Title:  Tattoos and Their Impact on Workplace Perceptions

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**Abstract**

One in four people between 18 and 50 have at least one tattoo (Laumann & Derrick, 2006). This means that approximately one in four interviewees will be tattooed. Human Resource professionals have expressed a reluctance to hire those with visible tattoos (Dean, 2010; Swanger, 2006). The purpose of this study was to examine workplace perceptions of tattoos. The researcher sought to determine if individuals perceived bias toward tattooed individuals obtaining and continuing employment and if individuals sought and applied to organizations based on diversity organizational climate. Via Study Response, participants (N=158) were asked to disclose their tattoo status, perceptions of employability based on this status, willingness to conceal these tattoos, positive diversity climate experiences, and general demographic information. Confirming Dean’s (2010) results, findings indicate participants rated occupations in the healthcare and financial industries as least accepting of tattoo ownership. Tattooed individuals were more likely to seek high diversity employers, but no more likely to apply than their nontattooed counterparts. Individuals having witnessed a coworker experience discrimination due to tattoo ownership were more likely to cover tattoos for interviewing purposes.
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Statement of the Problem

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, one in four people between 18 and 50 have at least one tattoo. By extension, this means that approximately one in four interviewees will be tattooed, and it is likely this tattoo will be visible. To better provide an accurate picture of the demographic breakdown: between 84% and 89% of men with tattoos have at least one visible tattoo (Forbes, 2001; Laumann & Derick, 2006). Between 48% and 67.6% of women who have tattoos have at least one visible tattoo (Forbes, 2001; Lauman & Derick, 2006). The American Academy of Dermatology (2006) also found that Hispanics were much more likely to have a tattoo than Non-Hispanics. Furthermore, African Americans/Blacks were more likely to be tattooed than Whites. Those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community have been reported to be two times more likely to be tattooed than the general population (Elzweig & Peeples, 2011).

Swami and Furnham (2007) cited tattooing as a means of expression for those in marginalized groups such as women, lesbians, gays. Swanger (2006) found that 86% of responding Human Resources Management (HRM) professionals reported that a visible tattoo would negatively impact an interviewee’s chances of obtaining employment with their organization. Swanger’s (2006) results, coupled with the American Academy of Dermatology’s findings leave us with a gap in our understanding of whether or not protected classes may be selected at a lower rate because of these tattoos.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of tattoos in the workplace. The issue of perceptions surrounding visibly tattooed individuals in the workplace is one of great
importance, as protected classes appear to engage in tattooing more than non-protected classes (Elzweig & Peeples, 2011; Lauman & Derick, 2006). Researchers sought to determine if individuals perceived that there exists bias toward tattooed individuals in obtaining and continuing employment, and also explored if a diversity organizational climate encouraged application by tattooed individuals.

**Assumptions of the Study**

Tattoos have a history of being associated with sailors, bikers, and convicts (Burgess & Clark, 2010). The stereotype of bikers and convicts are mostly negative. Research indicates these negative stereotypes of tattoos persist today despite the rise in popularity of tattoos (Dean, 2010; 2011). The current study assumes these persisting negative stereotypes will impact the selection of visibly-tattooed employment candidates. A second assumption is that stereotype activation may influence a human resource professionals’ decision-making processes when selecting against a person with visible tattoos. Furthermore, the current study assumed that visibly tattooed individuals applying for white collar positions were at increased risk for being selected out due to stereotype activation.

**Definition of Terms**

**Servicescape.** Dean (2010) defines servicescape as the environment in which the customer-service provider interaction occurs. He contends there are three dimensions that make up the servicescape: ambient factor, design factor, and social factor. “Social factor includes the physical appearance of employees” (p.295).

**Selection.** For the purpose of this study, selection was operationally defined as being selected for a job, i.e. being hired.
Visible tattoos. For the purpose of this study were those tattoos located on the hands, face, neck, or below the elbow.

Non-visible tattoos. For the purpose of this study were those tattoos not located on the hands, face, neck, or below the elbow. These tattoos may show through thin fabric or be uncovered by short sleeve shirts, shorts, skirts, or sandals or by the act of leaning/bending over.

Stereotype activation. Wigboldus, Dijksterhuis, and Knippenberg (2003) define stereotype activation as mental representations in which social category is associated with traits that are stereotypical for this category. “Stereotype activation also blocks the ability to access positive or contradictory stereotypical information that may counteract the negative perceptions” (p.471).

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study was the electronic survey collection method. Survey fatigue could have negatively impacted the response rate of study. Participants were compensated for their participation. Typical response rates in these surveys are 10 to 30% (The Study Response Project, 2011). This can be a limitation because participants may not honestly answer survey questions in order to qualify for survey rewards.

An additional limitation is the use of a third party survey host. In using a third party, the researcher had limited control over many aspects of the survey deployment that may have potential survey issues, i.e. if and how often reminders would be sent out, etc. The ease of using a third party host was a consideration in their utilization.

Methodology

Responses were collected using Study Response. The researcher, using grant funds, paid Study Response to deploy the electronic survey to their pool of paid survey takers. The survey
was created online via Qualtrics. The URL for this Qualtrics survey was supplied to Study Response. Study Response deployed the URL to its survey participants. Study Response participants were selected as follows:

Study Response serves as a remailer that sends recruitment/reminder messages to individuals who have explicitly agreed to participate in web-based research studies through a double-opt in process. During researcher registration you configure different aspects of your sample such as sample size, demographic mixture, etc. We then draw a random sample from our database according to your specifications. We send out messages to all of the respondents selected to participate in your study. Respondents follow a link to your online research instrument. (The Study Response Project, 2011, para. 2)

Participants were asked to disclose their tattoo status, perceptions of employability based on this tattoo status, positive diversity culture experiences, and general demographic information. As this survey was deployed using a third party host it was not up to the researcher to determine compensation amounts or frequency of compensation. All Study Response participants were compensated with a $5 Amazon gift card. (The Study Response Project, 2011).
Chapter II: Literature Review

The History of Tattooing

Early tattoos. People have personal reactions to tattoos and these reactions may be based on stereotypes. To understand the origins of these stereotypes, understanding the historical progression of the tattoo is important. Body modification, including tattoos, can be traced back to Egyptian culture (Carmen, Guitar, & Dillon, 2012). Some tribal cultures in Borneo, the Philippines, New Zealand, and New Guinea, in fact, embrace tattooing and a lack of tattoos makes an individual an outsider (DeMello, 2000). When these tribes were discovered by the Royal Navy in the 17th and 18th centuries, the westernization of tattoos began to occur. The Royal Navy brought the tattooing tradition back to England (Carmen et al., 2012). While tattooing was a symbol of passage into adulthood or maturity for the tribal people, the Royal Navy sailors utilized tattooing as a symbol of group identity and toughness. This small trend would have potentially languished had it not been for the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution brought with it the ability to tattoo more quickly and less painfully (Carmen et al., 2012). Tattooing remained a relatively minor trend until the first and second world wars when American sailors adopted the idea of using tattoos to establish group membership and physical prowess (Carmen et al., 2012; Laumann & Derrick, 2006). Tattoos became more prominent as the sailors attempted to outdo one another as a proof of male supremacy. Once American sailors adopted the trend, it became a fixture in the American military as a whole (Burgess & Clark 2010; Carmen et al., 2012; Laumann & Derrick, 2006). The tattoo remained primarily a military trend until the 1960’s when it was utilized by two counterculture groups.

Recent history of tattoos. The hippie counterculture increasingly became tattooed mostly to rebel against the mainstream culture and to endorse counterculture interests. The
motorcycle gang counterculture also began to tattoo for many of the same reasons the sailors had: to delineate affiliation within the culture, indicate status, and intimidate rival groups (Carmen et al., 2012; Laumann & Derrick, 2006). While the sailors’ tattoos were patriotic, the motorcycle gang tattoos were markedly unpatriotic, even antisocial. The motorcycle gang acceptance of tattooing seems to be the first real negative and potentially harmful blow to the general perception of tattoos. The second harmful blow to the tattooing culture would be when prisoners embraced tattoos for the purposes of group identification and antisocial or criminal activity (Burgess & Clark, 2010; Laumann & Derrick, 2006).

In the 1970’s, new countercultures embraced tattooing. Punk, feminist, and gay movements all looked to tattoos for self-expression and group identification (Carmen et al., 2012; Laumann & Derrick, 2006). Swami and Furnham, (2007) cite tattooing as a form of expression for marginalized groups, such as women, lesbians, and gays. The feminist and gay movements looked to tattoos to help demonstrate a new level of freedom. This new freedom, paired with the popularization of punk, helped to push tattoos toward the mainstream culture or, at the very least, toward being considered “trendy”. Tattoos became embraced by the mainstream in the 1990’s when Disney teen idols were seen with tattoos, actors and actresses began tattooing, and even Barbie© came with tattoos (Carmen et al., 2012; Laumann & Derrick, 2006).

**Current Perceptions of Tattoos**

Research indicates that negative stereotypes of tattoos persist. Burgess and Clark (2010) found those individuals with what the authors categorized as a “cute” tattoo were viewed more favorably than those with a “tribal” tattoo. However, both groups were not viewed as favorably
as those without tattoos. The 2008 and 2012 Harris polls reported between 24% and 29% of respondents believed that people with tattoos were more likely to do something deviant.

Tattooed individuals tend to rate others tattooed individuals more positively than those without tattoos (Hawkes et al., 2004). This conclusion could be explained by the “similar to me” effect; people will evaluate others more positively if they believe they are similar to them in some way. This finding is in conflict with other research, such as Dean (2010; 2011), which concluded the perceptions of tattoos in the workplace did not differ between tattooed perceivers and non-tattooed individuals.

While tattoos have become almost mainstream, the negative stereotype of the biker, the prisoner, and antiestablishment attitudes persist (Carmen et al., 2012). Laumann and Derrick’s (2006) heavily-cited work notes that those of Hispanic descent are more tattooed. This finding is supported by the 2008 and 2012 Harris Polls. The 2008 Harris Poll also indicated that tattooed individuals are more likely to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Employers and organizations should be aware of this statistic. If tattooed individuals are more likely to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual, Hispanics or other persons of color then a policy against tattoos or a preference for non-tattooed employees may decrease their workforce diversity and/or may be a harmful to protected classes in both federal and state arenas.

Data suggests there is some truth to the stereotypes: 76% of respondents indicated that they had been in jail for three days or longer also reported having tattoos (Laumann & Derrick, 2006). Drug usage, alcohol use, and traffic violations were also reportedly higher among the tattooed, while education level was, on average, lower (Forbes, 2001; Lauman & Derick, 2006). Overall, Forbes (2001) concluded the tattooed are more likely to be involved in risk taking behavior.
Social perceptions regarding tattoos are so prevalent that even children are aware of them. Durkin and Houghton (2000) surveyed 340 children from 6 to 16 years of age. The children were shown drawings of three men, one of which had a visible tattoo. The children were then read a statement, e.g. “Who sent some flowers to his mum for her birthday?” or “Who carries a knife?” (Durkin & Houghton, 2000, p. 164), and were asked to select the drawing of the man who they believed did this act. As the authors expected, the children largely selected the tattooed individual as being delinquent. This research speaks to the early age that individuals form negative stereotypes that can plague tattooed individuals.

Perceptions of women. The majority of research indicates that women are more negatively perceived when they are tattooed than are men. This hypothesis has been supported by the work of Hawkes, Senn, and Thorn (2004), Resenhoeft, Villa, and Wiseman (2008), and Swami and Furnham (2007). Swami and Furnham found that as the number and more obvious placement of tattoos increased, the more a woman was negatively viewed. Men with and without tattoos were negative in their rating of women with tattoos; however, men with tattoos rated the women more favorably than did men without tattoos (Hawkes et al., 2004). Women with multiple visible tattoos were categorized as being heavy drinkers, more promiscuous, and unattractive. Overall, women with tattoos are still widely considered to be violating social norms, and thus could still be negatively viewed. Conversely, research done by Burgess and Clark (2010) concluded that women were judged no more harshly than men.

Generally social sex stereotypes have remained unchanged within the US society. Women are consistently described as emotional, passive, or submissive, whereas men are consistently described as assertive, rational, and active (Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, & Hepburn, 1980). Research by Hawkes et al. (2004) and Degelman and Price (2002) investigated the impact
of tattoos on people’s perceptions of tattooed women. Hawkes et al. (2004) concluded that women with tattoos violate social norms particularly in cultures where women are expected to be demure and passive. Research by Degelman and Price (2002) found that their female model was perceived more positively on nine personality attributes, including motivated, honest, intelligent, and attractive, when her tattoo was not visible.

It would appear from the current research that women with tattoos are more likely to be viewed critically for tattoo ownership (Hawkes et al., 2004; Resenhoeft et al., 2008; Swami & Furnham, 2007). In the general adult population, 23% of women are tattooed, a greater percentage than the male population (Harris Poll; 2012). Employers and organizations should be aware of this statistic as well. If tattooed individuals are more likely to be female, then a policy against tattoos or a preference for non-tattooed employees may decrease their workforce diversity and/or may be a harmful to women as a protected class just as it was with gays, lesbians, bisexuals and persons of color.

Research has shown tattoos have been negatively correlated with perceptions of attractiveness (Degelman & Price, 2002; Harris Poll, 2008; Harris Poll, 2012; Hawkes, et al., 2004; Resenhoeft, et al., 2008; Swami & Furnham, 2007). Importantly, attractiveness can have a positive impact on selection (Dipboye, Fromkin & Wiback, 1975; Luxen, & Van De Vijver, 2006; Shannon & Stark, 2003). There is some research to indicate HRM professionals are unwilling to hire those with visible tattoos (Luxen, & Van De Vijver, 2006; Shannon & Stark, 2003). Based on the greater negativity surrounding tattooed females, the impact would likely be greater for tattooed females than tattooed males.

**Organizational and business concerns.** The stereotype that those with visible tattoos must be antisocial and/or have a criminal record still persists (Carmen et al., 2012). If these
negative stereotypes continue to persist in our society, then workplaces and organizations must deal with how a tattooed employee would be perceived by a client or customer, and in some cases by his or her own workforce.

There is conflicting research regarding what mitigates negative perceptions of those with tattoos. Some research seems to indicate that negative tattoo perceptions are more associated with perceivers who do not have tattoos (Hawkes et al., 2004; Resenhoeft et al., 2008; Swami & Furnham, 2007), whereas other research indicates that gender of the tattooed individual mitigates perceptions of those with tattoos. Dean’s (2010; 2011) work indicates that negative tattoo perceptions are more associated with the occupation of the tattooed (e.g. those in the financial and health care industries). Burgess and Clark (2010) also investigated the perceived suitableness of tattooed employees for certain types of work (e.g., office manager and childcare worker). In particular, the researchers examined how suitable those individuals with “cute” or “tribal” tattoos were for these jobs. Overall, their research concluded that those with any type of tattoo were less suitable for office manager or childcare worker than those without tattoos.

Furthermore, Dean’s (2010) work notes that both younger and older consumers have a negative perception of visibly tattooed service providers. This negative perception can impact an organization's future success (i.e. referrals or return business). Miller, Nicols, and Eure (2009) address tattoos in the workplace as well. Their work suggests that work done with a visibly tattooed coworker is most preferable if the work being done is not face-to-face with customers and does not require pay interdependence (when an employee’s pay is dependent upon the skills and service provided by coworkers).

The implications for this finding are important as it impacts person-organization fit. Person-organization fit concerns whether or not individuals’ beliefs and values match those of
their employing organization (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). A “good” fit positively impacts production, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and absenteeism (Davidson, Manning, Timo, & Ryder 2001). Those with low or no person-organization fit are more likely to select themselves out of an organization. Visible tattoos could be considered an important part of person-organization fit, not only by managers and customers, but by coworkers as well. This could impact an organization in three distinct ways. First, visible tattoos could potentially be a perceived indicator of lack of organizational fit to a recruiter, human resource management professional, or co-worker. Second, even in age groups (20-somethings) that are more heavily tattooed and pierced than other age groups, visible tattoos tend to be viewed as inappropriate in the workplace. Third, employees without visible tattoos appear to be cognizant of the negative impacts tattoos can have on customers and business in general (Lin & Mattila, 2010).

Miller et al. (2009) and Dean (2010; 2011) both touch on the concept of person-job fit, which is similar to person-organization fit. Those with visible tattoos were not deemed as appropriate coworkers in a client contact workplace (Miller et al., 2009) and were seen as being a poor fit for financial or medical occupations (Dean 2010; 2011). This perceived lack of fit could be grounded in stereotypes. Crandall, Eshleman, & O’Brien, (2002) suggest that it is socially acceptable to dislike some groups. However, these authors do not directly address the acceptability of disliking those with tattoos. A vast amount of empirical research indicates that it is often deemed acceptable to discriminate against those with visible tattoos (Dean, 2010; 2012; Durkin & Houghton, 2000; Hawkes et al, 2004; Swami & Furnham, 2007). This acceptable discrimination could play a part in the lack of perceived person job-fit for those with visible tattoos.
The concept of servicescape is discussed by Dean (2010; 2011) and is prevalent in research in the hospitality literature (Lin & Mattila, 2010; Shao, Baker, & Wagner, 2004). Servicescape is the arena in which interactions between a customer and a service provider occur. This servicescape can provide clues to the customer about what to expect from the customer service provider. Servicescape theory states, if a customer is new to a servicescape, he or she may use environmental cues, such as appearance, to help form opinions about the organization. Tattoos are included in these environmental cues. Similarly, inference theory, a social psychology theory, suggests humans seek out clues from their environment to make mental judgments about all with which they come in contact (Shao et al., 2004). Perception theory suggests that customer satisfaction is directly aligned with a customer’s predetermined belief about a service based on cues gathered from the “situational and perceiver characteristics” (Shao et al., 2004 p. 1166). A disconnect in expectations and reality can have a negative impact on customer satisfaction. Servicescape can make a strong impression on customer perceptions of the organization as a whole (Lin & Mattila, 2010; Shao et al., 2004).

The customer behavior literature also contends that while servicescape is part of what customers use to determine their overall satisfaction with a business, interaction with employees is also a factor (Lin & Mattila, 2010). Therefore, the appearance of employees could be considered crucial, as it is part of the servicescape prior to employee interactions, as well as during employee interactions. The appropriateness of an employee’s dress has been linked to both positive customer expectations of an organization and intentions to purchase (Shao et al., 2004). Dress refers to not only the physical clothing of an employee, but also physical adornment of “detectable modifications (e.g. tattoos)” (Shao et al. 2004, p. 1165). Employers and organizations need to consider the servicescape and the impact tattooed employees can have
on important organizational outcomes. This author argues inference theory, perception theory, and servicescape are essentially the same theory arising in different domains. Considering these theories, it becomes clearer why an organization would be concerned with the appearance or presentation of its employees.

Organizations should be concerned with perceptions by the consumer regarding employees with tattoos. These perceptions can negatively impact repeat business and referrals as suggested by previous research (Dean, 2011). The age of the consumer does not seem to mitigate the often negative impact on servicescape and customer experience made by the presence of tattooed employees (Dean, 2011).

Employees also bring their own perceptions to work with them, which can make them less willing to work with or tolerate those with visible tattoos in particular workplace settings (Miller et al., 2009). Research participants have described those with tattoos as less suitable for certain types of work. They also have described tattooed individuals as poor decision makers who are more deviant and impulsive and less intelligent, trustworthy, and attractive (Degelman & Price, 2002; Harris Poll; 2008; Harris Poll. 2012; Hawkes, et al., 2004; Lauman & Derick, 2006; Resenhoeft, et al., 2008; Swami & Furnham, 2007). The research also indicates that not all of these stereotypes are without foundation (Lauman & Derick, 2006). Many tattooed participants had spent time in jail and were less educated, but they were also more likely to be part of a protected class.
Selection Practices

Pre-interview impressions can impact post interview outcomes. Research indicates that after an interviewer forms a pre-interview impression, the trajectory of the interview is determined (Macan & Dipboye, 1990). An interviewer who has a positive pre-interview impression of an interviewee will spend more time trying to sell an applicant on the job and organization, and will allow more time for the interview experience. Conversely, an interviewer who has a negative pre-interview impression of an interviewee will use a more abbreviated interview format, and will not attempt to sell the interviewee on the organization or job. An interviewee who senses this negative pre-interview impression may be handicapped during the interview process. He or she may become nervous or anxious, and this may prevent any chance for the interviewee to overcome a predetermined judgment (Macan & Dipboye, 1990). While this research does not specifically consider tattoos, if one considers Dean’s (2010; 2011) research regarding image congruence, it seems reasonable to assume that interviewers who are surprised or jarred by visible tattoos, or hold stereotypes against tattooed individuals, may form a pre-interview impression based on these visible tattoos. Subsequently, the same negative consequences could result – shortened interview time, lessened exchanges of information, and a more nervous, distracted, or dejected interviewee.

Attractiveness and its impact on hiring. Research on perceptions surrounding visible tattoos consistently considers the characteristic of attractiveness (Degelman & Price, 2002; Harris Poll, 2008; Harris Poll, 2012; Hawkes et al., 2004; Resenhoeft et al., 2008; Swami & Furnham, 2007). Individuals with tattoos are perceived as less attractive as those without tattoos (Degelman & Price, 2002). Additionally, there is literature to support the notion that attractive people are more appealing and considered more capable (Luxen & Van De Vijver, 2006;
Shannon & Stark, 2003). If attractive individuals are hired at a greater rate than unattractive individuals, and those with tattoos are considered less attractive than those without tattoos, then it seems likely that with tattoos are less likely to be hired.

Although HRM professionals assert they are not in the practice of hiring individuals based on physical appearance, researchers posit HRM professionals may be unaware of the impact physical appearance has on the selection process (unconscious motivation; Luxen & Van De Vijver, 2006; Shannon & Stark, 2003). An additional explanation for this phenomenon may be that HRM professionals unintentionally use attractiveness as a tie-breaker for those candidates who are equally matched in knowledge, skills, and abilities (Dipboye, Fromkin & Wiback, 1975). Research conducted by Hitt and Barr (1989) concluded that job-irrelevant variables often can have a greater impact on the selection process than job-relevant variables. It is possible that tattoos could be included in the category of impactful job-irrelevant variables. There are HRM professionals, as is the case with the general population, who do not care for visible tattoos and, therefore, may unconsciously use this preference to select against those with tattoos, or consciously use the visible tattoos as a tie breaker when two candidates are equally matched.

**Human resource management professionals’ unwillingness to hire.** Research indicates that human resource professionals are unwilling to hire those with visible tattoos. Swanger (2006) surveyed human resource managers (HRM) regarding personal or organizational perceptions of individuals with visible tattoos. The majority of HRM professionals (86.67%) had a negative view of visible tattoos. This could stem from personal bias, business reality or other legitimate business needs.

Elzweig and Peeples (2011) examined the court cases involving tattoos and piercings in the workplace. Based on their findings, the authors recommended organizations evaluate
whether a dress code is based on a true business purpose. Additionally, the authors advocated that an organizational awareness of their clientele can play a key role in setting business need-based polices that are not grounded in stereotypes. Having a tattoo may even be a desirable addition to employees working in some industries (e.g., tattoo parlors). Despite meeting client expectations for tattoos, tattoo parlor or tattoo shop owners have expressed a concern in hiring tattooed individuals for their own businesses (Timming, 2011). However, a tattoo artist without a tattoo can be considered suspect by both the clientele and the shop owner as well (Ink Master, 2012). Tattoo shop owners expressed that it can be difficult to find desirable tattooed applicants because so many in the industry are untrustworthy and deviant. When shop owners were asked to disclose the typical interview questions used with applicants, “Have you ever stolen from your work” was one of the most common questions asked (Timming, 2011, p. 578). Even within the tattooing industry, negative perceptions of tattooed personnel still persist. Given these negative perceptions the next logical question is whether applicants, consciously or unconsciously aware of these possible negative perceptions, make an effort to hide them in employment settings.

**The importance of image for organizations.** HRM professionals are not necessarily given free reign by organizations to unconsciously or consciously exert their own preferences or prejudices onto the hiring practices and policies of their employers. As suggested by Elzweig and Peeples (2011), it is a best practice for an organization to have hiring and dress code/uniform requirements that are grounded in business functionality. However, businesses may choose to design policies based on negative or unfounded opinions without much fear of legal retribution, as legal precedents reflect the court’s preference for siding with an employer when questions of dress code or uniform requirements arise (Bible, 2010; Elzweig & Peeples, 2011). An organization may create a hiring policy, dress code, or uniform requirement that is
discriminatory against tattooed individuals with the knowledge that the court system is reticent to side against the employer, but doing so may invite legal action and the costs associated with it.

Based on the literature and legal precedent, organizations have a valid reason to select against those with visible tattoos or to create dress code policies that require the covering of visible tattoos (Dean, 2010; 2011; Elzweig & Peeples, 2011). Dean’s (2010; 2011) work shows a preference by consumers to have service providers that are not visibly tattooed. The overall negative perceptions of those with tattoos would further bolster the claim that visibly tattooed employees would damage business depending on the industry in question. A hospital’s policy requiring their nurses conceal visible tattoos may be defensible, as Dean’s (2011) research demonstrates the perception that visibly tattooed healthcare professionals are considered to be unsanitary and unprofessional. Similarly, a bank policy not to hire those with visible tattoos may be defensible as the research indicates consumers find tattooed individuals in the financial industry to be untrustworthy, poor decision makers, and have poor judgment (Dean, 2010). The extant literature seems to suggest that hiring managers are either aware of the negative ramifications that may come from hiring individuals who violate customer expectations of professional dress/demeanor, or may exhibit a bias against tattooed individuals and are subsequently less likely to hire individuals with visible tattoos.

Precedents. Organizations have, in the past, made an effort to control the appearance of their employees in one way or another. This can take form in the presence of dress codes, uniform requirements or hiring practices, e.g. choosing to hire a person without tattoos. Employers have legal latitude to do so as long as they remain within the bounds of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title VII. The 1964 Civil Rights Act does not allow employers to refuse to hire or to fire a person based on gender, race, color, religion, or national origin (Civil Rights Act,
Title VII does not allow employer to discriminate based on gender, race, color, religion, or national origin (Elzweig & Peeples, 2011). Notably, neither the Civil Rights Act nor Title VII includes individuals with nonreligious tattoos.

This lack of coverage by the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title VII has proven difficult for those employees who have sought legal protection to display their tattoos in the workplace. The concept of choice could be pivotal (i.e., tattoos are a chosen differentiation, whereas one does not choose his or her race). Many of the cases involving a tattooed employee and his or her employer have been fought on the grounds of first amendment right infringement. Tattooed individuals assert that tattoos are part of an individual’s expression of free speech that should not be denied by an employer’s policies. The courts have not agreed (Bible, 2010; Elzweig & Peeples, 2011). The courts typically view tattoos not as free speech, but as an expression of self-interest, which is not protected by law. Furthermore, protected free speech cannot be damaging to the employer. The courts have strongly sided with employers on the issue of image (Bible, 2010). This means that having “love” and “hate” knuckle tattoos would not be free speech because it might intimidate customers and, therefore, damage the employer’s image.

Claims of religious freedom are more complicated for an employer to handle. In cases such as these, the burden of proof shifts back and forth between employee and employer. First, it is incumbent upon the employee claiming a tattoo is part of his or her religion to demonstrate not only that it is, in fact, a religious tenet, but also that the religion does not allow for the covering of said tattoo. Second, if the tattooed individual is able to show religious support of the tattoo and supporting doctrine that it cannot be covered, then the employer must demonstrate that a reasonable accommodation was offered to the tattooed employee. Third, the employee must then indicate why the reasonable accommodation was not acceptable. Finally, the employer must
then demonstrate why the accommodation the employee is requesting would be damaging to the organization. Only one court case, *EEOC v. Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Inc.*, in 2005, has found in favor of the employee (Bible, 2010; Elzweig & Peeples, 2011).

The literature recommends that organizations set a very clear dress code or uniform policies of which all employees are aware. These policies should be grounded in business need and with the clientele in mind. Furthermore, if an issue of religious freedom arises, the employer or organization should make a reasonable accommodation, as is required by law. Finally, the extant literature recommends that hiring policies be amended to ensure that those hired would not be burdened with covers that would be cumbersome or stand out considerably (e.g. asking a nurse to cover a lipstick kiss tattoo on his or her cheek, as the covering would stand out as much as the tattoo).

Policies and practices put in place by organizations that are grounded in business need may improve customer perceptions of an organization’s services and products. However, these practices and policies may also inadvertently select against protected classes. As is indicated by a dermatology survey (Laumann & Derick, 2006) and the Harris Poll (2008), those with tattoos are more likely to be gay or lesbian, female, or Hispanic. While the law does not allow an organization to select against protected classes, it also does not preclude an organization from selecting against a tattooed individual for business purposes. This creates a quandary for organizations. It may be difficult for organizations to legally justify selecting against an individual based on tattoos if it appears to the court they are, in fact, selecting against a protected class. In sum, organizations need to be concerned with adverse impact if polices are rooted in business need, but also discriminate against a disproportionate number of members of a protected class.
**Stereotypes.** Stereotype activation is a concept similar to servicescape or inference theory. Whereas Servicescape or inference theory refer to individuals using environmental cues to make judgments about a situation or place that is unfamiliar to them (Dean, 2010; 2011; Shao et al., 2004), stereotype activation is a psychological construct in which individuals use physical features to make judgments about individuals that are unfamiliar to them (Wigboldus et al., 2003). These judgments can be based on gender, age, skin, color, salient features, and behaviors (Wigboldus et al., 2003). Salient features may include tattoo ownership as well. Group affiliation has played a large role in the history of tattoos. As previously discussed, group affiliation has been a primary function of the tattoo. Stereotype activation may occur based on this historical artifact. The historical artifact being tattoo ownership in itself has demonstrated a group affiliation with the negatively-perceived tattooed organizations, e.g., biker gangs or prisoners.

There are mixed findings regarding theories about stereotype activation and HRM. Much of the research that has examined HRM professionals and potential discriminatory practices suggest that these professionals are busy, and to save time, unconsciously fall back on stereotypes (Allport, 1954). This research suggests stereotypes lay dormant in a person’s mind until an individual comes in contact with the object of the stereotype. Allport also suggests that stereotyping is a cognitive short cut used to save effort in an over-worked or taxed individual. However, research conducted by Gilbert & Hixon (1991) suggests the opposite – when participants were distracted by a task, they were less likely to make stereotyped judgments. Despite the conflicting findings, stereotype activation, like servicescape, may play a role in the acceptance of a tattooed employee or job candidate, which coincides with the preponderance of findings in the literature.
Implicit prejudices have been heavily researched by the field of psychology using the implicit association task (IAT), which is said to reveal an individual’s true racism (Verhaeghen, Aikman, & Van Gulick, 2010). There are many theories that help to explain the basis of these implicit feelings or beliefs, including childhood experiences, upbringing, or based on cultural conditioning Verhaeghen et al. (2010) suggest that individuals are more likely to encounter a poor, uneducated black person, or the feeble, elderly woman in the media than a third generation wealthy Harvard educated black man or a strong, sharp elderly woman. This constant pairing of poor and black and feeble and old makes an impression that becomes apparent in IATs. This may be true for tattoos as well. The media is permeated with the concept of deviant behavior being committed by individuals with tattoos (e.g., the psychopath biker with hand and neck tattoos, the gang member with the tear drop tattoo).

Crandall et al. (2002) suggest that prejudices are not declining. Instead, people simply suppress prejudicial opinions based on social norms. Group Norm Theory suggests individuals form prejudicial norms based on social groups and the pressures from these groups to conform. In an examination of prejudicial opinions, Crandall et al. (2002) concluded that while prejudice as a concept is not socially acceptable there are socially acceptable prejudices. Socially accepted prejudices included the dislike or negative feelings toward rapists or general criminals (Crandall et al., 2002). Surprisingly lacking from the extensive list of potential targets of prejudice were those with tattoos. The literature also revealed a trend that those who score high on a suppression of prejudice scale will not express prejudice when it is socially unacceptable, but will express prejudices at high levels when they feel it is socially acceptable to do so (Crandall et al., 2002). Research by Miller, et al. (2009) indicates employees have expressed a lack of desire to work with tattooed co-workers in certain workplace scenarios (Miller et al., 2009).
Diversity climate. Workplaces that encourage diversity climate are more likely to hire a demographically wide range of employees (Wolfson, Kraiger, & Finkelstein, 2011). Diversity climate can impact many different organizational areas. These areas include but are not limited to job satisfaction, work quality, absenteeism, and organizational identification (Wolfson et al., 2011). Diversity climate, if not promoted and fostered from the top down can have negative impacts such as high turnover and negative perceptions of workplace satisfaction (Wolfson et al., 2011). An organization making an effort to increase diversity may see intended and unintended consequences related to relational demography. Research done in the area of relational demography has found a preference within groups of people to work with those that are most similar to the group.

Harrison and Klein (2007) suggest that one of the benefits of diversity within groups or teams is the decreased chance for group-think. Groups that are heterogeneous are less likely to be quick to reach a consensus due to differing opinions and backgrounds. Instead, a better quality or high caliber decision-making process will likely occur. Groups or teams with greater diversity are more likely to experience increases in creativity or innovation as a result of greater multiplicity of information.

Work done by Wolfson et al. (2011) concluded organizations that fostered diversity climate had employees who reported greater workplace satisfaction in which their own identities were valued and assisted them in accomplishing their own personal career goals. Furthermore, a positive diversity climate was linked with job satisfaction, feelings of inclusiveness, and organizational commitment (Wolfson et al., 2011). This author asserts that this positive diversity will be attractive to tattooed candidates.
Chapter III: Methodology

Participants

The sample was recruited using Study Response (The Study Response Project, 2011) an online survey service for those in the social sciences, offering access to a large, diverse population across 17 countries. This database of respondents includes occupation, education, gender, and age. The average respondent is a 34-year-old, female with little or no college education, 14.5 years of work experience from the United States. Occupations ranged from blue collar and white collar positions and include students and unemployed.

Frequencies for study variables are presented in Table 1. The sample consisted of 157 respondents. Of these, 68% of respondents identified themselves as not having tattoos. Of the 32% that did have tattoos, 100% indicated the tattoos are coverable. Of the tattooed respondents, 79% indicated they chose to cover them for interviews. Overall 68% of the respondents worked in white collar industries with an average of 20 years work experience.

Materials

Fourteen questions from section one of the survey were developed by the researcher specifically for this project to examine the experiences of those with and without tattoos in the workplace. These questions were established to identify possible common experiences or types of employment selected by tattooed or non-tattooed respondents. Section two, question 38, was a replication of the Perceptions of Tattoos in the Workplace survey by Dean (2010). This question offered nine occupation choices and three descriptive word choices (Appropriate, Not Appropriate, and No Opinion) for this single question. The occupational choices in the survey were Barber/Hair-stylist, Bank loan officer, Grocery store clerk, Auto mechanic, Nurse (RN), Accountant (CPA), Bartender, Dentist, and Stockbroker. Dean does not list the reliability of his
measure, however, the findings of this researcher were very similar. The use of this measure was to help determine the perceptions of those with visible tattoos in an array of occupational settings. Section three was intended to examine the mitigating impacts of diversity culture on perceptions of visible tattoos in the workplace. Nine questions asked if participations were more or less likely to seek out and/or apply to an organization based on diversity climate and other diversity climate related factors. The diversity climate scale—organizational fairness subscale (α = .89) (Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris, 2012) were modified by the researcher and advisor to relate directly to tattoos. While the wording has been changed slightly, the integrity of the questions remains intact and thus the reliability and validity should remain consistent. The final section, containing 15 questions, address organizational support (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). The reliability of the measure by Eisenberger et al. (1997) was not stated. Organization support questions help to examine an employee’s overall perception of support. An employee who feels supported may be less likely to perceive their physical appearance, e.g. visible tattoos as negatively impacting their workplace situation. These questions have not been altered from their original state.

**Data Collection Procedures**

A survey was deployed electronically via Study Response. A 46-question survey was administered electronically via Study Response, a third party survey company. Survey takers’ personal, identifiable information was not collected during the process. The third party Study Response assigns random identification numbers to respondents. Identification numbers were used strictly for the means of Study Response to pay participants. Reminder emails were sent to all non-respondents to encourage a greater response rate. The survey data was collected from
July 30 to August 19, 2013. All Study Response participants were compensated with a $5 Amazon gift card. (The Study Response Project, 2011).
Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine if individuals without visible tattoos were selected for employment at a greater rate than those individuals with visible tattoos. This research examined respondents’ perceptions of discrimination regarding employment and visible tattoos. This was done by examining the subjective reports of those with visible tattoos whom were asked to consider the questions as if they were in the hiring process. The study examined the attractiveness of high diversity organizations to those with and without tattoos. Respondents were asked about their likelihood to seek out or apply to organizations with high levels of diversity. This research also examined perceptions of appropriateness for tattoos in specific occupations. This last portion of the research was modeled after Dean’s (2010) research.

Data Cleaning

The data were cleaned using SPSS. A number of the original research questions could not be analyzed due to missing data. The gender variable was unintentionally omitted from the online survey. As this variable was not collected, the research questions relating to gender were unable to be analyzed. Future research should examine this protected class demographic in relation to tattoos. Frequencies for study variables are presented in Table 1.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: At what frequency did respondents perceive a coworker has had a problem at work due to tattoos? Based on survey responses 41% of respondents reported seeing a coworker have a problem at work due to a tattoo, 59% did not. This research question was examined in two ways: first ignoring tattoo ownership to explore overall perceptions, and then a separate analysis was done comparing perceptions of those with tattoos and without. First, a 1 sample Chi square suggests that overall, more people responded that they
had not perceived a co-worker to have a problem at work. \( \chi^2 (1, N = 91) = 4.70, p = .030 \). These findings do not change when tattoo ownership is considered using a two-sample Chi-square analysis, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 90) = .768 p = .381 \). This finding would therefore, be not significant. It appears there is a general finding that more people did not perceive co-workers to have problems because of their tattoos. It didn’t matter if they, themselves, were tattooed or not.

**Research Question 2: Is there a difference between frequency of perceiving a coworker having a problem at work due to tattoos and the frequency with which respondents cover tattoos for interview purposes?** This question was analyzed using a two-sample Chi Square test of independence. The results of this hypothesis test suggest there is a difference between those with visible tattoos and those without tattoos, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 47) = 11.178, p < .001 \). These results suggest that those with visible tattoos covered them at a greater rate if they had perceived a coworker having had a problem at work due to tattoos, 41% and 59%, respectively.

**Research Question 3: Which jobs are deemed least appropriate for tattooed employees?** Respondents were given a list of nine occupations and asked to rate them on a three point scale (Appropriate, No Opinion, and Not Appropriate). The current research supports the work of Dean (2010; 2011). Findings indicate that respondents found it “appropriate” for Auto Mechanics (78.6%), Bartenders (77.4%), Barbers/Hairstylists (65.2%) to have tattoos. Only one occupation garnered a general consensus of “no opinion”, that being Grocery Store Clerk (48.7%). Respondents found it largely “Not Appropriate” for Bank Loan Officers (62.3%), Dentists (62.3%), Stock Brokers (56.8%), Accountants (54.9%) and Nurses (52.9%) to have tattoos. The occupations identified as “Not Appropriate” are supportive of Dean’s research that found that tattooed individuals are not as accepted in the health and financial industries as they
may be in other industries. Dean’s 2010 research also found the same five categories ranked as “Inappropriate”.

**Research Question 4: At what frequency do those with tattoos choose to cover them for interview purposes?** This research question was examined using a one sample Chi square analysis. The results of this hypothesis test suggest there is a difference between those who do and do not cover tattoos for interview purposes, $\chi^2 (1, N = 37) = 15.511, \ p < .001$. A larger percentage of tattooed participants (78.7%) reported covering their tattoos for interview purposes than non-tattooed participants (21.3%). Applicants appear to view covering their tattoos as a part of the interviewing process.

**Research Question 5: Is there a difference between perceived number of times rejected for employment between visible and non-visible tattoos?** A Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated that there were not significant differences in the perceptions of being rejected for visible and non-visible tattoos ($Z = -1.51, p = 0.131$). Here, 35 of the 40 tattooed respondents indicated that they had experienced rejection 1-2 times for visible and covered tattoos, suggesting that there are not significant differences in these perceptions.

These results should be interpreted with great caution for three reasons. First, whether a tattooed respondent had *both* tattoos that could be covered as well as tattoos that could not be covered, or one or the other, could not be determined with the current data. Second, all tattooed respondents answered both questions regarding the number of times they were rejected. However, note that the survey did not include an option for ‘0 rejections’. Thus, it is possible that respondents simply selected the lowest category available (i.e., 1-2). Related to that point, it is unknown if respondents distinguished whether they were rejected for non-visible tattoos in instances where they had both a visible (non-coverable) and non-visible tattoo.
Research Question 6: Is there a difference between tattoo ownership and propensity to seek an organization that appears to have a high level of diversity? An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the likelihood of tattooed and non-tattooed respondents seeking an organization that appears to have a high level of diversity. There was a significant difference in the scores for tattooed (M = 3.09, SD = .62) and non-tattooed (M = 1.07, SD = 2.71) respondents; t(103.96) = 3.25, p = .002. These results suggest that tattoo ownership does impact the likelihood of an individual to seek out an organization with a high level of diversity. Specifically, these results suggest that those with tattoos are more likely to seek out an organization with a high level of diversity.

Research Question 7: Is there a difference between tattoo ownership and likelihood to apply to an organization that appears to have a high level of diversity? An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the likelihood of tattooed and non-tattooed respondents applying to an organization that appears to have a high level of diversity. There was not a significant difference in the scores for tattooed (M = 3.09, SD = .65) and non-tattooed (M = 1.07, SD = 2.89) respondents with regard to actively applying to organizations with perceived high levels of diversity, t(152) = 1.55, p = .120. These results suggest that tattoo ownership does not significantly impact the likelihood an individual will actually apply to an organization with a high level of diversity despite the difference in propensity to seek out higher levels of diversity, as noted in the previous research question.
Chapter V: Discussion

Based upon the survey results, tattooed individuals are more likely to seek out an organization with a high level of diversity. However, they were no more likely than non-tattooed individuals to report applying to an organization with a high level of diversity. Tattooed people seem to have a greater preference for highly diverse workplaces, but non-tattooed people were just as likely to apply to these types of organizations. Future research could be done to investigate the distinction. It appears respondents would like to work for organization that has a high level of diversity, but the data suggests that it does not increase the likelihood to apply. It is possible that those who work for organizations become tattooed after being hired, and therefore do not need to apply to other high diversity climate employers. This could indicate a propensity to stay with high diversity climate employers. The implication for organizations is that high diversity climate is one that may increase employee longevity.

A larger percentage of tattooed participants (78.7%) reported covering their tattoos for interview purposes than non-visibly tattooed participants (21.3%). Visibly and non-visibly tattooed applicants appeared to view covering their tattoos as a part of the interviewing process. This may be correlated with perceptions of discrimination of tattooed individuals in the workplace, as individuals with visible tattoos covered them at a greater rate if they had perceived a coworker having had a problem at work due to tattoos, 41% and 59%, respectively. Seeing a coworker have negative experiences due to a tattoo could influence applicants to cover their tattoos for interview purposes. This could tie into the concept of stereotype activation. Again, Miller, et al., (2009) work suggested that work done with a visibly tattooed coworker is most preferable if the work being done is not face-to-face with customers and does not require pay interdependence. This can also impact person-organization fit by making people feel supported.
and valued or accepted in their place of work. This is an important concept for organizations or hiring professionals to recognize. Finding the right fit for a tattooed employee may not only benefit the employee but the organization as a whole (Dean 2011).

A “good” fit positively impacts production, intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction, and absenteeism (Davidson et al., 2001). Those with low or no person-organization fit are more likely to select themselves out of an organization. Even though tattooed individuals seek out high diversity climate, they are still likely to negatively perceive individuals with tattoos for particular industries, as suggested by Dean (2010). Therefore, they are likely to perceive a negative association with their own tattoos instigating a desire to cover them for interviewing purposes.

Finally, this research supported the findings of Dean (2010). Dean’s work found that respondents preferred those in the health care and financial/banking industries to be without visible tattoos. Dean also found that respondents expected or were accepting of tattoos in service industry occupations (e.g. mechanic or barber/hairstylist). Despite the growing popularity or cultural acceptance of tattoos, there were still certain industries where tattoo-wearing is deemed less acceptable. HRM professionals and hiring organizations should be aware of these perceptions. Evidence from Dean’s (2010) research supported organizational concerns that tattooed employees may negatively impact business success or the likelihood a customer would refer someone to a business with visibly tattooed workforce within particular industries. Being aware of tattoos and their apparent impact on servicescape could have a financial business impact. Applicants also need to be aware of these perceptions as well as the legal support for businesses to set dress codes out of business necessity. Tattoos in the eyes of the court have so
far not been deemed free speech. Tattoo-wearers need to be aware of the perception of visible
tattoos within any industry they wish to enter.

Limitations

During data collection, gender, a descriptive statistic, was not gathered due to data
corruption in the survey process. Therefore it was not possible to report upon the questions
about tattoo ownership and gender or tattoo ownership and sexual orientation. It would be
beneficial for future research to examine the impact of gender and, furthermore, sexual
orientation on tattoos and selection. The author of this paper did research regarding best
practices for handling missing data. Unfortunately, none of the research was directly applicable.
Most of the research focused on compensating for the missing data by utilizing different
determining if missing data is “ignorable or nonignorable”. Sterner went on to explain that
ignorable missing data is data “specifically identified as part of the missed data process and/or
managed by the researchers” (p.89), whereas nonignorable data would be problematic because
missingness is related to the values that researchers are not able to observe (Sterner, p.89). In
the case of this paper the missing data is just best considered ignorable as it has been identified
and can be managed by the researcher. The main conclusion of the literature regarding missing
data is that missing data does damage the integrity and usefulness of the research being
conducted. The overarching limitation is the missing data. This missing data limits the ability to
explore several topics within this research such as the potential mitigating factors of gender on
visible tattoos. Furthermore, it was not possible to investigate the perception of discrimination
by tattooed members of protected classes. Another limitation is that for the question regarding
perceived number of times rejected based on tattoos, the response options did not include ‘0
rejections’. Thus, it is possible that respondents simply selected the lowest category available (i.e., 1-2). Related to that point, it is unknown if respondents distinguished whether they were rejected for non-visible tattoos in instances where they had both a visible (non-coverable) and non-visible tattoo.

This significantly limits the applicability of this research to the general workforce. However, one can still take from the research the existence of negative perceptions regarding tattoos in certain industries and the possible need to cover tattoos for interview purposes if one wishes to enter this industry as a tattooed individual. HRM professionals may need to be aware of the existing research that indicates that protected classes are more likely to be tattooed. Making the decision to protect business interests by being mindful of the perceptions of tattooed employees, while still trying not to inadvertently discriminate against the protected classes must be considered.
References


Appendix: Survey Instrument

Informed Consent Form

Introduction
This study attempts to collect information about the perceptions of tattoos and the impact of tattoos on employment selection.

Procedures
You will be asked to complete a questionnaire; questions are designed to determine your perceptions about tattoos and the impact of tattoos on employment selection. The questionnaire consists of 46 questions and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Risks/Discomforts
Risks are minimal for involvement in this study. However, you may feel emotionally uneasy when asked to think about your own personal experiences in hiring situations.

Benefits
It is hoped that through your participation those in the recruitment and human resources community will gain a better understanding of the impacts that tattooed employees have in the workplace.

Confidentiality
All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed and no one, other than the primary investigator and assistant researchers listed below, will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in a HIPPA-compliant, StudyResponse.com-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Participation
Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without any repercussions. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions.

Questions about the Research
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Erin Steffeck at 920-737-2621.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants
If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Robert Peters at 715-232-1983.

1) Do you have any tattoos?
   - Yes
   - No

   If Yes: Where are your tattoos located?

   If yes: Do you cover them for interviews?
   - Yes
   - No

   If no: Are your visible tattoos coverable?
   - Yes
   - No
2) Have you ever seen a co-worker have problems related to having a visible tattoo?
   - Yes
   - No
   If yes: What kind of problem? 

3) Have you ever had a problem at work because of a visible tattoo?
   - Yes
   - No
   If yes: What kind of a problem?

4) Do you have any coworkers with visible tattoos?
   - Yes
   - No

5) Do you have any managers/supervisors with visible tattoos?
   - Yes
   - No

6) Does your organization have a stated policy regarding visible tattoos in your workplace?
   - Yes
   - No
   If yes: Why do you believe they have a stated policy regarding visible tattoos?
     - Customer Complaints
     - Business Reasons
     - Organizational Reputation
     - Other: 

7) Does your organization use a structured interview (ask the same set of questions to everyone) process?
   - Yes
   - No

8) Which industry do you work in?
   - Blue collar (manufacturing, mining, construction, mechanical, maintenance)
   - White collar (financial services, managerial, administrative)
   - Pink collar (day care worker, public relations)
   - Medical (doctor, dentist, nurse, physician’s assistant)
   - Grey collar (Food preparation, protective services, paralegal, computer technicians)
   - Other: 

9) How often do you believe you have been rejected for employment due to your visible tattoos?
   - 1-2 times
   - 3-4 times
   - 5-6 times
   - 6-7 times
10) How often do you believe you have been rejected for employment due to your non-visible tattoos?
   - 1-2 times
   - 3-4 times
   - 5-6 times
   - 6-7 times
   - 8-9 times
   - 10 or more times

11) Do you believe your organization has an overall opinion/perception of employees with visible tattoos?
   - Yes: Strong Negative Perception
   - Yes: Negative Perception
   - Yes: Positive Perception
   - Yes: Strong Positive Perception
   - No: This is not something my organization cares about.

12) How likely are you to view tattooed employees in your own industry as inappropriate?
   - Very Unlikely
   - Unlikely
   - Likely
   - Very Likely

13) How likely is your boss or hiring manager going to be influenced by a visible tattoo on a candidate?
   - Very Unlikely
   - Unlikely
   - Likely
   - Very Likely

14) How likely your boss or hiring manager to use a visible tattoo as a tie-breaker between two equally qualified candidates to disqualify the tattooed applicant?
   - Very Unlikely
   - Unlikely
   - Likely
   - Very Likely

15) How likely are you to actively seek out an organization that appears to have a high level of diversity?
   - Very Unlikely
   - Unlikely
   - Likely
16) How likely are you to actively apply to an organization that appears to have a high level of diversity?
   - Very Unlikely
   - Unlikely
   - Likely
   - Very Likely

17) Where I work, I feel that I have been treated differently because of my tattoo(s).
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

18) Where I work, management has a track record of hiring and promoting individuals objectively regardless of their tattoo(s).
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

19) Where I work, management here gives feedback and evaluates employees fairly regardless of such factors as employee’s visible tattoo.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

20) Where I work, management makes promotion decisions fairly, regardless of such factors as the employee’s visible tattoo(s)
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

21) Where I work, management interprets human resource policies fairly for all employees.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
22) Where I work, management gives assignments based on the skills and abilities of each employee.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

23) Where I work, management at my place of employment encourages the formation of employee network support groups.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

24) Where I work, there is a mentoring program in use that identifies and prepares all employees of color and white female employees for promotion.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

25) Where I work, is a more “traditional” workplace.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

26) Where I work, management spends enough money and time on diversity awareness and related training?
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
27) Where I work, the performance evaluation system is a fair one
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

28) Where I work, I am satisfied with the way performance evaluations are done
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

29) Where I work, different opinions, ideas, and perspectives are valued
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

30) My workplace cares about my opinion.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

31) My workplace really cares about my well-being.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

32) My workplace strongly considers my goals and values.
33) Help is available from my workplace when I have a problem.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

34) My workplace would forgive an honest mistake on my part.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

35) If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me. (R)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

36) My organization shows very little concern for me. (R)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

37) My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.
38) Regarding tattoos on employees I might meet during business transactions, visible tattoos (arms, hands, neck, face) on ________ are _________. The following are Dean’s categories:

Barber/hair stylist          Appropriate
Bank loan officer            No opinion
Grocery store clerk          Not Appropriate
Auto mechanic                
Nurse (RN)                   
Accountant                   
Bartender                    
Dentist                      
Stockbroker                  

39) How many years of work experience do you have?
   o 1-5
   o 5-10
   o 10-15
   o 15-20
   o 20+
   o I choose not to answer

40) What is your highest level of education?
   o High equivalency
   o High school diploma
   o Bachelor’s degree (BA or BS)
   o Master’s degree
   o PhD
   o MD
   o I choose not to answer

41) Sex/gender?
   o Female
   o Male
   o Intersex
   o Transgender
   o Alternative identity (specify) [ ]
   o I choose not to answer

42) What is your age?
43) What region of the country are you in?
   - New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut)
   - Mid-Atlantic (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey)
   - East North Central (Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio)
   - West North Central (Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa)
   - South Atlantic (Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida)
   - East South Central (Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama)
   - West Central (Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana)
   - I choose not to answer

44) Race (choose 1 or more):
   - African American or Black
   - American Indian or Alaska Native (specify tribal affiliation)
   - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
   - Cambodian
   - Hmong
   - Laotian
   - Vietnamese
   - Other Asian (please specify)
   - White
   - I choose not to answer

45) Ethnicity: Are you of Hispanic or Latino/a origin?
   - No
   - Yes, Cuban
   - Yes, Puerto Rican
   - Yes, Mexican American or Chicano/a
   - Yes, Other Hispanic or Latino/a
   - I choose not to answer
46) People are different in their sexual attraction to other people. Which best describes your feelings? Please select the option that best describes you:

- Only attracted to females
- Mostly attracted to females
- Equally attracted to females and males
- Mostly attracted to males
- Only attracted to males
- Not sure
- None of the above (please explain) [______________]
- I choose not to answer