

The Social Phenomenon Surrounding Black Cosplay

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This study aims to identify if there is racial battle fatigue associated with being a Black cosplayer that stems from negative experiences due to racial discrimination. Black cosplayers are experiencing backlash for their chosen characters (which are often fictional) not being Black. There is an underrepresentation of the Black community in all forms of media. This lack of representation does not allow many options for those that participate in the subculture of cosplay. As cosplay is a marginalized group within society, Black cosplayers are a marginalized group within a marginalized group. An online survey for those involved in cosplay and voluntary participant interviews have been analyzed along with data collected from various social media platforms. All participants in this study are 18 years of age and older and are now or have previously been members of the cosplay community. Results of the online survey conducted show that many participants in cosplay have positive experiences associated with the subculture. This information was consistent in interviews although members of the Black and Female community have experienced more negative backlash from the community. People of color are experiencing higher negative responses as a result of participating in cosplay, supporting the thesis that cosplay is a reflection of systemic racism within society. While some Black cosplayers have noted that they believe they have the same experiences as their White counterparts, others note that members of the Black community have become accustomed to this type of behavior.