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Creative Expressions and Cultural Shifts: The Impact of Cosplay in Makassar

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates the expression of cosplay culture and its influence on local cultural identity among cosplayers in Makassar, Indonesia. In the context of the growing globalization of Japanese popular culture, cosplay has evolved into a prominent form of youth cultural engagement that facilitates creativity, self-expression, and community interaction. Grounded in Henry Jenkins' theory of participatory culture, the research explores how cosplayers engage as both cultural consumers and producers—manifested through costume creation, performance, and participation in cosplay events. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through participant observation, documentary studies, and in-depth interviews with cosplayers, event organizers, and attendees. The findings reveal that cosplay serves as a medium of cultural negotiation, where global and local values intersect, leading to hybrid forms of expression. While cosplay fosters artistic innovation and social cohesion, it also presents challenges to traditional norms and local identity. However, initiatives such as the integration of indigenous elements into costume design highlight cosplay's potential to support cultural continuity and intercultural dialogue. This study offers insights into the localization of global cultural practices and underscores the dynamic interplay between global influences and local identities within contemporary youth culture. **Keywords:** Cosplay, Cultural Identity, Japanese, Makassar.

INTRODUCTION

Japanese popular culture has now become a global phenomenon that influences various aspects of people's lives, especially teenagers in various countries. Based on several research that related to this research, the first is research by Sarinastiti and Merdiana (2022), cosplay culture was only known in the 2000s along with the development of the internet and digital images. Cosplay culture has now developed very rapidly throughout the world, including Indonesia. It emphasizes that Cosplay is the art of wearing costumes and playing roles as anime, game, manga or other media characters. Cosplay not only functions as entertainment, but has also become a container or medium for expressing identity and creativity (Li, 2024; Fairuz et al., 2022; Sendana et al., 2025). Cosplay culture is a form of cultural expression that involves elements of art, imagination, and social interaction. For example, in the cosplay community, individuals try to represent certain characters, not only through costumes but also through behavior, gestures, and even voices attached to the characters they play. This process allows cosplayers to express their individual and group identities within the wider community. Several cosplay communities in Indonesia also show forms of cosplay cultural expression in their activities. For example, in Makassar, communities such as Cosplay Makassar Suki (COMASU) are not only a space for creativity but also for building solidarity and collective identification (Rahmawati and Ardiansyah 2020).

Apart from the community, cosplay culture is also often expressed in events or activities that raise the theme of Japanese popular culture. Like several events held in Makassar. Cosplay culture also carries aesthetic values and norms that originate from Japanese culture. In addition, cosplay culture does not have an entirely positive influence on its lovers, cosplay culture lovers also have an impact on their local culture which is starting to be abandoned and forming a new culture in cosplayers.

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Recent and relevant research also shows that the phenomenon of cosplay culture has a significant impact on individuals, groups, and society at large. Research conducted by Rahmawati and Ardiansyah entitled "Japanese Cultural Hegemony in Cosplayer Lifestyle: A Study of the Cosplay Community in Makassar." (2020) revealed that cosplay culture in Makassar has become an important place for teenagers to express themselves while building broader social interactions. This study focuses on the cosplay cultural community in Makassar. Next is Sugiyama's research "Cultural Mixing of Indonesian Cosplayers in an Acculturation Perspective." (2023), this study highlights the phenomenon of hybridization by describing cosplayers in Indonesia combining elements of Japanese and local culture to create new interpretations. This study not only reflects crocodile adaptation but also shows how local communities have the creative power to reconstruct global culture according to their needs. This study is also in line with research conducted by Chandara et al. namely "Analysis of the Development of Cosplay in Generation Z in Indonesia as a Potential for DKV Curriculum Interest." (2024), which examines how cosplay influences creativity and self-expression among Generation Z Indonesia, as well as its potential for integration into the creative education curriculum. The expression of cosplay culture also has a significant social dimension, Prayoga in his writing entitled "The Phenomenon of Cosplay and Popular Culture in Big Cities: A Case Study of the Cosplay Community at Green Pramuka Square, Central Jakarta." (2023) revealed in their study of the cosplay community in Jakarta how cosplay culture has developed into a subculture that builds social networks and data connecting individuals with similar interests. On the other hand, Nasution et al. Analysis of the Development of Cosplay as Japanese Pop Culture in Medan City." (2024) showed that the development of the cosplay community in Medan also creates space for creative collaboration while maintaining local elements in their practices. This study aims to look further at how cosplayers in Makassar express cosplay culture and how the impact of expressing cosplay culture on the local culture of cosplayers and how the activity of expressing cosplay culture can influence their perception of their own cultural identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Identity

Stuart Hall (1990), in his concept of cultural identity, states that identity is not something fixed or essential, but rather a social construct formed through processes of representation, experience, and interaction within a specific cultural context. Cultural identity is dynamic and constantly evolving over time, shaped by history and environmental influences. In his view, identity is not only about "being," but also about "becoming," which means that identity is always in the process of formation and renewal. Through this theory, it can be understood that individuals do not passively inherit their cultural identity, but actively shape and negotiate it in relation to various cultural symbols, narratives, and practices (Asha et al., 2025; Abbas et al., 2024).

The act of wearing costumes and imitating characters from anime, manga, or games is not merely an aesthetic activity, but also a process of representation and identity negotiation. Cosplayers do not only represent fictional characters, but also create new spaces for self-expression, expand the meaning of personal and collective identity, and form communities with cultural values that are hybrid between local and global cultures. Therefore, Hall's theory of cultural identity provides a strong analytical framework to explore how cosplay culture influences how cosplayers perceive, shape, and express their identities.

Globalization

Glocalization is a combination of the words "global" and "local," indicating that the process of cultural globalization always involves reinterpretation, adaptation, and integration with local values, as stated by Robertson (1995). In this context, globalization is not a one-way process from the center to the periphery, but rather a dynamic interaction between global and local cultures. Robertson emphasizes that global cultural phenomena such as music, food, or lifestyle will always be reinterpreted by local societies, resulting in unique and diverse cultural forms.

Cosplay, as a product of Japanese popular culture, is not wholly adopted in its entirety, but rather through an adaptation process aligned with local social values, norms, and creativity (Hu, 2024; Brush, 2024). For example, some cosplayers incorporate local elements into their costume designs or choose characters that resonate with their own life experiences. Moreover, cosplay community activities are also modified to suit local socio-cultural conditions, in terms of event formats, themes, and participant interactions. This demonstrates that global cultures

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like cosplay are not inherently dominant, but undergo a glocalization process that reflects the creativity and cultural agency of local communities.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. The qualitative approach is used to explore how cosplay enthusiasts express their passion, including perspectives from cosplayers, visitors, and event organizers. The descriptive method allows the researcher to understand the meanings behind individuals' actions, practices, and perceptions within cosplay culture (Moleong, 2017). The research is conducted in Makassar, a city where cosplay culture is rapidly growing. The research subjects include cosplayers, cosplay communities, organizers of Japanese popular culture events, and community members or visitors attending cosplay-related events.

Data is collected using several techniques, 1) Participant observation, conducted by engaging in and attending cosplay events such as festivals or competitions, with the aim of directly observing cosplay cultural practices during these events.

In addition to observation, the researcher also uses documentary study techniques. This involves analyzing community archives, event documentation, and social media posts to track the development of cosplay culture in Makassar (Afifuddin & Saebani, 2012). 2) The next technique is in-depth interviews, carried out to explore the experiences and views of participants regarding the development of cosplay culture in Makassar. This method is suitable for obtaining detailed data (Sugiyono, 2018).

The data collected through these techniques is then analyzed by first identifying data according to categories based on emerging patterns. The data is categorized into aspects such as the expressions of cosplayers, visitors, and event organizers. The results of this analysis are then interpreted using Henry Jenkins' theory of participatory culture. Jenkins' theory explains that individuals or groups are not only consumers of culture but also actively participate as producers and distributors of culture. This theory emerged in the context of modern media culture, technology, and digital platforms that enable greater audience involvement (Jenkins, 2013).

Jenkins (1992) outlines three main elements of his theory: 1) In participatory culture, consumers also act as producers who create new works that they themselves consume (Jenkins, 1992). 2) Participatory culture develops through communities or groups where individuals share, collaborate, and learn—creating spaces for cultural innovation (Jenkins, 2006).

3) Jenkins also emphasizes the use of digital media such as social media technologies, forums, and video platforms that allow for widespread content distribution. Individuals or groups can use these platforms to showcase their work and gain recognition from global communities (Jenkins, 2013). The element of creative agency also highlights that participants have the freedom to interpret and create new meanings from the culture they consume.

This study also adheres to ethical research principles. Prior to conducting observations and interviews, all research participants are given a clear explanation and understanding of the study and asked to voluntarily give their informed consent without any coercion. If participants request their privacy to be protected, their privacy and anonymity are strictly maintained, and pseudonyms are used in the research documentation.

Through this method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cosplay culture is expressed by its enthusiasts.

RESULTS

Expressions of Cosplay Culture

In recent times, cosplay culture has been widely and intensively practiced. The increasing number of fans who engage in cosplay and share related content on their social media platforms has contributed to the emergence of many new fans. As a result, the ways in which cosplay culture is expressed have become increasingly diverse.

1. Creating and Renting Costumes

Fans of cosplay culture who frequently participate as cosplayers often act as both producers and consumers.

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Initially, these fans noticed the limited access to costumes and began to see this as an opportunity. Some of them started making costumes by sewing them themselves or by purchasing directly from Japan through friends or family members living there. In addition to creating their own costumes, they also rent them out.

Some cosplayers rent out their own costumes to fellow fans, while others consign their costumes to cosplay costume rental services to be leased to other enthusiasts. In Makassar, there are many cosplay costume rental businesses that promote their services via Instagram accounts such as @mkscost, @cosplay_rent, @domo_cosrent, @usagi_cosrent, among others. According to Noa, during an interview, there are around 40 costume rental services available for cosplay fans in Makassar, one of which is shown in the data.

Data 1. Cosplay costume rental services

Source. Instagram

"We cosplayers love new costumes. In the past, when we saw a new costume, we were immediately interested and made the costume ourselves or went to a tailor, but now access to get costumes is very easy, either through online shopping applications or to costume rental services. We also usually rent out the costumes we have to costume rental services. The place is on Instagram social media, around 40 accounts for cosplay costume rental services," Noa (25).

Based on the data above, it shows that fans of cosplay culture do not merely consume cosplay culture, but also produce it through their own creative interpretations. One example is creating or producing costumes that match their favorite characters. This demonstrates the role of cosplay fans as producers of culture. Activities such as making, buying, and renting costumes are tangible manifestations of the creative process known as prosumption. They generate new meanings through the creation and modification of their costumes, thereby producing new and engaging interpretations.

This aligns with Henry Jenkins' view that grassroots experimentation can lead to new creations and stronger connections with consumers, who are increasingly drawn into mainstream practices. At that point, we can observe new ideas emerging and expanding into commercial media (Jenkins, 2006:132). Jenkins also states that participatory culture should be understood as a revitalization of old cultural processes in response to popular culture (Jenkins, 2006:21). He further adds that the productivity of participatory culture becomes public, and this cannot be ignored by the media industry, nor can it fully control or restrict what is produced and shared (Jenkins, 2006:134).

When linked to cosplay culture, those who create costumes with creativity gain recognition from the community.

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Thus, they demonstrate their abilities and expand their influence within participatory culture. As a result, the act of prosumption in participatory culture not only becomes a means of expression but also strengthens the sense of togetherness among cosplay fans and can even extend into commercial media.

2. Participation in Cosplay Culture Events

Fans of cosplay culture have many ways to express their love for cosplay during cosplay events. In Makassar, cosplay activities are held almost every week in malls or other crowded places. One of the main activities and forms of cultural expression at these cosplay events is the Coswalk competition. The Coswalk competition involves participants walking and posing on stage according to the characters they are dressed as, and they are judged by a panel.

Judges evaluate several criteria before determining the winners, such as make-up, costume, pose/style, and the level of confidence the cosplayers show on stage. Before participating in the competition, cosplayers usually research character references, styles, and make-up through watching anime or playing games. After deciding on a character to portray, they practice the character's style or poses before the competition.

Some cosplayers are very enthusiastic about joining the competition for the experience and personal growth, treating it purely as a hobby. However, there are also those who compete with the goal of winning and even consider it a profession or a way to earn money. Even if a cosplayer does not win, the process provides an opportunity to gain recognition or respect from fellow cosplay culture enthusiasts.

This competition is not only a platform to showcase talent but also serves as a space for collaboration, helping to strengthen the solidarity and sense of community among cosplay fans. This sentiment was expressed by Noel (24), one of the judges in the Coswalk competition:

> "Coswalk competition is a cosplay competition where cosplayers go up on stage to demonstrate the typical style of the character they use and compete with several other participants, before they join the competition, they first do research on the character that will be used during the competition. If the purpose of joining the competition is also several, such as just wanting to get lessons and experience, there are also those who follow suit, there are even cosplayers who make this a job to get money and recognition"

Data 2. Participants in the coswalk competition at Trans Studio Mall

Source. Author's documentation

Noa added that:

> "In the past, cosplayers used more characters from popular Japanese anime or manga on TV, such as Naruto, One Piece, Bleach. Now, there are more from games, western films, Vtubers,

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even original characters, namely characters created by the cosplayers themselves," said Noa (25).

This shows that there is a noticeable difference between cosplayers who participated in Coswalk competitions during the early years of cosplay culture and those in the current era. In the early development of cosplay culture, most Coswalk participants often portrayed characters from anime. However, nowadays, participants rarely use anime characters and instead more frequently portray characters from video games and V-Tubers, such as Uwowo and Kujou Sara from Genshin Impact, Sub-Zero and Scorpion from Mortal Kombat, and Ike Eveland from the V-Tuber group Nijisanji.

Aside from the Coswalk competition, another form of cosplay cultural expression is the presence of cosplayers who attend events wearing character costumes. They simply enjoy the event, walk around, shop at booths, and chat with fellow cosplayers. Occasionally, visitors ask to take pictures with them. These cosplayers wear their costumes to feel a sense of belonging with other fans and to blend in with the event environment (see data 3).

Those who express cosplay culture in this way wear various types of costumes, such as anime or manga costumes, game character costumes, gothic or dark-themed costumes, or original costumes, which might include just a wig or a character mask.

These individuals choose not to compete but instead express their love for cosplay culture in different ways, such as by enjoying the atmosphere or showing appreciation for other cosplayers.

Data 3. Cosplayers who just enjoy the event without participating in the competition

Source. Author's Documentation

Another form of cosplay cultural expression is by attending events without wearing a costume. These individuals simply come to enjoy the cosplay culture presented at the event, as shown in data 4. Those who express cosplay culture in this way attend to watch the Coswalk competition, take photos, and enjoy the event's atmosphere. In addition, they observe the cosplay characters portrayed at the event as a way to discover new anime or video games to watch or play. Seeing more anime or video game characters brings them a sense of joy and excitement.

As expressed by Ojan (20)...

“No, sis, just come and see the cosplay, I've liked seeing people cosplaying for a long time, sis.”

This illustrates the flexibility of participatory culture, where individuals may choose not to take on active roles but still participate by appreciating the cosplayers present at the event. Moreover, it shows that participation does not always require direct contribution—their presence alone is important in creating an inclusive cultural environment where every role is valued, whether as a performer or simply as an admirer.

This highlights that participation doesn't necessarily have to take the form of direct involvement, but can also be

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expressed through presence as a form of support and appreciation for the cosplayers. Participatory culture offers individuals the freedom to choose how they want to express themselves according to their own style.

Data 4. Visitors who come to enjoy the event without being directly involved

Source. Author's Documentation

Based on this data, cosplay events have become an important medium for cosplayers to express their cultural identity. Activities such as competitions and interactions at these events serve as collaborative spaces that support creativity and strengthen social bonds among cosplay enthusiasts—whether they are direct performers, visitors, or simply enjoy the atmosphere. Each plays an important role in creating a dynamic, inclusive, and collaborative culture, as stated by Jenkins in his book, where participatory culture is understood as the normal way media operates. Studying participatory culture helps us understand innovations occurring within the media industry. Collaboration enables media audiences to shape the content they engage with, fostering a deeper sense of participation and ownership (Jenkins, 2006:255).

In the context of cosplay, this reflects how cosplayers not only adopt Japanese culture, but also create unique versions of their characters through costume modifications and performances. Moreover, participatory culture enables individuals to learn collectively, share ideas, and support fellow cosplay enthusiasts in producing creative works. These expressions of cosplay culture demonstrate that cosplay events are not just places to showcase creative work, but also to build solidarity and mutual appreciation among fans.

3. Social Media as a Medium

The spread of information in today's era is increasingly rapid with the presence of social media. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become essential and central tools for cosplay fans to express themselves and expand their participation to a broader or even global level. As shown in Data 5, they express cosplay culture by wearing the costumes of their favorite characters, posing in character-specific styles, and then uploading the photos to their social media accounts.

They often use Instagram with pseudonymous usernames, or what they call "alter names"—alternative accounts that represent a different persona of the cosplayers, separate from their real-life identities.

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Data 5. Cosplayers express cosplay culture through social media
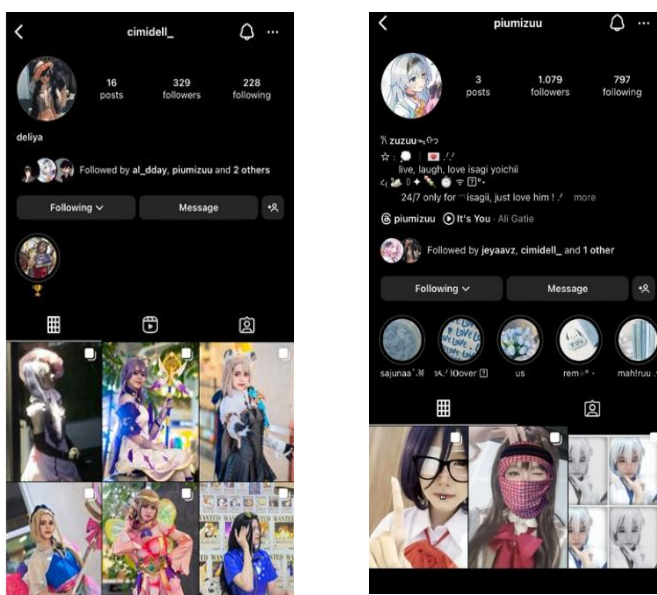
Source: Instagram

In addition to uploading their photos to social media, they also form photography groups or communities for cosplayers. Cosplay photography plays an important role in supporting the distribution of cosplay culture. One such community is Shutter Heroes, which focuses on cosplay photography. This community serves as a platform for Kameko (a Japanese term referring to individuals who have a hobby, activity, or profession in cosplay photography) in Makassar, as well as a place to learn and share knowledge related to photography.

The community expresses its enthusiasm for cosplay culture through cosplay photography. They offer their services to cosplayers to capture moments of them wearing their favorite costumes. Additionally, they often set up photo booths at cosplay events to attract cosplayers who want to take pictures in their favorite costumes.

Data 6. Instagram cosplay photography community

Source. Instagram

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Cosplayers not only share their creations, but also build broader connections. Through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, they are able to interact with a global audience, gain recognition, and strengthen their enthusiasm for cosplay culture. Henry Jenkins states that many content creators thrive by highlighting audience practices. A range of communication tools has emerged to facilitate various informal and instant methods. Platforms offer new capacities for individuals to distribute their media content. These platforms have flourished as tools for people to share content and communicate with each other. In short, digital media provides a space for individuals to widely distribute their content, allowing participatory culture to grow beyond geographical boundaries (Jenkins, 2013:2–3).

In addition, social media creates access for cosplay enthusiasts to interact with a larger community, both locally and internationally. They believe that each post represents more than just themselves—they feel that the personality of their favorite character lives within them. It is their way of validating their creativity.

The role of photographers is also crucial in the realm of social media. In the book Spreadable Media, written by Jenkins and others, it is explained that companies are working together to respond to emerging media cultures by developing more complex forms of co-creation. These practices reflect collaboration to achieve what could not be done individually (Jenkins et al., 2013:182). The collaboration between cosplayers and photographers embodies participatory culture in the way they complement each other. Participatory culture involves various actors with different contributions, who support one another to create more meaningful works.

Thus, social media does not only function as a communication tool for cosplay fans; it also serves as a medium to strengthen solidarity and expand the reach of cosplay culture. This phenomenon demonstrates that participatory culture is not only about creation—it is also about how a work is received and brought to life again by a global audience.

From the various forms of cosplay expression described above, cosplayers are not only motivated to create, but also to interact with fellow cosplay enthusiasts in many ways. This shows that cosplay culture is an inclusive medium that gives all fans the opportunity to participate, either as performers or as observers. Cosplay fans participate in flexible ways that reinforce the cosplay community as a medium for creativity, learning, and collective appreciation. This aligns with Jenkins' concept of participatory culture, which enables all individuals to be involved, creates a collaborative space, fosters deep engagement, encourages innovation and creativity, and builds an inclusive environment.

The Impact of Cosplay Cultural Expression on Cosplayers' Local Culture

Cosplayers continue to hone their skills in expressing cosplay culture by portraying their favorite characters. As a form of participatory culture, cosplay allows individuals to express themselves freely. Therefore, cosplay—whether consciously or unconsciously—has an influence on cosplayers' behavior toward their local culture. This influence has the potential to shape how they understand and adopt local cultural values. This section discusses the impact of cosplay culture on cosplayers' local cultures, addressing changes in cultural identity, social interaction, and society's acceptance of the cosplay phenomenon in their environment.

1. The Shift in Local Cultural Identity in Cosplay Cultural Expression

The first and most directly observable impact is the shift in cultural identity. Cosplayers are showing a decreasing interest in their own local cultures—be it in terms of traditional clothing, language, or local arts. As cosplayers, they tend to take more pride in and glorify Japanese culture rather than their own local heritage. Cosplay culture offers appeal and encourages cosplayers to express the characters they admire. The deeper they immerse themselves in cosplay culture, the more significant the shift in their local cultural identity becomes.

The use of Japanese terms in daily life is a concrete form of this identity shift. Common expressions used in both face-to-face and online interactions include "kawaii," "sugoi," "senpai," "tadaima," "itadakimasu," "ikuzo," and many more phrases adopted from anime and Japanese films. This trend affects the decreasing use of regional languages, especially among teenagers who should ideally be preserving their mother tongues. This phenomenon can replace and even cause people to abandon their native languages in favor of Japanese vocabulary.

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Additionally, cosplayers tend to develop skills derived more from Japanese culture than from their own local cultural practices. For instance, they are more interested in anime costume design, makeup, and illustration-related skills such as manga and gaming, while showing less interest in traditional local skills like making traditional clothing, regional dances, painting, or folk songs, which are becoming foreign to them.

This cultural identity shift among cosplayers reflects the dominance of foreign culture—specifically Japanese culture—over local traditions. This aligns with Herbert Schiller's theory of cultural imperialism (1976), which argues that the cultural dominance of a particular country or global power spreads widely and erodes local cultures through media and modern cultural products, including popular culture. Schiller also noted that in the global era, media plays a significant role in spreading ideologies and lifestyles of dominant nations to developing countries. This process happens subtly and without direct force, but significantly influences the cultural awareness and preferences of the public (Schiller, 1976: 9–10). Schiller further adds that cultural dominance occurs when societies intensely absorb foreign cultural values and symbols to the point where local culture loses its appeal and authority (Schiller, 1976: 12). This shift is inseparable from how media and the internet work as the main channels for spreading culture, including pop culture. Media is not merely a tool for entertainment but also for disseminating dominant ideologies (Tomlinson, 1991).

This cultural shift shows that cosplay culture has become more dominant in shaping identity than local cultural heritage. Ideally, cosplay enthusiasts should not only consume foreign culture but also take responsibility for preserving their own local traditions.

2. Social Norms

A significant challenge faced by cosplay enthusiasts is the contrast between cosplay fashion and the standards of decency and values held by society. Cosplay practices adopted from anime, manga, and games often portray more revealing and tight-fitting outfits compared to traditional Makassar dress norms. Some cosplay costumes feature mini skirts, tight fits, or fantasy elements that are not considered typical by the local community, leading to public debate—especially when such costumes are worn in public spaces accessible to people of all ages.

Similar to the cultural identity shift, Schiller's cultural imperialism theory also views this as a form of foreign cultural penetration that enters through media and the entertainment industry. According to Schiller (1976), the cultural dominance of developed countries does not occur through military force, but rather through the spread of symbols, values, and lifestyles via mass media. This has led to cosplay being regarded as a symbol of global aesthetics practiced in various countries.

Moreover, the local public often perceives cosplay as something foreign and irrelevant to their culture. There are views that consider cosplay culture excessive and therefore foster negative perceptions in society. Cosplayers face challenges in balancing their freedom of expression with prevailing social norms. This reflects that foreign culture is not always widely accepted, especially in regions where strong local cultural values persist.

3. Interaction with Local Culture

The development of cosplay culture in society has been rapid and has become a part of popular culture with significant appeal. However, as it evolves, cosplay enthusiasts more often interact with global culture while sidelining interaction with local culture lovers. They tend to form separate social circles from local cultural activists, which creates a more exclusive social environment.

Cosplay enthusiasts are more inclined to participate in East Asian cultural activities (such as those from Japan, Korea, and China) like pop culture festivals and culinary events. In contrast, their participation in local cultural events, such as traditional arts and theater festivals, is quite rare. This results in a lack of cultural exchange between cosplay culture and local culture, causing both to develop separately. As a result, cosplay lovers and local cultural practitioners grow apart—cosplay continues to evolve among its enthusiasts, while local culture is preserved by its own community. Ideally, cosplay culture should remain open to all cultures, including local ones, to foster new innovations.

Such issues have drawn the attention of both cosplay and local culture enthusiasts, along with the involvement of

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the government. As a result, they have begun to collaborate, hold discussions, and take joint actions. These efforts have led to unique collaborations—for example, some cosplayers in Makassar have designed costumes that do not only showcase Japanese elements but also incorporate local cultural aspects. Traditional fabric motifs have started to be used in cosplay costume designs. Additionally, characters inspired by local culture are being created while maintaining their original cultural identity.

Moreover, local cultural festivals have begun to include cosplay activities. The presence of cosplayers at these local events enables direct interaction between the two cultures, and introduces more diverse and creative forms of cultural expression. Support from local governments and institutions has also started to become visible in several events. Some cosplay-related activities have received recognition from cultural agencies. Educational institutions are also playing a role by supporting student creativity through cosplay practices in schools and universities. This shows that cosplay is increasingly seen as a form of creative expression.

Cosplay culture does not only pose challenges in terms of identity and norms, but also opens new opportunities for cultural collaboration. Although initially it leaned towards exclusivity, at certain stages, initiatives have emerged to foster interaction between cosplay and local culture. This idea is further elaborated by Homi K. Bhabha, who states that when two cultures meet, they do not merely clash or dominate one another, but create a "third space"—a space of cultural interaction in which new identities, meanings, and expressions are born from the blending of cultures (Bhabha, 38:1994).

The explanation above reveals that cosplay culture as a whole reflects a complex dynamic between adaptation and social challenges. On the other hand, it also opens space for societal creativity while simultaneously triggering shifts in cultural identity. Cosplay culture should not simply be understood as cultural adoption from outside, but rather seen as a creative space where local and global cultural values engage in dialogue. In this context, cultural hybridity becomes a transformative force that allows the emergence of new cultural expressions that are inclusive, innovative, and still rooted in the local cultural context.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, there are many ways to express cosplay culture. For instance, some people participate in cosplay walk competitions (coswalk) to gain experience, while others pursue cosplay as a profession to earn money. Besides competing, some simply enjoy cosplay events for personal pleasure, as Jenkins states—not all fans of a culture become main actors; some also provide support. Cosplay enthusiasts do not merely adopt Japanese culture, but also actively create new interpretations through costume modifications, social media use, and participation in communities.

The development of cosplay culture also impacts local culture. On one hand, cosplay serves as a space for innovation within local culture and has received support from the government. On the other hand, it has also contributed to a shift in cultural identity—for example, some cosplayers prefer using Japanese terms over their mother tongue, glorify Japanese culture more than their own local culture, and forget their cultural identity, such as by dressing in ways that do not align with local values and norms of modesty and politeness. This also indicates that participatory culture within the cosplay community is not yet fully accepted in the cultural context of Makassar. It reflects that popular culture is not always easily absorbed into a social environment that upholds strong values and norms.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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