EXPLORING FANDOM CONTENT CREATION: SAFE-HAVEN FOR LGBT CREATIVES TO ACHIEVE CAREER SATISFACTION?

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Abstract

This study takes a phenomenological approach, applying the social cognitive model of career self-management (Lent & Brown, 2013) in order to understand factors affecting U.S. LGBT+ fandom content creators' career decisions and satisfaction. Interviews were conducted with 14 LGBT+ cosplayers and fanartists and then manually coded and analyzed for emerging themes. Results from this study shows that life experience factors (i.e. family life and education), personal characteristics (i.e. gender, values), and contextual factors (i.e. career context and society at large) can affect someone's adaptive behaviors towards achieving goals and overcoming obstacles in order to achieve career satisfaction and other pay-offs (i.e. safety and community). The resulting thematic map visualizes a more identity-centric perspective on career decisions and career satisfaction than previous perspectives. While the subject matter of this study observes a very niche group, findings from this study can be applied to other minority populations outside of LGBT+ content creators to help understand how various factors impact their career decisions toward career satisfaction.