

Exploring the Influence of Cosplay on Men's Fashion: A Design-based Marketing Perspective

Dr. Rodania Mohamed Rashad

Lecturer at Readymade garments dep. Faculty of applied arts- Damietta Univ.
Rodaniamhmd@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research aims to explore the influence of cosplay on men's fashion from a design-based marketing perspective. The study seeks to analyze how cosplay, as a vibrant and expressive subculture, shapes the design elements, aesthetics, and consumer preferences in men's fashion. By examining the interplay between cosplay and fashion design, this research provides valuable insights into the potential opportunities and challenges for brands and marketers in leveraging the influence of cosplay to engage with the male consumer market. **Problem statement:** The research addresses the following questions: How does cosplay impact the design elements and aesthetics of men's fashion? What are the consumer perceptions and preferences regarding cosplay-inspired designs in men's fashion? What are the potential marketing strategies that brands can employ to effectively engage with the cosplay-influenced male fashion market through innovative design concepts and targeted campaigns? This would harness the Cosplay culture to craft a distinctive and immersive marketing strategy that elevates the men's fashion shopping experience, engages customers, and cultivates a community of dedicated followers. **Results:** impactful outcomes of incorporating Cosplay into men's fashion marketing through social media platforms. Highlighting its potential to elevate engagement, broaden reach, and positively influence brand perception. Overall, the results emphasize the value of leveraging Cosplay for enhancing men's fashion marketing strategies on social media.

Keywords:

Cosplay, Men's Fashion Design, Marketing.

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Introduction:

Cosplay, a popular subculture rooted in dressing up as fictional characters, has begun to influence the world of men's fashion. This integration of cosplay elements into fashion designs has created a unique fusion of fantasy and contemporary menswear. As a result, understanding the impact of cosplay on men's fashion from a marketing perspective is essential for brands and designers.

This research aims to explore the influence of cosplay on men's fashion and its marketing implications. By examining the interplay between cosplay and fashion design, the study aims to uncover how cosplay shapes design elements, aesthetics, and consumer preferences in this domain.

The research will delve into the integration of cosplay-inspired elements and styles in men's fashion collections. It will examine how these designs resonate with the target audience and influence their perceptions and purchasing behavior. Furthermore, the study seeks to understand consumer perceptions and preferences towards cosplay-inspired designs in men's fashion. Factors such as appeal, authenticity, and emotional connection will be explored to guide brands and

marketers in effectively engaging with the cosplay-influenced male fashion market.

This research will contribute to the fields of fashion, marketing, and subcultural studies by filling a research gap concerning the impact of cosplay on men's fashion and its marketing implications. As cosplay gains recognition and influence, its impact on men's fashion cannot be overlooked. This research aims to provide valuable insights for fashion marketers, designers, and industry professionals seeking to leverage the influence of cosplay to engage with the cosplay-influenced male fashion market.

In summary, this research examines the influence of cosplay on men's fashion from a marketing perspective. It explores how cosplay shapes design elements, aesthetics, and consumer preferences in men's fashion, while also analyzing consumer perceptions and preferences towards cosplay-inspired designs. By filling a research gap and providing insights, this study aims to guide brands and designers in effectively engaging with the cosplay-influenced male fashion market.

Research Problem:

The research problem in this study revolves around understanding the influence of cosplay on men's fashion from a design-based marketing perspective.

It involves exploring the specific ways in which cosplay, as a subculture and form of self-expression, shapes the design elements, aesthetics, and consumer preferences in men's fashion. The research aims to address the following questions:

- 1- How does cosplay impact the design elements and aesthetics of men's fashion?
- 2- What are the consumer perceptions and preferences regarding cosplay-inspired designs in men's fashion?
- 3- What are the potential marketing strategies that brands can employ to effectively engage with the cosplay-influenced male fashion market through innovative design concepts and targeted campaigns?

By addressing these research questions, the study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on the relationship between cosplay and men's fashion, providing insights for fashion marketers and designers seeking to tap into the cosplay-influenced male consumer market.

Objectives:

The objective is to harness the Cosplay culture to craft a distinctive and immersive marketing strategy that elevates the men's fashion shopping experience, engages customers, and cultivates a community of dedicated followers. As the following:

- 1- The study aims to explore how cosplay influences the design elements and aesthetics of men's fashion.
- 2- The research seeks to understand consumer perceptions and preferences towards cosplay-inspired designs in men's fashion.
- 3- The study aims to identify effective marketing strategies for brands to engage with the cosplay-influenced male fashion market.

Significance:

- 1- The study contributes to the academic understanding of how cosplay influences men's fashion from a design-based marketing view.
- 2- It provides valuable insights for fashion marketers and designers to develop strategies based on consumer preferences towards cosplay-inspired designs in men's fashion.
- 3- The research promotes innovation, creativity, and cultural understanding by exploring the integration of cosplay elements into men's fashion and its impact on broader fashion trends.

Research Methodology:

The study used the analytical Descriptive methodology. The study also carried out a consumer Research, gathering insights into consumer perceptions and preferences regarding cosplay-inspired designs in men's fashion through

surveys, interviews, or focus groups, considering factors such as appeal, authenticity, and purchasing behavior. In Addition a marketing strategy has been developed>

Delimitations:

- 1- Creating Men's cosplay designs inspired of video games analyzation for Spring/Summer 2024/2025.
- 2- Suggest a Marketing Strategy based on the idea of cosplay for men under the age (25:35 years),

Theoretical Framework

Cosplay Fashion: (Ducrot, O -2018) (Bainbridge, J.-2014) (Lo, K.-2018) (Hildebrandt, K. A.-2015). refers to a style of clothing and accessories that are inspired by characters from various forms of media, such as anime, manga, video games, and movies. It involves creating and wearing costumes that mimic the appearance and style of fictional characters. Cosplay, derived from the combination of "costume" and "play," has evolved into a popular subculture and a form of self-expression. The concept of cosplay fashion emerged in Japan in the 1980s and has since gained international recognition and popularity. It has become an integral part of conventions, events, and fan gatherings, where individuals showcase their creativity and passion for specific characters or franchises through elaborate and detailed costumes. Cosplay fashion not only involves the physical aspect of creating and wearing costumes but also encompasses the embodiment and portrayal of characters through gestures, mannerisms, and interactions with fellow cosplayers. It allows individuals to immerse themselves in the world of their favorite characters and express their admiration and appreciation for the source material. (p. 351:368), (P. 492-506), (p. 244-251), (P 227-243). As shown in pic. ⁽¹⁾

Cosplay art Kinds: (Matsui, N. -2015) (McCosker, A., Wilken -201) (Davis, L. -2017) Cosplay refers to different types or categories that showcase a diverse world of character transformation, these types are: (P. 57-70), (P.629,646)

- 1- **Anime Cosplay:** This involves cosplaying characters from Japanese anime, which are animated television series or films. Anime cosplay often features colorful costumes, distinctive hairstyles, and exaggerated expressions. As shown in pic. (2)
- 2- **Manga Cosplay:** Manga cosplay focuses on characters from Japanese manga, which are Japanese comic books or graphic novels. Manga cosplay involves bringing manga characters to life through costumes, makeup, and props. As shown in pic. (3)



Pic. (1) different looks for cosplay art (<https://www.facebook.com>)



Pic. (2) Anime Cosplay examples



(a) Demon slayer



(b) Shizuku-Tan manga character

Pic.(3) examples for manga cosplay characters

3- **Video Game Cosplay:** Video game cosplay revolves around characters from popular video game franchises. Cosplayers recreate the looks

of video game characters, including their outfits, weapons, and accessories. As shown in pic. (4)



Pic. (4) video game cosplay examples (<https://www.belloflostsouls.net>)

4- **Movie/TV Series Cosplay:** This type of cosplay involves cosplaying characters from movies or TV series. It can include characters

from superhero films, fantasy series, science fiction movies, or historical dramas. As shown in pic. (5), (6).



Pic. (5) Pirates of Caribbean



Pic. (6) Mad hatter's character in Alice wonderland movie

5- **Crossplay:** refers to cosplaying a character of a different gender. It involves portraying a character whose gender differs from the

cosplayer's own, adding an element of challenge and creativity to the cosplay. As shown in Pic. (7).



Pic. (7) a crossplay character (<https://omgmalescos.tumblr.com>)

6- **Historical Cosplay:** Historical cosplay focuses on recreating costumes and characters from various historical periods. This type of

cosplay often requires extensive research and attention to historical details. As shown in Pic. (8)



Pic. (8) cosplay fashion of Troy historical movie (<https://www.pinterest.com>)

7- **Steampunk Cosplay:** it combines elements of Victorian fashion, steam-powered technology, and science fiction. It involves creating unique

costumes that blend historical aesthetics with futuristic elements. As shown in Pic. (9).



Pic. (9) examples of steampunk cosplay (<https://www.pinterest.com>)

Marketing Types: (Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F., 2019) Marketing can be categorized into various types based on different criteria. Here are some common types of marketing, along with brief explanations and references:

- **Digital Marketing:** This type involves promoting products or services through digital channels such as websites, social media, email, search engines, and online advertising.
- **Content Marketing:** (Pulizzi, J., & Barrett, N., 2017) focuses on creating and sharing valuable content to attract and engage a target audience, with the goal of building brand awareness and customer loyalty.
- **Social Media Marketing:** (Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R., 2017) This type involves using social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn to connect with and engage an audience, build brand identity, and drive traffic to a website.:
- **Influencer Marketing:** (Gupta, S., & Pirsch, J., 2020) leverages individuals with a strong online presence and following (influencers) to promote products or services to their audience.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** (Enge, E., Spencer, S., & Stricchiola, J., 2016) SEO involves optimizing a website's content and structure to improve its visibility in search engine results, leading to increased organic (non-paid) traffic.
- **Email Marketing:** (Chaffey, D., & Smith, P. R., 2017) involves sending targeted emails to a list of subscribers or customers to promote products, share news, and build relationships.
- **Event Marketing:** (Allen, J., O'Toole, W., Harris, R., & McDonnell, I., 2017) involves organizing or participating in events, conferences, trade shows, or exhibitions to promote products or services and engage with potential customers face-to-face.

- **Guerrilla Marketing:** (Levinson, J. C., & Gibson, S. - 2016) employs unconventional and low-cost tactics to create a buzz around a product or service, often relying on creativity and surprise.
- **Direct Marketing:** (Hughes, A. M., & Ginnett, R. C. - 2019) involves reaching out to potential customers directly through methods such as direct mail, telemarketing, or SMS marketing.
- **Product Marketing:** (Richards, L.- 2020) focuses on promoting and positioning a specific product, including market research, pricing, and creating compelling product narratives.

Practically Work: The research's practical implementation is bifurcated into two distinct branches, each offering a unique perspective on the integration of Cosplay within men's fashion marketing:

- **The first branch:** delves into the realm of creativity by developing four captivating Cosplay Designs inspired by popular video games. These designs, meticulously crafted to mirror the aesthetics of beloved game characters, are ingeniously woven into the fabric of the marketing approach. The designs are strategically aligned with the brand's identity, resonating with both Cosplay aficionados and fashion enthusiasts. By showcasing these designs in tandem with the virtual Cosplay showcase strategy, a seamless integration between virtual expression and tangible fashion products is achieved, forming a captivating synergy that elevates customer engagement and brand resonance.
- **The second branch:** entails a comprehensive Full Virtual Cosplay Showcase Marketing Strategy, where the physical confines of the shop are transcended, and the fashion narrative extends to the virtual realm. This strategy leverages dedicated sections on the brand's website and social media platforms to encourage customers to share their own Cosplay-inspired fashion looks, fostering a vibrant online community of fashion enthusiasts.

Firstly: Cosplay designs implemented: cosplay men's fashion involves several key steps. Firstly, thorough research and inspiration are necessary to understand current cosplay trends and gather inspiration from various sources. This helps in capturing the essence of cosplay and incorporating it into men's fashion designs. The next step is design and concept development, where unique designs are created, combining cosplay elements with men's fashion. Experimentation with fabrics,

colors, and silhouettes is crucial to achieve the desired aesthetic. Once the designs are finalized, the focus shifts to construction and tailoring. Skilled techniques are employed to transform the designs into tangible garments, ensuring attention to detail and maintaining high-quality standards. Collaboration with cosplayers is essential to create authentic and visually impactful looks. By working closely with cosplayers, designers can understand their needs, preferences, and styling requirements, resulting in designs that resonate with the cosplay community. To effectively market and promote the cosplay men's fashion collection, a well-defined strategy is developed. This includes utilizing social media platforms, organizing fashion shows, or planning professional photoshoots to showcase the collection and generate interest. Additionally, engaging with the target audience and leveraging the power of influencer collaborations can help expand the reach of the collection. Overall, practically working on cosplay men's fashion requires a combination of research, design, construction, collaboration, and strategic marketing. By following these steps, designers can create unique and appealing cosplay-inspired designs for men, capturing the spirit of cosplay while staying relevant in the fashion industry.

First Design: it inspired of the hero of Darksiders game

Materials: gabardine, leather, Foam, linen, chamois, blue led lighting, game eyes, glue, paints, polishing spray.

Description: it's a cosplay fashion design inspired by the hero of Darksiders game: The hero of Darksiders had been clad in black armor and wielding a massive sword, designed to be both intimidating and alluring. It would have made for a stunning cosplay.

The armor had been made of EVA foam, a lightweight and durable material that could be easily shaped and painted. The sword had also been made of EVA foam, with a metal blade inserted into the foam core. The costume had also included a helmet, gauntlets, and boots.

The overall design of the costume had been dark and edgy, with a touch of gothic flair. It would have been perfect for anyone who wanted to cosplay a powerful and mysterious character.

Specific details that could have been included in the design were:

- The armor had been made of black EVA foam, with studs and rivets added to give it a rugged look.
- The sword had been a massive two-handed sword, with a black blade and a hilt decorated with skulls.
- The helmet had been a full-face helmet, with a

visor obscuring the wearer's face.

- The gauntlets had been made of black EVA foam, with metal vambraces protecting the wearer's forearms.
- The boots had been made of black EVA foam, with metal greaves protecting the wearer's shins.

The use of EVA foam instead of metal or wood had allowed for a more lightweight and affordable costume. It had also made the costume easier to transport and store. Additionally, the foam could have been easily shaped and painted to create a realistic look.



Pic. (10) mode board of Darksiders



Pic. (11) Prototype images of parts of the design



Pic. (12) Final Design inspired of Darksiders game

Second Design: it inspired of the hero of Warhammer game

Materials: gabardine, Foam, linen, glue, paints, polishing spray.

Description: Presenting an awe-inspiring cosplay fashion design that draws its inspiration from the valiant hero of the Warhammer universe,

ingeniously crafted using the dynamic medium of painted foam in lieu of conventional metal. This design captures the essence of the hero's relentless courage while offering unparalleled comfort and uninhibited movement. Meticulously detailed, the foam panels are intricately carved and layered to mirror the intricate motifs and textures of

traditional metal armor, then expertly painted to replicate the iconic battle-worn appearance. The lightweight nature of the foam allows for seamless mobility, empowering cosplayers to flawlessly embody the hero's commanding stances and epic actions. This innovative cosplay masterpiece not only pays homage to the indomitable spirit of the Warhammer hero but also stands as a testament to the boundless creativity achievable through imaginative materials and masterful craftsmanship. Here are some specific details that could be included in the design:

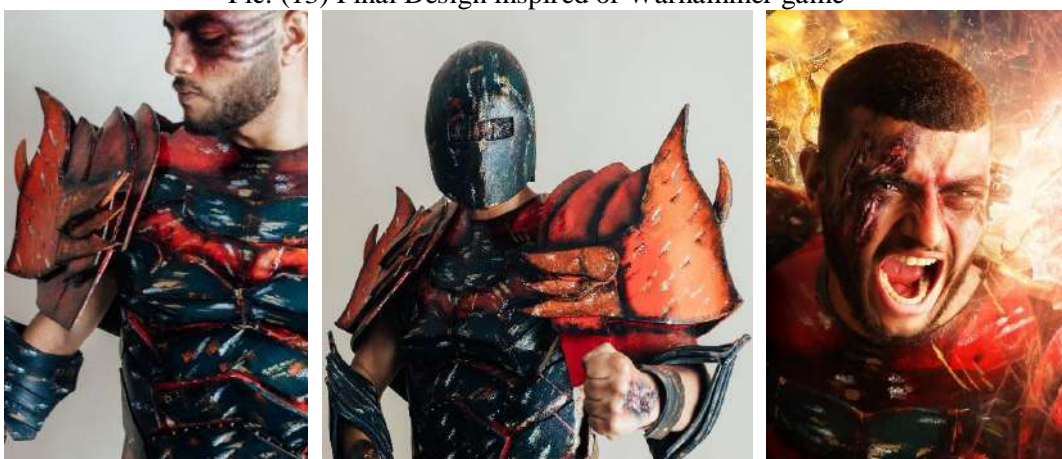
- **Armor Material:** Black EVA foam forms the base, enhanced by strategically placed studs and rivets for a rugged appearance.
- **Sword:** A massive two-handed sword features a black blade and a hilt adorned with eerie skulls, reflecting the hero's battle-hardened aura.
- **Helmet:** A full-face helmet boasts a concealed visor, adding an air of mystery while preserving the hero's enigmatic allure.
- **Gauntlets:** Crafted from black EVA foam, the gauntlets are fortified by metal vambraces that

protect the wearer's forearms with a blend of strength and style.

- **Greaves:** Black EVA foam greaves, painted with a striking red hue, guard the wearer's lower legs, while metal boots further amplify protection and visual impact.
- **Boots:** Fashioned from black EVA foam and painted with an intense black-green shade, the boots harmoniously integrate with metal greaves for a robust and captivating appearance.
- **Synthesis of Materials:** The design seamlessly unites the lightweight flexibility of EVA foam with the aesthetics of metal accents, embodying the hero's journey.
- **Detail-Oriented:** Each component, from the sword's ominous hilt to the secretive helmet, reflects the hero's saga through meticulous craftsmanship.
- **Fantasy and Function:** This creative masterpiece epitomizes the convergence of imagination and practicality, showcasing the potential of unrestricted artistic ingenuity.



Pic. (13) Final Design inspired of Warhammer game



Pic. (14) different looks for the details of the design

Third Design: it inspired of the hero of Dark Souls

Materials: brown leather, Foam, glue, paints, polishing spray.

Description: introducing a striking and innovative take on the iconic hero from the Dark Souls game – a cosplay fashion design that seamlessly melds

fantasy and functionality using lightweight painted foam instead of traditional heavy metal armor. This design captures the essence of the hero's resilience and valor while offering unparalleled comfort and mobility. Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, the foam panels are intricately carved and layered to replicate the intricate

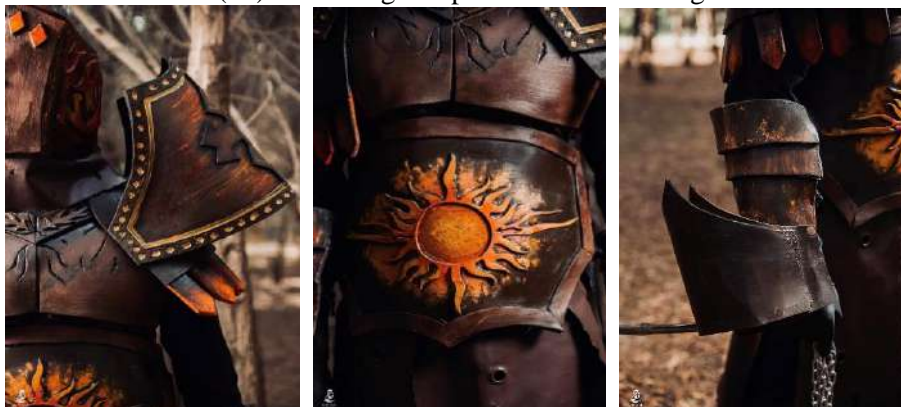
patterns and textures of metal armor, then expertly hand-painted to mimic the weathered, battle-worn look of the original. The foam's flexibility allows for fluid movement, ensuring cosplayers can effortlessly recreate epic battle poses and dynamic stances. The fusion of form and function in this cosplay design not only pays homage to the Dark Souls hero but also serves as a testament to the limitless creativity that can be achieved through innovative materials and thoughtful craftsmanship

- **Sword:** A colossal two-handed sword takes center stage, featuring a black blade exuding power, accompanied by a hilt adorned with three distinctive pointed balls.
- **Helmet:** A full-face helmet with a mystifying visor conceals the wearer's countenance, encapsulating the enigmatic essence of the Dark Souls hero.
- **Gauntlets:** Crafted from brown painted foam with striking orange splashes, the gauntlets offer a visual contrast, while metal vambraces offer protection for the forearms.

- **Greaves:** Made from black painted foam and adorned with carefully applied brown accents, the greaves mimic the appearance of traditional armor and seamlessly transition into metal boots for shin protection.
- **Synthesis of Materials:** The design seamlessly blends the versatility of painted foam and the aesthetics of metal, creating a harmonious illusion of authentic armor while allowing for flexibility in movement.
- **Artistic Authenticity:** Meticulous attention to detail is evident in every aspect of the design, from the intricacies of the sword's hilt to the hero's enigmatic visage, resulting in an unmistakable representation of the Dark Souls hero.
- **Creative Fusion:** By pushing the boundaries of creativity, this cosplay design celebrates the harmonious marriage of fantasy and pragmatism, showcasing the potential that emerges when artistic innovation knows no confines.



Pic. (15) final design inspired of Dark Souls game



Pic. (16) different looks for the details of the design

Fourth Design: it inspired of the hero of Elden Ring game.

Materials: Golden Sastin, Foam, linen, glue, paints, polishing spray.

Description: Introducing a visionary cosplay fashion design that draws inspiration from the legendary hero of Elden Ring, seamlessly brought to life using the remarkable versatility of painted foam instead of traditional metal components. This

design pays homage to the hero's mythical journey, encapsulating their indomitable spirit while offering unmatched comfort and unrestricted movement. Crafted with precision, the painted foam panels intricately replicate the intricate motifs and textures of metal armor, then artfully adorned with hand-painted detailing that mimics the battle-scarred, weathered aesthetic of the original. The lightweight nature of the foam ensures fluidity in motion,

enabling cosplayers to effortlessly embody the hero's valorous poses and dynamic actions. This cosplay masterpiece not only honors the essence of Elden Ring's hero but also stands as a testament to the boundless creativity achievable through innovative materials and artful craftsmanship.

Here are some specific details that had been included in the design:

- **Armor:** Crafted from golden EVA foam with metal color accents, conveying an opulent yet resilient appearance.
- **Cloak:** Made of luxurious golden satin, replacing fur fabric, and featuring an elegant brown hem for added refinement.
- **Helmet:** Blending metal aesthetics with EVA foam, the helmet includes a visor that conceals the face, while the helmet itself is intricately crafted from foam.
- **Gauntlets:** Grey-painted EVA foam gauntlets emulate the look of sturdy metal armor, echoing

the hero's indomitable spirit.

- **Boots:** EVA foam boots incorporate metal greaves for comprehensive protection, merging comfort with an imposing presence.
- **Sword:** Meticulously crafted from EVA foam, the sword showcases the Erdtree symbol and is imbued with the very power of the Erdtree.
- **Design Unity:** The design harmoniously combines painted foam's lightweight flexibility with metal accents, encapsulating the hero's journey.
- **Artistic Craftsmanship:** From the intricate helmet to the symbol-adorned sword, the design showcases the hero's saga through meticulous details.
- **Fantasy and Practicality:** The creation masterfully melds fantasy and function, underscoring the boundless potential of creative ingenuity.



Pic. (17) Final Design inspired of Elden Ring game



Pic. (18) different looks for the details of the design

Secondly: marketing Strategy recommendation based on "Virtual Cosplay Integration":

- **Virtual Cosplay Showcases:** Transform the brand's website and social media platforms

into virtual Cosplay showcases. Create dedicated sections where customers can upload and share their Cosplay-inspired looks using the store's fashion products.

- **Hashtag Campaigns:** Develop and promote custom hashtags that resonate with the brand's identity and the Cosplay theme. Encourage customers to use these hashtags when sharing their virtual Cosplay looks, thereby unifying content and enhancing online visibility.
- **Engagement Contests:** Organize periodic online contests where participants submit their best Cosplay-inspired fashion photos. The entries can be judged based on creativity, alignment with the brand's aesthetic, and engagement metrics.
- **Virtual Workshops:** Host live virtual workshops where customers can learn how to integrate Cosplay elements into their fashion looks. Collaborate with Cosplay experts to provide tips, guidance, and inspiration.
- **User-Generated Content Spotlight:** Regularly spotlight select user-generated content on the brand's social media pages and website. This not only acknowledges participants but also encourages others to share their unique fashion interpretations.
- **Virtual Fashion Shows:** Organize virtual fashion shows that feature Cosplay-inspired outfits created by customers. Livestream these shows on platforms like Instagram Live or YouTube, inviting comments and interactions from viewers.
- **Collaboration with Influencers:** Partner with social media influencers and Cosplay enthusiasts to promote the strategy. Their endorsement and engagement can significantly amplify the reach and impact of the virtual Cosplay initiative.
- **Interactive Q&A Sessions:** Conduct virtual Q&A sessions with fashion experts and Cosplay enthusiasts. Customers can seek advice on blending fashion styles and Cosplay elements seamlessly.

Benefits:

- **Enhanced Customer Engagement:** The strategy fosters active engagement as customers participate by sharing their virtual Cosplay looks and interacting with the brand.
- **Community Building:** A vibrant online community of fashion and Cosplay enthusiasts is formed, promoting camaraderie and shared interests.
- **Brand Identity Reinforcement:** The strategy reinforces the brand's identity by allowing customers to interpret its fashion offerings in their own creative ways.
- **Wider Audience Reach:** The online nature of the strategy extends the brand's reach beyond physical boundaries, attracting a diverse audience.

- **Immersive Shopping Experience:** Customers experience a holistic shopping journey where physical and virtual worlds seamlessly merge.

Measurement and Evaluation:

- Monitor engagement metrics on social media platforms, including likes, shares, comments, and usage of custom hashtags.
- Track the growth of the online community, measured by the number of participants and interactions.
- Collect feedback through surveys to understand customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.
- By integrating Virtual Cosplay experiences, the brand can elevate its marketing approach, foster customer engagement, and create a unique sense of community around its fashion offerings.

Research results:

- 1- The impactful outcomes of incorporating Cosplay into men's fashion marketing through social media platforms
- 2- Highlighting its potential to elevate engagement, broaden reach, and positively influence brand perception.
- 3- Overall, the results emphasize the value of leveraging Cosplay for enhancing men's fashion marketing strategies on social media.

Research recommendations for the integration of Cosplay in men's fashion marketing:

- **Consumer Perception Analysis:** Investigate how consumers perceive and respond to the Cosplay-inspired marketing strategy in men's fashion, focusing on attractiveness and its influence on purchasing decisions.
- **Segmentation Study:** Identify specific customer segments that resonate most with the Cosplay strategy and explore their unique preferences and behaviors.
- **Long-Term Impact Assessment:** Evaluate the lasting effects of the Cosplay approach on brand loyalty, customer retention, and sales over an extended period.
- **Social Media Engagement Examination:** Analyze the role of social media in enhancing engagement through user-generated content, online communities, and hashtags.
- **Cultural Context Exploration:** Study how the Cosplay strategy's reception varies across diverse cultural contexts and assess the need for customization to suit different markets.

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