THE EFFECTS OF TATTOO TYPE AND ATTRACTIVENESS ON TRUSTWORTHINESS AND EMPLOYMENT SUITABILITY

Tattoos

In Western society tattoos have historically been associated with negative or deviant groups of people such as carnival workers, sailors, bikers, convicts, and other marginalized groups (DeMello, 2000). Body modification has become more prominent and accepted in modern society and this has led to tattoos appearing more frequently and among a diverse group of people. Tattoos are becoming more popular among people from different age groups, occupations, and social classes (Stuppy, Armstrong, & Casals-Ariet, 1998 as cited in Seiter & Hatch, 2016). In fact, previous research has estimated that almost 1/4 of the population have at least one tattoo which has presumably increased in the past few years (Laumann & Derick, 2006 as cited in Zestcott et al. 2018). Tattoos have gained popularity in our society with some individuals showing a shift towards respectability for tattooed individuals, but for others the savage associations of tattooing continue (Burgess & Clark, 2010).

For example, Seiter and Hatch (2016) found that people with tattoos received lower ratings on different traits such as competence, character, and sociability compared to people without tattoos. They also found that although having tattoos affected perceptions of credibility for tattooed individuals, it did not affect participants' perceptions of attractiveness. Degelman and Price (2002) obtained similar results in their study when they showed participants a model with and without a tattoo on her arm and instructed them to rate her on 13 personal characteristics. They found that mean ratings for all 13 personal characteristics were more positive for the photo of the model without the tattoo. In contrast to Seiter and Hatch, they found that participants rated the model with the tattoo as less attractive, and they also rated her as less

honest compared to the model without the tattoo. These studies suggest that although body modifications like tattoos are more common in our society, they still affect people's judgements in a negative way causing people to believe that tattoos make you untrustworthy or unattractive (Seiter & Hatch, 2016; Timming & Perrett, 2017). This can cause people with visible body art to be treated in an unfair way in society.

The presence of visible tattoos has been shown to influence how individuals are perceived by health care providers and on professional men and women. Stuppy and her colleagues (1998) conducted a study to test this theory and found that in a healthcare setting physicians and registered nurses rated tattooed people less positively than did students. They found that female attitudes were more negative than men's and that adolescents with tattoos were rated more negative compared to adults with tattoos. These negative attitudes can have an impact on patient care. Tattooed individuals, especially adolescents, may be at risk of being negatively perceived when they seek health care. This study also highlighted that tattooed professional women were rated significantly more negative especially by female respondents. The less positive rating of tattooed professional women may reflect beliefs that being tattooed does not project a professional image and/or that tattoos are not feminine (Stuppy, Armstrong, & Casals-Ariet, 1998). This can influence the credibility of professionals that have visible body art by their coworkers and people in society.

Attractiveness

Attractiveness is an important trait that has led to benefits in modern society and throughout history. Attractiveness has been associated with traits such as youthfulness, thinness, color (redness), averageness, symmetry, health, masculine traits, and feminine traits (Little, 2014). Many people in our society have underlying agreements about what defines

attractiveness, but not everybody is attracted to the same types of characteristics because of individual preferences. Sex differences in attractiveness have shown that men prefer more youthful and attractive females in contrast to women who prefer slightly older men with earning potential (Buss, 1989 as cited in Little, 2014).

Studies have shown that people with more attractive faces are judged more positively on a host of dimensions, this is known as the "attractiveness halo" (Zebrowitz & Montepare, 2008). For example, Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972) conducted a study to determine whether physically attractive males and females are perceived to possess more socially desirable personality traits and expected to lead better lives compared to unattractive individuals. Dion and his colleagues confirmed their theory and found that attractive individuals were perceived as more socially desirable, perceived as having better occupational success, assumed to be happier, and more likely to find a partner for marriage compared to unattractive individuals. Similarly, Talamas, Mavor, and Perrett (2016) studied the perceived intelligence of students based on their attractiveness. There was a strong positive correlation between attractiveness and perceived intelligence ($r = 0.81$), attractiveness and perceived academic performance ($r = 0.74$) and attractiveness and perceived conscientiousness ($r = 0.81$). There was no relationship between attractiveness and actual academic performance. These studies confirm that being attractive can have benefits in society because attractiveness is associated with having numerous positive characteristics.

Trustworthiness

When there is no history of interaction between two people, such as with trust in strangers, trusters frequently resort to visual cues to evaluate trustworthiness (Timming & Perrett, 2017). Trustworthiness is an important trait to research because trusting others is an

important part of our society, and it is something we look for in others. Todorov, Pakrashi, and Oosterhof (2009) tested how time exposure affects judgments of trustworthiness. Photographs of actors were presented for 50, 100, or 500 ms and rated on trustworthiness followed by confidence ratings. The average correlation for each of the three-time exposures were significant suggesting that individuals can judge trustworthiness accurately in a short amount of time. As time increased so did the correlations of trustworthiness judgements. In a second experiment participants were unable to discriminate trustworthy from untrustworthy looking faces after 17 ms exposure, but after 33 ms exposure participants discriminated between these faces (Todorov, Pakrashi, & Oosterhof, 2009). Not only do we judge people on traits such as trustworthiness by using physical features, but this also happens at a very fast rate suggesting it is unconscious and people are unaware that they are doing this.

Timming and Perrett (2017) examined the effects of different genres of body art on the perceived trustworthiness of hypothetical men and women with tattoos. This study used photographs of tattoo 'flash' images that were in the genres Christianity, violence, nudity, nature, and tribal. Participants were presented with images of the flash art and asked how much they would trust a woman displaying this tattoo and how much they would trust a man displaying this tattoo. The results obtained showed that tattoos depicting images of violence and nudity resulted in the lowest levels of perceived trustworthiness; tattoos depicting images of Christianity and natural floral settings result in the highest levels of perceived trustworthiness; and tribal tattoos were rated as neutral on the trustworthiness spectrum. Women with most genres of tattoo were trusted less than men, yet women with nature-themed tattoos were trusted more than men with the same nature-themed tattoos which suggests that tattoos are a potentially gendered

phenomenon, with some genres being perceived as more appropriate for men than women, and vice versa (Timming & Perrett, 2017).

Impression formation

Although in society we are told not to judge a person by their appearance research has shown that we tend to do so even without our conscious awareness. For example, Walker et al (2011) manipulated facial information on photographs of Asian and Western faces to determine personality trait judgments that people make about others. They digitally manipulated the photographs by reconstructing the faces to look either more or less extreme with respect to a corresponding personality trait. They found that participants identified the six different personality traits (aggressiveness, extroversion, likeability, risk seeking, social skills, and trustworthiness) at a significant level. Naylor (2007) found similar results when studying impression formation on photographs of financial consultants. Naylor found a high correlation between participants' ratings of sales performance and actual sales performance. He also found that participants could accurately make judgements on personality traits of the individuals in the photographs if these characteristics were important for the domain in which the target was being judged (e.g., professionalism, confidence, and competence in financial sales). Therefore, people not only make judgements quickly, but they can also be accurate.

Perceptions of Tattoos in an Academic Environment

Thompson (2020) interviewed professors and found that they expressed how important the first few weeks of school are to establish their authority and a rapport with students before exposing any visible tattoos, because there are stereotypes of what a professor should look like, and what they should not look like. They also feel a loss of authenticity when they cover themselves up to hide these aspects of themselves. Although they cover themselves up to mold

into this stereotype of what a professor should look like they admit that the new generation of students do not view tattoos as deviant like older generations. They often find professors showing ink younger-appearing or more relatable, but they also do not realize the extent to which their professors conceal their tattoos to uphold the illusion that professors still do not collect extensive body art. This suggests that tattoos are becoming more acceptable in an academic setting (at least when teaching adults) but professors still feel the need to cover their tattoos to uphold this idea of professionalism in the academic setting.

In contrast to how tattoos are viewed in post-secondary institutions, students at younger schools might have a different opinion on visible body art. For example, Durkin and Houghton (2000) conducted a study to investigate whether children and adolescents associate more delinquent attributes to tattooed individuals compared to non-tattooed individuals. They used children aged 6 to 16 years of age and they were presented with a guessing game in which they had to make a series of judgments deciding which individual from a set of three illustrations of men best fit a brief verbal description. One of the three men in the illustrations had a visible tattoo on their arm (the tattoo was neutral with no direct symbolism associated with aggression). There was a statement which declared that one of the three men had committed either a negative, positive, or neutral act. The participants were then instructed to assign the given act (positive, negative, or neutral) to one of the three men per page.

Their results showed a strong main effect of stereotype evident in the increased likelihood that individuals with a tattoo were identified with the negative statements. Younger kids (ages 6-8) were more likely to select neutral or positive acts for tattooed stimuli whereas older kids (ages 10-12) were more likely to select negative acts for tattooed individuals. The kids aged 14 - 16 attributed fewer negative acts to the tattooed stimuli compared to the kids aged 10 –

12, but the negative stereotype scores were still significantly higher than positive scores. The researchers suggest that younger children may be less aware of detailed social stereotypes associated with physical markings which could explain why they rated the tattoo stimuli as more positive or neutral. These findings showed that the stereotype of tattooed people being involved in deviant behaviour can develop at a young age. Therefore, this could have implications for children's performance in certain contexts (Durkin & Houghton, 2000).

Mallozzi (2012) suggests that cultural models of teachers often include rhetorical bodily images of what is socially valued; however, real-life teachers may not match these images and can be vulnerable to critique. The cultural model of a teacher image in the United States is typically seen as a conservatively dressed and coiffed female who does not have body modifications such as tattoos (Mallozzi, 2012). Real life teachers whose bodily images are outside this cultural model more likely to be disregarded, marginalized as less than optimal, and deviant. Mallozzi examined the effects on students' perceptions of their teachers after being informed about their tattoos. Two participants (Erin and Gabbie) shared stories about their tattooed bodily images to their students and colleagues that reflected their personal lives. Erin believed that there was a change in how students thought of her after they realized she has tattoos. She explained that her students once considered her the kind of woman who existed as, "an uncomplicated teacher operating only to serve her classroom (a teacher who meshed with the typical model)" to being taken out of that cultural model category and out into "this different category". Therefore, according to Erin it was her tattooed body that allowed students to see the Erin's personal life. For Gabbie, she did not feel as though her students' perceptions of her had changed but instead her students visualizing her body with a tattoo was confirmation of the

personal life that her students already knew existed. Therefore, not all students would consider their teacher as being deviant or less capable of their job by having a tattoo.

Tattoos in the workplace

In Great Britain, The Equality Act 2010 states that employers are not allowed to discriminate against staff based on certain characteristics including age, disability, marriage, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Body art is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act which means that school leaders (and all employers) are allowed to make hiring decisions based on the presence of visible tattoos. They are also within their rights to implement a dress code that requires tattoos to be covered up on school premises. Students may be less likely to make judgements about people with tattoos because they are more common in society today, so they might be more likely to see tattoos on people they respect and admire. In contrast, their parents (who grew up when tattoos were less common and accepted) might be more judgemental ("Can Teachers have Tattoos? What does the Law Say?", n.d.).

Having visible tattoos can lead to negative consequences in society especially when looking for employment. For example, Burgess and Clark (2010) conducted a study to examine whether increased tattooing rates and styles have eradicated or altered traditional negative stereotypes of individuals with tattoos. They tested the perceived suitability of tattooed and non-tattooed individuals applying for a job either as a childcare worker or as a manager of an office. The study consisted of 300 participants who were a mixture of university students and volunteers between the ages of 18-58. The stimuli included two men and two women with tribal tattoos, cute tattoos, and no tattoos. The tattoos were chosen from a preliminary study in which participants grouped suns, dolphins, and small brightly colored shapes as cute tattoos, and black Celtic and black artistic designs as tribal tattoos. A second preliminary study used another group

of participants to rate the tattoos in both groups on aggressiveness to confirm that tattoos in the cute group were rated as less aggressive than tattoos in the tribal group. These two groups of tattoos were then used in the main study to test job suitability.

The results showed that there was a significant main effect for tattoo status in which those photographed without a tattoo and those photographed with a cute tattoo were rated as similarly suitable for the job for which they were applying. Individuals in the cute and no tattoo conditions were rated as more suitable for the job than those in the tribal tattoo condition. There was no significant main effect for job type between the office manager position and childcare worker position and no significant interactions were found. There was also a significant main effect of gender of the photographed person with women rated more suitable for the job than men, and a significant main effect of participant gender with men judging the photographed individuals to be less suitable for the job compared to women participants. Burgess and Clark (2010) suggest that since participants viewed tattooed individuals differently based on tattoo type (cute vs tribal) this could suggest that there is a changing stereotype of tattoos. If the tattoos were still seen as homogenous and deviant, participants should perceive all tattooed individuals more negatively than their non-tattooed counterparts, regardless of tattoo type.

Similar research has been done looking at the effects of visible tattoos and piercings on job applicant hireability ratings for customer facing jobs and non-customer facing jobs (Timming, Nickson, Re, & Perrett, 2017). Timming and his colleagues used photoshop to add tattoos and piercings to four male and four female faces (eight control faces had no tattoos or piercings). For the tattoo condition a star was placed on the lower left of the neck and for the piercing condition a silver “stud” was placed on the lower left-hand side the lip. In this study, 120 university students participated, and they were instructed to assume that they were recruiters

hiring someone from a group of job applicants. They were then asked to view each image and rate how likely they would be to hire the person on a 7-point scale (1= extremely unlikely to 7 = extremely likely). All the control and stimulus faces were presented to participants twice in two separate conditions: How likely they would be to hire the applicant for a customer-facing job (i.e., a cashier, a waiter or waitress, a teacher) and the second block asked participants to rate how likely they would be to hire the same faces for a non-customer-facing job (i.e., a chef, a factory worker, or a nighttime janitor).

They found that tattooed and pierced job applicants had lower hireability ratings compared to the control faces with no visible body art. This negative effect of body art on employment chances is reduced for job applicants seeking non-customer facing roles. In contrast, for jobs that require customer-facing roles the tattoo is associated with lower hireability ratings compared to the piercing. These results suggest that visible body art can potentially be a real impediment to employment depending on the job context, especially for tattoos that are easily noticed like on the face and neck area (Timming, Nickson, Re, & Perrett, 2017).

Baumann, Timming, & Gollan, (2016) sought to examine the gendered effects of body art on consumers' attitudes toward visibly tattooed employees using two job contexts: a surgeon and a mechanic. A circular black ‘tribal’ image was selected as the tattoo stimulus, and it was added to the right side of the neck of eight model photographs (four men and four women) using photoshop. A series of photographs were presented to respondents who were posing as consumers and asking them to rate each face on how likely they would want the employee depicted in the photograph to serve them in the front-line service encounter either as their doctor if they were going into a routine surgery or as a mechanic to get their vehicle fixed. The results showed that all tattooed faces were rated lower than non tattooed faces, all the faces were viewed

more positively as mechanics than surgeons, and male faces were rated higher than female faces regardless of tattoo or job context. In contrast to Burgess and Clark (2010), results also showed a significant interaction between job context and stimulus with the tattooed surgeons being rated much lower than the surgeons without a tattoo suggesting that job type is important. The tattooed mechanics were also rated lower than the mechanics without a tattoo, but the margin of difference is much smaller. Therefore, the tattoo is just a slight liability for a mechanic, but a major liability for a surgeon which suggests that job context is important when considering tattoo bias (Baumann, Timming, & Gollan, 2016). Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002) suggest that stereotype content may reflect separate dimensions of dislike and disrespect. Some out-group stereotypes (e.g., elderly people) elicit disrespect for perceived lack of competence; other out-group stereotypes elicit dislike for perceived lack of warmth (e. g., career women). Some out-groups may elicit both dislike and disrespect (e.g., welfare recipients). Therefore, individuals with tattoos may elicit feelings of dislike and disrespect from individuals who do not have tattoos causing these negative feelings and leading to negative stereotypes and perceptions about them.

In contrast to previous research (Burgess & Clark, 2010; Baumann, Timming, & Gollan, 2016) other studies have found that negative tattoos do not lead to more negative perceptions of employment suitability compared to positive ones (Tews, Stafford, & Kudler, 2020). Twes and his colleagues conducted a study to examine the effects negative content tattoos and positive content tattoos on employment suitability for entry level management positions. The dark tattoos included pictures of a horror mask, a serpent, or a skull and light tattoos consisted of a flower, a musical note, or the word “together” in a script font. The sample consisted of 253 individuals whose job responsibilities included recruiting and selecting employees. They were presented a photograph of a job candidate who was either female or male with no tattoo, a dark tattoo, or a

light tattoo. Employment suitability was assessed by perceived competence and providing a hiring recommendation. Perceived competence was assessed with the following five-items: competence, confidence, independence, competitiveness and intelligence (developed by Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Hiring recommendation was measured by using a two-item scale (developed by Higgins & Judge's, 2004) which included *I would recommend extending a job offer to this candidate* and *Overall, I evaluate this candidate positively* (Tews, Stafford, & Kudler, 2020).

Candidates with light tattoos were rated lower in perceived competence compared to candidates with dark tattoos or no tattoos. Tews and his colleagues suggest that this could be due to light tattoos as being perceived as juvenile or silly, whereas dark tattoos may have been viewed as more traditional. They also predicted that hiring managers would perceive dark tattoos more positively on male candidates relative to females and vise versa, but this was also not supported. A limitation to this study is that it focused on tattoos in the context of hiring individuals for entry-level management positions, so future research should examine tattoo bias in different employment contexts (Tews, Stafford, & Kudler, 2020). Another opportunity for future research is examining how tattoos interact with other candidate characteristics in influencing employment suitability, such as human capital, physical attractiveness, or sexual orientation.

Current study

The purpose of this study is to determine weather or not tattoo type and attractiveness affects perceived trustworthiness and employment suitability for educational assistants. There is a substantial amount of research on the social consequences of having a tattoo, the benefits of attractiveness in our society, and impression formation such as perceived trustworthiness.

Although these topics have been researched independently there has not been research combining the three variables. The rationale of this study is to examine how different styles of tattoos can influence how much a person can be trusted and whether this affects employment suitability for educational assistants. This study will look at different perceptions people make regarding character attributes about people with tattoos and also whether or not attractive people with these tattoos have an advantage over unattractive people with similar tattoos. Previous research has highlighted some of the negative views that hiring managers might hold about tattooed employees (Timming, 2015). These hiring managers expressed their perceptions of people with tattoos as looking lower-class, dirty, conveying questionable behaviour, and being horrific to look at. Several hiring managers also expressed concern that visibly tattooed employees would be viewed by customers to be 'abhorrent', 'repugnant', 'unsavoury' and 'untidy'. One individual suggested that customers might project a negative service experience based on a widely shared stereotype that tattooed people were 'thugs, druggies, and probably non-educated delinquents (Timming, 2015). Therefore, the tattooed models in this study were rated on several personal characteristics such as intelligence, personality traits such as conscientiousness, job suitability/hireability and attractiveness. This experiment only included female models with either a positive tattoo, a negative tattoo, or no tattoo to act as a control group. The tattoos have been chosen on the assumption that nature-themed (positive) images will be associated with more positive connotations that could reduce perceptions of a threat or harm while violence-themed (negative) images could lead to a perception of threat (Timming & Perrett, 2017).

Trustworthiness is typically measured by participants selecting trustworthy faces from different photos (Zaidel, Bhava, & Reis, 2003) and by rating faces on several different attributes

(Todorov, Pakrashi, & Oosterhof, 2009). Surveys and questionnaires have also been used to study attractiveness in previous research. In the current study attractiveness was measured using a 7-point scale where: (1) being very unattractive to (7) being very attractive. Trustworthiness was measured on a similar 7-point scale with (1) being very untrusting to (5) being very trusting.

There has been little attention committed to this topic in psychology because most early research on tattoos focuses on the presence or absence of tattoos rather than the image of the tattoo itself (Seiter & Hatch, 2016; Timming & Perrett, 2017) and recent research that has considered tattoo style has not considered attractiveness along with job suitability together. Research that has looked at the effects of tattoo style on job suitability alone and the presence or absence of tattoos separately have had contradictory results (Burgess & Clark, 2010; Baumann, Timming, & Gollan, 2016; Timming, Nickson, Re, & Perrett, 2017; Tews, Stafford, & Kudler, 2020). The current study casts a new light on the previous research that examined tattoos on only one dimension whereas this study examines different styles of tattoos in relation to attractiveness and hireability for a position working with children. Attractiveness is an important variable to consider because, as previously mentioned, positive attributes tend to be generalized to attractive people.

Hypothesis

The independent variable in this study is tattoo type and the levels are positive, negative, and no tattoo (control). The dependent variables in this study are perceived intelligence, job suitability/hireability, trustworthiness/honesty, and conscientiousness. Trustworthiness is operationally defined by a 7 - point scale from very untrusting to very trusting. Job suitability was assessed with questions regarding hiring recommendation on a two-item scale 1) I would recommend extending a job offer to this candidate 2) Overall I evaluate this candidate positively

(developed by Higgins & Judge's, 2004). Another question regarding job suitability asks the participant, *"I think that this person is suitable as working as an Educational Assistant in an elementary school?"* with (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. There was also a question asking, *"I would feel comfortable working with this candidate"* from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Personality characteristics such as very uncaring-very caring, very uncreative-very creative, very undetermined-very determined, very unmotivated-very motivated, very dishonest-very honest, very ungenerous- very generous, very unmysterious-very mysterious, and very unintelligent-very intelligent were asked on a seven-point scale which was slightly modified from the 5-point scale used by Degelman, and Price (2002). The big five personality traits were examined using the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) which is a very brief measure of the Big-Five personality domains (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). The TIPI instructs the person to rate how much someone is perceived from (1) disagree strongly to (7) agree strongly on the following personality traits: Extraverted/enthusiastic, critical/quarrelsome, dependable/self-disciplined, anxious/easily upset, open to new experiences/complex, reserved/quiet, sympathetic/warm, disorganized/careless, calm/ emotionally stable, and conventional/uncreative. Attractiveness ratings of the models were controlled by using a covariant analysis and the attractiveness ratings were obtained using a seven-point scale: (1) very unattractive to (7) very attractive. I hypothesize that models without tattoos (control) will be rated higher on trustworthiness and job suitability compared to models with tattoos (both positive or negative). I also hypothesize that participants will rate models with positive tattoos as more trustworthy and higher on job suitability compared to models with negative tattoos. I hypothesize that attractiveness will mediate the relationship between tattoo style, trustworthiness, and job suitability. For this reason, I am hypothesizing that in the control group (no tattoos) ratings will

be higher for trustworthiness and job suitability for women who are attractive compared to less attractive women with no tattoos. I predict that models with a negative tattoo who are rated as less attractive will have the lowest ratings of trustworthiness and job suitability, but for attractive models with a negative tattoo trustworthiness and job suitability ratings will increase. Therefore, I predict that attractive models with no tattoos with have the highest ratings, unattractive models with no tattoos will have the second highest. This will be followed by attractive models with positive tattoos, attractive models with negative tattoos, unattractive models with positive tattoos, and lastly the lowest scores are predicted to be unattractive models with negative tattoos.

Method

Participants

The sample of students for this study consisted of 35 individuals (7 male, 27 female, and 1 genderfluid) between the ages of 18 - 59 (M=22) years of age. The participants were all enrolled in at least one psychology course at Brandon University. They were informed that the purpose of this study is to see how details of a job resume influences perceptions of job suitability. The participants were instructed to act as hiring managers for an elementary school in which a full-time educational assistant is needed. They were instructed to read a job description for an educational assistant position, then review the resume of the person applying, and view their photograph to determine how suitable they perceive this candidate to be for the job. Two manipulation checks were used at the end of the questionnaire to verify that the tattoo was observed on the models' arm and whether they viewed this tattoo as positive or negative (yes / no format).

Stimuli

This study used 6 female models between the ages of 20 – 27. All models were dressed in a black short-sleeve shirt and standing in-front of a white plain wall. All models were

photographed with a neutral pose and a neutral facial expression with a tattoo edited onto their upper arm. Each of the five models had a photo being rated of themselves without a tattoo, with a dagger tattoo, a gun tattoo, a butterfly tattoo, and a flower tattoo (separately). Therefore, 30 different photographs were used, and each rated once (except for the control photos with no tattoos which were rated twice by two separate candidates). The models were informed about what their photographs were being used for, how they were edited, and a model release form was signed by each model.

Design

Using a single factor between subjects' design the participants were randomly assigned one of the photographs of the model. The independent variable being manipulated was tattoo style which was made up of positive tattoos, negative tattoos, and no tattoo (control group). There was two positive tattoo images (flower and butterfly) and two negative tattoo images (dagger and gun) that were edited onto the model's upper arm. The variables being measured were perceived trustworthiness/honesty, job suitability, comfort level working with this individual, and perceived personal characteristics/ personality type (caring, creativity, determination, motivation, honesty, generosity, mysteriousness, intelligence, extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and openness to experience). The dependent variables of interest were intelligence, job suitability/hireability, trustworthiness/honesty, conscientiousness and whether they would feel comfortable working with this individual. The other questions were added to 'mask' the true intention of the study. This is a between subjects' design because each participant rated a different photo and tattoo combination. Not all the participants rated the exact same model and tattoo combination because the 30 photographs of the models were randomly assigned to each of the participants, and each participant only viewed and rated one photograph.

The control photos of the model with no tattoo were rated twice by two different participants for the purpose of keeping each group equal.

Materials

This study used photographs of 6 different female models which were rated on several different attributes. Each photograph of the model was displayed in 5 different ways: Two different negative tattoos, two different positive tattoos, and one photograph with no tattoo to act as a control. The positive tattoos were simplistic images of a flower and butterfly. The negative tattoos in this experiment were simplistic images of a dagger and a gun. As mentioned in the "stimulus" section, the models were photographed in the same position, with the same shirt, and a neutral facial expression. The images were printed out along with the job description, resume, and questionnaire which was in bubble response format. The questions included 7 about personal characteristics, 5 about personality, 1 on attractiveness, 1 on trustworthiness, 4 on hireability/ job suitability, 1 on comfort level working with this candidate, 2 manipulation checks and 2 random questions to make sure that they are paying attention to how they are answering the questionnaire. There was also a personal questionnaire to gather information on the participants such as age, gender, ethnicity, presence or absence of tattoos, considering getting a tattoo, and having friends/ family members with multiple tattoos.

Procedure

Participants from Brandon University that volunteered to be apart of the study booked appointments selecting time slots that fit into their schedule to come and complete the trial. There was a maximum of 5 participants completing the study per slot and the experiment took place in the same room in the psychology department at the university. All the participants received the same instructions prior to the study stating that the purpose of this study was to see how details of a job resume influences perceptions of job suitability. The participants were

instructed to act as hiring managers for an elementary school in which a full-time educational assistant was needed. When the participants entered the room they signed in and were seated in one of the available spots, so that they were spread out evenly. Once they were seated they were then given a consent form and confidentiality agreement to read and sign. The participants were reminded that at any point in the study if they change their mind they do not have to continue. First, the participants received the job description for the educational assistant position and had a maximum of three minuets to read this. Next, they were given the resume of the job candidate and their photograph in which they had another three minuets to review these documents (on average it took the participants 1 minute to read the forms). After they reviewed the job description, resume, and photograph they were provided with the questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire was made up of 19 bubble form questions regarding questions about job suitability, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. It also contained 10 fill-in the blank for personality type (TIPI). On average, the questionnaire took about 10 minuets to compete.

After the participants completed the trial, they were given the personal assessment sheet to fill out to gather information about themselves (age, gender, ethnicity, if they have tattoos themselves, if they have considered getting a tattoo, and if their family members or friends have tattoos). This information can be beneficial when interpreting the results because people of different cultures or people apart of the tattoo community could potentially influence the outcome (Timming and Perrett, 2017). Likewise, it could potentially influence the results if a participant has considered getting a tattoo but has not done so yet. After the completion of the task and personal questionnaire the participants were then debriefed all together. The actual intention of the study was explained, so they were informed that the actual purpose of the current study was to assess whether or not tattoo stye and attractiveness influences trustworthiness

ratings and job suitability. The participants were thanked, and their professors were emailed, so the 1% participation mark in their psychology course could be provided. Trials for each participant from explanation to debriefing took no longer than 15 minuets.

Confounding variables

Some confounding variables have been considered when developing this experiment. Participants might have different judgements of tattoos if they have tattoos themselves; this can be accounted for by the self report questionnaire. It is assumed that participants with a tattoo would rate a model as more positive than a participant without a tattoo. It is also possible that participants judgements could potentially be influenced by the position of the tattoo on the model; this has been accounted for by placing the tattoo on the same position and keeping them the same size for every model. It is assumed that people with a tattoo on their arm would be rated as more positive than people with a tattoo on their face or neck area, so the upper arm was used for the tattoo location. Ethnicity of the participant was also accounted for in the personal questionnaire because different ethnic groups may perceive tattoos as sacred and very positive while in other cultures they are perceived as negative and deviant. To avoid the participants from catching on that the experiment was about tattoos each person only viewed and rated one photograph, so that they would not not know about multiple tattoos being used in the study.

Data Analysis

The design of this experiment is a single factor between-subject design, so the inferential statistical test used is a between-subjects ANOVA on multiple dependent variables. Attractiveness was controlled by using a covariate analysis. The relationship between tattoo style (positive/negative/none) was assessed with honesty, intelligence, trustworthiness, comfortability,

job suitability, hireability, and contentiousness to determine if there was a significant relationship between groups. Another between subjects ANOVA was used to analyze the relationship between perceived attractiveness of the model and each of the dependent variables (honesty, intelligence, trustworthiness, comfortability, job suitability, hireability, and contentiousness) to determine if there was a significant effect. Crosstabulation reports were done for the yes/ no questions *(I would extend a job offer to this candidate and overall I rate this candidate positively)* with attractiveness ratings and tattoo style separately.

Results

Main Analysis

The between subjects ANOVA which analyzed the effects of tattoo style and each of the dependent variables is summarized in Table 1. The results show that there is no significant effect of tattoo style on any of the dependent variables at the .05 significance level. The results are as follows: Honesty [F (2, 32) = 1.36, Mse =.88, p = .27], intelligence [F (2, 32) = .31, Mse=.97,p = .73], trustworthiness [F (2, 32) = 1.13, Mse=.63, p = .334], attractiveness [F (2, 32) = .46, Mse = 1.30, p = .64], comfortability [F (2, 32) =1.41, Mse=.96,p =.26], job suitability [F (2, 32) =.77, Mse=2.50, p =.47], hireability [F (2, 32) =.65, Mse=2.97, p =.53], and contentiousness [F (2, 32) =.33, Mse=.95,p =.72]. Therefore, the hypothesis that: 1) models without tattoos (control) would be rated higher on trustworthiness and job suitability compared to models with tattoos (both positive or negative) and 2) participants will rate models with positive tattoos as more trustworthy and higher on job suitability compared to models with negative tattoos was not supported. The prediction that attractive models with no tattoos will have the highest ratings, unattractive models with no tattoos will have the second highest rating, followed by attractive models with positive tattoos, attractive models with negative tattoos, unattractive models with

positive tattoos, and lastly the lowest scores are predicted to be unattractive models with negative tattoos was also not supported.

Table 1

Mean Ratings for Job Applicants as a Function of Tattoo

	Tattoo							
Variable	Control		Positive		Negative			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Honesty	5.0	.89	5.67	1.07	5.25	.97	1.36	.27
Intelligence	4.55	.93	4.83	1.11	4.83	.94	.31	.73
Trustworthiness	4.82	.87	5.25	.87	5.33	.89	1.13	.34
Attractiveness	4.82	1.40	5.25	.87	5.17	1.11	.46	.64
Comfortability	5.27	1.49	5.92	1.16	6.17	1.27	1.41	.26
Job Suitability	4.91	1.87	4.92	1.24	4.17	1.90	.77	.47
Contentiousness.	5.18	1.40	5.46	.94	5.08	1.14	.33	.72
Hireability	4.64	1.80	4.92	1.44	4.08	2.15	.65	.53

*p<.05.

Cross-tabulations of (*tattoo style x job offer*) and (*tattoo style x rate positively*) show no significant relationship but there are trends for the positive tattoo and negative tattoo condition to have more "yes" scores compared to the negative tattoo group, but chi-square tests show no significant relationship between tattoo style and job offer (X^2(2, N=35) = 3.05, *p*=.218) or tattoo style and positive ratings (X^2 (2, N=35) = 2.38, *p*=.305) shown in Table 2 & 3 respectively.

Table 2

Tattoo Style and Job Offer

	Job Offer	
Tattoo Style	*Yes*	*No*
Control	9	2
Positive	9	3
Negative	6	6

Note: Chi – square test shows no significant relationship between tattoo style and job offer.

X^2(2, N=35) = 3.05, *p*=.218

Table 3

Tattoo Style and Rate Positive

	Rate Positively	
Tattoo Style	*Yes*	*No*
Control	9	2
Positive	11	1
Negative	8	4

Note: Chi-Square test shows no significant relationship between tattoo style and rating the applicant positively.

$X^2(2, N=35) = 2.38$, $p=.305$

Supplemental Analysis

A multivariate ANOVA using attractiveness as a covariate resulted in a significant relationship between perceived attractiveness of the model for the dependent variables honesty ($p=.028$), trustworthiness ($p=.05$), comfortability ($p<.001$), job suitability ($p=.026$), hireability ($p=.046$), and contentiousness ($p<.001$) as seen in Table 4. There was no significant relationship for perceived attractiveness and perceived intelligence ($p= .47$). Pearson Correlation Coefficient shows that there is a small positive correlation between perceived attractiveness and intelligence ($r=.13$), a medium positive correlation between perceived attractiveness and honesty($r=.37$), job suitability ($r=.38$), hireability ($r=.34$), trustworthiness ($r=.47$), and a large positive correlation between perceived attractiveness and conscientiousness ($r=.54$) and comfortability ($r=.69$).

Table 4

Supplemental Analysis: Relationship Between Attractiveness on Different Dependent Measures

	Attractiveness		
Variables	*Correlation*	*F*	*Sig*
Honesty	.371	5.26	.028
Intelligence	.128	.55	.47
Trustworthiness	.465	9.08	.005
Comfortability	.686	29.26	<.001
Job Suitability	.375	5.41	.026
Contentiousness	.544	13.87	<.001
Hireability	.340	4.31	.046

*p<.05.

Chi-square results of perceived attractiveness of the candidate and extending a job offer to the candidate shows no significant relationship (X^2(5, N=35) = 7.54, *p*= .184), but there was a significant relationship between perceived attractiveness ratings and rating the job applicant positively (X^2(5, N=35) = 15.34, *p*= .009) as shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5

Attractiveness Ratings and Job Offer

	Job Offer		
Attractiveness	*Yes*	*No*	*Total*
2.00	1	0	1
3.00	0	1	0
4.00	4	5	9
5.00	8	1	9
6.00	10	3	13
7.00	1	1	2

Note: Chi-Square test shows no relationship between perceived attractiveness and job offer.

$$X^2(5, N = 35) = 7.54, p = .184$$

Table 6

Attractiveness Ratings and Rate Positively

	Rate Positively	
Attractiveness.	*Yes*	*No*
2.00	1	0
3.00	0	1
4.00	4	5
5.00	9	0
6.00	12	1
7.00	2	0

Note: Chi-square test shows a significant relationship between perceived attractiveness and rating the applicant positively.

$X^2(5, N=35) = 15.34$, $p = .009$

Mean attractiveness ratings between models (Table 7) were assessed and a ANOVA was conducted to determine whether models differed significantly on attractiveness, and there was a significant difference, F (5, 29) = 3.054, Mse = .966, p = .02. A follow up study was done using Tukey HSD (Table 8) which shows that there was actually not a lot of variability between models for attractiveness ratings. Models A, B, C, D, E were rated similar on attractiveness and models A, B, C, E, F were rated similar on attractiveness, so the difference is between the models D and F (model D was rated lower than model F). Therefore, the Tukey HSD results determine that all the models were rated comparable on attractiveness ratings suggesting that it is not actual attractiveness of the model that produces these results, but how attractive the rater perceives the model to be.

Table 7

Mean Attractiveness Ratings For Models

Model	*M*	*SD*
A	4.5	1.05
B	5.8	.75
C	5.0	.89
D	4.2	1.33
E	5.2	.98
F	6.0	.71

F (5, 29) = 3.054, Mse = .966, p = .025

Table 8

Tukey HSD: Follow-up Test for Attractiveness

Model	*N*	*Subset 1*	*Subset 2*
D	6	4.17	
A	6	4.50	4.50
C	6	5.00	5.00
E	6	5.17	5.17
B	6	5.83	5.83
F	5	.71	6.00
Sig		.071	.129

Manipulation checks were done at the end of the questionnaire to make sure that the participants noticed the tattoo on the applicant's arm and interpreted the tattoo as either positive or negative. A Chi-square test shows that participants were able to correctly identify that there was a tattoo (or no tattoo) on the applicant's arm (X^2 (2, N=35) = 2.13, p=.344) as shown in Table 9. In contrast, the Chi-square results for interpreting the tattoo as a positive or negative tattoo showed a significant relationship (X^2(1, N=24) = 6.75, p=.009) suggesting that participants were incorrectly interpreting the tattoo. As shown in Table 10, for participants who viewed positive tattoos (a butterfly or flower) there was only one error out of twelve whereas for negative tattoos (dagger or gun) there were seven errors out of twelve. Therefore, these errors occurred when someone viewed a dagger or gun and rated the image as a positive tattoo rather than a negative tattoo and vice versa.

Table 9

Manipulation Check 1

	Noticing the Tattoo	
Tattoo Style	*Correct*	*Incorrect*
Control	10	1
Positive	12	0
Negative	10	2

Table 10

Manipulation Check 2

	Interpretation of the Tattoo	
Tattoo Style	*Correct*	*Incorrect*
Positive	11	1
Negative	5	7

Note: Chi-square test shows no significant relationship between tattoo style and noticing the tattoo on the job applicant (X^2 (2, N=35) = 2.13, p=.344). Chi-square test shows a significant relationship between tattoo style and how the participants interpreted the tattoo (X^2 (1, N=24) = 6.75, p=.009).

Discussion

Although there was no significant effect of tattoo type on the dependent variables, we can not conclude that tattoo styles do not influence job suitability; Job suitability for each candidate should have been the same considering that each participant received the same job description and resume. More research would need to be done with a larger sample size. All six models were rated comparable on attractiveness, so it is not actual attractiveness of the model but how attractive the rater perceived the model to be. Although there was no significant effect of tattoo style, there was a significant effect of perceived attractiveness for the dependent variable's honesty, trustworthiness, comfortability, job suitability, hireability, and contentiousness. These results support the attractiveness halo in which we attribute more positive traits to individuals that we perceive to be physically attractive. Perceived attractiveness could be related to so many of these positive characteristics because facial appearance comes very early in the perceptual stream (Verhulst, Lodge, & Lavine, 2010) and when forming perceptions of others we use a constructive process in which we construct an image that fits in with what we already know

rather than using objective information ("Halo effect - The Decision Lab", 2022). Therefore, since we view attractiveness as positive we attribute other positive characteristics to the attractive person as well. These results can help explain how previous research has shown that more attractive individuals are perceived as more successful, happier, more likely to find a partner for marriage, more intelligent, and more contentious compared to unattractive individuals (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972; Talamas, Mavor & Perrett, 2016). In contrast to Talamas, Mavor, and Perrett (2016), our results showed no significant relationship between perceived attractiveness and perceived intelligence of the model.

Jackson, Hunter, and Hodge (1995) found that attractiveness effects were stronger for males compared to females and they were stronger when explicit information about competence was absent compared to when it was present. Research such as the one conducted by Talamas and his colleagues (2016), which looked at the perceived intelligence-attractiveness relationship did not include any explicit information of intelligence. The current study had participants view a fake resume before viewing the photograph of the candidate in which information such as previous jobs, skills, and education of the candidate was gathered before seeing their physical appearance. The participants could have potentially already had perceptions of the candidate's intelligence established before being influenced by the photograph, or their physical attractiveness, which could be responsible for the intelligence ratings not being influenced by perceived attractiveness. In contrast, the other variables such as honesty, trustworthiness, contentiousness, and comfortability would be less likely to be influenced by information on a resume. It is important to note that this is just a theory, so more research would need to be done to support this claim. This would still leave the question as to why job suitability and hireability were influenced by attractiveness ratings since the information on the resume are related to these

two variables as well. Another possibility for perceived intelligence not having a significant relationship with perceived attractiveness is that the relationship could still be there, but it is just not as strong of a relationship as the other variables. It is possible that with a larger sample size this relationship could potentially be significant since there is a small (but positive) correlation of r=.128 between the two variables.

Limitations and Future research

The present study does have some limitations which should be considered for future research in this area. Firstly, there was a small sample size of only 35 individuals who participated in this study. As shown in Table 2 & 3, trends do appear to be a little lower for extending a job offer and for rating the applicant positively when there is a negative tattoo image compared to when there is a positive tattoo image or no tattoo, but there is not a significant relationship so we would need to collect more data from more participants to see if this could potentially be significant. Future research should consider using a larger sample size as well as individuals from different age groups. Since the stereotypes of tattoos seem to be changing (Burgess & Clark, 2010) future research could look at the difference between views of younger individuals versus older individuals regarding tattoo types. A second limitation of this study involves the interpretation of tattoos. The dagger and gun tattoos were perceived as positive from over half of the people in the negative tattoo group (Table 10). This suggests that more research needs to be done to determine what a negative tattoo image would be. Future research could benefit from doing a pilot study with predicted positive and negative tattoo images to see what images are rated the most positive to most negative. For attractiveness ratings there was a trend to rate the applicant as positive, but not for extending the job offer. More research needs to be done to determine why they rate the applicant more positively and higher on the dependent

variables, but still do not extend the job offer. Lastly, another limitation is how well these results could be attributed to real life situations. The participants in this study were students asked to act as hiring managers (something most of them have probably never experienced before) which could have also influenced the results. Future research could try to replicate this study in a naturalistic environment with real hiring managers to see if the results would significantly differ.

Conclusion

Although we are told not to judge a book by its cover we often do so without our conscious awareness. Although there was no significant effect of tattoo styles on trustworthiness and job suitability for an educational assistant there was a significant relationship for these variables and perceived attractiveness. The findings of this study can lead to practical implications and can possibly be used in society. For example, these findings can draw attention to the bias and discrimination that people face due to their appearance when applying for a job. This information can make people aware of the judgements that they make from the first impressions of other people as well as how they might be perceived during an interview. Awareness of these false impressions can cause people to be more cautious when judging others by their appearance. It is also important that recruiters are conscious of their own reactions and potential stereotypes associated with body art (or perceived attractiveness) and take proactive steps to overcome any latent prejudices, for example, by participating in unconscious bias training (Timming & Perrett, 2017). Job seekers could potentially overcome this discrimination by being trained to understand the types of bias that occur during the hiring process to help bring them into conscious awareness and make accurate decisions on whether or not someone would be a successful candidate based on things such as experience and skill level rather than physical appearance. It is unlikely that we can completely stop these biases from occurring since they

happen unconsciously but being aware of them can help bring it to our conscious attention and change our actions towards them.

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