

Personal Identity and Image Management A Dramaturgical Study of Anime Cosplayers in Cirebon

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Abstract. In social life, individuals inevitably have both a public and private side, the same is true for anime cosplayers in Cirebon. Cosplay is understood as a performative practice of portraying characters from anime, manga, and video games to recreate those characters identities within social spaces. The practice of anime cosplay in Cirebon understood not merely as hobby, but as medium for self-expression and development personal identity. This study was conducted using descriptive qualitative research method with inductive approach to anime cosplayers in Cirebon based on dramaturgy theory Erving Goffman, 1959 [1]. Data collected through in-depth interviews with cosplayers in Cirebon, EO of Japanese events, and professional Japanese cosplayer. This study aims to analyze how and why anime cosplayers in Cirebon manage their public image by separating their identities between front stage and backstage dramaturgical perspective, amidst negative social stigma of cosplay. The results of this study show that majority of cosplayers in Cirebon separate their identities between cosplay and their real life. This study contributes theoretically dramaturgical studies, particularly in anime cosplayers context that under-researched and helps public to understand that cosplay should not be automatically viewed as negative stigma but rather as form of creative self-expression in social life.

Keywords: Anime, Cosplay, Dramaturgy, Identity, Interpersonal Communication.

1. Introduction

Japanese pop culture is gaining rapid popularity in various regions of Indonesia, one of which is the city of Cirebon. Popular culture is the shared cultural heritage of a large number of individuals or communities and consists of various deeply rooted cultural practices, including but not limited to language, fashion, and daily customs [2]. Among the various forms of popular culture, anime has a fairly large fan base. The term anime, or アニメ in Japanese katakana, is an abbreviation of the word animation. Anime is defined as a form of animation originating from Japan that features unique visual styles, complex narratives, compelling stories, and distinctive cultural expressions, thereby influencing the interests and behaviors of its fans [3]. Anime also serves as a medium for social communication that fosters community building and interaction among fans across cultures [4].

One way people express their love for anime is through cosplay. Cosplay, which is short for “Costume Play” and is written as コスプレ (kosupurei) in Japanese katakana, is an activity practiced by individuals known as cosplayers, in which they wear costumes to visually portray a specific character [5]. People who participate in cosplay are usually called cosplayers, or are often referred to by the shortened term “coser” [6]. According to Esuto, a professional Japanese cosplayer, cosplay is what is known as the process of “変身願望” (henshin ganbō)—that is, the process by which a person transforms into a personality vastly different from their own, changing both in appearance and in outward and inward character, and expressing that transformation. It is

the desire to transform, to become someone else, rather than remaining oneself in real life. According to him, this is more of a psychological feeling buried within everyone, and the cause is usually more about stress relief and personal growth.

Cosplay is understood as a performative practice in which individuals wear costumes and portray characters from anime, manga, and video games to recreate those characters' identities within a social context [7]. According to Rohimah's research, this article explains the origins of cosplay in 1903, when a married couple named William Fell from Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S., pioneered the practice. It all began with a masquerade party where participants dressed up as characters from the comic book "Chicago Day Book: Mr. Skygack and Miss Pickles" [8].

Unlike its counterpart in Indonesia, research shows that the evolution of cosplay really began in the 2000s during the early years of cosplay's introduction to Indonesia in the 2000s, public interest in the activity was still relatively low. This situation was evident when the University of Indonesia held its first Japanese cultural event, known as the University of Indonesia Japanese Festival (GJUI). At that time, anime cosplay had not yet managed to attract significant attention, so the number of enthusiasts and participants remained limited [9]. Building on this phenomenon, there has been rapid development in the evolution of clothing styles among anime cosplayers in Indonesia over time, so that today anime cosplay in Indonesia can be viewed as an individual's personal identity and a platform for presenting a specific impression to an audience or community.



Fig.1 Documentation of the Kimochi 10th Anniversary Event
November 9, 2025, at Graze City Mall, Cirebon. Source: Instagram @kimochimanagement

Figure 1 shows that in Cirebon itself, the anime cosplay and Japanese culture community has flourished through various activities and platforms, such as the increasing number of Japanese events being held. According to data from the CEO of Kimochi Management, over the course of one month, 4–6 anime events are held in Cirebon, based on a summary of the 2022–2023 period following the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was found that anime cosplayers in Cirebon tend to separate their identities or manage their public image between their life in the spotlight as cosplayers and their everyday life behind the scenes. This study focuses on analyzing how the process of impression management is carried out by a cosplayer between their persona on stage when performing as a cosplayer and their true self known in their private life, thereby addressing the research question: "Why do cosplayers in Cirebon separate their identities between their cosplay life and their real life?" It can be seen here that this research is important because, so far, there has not been much research analyzing how the Dramaturgy Theory process applied to the lives of anime cosplayers in Cirebon.

This study aims to analyze how anime cosplayers in Cirebon City manage their public image through the separation of identities between the front and back stages from a dramaturgical perspective. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the strategies used by cosplayers in constructing their character images when performing in public spaces, as well as their personal identities in daily life amidst the social stigma surrounding cosplay. The theoretical benefit of this research is to enrich communication studies, particularly in the realm of interpersonal communication and dramaturgical studies regarding impression management practices among cosplayers at the local level, specifically in Cirebon City. This study is also expected to broaden

the application of dramaturgical theory in understanding popular cultural phenomena in society. Practically, this study is expected to provide the public with an understanding that cosplay is a form of self-expression and creative self-actualization that should not be automatically viewed negatively. In terms of cultural communication, society can better understand that the practice of cosplay can be more accepted and considered as something normal. The study also contributes to the academic literature on cosplay as a practice of identity management, a topic that remains under-researched in Indonesia, particularly in the city of Cirebon.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Anime Cosplayer

Anyone who makes a living through cosplay certainly needs to understand the characteristics of the character they'll be portraying. For cosplayers, cosplay is understood as a form of self-identification with fictional characters. This is expressed by wearing appropriate character costumes, accessorizing, applying makeup that complements the character's appearance, and imitating the character's scenes and expressions [6].

2.2 Cosplay as a Form of Self-Expression

Anime cosplay in Cirebon is viewed by local cosplayers as a means of self-expression, an escape from the emotional pressures of daily life, and a tool for personal identity development. Some sources also feel that cosplay serves as a means to build self-confidence, especially when someone performs in public spaces or on stage. According to the sources, cosplay is viewed as an activity encompassing various artistic aspects, ranging from acting, visual design, to crafting. The desire to try new things, explore creativity, and fulfill childhood dreams by becoming an anime character.

Self-expression is a way for individuals to convey their thoughts, feelings, and unique identity through various activities. Self-expression reveals who we are and everything we perceive as reality, whether through our thoughts, emotions, behaviors, or beliefs [10]. Identity is the part of ourselves that others recognize. An important way to explore identity is through interaction [11]. Through anime cosplay, individuals can express their identity through a performative visual medium. It is clear that cosplay serves as a platform for self-expression where cosplayers not only showcase their ideal selves but also manage how they wish to be perceived by the audience. This highlights the importance of how cosplayers manage the impression they make on the public. Impression management is the ability to project a desired image, depending on an individual's social skills and level of self-monitoring; where inadequate management efforts can lead to image risk or audience resistance [12]. Today's digital landscape also plays a key role in the success of impression management for anime cosplayers. It's indicates that the rise of the digital age has not only impacted patterns of human social interaction. Rather, nearly every aspect of life has undergone significant changes as a result of advancements in digital technology [13]. People and communication play a vital role in building close relationships, as communication forms the foundation of relationships, social interaction, cultural development, and personal grow [14].

Based on in-depth interviews with informants, Esuto, a professional Japanese cosplayer, explains that cosplay is what is known as the process of “変身願望” (henshin ganbō) that is, the process by which a person transforms into a personality vastly different from their own, changing both in appearance and in outward and inward character, and expressing that transformation. The desire to transform, to become someone else, rather than being oneself in real life. According to him, this is more of a psychological feeling hidden within everyone, and the causes usually involve escaping from stress, an escape from the real world, and personal growth. Study by [15] with titled “Cosplay: Imaginative Self and Performing Identity” found that every cosplayer has different interests, motivations, and experiences, so their level of involvement and commitment to the world of cosplay varies. For beginner cosplayers, getting involved in this activity can feel quite challenging if they lack self-confidence, a strong interest, enthusiasm, guidance, and support from those around them.

2.3 Dramaturgy in Anime Cosplay

Dramaturgy is a term heavily influenced by the concept of theatrical drama or fictional performances on stage. Through the role played by an actor, a specific character is presented to the audience so that they can grasp a picture of that character's life and understand the plot presented in the dramatic performance. Dramaturgy theory was proposed by Erving Goffman in his 1959 work titled **The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life**. Erving Goffman argued that dramaturgy is a depiction of social life analogized to a theatrical performance. Through this concept, individuals are understood to be able to display different characters depending on their position, whether on the front stage, the backstage, or in other social contexts [16].

Table 1. Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory Framework

Dimension	Indicator	Brief Explanation
Front Stage	Setting	Cosplay stage event, Japanese event organizer.
	Personal Front, Appearance	Cosplay supplies (props, wigs, makeup, and costumes).
	Expressive Equipment	Practice in performance, gestures, and character expressions.
Back Stage	The Self, Real Life Character	The real world, apart from cosplay.

Table 1 shows that cosplay practices, which consist of the "front stage"—such as anime events or competitions where cosplayers perform—encompass the cosplayer's personal front and appearance during the costume-making process, as well as expressive elements like character expression training; and the "backstage," which refers to the cosplayer's daily life or real-life experiences outside of anime cosplay practices. Cosplayers also need to manage the impression they make on the audience so that their performance appears attractive [17]. This indicates that impression management can be a crucial aspect in a cosplayer's success in establishing the framing of the character they portray. According to [18] in a film or series, framing is extremely important because it shapes the audience's perception of the story being told. The same applies to anime series and films; framing plays a major role in shaping the audience's perception of anime cosplay characters, that's where anime cosplayers need to adjust their appearance to be similar to the image of the cosplay anime character. Therefore, the above things can be used to analyze cosplayer behavior.

2.4 Previous Research

This study builds on previous research. Several earlier studies have shown that the practice of anime cosplay can demonstrate a strong sense of self-identity, boost an individual's self-confidence, or foster self-expression, as well as foster a sense of belonging to a particular group or audience. This includes research conducted by [19], This study analyzes how a female cosplayer's identity is shaped by emotional experiences, motivations (family, community, interests), social interactions, and performance experiences. Titled "Communication Experiences and Self-Identity of Female Anime Cosplayers," this study concludes that the communication experiences of female cosplayers in the Greater Jakarta area revolve around their identity and happiness, where a deep love for anime characters serves as the driving force to keep growing and never give up.

A second study conducted by [20] titled "How Does a Cosplayer Integrate Personal Identity with the Personality of Their Chosen Character?" indicates that cosplayers participate in their hobby with the aim of interacting, relaxing, and meeting new people who share similar interests, and that they conceal their identities because they do not want their cosplay activities to interfere with their normal lives. This study also reveals that cosplayers use cosplay as a medium for integrating their personal identity, even though there is tension between their personal identity and the community's social pressures regarding how cosplayers present themselves.

The third study was conducted by [16] titled "A Dramaturgical Analysis of Teachers Selling Subsidized Fertilizer from Erving Goffman's Perspective," although the research context differs,

this study employs the same theoretical foundation Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory to examine how individuals perform different roles in their social lives. The results of the study indicate that the subjects present a professional image as teachers in formal public settings, while in private settings they assume another role as sellers of subsidized fertilizer.

Based on previous research, there has been a general focus on analyzing how anime cosplayers behave, assert their self-identity, and communicate within their audience communities. However, few studies have examined the dramaturgical processes that occur between the front and backstage aspects of anime cosplay practice. This research is expected to provide an overview of the relationship between dramaturgy and the theory of identity construction or self-presentation in an interpersonal social context.

3. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method with an inductive approach, examining the social phenomena of anime cosplayers' experiences in Cirebon as they relate to their on-stage and off-stage personal identities, based on dramaturgical theory. Research data was collected using purposive sampling through in-depth interviews with research informants, namely an anime cosplayer in Cirebon who has been immersed in the world of cosplay for 3–5 years and frequently participates in various anime cosplay stage competitions and Japanese event organizations, as well as a professional Japanese cosplayer with 37 years of experience in the world of anime cosplay, to provide insight into the meaning of anime cosplay practices.

Primary data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with key informants and supporting informants (conducted in person and partially online via Instagram, Zoom Meetings, and Google Forms). During the research interviews, data was recorded (with full ethical permission) to ensure the completeness of the research sample. Digital documentation included photos of the interview process with the informants, photos of anime cosplay events attended by the informants, and the collection of supporting data using literature reviews from journals, books, and scientific articles to establish the theoretical framework applied to the research.

In this study, data validity was tested using triangulation techniques, including observation, interviews, and documentation. According to [17] observation is a data collection technique that involves directly observing activities, behaviors, and social interactions occurring in the field. Through this process, researchers are expected to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study, including data that cannot be obtained through other data collection methods. The researcher conducted direct observations by visiting several anime events in Cirebon City during November–January 2025–2026. The next step in the research process was to collect data through interviews. This technique is used to clarify and expand upon the information previously obtained by the researcher during the observation activities. The interviews include key questions such as the reasons individuals engage in cosplay, as well as an analysis of the lives of cosplayers both on stage and behind the scenes. Documentation techniques include photographs of cosplay performances, cosplay events in Cirebon, the preparation process for meeting cosplay needs, and joint photographs between the researcher and the informants.

4. Results and Discussion

After conducting field observations by visiting several anime events in Cirebon from November 2025 to January 2026, the researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with six research informants. Among them were four experienced anime cosplayers in Cirebon named Pey, Riz, Bojem, and Hilal; one professional Japanese cosplayer named Esuto-san; and one Japanese event organizer, Zetsu. This research focuses on three main things related to cosplay, namely duality of identity, social stigma and dramatic performance because the three influence each other and are highly interrelated.

4.1 Front Stage Cosplayer

The concept of the front stage in anime cosplay practice is certainly a crucial aspect of the dramaturgical framework of cosplay performances. This is because it reflects the cosplayer's presence when performing in front of a public audience on stage, which involves understanding and embodying the identity of the character being portrayed, as well as how the cosplayer interacts with the audience. It is through this that the individual is recognized as a skilled cosplayer capable of bringing the character to life. Furthermore, the availability of anime cosplay events in Cirebon also supports the front stage of cosplayers' performances by creating a space for self-expression.



Fig. 2. Cosplayer Pey's front-stage performance. Source: Instagram @peyoyayi

Figure 2 shows that Pey obtained her cosplay costumes by pre-ordering them from China. Pey orders and imports cosplay costumes directly from abroad because of their high quality; she also finds that purchasing from overseas is more practical and doesn't require much preparation time for cosplayers before a performance. In addition to using them herself, Pey also runs a cosplay costume rental business. This way, Pey can earn an income through her hobby. Pey usually orders the cosplay costumes one month before an event or, at the latest, two weeks before the event.



Fig. 3. The process of creating an Orochimaru cosplay costume by Bojem.
Source: Courtesy of the interviewee

Figure 3 shows that some participants enjoy exploring the creation and assembly of costumes and props for cosplay. As seen in Figure 4.2, Bojem focuses on using recycled materials as the base for creating cosplay costumes. Bojem used jute sacks as the base material for the Orochimaru character costume, which took 10 days to make. Bojem explained that it is not easy to make costumes using recycled waste materials; creativity must be adapted to the availability of materials. The interviewee also noted that the cleanliness of the materials requires meticulous attention during the process.



Fig. 4. The process of creating a cosplay costume of the character Oda Nobunaga by Hilal.
 Source: Instagram @hial_caem

Figure 4 shows that Hilal, the interviewee, created a custom costume for the character Oda Nobunaga from the game Samurai Warriors 5. Hilal explained that he used foam as the base material to ensure the costume remained comfortable and lightweight despite its large size. The costume-making process took 15 days, from December 10, 2023, to December 23, 2023. Challenges in designing and creating the costume included meticulous attention to detail in every corner of the costume and matching the base materials to the original appearance of the character's costume. According to Hilal, matching the colors and gradients to the original character's outfit was a particularly intense challenge. However, through meticulous attention to detail, passion, and growing confidence in costume-making, Hilal was able to complete the costume-making project to the best of his ability.

Based on interviews with sources, Riz found that the culture of making one's own accessories tends to have historical roots in the development of the cosplay community in Cirebon, particularly during a time when access to wigs, costumes, and props was still limited. These conditions fostered a spirit of self-reliance and technical skills that some cosplayers still maintain to this day.



Fig. 5. The process of creating Orochimaru's character design by Bojem.
 Source: Bojem's personal collection and Instagram @bojem_lovers

Figure 5 shows that Bojem not only creates costumes but also frequently makes his own accessories and props for his cosplay performances. In creating the cosplay props for the Orochimaru character, Bojem used recycled Dacron as the base material. The process involved sewing and bonding the materials using a hot glue gun, with a finishing touch of modified scale-textured ornaments made from foam. Bojem created these character props in October 2024.



Fig. 6. Cosplay makeup look for the character Madoka Kaname from *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*.
 By Pey. Source: Instagram @peyoyayi

In Figure 6, it can be seen that Pey's makeup style tends to be sweet and cheerful. Pey explains that the cosplay makeup process she undergoes does not always fully resemble the character she is portraying. This is due to the technical difficulty of the makeup, particularly around the eyes, even though she has studied various tutorials on social media platforms like

TikTok. Therefore, she tends to adapt the makeup to her personal preferences—a process she refers to as “improvement makeup”—without losing the essence of the character she is portraying.



Fig. 7. Maomao cosplay makeup look from "The Apothecary Diaries".
by Riz. Source: Instagram @rizuki69

Figure 7 shows that the makeup appearance for the character Maomao from "The Apothecary Diaries", created by interviewee Riz, was designed to be more delicate in the style of a classic Chinese dynasty maiden. Interviewee Riz explained that her cosplay makeup skills developed through self-taught learning. In the early stages, she focused on understanding the basics of makeup, such as knowledge of color shades that suit her personal facial features. Subsequently, the interviewee learned makeup techniques by referring to various tutorials on social media platforms like TikTok, particularly those focused on Chinese makeup styles. This choice of style was tailored to the cultural backdrop of the character being portrayed, as seen in Figure 4.7—a character with a classic Chinese dynasty aesthetic. The interviewee also adapted the makeup style to reflect how the cultural traits of the cosplay character were presented.

4.2 Behind the Scenes of a Cosplayer’s Daily Life

Table 2 Behind-the-Scenes Insights Anime Cosplayers in Cirebon

Name	Address	Front Stage (Cosplayers in the spotlight)	Back Stage (Real Life)	Intensity of public's tendency to know them as cosplayers
Bojem	Ciwaringin	Cosplayers and costume and prop makers who use recycled materials.	Takoyaki vendors at night markets are known for their cheerful and humble personalities. Their everyday attire while selling: a T-shirt and cotton pants.	For the most part, just close neighbors and peers.
Hilal	Gunung Jati	A cosplayer who focuses on costume design and frequently serves as a judge for costume competitions.	A costume maker who, in his everyday life, wears a Barong T-shirt or casual- looking clothes.	For the most part, everyone from family and relatives to neighbors and peers knows him

				as a costume maker.
Pey	Kedawung	A cosplayer known for her sweet and adorable cosplay characters, she comes across as cheerful, humble, and outgoing. Her cosplay makeup tends to be more eccentric, and she uses a pre-order system from China to obtain her costumes and cosplay accessories.	A student and an ambivert, Pey usually wears culottes and baggy pants when she goes out. She enjoys watching adventure series like My Little Pony and loves to draw. Pey doesn't like to show her drawings to others.	It's just a few people—in fact, she even created a separate cosplay account to keep her cosplay life separate from her real life. However, Pey feels more comfortable using her cosplay account to interact with friends who share her hobby.
Riz	Karyamulya	A cosplayer specializing in dance performances. She frequently performs at cosplay competitions that feature many dance routines and serves as a judge for dance cosplay.	A stay-at-home mom, known by those around her as quiet, enjoys writing fanfiction, drawing fan art, and taking photos of nature and her cats. Her outfits are designed to be understated, leaning more toward a Korean style	Only her husband, who shares her hobby, and her closest friend know about it; Riz keeps her cosplay activities a secret from her in-laws.

Table 2 illustrates the front-stage and backstage lives of anime cosplayers in Cirebon. The data show that each informant constructs a different identity when in public cosplay spaces compared to their daily lives.

For instance, Bojem, who presents himself on the front stage as a cosplay costume designer with a creative, recycling-based approach. Meanwhile, in his daily backstage life, he works as a takoyaki vendor at a night market. Bojem's identity as a cosplayer is little known within his social circle. However, through his takoyaki business, he subtly represents his interest in Japanese culture. In this way, Bojem connects the cultural practices he enjoys in his backstage life without explicitly revealing his identity as a cosplayer.

Hilal demonstrates consistency in his roles between the front stage and the backstage. On the front stage, he is known as a costume maker and a cosplay competition judge who focuses on evaluating cosplayers' costumes; backstage, Hilal works as a costume maker with a casual style of dress. This makes Hilal's cosplay identity more widely recognized by his family, neighbors, and circle of friends due to his profession as a costume maker. In short, Hilal does not separate his identities or manage different impressions between the front and backstage in his social life.

Unlike Pey, who maintains a fairly strict separation between her two sides of life. When performing on stage, Pey projects a sweet, cheerful, and extroverted persona with eccentric makeup and costumes ordered through a pre-order system from China. However, behind the scenes, Pey is a student with an ambivert personality who deliberately keeps her cosplay identity separate by creating a dedicated cosplay account. Pey deliberately separates her cosplay identity from her personal life because she feels uncomfortable when her friends find out about her cosplay hobby and she is called "*wibu*" by her friends due to the stigma that cosplayers are considered strange in mainstream society, even though Pey feels that cosplay does not harm anyone because it is a form of creative self-expression as well as a means of entertainment from the drudgery of real life.

Riz presents a stark contrast between her front stage and back stage personas. On front stage, Riz is known for her experience in dance and cosplay performances and actively participates in cosplay competitions. However, in real life behind the scenes, Riz is a housewife who tends to be quiet and even keeps her cosplay activities a secret from her in-laws and the people around her. Riz keeps her cosplay activities a secret from her in-laws because they tend to be religious. Nevertheless, Riz's husband supports her cosplay hobby because they share the same interests - they both love Japanese culture, including anime cosplay.

Of the four informants, only one - Hilal - showed a tendency to integrate his cosplay identity into real life. This was evident in the alignment of his profession as a costume maker with his role in the cosplay world, as well as the high level of public recognition of him as a professional cosplayer. Meanwhile, the other three informants - Bojem, Pey, and Riz - exhibited a more dominant pattern of separating their cosplay lives from their real lives. Bojem limited his cosplay identity to a specific social circle, despite possessing specialized skills as a costume and prop maker using recycled materials. Pey consciously separated the two identities by creating a dedicated cosplay account and ensuring that his cosplay identity did not merge with his real life. Likewise, Riz demonstrates the strictest separation by keeping her cosplay activities secret from her family.

It can be concluded that the backstage lives of anime cosplayers in Cirebon reveal diverse strategies for identity management and impression management, influenced by social background, occupation, family environment, and the level of social acceptance of individual cosplay activities. This identity management is influenced by the social stigma surrounding cosplay. Cosplayers in Cirebon generally tend to position cosplay as a situational identity based on a hobby, which is only displayed in specific spaces and times, such as events, stages, and competitions. Their cosplay identity is not fully carried into daily life but is selectively managed through impression management strategies.

5. Conclusion

Cosplayers construct performative identities through the management of their appearance. This study analyzes the dynamics of the lives of several anime cosplayers in Cirebon City, whose practices reveal a management of impressions that separates their identities between the front stage and the backstage. In the front stage, the informants present themselves as cosplay characters with costumes, gestures, and expressions tailored to the roles they portray. Meanwhile, in the backstage, they return to their personal identities in daily life as students, college students, workers, or housewives.

The research findings indicate that this separation of identities is influenced by social stigma surrounding cosplay. Most informants consciously limit, or even conceal, their cosplay activities from certain social circles to avoid negative labelling such as being perceived as deviant or non-conforming. Some informants chose not to disclose their cosplay activities to their extended family due to the family's strong religious background. Strategies employed by the informants to separate their front-stage and back-stage identities include creating separate social media accounts one dedicated to cosplay and another for personal life as a form of audience segmentation and identity management. This study still has limitations regarding the analysis of the subjective experiences of anime cosplayers in managing their public image between the front and back stages. Therefore, the research can be continued by exploring the long-term psychological impacts of identity separation, incorporating family and social environment perspectives to comprehensively understand the construction of stigma surrounding cosplay practices, and deepening the analysis of social media's role in digital impression management strategies. Thus, studies on cosplayers should not be understood merely as performative practices but also as a complex social phenomenon within the dynamics of popular culture and the realm of interpersonal communication.

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