affected your relationships with family, friends, or colleagues?

#### Differentiating Character Portrayal from Reality

1. How do the people in your life perceive your cosplay identity?
  - *Have you ever had to explain or defend your cosplay identity to someone? If so, how did they respond?*
  - *Have you ever faced misunderstandings or conflicts because of your cosplay identity?*
2. Do you ever feel pressured to keep your cosplay identity separate from your real-life persona in social situations?
  - *Have there been situations where you hesitated to share your cosplay identity with others? Why?*
3. How does portraying different characters affect your behavior and emotions, both on and off set?
  - *Do you ever find yourself acting like your character unintentionally?*
  - *How do you feel when you begin to embody the role of your character?*
  - *Does this feeling change depending on the character you play?*
4. How do you transition back to your everyday self after cosplaying?
  - *Does this transition feel natural, or do you experience any difficulties?*
  - *Do you find it challenging to transition back to your everyday persona after cosplaying? Why or why not?*
5. Can you describe your overall experience as a cosplayer?

#### Appendix B

##### Participant 1

**Interviewer:** How did you get into cosplay and ano yung mga bagay na bakit nagustuhan mo mag cosplay?

**Participant 1:** Ano ba, I'm actually not into cosplay much, pero kasi ayun nga since ayun nga mahilig ako ahm, actually not just anime, cartoons and movies as well. Ahm I guess the moment na ano na may freedom ako to destroy my hair kasi lagi ko siyang dina-dye, I just realized na pwede ko sya kunin as an opportunity to cosplay e ako kasi low cost lang naman ako so since I don't have budget for it, pero I figured out na I have some clothes na Pwede ko siya ahm ano pano ba 'to—I have a few clothes in my wardrobe that I can make it look like a few characters, so I pick the characters based on my wardrobe lang

**Interviewer:** Oh, okay nasabi mo diba na dina-dye mo yung hair mo, magbigay ka nga ng example ng character na nag resonated deeply with you?

**Participant 1:** I actually have never cosplayed a character that I resonated deeply, kasi I said na—na nag lack ako sa budget like I don't have budget to cosplay. Pero ayun nga like normally they're just based on the colors na I used to and I don't resonate with Starfire—I've cosplayed her before, pero kasi my hair was pink and my friends hair was purple tas nag decide kami okay mag matching tayo ng raven and starfire. Pero ayun it's not really that deep, like there's some characters that I completely don't resonate with. I don't resonate with the character Maxine from 824's movie X, pero kasi I did kasi I had a jumper at home tapos meron akong bandana na red tas may hair was like fade color—nag fade na yung color non eh so brown lang sya and I'm like, ay low key kamukha ko kapag pinagsama ko yung wardrobe—so I did it and sa Instagram ko yung photoshoot namin okay.

**Interviewer:** So how do you prepare to fully embody the character through cosplay? like physically or mentally? any aspect

**Participant 1:** Parang ang weird non, normally I don't. Like I just wing it, like I just behave the way I do. Pero kasi nga there are some times na people would say that, oh, you're low-key like the character. Feel ko talaga yung pinaka na naging lowkey na, oh my God, you're literally her—is yung nag starfire nga ako kasi ewan ko kinikilig ako kay Denise Julia non at that time kasi nag concert sya dito, tapos yung friend ko nga introverted sya tas as Raven so naka upo lang sya don habang tas ako parang huyipee oh my God so parang that's so funny in character. Ahm, other than that I feel like wala sa sobrang silly ko siguro people would just randomly say, oh you're literally her—ok, why not

**Interviewer:** So do certain characters require more preparation than others?

**Participant 1:** Wait lang, so you mean are there some characters that require more preparation?

**Interviewer:** Oo

**Participant 1:** Feel ko yung pinaka effort na sana na achieve ko, kasi I cosplayed cosplayed full fighter from JoJo, pero kasi ito yung pinakasayang for me kasi I didn't have a wig and then my friend informed me na sana nag paggawa sya ng—nag nagpagawa ako ng wig sa kanya, because teh characters hair was green, I didn't have green hair dye. And although kinos-tomize ko kasi may jumper diba ako sa bahay tas the character had a text sa back nakasulat ano GDST, if I remember correctly and then I had to manually make cutouts for it to stick it tas naka double sided pa sya. And then my jumper didn't have clip on it, so I made, like yung parang drawing lang na clip here, pero sadly natanggal sy when I was in cosplay tas kulang ako ng wig but I still feel like since it was my first, it did require lots of effort kasi ayun nga itchura ng character, it's just a regular jumper—it didn't even look identical to the one with the picture, other than na pants sya like yung pants sa jumper, that's pretty much it tas nahirapan din ako maghanap ng bra, 'di ko alam naging poor choice ko yung pag hanap ng kulay black na bra tas yung character like wala kasi siyang soot underneath. Sana

nalang nag ano ako yung skin colored or nag strapless, but I don't know. I was stupid, I didn't pict that.

**Interviewer:** so sabi mo low budget ka when you cosplay, so may aspect ba ng character na often mong kino-cosplay?

**Participant 1:** I feel like yung often na kino-cosplay ko is the ones dressed up in a civilian clothing. So ayun nga I did cosplay as Tyler Durden from Fight Club and yung suot nya lang is Hawaiian shirt and the red jacket and it just so happens na my grandpa had this cool red jacket sa wardrobe nya tas I borrowed it from him. Ahm tas yung cosplay ko kay Musa, it didn't really look exactly identical to her, pero kasi my sister had a red top and then there was blue at that time—yung dark blue. And then I had—malamang may pants sya tas may red shoes ako sa bahay kaya. So, based on na talaga sya sa civilian outfit, so even if I did want to cosplay some characters na yung itchura nila is specific uniform or minsan yung madami silang mga twinklets or kung ano anong abubot, I can't do that kasi I don't really have money to buy, even if nag ukay ako, I mean technically nag uukay ako, ahm wala 'di pa rin sapat kasi it's kinda hard to find substitute din to pick up the fashion vibe now, ah this character would wear this kapag civilian sya

**Interviewer:** Ano, what characteristics naman of your real identity na madalas mong na incorporate when you're cosplaying?

**Participant 1:** I feel like I mentioned it now—it's because I act very silly, like wala lang akong pake like parang I don't give a f\*ck really, kasi I'm just dressing up as a character, I don't have to embody the character unless kapag may photoshoot tas parang pick a pose that they would do or pick a specific facial expression that they would do kapag nag po-photoshoot. Pero ayun nga, I'm not a professional cosplayer so most of these pictures are just taken by friends or sister nga. And we just do it for funsies, ayun lang naman

**Interviewer:** Oh so pag nag co-cosplay ka more on sa costume lang talaga yung focus mo hindi yung mismong character?

**Participant 1:** It's a mix of both. Like some, I could just take a picture na casual lang kami na sige mag selfie tayo, sige mag group photo tayo and then there are some na parang embody it a little bit. Like ahm, for example nga, nag photoshoot—the first na parang serious photoshoot is Maxine from X nga and then the character kasi sa porn star, ang funny kasi ang layo ng personalities ko sa kanya and I told you guys na I just wanted to cosplay the character kasi like I had it in my wardrobe tas I'm a fan of horror movies and then so nung nag pa picture kami, my friend suggested why won't you act a little but slutty yung ganon to embody since ganon yung role nya sa movie Promiscuous. I don't think I've ever posted the pictures kasi nahihiya ako pero ayun nga I'm—it was fun namna to embody a character, like it feels fake ueha, pero it's just like para maging maganda yung itchura ng pictures mo

**Interviewer:** How would you define the concept of a dual personal through exploring its implications on social interactions?

**Participant 1:** Pano yun? pwede pa explain ng question

**Interviewer:** Paano mo mapapakita yung dual persona sa pag cocosplay—sa social interaction?

**Participant 1:** So is it like kapag may naka kilala ng character na they expect na oh my God its, for example oh my God it's ahm bugs money tas they expect na cosplayer to act a little bit like him ganon ba?

**Interviewer:** Yeah

**Participant 1:** I feel like kasi technically diba naka costume ka, you're practically an actor when you have to and then you're not an actor when you don't need. So yung sa concierto nung huli, diba I was dressed up as musa, there were a few people that said, oh my God it's musa, pero kasi sadly I was unable to embody anything about the character kasi bumabagyo nun, di ko alam kung naaalala nyo yun tas I was telling sa booth, pero ayun other than that parang it doesn't affect me that much because I don't go to cons. This is a question probably for people na ano nag wo-work talaga sila sa mga con or they dress up for events. Ako kasi parang sobrang casual ko lang na parang I don't have to do it ganon. If someone just asks me to do a silly pose, I will kasi oh it's my character like do a silly, like do a little silly pose ganon

**Interviewer:** How has cosplaying shaped the way you see yourself and your perosnla development?

**Participant 1:** Uhm, feel ko yung—wala masyado sa personal development actually, but other than siguro kasi nakakatulong sya in self presentation, what kind of clothes that I comfortable with

kasi late—I'm a person na late na ako na discover na maybe I could try watering this, I could try wearing that kasi sobrang insecure ako nung bata ako, just like nagkaroon ako nung bata ako ng gender dysmorphia for a couple of short years, like nung high school—early high school or late grade school. So I guess n a parang trying out different kinds of clothes na parang how can I look like this character with my wardrobe and with clothes that I am comfortable with, or clothes that I could try. Maybe it could alleviate nga yung insecurities ko or yung technically nga yung little dysmorphia that I still have till present day na watering this doesn't make me that ganon, well siguro ayun lang naman yun kasi ayun nga sabi ko nga sobrang onti lang naman ng set na na cosplay ko pero I guess it did a little bit with esteem

**Interviewer:** Ahm, masasabi mo ba na nakatulong yung pag co-cosplay sa pag express mo sa sarili mo?

**Participant 1:** I feel like at some sort, yes. Kasi ahm, I'm a person na it takes so long for me to reveal my interest. Personal interest na you would have to spoon-feed me, or kailangan nyo talaga sya ihakot sakín, like na even if you say na, oh, this is my favorite show too, I wouldn't really speak to you much about it. So if I embody a character or show na I'm dressed up as this character, tas galing sa favorite show ko, people would be happy, na parang may nakakakilala sakín, like oh eto si Foo fighter, I actually, encountered two girls na nagulat sila na ano na may JoJo cosplayer kahit sobrang low-cost and sobrang dugyot na ako tignan nag mamadali ako non. Pero ayun, I guess it's nice to have some sort of connection na kahit nahihiya ako I-explain, it makes it aliavate na I don't have to explain myself or parang I don't have to say much na I'm into this stiff to people kasi I'm not really comfortable sharing yung interest ko

**Interviewer:** How does cosplaying help you express parts of yourself that you don't usually show in daily life?

**Participant 1:** Ayun nga, I think nasabi ko na sya pero pampadagdag lang na as much as possible I would really like yung opportunity to dress up more. Lalo na kapag school event. Ewan ko pero sa school event lang talaga ako tumatatak or sa mga event ng friends namin. Like I said, it's not something much na I'm comfortable expressing, pero parang with friends or with

peers parang they see you as a character for a day or an hour at least. Pero it depends on people it's not too much to me.

**Interviewer:** May naging epekto ba ito sa behavior mo or personality mo sa labas when interacting with other people?

**Participant 1:** Feel ko, in general wala. Pero kapag with strangers, a little bit. Actually, nahiya ako. Wait, magkkwento ako for a while if okay lang. I cosplayed ano si Nana Mikento from Jujitsu kaizen. Tapos nung nag bar kami, tapos like it made me a little bit embarrassed kasi galing palang ako sa gastritis non tas ano ba inom ko, tatlong shot ng Cuervo tapos may rum tas I finished it all in one go. It was such a rookie mistake. Tapos I was a little bit embarrassed nga kasi parang uhm Nanami is a character that's very stoic seen by fans tas very parang masculine at some sort na kalma sya. Pero I was there na dugyot na sumusuka nako. Tas hindi ako nakapag reapply ng lipstick ko and I was technically sleeping sa friend's shoulder ko and at the same time my friend's were ridiculously dancing sa front and I was like oh my god that is some really silly shit. Hala sorry for the curse word. Pero ayon, it made me a little bit embarrassed because that is not a character that I'm cosplaying like how I was behaving. Pero nga I was too drunk to comprehend na maybe I should calm a little bit down na on drinking. Pero sometimes its a bit embarrassing when out of character especially pag context like this.

**Interviewer:** Do you find it challenging to balance your cosplay persona and your everyday identity. If so, how do you manage?

**Participant 1:** No, not at all. Like, wala. Kasi di naman ako lagi nagccosplay so wala. Wala talaga syang effect for me.

**Interviewer:** So hindi ka naman nagsstruggle with the feeling na losing yourself as Participant 1 when you're cosplaying?

**Participant 1:** No, not at all.

**Interviewer:** When embodying a character, how do you cope up in maintaining a balance between staying in character and preserving yourself?

**Participant 1:** I feel like I probably, given context sa previous question, my answer is no. Pero like sometimes, yes kasi parang I am playing just like Barbie. Tapos minsan Nagsslip away yung character mo pero it's fine pero kasi nga di naman ako nagaattend ng formal event na I have to stick to a character like yung parang sa mga disney, if you are snowwhite dapat talaga you stay as snow white throughout the whole shift. Wala naman akong ganon so wala lang talaga sya sakin.

**Interviewer:** May naging epekto ba to sa relationship mo with your family, friends or peers?

**Participant 1:** A little bit sa family. Kasi di naman sa parang against sila sa cosplaying, but like they find it childish. Or sometimes they don't like the outfits na parang why are you dressed i

Up like that? And my point is, I just want to play dress up. It does not mean it's not that deep. But for them, for some reason,

di ko alam mahilig sila mag slut shaming and pahiya na parang "oh you are not supposed to be into this because you are a grown ass woman." So ako parang okay. Kaya minsan, kapag may events nga dinadala ko nalang siya sa school or sometimes kapag outside of university nga like I said nung nag Nanami costume ako, I make sure na parang it's appropriate for them or if it's not appropriate for them, edi wala within friends lang, sa school lang or sa bahay. Kasi they didn't see yung suot ko when I was cosplaying Maxine. Kasi technically, suot ko lang don is jumper so practically like I probably don't have anything underneath. So they would probably get mad at me if they saw me dressed up like that. Pero kasi wala sila sa bahay so I make sure na sila ay out of sight out of mind.

**Interviewer:** How do people in your life perceive your cosplay identity?

**Participant 1:** Kung identity, wala. Pero if cosplaying lang mismo, ayaw nga ng family ko. Kasi they think it's childish.

**Interviewer:** So nasabi mo nga na parang ayaw ng family mo, have you ever had to explain or defend cosplay identity to someone? Like your family. If so, how did they respond?

**Participant 1:** To defend, It's not that serious, It's not that deep. Pero di naman umabot sa point na kapag away. They just find it stupid nga. Kaya nga kapag ano iniiterate ko na oh it's a for an event like concierto. Pag naka tatlong cosplay ko galing concierto o dalawa. So wala lang they're just like okay. Or nung nag bar nga ako naka corporate itsura ko, they're like why are you like that? And im like it's our planned friend group thing na we want to just dress up for our first bar and they're like okay. They find it weird kahit nag explain nako. Weird na without saying additional necessary things.

**Interviewer:** Do you ever feel pressured to keep you cosplay identity from your real life persona in social situation?

**Participant 1:** No.

**Interviewer:** Have there been situation where you hesitate to share your cosplay identity with others?

**Participant 1:** Oo, kasi nakaka low cost ko lang. Sabi ko nga sainyo kulang na kulang ako sa budget i pick random clothes from my wardrobe that is identical to an existing character that I know pero the thing is I always make sure that I know them. So ayun nga Im not a fan of teen titans but i did cosplay Starfire kase I used to watch teen titans. And then uhm ano pa ba, Im a fan of fight clubs so I really wanna cosplay tyler durden. So ayun nga Im still embarassed kasi they don't look exactly like the character so I was technically wearing civilian. Uhm dba kase parang dba hindi naman ganon itsura ni starfire. Naka shirt ako, nakaskirt ako, uhm long socks and nails and I didnt have contact lenses and the pink hair was just carrying it all. So it feels a little parang di sya kasing bongga ng iba. Pero kase I know that they have money for it and I don't kaya di ako masyadong insecure about it but it makes me a little hesitant kasi nga its really not that good theyre just low cost nga its like uhm alam nyo yung mga ano drawing na low quality? It feels like that.

**Interviewer:** How does portraying different characters affect your behavior and emotions both on and off set?

**Participant 1:** I feel like natanong nyo ren before, pero ayon wala naman nga. Theres only a few instances that I have embodied a character to look cool pero kase mostly they are just



[19:14 - 19:16 unclear] Pero I don't know, It's not ever, I mean sikat yung anime pero not everyone knows it so I dont assume I dont have to exactly look like a carbon copy. I just want to look impressionable at least or presentable sakanila.

**Interviewer:** How do you transition back to your everyday self after cosplaying?

**Participant 1:** I don't transition I just act like this. Be who you are, be yourself. Pero I guess it takes a lot of exhaustion nga parang even if I did act myself meron nitong part, parang ngayon nga I said that I want to impress people I want people to know na I am cosplaying a character that they see on tv. So, it is a little bit exhausting nga parang same way lang sya sa gala except may additional addression sa self ko na you are just acting as someone today. Parang you are still Participant 1 but you are just someone na they see on tv and this is your version of it. So me in a bar dressed up as Nanami Kento is like Im just putting a faith as a costume but at some point I have to look impressionable that I am dressed up as him sakanila. So parang It's just it's not that tiring nga pero it is something na rewarding for me na oh my god na cosplay ko sya, eto yung na experience ko dressed up as a character so it makes me normally tired just like other gala.

**Interviewer:** Can you describe your overall experience as a cosplayer?

**Participant 1:** I would say shy. I would repeat again that I am a low cost cosplayer and it is very under- parang hindi sya underwhelming. Fulfilling sya of course kasi parang I was able to succcessfully pull a costume with what I have but it is a bit underwhelming if I compare myself to others. Kasi even if low cost lang kami, ang ganda pa rin nun kasi nadudugyutan ako sa sarili ko minsan. I mean, ano lang talaga kasi may sense of insecurity pa din but im pretty sure it happens to every skill. Like if you are not good at drawing or not good at soccer, you would envy someone na mas magaling sayo. Pero at the end of the day, you always have to reaffirm yourself na that's them not you. So even if I'm a little shy at cosplaying kasi nga hindi naman ako lagi nagccosplay. I would say na rarely, kasi parang events lang talaga sya. It is fulfilling at the same time kinakahiyaan ko pa din sya kasi like its not much members na into this. Yung sister ko maybe a little bit pero ako mas gusto ko kesa sakanya. Well, I guess I'm just praying na parang okay maybe i should have a more budget so I could find more clothes na parang masusuot ko sya everyday at the same time magagamit ko sa cosplay in the future events or future kung ano anong gala.

*Participant 2*

**Interviewer:** So for the first question, how did you first get into cosplay and what drew you into it po?

**Interviewer:** Ang first po mag aanswer si participant no.3

**Interviewer:** How about you kuya?

**Participant 2:** Moving on with my experience, I started within ah my senior high school but [6:28 - 6:32 unclear] where I started first going to conventions. So during that time, I was just attending the conventions at first place I kinda realized that you know, the more you get into the environment, slowly you become actually one of them. And within that point, ah nagkaroon ako ng curiosity na sumama sa industriya. So apart from covering the events from my experience in covering it in

media pages is nagkaroon din ako ng parang intuition na parang what if I try yung pag cosplay. Sabihin natin yung simple lang muna na ipapanood sa club. Then slowly, umabot na sa point na nag papa commissions na ako sa wig, nag papa commissions na ako sa mga costume. And actually, ayun din, what continues me to ah drive it is because it gives me a bit more of freedom and a bit more leeway to expression since compared to my natural self 'no very academic purview ahm professional. Doon parang you can be relaxer [7:37 - 7:40 unclear]

**Interviewer:** Give an example po or share an example of character na nag re-resonate deeply with you po? Ikaw nalang po muna kuya if meron

**Participant 2:** Okay. Ah what character would resonate with me is the previous play that I did with Akosora Yana from Blue. Ahm she actually matches with my personal background and very academic [8:23 - 8:27 unclear] her character is a high school student that ah both a bit more light when it comes to light stuff and very stern when it comes to serious stuff. So ahm, currently, I haven't really found a character that are fitting with my personality description

**Interviewer:** Okay, so yung given po na character nyo, pa-paano nyo po piniprepay yung sarili nyo to embody the character through cosplay?

**Participant 2:** Ahm, I went through ah cosplay at form of, I think is set. Ahm first, you go research the character [10:34 - 10:37 unclear] read the mangas, read any form of literature related to them. Sabihin natin yu can look at AO3, fandom websites, or even fan-made comics to describe What's their personality. And second is you go on ah actualization stage where you ah try to imitate what the character is, if you could do some certain parts of it, and what unique thing that you could provide to make a stand that na [11:07- 11:09 unclear] character. And the third one is the you are ahm or people usually know is cosplay component itself. So you go buy the costumes, go but whatever clothing the character is wearing or ano yung naisip nyo na sosoarin ng character na 'yun, which comes to the point of wardrobe costumes na-or closet costumes. Na, tawag dito, you may think, oh this person's very stern, this person's very strict, maybe this person would wear a student uniform or let's say a corporate uniform. Because let's say, ah hindi naman lahat na nag-co-cosplay does these exact costumes or does the exact uniforms na sinusuot nung character na 'yun based on Google or based on the actual fandom itself. Because on our economy, medyo mahirap din ang pag co-cosplay. It's very expensive hobby compared to other hobbies since you have to combine fashion, you have to combine make-up, you have to combine each and every expensive thing na let's say, nag b-build up din sa cost ng cosplay mismo

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you po. Ahm since diba meron po kayong mga different characters na kino-cosplay, ahm ano aspect po ng character na 'yun yung kino-consider nyo kapag nag co-cosplay po kayo?

**Participant 2:** Ah for me, I actually consider yung element na if the character that I'm cosplaying is comfortable on my end. Since sabihin natin, there's two types of cosplayers. Ah yung isang type is the one that's just cosplaying for the ah profit-not the profit, but the fame, the clout, na, ay I ko-cosplay ko 'tong character na 'to even though hindi sya bata, pero dahil popular

sya. And the other one is the one that I'm in, is the one that's cosplaying yung mga characters na comfortable sila. Since, tawag, dito, ahm some characters may not be suitable with me so sabihin natin, bawal naman akong maging a character A, but I could be character B na partner naman ni character A. So, I could try and cosplay that because I'm more comfortable. And, ayun din, tawag dito. Ahm going back to the question, ahm, ah 'yun I'm just really going on the characters that I'm comfortable with, to be honest. Since, ah hindi naman ako yung parang nag co-cosplay lang for the sense of ah clout

**Interviewer:** Okay, so ahm what characteristics of your real identity do you often incorporate po sa cosplay portal?

**Participant 2:** I keep the incorporate to [16:04 - 16:08 unclear] and also yung parang sense of ahm the whole aspect of mind of being stern or let's say very a bit serious since, if I do try and cosplay yung mga characters, very lively, very joyful, I can't really do that so parang hindi magiging maganda—although cosplay is about accuracy. But hindi ako nagiging comfortable sa pag act sa mga characters, mga out of my field. Or yung kind of very academic, but also, ahm there's some characters na very, ahm let's say, there's a type of like [16:48 - 16:50 unclear] a very erotic identity, so I'm just sticking to the characters na parang, okay medyo stern yung character na 'to, very strict sya, very, ano, sabihin na natin medyo corporate yung type nya, I could go

**Interviewer:** Okay, so for our next question po. How would you define the concept of a dual persona through exploring its implication on social interactions?

**Participant 2:** I'd like to repeat. Pwede pa ulit nung question?

**Interviewer:** Okay, I'm sorry. How would you define the concept of—oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. Wait lang po. Okay I'm so sorry po. How would you define the concept of—How would you define the concept of dual persona though exploring its implication in social interactions?

**Participant 2:** Ahm, that's a very, ahm sabihin natin heavy question. Although not heavy na parang uncomfortable. It's a bit harder to digest compared to other questions. But from that I can think of since, ayuh nga, coming from a different experience, cosplaying gives them a bit of comfort, a bit of way to show themselves since sabihin natin in our country that's very conservative na you know we're kind of restricted to, sabihin natin, okay, ah kahit yung I-pag fashion mo, pagkulay mo ng buhok, O sabihin natin, pati expression mo na masyadong babae, is very limited. So, cosplaying is kinda gives that sense of actual self na ahm provides us into a more who we are. So, sabihin natin, there's two types of self that we could show here. Ah the first self is our actual self, which is yung ipinapakita natin through cosplay and the other one is the portrayed self, which is yung pino-portray lang natin sa labas, sa mundo, or sabihin natin sa mga magulang natin, or even to the conservative society here in the Philippines. And sabihin nga natin, ahm a lot of very liberal ideas in the country are being critiqued. Since ayun nga, iniisip na pang bakla, pang demonyo, ang sabihin natin, antichrist kung бага. So, the term for cosplaying na nagbibigay siya ng leeway for us to express ourselves gives that way na we can actually have a sense of self. Doon lumalabas yung parang pangalawang self natin, which is the whole self na nararamdaman natin sa loob natin

**Interviewer:** So for our next question naman po. Ahm papaano nakakatulong yung pag cosplaying sa ah—ano yung influence ng cosplaying sa behavior or personality nyo po outside the convention

**Participant 2:** Ah okay, ahm I'm getting this out of the point, ano yung parang, kasi you can say na parang ano yung effects ng cosplaying? ah I could say tawag dito, na once you get into the hub is that you got that sense na, ayun, sino kaya yung parang pwede ko introduce sa hobby, sino kaya yung gusto ko i-introduce sa ganitong style na I'm into this kind of hobby, I'm not into this kind of thing. But it also gives you sense of accomplishment since you ah after you go to a convention in cosplay and you actually enjoy the event and the character that you're in, you get that sense of accomplishment na, wow, I can actually be this kind of self, I can actually be this kind of thing. So, slowly you kinda develop into improving ahm your portrayed self na mas nagiging expressive ka, mas better communicator and also a better speaker—no not just a better speaker but a better model, a better ahm time management. I mean, depende. Some cosplayers may cram their coplays or something like that, but for my case, nagkakaroon din ako ng better time management through cosplaying since I have to plan the schedules, the routes, lalo na may mga ibang conventions na galing pa sa South, gaya ng nasa Manila Bay, sa Bay City Town Center. And the one I'm actually going on Friday sa may Malolos Bulacan actually take hours to commute here from Valenzuela. And ayun din, parang it gives you a sense of achievement, a sense of accomplishment and a sense of better improving yourself for the future. And kasi, ayun nga, cosplaying industry, there's organizations there na tawag dito, have to cater to the ongoing talents. Because hindi lang naman, ah, one time na mag co-cosplay. And some people do that, some people actually make it yung how to make it into what they are. Kasi ahm, going back to your previous question, tawag dito, ah they're kind of limited sa parents nila. So cosplaying kind of gives them a sense of rhythm. So, ayun din, parang it makes you more into who you are. Like, na hanap ko na yung sarili ko. It also gives you a sense of identity

**Interviewer:** Okay, so for the next question po. Ahm, since kanina sabi nyo po diba both na parang tinitignan nyo muna yung behavior bago nyo sya i-cosplay, ahm meron po bang times or scanario na feeling nyo nahihirapan kayo i-balance yung cosplay persona and yung everyday identity nyo talaga?

**Participant 2:** Ahm for me, actually, I don't really see a difficulty sa pag-display ng verbal self ko even in cosplay. Since I'm actually, a JN's member for cosplay University where I'm the vice president of. And she can actually tell yung talaga ng diba—even though I'm in cosplay during our events sa may FEU, that we held during the foundation day, nakikita pa rin nya na I could still display my actual self when then. And when it's the time to, you know, actually, time for your character, that's when I shift to cosplaying the persona that I'm in. Sine ahm I can actually confidently move away from site, depende lang talaga sa persona na doon ako

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Interviewer:** When embodying a character, how do you cope up in maintaining a balance between staying in character and

preserving your true self? Pano nyo po nammanage yung adjustment between the two?

**Participant 2:** It is more on first, maintaining myself since sabihin natin we can't actually be in character when we are in very intense emotion. Kunwari galit ka, or kapag pinaka nalulungkot ka, you can't really display the character you're cosplaying. Kahit yung actual self mo you can't even portray it while having very intense emotions so you have to find yourself, you have to take breaks or you have to distance yourself from others just to maintain both sides and I just usually try to separate the two as much as possible since I don't want people from my academic to just know me na "ah eto yung nagaganyan" I want people to know me na "ah magaling to magreport, magaling to maglead, isa talaga akong communication student na umaattend sa mga events just for that. And I just want people na nasa cosplay field to know me na either dun sa field na communication student nga and they should also know me na magaling mag cosplay, magaling mag model.

**Interviewer:** How has maintaining a dual persona affected your relationship with your family, friends, and colleagues?

**Interviewer:** Meron po bang situation na parang kailangan nyon iexplain or idefend yung kino cosplay nyong identity sa ibang tao?

**Participant 2:** For me, usually hindi naman. Although sometimes mas tatanungin nila, asan na yung cinocosplay mo? Because the previous attitude that I cosplayed with is yung typical na pang genshin na characters, very sikat bast yung mga ginugusto ko lang o yung mga nagmmatch sa personality ko. So they won't really ask na parang "uy bat ganto na yung actions mo?" because they would really understand na yung character ko mismo because the thing that I'm cosplaying is out in public. Yung main account na ginagamit ko sa Facebook, Instagram, is the same account that I use for cosplay. So they would already incorporate me into that type of person. It's more on them knowing na ah tatanungin nalang nila na anong character ginagawa mo and tungkol saan yung character mo then I will just have to explain to them the things that they would understand.

**Interviewer:** Meron bang situation na nafeel niyong napressure kayo to keep your cosplay identity separate from your real life persona and social situations?

**Participant 2:** On social situations, I could say na there are some times na you need to hide na cosplayer ka kasi anong tawag dito uhm there's a certain type of generalizations na pag cosplayer diba tinatawag na pambata o sabihin natin na ay mga makukulit mga yan [44:30 - 44:33 unclear]. There's a lot of people you know, kailangan din pagsabihan but ayon, for people na conservative o sabihin natin na kailangan kong itago na ay pupunta lang po ako ng events solike pumupunta lang akodun just to cover. Not that they know na pumupunta din akodun to cosplay na pambabaeng character, panglalakeng character na mahaba yung buhok, na iba yung dress style. Since ayon nga, pampaiwas ng gulo sa societal norms at pampaiwas din ng gulo sa mga nakakausap kong tao. Basta alamkong sila yung taona hindi comfortable sa mga ganong usapan kase I would know if they are up for the conversation or not.

**Interviewer:** Do you ever find yourself na acting like your character unintentionally po?

**Participant 2:** Actually, parang hindi ko naman siya napaghahalo minsan yung character ko. But when it come to my professional stance, hindi naman lumalabas yung cosplaying character ko. Well, when I'm cosplaying misan dun lumalabas yung actual self ko. As mention, you have organizations on your identity-I really have to be strict kase sabihin na naten na may mga members din dun na need natin tignan. So you really have to act as someone na professional.

**Interviewer:** How do you transition back to your everyday self after cosplaying a character?

**Participant 2:** Uhh transitioning back, ayun din as i've mentioned kanina, I- as much as I cosplay a character, I can get back to my actual self na tawag dito, very strict and very formal. You don't really expect someone who cosplay na nagccomute. There was a situation na nag eedsa carousel ako, na tinawag akong miss. Nung tinawag akong "miss", I acted as my actual self. Because, I am acting as a commuter so nagulat sya na "ay bossing pala" so ayun.

**Interviewer:** Can you describe your overall experience as a cosplayer?

**Participant 2:** Okay so ayun, my overall experience sa pagccosplay as someone who's been doing this for like 3 years, uhm anong tawag dito, marami nakong nakitang experiences na some people are having the same expressions kahit anong tawag dito- out of cosplay, so coming back sa mga nasabi ko, may mga nahihirapan ba na gawing normal self ang kanilang actual self. Well, whatever you're cosplaying kase is you're just being a bit playful. So, pag wala ako cinocosplay, it's like i'm back to my normal self. But sometimes may nakakausap din ako na ganon yung ugali very ganto yung ugali mo sa labas, ganto mo kinakausap yung ibang tao. And there's also times na may nanghharass, may nangbbastos. Cosplaying is a temporary character portrayal not something and may condition to that I don't know ano yung conditions but my general experience it's been smooth for me.

*Participant 3*

**Interviewer:** how did you first get into cosplay and what drew you into it?

**Participant 3:** so uhm... uhmm... I started on cosplaying because of the influence of my friend during ahh senior highschool. What drew me into cosplay is that ahh I get to see po ah their artistic creativity and ah.. personifying this anime characters ahh.. and with the influence ng friend ko... ahh.. ahh it lead us ahh from our creativity. And bond together yon.

**Interviewer:** Can you give an example po or share an example ng character na nagre resonate deeply po sa inyo.

**Participant 3:** For me the character that resonates closest would be "Loid Forger" from the Spy Family. You're someone who showed kindness and compassion but at the same time, we have this kind of perseverance in keeping determination, so I kind of resonated with her that ah.. I would have this persona that is very nice and gentle to people, but at the same time I have this kind of curiousness and perseverance when it comes specially sa academics that no matter how difficult it is, I would continue to persevere kahit na nahihirapan na ako.



**Interviewer:** So, yung given po na character ninyo. Paano niyo po piniprepare yung Sarili niyo to embody that character through cosplay?

**Participant 3:** okay so my preparation I usually do first in observation. I wanna watch first yung anime and then go through ahh observe every behavior every combination of though kung ano sila and they would act and then second, I would try to practice in front of the mirror and how uhm... ah.. and imitating those behavior and tsaka nalang ako magpa-practice on wearing those kinds of outfit ah.. kind to match their style and the how [ 8:08 - 8:15] unclear.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you po. Ahm since diba meron po kayong mga different characters na kino-cosplay, ahm ano aspect po ng character na 'yun yung kino-consider nyo kapag nag co-cosplay po kayo?

**Participant 3:** uhm.. so same with him uhm.. I go with the character i'm comfortable with and [unclear] so ahh [10:10-10:16 unclear] I would mainly choosing character that kind of ahh resonated with the same attitude as mine and ahh at the same time I am willing to go on exploring other characters for the benefit of trying out new things.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so, what characteristics of your real identify do you often incorporate po sa cosplay portrayal?

**Participant 3:** For me, it actually depends on the character's background. Different characters have this different backgrounds stories and those stories ahh kinda resonated with me in real life. [12:32 - 12:33 unclear] I would focus on someone who is ahh... let say medyo soft looking or someone who's very gentle but again ahh... It really depends on what I would like to portray as kung ano yung story na nag re resonate within me currently.

**Interviewer:** okay so for our next question po uhm how would you define the concept of a dual persona through exploring its implication on social interaction?

**Participant 3:** to add on to that having this kind of dual personality ahh just like what he said. In this country na very conservative ahh there is ahh to portraying itself that only can show with limitations ahh not all would have this kind of openness on accepting their passion so therefore cosplaying give us free way of expressing the actual self that you can not really show of without being judge on portraying yourself to others in this kind of conservative na country.

**Interviewer:** okay so for our next question naman po, uhm paano nakakatulong yung cosplaying sa ahh ano yung influence ng cosplaying sa behavior or personality niyo po outside the convention?

**Participant 3:** okay so I did mention na I tend to observe other so uhhh ahh. sorry sorry. Ahh going back I actually purposely observe others behavior and then I would adopt into it ahh so upon observation ahh that I would see on convention ahh their is this is some kind of of adaptability that how should I interact with other people and these creates a better connections and how to actually interact ahh interact in making more connections that perhaps makes your future purposes [unclear].

**Interviewer:** Okay, so for the next question po. Ahm, since kanina sabi nyo po diba both na parang tinitignan nyo muna yung behavior bago nyo sya i-cosplay, ahm meron po bang

times or scanario na feeling nyo nahihirapan kayo i-balance yung cosplay persona and yung everyday identity nyo talaga?

**Participant 3:** coming from a medical field ah there are difficulties pag dating sa ahh yung difference of ahh in cosplaying at the same time I have yung persona that is more on highly focused on academics and yung medicine so this difficulties ahh such as ahh yung keeping out yung aking professional sternest and this all kinds of seriousness ahh I feel it just mix yung... for example yung character na very jolly in the field na [unclear] required na to be more on serious and focus so it kinda would it mix at all and I had to separate uhm which persona I should portray when it comes to facing the medical field from the artistic side of cosplay na pretending on what character na one you could portray.

**Interviewer:** thank you po, ah so next po is when embodying the character ahm how do you cope up in maintaining a balance between the character and preserving your true self. Pa-paano niyo po na mamana yung adjustment between the two?

**Participant 3:** ahh to maintain the balance is that there is really a huge different persona between who Participant 3 and who is "name niya as cosplayer". and "name" actually yung cosplaying name ko and "Minuet" was let say uhm she's like some kind of ahh... Participant 3 is more on personally so [unclear] Participant 3 is a the one who studies in medicine uhm the one who is more on acads the one who would chose those kind of ahh yung very close and intimate side niya while "Minuet" was some kind of the character that ah what Participant 3 wasn't really shows as ahh so and yung "Minuet" na yun would depend kung ano yung characteristic na parang gusto i-resonate ni Participant 3 but of course Participant 3 is more on personal so "Minuet" is the one who would show it or express it. Uhm ahh may kind of division when it comes to my persona which I would show off in to us.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so uhm since kagaya po ni ate Participant 3 since she has a dual persona ahm how has maintaining a dual persona affected your relationship with your family, friends or colleagues?

**Participant 3:** okay ahh [unclear audio] it hard to digest pero okay naman ako sa tanong it's hard to digest lang.

**Interviewer:** it's okay lang po take your time.

**Participant 3:** Maybe it's a good question. It's uhm a bit hard to digest lang talaga. Sorry.

**Interviewer:** So, again po, how has maintaining a dual persona affected your relationship with family, friends or colleagues?

**Participant 3:** Since yung dual persona ko is to separate uhm identify ahh, let's say they kind of have no idea kung how would I be. So, I couldn't say much because again, Participant 3 Participant 3 would choose to protect yung other Minuet side because ahh afraid of judgement and uhm growing up in a conservative na family uhm, Participant 3 would remain Minuet uhm hidden, but at the same time, it would slip up a little. Yung persona ko na Minuet because they would be surprised that uhhh I could actually uhhh actually act like that. Ahh like magugulat Sila like "ahh! Ganyan pala si Participant 3 mag act." but, again, Minuet is more on pang let's say uhm things I really couldn't do as Participant 3. It's on ahhh if only it show lang, siguro if yun nga conventions and where I could freely

express yung creativity ko. So, Participant 3 well, could remain as she is silently.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, for our next question, I'm so sorry wait lang. Okay so meron po pang situation na parang kailangan i-explain o i-defend yung cino-cosplay niyong identity sa ibang tao?

**Participant 3:** For me, I think there are no experiences I have to depend on the character that I cosplay. Because, same as him, I use yung account ko that is both for cosplaying at the same time for acads na rin. So people would just ask if uhm sino yung character na cino-cosplay ko and why did I cosplay them? And, I'll just explain it to them and they would understand on why did I prefer to cosplay this kind of character. Cause its kind of uhm ano portraying na rin yung actual self ko.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. So, next po is meron bang situation na na-feel niyo na na pressure kayo to keep your identity separate from your real-life persona in social situation?

**Participant 3:** Since I grew up in a very conservative family, naturally, I chose to hide my other cosplays because ahh.. in a ahh. in a conservative environment, it is kind of very limiting and ahh... don't get the judgment na ahh "ay baka revealing naman yung character na cino-cosplay mo and ahh with that, I chose to speak na lang about yung aking artistic side when I was asked to. And, and I would kind of choose yung words ko carefully. Ano lang yung dapat kong pwedeng sabihin sa kanila. Because, again, I would know if people would be very open about sa ah, cosplay. And, if they are not, I would just keep them on the surface level on what I usually do.

**Interviewer:** uhm, so ahh do you ever find yourself na acting, acting like your character unintentionally po?

**Participant 3:** Occasionally, slip away yung from Participant 3 persona ko. Tapos, lababas yung Minuet persona ko. And, would be depending sa situation kung gaano siya ka-comfortable mag-slip up. Then, it's fine na mag- intentionally slip up ko yung ng isang character. But, wouldn't be expected na gagawin ni Participant 3.

**Interviewer:** So, um, how do you transition back to your everyday self po after cosplaying a character?

**Participant 3:** Transitioning from my cosplay to to my other self, I would just ahh just take a short breather lang and then, uh, if the situation requires Participant 3 to show up, then I would, uh, show and re- I'll revert back to myself as Participant 3. and, so, I would just hihinga lang ako ng hihinga lang ako ng malalim and then, would just back to my usual self kahit na karon to cosplay ako. Though, kung ano yung conventions, uh, then,

I would just go home. buglaang snap na lang yun na from yung portrayed character ko to my usual self na after those socializations, biglaan na lang ako madidrain na I would not speak at all. Kasi, very introverted rin ako na person. And, so social situations kind of drain me a lot. So, hindi ko na kaya i-keep up yung pag-portray ko ng character yun. So, after, uh, going out of the event, introvert back immediately sa pagiging Participant 3 ko na very quiet.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, for our last question po, um, can you describe your overall experience as a cosplayer?

**Participant 3:** My experience in cosplaying was fun, and I could say that alam, there's a lot of things that I could learn

about observing others and observing yung behavior nila. So, but at the same time, it could also be draining as someone that ah, isn't in too much on socializing. Alam, then again, ah, and again, cosplaying ah, feels nga really ah, uh, connections then having actual fun from different from the very serious medical field that I would be in ah, in academic. So, I love it. I don't give up my freedom on my actual self of expression. Um, parang yun lang, may hindi talaga maiwasan na like what they said, mga nag co cosplay that, I would ah, consciousness and be very strict on the people around me.

**Participant 4**

**Interviewer:** Okay, so let's begin with the first set of question po. So for our first question, how did you first get into cosplay and what drew you into it?

**Participant 4:** I started cosplaying after attending a Halloween, actually it was around 2022 and there was a Halloween event. So I decided to dress up as a character from a game called Genshin Impact which is Hu Tao. And it was during that day that I also attended a birthday party which is also Halloween themed. So that began basically my cosplay journey. And after experiencing that, I decided I wanted to continue with this new hobby.

**Interviewer:** Thank you po. So doon po sa Halloween party na yun, paano niyo po na-prepare or na-embody yung character na kinocospay niyo po?

**Participant 4:** I think mostly hindi pa ako masyadong very expressive. Like I am an introvert kasi and I'm not really that sociable when it comes to other people. And I guess it kind of brought up my self-confidence especially since I don't look like myself, my usual self. And basically it kind of gave me the confidence to I guess start being sociable with other people.

**Interviewer:** So pwede po ba kayo mag-share ng isang example ng character na nag-resonate deeply sa inyo?

**Participant 4:** I think the character na medyo nag-resonate sa akin is from Genshin Impact din, from that game, Lynette. Because she has the same personality as me. Medyo maypagka-introvert and di masyadong very into socialization. And I actually also cosplayed her.

**Interviewer:** So, yung usual characters po ba na kinocospay nyo? Is parang meron kayong certain types na laging kinocospay like villains, heroes, or sidekicks?

**Participant 4:** Ako usually, it depends po if I like the design of the character and also the personality and if I like the character itself. And sometimes, I see a pattern na medyo similar yung personalities ng kinocospay ko. And sometimes, medyo opposite din which is kind of a challenge din since if opposite yung personality ng character ko from my own personality, it is kind of a weird feeling din. Pero parang in a way, it is a challenging thing din na parang I need to go out of my comfort zone or the usual thing that I usually do.

**Interviewer:** So, for the next question po, how would you define the concept of a dual persona through exploring its implication on social interactions?

**Participant 4:** I think my definition regarding that would be is that basically, for example, I present myself a different personality depending on how I dress or maybe it depends din sa situation itself. For example, in attending cosplay events or conventions, I would kind of present myself differently from

my usual if I'm not cosplaying. Like since I'm embodying or cosplaying a character, how I would present myself, medyo iba yun. Sa mga events or conventions, I would interact more, I would speak more, and I would kind of socialize more compared to if yung casual lang yung hindi ako naka-cosplay. Parang very reserved kasi ako person so I don't really present myself or I would rather be behind the shadow or be a background character kapag not in cosplay. So basically, ang pinaka short explanation ko dun sa definition is basically it depends on the situation. Yung pag present mo ng personality, it can be depending on the situation or the event or what you are presenting yourself or ano yung suot mo that day or basically, involve na din yung image mo dun.

**Interviewer:** Yung cosplaying po ba, in a way, nakatulong po ba siya kung paano nyo mashape yung tingin nyo sa sarili nyo and yung personal development nyo?

**Participant 4:** I think it did have an effect, lalo na pagdating sa self-confidence since before ako mag-cosplay, I didn't care about my appearance that much. Like in a sense na I would just wear what is available or basta ako ano yung nandyan. And after being in this hobby na pag-cosplay, parang nagkaroon ako ng self-confidence and also mindset na maybe I could just express myself in this way. And also, basically try to go out of my comfort zone. And if I like something after, and maybe I would like something after discovering or stepping out of that comfort zone. And I think also na I kind of learned how to speak up more since I don't usually interact with other people. I don't usually interact with other people, i fint usually speak in public and it kind of helped na through going to events, like cosplay events, I was able to kind of learn or practice my socializing skills in that way.

**Interviewer:** Since sabi niyo po kanina, parang you're kind of a person na parang introvert. Sometimes po ba, do you find it challenging to balance your cosplay persona and yung everyday identity niyo?

**Participant 4:** I think maybe not so much, pero may times na I feel more confident if I'm in cosplay than I'm not. And so parang minsan I feel like I would want to be in cosplay more often than not. And sometimes it kind of, parang yung self-confidence ko, parang it's kind of aligned lang dun sa aspect na if I'm wearing or if I'm in a cosplay, I'm kind of more confident. Parang unlike, parang nahihirapan ako na what if I just, yung self-confidence na yun, parang pwede din maka-affect sa if I'm not cosplaying. Pero hindi eh, parang minsan mas gusto kong naka-cosplay ako.

**Interviewer:** So since diba sinabi niyo po na mas gusto niyo naka-cosplay, may imply niyo po ba dun na parang losing yourself doon sa character na kinocosplay niyo?

**Participant 4:** I guess maybe not 100%, maybe let's say like 50 or 55%. Since hindi naman ako totally, yung mindset ko hindi naman totally like I'm this character like 100%. Pero I feel like sometimes like medyo nakaka-affect din yun sa how I view myself din.

**Interviewer:** So paano kayo nagko-cope up sa pagmemaintain ng balance between staying in character and yung pag-preserve ng true self niyo? And paano niyo po namamanage yung adjustment between the two?

**Participant 4:** I usually manage like kailangan ko may breaks or rest days or weeks na not all the time naka-cosplay ka. Kasi

minsan medyo draining din yun if you're, since it kind of takes time para mag-cosplay magsuot ka ng everything like wigs, cosplay. Medyo draining din yun sa part ko since graduating student din ako and it's kind of hard to balance, try to be in cosplay for like maybe every week or every other week. So I usually cosplay if I feel like it. Kasi minsan mahirap din i-prioritize, since may mga priorities ako na kailangan ko gawin like studies first. And I need like, kailangan may balance talaga. So lately I think yun yung pinapractice ko ngayon. If I feel like I want to cosplay, I will. Pero if I don't, then hindi ko pipilitin ang sarili ko.

**Interviewer:** So before ako po i-ask yung sumunod na question, tingin niyo po ba yung parang meron kayong like dual persona ganon?

**Participant 4:** Maybe since parang kapag naka-cosplay ko, parang iba talaga yung, medyo iba yung personality ko in a way na like very confident ako compared if hindi ako naka-cosplay na medyo tahimik, medyo reserved. Usually hindi nagspeak up. Yun ang masasabi kong parang medyo iba yung kind of personality ko pagdating dun.

**Interviewer:** So yung dual persona na po yun, paano siya, paano naka-effect yun sa relationship niyo with your family, friends, or colleagues?

**Participant 4:** I think so far, hindi naman siya, I don't think naka-affect naman sa relationship ko with friends or family since usually hindi naman kasi ako nakaka-interact. Yung mga friends ko kasi, they're not really into cosplay or in that hobby so hindi naman sila, they don't really know my, the other self, like yung cosplay self ko. So medyo hindi sila familiar doon. So medyo hindi naman naka-affect sa relationship ko when it comes to that.

**Participant 4:** So yung mga friends nyo pa, sinasabi nyo kanina, hindi sila masyadong, hindi sila yung nagka-cosplay. Nakaka-experience po ba kayo ng mga tao na parang, papaano nila pine-perceive yung cosplay identity mo?

**Participant 4:** I think ano, actually since, wait, can you repeat the question?

**Interviewer:** How do the people in your life perceive your cosplay identity?

**Participant 4:** So ano, I think yung may mga friends kasi ako na, like in the cosplay community, hindi ko masyadong close, pero like mutual friends that I would sometimes interact with, like face to face na mga events. And usually parang napaperceive nila na parang very, parang na-intimidate sila sa akin. Parang yun ang sinasabi nila minsan eh, na medyo intimidating daw ako. Or it's kind of hard to approach, pero in kind of a nice way. And parang medyo different siya when compared if I'm not cosplaying. Since yung close friends ko na hindi nagka-cosplay, based sa comments nila, parang if I'm not cosplaying, like I'm kind of easily approachable. Parang ganun.

**Interviewer:** And yung situation, like kailangan nyong i-explain or i-defend yung cosplay identity nyo sa ibang tao?

**Participant 4:** Wala namang situation na itulad to the fact na parang kailangan ko mag-explain. Pero I guess since in cosplay kasi hindi ko masyadong nilalabas yung any other personal infos or like very, parang ano, yung pag naka-cosplay kasi ako, hindi ako masyadong, I don't reveal any personal info or anything about my personal life. So basically it's like, I guess



you can say parang like a mask kapag naka-cosplay. So walang personal info, walang personal background, walang mga ganun. And I guess I don't really explain that much. I just like give information na that doesn't relate to any personal things.

**Interviewer:** Parang related lang po dun sa character nyo, ganun po.

**Participant 4:** Opo.

**Interviewer:** Okay po. So do you ever feel pressured to keep your cosplay identity separate from your real life identity in social situations?

**Participant 4:** Since na-context ba like sa social media or face to face?

**Interviewer:** Siguro we can apply it in both situations po.

**Participant 4:** Pag sa social media kasi I think may separate accounts kasi ako for personal and cosplay account. So iba yung, very active kasi ako sa cosplay account, not so much sa personal, which kind of shows na like yung self-confidence ko like very tied na tied sa pag-cosplay. So I guess I would say na parang mas comfortable ko mag-share ng any information na for example yung likes and dislikes ko pagdating sa games or movies or other things. Mas comfortable ako na mag-share ng information about that pagdating sa cosplay accounts ko compared sa personal ko na very limited yung sinasabi ko or I don't post that much.

And I guess pag face to face, I guess when it comes to yung face to face, hindi naman siguro nahihirapan i-distinguish yung own self ko sa cosplay, parang self ko. Since tinatry ko i-balance yung parang hobbies ko and then yung academic stuff ko as also yung personal life ko. I don't think I would have a problem

with that except for the confidence part which is kind of like nakatie sa cosplay self ko.

**Interviewer:** So paano po kayo nag-transition back sa everyday self nyo after cosplaying?

**Participant 4:** Well sometimes, minsan kasi for example in a cosplay event if I attended a cosplay in cosplay, by the end of the day, minsan very tired na ako to the point na it's like you go blank at the end of the day because you're tired of every social interaction, of being there. And usually at that point, I want to take everything off. So I guess it depends on the situation. If during cosplay events, in that moment, at the end of the event, usually I would rather take the cosplay off and rest since medyo draining na yun. And if usually sa bahay lang, I usually have a time limit na nakasuot ako nun since I still have tasks to do. So I think yun yung usually ginagawa ko.

**Interviewer:** Hindi naman po kayo nahihirapan na mag-transition back?

**Participant 4:** No, so far hindi naman.

**Interviewer:** Okay, for our last question po. Can you describe your overall experience as a cosplayer?

**Participant 4:** I think my overall experience would be very enjoyable and although may times na medyo draining but I still enjoy basically being in a hobby na I could express my creativity and portray myself in different ways. Pero overall I think it did help me gain some confidence even though nakatayo sa pag-cosplay. I think I'm still on the road to building that confidence. So, I guess in a way it's a positive experience for me.