AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

<u>Laura Kane</u> for the degree of <u>Doctor of Philosophy</u> in <u>Design and the Human Environment</u> presented on <u>March 10, 2017</u>.

Title: <u>Why cosplay? Motivations behind participation and use of social media among cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages.</u>

Abstract approved: _____

<p style="text-align:center">Brigitte Gaal Cluver</p>

The purpose of this study was to explore motivations behind participation in cosplay and the use of social media among cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. Further focus was placed on investigating the role of Facebook Artist Pages in building fame. To explore such motivations, two theories were referenced: Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which addresses motivations associated with needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, and Gountas et al's (2012) Desire for Fame theory and scale, which addresses the motivation of one's desire for fame. Part 1 of the study consisted of a content analysis of 155 cosplay Facebook Artist pages. Part 2 of the study consisted of an Aspirations Index and Desire for Cosplay Fame online survey, as well as - semi-structured interview completed by 20 cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. Results suggest that cosplayers with Facebook Artist Pages choose to participate in cosplay because of the creative challenge of making a costume (competence), to build new skills (competence), as a bonding activity (relatedness), to be able to don the persona of another character (autonomy), to express their fandom (relatedness), and to receive positive feedback on something they create (competence). Using social media allows cosplayers to share their work (competence), interact with

other fans (relatedness), keep up to date on the work of other cosplayers (relatedness), make friends (relatedness), and promote themselves (relatedness and competence). Only two participants indicated they wish to be famous cosplayers, while most others expressed that becoming a famous cosplayer required too much extra time, effort, and money to make it worthwhile.

Why cosplay? Motivations behind participation and use of social media among
cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages.

by
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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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Laura Kane, Author

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Chapter One

Introduction

In the summer of 2016 over 100,000 people gathered together at the Anaheim

Convention center for the annual Anime Expo convention, a three day celebration of all

things anime, manga, and Japanese culture (Delahanty, 2017). Many attendees were

dressed as characters from their favorite shows, video games, and comic books. This

activity is called cosplay, "a portmanteau word that combines both elements 'costume'

and 'play' together. While 'play' represents that it is one sort of performing activity,

'costume' implies that people need particular outfits and accessories to be a specific

character" (Wang, 2010, p. 18). Cosplayers choose their characters from a multitude of

sources, including Hollywood movies, Japanese animation, video games, comic books,

and television shows (Lotecki, 2012). Fans who participate in cosplaying often make

their own costumes or purchase ready-made costumes of their favorite characters and

"perform" as the characters at conventions and meet ups. In addition, some post

photos online of themselves in costume (Okabe, 2012). Conventions such as Anime

Expo and DragonCon "offer entertainment, contests, celebrity guests, and booths with

products to purchase" (Taylor, 2009, p. 2). Cosplayers that perform on stage in costume

contests at conventions can win prizes based on costume construction and

performance (Taylor, 2009).

Whereas conventions and in-person meet ups historically have served as

grounds for individuals to participate in cosplay (Rahman, Wing-sun, & Cheung, 2012),

social media has emerged as an important arena for such activities as well (Lotecki,

2012; Taylor, 2009). The term "social media" refers to websites that, to some extent,

facilitate interactions between individuals (Greenwood, 2013). Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Reddit, 4chan, LinkedIn, Vine, and YouTube are examples of social media. Social media websites often have a platform whereby individuals can interact with each other. This research project focuses on cosplayers who maintain "Artist" Facebook Pages. A Facebook Page is set up to represent a "local business or place," a "company, organization or institution," a "brand or product," an "artist, band or public figure, "entertainment," or a "cause or community" (Facebook Page Creation, 2017). By creating and maintaining Facebook "Artist" Pages, participants in this study are able to make available to the public their customized profiles, photos and videos of their works (costumes, props, etc.), announcements, and a means to purchase commissions and works. In addition, well-known cosplayers have used Facebook Artist Pages a platform to announce their next convention appearance and sell items such as prints and calendars (Johnston, 2013). Other Facebook members can "Like" a Facebook Pages; in turn, updates from the "Liked" Pages are posted directly onto the members' newsfeeds. Facebook Page users can track and interact with those individuals who have "Liked" their Pages. The usage of Facebook Pages by cosplayers has given rise to cosplay celebrity. As a result, discussion within the cosplay community is emerging with some individuals concerned that a new generation of cosplayers is participating as a chance to gain attention and become famous rather than as a form of fandom expression (Johnston, 2013; melissahillman, 2013).

People participate in cosplay for a number of reasons. Studies of cosplay have shown that many cosplayers participate to show their love of a character, to meet likeminded individuals, and to escape from mundane life (Okabe, 2012; Rahman et al.,

2012). According to Johnston (2013), some cosplayers are motivated by a desire for individual recognition and celebrity-like status. Although there is a presence of celebrity cosplayers within the cosplay community, researchers have not investigated how and why individuals work towards and maintain celebrity status. Yaya Han serves as an example of a cosplayer who has reached celebrity status and served as a special guest at multiple conventions ("Yaya Han," n.d.). No formal studies have been conducted on how important individual recognition and celebrity status is among cosplayers, but several studies acknowledged that participants often have negative attitudes towards cosplayers that participate solely for the attention from others (Rahman et al., 2012; Taylor, 2009; Wang, 2010). For some, dressing up as a character for the sole reason of getting attention from photographers and becoming famous is seen as going against the intrinsic spirit of the hobby (Okabe, 2012). However, inviting famous cosplayers as special guests to host panels, sign autographs, judge costume contests, and have booths selling photographic prints of themselves in costume is increasingly becoming common practice for cosplay convention organizers. In turn, according to Johnston (2013), the celebrity cosplayer persona is further perpetuated.

Current studies of motivations for participation in cosplay have not addressed the motivation for using social media to supplement a cosplayer's convention activities and a cosplayer' desire for fame. This study will address the motivations of cosplayers to participate in cosplay, utilize social media, and the extent to which a cosplayer desires fame in the context of Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory.

Statement of Purpose

The present study focuses on cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. The purpose is to investigate motivators behind cosplay participation and the maintenance of Facebook Artist Pages, as well as perceptions of how social media can be used to build cosplay fame.

Research Questions

1. What motivates cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages to participate in cosplay as they do? To what do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages attribute the level of fame they have achieved thus far?

2. How do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages believe social media can be used to develop and maintain cosplayer fame?

3. How and why do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages use their Facebook Artist Page?

Disclosure

I would like to state that I identify as part of the cosplay community, having been a cosplayer since 2002. I have attended multiple conventions across the country and participated in several costume competitions. I was a craftsmanship judge for the costume contest at Anime Boston in 2007 and the costume contest at Daisho Con in 2016. As an insider, I am familiar with the terminology used in the cosplay community and can identify which cosplayers are considered famous simply by observing how cosplayers talk about other cosplayers online (especially though anonymous online image boards such as 4chan.org/cgl). As both an insider in the community and a

researcher in fan studies, I am able to compare the perceptions of cosplay among academic literature to my own experiences in the community.

Because I am intimately connected to my topic of study, I acknowledge that I bring biases to my research. I intend to minimize these biases by remaining impartial during the interview protocol development, interview process, and data analysis. My existing assumptions and attitudes regarding the cosplay community will be made explicit in the next section of this paper. By being aware of my existing assumptions I know which topics will call for increased attention and impartiality throughout the research process.

Assumptions and Limitations

As with any qualitative research, an important assumption is that participants are fit and able to give accurate representations of their experiences (Neuman, 2009). Barring interviewing informants that are burdened with mental disabilities, informants are assumed to be adept at adequately describing their own experiences.

One limitation associated with qualitative research is the potential for researcher bias to influence the research process (Neuman, 2009). It is common practice for researchers using a qualitative approach to state their assumptions surrounding their topic of study (Bernard, 2011; Neuman, 2009). The following are my personal assumptions regarding participants and their behaviors within the cosplay community.

1. There are differences between cosplayers but one can draw generalizations.
2. Cosplayers who spend more time on putting together their costumes (whether making the outfits themselves or tracking down hard to find items to purchase)

are more dedicated to the hobby than those who cosplay with off-the-rack costumes available at convention dealer rooms and online retail stores.

3. There is a distinction between a serious cosplayer and a casual cosplayer. A serious cosplayer would be someone who chooses to compete in costume contests, make efforts to have professional photographs taken, and spend money on higher quality materials to construct their costumes. While a serious cosplayer does not have to fulfill all three of the mentioned qualities above I assume they fulfill at least two of them. A casual cosplayer would be someone who only cosplays character costumes that are easy to make or obtain, and does not place emphasis on high quality photos and materials.

4. Physical appearance has some relation to the potential for someone to become a famous cosplayer. The more one fits Western ideals of beauty, the more likely one is to be a famous cosplayer. This applies to cosplayers of all genders.

5. A cosplayer can gain fame for his/her costume craftsmanship skills.

6. Many cosplayers maintain and follow Facebook Artist Pages, have personal websites, have profiles on cosplay database websites such as ACParadise.com and Cosplay.com, and post their photos on Instagram and Tumblr. I personally see the use of ACParadise.com, Cosplay.com, Instagram and Tumblr as basic social media platforms for cosplayers and the Facebook Artist Page and personal web page as indicative of a more serious platform for sharing content.

7. I assume that the cosplay community believes that the number of likes on a Facebook Artist Page is used to showcase how popular a cosplayer is, especially in blog articles about cosplay fame such as Johnston (2013).

My standing in the cosplay community will be both an asset and a limitation to this study. As an already established cosplayer, participants may be more comfortable discussing the nuances of the community. In his study of the behaviors of participants in the *Star Trek* fan community, Jenkins (2012) found that participants felt more comfortable speaking to him about their fandom behavior after he himself disclosed his own identity as a *Star Trek* fan. However, because I have a history of being a part of the cosplay community and have established connections with other cosplayers, discretion is of the upmost importance. I may be speaking with cosplayers who have well established fan bases and their responses may be filtered in fear that their opinions and true motivations may contrast with their online presentation of themselves. In order to counter this possibility, the consent form and initial briefing of the study will disclose the steps that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and how the information in the study will be used.

A limitation of qualitative research is the inability to generalize the findings outside of the scope of the participants included in the study. Qualitative research is centered on understanding the unique experiences of individuals (Bernard, 2011). Each individual possesses his or her own story, perceptions, and life experiences and qualitative research aims to derive meaning from these experiences. Because each person is unique, it is very difficult to generalize outside of the participants in the study. As this is a study using a grounded theory approach, it is important to understand the unique experiences of individuals in the cosplay community in order to make further strides in understanding how and why cosplayers use Facebook Artist Pages. Additional

studies can make use of quantitative methods in order to be able to generalize the findings outside of the scope of this study.

Significance

Fan studies, including the study of cosplay, is a relatively new and evolving discipline. Over the last 30 years, has evolved from a focus on the ethnographic study of how fan groups work to, most recently, a turn to how fan behavior and fan culture is part of our everyday lives (Booth, 2013). But why study fans? Grey et al. states:

> The studies of fan audiences help us to understand and meet challenges far beyond the realm of popular culture because they tell us something about the way in which we relate to those around us, as well as the way we read the mediated texts that constitute an ever larger part of our horizon of experience. (Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2007, p. 10)

Studying fans allows us a glimpse into how people consume, interpret, transform and dispense the media around them. The way that fans interact with texts, including movies, television shows, comic books, anime, video games, and more, can influence physical and mental well-being. Previous studies on fandom have discovered that participation in fandom has led to higher feelings of inclusion, feelings of community, and increased feelings of self-worth (Jenkins, 2006a; Kozinets, 2001). Psychologists have found that increasing feelings of inclusion and self-worth are related to lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression (Cast & Burke, 2002). Similarly, participants of cosplay have expressed increased feelings of self-esteem while in costume and have indicated that cosplay serves as an outlet for expressing parts of their identity they may otherwise not be able to express every day and a mechanism for connecting with peers that share the same interests (Bonnichsen, 2011; Taylor, 2009).

Researchers have found that the drive for inclusion among peers is associated with the desire for fame (Gountas, Gountas, Reeves, & Moran, 2012; Uhls, Zgourou, & Greenfield, 2014). This study will build upon a relatively small number of studies focusing on desire for fame and the use of social media. Several studies have investigated Facebook use among college students (Clerkin, Smith, & Hames, 2013; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Greenwood, 2013), but no studies have been conducted on Facebook fan pages in particular and no studies have been conducted on how Facebook fan pages are used by fan work creators, such as cosplayers (Greenwood, 2013). In fact, general motivators associated with cosplayers' use of social media have not been investigated (Lotecki, 2012; Taylor, 2009). This study is one of the first studies to investigate the role social media (specifically Facebook fan pages) have within the context of cosplay.

The present study will also build upon a small number of studies that have used self-determination theory to understand online behavior and motivations. Self-determination theory, popularized by Deci & Ryan (2000), focuses on the innate drive for human beings to fulfill the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The self-determination theory has been used to study the behavior of high school students' online behavior (Zhao, Lu, Wang, & Huang, 2011), and the motivations for knowledge sharing within virtual communities (Yoon & Rolland, 2012). Yoon & Rolland found that sharing knowledge online led to improved feelings of competence and relatedness, but was not as effective in improving feelings of autonomy. The present study will be the first to apply self-determination theory to explore behaviors using Facebook fan pages.

In addition to the present study being the first to utilize self-determination theory to explore cosplay, and fan page use, it will also add to the body of work on the importance of fame in the context of personal goals and aspirations. At the conclusion of their study of the relationship of the desire for fame to personal goals and aspirations, Gountas et al. (2012) stress the importance that subsequent research on the subject investigate different market segments and their characteristics in order to determine if there are differences in the relationship between the desire for fame and intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. Individual differences such as personality, age, gender, education, and income may also play a role in the desire for fame and its association with intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Gountas et al., 2012). Therefore, looking at a highly specific targeted group of individuals such as cosplayers may illuminate potential issues and market segment characteristics that did not emerge in the more general research by Gountas et al. (2012).

Definitions of Terms

For the purposes of the present study the following definitions will be utilized:

1. **Fame** is "an achievement that is acknowledged when more people have heard of a particular person than he or she can ever meet" (Margolis, 1977, p. 3).

2. **Fandom** is "the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text" (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 8)

3. **Cosplay** is "a portmanteau word that combines both elements 'costume' and 'play' together. While 'play' represents that it is one sort of performing activity, 'costume' implies that people need particular outfits and accessories to be a specific character" (Wang, 2010, p. 18).

4. **Social Media** will be used to refer to websites whereby users can interact with each other to some capacity. Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Reddit, 4chan, Linkedin, Vine, and YouTube are examples of social media.

5. **Facebook Page:** A Facebook Page is a specific type of page (separate from the traditional Facebook Profile) where an individual or organization can build a profile, upload photo galleries, and post videos that are all publicly viewable on Facebook.com. Pages can be established under broad categories, such as a "local business or place," a "company, organization or institution," a "brand or product," an "artist, band or public figure, "entertainment," or a "cause or community" (Facebook Page Creation, 2017). Within each of these broad categories more specific page types can be created, for example under "artist, band, or public figure" an individual can choose Artist, Author, Band, Teacher, Politician, or Fictional Character. Facebook Pages contain built in visitor tracking, purchasable ads, and event hosting. Individual Facebook Profiles can "Like" the Page and receive updates from the Page on their Newsfeed. The individuals that "Likes" the page are known as followers.

6. **Facebook Artist Page:** the term given to a Facebook Page designated as Artist. This shares the same features as a Facebook Page. Within the cosplay community, the term "Facebook fan page" is used interchangeably with the term "Facebook Artist Page."

7. **Values** are defined as learned guiding principles and preferences developed from social interactions, experiences, and culture (Parks & Guay, 2009).

8. **Aspirations** are long term goals in life (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

9. **Motivators** are "psychological processes involving 'arousal, direction, intensity, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal directed'" (Mitchell, 1997, as quoted in Parks & Guay, 2009)

10. **Intrinsic motivations** are motivations "that individuals find interesting and would do in the absence of operationally separable consequences" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 233).

11. **Extrinsic motivations** are motivations that are driven by an outside source, such as social convention, peer expectation, and external reward (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

The present study focuses on one form of fandom, cosplay, and will investigate motivators for Facebook Artist Page usage among individuals within the cosplay community. This review of literature is broken up into several sections. The first section centers on motivational theories and presents an overview of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the importance of values in determining behavioral motivation. The second section provides an overview of fandom in general and presents different types of fan works before focusing specifically on cosplay. The third section addresses various types of fame and celebrity as well as the process for creating micro-celebrity and what this means for ordinary people today. The fourth section discusses how people utilize social media to form connections with others and cultivate their own social groups and micro-celebrity. The fifth section dedicated to the marriage between fame, social media, and cosplay is included to help shed light on the connections between the previous sections discussed.

Motivational Theory

In order to understand why individuals choose to participate in cosplay, why they choose to utilize social media, and why they may desire fame, it is important to have an understanding of basic motivational theory. Motivational theorists rely on the assumption that individuals choose to participate in particular behaviors with the intent to satisfy particular goals or needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985). These motivations can be as essential to human function as choosing to eat a meal, to as trivial as deciding what color car to buy. The self-determination theory popularized by

Deci & Ryan (2000) explains that all behaviors and goal pursuits boil down to the satisfaction of three essential needs: the need for competence, the need for relatedness, and the need for autonomy.

Originally developed over the course of several works by Deci & Ryan through the 1980s, SDT currently serves as the foundation of motivational behavior studies in fields ranging from communication studies, business, anthropology, psychology, and sociology (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Lange, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2011). The theory is based on the assumption that humans are "active, growth-oriented organisms who are naturally inclined toward integration of their psychic elements into a unified sense of self and integration of themselves into their larger social structures" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229). In other words, humans actively work towards being successful at participating in interesting and fulfilling activities, having control over their lives, and having positive social interactions. The successful fulfillment of the needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy are required for an individual to reach ideal psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The effectiveness of the needs satisfaction depends on if the motivation for the behavior is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated.

Activities driven by intrinsic motivations are "defined as those that individuals find interesting and would do in the absence of operationally separable consequences" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 233). In other words, intrinsically motivated activities are those that people engage in for the sake of engaging in them. Studies show that the fulfillment of intrinsic motivations lead to the most positive psychological outcomes and feelings of wellbeing (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Conversely, activities driven by extrinsic motivations are those that are motivated by an

outside source, such as social convention, peer expectation, and external reward (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Researchers have found that extrinsically motivated behaviors, as opposed to intrinsically motivated behaviors, tend to result in lower levels of personal fulfillment and satisfactions (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Extrinsic motivations may potentially lead to positive feelings and self-fulfillment. SDT theorists posit that the extrinsic motivations that are more integrated, as opposed to those that are less integrated, into the individual's self-regulation are more likely to lead to positive outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Deci & Ryan (2000) refer to this process as *internalization.*

Internalization occurs when individuals take motivational constructs originally derived from external sources and integrate them into personal values. It "is an active, natural process in which individuals attempt to transform socially sanctioned mores or quests into personally endorsed values" (Ryan et al.,1985, as quoted by Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 236). Deci and Ryan (2000) describe internalization in four steps: external regulation, introjection, identification, and integration. External regulation, which represents one of the lowest level of integration, occurs when behaviors are only driven by external rewards or consequences. Examples include listening to parental demands to avoid external punishment or studying to achieve a good grade. Studies suggest that externally motivated behaviors provide the least fulfillment of the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and work towards undermining intrinsic motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Introjection is similar to external regulation in that one is motivated by external drivers; however, behavior is driven by one's motivation to avoid a negative psychological consequence, such as shame or guilt (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Examples

include acting politely towards aggressive customers on the job to avoid getting in trouble with a superior or changing one's behavior to avoid embarrassment. In the case of introjected motivations, the individuals are aware that there is some level of external control over their behaviors; however they make an active conscious choice to engage in the behavior despite potential negative consequences to their personal fulfillment. The next level, identification, is when an individual is completely aware and has accepted the fact that his or her behavior is driven by external factors, but he or she has identified with the importance of the task and has made performing it more autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, choosing to obey traffic lights to avoid colliding into cars crossing into the intersection. Finally, integration occurs when one's behavior is completely driven by self-motivation and identification of the behaviors as in line with one's values and personal identity. Specifically, "what was initially external regulation will have fully transformed into self-regulation, and the result is self-determined extrinsic motivation" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 236). When compared to the other three stages of internalization, behaviors driven by integrated self-determined extrinsic motivations are most likely to result in higher levels of personal fulfillment. Thus, integrated self-determined extrinsic motivation is considered most similar to intrinsic motivation. Further clarification of internalization is explained by looking at the three basic needs as determined by SDT, the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Deci and Ryan (2000) define competence as being effective at completing tasks, goals, and developing skills. They generalize competence further as "a propensity to have an effect on the environment as well as to attain valued outcomes within it" (p. 231). They further mention that in order for one to attain the benefits from successful

competency or effectiveness, one does not need to become a master of a particular skill or craft. Rather, so long as one perceives a suitable level of competence, his or her need for competence can be fulfilled. Though feelings of successful competence can be met through personal evaluation of skills and effectiveness, positive feedback from peers is seen as an important aspect to meeting the need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Negative feedback, conversely, is detrimental to the satisfaction of the need for competence. The effects of this negative feedback depends upon whether the particular motivation for the behavior is either intrinsic or extrinsic. If the behavior is intrinsically motivated the negative feedback would have a more harmful effect because the behavior is more personally motivated (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The more integrated or intrinsically motivated the behavior, the more effective the behavior will be at fulfilling the need for competence.

The need for relatedness is based on the human being's drive for meaningful social interaction and relationships. Social relatedness can be achieved through a variety of different environments, both in person (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Greenwood, Long, & Dal Cin, 2013) and as recent studies show, through online interactions (Ellison et al., 2007; Gentile, Twenge, Freeman, & Campbell, 2012; Reinecke, Vorderer, & Knop, 2014). According to SDT, intrinsic motivations are more likely to result in positive satisfaction when the individual feels secure and comfortable with the individuals they are relating to. For example, one's need for relatedness is much more likely to be fulfilled when in the company of close friends as opposed to new acquaintances. This is in line with studies that show that the more integrated in a community one becomes, the more related one feels to the other community members

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Gray et al., 2007; Greenwood et al., 2013). Over time "SDT proposes that people tend to internalize the values and regulations of their social groups. This tendency is facilitated by feelings of relatedness to socializing others, as well as feelings of competence with respect to the regulation being internalized" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 238). In other words, the more time we spend with people, the more we tend to internalize their values and ideas. This leads to increased feelings of belonging and competence by being accepted into a social group.

The need for autonomy is related to the feeling of control over one's life and the decisions one can make (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When it comes to executing a behavior the more control one has over the behaviors, consequences, and rewards associated with the motivation the more in control of their needs fulfillment one feels (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan et al., 1985). For example, an individual may feel less satisfaction fulfilling a task he or she feels "forced" to perform—such as taking a standardized test—than he or she would feel if performing a task for personal knowledge growth—such as reading a book. Having to take a standardized test as a requirement in school is outside of the control of the individual; one may feel he or she is expected to comply and would be punished should he or she choose to ignore the task. This is in contrast to the intrinsic motivational need one may fulfill by reading books one has an interest in. Studies have shown that implementing deadlines, surveillance, and threatening punishment all reduce feelings of autonomy and therefore reduce intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, Ryan et al., 1985).

It is important to recognize that it is key to understand what an individual finds intrinsically valuable in order to determine if his or her behavior is intrinsically or

extrinsically driven. In the next section of this paper, the concept of values will be defined and discussed in terms of its relationship to motivation and behavior.

Values, as described by Parks and Guay (2009), can be generalized as learned guiding principles and preferences developed from social interactions, experiences, and culture. For example, values are often passed on from parents to offspring, from educators to students, and from one friend to another. Over time individuals develop a set of values that ultimately guide their motivations and behaviors. Studies in psychology and sociology have worked towards identifying a generalized idea of the core values of human existence and have attempted to model these values. Schwartz (1994), developed a widely used values structure derived from a study of over 19 nations and varying cultures. The structure makes the distinction between 10 different core values, with additional connecting sub-values. The main values are identified as tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, and benevolence (Schwartz, 1994, p. 31). Within the circular matrix he developed, the values that are next to each other within the structure are the most related (i.e. tradition and conformity, power and achievement) and all radiate around the central idea of self-respect. Certain values such as wealth are positioned more closely between two segments to show their relatedness. Those on opposite sides of the center work against each other.

Nearly 18 years later Schwartz and eleven other authors revisited the original values theory with the intention of improving its heuristic power and circular structure (Schwartz et al., 2012). The study surveyed over 6,000 individuals from 10 countries in order to develop a more detailed collection of core values than the initial 1994 study.

The resulting matrix consisted of 19 factor analysis confirmed core values: self-direction—thought, self-direction—action, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power—resources, power—dominance, face, security—personal, security—societal, tradition, conformity—rules, conformity—interpersonal, humility, benevolence—caring, universalism—concern, universalism—nature, and universalism—tolerance (p. 674). This new set of value predictions and connections are still being tested for reliability and validity and while there are shortcomings related to precision, studies have shown the measurement to be effective and much more descriptive than the original 10 value scale (Cieciuch, Davidov, Vecchione, Beierlein, & Schwartz, 2014; Cieciuch, Davidov, Vecchione, & Schwartz, 2014; Dobewall & Rudnev, 2013).

Studies have shown that the internalization of intrinsically related values and the subsequent fulfillment of goals informed by those values is related to lower instances of mental health problems compared to the internalization of extrinsically related values (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Parks & Guay, 2009; Ryan et al.,1985). Kasser & Ryan (1996) developed a scale that measures individuals' extrinsic and intrinsic aspirational goals as informed by values. Wealth, fame, and image are constructs that fall under extrinsic aspirations, whereas personal growth, community, and relatedness are constructs that fall under intrinsic aspirations. Health falls under both intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. Kasser and Ryan state that those who place more importance on extrinsically based aspirational values and goals have more mental health issues than those who focus on intrinsically based values and goals (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). In fact, researchers have noted that extrinsic motivators can be

detrimental to an overall sense of personal fulfillment and happiness (Gountas et al., 2012; Greenwood et al., 2013; Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

The present study is focused on understanding why people participate in cosplay and the role of social media in the development of cosplay fame. Because the present study focuses on the values, motivations, and aspirations in the context of cosplay, Facebook, and the creation of fame, the remaining review of literature will focus on fandom, cosplay, social media, and fame and potential motivations and aspirations associated with each. Throughout the remainder of this review of literature, the discussion will focus on motivations and aspirations in relation to fandom behavior, cosplay, the desire for fame, and online social media behavior held by the group in question. It will be important to note which of these motivators are extrinsically versus intrinsically based. It will also be important in the subsequent data analysis to determine where these motivators may have originated.

Fandom

It is not uncommon for the opening paragraphs of research about fandom to start by justifying why it matters. A frequently used quote to justify the research is "Fandom matters because it matters to fans" (Gray et al., 2007, p. 1). Over the last thirty years researchers such as Henry Jenkins and John Fiske have transformed the study of fans from explaining how fandom behavior is *normal* and much more than just being really into *Star Trek* into a legitimate, ever growing field of understanding how and why we become so invested in seemingly the most mundane (Gray et al., 2007).

What is Fandom?

Fandom is…more than the mere act of being a fan of something; it is a collective strategy, a communal effort to form interpretive communities that in their subcultural cohesion evaded the preferred and intended meanings of the "power bloc" (Fiske, 1989) represented by popular media. (Gray et al., 2007, p. 2)

A very basic definition of fandom is simply "the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text" (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 8). The definition of fandom is highly debated among fans and scholars alike. Being a part of a fandom has a mainstream connotation of being something that is abnormal (Jenkins & Tulloch, 1995). There is a perception that people who participate in fandom are delusional and take the narrative or text way too seriously (Pearson, 2007). In her investigation into high-brow media (think Shakespeare) and fan studies, Pearson (2007) observed that individuals had many different ideas on what a fan is. Those Pearson (2007) described as "friends within the Sherlockian world" (p. 106) (and in this case the classic literature and not the more modern BBC television adaptation) equated the word fan with sports enthusiasts and would not adopt the word to describe themselves and their appreciation of Conan Doyle's work. Others indicated that the word fan denotes a kind of "loony" or "irrational" behavior (Pearson, 2007, p. 106). When choosing to define themselves, the term aficionado or devotee was more well received, and one participant made note to say that "I would prefer to separate myself from teenagers and testosterone-charged boys of all ages" (Pearson, 2007, p. 106).

How did the word fan and fandom get such a negative connotation? Part of the reason fandom has a bad name is the media portrayal of die-hard fans as nerds that are out of touch with reality and are socially inept (Jenkins, 2012). *Star Trek* fans are

constantly mocked for their enthusiasm in popular culture, and at this point the crazed

fan has become a trope that exists for the purposes of mockery and entertainment

(Jenkins, 2006a; Jenkins & Tulloch, 1995). The fanatical part of fan and fandom is a

large part of its negative tone. "Building on the word's [fanatic] traditional links to

madness and demonic possession, news reports frequently characterize fans as

psychopaths whose frustrated fantasies of intimate relationships with stars or

unsatisfied desires to achieve their own stardom take violent and antisocial forms"

(Jenkins, 2012, p. 13). Stories of crazy fans far outweigh the stories of normal fans.

> The fan, whose cultural preferences and interpretive practices seem so
> antithetical to dominant aesthetic logic, must be represented as "other", must be
> held at a distance so that fannish taste does not pollute sanctioned culture.
> Public attacks on media fans keep other viewers in line, making it uncomfortable
> for readers to adapt such "inappropriate" strategies of making sense of popular
> texts or to embrace so passionately materials of such dubious aesthetic merit.
> (Jenkins, 2012, p. 19*)*

Others may react to the term fandom and fan because of its connection to the

kinds of texts usually associated with these terms. The fans of the original Sherlock

Holmes stories that Pearson (2007) studied wanted to differentiate themselves from

other types of fans, implying that their interest in Conan Doyle's original Sherlock

Holmes works somehow put them above fans of sports. Jenkins (2012) discusses the

institutional hierarchy of fandom built entirely on perceptions of what is and is not in

good taste.

In the last several years society has become more and more accepting of typical

fan behavior, with scholars often noting that fandom has gone "mainstream" and is

losing its subcultural characteristics (Jenkins, 2006b). What has come out of it is a need

to distinguish between different levels of fans, from the casual fan to the most deeply invested fans. Jenkins (2006b) notes that individuals now engage in "fannish behavior" without identifying as a fan, and vice versa. Fannish behavior, specifically fan works, is discussed later in this review.

Studies of Fandom. As stated earlier, fans consume texts in a variety of ways, and the extent to which individuals consume these texts and incorporate them into their lives has been a topic of interest most notably to media scholar Henry Jenkins. Jenkins, who has published four books related to media, fandom, and audience consumption is well-known among scholars interested in this topic; his most famous work *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* has been cited over 3200 times (Scholar.google.com). Currently, writers documenting the evolution of fan studies often begin with the work of Jenkins, and describe the changes of themes in fan studies in as waves (Gray et al., 2007).

Studies of fandom have undergone three "waves" since the 1970s. The first wave, called the "Fandom is Beautiful" stage by Gray et al. (2007), focused on describing what fandom was about and how it worked. Science Fiction Fandom was at the forefront of this wave, with Trekkers and sci-fi writers at the helm. "Early fan studies (and much of the work it inspired) often turned to the very activities and practices— convention attendance, fan fiction writing, fanzine editing and collection, letter-writing campaigns—that had been coded as pathological, and attempted to redeem them as creative, thoughtful, and productive" (Gray et al., 2007). At that time fandom was perceived as weird, and early studies attempted to explain to the masses that fandom

was a collective, engaging way of expression that was sorely misunderstood (Gray et al., 2007; Jenkins, 2006a, 2012).

The second wave of fandom studies occurred after fandom began making its way into the mainstream. This wave occurred in the mid-1990s as companies and marketing teams began to market specifically to fans, and in a way encouraged the types of fan behavior previously seen as odd (Gray et al., 2007). Celebrities began identifying themselves as fans, attempting to reach out to their audiences in a way to tell them, "It's ok, I am the same way" (Gray et al., 2007). An important note however, is that though fandom was entering into the mainstream, it became more important to be a part of the right fandom, because some texts or works were seen as more acceptable than others. For example, it was much more acceptable to be part of a fandom of a sports team than it was to be a part of Harry Potter fandom (Gray et al., 2007). During the second wave, focus shifted to understanding how fan communities work and attempting to generalize the dynamics of fan groups. However, it soon became apparent that everyone participated in fandom differently, and this brought about the third wave of fandom studies.

The third wave is the current wave of fandom studies and focuses less on why and how people participate in fandom, and more on what participating in fandom means for people's everyday lives (Gray et al., 2007). Currently fandom participation occurs online, and individuals can be connected with other fans 24/7 through an internet connection. Users can connect with fandom communities through their Facebook pages, follow their favorite actors on Twitter, and share links to fan-art and fan-fiction on Tumblr. The third wave of fandom studies captures "fundamental insights into modern

life" (Grey et al., 2007, p. 9). Grey et al. (2007) state that, "it is precisely *because* fan consumption has grown into a taken-for-granted aspect of modern communication and consumption that it warrants critical analysis and investigation more than ever" (Gray et al., 2007, p. 9).

In line with this third wave of fandom studies, Robert Kozinets' (2001) frequently cited study of *Star Trek* fans was aimed at understanding the complex meanings of consumption and fan practices within the Trekker community. Using Schouten and McAlexander's (1995) theory of a *subculture of consumption* to inform his study, Kozinets (2001) conducted in-person observations at conventions, conducted an informal online ethnography, and interviewed 67 fans of *Star Trek*. Schouten and McAlexander define a *subculture of consumption* as "a distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand or consumption activity" (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, p. 43). Kozinets' (2001) findings suggest that many fans of *Star Trek* value the utopian society presented in the series, and their consumption and fan practices often play into the identity of the fan. Through their fan practices "individual fans [legitimize] particular differences, locate their own sources of identity and power, and invest themselves in the social world in particular ways" (Kozinets, 2001, p. 83). He also adds that "mass media reception in fandom is driven by an affective relationship with the culture of consumption that affords each fan a source of identity, power and mastery" (Kozinets, 2001, p. 83). The result of Kozinets' (2001) work is the Model of Consumer-Media Articulations in a Mass Media Culture of Consumption, which details the relationships between media producer articulations (the language producers use to promote the media), macro cultural

articulations (the attitude of the mass culture regarding the media), media subculture and micro cultural articulations (the attitude towards the media held by fans and smaller groups of people), media culture of consumption articulations (the attitude towards how the media should be consumed), and the individualized negotiations of consumption meanings identities and practices (Kozinets, 2001, p. 83). According to Kozinets (2001), the combination of the attitude towards a text as conveyed through popular culture, the socially acceptable way the text is consumed, and the attitude towards the consumption practices of the text in subculture and fan groups all combine to help shape the attitudes a given media fan has towards their consumption of texts. In Kozinets' (2001) study, the way *Star Trek* fans chose to consume the show and the level of comfort they had in expressing their fandom was negotiated under the influence of macro and micro cultural articulations regarding how *Star Trek* fandom should be expressed. To those involved in the *Star Trek* community, it was socially acceptable to dress up as the characters, but to those outside of the fandom it seemed bizarre (Kozinets, 2001).

Complimentary to Kozinets' research, Obst, Zinkiewicz, and Smith (2002) investigated the "underlying dimensions of psychological sense of community (PSOC) in an international community of interest, science fiction fandom" (p. 93). A total of 359 Sci Fan fans at Aussiecon in Melbourne, Australia completed a questionnaire addressing feelings of community within the science fiction fandom and levels of identification (Obst et al., 2002). Their findings suggest that participants in science fiction fandom feel a high sense of community and are drawn together because of their shared interests. Findings also indicate a notable sense of "Influence—the idea of needing a reciprocal relationship between individuals and the community in terms of the impact on one

another" (Obst et al., 2002, p. 97) within the community. Data suggests that there was no significant difference of PSOC between the fans that interact mostly online versus those who interact face to face.

Current studies of fandom, especially those published in *The Journal of Fandom Studies* and *Transformative Works and Cultures,* focus on the relationship between fans and fan works. For example, in "A Case of Identity: Role Playing, Social Media and BBC *Sherlock"*, McClellan (2013) explains how fans take to Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr to role play as characters from the popular British television show *Sherlock*. Fans role play the characters online in order to expand past the storylines depicted in the television show and experience emotional immersion in the characters via the creation of new narratives (McClellan, 2013). Role playing characters online is a subtype of fan fiction, a type of fan work that allows users to take on the persona of a given character and interact with other individuals that take on the persona of another character (McClellan, 2013).

There are a number of different types of fan works, each offering a unique outlet for self-expression. The next section will explore three different fan works: fan fiction, fan art, and cosplay.

Fan Works. It is difficult to look at fandom studies and not read something about fan-fiction and fan-art. These two methods of transformative works enable fans to express themselves and their interpretations of their favorite narratives. "Fan generated-texts…need to be understood within their own terms as cultural artifacts. They are aesthetic objects which draw on the artistic traditions of the fan community as well as on

the personal creativity and insights of individual consumer/artists" (Jenkins, 2012, p. 223).

Jenkins (2012) defined fan writings as "Silly Putty™", stating "fan writing builds upon the interpretive practices of the fan community, taking the collective meta-text as the base from which to generate a wide range of media-related stories" (Jenkins, 2012, p. 156). Fan-fiction is the most popular of fan writings. Generally, fan-fiction is made by taking an existing set of characters and writing an original story. For example, in Gabriel and Standbyme's fan-fiction *Twist and Shout,* the characters Dean and Castiel from the TV show *Supernatural* are written into a tragic and explicit love story dealing with loss, post-traumatic stress disorder, and homophobia all set amidst the Vietnam War and AIDS epidemic (gabriel & standbyme, 2014). Fan-fiction allows writers to "rework and rewrite [the primary text], repairing or dismissing unsatisfying aspects, developing interests not previously explored" (Jenkins, 2012, p. 162). Fan-fiction writers often create alternate universes for existing characters, change sexual orientations of characters to suit their whims, and cross over multiple genres to create large, dynamic universes open for storytelling (Jenkins, 2012). Writers often share their works online through a variety of outlets; websites such as An Archive of Our Own specifically cater to fan-fiction writers. An Archive of Our Own currently hosts over 1.5 million original pieces of fan-fiction that cover 11 different fandom genres and hosts over 7 million users a month ("Home | Archive of Our Own," n.d.).

Fan-art is a similar process, wherein artists create original media depicting existing characters. Artists can create alternate universes, create their own comic book style books with borrowed characters, and sell prints of their work at local conventions

and online. Many fan artists create original pieces of work that are then uploaded on websites such as DeviantArt (Manifold, 2009). Fans of Japanese animation are well known for their fan creations of *doujinshi*, a form of fan-made comic books adapting existing characters and setting them in original storylines (Ito & Crutcher, 2014). Doujinshi artists often sell their fan-made comics at art or doujinshi shows to other fans (Ito & Crutcher, 2014).

Regardless of the medium, fan works contribute to the shared social capital of the fandom base. "Fan reception cannot and does not exist in isolation, but is always shaped through input from other fans and motivated, at least partially, by a desire for further interaction with a larger social and cultural community" (Jenkins, 2012, p. 76). The website Tumblr has become a popular place for fandom to flourish, and makes sharing fan art and fan fiction as easy as clicking "reblog" (Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter, 2014).

> *Online fan communities might well be some of the most fully realized versions of Levy's cosmopedia, expansive self-organizing groups focused around the collective production, debate, and circulation of meanings, interpretations, and fantasies in response to various artifacts of contemporary popular culture (Jenkins, 2012, p. 137).*

One type of fan work that does not get as much attention in studies of fandom is cosplay. Cosplay will be the focus of the next section of this chapter and will be the type of fan work investigated in the present study.

Cosplay. "The word 'cosplay' is a portmanteau word that combines both elements 'costume' and 'play' together. While 'play' connotes a performing activity, 'costume' implies that people need particular outfits and accessories to be a specific

character" (Wang, 2010, p. 18). Those who participate in cosplay are known as cosplayers. The act of participating in cosplay is known as cosplaying.

Okabe (2012) claims that the term cosplay "originally referred to period dramas and historical plays and rehearsals that required costumes appropriate to the period. The term has gained currency in Japan since the 1970's to describe the practice of dressing up as characters from anime, manga and games" (2012, p. 225). However the most popular origin story of the word cosplay is credited to Japanese journalist Nobuyuki Takahashi, who used the term *kosupure* to describe the fans dressed as characters at the Los Angeles Science World Con in 1984 (Rahman et al., 2012). It should be noted that Los Angeles Science World Con was not the first convention that had costumed participants. The origins of costumed participants at conventions dates back to the World Science Fiction Convention in NYC in 1939 (Madle, 1994). This convention had two costumed participants, sci-fi writers Forrest J. Ackerman and Myrtle Douglas, dressed as characters from the movie *Things to Come* (Madle, 1994). According to Madle (1994), the costumers were dressed up at a banquet held during the convention and became the "real basis for the costume balls which became a part of all future world conventions" (p. 51).

There is an unspoken debate in the cosplay community and within academic studies about cosplay regarding what kinds of costuming activities can be called cosplay. For some, the term cosplay should only be applied to the dressing as characters from Japanese anime, manga and video games because they believe that cosplay originated in Japan (Flashcombo, 2009). With this mindset, someone dressed up as Thor or Spiderman would not be considered a cosplayer but a costumer. Only

those who dress as characters from Japanese content would be allowed to be labeled as cosplay. This label is largely flawed, because the origins of the word cosplay itself is credited to a mixing of Japanese and Western culture (Takahashi was talking about costumes at a California convention, where characters from a variety of texts were represented (Okabe, 2012)). Moreover, many Japanese and Western series cross-over from one type of media to another. For example, the popular British live action television show *Sherlock* has an international fan base, and there is a Japanese manga series based on the show. Does this mean those who dress up as Sherlock can claim to be cosplayers? Perhaps. Several studies address the assumption that cosplay refers to dressing as characters from Japanese origins, and state their own definition of cosplay is broader and includes Western media (Lamerichs, 2010; Lotecki, 2012).

Other researchers are much more general with the term, lumping any kind of playing in costume a form of cosplay. For example, Lotecki (2012) describes historical reenactment, zombie walks, and live action role playing all as types of cosplaying. This definition is also problematic, because it leaves so much open room for interpretation. Individuals who participate in zombie walks or live action role playing are usually coming up with their own original characters (Lotecki, 2012). This involves an individual devising an appropriate role or persona they wish to adopt. If someone is dressing as a well-known character such as Batman, casual viewers that are familiar with the popular character have expectations about the character's appearance, personality and behavior. The outside observer has something to go on. This may not be the case with original characters. As will be discussed later in this section, cosplay has a huge focus on faithfulness to the appearance of a character that does not occur when talking about

a made up zombie or role playing character. As Wang (2010) put it, "the essential of cosplay has determined that for cosplay activities, there should be an original source" (p. 20).

What about historical reenactment? Is that cosplay? Those were real people! Strauss (2001) defines historical reenactment as "ritualized behavior [and] ceremonial activities" surrounding dressing as historical figures and reliving important historical events. Studies have found that some of the most popular motivations for participation in reenactment is being able to don another persona for a day, to appreciate history, and escape mundane life (Miller, 1998). These motivations are not too far off from the motivations for cosplaying. However, there is a large difference in the costumed performance of historical reenactment than typical convention cosplay. Reenactment is largely focused on obtaining and experiencing historical accuracy (Miller, 1998). This means wearing and creating garments from period-appropriate material and obtaining period accurate props and accessories. When asked to explain the difference between cosplay and reenactment, reenactors cited the difference in motivations of cosplayers versus reenactors and indicated that they feel their hobby is less nerdy and more serious ("Historical reenactment versus cosplaying," 2010).

Lotecki (2012) described cosplay as having genres: steampunk, furry, live action role playing, historical reenactment, zombie and Trekkers. She emphasizes within these genres individuals often dress as original characters. This is especially evident in furry cosplaying, where individuals often dress as their "fursona", their personal expression of their animal personality.

A few studies mention Lolita as a type of cosplay (Rahman et al., 2012; Winge, 2006). The term Lolita refers to the Japanese street style Elegant Gothic Lolita that is largely identifiable by bell shaped skirts, elaborate embellishment, and doll-like appearance (Rahman, Wing-sun, Lam, & Mong-tai, 2011). It is very important to note that cosplay and Lolita fashion are not one and the same, and should not be lumped together. Lolita is considered a fashion style rooted in a culture, as is punk or goth; therefore, many lolitas do not consider their clothing a costume and take offense to being labeled as cosplayers (Blauersouth, 2011; Rahman et al., 2011; "What is Lolita? - for Lolitas of All Styles," 2014, "What Is Lolita? / The Fashion," 2014).

Whereas Lolita dressing entails the adoption of a particular style, cosplaying entails obtaining or recreating a costume donned by an existing character from popular media and dressing as the character in a social setting. For the purposes of the present study, any person dressed as a character based in a published text will be considered a cosplayer. Original costume designs without a developed story or character are not considered to be cosplays.

Once dressed as the character, the cosplayer then determines how he or she will interact with others while in costume (Lotecki, 2012). Some cosplayers choose to embody the personality of their character and will role play as the character the entire time they are in costume (Lotecki, 2012). For example, a cosplayer dressed as Jack Sparrow from the *Pirates of the Caribbean*, may choose to walk and talk just like the character does in the movie. For others, cosplaying is just about being a visual representation of the character, and do not choose to change their behavior or role play in any way (Lotecki, 2012).

The most popular venue for cosplaying is at a convention. These conventions usually cater to a variety of fandom activities. The most popular types of conventions cosplayers flock to are those that focus on anime, manga, video games, science fiction and comic books. Conventions such as San Diego Comic Con, Penny Arcade Expo, Dragon Con, and Anime Expo bring in thousands of attendees every year (Delahanty, 2015). Depending on the type of convention, cosplayers can participate in costume contests, attend panels dedicated to various aspects of cosplay creation, and join photoshoots with other cosplayers from the same series (Lotecki, 2012; Okabe, 2012). Special convention events like Human Cosplay Chess, Project Cosplay!, and themed cosplay balls are held to give more opportunities for cosplayers to interact with each other and entertain the other attendees of the convention.

For many, obtaining the costume is part of the draw for cosplaying (Taylor, 2009). Many cosplayers make their own costumes, utilizing skills in sewing, prop making, and wig styling (Lotecki, 2012). Those who do not want to create their own costumes can purchase ready-made costumes of popular characters from largely Chinese manufacturers online or commission a seamstress to make a custom costume (Lamerichs, 2010; Lotecki, 2012; Rahman et al., 2012). Although purchasing costumes has become easier, "Making one's own outfit instead of buying or commissioning a costume has high value within the cosplay community" (Okabe, 2012, p. 227). While the process of obtaining the costume is of interest to some researchers, most choose to focus on the *why* and not the *how.*

The majority of studies on cosplay have focused on investigating the motivations of cosplayers (Bonnichsen, 2011; Frey, 2015.; Lotecki, 2012; Peirson-Smith, 2013a;

Rahman et al., 2012; Wang, 2010), the way cosplay allows exploration of gender identity (Bonnichsen, 2011; Galbraith, 2013; Gn, 2011; Leng, 2013), and what cosplay can tell us about the creative potential of adolescents (Manifold, 2009). Studies have shown that cosplayers participate in the hobby as a form of escape (Rahman et al., 2012), a way to express the love of a character (Lotecki, 2012; Taylor, 2009; Winge, 2006), as a form of gendered expression (Gn, 2011; Leng, 2013), and as a way to be part of a community of likeminded individuals (Wang, 2010). The most popular of these reasons is as an expression of fandom (Bonnichsen, 2011; Okabe, 2012; Taylor, 2009).

An example of a recent study that addressed motivations of cosplaying is Rahman et al.'s (2012) study *"Cosplay": Imaginative Self and Performing Identity* which sought to understand the cosplay culture in Hong Kong. Using 15 informants (12 survey respondents and 3 in depth interviewees) Rahman et al. found that participants of cosplay valued the hobby as a form of escape from everyday life and a form of personal self-expression. Informants described that cosplay gave them a chance to act outside of their personality, and be admired for their performance (Okabe, 2012).

Daisuke Okabe's study of Japanese cosplayers is documented in the book *Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in a Connected World* and focuses on understanding the cultural practices of cosplayers. Okabe's work consisted of interviews with 10 female cosplayers between the ages of 20-28 years old and field observations at Japanese cosplay events. Findings indicate that cosplayers share a code of conduct in terms of acceptable cosplaying locations and behavior (Okabe, 2012). For example, in Japan it is only acceptable to cosplay within the hall of the cosplay event, and cosplayers must change out of costume when choosing to leave (Okabe, 2012).

Participants also expressed the value of hand making a costume versus purchasing a costume from a store, suggesting that "failing to make one's costume can be seen as a rejection of the community's values and standards [and] cosplayers attending events wearing premade outfits apologize to other cosplayers" (p, 235). Additionally, cosplayers expressed the importance of peer feedback within the community. Cosplayers attempting to gain general fame by dressing up as popular characters "dressing to try and get attention" were perceived negatively, and dubbed as *torareta* (p. 241). "If a cosplayer chooses to portray a character who really does wear revealing clothing, and she exhibits a deep understanding of the character, she is not classified as a *torareta*. However, if other cosplayers think her intent is simply to get attention, she is looked down upon" (p. 241).

Anne Pierson-Smith (2013a) conducted a focus group and series of interviews with over 40 cosplayers in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong in order to understand individuals' motives for participation. Similar to findings by Rahman et al. (2012), participants valued cosplay as a chance to adopt the persona of their favorite character, to interact with likeminded fans, and express their identity through dress. Peirson-Smith (2013) also noted that cosplayers felt community feedback was important, and being praised and accepted among the community promoted feelings of inclusivity within the community. Participants also noted the importance of *crossplay* as a valuable form of gendered expression.

Within the cosplay community the term *crossplay* refers to dressing as a character that is of the opposite sex (Leng, 2013). Crossplay is a largely accepted practice within the cosplaying community, and in addition to sharing the same values of

authenticity and accuracy of costume as regular cosplaying, crossplayers strive to pass as the opposite gender while in costume (Leng, 2013). However, some crossplayers purposefully make mockery of their crossplaying activity and participate as a form of parody and entertainment (for example Sailor Bubba and Man Faye) (Lamerichs, 2010). Female to male crossplay is the most common, as women often feel they can "pull off" cosplaying male characters (Lamerichs, 2010; Taylor, 2009)

One of the central themes throughout studies of cosplay is the idea that accuracy to the original character is one of the most important aspects of successful cosplay (Bonnichsen, 2011; Lotecki, 2012; Okabe, 2012). Accuracy to the original character is based on getting the components of the costume correct, and presenting oneself correctly through posing (Okabe, 2012). When cosplaying as a character that is well known among other fans it opens up the opportunity for others to assess the authenticity of the costume.

A cosplayer's assessment of her own costume is meaningless on its own. The standards that define the quality of cosplay are not based on individual assessment, nor are they based on assessments accessible to the general public. It is considered more meaningful to create an outfit that garners acclaim from a few community members than from the general public. Whether a cosplay is "good" or "bad" is meaningless if taken out of the context of a peer review by members of the subcultural community. (Okabe, 2012, p. 238)

The internet has become the method by which other cosplayers can view and assess the work of other cosplayers and provide feedback (regardless of whether the feedback is welcome or not).

> Acknowledgement of competence was awarded in several ways including: through complimentary online comments left on individuals artist's gallery, pages by fellow fans, being listed as a favorite on other fanartist's or cosplayers' websites: being asked to pose for photographs at conventions; being awarded prizes at…masquerade competitions held…at anime conventions or by being commissioners to create…costumes for fans. (Manifold, 2009, pp. 265–266*)*

Those who do not measure up to community standards may fall prey to the darker side of the community: those who intentionally ridicule and belittle the efforts of cosplayers (Taylor, 2009). These interactions take place in sub communities on 4chan and Tumblr, and are usually met with harsh criticism and loathing from the larger community (Taylor, 2009). There have been no studies that explicitly address this aspect of the cosplay community.

Fame

  The Definition of Fame. Fame has many definitions and synonyms. What does it mean to be famous? Is it defined by how many people know your name? Is it someone remembering you after you die? Does it have to do with how much money you make or how many autographs you've signed? Are you famous after you've graced the cover of a magazine or after you've been written into a history book? Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines fame as "the condition of being known or recognized by

many people" (Merriam-Webster, 2015). How many people is enough to qualify being famous?

Scholars have struggled or outright neglected to define fame in their work, assuming that we the reader know what being famous means (Gountas, Gountas, Reeves, & Moran, 2012; Greenwood, Long, & Dal Cin, 2013; Maltby et al., 2008; Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014; Uhls & Greenfield, 2012). Margolis (1977) defined fame as "an achievement that is acknowledged when more people have heard of a particular person than he or she can ever meet" (1977, p. 3). This definition is problematic, as humans are not the only achievers of fame. The Statue of Liberty for example, is a famous landmark that many people know of; however, an inanimate object is not a person. Songs, buildings, sayings, and stories can be famous, and therefore, fame is not limited to something only a human person can achieve. Because this particular study focuses on the fame achieved by an individual, Margolis's definition of fame will be adopted for the present study.

Margolis (1977) describes how fame is defined through several categories:

- *Face Fame-* fame derived from physical recognition of the face or body, such as a model. Margolis uses Elizabeth Taylor as an example.
- *Job Fame-* fame derived from holding a position, such as the President of the United States.
- *Fame by Association-* fame derived from association with another famous individual, such as assistants or relatives
- *Fame by Resemblance-* garnered fame from looking like another celebrity

- *Fame by Disaster-* obtaining fame resulting from a disaster, such as a survivor of a plane crash

- *Fame by Ideas-* fame obtained by contributing important ideas to society such as Bill Gates

- *Fame by Familiarity-* fame drawn from consistent exposure to the audience, such as a local news anchor

- *Fame by Entertainment-* being well known for one's ability to entertain. Actors, singers and musicians easily fall into this category

- *Fame by Heroism-* not as often, but fame garnered from performing a heroic act. An example would be the pilot who landed a plane in the Hudson River.

- *Fame by Notoriety-* fame obtained just from being well known or doing something out of the ordinary. Margolis uses Charles Manson as an example. A more contemporary example may be Kim Kardashian, an individual who is famous for no reason other than being famous.

Margolis (1977) points out that it is not uncommon for an individual to start with fame derived from one category and transition to garnering fame in another category. For example, Angelina Jolie, who is most widely known for her film career (*Fame by Entertainment)* is also known for her humanitarian efforts for war refugees and her stance on preventative surgery against breast cancer (*Fame by Heroism)* (Feeney, 2015; Park & Begley, 2015)*.*

In his book *Illusions of Immortality: A Psychology of Fame and Celebrity*, Giles (2000) denotes his own taxonomy of fame, and discusses that "different types of fame have been identified throughout history: fame as immortality, spiritual fame (in the eyes

of God), worldly fame (in the eyes of the public) and, more recently, the fame of the moment" (2000, p. 3) He states that fame, with a deep history dating back to the times of Homer, has evolved into four levels:

- *Domain Specific Fame*-obtaining fame in a specific domain such as sports or academia
- *Fame in the Local Community*- "fame that is constrained either geographically or institutionally" (117)
- *National Fame*-"mass media recognition" (118), able to be recognized by a large and general public
- *International Fame*- known on a worldwide scale

A famous individual may have fame on any of these levels, and at some point may move from one level to the next. Giles (2000) also explains that fame can be described with the following typologies:

- *Public Figures*- *"*individuals who achieve fame because of their role in society…fame automatically adheres itself to any individual who holds an office of this kind; it is impervious to personality factors and the job description carries as much significance as the individuals[sic] name" (111) The President of the United States or the Prime Minister would fall into this category. This is similar to Margolis'(1977) *Job Fame* as described above.
- *Meritocratic Fame*- fame obtained "through merit alone" (112). Giles uses sports stars, classical musicians and scientists as examples of today's merit based

fame achievers. He also notes the problem with defining what counts as a worthy

skill to contribute to merit based fame.

- *Showbusiness "Stars"*- this category describes the more common idea of

  celebrities and individuals who are more noteworthy because of "their off-screen

  lifestyle and personality than for their acting ability" (115).

- *Accidental Fame*-this category describes those that have "achieved fame through

  notoriety or through public access media of some kind" (115). This definition is a

  combination of several of Margolis's (1977) categories. Giles (2000) notes that

  even though he describes this category as accidental fame, individuals who

  "break out" overnight to stardom count in this category even if the individual had

  been seeking fame up to the breaking out point.

Giles' (2000) typography is much more general than Margolis (1977) when defining the

type of fame an individual can obtain, but his description of different levels of fame has

the most potential relevance for discussing the type of fame obtained in fandom and

online participation. The idea of *domain specific* and *fame in the local community* is

perhaps the most relevant to the present study due to subcultural nature of cosplay and

social media, and therefore, it will be discussed in the results section of this project.

Fame and Celebrity. The terms "fame" and "celebrity" are often used

interchangeably in research aimed at describing a certain predisposition for attention

seeking (Gountas et al., 2012; Greenwood et al., 2013; Maltby, 2010; Maltby et al.,

2008; Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014; Uhls & Greenfield, 2012). However, several authors

that specifically study fame as a concept note that fame and celebrity, while sharing

some characteristics, are actually two different concepts.

>*Fame once promised honor and glory and immortality, but in this media age, fame has dissolved into a new slickness and is now indistinguishable from the simple notion of 'celebrity' [but] fame still carries with it an excitement, a promise, a sense of holiness or blessedness which is lost when we try to reduce it to simple celebrity status. (Margolis, 1977, p. 3)*

Margolis (1977) implies that the acquisition of fame brings with it a sense of godliness and reverence from others. Braudy (1997) expresses similar sentiments, and cites that fame is more long term than celebrity, and those that have true fame are able to maintain their status for long periods of time. "The defining characteristic of celebrity is that it is essentially a *media production*, and its usage is largely confined to the twentieth century…the suggestion is that celebrities are well known (through the media) for nothing in particular, whereas the truly famous are in some way *deserving* of individual recognition" (Giles, 2000, p. 4). Maltby et al. (Maltby et al., 2008) describe that "Celebrity is a largely modern phenomena[sic], dependent on technology, while fame has long-standing historical roots. However, in today's media-saturated world, the two are seamlessly intertwined" (p. 280). Malby et al. write of fame and celebrity as separate concepts, but for many the two concepts are the same.

Braudy (1997) and Margolis (1977) note that celebrity is one kind of fame, but most scholars tend to lump fame and celebrity into one concept. For example, in studying fame appeal among adolescents Uhls and Greenfield (2012) use the term celebrity and fame interchangeably. For the purposes of the present study celebrity and fame will be considered one and the same, but attention will be paid to whether participants believe there is a difference between cosplay celebrity and cosplay fame.

One accepted notion in research on celebrity is the idea that those individuals who possess celebrity status in a culture actually reflect the collective values of the

society. "Celebrity…serves to pull [public politics, civil society and private domestic life]

together and do its bit toward maintaining social cohesion and common values" (Inglis,

2010, p. 4). The celebrity can represent both the good and bad values popular within

the society (Inglis, 2010). The celebrity is appointed by the masses as a representation

of the ideal behaviors, looks and lifestyle of the hungry masses. "Fame allows the

aspirant to stand out of the crowd, but with the crowd's approval; in its turn, the

audience picks out its own dear individuality in the qualities of its heroes" (Braudy, 1997,

p. 6).

     The Making of a Celebrity. Individual celebrities are not created by simply

having society pick someone that possesses collective values. Celebrities are made.

The making of a modern celebrity is not an individual endeavor. The modern Hollywood

celebrity has a team of individuals that are responsible for curating the celebrity image

and persona. Managers, agents, and publicists can create a celebrity from the ground

up, and once created they then work daily to ensure that the desired image of the

celebrity is presented to the masses (Turner, 2013). Reality TV shows such as

American Idol, Popstars, and *America's Got Talent* are perfect examples of taking an

"ordinary" individual and the power of managers, agents, and publicity to make them a

success (Turner, 2013). Magazines reproduce images of our favorite celebrities on

newsstands across the country, websites update us daily on the latest activities of our

favorite stars, and news stations provide information about celebrity relationships and

gossip.

     The making of a celebrity is not entirely reliant on the celebrity industry. In some

cases the effort of the individual to become a celebrity plays a large role in their

resulting renown (Turner, 2013). For many this means making oneself into a product to sell. The commodification of the self reflects Western capitalistic values (Margolis, 1977). Making money through the use of one's notoriety plays perfectly into the Western idea of making your own success. For a celebrity, their product to offer is themselves. "Fame-age America's myth has been translated into something called the American Dream, the idea that any one of us, through hard work and dedication, can become rich and famous in our own lifetime and thus separate ourselves from the obscure masses" (Margolis, 1977, p. 19).

Over the last decade television shows such as *Keeping Up with the Kardashians, John and Kate Plus Eight, Dance Moms, The Jersey Shore,* and *The Real Housewives* have pioneered the creation of the "personality" celebrity—individuals who attain fame and celebrity based solely on their outrageous personalities (Turner, 2013). In contrast to shows such as *American Idol* and *America's Got Talent* which relied on individuals with some kind of talent, shows such as *The Jersey Shore* and *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* focused on the materialistic, the egotistical, and the narcissistic, providing entertainment to audiences who could not stop themselves from viewing the often messy and dramatic lives of those on the show (Turner, 2013). Kim Kardashian, Caitlyn Jenner, Snooki, and Honey Boo Boo are all examples of personalities that attained celebrity status solely from their outrageous or controversial behavior on their respective shows. Reality shows such as these have showed audiences that talent is no longer something required in order to be famous, one just has to have the personality and the right circumstances to make it big (Turner, 2013). In today's society the "home-grown" celebrity is most often dominated by the online micro-celebrity.

In her ethnographic work of cam-girls, Theresa Senft witnessed the creation and maintenance of the *micro-celebrity* (Senft, 2008). Senft uses the term micro-celebrity to describe the fame attained by the most popular of the women who broadcasted themselves via webcam for an audience of onlookers. She defines the *micro-celebrity* as one "having a commitment to deploying and maintaining ones online identity as if it were a branded good, with the expectation that others do the same" (2013, p. 346). Senft's study took place during the heyday of LiveJournal and Myspace at a time when webcam technology was not where it is today. Despite most cameras only being able to update with real-time imagery every 30 seconds or so at the time, the cam-girls garnered hundreds of thousands of viewers and crafted a level of fame within their community. Senft describes micro-celebrity as "a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the web using technologies like video, blogs, and social networking sites" (2008, p. 25). "Typically, the micro-celebrity operates within a relatively limited and localized virtual space, drawing on a small number of fans such as the followers of a particular subcultural practice" (Turner, 2013, p. 72).

The micro-celebrity and DIY celebrity are seen as interlinked, working outside of the boundaries of the mainstream media (Turner, 2013). YouTube, Vine, Twitter, and Tumblr have become a breeding ground for the micro-celebrity. Turner (2013) recognizes that there is certainly potential for the micro-celebrity to reach the same scale and structure of fame as the typical Hollywood celebrity, reinforcing the idea that in today's society it is entirely possible to manufacture one's own fame. The micro-celebrity is able to take more control over their path to celebrity than a media-made celebrity, with more freedom to dictate the presentation of their persona to their

audience. DIY or micro-celebrities "[create] their own sites, [generate] their own content, and [design] their own performances of themselves" (Turner, 2013, p. 71). As Turner noted of James Bennett's take on micro-celebrity "micro-celebrity demonstrates the fact that not only has the desire to be famous become 'increasingly ordinary', but so have many of 'the tools to which to become famous'—the techniques used to publicize the self through personal websites, blogs, and social media such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter" (2013, p. 72). There are thousands of instances where this process of self-made celebrity is successful—YouTube personalities being a prime example—and the process is becoming more enticing to younger audiences (Uhls & Greenfield, 2012). Micro-celebrity is largely built on the process of self-branding, a type of impression management crucially important to the development of celebrity online. More details about self-branding and online interaction will be discussed further in this review of literature. First it is important to discuss the desire for fame in general.

The Desire for Fame. Braudy (1997), whose work on fame is popular among other writers regarding fame, traced the origins of fame from the notoriety of Augustus and Ancient Rome to today's celebrity. He writes

> The urge for fame mingles one's acceptance of oneself with the desires for others (or the Other) to recognize that one is special. It is the most immediate effort individuals make to reach beyond themselves, their families and their place in a traditional order to claim a more general approval of their behavior and nature, whether that approval comes from within the world or outside it. (Braudy, 1997, p. 585)

Braudy's work discusses the discourse of fame through history, tracing the development of the phenomena of representations of fame through text. Braudy's explanation of why people may desire fame is that the lifestyle and success is ingrained into Western culture, especially in our current technological age. The American Dream is built on financial success, wherein one can obtain their own dream of having a picturesque home, a nuclear family, and a fulfilling career; a lifestyle easily obtained with the financial benefits typically associated with fame (Giles, 2000).

Fame comes with more than the promise of financial success. Fame can promise a kind of immortality by preserving one's name and leaving a legacy after death. "Fame is another way of preserving one's identity for future generations. One possibility is that this is a way of defying death, and that the basic human need for immortality can be realized in a symbolic sense" (Giles, 2000, p. 44). Braudy (1997) describes Rome's historical figure Augustus as the first famous person, noting his awareness of the importance of "the relation between accomplishment and publicity" (p. 32) and his active pursuit of preserving his legacy through political and historical renown.

A popular angle that researchers have used to approach the study of the desire for fame is attempting to explain the variance of the desire for fame in relationship to self-esteem (Evans & Wilson, 2003; Giles, 2000; Maltby, 2010; Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014). Past research on the desire for fame has found that "self-esteem may be connected to the desire for fame because individuals with high levels of self-esteem or those with somewhat low levels of self-esteem may desire fame to validate their positive self-views (in the case of those with high self-esteem) or as a way to gain confidence (in the case of those with low self-esteem)" (Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014, p. 702). In short,

"individuals may desire fame, in part, because they believe it will increase their social value and make them feel better about themselves" (Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014, p. 702).

The desire for fame has also been attributed as being important to gaining acceptance within society of one's peer group. Noser & Zeigler-Hill (2014) note "one underlying reason that individuals seek fame is to gain social acceptance and inclusion" (Noser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014, p. 702). The level of desired inclusion can depend on the individual. A person may desire social acceptance on a very large scale as a result of being a famous movie star, or could be on a small scale as in being the most popular person in school (i.e. a micro-celebrity).

Maltby et al.'s (2008) study attempted to understand what factors college aged students identified as being indicative of a desire for fame. The first of two studies identified the following factors: ambition, social access, glamour, meaning derived through comparison with others, psychologically vulnerable, attention seeking, altruism, positive effect, and conceitedness (Maltby et al., 2008). In the second study aimed at testing the validity of their factors they found that positive effect and altruism were unreliable factors and were subsequently removed from the model (Maltby et al., 2008). In a separate study two years later, Maltby (2010) attempted to develop a conceptual "Fame Interest" scale based on the nine factors found in his previous study. He developed 90 descriptors of individuals who desire fame and had a sample of 1,978 individuals rate the descriptors on a 5 point agree/disagree scale. The results of his findings indicate that Fame Interest "comprises six factors: intensity, vulnerability, celebrity life-style, drive, perceived suitability, and altruistic" (Maltby, 2010, p. 428). The factors are similar to the factors identified in his previous study but represented a more

simplified and concise version of them. Noser & Zeigler-Hill (2014) adapted Maltby's (2010) Fame Interest Scale and used it to measure the connections between the desire for fame and self-esteem, and found those with "unstable high self-esteem reported a stronger desire to become famous than did those with stable high self-esteem" (2014, p. 701).

Gountas et al. (2012) also developed their own scale to measure fame, and named it the "Desire for Fame Scale." The scale was derived from previous literature and comprises the following six items (pg. 683):

1. One day I would like to be famous.

2. I love the idea of being a famous person.

3. I would like to be a famous celebrity because it would give me a higher social status.

4. I would like to be famous because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence.

5. The lifestyle of famous celebrities appeals to me a lot.

6. If I were famous I would be happier.

Gountas et al. (2012) provided evidence that the scale was reliable and used it to measure the relationship between the desire for fame and extrinsic and intrinsic aspirations among 507 Australian individuals between the ages of 18-35. Their findings found a "negative relationship between desire for fame and self-acceptance, and a positive association between desire for fame and social recognition and materialism [and] it is reasonable to assume that the desire for fame may be related to deficits in

personal growth and other undesirable outcomes for development and well-being"
(Gountas et al., 2012, p. 687).

Greenwood et al. (2013) developed their own scale to measure a desire for fame
as well in their attempt to explain the relationship between the need to belong,
narcissism and relatedness and the appeal of fame. Their scale, which they called the
"Fame Appeal" scale included 25 items "designed to capture various imagined appeals
of being famous: being seen/recognized, enjoying a high status/wealthy lifestyle,
helping others, and feeling powerful" (Greenwood et al., 2013, p. 492). Participants
were asked to rate how appealing the items were on a seven point scale from not very
appealing to very appealing. Their "measure of fame resulted in three factors: the desire
to been seen (Visibility) accounted for the most variance, followed by the desire for an
elite, high status lifestyle (Status) and the desire to use fame to help others or make
them proud (Pro-social)" (Greenwood et al., 2013, p. 493). The same scale was used in
a subsequent study by Greenwood (2013) aimed at uncovering the relationship
between attitudes about fame and social media use among 371 individuals sampled
from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Additional information about the present study will be
discussed in the following section relating fame and social media usage. Before we can
discuss the relationship between fame and social media usage as will be focus of the
present study, the importance and uses of the types of social media used today will be
reviewed.

Online Social Media

> *People in virtual communities use words on screen to exchange pleasantries and*
> *argue, engage in intellectual discourse, conduct commerce, exchange*
> *knowledge, share emotional support, make plans, brainstorm, gossip, feud, fall in*

love, find friends and lose them, play games, flirt, create a little high art and a lot of idle talk. People in virtual communities do just about anything people do in real life, but we leave our bodies behind. You can't kiss anybody and nobody can punch you in the nose, but a lot can happen within those boundaries. To the millions who have been drawn into it, the richness and vitality of computer-linked cultures is attractive, even addictive (Rheingold, 1993, p. 3)

Since its humble beginnings in the 1990s in the form of AOL chatrooms, Bulletin Board Systems (BBS), and Internet Relay Chat Rooms, social media on the internet has been a way for individuals to connect to each other instantly across electronic domains (Wood & Smith, 2004). Today we are connected to social media through cell phones, tablets, mp3 players, computers, watches, and cars. Social networking sites have become a pillar of activity on the internet, especially to connect users with friends, family, and likeminded individuals.

One of the largest uses of social media today is for the formulation and maintenance of online virtual communities. Rheingold (1993), one of the first writers about online communities, defines a *virtual community* as "social aggregations that emerge from the Net when people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (1993, p. 5). Online communities share many of the same characteristics as in person communities, most notably "social network capital, knowledge capital, and communion" (Rheingold, 1993, p. 13).

Social network capital is defined as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network or more of less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 14). Individuals who participate in online communities

may experience a variety of different kinds of social capital and may reap different benefits of these interactions. Studies have shown that social capital is linked to a more positive experience of social networking communities, and most notably has the strongest linkage to bridging social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe (2007) conducted a study of the relationship between Facebook use and the formation and maintenance of bridging and bonding social capital. Bridging social capital refers to loose ties among members of a community as in acquaintances, whereas bonding social capital refers to the bonds akin to family members and close friends (Ellison et al., 2007). Users of Facebook were more likely to use the website for bridging social capital, wherein they use the website to maintain weak ties with others in order to share information but not emotional support (Ellison et al., 2007). The types of bridging social capital interactions described in Ellison et al. (wherein users to do not form tight emotional bonds but place others in the same light as an acquaintance) are very much like those that exist among Facebook groups, Tumblr communities, Twitter followers and YouTube channels (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009).

Knowledge capital is defined as a shared knowledge among the community (Rheingold, 1993). For example, users on a Benedict Cumberbatch fan forum may all be collectively aware of the actor's birthday, favorite color and the date of his next movie premiere. New users can enter the community and over time acclimate by sharing in the collective knowledge of the community. Online communities, much like in person social communities, develop their own rhetoric that participants in the community use when interacting with other members. Part of the inclusion in the knowledge capital is being able to develop and participate in the rhetoric of an established community.

Communion within an online community is about feelings of inclusion and membership (Rheingold, 1993). These feelings of community are developed through interactions and the feeling that one is making meaningful contributions to the social and knowledge capital of the community (Rheingold, 1993). These online communities develop their own virtual subcultures, with their own language, accepted behavior, and values. "There is no such thing as a single, monolithic, online subculture; it's more like an ecosystem of subcultures, some frivolous, others serious" (Rheingold, 1993, p. 3).

Communicating through online media is slightly different than interacting face to face. Scholars studying online communication note the differences between immediate communication and mediated communication (Wood & Smith, 2004). Online interactions including email and chat rooms are mediated communication, wherein the interaction takes place with "separation of technology" (Wood & Smith, 2004, p. 6). To put into context, when dealing with immediate communication we are speaking face to face, with our responses to individuals drawn up on the fly. In contrast to email communication and blog posting, one has little time to formulate a response during face to face communication. Computer mediated communications (known as CMC) are regulated and altered human behaviors by communicating through computer technology (Rheingold, 1993; Wood & Smith, 2004). Not only does one have more time to formulate responses when interacting online, but in many cases one's responses are moderated by an outside party. On BBS boards and forums there are actual users who review and police the content of the board to make sure all communications fall in line and follow *netiquette* (Wood & Smith, 2004). Today's larger social media communities

such as Facebook and Twitter have a reporting system in place so any user of the website can aid in policing content and making sure other users follow the rules.

Fame and Social Media. Today's path to fame in a technically connected society is very different from the path before the internet. On the internet it is easier than ever to have one's voice heard. Anyone can create a YouTube account and upload videos, create a Facebook account, or create a blog on Tumblr and say and do virtually anything they want. The seemingly most mundane of content can garner millions of views on YouTube and gain worldwide recognition. Young adults and adolescents are becoming more aware of the notoriety one can gain from using the internet, and studies have shown that more young adults and adolescents are placing value on being able to become famous among audiences of their peers (Uhls & Greenfield, 2012; Uhls et al., 2014).

Greenwood (2013) conducted a study to determine the relationship between fame appeal and participants' use of Facebook and Twitter. Using her previously developed "Fame Appeal" scale she found that "the appeal of Visibility aspects of fame, frequency of time spent fantasizing about becoming famous, and perceived realism of becoming famous one day showed the most consistent and robust relationships with overall social media use (e.g., posting updates/photos, responding to posts), and greater celebrity oriented media habits (e.g., following/friending more media figures and responding more often to their posts" (Greenwood, 2013, p. 232). These findings are consistent with studies that show that narcissism is related to increased self-promotion behavior on Facebook (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008). The Visibility aspects of fame "captures the appeal of being recognized, asked for an autograph, featured on a

magazine cover, and other indices of public admiration and attention" (Greenwood, 2013, p. 232). Within the same study, Greenwood (2013) found that individuals who scored higher on the Visibility aspect of fame were also more likely to follow celebrities on social media and participate by commenting on celebrity status updates and photos. Those who partake in posting on celebrity pages may do so in order to facilitate feelings of inclusion among "the stars" and hope that being associated with a celebrity figure will boost their own popularity (similar to Margolis' (1977) *Fame by Association). .*

Facebook. According to a Pew Research survey of 2,003 adults over the age of 18, 71% of internet users use Facebook and 52% of adults online use multiple social media websites (Pew Research Center & Washington, 2014). Last year Facebook reported having 1.23 billion monthly active users, with 757 million users using the website on a daily basis (Protalinski, 2014). Needless to say social media has come a long way from the days of the AOL chatroom.

Facebook was established in 2004 by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg as a platform for Harvard college students to socialize and network online (Phillips, 2007). At the time the website was called "The Facebook," an homage to the printed pamphlets colleges would provide incoming students with contact and profile information of fellow students (Phillips, 2007). Membership was only granted with an authorized student email address and at first only a limited number of colleges participated. In 2006 Facebook opened up to non-college users and has since become a platform for individual users, businesses, celebrities and groups to network, promote and keep up to date with others (Phillips, 2007).

Facebook's format is built on a template that each user shares. "A Facebook page utilizes a fill-in-the-blank system of personalization" (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008, p. 1305) that allows easy comparison between profiles of different users. Profiles are only unique to the extent that users add personalized images, descriptive text, and membership in groups affiliated with hobbies and entertainment. The more the user puts in to filling out all of the sections of their profile the more the profile becomes a representation of the user (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008).

Due to its popular and widespread usage, Facebook has been the focus of a range of scholarly studies, including connecting usage to self-esteem (Clerkin, Smith, & Hames, 2013), depression (Jelenchick, Eickhoff, & Moreno, 2013), business endeavors (Clerkin et al., 2013; Zamboni, 2011), and narcissism (Greenwood, 2013). A simple search of the word Facebook in peer reviewed journal article titles elicited over 1400 entries! This does not account for research that used the more general term social media in the title. Clearly the breadth of studies related to Facebook is too wide for the scope of this review. Therefore, the focus will be placed on work related to Facebook usage as a tool for reassurance seeking and narcissism validation.

Anderson et al. (2012) conducted a review of 100 recent studies in psychology that have focused on Facebook use and its connection to various topics in the psychology field. Their review culminated in three themes: 1) antecedents of Facebook use, 2) how individuals and corporations use Facebook, and 3) psychological outcomes or effects of Facebook use (Anderson et al., 2012). What they found is that younger individuals and adolescents are more likely to use Facebook, but are far from the only demographic using the website. Facebook allowed individuals to maintain social

networks online among friends that they had made in real life and acquaintances in real life, but did not serve as a way to meet strangers. Some studies indicated a positive relationship between outgoingness and Facebook use, suggesting that those that are more outgoing are more likely to use Facebook to connect with others. Other studies also found a positive correlation between introvertedness and Facebook use, suggesting that introverted people use the website to connect with others without having to interact in person. Most importantly, research suggests that Facebook activity correlates to an individual's sense of self and having "friends" through Facebook increases a user's social capital and helps facilitate bridging relationships.

One of the driving features of Facebook is the ability to comment on status posts, photographs and shared links among friends. Many of these features open a window for those seeking reassurance from others about their daily lives. This can be both a positive and a negative for people. Clerkin et al. (2013) found that "Facebook reassurance seeking predicted lower levels of self-esteem, which in turn predicted heightened feelings that one does not belong and that one is a burden. A profound sense of social isolation and loneliness is at the heart of both thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness" (Clerkin et al., 2013, p. 529). Even though Facebook offers the chance for people to interact with others at any given time, the potential for isolation if one's words go unnoticed is also evident.

Those who have a high sense of self-esteem and narcissism are more likely to use Facebook and have a larger network of friends (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Gentile et al., 2012). Buffardi & Campbell (2008) found a positive correlation with narcissism

and an outsider's perception of the "sexiness" of a user's profile picture, attractiveness and self-promoting behavior.

Impression Management and Social Media. When faced with meeting a new person in real life an individual uses sensory cues to help formulate an impression of what he or she believes the individual will be like. This is the basis of impression formation (Asch, 1946). Visual cues about a person's appearance, behavior, and verbal cues such as speech pattern or tone of voice all work towards generating an idea of an individual's personality. Preconceived notions of what these cues indicate are built on social and personal experiences learned through an individual's lifetime and the context in which the impression is formed (Asch, 1946; Hamilton & Zanna, 1974). For example, a simple impression formation based on voice would be the type of accent a person speaks with. One can infer the individual's country of origin based on their accent or speech pattern.

When presenting the self in public and online, impression formation becomes important to the individual. Using certain behaviors or reflecting certain attributes can make a person appear friendly and approachable, or obnoxious and self-centered (Hamilton & Zanna, 1974; Walther, Heide, Hamel, & Shulman, 2009). Impression formation and the development of a persona online differs in some way from in person impression formation. When managing one's own social media profile on a website such as Facebook, the user has a degree of control over how they want others to view their profiles. One can control the impressions a person can make based on the content he or she posts on their page, such as photographs. In a study that investigated impression formations of personality based on photographs, participants were able to

correctly identify personality attributes based on facial appearance and poses alone (Berry & Finch Wero, 1993; Naumann, Vazire, Rentfrow, & Gosling, 2009; Qiu, Lu, Yang, Qu, & Zhu, 2015). Therefore it should come as no surprise that individuals looking to curate an online presence would be concerned about the types of photographs that are present on their page.

The "ordinary" person's online impression management typically centers on positively presenting oneself to potential employers, peers, work-related superiors, or potential romantic interests (Kacvinsky & Moreno, 2012; Ponce et al., 2013; Walton, White, & Ross, 2015). Limiting sexual imagery, harsh language, partying or intoxicated behavior, and discussions of controversial political or social ideas are usually stressed by career advisors and guidance counselors to prospective employers and students (Walton et al., 2015). Facebook itself actually encourages individuals to filter or monitor their content, allowing users to filter their posts to particular individuals within networks in order to aid in maintaining the image they wish to project to the public (Walton et al., 2015).

Once a user does decide to post content, the content is up to scrutiny and impression formation by anyone who wishes to view it. Studies have shown that posting more frequently, the types of photographs posted, and even the types of websites "Liked" by a user can indicate personality traits (Fernandez, Levinson, & Rodebaugh, 2012; Kosinski, Bachrach, Kohli, Stillwell, & Graepel, 2013; Walther et al., 2009). For example, users that "Like" or Follow websites related to education and electronics are seen as more organized or spontaneous than those that "Like" or Follow websites related to arts, literature, and mental health (Kosinski et al., 2013). Photographs have

been shown to correctly indicate personality traits, and users will frequently choose to use profile pictures that portray the user as attractive or are reflective of a desired personality trait (Wu, Chang, & Yuan, 2015).

In their study testing the warranting principle (that "observers place greater credence in information about the personal characteristics and offline behaviors of others when the information cannot be easily manipulated by the person who it describes" (p. 229)) Walther et. al (2009) found that viewers of Facebook pages are more skeptical about personality attributes and appearance attributes if stated by the user. Viewers were swayed to view an introverted user as more extroverted when comments left on her Facebook wall painted her as extroverted. In other words, if the comments in a introvertedly staged photograph characterized the person as extroverted, observers were more likely to believe the persona presented in the comments versus the photograph. This could have a profound effect on who the user allows to post on their wall if the user is adamant about presenting a very specific type of persona to users.

Impression formation online becomes more muddied when delving into the realm of micro-celebrity. When an ordinary person decides to post on his or her personal page and have discussions with other users, his or her conversations are not often viewable and are not subject to scrutiny from hundreds of thousands of people. On the pages of micro-celebrities, content posted by the user is mixed in with the comments and postings by fans. Unless the micro-celebrity sets specific controls regulating who is allowed to post, anybody can choose to chime in and offer their opinion. Not only does the micro-celebrity have to be aware of how he or she is presenting themselves through

their own postings and content, but he or she needs to be aware of how they come across when replying to comments and interacting with fans. This is largely different than the way more commercial celebrities interact with fans online, since much of this communication is done through publicists and third party representatives (Turner, 2013). As mentioned above in regards to the warranting principle, the interaction between fan and micro-celebrity might provide a more reliable assessment of personality for the uninitiated viewer (Walther et al., 2009). For this reason, it becomes important for a micro-celebrity to provide a truthful and realistic interaction between themselves and their fans. Over time there develops a standard of how the interaction with the micro-celebrity would play out, and new users would expect these standards and anticipate a certain level of intimacy with the celebrity (Senft, 2008). This all contributes to the commodification of the micro-celebrity, and creates a foundation in which the individual can begin to brand themselves (Senft, 2013).

The idea of self-branding is something that Senft (2013) describes as something even the ordinary user of social networks participates in. Every time we monitor our online profiles deleting unflattering photographs, ignoring or accepting friend requests, and adjusting privacy settings we are participating in some form of online branding (Senft, 2013). Those that maintain an online representation "behave on the internet as one would if placed on a public stage, because, in a very real sense, one is" (Senft, 2013, p. 347) all the time. Posts can be indexed and archived, photos saved and reposted, and videos screenshot and saved. All participation in online activity leaves a footprint, so the representation of the self must be consistent throughout. Any deviance

from this representation is detrimental to developing a trusting relationship between the individual and their audience.

In her interviews with micro-celebrity cam-girls and through her own experience becoming a cam-girl herself, Senft (2008), found it was important to convey realism and an aura of familiarity with one's audience. Being able to interact directly with fans and include them in the exciting and mundane parts of life contributed to a relationship between the audience and the cam-girl. Viewers of the cam-girls Senft interviewed noted that this access into a typically private or intimate part of the individual's life was extremely compelling and hard to turn away from. Viewers expressed desire to meet the individuals in real life to ascertain that what they viewed on camera was truly a reflection of what the person was really like. Senft describes that the difference between the micro-celebrity and the more typical Hollywood celebrity is that the audience spends less time contemplating what the micro-celebrity is really like, as they are able to directly interact with them.

Senft's (2008) cam began obtaining more views after links to her cam were posted by more popular cam-girls and press described her as the cam-girl writing about cam-girls. She describes that "eventually I realized that these people [new people who found her through links to her site] felt that they were owed some entertainment…and with press coverage comes the obligation to be press-worthy" (p.9). This led to her development and realization of self-branding, a practice she notes every micro-celebrity uses to get one's name out there among the mass of ordinary people in everyday life.

This intimate connection with the audience proved to be a double-edged sword, since opening up oneself so much inevitably leads to unwanted scrutiny and judgement. Senft received hate mail about the ideas she expressed in the discussions she had with her fans when streaming. When fans did not appreciate her contributions, or did not get what they expected out of the stream—whether it be sexual display or "entertainment"— Senft experienced commodification and what she described as a "labor state." It was in these moments she felt most like a product that was being consumed. Cam-girls that she interviewed expressed similar sentiment, especially in regards to sustaining an audience for a prolonged period of time. Eventually the girls had to monetize the types of interactions they would have with their audiences, and had to determine which parts of their lives were only for paid subscribers to see. This led to the inevitable self-branding mentioned earlier (Senft, 2013).

Cosplay, Fame, and Social Media

Given that cosplay involves the presentation of the self through photos and in person at conventions, the connection of Facebook page use and how the user chose to represent his/herself online could provide important information about the user his/herself. In the next section of this review I will synthesize the connection between fame, social media use, and cosplay.

Within the last few years, more mainstream attention has been paid towards cosplaying as a hobby through TV shows such as *Heroes of Cosplay*, *Face Off*, and *King of the Nerds.* Thus, individual cosplayers are gaining popularity and reaching celebrity-like status within and outside the community (Johnston, 2013). These cosplayers perfectly represent the micro-celebrity coined by Senft (2008). Cosplayers

including Yaya Han, Kamui, Scruffy Rebel, Jessica Nigri, and Riddle have been featured on television programs such as *Heroes of Cosplay, Face Off* and *Revenge of the Nerds,* paid to travel as guests to conventions, and offered sponsorship opportunities from cosplay material suppliers. These individuals are relatively unknown outside of their niche subculture, and utilize the internet to maintain and manage their represented personas.

Cosplayers with higher levels of recognition and fame often use social media as a way to stay in touch with fans. The Facebook Artist Page has become a popular outlet for cosplayers to connect with their audience. Artist Pages also utilize the "Like" option, which allows other Facebook users to follow their Pages. Likes are tallied on each Page so it becomes very easy to compare how many "likes" each famous cosplayer has (Johnston, 2013).

There have been no formal studies on the phenomenon of cosplay celebrity, how a cosplay celebrity's success originated, and what cosplay celebrities mean for the future of the hobby. There have been several mentions in studies of cosplay of the potential for becoming well known within the community (Bonnichsen, 2011; Taylor, 2009). Furthermore, researchers have mentioned that the typical mechanics of the community could lead to some participants becoming more well-known than others (Manifold, 2009). The cosplay community acts on a system wherein those cosplayers that give back and share their skills among others in the community receive more attention and positive feedback and are generally more well known within the community (Manifold, 2009). The cosplayers Kamui and DoxieQueen are two examples of cosplayers that have made an effort to share their skills through tutorials and in the

case of Kamui, even published books detailing her methods for prop making ("Angela's Costumery & Creations," n.d., "Kamui Cosplay," n.d.).

The fame from many cosplay celebrities is often attributed to their physical appearance and sexual attraction in nonacademic investigations of cosplay celebrity (melissahillman, 2013). This has become a topic of tension within the community, as many feel that cosplaying solely for attention (i.e. explicitly trying to exaggerate one's breasts in a costume, taking sexually provocative photos and fishing for "likes" on their pages (SirWonderusMary, 2012)) is against the spirit of the hobby (Okabe, 2012). Further investigation is needed to fully understand the nuances of cosplay fame and the attitudes of cosplayers towards cosplay celebrities.

The purpose of the present study is to explore motivations behind participation in cosplay and the use of social media among cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. Further focus is placed on understanding the motivations to participate in cosplay, the role of the desire for fame in using social media, and the role of Facebook Artist Pages in building fame. The present study will serve as a stepping stone that will hopefully lead to further understanding of the complex relationship between social media use, cosplaying, and the desire for fame. Cosplaying has largely been described as an outlet for boosting self-esteem, creating feelings of inclusion, and as a form of escape from the troubles of everyday life (Okabe, 2012). However, the prevalence of cosplay fame and the emergence of celebrity cosplayers has provided an outlet for participants to gain fame they otherwise may not experience in their own lives. Cosplayers who wish to promote themselves can do so via Facebook Artist Pages and easily compare themselves to others. Psychologists have found that too much of a

focus on narcissistic tendencies, attention seeking, and peer fulfillment can be

detrimental to one's personal and psychological well-being. It is the goal of the present

study to begin to understand the role of fame appeal in cosplay and the role social

media plays into achieving fame.

Chapter Three
Methods

The purpose of the present study was to explore Facebook Artist Page usage among participants of cosplay. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What motivates cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages to participate in cosplay as they do?

2. To what do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages attribute the level of fame they have achieved thus far?

3. How do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages believe social media can be used to develop and maintain cosplayer fame?

4. How and why do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages use their Facebook Artist Page?

Research Procedures

Part 1-Content analysis. Through content analysis, the types of content included within cosplayers' Facebook Artist Pages were identified and quantified. Each Facebook Page included in the content analysis was included in a list of Facebook Artist Pages that served as the population from which participants in the second part of the study were drawn. Results from the content analysis provide an overview of the types of content the population under investigation posts on their Facebook Artist Pages. Specific questions regarding the importance of the different types of content identified were included in the interview guide developed and used in the second part of the present study.

IRB approval*.* Part 1 of the study received approval from the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board. The Approval Notice can be found in Appendix One.

Sample. The sample included in this portion of the study were generated by using the search function on Google.com. The term "cosplay site:facebook.com" was entered into the search bar. A list was generated that displayed all pages on Facebook related to cosplay. For each page listed, the link was clicked that led to Facebook.com. Any page that was designated as "Artist" was included in a list in an Excel spreadsheet. Results continued to be added until there were no longer any relevant search results. It is important to note that this method did not return every single Artist page dedicated to cosplay that exists on Facebook. Therefore, the population that will be referred to in the rest of this paper will only refer to the number of pages that showed up on Google.com.

In order to obtain the random sample for the content analysis a random number generator was used to select the pages from the list. In order to be able to estimate the mean number of likes reported on the Facebook Pages, a representative sample must be chosen. Statistical sampling theory utilizes the central limit theorem—which describes that "the mean and standard deviation of the sample mean will usually approximate the true mean and standard deviation of the population…and the distribution of the sample mean will approximate a normal distribution" (Bernard, 2011, p. 133). In other words, by selecting the appropriate sample size from the population the overall distribution of means will reflect the overall distribution of the means of the population. The sampling formula utilized in the present study is the calculation for sampling a finite population from Creative Research Systems—a statistical software

development package utilized by the U.S Government, hospitals, and research organizations ("The Survey System Client List," 2017).

Sample Size= $\dfrac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$

Where: Z= Z value (1.96 for 95% confidence level)

p=Percentage picking a choice, expressed as a decimal (.5 used for sample size needed)

c=confidence interval, expressed as a decimal

In the case of finite populations, the following correction is made once the above sample size is figured out:

New sample size: $\dfrac{SS}{\dfrac{ss-1}{pop} + 1}$

The number of participants selected was determined by using the above sampling formula to obtain a 95% confidence level. A confidence level refers to the degree of certainty that a researcher has that a specific value falls within a given confidence interval (Bernard, 2011). In the present study a confidence interval—the "range of values, usually a little higher and lower than a specific value found in a sample" (Neuman, 2009, p. 252), of plus or minus five percent will be used. In other words, using the sample size formula designated above, with 95% confidence, any given percentage of yes or no answers in the content analysis will be plus or minus five percent from the true population percentage (Bernard, 2011; Neuman, 2009). Using the formula described above, the total number of Facebook pages compiled during the

Google search will be used as the total population. The number of pages to include in the sample for the content analysis will be based on obtaining a 95% confidence level with a plus or minus 5% confidence interval.

When reviewing the pages for the content analysis data collection the pages were viewed while logged out of Facebook in order to ensure that all information being displayed was available to the public. No direct contact with the owners of the pages was made. All information included in the content analysis was publicly available information.

Data collection. After selecting pages to be included in the sample, data collection commenced. Each page was coded for the following categories:

1. Number of Likes: this category was chosen because the popularity and ranking of a Facebook page among the cosplay community is often attributed to the number of likes a page receives.

2. Gender: this category was chosen to be able to see what proportion of cosplayers with Facebook pages are women versus men. It may be noteworthy if the proportion is skewed one way or the other.

3. Number of photos posted: depending on the content of the photographs, cosplayers that post more photos may be more active in the community. Posting many photos may be a sign of a more active Facebook page.

4. Whether or not the user posts videos: videos require much more work to create than photos, and pages that post videos may be more popular among followers.

5. Whether or not the page had an online shop associated with it: cosplayers that sell products are attempting to monetize their cosplaying activities. If this is something that is very frequent it would be important to ask interview participants their attitudes towards cosplayers monetizing their hobby.

6. Whether or not they post tutorials: tutorials require extra work outside of making personal costumes. If most cosplayers post tutorials it will be important to understand why posting tutorials is important to those cosplayers.

7. Whether or not they post prints for sale: in the last several years famous cosplayers like Yaya Han, Jessica Nigri, and Kamui Cosplay have been making money selling prints of themselves in costume. Cosplayers that sell prints of themselves in costumes may be more likely to have a higher number of followers because they are associated with the same behaviors as Yaya Han, Jessica Nigri, and Kamui Cosplay.

8. Whether or not they take commissions: Cosplayers that take commissions are able to monetize their skill sets and help others at the same time. If many cosplayers with Facebook pages take commissions it would be important to understand how their Facebook page is used to aid their commissioning business.

A codebook was established detailing how each coding item was defined. The data was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. Each profile was viewed while signed out of Facebook.com to ensure all data being viewed was publicly available. The number of likes was displayed on the side of the main page and noted in the spreadsheet. Next the

main list of albums was viewed and the total number of photos in each album were calculated together. If any album name mentioned being a tutorial, this was counted as a yes for the user posting tutorials. The photo contents of the tutorials were still counted in the total photo count. If there was an album specifically dedicated to videos this counted as a yes for the user posting videos. Any videos in an album were not counted towards the number of total photos. If there was an album that had photos of completed commissions this counted as a yes for the user offering commissions and the photos in the album were counted towards the total number of photos posted. Next the newsfeed of the page was scrolled through looking for specific posts about selling prints, offering commissions, and posting tutorials. If at least one post was seen that offered the selling of prints, this counted as a yes in the category of the user selling prints. If there was at least one text post about the user offering commissions, or link to an outside website where they offered commissions, this counted as a yes for the category of offering commissions. If the user posted at least one text, photo, or video tutorial, or at least one link to their own personally created tutorials hosted on external websites, this counted as a yes for posting tutorials. If the page had the Shop widget installed on the Facebook page, regardless if the store was currently offering items for sale, this counted as a yes for the user including a store on their page. Once all coding for the page was completed, a new page was randomly chosen from the list and then analyzed in the same manner.

Reliability: Reliability in content analysis is measured by how well the coding system works when conducting the analysis (Neuman, 2009). A manifest coding system was used to analyze the data. Manifest coding "utilizes a list of terms or actions that you

want to locate…and count the number of times they appear (Neuman, 2011, p. 364).

Manifest coding is "highly reliable because the phrase or word either is or is not present"

(Neuman, 2011, p, 364).   Every element coded in the content analysis was objectively

based (yielding a yes or no answer, or a number). By keeping the data collection simple

and objective, little error in the coding process could occur.

Validity. Establishing validity in content analysis is established by using mutually

exclusive categories in such a way that there is no overlap between one category and

the next (Bernard, 2011). For the present study, the content analysis made use of only

eight, very specific codes with well-defined parameters. The codes were defined in such

a way that there would be no overlap when coding the pages. In addition, many of the

coding categories were answerable with a yes or no question and simple to identify

within the layout of the Facebook page template.

Limitations of the method. Due to the content analysis being centered on

manifest coding—the visual, surface content of the page (Neuman, 2011, p. 364), the

findings only describe content included on the Facebook Artist Pages maintained by

cosplayers. The findings cannot explain the users' motivations regarding their choice of

content included on their Facebook Artist Pages. However, in the second part of the

present study, Facebook Artist Page users completed surveys and in-depth interviews,

which in turn rendered data that does provide an understanding of motivations

regarding Facebook Artist Page usage. For example, if a participant in the interview

posted tutorials on their page, clarifying questions were asked regarding their motivation

to post tutorials.

An additional limitation to this mode of data collection was the nature of the Facebook page itself. The pages used in the analysis are live pages and have the potential to change on a minute to minute basis. By the time the data were collected and analyzed, the total counts of photos, likes, and the types of content may have changed. Therefore, only inferences based on the specific time period the data were collected can be made. If future studies are to be done on the content of the pages, it may be necessary to recode and update certain parts of the data to ensure the data is still an accurate reflection of the pages selected.

Part 2-Interview and online survey. The present study utilized a series of online surveys held on the Qualtrics website and semi-structured interviews conducted through the video conference program Skype. The online survey consisted of an Aspirations Index and a Desire for Cosplay Fame Scale. Participants were asked to complete the online survey prior to completing the Skype interview.

IRB approval. Part 2 of the study received approval from the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board. The IRB Approval Notice can be found in Appendix Two. The approved recruitment message can be found in Appendix Three. The IRB approved consent guide for the online survey and verbal consent guide for the online interview can be found in Appendix Four and Five.

Sample. The target population for the interviews were individuals that participate in cosplay over the age of 18 and have Facebook Pages designated as Artist pages. Purposive sampling was used. During Part 1 of the present study, a list of all Facebook Artist Pages included in the content analysis was created. From this list, Artist Pages

were randomly selected. Owners of these respective Pages were sent recruitment messages to participate in Part 2 of the present study.

Participants were recruited via a personal message to their Facebook Artist Page sent from the researcher's personal Facebook account. The researcher's personal account was used to establish trustworthiness with the potential respondent. If the recruited participant chose to view the profile of the researcher, they would find information that validated the origins of the message. The researcher's personal account had Oregon State University affiliation associated with it, as well as photographs of the researcher's personal cosplaying activities, establishing the researcher's familiarity with the cosplay community.

If a participant did not agree to participate via a specific message declining to participate, or did not respond within a 5 day time period, a recruitment message was sent to the next randomly selected name and so on. Participants were continually recruited from July 31, 2016 to February 5, 2017, at which point 20 surveys and interviews were completed.

Data collection. Participants completed an online survey containing the Aspirations Index and the Desire for Cosplay Fame scale, as well as an interview conducted via Skype. Participants could only participate in the interview if they had completed the online survey.

Online Survey. Prior to the interview conducted via Skype, participants completed a survey hosted on the Qualtrics website. The survey was conducted with each participant prior to the interview for the purposes of obtaining information

regarding which of the seven aspirations were the most important to the participants and the extent to which they desire cosplay fame. The Aspirations Index and Desire for Cosplay Fame scale is included in Appendix Six. The survey included the Aspirations Index developed by Kasser and Ryan (1996) and an adaptation of Gountas et al.'s (2012) Desire for Fame scale. For the purposes of the present study the items in the Desire for Fame scale were reworded to pertain to cosplay fame and celebrity rather than generalized celebrity and fame as in the original scale.

The Aspirations Index was developed over a series of projects conducted by Kasser and Ryan to create a reliable measure of the importance, extent fulfilled, and the likelihood to fulfill seven different aspirations (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). The scale measures seven different aspirations: fame, wealth, image, health, personal growth, community, and relationships. Within the scale, each aspiration is measured on five dimensions, which ultimately are averaged together to render a score for the aspiration. For each dimension, participants rate the dimension in terms of its importance, likelihood of achievement within their lifetime, and extent to which it has been fulfilled on a 1-7 scale with 1 being not at all important and 7 being very important. Participants' responses to the 35 questions related to an aspiration averaged together to obtain a numerical representation of the importance, extent to which the aspiration has been fulfilled, and the likelihood that the aspiration will be met in the future. The scale further splits the categories into intrinsically motivated aspirations and extrinsically motivated aspirations. The aspirations of wealth, image, and fame are categorized as extrinsically motivated. The aspirations of personal growth, relationships, and community is

categorized as intrinsically motivated. The aspiration for health is categorized as both an intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

The Desire for Cosplay Fame scale was adapted from the Desire for Fame Scale developed by Gountas et al.(2012). The scale measures the rate to which the participant agrees or disagrees with five statements related to the desire for fame. The scale asks participants to rate on a scale of one being Strongly Disagree, two being Disagree, three being unsure, four being Agree, and five being Strongly Agree. For the purposes of the present study the Desire for Fame scale was adapted specifically to address the attitudes towards cosplay related fame. This was done by adding the word "cosplay" before the word "fame" in the scale.

Interview. The questions developed for the interview were based on the research questions and the purpose of the study. The formulation of the interview questions will be described in the context of answering the research questions of the study.

Research question 1: "What motivates cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages to participate in cosplay as they do?" was answered via the open-ended question "Why did you start cosplaying?" as well as follow up probing questions regarding if their motivations have changed over time. If unique motivations emerged additional probing questions were asked to understand why the participant believes that motivation is important or why the participant believes their motivations have changed over time.

Research question 2: "To what do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages attribute the level of fame they have achieved thus far?" was answered using open ended questions such as "Do you consider yourself cosplay famous, why or why

not?" and if the participant did not believe they were famous, via the question "What do you think it would take for you to become cosplay famous?" Participants that expressed that they considered themselves well known or famous were further asked how they knew they had become well known or famous.

Research question 3: "How do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages believe social media can be used to develop and maintain cosplayer fame?" was answered by asking open ended questions about the participant's use of social media, the types of content they post, and what role that content has in how famous they are in the community. If the participant did not believe themselves to be famous, additional probing questions were asked about what types of content they believe boost their follower count, or if there was a specific period of time when they saw their follower number increase.

Research question 4: "How and why do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages use their Facebook Artist Page?" was answered using open ended questions about how they use their Facebook page and why they began a page in the first place. Questions such as "Why is posting finished photos important to you?" were asked to understand the specific motivations to post certain content. If the participant did not utilize a specific type of content on their page, such as posting videos or posting tutorials, participants were asked why they did not engage in this type of behavior.

Before each interview began, the survey data was analyzed to make note of which aspirations scored the highest, the scores for each question, and the participant's answers of the Desire for Cosplay Fame scale. Additional questions were included to

prompt respondents to clarify their answers and scores in the Aspirations Index and the Desire for Cosplay Fame Scale completed prior to the interview. As each participant had unique responses to the Aspirations Index and the Desire for Cosplay Fame scale, the questions were included in the interview guide as conditionally dependent on the survey data.

Questions in the interview were ordered specifically to prompt participants to explain why they started cosplaying and what they describe to be their current motivations to participate. Key words that participants mentioned during this line of questioning such as cosplaying for fun, friendships, and creativity helped direct which laddering questions to move onto during the interview. The laddering technique led to each interview having several unique questions raised that catered to that participant's specific answers and experiences. To see the interview guide please see Appendix Seven. The interviews were recorded using the recording software Audacity and transcribed by the researcher into a Microsoft Word document.

Data analysis. The analysis for the Aspirations Index, Desire for Fame Scale, and the subsequent online interview will be described in detail below.

Online Survey. The ratings of the Likert items from the survey were averaged together for each participant to obtain a score for the importance of, likelihood to achieve, and the extent to which they have already achieved each of the seven aspirations. The overall scores for each participant were then added to another worksheet where the average group score for each aspiration was calculated to provide general information about the sample. The procedure of obtaining the individual and

group scores of the Aspirations Index is consistent with Kasser and Ryan's procedure (1996). The three to four highest scoring aspirations for each individual were incorporated into the interview guide; Participants were asked to further discuss the aspirations that were of most importance and if cosplaying has helped them work towards each of their most important aspirations. The scores served as a means to describe the motivations of individual participants and aided in interpreting results from the interviews.

The same procedure described above was conducted for the Desire for Cosplay Fame scale. The procedure of averaging the Likert scale items per participant to obtain a Desire for Cosplay Fame score is also consistent with Gountas et al.'s (2012) original Desire for Fame study. The Desire for Cosplay Fame score was used to provide triangulation of the attitudes regarding cosplay fame that emerged during the interview process.

Interview. A grounded theory approach to coding was used to code the results of the interviews. The aim of grounded theory is to apply systematic deductive reasoning to understand human experiences (Bernard, 2011). The steps to grounded theory are as follows: "code the text for themes; linking themes into theoretical models; and displaying and validating the models" (Bernard, 2011, p. 435). Once transcribed, the interviews were analyzed to identify themes that emerged regarding motivations surrounding participation in cosplay, the use of cosplay Facebook Artist Pages, social media in general, the participant's opinion on cosplay fame, and the extent to which they themselves have achieved fame. Each interview was coded individually to capture the unique experiences of each participant. A codebook was established as a table in

Microsoft Word that included the research question being answered, names of the themes, and the relevant quotes that are representative of the theme. Once one theme emerged every transcript was reviewed several times and supporting quotes were pasted under the matching theme to establish how many individual participants shared the same experience or opinion. This procedure was repeated for each research question.

   Reliability and validity. In qualitative research reliability and validity are grouped together and is more often referred to as establishing *trustworthiness* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)*.* Trustworthiness is built upon the foundation of *credibility, transferability, dependability,* and *confirmability* (Sayre, 2001). The credibility of a qualitative study is hinged on the successful integration of one or more techniques. These techniques are: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, external checks, negative case analyses, referential adequacy, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose of establishing credibility is to increase the likelihood that the information gathered during the research is based on truthful representation of the "multiple realities" being established (the multiple realities being the interpretation of the participant vs the interpretation of the researcher) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296).

   In order to establish credibility it is essential for the findings to be double checked and verified by peers, data, and the participant themselves. The first of the techniques, prolonged engagement, involves the researcher being present in the observational situation for an extended period of time, such as immersing oneself in a culture for several years. The longer one is integrated into a culture the more likely a robust understanding of the culture is established and therefore the likelihood of producing

credible findings increases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For the purposes of establishing prolonged engagement for the present study, the researcher has been a participant and an observer of the cosplay culture for nearly 15 years. The researcher is familiar with the common terminology and has observed the birth and development of the cosplay micro-celebrity first hand. The researcher has attended conventions, participated in cosplay competitions, judged craftsmanship, attended panels, worked with photographers, and constructed dozens of costumes. The researcher has been an avid social media user for nearly 10 years and still regularly updates Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, YouTube, Reddit, LinkedIn, and other community based bulletin boards. The researcher understands the various features and content on each of these sites and has both posted their own content and viewed the content of others. The benefit to prolonged engagement is being able to recognize unique "distortions" that can arise in the data, either from the participants, the researcher themselves, or the outside events and be able to draw on the experience and take the distortions into account (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The prolonged engagement is also very effective at establishing trust between the participant and the observer, as the participant may be less likely to feel like an outsider being studied and more like they are interacting with a peer. However it is important to note that the researcher must still remain impartial and be able to view the culture or individual with an open mind and avoid "going native" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305).

The second technique for establishing credibility is persistent observation. This refers to a thorough enough immersion into the subject being studied in order to look at it from all angles and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By thoroughly delving into

the area being studied the observer would be able to parse out which observations are important and which are tangential. It is important that in order for persistent observation to be effective at establishing credibility the researcher must explain their reasons why certain observations are more important than others. In the context of the present study this took take place during the analysis of the interview data and explanation for the decisions were included in the discussion section.

Triangulation is defined as using "different sources, different methods, and sometimes multiple investigators" to verify or support the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 307). Through triangulation the data can be validated in several ways. The first of which is the use of different sources in order to compare and support the findings of the study. If observations are consistent with previous observations by other researchers this provides credibility to the study. A thorough literature review is essential to triangulation using this method. Using different methods in the study itself can also provide triangulation of the data. In qualitative studies this is often done by asking questions that are similar but rephrased differently in order to provide validation within the study. This can also be done by using different data collection methods such as an interview and a survey, or participant observation and a focus group. This provides more than one context for gathering information and means of interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, triangulation can be achieved using peer-debrief or multiple researchers in the data collection and analysis process. This enables multiple perspectives for interpreting and collecting the data and therefore increases the credibility of the study. In a study with multiple researchers a briefing and debriefing process is used throughout the study and agreement must be met with interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For

the purposes of the present study multiple sources, multiple methods, and triangulation

of the data were used to establish credibility. A thorough review of literature was

conducted to establish current theories and research on the relevant topics of the study.

The interview questions were supplemented by an online survey that provided

additional insight into the desire for fame and importance of social media for fame

achievement. The interview questions were formatted in such a way as to establish

triangulation by rephrasing important questions in slightly different ways in order to

reinforce important points.

External checks or *peer debriefing* is the process of establishing credibility by

checking in with a disinterested party in order to attempt to find patterns or gain insight

only an outsider would notice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The peer debrief allows the

researcher to get a second (or more!) pair of eyes on the data that is completely

unfamiliar and therefore not invested in the data. This allows the peer to play "devil's

advocate" and therefore force the researcher to explain their reasoning for the

interpretation with clear context and evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this case of

this research, the role of the graduate advisor served as an external check throughout

the process of the study.

Member checking is often considered one of the most important methods of

establishing credibility in qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sayre, 2001).

Member checking involves the "data, analytic categories, interpretations, and

conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data

were originally collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). In other words, member

checking is verifying that what you found or observed is correct by actually checking

that it is correct with your informant. This may involve repeating and confirming what members say during an interview process, following up with members after data analysis, and participant groups allowed the opportunity to comment freely about the findings and findings obtained from related groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking allows the informants to ensure that they are represented truthfully, and that the observer or researcher has correctly interpreted the information they were provided. For the purposes of the present study member checking took take place during the interview process by confirming answers to the survey questions provided by the informants. Each participant was asked to clarify the importance of their highest scoring aspirations from the aspirations index, and provide clarification on their answers from the Desire for Cosplay Fame scale. This method provides the most immediate feedback and flexibility, and since the interviews were recorded, limited the chance that participants can claim "misunderstanding or investigator error" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314).

According to the naturalist process of obtaining trustworthiness, establishing *transferability* refers to establishing a robust description of the event and its context in order for other researchers to make inferences about similar events and contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While there is no specific criteria for what constitutes a "proper thick description" of events, the data needs enough information that others would not be guessing or attempting to fill in the blanks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Transferability in the present study will be established by providing detailed descriptions of the data collection and analysis stages, descriptions of the cosplayers in the present study can be found in Appendix Nine.

To establish *dependability* the researcher will maintain a clear, repeatable procedure during the analysis and coding process. Each participant in the study has unique experiences and perspective, and qualitative researchers are responsible to be consistent with data collection and analysis (Neuman, 2009). Furthermore, dependability in qualitative research is enhanced by multiple types of data collection regarding the same participants (Bernard, 2011). The inclusion of the Desire for Cosplay Fame scale at the end of the survey served as a means of triangulation of the participant's description given in the interview of their attitudes towards fame. Revisiting the results of the Aspirations Index during the interview also helped support and clarify the attitudes towards the seven aspirations measured in the survey.

Confirmability was established by remaining informed, unbiased and objective throughout the research process. The researcher did this by first being honest about assumptions and perceptions of the subject. During the interviewing process and the data analysis stage the researcher constantly checked interpretation of the data was not based on assumptions and the interpretation was open to new perspectives and ideas. Any inferences or conclusions obtained in the data analysis stage were only made with supporting data from the interviews and literature.

Limitations of the Method. Using interview methods allows a personal interaction between the researcher and participant and gives the opportunity for in depth discussion (Neuman, 2009). However, conducting interviews takes a lengthy amount of time, and it would be nearly impossible to interview every cosplayer with an Artist Page. Because of this limit, it may be possible to overlook different perspectives and insights

that would otherwise be included in a larger sample. For the purposes of the present study twenty participants were interviewed.

A second limitation is with the method of sampling. In order to make any generalizations to a larger population it would be necessary to obtain a true random sample of participants. Because of the nature of the algorithm of the Google search function it may not be possible to obtain a complete list of all of the Facebook Artist Pages currently posted on the website in order to obtain a random sample. Google's search function can only display pages that allow themselves to be viewed in the search engine, and proper keyword use is required in order for the page to display in the search results. When the Google search no longer produces useable results, the sampling will conclude.

As with any interview data collection, the findings of the interviews are contingent on truthful and representative responses from the interviewees. If interviewees do not answer the questions truthfully it affects the findings and the truthfulness of the study. The researcher can probe for further inquiry during the interview process, and stress the importance of honest and truthful discourse.

Chapter Four

Results

Content Analysis

The total population size for the sample of Facebook Artist Pages based on the Google search results was 258. These results only represent Facebook Pages designated as "Artist" and use English as the primary language. Using statistical methods of calculating sample size, the designated sample size with a confidence level of 95%, a confidence interval of 5, and a population size of 258 is 155. For the content analysis portion of the study 155 pages were included in the analysis. In order to determine which pages should be included in the analysis, a random number generator from www.random.org was used. While conducting the analysis, if an entry did not fit the established parameters (such as having changed their designation of "Artist" to "Public Figure") it was removed from the sample and population and a new random number was generated. To see the complete coding results and code book, refer to Appendix Eight.

The number of likes of the Facebook Artist Pages included in the content analysis ranged from the lowest count of 202 and the highest of 247,773. The median number of the likes was 7,099. See Figure 1 for a graphed version of the raw likes data.
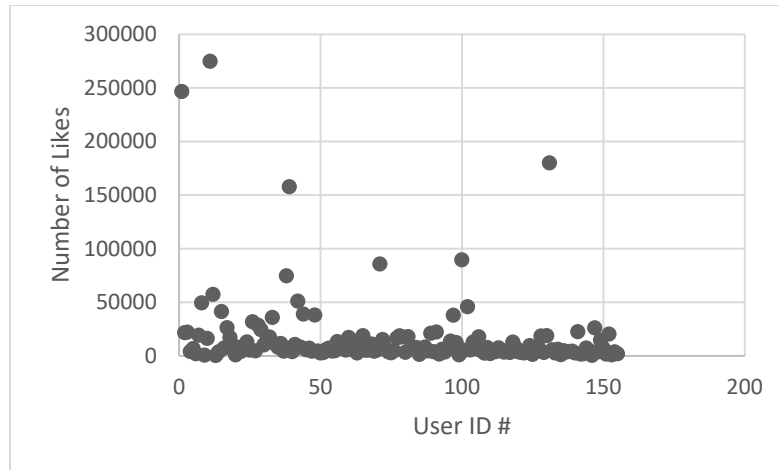
Figure 1: Total number of likes by user.

	Median	Highest	Lowest
Number of Likes	7099	274,773	202
Number of Photos	490	4794	41
Percentage			
% Post Videos			73.55%
% Sell Prints			34.84%
% Store			27.74%
% Commission			20.65%
% Tutorials			27.74%

Table 1: Percentage of Yes answers in Content Analysis

As seen in Table 1, about 74% (114 of 155) of the sample posts videos to their page.

About 35% (54 out of 155) of the sample offered prints of themselves in costume for

users to purchase. Almost 28% (43 out of 155) of the users had store widgets on their

page, and 21% (32 out of 155) offered commission services for custom costumes,

props, and wigs. Finally, nearly 28% (43 out of 155) of the users posted tutorials for

various costume making, props, wigs, and make up techniques on their pages.

Limitations. Two variables had to be eliminated from the initial data collection. When coding I noticed that under start date the format of the entry was not consistent among the participants. Some participants put their date of birth in the start date and others put when they began cosplaying and not when the page was established. Due to the inconsistency of the data, I eliminated this part of the collection. Similarly, location was very often not included and I ended up with a large gap in the data. Due to not having enough location data, I eliminated this from the data analysis as well.

An additional variable was also added during the coding process. I came across several pages that represented cosplay "teams" or couples. This led to having to address how to denote gender in the case of having more than one individual being represented. I ended up adding in a "Member" variable which counted how many members the page represented. If the members were different genders I added the option of "Both" to the gender category.

Comparison of Participants in Part 2 to Content Analysis. From the 155 Facebook Artist pages included in Part 1 (content analysis) of the present study, 20 cosplayers were recruited to participate in Part 2 (interviews). The Facebook Artist Pages of these 20 participants were analyzed in the same manner as the Facebook Artist Pages included in Part 1 of the study. A comparison of the Facebook Artist Pages included in Part 1 of the present study and the Facebook Artist Pages maintained by those included in Part 2 of the present study are presented within this chapter. In Part 1, 144 of the 155, or 92.9 percent, Facebook Artist Pages represented a single individual. Of those individuals, 87% of them were female. In Part 2, 17 of the 19, or 89.5 percent, Facebook

Artist Pages represented a single individual. Of the participants in Part 2,, 85% were female.

When compared to the number of likes on the pages analyzed in Part 1 of the present study, the overall range of the number of likes is much smaller on the pages of the participants included in Part 2 of the study. The range of likes in part 1 of the study was from 202 to 274,571 (median=7099), and the range of likes in part 2 of the study was from 242 of 58,127 (median=2658.)

The range in the number of photos posted on the Pages in Part 1 of the study was 41 at the lowest and 4794 at the highest, with the median number of photos being 490. The range in the number of photos posted on the Pages in Part 2 of the study was 136 at the lowest and 1511 at the highest, with the median number of photos posted being 312.

Figure 2 below shows the comparison between the remaining variables measured in the content analysis.
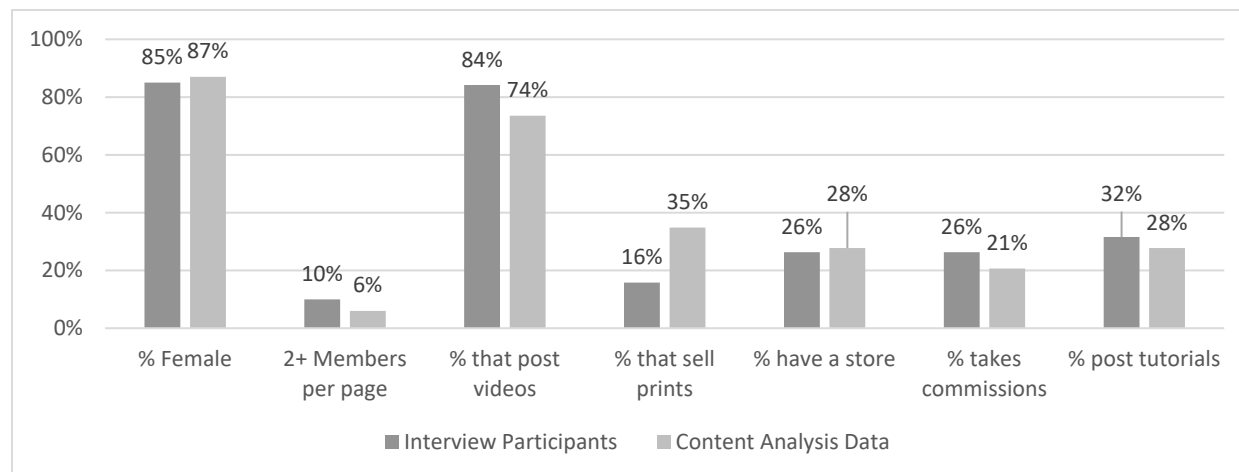
Figure 2: Interview participants versus content analysis data

In Part 1 of the study (content analysis), among those included in the sample, the percentage of Facebook Artist Pages representing female and male individuals was 87% and 13%, respectively. In Part 2 of the study (survey and interviews), the percentage of female and male participants in the survey and interviews was 85% and 15%, respectively. Twenty-eight percent of the Facebook Artist Pages in Part 1 and 23% of the participants in Part 2, had stores connected to the Artist Page. Among Pages included in the Part 1 sample, 21% offered commissions, compared to the 26% of participants in Part 2 of the study. In Part 1 of the study, 28% of the Facebook Artist Pages included tutorials. In Part 2 of the study, 32% of the participants had posted tutorials on their Page. The percentage of users that included videos on their Pages was slightly higher among the participants of the study, with 84% of the interview participants posting videos on their Pages while 74% of the sample in Part 1 included videos. The largest difference between the two samples was in the percentage that sell prints on their Page. In the content analysis sample 35% of the cosplayers sold prints of themselves in costume, while only 16% of the cosplayers in the interview portion of the study sold prints. To better understand the individual Pages of the participants in the interview portion of the present study, the content analysis data of the survey participants is included in Figure 3.

	Gender	Members	Likes	# of photos	Videos?	Sells Prints?	Store?	Commissions?	Tutorials?
Sarah	Female	1	2625	188	no	no	no	no	no
Amanda	Female	1	4601	664	yes	no	no	no	no
Paul	Male	1	2690	136	yes	no	no	no	no
Michelle	Female	1	1920	182	yes	no	no	yes	no
Nicole	Female	1	726	250	yes	no	no	no	no
Samantha and David	Both	2	548	147	no	yes	yes	no	no
Mary	Female	1	6883	884	yes	no	no	no	no
Ann	Female	1	1607	270	yes	no	no	yes	no
Haley	Female	1	4606	842	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Alex	Female	1	404	241	yes	no	no	no	yes
Ashley	Female	1	4924	532	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Kate	Female	1	879	833	yes	no	no	yes	no
Sydney	Female	1	3909	354	yes	no	no	no	yes
Thomas	Male	1	242	124	yes	no	no	no	yes
Rydia	Female	1	15041	473	yes	no	no	no	no
Aeris	Female	1	58369	1119	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Sandi	Female	1	444	216	yes	no	no	no	no
Molly	Female	2	4283	1511	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Figure 3: content analysis data of part 2 participants.

Aspirations Index Survey, Desire for Cosplay Fame Scale, and Interview

Aspirations Index. A total of 20 respondents participated in part II of the study. The IRB approved recruitment message was sent to individual cosplay pages on Facebook via direct message with a 14.63% response rate. Of the 269 messages sent, 14 responded to the messages declining to participate. A total of 27 participants agreed to participate in the survey and interview portion of the study. A total of 25 surveys were reported on Qualtrics as completed. Five of the 25 surveys were completed without a subsequent interview due to the participant no longer responding to messages. None of these surveys were included in the final data analysis. One survey had to be discarded because the participant had changed the designation of their Facebook page from Artist to Public Figure before the interview, thereby making them no longer part of the initial population. Gender was collected at the beginning of the online survey. Of the 20

participants seventeen identified as female, and three identified as male. No other demographic data was collected about the individual besides their gender.

The Aspirations Index scores were calculated by grouping together the scores of the five questions pertaining to each aspiration according to Kasser and Ryan's (1996) instructions for the index. Individual average scores were collected for each participant. Each aspiration was reported through three measures: the importance of the goal, the likelihood of attaining that goal in the near future, and the progress the individual has made towards attaining that goal. The individual scores were calculated before each interview and each participant was asked to provide clarification on their scores during the interview process. The individual scores for each participant are listed in the tables below:

Respondent: Sarah						
	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3	1.6	3	6.6	4.8	7	6.4
Likelihood	4.2	2.4	4.8	4.6	4	6.4	6.6
Attainment	3.6	2.8	5.6	5.2	2.4	6.4	5.6
Respondent: Amanda						
	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	5.8	2.8	3.4	6	5.6	7	6.2
Likelihood	6.8	3	3.8	5.4	5.2	7	6.2
Attainment	6	3.2	3.4	3.8	4.4	7	5.4
Respondent: Paul						
	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth

	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.4	1.8	3.2	6.2	5	6.2	6.6
Likelihood	3.4	1.8	3.6	6	3.8	5.8	5.8
Attainment	1.6	1.2	2.6	4.2	2.2	2.4	3.6

Respondent: Michelle

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.4	2	2.8	5.8	5.8	5	6.4
Likelihood	2.4	2	4.2	5	5	5	5.8
Attainment	2.4	2	4.2	3.8	4.6	5	5.2

Respondent: Nicole

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.6	5.2	5	7	7	4.4	6.8
Likelihood	4	4.6	6	6	6	5.4	6.2
Attainment	3.8	4.4	5	5.4	4.6	4.8	4.8

Respondent: Samantha

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	4.6	2.8	3.6	6.4	5	7	6
Likelihood	4.8	3	3.6	6	5.6	6.6	6
Attainment	4.8	2.6	3	6.2	3.6	6.8	5.2

Respondent: David

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.2	1.6	1.4	5.8	5.6	6.2	5.6
Likelihood	4	1.8	1.8	5.6	4.8	6.2	5.8
Attainment	4.2	1.6	2	4.4	3.8	6.2	5.4

Respondent: Mary

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	4	3.2	3.8	6.4	4.6	5.2	4.6
Likelihood	4.6	4.4	4.8	6.4	5.4	5.6	5
Attainment	4.2	5	4.6	6.4	5.2	5.2	4.8

Respondent: Ann						
		Extrinsic		Intrinsic and Extrinsic		Intrinsic	
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	5.8	4.2	5	6.6	6.4	5.6	7
Likelihood	2.8	2.8	4	4.6	5	5.2	4.6
Attainment	1.4	1.6	4	3.2	3.6	4.6	3.2

Respondent: Haley						
		Extrinsic		Intrinsic and Extrinsic		Intrinsic	
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3	2.8	4	6.8	5.6	7	6.4
Likelihood	3.4	3.4	5.4	5.2	5.8	6.6	6.2
Attainment	2.2	2.6	4.4	3.6	5.2	6.4	5

Respondent: Alex						
		Extrinsic		Intrinsic and Extrinsic		Intrinsic	
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	5	7	3.8	6.8	4.4	6.2	5.6
Likelihood	5	2.2	3.2	4.4	2.6	6	7
Attainment	5	5	3	5	2.4	5.2	6.8

Respondent: Ashley						
		Extrinsic		Intrinsic and Extrinsic		Intrinsic	
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.2	2.4	2.6	6	5	6.8	6.2
Likelihood	3.2	1.6	2	4.2	4.2	6.4	6
Attainment	3	1.8	2.2	4.2	3.6	6.2	4.6

Respondent: Kate						
		Extrinsic		Intrinsic and Extrinsic		Intrinsic	
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	4	5.2	2.4	4.8	6.8	4.2	6.2
Likelihood	3.4	5.2	2.6	4.8	6.8	4.6	6.2
Attainment	3.8	4.8	2.2	4.6	6.6	4	6

Respondent: Sydney						
		Extrinsic		Intrinsic and Extrinsic		Intrinsic	

	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.8	4.4	3.6	4.4	6	7	6.4
Likelihood	3.2	4.4	4.4	4.8	5.6	7	6.2
Attainment	2.2	3.8	3.6	3.8	4.6	7	5

Respondent: Crystal

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	4	1.8	3	6.6	6.4	6.8	7
Likelihood	3.6	1.8	2.8	6	6	6.8	6.4
Attainment	3.4	1.6	2.6	5.4	4.6	6.8	5.6

Respondent: Thomas

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	4.4	3	3.2	6	4.8	7	6.2
Likelihood	5.2	2.8	3.4	5.6	4.2	7	6.2
Attainment	3.6	1.8	3.4	4.8	3.2	7	4.8

Respondent: Rydia

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.4	4.8	4.2	7	7	7	7
Likelihood	2.8	4.2	5.2	5.8	6.4	7	5.8
Attainment	3	4.8	5.2	5.4	6	7	5.4

Respondent: Aeris

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	3.8	3.4	5	6.4	5.6	6.6	6.4
Likelihood	3.6	3.6	4.6	6.4	5.8	5.6	5.8
Attainment	3.2	3.4	4.4	6	4.8	5.2	6

Respondent: Sandi

	Extrinsic			Intrinsic and Extrinsic	Intrinsic		
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	4	4	3	5.4	7	6	6.8
Likelihood	3.8	4	3.6	5.2	7	5.2	6.8

Attainment	2.2	3	3	4.6	6.6	3.8	4.4
Respondent: Molly							
		Extrinsic		Intrinsic and Extrinsic		Intrinsic	
	Wealth	Fame	Image	Health	Community	Relationships	Personal Growth
Importance	5	6.2	5.2	6.2	7	5.4	7
Likelihood	3.6	4.8	6	5	6.2	5	6.8
Attainment	3.2	3.8	5.2	4.2	4.8	4.8	5.4

Table 2: Results of the Aspirations Index

Each of the aspirations was rated on a 1-7 scale with 1 being not at all important and 7 being very important. The group means for the importance of wealth was 4.0 (*n*=20, *SD*=.84) the group mean for the importance of fame was 3.5 (*n*=20, *SD*=1.48), the importance of image was 3.6 (*n*=20, *SD*=.93), the group mean for the importance of relationships was 6.2 (*n*=20, *SD*=.93), the group mean for the importance of personal growth was 6.3 (*n*=20, *SD*=.58), the importance of community was 5.8 (*n*=20, *SD*=.86) the importance of health was 6.2 (*n*=20, *SD*=.70). The group means were calculated to get an overall idea of the attitudes of the group, but individual scores will be used in the subsequent analysis.

Desire for Cosplay Fame Scale. Participants also completed the Desire for Cosplay Fame scale at the end of the survey. The participants indicated their agreement and disagreement with several questions pertaining to the appeal of cosplay fame and the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer. The Likert style scale rated the responses from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) with (3) being Unsure. The results of the individual responses are in the table below.

Respondent: Sarah	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous			x		
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot				x	
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier	x				
Respondent: Amanda	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous		x			
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot			x		
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier	x				
Respondent: Paul	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous			x		
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer				x	
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot				x	

If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier			x		
Respondent: Michelle	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous		x			
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot		x			
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier		x			
Respondent: Nicole	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous				x	
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status				x	
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence			x		
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot			x		
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier				x	
Respondent: Samantha	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous				x	
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer					x
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot				x	
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier			x		
Respondent: David	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Unsure**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
One day I would like to be cosplay famous			x		
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot	x				
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier		x			
Respondent: Mary	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Unsure**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
One day I would like to be cosplay famous			x		
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot			x		
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier		x			
Respondent: Ann	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Unsure**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
One day I would like to be cosplay famous		x			
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot	x				
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier	x				
Respondent: Haley	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous		x			
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot		x			
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier		x			
Respondent: Alex	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous					x
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer					x
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot	x				
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier					x
Respondent: Ashley	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous		x			
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer		x			

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot	x				
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier	x				
Respondent: Kate	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous				x	
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer				x	
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status		x			
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot			x		
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier		x			
Respondent: Sydney	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous				x	
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer				x	
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot				x	
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier			x		
Respondent: Crystal	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous		x			

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot	x				
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier	x				
Respondent: Thomas	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Unsure**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
One day I would like to be cosplay famous			x		
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot			x		
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier			x		
Respondent: Rydia	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Unsure**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
One day I would like to be cosplay famous				x	
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer				x	
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence			x		
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot				x	
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier			x		
Respondent: Aeris	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Unsure**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

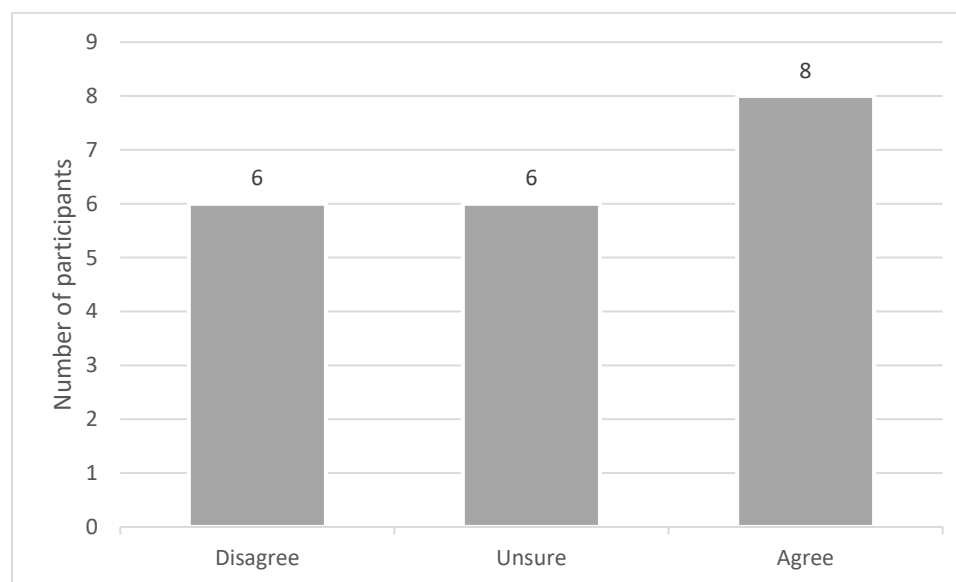|	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous			x		
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status	x				
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence	x				
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot		x			
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier		x			
Respondent: Sandi	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous				x	
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer				x	
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status			x		
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot				x	
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier		x			
Respondent: Molly	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
One day I would like to be cosplay famous				x	
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer					x
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me higher social status				x	
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence		x			
The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot					X
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier				x	

Table 3: Results of the Desire for Cosplay Fame Scale

The average rating for the importance of fame as a life aspiration among all the participants on a scale from 1 being not at all important to 7 being very important was a 3.5 (n=20, SD=1.48). Only 2 participants, Alex and Molly, rated fame as very important as a life aspiration. They rated fame at a 7 and 6.2 respectively, while all other participants rated fame importance at a 5.2 (moderately important) or lower. When asked if they wanted to be a famous cosplayer on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being strongly disagree, 3 being unsure, and 5 being strongly disagree, Alex indicated that she strongly agreed with the statement that she would like to be cosplay famous. Nicole, Samantha, Kate, Sydney, Rydia, Sandi, and Molly all agreed with the statement, Sarah, Paul, David, Mary, Thomas, and Aeris were unsure. Amanda, Michelle, Ann, Haley, Ashley, and Crystal all disagreed with the statement. A visual representation can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4. One day I would like to be cosplay famous

As shown in Figure 5, when asked if they loved the idea of being a famous cosplayer, eight participants agreed, five were unsure, and seven disagreed.
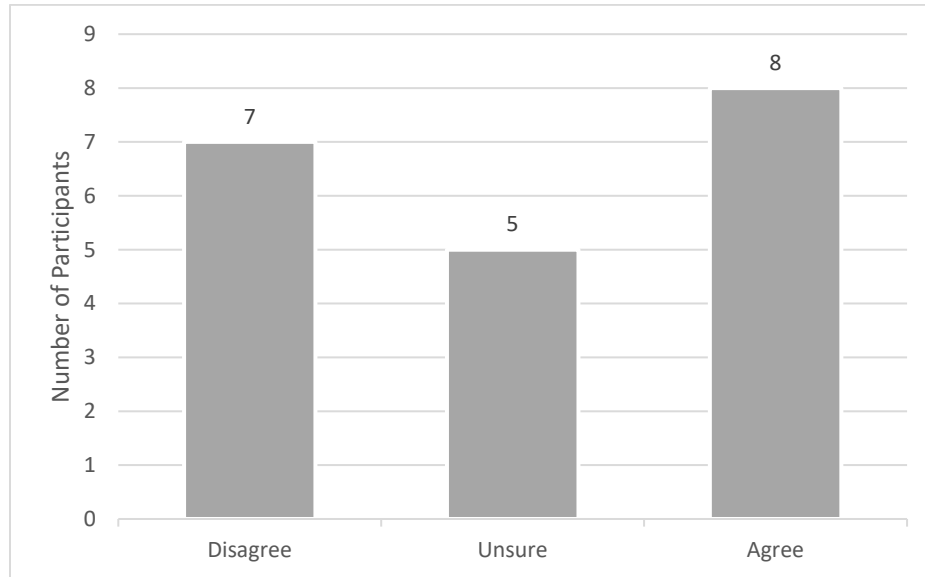
Figure 5. I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer

When asked if the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to them six participants agreed that the lifestyle was appealing, ten disagreed, and three were unsure. This can be seen in Figure 6.
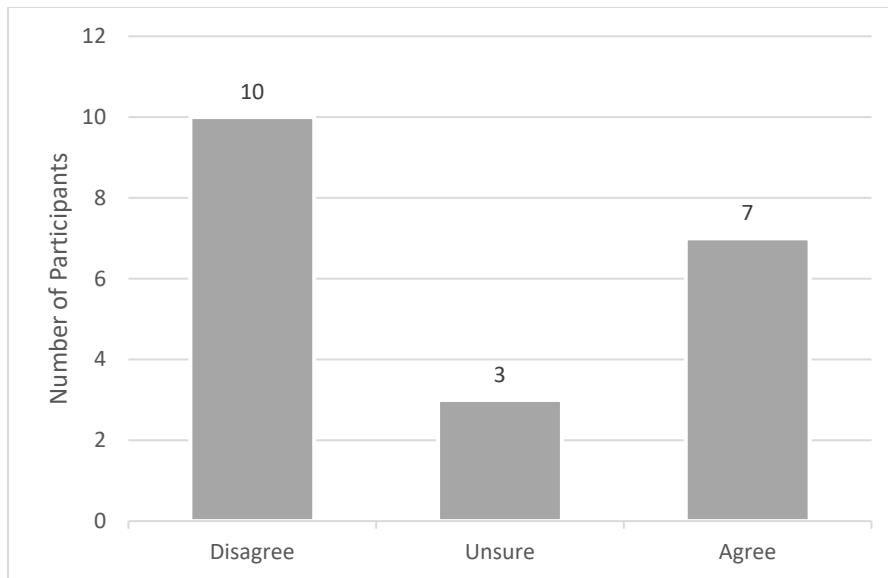
Figure 6. The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot.

When asked what was appealing about the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer participants such as Paul and Samantha indicated that the travel, free conventions, and ability to go to cons as a job appealed to them. Subjects such as Sarah and Kate felt like while the lifestyle would be appealing, it would be tough navigating a convention crowd if they were famous cosplayers. Further discussion of the individual results of the aspirations index will be included with the analysis of the interview data.

Online interviews. A total of 19 interviews were conducted with 20 participants. Samantha and David conducted their interview together as their Facebook Artist Page was dedicated to their cosplaying activities as a couple. Interviews were conducted over the Skype video conference interface and recorded using the Audacity software. Recordings of the interviews were then transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. All identifying information including participant's pseudonyms used for the aspirations index, cosplay alias, real names, and other potentially identifiable information was either

redacted or changed to protect the privacy of the individual. Interviews generally lasted around 45 minutes.

Research Question 1: What motivates cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages to participate in cosplay as they do?

In order to address Research Question 1, direct questions were asked regarding why the individual began participating in cosplay and their current motivations to cosplay. During the coding process, subsequent data addressing these motivations emerged from participant's responses to aspiration related questions. Using the emergent themes approach to coding, each interview was analyzed for general themes regarding their motivations to participate in cosplay. From the initial round of coding 15 themes emerged. The themes were then split into two subsections: reasons why they began cosplaying in the first place and reasons why they continue to cosplay. Detailed information about each subsection, theme, and satisfied need will be introduced here and further discussed in chapter five.

Reasons why they began in the first place. All participants were asked why they started cosplaying in the first place. Three main themes emerged from their answers: to be a part of a community, as a creative outlet, and because it looked fun. After describing why they started, all participants were asked if their motivations to cosplay have changed since they started. A number of additional motivations emerged from this question. The following section will detail both why cosplayers began cosplaying and why they continue to cosplay.

Theme 1: To be a part of a community, or, everyone else was doing it! This theme encompasses two sub-themes:1) participants started cosplaying because they wanted to be a part of a new community, and 2) participants wanted to remain a part of their existing friend community through their participation. The first theme, "participants started cosplaying because they wanted to be part of a new community," emerged from participants witnessing cosplaying in person or online and realizing that they would like to be a part of the group. When asked why they began to cosplay, Sarah stated that "It was such a nice environment with all the people dressing up and I wanted to be part of that community." Sarah, Amanda, and David all indicated that dressing in costume was an enticing part of the convention atmosphere and felt that they would going against the convention norms if they weren't cosplaying.

> *So I went [to the con] and I didn't wear a costume to begin with, and then I saw like basically a sea of people. It's like you were the odd one out if you weren't in costume at this convention.-Amanda*

A couple of participants made statements that inferred that dressing up was an expectation of attending a con, and that as a cosplayer at a convention you are part of the "In" crowd.

> *I hadn't been to a comic convention since I was about 10 and back then I was just going for collecting comics and getting signatures from authors and artists that I loved and I didn't dress up, But when Wizard World came here I was like I am going to go to this and I am going to dress up because if I go I can't not dress up. -Crystal*

> *It was funny for me, we were going to go to GenCon for the first time ever, right, and it was just like, "Well, we need to wear a costume at GenCon!!"-David*

The second subtheme, "participants wanted to remain a part of their existing friend community through their participation," is evidenced by Nicole, Molly, Sandi, and Ann's indication that they started cosplaying because their friends were into it, and their friends had encouraged them to participate.

> Researcher: Why did you start cosplaying?
>
> Ann-I had friends that were doing it. So, peer pressure.

These participants later indicated that their friends continue to cosplay with them today and it is one of their main drivers for continuing to participate in cosplay. More information about the reasons why participants continue to cosplay will be discussed in a subsequent section.

Theme 2-Because it looked fun! This subtheme emerged from participants witnessing cosplayers in person and at conventions and interpreting the cosplay experience as something fun and enjoyable that they wished to experience for themselves. Sarah, Amanda, Michelle, Haley, and Sydney all had witnessed cosplayers while attending a convention as "normal" attendees. They all indicated believing that cosplayers were impressive, looked like they were having fun, and that it was something they wanted to try and be a part of.

> I started cosplaying because I actually just thought it would be
> fun. I went to my very first convention and I was just walking
> around in a nerdy shirt and jeans and I saw this girl dressed up
> as Cardcaptor Sakura and I was like "I didn't know they
> dressed up at anime cons? I thought that was strictly a Star
> Trek thing" so as soon as I saw that I knew I had to try it. -
> Haley

Mary had a similar but unique experience, in that she enjoyed dressing up as characters before ever attending a convention, and in a way—discovered what she was doing was something other people did already.

> *I was told about a convention that was in my area and it dawned on me that it would be fun to dress as a character from a show that I really liked—Yu Yu Hakusho—and then when I went I found out that a lot of other people had had the same idea but I did not know it was a thing. I just thought it would be fun and then it turned out to be a thing. -Mary*

Ashley and Paul had encountered photos of cosplayers online and were inspired to cosplay based on the representation of cosplayers in photographs.

> *I was actually playing Final Fantasy VIII and I got stuck and I needed help and so I went on the internet, which was still a relatively new thing for me at the time, and I was looking up help and I found pictures of cosplayers and I was like "PEOPLE DO THIS?! This is so cool! It's like everything I like all in one place!" and that's how I got into it. -Ashley*

> *I was going to my first convention, actually, Blizzcon in November of that year and I was sort of looking online and trying to figure out what I got myself into and I just saw all these photos of people in costumes and I was like "oh my gosh that is so cool I need to learn how to do that" and it was basically after that I was super into it like right away! -Paul*

Alex indicated that she began cosplaying because she enjoys dressing up and saw it as an opportunity to dress up and not be seen as doing something weird. She described that in her home country Halloween is not celebrated so there are no culturally acceptable times of year to dress in costume.

Theme 3: It's a creative outlet. Upon discovering cosplay two participants indicated that what inspired them to start cosplaying was that it would be a chance for them to utilize their artistic abilities and creatively express themselves.

> *When I first started I think what appealed to me the most was*
> *it was a creative outlet and at the time I was taking a lot of art*
> *classes in middle school and high school and I really enjoyed*
> *3 dimensional art and creation. -Mary*

> *I always wanted to be a designer of costume related things,*
> *and I really liked doing art with my mom and stuff and so when*
> *I found out about cosplay I was really really excited because I*
> *was like "finally I can use my skills in something I like"*
> *because I love video games and anime and stuff like that, so I*
> *was pretty excited -Kate*

It is important for this theme to distinguish that it was the creative aspect at the very beginning that inspired these participants to cosplay. They recognized right away the potential for the hobby to explore and expand their already existing skill and artistic hobbies. Similar sentiments were expressed by those when asked why they continue to cosplay today, as will be seen in the next subsection.

Reasons why they continue to cosplay. All participants were asked if their motivation to participate in cosplay had changed from when they first began cosplaying. Many themes emerged from this question, with many participants citing multiple reasons why they continue to cosplay. The themes will be discussed in detail below.

Theme 1: Cosplay as a creative challenge. Nearly half of the participants indicated that they continue to cosplay as a way to gain more skills in costume making, prop building, and other artistic endeavors. Participants used language like "building

skills", a "challenge", and "learning experiences" to describe their motivations to continue to participate in cosplay.

> *I think it started out as just for fun because like it was a cool idea to do it, and then over time it became like a challenge for myself because I liked to try to create more difficult and complex costumes so it became a learning experience and I liked to do it because I could learn to make these different things and learn all these different trades. -Michelle*

> *Probably the challenge of it, and I think that's probably why my list is smaller. I am less interested in kind of every interesting design I see and I want something that is going to make me tackle a problem I haven't had before, so maybe it's just advancing my skill set -Ashley*

Sarah, Amanda, Michelle, Samantha, David, Mary, Haley, Ashley, Sandi, and Sydney all expressed their love of the challenge that comes with cosplaying. This challenge was rooted in the interpretation of a fictional character in to real life and having to learn new skills and techniques in order to make a character come to life. Michelle, Ann, Samantha, and David all mentioned that they would not have learned to sew had they not gotten into cosplay, and that trying to improve their sewing skills is a driving motivation to continue to cosplay. Similar sentiments were expressed by Sarah, Paul, and Kate when it came to working with Worbla and creating armor. Sarah cited specific types of skills that she wanted to learn and how her character choices for future costumes are driven by what type of skill she would like to learn next.

> *I have not built wings yet, so that would be my next focus for example. I want to build some wings. Or I want to work with lights, or I want to make these huge shoulder pads, things like that mostly. -Sarah*

Theme 2: It's fun! Similar to the reasons why many participants decided to start cosplaying in the first place, Sarah, Amanda, Mary, Sandi, and Ann all expressed that cosplaying was still a fun activity for them and would continue to cosplay as long as it was still fun for them.

> *For me the main orientation has always been to just have fun*
> *doing it and do so mostly with friends and that has not*
> *changed over time for me at all. For me that is still the most*
> *important factor -Sarah*

Ann explained that a side hobby of hers was acting and performing, and cosplay was a form of "soft-core acting" and that's what made cosplay fun for her.

> *It's just fun. It's like soft core acting and I like acting and it*
> *gives me an excuse to sort of do that in a normal setting I*
> *guess. -Ann*

Theme 3: To maintain and build friendships. When asked if their motivations to cosplay have changed over time six participants expressed that they continue to participate because of the network of friends that they have and attending conventions is one of the times they can be the most social with their friends.

> *And also like the friendships I've made. Like I've made so*
> *many friends through cosplay and it's kind of like a big family*
> *gathering at every convention. So that's kind of like the*
> *reasons I do it. -Amanda*

While these six participants mentioned their friends specifically as a motivation to continue, every participant cited having friends that they have made while being in the cosplay community. More discussion about the relationship between friendships and the cosplay community will be discussed later in the aspirations portion of this chapter.

Theme 4: For positive feedback. When asked why they continue cosplay and the aspect of the hobby that appealed to them the most, eight participants said it was the amount of positive feedback and attention received while cosplaying. Sydney specifically stated that after her first time cosplaying the attention she received from her first costume inspired her to continue.

> *Well after I made the first cosplay for myself. I made Leona from League of Legends and attended my next year at Anime Nebraskon. It was the attention. It was how much people truly appreciated the time and the work that you put into your costume. I remember walking in to through the doors in my costume and I was trying to put pieces back on because it was really windy and pieces blew off and I was trying to put myself together and people were like "Can I take your picture can I take your picture!?" Again there was just like HOLD ON. It's that excitement and the attention that you get -Sydney*

Mary stated that she does enjoy cosplay for her own personal benefit, but the attention and positive reinforcement is an added bonus that makes all the hard work worth it.

> *The stuff that I make myself that I go out of my way and spend my own money to make there is no real monetary or substantial benefit to doing this—it's just something I like to do so the positive reinforcement kind of keeps the motivation up for something that otherwise really has no payoff except for "You've done something awesome, and that's cool" but then you know if you do something awesome and that's cool and you post it and other people think that's awesome that's just added benefit. -Mary*

Nicole explicitly stated that without the feedback from others while cosplaying and subsequently online there is not much of a point in cosplaying at all. She believed that others in the community feel the same way, even if they don't come right out and say it.

> *At its core cosplay is meant to be seen and it's meant to be known about and it's meant to be talked about. That's why we do*

> *it. This is not something like making boats in bottles. You don't*
> *just do it and stick it on the shelf and admire it. That's not how it*
> *works. So ironically without the community it wouldn't exist. -*
> *Nicole*

Sarah compared cosplaying and the positive reinforcement received through cosplay to

the admiration received from showing off artwork. She compared her own cosplay work

to those of more traditional artists. The positive feedback was important as it fostered

positive feelings in the artist.

> *Because I think too, if you are for example if you are a painter,*
> *and you make this beautiful painting you can like it a lot but if you*
> *hang it up and everybody goes "oh that's an ugly painting, my 3*
> *year old could make that" I dunno, it doesn't give you a very good*
> *feeling. So it's the same with costumes, like anything we create,*
> *right? So it's not like we look for approval from other people, but*
> *at the same time we want to be appreciated for what we've*
> *created in one way or another, and that's really what it comes*
> *down to. We can probably do without and people would probably*
> *continue doing what they love without other people's approval but*
> *getting that approval is really valuable at the same time. -Sarah*

The positive reinforcement received from both other cosplayers, convention attendees,

and others online is a complex and important issue and will be discussed in more detail

in Chapter 5.

    Theme 5: To express their fandom. When speaking about their motivations to

cosplay and what appealed to them the most about cosplay, Sarah, Amanda and David

mentioned cosplaying as a way for them to express their love of a character or a series

to others.

> *I think it's a combination of things, part of it is certainly*
> *representing your fandom to the geek community, being able to*

> *not just enjoy the games or the movies or whatever it is that you*
> *are excited about -David*

Sarah mentioned that her cosplaying is a way for her to compliment the original artist.

> *..it's also a compliment to the original artist who have created and*
> *worked really hard creating this concept and the character and*
> *the story behind it -Sarah*

Amanda expressed that she chooses to cosplay only as characters that she likes and that mean something to her. This led to some of her cosplaying being focused on making multiple costumes of a specific character because she held a personal connection to the character.

> *I kind of only cosplay characters that I really really like and/or that*
> *mean something to me. So characters that I feel are particularly*
> *strong like Lara Croft. I will cosplay every single costume of her*
> *ever. No questions asked, because I grew up with Tomb Raider -*
> *Amanda*

Theme 6: To promote a community or brand. Two participants expressed that a current reason they continue to cosplay is for the promotion of a community or a brand. Mary discussed her experience being hired by game companies and developers to dress as one of their characters to promote a new product or a brand. She specifically focused on her efforts of combining her love of cosplay with the potential to make money.

> *I like the idea of doing something I love and turning it into*
> *something I can live off of and I think that's kind of the natural*
> *drive I have in any sort of scenario is that I want to always be*
> *able to take whatever I do kind of to the maximum limit and I*
> *don't really have any gaps in hobby versus profession. I figure if I*
> *love to do something enough I might as well get paid for it, and I*
> *really do like going to trade shows a lot and it all just came down*
> *to this logistical natural conclusion where I thought "I love doing*

> *this and it would be nice to get paid for it and I'm very good at*
> *it—so how can I make all those things collide?" -Mary*

Nicole expressed that she holds an important leadership position in her cosplay community and it's important to her to be a strong example of a cosplayer in order to promote her community. She believes that her expertise and presentation have a strong influence on the wellbeing of the community.

> *If I don't look good, if I don't impress people, they won't listen to*
> *me and they won't come to the events and make friends and*
> *they won't let the conventions host this year. It's become a little*
> *more high stakes for me. So my motivations have changed. I do*
> *have to be impressive, I do have to be a show off, which is not*
> *at all how this started when I was making costumes out of bed*
> *sheets and t-shirts! -Nicole*

Theme 7: To step into other shoes. Two participants alluded to the fact that cosplaying allows them to step into the role of another character. Amanda and Ann both expressed how cosplaying allows them to don the persona of a character for a day, and that this is something most people don't get to do in their everyday life.

> *I'm trying to mirror and become that character, because it's*
> *just, it's not supposed to be you. It's supposed to be someone*
> *else, so doing that to become that person, even for that short*
> *amount of time, is the thing that I want to do. So like whatever*
> *tricks I need to do to make that happen in real life. It's a bit*
> *theatrical -Amanda*

> *It's just nice to not be you for a while, I mean it's like stepping*
> *out of who you are and you get to be somebody else for a*
> *couple of hours -Ann*

Unique Responses. Alex specifically cited that she continues to cosplay because of the fame aspect of the hobby. She was also the only participant that rated fame as very important to her in the Aspirations Scale taken before the interview.

> *Well actually its complicated. I think that at the beginning its only about dressing up, but now its somehow evolved, but I'm not really sure in which way because obviously its not all about the dressing up now, since I have an artist page and everything so maybe the fame is crucial now. I suppose so. -Alex*

When asked to clarify her desire for fame she described that she wanted to be a famous singer when she was younger and when that did not work out for her cosplay took the place of that as an outlet to get her name and skills out there.

Further discussion of the implications of all the above themes and the relationships to the satisfaction of the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness will be included in Chapter 5.

Research Question 2: To what do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages attribute the level of fame they have achieved thus far?

In the attempt to answer research question two, several main elements emerged. First, the definition of what it means to be a famous cosplayer seemed to differ among the participants. In order to understand to what the cosplayers attribute their cosplay fame is it is important to understand what it means to be a famous cosplayer. Second, only a few participants in the study considered themselves famous, however, a difference between being famous and being well known was stressed among a handful of participants. Finally, the participant's perception of what it would take for them to become more famous is discussed as a way to shed additional light on what makes a famous cosplayer. The following sections will describe each of these elements in detail.

What is a famous cosplayer? A potential new area of inquiry that arose in the present study among the participants was the definition of what it is to be a famous

cosplayer or a cosplay celebrity. The term was often used interchangeably among the participants when describing their ideas about cosplay fame. The definition of a famous cosplayer was not provided during the interview process in the hopes of participants describing how they define cosplay fame. Participants defined a famous cosplayer using four different themes related to behavior, social media, and perks received as a result from their renown.

Participants perception of cosplay fame. Four major themes emerged from the data when participants discussed their ideas about what makes a person a famous cosplayer. To the participants in the present study, a famous cosplayer is someone that is invited to conventions, paid to cosplay, has a large number of followers, and is frequently recognized at conventions.

Invites to conventions. Several participants mentioned that being invited as a guest by a convention was an indicator that somebody was a famous cosplayer. The exact activities an invited cosplayer takes part in at the convention was not clearly defined by the participants. However, the participants noted that being invited as a guest to a convention is different than attending the convention as a regular attendee, hosting their own panel, or having a booth in the artist alley. Amanda described that this is not something that happens in her country and that cosplayers that are typically considered famous like Yaya Han and Jessica Nigri have to pay to have a booth in the dealers room or artists alley at her country's major conventions.

Alex was the only participant in the present study that considered herself to be a famous cosplayer, and made the specification that she only believes she is famous in

her home country. She believes this is true because she has been invited as a guest to the conventions in her local area. She noted that in order for her to be considered truly a famous cosplayer she would have to be invited to a convention in another country. To her, she was not on the same level of cosplayers like Yaya Han and Jessica Nigri because she had not been invited to conventions outside of her country. This resonates with Nicole's description of a famous cosplayer hierarchy, which will be described later in this chapter.

Paid to cosplay. According to some participants being a famous cosplayer means that you get paid to cosplay. For two participants, this was closely related to being paid to attend conventions as a guest. The payment of the travel, lodging and convention badge means that the cosplayer is essentially getting a free opportunity to cosplay. Their cosplaying activity is what is drawing in additional crowds to the conventions so fans can witness the cosplayer dressed up in person. Mary made a specific distinction between being a paid cosplayer and a famous cosplayer. According to her, paid cosplayers are considered professional cosplayers and famous cosplayers are those that have gained a large following and established some form of personal branding. Mary describes herself as a professional cosplayer because she is paid to cosplay, but she does not consider herself to be a famous cosplayer.

A large Facebook following. As mentioned in the section regarding what participants would have to do to be considered more famous, several participants noted the number of people that follow them would have to be increased. When discussing a cosplayer having a fan following this often went hand in hand with the number of likes

on a page. As Mary described, when a cosplayer has more likes they have a larger community surrounding them since every like is connected to a real human being.

There was no specific number of followers one needs to be considered famous, but Michelle considered the estimated 1000 followers she had to be small. Alex, who considered herself to be a famous cosplayer in her home country, had about 12,600 followers during the time of the interview. Rydia did not consider herself to be famous, yet had over 52,000 followers on her page. The cosplayers most frequently mentioned as examples of famous cosplayers have well over those numbers. At this point in time Kamui Cosplay has 280,876 followers, Yaya Han has 2,178,819 followers, and Jessica Nigri has 4,763,118 followers. However, as Kate stressed, likes may not be a reliable measure of fame.

Kate mentioned that likes cannot always be trusted. She mentioned that cosplayers can "buy likes" for their page. Ashley may have also referred to this when she mentioned that likes are easy to inflate. Buying likes involves paying a third party to create a slew of fake Facebook profiles to like the page and boost the overall count of likes in the hopes of generating more traffic to the page and making the page look more exciting (Corion, 2014). According to Corion (2014), buying likes is not always successful, since the profiles are all fake and have no real people behind them This may mean there is little to no engagement taking place on the page (Corion, 2014). This sentiment was reflected by Rydia, who described the consequences of people mining for likes or participating in share for shares. She described that the number of likes did not truly reflect the star power of the cosplayer, and that it was more important to look at the engagement and the enthusiasm of the people that followed the cosplayer.

Being recognized. Kate described that to her, a famous cosplayer is someone that is easily recognizable at a convention. She mentioned that she would know someone is famous if people around the convention were excited to see the person and eager to take their picture. This is an interesting definition of a famous cosplayer, because several cosplayers in the study like Haley, Thomas, Rydia, Kate, Michelle, Mary, Crystal, Nicole, Sandi, and Molly all mentioned being recognized at cons. However, for these cosplayers it was a sign that they were beginning to achieve some level of fame, but that the frequency in which they were recognized was not high enough for them to consider themselves to be famous. In the case of Thomas, Nicole, and Haley this did contribute to their qualification of themselves as well-known cosplayers. Aeris noted that she was beginning to be recognized not for herself as a person, but because of the costumes she had done. For example, for Aeris, when meeting new people they would mention that someone had cosplayed an iconic character from the year before and found it memorable, but they did not realize that she had been the one cosplaying the character. Aeris specified that it was her work that was becoming well known, and not necessarily herself as a craftsman. As evident in the various descriptions of what it means to be a famous cosplayer, cosplay fame can be achieved in a number of ways, however not every participant believed they had achieved fame.

To what do they attribute their cosplay fame? When asked, only one participant indicated that she perceives herself to be a famous cosplayer. Therefore, deriving an understanding of how the remaining participants achieved the level of fame they currently have was difficult since they themselves did not consider themselves as

having achieved fame. The following sections will describe the participant's perception

of their own level of fame followed by what they consider to have contributed to the level

of fame they have managed to achieve.

Fame perception. Data collected via the aspiration index survey supports what

participants communicated during the interviews. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is

"not at all," 4 is "moderately," and 7 is "very," the mean score for having already

achieved fame was a 3.0 (n=20, SD=1.30). the mean score for likelihood of attainment

was 3.2 (n=20, SD=1.12) , and the mean score for the importance of fame was 3.0

(n=20, SD=1.48). Therefore, understanding how individual participants achieved their

current level of fame emerged from within explorations and descriptions of their cosplay

experiences, use of social media, and their overall behavior in the cosplay community.

Not every participant had a clear-cut answer to this question.

Amanda, Nicole, Haley, Alex, Thomas, and Molly indicated when asked if they

were famous cosplayers that they did not consider themselves to be famous cosplayers,

but that they considered themselves to be well known cosplayers. These participants

were asked to clarify and they described their definition of a famous cosplayer versus a

well-known cosplayer.

> *That's a tough question because I am well known in the state.*
> *Everywhere I go people who cosplay do know me but I don't*
> *think that makes me famous. It just makes me well known. To*
> *me there is a big difference in well-known and famous. Famous*
> *people are watched. Famous people are anticipated which is*
> *very different from being well known where you know, it's kind*
> *of like going to the town tavern and everybody knows your*
> *name. Neither is better or worse than the other. It's just a*
> *different kind of famous -Nicole*

Nicole was asked to clarify her different ideas of famous and provided a lengthy

explanation about her views of the different types of fame that can be achieved in the

cosplay community. She noted that people in the cosplay community can become

famous in several different ways. Further discussion of the different types of famous

cosplayers will be included in the discussion section of this paper.

> *No, like, it's weird because I'm not in the realm of just like,*
> *Jessica Nigri or Yaya Han and things like that but I'm well*
> *known enough that I am well known in the cosplay scene*
> *specifically in the UK and that's about it, but I wouldn't say I'm*
> *like "famous". There's different degrees of fame. But I don't think*
> *I've reached that -Amanda*

She expressed similar sentiments as Nicole when it came to different levels of fame.

> *Well you've got the famous famous, right? So when like*
> *millions of people, actors, actresses, that sort of thing. Then*
> *you kind of get down into local fame like maybe someone in*
> *your village or town is known for something and that's also a*
> *kind of fame. And then there's the social media famous. In*
> *quotes! Which is just like they are famous on a platform, but if*
> *you walked passed them in the street like you'd have no idea*
> *who they are. And then there's also different degrees of*
> *cosplay fame like Jessica Nigri really, you definitely, if you're*
> *in the cosplay scene, not even if you're in the cosplay scene,*
> *she's probably the most famous with the most Likes and*
> *people who aren't into it whereas I'm just, people just know me*
> *from just being at certain conventions but if I was to go to*
> *America or if with people on the street they don't know who I*
> *am, it's just kind of like "oh hey I saw that costume that one*
> *time you did" -Amanda*

Amanda, Nicole, Haley, Alex, and Thomas all made the distinction that they are only well known in their local community or among those that have been in the hobby for a long period of time. Haley and Thomas both had been cosplaying for over a decade and had made a name for themselves just from being a frequent presence at their local conventions. Similar sentiments were expressed by other participants that did not see themselves as being famous, but that participating in conventions and social media enabled their names to become more known in their communities. Alex indicated that she considers herself to only be famous in the country that she lives in. She compared her fame on a 1-10 scale with 1 being the least famous to 10 being the most famous that she would be a 6 or 7 in her country but only a 1 or 2 compared to cosplayers in the rest of the world.

Contributions to current level of notoriety. Among all of the participants several themes emerged when discussing the amount of notoriety (but not fame) they have achieved so far. The themes that did emerge are described below:

Theme 1: Social media. The most recurring theme that emerged among the participants when discussing their current level of notoriety was the influence of social media in spreading their work. Paul, Michelle, Mary, Ann, Haley, Alex, Ashley, Crystal, Sandi, Molly, and Thomas all alluded to experiencing boosts in attention, reach, and recognition after posting their work online through a social media outlet. Michelle, Mary, Haley, Ashley, and Thomas mentioned using the Cosplay.com user interface when they first began cosplaying and that is how people first began following them for their work. They continued using the website until they began to see a shift towards other social media websites such as Facebook.

Paul, Michelle, Molly, and Sydney all noticed that participating in Facebook groups for specific fandoms helped boost their notoriety among other cosplayers. Michelle indicated that she was well known in her local convention scene but after becoming an administrator for a global Facebook group her name spread like wildfire.

> *I would say it's more like a 2 or a 3, only because for a while I was really well known in the New England cosplay community and then I kind of fell out of it for a bit. But now I'm really well known in the Disney cosplay community like worldwide because I am an administrator for the Disney Cosplayers Group [On Facebook] and we have like 17,000 members and they all pretty much know me and they know my work and they know to reach out to me for certain costumes. So I don't consider myself famous at all but I do know that a lot of people know who I am, and they recognize my work. -Michelle*

Thomas noted that he was more well known among the community when he first started cosplaying in 2004 and it was through Cosplay.com and the convention specific forums that helped plant his name among the other convention attendees. He noted that he would attend a convention and people would recognize his cosplay alias on his badge and ask if he was the person with the same name on the convention forums.

> *Before Facebook really was able to have people have such interconnectivity with each other there were the forums of conventions or cosplay.com and you kind of just were constantly checking the forums and staying on that and people remember you from that. So that kind of was more like a personal idea—I took charge in being vocal and being out there—not necessarily promoting in any way but just being present and kind of went from there. -Thomas*

Alex noted that without social media only a hundred or so people would know who she was compared to the over 15,000 people she has that follow her on her page. She described that without social media she would have to attend a large number of conventions in order to show her work.

Because of Facebook I can save my time and I would choose Facebook more than going to a convention to promote myself. So if I did not have social media or Facebook it would be like not being known at all, or maybe 100 or so people would know me or something like that. -Alex

Theme 2: Attending conventions. Sarah, Amanda, Mary, Haley, Sandi, and Sydney noticed that they began to be more well-known after attending conventions and meeting other cosplayers. While at the conventions participants were approached by many different people for photographs and to answer questions about their costumes. Several participants indicated that they were asked if they had websites or Facebook pages to be looked up after the convention. While their social media did play a role at this point, these participants indicated that the convention provided an opportunity to meet these individuals they would otherwise not have met.

After the convention participants indicated that they became more well-known after being tagged in convention photographs and videos. The tags were both on their personal Facebook pages and their cosplay pages. If their costume was photographed by a variety of people they were reaching a wider audience.

No, you definitely see highs and lows [in terms of new followers], and the highs mostly come from, well, after you come back from conventions and you've talked with people and spread your name - Sarah

Alex and Thomas were the only participants to speak about spreading cosplay page specific business cards at the conventions. These cards—Thomas called Moo Cards because of the website where they were ordered—have photographs of past costumes, email addresses, and website URLs to Facebook pages or personal websites. Thomas described handing out these cards to photographers who took his picture at the

convention so the photograph could be tagged with his page after the convention ended.

Unique Experiences. Several individual participants had unique experiences that led to them becoming more well known in their community. Haley indicated that she was well known in the community for being around for a long period of time, but a specific costume she made boosted her notoriety overnight. She has nearly 17 years of cosplay experience, and had a small following for 15 of those years. She described that in the last two years her fan following exploded after the debut of her La Muerte costume from *The Book of Life.*

> *That costume exploded online. My boyfriend was like—you don't understand—he was up before me and wandering around the hotel room and I was getting up. He was ready to go leave and I wanted to shower and all this stuff. He was like "Have you even checked your Facebook? Have you checked your Instagram? Have you checked anything?" and I was like "no but my phone has been buzzing all morning so I must have been tagged in something." He was like "no you haven't been tagged in something. You ARE the something, you don't get that" and when I checked that overnight the costume exploded -Haley*

She was being tagged in photographs taken at the convention and the photographs were being shared and reblogged on a number of different social media outlets. She described that the photographs went so viral that they reached the creator, producer, writers, and animators of the movie who praised her costume and shared her photographs on their own social media pages. She later went on to say that she gets recognized more now for having done that specific costume than for her own personal cosplay name that she's built over the last 17 years.

Nicole indicated that any notoriety or fame that she had developed was purely built on luck. She did not consider herself a famous cosplayer, but that she does get a small amount of recognition and it boiled down to being in the right place at the right time. She mentioned her demographic and that she fit into what she considers the typical average for American cosplayers.

> *I don't put focus on getting fans, or likes, or shares. I don't really care. I've never paid for sponsored posts. I've never done a share for share to get my name out there. I've never put that effort in to be an elite. And it's also, I say luck because a lot of it is stacked against me when I'm the most common demographic to cosplay. I am your average build, fair skinned, female. Just like 70% of American cosplayers. So there is very little for me to differentiate myself from the crowd. Yea, I consider myself an excellent craftsman. I'm wonderful at sewing and my makeup is pretty decent and so is everybody else's. So I do say it's a lot of luck. -Nicole*

What it would take to become famous. Even though most of the participants did not believe they were famous cosplayers, when asked what it would take to become a famous cosplayer there were several themes that emerged that they believed would make someone famous. In some cases specific cosplayers were named and used as an example of the types of behavior that would be needed to become famous. Ten participants had named specific cosplayers that they considered to be famous cosplayers. Of the participants interviewed, seven named Yaya Han, seven named Jessica Nigri, and five named Kamui Cosplay. Samantha and David, who interviewed together, mentioned cosplayers Lightning and Allie-Cat as popular cosplayers that they follow, and Crystal mentioned Ivy Doomkitty as a cosplayer who would draw an audience to a convention. These cosplayers were referenced as people who work hard towards cultivating an online presence, a personal brand, making and debuting new

costumes frequently, and in some cases a product they could sell (i.e. tutorials or prints). These participants mentioned the behavior and social media activities of these individuals in the context of what one would have to do in order to become a famous cosplayer.

Theme 1: Expanded Reach. When noting what they would have to do in order to boost their current level of fame within the community several participants indicated that they would need more overall page "Likes" on their Facebook page. The average number of likes (as of January 2017) on the pages of the participants interviewed was around 5,838 (*n*=19, *SD*=12,103) with the lowest being 364 and the highest being 52,768. Mary, who identifies as a professional cosplayer, described the Facebook "Like" as sort of rating system in order to compare one cosplayer against another. When a cosplayer has more likes they have a larger community surrounding them. This enables them to reach more individuals. This larger reach is appealing to companies and industry professionals looking to connect with an audience.

> *The more likes the [Facebook page] had the more interest they garnered because the likes on a Facebook page are actual human beings and so if you have a lot of them you have a big community surrounding you. So as far as market reach goes if you looked at someone it was like Yelp. Like if you went on Yelp and you see a 5 star restaurant and then you see another 5 star restaurant but one has 6 thousand reviews and one has 4, you feel like the weight of those reviews means more and so the 5 stars becomes kind of irrelevant and it becomes the community surrounding that rating. - Mary*

Having more likes in order to gain more of a reach among individuals relates to the next theme of an overall improved social media presence. Ashley shared her opinion on how

likes are used as a measure of popularity in the cosplay community, but that likes can

be inflated and are not necessarily an accurate portrayal of popularity.

> *Well I mean obviously, it's a "Like" game—people want to get more likes. People judge someone's popularity based on how many likes they have—although I think the way Facebook does that whole system—that's kind of a false sense of popularity in a lot of times…I don't think it's a necessarily an accurate reflection of how popular someone is. It's certainly is a baseline and I get why people judge based on that but it's so easy to falsely inflate that and I think that going after that as a goal you're just going to frustrate yourself in a quest for something that's not rewarding in any sort of way. -Ashley*

Theme 2: Increased activity on social media. Paul, Alex, Sydney, and Thomas

all specifically mentioned that they felt they would have to be more active and consistent

with their social media activity for them to become famous cosplayers.

> *Well today you would have to be really heavy on almost all of the social media, whichever one really works for you I guess, but I know famous cosplayers are people—or people I would deem more famous then I am—or at least well known, they have their Twitter, they have their Instagram, some of them have Vines, they have their Facebook pages. Some have their real Facebook pages, some are like mine, a fan page or an art page, and they are constantly updating anything and not necessarily even about cosplay, just what they are doing and that constant effort is just a little bit beyond me right now in my state of life with starting a family and owning a house and having a career that is not cosplay. I don't really think I could keep up with that without going nuts. -Thomas*

These participants mentioned that consistently keeping their social media pages

updated with progress, finished photos, and tutorials would eventually make them

famous cosplayers, but that their outside commitments limited their ability to do so.

They noted that the cosplayers that have hundreds of thousands of likes spend a long

time creating content to post on their page, and may even schedule their posts all at once so their posting is consistent. Thomas reiterated the time commitment that goes into cultivating the social media presence.

> *I can't be on social media [all the time]. I really feel like…the people*
> *who are really cosplay famous, they are on it every few hours and*
> *they'll pop something up there. I don't know if they just schedule*
> *that in their life or if they are a little more free to do that. -Thomas*

Mary reinforced the notion that an active participation in social media would lead to someone becoming more famous. She felt that one of the indicators that a cosplayer is famous is their social media presence.

> *A very strong social media presence is a very good indicator [of a*
> *famous cosplayer]. A cosplayer who posts three or four times a*
> *week is obviously more invested and has a bigger following than*
> *someone who posts a progress picture once a month. -Mary*

More information about the role of social media in relation to the development of a famous cosplayer will be discussed under the next research question.

Theme 3: More networking. Amanda, Michelle, Nicole, Haley, and Sydney all expressed that in order for them to become famous cosplayers they would have to make more of an effort to network and collaborate with industry partners and conventions. These collaborations would lead to having more name exposure at more conventions and online. Sydney mentioned Yaya Han's collaboration with Jo-Ann fabrics as an example of networking with companies. Samantha and Alex specifically noted being invited as guests at conventions as a marker of reaching the level of a famous cosplayer.

Mary describes herself as a professional cosplayer in that she earns money for cosplaying by being hired by game developers to dress as their characters at trade shows. When asked what would increase her level of fame she mentioned trying to obtain mainstream notoriety wherein she would be well known outside of just the convention or trade show circuit—similar to the way Yaya Han is building a name for herself in the sewing and crafting world through her collaborations with companies like McCall's and JoAnns.

The networking connections mentioned by the participants did not extend only to conventions and industry partners. Amanda, Michelle, Nicole, and Haley all mentioned collaborations with other cosplayers and photographers as a way to boost their potential fame. Michelle painted a picture of networking as "being friends with the right people" when it comes to gaining cosplay fame. She mentioned that because she knows people that are cosplay famous that she has a shot of being cosplay famous if she truly wanted to. Samantha noted that networking with other cosplayers allows the expansion of skills and creates opportunities for artistic collaboration.

> *I think it's interesting how people who are more famous—they have*
> *more connections so they might know people in the prop industry*
> *and people who are really good at sewing so I think they can get*
> *good information on how to make parts of their costumes that way.*
> *So it would be cool to be more involved with the community but*
> *yea, that would take a lot of work too. -Samantha*

Similarly, knowing talented photographers—as Nicole described—allows for a two way collaboration wherein the photographer can promote the cosplayer and vice versa. This networking takes place both online and in the convention setting. Nearly every participant had experience meeting and making connections with other cosplayers and

attendees while cosplaying at conventions. Increasing this activity, as suggested by Amanda, Michelle, Nicole, and Haley, would inevitably lead to an increased level of cosplay fame.

Theme 4: More sex appeal. When asked what it would take for them to be considered famous cosplayers, Michelle, Samantha, Haley, Ashley, Sandi, and Kate all indicated that their physical appearance would have to be altered or the amount of skin they show in their choice of costume would have to change in order to appeal to a larger population of individuals.

> *I think to be a famous cosplayer nowadays you have to show your body. That's what I have been seeing a lot. I respect those people who do that, I mean it's their style, but I am not like that. I really like doing armor and not showing a lot of my body because a lot of people say the same thing and they come to me saying "I just don't want to do this anymore because I don't like showing my skin and people that are showing skin get more attention and they are more popular nowadays." I just cosplay to show people that you don't have to show skin to be popular or be recognized for your work. -Kate*

Michelle described that she did not fit the typical body type of what she viewed as the average famous cosplayer and that in order to become famous now she would have to be skinnier. She described being called out on the anonymous web board 4chan.org for her weight in the past.

> *When you see famous cosplayers I think 9 out of 10 of them are very slim and most of the women are, you know, they have tiny waists and big boobs and they are beautiful and I think for a long time that affected me a lot. Like I really tried to be like that. Not because I wanted to be famous, but because I'd seen my face put on websites making fun of fat cosplayers a lot of times and it definitely affected my self-confidence for a long time. -Michelle*

Samantha and David, a cosplaying couple interviewed together, when asked what they would need to do to become cosplay famous, Samantha turned to David and jokingly remarked that he would need "a face transplant." She then turned around and mentioned that she felt she would need to be better at modeling and having more awareness of how to present herself physically.

Ashley cited her age as something that would be an obstacle to overcome in order to be famous today. She has over 13 years of cosplaying experience, and began while she was in college. She mentioned that she no longer cosplays characters that dress sexually suggestive, as she used to when she first started.

> *I almost think I am too old to do it now because I can't wear the kind of costumes that probably get the kind of like—sexual attention that it takes these days, but that would probably be what you'd have to do. -Ashley*

Only female participants indicated that sex appeal plays a role in the potential to be a famous cosplayer. Paul noted that physical health does play an important role in his personal motivation to participate in cosplay, but he did not mention it as something that would increase his chance of becoming famous. He did mention that he avoids being overweight in the fear of receiving negative feedback from other cosplayers.

Theme 5: More costumes equals more fame. Amanda, Paul, Michelle, Nicole, David, and Ann all responded when asked how they could increase their level of fame by saying that they would need to cosplay more in general. These participants all felt that famous cosplayers make and debut costumes more frequently than they themselves currently do, and that with more costumes comes more fame. By debuting more costumes there is more varied content to share with others both at conventions

and online, and more opportunities for collaboration with photographers and other cosplayers.

> *I don't foresee [becoming cosplay famous] within the realm of possibility just because for me the level of commitment. To me famous cosplayers are people that put a lot more time and effort into this than I am willing to give. So certainly, that would have to change. -David*

Participants cited personal obligations, money, and their jobs as reasons why they could not devote as much time to cosplay as those that are more famous. Michelle, Mary, Ann, Haley, Ashley, and Thomas all mentioned choosing to devote their extra money to other areas of their life including saving money to start a family, investing in their home, and traveling to trade shows. These participants indicated that the types of costumes that would be eye catching and award them more fame would cost a large amount of money to make and the other aspects of their lives were more important to them than achieving fame.

Research Question 3: How do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages believe social media can be used to develop and maintain cosplayer fame?

Each participant was asked a series of questions about how they view their current level of fame and how their social media page specifically allows them to increase their level of fame. As mentioned in the previous section, only one participant felt like they were famous, and five felt like they were well known but not specifically famous. With these participants it was much more clear how social media contributed to

their level of fame as they were able to provide clearer examples. To those that did not consider themselves to be well known or famous they indicated instances that lead to increased likes on their page.

Theme 1: Showing off work equals more fame. Sarah, Paul, Nicole, David, Mary, Ann, Sandi, Alex, and Ashley indicated that they were able to spread their work through social media outlets and that has caused their name to be more familiar among the cosplay community. With these participants, social media serves as a convenient outlet for them to post their work for others to find. By posting their costumes online, tagging them with hashtags, and sharing them on fandom specific communities a large audience of people can view their work.

> *So sharing [on social media] you know—here's how I put this thing together, here's what it's made of, here are the steps that I used to put it together. People seem to be pretty interested in that kind of stuff. -David*

> *There's this sort of unofficial community of Blizzard cosplay Facebook people. There's lot of Facebook groups that you are added into just because somebody sees that you cosplay something from Blizzard. So yea, I definitely received more feedback after I made the Facebook page. It sort of created a lot more channels for people to be able to find my stuff and keep tabs on me. -Paul*

Facebook's Newsfeed is set up so that users can view when a friend likes or comments on a post from another profile or page. By frequently uploading photos and having them be shared or liked by their followers, their name naturally spreads further and further because the friends of the person who liked the original photo will be exposed to it as well. This has the potential to set off a chain reaction of likes and shares that helps boost the visibility of the original poster.

Under this theme it is the content of their pages being shared—more specifically the photos of their finished and in progress cosplays being shared that appeals to people. The more they are able to spread the photos through social media the more fame and notoriety they will receive. Social media has allowed them to make sharing their work easier.

Theme 2: Networking means more fame. As mentioned in the quote in the previous section, Paul indicated that Facebook groups also allowed his name to be spread amongst a specific community of cosplayers. Facebook Groups are another networking tool that allows single or multiple users to create a discussion board format page dedicated to a specific topic or activity. These groups share many of the same features as private pages such as photo uploads and text posts, but they allow anyone that is part of the group to post, not just the owner of the page. Paul specifically mentioned being a part of the Blizzard cosplay group on Facebook and Michelle indicated that she is an administrator of the Disney Cosplayers page on Facebook. These groups can be found by using the search function at the top of Facebook's website, and depending on the page, hundreds to thousands of personal profiles of like-minded individuals can be found by looking at the members of a Facebook group. This is just one kind of networking opportunity that social media provides for cosplayers.

Nicole discussed how people find her unapproachable at conventions, and her social media pages have allowed people to approach her more easily. This has made it easier for people to get to know her.

> *There are people who apparently are intimidated of me and I do like*
> *to make that initial contact through my page as a kind of invitation*

to please approach me! I am here to be approached! Which didn't used to be a problem but has become one. -Nicole

The ease of networking online extends not only to the opportunity to interact with the people that like their page, but also to people that may be seeking cosplayers for business opportunities and collaborations. Kate described that having a Facebook page with many likes on it is a positive thing for companies looking to hire cosplayers.

I think because if you reach at that point that you have the mark of celebrity they give you a checkmark on the side of your name, then people start contacting you to go to events and they start paying you and that's what people use Facebook for I think because they see you have a lot of likes and they instantly think you're famous or a celebrity and so they will start contacting you through Facebook. -Kate

Participants largely attributed their networking efforts to people liking, commenting, and sharing their posts. This visibility is called reach, and Facebook uses it as a promotion and networking tool for pages. When asked about the negatives of Facebook Pages, Amanda, Nicole, David, Mary, Haley, Ashley, Kate, Crystal, Rydia, and Aeris all mentioned the reach algorithm was a problem. Crystal described the reach function on Facebook and how it can hinder how much she is able to share her work.

There is a limited audience that things get delivered to, and that's frustrating you know and you have 3800 followers and like 200 people saw this, and it's like "well…ok but what about the other 3600 people who follow me? They wouldn't maybe follow me if they didn't want to see some of the things that I post. That frustrates me as a follower too because I don't see things that other people post and that's why I follow their page. -Crystal

She described how Facebook allows you to boost the percentage of people a given post can reach on her page if she pays for it. This sentiment was shared by many of the

other participants, who noted that they cannot afford to pay to have their work shown to everyone, and that the function is not fair to artists. This function limits the networking potential of their page and for Mary, is actually leading to her to want to stop using Facebook as a networking tool altogether.

Haley, Sandi, and Rydia specifically noted that social media has allowed their work to reach the eyes of the creators of the media that they were cosplaying from. Haley recounted how her La Muerte costume from *The Book of Life* was seen by the producers on social media and that had led to her notoriety as a cosplayer exploding nearly overnight.

> *Knowing that the costume was shown and seen by the creators of the film, the director, the producer, his artistic team, all saw the costume and were nerding out and reblogging it on their social media, I sat down on the floor and I just started crying. -Haley*

When asked if it was possible for a cosplayer to boost their level of fame without social media, Rydia indicated that social media allows a person to be able to connect with companies that have social media accounts and that it's a major component to somebody becoming famous. She recounted her own experience with the Marvel Twitter account retweeting one of her costume posts.

> *You're going to need companies, the thing about Facebook and all these social media outlets is that it's not just you know, civilian accounts that are on there. Yea Marvel has an account and when I actually did get a tweet from Marvel once I nearly fell on the floor through to China because THIS is actually like praise from Caesar at the point, when artists that have been drawing the character for issue after issue after issue see my costume and they are like "yea I was pretty much drawing you" -Rydia*

The involvement of companies, producers, and writers on social media outlets like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter has allowed cosplayers to interact directly with these individuals. When company pages like Marvel or Funimation share photos of cosplayers on their pages the cosplayer is exposed to the audience reach of that particular company, which may be much larger than the cosplayer's personal audience. By linking back to the cosplayer's page the company pages help boost the notoriety of the cosplayer. Without this social media connection these cosplayers would only be able to reach a local audience of convention goers.

Theme 3: More friends equals more fame. For Amanda, Paul, Michelle, Nicole, Samantha, Haley, and Crystal social media allowed them to connect with other people with similar interests and this allowed their name to be more well known. Crystal specifically noted that this building of friendships both in and outside of the convention was valuable.

> *I think –so like I said social media allows me to connect with people who are also interested in cosplay and that runs the gamut between people who are just fans of cosplay who are just there to just kind of enjoy their favorite characters coming to life and are appreciative of what we do to just other cosplayers who are either established cosplayers who are like "oh wow hey you do what I do and we can appreciate each other and draw inspiration from each other"-Crystal*

For some participants these connections were similar to in person acquaintances, wherein they may only speak at conventions or online in a casual capacity. For others social media allowed them to extend that casual acquaintance to real friendships. Amanda noted that her approach to making friends through cosplay changed with the introduction of social media.

> *So in the beginning it was just me like meeting people and getting their information to talk to them later and calling them. But then once Facebook opened up this world to other people, and I started getting friends all over the world and I've made friends that I communicate with every single day instead of just seeing them at conventions. So we are able to plan things, plan costumes to do together, and groups, and skits and all of this stuff just because of social media. I would not have been able to do that with just calling or texting across like six states. -Amanda*

For Aeris three of the people that followed her cosplay page now are friends of hers.

> *Another thing that unexpectedly came from having the Facebook page was making friends. I think I have three friends that I've made from my Facebook page alone. I have two of which I play on Xbox live with and another one that I talk to regularly every other day. -Aeris*

These participants alluded to a similar networking effect that companies have on cosplayer notoriety. When companies share or like their posts on their larger pages their audience is able to see the work of the cosplayer. When these cosplayers indicated making friends that also have pages these friends would tag them in posts after conventions, while working on progress photos, and in group discussions. The audience of the tagger would then be able to see the work of the tagged cosplayer. This enabled a larger spreading of the cosplayer's work and name to an unconnected audience. Aeris specifically mentioned the term "Share for Share" and described that cosplayers would share posts of other cosplayers in order to help boost the reach and audience of each cosplayer in the hopes that their followers would like the other's page.

Theme 4: Personality equals more fame. Sarah, Ann, Haley, Alex and Rydia all spoke about how social media allows other people to understand who they are as a person behind a costume. Haley described how at first she thought people only followed

her because of her work, but that after showing more of her personality to her followers she received more positive feedback. Alex posted a couple of out-of-costume photos on her page and was sent private messages that she should post more of them and it was refreshing to see the person behind the costume. Aeris, who has one of the largest Facebook followings of all the participants in the study, asked her followers what interests them the most: costumes or personality.

> *There are people that I follow that I don't really look at their costumes that much, but they are absolutely hilarious. And I respond to that and I understand why people do as well. I made a post recently just asking my followers almost this—just what makes you guys follow somebody? What makes you press that button and actually stick to it and it was an overwhelming response of 50/50 costume/skill and personality. People like likeable people that can also do something else. -Aeris*

Sarah pointed out that she shows a little bit of her personality on her page because she appreciates seeing it on other cosplayer's pages.

> *It helps if you are able to get to know the person that you are following, a little bit of personality in there too. When you feel personal with someone you always have more appreciation for something that they are doing then when you just see a picture of something cool, right? -Sarah*

A few participants indicated that while they are aware that their followers appreciate having insight into their personality, the idea can be off-putting at first. Haley and Thomas both shared sentiments that it can be surprising when people they had never met before at a convention come up to them and act like they know them personally.

> *It's a very surreal feeling when you all of the sudden have people come up to you at conventions like "Oh my God you're [her name]!" and I'm sitting here like "What? You know me?" It's a*

> *very—I don't know like how celebrity—like actual celebrities do this all of the time because it's a very weird thing where people know who you are but you don't know them. It's cool. It's that little thing that you kind of sit there and think that's really awesome that you know me through and it's not me personally, but you know my work and you like my work. And you like me because you have only met me through Facebook, but you know that you like my personality enough to follow me still. I'm a quirky individual so the fact that people keep up with me is fantastic in my book. And the fact that they like that is cool. It's a really cool sensation I guess you could say. -Thomas*

Mary held a counter position to this angle, and said she wishes she could post more personal stories and day to day activities to her followers on her page, but she thinks her followers would not care. She felt that her overall reach would decrease if she posted too many personal anecdotes.

> *So sometimes I wish I could post more about my personal life or things that interest me randomly throughout the day or something but people don't like pictures of books and they don't like pictures of how pretty the weather is and stuff and so posting those things will hurt my reach so I can't really post them. -Mary*

Mary was the only participant who stressed the importance of her page as a networking tool for her contractual work so that is why she does not post too much personal information.

Research Question 4: How and why do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages use their Facebook Artist Page?

Each participant was asked why they began their Facebook page. They were also asked what kinds of content they post on their page and what the value of posting

that particular content was to them. The results of these questions will be detailed below.

Why did they start using a Facebook page? When asked why they began using a Facebook Page in the first place six participants noted that they wanted a place to keep track of all their photos and progress on their cosplaying. The page became a place for them to upload folders of their costumes, organize them in an easy to read format, and document their progress from start to finish. The page became an online portfolio for them to keep track of the progress they had made from a beginner cosplayer to a more experienced cosplayer.

> *I wanted to create a portfolio where I could keep track of different photo albums of work in progress pictures and how I made things because I like being organized and documenting things like that. - Sydney*

Seven participants noted that they started using the Facebook page specifically because their friends told them to or that everyone else was doing it at the time. Of those seven participants, six of them mentioned a specific cosplayer friend that suggested that they create a page. Alex's friend told her to create a page because her costumes were beautiful and needed to be shown to the world. Ashley, a veteran cosplayer of over 11 years, said she made her page in order to feel like she was keeping up with the current cosplay community. She noted that she felt that she was missing out on gatherings with her friends and the new work people were sharing because she did not have a page. Nicole had a unique experience in that her first page was created as a joint page between herself and two other friends. The page was dedicated to their group efforts as cosplayers. As her personal cosplay endeavors grew

she felt out of place posting them on the group page and then created her own personal page.

Nine participants indicated that they started their Facebook page as a way to keep their cosplay activities separate from their personal Facebook page. For these participants, it was important for them to have a place where they could post their work and not spam their personal pages with cosplay photographs. For Samantha and Thomas they noted that they were afraid their regular friends on their personal pages would be angry and unfriend them if they posted too many photos of themselves in costumes. Rydia expressed similar sentiments.

> *I didn't want my personal—I didn't want to mix business and*
> *pleasure I guess? I didn't want my personal life getting out there,*
> *or just people being annoyed by it like ok we know what you do*
> *stop posting pictures everyday of your stuff, so to keep the privacy*
> *I got the page and it's just way easier. -Rydia*

Michelle, Haley, Sydney, Thomas, and Rydia noted that they did not want people they met at conventions adding them on their personal pages because they did not want to share too much private information. They did not want people they met to know their first and last names, where they lived, and information about their daily lives so they created the pages for people to follow them without too much personal information. These pages also allowed convention photographers to tag their cosplay pages instead of their personal pages so random people online would not be trying to friend their personal Facebook page.

> *When they wanted to tag someone they would tag my personal*
> *page and I'm like "Well if I give them a cosplay page then they*

won't do that! I can keep everything over here" so part of it was for that reason. -Ashley

Ann and Kate started their pages after having attended conventions and held panels. They noted that while at the conventions people would come up to them asking for their panel PowerPoints, handouts, and helpful information about their costume creation. Kate was specifically being asked by convention goers for a page and she didn't have one.

How do they use their Facebook Artist Page? When asked how they utilize their Facebook page every participant indicated that they use it to post photos of themselves in their costumes. All the participants post in progress photos and final finished photos of their costumes. The motivations to post the finished photos versus the in progress photos differed.

When asked why posting finished photos was important, nine participants indicated that it represented the final piece and a culmination of all their hard work. These participants felt like the finished photo was the final step in completing a costume. Crystal described the final photograph of a costume as a piece of artwork. As a traditional studio artist herself, she saw the completed costume and photography like a painting. Paul described the final photos of the costume as really bringing the costume to life. He specified that without the photograph of himself in the costume when it was completed it would just be a bunch of armor sitting on the floor of his house.

Nicole noted that unless you post high quality good photographs of the finished costume the costume may as well not exist, since just having a costume completed is

not enough for an audience. She noted it was important for her to have the finished

photos but also that it was important for her followers to have the finished photo.

> *Because as far as Facebook pages go you have "yea you can cosplay that" and if there's no good pictures of it it doesn't exist. So it's kind of vital to be posting finished work pictures in a full setting, with lots of good lighting, and really nice framing. Not those "Hi I am at the con in the hallway standing kind of awkwardly next to a water fountain" kind of pictures, which is sadly a norm. You know there's a lot of pages where the only pictures they have are bathroom selfies as they go out on the floor. That's one of those next step things. You gotta have nice pictures, because at the end of the day that's all you've got to put up there. There is no other product you can give people than pictures and a few words to go with it. -Nicole*

Mary, Sydney, and Aeris all mentioned that posting finished photos of their costumes on

their Facebook pages attracted more new users and extended their reach more than

other types of photos. Mary specifically mentioned that she consciously posts finished

photos to keep her reach up among her audience.

> *I mostly post final cosplay photos and because this is a numbers game right—it's because they get me more attention and likes or reach than if I post progress photos -Mary*

Sydney mentioned that she saw how other cosplayers with large followings posted a

large number of professional finished photographs and she modeled her style of posting

photos after those cosplayers. She noted that the more popular cosplayers used high

quality photos to show off their craftsmanship and those photos got the most attention

from their followers.

All of the participants indicated that they post in progress pictures of costumes

they are working on to the Facebook page. Nearly half of participants indicated that the

in progress photos they upload on their page are often the photos that get the most likes

and comments. When asked why posting in progress photos was important, answers were grouped into three categories: 1. For the encouragement and motivation from followers, 2. For the benefit of their followers, and 3. To prove they were making the costume themselves.

Sarah, Samantha, David, Haley, Alex, Ashley, and Thomas all said they post in progress photos on their page to keep themselves motivated. These participants mentioned that when they post photos they usually get positive feedback from their followers and this helps push them to complete the costume.

> *It's almost like the a support system of people who are encouraging you to keep going to keep trying and you may post a photo and the subtext that you post is that it was a really rough night, I didn't get enough done, I am really frustrated, but here is what I have so far, and people are like "it's ok, this looks great, you're doing awesome, keep going!" it's almost like your fans become a support system because all of your other cosplay friends are sitting there like "well I am working on my own stuff but you do you! You keep going it's going to be awesome" but your fan base almost becomes like the people who are sitting there "you can go it! Keep trying! I know you are going to be able to do it!' and I think that is one of the reasons why I like to post progress pictures so much because it's almost like a kick to my butt so to speak to keep going because they are excited for it, and knowing that people are exciting to see your finished product is kind of a nice energy booster, I guess you could say. -Haley*

Ashley expressed a similar sentiment that posting progress pictures after a rough night of working on a costume or being lost during the construction process often helps him realize the potential in what he is making and revives his excitement in making the costume.

Amanda, Paul, Michelle, Nicole, David, Mary, Ann, Haley, Kate, Sydney, Crystal, Rydia, and Aeris all indicated that they post in progress pictures for the benefit of their followers. All of these participants indicated that they often get messages from their followers about how they make certain pieces of their costumes, and posting the in-progress photos helps their followers understand the process that they undertake to make a costume. Nicole mentioned that posting her in progress photos circumvents people messaging her about how she made her costume because she is upfront about the process right away. Crystal also posts her in progress pictures as a learning tool for other followers, and she mentioned specifically that all cosplayers should post them as it helps move the community forward. Michelle shared a similar sentiment, that when she posts in progress photos she is experimenting and making mistakes so that her followers will not have to make the same mistakes she did when making her costume. Aeris mentioned that not every cosplayer shares this sentiment and it bothers her because it goes against the idea of community growth.

Haley briefly mentioned a negative to posting so much of her work online for everyone to see.

> *I've been messaged and harassed multiple times through the internet, my Facebook page, in regards to not being able to release information about a costume. -Haley (Subject 10)*

She was happy to share her progress, post tutorials, and help other cosplayers when they asked, but when it was not enough for some of her followers who wanted more specific construction information.

Nicole and Rydia both mentioned that posting in progress pictures was a way to prove to her followers and the community that they were making the costumes themselves.

> *Posting progress photos also helps with a very old dilemma in cosplay which is the "She bought that". And I can say "No! No I didn't! Here is my bathroom sink and here's pictures of me painting these beads" and it adds to your credibility as an artist. -Nicole*

Rydia mentioned that there is a stigma that cosplayers that are popular and focus on modeling and photography do it for the attention and not the artistic construction of the costume.

> *I want people to know that I make my own stuff and it separates the costuming further from the modeling. Do I think people that buy their costumes can be cosplayers? Yes, but for my own personal goals, I want to make everything and I want people to know that I made everything and for all the work that I put in it, yea I want them to see it. -Rydia*

Similar to posting in progress photos, Amanda, Nicole, Samantha, David, Mary, Ann, Ashley, Kate, Thomas, Molly, and Aeris all mentioned that they post tutorials on their page. For these participants the tutorials were both in photographic and video formats. When asked why they post their tutorials, they all indicated that they like to share their knowledge and help others in the community. Mary said she has posted 1 or 2 tutorials on her page, but does not have much of a motivation to help the community or better the community. For the tutorials she did post it was for costume pieces she received the most inquiries and questions about and posting the tutorial lead to less messages about the costume.

Only one participant indicated that they made use of the polling toll on their Facebook page for interacting with their followers. Nicole said she has used polls to ask her followers what cons they want to see her at next, or what kind of content they would like to see. For these participants, the poll function was an additional way that they could communicate with the people that follow her. Nicole uses it in order to have a better idea of what her followers would like to see so she does not provide them with content they do not want to see

> *I do a lot of polling on my page of "What do you guys want? What do you want to see?" or I'll say "Which convention do you all want to see me at next?" and you know it's a good way to gauge because I would hate to put forth a lot of effort for nothing. And that's not to say it would actually be for nothing but if I find out that no one is going to this con and it's going to be boring and no one I know is going to be there then why even go? -Nicole*

Chapter Five
Discussion

The purpose of the present study is to explore motivations behind participation in cosplay and the use of social media among cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. Further focus was placed on understanding the motivations to participate in cosplay, the role of the desire for fame in using social media, and the role of Facebook Artist Pages in building fame. The following research questions were presented:

1. What motivates cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages to participate in cosplay as they do?

2. To what do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages attribute the level of fame they have achieved thus far?

3. How do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages believe social media can be used to develop and maintain cosplayer fame?

4. How and why do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages use their Facebook Artist Page?

Motivations behind participants' participation in cosplay and use of social media can be understood through the lens of Self Determination Theory. Self Determination Theory asserts that all human beings are motivated to fulfill three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Furthermore, the theory asserts that the fulfillment of the three needs relates directly to one's general well-being. Autonomy is described as the need to feel in control of one's choices and behaviors, relatedness is described as the need to emotionally connect with others, and competence is the need

to feel effective at completing tasks, goals, and developing skills (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self Determination Theory also differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivated behaviors are those that people engage in for the sake of pleasure and enjoyment. Externally based motivational behaviors are those that are, to some extent, controlled by external factors (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Extrinsically motivated behaviors are associated with lower feelings of relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Thus, intrinsically motivated behaviors may lead to greater well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Kasser and Ryan (1993) developed a scale to measure the level to which individuals are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. This scale was administered to participants in the present study to provide an understanding of each individual's various intrinsic and extrinsic motivations throughout the data analysis and interpretation process. The purpose of the present study is to explore motivations behind participation in cosplay and the use of social media among cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. Objectively measuring motivations via the Aspirations Index, while also gaining insight through a qualitative interview approach has ultimately led to an understanding of how cosplay participation and Facebook Artist Page maintenance relates to motivation, as well as the fulfillment of one's need for relatedness, autonomy, and competence.

Much of the results presented in the previous chapter will be discussed as they relate to Self Determination Theory. Discussion will first focus on understanding what motivates the participants of the present study to participate in cosplay. The motivations to participate in cosplay will be described in the context of intrinsic and extrinsic

motivations and the fulfillment of the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Focus will then shift to the extent in which participants in the present study desire fame, and their attitude towards cosplay specific fame. Cosplay fame will then be discussed in the context of the fulfillment needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The discussion of cosplay fame will then shift to a focus on understanding to what participants attribute their cosplay fame. Understanding of participants' views on the role of cosplay fame in their own experiences will be compared to previous academic and non-academic studies on cosplay fame. Finally, the discussion will conclude with the role of Facebook Artist Pages in the fulfillment of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

What motivates cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages to participate in cosplay as they do?

The participants in the present study chose to begin cosplaying and continue to participate in cosplay to fulfill intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. As previously discussed, three themes emerged when participants described why they began participating in cosplay: to be a part of a community or because their friends were doing it, because it looked fun, and as a creative outlet. When asked why they continued to cosplay, seven themes emerged: as a creative challenge, it's a fun activity, to maintain and build friendships, to express their fandom, to promote a community or brand, and to step into another's shoes. Each of these motivations can be defined as intrinsic or extrinsic, and can contribute towards the fulfillment of an intrinsic or extrinsic life aspiration. The importance of the extrinsic or intrinsic motivation is attributed to the values that each participant has internalized. The motivations to participate in cosplay

and the aspirations valued by the participants in the present study are consistent with Deci and Ryan's (2000) categorization of aspirational goals aiding in the fulfillment of the basic needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the subsequent sections, the importance of intrinsic versus extrinsic aspirations will be discussed and how participating in cosplay helps participants work towards the fulfillment of their life aspirations and fulfillment of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Participating in cosplay and the fulfillment of basic psychological human needs

According to the participants in the present study, cosplay serves as a mechanism to fulfill basic needs related to competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The following discussion will focus specifically on how cosplay fulfills these needs and areas where the needs are challenged.

Cosplaying and the fulfillment of one's basic need for competence. Deci and Ryan (2000) define competence as one's effectiveness on the surrounding environment that "tends and differentiates toward activities and practices that are specifically relevant to effective social interaction and physical survival, even without making either survival or reproductive skills a proximal aim" (p. 252). In other words, positive feelings of competence are related to the effective execution of behaviors that promote survival and positive social interaction. Deci and Ryan (2000) further specify that social interaction while conducting the activity is not a requirement when it comes to the fulfillment of competence needs. They reference the playing of solo games, reading, and skill building many people take part in for the sake of personal achievement and

fulfillment. These types of activities are in line with the aspiration "personal growth" which is measured in Kasser and Ryan's (1996) Aspiration Index. To measure this concept, participants rated the importance of growing and learning of new things, having a meaningful and complete life, choosing what they do in life, accepting who he/she is as a person, and increasing their insight into why they do the things they do. When asked why they began to cosplay in the first place, three of the 20 participants indicated that they began as a way to improve and challenge themselves creatively and five of the 20 participants expressed that they continue to cosplay because it's a creative challenge and they enjoy pushing themselves to expand their skills in costume making.

Challenging oneself creatively and pushing oneself to learn new skills is consistent with Kasser and Ryan's (1996) concept of personal growth. It is noteworthy that nearly all participants rated personal growth as important to them on a scale of 1-7 with 7 being the most important (μ=6.3, n=20, SD=.58). In fact, 17 out of the 20 participants received a score of six or greater on the personal growth aspiration. In addition to perceiving personal growth, receiving positive feedback from others can contribute to one's sense of competence. Six of the 20 respondents indicated that they continue to cosplay because of the positive feedback they receive from people. Challenging oneself to learn and refine skills and receiving positive feedback from others all relates to fulfillment of the need for competence. These two areas of competence fulfillment through cosplay will be discussed in the next two subsections.

The importance of personal skill building. When asked specifically in the Aspirations Index if growing and learning new things was important to them on a 1-7 scale with 1 being not at all important and 7 being very important, every participant

rated the importance a 6 or a 7. All cosplayers involved in the present study make their own costumes, and therefore had a natural tendency to grow and learn new things related to costume construction throughout their years of cosplaying. Among the participants in the present study, Ashley, Alex, Sarah, Nicole, Mary, Michelle, and Ann expressed that building skills in costume making, sewing, and armor building was a primary motivator to continue to participate in cosplay. According to Alex and Sydney, through the construction of every new costume, they were able to learn something new about sewing or crafting. Thomas, Nicole, and Aeris all described themselves as having become like a jack of all trades because of the myriad of skills and information they had acquired over time.

For example, Ashley values the improvement of her skills over time so much that she has taken recently to redoing old costumes that she made when she first began cosplaying in order to better represent the character and the overall look of the costume.

> *You never kind of create what you have in your head the first time.*
> *So when you go back to something and you're like "Wow, I could*
> *do such a better job recreating this as this point", something that*
> *satisfies me is that it pays better homage to the character, that will*
> *probably last longer, is kind of one of my biggest motivations [to*
> *cosplay now] -Ashley*

By going back and reworking old parts of her costume she can visually see how her costume making skills have improved over time when comparing new finished photos to the old photos.

Some participants in the study indicated that cosplay has enabled them to work on skills related to cosplay that are not crafting or sewing related. For Rydia and Alex,

cosplaying has allowed them to improve other skills they valued like photography, makeup, and modeling. Paul described that cosplaying had improved his work ethic, and made him a more dedicated worker both in regards to cosplay and real life. Nicole mentioned how conducting panels at conventions and being the head of a Facebook group for cosplay improved her public speaking and managerial skills, as well as helped her learn to resolve conflicts and deal with agitated people in a calm, collected way.

The pervasive importance of the act of creating the costume is a departure from previous studies about cosplay. In Rahman, Wing-Sun, and Cheung's (2012) study "Cosplay: Imaginative Self and Performing Identity," 15 Hong Kong cosplayers were interviewed about their motivations and experiences participating in cosplay. Of their informants, only one participant indicated enjoyment in the process of creating costumes and the challenge of the craft. This is a marked difference among the participants in this study, where nearly every participant indicated that the challenge of creating a costume was a primary motivator for participation. The participants in Rahman et al.'s (2012) study were recruited primarily through "a university campus, cosplay events, and forums" (p. 323). The recruitment in this study was limited specifically to cosplayers using an Artist designated Page on Facebook. In Rahman et al.'s (2012) study several participants indicated that they purchase their costumes and therefore the creative challenge of making costumes would not apply to them. By only drawing from a population that consists of cosplayers with Artist designated Pages, the sample chosen may be more skewed towards those who appreciate the art of cosplay over other aspects of the hobby.

In contrast to findings from Rahman et al.'s (2012) study, Pierson-Smith's (2013b) found that many of the female cosplayers who participated in her study had an appreciation for the costume creation process. Her participant pool included a mixture of participants that created their own costumes and those that purchased their costumes. More of the female participants in the pool made their costumes versus the male participants, and Pierson-Smith (2013) described that "the process of making the costume seemed for the female players an integral part of the cosplay activity as they appeared to enjoy researching their characters in detail" (p. 96).

The importance of positive feedback from others. The appreciation of positive feedback and attention one receives from others while cosplaying was consistent among the participants in Rahman et al.'s (2012) study and those in the present study. The positive feedback was received from accurate portrayal of the character in both a "visual and narrative" authenticity (Rahman et al., 2012, p. 329). In other words, it was both the appearance of the cosplayer in costume and the body language and roleplay the cosplayer engaged in while in costume that garnered the most positive feedback.

Being able to remain in character felt more authentic to the cosplay activity and aided to the visual authenticity of their cosplay. The fulfillment of visual authenticity refers to the accurate portrayal of the character's appearance via costume, wigs, props, and accessories. The narrative authenticity refers to the accurate portrayal of the character via personality, body language, and posture. Participants in Rahman et al.'s (2012) study stressed the importance of both the visual and narrative authenticity in order to be deemed "authentic cosplayers" and the upkeep of the role play of the character throughout the entire convention attendance (p. 326). Fifteen of the

participants in the present study noted that visual authenticity is only important when it comes to being a successful cosplayer and that they only acted in character when taking a photograph or performing onstage. Pierson-Smith (2013) conducted a similar study of cosplayers in South East Asia seeking to understand participants' motivations to participate in cosplay. Her study utilized 40 participants and through focus groups and individual interviews, found similar sentiments for participation as seen in Rahman et al.'s (2012) study. Her participants indicated their appreciation to don another persona for a day and be able to express an unexplored aspect of their personality through their character choice. Her participants shared the sentiment that accurate cosplay portrayal included the role playing of the character, but less emphasis was placed on remaining in character throughout the entire convention event. The cosplayers involved in the present study seem to place more of an importance on visual authenticity than narrative authenticity, notably due to the stressing of high quality photographs and accurate costumes. Their photographs of their costumes provided them more long term opportunities for positive feedback compared to acting in character or body language that is more easily conveyed at a convention.

Deci and Ryan (2000) note that positive feedback tends to be more satisfying and lead to continuation of the behavior if the feedback is about something the person had control over. As an example from the present study, Sydney mentioned that her followers give her positive feedback on her store-bought Spider Gwen costume, and that they want to see more photographs of her wearing it. However, she has a hard time understanding why they value it because she did not have a hand in making the costume.

> *As far as everyone else they want more pictures of Spider Gwen and I don't know why. I didn't even make that one! I bought it! But everyone wants pictures of it! Like why? I'm sure it's great but it's like, I didn't make this! -Sydney*

For Sydney, receiving positive feedback on the costumes she made herself is more valuable because she had invested her time and effort into them and they are more meaningful to her.

In order for the need of competence to be sufficiently fulfilled from the feedback of others, the relationship between the individual and those providing the feedback has to be secure, genuine and mutual. Ashley noted that when people Liked her page on Facebook she would check their profile and see if they had anything on their profile that related to cosplay. She was apprehensive to allow someone to follow her page if they did not share the connection of enjoying cosplay in some way. She expressed that such individuals would only be following her because they liked her pictures, but were not interested in her costume construction work. For her, it was important that if she was going to be receiving feedback from this person that their positive or negative feedback had the backing of coming from someone who had knowledge of or some authority related to cosplaying. For cosplayers such as Haley and Aeris, receiving compliments from the creators of the character they are dressed as is the highest form of compliment because they considered these individuals to hold the highest authority and knowledge of the character.

Cosplaying and the fulfillment of one's basic need for autonomy. Deci and Ryan (2000) describe autonomy as "the experience of integration and freedom" and that "it is an essential aspect of healthy human functioning" (p. 231). Autonomy is an

individual's perception that their behaviors, actions, and decisions are made of their own free will. Any external attempts to control this behavior, be it from external punishments, rewards, or limitations hinders the feeling of autonomy. Deci and Ryan (2000) state that external factors that control one's behavior are in opposition of one's need for autonomy, and therefore, may result in behaviors that lack effort, passion, and creativity. Behaviors motivated by one's need for personal fulfillment, happiness, and entertainment can be described as intrinsic autonomous behaviors. These behaviors are done for the sake of doing them. In Kasser and Ryan's (1993) Aspirations Index, the measurement of the importance of autonomy was reflected in the questions pertaining to personal growth.

In the Aspirations Index, the personal growth as an aspiration was measured by rating the importance, likelihood to achieve, and current attainment the following: to grow and learn new things, to look back on one's life as meaningful and complete, to choose what I do instead of being pushed along by life, to know and accept who I really am, and to gain increasing insight into why I do the things I do. For the participants in the present study, participating in cosplay is a leisure activity that allows them to have fun and express themselves. When interviewed, 19 of the 20 participants expressed that they are motivated to participate in cosplay for reasons related to pure enjoyment and free expression this leisure activity brings. For the participants in this study engaging in role play and participating in an activity that they find personally enjoyable satisfies intrinsic motivations for positive expression and support the need for autonomy.

Engaging in role play. Rahman et. al (2012) concluded that the major reason for participating in cosplay among their informants was to don the persona of a

character for a day and to be able to live out a fantasy personality they otherwise cannot

play out in their everyday life. Many of the studies on cosplay have focused on this

transformative aspect of cosplay and how it allows participants to integrate and act out

fantastical characters and personality traits they otherwise cannot enact in their normal

lives (Lamerichs, 2010; Peirson-Smith, 2013a; Rahman et al., 2012; Taylor, 2009;

Wang, 2010)**.** Interestingly, in contrast, only four of the 20 interview participants in this

indicated that they enjoyed the role-playing activity of cosplay. Their desire to cosplay

as a means of becoming another character for a day closely mirrored the reasons

expressed by the participants in Rahman et al., (2012) and Peirson-Smith's (2013)

study. Of the 20 participants interviewed for the present study, only four participants

liked the opportunity to act like another character for a day, especially a character that

had a different personality trait than their own.

The act of being able to become another character for a day and adopt their

behavior and personality characteristics allowed participants such as Ann and Nicole to

explore parts of their personality they otherwise would not have been aware of. Nicole

described cosplaying as a way that she was able to understand who she was as a

person by being able to don the personas of many different characters.

> *It kind of forced me to decide who I was and that's weird because*
> *it's a hobby about pretending to be everybody else. It's funny that*
> *by doing so you find out who is under the costume...You dress as*
> *characters that you feel a connection with and that teaches you a*
> *lot about yourself …it's also a way for us to try on different skins.*
> *It's a way for me to say "Can I be this brave? Can I be this*
> *outgoing? Can I be funny? Can I be all these things? I'll be them for*
> *a day with no risks, with no consequence." It lets you try to build*
> *yourself from all of these characters that you relate to and want and*
> *aspire to be. -Nicole*

Ann described herself as previously being very shy, but by cosplaying characters that were not shy she was able to become more comfortable around people. Amanda described that she likes to pick characters that are strong, powerful women that she can relate to in some way. When she dresses as a character like Lara Croft she tries to imbue as much of the character into her portrayal as she can in the hopes of becoming more like them herself.

Participating in a personally enjoyable activity. The most notable aspect of the relation between cosplay and autonomy is the nature of the activity itself. Cosplaying is a voluntary activity, and none of the participants in the study were forced to participate. All of the participants chose to participate in cosplay because of a reason that seemed desirable to them. This is further supported by Rydia, who indicated that she did not desire becoming a famous cosplayer because it would take away from the fun of it and make it too much of a burden. According to Crystal, the autonomous nature of participating in cosplay would be lost if her livelihood was dependent on it.

> *I would just want my art to be for fun, right? As opposed to I feel like if I monetize it or if I put any pressure on myself in that regard than it's not going to be fun anymore and I kind of shy away from that kind of stuff. It just doesn't seem like a good idea to me. - Crystal*

Crystal and Rydia both felt that monetizing their cosplaying activity would make it less fun for them. To them, cosplaying was an outlet for fun and not a way to make money. For some participants in this study cosplay was also a form of therapy.

Cosplaying helps Rydia and Haley regulate negative emotions they encounter in other areas of their life. Rydia described her nine-to-five job as "soul crushing" and

uncreative. However, cosplay offers a way for her to have an outlet for creative expression and remain mentally healthy. Haley described how she suffers from generalized anxiety disorder, and for several months working on her costumes was the only way for her to deal with her anxiety and avoid nearly daily panic attacks. She used her time constructing her La Muerte costume as therapy, and when she finished the costume she felt she had overcome a major obstacle in her life.

Deci and Ryan (2000) describe that the mere act of taking part in an activity that is enjoyable and not driven by a specific need fulfillment may not necessarily fulfill the need of autonomy. Deci and Ryan (2000) describe that autonomy and personal feelings of competence are interrelated. If the individual does not personally feel competent in the task they are performing or the activity they are taking part in there is only partial fulfillment of the autonomic need. Therefore, the fulfillment of autonomy in relation to the task is reliant on the person's perceived level of competence. For example, participants like Thomas and Ashley who both love the creating process of their costumes, the process can be stressful for them if they do not feel like their skills are up to par with what they are trying to accomplish. Their perception of where their skill level should be acts as a control over their behavior and decreases their feelings of autonomy. To gain back control over their perceived level of competence and autonomy when their skills do not allow them to execute a costume piece to their satisfaction, Thomas and Ashley both expressed reaching out to their followers for positive feedback. This feedback provides Thomas and Ashley a morale boost in order to gain back the motivation to continue their work and feel better about what they've produced.

Autonomy and external regulation. According to Deci and Ryan (2000) the

degree to which one experiences autonomy can be lessened when external influences

are experienced. In other words, behaviors feel less intrinsically motivated when outside

rewards or external regulations are introduced. Nicole and Mary described that they

began cosplaying because they enjoyed the challenge of creating costumes and the

creative outlet it provided them. However, their role in the community changed over time

and now their motivations to cosplay have shifted to include both intrinsic and

extrinsically driven motivations. In the case of Nicole and Mary, they are now

experiencing external regulation in regards to their motivation to participate in cosplay.

Nicole and Mary both expressed that they participate in cosplay today as a form of

promotion. While they both also indicated that they cosplay for the challenge of creating

new costumes and building new skills, they both related that the stakes were higher for

them compared to other cosplayers because of their role in the community. Nicole

mentioned that she felt responsible for presenting a professional and inspiring portfolio

of cosplay costumes because the success of her local community is reliant on it. Mary

described that as a professional cosplayer, the primary motivation to participate in

cosplay is to promote whatever brand or company hired her to do so. Both Mary and

Nicole's sense of responsibility to others suggest that their motivations to participate are

to some extent external. In turn, some aspects of their participation is a form of

externally regulated behavior. In Mary's case she feels responsible for the success of

her local community, and that the only way she felt she could control it was through how

she presented herself. This external regulation affects her feelings of autonomy in

regards to her motivation to participate. Furthermore, because cosplay plays a part in

Mary's livelihood, and because she is expected to promote someone besides herself while cosplaying, her motivation is externally regulated. The effectiveness of promoting their community and themselves was dependent on the amount of fame the participant felt they had obtained.

Cosplaying and the fulfillment of one's basic need for relatedness. Every participant in the study expressed that cosplaying allowed them to meet new people, gain friends, and for several of them, find romantic partners. Deci and Ryan (2000) described that relatedness is the desire to feel like they belong, to make connections with other people, and to be a part of a community. Many participants in the present study began participating and/or continued to participate in cosplay because the activity fulfilled various aspects of the need for relatedness.   According to Deci & Ryan (2000), those who are intrinsically motivated to take part in behaviors that fulfill the need for relatedness are more likely to be satisfied with the outcome of the behavior than those who are extrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As will be seen in the following subsections, participation in cosplay facilitates fulfillment of relatedness. It provides opportunities for participants to be among other fans, build and maintain friendships and intimate relationships, and engaging in community service in relation to their cosplaying experience. Within the context of the self-determination theory, these activities are all categorized as intrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Cosplayers may be more likely to be satisfied with their cosplaying experiences because of the role cosplaying plays in their fulfillments of the intrinsically based need for relatedness.

The importance of being among other fans. Sarah described that being at a convention was an important experience for her because she felt at home knowing she

was among other fans. She described the experience as something different than what she experiences in her everyday life because she is normally not surrounded by people that enjoy the same things as she. This sentiment has been found in other studies that focus on fandom and convention attendees (Jenkins, 2012; Jenkins & Tulloch, 1995; Obst et al., 2002; Taylor, 2009). Jenkins (2006a) has described that convention goers often feel ostracized in their everyday lives because of their passion for the media they consume and their fan practices. In a study of Star Trek fans, the convention was a haven for fans to be themselves and interact with others who could relate to them (Jenkins & Tulloch, 1995). Sarah, Mary and Ashley all described that conventions are places where they could let their nerd flag fly and it was important for them to be in a place where other people relate to them.

> *None of us want to feel like the outcast, right? And when you are in a society it's mostly media that decides what's cool, if that doesn't suit you very well you're always going to feel a little bit strange from other people, like you can't truly connect with them, and that connection of course for a lot of people is a very important thing. We all want to have a connection with one person or multiple people where we can feel like we can really be ourselves. -Sarah*

Mary, and Ashley appreciated finding a place where they could be themselves without feeling like they were being ostracized for being different. When they first attended a convention, they identified with the other attendees and felt like they had found a place where they had belonged. This sentiment was not shared with Sarah, Samantha and David, who felt like they had first encountered the convention community as outsiders and cosplaying was a way for them to fit in. Sarah, Amanda and David chose to cosplay at conventions because they thought it was expected of them. They started cosplaying because they felt that they would be outside of the norm at a

convention if they were not in costume. This type of behavior is described by Deci and Ryan (2000) as external regulation.

Deci and Ryan (2000) describe that for a more complete feeling of relatedness for a person, the context in which the relatedness is occurring needs to be secure. If the context in which the relatedness behavior is to take place is not interpreted as secure, external regulation—or the avoidance of negative consequences will take place. Sarah, Amanda, and David externally regulated how they appeared at the convention to avoid the negative consequence of feeling left out or left behind. Once they felt like they had become part of the community they internalized the importance of being in the community and the shared community values. Once they had felt like they belonged it was easier for them to make friends.

The importance of developing and maintaining friendships and intimate relationships. In addition to fostering a sense of group-relatedness, participation in cosplay has led to fulfillment of many participants' needs for relatedness by facilitating meaningful relationships with others. With a mean score of 6.2 (n=20, SD=.93) on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being not at all and 7 being very important, the participants in the study found having friends, intimate relationships, and people they could rely and count on as an important life goal. The overall score for having already attained close friendships and intimate relationships on a scale of 1 to 7 with 7 being very much attained was a 5.6 (n=20, SD= 1.32); note that a score of 5 represents "moderately" attained. All but two of the participants were asked if their aspiration for meaningful relationships relates to their participation in cosplay. Of those that clarified their answers, two types of relationships emerged: close friendships and intimate

relationships. The importance of each of these relationships to relatedness differed between participants.

Close friendships. All participants indicated that cosplaying has resulted in them meeting and making friends they otherwise would never have known. Thomas, Ashley, Michelle, and Ann all indicated that their closest friends were all people that they had met through cosplay. Michelle specifically mentioned that she considers her best friends that she met through cosplay as family; these friends were even invited to her family events and gatherings. Thomas and Ashley, who have both been cosplayers for over a decade, said that they are still close friends with cosplayers they met during the first conventions they attended. Nicole informed me during the interview that she was living in what she called a cosplay house—where she and all of her roommates were cosplayers and they frequently bonded over making costumes together. The shared experience of cosplaying made these friendships more secure and important to these participants.

Deci and Ryan (2000) described that "a secure relational base appears to provide a needed backdrop—a distal support—for intrinsic motivation, a sense of security, that makes the expression of [relatedness] more likely and more robust" (p. 235). Without the sense of security, external regulation may take place in order to avoid the friendship disintegrating or causing unneeded stress. Ann, Molly, and Nicole described instances of external regulation in relation to relatedness when talking about why they started cosplaying. Ann said that her friends all had been cosplaying and peer pressured her into joining them. Nicole and Molly expressed similar sentiments that their friends had all been into cosplay and suggested that they join them. In order to retain

the feelings of a secure friendship and continuing feelings of relatedness Ann, Molly, and Nicole decided to cosplay to avoid the negative consequence of harming their existing friendships. After participating in cosplay with these friends the connection with these friends became more secure and the fulfillment of relatedness more likely.

As measured in the Aspirations Index, the need for secure, fulfilling relationships is considered intrinsically driven. For these participants, they all considered themselves to have close friends that they had obtained through cosplay and considered relationships in general to be relatively important. On a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being not at all important and 7 being very important the participants in this study considered relationships to be important (μ=6.2, n=20, SD=.93). These friendships shared a common bond of a shared hobby, wherein two or more people could discuss it together and share feelings of mutual understanding. This was important to Ashley, who ended up bonding over cosplay with people and finding out they also shared other interests that helped them build their friendship.

> *It was really wonderful to meet people who I thought were similar to me… they really geeked out over stupid nerdy stuff but also like to be outdoorsy and liked to travel and had interests that were similar to mine… so it was really nice to find people who had a little bit of both worlds going on and shockingly I did it with one of the nerdiest hobbies you could do! -Ashley*

Having more than one interest to share made her friendships feel more secure, and therefore more fulfilling of her intrinsic motivation for relatedness. For some participants, this bond blossomed into romance.

Intimate relationships. Haley, Ashley, Thomas, Samantha, David, Alex, Sydney, and Rydia all mentioned that they met their significant other through cosplay and

conventions. Furthermore, Haley, Ashley, Thomas, Samantha, and David noted that their romantic partners participate in cosplay with them. For example, Samantha and David share their cosplay Facebook page together; they started cosplaying together after they had started dating. Ashley and Thomas are husband and wife, and began cosplaying separately before meeting at a convention, becoming friends, dating, and eventually getting married some years later. They each run their own separate Facebook pages dedicated to their cosplay activities. Cosplaying became an activity for these couples to do together. They turn to one another for feedback, support, collaboration, and ideas.

Kate and Alex both described how their immediate family members became involved in their cosplay activities and it turned into something they could bond over. Kate described how when she first started cosplaying she kept it secret from her conservative parents. Once her mother found out that she was making her own costumes her mother became very excited and invested in what she was doing.

> *When I slowly tried to bring it up [to mom] and I started to do my own stuff in the house she just LOVED it and she started supporting me and she was so excited when I won my first contest …and she was supporting me more and more every year. She's the one who told me "Why do you never bring me to your cons?" So one day I asked her "Mom do you want to go with me to MegaCon in Florida?" and she was excited. She bought a ticket to Florida and had the best day ever. She was so excited and smiling. -Kate*

Alex's mother and sister both frequently comment on her photographs of her costumes on her page, and it makes her happy that her family supports her in something that is so important to her.

For the participants in this study, cosplay has given them an outlet to satisfy the need for relatedness in their life. Cosplaying at conventions provides them the opportunity to meet many new people with similar interests, eventually form bonds, and potentially find romantic partners. For some participants cosplaying has also allowed family members to bond and provide support networks.

Cosplaying and community service. Michelle, Ann, Sandi, Rydia, Aeris and Haley all mentioned that they cosplay for a number of different charity events. Michelle and Ann both participate in dressing up as Disney Princesses for birthday parties, schools, and hospital events for children. Sandi, Rydia, Aeris, and Haley all dress as superheroes for charity events at various community businesses and hospitals. When asked what is valuable about this type of participation, all of these participants expressed the joy in being able to bring a smile to a child's face or brighten the day of someone who is less fortunate. Michelle and Ann had both experienced moving emotional experiences while dressed as Disney princesses and working with autistic children.

> *I'm also still doing a ton of charities where we'll go and we'll bring 5*
> *princesses and we specifically work a lot with a school in Hingham*
> *for special needs students and severely disabled kids who can't*
> *even walk on their own for the most part…We have two a year*
> *every year and we just go and we talk to the kids…I feel like I am*
> *making a difference in my local community just by letting these kids*
> *have a magical day because most likely most of them can't have*
> *that day in Disney where they meet all the characters because a lot*
> *of these families can't afford it. So it's cool to be able to offer that to*
> *families around here and they get to see a princess…I love*
> *watching the kids, how their faces light up. We have a lot of parents*
> *who cry because some of the kids are severely autistic and they*
> *won't communicate and they don't like strangers, they don't like*

being touched but we've had a lot of them come right up to a
princess and hug them and start talking to them. -Michelle

Aeris described how her Halo cosplay group that she is a part of worked together to build a suit of character armor for a child diagnosed with terminal cancer and was a fan of the game. Her Halo group was able to nearly complete the armor before the child died from his illness. Being able to be involved in creating something so meaningful for someone in need was a powerful experience for her.

For these cosplayers being able to give back to the community and help less fortunate individuals was important to them. This type of behavior relates directly to the community aspiration as measured in the Aspirations Index. On a scale of 1-7, with 7 rated as very important, Michelle, Rydia, Aeris, Ann, Sandi, and Haley all rated the importance of community as 5.8, 7, 5.6, 6.4, 7, and 5.6, respectively. Rydia and Sandi both rated community as a 7, and both were the two cosplayers in the study that participated the most in community service related cosplay activities.

Fame and the Fulfillment of Basic Human Needs

The participants in this study had differing opinions on general fame and cosplay fame. Participants were asked in the Aspirations Index the importance, likelihood of attainment, and amount of attainment for generalized fame. In addition, a series of questions at the end of the survey asked participants how they felt about cosplay fame specifically. Clarifying questions about the desire for cosplay fame were asked during the interview portion of the study. The results of the general measure of fame importance and attainment, the results of the desire for cosplay fame scale, and the subsequent interview questions will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. The

results will be discussed in the context of the fulfillment of the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

General desire for fame. The works of Margolis (1977), Gountas et al., (2012), and Braudy (1997) focus on the general appeal of fame and its effect on psychological well-being. These authors describe that individuals who place importance on the achievement of fame are shown to be more likely to exhibit lower feelings of self-esteem, increased levels of anxiety, and poor mental health. According to Gountas et. al. (2012), the more a person desires fame, the less likely he/she is to exhibit feelings of self-acceptance. Gountas et al. (2012) found a "negative relationship between desire for fame and self-acceptance, and a positive association between desire for fame and social recognition and materialism." (p. 687). Furthermore, Gountas et al. (2012) describe that "it is reasonable to assume that the desire for fame may be related to deficits in personal growth and other undesirable outcomes for development and well-being" (p. 687). Similarly, in their study of fame appeal, Noser & Zeigler-Hill (2014) note "one underlying reason that individuals seek fame is to gain social acceptance and inclusion" (p.702). Based on this past research, participants in the present study that placed a high importance on achieving fame may be more likely to exhibit lower levels of self-acceptance, deficits in personal growth, and value materialism and social recognition compared to those who do not place importance on being famous. However, fame does not appear to be a strong aspiration held by most participants in the present study.

In the Aspirations Index each participant indicated the importance of fame. The mean importance of fame among the participants on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being not at

all important and 7 as very important was a 3.5 (*n*=20, *SD*=1.48*).* Fame was measured

with the importance of the following statements: to have my name known by many

people, to be admired by many people, to be famous, to have my name frequently

appear in the media, and to be admired by lots of different people. As Gountas et al.

(2012) and Noser & Zeigler-Hill (2014) describe, desiring fame is associated with

deficits in personal growth and is frequently considered a way to gain social

acceptance. Feelings of self-acceptance, inclusion, recognition, and personal growth

were all expressed by the participants of this study as benefits to participating in

cosplay. It is possible that the general desire for fame is mitigated by the benefits of

participating in cosplay.

Only one participant in the study, Alex, rated being famous as very important to

her—regardless of the type of fame. Her overall score for the importance of fame in her

Aspirations Index was a 7, and she rated all 5 questions pertaining to fame as 7. Molly

also rated fame as very important to her, but she did not consider generalized fame

important to her when asked during the interview. No other participant in the study

found being famous for the sake of being famous as something that they valued. Even

though the other participants did not value generalized fame, their opinions on cosplay

fame varied from something that was very appealing and something they would like to

work towards to finding the idea of being a famous cosplayer an impossible goal.

Cosplay and the desire for fame. Over the last several years several online

blog sites and several influential figures in the cosplay community have come forth with

statements about the dangers of valuing fame and the problems with trying to achieve

cosplay fame. Blog sites such as Buzzfeed, Nerd Caliber, and various cosplayers have

directly addressed what they view to be a change in the motivations for new cosplayers to participate in cosplay and the dangers of putting too much of a focus on fame (BelleChere, 2013; Chaka Cumberbatch, 2013; Cosplay.ph, 2012; emperoraugustus, 2016; Johnston, 2013; melissahillman, 2013; SirWonderusMary, 2012). Several cosplayers in this study even mentioned that they believe that more and more people are putting too much emphasis on being famous

Each participant in the study was asked to provide their opinions on cosplay fame and to what extent they desired and achieved cosplay fame. In order to measure the desire for cosplay fame, the Desire for Fame scale developed by Gountas et al. (2012) was adapted to specifically apply to cosplay fame. The scale consisted of five questions rated on a Likert-style scale. The scale measured the extent of agreement on a 1 to 5 scale with one being strongly disagree, three unsure, and five being strongly agree. The responses to the question "I would like to be cosplay famous" was split almost evenly into thirds with seven participants agreeing, seven participants disagreeing, and six unsure. In order to improve triangulation of the data collection and to provide context to the data, during the subsequent interview each participant gave his or her own perspective of what being a famous cosplayer means to them and what they would need to do to become famous.
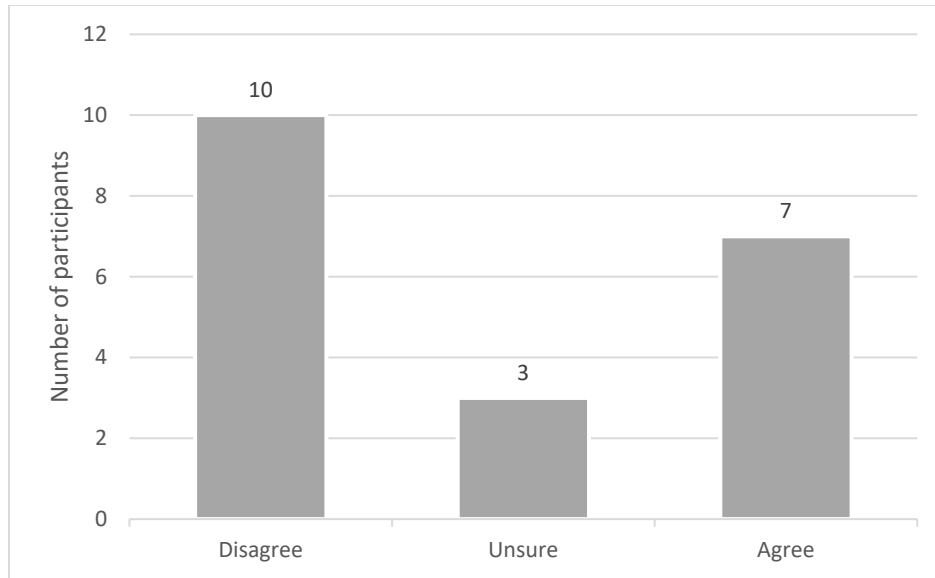
Figure 7. The lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appeals to me a lot.

As pictured in Figure 7, ten participants did not find the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer appealing, three were unsure, and seven noted that the lifestyle did appeal to them. For some the lifestyle and benefits of being a famous cosplayer was very appealing, while for others being famous seems more of a nuisance and not in line with their current lifestyle or aspirations. As will be detailed in the next section, the participants expressed both positive and negative aspects of the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer. With such a divide, it's no surprise that when asked if they agreed or disagreed if they would be happier if they were a famous cosplayer, as seen in Figure 8, 13 out of 20 of the participants disagreed, four were unsure, and three agreed.
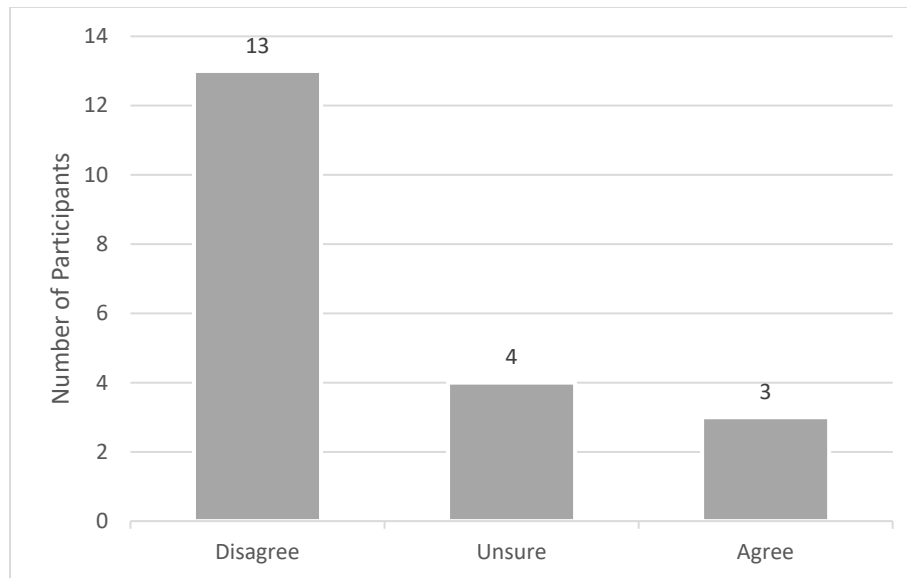
Figure 8. If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier.

The appeal for certain aspects of being a famous cosplayer will be discussed in the context of the self-determination theory. Potential hindrances to the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness will be discussed as well.

The desire for cosplay fame and autonomy. Participants in this study expressed opposing views on the effect fame would have on their feelings of autonomy. Several participants noted that being a famous cosplayer would change their motivations to participate in cosplay and it would not reflect what cosplay means to them. When describing what it would take for her to become a famous cosplayer Nicole mentioned that she would not be comfortable being a famous cosplayer because it would change the kind of cosplayer that she was. Instead of focusing on bettering her community and helping others she would have to shift her focus to promoting herself and growing herself as a brand. Ashley mentioned that she would have to change the types of costumes that she would have to cosplay so that she would appeal more to an

audience that wanted to see more skin. For Nicole and Ashley the road to becoming a famous cosplayer would involve them having to give up some control over the way they participate in cosplay in order to appeal to an audience and spread their names.

Mary, the only participant that described herself as a professional cosplayer, noted that the appealing thing about being a famous cosplayer is that she would not have to rely on her resume as much and companies that are looking to hire her could just look at the number of followers she had on her page.

> *I think the only aspect I can think of is having to less rely on my resume—I think that would be very handy—because right now I go into every situation like a job interview when I am negotiating contracts and it's very much like "I've done this and I've done this and I've done this" and it would be so much easier if I could just say "Go to my Facebook page and see my 2.1 million likes or something!" and then kind of have that instant recognition. -Mary*

If she was a famous cosplayer she could transfer the locus of control that determines her success as a professional cosplayer from her resume to a hard number that can solidify her importance in the community. In other words she would be able to transfer the control of her personal fame from something subject to evaluation from an external party (those reading her resume), to something more concrete and measurable within the community (number of likes). To Mary, using a more concrete measure of fame makes her feel more in control of her position in the community and could lead to more contracts and opportunities.

Rydia noted that she would not want to be a famous cosplayer because she felt it would make cosplaying too much like a job.

> *Famous usually means to me that they are making money off of it. That that is their new 9-5 or they use term professional cosplayer. The word tends to have a connotation that their heart is no longer in it just for the sake of fun. It becomes their job. It puts into question the sincerity of the types of costumes they make and the types of characters that they pick. There is more pressure because that is your meal ticket. I understand why people do it, but when you are free range and when you are not dependent on that "fan base" you know, you are free. It's like working with a corporation versus being self-employed. -Rydia*

This reflects the shifting of Rydia's intrinsic motivation to cosplay as being something personal to an extrinsic motivation because of the shifting perspective on what is controlling her motivation to participate. For example, if cosplaying were a job the reason she would have to cosplay would be to make money and not because it's a fun activity. Crystal expressed similar sentiments, but about the artistic aspect of the cosplaying specifically. She told the story of a tattoo artist friend that loved drawing and designing tattoos but as soon as he became a professional tattoo artist he began to dislike his art because he was so reliant on it to succeed and he was easily burnt out. Rydia and Crystal both felt that if cosplaying became more of a job and less of a creative and expressive pastime they would feel less in control of the behavior, and therefore less autonomy. Deci and Ryan (2000) describe that the undermining of intrinsic motivations can lead to decreased feelings of autonomy and competence.

Sarah and Samantha noted that while the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer was appealing, the effect fame would have on their convention experiences would be negative. Sarah and Samantha both described that if they were famous they would not be able to move around the convention as easily because people would be continually

stopping them to take their picture and following them around into the bathrooms and other private areas of the convention.

> *These people are constantly followed by all these other cosplayers wanting to take pictures, wanting to chat, wanting their way in to have like some sort of communication or building a friendship with you so I mean at some point I'd imagine you would want to escape that, especially when you need to do things like going to pee, or going for dinner, that's another example, I mean yea, you're going to have to find a place where maybe not a lot of people would go to otherwise you can't have your dinner in peace. -Sarah*

While the participants mentioned above expressed that fame would negatively affect their sense of autonomy, Sydney described that being a famous cosplayer would allow her more freedom to work on whatever project she wanted. She noted that if she were a famous cosplayer that was always being invited to conventions she would not have to work a nine to five job and could spend more time creating costumes. Paul expressed similar sentiments when asked about the appealing aspects of a famous cosplayers lifestyle. Paul admired how many famous cosplayers are essentially paid to make costumes and go to conventions and he felt that being able to make a career out of something that he was passionate about was valuable.

The desire for cosplay fame and competence. When asked what was appealing about the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer several participants mentioned that they could share more of their ideas and work with a larger audience of people. Being able to reach a larger audience expanded the amount of positive feedback participants could receive on their work. Haley described that being able to receive the amount of feedback at the rate a usual famous cosplayer does would be great. This sentiment was shared with several other participants in this study.

Alex, Rydia, and Ashley described that the appealing part of being a famous cosplayer is having more people to witness the growth and development of their skills as an artist. This relates directly to their fulfillment of their need for competence. By broadening their audiences, they have more people to witness and provide them with feedback and more opportunities for their skills to be validated. With a larger audience to view their work and a larger audience to provide feedback, Rydia and Ashley may feel more secure about their position in the cosplay community and therefore may experience less self-doubt and perceived incompetence. They may feel that if so many people admire their work they must be good at what they do. Being a famous cosplayer also may provide them with a secure position in the cosplay community as someone with a higher social status.
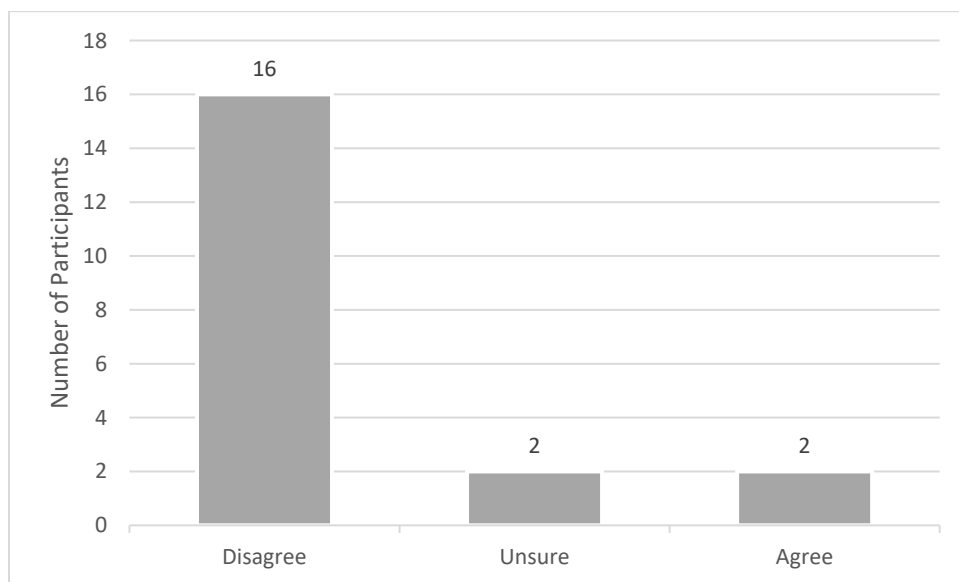
Figure 9. I would like to be a famous cosplayer because I would have a higher social status.

Figure 9 shows that 16 out of the 20 participants disagreed that they wanted to be a famous cosplayer because of how their status in the community would be elevated. This was consistent in the interviews, with only two participants alluding to anything related to status in the interview. Ashley mentioned that being famous is appealing to her because she values being thought of as the quintessential version of a given character. For example, Ashley mentioned having cosplayed Fran from Final Fantasy XII. Many other people have cosplayed this character—a simple search on ACParadise.com shows that 26 cosplayers have made that costume—and that is only amongst the people who are members of the site. For Ashley, it would be important for her to be considered the best version of a character. To her, it would be valuable if people thought of her when describing the best cosplayed version of Fran. Having this status in the community could lead to increased opportunities to network and make friends

Samantha mentioned that if she were a famous cosplayer she would be able to network with other cosplayers much more easily and have access to better materials and talented individuals. If she were famous companies would want to work with her because she would hold a position over power over an audience. She alluded to Kamui Cosplay's relationship with the makers of Worbla, who send her samples to test on her channel to boost the sales of the product. For Samantha, being a famous cosplayer would allow her access to better materials since companies would want to reach out to her. However, Samantha did not indicate this as a motivation for her to be famous, just that it is a perk of the lifestyle of a famous cosplayer that appeals to her.
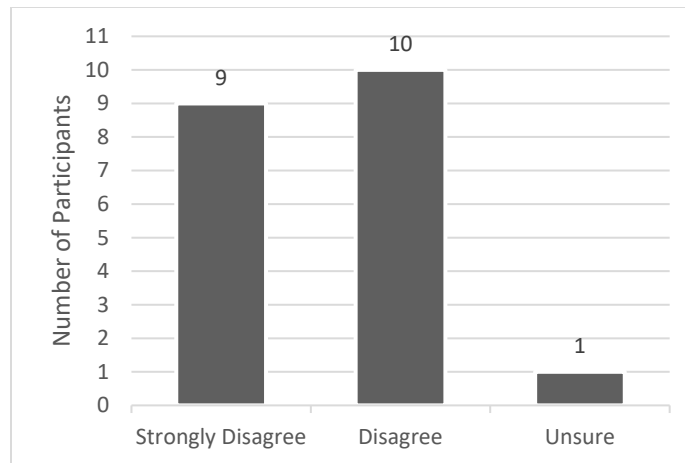
Figure 10. I would like to be a famous cosplayer because people would perceive me as having more power and influence.

As shown in Figure 10, 19 out of 20 of the participants indicated that they disagreed that they wanted to become a famous cosplayer because they felt that people would perceive them as having more power and influence. Only Mary indicated that she was unsure. She may have been unsure of this question because of the role of cosplay in her life. Because she is a professional cosplayer and has to represent a brand or a community during some of her cosplaying activities, having more power and influence in the community could be a positive for her. If she had more power and influence in the community her actions and opinions could resonate more effectively with her audience. For example, if she held more power and influence over her audience when she was paid to promote a game or a product, her efforts could be more successful and in turn the game or product would be more successful. Being successful in this way would help her feel more competent as a professional cosplayer. However, if she had more power and influence to expand her potential as a professional cosplayer that focuses on

promoting products, she may lose the followers that appreciate her as a craftsman and someone they could relate to on a personal level.

The desire for cosplay fame and relatedness. For a few participants being a famous cosplayer would allow them to meet many new people and travel to new places. Sarah, Paul and Kate all indicated that if they were famous they would be able to travel to more conventions and meet more people. These participants all noted that famous cosplayers are those that are invited to appear as guests at conventions. They described that being able to go to conventions they otherwise might never be able to attend would allow them to interact with a different group of people than they see at their usual conventions. With a new crowd of people there is a new potential for making friends, networking, and helping others.

Nicole specifically valued being able to help the cosplay community more if she were more well known, and that aspect was the only part of cosplay fame that appealed to her. If she were more well known her work would reach a larger amount of people and therefore more people could benefit from the tutorials and advice that she loves providing. To Nicole, she values helping the community and pushing it to be a place where cosplayers feel welcome and free to ask questions.

To what do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages attribute the level of fame they have achieved thus far?

The cosplayers in this study that considered themselves famous or well-known attributed their fame to their active social media presence, their convention attendance, their paid and promotional work, their community service, and luck. Several of these

factors, including convention attendance, social media presence, and luck were expressed by cosplayers interviewed in other studies when discussing what made a cosplayer well known. However, other factors such as physical appearance were not widely expressed by the participants in this study but were more prevalent in previous studies about cosplay. In the next section of this discussion, several contributors to cosplay fame that arose in previous studies of cosplay will be compared to the contributions described by the participants in the current study. Finally, a discussion will be included about how the types of cosplay fame discussed by the participants in this study relate to previous taxonomies of fame.

Fame and online presence. In her interview of adolescent fan artists including cosplayers, Manifold (2009) found that the cosplayers that she interviewed valued other cosplayers sharing their work online and that those who helped novice cosplayers were highly regarded among the community. Similar sentiments were expressed by the cosplayers in Taylor's (2009) assessment in the cosplay community, and mentioned specifically that the online component of cosplay aided in cosplayers gaining prestige and notoriety in the community. Cosplayers that went out of their way to answer questions and connect to the people that followed them were regarded more positively than the cosplayers that did not share their knowledge or interact positively with their fans.

Gaining notoriety for posting work online is not limited to the cosplay community. Studies of fandom describe how posting fan videos, fan fiction, and other creative fan works can cause individuals to become well known among the other fans in their community (Jenkins, 2006a, 2012). Additional studies will need to be conducted to

understand what about these individual fan works leads to them becoming popular in their given community.

Fame and physical appearance. The role of physical appearance in making a cosplayer famous played more of a role in describing famous cosplayers in previous studies (Nesic, 2013; Peirson-Smith, 2013b). Several participants in the present study alluded to the idea that in order to become a famous cosplayer today a pleasing appearance and conformance to western ideals of beauty are required. When asked what it would take for them to be considered famous cosplayers, Michelle, Samantha, Haley, Ashley, and Kate all indicated that their physical appearance would have to be altered or the amount of skin they show in their choice of costume would have to change in order to appeal to a larger population of individuals. Only one unpublished study on cosplay discussed the importance of conforming to western beauty ideals for a cosplayer to become popular or well known (Nesic, 2013). Non-academic descriptions of cosplay fame note that cosplayers that conform to western beauty standards are often harassed about their motivations to cosplay characters that show skin or appear to be pandering to a male gaze (Chaka Cumberbatch, 2013; melissahillman, 2013). These cosplayers often have to justify their choice of costume and their behavior. More detail of this behavior will be discussed below.

Fame and perceived motivations. Several subjects in this study alluded to the negative association with the concept of cosplay celebrity. Rydia specifically mentioned that to her, cosplay celebrities are often associated with more superficial motivations to participate in the hobby. Cosplaying for the purpose of becoming famous has been discussed in previous studies as going against the spirit of the hobby (Nesic, 2013;

Okabe, 2012) as well in non-academic blog posts popular among the community (BelleChere, 2013; Chaka Cumberbatch, 2013; Cosplay.ph, 2012; melissahillman, 2013). Non-academic descriptions of cosplay fame are more candid about the negative connotations of cosplay fame than anything expressed by the participants in this current study. Melissahillman (2013) described in her blog post that the mainstream attention cosplay has been receiving over the last five has led to western beauty standards being used to evaluate cosplayers rather than a focus on their craftsmanship or talent. She further describes that attractive, popular female cosplayers are constantly being compelled to verify their motivations and to prove they are participating for the right reasons—for example, cosplaying to express their love of a character and not to show off their bodies—in order to circumvent receiving negative feedback. Several statements made by Nicole in this study alluded to this phenomenon. Nicole described that a part of her level of fame can be attributed to the fact that she fits into a standard western ideal of beauty—she is white, skinny, and pretty—and because of that she works extra hard to prove that she is a legitimate and talented craftsman and not just a pretty face because she does not want people to think that she is only well known because she is pretty.

The importance of achieving the right kind of cosplay fame may have implications on the types of need fulfillment most important to the individual cosplayer. For the participants in this study being famous based on physical appearance does not fit well into the fulfillment of autonomy, competence and relatedness. According to Kasser and Ryan (1993) the focus on maintaining a physical appearance based on valued cultural standards is extrinsically motivated and has been associated with lower self-esteem and

higher levels of anxiety. While maintaining a peak physical appearance and pleasing image may be valued in terms of competence, participants in this study did not place a high rating on the importance of image. The Aspirations Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1993) asked participants to indicate the importance of image based by rating the importance of successfully hiding the signs of aging, having people comment on how attractive they look, to keep up with trends in fashion and clothing, to achieve a specific "look" and to have an image others find appealing. Image was measured among all the participants in the Aspirations Index on a scale of one being not at all important and seven being very important. Overall the rating of the importance of image was moderately important (μ=3.6, n=20, SD=.93). No participant rated the importance of image higher than a five on the scale.

Interestingly, only one participant, Nicole, made mention of her physical appearance having an influence on her notoriety. However, to her, the fact that she fits into the average physical appearance of most other cosplayers is an obstacle that she must overcome. She mentioned that she was lucky that she has managed to become well known despite fitting into the typical demographic of a young, average built, attractive, white female cosplayer. To her, it was her craftsmanship that differentiated her among what she considers to be an overabundance of white, average build female cosplayers. Among the cosplay related studies reviewed for this project no cosplayers expressed a struggle with trying to differentiate themselves because they believed themselves to be at a disadvantage because of their physical appearance being too similar to the average cosplayer.

Cosplay fame as it relates to other types of fame. As discussed in Chapter Two, Giles (2000) and Margolis (1977) both present distinctions on the types of fame one can achieve. Giles (2000) defines fame in the following categories:

- *Domain Specific Fame*-obtaining fame in a specific domain such as sports or academia

- *Fame in the Local Community*- "fame that is constrained either geographically or institutionally" (117)

- *National Fame*- "mass media recognition" (118), able to be recognized by a large and general public

- *International Fame*- known on a worldwide scale

Among the types of fame listed by Giles (2000), the following are in-line with findings from the present study, specifically: domain specific fame, and fame in the local community. Alex and Kate mentioned they are well known in their country; this relates to Giles (2000) definition of fame in the local community. Michelle and Molly mentioned being well known in specific cosplay communities: notably the Disney cosplay community and the Borderlands cosplay community. This fits into Giles (2000) description of domain specific fame. Several participants alluded to the idea that cosplayers such as Jessica Nigri and Yaya Han might be on the level of national fame, but further investigation would be needed to understand the extent to which these cosplayers are nationally well known.

Margolis (1977) detailed more specific ways fame is achieved in the following categories:

- *Face Fame*- fame derived from physical recognition of the face or body, such as a model. Margolis uses Elizabeth Taylor as an example.

- *Job Fame*- fame derived from holding a position, such as the President of the United States.

- *Fame by Association*- fame derived from association with another famous individual, such as assistants or relatives

- *Fame by Resemblance*- garnered fame from looking like another celebrity

- *Fame by Disaster*- obtaining fame resulting from a disaster, such as a survivor of a plane crash

- *Fame by Ideas*- fame obtained by contributing important ideas to society such as Bill Gates

- *Fame by Familiarity*- fame drawn from consistent exposure to the audience, such as a local news anchor

- *Fame by Entertainment*- being well known for one's ability to entertain. Actors, singers and musicians easily fall into this category

- *Fame by Heroism*- not as often, but fame garnered from performing a heroic act. An example would be the pilot who landed a plane in the Hudson River.

- *Fame by Notoriety*- fame obtained just from being well known or doing something out of the ordinary. Margolis uses Charles Manson as an example. A more contemporary example may be Kim Kardashian, an individual who is famous for no reason other than being famous.

Among the types of fame listed by Margolis (1977), the following are in-line with findings from the present study: face fame, fame by ideas, fame by resemblance, fame by familiarity, and fame by notoriety.

Cosplayers that are well known because of their physical appearance would fall into Margolis's (1977) definition of face fame. Fame by a having a pleasing physical appearance is contingent on their ability to present oneself in a visually pleasing fashion. In the cosplay community, this is related to the physical appearance of the cosplayer. Michelle, Samantha, Kate, and Ashley all specifically referred to their perceived importance of physical appearance in the cosplay community. Kate mentioned that she feels that to become famous, cosplayers have to be willing to show their bodies. Michelle mentioned that most famous cosplayers today reflect typical cultural standards of beauty, namely being skinny with large breasts. However, Nicole mentioned that while appearance can be a factor in someone becoming famous, a pleasing physical appearance only accounts for a fraction of the types of cosplay fame she perceives.

Cosplayers well known because of their craftsmanship would fit into Margolis's (1977) definition of fame by ideas. The use of skills, execution of costumes, and interpretation of the character have made them popular among the cosplay community. The participants in the present study frequently mentioned Kamui cosplay as famous cosplayer, and stressed that she is well known because of her craftsmanship and her armor building techniques.

Cosplayers that are well known because of how much they look like a specific character, (for example, what Ashley describes as being the cosplayer someone thinks of when they think of the perfect example of a cosplay of a given character) would fit into Margolis's (1977) definition of fame by resemblance. These cosplayers are popular because they have managed to transform their physical appearance through make up, costumes, photographs, or role playing to perfectly personify a character.

Cosplayers that are famous because of causing drama would fit into Margolis's (1977) definition of fame by notoriety. Ann suggests that a cosplayer can achieve fame in the community for starting drama and picking fights with other cosplayers. For these individuals, their fame in the community is not achieved through skill, presentation or any ability, but by the controversy they cause with their behavior. This type of fame in consistent with Margolis's (1977) description of fame achieved by notoriety because cosplayers that start drama are famous in the community because of their actions.

When asked to describe cosplay fame Nicole described several different types of fame that coincided with Margolis's definitions of face fame, fame by ideas, fame by notoriety, and fame by resemblance. She continued to describe that she considers cosplay fame to exist on a hierarchy, with some types of fame being more valuable than others. She implied in the interview that she would only like to be a certain kind of cosplay famous. If it were up to her she would want to be well known as a good craftsman—which would fit into fame by ideas according to Margolis (1977)—rather than being face famous or famous by notoriety.

The concept of a hierarchy of cosplay fame—that certain kinds of fame in the cosplay community are more valued than others—has potential to shed light on the understanding of fame in general. Previous studies of fame have inferred that certain types of fame—such as fame by heroism and fame by ideas—are associated with being a more legitimate form of fame than fame by notoriety or face fame (Braudy, 1997; Margolis, 1977). Further understanding of the concept of fame in the cosplay community may provide additional perspectives on the categorization of fame in general.

How and why do cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages use their Facebook Artist Page?

As discussed in the results section, participants use their Facebook Artist Pages for a variety of reasons. Every participant described using their Facebook Page as a place to post pictures of their finished and in progress costumes they were working on. The Facebook Page was also a place where they could talk to people who followed their work, offer advice, and discuss similar interests. In the case of participants such as Mary, their page also served as a virtual resume for obtaining paid contractual cosplaying work. No matter the reason why a participant chose to make use of the Facebook Artist Page platform and the types of things they use it for, each can be connected back to a fulfillment of the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Facebook and the fulfillment of autonomy. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Deci and Ryan (2000) describe autonomy as "the experience of integration and freedom" and that "it is an essential aspect of healthy human functioning" (p. 231). Many participants in the present study described how Facebook's page platform has been hindering their feelings of autonomy with their reach algorithm.

Sometimes I feel pressured into posting something just because Facebook has that stupid algorithm that like if you don't post for a while then it won't appear on as many people's feeds. You don't get as many likes and when you are putting that much work into something that you're doing and posting things you want to share with people-Paul

Amanda, Nicole, David, Mary, Haley, Ashley, Kate, Crystal, Rydia, and Aeris all had issues with the reach algorithm. It was frustrating to them that they could not expect to have their content reach all their followers at one time. The only way they could ensure that their content reached all their followers was to pay for it. By paying Facebook a specific amount, an admin of a page can boost a post by changing the algorithm used to reach other users. For example a boosted post might reach 50% of their followers while an unboosted post would only reach 10% of their followers. Only one participant had indicated she had boosted a post she had made so it would reach more of an audience. Afterwards she felt like Facebook was constantly trying to get her to boost her posts and that became a nuisance to her. To try and gain back control of their content and limit the external regulation taking place on the part of Facebook, some cosplayers are choosing to move away from Facebook entirely and make use of other social media platforms. If the participant no longer feels in control of their content the behavior seems less likely to fulfill their need for autonomy.

Participants such as Michelle and Thomas felt that they were motivated to post when they had something to say, but that as their followings grew they felt like they had to cater to their audience. Michelle and Thomas indicated that they often feel obligated to post on their Artist Page in order to keep the people who follow them satisfied.

> *I think there's the expectation to keep it as relevant and as active as possible which I am not great at because I have 8 different social lives plus my work and my own personal page I am trying to handle so for me I always forget about the page and I'm like "oh crap I gotta go update that because it's been a year now since I posted anything but I've worked on 18 costumes since then!" So I think that's the biggest flaw to it, it's just the extra step to keeping it updated so nobody forgets about it. -Michelle*

According to Michelle, remaining relevant in the eyes of her audience was important, so rather than completely forgetting about her followers she makes sure to post content in order to let her followers know that she is still around and working. To Michelle, keeping her audience around and interested in her work meant that she could continue feeling confident that she had a support network that she would reach out to when she needed it.

Facebook and the fulfillment of competence. Seven cosplayers involved in the study described that their Facebook pages were a place where they could upload photographs of their past and current work specifically to keep track of their personal progress. Their pages became a virtual portfolio of their work. With all their work in one place they could easily see how much they have improved in a number of different skill areas over the course of their cosplay careers.

Consistent with every cosplayer involved in this study, uploading their photos to Facebook allowed them to share their work for other people to comment on and use for a variety of reasons. Uploading photos to Facebook is a quick way to gain an audience for their work, and a quick way to receive feedback on what they are working on. Receiving positive comments from followers, other cosplayers, and in the case of Rydia, Sandi, and Haley, getting noticed by the original artist and creators has a positive effect

on the cosplayers sense of competence. These comments reinforce their perception of their skill level and encourage them to continue to improve themselves. According to Thomas, it was not until people positively responded to his work that he felt like it would be worth it for him to post tutorials.

According to some cosplayers such as Thomas, Aeris, Ashley, Michelle, Haley, and Amanda, Facebook has given them a platform to post tutorials of their work. These participants indicated that they were frequently asked questions about how they constructed parts of their costumes. Posting tutorials allowed them to prevent repeat questions about the same technique. Receiving repeat questions on a technique was viewed as a nuisance and posting a relevant tutorial on the technique diminished the number of questions they received about the technique.

Several participants also indicated that posting tutorials was a way for them to give something back to the community. Participants like Paul, Nicole, and Michelle noted that tutorials posted by other cosplayers had helped him when they were starting out. These participants felt grateful to those who had taken the time to help others, and they felt that helping others that asked them for help was a way to give back to the community. In addition to helping the community, having people ask them for help increased their feelings of competence because other cosplayers believed their work was good enough to emulate. When someone asked them to post a tutorial or tell them how they made something it validated that their skills were up to par and worthy of sharing with the community. By extension, creating a positive helpful atmosphere by posting tutorials also helped foster a positive community on their page.

The Facebook page serves as a platform that allows cosplayers to create a support system that they can reach out to whenever they are looking for a boost in confidence or someone to say something positive to them. Sandi and Thomas expressed this sentiment and added that they only have a small following, and therefore, do not always receive comments on their photos. With a smaller number of followers there are less individuals to draw on for support when feelings of competence are low.

Facebook pages were not always a positive place to boost feelings of competence. Haley, Alex, Ashley, and Kate have all had negative experiences with people on their Facebook page. Haley, Alex, and Ashley have experienced people posting negative comments about their photos or costumes. Alex described being emotionally distraught after receiving negative feedback on her Facebook page; however, she believes that everyone is entitled to their own opinion. She indicated that despite the feedback hurting her feelings and portraying her work in a negative light she does not delete the comments nor does it stop her from posting other content. Although she continues to post, the negative comments affect her personal feeling of competence and may cause her some level of anxiety when posting new photos.

Kate indicated that one of the things she is scared about when it comes to sharing her photos on her Facebook page is that somebody will steal her pictures and claim they made the costume themselves. When asked to describe why it would be upsetting to have someone claim they made her costume she described that she works so hard to build her skills and her costumes that it feels disrespectful for someone to discredit her work. Having people think someone else did the work lowers the

effectiveness of the feedback at fulfilling her need for competence. If her work is being attributed to somebody else the positive feedback would be directed at the other person and not her.

Facebook and the fulfillment of relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2000) described that relatedness is an individual's desire to feel like they belong, to make connections with other people, and to be a part of a community. As discussed in the previous chapter, Facebook provides a platform for the participants in this study to meet and connect with people in the cosplay community and around the world. Additionally, Facebook can be used to increase and decrease feelings of relatedness among the participants in the study. In the following section the role of Facebook in increasing and decreasing relatedness will be described in the context of this study and compared to previous studies.

Paul, Michelle, Samantha, David, and Nicole described that it was important for them to have a part in the online cosplay community outside of their personal page. The notion of using Facebook to connect with others with similar interests was consistent with previous studies of Facebook use among teenagers, adolescents, and adults (Anderson et al., 2012; Clerkin et al., 2013; Greenwood, 2013; Kacvinsky & Moreno, 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2009) For Michelle, Samantha, David, and Nicole, their role in their respective cosplay communities varied from casual participants to administrators tasked with a leadership role. Their participation in the communities was described as a way to relate to others and feel like they belonged. This fulfillment of relatedness was separate from the relatedness fulfilled through interacting with followers on their own page.

Every participant in the study was asked to describe the relationship he or she has with the people that follow them on their page. Paul, Thomas, Haley, Kate, Sydney, Crystal, and Aeris described their followers as a support network that they could reach out to for support and feedback. Participants valued being able to have people they could go to when they were having a bad day or needed advice on what they were working on. However, for some participants it was important that they limit how much personal information they share with their followers. For some participants they were apprehensive to discuss personal problems for fear of sharing too much information.

Mary and Haley described that they maintain a purposeful barrier between themselves and their followers. In order to maintain a level of privacy they only let their followers in on a limited about of their life and personality. They are comfortable relating to them over cosplay and other shared interests but do not feel like they need to relate to their followers on a personal level. This sentiment was similar to those expressed by Ann, Nicole, and Ashley, who see their followers like peers and students. They are able to interact with them and share their knowledge, thereby fulfilling both the need for relatedness by discussing similar interests, and also their need for competence by being able to share knowledge, but still retaining a level of disconnect. As discussed in the earlier section, sharing knowledge fulfills Ann, Nicole, and Ashley's need for competence.

Michelle, Nicole and Ashley also expressed that being able to help out a cosplayer that may have been in a similar position as they were when they were first starting out is valuable to them because they can identify with them. Nicole, Michelle, and Ashley feel compelled to help out new cosplayers because they can remember

when they themselves were new cosplayers and how much they appreciated it when a more experienced cosplayer offered them help. Nicole stressed that this aspect of the cosplay community is the most important to her. She valued being able to relate to other cosplayers and having them relate to her.

Gender differences.

Most participants in Part 2 of the study identified as female, specifically17 of the 20 participants, or 85%. This is very similar to findings from the content analysis conducted during Part 1 of the study.   Responses from the three male and 17 female participants while interviewed during Part 2 of the study did not appear to differ according to gender with regards to motivations behind cosplay participation and maintenance of Facebook Artist Pages.   The responses provided by the male cosplayers in the survey portion of the study also did not appear to be different than those provided by the female cosplayers. Both genders rated intrinsic aspirations as the most important overall. Only two cosplayers rated the extrinsically motivated aspiration of fame as important, and both of them were female cosplayers. Since these two cosplayers only represent 10% of the participants in the study, it would be difficult to infer if gender was related to their ranking fame as important. Additional studies would have to be conducted to explore the various potential variables that may have a role in why certain aspirations are rated as important over others.

Comparisons to other studies.

Previous studies have found a positive correlation between Facebook use and the fulfillment of the needs of autonomy and competence (Reinecke et al., 2014). In

Reineke et al.'s (2014) study investigating the role of regular Facebook page usage found positive correlations between the enjoyment of Facebook and the fulfillment of the need for autonomy and competence, but an insignificant relationship "between the satisfaction of the intrinsic need for relatedness and the enjoyment of using Facebook" (p.430). This is in contrast to the findings in the present study, where Facebook's role in connecting users to each other was stressed over and over again. This may be attributed to the unique population investigated in the present study. Reinecke et al.'s (2014) study involved 230 students from a German University who all had regular Facebook profiles. It is possible that the use of an Artist Page effects the potential for the fulfillment of the need for relatedness. This may be a potential new area of investigation for future study.

In her study of how attitudes about fame predict social media usage, Greenwood (2013) described that users that found possessing visible fame (their image being well known) and those that possessed dreams of becoming famous positively predicted the amount of Facebook usage a participant engaged in. This is consistent with the notion expressed by the participants in the present study that if they were to become more famous they would have to participate more actively in social media. Greenwood (2013) also suggests that those who have a higher desire for fame are more likely to follow, friend, and post on celebrity oriented social media pages. This is also consistent with some of the participants in the present study, who note that networking with other cosplayers helps build notoriety and would be something they would have to do if they wanted to become more famous. However, the amount of notoriety one would need to

be considered a famous cosplayer was inconsistent among the participants and warrants further investigation.

Self-Determination Theory purports that intrinsically motivated behaviors are more likely to lead to positive feelings of well-being and improved mental health (Deci and Ryan,2000). For the participants in this study, the motivations to participate in cosplay were largely intrinsically based, and participants generally attributed participating in cosplay to positive feelings of well-being. For participants such as Haley, Ann, and Paul, participating in cosplay helped them cope with mental health issues, improved feelings of self-esteem, and helped them develop a more effective work ethic. The benefits of intrinsically motivated behaviors associated with participating in cosplaying to overall mental health and well-being among the participants in this study were consistent with the benefits of intrinsically motivated behaviors described in studies noted by Deci and Ryan (2000).

Implications for Further Study

The purpose of the present study is to explore motivations behind participation in cosplay and the use of social media among cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. Additional considerations were made to understand the role of the desire for fame in using social media, and the role of Facebook Artist Pages in building fame. The results of this study suggest that cosplayers with Facebook Pages designated as Artists choose to participate in cosplay because of the creative challenge of making a costume, to build new skills, as a bonding activity with friends, to be able to don the persona of another character for a day, to express their love of a character or fandom, and to receive positive feedback on something they create.

The primary motivations to participate in cosplay among participants were not consistent with other major published studies of cosplay. Rahman et. al. (2012), Lamerichs (2010), and Peirson-Smith (2013b) all focused on the transformative aspect of cosplay and their participants motivation to participate in cosplay as a way to escape mundane life. The cosplayers in the present study were much more motivated by the creative aspect of the hobby, stressing the importance of challenging themselves to create costumes accurately and being able to share the fruits of their labor with others. Future studies will need to explore why there is such a disconnect between the motivations conveyed by participants in previous studies compared to the motivations conveyed in the present study.

According to the participants in the present study, cosplayers that want to be famous will have to make use of key strategies associated with internet activity. Cosplayers that desire to be famous will make calculated efforts to increase their social media presence through the frequent posting of high quality photographs of finished and in progress costumes. This may be supplemented with the posting of tutorials, videos, and personal anecdotes that would allow the audience to get to know the personality of the cosplayer. Facebook Pages, specifically pages designated as Artist Pages, allow the cosplayer to have a place to post their current and past work, network with people that follow their page, share the pages of other cosplayers in the hopes of broadening their reach, and create a form of measurable success by tracking how many people are following their page. Facebook's wide adoption by cosplayers, media outlets, companies, artists, and a wide range of people allow cosplayers the ability to easily spread their work to a variety of people.

This study is the first of its kind to investigate the notion of cosplay fame. What emerged from the study was the need to define what it means to be a famous cosplayer. Participants expressed various characteristics of what they believe describe famous cosplayers but no consistent definition was established. Several participants further made the distinction between famous cosplayers and well known cosplayers, suggesting there is a difference between how and why these cosplayers became known in the community. In this study, only one participant considered herself famous, but only in the country that she resided in. There may be a difference between the motivation and behavior of cosplayers that are well known versus the cosplayers that are famous. Once a definition of a famous cosplayer and a definition of a well-known cosplayer is established it may be beneficial to understand the attitudes and motivations of each of these groups. For example, Yaya Han, Kamui Cosplay, and Jessica Nigri were all considered famous cosplayers by the participants in this study. Further studies may benefit from understanding how these three cosplayers interpret the difference between being a famous cosplayer and a well-known cosplayer. Regardless, Facebook and social media plays a large role in how cosplayers become famous.

A very popular sentiment among the participants in this study was that Facebook allows them to create an online portfolio to share their work with others and receive positive feedback. Half of the participants in this study expressed frustration with Facebook's reach algorithm, with some suggesting that they may even consider moving away from Facebook entirely because how limited the current reach is. This could potentially be devastating to Facebook if page users decide to move to another platform. The Facebook Pages reach algorithm does not make a distinction between

company based Pages and independent designer or Artist Pages. Facebook may have to develop a system to recognize the difference between large companies that can afford to promote themselves and pay for increased reach and independent artists who rely on being able to reach all of the small audience they have following them.

Limitations of the Study

Cosplayers in this study consider social media as very important because it allows them to share their work and connect with others. Social media was the outlet for them to share their photographs after a convention and a place for them to receive feedback on their in-progress work. For this particular study, I chose to focus on cosplayers that took the time to create a Facebook specific page to showcase their cosplaying activities. Because all participants have an established social media presence showcasing their cosplaying activities, the importance of social media in cosplay in general may be overrepresented. Future study will need to be conducted with a wider range of cosplayers that do not have Facebook Artist Pages to see if the importance of social media is consistent with other cosplayers.

Future researchers interested in studying the relationship between social media and cosplaying will want to consider the potential difference between the types of Pages cosplayers choose to utilize on Facebook. While the Facebook Page appearance and features are all identical, cosplayers can choose in which category they place their page. During the content analysis phase of this study many cosplay Pages were found to have been given a Public Figure or Just for Fun designation. Most of the Pages that showed up were designated as Artist Pages, but some of the cosplayers that were named as famous cosplayers in this study have Public Figure designated Pages. Yaya

Han, for example, designates her Page as Public Figure and not Artist. Future study may want to explore if the attitudes towards fame differ between those who designate their Page as Public Figure versus those that designate their Page as Artist.

While I do not believe it greatly influenced any of the answers I received during the interview process, an unintended selection bias may have occurred during the recruitment portion of this study. Each recruitment message was sent to a Facebook Artist Page of a cosplayer randomly selected from the list derived from the content analysis. Before accounting for changes in Page status (i.e. Artist Page changed to Public Figure or Pages no longer active) the original population of names was 308. A total of 256 recruitment messages were sent out. The original list of cosplayers included less than a dozen cosplayers I had previously met and had casual to close friendships with over the 15 years I have been in the cosplay community. If a cosplayer I was previously acquainted with came up in the randomly generated list of names to recruit I sent the message to them in the same manner I sent out all of the other recruitment messages. However, my response and agreement rate was much higher with the cosplayers with whom I had been previously acquainted. In total, seven of the 20 participants in this study were individuals that I knew from my previous experience being in the cosplay community.

Previously knowing seven of the participants in the study may have impacted the overall distribution of experience level and age of the cosplayers selected to participate. When I was most active in the cosplay community I was in my late teens and early twenties and made friends with others cosplayers in a similar age range. Of the seven participants that I was acquainted with before the study, six of them were active around

the same time I was active in the community nearly ten years ago. These cosplayers are now in their late twenties and early thirties. While age was not collected as a demographic in the data collection, I am aware of the age of the cosplayers that I knew before the study. Additional studies would have to be conducted to verify if the age of the participants in this study is a true representation of the overall cosplayer population.

Selecting cosplayers that are older and have been active in the cosplay community since before the emergence of cosplay celebrities and the widespread use of Facebook Pages may have led to a more biased view of Facebook Pages and cosplay celebrity. These cosplayers may have a cynical view of cosplay celebrity as it's a recent development in a hobby they have been involved in for a long time. Further comparisons regarding the attitudes towards cosplay fame would need to be made with a younger selection of cosplayers.

In addition to the age demographic, the skill level of the cosplayers involved may be more skewed due to my knowing the cosplayers beforehand. When I was active in the cosplay community I was considered a journeyman and master cosplayer and interacted with other cosplayers at the same skill level as I had been. Now nearly 10 years later these cosplayers that are more active now have even further improved their skills. These cosplayers may be more likely to have posted tutorials and been asked about their costume making skills because of their long-term experience. The amount of importance they place on craftsmanship, sharing knowledge, and improving skills may be due to their long-term experience making costumes, competing, and being in the community. Additional studies of this nature will have to make note if cosplayers that

have less experience value craftsmanship, sharing knowledge, and improving skills as much as the cosplayers involved in this study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore motivations behind participation in cosplay and the use of social media among cosplayers who maintain Facebook Artist Pages. Additional considerations were made to understand the role of the desire for fame in using social media, and the role of Facebook Artist Pages in building fame. The results of this study suggest that cosplayers with Facebook Pages designated as Artists choose to participate in cosplay because of the creative challenge of making a costume, to build new skills, as a bonding activity with friends, to be able to don the persona of another character for a day, to express their love of a character or fandom, and to receive positive feedback on something they create. It is important to note that the motivations to participate in cosplay may be unique to the cosplayers that chose to participate in this study, and the motivations of the cosplayers that did not participate in this study may be different.

Social media plays an important role in the cosplaying activities of the participants in this study. Using social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allows the cosplayers to share their work, interact with other fans, keep up to date on the work of other cosplayers, make friends, and promote themselves as artists. Without social media, the cosplayers in this study would be limited to the exposure they receive by attending conventions. Previous studies of cosplay have not stressed the importance of social media to the overall participation of cosplayers in the hobby, and

therefore, are missing a potentially vast area of inquiry. This study serves as a stepping

stone to understanding how and why social media plays such a large role in the cosplay

community, as well as how social media can create celebrities out of fan artists.

While cosplayers such as Yaya Han, Jessica Nigri, and Kamui Cosplay have

paved the way for the rise of celebrity or famous cosplayers, the number of cosplayers

in this study that value becoming a famous cosplayer is relatively small. Only a couple

of participants in this study specifically wanted to be famous cosplayers, while most

others found that becoming a famous cosplayer required too much extra time, effort,

and money to make it worthwhile. Several participants in the study even suggested that

they would not want to be famous because of a perceived association that famous

cosplayers participate in cosplay for disingenuous reasons. According to the cosplayers

in the study that did value cosplay fame, their desire for fame influenced the way that

they participated in social media, convention activities, and their networking strategies.

This study was one of the first to explore cosplayer's attitudes towards cosplay fame,

and serves as a jumping off point for further inquiry into the role of famous cosplayers in

the overall perception of cosplay as a hobby and activity.

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Appendices

Appendix One: IRB Approval Notice: Part 1 of Study (see following page)

Human Research Protection Program
Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Integrity
B308 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-2140
(541) 737-8008
IRB@oregonstate.edu | http://research.oregonstate.edu/irb

APPROVAL NOTICE

Date of Notification	10/20/2016	Date Approved	10/19/2016
Principal Investigator	Brigitte Cluver	Study ID	6956
Study Title	Facebook Fan Page Use by Cosplayers		
Study Team Members	Laura Kane		
Review Level	Expedited	Category(ies)	7
Submission Type	Continuing Review Application		
Waiver(s)	Informed Consent AND Parental Permission		
Risk Level for Children	§46.404 minimal risk		
Number of Participants	1000 Do not exceed this number without prior approval		
Funding Source	None	PI on Funding	N/A
Proposal #	N/A	Cayuse #	N/A

The above referenced study was reviewed and approved by the OSU Institutional Review Board (IRB).

EXPIRATION DATE: 10/18/2017

Continuing review applications are due at least 30 days prior to expiration date

Comments: Study closed to enrollment; data analysis only.

Please note when applicable, if the PI has not already done so, the HRPP staff will update the version date on the protocol and consent document(s).

Principal Investigator responsibilities for fulfilling the requirements of approval:

➢ All study team members should be kept informed of the status of the research.
➢ Any changes to the research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. **This includes, but is not limited to, increasing the number of subjects to be enrolled.** Failure to adhere to the approved protocol can result in study suspension or termination and data stemming from protocol deviations cannot be represented as having IRB Approval.
➢ Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others must be submitted to the HRPP office within three calendar days.
➢ Only consent forms with a valid approval stamp may be presented to participants.
➢ Submit a continuing review application or final report to the HRPP office for review at least four weeks prior to the expiration date. Failure to submit a continuing review application prior to the expiration date will result in termination of the research, discontinuation of enrolled participants, and the submission of a new application to the IRB.

Appendix Two: IRB Approval Notice: Part 2 of Study (see following page)

Human Research Protection Program

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Integrity
B308 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-2140
(541) 737-8008
IRB@oregonstate.edu | http://research.oregonstate.edu/irb

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

Date of Notification	07/22/2016	Date Acknowledged	07/22/2016
Principal Investigator	Brigitte Cluver	Study ID	7593
Study Title	Fan Page Use by Cosplayers		
Study Team Members	Laura Kane		
Review Level	Exempt	Category(ies)	2
Submission Type	Initial Application		
Funding Source	N/A	PI on Funding	N/A
Proposal #	N/A	Cayuse #	N/A

The above referenced study was reviewed by the OSU Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) office and determined to be exempt from full board review.

EXPIRATION DATE: 07/21/2021

The exemption is valid for **5 years** from the date of approval.

Annual renewals are not required. If the research extends beyond the expiration date, the investigator must request a <u>new</u> exemption. Investigators should submit a final report to the HRPP office if the project is completed prior to the 5 year term.

Comments:

Principal Investigator responsibilities:

➢ Certain amendments to this study must be submitted to the HRPP office for review prior to initiating the change. These amendments may include, but are not limited to, changes in funding, study population, study instruments, consent documents, recruitment material, sites of research, etc. For more information about the types of changes that require submission of a project revision to the HRPP office, please see:
http://oregonstate.edu/research/irb/sites/default/files/website_guidancedocuments.pdf

➢ All study team members should be kept informed of the status of the research. The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that all study team members have completed the online ethics training requirement, even if they do not need to be added to the study team via project revision.

➢ Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others must be submitted to the HRPP office within three calendar days.

➢ The Principal Investigator is required to securely store all study related documents on the OSU campus for a minimum of three years post study termination.

Appendix Three: IRB Approved Recruitment Message

Dear [name of Artist Page],

I am a doctoral student in the College of Business at Oregon State University and am conducting a study titled Fan Page Use by Cosplayers. The purpose of this study is to explore motivations to participate in cosplay, how cosplayers use Facebook fan pages, and the role of social media in micro-celebrity formation within the cosplay community. My advisor, Dr. Brigitte Cluver and I are seeking cosplayers who have an Artist page on Facebook.com to participate in this study. If you are an adult (as defined by the state in which you live), we would like to invite you to participate. We identified you as a possible participant because your fan page came up in a Google search of cosplay-related Artist pages hosted on Facebook. *Please note that this study is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation project at Oregon State University.*

Participation in this study involves two consecutive parts:
- Part 1: Completion of a 10 to 15 minute survey about your life aspirations
- Part 2: Completion of a 45 to 60 minute skype interview about

To learn more about the study and to complete the survey, please visit the following web address.

If you have any questions, please contact the principal investigator, Dr. Brigitte Cluver, by email at Brigitte.cluver@oregonstate.edu or by responding to this message.

Thank you,

Brigitte Cluver & Laura Kane

Principal Investigator & *Student Researcher*

College of Business, Oregon State University

Study Title: Fan Page Use by Cosplayers

Appendix Four: IRB Approved Online Consent Guide for Survey

Explanation of Research Study

Project Title: Fan Page Use by Cosplayers
Principal Investigator: Brigitte Cluver
Student Researcher: Laura Kane
Version Date: 7/20/2016

The following document contains important information that you will need to help you decide to be in this research study or not.

The purpose of this study is to explore how cosplayers use Facebook fan pages and to explore the role of social media in the role of micro-celebrity formation in the cosplay community. This study is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation project at Oregon State University.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you identify as a cosplayer and have an Artist designated page on Facebook.com. Your page was randomly selected from a larger list of cosplay artist pages that showed up on Google.com.

This is a two-part study. The first part is a survey in which you will be asked to share information about your life aspirations; the expected time to complete the survey is 10 to 15 minutes. The second part is a Skype interview in which you will be asked to discuss your motivations to participate in cosplay, your ideas about cosplay fame, and the way you use your cosplay Artist page; the expected time to complete the interview is 45 to 60 minutes. Your participation in both parts of the study is voluntary; you may discontinue participation at any time.

To ensure that your responses are not directly linked to your name or Facebook Fan Page, you will be asked at the beginning of the survey to provide a pseudonym (or nickname) that you would like me to use when communicating with you. Your pseudonym, rather than the name provided on your Fan Page, will be used to link information from the survey and the interview. After the interview is over, your pseudonym will be removed and then replaced with a number.

This study is not designed to benefit you directly. You will not be paid for being in this research study. However, I would be happy to provide you with a summary of my research findings after the study is complete. To request a copy of the findings, please email me your request at [kanel@oregonstate.edu.](mailto:kanel@oregonstate.edu)

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw from this project before it ends, the researchers may keep information collected about you and this information may be included in study reports.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact the Oregon State Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) office at (541) 737-8008, Brigitte Cluver at Brigitte.cluver@oregonstate.edu or Laura Kane at kanel@oregonstate.edu

By clicking the agree box below you are indicating that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study.

Please check the box below
_I agree to participate in this study
_I decline to participate in this study

Appendix Five: IRB Approved Verbal Consent Guide for Interview

Verbal Consent Guide For Interview

Project Title: Fan Page Use by Cosplayers
Principal Investigator: Brigitte Cluver
Student Researcher: Laura Kane
Version Date: 7/16/2016

I am going to read to you important information that you will need to help you decide to be in this research study or not. Please listen carefully and if you have any questions please ask me any questions about anything that is unclear.

The purpose of this study is to explore how cosplayers use Facebook fan pages and to explore the role of social media in the role of micro-celebrity formation in the cosplay community. This study is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation project at Oregon State University.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you identify as a cosplayer and have an Artist designated page on Facebook.com. Your page was randomly selected from a larger list of cosplay artist pages that showed up on Google.com.

This research involves a semi-structured interview held online in which you will be asked questions pertaining to your motivation to participate in cosplay, your ideas about cosplay fame, and the way you use your cosplay Artist page. You will also be asked to clarify your responses from the Aspirations Index you completed online prior to this interview. You will provide the pseudonym that you indicated in the Aspirations Index. After the interview your pseudonym will be removed and replaced with a number.

The interview will be recorded for the purpose of transcribing the interview for data analysis. The recordings will be kept confidential. If you do not wish to be recorded you should not enroll in this study.

The expected time to complete the interview is 45-60 minutes.

Because it is not possible for us to know what studies may be a part of our future work, we ask that you give permission now for us to use your recording and transcription without being contacted about future study. Future use of your recording and transcription will be limited to studies about cosplay, fandom, social media, motivational theory, and fame.

Do you consent to allow your data including the recording of the interview and transcription for use in future studies. Please clearly state yes or no.

We may contact you in the future for another similar study. You may ask us to stop contacting you at any time.

At the conclusion of the project subjects will be contacted with information about the results of the project.

It is important that you are aware of the possible risks of participating in this study. This study will ask you to discuss personal motivations, aspirations, and opinions. There is minimal emotional and psychological risk involved in divulging this information and you are free to end the interview at any time.

Do you consent to participate in this interview? Please clearly state Yes or No.

Appendix Six: IRB Approved Aspirations Index and Desire for Fame Scale

Q1. Within the state you currently live, are you legally considered an adult?

___ yes (if yes, participant will be directed to Q2)

___ no (if no, the participant will be directed to a screen and told, "Thank you for your interest in participating. However, we can only include individuals who are legally considered adults in this study.")

Q2. As I have already stated, this is a two-part study. Right now, you will complete an online survey. After you have completed the survey, I will contact you through Facebook messaging to set up a Skype interview. From here on out, I will communicate with you using a pseudonym (or nickname) of your choice; I am doing this to ensure that your responses are not tied to your actual name. What pseudonym would you like me to use when communicating with you?

_____

Pre-Q3. Everyone has long-term Goals or Aspirations. These are the things that individuals hope to accomplish over the course of their lives. In this section, you will find a number of life goals, presented one at a time, and we ask you three questions about each goal. (a) How important is this goal to you? (b) How likely is it that you will attain this goal in your future? and (c) How much have you already achieved this goal thus far?

Q3. Life-goal: To be a very wealthy person.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all			moderately			very
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all			moderately			very
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
    very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q4. Life-goal: To grow and learn new things.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
    very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
    very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
    very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q5. Life-goal: To have my name known by many people.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
    very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
    very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
    very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q6. Life-goal: To have good friends that I can count on.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q7. Life-goal: To successfully hide the signs of aging.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q8. Life-goal: To work for the betterment of society.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

     not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

     not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q9. Life-goal: To be physically healthy.

a. How important is this to you?

     not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

     not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

     not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q10. Life-goal: To have many expensive possessions.

a. How important is this to you?

     not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

     not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

  not at all   moderately
    very

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q11. Life-goal: At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete.

a. How important is this to you?

  not at all   moderately
    very

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

  not at all   moderately
    very

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

  not at all   moderately
    very

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q12. Life-goal: To be admired by many people.

a. How important is this to you?

  not at all   moderately
    very

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

  not at all   moderately
    very

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

  not at all   moderately
    very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q13. Life-goal: To share my life with someone I love.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
        very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
        very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
        very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q14. Life-goal: To have people comment often about how attractive I look.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
        very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
        very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
        very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q15. Life-goal: To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q16. Life-goal: To feel good about my level of physical fitness.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q17. Life-goal: To be financially successful.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
        very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
         very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
         very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q18. Life-goal: To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
         very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
         very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
         very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q19. Life-goal: To be famous.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
         very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
         very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately

      very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q20. Life-goal: To have committed, intimate relationships.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately

      very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately

      very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately

      very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q21. Life-goal: To keep up with fashions in hair and clothing.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately

      very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately

      very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately

      very

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q22. Life-goal: To work to make the world a better place.

a. How important is this to you?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q23. Life-goal: To keep myself healthy and well.

a. How important is this to you?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q24. Life-goal: To be rich.

a. How important is this to you?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q25. Life-goal: To know and accept who I really am.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q26. Life-goal: To have my name appear frequently in the media.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
        very

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

      not at all   moderately
            very

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q27. Life-goal: To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love.

a. How important is this to you?

      not at all   moderately
            very

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

      not at all   moderately
            very

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

      not at all   moderately
             very

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q28. Life-goal: To achieve the "look" I've been after.

a. How important is this to you?

      not at all   moderately
             very

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

      not at all   moderately
             very

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

      not at all   moderately
             very

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q29. Life-goal: To help others improve their lives.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
      very

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
      very

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
      very

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q30. Life-goal: To be relatively free from sickness.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
      very

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

    not at all   moderately
      very

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

    not at all   moderately
      very

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q31. Life-goal: To have enough money to buy everything I want.

a. How important is this to you?

    not at all   moderately
      very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q32. Life-goal: To gain increasing insight into why I do the things I do.

a. How important is this to you?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q33. Life-goal: To be admired by lots of different people.

a. How important is this to you?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

      not at all   moderately
         very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
    very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q34. Life-goal: To have deep enduring relationships.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
    very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
    very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
    very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Q35. Life-goal: To have an image that others find appealing.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
    very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
    very

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
    very

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q36. Life-goal: To help people in need.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
        very

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
        very

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
        very

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q37. Life-goal: To have a physically healthy life style.

a. How important is this to you?

not at all   moderately
        very

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

not at all   moderately
        very

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c. How much have you already attained this goal?

not at all   moderately
        very

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Pre-Q38. For the following statements, indicate how much you agree or disagree. Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how strongly you agree or disagree, with 3 being unsure.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Unsure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
One day I would like to be cosplay famous					
I love the idea of being a famous cosplayer					
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because it would give me a higher social status					
I would like to be a famous cosplayer because other people would perceive me as having more power and influence					
The lifestyle of famous cosplayers					

appeals to me a lot					
If I were a famous cosplayer I would be happier					

Q39. Please indicate your gender_____

Appendix Seven: IRB Approved Interview Guide

(R.# refers to which research question this question addresses)

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me. I'd like to start with a few general questions and then move into more specific ones.

(R. 1) How long have you been a cosplayer?

(R. 1)

a. Why did you start cosplaying (what motivated to participate in cosplay)? What about cosplay appealed to you when you first started?

b. How has your participation in cosplay evolved over time? Why have you continued to be involved to the level that you currently participate (what motivates you to be involved as you are right now)?

(R. 2)

A. Do you consider yourself to be a famous cosplayer?

If No What do you think it would take for you to be considered to be a famous cosplayer?

If Yes When did you realize that you had become famous?

What were the indicators that you were becoming famous?

B. Is being a famous cosplayer important to you? Why not or how so?
C. On a scale from one to ten, with one being not at all famous and ten being extremely famous, how famous would you say you are?
  a. How do you know that you are famous to this extent?
  b. What are the indicators?
D. How can you judge your level of fame in comparison to others within the cosplay community? Specifically, what are the indicators?

(R. 3) What role does social media play in your participation within the cosplay community? (Prompt…How so?)

1. What social media websites do you regularly use? For each, how do you participate?

2. What do you think the role of Facebook fan pages specifically plays in the process of becoming a famous cosplayer?
3. Do you think a cosplayer can become famous or increase his/her level of fame without the use of a Facebook fan page?
4. How has social media helped you to become famous? (if applicable)

(R. 4) When did you first start using a Facebook fan page?

1. Why did you decide to create a Facebook fan page (what motivated you)?
2. What are the benefits to using the Facebook page over other types of websites?
3. Do you think your Facebook fan page has contributed to the level of fame you have right now? How so? How do you know that the Facebook fan page has contributed to your fame?

(R. 4) What kinds of content do you post to your page?

1. Why is posting _____ content **(attribute)** important to you? (laddering approach…use probing questions to get at how it relates to **consequences** and ultimately his/her **values/life-goals/aspirations**)
2. What types of content do you wish you could post more of? (do you need this question?)
    a. What about that type of content is important to you?7
3. Is there any type of content that you wish you could post and currently do not?

(R. 4) What are the benefits to using a Facebook fan page?

1. Why is this feature important?
2. What does this feature allow you to do?
3. What would you use if this feature did not exist?

(R. 4) What are the negatives to using a Facebook fan page?

1. Why do you think this is a bad thing?

(R. 4) How would you describe your relationship between you and your followers on Facebook?

1. What do you like best about your followers?
    a. Why is this important to you?

(R.1.) When you took the online survey, your responses indicated that one goal you have is "_____" (either wealth, fame, image, personal growth, relationships, community, health). In what ways has participating in cosplay helped you to move towards this goal? Are there any other ways that you believe cosplay will help you move towards achieving this goal?

That's all of the questions I have for you today. Is there anything else you would like to add that I have not addressed?

Appendix Eight: Content Analysis Codebook and Results

Code Book

Code Descriptions	
Gender	gender is inferred based on stereotypical binary gender roles: male or female-Both is used if more than 1 member is represented and they are different genders
Members	the number of individual cosplayers the page represents
Likes	the number of likes the page has at the time of viewing
# of photos	obtained by viewing the "albums" tab and counting the number of photos in each album, this includes profile pictures, timeline images, and mobile uploads
Videos	whether or not there is at least one video uploaded under the videos folder
Sells prints	Determined by scanning the page offering print sales, links to 3rd party print stores, or mentions convention appearances to sell prints. Links to deviantart accounts with prints available for sale count. Store Envy accounts count.
Store	yes means they have a store widget/app on their page-does not count stores hosted outside of facebook. Store can have nothing in it-as long as widget is present
Commissions	takes commissions for custom costumes or props
Tutorials	posts tutorials about various costume, propmaking, wig, or make up methods. These can be on linked YouTube channels

Gender	Members	Likes	# of photos	Do they post videos	Sells Prints	Store	Commissions	Tutorials
female	1	246582	2377	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
female	1	21603	895	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
female	1	21991	1214	yes	yes	no	no	yes
female	1	4030	183	no	no	no	no	yes
female	1	6673	722	yes	no	no	no	yes
female	1	1940	127	yes	no	no	yes	no
female	1	19229	551	yes	yes	no	no	no

female	1	49417	1041	yes	yes	no	no	no
female	1	569	174	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	16194	575	no	yes	no	no	no
		27477						
female	1	3	2098	yes	yes	yes	no	no
male	1	57218	1128	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
male	1	202	102	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	3745	312	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	41300	850	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
female	1	7271	498	yes	no	yes	yes	no
female	1	26215	369	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	17061	995	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
female	1	9814	738	no	no	no	no	yes
female	1	905	280	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	7846	376	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	4096	463	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
female	1	9278	490	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	12998	4794	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	5289	788	yes	no	no	no	yes
female	1	31814	1860	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
female	1	4604	754	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	28493	706	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	24278	660	yes	no	no	yes	yes
female	1	10088	326	yes	no	no	no	no
male	1	13637	191	no	no	no	no	no
both	2	17624	1358	yes	no	no	no	yes
female	1	35851	448	no	no	no	no	yes
female	1	11244	1306	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
female	1	8014	1316	yes	no	no	no	yes
female	1	11390	884	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	4283	428	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	74606	791	yes	yes	yes	no	no
		15777						
female	1	0	983	yes	yes	no	no	yes
male	1	3793	203	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	10613	801	yes	no	no	yes	no
female	1	51048	396	no	yes	yes	yes	no
both	3	8025	548	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
female	1	38856	738	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
male	1	5664	114	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	7125	267	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
female	1	4283	566	yes	no	no	yes	yes
female	1	37991	1375	yes	yes	yes	no	yes

both	2	4488	353	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	2618	390	yes	no	no	no	yes
female	1	2998	324	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	5817	435	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	7114	291	yes	no	no	no	no
male	1	4449	42	yes	no	no	no	no
male	1	4548	3073	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
female	1	13268	993	yes	no	no	no	yes
female	1	10296	780	yes	no	no	no	no
both	2	8203	479	yes	no	no	yes	yes
female	2	5321	768	yes	yes	no	no	no
female	1	17060	379	yes	yes	no	no	no
female	1	5783	345	no	yes	yes	yes	no
female	1	13340	380	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	2712	121	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	13699	321	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	18712	556	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	5217	346	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	5355	341	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	11011	1251	yes	yes	yes	no	no
male	5	4240	122	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	5385	1447	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
female	1	85612	2887	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	15208	830	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	7099	1115	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	3677	220	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	2747	357	yes	no	no	yes	no
female	1	4628	187	no	no	yes	yes	yes
female	1	16601	680	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	18673	964	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
female	1	17597	336	no	yes	yes	no	no
female	2	3308	382	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
female	1	17944	290	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	6790	404	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	5914	115	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	7772	1491	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
female	1	1305	266	no	no	no	no	no
male	1	5678	680	yes	no	no	yes	yes
female	1	8208	730	yes	no	no	no	no
male	1	4603	1591	yes	no	no	yes	no
male	1	21055	275	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	3869	209	no	no	no	yes	no
female	1	22137	668	yes	no	yes	no	yes

female	1	1667	107	no	no	no	no	no
male	1	6117	642	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	3601	253	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	7651	587	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	13753	381	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	37950	259	no	yes	yes	yes	no
female	1	12397	120	no	no	no	no	no
both	4	934	458	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	89508	1141	yes	yes	no	no	no
female	1	5177	90	no	no	no	no	yes
female	1	45846	972	yes	yes	no	no	no
both	2	5462	757	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	12818	304	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	6466	852	yes	yes	no	no	no
female	1	17791	302	yes	no	yes	no	no
male	1	4566	240	yes	no	no	yes	no
male	1	2553	134	yes	no	no	no	no
both	2	7754	894	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
both	4	2080	554	yes	no	no	yes	yes
female	1	4928	239	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	3892	535	no	no	no	yes	yes
female	1	7475	247	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	4730	484	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	3376	540	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	4954	374	yes	yes	no	yes	no
female	1	3134	1991	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	12784	1599	yes	no	yes	no	no
male	1	7747	998	yes	no	no	yes	yes
male	1	3660	795	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	3124	997	yes	no	no	no	no
male	1	2637	738	no	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	3480	257	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	9460	901	yes	no	no	yes	yes
female	1	1315	129	no	no	no	no	yes
female	1	7397	124	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	8221	79	no	yes	no	no	no
female	1	18419	428	yes	no	no	no	no
both	2	3131	350	yes	no	no	no	no
female	2	18790 17995	294	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	1	1236	yes	no	no	yes	no
female	1	5651	336	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	2612	334	no	no	no	no	no

female	1	6078	316	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	943	377	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	4815	854	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	3508	1070	yes	yes	no	no	yes
female	1	3923	1116	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	4286	915	yes	yes	no	no	no
female	1	2720	330	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	22455	1037	yes	yes	no	no	yes
female	1	1604	273	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	1901	93	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	7343	1090	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	4755	841	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	342	57	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	26062	2883	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
female	1	3703	591	yes	yes	yes	no	no
female	1	14646	733	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
male	1	7127	186	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	1641	242	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	20316	379	yes	no	no	no	no
female	1	820	41	no	no	no	no	no
male	1	3661	1263	no	no	no	no	no
female	1	1972	828	yes	no	no	no	no

Appendix Nine: Description of Interview Participants

Respondent	
Sarah	Sarah has been a cosplayer for three years. At the time of her interview she had 2,547 followers on her Facebook page. She mentioned in the interview that she is 29 years old.
Amanda	Amanda has been a cosplayer for five years. At the time of the interview she had 4,592 followers on her fan page. Amanda's favorite character to cosplay is Lara Croft.
Paul	Paul has been a cosplayer for three years. At the time of the interview he had 2,690 followers on his page. Paul's favorite online cosplay community is associated with the Blizzard video game company.
Michelle	Michelle has been a cosplayer for over 14 years. At the time of her interview she had 1,924 followers on her page. Michelle is an administrator for a Facebook Disney Cosplay group with over 18,916 members. Michelle also owns her own party princess business and employs fellow participant Ann.
Nicole	Nicole has been a cosplayer for nine years. At the time of her interview, she had 657 followers on her page. Nicole is an administrator for the regional cosplay group for her area. She lives in a house with other cosplayers that all help each other make costumes.
Samantha and David	Samantha and David have been cosplaying together for three years. At the time of their interview they had 545 followers on their page. They help each other throughout the costume making progress and both post to the same Facebook page.
Mary	Mary has been cosplaying for 13 years. At the time of her interview she had 6,871 followers on her Facebook page. Mary is a professional and hobby cosplayer.
Ann	Ann has been cosplaying for seven years. At the time of her interview she had 1,606 followers on her page. Ann loves to dress as Disney Princesses for charity and birthday parties. She has dressed as Elsa, Rapunzel, and Cinderella. She works for Michelle, who has her own party princess business.
Haley	Haley has been cosplaying for over 17 years. At the time of her interview she had 4,549 followers on her page. She and her boyfriend have been cosplaying together for a long period of time and often collaborate on their costumes together. Haley often does panels at conventions about cosplay construction and masquerade skits.
Alex	Alex has been a cosplayer for five years. At the time of the interview she had 12,665 followers on her page. In addition to cosplaying, Alex also makes and sells hats and plushies on her page.

Ashley	Ashley has been cosplaying for 11 years. At the time of her interview she had 396 followers on her page. Ashley is married to fellow participant Thomas and together they now judge various cosplay competitions around the New England area.
Kate	Kate has been a cosplayer for five years. At the time of the interview Kate had 4,839 followers on her page. Kate began cosplaying when she lived in Puerto Rico. Now she lives in the southern United States.
Sydney	Sydney has been a cosplayer for three years. At the time of the interview Sydney had 812 followers on her page. Sydney loves the challenge of trying out new techniques when she makes new costumes.
Crystal	Crystal has been a cosplayer for four years. At the time of the interview Crystal had 3,843 followers on her page. In addition to cosplay, Crystal often does belly dance at her local Renaissance fairs.
Thomas	Thomas has been a cosplayer for 12 years. At the time of the interview he had 237 followers on his page. Thomas is married to fellow participant Ashley. Thomas and Ashley both frequently participate in a friends website dedicated to anime convention news and cosplay tutorials.
Rydia	Rydia has been a cosplayer for seven years. At the time of the interview she had 52,768 followers. Rydia participates in a lot of charity work related to cosplay with local cosplayers in her area.
Aeris	Aeris has been a cosplayer for 10 years. At the time of the interview Aeris had 1,032 followers on her page. Aeris is part of the 405th, a group dedicated to Star Wars costuming.
Sandi	Sandi has been a cosplayer for 10 years. At the time of the interview she had 364 followers on her page. Sandi and her father often cosplay together and help each other out with making their costumes.
Molly	Molly has been a cosplayer for four years. At the time of the interview Molly had 3,159 followers on her page. She shares her Facebook page primarily with her sister.