THE IMPRESSIONS FORMED ABOUT BODY-MODIFIED PROFESSIONALS

by

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of my PhD was to explore the impressions formed by clients and services users about tattooed professionals. This thesis makes original contributions to knowledge, specifically:

1. That clients accessing the services of a professional used the presence of a visible tattoo to initiate conversation or 'break the ice'.
2. That members of the public used the presence of a visible tattoo as both an icebreaker and a way to continue a conversation with a stranger.
3. Establishing an Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum along which tattoo observers are positioned, with such Allies having a point at which their acceptance of tattoos becomes conditional.

Abstract

Maxims such as 'first impressions last' and 'never judge a book by its cover' are common (Yu et al., 2014), with good reason. Impression formation research demonstrates that individuals rapidly attribute complex personal and moral characteristics to others based on limited information. Historically, visible tattoos have been associated with deviance and unprofessionalism, contributing to individuals being stigmatised as deviant or mentally ill (DeMello, 2000). While attitudes towards tattoos are changing, research examining their impact on perceptions of professionals is emerging (Ellis, 2015; Owens et al., 2023). This thesis addresses this gap by exploring how visible tattoos influence impression formation of professionals across selected occupations, and by examining the tension between perceptions of professionals as altruistic and trustworthy (knightly) and tattooing as a potential sign of deviance (knavish).

A mixed methods design was employed across four studies:

- Study One consisted of quantitative data collection. Participants (n=411) completed three validated measures, the Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire, the Moral Foundations Questionnaire, and the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale, in relation to a fictional professional named Sam, presented as one of six professions.
- Study Two adopted qualitative methods comprising semi-structured interviews with participants (n=12).
- Study Three participants (n=173) completed an original bespoke survey rating acceptance of visible tattoos differing in theme, size and body placement.
- Study Four participants' (n=46) completed a story about a fictional character ("Sam"), followed by a set of questions.

The research found profession-specific baseline image norms; however, visible tattoos did not produce statistically significant negative effects on overall impressions of professionals. Acceptance of tattooed professionals was conditional, influenced by tattoo quality, type, and bodily location. Participants' responses were conceptualised within an Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum, representing one original contribution to knowledge. The second original contribution was the finding that participants perceived tattoos as facilitating conversation, rather than signalling deviance.

This research challenges stigmatising assumptions linking tattoos with unprofessionalism. The findings have implications for recruitment practices and organisational policy and support a more refined understanding of professionalism in contemporary society.

Author's declaration

I, Stephanie Talliss-Foster declare that this thesis entitled THE IMPRESSIONS FORMED ABOUT BODY-MODIFIED PROFESSIONALS and the work presented in this thesis are both my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that this work was done wholly while in candidature for a research degree at this University. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Parts of this work have been presented as follows:

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Signed

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To **Elle:** As you once said to me: 'That's that then', and I won't ever forget that.

To **David**: Thank you for all the proof-reading: you have read this thesis almost as many times as I have.

Thank you to all the participants who took time to respond to the surveys, be interviewed, or write me a story. Without them this research would literally be nothing.

Dedication

To David: If this is a surprise to you, then I've failed as a human being. You are my everything. In you I found the one person I want to annoy for the rest of my life. We have real love not that movie nonsense. Thank you for inspiring me to be a better version of me and for always being on spider patrol. Can we get a dog yet?

As an anti-dedication, I'd like to set a plague on my biological family. You are as dead to me as I am to you.

THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis is presented in eight Chapters:

Chapter One: Provides a comprehensive review of the literature pertinent to this research, critically examining existing studies and identifying gaps that this study seeks to address. It introduces the research area, situates the study within its broader context, articulates the research problem, and highlights the aims and objectives. It also establishes the research questions and hypotheses and outlines the study's contribution to the academic discipline.

Chapter Two: Details and justifies the research design, outlining the methodological approaches and techniques employed, and discusses their appropriateness in addressing the research questions.

Chapter Three: Presents Study One, including design, participants, materials, procedure, ethical considerations, descriptive results, and inferential analysis.

Chapter Four: Presents Study Two, including the research design, participants, materials, procedure, ethical considerations, and Template Analysis of the interview data.

Chapter Five: Presents Study Three, including design, participants, materials, procedure, ethical considerations, descriptive results, and cluster analysis.

Chapter Six: Presents Study Four, including the research design, participants, materials, procedure, ethical considerations, and Template Analysis of the story completion data.

Chapter Seven: Offers a critical discussion of the findings from all four studies, synthesising the results and situating them within the broader academic context.

Chapter Eight: Draws informed conclusions based on the reviewed literature and the research findings. It evaluates the overall study, discusses its contributions and limitations, and offers recommendations for future research.

Author's notes:

1. Study One data collection occurred alongside and during UK government lockdowns in connection with the global COVID-19 Pandemic. Implications of the impact of this are addressed at relevant points throughout the thesis.

2. This thesis and its author are not advocating or discouraging any form of body modification, including tattoos.

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Glossary

For the purpose of this research, the following apply:

- Cicatrization/Scarification – the process of causing intentional skin irritation to promote the growth of scar tissue, usually patterned.

- Occupation – any activity that occupies a person's time.

- Occupational group – a collective of individuals undertaking the same or similar occupation.

- Piercing – a penetration of jewellery into openings made in such body areas as eyebrows, helix of the ears, lips, tongue, nose, navel, nipples, and genitals.

- Profession – an occupational group that is recognised by the society it functions in as having been professionalised.

- Professional – any person recognised as belonging to a profession.

- Professionalisation (professionalization – US spelling)– the strategic process carried out by an occupational group to establish itself as a recognised profession. At minimum, the process includes setting of learning and skill development standards, formulation, and communication of an agreed set of behavioural standards, societal recognition as a profession.

- Professionalism – the behavioural standards associated with and required by a profession of its members.

- Tattoo – is the indelible pigmentation of skin caused by inserting coloured ink or inks through punctures in the dermis.

- Tattooing – the process of creating punctures in the dermal layer to a depth of up to 0.5cm in order to introduce coloured ink or inks.

Chapter 1 Literature Review

To determine any impact on the impressions formed, the reviewed literature identifies the character traits most commonly associated with being a professional, impression formation and stereotyped image norms. A brief history of body modifications is provided, including how tattoos and tattooed people have been perceived both generally and in relation to occupations.

1.1 Defining Profession

The literature reviewed in this section summarises the historical background of professions, the process of an occupation becoming a profession, and the character traits associated with being a professional. This section will demonstrate the absence of an agreed set of skills, knowledge, and behavioural characteristics across all professions. As a result of the reviewed literature, a defined set of character traits associated with being a professional will be identified that will form the basis of data collection in this research.

1.1.1 What is a Profession?

Prior to the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Act (2022), the UK had no codified way of defining a profession. However, the Act does not specify the skills and knowledge required of professionals, leaving this to designated bodies representing the various professions to decide. Therefore, it is important to take account of the historic roots of how occupations became professions. Traditional conceptions of professions were strictly limited to any occupational position within society that required a university education; in law, medicine, or theology (Branden & Honingh, 2016; Crook, 2008; Dingwall & Lewis, 1983). Defining what constitutes an occupation is similarly challenging (Golledge, 1998; Hasselkus & Dickie, 2024; Pierce, 2001), being from any activity that occupies a person's time, through to any activity which is rewarded with some form of benefit

or payment. Within the UK, prior to the move to mass access to higher education that took place between the mid-1980s and 2010, university was an institution reserved for the upper classes in society (Lomas, 2002; McLernon, 2008; Poole et al., 2006; Santiago & Carvalho, 2008; and Welch, 2020). Such elitist education created a dichotomous division of labour: three traditional professions, versus occupational groups such as tradesmen (Farrugia, 1996). Whilst a university education was a core component of traditional definitional descriptions, this alone did not identify a profession. Subscription to a code of conduct or ethical practice and a commitment to the delivery of public service helped establish clear and exclusive boundaries between professionals and trade-based occupations. However, defining a profession is not as simple as it may at first seem, and the debate has been ongoing for over one hundred years (Flexner, 1915), with little in the way of agreed conclusion. Laffin (1986, p. 20) argues that considerable effort has been dedicated to establishing a universally accepted definition of the term 'profession,' yet these efforts have largely been unsuccessful. Suddaby and Muzio (2015, p. 26) noted that researchers have encountered difficulties in pinpointing characteristics that are genuinely exclusive to professions. The challenge in defining standardised or universally agreed professional characteristics stems from the diversity in professions (Dietrich & Roberts, 1999; Houle, 1981; and Vollmer & Mills, 1966) and trying to find a core of defining qualities.

Central to this thesis is the distinction between the concepts of *knightly* and *knavish* traits, originally proposed by Le Grand (1997) to describe contrasting assumptions about human motivation and behaviour. Knightly qualities reflect expectations of honesty, altruism, integrity and service to others, characteristics that are traditionally associated with professionalism and that underpin public trust in professional groups. In contrast, knavish qualities are associated with self-interest, opportunism and behaviour that may undermine confidence and trust.

Although these concepts were developed within discussions of public service and professional motivation, they provide a useful framework for understanding how impressions of professionals are formed.

This thesis argues that first impressions of professionals are shaped by the interaction between these competing expectations. Professionals are often expected to embody knightly qualities because of their role, expertise and ethical responsibilities. However, visible tattoos have historically been associated with stereotypes of deviance, risk-taking and non-conformity, characteristics that may be interpreted as more closely aligned with knavish assumptions. The presence of visible tattoos therefore has the potential to create tension between established expectations of professionalism and assumptions based on appearance. Throughout this research, the concepts of knightly and knavish are used as a conceptual framework to explore how participants interpret tattooed professionals and whether visible tattoos continue to influence perceptions of trustworthiness, professionalism and moral character.

1.1.2 Classifying Professions

Professions are defined according to either trait or functionalist theory (Evetts, 2003). Being largely stable, a trait describes individual differences in behaviour, thoughts, and feelings (Matthews, 2018). Flexner (1915) was one of the first to articulate a criterion-based approach encompassing primarily intellectual activities that involve substantial personal responsibility. Professionals draw their foundational knowledge from science and scholarship, transforming it into practical applications and exhibit methods that can be taught educationally, display tendencies towards self-organisation, and are increasingly motivated by altruistic aims (Flexner, 1915). Flexner's (1915) criteria provided a definition of profession as relevant at that time, but were broad and abstract, and, ultimately limited. For

example, Flexner (1915) offered little in terms of an explanation about how the knowledge was gained and shared or how the altruism was measured.

Millerson (1964) classified professionals using twenty-three traits, including (Millerson, 1964, p. 5):

- Skill based on theoretical knowledge and competence-based education.
- Adherence to a professional code of conduct.
- Indispensable, impartial, and altruistic service.
- Practice modified by generalised knowledge.
- Members prepared to contribute to professional development.
- Guaranteed service raising prestige securing employment and improving income.
- Application of individual judgment and principles to disciplined practice.
- Independence.
- Non-manual.
- Profits not dependent on capital.
- Recognised status.

As well as being at the heart of the UK Professional Qualifications Act (2022) the requirement to be university educated is a central component of traditional attempts to define professions (Flexner, 1915; Millerson, 1964; and Vollmer & Mills, 1966). However, Meinart et al. (1999), argued for functionalist theories of defining professions because a university education alone is insufficient to define a profession.

When both Flexner (1915) and Millerson (1964) were writing, trait theories of defining a traditional profession were popular because they were possible. Higher education remained out of reach to many, so the simplicity of trait theories in defining professions helped secure the approach more widely. However, as universities began to offer a wider range of opportunities to more people (Lewis,

2014), trait definitions became increasingly less fit for purpose in addressing the characteristics required to be a professional. As professional membership broadened, trait theory definitions declined due to their inability to adapt. A new way to define professions was needed (Johnson, 2016; Larson, 1977; and Parsons, 1939, 1951).

1.1.3 Sociological Explanations

Sociological explanations of professions situate the function being performed as the key factor in defining a profession. Parsons (1939, 1951) and later Johnson (1972, 2016) and Larson (1977) highlighted the need to account for contextual factors in arriving at a definition. Parsons (1939) used Weberian rational-legal social order in a capitalist economy to contextualise the status of professions in functionalist terms. He argued that professions and bureaucratic organisations require restricted power and functional specificity to operate. Whereas professions are organised collegially to achieve an agreed aim, bureaucracies need hierarchy, which undermines shared norms. According to Parsons (1939) society relies on professions to deliver crucial societal functions such as the advancement and practical application of science and liberal knowledge to the extent that their disruption would necessitate significant structural adjustments.

Parsons (1939) highlighted the authority that professionals exercise in society, albeit pervasively. He argued that a doctor issuing orders, and a lawyer giving advice are examples of authority based on technical competence as opposed to any superiority of status (Parsons, 1939). Similarly, Halliday (1987), Noordegraaf (2020), and Saks (2010) acknowledge the restrictive nature of professions, suggesting that professional groups enforce state-endorsed exclusionary practices in the marketplace (Saks, 2010, p. 887). The theme of control became a central aspect in subsequent functionalist definitions of professions. Johnson (1972, p. 45)

saw a profession as a "peculiar type of occupational control rather than an expression of the inherent nature of particular occupations". Abbott (1988) argued that professions evolved out of the medieval guilds as a system of legitimised competition for occupational jurisdiction over types of work. It is this ability to account for occupational competition and respond to prevailing market forces that affords functionalist theories of professions the ability to adapt to account for the emergence of modern professions. Currie et al., (2012) interviewed and observed medical professionals in eleven English National Health Service sites to explore how they maintain professional dominance. Specifically, Currie et al., (2012) sought to determine how specialist medical and nursing staff exert dominance through resource control and the delivery of services where new medical and nursing roles were introduced. They concluded that 'elite' professionals acted creatively to redefine and recreate institutional arrangements to enhance it and move beyond simple maintenance of status (Currie et al., 2012). Their findings support prior research relating to organisational power and professionals. Although they adopted Suddaby and Vale's (2011) idea of an elite professional, Currie et al., (2012) do not clearly explain or justify which roles were categorised as elite. This is a significant limitation of their research because, as the largest employer in the UK and one of the biggest globally (Bailey, 2020), the NHS is a multi-departmental organisation composed of differing hierarchical structures across clinical and administrative staff. Consequently, without specific knowledge about the NHS, a natural conclusion about what an elite professional is or might be is not possible and so any objective measurement of their findings, or attempt to replicate, will be likely impossible.

1.1.4 Contemporary Explanations

Professions are unstable, market-driven constructs reflective of the society in which they exist (Johnson, 2016). Thus, in evaluating the function served by

professions within society, functionalist theories of professions are more responsive to the changing economic and bureaucratic market, rather than focusing on a deterministic list of traits. This is because professional traits are subject to social contexts (Crook, 2008; and Dingwall & Lewis, 1983), whereas functionalist theories are more adaptable by virtue of assigning status to the function the occupation performs. Consequently, functionalist theories of professions are more adept than trait theory at justifying the inclusion of non-traditional, modern occupations in the unclearly defined group of professions (Johnson, 1972; 2016). However, centuries of traditional application of the term profession battle against ill-defined modern usage, being seemingly applied to any group earning an income from a recognised activity (Meeker & Haldeman, 2002). For example, the prevalence of electronic goods in most societies from medical care and education to entertainment means there is a high market value placed on the knowledge and skills of electricians. Therefore, applying functionalist theory, electrician is a profession as their skills are highly sought, whereas per traditionalist trait theory, electrician is not a profession but a trade, as the role fulfils few of the generally accepted criteria to be a profession.

Witz (1990) argued that the study of professions should move away from attempting a universal definition, towards their reconceptualisation as the analysis of specific occupations being distinct cases rather than examples of a broader, unchanging concept (Witz, 1990, p. 64). Brante (2010), Münte and Scheid (2017), and Olgiati (2010) support this view of moving away from a macro-level universal definition to more individualised micro-level explanations. This is because, whilst trait theory explanations support the existence of traditional professions, they do little to account for the modern-day application of the term. Similarly, functionalist explanations of professions respond well to emerging market forces but offer little in determining how an occupational group becomes a profession.

Recognising the nature of professional work was changing, Evetts (2011, 2013) redefined her earlier dichotomous approach to argue for a focus on the occupational value of the functions performed by professions. Evetts (2013) identified that professionals such as nurses, teachers, and doctors are increasingly employed in a variety of national and international organisations (commercial, retail, and professional service firms), meaning the discretion such professionals previously had to make decisions is diminishing (Adler et al., 2008; Brante, 2010). According to Evetts (2013) and Münte and Scheid (2017) the occupational value theory of professions recognises both trait and functionalist aspects, in more of a continuum than had previously been the case. Evetts (2011) contends that the component features of a profession encompass the knowledge attained and applied through expert judgment to highly complex circumstances, a degree of trust and confidence from the general public served by the profession set out in a code of conduct or ethics, a strong sense of purpose in the work being carried out, with clear boundaries enforcing the power held by the profession, and collegial association and support, leading to a self-defining control of the systems of work carried out by the profession.

Consequently, the occupational value theory of professions is more responsive to social change than other definitional frameworks. This is because it encompasses the value of the occupation at any given point and recognises newer and emerging professions that might otherwise have been overlooked or excluded (Brint, 2001; and Ruiz Ben, 2009). Evetts (2013, p. 781) emphasised the importance of understanding professions as structural, occupational, and institutional frameworks that manage work in response to the uncertainties inherent in modern, risk-oriented societies. For Evetts (2013), a risk society is one which requires professionals to deal extensively with risk. From birth, health, survival, social order, and the built environment, professionals assess risk and use their

knowledge and skill to manage any uncertainties impacting their clients. However, a noteworthy flaw in Evetts' (2013) explanation is that she does not adequately address the process by which a profession gains trust and confidence from the public. Further, their explanation is self-referential in that a risk society needs professionals to deal with risk, and a professional is an arrangement for dealing with risk (Evetts, 2013). That explanation does not address how the risks arise, who identifies the risk, and why only professionals are capable of dealing with the risk. As noted, trust, competence, and altruism (Brint, 2001; Evetts, 2011, 2013; and Ruiz Ben, 2009) are pivotal in professionals' identity construction.

Contrastingly, Faulconbridge and Muzio (2008) argue that the impact on professional values by societal contexts such as technology, globalisation, and competition is moderated by the interests and values of professionals. They suggest the status and power held by professionals in the contemporary workplace is of greater importance in determining professional values than the society in which they operate (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2008). On balance, the adaptable framework of assigning occupational value in defining professions provides a more complete explanation for the roles professionals occupy in society than relying solely on an incomplete account of the perceived power and status that professionals occupy (Freidson, 2001). Categorising professionals using occupational value theory supports their increasing use and employment within a variety of organisations. However, carrying out professional duties as an employee within an organisation redefines the nature of what it is to be professional. Therefore, the ability of an occupational group to be termed a profession is not by chance and requires strategic intervention through a coordinated process of professionalisation.

1.1.5 Gender and Professions

Whilst highlighting that, prior to the massification of higher education from the mid-1980s, university was for the upper classes (Lomas, 2002; McLernon, 2008; Poole et al., 2006; Santiago & Carvalho, 2008; and Welch, 2020) the process of becoming a professional through university education reinforces a further area of exclusionary control: gender. In England and Wales in 2020, females made up

- 38% of all practising barristers (Bar Standards Board, 2021).
- 75.8% of all teachers (Department for Education, 2020).
- 48% of licensed doctors (General Medical Council, 2020).
- 89% of registered midwives (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2021).
- 31% of ordained ministers (Church of England Research and Statistics, 2020).
- 33% of police officer (Allen & Zayed, 2021).

This shows that whilst doctors are the most equally gender-balanced profession (at 48% female), midwives are predominantly female (89%) but females make up less than one-third (31%) of ministers. Therefore, some professions demonstrate marked gender imbalance in their membership.

Barker (1998) argued that the impact of gender on intra- and inter-professional dynamics, has been overlooked. Despite the body of research into professions, professionalism, and professionalisation it historically ignored its own gender bias (Dinhof & Willems, 2024). Both Davies (1996) and Witz (1990, 1992) emphasised the failure to account for gender in discussions of professions and professionalism was an active closure. Meaning that although there were known gender differences in professions and professionalisation, these differences were deliberately excluded from research publications (Davies, 1996; and Witz, 1990, 1992). From the mid-1980s researchers broadened the scope of research into professional work to include the contribution of women, specifically their entry into

and progression within a profession (Bottero, 1992; Crompton & Sanderson, 1986; Riska & Wegar, 1993; and Spencer & Podmore, 1987).

The mid-1980s represents a pivotal point in the levels of women's engagement in professions. For example, Plickert and Sterling (2017) argued that more so in the last three decades than had been the case before the mid-1980s there had been an influx of women in legal practices due, in large part, to a more balanced gender profile of those entering law courses at higher education level. However, their research notes that despite gender balance on entry into the profession, the pipeline to more senior partner status is narrowed by factors linked to stereotypical gender roles, such as marriage and motherhood (Plickert & Sterling, 2017). Sommerlad (2016) contends that women lawyers faced systemic subordination from the time they began entering the profession in significant numbers during the early 1980s. Furthermore, this systemic subordination is also present in "other exclusively male domains" (Sommerlad, 2016, p. 62). Recent research not only acknowledged gender disparities in some professions but explored the reasons why (Serenko & Turel, 2021). It highlights a gender disparity in information technology careers that they suggest is a critical issue with national implications (Serenko & Turel, 2021). In addition, they used data obtained from 185 undergraduate students at a single US university to argue that the cause of the disparity can be traced to the influence of implicit gender identity on choice of course studied (Serenko & Turel, 2021). For Serenko and Turel (2021), implicit gender identity is the extent to which men and women acquaint themselves with stereotyped masculine and feminine gender groups. Although persuasive, their findings are limited, not least because the definitions of masculinity and femininity they used are not static or precisely defined concepts (Serenko & Turel, 2021). Also, the data are not longitudinal and from a limited cohort of students that are unlikely to be representative of all students in the US, or indeed across the world,

particularly as the funding for undergraduate study varies globally (Serenko & Turel, 2021).

Wald (2010) argued that any collegiate relationship professionals have with their clients has dissolved. This is because the increasing employment of professionals within corporate organisations has resulted in aggressively competitive relationships within and between those organisations in the pursuit of new clients. Research suggests that the change in organisational structure and competition for clients has been particularly damaging for female professionals (Abel, 2003; Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2008; and Hanlon, 1998). This is because the organisational structure has reconstituted, extended and fragmented the nature of professional work. That fragmentation allows for the creation of hierarchies within the work carried out by professionals (e.g. managing partner and partner, senior lecturer and lecturer, barrister and solicitor).

Less specialist, more routine work has often been assigned to female professionals (Dinhof & Willems, 2024; Harris, 2014; Sandefur, 2007; Susskind, 2013). Harris (2014) analysed the gender composition of UK barristers and found that women were over-represented in less prestigious specialisms and chambers, and made up 12.4% of prestigious Queens Counsel. Sommerlad (2016) carried out a series of interviews with female solicitors and barristers using a respondent-driven sampling method. Sommerlad's (2016) participants reported experiencing everyday sexism (where women were seen as being either men in skirts or pretty), and the need to generate a high level of billable hours. The competitive nature of the organisations rewarded longer working hours which is incompatible with caring responsibilities traditionally associated with women (Sommerlad, 2016). Having a limited sample size, initially recruited from contacts of the researcher then subsequently on a respondent-driven sampling method, the extent to which Sommerlad's (2016) findings can be replicated is questionable. Notwithstanding

this criticism, Sommerlad's (2016) findings are valid as they represent the views of individuals' experiences working in specialised populations that are hard to reach. Sommerlad (2016) argues that the modern position of professional women is the result of a complicated relationship between the role they carry out in a largely capitalist tertiary service industry and outdated gender stereotypes.

Dinhof and Willems (2024) and Glucksmann (1995) suggests that professionalism is a form of patriarchal authority that requires complete commitment which is incompatible with family and raising children. Krause (1996) proposes that it is this incompatibility that allows the professional patriarchy to consign female employees to mid-level ranks within an organisation. For some authors, the noted lack of coverage of gender within the professional discourse is paradoxical (Bennett, 2009; McLaughlin et al., 2012; Sommerlad, 2016; Tomlinson *et al., 2*013). Bennett (2009), and McLaughlin et al., (2012) see women's lack of control over their occupational position as a necessary function of the organisation and control of labour. Sommerlad (2016) argues that the structure of the organisation reinforces the professional patriarchy by seeing them as male-owned spaces, whilst assigning female professionals a shelf-life linked to family responsibilities. Sommerlad (2016, p. 77) asserts that the narrative of female domesticity continues to overshadow the discourse of female professionalism. This observation, however, does not pinpoint whether the narrative of female domesticity operates as a barrier to training and entry into a profession, or some other force restricting progression within a profession. Tomlinson et al., (2013) attempted to map where domesticity had the most notable impact on women's career progression.

Tomlinson et al., (2013) carried out interviews with 82 participants, including legal practitioners with the aim of establishing career progression and the meaning attached to the choices that had been made. From their results, Tomlinson et al.,

(2013) identified six strategies that mapped on to identifiable career progression points. Some strategies were typically associated with early-career professionals, with strategies involving compromise between career progression and starting or supporting a family being common amongst mid-career professionals (Tomlinson *et al., 2*013). Strategies common in later-stage professionals were often based around system reformation (Tomlinson *et al., 2*013).

Although not intended to be generalised beyond the practitioners sampled, Tomlinson et al., (2013) addressed the criticisms levelled at similar prior research in applying analytic categories that meant their findings were more capable of being applied to other organisations and disciplines. Subsequent research (Cohen & Dubeley, 2020) supports the six categories identified by Tomlinson et al., (2013), including the implication that if workers are not working long hours or are able to be competitive in obtaining new client business that they are not being professional or showing an expected level of professionalism. This means that professional occupations operate as patriarchal structures with working practices that encourage longer working hours incompatible with prioritising personal and family life. A limitation of the noted research is that it only takes into account the view of the professional (whether employed or self-employed) and does not include the views of clients, service-users, or customers about what it means to be professional. Professionalism and being a professional is explored in the following section.

1.1.6 Professional(ism)

Evetts (2003) observed that the term professional is used internationally to describe occupations including social workers, computer experts, and law enforcement officers. Acknowledging the myriad difficulties faced in setting and accepting a definition of a profession, attempts at defining 'professionalism' may seem naïve. Unsurprisingly, it seems as much has been written about the difficulties in articulating a definition of professionalism as has been written in the

pursuit of an elusive description (Englund, 1996; Fox, 1992; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996). Conceptualisations of professionalism have encompassed references to the strategies and rhetoric used to enhance status, salary, and working conditions (Hoyle, 1975, p. 315), as well as the perceived value of the services provided by members of the profession to those in positions of authority (Ozga, 1995, p. 22).

Freidson (2001, p. 17) provides a way to navigate the self-referential ambiguity surrounding contemporary definitions of professionals. He highlights two central concepts: the belief that certain work is highly specialised and inaccessible to those without appropriate training and experience, and the notion that such work cannot be "standardized or rationalized" (Freidson, 2001, p. 17). Svensson (2006) explains the need to encompass behavioural, cognitive, and contextual traits such as competence, trust, creativity, and knowledge in defining a professional, or, more accurately, the traits of professionalism. Professionals exert substantial power over any member of society who is not of their profession, and to belong to a profession implies a shared power, glory, and privilege.

The adherence to a profession's code of conduct or practice provides an objective measure of the skills, knowledge, and competency that a professional requires. Consequently, a measure of the individual's adherence to the code – a measure of their professionalism – is possible. However, a focus on professions as homogenous groups tends to overlook the influence of the individual within the group. As Power (2008, p. 1) contends, traditional understandings of professionalism are now insufficient. For example, Sachs (2003, p. 17) emphasises that in the context of teaching, it is crucial for the concept of professionalism to be defined and embraced by teachers themselves. This ownership ensures the term is meaningful to educators and effective in enhancing their public image and societal significance (Sachs, 2003, p. 17).

1.1.7 Personality and Professions

Given the centrality of a professions' code of conduct that members adhere to, it is unsurprising that admirable behavioural traits are articulated as a threshold. However, trait theories are unstable. Although the concept of "personality traits" is likely as ancient as human language itself (Fajkowska & Kreitler, 2018, p. 6), the belief that these traits remain unchanging over time is widely held (Matthews *et al., 2*009). However, such an assumption is open to challenge. For example, Roberts and Mroczek (2008) used longitudinal and cross-sectional research on aging to show that personality traits can change at any time throughout adulthood. Stieger et al., (2021) carried out large-scale randomised control trial nonclinical intervention research over three months and found that personality changes were observed during and following the intervention.

Whilst personality psychology approached genetic or biological factors as being inflexible or unchanging (Eysenck, 1972), Roberts (2018) challenges that assumption. For Eysenck (1972) personality is a function of biological brain structures so that the activation of the limbic system, responsible for controlling emotion, long-term memory, and motivation, and the reticular formation, responsible for consciousness and arousal, form an individual's personality. However, Roberts (2018) argued that personality traits are malleable according to complex biological responses to changing environmental influences (Roberts, 2018). Fajkowska (2018) suggested biological traits are more stable than those associated with environmental influence. Kreitler (2018) clarified that biological structures underpinning personality traits do not change, but how they manifest does. Therefore, observable personality traits are unstable as they are subject to change. Any assumption that traits are fixed is unsupported either in a short-term period of targeted intervention, or more naturally across an adult's lifespan.

Professionals, or perhaps more accurately the traits of professionalism, can be seen to include:

- Learning (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1964; Corfield, 1995; Waddington, 1985),
- Trust (Di Luzio, 2006; Evetts et al., 2006; Illich et al., 1977; Le Grand, 1997; Martin et al., 2004; Millerson, 1964; Pfadenhauser, 2006; Sachs, 2003; Svensson, 2006),
- Societal status (Fulton, 1984),
- Altruism (Flexner, 1915),
- Adherence to a code of conduct (Millerson, 1964).

In summary, the typifying traits of professions are positively skewed and 'knightly': knowledge, status, and trust underpinning a social service function. However, within professionalism research, there is a lack of client, service-user, or customer views about what a professional is.

1.2 Social Cognition and Social Identity: Of Knights and Knaves

Sachs (2003) argued that professionals must embrace their professionalism to enhance social significance and public image. Whilst sensible, Sachs (2003) views exposed a worrisome concept: professionals' social importance and public image need improving. Paramount to the study of professionals is an understanding of how individuals come together to form a group, and how impressions about the group status are curated and managed. This section will cover social identity and social cognition theories as the basis for creating impressions of professionals as a high-status in-group with 'knightly' qualities. This section will address how the low-status in-group 'knavish' qualities associated with body modifications can undermine and threaten the impressions formed about professionals.

1.2.1 Social Identity Theories

Tajfel (1978) proposed Social Identity Theory to explain how membership of social groups influence individuals' perceptions of themselves and others. Moreover, the identification with a group serves to reinforce and safeguard an individual's self-identity (Tajfel, 1978). To create a group identity there must be the categorisation of the 'in-group' as juxtaposed against an 'out-group'. This 'them and us' categorisation applies a positive filter on the activities and behaviour of the in-group, with a corresponding negative view of the 'out-group' category (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971). Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals define themselves in relation to the social groups they belong to, which influences their attitudes and behaviours towards others. Tajfel (1978) argued that Social Identity Theory operates through three interrelated psychological processes. Individuals first categorise themselves and others into social groups. They then identify with groups that contribute positively to their sense of self before comparing their own group with others in ways that enhance its status. These processes influence not only how people understand themselves, but also how they evaluate members of other groups. Membership of a valued social group therefore contributes to self-esteem, encouraging individuals to maintain the group's positive reputation and distinctiveness. Whilst Tajfel's (1978) original theory explains why individuals identify with social groups, later developments by Turner et al., (1987) argued that the extent to which a particular social identity becomes salient depends upon the social context. Individuals possess multiple social identities simultaneously, but different identities become psychologically prominent according to the situation in which they find themselves. Professional identity may therefore become more or less salient depending upon the audience, organisational environment or social interaction.

According to Brown (2020, p. 10), Social Identity Theory can be viewed as the systematic study of group dynamics, and that in various intergroup situations individuals adopt characteristics of their group affiliations to inform their thoughts and behaviours. As a result, they begin to behave as members of a group rather than as independent individuals, prompting what is known as the 'search for positive distinctiveness' (Brown, 2020, p. 10). From a psychological perspective, categorising people into social groups is a normal and efficient cognitive process. Rather than evaluating every individual from first principles, people use readily available information to place others into meaningful categories. This allows rapid judgments to be made when information is limited or incomplete. Although this process is efficient, it also means that expectations associated with a particular group can influence perceptions of individual group members. Applied to professional groups, in-group membership involves reinforcing the knightly qualities associated with professional identity. Social Identity Theory provides a useful psychological framework for understanding professions because it explains how group membership shapes both identity and behaviour. Rather than viewing professionalism simply as a collection of individual characteristics, the theory suggests that professionals come to understand themselves through membership of a recognised professional group. Professional identity is not simply acquired through formal qualification but develops through ongoing socialisation into the norms, values and behaviours of the profession. Professional education, workplace cultures and interactions with colleagues reinforce shared understandings of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct. Social Identity Theory therefore provides a framework for understanding professionalism as an evolving group process rather than a fixed individual attribute. Through this process, professionals adopt the values, norms and expected behaviours associated with their professional group. Professionalism can therefore be understood not only as something

individuals possess, but also as something that is learned, reinforced and maintained through group membership. Social groups also develop shared ideas about what a typical member of the group looks like and how they behave. These shared expectations, often referred to as group prototypes, help people recognise who belongs to a group and whether an individual appears representative of it. Within professions, these prototypes may include expectations relating to appearance, behaviour, communication and ethical conduct. Individuals who differ from these expectations may be viewed as less representative of the profession, even where their competence and qualifications are identical. Importantly, group prototypes are neither static nor universally shared. They evolve over time in response to cultural change, organisational expectations and increasing diversity within professions. Consequently, perceptions of who appears representative of a profession may differ between observers and across generations.

An important implication of Social Identity Theory is that group identity is reinforced through symbols, behaviours and shared norms that distinguish members from non-members. These visible and behavioural markers help people recognise who belongs to the group and what the group represents. Professional qualifications, standards of behaviour, dress, language and codes of conduct all act as signals of membership and communicate expectations about competence and trustworthiness. Where an individual's appearance or behaviour differs from these established expectations, observers may question whether that person represents the values traditionally associated with the profession. Social Identity Theory therefore provides a useful framework for understanding how impressions of professionals may be influenced by visible characteristics. Because appearance is processed rapidly during first encounters, visible characteristics frequently function as heuristic cues from which observers infer professionalism before direct evidence of competence becomes available. As applied to professional groups, the

belonging to the in-group involves emphasising and reinforcing the knightly qualities. In professional settings, this suggests that members of a profession have a psychological investment in maintaining the profession's public standing and the values associated with it. This underpins both the power and status aspects of Millerson's (1964) and Wilensky's (1964) requirements for the professionalisation of an occupation addressed above.

Research has extended Social Identity Theory to address the disparity between being in-group and being out-group with social privilege. Whilst Social Identity Theory explains how group membership strengthens professional identity, it also highlights the boundaries that distinguish members from non-members. These boundaries have wider social consequences because they influence access to status, authority and legitimacy. Consequently, later researchers have extended the theory to consider how group identities intersect with privilege and power. Hearn (2012) defined social privilege as the positionality of an individual towards a group, a social location that understands that "…all persons have a position in relation to others" within a society or group (Hearn, 2012, p. 42). Spanierman and Smith (2017) suggest that the first step to closing the gap between groups of differing social privilege begins with awareness of the privilege. This, alongside other actions such as self-reflection about individual positionality can lead to effective allyship and, ultimately, meaningful organisational change (Spanierman & Smith, 2017, pp.608-610). From this perspective, professional groups may possess forms of social privilege and social capital. Recognising this positionality may enable members of professions to engage more effectively in allyship and organisational change. However, social privilege should not be regarded as uniformly experienced across all members of a profession. Characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age and visible appearance may influence the extent to which individuals experience the status typically associated with professional membership.

Social Identity Theory also provides an important foundation for understanding impression formation. Rather than evaluating unfamiliar individuals in isolation, people draw upon existing knowledge of social groups when interpreting behaviour and appearance. Consequently, judgments about professionals are influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by the extent to which they appear to conform to expectations associated with their professional group. This relationship between social categorisation and impression formation provides an important rationale for the present study, which explores whether visible appearance influences perceptions of professionalism. However, whilst Social Identity Theory explains how professional identities are formed and maintained, it provides only a partial explanation of how observers construct impressions during brief encounters. The theory has also been criticised for emphasising group membership over individual differences, with personality, previous experience and situational factors also influencing behaviour. These limitations support the inclusion of Social Cognition Theory, which provides a complementary explanation of the cognitive processes involved in impression formation.

Taken together, Social Identity Theory suggests that professionalism is understood not solely through competence or qualifications but also through the social meanings attached to professional group membership. If observers rely upon group prototypes and visible markers when identifying professionals, appearance may become an important component of professional judgment. The next section therefore considers the cognitive mechanisms through which these judgments are formed.

1.2.2 Social Cognition Theories

Social cognition encompasses the cognitive and emotional processes that are necessary to interpret the behaviours of others. It is the facility an individual has to

create relational representations with other people in order to inform and guide social interaction and individual and group behaviour (Adolphs, 2003; Javed & Charles, 2018). Where people have similar interests they form a group, with subsequent behaviour being an extrapolation of the individual contribution. Within this grouping, one individual's actions could influence the entire group. Members of social groups undergoing similar circumstances will experience behaviour, emotion and cognition of that event according to socially engaged psychological states (Bogardus, 1924; Dunlap, 1925; Ellwood, 1925; Faris, 1925; Judd, 1926; Kantor, 1922; and McDougall, 1920). This aligns with Millerson's (1964) expectation that professions must demonstrate competence, adherence to a code of conduct, deliver guaranteed service that raises prestige, and have recognised status (Millerson, 1964, p.5). Together, Social Identity Theory and Social Cognition Theory provide complementary explanations for professional behaviour. The former focuses on how professionals develop and maintain a shared professional identity, whereas the latter explains how members of the public interpret the behaviours and characteristics displayed by professionals. This distinction is important because the present study is concerned not only with how professionalism is understood within professions, but also how professionalism is recognised and judged by others.

1.2.3 Expectations of Professional Behaviour

These psychological perspectives provide the foundation for examining the characteristics that professions seek to promote and protect through definitions of professional behaviour. Definitions of professionalism have attempted to reflect quality of service (Hoyle, 2001). Traditional and contemporary definitions tend toward the more noble attributes: Knowledge, skill, public service, adherence to a code of practice, and trust-engendering altruism. To be worthy of the trust placed in them, professionals are expected to act in the best interests of their client and to treat any information obtained as confidential. Halliday (1987) notes, professionals

are expected not to use the knowledge gained for fraudulent purposes. The reward for such behaviour may include high social status, and privileges including autonomy and authority. Researchers (Illich et al., 1977; Le Grand, 1997; Martin et al., 2004) observe these traits as being the admirable, 'knightly' side of professions. Evetts et al., (2006, p. 111) suggest that being recognised as a profession carries a certain prestige, making it highly desirable for an occupation to attain professional status. Whether trait or functionalist theories, definitions promote positive attributes of public service, knowledge, adherence to a code of behavioural conduct, and trustworthiness. This supports Millerson's (1964) criteria regarding guaranteed service that raises prestige. By extension, any conduct that devalues prestige would be unacceptable to the wider profession. This prestige, however, can be seen as a self-serving strategy. The societal recognition of professions and professionals creates an imbalance of power that the professional group is likely to want to reinforce.

Horney (1967) argued that those in positions of power often construct an ideology that reinforces and legitimises their dominance. This ideology portrays the differences of the less powerful as evidence of their inferiority, asserting that these differences are either inherent, fundamental, or divinely ordained (Horney, 1967). The independent, autonomous application of the knowledge and skills attained for the benefit of the public enables professionals to exert a substantial amount of control over society. That control permeates through the foundations of any profession. At the micro-level, professionals are the masters of their own destiny: they can choose the client work they wish to undertake, set the service expectations, timescales for completion and the fee charged for their endeavours. At a meso-level professional groups can set, and re-set the standards of educational attainment expected of new members, any terms of probation and acceptable behavioural standards, continuing professional development and

reasons for exclusion. At a macro-level, professional groups can exert meaningful influence on legislation, policymaking, and governance. However, as Evetts (2011) contends, the social order of modern professions requires maintenance to remain stable in a fragile, market-driven capitalist economy. Extending and applying Weber's (1947) rational-legal social order theories to professionals, Parsons (1951) believes that in a capitalist market economy, professions are instrumental in maintaining a stable balance in the structure and order of society. Although Parsons (1951) has been widely criticised for linking professions to functionalism (Dingwall & Lewis, 1983) the context in which professions operate – the function they perform in hierarchical markets – is critical. The balance of power, then, is key to the existence of professions.

Knaves are those with no actions or other end than their own self-interest (Le Grand, 1997). In occupational research, knaves represent an antithesis to the admirable knightly qualities underpinning many professional definitions, with increased focus on professions and their members displaying overtly knavish characteristics (Taylor-Gooby et al., 2000; Martin et al., 2004; and Welshman, 2007). At the very least, professionals may need to improve their public image (Sachs, 2003).

For any profession-led diktat to be accepted there must be a benefit enjoyed on a relatively widespread level so that society does not begin to question the power held. Whilst discussions in numerous sectors regarding breaking down silos that are said to exist are currently popular (Bechelli et al., 2014; and Worthy & Yestrebsky, 2018), professions could be accused of building higher, stronger, and deeper silos that reinforce their separation and otherness from occupational groups. Horney (1967) theorises that power ideologies serve to obscure or deny the existence of underlying conflicts and struggles. Perhaps this is the reason for the enduring, yet at times subtly implicit, definitions of professions as being

knightly in persuasion. Indeed, Sardar (2000) believes that any thought of knights acting knavishly is not easily borne. As Le Grand (1997) articulates that while the strategies of a deceitful individual may pose minimal risk if the majority are trustworthy, the approach of an honest person could lead to significant consequences if they are surrounded by deceitful individuals. To maintain the balance therefore, it is imperative that the individual professionals continue to subscribe to the code of conduct for the profession: that they act with professionalism as assigned to their profession.

However, trust, as a psychological relationship measure, is ever-changing in a world that can establish or destroy credibility within a single news cycle, particularly for traditional professions. High-profile scrutiny of individuals such as serial-killing General Practitioner Dr Harold Shipman (Baker, 2004) or rogue breast surgeon Dr Ian Paterson (Iacobucci, 2020), numerous US Catholic Priests identified in the Spotlight campaign of 2002 (Maher et al., 2007), and the courtroom tactics of a defence barrister that contributed to a witness suicide (Sherwood, 2018) highlight how the actions of one can undermine trust in the many. Trust is therefore central to professional definitions. Therefore, anything that threatens to challenge the public's perception of a profession acting 'knightly' has the potential to undermine the trust and confidence placed in the whole profession.

The division of labour within an organisation requires that the individuals perform duties that are within their skill set, ability level, and even contractual obligations. Mintzberg, (1979) contends that professionals exist within established yet diverse organisations where bureaucratic processes are secondary to the expert roles of the professional (e.g. accountancy, legal advisory services, universities, and medical practices). Such organisations are influenced by the professional body that regulates the actions of the professional. Segregating the duties and roles that can be performed only by professionals in an organisation sets the foundations for the

silos that reinforce their otherness, reinforcing the more knavish qualities of professionalism. Yet according to Horney (1967), organisations would wish to downplay the disparity resulting from the presence of professionals. French and Raven (1958) and Yukl (2004) suggest an organisation's overarching objectives propagate influences, such as the distribution of rewards and the legitimisation of power disparities, which may contribute to the ability to "conceal the existence of a struggle" (Horney, 1967, p. 56). The imbalance lies in the division of labour and the social standing of professions. Arguably, it is the education and learning of skill that fosters in the trainee professional a sense of the scarcity of knowledge and behavioural standards, and how to reinforce the public's perception of that profession. Collectively, the psychological literature suggests that perceptions of professionalism are shaped by more than objective measures of knowledge or competence. Individuals routinely categorise others into social groups, apply existing expectations about those groups and form impressions using limited information. Therefore, visible characteristics that either reinforce or challenge expectations of what a professional should look like may influence perceptions before any interaction has taken place. These psychological processes provide an important theoretical foundation for the present research, which examines whether visible tattoos influence perceptions of professional character traits. The maintenance of these professional expectations depends not only on the behaviour of professionals themselves, but also on how those behaviours are interpreted by others. Consequently, understanding professionalism requires consideration of the psychological processes involved in the formation of first impressions, trust and credibility.

1.3 Impression Formation

This section critically analyses social psychological, philosophical, sociological, and anthropological research relating to impression formation and

impression management. Reference to relevant research, including as relevant to tattoos, will be made.

Impression formation represents the point at which professional identity and public perception intersect. Although professions establish standards of behaviour intended to communicate competence, integrity and trustworthiness, members of the public rarely possess complete information when evaluating an individual professional. Instead, they rely on rapid psychological judgments that draw upon visible cues, previous experience and cognitive shortcuts. Understanding these processes is therefore fundamental to the present research.

Allport (1924) proposed that social behaviour encompasses responses to various forms of human interaction, such as language, gestures, and movements, and that social psychology serves as a framework for examining and understanding these behaviours in context. These reactions to social stimuli are influenced by the impressions formed as a result of the interaction. There are dual aspects associated with studying social interactions: the presentation of the self in order to manage how the individual is perceived by others and the impression formed through the interaction. Whether or not accurate, it is that impression that will influence subsequent responses and interactions. The process of impression formation is closely linked to social categorisation. Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals use observable characteristics to assign others to social groups, allowing rapid judgments to be made in situations where complete information is unavailable (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Visible characteristics therefore become important sources of information during initial encounters. In professional contexts, appearance cues may contribute to assumptions regarding competence, professionalism and trustworthiness, thereby influencing the impressions formed before verbal communication has occurred.

People spontaneously form impressions of others (Uleman and Moskowitz (1994, p. 490). These spontaneous impressions have a lasting impact on decisions made about colleagues, partners, and friends (Park and Judd, 1989). Asch (1946) recruited 166 undergraduate students and presented them with personality trait information about an individual categorised as either warm or cold, before asking them to provide an impression of the individual being described. Asch (1946) identified a primacy effect in the use of descriptive language so that the warm or cold description influenced the impressions formed by participants. The first impressions formed as a result of the language used provided a schema for the subsequent interpretation of descriptive language (Bargh, 1982; Hastie & Kumar, 1979; Higgins et al., 1977).

Research has considered real-world influences, such as cognitive distractions on how impressions are formed. Biernat et al. (2003) noted that the use of stereotypes can be heightened in pressured situations, such as with a restricted time exposure to the observed target. The observer relies on cognitive short-cuts in the form of image-norm stereotype expectations to create an impression of the target (Biernat et al., 2003). Some visual cues are predominant in the formation of impressions. For example, the wearing of a recognisable occupational uniform, such as religious dress or police uniform, can lead to impressions about not only the occupation of the wearer, but also personality traits. From a Social Identity Theory perspective, occupational uniforms function as powerful symbols of group membership. They provide readily identifiable cues that allow observers to categorise individuals into recognised professional groups and to activate associated expectations and stereotypes. Consequently, uniforms may communicate not only occupational status but also assumptions regarding values, behaviours and levels of competence. The same categorisation processes may occur in relation to other visible appearance characteristics, including tattoos,

particularly when such characteristics challenge or reinforce established expectations of professional identity.

People are predisposed to judge others, to make inferences about personality traits that are held to be consistent predictors of specific behaviour (Asch, 1946; Bar et al., 2006; Pazhoohi & Burriss, 2016; and van't Wout & Sanfey, 2008). Such judgments, however, go beyond the information given (Bruner, 1957) and are more than a passive register of the environment (Wittenbrink et al., 1997). Vrij (1997) considered the colour of sports team clothing and the perceived level of aggression of the wearer, finding that those wearing black clothing were seen to be more aggressive than those wearing light clothes. Similarly, Blumhagen (1979) identified that the significance of the general physician's white coat represented a range of perceived personality traits including an almost supernatural ability to heal, and supreme authority.

Chandler et al. (2012) noted that impressions are comfortably formed with sufficient information, but where there is insufficient information, the perceiver will be hesitant to reach a judgment. In this regard, image norms (such as occupational uniform) are sufficient to increase comfort in reaching judgments about occupation and personality. Image norms as a cognitive schema facilitate the interpretation and judgment of stimulus information including its attributes and associations (Brewer & Nakamura, 1984; Fiske & Linville, 1980; Hastie, 1981; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977; and Taylor & Crocker, 1980). There are two broad schematic approaches to information processing: top-down or bottom-up (Abelson, 1981; Bobrow & Norman, 1975; and Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977). Bottom-up processing is concerned with data at an individual level and is broadly associated with perception and hypothesis-testing. Knowledge is created through attention to specific detail; for example, touching a flame with bare skin for the first time results in pain, a second attempt to verify the experience will be more cautious and confirm the

impression formed. Top-down processing, in contrast, involves forming knowledge through a conceptual, theory-driven approach that draws on previous experiences and information. According to Fiske and Taylor (1991, p. 98), individuals streamline reality by retaining knowledge in a broad, integrated form rather than preserving each original experience individually and in its unrefined state. Clearly the types of schemas have their own comparable advantages and disadvantages. It is important, therefore, to establish when and why one schema is activated over another.

Proponents of the top-down schema include Gestalt psychologists Brunswik (1956) and Koffka (1935). They contend that the interpretive nature of the brain allows for constructive perceptions of stimuli. The configuration or Gestalt alters the meaning of component attributes. The unearthing of Gestalt configurations contributed to the work of both Asch (1946) and Heider (1944). Asch provided one group of participants with a brief list of descriptive adjectives, which included "intelligent, skilful, industrious, warm, determined, practical, cautious" (Asch, 1946, p. 262). The second group of participants heard the same list but with 'warm' being replaced by 'cold' (Asch, 1946). Asch (1946) found that the 'warm' trait group described the other listed traits in a more positive manner than those in the 'cold' trait group. Asch (1946, p. 284) argued that impressions of others are constructed holistically, with each trait deriving its meaning and significance from its integration within the overall perception. As he explains, a trait's full content and impact become apparent only when considered as part of the entire impression (Asch, 1946, p. 284). Subsequently, Asch (1946) demonstrated that impressions vary depending on how peripheral a trait quality is. Whilst the results for 'warm-cold' were found to be strong, results for the substitutions of 'polite-blunt' were weaker. For Asch (1946) certain characteristics were more centrally relevant to forming impressions, rendering other personality traits as peripheral. Asch (1946)

proposed two, diametrically opposed models to explain the results obtained: algebraic and configural. The algebraic model sees each individual trait being scrutinised and evaluated separately from all other traits. The separate evaluations are ultimately combined into a summarised evaluation. The configural model holds that an overall, unified impression is formed and that individual traits are attended to based on the unified impression: traits are interpreted to fit the overall impression formed. Asch's (1946) research represented a turning point in what had previously been deemed social perception (Jones, 1998). By using a straightforward process drawing on conflicting information, Asch argued for a dynamic interaction between the trait qualities presented, and the impressions formed. Although Asch (1946) established that some traits are central to impression formation whilst others were only peripherally important, he did not identify why this effect occurred. Asch's (1946) research prompted numerous further studies, although it was some time before any insight was offered as to why a particular trait in a given context is more central than others (Jones, 1998).

Heider (1944) theorised the relationship between cognitive organisation and attitudes suggesting a phenomenal and perceivable causality. The underlying cause of an event (especially motives) are the framing context of the environment which gives meaning to what is being experienced. External information, the 'thing', is interpreted through an established organisational process, the 'medium' (Boell & Hoof, 2015). In 1958, Heider summarised his prior work, highlighting the importance of everyday, basic 'common sense' psychology. For Heider, there was value in recording the psychological understanding of the person on the street to reach conclusions about their other behaviour and expectations. Heider (1958) believed that in this naïve form, organised psychology could evaluate the experiences of the everyday and take verbal explanations to identify reasons for actions. Heider (1958) highlighted a pivotal concept in understanding behaviour,

asserting that individuals tend to attribute actions either to their own beliefs, motives, or intentions, or to external environmental factors. This distinction underscored the tendency of people to interpret behaviour through the lens of personal experience and perspective, thereby shaping their understanding of social interactions and relationships (Heider, 1958). This insight meant more accurate predictions could be made about how perceptions are made, and how they can be influenced by mood, social groups, and prior information.

The acknowledgement of common sense or collective understanding pioneered by Heider (1958) demonstrated a level of accessibility in social psychology which impression formation research embodies. Researchers in the field are quite willing to recount old adages such as 'first impressions last' and 'never judge a book by its cover' (Yu et al., 2014), with apparently good reason. Decades of impression formation research has revealed startling insight into the depth of attributes people will assign to a stranger based on casual or fleeting interaction or observation. According to Jones (1998), the challenge for research was determining external or internal causal attribution, leading to the exploration of implicit impression formation.

1.3.1 Implicit Impression Formation

Uleman et al. (2005, p. 362) argued that how people come to know other people is complex and formed of "a thousand strands". They explain implicit impressions as being those not formed of an explicit memory, but informing our ability to describe someone as behaving 'out of character' even though people may have never seen them act that way before. Uleman et al. (2005, p. 362) describe these influences as "preverbal, nonepisodic remnants in memory resulting from our observations of, interactions with, and inferences about others." These remnants of memory are associated with other individuals in ways that inform our explicit thoughts, emotions, and behaviours towards them, all without necessitating their

conscious emergence into awareness (Uleman et al., 2005, p.362). Implicitly formed impressions move to being explicit when they are articulated. Similarly, explicitly held impressions move to being implicit when they function outside current awareness because we are unable to remember. A particular difficulty in establishing the distinction is a fundamental facet of human behaviour: people may say one thing but behave in another way. The discrepancy is not necessarily due to a lie, although that may sometimes be the case, but because implicit and explicit impressions are at odds with each other. The challenge for research is distinguishing between implicit and explicit impressions when individuals may not even be aware of implicit impressions being formed. One explanation for the formation of implicit impressions can be found in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory proposes that individuals routinely categorise both themselves and others into social groups in order to simplify and make sense of the social world. These categories may be based on occupation, age, gender, appearance, social status, or other visible characteristics. Once categorisation has occurred, individuals draw upon existing knowledge, assumptions and stereotypes associated with that group. As a consequence, impressions may be formed rapidly and with limited information, often before conscious reflection has taken place. The link to other people is key within social psychology, as noted by von Zimmerman and Richardson (2018), humans synchronise their behaviour automatically, often without intention. For example, when two or more people are put together, they will spontaneously coordinate posture, step together when walking, and mimic both facial expressions and other movements. Katevas et al. (2015) examined the walking patterns of people walking in groups of two or three people. They found that non-verbal signals (head orientation, gaze, and gestures) significantly impacted gait synchronisation. Such joined action relies on the ability of the people interacting to predict and adopt the actions of the other. They also

need to be able to share representations to integrate their own behaviour, as well as the behaviour of their partner. This synchrony occurs at a neural level (Winston et al., 2002). Fairhurst et al., (2013) similarly see cooperation between pairs as being necessary in achieving common goals, with success dependent upon perceiving and responding to the actions of the other person in the pair. Fairhurst et al., (2013) used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to measure brain activity during paired behaviour with a virtualised partner. They concluded that synchronisation in paired activity leads to an increase in prosocial thoughts and behaviour. Ultimately, successful social interaction depends on an individual's ability to perceive and predict the behaviours of another person. This effect is also found in group situations, whereby an ability to coordinate behaviour leads to an increase in social cohesion (Jackson et al., 2018). However, a limitation of both Fairhurst et al., (2013) and Jackson et al., (2018), is that they both overlook that mimicry occurs outside of prosocial settings in parasitic and predatory human behaviour (Jones, 2014; and Van Der Zee et al., 2021). In the context of the current research, the ability to successfully predict behaviours is directly tied to the cognitive shortcuts that a client applies when determining whether to use the services of a professional who they do not otherwise know.

The role of social categorisation is particularly important when considering visible aspects of appearance. Social Identity Theory suggests that observable characteristics often function as markers of group membership, allowing individuals to make rapid judgments about others in situations where information is incomplete. Whilst such categorisations can facilitate efficient social interaction, they also increase the likelihood that stereotypes and preconceived expectations will influence perception. Consequently, appearance-based characteristics may become disproportionately influential during initial encounters, despite having little objective relationship with an individual's actual abilities, values, or behaviour.

Impression formation research has focused on the implicit inferences people make about a range of character traits based on the physical attractiveness of the person being observed. Feingold (1992) conducted meta-analytic research into physical attractiveness and associated characteristics. He found that people judged to be physically attractive are more often perceived as being socially adept, intelligent, mentally healthy, sociable, sexually warm, and dominant than those judged to be physically unattractive (Feingold, 1992). Although Feingold's (1992) conclusion that what is beautiful is good has been widely cited, it over-emphasised the expectation that those judged to be physically attractive will have the more positive traits noted. In reality, those judged to be more physically attractive were no more likely to have the traits noted than those not judged to be physically attractive (Lorenzo et al., 2010). Further, although Eagly et al., (1991) support the 'what is beautiful is good' notion, the magnitude of the effect was weaker than previously reported. The effect persists regardless of whether the face being observed is natural or an artificial composite representation of numerous facial features (Eagly et al., 1991). According to implicit personality theory, once a person perceives someone else as being physically attractive, they will assign characteristics that are associated with being attractive to that person (Ashmore, 1981; and Pendry & Macrae, 1994). Penton-Voak et al. (2006) asked individuals to complete a self-report questionnaire evaluating various behavioural traits and then asked observers to view either the true photograph or a composite image and rate the perceived behavioural traits of the person being observed. They found modest accuracy between the self-report and observer ratings of behavioural traits for emotional stability and openness to experience (Penton-Voak et al., 2006). As well as ascribing greater positive behavioural traits to those rated as physically attractive, research has identified that they enjoy greater advantage in a range of areas. Biddle and Hamermesh (1994) report that people rated as good-looking

earn up to 10% more salary than people rated as either average- or plain-looking. They (Biddle & Hamermesh, 1994) argue that this 'beauty premium' means good-looking people are more likely to work in an industry where beauty is required (Hamermesh, 2011; and Zebrowitz, 1999). The beauty premium extends to the concept of baby-facedness. Zebrowitz and Lee (1999) researched the impact of both baby-facedness and attractiveness on outcomes for either delinquent or non-delinquent boys. They recruited 206 undergraduate participants to act as judges in viewing photographs of boys aged 12 to 17, some of whom were convicted of criminal offences. They found that that whilst more attractive or baby-faced boys experience more favourable outcomes than average-looking or mature-faced counterparts, this effect reverses where the level of delinquency is higher (Zebrowitz & Lee, 1999). Zebrowitz and Lee (1999) concluded that there is a contrast effect that works as a threshold. Once the threshold is reached, the beauty premium acts as a negative influencer as the delinquent boy is acting against expectation based on looks (Zebrowitz & Lee, 1999). They argued that the benign expectations of intelligence, skill, and sociability have been violated and attract harsher and more severe outcomes as a result (Zebrowitz & Lee, 1999). The Zebrowitz and Lee (1999) research has three distinct flaws. The average age of the participants was not given but is likely to have been close to the ages of the older photographs observed. Secondly, the ecological validity of the research was low: participants were acting in the role of judge meaning there were no real-world consequences for the people whose faces they rated. Finally, participants viewed nearly 500 images of faces. There is no mention of exploration of the participant-judges becoming desensitised or any activity taken to counter this (such as randomising the order in which images were presented). Despite these methodological flaws, baby-facedness impacts perceptions of trustworthiness.

In summary, as an uncontrolled response, people are predisposed to form impressions of others using whatever information is available. Social Identity Theory suggests that much of this information is interpreted through processes of social categorisation, whereby individuals use visible characteristics to assign others to particular social groups. These categorisations provide a framework through which expectations regarding behaviour and personality are formed. As a result, appearance cues may influence impressions not because they provide direct evidence of character, but because they activate pre-existing beliefs associated with particular social identities.

Without attending to it, we rate others in terms of physical attractiveness, and assign notational expectations accordingly, so that those who are physically attractive to us are assumed to also be behaviourally more attractive. In a demonstration of sociability, we orient our own behaviour in such a way as to replicate what we observe in others. However, where someone judged to be physically attractive behaves in a contrary way to the characteristics they have been assigned, or where a person's behaviour is unpredictable, the ability to connect is lost and the attendant judgment is notably more negative. Consequently, the value of being able to accurately judge trust is critical to effective impression formation.

In the context of the current research, Social Identity Theory provides a useful explanation for how visible tattoos may influence perceptions of professionals. If observers use appearance cues to categorise professionals into particular social groups, tattoos may activate assumptions that either align with or challenge existing expectations of professionalism, competence and trustworthiness. The extent to which such expectations influence impression formation is therefore directly relevant to research questions one and two.

1.3.2 Centrality of Trust

The ability to establish a stranger as either friend or foe is an evolutionary imperative, as such an evaluation relies on the ability to determine the trustworthiness of another person. However, the ability to judge trustworthiness is not only useful in assessing threat, but research has also demonstrated trustworthiness and perceived morality as being central traits in determining desirability. Cottrell et al., (2007) devised three experiments to determine the characteristics identified as being most desirable across a series of interdependent groups and relationships, for example, work teams, sports teams, colleagues, and family. In all cases, participants identified trustworthiness as being the most important characteristic in others, regardless of group task or goal. From this, Cottrell et al. (2007) concluded that trust is the foundation of human sociality. Separate research has established the same centrality of trust in forming impressions of others (Brambilla et al., 2011; 2012; 2019; and Ellemers & van den Bos, 2012). Being able to accurately determine another person's trustworthiness is therefore central to impression formation.

van 't Wout and Sanfey (2008) investigated the importance of facial signals in the perception of social intentions in relation to social behaviour. Building on prior research using explicit social information about another person, such as moral status, van 't Wout and Sanfey (2008) designed an experiment using The Trust Game from Berg et al. (1995) to determine whether implicit social facial cues could be used to influence strategic decision-making. The game involved two anonymous players attempting to increase an initial endowment of $10 by trusting the other player to share a portion of their endowment. Players had nothing other than social facial cues to make their decisions. Of the 32 players, 30 chose to share their endowment. Berg et al. (1995) argued that this finding demonstrates a level of trust between the sender and responder. A key criticism of the *Trust Game* is that

participants are not basing their actions in trusting someone else using their own money. In effect, through their involvement in the *Trust Game,* participants are not guaranteed to win money, but they are guaranteed not to lose any of their own money. Consequently, Berg et al. (1995) methodologically failed to take into account participants' motivational factors when playing the *Trust Game*. Examining the impact of facial social cues, van 't Wout & Sanfey (2008), used a slightly modified version of the *Trust Game*.

In van 't Wout & Sanfey's (2008) version, participants only ever took the role of sender, but played repeatedly with 79 different previously unencountered game partners. The responders in this version received quadruple the amount sent but responded in a pre-determined manner: for any amount of $5 or higher sent, half the time they would repay 50% of that received and half the time they would send nothing back; for any amount of $4 or lower sent they sent nothing back. Ahead of each game the sender was presented with a picture of their game partner. Following the game, participants were asked to rate for trustworthiness a series of photographs that included images of their game partners as well as non-partner images. Van 't Wout & Sanfey (2008) found both a positive correlation between the normed trustworthiness ratings of partners and the subjective trustworthiness ratings and the amount of money sent. Recognising that other facial social cues may be influencing participants, van 't Wout & Sanfey (2008) evaluated the impact of perceived attractiveness on trustworthiness, finding that although attractiveness is linked to trustworthiness, there was no observed correlation between attractiveness and the amount of money sent. Similar experiments with variations on the Trust Game rules have elicited comparable results (Campellone & Kring, 2013; Chang et al., 2010; and DeBruine, 2002). Research therefore supports fMRI investigations linking determinations of trustworthiness to brain areas associated with emotion (Fairhurst et al., 2013; Santos et al., 2016; Winston et al., 2002). As

an emotionally triggered neural response, research has sought to determine how quickly implicit impressions are formed. As noted, people demonstrably form impressions of others based on minimal implicit information. While initial studies indicated that the formation of impressions occurs spontaneously (Uleman & Moskowitz, 1994), subsequent research has investigated the minimum duration of exposure to a facial image necessary for an impression to be established. The speed with which these judgments occur has important implications for understanding professional appearance. Fiske and Taylor (1991) argue that individuals often function as cognitive misers, relying on existing schemas and cognitive shortcuts to efficiently process social information. Rather than engaging in detailed evaluation, observers draw upon readily available cues when forming impressions of unfamiliar individuals. Whilst efficient, this process may increase reliance on stereotypes and socially shared expectations, particularly when limited information is available.

In a series of five experiments Willis and Todorov (2006) controlled the amount of time participants were exposed to previously unfamiliar faces. Participants were exposed to faces for between 100ms and 1,000ms, before being asked to judge the target image for either attractiveness, aggression, competence, trustworthiness, or likeability (Willis & Todorov, 2006). Participants formed impressions after 100ms. Between 100-500ms the impressions formed became more negative while the level of confidence in those judgments increased (Willis & Todorov, 2006). They concluded that the additional exposure time had not influenced the impression formed but boosted confidence in those judgments. Whilst the empirical evidence supports the immediacy of impression formation, a more recent approach to impression formation research has investigated the enduring nature of initial judgments.

Per Willis and Todorov (2006), people make judgments very quickly, with additional time merely reinforcing confidence levels in those initial judgments. The impact on initial impressions by further knowledge is a developing area of research. Campellone and Kring (2013) used an adapted version of the *Trust Game* noted above. Participants played with partners under two conditions: with or without partner's facial displays of emotion. In their findings, facial displays of anger took priority over other factors in making the decision not to trust someone else (Campellone & Kring, 2013). The same was not true for facial displays of happiness. Campellone and Kring (2013) concluded that all available information is used when making decisions, and where facial behaviour and emotional information is incongruent with existing beliefs, current behaviour is prioritised in making a decision to trust (see also, Chang et al., 2010).

Brambilla et al. (2019) investigated the extent to which the first impressions formed are updated in the context of new information. Developing Campellone and Kring's (2013) the 'angry/happy' emotional overlay, Brambilla et al. (2019) presented participants with information about an individual and asked them to articulate their first impressions. Participants were then presented with further information connected to either sociability, morality or competence that was incongruent with the earlier information. For example, participants were presented an image of a stranger with accompanying information, such as 'he lied to his parents', and asked to articulate their first impressions. Participants were then presented other information, such as '*he is friendly to his colleagues*', and asked to re-rate the impressions formed. More so than either competence or sociability, morality was viewed as being the most informative behavioural characteristic, having the biggest impact on changed impressions (Brambilla et al., 2019). They concluded that although first impressions are formed spontaneously, they can be updated or completely modified by the presentation of new information that goes

to the morality of the individual being perceived (Brambilla et al., 2019). The prominence of morality in impression updating highlights the close relationship between trustworthiness and professional identity. Individuals are often willing to revise initial assumptions when presented with information that directly informs moral character because morality provides insight into how another person is likely to behave towards others. Within professional settings, perceptions of honesty, integrity and ethical conduct may therefore be especially influential. This is particularly relevant in professions characterised by vulnerability, dependency and unequal knowledge relationships, where members of the public must often place trust in individuals whose expertise they are unable to independently verify.

In the context of the current study, the literature suggests that trustworthiness is likely to represent a central dimension through which professionals are evaluated. Research demonstrates that individuals form trust-related judgments rapidly, often on the basis of limited information, and that these judgments are influenced by social categorisation processes, stereotypes and appearance-based cues. Information regarding a target's profession may activate expectations associated with a recognised occupational group, whilst visible tattoos may provide additional information that either reinforces or challenges those expectations. The extent to which tattoos influence perceptions of trustworthiness, professionalism and related character traits is therefore directly relevant to understanding how impressions of professionals are formed. Furthermore, the finding that impressions can be modified when new information becomes available suggests that the interaction between occupational identity and tattoo characteristics may be more complex than a simple positive or negative evaluation. Examining these processes contributes directly to research questions one, two and three.

1.3.3 Stereotypes and Groups

The concept of stereotypes pre-dates its definition. Writing in the late 1700s, and as a key influencer of later philosophers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau, Degérando noted the limitations of travellers who were quick to judge an entire nation on the basis of a few representatives. It was Degérando's opinion that judgments about the character of others were reached after observing a few of their actions, the interactions were unsystematic, random, and without any regard for the social context (Jahoda, 2007). However, the term 'stereotype' did not emerge until the Twentieth Century.

Stereotype research within social psychology owes much to the work of Henri Tajfel, beginning in 1969 with the *Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice*. Written before the widespread influence of social cognition within social psychology, and reflecting the climate of the time, *Cognitive Aspects*, explored why prejudice might occur readily in some, and less so in others. Nevertheless, Tajfel (1981) laid the groundwork for his subsequent Social Identity Theory. According to Tajfel, (1978) an individual's pride and self-esteem are relational concepts derived from the groups they identify with. An individual can belong to many groups in their lifetime and will derive their identity from their position within the group, ('ingroup'), to the extent that anyone not within the same group as the individual is an outsider, ('outgroup'). Therefore, a stereotype is a cognitive shortcut, an over-simplification of a person or an aspect of a person's character based on limited information. Further, the impression formed is usually in favour of the ingroup and more negative about the outgroup's characteristics. The significance of Social Identity Theory for impression formation lies in its explanation of how limited information can generate meaningful social judgments. Once an individual has been categorised as belonging to a particular group, characteristics associated with that group may be applied to the individual, regardless of whether those characteristics

are accurate. Consequently, stereotypes serve an important cognitive function by reducing uncertainty and simplifying social interactions. However, this efficiency comes at the cost of potentially inaccurate judgments, particularly when group membership is inferred from visible appearance cues rather than direct knowledge of the individual.

In order for an individual to identify with a group, there must be an overlap between the individual's self-concept and the collective identity of the group: the greater the overlap, the higher the level of social identification. The lower the level of overlap, the less likely an individual will identify with that group, to the point that they see themselves as apart from the group, 'outgroup'. Within professional contexts, occupational identity may function as a particularly salient social category. Members of the public often possess expectations regarding the appearance, behaviour and values of recognised professions, even where they have limited direct experience of those professions. Such expectations may influence the interpretation of other visible characteristics. As a result, appearance cues that either align with or diverge from established professional norms may affect the impressions formed about an individual professional and the extent to which they are perceived as representative of the occupational group.

More recent research has considered the cohesive nature of groups. It has been suggested that social groups in particular must fulfil two functions to survive: they must achieve a cohesion within the group, whilst managing the impression portrayed to anyone outside the group (von Zimmerman & Richardson, 2018). The nature of the managed impression to outsiders can either be as a recruitment tool to attract new members or to serve as a warning to potential enemies (von Zimmerman & Richardson, 2018). Lickel et al., (2001) examined the nature of social groups, determining that the cohesive nature of a group, or how much it acts as a single unit, can be determined by intuition. They concluded that people apply

an intuitive system of beliefs in order to understand and make sense of life events. Dweck et al's (1995) work argued for a return to trait theories and contended that the implicit theories an individual holds about the attributes of another person provide a framework for how their actions are interpreted. They compared incremental (changeable, dynamic) theories with entity (static trait) theories, concluding that interpretations of behaviour that rely on malleable frameworks require a far greater sample section to achieve the same degree of certainty about a behaviour seen as a fixed trait (Dweck et al., 1995). However, the adaptability of incremental theories affords space to change not found in entity theory explanations of impression formation. This distinction between fixed and malleable judgments is particularly relevant to appearance-based perceptions. If impressions are based upon relatively fixed assumptions about social groups, visible characteristics may have a lasting influence on how individuals are evaluated. Conversely, if impressions remain open to revision, appearance-based judgments may be modified when additional information becomes available. Understanding the extent to which professional stereotypes can be reinforced or challenged is therefore important when examining public responses to visible tattoos. This fixedness or malleability is a key aspect of research questions 1, 2, and 3 in the current research.

Social Identity Theory also provides a useful framework for understanding changing attitudes towards social groups over time. The characteristics associated with a particular group are not fixed but are shaped by wider social, cultural and historical influences. Consequently, stereotypes may evolve as the social position of a group changes. This is particularly relevant when considering tattoos, which have historically been associated with marginal or outsider groups but have become increasingly common across a broad range of social and professional settings. Sociologists Elias and Scotson (2008) considered the factors necessary to determine

whether a group is mainstream or an outsider group. They determined that differences in opportunities provide a framework for whether a group becomes established or exists on society's fringes. In the main, a longer history affords a group greater access to power domains: political, cultural, economic, and moral. Outsider groups are often less embedded within society, excluded from the social, economic structures that influence power and facilitate control (Elias & Scotson, 2008). Although used to explore the societal inequities facing groups based on race, gender, and sexuality, other sociologists have used Elias and Scotson's approach to evaluate how tattooed groups fit within the established-outsider figuration. Rees (2016) used the established-outsider theory to analyse tattooed versus non-tattooed groups, noting that the fluid nature of power balances facilitated cultural shifting of tattooing from an outsider to established group. The literature reviewed in this section suggests that stereotypes emerge through processes of social categorisation and group identification. These processes allow individuals to make rapid judgments about others based on limited information but may also result in assumptions that are resistant to change. In the context of the current study, professional identity and visible tattooing represent potentially competing sources of social information. Whilst occupational membership may activate positive stereotypes associated with competence, trustworthiness and professionalism, visible tattoos may activate alternative stereotypes derived from wider social and cultural beliefs. Examining how these sources of information interact is central to understanding the impressions formed of tattooed professionals and directly informs research questions 1, 2 and 3.

1.3.4 Impression Management

As an active process, impression management is a form of control exerted by an observed person with the intent of influencing what impression is formed by an observer. Mayer (2015, p. 296) observed that a wise but unidentified figure once

engraved the phrase “Know yourself” on a pillar at the Greek temple of Delphi, sparking a discourse on self-awareness that persists to the present day. One of the earliest social psychological explanations of this drive to know oneself was developed by Festinger (1954). He presented a series of nine hypotheses aimed at distilling a theory of social influence. Festinger (1954) was keen to articulate his notion that a person’s imperative towards self-knowledge and understanding is derived firstly from a desire to quantify opinions and abilities. Where such quantification is not possible to measure objectively, an individual will situate themselves in an available peer group (Festinger, 1954). Further, people are more likely to compare themselves with someone who shares a high level of similarities: conversely, the tendency to compare against someone with whom there are few perceived similarities decreases as the level of similarity falls (Festinger, 1954). Self-presentation research has identified a tendency towards bias relating to stimuli considered self-relevant, such as hometown (Gray et al., 2004). Bargh (1982) used a dichotomous listening task in which participants heard two different information streams, one in each ear, but attended to only one stream. The research identified that information in the unattended stream only entered participants’ conscious awareness when it was relevant to their self-conception, such as participant name. Subsequent research relating to self-relevant visual stimuli supports Bargh’s (1982) findings. The relevance of these findings to impression management lies in the relationship between self-concept and social identity. Social Identity Theory proposes that individuals derive part of their identity from the groups to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Consequently, people are motivated not only to maintain a positive view of themselves but also to present themselves in ways that are consistent with valued group memberships. Within professional settings, this may involve adopting behaviours, appearance standards and forms of self-

presentation that reinforce membership of a recognised occupational group and communicate desired characteristics to others.

The psychology of relationships, interpersonal behaviour and communication has been studied in a variety of contexts. In many settings, trust and interpersonal relationships are built more naturally over time, but when a person engages a professional, the need for trust cannot develop naturally but must form almost immediately if the relationship is to be profitable. From a psychological perspective, impression management can be understood as an attempt to influence the information available to observers during the impression formation process. Given that individuals often rely on cognitive shortcuts, stereotypes and social categories when evaluating unfamiliar people, visible aspects of appearance become particularly important. Professionals may therefore seek to present themselves in ways that align with public expectations, reducing uncertainty and increasing perceptions of competence, trustworthiness and credibility. Sociological, anthropological, and psychological research has begun to consider the impact of appearance on perceptions of professionals.

In their consideration of public accountancy audits, Carrington (2010) notes the impact that 'professional appearance' plays in the process, referring to a "[d]ress code" (p. 671) as being part of the professional display. The medical profession hit upon the potential interplay between appearance and public trust. As long ago as the 12th Century, physicians, including Hippocrates, considered that non-verbal communication was assigned greater importance than verbal (Rowland et al., 2005, p.214). They highlighted the expectation that a physician should present themselves in a respectable and tidy manner, as the public often perceives that doctors who do not maintain their own appearance may be incapable of adequately caring for others. Accordingly, physicians are advised to dress in a manner that is considered appropriate and professional (Rowland et al., 2005, p.

214). However, Anderson-Gough et al., (2002) argued logically that there is no inherent link between one's appearance and their ability to perform work-related tasks. For instance, they pointed out that wearing a wig and gown does not inherently enhance a lawyer's competence or skill (Anderson-Gough et al., 2002, p.42). However, the institutional norm associated with the wig and gown is a managed impression used to signify professional membership. The symbolic value of professional appearance extends beyond practical considerations. Visible markers such as uniforms, formal dress and occupational symbols communicate group membership and help observers categorise individuals into recognised professional roles. Social Identity Theory suggests that such categorisation activates expectations associated with the occupational group, including assumptions regarding competence, authority, trustworthiness and ethical behaviour. Consequently, professional appearance functions not merely as a matter of presentation but as a mechanism through which social identities are communicated and interpreted.

Using an experimental design, Rowland et al. (2005) showed participants 10 images of doctors in order to determine their perceptions of specified characteristics, for example, confident, trustworthy, or competent. Their findings identified that the doctor's image had an impact on perceptions of professionalism and is reinforced by a variety of other research studies, providing further evidence and context (Cha et al., 2004; Dewayne Edwards et al., 2012; Henderson et al., 2009; Major et al., 2005; and Shelton et al., 2010). However, Carrington (2010, p. 672) observed a limited understanding of the relationship between the perceived quality of a professional's output and the quality of their actions or process, in comparison to the quality associated with their appearance. Therefore, although a person being observed can make efforts to manage the impression formed by an observer, their ability to do so may be limited. This limitation highlights an

important distinction between impression management and impression formation. Whilst individuals may attempt to control how they are perceived, the final impression remains dependent upon the observer's interpretation. Existing stereotypes, prior experiences and expectations may therefore influence how appearance cues are understood. The same characteristic may consequently be interpreted positively by one observer and negatively by another, depending upon the beliefs and assumptions they bring to the interaction.

A person being observed may deploy a range of actions aimed at manging (usually mediating) the impression being formed about them. These actions can include use of more natural language in face-to-face settings (Chapman & Webster, 2001), and non-verbal actions such as hand gestures and eye contact (Oda et al., 2009), and facial expressions and body movement (Ekman & Frieson, 1969). Kilgo et al., (2018) carried out experiments aimed at determining the impact of non-verbal cues in the formation of impressions. They found participants associated smiling and eye contact with characteristics such as caring, intelligence, and good leadership. However, none of the non-verbal cues they examined impacted impressions formed about honesty or morality. Therefore, selected non-verbal cues (smiling and eye contact) can mediate and manage the impressions formed about a person, but others (such as hand gestures) do not.

The barriers to total impression management lie with the observer. Although individuals can attempt to influence how they are perceived, observers interpret appearance and behaviour through existing schemas, stereotypes and social expectations. Consequently, impression management is unlikely to completely override previously held beliefs about particular social or professional groups. In the context of the current study, visible tattoos may represent a particularly important appearance cue because they have the potential to either reinforce or challenge expectations associated with professional identity. Understanding the

extent to which professional appearance can mediate perceptions of tattooed professionals is therefore central to examining how impressions are formed and maintained.

1.3.5 Image Norms

The employability of an individual based on their appearance and ability to fit with the brand of a hiring company is a key area of body modification research related to stigma and image norms. For example, people rated as being physically attractive have received demonstrably more positive employment assessments than their less attractive counterparts during the recruitment process (Marshall et al., 1998). This more favourable treatment of those rated as physically attractive extends to job promotion and pay (Morrow et al., 1990; Frieze et al., 1991). Ayto (1999) defines the less preferential treatment (discrimination or prejudice) afforded to a person based on their appearance as "Lookism" (Ayto, 1999, p. 485; and Chenevert et al., 2024). Jones et al. (2024) and Nickson (2022) argue that not only is Lookism prevalent in hiring practices, but it is also legal in the service or hospitality and tourism sector where image norms are often linked to branding and commercial activity. This section will address occupational image norms and introduce the Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio (2006) Model as a basis for the current research.

A growing body of research has explored the influence of the recruiters' stereotypes in relation to a range of demographic and physical factors. The UK Equality Act (2010) makes it illegal to discriminate against a person based on a protected characteristic. Since its introduction, the number of employment tribunal cases heard by the Courts on the basis of alleged discrimination has grown (Ministry of Justice, 2020). However, differential treatment on the grounds of non-protected characteristics is not covered by the Equality Act (2010). For example, weight stigma and anti-fat attitudes are prevalent (Schwartz & Brownell, 2004), with

anti-fat attitudes including that a person is defective, lazy, incompetent, and lacking in emotional stability (Puhl et al., 2009). Being tattooed is similarly not covered by the Equality Act. The stigma associated with being tattooed is addressed below. From a psychological perspective, image norms can be understood as socially shared expectations regarding how members of particular groups should appear. These expectations function as cognitive schemas, enabling individuals to categorise others quickly and efficiently (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Whilst such schemas reduce uncertainty during social interactions, they may also contribute to stereotyping when observable characteristics are used to infer less visible attributes such as competence, professionalism or trustworthiness. Consequently, appearance-based judgments often extend beyond what can reasonably be concluded from appearance alone.

Sommerlad (2016) argued that, despite shifts in professional work due to the growing employment of professionals within organisations, remnants of the traditional order remain. These are evident in the profession's continued reverence for its history, reflected in aspects such as formal attire, underlying values and practices, as well as the preserved hierarchical, patriarchal structures of professional organisations (Sommerlad, 2016, p. 65). As a common function within an organisation, the process of recruiting for new staff is often controlled or informed by human resources staff. To control image norms, organisational roles requiring regular contact or interaction with clients are increasingly subject to control, including of uniform or dress codes and overall appearance (Wu et al., 2019). Roles involving regular contact with clients, such as, receptionist or concierge, specify professionalism in behaviour and appearance as a requirement of the job, but do not clearly explain the standard to be achieved (Uzunogullari & Brown, 2020). The ambiguity surrounding professional appearance is important because perceptions of professionalism are not derived solely from objective

standards. Rather, they are influenced by collectively shared beliefs regarding what members of particular occupations are expected to look like. Through repeated exposure to professionals within society, individuals develop mental representations of occupational groups that include assumptions about appropriate appearance. These representations may subsequently influence judgments when an individual either conforms to or deviates from those expectations.

However, research into the process of recruitment has identified that the impressions and pre-confirmatory biases based on image norms formed by interviewers before an interview may result in a change in their questioning strategy (Binning et al., 1988; and Dougherty et al., 1994). Eisenkraft (2013) argued against relying on intuition for staff recruitment. Individual judgments are often compromised by unique biased image norms making them unreliable for accurately predicting job performance. They recommended that first impressions based on intuition should only be considered trustworthy if they are derived from the aggregated assessments of multiple independent evaluators (Eisenkraft, 2013). Shenoy and Kumar (2021) concur with Eisenkraft (2013), arguing that intuitive first impressions based on image norms are a form of affinity bias, which is a type of in-group identification. This finding is consistent with Social Identity Theory, which proposes that individuals favour people who appear similar to themselves or who are perceived to belong to valued social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In recruitment settings, image norms may therefore function as markers of group membership, influencing perceptions of whether an applicant appears to fit the organisation or profession. Importantly, such assessments may occur automatically and without conscious intention, reflecting broader processes of social categorisation and stereotype activation.

Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio (2006) proposed a theoretical model based the relationship between the perceptions that recruiters had of job applicants and

their stereotyped image norms. They defined image norms as the expectation that individuals should convey an image aligned with the standards of their occupation, organisation, or industry to secure employment or advancement (Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson, 2006, p.155). Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio (2006) also suggested that image norms extend beyond the expected standard of performance or competence to factors that are not actually required to perform a job. They argued that image norms are stronger for those organisations that have an organisational image (Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio, 2006). Tom (1971) explained organisational image as being the way an organisation is perceived based on a range of factors including what is known, felt, or believed about the organisation. Redefinitions of organisational image include the reaction to an organisation's name (Gatewood et al., 1993), or organisational attributes (Belt & Paolillo, 1982).

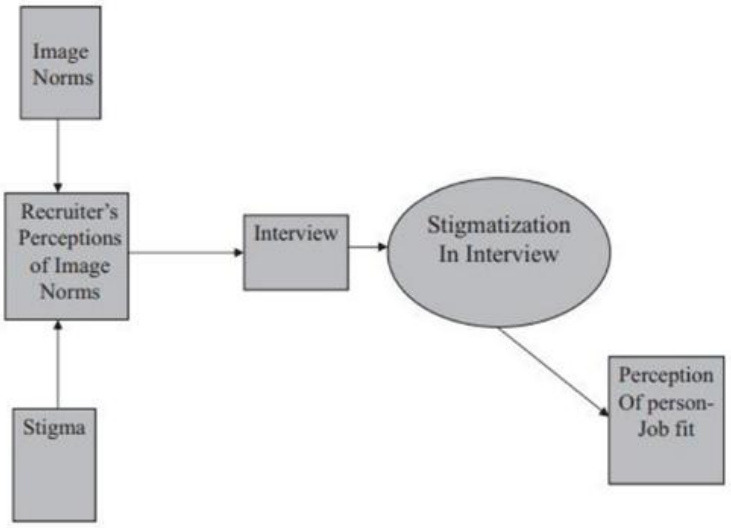
However, despite the widespread understanding of the limitations of relying on intuitive judgments as well as the lack of an agreed definition of what it means to be professional, as discussed above, recruiting staff rely on both factors when making recruitment decisions. Koval and Rosette (2020) researched the professionalism and competence attributed to job applicants, linking perceptions of competence and level of professionalism with hairstyles. Whilst the breadth of impression formation and impression management research is remarkable, what is less so is the lack of diversity in this liminal space. The frame for existing impression formation research has been "monocultural" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.224), specifically from a Western viewpoint. The finding that seemingly minor appearance characteristics can influence perceptions of competence and professionalism further illustrates the importance of image norms within impression formation. Characteristics such as hairstyle, dress, jewellery or body modification may possess little direct relationship to occupational performance.

Nevertheless, they may acquire symbolic meaning through their association with particular social groups, lifestyles or identities. As a result, observers may use these characteristics as cues when forming impressions of unfamiliar professionals.

Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio (2006) argued that organisations involved in entertainment, hospitality or retail may attempt to recruit employees whose individual image is congruent with the organisational image. Those involved in recruiting new staff are likely to have an image norm that is informed by occupational and private opinions and perceptions (Hurley-Hanson & Giannantonio, 2006). The image norm held by the recruiter will be confirmed or disproved as a result of the applicant's interview performance. The resulting perception will be measured against the job requirements to determine if there is a sufficient match. The Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio (2006) model highlighting the relationship between image norms, stigma and person-job fit is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio Model (2006)



However, the model is limited by a lack of mediating factors that may be used to positively manage the impression being formed by an observer. For example, the interview activity is a key component of the model. Yet it does not take into account that performance factors such as language (Chapman & Webster, 2001),

facial expressions and body movement (Ekman & Frieson, 1969) can positively mediate the impression being formed. Although prior research explored the impressions formed about specific professions, occupations, and physical characteristics, there is minimal research on the interplay between professional occupation and body modification on impression formation.

The Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio (2006) model provides a useful framework for understanding how image norms may influence evaluations of professionals. However, the model focuses primarily on organisational decision-making and recruitment outcomes. The broader psychological literature suggests that similar processes may also operate amongst members of the public, who routinely draw upon appearance cues, stereotypes and occupational expectations when evaluating professionals. Therefore, image norms may influence not only employment decisions but also wider perceptions of professional credibility, competence and trustworthiness.

Taken together, the psychological literature suggests that professionalism is shaped by two complementary processes. First, professionals develop shared identities through membership of professional groups and internalise the values and behaviours associated with those groups. Secondly, members of the public evaluate professionals using rapid cognitive processes that draw upon observable cues and existing beliefs. Consequently, professionalism is not determined solely by the characteristics professionals intend to project, but also by the impressions formed by those who encounter them. This provides the theoretical rationale for examining whether visible tattoos influence perceptions of professional character traits. If tattoos function as appearance-based cues that activate existing stereotypes or challenge established image norms, they may influence how professionals are categorised and evaluated by members of the public.

Understanding the extent to which such cues shape perceptions of professionalism, competence and trustworthiness is therefore central to the current study.

1.4 Body Modification

This section explores body modification, which is a broad area encompassing diverse practices aimed at altering physical appearance for aesthetic, social, or cultural reasons. Body modifications encompass several distinct methods, notably tattooing, piercing, cicatrisation, and scarification, each with its unique historical roots, techniques, and cultural meanings. This section will briefly introduce piercing, scarification, and tattooing as forms of body modification, setting out the relevant cultural and societal history contextualising the popularity or otherwise for each type of body modification. Justification is provided for the use of tattooing in the current research.

1.4.1 Self-Mutilation

Researchers such as Favazza (1996) argue that all forms of body modification reveal self-mutilating tendencies, perpetuating a stigma that pathologises these practices as indicators of mental illness. Beaubien (1995) reports the view of a clinical psychologist working with women who self-harm to relieve overwhelming anxiety who believed that women who modify their bodies do so as a socially acceptable parallel to those using razor blades to slice their arms. The explicit assertion is that body modifiers are driven by a need to express their self-hatred or anger through self-mutilation and serve to pathologise body modification (Pitts, 1999). Indeed, for Favazza (1996) all body modification (from pierced ears to branding and scarification) is evidence of self-mutilating behaviour, and that to be a body modifier is to be stigmatised as mentally unwell. Despite this stigma, certain forms of body modification, such as piercing, are commonplace and have fewer associations with mental illness.

1.4.2 Piercing

As a popular form of body modification, piercing is defined as: "a penetration of jewellery into openings made in such body areas as eyebrows, helix of the ears, lips, tongue, nose, navel, nipples, and genitals" (Armstrong et al., 1995, p.20). Research suggests the prevalence of piercing may be as high as 50% (Armstrong et al., 2004; and Crowther et al., 2017). Indeed, van Hoover et al. (2017), describe piercing (in particular, ear piercing) as being so commonplace as to be a normative practice. Global prevalence studies indicate piercing is particularly common among women (Kluger et al., 2019; Laumann & Derick, 2006).

Although its exact historical origins are challenging to trace, archaeological evidence suggests piercing has existed for thousands of years, with specific practices seen across diverse cultures, from ancient Roman infibulation to earring depictions in Southeast Asia (Waugh, 2007). Using sculptural remains as an ethnographic source demonstrates that piercings – in particular earrings – have been popular for 2,000 years. Waugh, (2007), describes the depiction of pierced ears and nasal septa in carved plaques from Cambodia, and temple carvings from India and Southeast Asia. They also note that ancient Romans would pass a ring through the prepuce to dampen sexual excitement and to safeguard the tonal quality of voice in youths – a practice known as infibulation (Waugh, 2007).

Although popular, body piercing remains stigmatised, especially in visible areas, as research shows that individuals with facial piercings are often viewed as less conscientious and trustworthy (Crowther et al., 2017; and McElroy et al., 2014). This stigma influences behaviours within professional settings, where individuals frequently conceal piercings to mitigate potential negative perceptions. Ellis (2015) noted that job applicants with body piercings engaged in covering-up behaviour when undergoing the recruitment process. Removing visible piercings from the nose, lips, or eyebrow was found to be commonplace. However, despite this

'norming' activity, research identifies a dichotomy in attitudes to piercings. Crowther et al., (2017) and McElroy et al., (2014), characterise piercings as being widespread but that a stigma and negative attitude to people with piercings still exists. They argue the stigmatising effect of piercings is greatest for facial piercings, leading to perceptions that the pierced individual is less conscientious and less trustworthy than non-pierced individuals.

1.4.3 Cicatrisation and scarification

Cicatrisation and scarification involve causing intentional skin irritation to promote the growth of scar tissue, which is usually patterned. Cicatrisation and scarification are not widely known or practised in many Western societies, likely because, as with all body modification research it is reliant on self-report data that has previously been linked to higher-risk groups in society (Breuner & Levine, 2017). The prevalence of scarification is therefore felt to be niche, with no data on its prevalence (Breuner & Levine, 2017). Having a greater prevalence in non-Western societies, cicatrisation and scarification are growing in popularity as reflected in the research literature in both the UK and North America. According to Pitts (1999), scarification is socially problematised because of its more invasive, permanent, and deviant associations when compared to other forms of body modification such as tattooing or piercing. It is this increased permanency, and invasive nature that marks scarification as being more deviant than other body modifications, and making it the subject of psychological scrutiny (Breuner & Levine, 2017; and Pitts, 1999).

1.4.4 Tattooing

Despite the diversity of body modifications, tattooing presents a particularly rich area for psychological inquiry due to its widespread presence and evolving social perceptions. Tattooing, defined as the permanent insertion of ink into the

skin, has gained substantial social acceptance in many Western societies, yet it remains a complex and sometimes stigmatised practice, embodying both self-expression and cultural identity (Caplan, 2000; and DeMello, 2000). Tattoos offer a permanent, highly visible form of self-expression, making them a compelling subject for examining identity, societal attitudes, and the psychological implications of marked bodies. Tattooing was chosen as the focus of the current study and so is addressed in more detail, below.

1.4.4.1 A History of Tattoos

A substantial portion of the research and documented history relating to tattooing centres on males (DeMello, 2000; and Lane, 2014). This section addresses the mainstream developments of tattooing, including what the practice involves. Tattooing, as a form of body modification, is clearly defined by Caplan (2000, p. 255) as a process involving the penetration of the skin and the injection of permanent pigment into the dermis, typically between 0.25 and 0.5 cm deep, using a needle or similar sharp tool. The pigment is either applied to the instrument prior to insertion or rubbed into the resulting punctures (Caplan, 2000, p.255). Tattoos have a long history, with archaeological findings indicating that the practice of tattooing likely dates back to communities from the late Stone Age (Sanders & Vail, 2008, p.9). Bronze Age men preserved in ice between Italy and Austria and found in 1991 led to the identification of several tattoos on the torso and legs (Gilbert, 2000; Spindler, 2001). In addition, throughout Egypt and all the islands of Polynesia from the second millennium BC (Gathercole, 1988). Tattoos adorned the bodies of Christians as long ago as the early 1600s chronicling faithful pilgrimage to the Holy Land (DeMello, 2000). As Caplan (2000) notes, “This basic technique is found throughout the world, with local variations” (p.255).

1.4.4.2 Rise of Tattoos in the West

Commentators, anthropologists, and historians alike agree that tattoos gained widespread popularity in the West in the mid-1700s following the return of Captain James Cook and his tattooed sailors from their voyages to the Pacific Islands. Alternative theories for the spread of tattooing hold that a nomadic group called the Ainu spread the practice to Japan, or that Samoan explorers encountered tattooed Westerners before passing on the markings to New Zealand, Australia, and Fiji (Sanders & Vail, 2008). Prior to Cook's accounts, tattoos were known as 'pricks' or 'marks' with Cook adopting the Tahitian word 'ta-tu' (Burgess & Clark, 2010; DeMello, 2000). Cook's sailors were not only tattooed themselves but also brought tattooed Polynesians back to England, where these individuals were showcased as curiosities. The heavily tattooed Polynesians were displayed in stark contrast to the supposedly 'civilised' and unmarked bodies of Westerners (DeMello, 2000, p.746). Having initially included geometric designs, lines and animals, Kaeppler, (1988) argues that tattoos served to record genealogy as well as to provide spiritual protection. By the nineteenth Century sustained contact between Polynesians and European sailors resulted in an evolution of tattoo designs that included language to mark the deaths of chiefs, and weapons including rifles and canons (DeMello, 2000).

Having been paraded as different or 'other,' tattooing facilitated a common 'language' between disparate civilisations, with the traditions and technologies of each advancing collective practice. Due to abuse of preserved heads bearing the New Zealand status Moko tattoos (Gathercole, 1988), Māori culture was used to set native New Zealanders apart from settled Europeans as a divisive measure. Having paraded tattooed Polynesians throughout England at fairs and in pubs, tattoos came to be seen as primitive with the 'othering' of tattooed individuals as side show savages (DeMello, 2000). Despite being synonymous with savagery, Western

adoption of tattoos by sailors came to represent freedom, adventure and travel which paved the way for the acceptance of tattooing in working class society in England and in North America. Martin Hildebrand established the first permanent tattoo shop in New York City in 1846, with his initial clientele including sailors and soldiers, latterly on opposing sides of the civil war (Parry, 2006; Sanders & Vail, 2008). Meanwhile in England, Tom Riley and George Burchett tattooed the Prince of Wales who later became King Edward VII, beginning a fad amongst the aristocracy of England and Europe which persisted until the outbreak of the first World War (DeMello, 2000).

1.4.4.3 Tattoos as Communication

Tattooing has long been recognised as a form of communication, irrespective of whether it is viewed as a long-lasting cultural practice or a passing fashion trend (Kosut, 2000). From the earliest evidence of tattooing to the present day, tattoos have acted as a visual form of communication, allowing people to express their beliefs, affiliations, experiences and identities. As DeMello (1991, p.107) observed, "Except when worn in private areas, tattoos are meant to be read by others." This means that tattoos are not just decorative. They are also a way for people to communicate ideas, experiences and identities to others. Whether chronicling faithful pilgrimage to the Holy Land to communicate Christian faith (DeMello, 2000), or marking a significant life event (Leader, 2016; Naudé et al., 2019), tattooing is a form of self-expression (Atli et al., 2022) and function as visible narratives through which individuals present themselves to the social world.

Contemporary research suggests that the communicative role of tattoos has become increasingly prominent as tattooing has moved from the social margins into mainstream culture. Park (2016) suggests that the rise in tattooing amongst young Koreans is indicative of the move away from being solely gang affiliation to being a sign of expression of self, brought about through social change. Rivera

(2023) identifies a similar transition within Filipino society, where tattoos have increasingly become vehicles for communicating individuality rather than deviance. Rivera (2023) reports similar Filipino societal transition from tattoos as stigmatised to self-expressive communication. However, it is not only the form of the tattoo that is important as self-expressive communication, but the decision when to actively communicate. For example, determining when to share or conceal a tattoo as a form of impression management allows tattooed individuals to control their narrative (Dunlop et al. 2020; Leader, 2016; McAdams, 2013; 2015). These findings show that the meanings people attach to tattoos are not fixed or the same for everyone. Instead, they change as society and culture change over time. As a result, tattoos can only be fully understood by considering the social and cultural contexts in which they are created, shown and interpreted.

This idea is developed further by Wymann (2010), who argues that tattoos should be seen as more than just body decoration. Instead, they are a complex way for people to communicate ideas, experiences and identity. Drawing on communication theory and semiotics, he argues that tattoos are more than just personal expression and can also be a form of art, a way of communicating with others, and a reflection of culture (Wymann, 2010). This means that a tattoo's meaning does not come from the image alone, it is shaped by the person wearing it, the people who see it and the culture in which it is viewed. Kosut (2014) argues that tattooing is a way of communicating cultural ideas, and that its meanings change as society and artistic styles change over time. From this perspective, tattoos communicate because their meaning is shaped by society and culture. This means they do not have one fixed meaning but can be understood differently over time and in different situations. Together, these studies (Wymann, 2010; Kosut, 2014) show that tattoos are more than simple expressions of identity. Instead, they are a form of communication whose meaning depends on how they are understood

within different social and cultural contexts. This complexity highlights an important difference between self-expression and communication. While tattoos are often chosen to represent personal values or experiences, the meaning that other people take from them is not always the same as the meaning intended by the wearer. Larsen et al. (2014) show that tattoos continue to be associated with stereotypes, even though they have become more socially accepted and widely available. Their findings highlight a paradox, that people may choose tattoos to express their authenticity and individuality, but others may still judge them based on negative stereotypes linked to the past (Larsen et al., 2014). Consequently, what tattoos communicate is not entirely under the control of the person wearing them. Instead, their meaning is shaped by both the wearer's intentions and the way other people interpret them. This supports Wymann's (2010) argument that tattoos are a form of communication whose meaning is shaped by relationships and social interaction, rather than being fixed or understood in the same way by everyone.

The relationship between authenticity and consumer culture makes it even more difficult to understand how tattoos communicate meaning. Kosut (2006) argues that contemporary tattooing presents a paradox. Tattoos are promoted as unique expressions of personal identity, while at the same time being bought and sold as consumer products. As tattoos become more common and widely available, they might be expected to seem less unique and less able to express individuality. However, the research suggests the opposite may be true. Rather than turning tattoos into simple fashion accessories, commercialisation appears to have increased the range of identities, experiences and personal stories that people express through tattooing. Nevertheless, this creates important questions about authenticity. As tattooing has become more common and socially accepted, it may no longer be seen as a clear marker of individuality. Current research does not

provide a definitive answer. Instead, it suggests that authenticity depends on the personal meanings individuals give to their tattoos, rather than on tattooing itself.

More recent research has shifted the focus from tattoos as representations of identity to tattoos as a way of communicating personal stories. Drawing on narrative psychology, Naudé and Naudé (2024) argue that tattoos communicate people's changing life stories rather than fixed identities. Similarly, Krtalić et al. (2025) describe tattoos as records of personal experiences that mark important life changes and help preserve memories. These ideas closely match McAdams' (2013; 2015) theory of narrative identity, suggesting that tattoos not only reflect people's life experiences but also help them make sense of those experiences by shaping their personal life stories. Rather than simply expressing identity, tattoos help tell the story of a person's life. They show where people have come from, who they are becoming and how they understand their experiences over time.

Importantly, communication through tattooing is not constant but selective. People choose when to show or hide their tattoos, giving them some control over the impressions that others form of them (Leader, 2016; Dunlop et al., 2020; McAdams, 2013; 2015). The decision to show or hide a tattoo becomes part of how it communicates meaning, allowing people to adapt the personal stories they share depending on the situation and the people around them. Communication therefore involves more than the tattoo itself. It also includes decisions about when to make a tattoo visible or keep it hidden, showing that meaning is actively shaped rather than simply communicated.

The way tattoos communicate meaning also extends beyond personal identity. Weder et al., (2023) show that tattoos can express environmental values and concern for ecological issues, allowing people to communicate their commitment to wider social and ethical causes as well as their personal

experiences. This shows that tattoos are not only a way of telling personal stories but also a way of taking part in wider social and cultural conversations.

Taken together, the literature shows that tattoos are much more than permanent forms of self-expression. They are visual and symbolic ways of communicating through which people express and negotiate their identity, memories, values and sense of belonging within changing social contexts. Their meaning is not fixed or contained within the tattoo itself. Instead, it develops through the interaction between the person wearing the tattoo, the people who see it and the wider cultural context. As a result, tattoos are best understood not as fixed statements of identity but as an active form of communication through which people create, shape and revise the stories they tell about themselves and their place in society.

1.4.4.4 Developments in Tattooing

Technological advances in the late 1800s led to the development of the first electric tattoo machine which allowed for the simultaneous use of numerous needles. Further innovations included a wider variety of colours and more stable inks (Caplan, 2000) which in turn led to the 'Americana' design style with stronger dark outlines and contrasting brighter coloured in-fill (DeMello, 2000). Given the military lineage, tattoos were unsurprisingly typically badge-like designs such as hearts, patriotic images, military insignia, roses and banners (Caplan, 2000; Rubin, 1988). The development of the electric tattoo machine heralded a faster, cheaper, easier, and less painful means of tattoo creation than had previously been possible. As a business opportunity, tattooing became more lucrative, with tattooing and tattoos spreading rapidly through the lower echelons of society, and increasingly abandoned by the wealthy (DeMello, 2000). By the Second World War the influence of sailors in tattooing following service in China and Japan was again felt in the

form of Asian designs such as tigers, Chinese characters, and dragons (DeMello, 2000).

The consistent and pervasive influence of military service and war on the development and evolution of tattooing is not coincidental. Enterprising tattooists capitalising on the patriotism of departing sailors set up shops near military bases in port towns offering standardised images, known as flash, that a tattooist was capable of reproducing with ease and without artistic skill. Despite this populism, the Navy disapproved of "indecent or obscene" tattoos (Tuttle, 1985, p. 11), noting that any applicant bearing such a tattoo would be rejected from service, and the unsuitability of being tattooed in the workforce was codified. By the 1940s tattooists extended augmented services by offering to ink over existing tattoos, such as, naked ladies, with, for example, hula skirts and nurses' uniforms. However, a tattoo is more than pigment on skin. For example, amongst sailors and some branches of the armed services, tattooing was an ingroup rite of passage, whilst in the mainstream it remained 'outsider'. DeMello (2000, p. 3) observes that the cultural significance and class associations of tattoos have fluctuated over time.

1.4.4.5 Tattoo Renaissance

The tattoo has experienced a continuous process of redefinition, evolving from the 'primitive' to a symbol linked to exploration (DeMello, 2000, p. 3). DeMello (2000) argued that such diversity and movement between popular and fringe, ingroup and outgroup deserved more than superficial understanding. Tattooing experienced a renaissance in the 1960's (Rubin, 1988) as a result of multiple important changes and Burns (2019) argues that an increasingly connected, digital world led to the coopting of tattoo culture in the mainstream media. Sanders and Vail, (2008) argue that an influx of young tattooists with art backgrounds and university education explored tattooing as an alternative to fine art forms leading to practitioners to self-define as artists who required pre-

arranged appointments and consultations. The emphasis on artistic rather than merely economic motivations led to new styles and larger, thematic tattoos, as opposed to the fragmented badge-like Americana designs that had previously been common, becoming more popular (DeMello, 2000).

The shift in approach led to the development and widespread use of single-needle tattoo machines which allowed more detailed designs to be created (Rubin, 1988). With this renaissance came academic interest: anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists began to recognise tattooing as a rich seam of human behaviour that had previously been associated with deviant behaviour. As noted above, Rees (2016) applied the established-outsider theory to tattooed individuals. Rees (2016, p. 171) specifically identified tattooed individuals as an outsider group that possesses minimal social, financial, or cultural power, including categories such as sailors, fairground workers, and prostitutes. Rees (2016) argued that a series of connected developments facilitated the move of tattooing from outsider to established: the increasing use of the body to construct identity, cultural and societal diversity, increased visibility of tattooing in popular culture, and systematic legitimisation of tattooing as art within popular culture and academia. By contrast Owens et al. (2023) found that whilst tattooing has become more prevalent, perceptions about tattooed people being deviants, criminals, and addicts are stubbornly resistant to change. Owens et al., (2023) carried out a scoping review of psychological literature relating to body modifications. They found that of the reviewed articles, 38% (n=36) aimed to explore underlying dysfunction or deviancy. The second most common theme they found (32%) was about how tattooed people are perceived, including employment prospects Owens et al., (2023).

Ellis (2015) noted a lack of empirical research exploring visible body art in employees in some industries, most notably business. They carried out a qualitative review of posts on a social media group created to share experiences of

tattoo acceptance in the workplace. Ellis (2015) identified a common sense of inevitability that some form of cover-up was needed when going through recruitment for a job. For example, buying specific interview clothes that have long sleeves to cover tattoos is commonplace. Ellis (2015, p.105) describes such activity as an attempt to appear "normal". The use of this descriptor is justified in relation to the academic literature, as articles addressing body modifications are frequently found in the journal *Deviant Behavior* (Ellis, 2015, p.106). In summary, although not always overtly presented as being exclusively such, much of the research on tattooing has drawn on male practice and experience. Having established links with certain occupations which have stereotypically been associated with men, for example, sailors, soldiers, the acceptance of tattooing as a form of body modification is not only accepted but arguably expected. The same is not necessarily true for women and tattooing.

1.4.4.6 Tattooing – A Her-Story

Originally considered to be a fringe deviant subculture, tattoos are increasingly prevalent and accepted in mainstream culture (Burgess & Clark, 2010). Despite being an expression of personal identity, a stigma still exists around the presence of tattoos that extends to personality trait judgments (Skoda et al., 2020). Historically, tattooing in ancient Egypt was reserved only for women, and in particular "…concubines, dancers, and priestesses" (Sanders & Vail, 2008, p. 9) who wore a tattooed symbol of Bes the protector goddess of such women. However, amongst the tattooed, women have been identified as a lower status group. This section will address the impressions formed about tattooed women, their occupations, and explore the use of gender in the current research.

Stirn et al., (2006, p.202) noted that tattoos are "more common amongst men than women", and that women are more likely than men, to have a tattoo that can be covered by clothing (52% compared to 11%; Laumann & Derick, 2006).

Accepting that younger respondents had fewer tattoos than their older counterparts due to less time in which to accumulate them, Laumann and Derick (2006) observed that women were more likely to obtain their first tattoo when over 30 years old, 30% of women compared to 11% of men. However, younger women with tattoos are judged to be reckless. Swami (2012) compared Big Five personality measures of women visiting a tattoo parlour seeking their first tattoo. Those women who got a tattoo were more likely to engage in casual sex and had higher scores on sensation seeking than those women that did not get a tattoo. Flaws in Swami's study include that participants were drawn from a single tattoo establishment. This limits the applicability of the research in terms of both geographical location and price-point. Further, the study did not explore whether any of those that left without getting a tattoo returned at any point to get a tattoo or whether being asked to complete a survey about sensation seeking influenced the decision to get a tattoo. Western interpretations of femininity include growing old gracefully, something that is not usually associated with being tattooed (Baraitser, 2014).

An increase in media reporting of the incidence of tattoos (Rohrer, 2007) has been accompanied by "moral panic about the rise of tattoos among so called 'normal' people" (Dann et al., 2016, p. 4351). In this context, 'normal' represents anything that is not associated with deviancy, as well as being working class (Dann, 2022). Atkinson (2002) contends that amongst North American women, the increasing incidence of tattooing is a non-normative subversion of hegemonic ideologies of femininity (Butler, 1990; Dann, 2022; Dann et al., 2016; DeMello, 2000; Gillespie, 1996; Mifflin, 1997; and Pitts, 1998). For tattooed women, the impressions formed about deviancy go beyond criminality or savagery (DeMello, 2000), to classism (Dann, 2022; and Dann et al., 2016), deviancy encompassed promiscuity (Skoda et al., 2020; and Swami & Furnham, 2007) and aggression

(Swami et al., 2015). Research has identified contemporary gender differences in relation to tattoos.

For Foucault (1979) the physical body of the individual and what is considered to be beautiful, is regulated by society, the state, and social relationships. As a concerted effort to reject the societal regulation of the physical body, Carnival Culture emerged. As noted by Bakhtin (1968) Carnival Culture developed as critique of social hierarchies, using mockery and satire to challenge widespread deference to the state and elites, a celebration of the reversal of the "usual esthetic standards" [sic] (Langman, 2008, p. 662). DeMello (2000) noted that as an evolution from the fairs and sideshows made famous by P.T Barnum, world expos and circuses, tattooed women entered the limelight in the 1880s reviving a flagging genre. The Victorians were unaccustomed to seeing partially clothed women in public, and so a woman displaying a tattooed thigh caused sensation. As the appetite for fairs waned, so too did the need for tattooed carnival spectacles (DeMello, 2000). Western attractiveness centred around White, middle class femininity, an ideal that did not include being tattooed (Dann, 2022; Dann et al., 2016; Hawkes et al., 2004). By the 1950s it was widely held that "nice girls don't get tattoos" (Steward, 1990, p. 71). Where perceptions of tattooed males are less stigmatised (Hawkes et al., 2004), attitudes towards tattooed women have changed little since the early nineteenth Century (Baumann et al., 2016; and Westerfield et al., 2012).

In summary, the relationship and experience of tattooing is different for men and women. In particular the character traits associated with tattooing have historically been more negative for women than men. Notable in the research centring on women with tattoos, as compared to their male counterparts, is the prevalence of views on sexual promiscuity – a character trait not normally present in research on tattooed men – and lower social status as a result of both classism

and mental instability. Consequently, as a result of the available literature recording differences in how men and women with tattoos are perceived, as well as the noted disparity between male and female professionals, gender was chosen as the intersectional focus for the current study.

1.4.4.7 Perceptions of Tattoos

Despite negative associations with having a tattoo, its popularity appears to be increasing (Burns, 2019; DeMello, 2000; and Owens et al., 2023). It is impossible to know with any certainty the prevalence of tattooing in any society: estimations range from 20% (Pound, 2015), to nearly 40% (Breuner & Levine, 2017). Research shows that the prevalence of tattooing over the last twenty years has increased with over a quarter of people in the United States in 2024 having a tattoo (Statista Research Department, 2024): up from 15% in 2003 (Hashemi & Sangi, 2024). Despite this increase, perceptions about tattoos and, by extension, the people that have them, have remained stubbornly inflexible (Owens et al., 2023). Reasons for this inflexibility are likely due to a range of competing factors, including body modification research steeped in outdated views of deviance and risky behaviours, and the individual world view of those observing tattooed people (Owens et al., 2023). Authors such as Vale and Juno (1989) recognise that perceptions of tattoos encompass not only views about the tattooed person, but those observing the tattooed person. However, this recognition has had minimal impact on the field of body modification research as noted by the continual return to outdated attempts to explore body modifications and any link with deviancy (Owens et al., 2023).

In their scoping review Owens et al., (2023) observed that, of the 36 articles that aimed to identify a link between deviant behaviour and body modifications 25% attempted to correlate historic behaviour and body modifications, whilst 41% focused on current behaviour or predictions for future behaviour. Despite Owens et

al., (2023) highlighting the over-reliance of body modification research (and tattooing in particular) in deviant and psychopathology journals, subsequent research refuses to step away from out-dated thinking, particularly when it comes to tropes regarding mental instability.

Hashemi and Sangi (2024) used a convenience sample to explore whether social media use increased levels of low self-esteem in tattooed people. Their findings identified a high level of social media use amongst tattooed and non-tattooed people, but no significantly greater levels of low self-esteem amongst tattooed participants compared to non-tattooed participants. The timing of their data collection coincides with the global COVID-19 pandemic when many countries had government-imposed lockdowns. The authors did not address any potential impact of the impact of the global pandemic on their convenience sampling method. In outlining their research aims, Hashemi and Sangi (2024) present (without critique) a range of previous studies linking body modifications (tattoos in particular) with behavioural and lifestyle situations they classify as 'negative'. These include sexual activity outside of marriage (Swami, 2012), and addiction (Dukes, 2016). The lack of critique of the contextual research in Hashemi and Sangi's (2024) research belies a world view in keeping with the outdated research approaches Owens et al. (2023) note. A world view that perpetuates the perception of tattoos and tattooed people as being risk-takers, deviants, criminals, and addicts despite the noted increasing prevalence of their appearance in societies globally (Owens et al., 2023).

However, as Owens et al., (2023) identified, where research moves away from merely exploring links between body modifications and dysfunction (past or potential), it encompasses a range of perceptual factors. The second most common research objective in their meta-analytic review was assessing perceptions of tattooed people. Within this identified category of objectives, Owens et al., (2023)

noted research foci included perceptions of tattoos linked to: employment or work; and impact on trustworthiness. However, the starting point for the articles included in the meta-analysis having research aimed at exploring tattoos and their impact on social interaction is that the historic stigma regarding body modifications and dysfunction persists.

Timming and Perrett (2016) identified that the presence of a visible tattoo reduced perceived trustworthiness of the wearer. Using three tattoo conditions (none visible, a partially visible and non-religious star on the neck, and a visible religious cross pendant) Timming and Perrett (2016) asked participants to rate targets' perceived trustworthiness. Whilst their results found that the presence of a visible tattoo reduced the overall rating of trustworthiness compared to the no-tattoo condition, participants self-identifying as Christian had a significantly more positive perception of the trustworthiness of the target shown in the cross pendant condition than the star. The same finding was not true of participants that self-identified as having no religious affiliation. In this case the no-tattoo condition also had highest ratings of perceived trustworthiness, but the cross pendant condition was rated lowest in terms of trustworthiness. Timming and Perrett (2016) explain their findings in terms of blurred signalling. Specifically, that the image being shown signals a shared commonality (of culture or religion) that increases perceived trustworthiness, but that the medium of the image being a tattoo leads to a mixed reality for the observer regarding trustworthiness. Timming and Perrett (2016) argue that being tattooed is a signal of untrustworthiness, perpetuating the inflexible view of tattooing being a sign of dysfunction. Although Timming and Perrett's (2016) research attempted to distinguish between the signal and the medium of the signal, there are limitations in their research design. Specifically, the tattoo conditions were flawed. Although the tattoo image changed, the positions relative to the image did not. The star condition was always higher on the

neck just below the jawline, and the cross was always lower down the neck at the top of the sternum. Timming and Perrett (2016) did not show participants the star on the sternum, or the cross on the jawline. This variable being absent limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the study. However, Timming and Perrett (2016) acknowledge that the genre of tattoo (such as religious, political etc.) is likely to have a different impact on different outcomes, such as employability. This link between tattoo and employability in different sectors is addressed in the following section.

1.4.4.8 Perceptions of Tattooed Professionals

In some occupational groups, the presence of tattoos is more accepted than others. For example, less rigid occupational groups and blue-collar workers, are more likely to hire tattooed workers than professions (Dean, 2010). Timming (2017) questioned experienced managers (n=192) and found that hiring tattooed staff could help target younger and edgier customers. However, as this section will demonstrate, not all occupations or those people within an organisation responsible for hiring new employees are as welcoming of tattooed employees.

Research has shown that hiring managers are subject to social stigmas of body adornment. Specifically, that the tattooed are less able to perform the job being recruited for. Resenhoeft et al., (2008) showed hiring managers (n=158) manipulated photographs of a woman with or without a visible tattoo. The tattooed woman received more negative ratings from the hiring managers for interpersonal dimensions than the non-tattooed woman (Resenhoeft et al., 2008). These interpersonal dimensions included intelligence, honesty, and determination. Resenhoeft et al., (2008) concluded that college students should be advised against getting a tattoo because to do so may harm opinions formed about them by their peers in a manner similar to how binge drinking is perceived. And that older adults view tattoos negatively which may lead to "…*difficulties for tattooed college*

students in securing employment when nontattooed older adults are in charge of hiring" (Resenhoeft et al., 2008, p. 595). This conclusion is, however, unsupported through Resenhoeft et al's (2008) research and is likely an example of a stigmatised interpretation of the results obtained.

In contrast to Resenhoeft et al., (2008), Uzunogullari and Brown, (2020) found that hiring managers often recognised body modification as an expression of socio-cultural trends. However, instead of warning potential employees not to get a visible tattoo, Uzunogullari and Brown, (2020) concluded that employers should continue to review hiring practices to reflect evolving views in contemporary society. As Conway (2013) and Dann (2022) note, warnings such as Resenhoeft et al's (2008) are more commonplace than attempts to challenge outdated hiring practices, as evidenced by news articles advising tattooed employees about the clothes to wear for a job interview.

Burgess and Clark (2010) argue that although the associations with tattooing and savagery (DeMello, 2000) still exist, a new association is emerging – that of respectability and tattooing. Although not going as far as supporting respectability and tattooing, Flanagan and Lewis (2019) found that negative associations with tattooing and employment are reducing. Timming (2017) surveyed participants with management experience (n=192) and found that being tattooed is both acceptable and expected when working in nightclubs compared to a fine dining restaurant. However, Timming (2017) recruited participants with experience of managing in any sector, not only restaurants and nightclubs, meaning that whilst context is important the applicability of their findings is limited as speculative based on stereotyped assumptions about the workplaces. Similarly, within the professional North American basketball league (NBA) over half of players are tattooed (Dillingh et al., 2020; NBA Tattoos, 2019). However, negative associations still persist in some professions.

In Hauke-Forman et al's (2021) research participants were shown images of male and female police officers either with or without a visible tattoo, and asked to rate perceptions of likeability, respect and threat. Participants rated the tattooed police officers as being less friendly, more assertive, less competent and less trustworthy (Hauke-Forman et al., 2021). Ratings for respect were not impacted by a police officer being tattooed. There are some features of the Hauke-Forman, et al., (2021) research that potentially limit its ecological validity. For example, the research was carried out in Germany where police officers have been unable to be visibility tattooed in uniform, and the research images included the police officers' utility belts on which handguns were visible. Therefore, the results are limited in (for example) the UK where police officers are not routinely armed, meaning opinions of the behavioural traits measured may be different. Additionally, the size and style of tattoos were not explored as a factor influencing participants' views. This is a key omission in the Hauke-Forman et al., (2021) research, as the tattoos edited on to the forearms of the police officers were large enough to extend to the wrist and the back of the hand. Further, the style of tattoos encompassed complex patterns with overlapping sections culminating in pointed lines. This means that Hauke-Forman et al., (2021) did not test to see if different sizes and/or style of tattoo elicited the same strength of rating for the behavioural traits from participants. Although Hauke-Forman et al., (2021) took into account certain demographic information (such as political associations), they did not take into account earlier German research by Thielgen et al., 2020) which found that there was no detrimental effect of seeing a tattoo on a uniformed officer amongst criminal offenders.

Zidenberg et al., (2022) investigated whether the presence of different types of visible tattoo impacted the impressions formed about mental health professionals. Their research presented participants (n=534) with a fictional female

clinical psychologist with either no visible tattoo, a visible neutrally themed tattoo (e.g. a flower), or a visible provocatively themed tattoo such as a skull. Participants rated the clinician with the provocative tattoo as being more competent in relation to empathy and ability to practice with adults in a forensic setting than clinicians in the other conditions (Zidenberg et al., (2022). In addition, the provocatively tattooed clinician was felt to be less lazy, and rated higher in terms of confidence, likeability, and interest. However, participants in the tattooed conditions (neutral or provocative) rated the clinicians as appearing less professional than the non-tattooed clinician (Zidenberg et al., 2022). Whilst their research recruited the clients and services users of clinical psychologists improving its ecological validity, it is unclear how or why Zidenberg et al., (2022) characterised the tattoo used as being provocative.

1.5 Summary of Reviewed Literature

From the reviewed literature, there is no agreed definition of what a professional is. Where they exist, attempts to classify professionals focussed on the groups formed to protect and promote their interests, and the interests of their members. Professional classification research excluded the public perception of professionals, including the views of clients or service users. Such activity seeks to promote knightly character traits to reinforce societal status, and limit membership keeping the availability of skills less common. Despite this, being classified as a professional, with all its imprecise definitions and applications, holds societal influence.

Despite its prevalence in many societies, tattooing has struggled to dissociate itself from stereotypes about criminality and deviancy. Where it exists, research into being tattooed and occupational status has focused on tertiary services such as bars, restaurants, and retail. Occupational research, particularly occupational psychological research, has yet to make a notable contribution to

understanding the impact of tattooing and other forms of body modifications on professional identity. This is perhaps, because of the contested nature of defining what a professional is or else because of the stigmatising effect of tattoo research (or both). The current research addresses the gap in professional research in relation to tattooing.

1.6 The Current Research

This research brings together two contested and important aspects of modern life: the character traits associated with being a professional, and the impressions formed about people with tattoos. This research addresses a gap in existing research by exploring whether the impressions formed about a professional are impacted by that professional being tattooed. The current research makes a conscious choice to focus on gender and profession, recognising that there are many other demographic aspects of professions and professionals that are not being emphasised. As Lloyd-Walker and Walker (2015) note, the broader the research topic, the more difficult it can be to identify a clear framework for addressing a research question. For example, the current research does not attempt a detailed exploration of ethnicity, disability, or sexuality of professionals as, to do so, would likely expand the scope too far, rendering the thesis too long. However, the importance of such research is noted and included in the discussion of further research.

1.6.1 Research Aim

The overall aim of this current research was to determine if the perceived character traits associated with being a professional are influenced by the presence of a visible tattoo on that professional.

1.6.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the current research were to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of relevant literature.
2. Identify research questions where an original contribution could be made.
3. Identify a suitable strategy for data collection, including relevant survey measures, and suitable professional occupations to present to participants.
4. Obtain ethical approval for the research.
5. Conduct data collection.
6. Analyse data using the most appropriate methods.
7. Conduct further data collection to demonstrate proof of concept for original theoretical contributions.
8. Discuss results in the context of existing research as addressed in the literature.

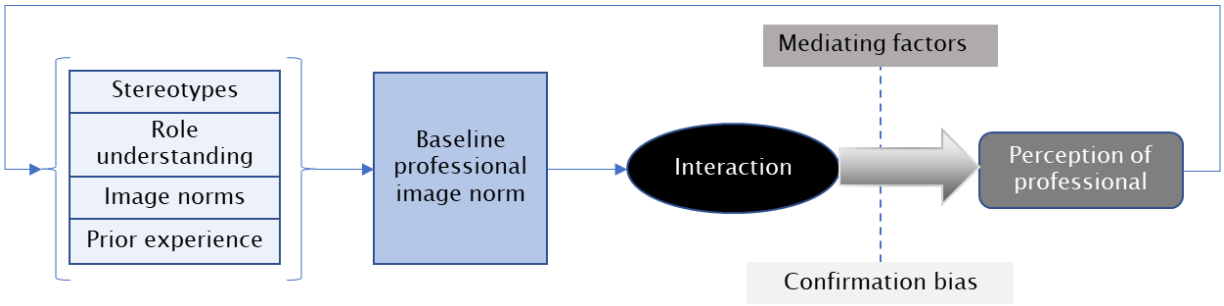
1.6.3 Underpinning Model

The Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio (2006) Model ('Model') shown above in Figure 1 was chosen as the basis for the current research as it aligns with the overall aim, research questions and hypotheses. Specifically, the Model is underpinned by image norms associated with occupations, rather than merely attractiveness (for example Ayto, 1999; Frieze et al., 1991; Marshall et al., 1998; and Morrow et al., 1990). The Model uses physical cues to inform categorisation of targets taking into account inferences about character traits. Further, the Model takes into account stigma in the formation of image norms, recognising that stigma and prejudice may overlap but can differ depending on social constructions and "…person-environment interactions" (Hurley-Hanson & Giannantonio (2006, p. 455). This means a characteristic can be the source of stigma in one social interaction but not be stigmatising in another. Therefore, the Model is based on a broad patchwork of factors leading to image norms, factors that align with the current research. It recognises that impressions formed about another person may be positive or negative, but not all negative views are stigmatised. The Model was

adapted and extended in the current research to account for potential mediating factors on image norms for the professions used (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Adapted Hurley-Hanson and Giannantonio Model (2006)



Specifically, whereas the Model draws on image norms and stigma to form the basis of the recruiter's baseline image norms, the adapted Model expanded these factors in the formation of the baseline professional image norm, and any confirmatory bias occurring as a result of the interaction. The extended factors shown in Figure 2 mean that the adapted Model has broader applicability than either recruitment or the hospitality sector. These expanded factors include:

Prior Experience. Prior experience of a person in a professional role can establish either a knightly or knavish schema within which all future interactions are framed. This is a powerful aspect of impression formation not acknowledged in the Model.

Stereotypes. Professionals are portrayed in all forms of media, whether factual or fictional, print or visual. For example, military leaders are shown wearing dress uniform, scientists wear lab coats, judges wear elaborate robes and powder wigs. Whether or not accurate, such value-laden images are a convenient and effective way of visually conveying a person's occupation. Stereotypes about occupational roles may extend to gendered image norms. For example, vicars as male, hair stylists as female, engineers as male etc. This means images presented that support gender stereotypes are subject to confirmatory bias. Finally in terms of stereotypes, being visibly tattooed is subject to gender-based confirmatory bias.

The Model is adapted in the current research to take advantage of these semiotic portrayals by choosing professions that have associated stereotypes.

Role Understanding. Foundational to the creation of a baseline image norm is the need to understand the scope of the impression being formed. It is possible to infer that an astronaut needs to have advanced intellectual capability in a specific field without knowing what an astronaut does, or that a ballet dancer needs to have strength and balance. Therefore, whether a person has personal experience of meeting an astronaut or ballet dancer, there is a basic understanding of the role they perform. This means that participants need not have direct experience with a given professional to have an understanding of the role they perform. Whereas less well-known roles would result in inconsistent or inaccurate baseline image norm formation.

The Model is linear and does not address the feedback mechanism by which the perception of a professional is updated. The adapted model includes a feedback mechanism informed by the last interaction with a professional to update the stereotype, role understanding, image norm, and prior experience of a professional.

1.6.4 Body Modification in the Current Research: A Focus on Tattoos

Tattoos are highly recognisable and widely understood in society, even if an individual does not have any tattoos of their own. This means that tattoos as experimental stimuli required no accompanying explanation unlike scarification. Tattoos could be more easily visible in a photograph compared to certain piercings due to small size or obscured locations. Finally, as a consequence of their prevalence levels balanced against the continuing stigma associated with them tattoos were felt to be the most appropriate form of body modification to use in the current research.

1.6.5 Professionals in the Current Research

The professionals used in this research were selected as they align with relevant literature regarding professional definitions, and participants are likely to understand the roles without further explanation. They are:

Vicar: A traditional profession with defined pathways to becoming ordained and a code of conduct that extends to their personal life. It is anticipated that the baseline professional image norm for vicar will be male, non-tattooed, and wearing a clerical-collar.

Barrister: A traditional profession with defined academic and vocational requirements for qualification and a legally mandated code of conduct. It is anticipated that the baseline professional image norm for barrister will be male and non-tattooed.

Doctor (Medical): A traditional profession with a defined academic and vocational route to qualification and a clearly defined code of conduct. It is anticipated that the baseline professional image norm for doctor will be male and non-tattooed.

Teacher (UK qualified): A newer, non-traditional profession requiring completion of an academic course of study that confers Qualified Teacher Status and having to carry out work in accordance with the Department for Education (2021) Teachers' Standards. It is anticipated that the baseline professional image norm for a teacher will be female and non-tattooed.

Nurse (UK): A non-traditional profession requiring completion of an academic course of study recognised by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and practice meeting the NMC Code of Conduct. It is anticipated that the baseline professional image norm for nurses will be female and non-tattooed.

Police Officer: A non-traditional profession. Although the requirements vary between police forces most require qualifications at A-level and, having to carry out

work in accordance with the College of Policing Code of Ethics. It is anticipated that the baseline professional image norm for police officer will be male and non-tattooed.

1.6.6 Contribution

This thesis makes two original contributions to knowledge. The first is that the clients and/or service users of visibly tattooed professionals use such tattoos to initiate conversations (tattoos as ice breakers). The second is the establishment of an Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum.

1.6.7 Research Questions

RQ1: Would participants identify any character traits common to all professional occupations included, both traditional and non-traditional professions?

RQ2: Did the presence of a visible tattoo on included professionals impact participants' impressions formed about the character traits of that professional?

RQ3: What features of a tattoo (for example size, theme, location on the body) would influence participants' impressions formed about a tattooed professional?

1.6.8 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed to investigate the influence of visible tattoos on participants' perceptions of professionalism across six key professions. As there is currently no single survey that measures the values associated with being a professional, three separate survey measures (Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire, Schwartz, 2012; Moral Foundation Questionnaire, Graham et al., 2011; and Barratt impulsiveness Scale, Patton et al., 1995) were used to examine the ways in which visible tattoos impact the perception of character

traits. The six professions were grouped into either 'traditional' (vicar, doctor, barrister) or 'non-traditional' (nurse, teacher, police officer):

Hypothesis One: The impressions formed by participants about traditional professions' character traits will be significantly more positive than for non-traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

Hypothesis Two: The impressions formed by participants about non-tattooed professionals' character traits will be significantly more positive than for tattooed professionals when considering total survey measure mean scores.

Hypothesis Three: The impressions formed by participants about the professional character traits of males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions will be significantly more positive than for males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

Study One and Study Two data collection tested hypotheses 1-3.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

This chapter explains the overall research philosophy and approach for the current study and ensuring informed consent was provided.

2.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the assumptions researchers make regarding the nature of reality ontology, the nature of knowledge (epistemology), and how knowledge can be generated through research (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). These philosophical assumptions underpin methodological decisions and influence the interpretation of research findings. Consequently, selecting an appropriate philosophical position is fundamental to ensuring coherence between the research questions, methods, and intended outcomes.

Within the social sciences, several philosophical paradigms offer different perspectives on reality and knowledge. Positivism assumes that reality exists independently of human experience and can be objectively measured through empirical observation, favouring quantitative methods and hypothesis testing (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). In contrast, interpretivism assumes that reality is socially constructed and that individuals attribute different meanings to their experiences, making qualitative approaches particularly valuable for understanding subjective perspectives (Thomas, 2022; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Critical realism occupies an intermediate position by acknowledging the existence of an objective reality whilst recognising that our understanding of that reality is inevitably shaped by social, cultural and contextual influences (Archer et al., 2013).

Although each of these paradigms offers valuable insights, none individually was considered sufficient for addressing the aims of the present study. The research sought both to quantify perceptions of tattoos across professional contexts and to explore the meanings participants attached to those perceptions.

Consequently, adopting either a purely positivist position, which privileges objective measurement, or a purely interpretivist stance, which prioritises subjective meaning, would have constrained the study by emphasising one dimension of the phenomenon at the expense of the other. Likewise, although critical realism acknowledges the interaction between objective structures and subjective experiences, its primary concern with uncovering underlying causal mechanisms was not the principal objective of the present research (Archer et al., 2013).

For these reasons, pragmatism was adopted as the overarching philosophical position. Rather than prioritising a particular ontological or epistemological commitment, pragmatism is concerned with selecting the philosophical and methodological approaches that most effectively address the research problem (Creswell and Creswell, 2022; Davies and Fisher, 2018; Morgan, 2014). Pragmatists reject the notion that researchers must align exclusively with either objectivist or constructivist assumptions, instead recognising that different forms of knowledge may be appropriate depending on the research question and the practical context in which inquiry takes place (Creswell and Creswell, 2022; Gannon *et al.*, 2022).

Ontologically, pragmatism adopts a pluralistic position, recognising that reality may comprise both objective conditions and subjective interpretations (Creswell and Creswell, 2022). In the context of the present study, professional attitudes towards tattoos are influenced by observable organisational practices, such as recruitment decisions and workplace policies, whilst simultaneously being shaped by individuals' beliefs, values, cultural norms and lived experiences. Understanding these multiple dimensions required a philosophical stance capable of accommodating both measurable patterns and socially constructed meanings (Creswell and Creswell, 2022).

Epistemologically, pragmatism views knowledge as provisional, contextual and generated through its usefulness in addressing real-world problems (Mulatu

and Negash, 2023; Mulisa, 2022). Rather than seeking a single objective truth or assuming that all knowledge is entirely socially constructed, pragmatism evaluates knowledge according to its explanatory value and practical application (Creswell and Creswell, 2022). This perspective aligns closely with the purpose of the current study, which sought not only to understand perceptions surrounding tattoos but also to generate findings capable of informing professional practice, organisational policy and future research.

Davies and Fisher (2018) argue that pragmatism moves beyond the traditional philosophical divide between positivism and interpretivism by allowing researchers to employ multiple methods where these best address the research objectives. Morgan (2014) similarly conceptualises pragmatism as a contemporary research paradigm that reframes methodological differences as practical choices determined by the nature of the research problem rather than by philosophical allegiance. Consequently, the value of research is judged not solely by theoretical coherence but also by its capacity to produce meaningful and actionable knowledge (Baig et al., 2020; Hall, 2013; Mulatu and Negash, 2023).

This philosophical position was particularly appropriate given the complexity of attitudes towards body modifications such as tattoos. Perceptions of tattoos involve measurable social trends, individual psychological experiences, cultural influences and professional expectations, none of which can be fully understood through a single methodological tradition. Pragmatism therefore provided the flexibility required to investigate these interconnected dimensions whilst maintaining philosophical coherence (Creswell and Creswell, 2023; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018).

A further advantage of adopting pragmatism was the methodological freedom it afforded. Rather than being constrained by what Thomas (2007) describes as the 'tyranny of method', pragmatism encourages researchers to select

methods according to their ability to answer the research questions effectively (Clarke and Visser, 2019; Ganiyu *et al.*, 2022; Scott, 2016). This flexibility was fundamental to the present study because it enabled the integration of quantitative measures capable of identifying broader patterns with qualitative methods that explored participants' experiences and interpretations in greater depth. Overall, pragmatism provided the most appropriate philosophical foundation for this research because it acknowledged the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon under investigation, accommodated both objective and subjective forms of knowledge, and prioritised the generation of findings with practical relevance. Importantly, this philosophical position also provided a coherent rationale for the mixed methods research design adopted within the study.

2.2 Research Approach

The adoption of a pragmatic philosophical position provided the rationale for employing a mixed methods research design (Creswell and Creswell, 2023; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Within pragmatism, methodological decisions are driven by the research questions rather than by adherence to a single research tradition (Davies and Fisher, 2018; Kelly et al., 2018; Makombe, 2017; Mulatu and Negash, 2023). Consequently, mixed methods were considered the most appropriate approach for investigating the complexity of professional perceptions of tattoos, as they enabled both the measurement of patterns across participants and an exploration of the meanings underlying those patterns.

Hall (2013) argues that mixed methods research reflects the pragmatic emphasis on addressing research problems through informed and strategic inquiry. Similarly, Cohen et al., (2018) suggest that integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies allows researchers to develop a richer and more comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena than either approach alone. Gannon et al. (2022) further contend that pragmatism recognises the complementary

strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods, facilitating a more robust and nuanced analysis.

Accordingly, the mixed methods design adopted in the present study was not simply a methodological preference but a direct consequence of the underlying pragmatic philosophy. Quantitative methods enabled the identification of broader trends and relationships within professional perceptions of tattoos, whilst qualitative methods provided insight into the experiences, reasoning and contextual influences that shaped those perceptions. Together, these approaches generated a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem than could have been achieved through either methodology independently.

The extent to which it is necessary to pit quantitative and qualitative approaches against each other is questionable. As Buchanan and Bryman (2007) observe, the paradigm wars of the 1980s (Creswell, 1994) have given way to the era of mixed methods research, described as a "paradigmatic soup" (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007, p. 486). Mixed methods research has become less focused on adhering to a singular paradigmatic stance and instead prioritises selecting the best methods to address research questions effectively (Schwandt, 2000). Johnson et al., (2007, p. 16) assert that the value of this approach lay in combining research methods in a manner that maximised the potential to address significant research questions effectively. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) similarly observed that integrating quantitative data collection with qualitative analysis facilitated the progression from exploratory stages to inferential analysis, resulting in research outcomes that were described by Johnson et al., (2007, p. 129) as "most informative, complete, balanced, and useful."

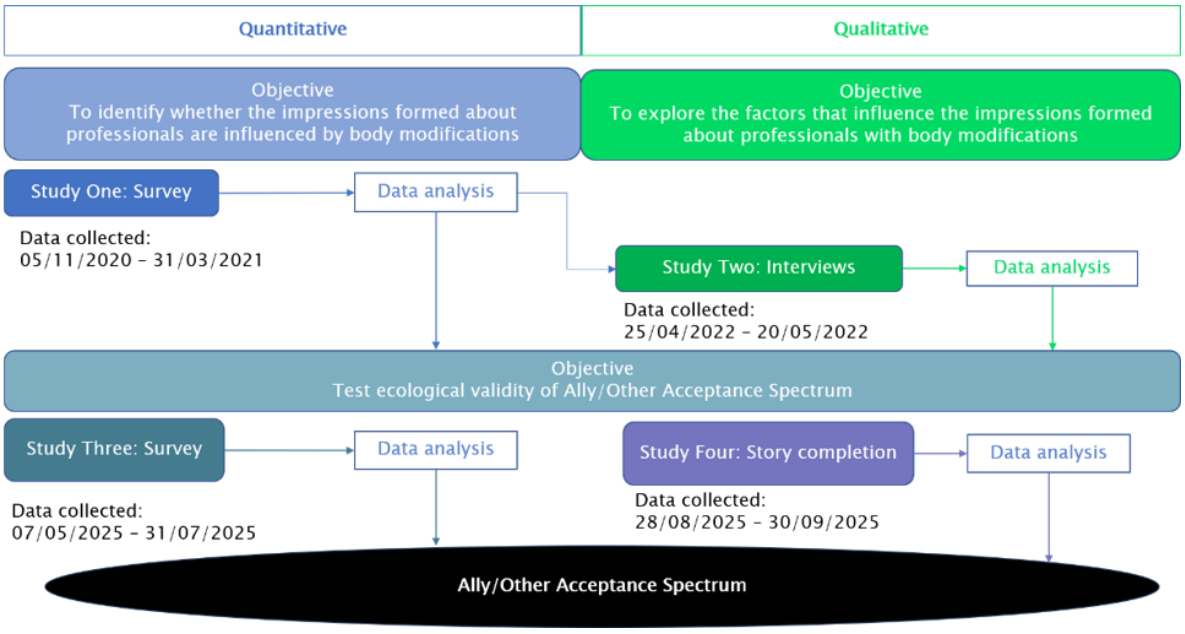
Using a mixed methods approach was grounded in the complex nature of the research problem, which necessitated a comprehensive understanding encompassing both breadth and depth (Cohen et al., 2018; Denscombe, 2021; Kara

et al., 2015; and Thomas, 2023). Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies created a framework to explore the psychological and social dimensions associated with perceptions of tattooed professionals as an area that could not be fully understood through a single methodological approach (Clark et al., 2021; Cohen et al., 2018). The complexity of judgments about professionals with tattoos required a thorough understanding of both the 'what' and 'why' aspects of the research questions (Clark et al., 2021; Cohen et al., 2018; Scammon et al., 2013; Thomas, 2023; and Wagner et al., 2016).

The nuances underlying judgments and the subjective meanings individuals attributed to tattoos required qualitative insights. Data collection therefore required both a survey and exploratory approach. This was a key strength underpinning the philosophy of the current research as it supported initial quantitative data gathering in Study One, qualitative data gathering in Study Two, and subsequent testing of findings (both quantitative and qualitative) in Study Three and Study Four. Figure 3 shows the relationship between data collection across the four Studies

Figure 3

Relationship Between Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection Across All Four Studies



2.2.1 Quantitative Approach

Study One conducted through established questionnaires provided the rigour necessary to quantify attitudes, biases, and stereotype-based judgments of both specific professions and tattoos (Cohen et al., 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2017; and Thomas, 2023). This approach facilitated broad data collection, enhancing the generalisability of the findings and enabling the identification of statistical relationships between variables (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Newby, 2013; and Thomas, 2023).

Study Three was developed to test the applicability of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum that was an original contribution of this research. An original survey measure was designed to quantify the point at which participants Conditionally Accept a tattoo based on a range of factors such as tattoo theme, size, and body placement. Quantitative data were crucial for testing hypotheses and establishing patterns of judgment, forming a foundational understanding of societal attitudes towards tattooed people, and tattooed professionals (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; and Newby, 2013).

2.2.2 Qualitative Approach

Study Two used semi-structured interviews to explore thoughts, perspectives, and opinions on judgments about tattooed professionals. This method facilitated an understanding of deeper psychological and cultural factors influencing perceptions of tattoos and professionalism (Cohen et al., 2018; and Thomas, 2023).

Study Four was a story completion task (Clarke et al., 2019) that provided participants more freedom to explore attitudes to visible tattoos with minimal structural framework. Qualitative research enhanced the interpretative power of the study, capturing complexities and subtleties that purely quantitative methods might have overlooked.

Nevertheless, the challenges inherent in adopting a mixed methods approach were acknowledged. Integrating qualitative and quantitative data required careful consideration to ensure coherence and avoid methodological incompatibility. Additionally, the time and resource intensity of mixed methods research posed practical constraints, particularly during data collection, analysis, and synthesis.

Overall, the mixed methods approach was firmly grounded in the need to capture both the statistical prevalence of judgments about tattooed professionals and the underlying psychological mechanisms driving these perceptions. By employing quantitative methods (questionnaires in Study One and survey in Study Three) alongside qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews in Study Two and story completion in Study Four), this allowed for data triangulation data comparisons, providing richer insights and capturing diverse perspectives relevant to the research objectives, which would have been restricted with a single method (Cohen et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2018; Mulatu & Negash, 2023).

Consequently, this strategy offered a more holistic view of the findings, enhancing the relevance, validity, and reliability of the research outcomes (Cohen et al., 2018; Ganiyu et al., 2020; Schoonenboom, 2019; Scott, 2016; Thomas, 2023). By integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the studies were able to provide a robust and nuanced understanding of how tattoos influence professional credibility, offering some contribution to the fields of psychology and workplace dynamics (Clark *et al., 2*021; Cohen et al., 2018; Scammon et al., 2013; Thomas, 2023; and Wagner et al., 2016).

2.2.3 Informed Consent

In meeting the ethical principle of responsibility, participants were aware that the research centred around tattoos, ensuring thorough disclosure and no surprises during their participation. Further, suggestions for sources of support were provided in the event that any participant might experience harm during their

participation. In terms of the BPS (2021a) ethical principle of integrity, the researcher did not employ any use of deception in presenting information to participants. In addition, only demographic information deemed necessary was requested and in all cases, participants could choose a 'prefer not to say' option, or else skip entering data to any field requiring text input.

The use of social media for recruiting research participants is a growing method across many research disciplines (Adair, 2015; and Andrews, 2012). Gelinas et al., (2017) outline two areas of ethical concern in social media participant recruitment: respect for privacy, and transparency. In relation to respect for privacy, concerns centre on the information that a person has posted, perhaps unintentionally. To address this, Gelinas et al., (2017) advocate that researchers should never disclose anything personal about their participants online, including engaging with them in a way that would allow others to infer anything about potential or actual participants. Transparency requires researchers to be clear about participants' expected involvement: the risks, aims, and any perceived benefits. Necessary information about what participation entailed, including research aims, right to withdraw etc. were shared with potential participants through the recruitment adverts and detailed information sheet. Therefore, it was felt to be appropriate to use social media to recruit participants as this gave anyone seeing the adverts the option to ignore the adverts or participate without anyone else being aware of their involvement.

In seeking informed consent, all participants in each Study were presented with key information explaining the purpose of the research, that they would be answering questions, the intended use of the data obtained, and a brief summary of what participation would involve. The wording of the participant information appears in Appendix H, and the wording used in the consent forms completed by Study One participants appears in Appendix I. Participants were presented with

demographic questions. The wording of the demographic questions appears in Appendix J.

Chapter 3 – Study One

This Chapter addresses Study One, including design, recruitment strategy, materials, procedure, data handling, and specific ethical considerations before presenting both descriptive and inferential results.

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Research Design

The research used an unrelated, independent samples design having engaged a cross-section of participants from the general population who completed three survey measures. Participants were presented with a common vignette about fictitious 'Sam' with some key differences. The key differences were the independent variables of either traditional professional (barrister/ vicar/ doctor) or non-traditional professional (nurse/ police officer/ teacher); one of 3 genders (female/ male/ gender neutral); and one of 2 tattooed statuses (not tattooed/ tattooed). Participants were assigned to one of 12 conditions in a 2 (profession: traditional; non-traditional) x 3 (gender: female; male; gender neutral) x 2 (tattooed status: not tattooed; tattooed) between participants design. The dependent variables were the scores for each measure (Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire; Moral Foundations Questionnaire; and the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale) which link to the strength of opinion relative to the characteristic or factor being surveyed. Appendix E shows the conditions, coding, and photographs used in the survey.

An *a priori* power analysis was performed in G*Power (Faul et al., 2007; 2009) to estimate sample size for MANOVA testing. Using a medium effect ($r2$=0.0625), power of 95% and p of 0.05, G*power indicated that at least 360 participants were required. The number of participants recruited was 411.

3.1.2 Materials

As there is no agreed definition of what a professional is, there is similarly no existing single measure that measures professional traits. Three existing measures were chosen based on their breadth of coverage of key professional traits as outlined by Millerson (1964), Vollmer and Mills (1966), and Wilensky (1964).

3.1.2.1 Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire

The Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire ('SPVQ') measures cross-cultural values linked to personal and social organisation and structures such as power, universalism etc. (Schwartz, 2012). Participants could respond between 1 and 6 for each of the 40 statements, meaning the lowest possible score was 40, and the highest possible score was 240. As statements were positively framed, the higher the SPVQ score, the more positive the judgment of the value being measured.

3.1.2.2 Moral Foundations Questionnaire

The MFQ measures individual priorities when making moral decisions such as loyalty, authority etc. (Graham et al., 2011). Participants could respond between 1 and 6 so that the lowest possible score was 32, and the highest possible score was 192. As statements were positively framed, the higher the MFQ score, the more positive the judgment of the value being measured.

3.1.2.3 Barratt Impulsiveness Scale

The Barratt Impulsiveness Scale ('BIS') measures tendencies linked to impulsiveness (Patton et al., 1995). Participants could respond between 1 and 4 so that the lowest possible score is 30, and the highest possible score is 120. As statements were negatively framed, scores were reversed for ease of reference. Therefore, for the BIS a lower score indicates a likely impulse-control disorder.

3.1.3 Sampling Strategy

In response to the adverts shared on social media (see Appendix G),

participants followed a link to the online data collection platform (Qualtrics). Based on the aims and research questions of the study, the intended sample were members of the public, whether in a professional occupation and whether tattooed, over 18 years old.

3.1.4 Data Handling

Data were stored within the Qualtrics system. Access to the data was password protected and limited to the researcher and the supervisory team.

3.1.5 Data Analysis

The intended strategy for data analysis was to carry out MANOVA testing for each of the three measures (SPVQ, MFQ, and BIS scores) to compare the variances between conditions and, as appropriate, taking into account participant demographics. As established measures, the authors recommend using total means scores for MANOVA testing before moving to specific themes. Further, although the SPVQ, MFQ, and BIS) each comprise multiple theoretically derived subscales, the present study was not designed to investigate differences between the constituent dimensions of these instruments. Rather, the purpose of Study One was to examine whether participants' overall responses differed according to the manipulated characteristics, profession, gender, and tattooed status, thereby addressing the research questions and hypotheses. Consequently, composite questionnaire scores were used as the dependent variables because they provided an overall measure of participants' responses to each construct and allowed the experimental hypotheses to be tested directly.

This decision helps to ensure consistency throughout the research design, whereby analytical procedures should be selected according to the research aims and questions rather than the level of analytical complexity afforded by the measurement instrument (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell and Creswell, 2023).

Although the psychometric instruments comprised multiple dimensions, the purpose of this study was not to examine the underlying structure of personal values, moral foundations, or impulsivity. Instead, these measures were used to capture participants' overall orientations towards each construct within the context of the experimental manipulations. Analysing individual subscales would therefore have addressed a different research focus from that defined by the research questions and hypotheses.

In addition, using total questionnaire scores provided a clear and coherent analytical strategy that aligned with the conceptual framework, research hypotheses, and statistical analyses. Treating each subscale as a separate dependent variable would have substantially increased the number of statistical comparisons, adding unnecessary complexity and increasing the risk of Type I error without providing evidence that directly addressed the aims of the study. As Thomas (2021) argues, methodological decisions should be informed by the nature of the research questions rather than by a desire to maximise analytical sophistication. Accordingly, composite scores were considered the most appropriate dependent variables for the MANOVA analyses because they enabled the study to evaluate whether the experimental manipulations influenced participants' overall responses to each psychometric construct, which was the central focus of the investigation.

MANOVA was selected because the study included multiple dependent variables that were conceptually related and were expected to show some degree of correlation, as they all measured participants' responses to the same vignette from different psychological perspectives. Analysing these variables simultaneously enabled the effects of profession, gender and tattoo status to be examined across the combined outcome measures, whilst accounting for the relationships between

the dependent variables. This approach also reduced the risk of inflating the Type I error rate that would have occurred had multiple separate ANOVAs been conducted.

To use MANOVA, data needed to satisfy the assumptions of normality of distribution and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (Dancy & Reidy, 2011; and Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Multivariate normality requires normally distributed data for each of the individual independent variables, equality of sample sizes, and 22 participants overall with at least 12 participants in each group. This means that tests for skewness should be no greater than ± 1.0, tests for kurtosis should be within a range of ± 1.0, and Shapiro-Wilk test results should have a *p* value >.05 (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010; Kim, 2013; and West et al., 1995). Homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices requires that the variances between groups should be approximately equal (meaning that the largest variance being tested is not more than three times that of the smallest variance being tested). This means that Levene's test and Box's M test results should have a *p* value >.05.

MANOVA testing was used on the SPVQ and MFQ results in respect of Hypotheses 1-3. Kruskal-Wallis testing was used on the BIS results in respect of Hypothesis One and Two.

3.1.6 Procedure

After clicking the link in the recruitment advert, participants were presented with information about the research (see Appendix H), asked to give consent (see Appendix I), and asked a series of demographic questions (Appendix J).

Following completion of the final question, participants were presented with a debrief screen, details of which are in Appendix K). Participant experience and losses throughout the procedure is shown in Figure 6, below.

3.1.7 Demographic Questions

Participants were asked about their:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Highest educational attainment
- Civil status or marital status.
- Occupational group
- Job title
- Number of tattoos
- Religious beliefs
- Religious beliefs and whether they influenced their views about tattoos.

Full details of demographic questions appear in Appendix J.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

To address the concerns about participant privacy as outlined by Gelinas et al., (2017) and to ensure there was no engagement online that could allow inferences to be drawn about participation, the recruitment advert invited anyone interested in learning more to click the link to the survey and read the participant information.

Participants were initially social contacts of the researcher. As an organic approach to participant recruitment (Khatri et al., 2015) this was felt to be an appropriate method of recruitment because anyone interested in participating was able to learn about the aims of the research before providing consent. This meant that it was a decision for each person who saw any of the adverts whether they wanted more information and, having received the information, whether they wanted to participate.

Participant information explained the purpose of the research, that they would be presented with information about a person working in a professional occupation before answering questions about them, the intended use of the data obtained, and a brief summary of what participation would involve. The wording of the participant information appears in Appendix H, and the wording used in the consent form completed by all participants appears in Appendix I. As part of the

consent form participants were presented with demographic questions and asked to provide a Personal Identifier Code. The wording of the demographic questions appears in Appendix J. The information sheet informed participants that they could withdraw at any time, including up to the point when the researcher would begin data analysis.

University ethical approval is shown in Appendix A.

3.3 Data Collection

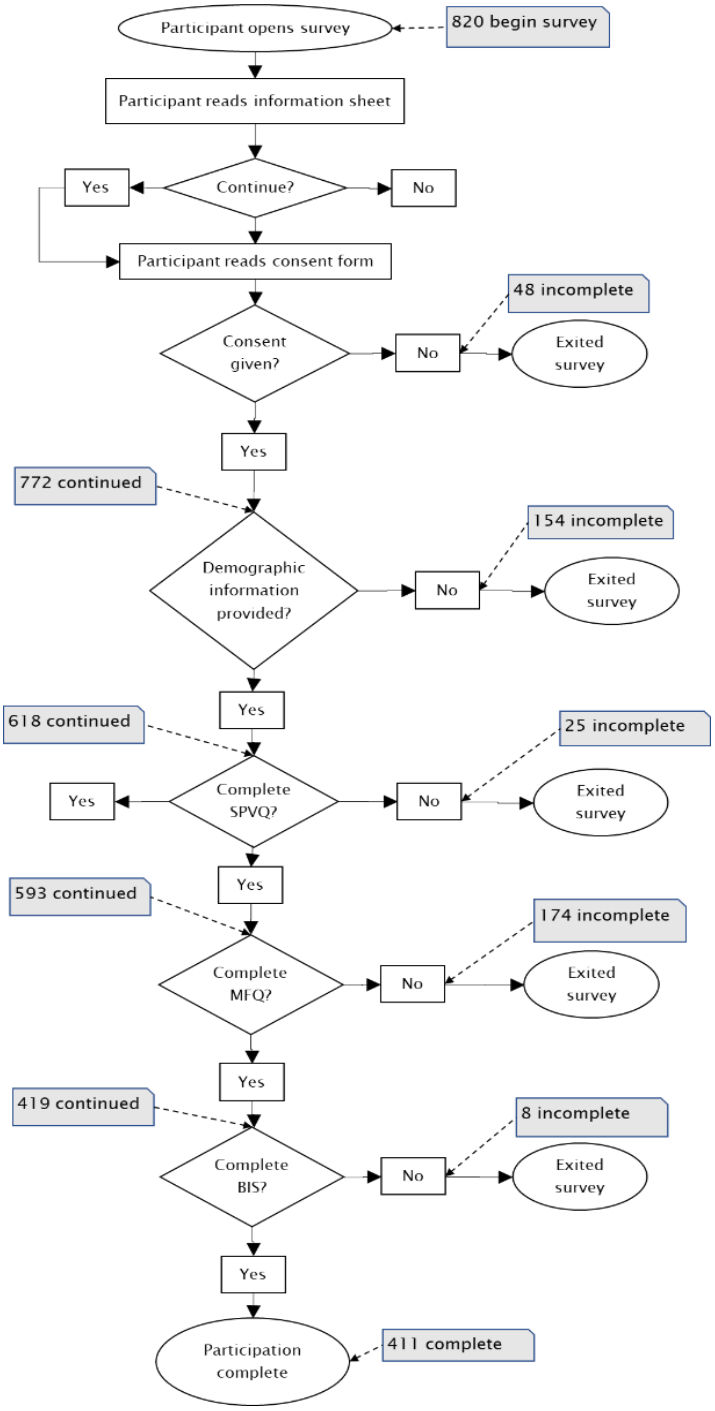
Data collection occurred during 2020-2021 alongside and during UK government lockdowns in connection with the global COVID-19 Pandemic.

3.4 Completion rate

Eight-hundred and twenty people began the survey: 49.9% (n=409) did not complete it (see Figure 4). The remaining participants (n=411) exceeded the power analysis target of 360.

Figure 4

Participant Losses and Completion Through Study One



3.5 Participants

Unless otherwise stated, the following information relates to the 411 participants that completed the survey. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 80 years (M=39.6 years) (see Appendix O). Office for National Statistics (2016)

definitions were used to determine professional/non-professional status of participant occupations (Appendix O). Of the tattooed participants (*n*=156) the reported number of tattoos ranged from 1 to 20 (M=3.79, Median=2.0, SD=4.0).

Participants were mainly female (*n*=324; 78.8%), White (*n*=343; 83.5%), between 18 and forty years old (*n*=235; 57.2%), educated to undergraduate degree level (*n*=143; 34.8%), working in a professional occupation (*n*=274; 66.7%), in a relationship (*n*=243; 59.1%), not tattooed (*n*=235; 57.2%), and not religious or spiritual (*n*=246; 59.9%).

3.6 Reliability of Survey Measures

As Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) measures the reliability of related items within a group, a series of Cronbach's Alpha tests were performed to determine the internal consistency (Zeller & Camines, 1980) of each related item within each survey measure. A low alpha value (approaching zero) can be indicative of poor inter-relationships between survey measure items; similarly, an alpha value of 0.9 is an indication that survey measure items are repetitious and are therefore redundant (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The Cronbach's Alphas for the Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire measure showed excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$). The Cronbach's Alphas for the Moral Foundations Questionnaire measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$). The Cronbach's Alphas for the Moral Foundations Questionnaire measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$).

3.7 Descriptive Statistics – Assumption Testing

Descriptive statistics for each measure (SPVQ, MFQ, and BIS) according to either traditional/non-traditional, gender, and tattooed status condition are shown below and in Appendix R.

3.7.1 SPVQ

The SPVQ measures cross-cultural values linked to personal and social organisation and structures such as power, universalism etc. (Schwartz, 2012). Participants could respond between 1 and 6 for each of the 40 statements, meaning the lowest possible score was 40, and the highest possible score was 240. As statements were positively framed, the higher the SPVQ score, the more positive the judgment of the value being measured.

None of the participants scored the SPVQ measure at the lowest possible rating of 40 (Appendix O). The actual lowest score for the SPVQ was 62 in the non-traditional male tattooed condition. This means that participants in the condition that saw Sam as a tattooed male in a non-traditional profession rated him more positively than the lowest possible rating (62 compared to the lowest possible score of 40). Similarly, none of the participants scored the SPVQ measure at the highest possible rating of 240. The actual highest score for the SPVQ was 222 in the traditional gender neutral non-tattooed condition. This means that participants in the condition that saw Sam as non-tattooed gender-neutral in a traditional profession rated Sam less positively than the highest possible rating (222 compared to the highest possible score of 240). Therefore, whilst participants in all conditions used the information provided to judge Sam positively, they did not rate all factors measured by the SPVQ as high as possible. Therefore, participants in all conditions felt more positively about Sam's personal and social values across the factors measured by the SPVQ than the lowest possible level but did not view Sam as favourably as possible. The mean SPVQ score across all conditions was 116.03.

3.7.1.1 Assumption Testing: Data Distribution – Normality.

To satisfy the first assumption for MANOVA testing for the SPVQ, data were analysed numerically and visually. Skewness and Kurtosis values were calculated. Although the total mean (116.03) and median (115.00) values were close, both the

Skewness (.778) and Kurtosis (2.434) values were greater than twice their respective standard error values (.120 and .240 respectively). Skewness and Kurtosis values for each condition were within the expected range ± 1.0 except for:

- Traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition. The skewness of the traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition was found to be 1.443, indicating that the distribution was right-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition was found to be 4.419, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Non-traditional male no tattoo condition. The Kurtosis of the non-traditional male no tattoo condition was found to be 1.818, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Non-traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition. The skewness of the non-traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition was found to be 1.286, indicating that the distribution was right-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the non-traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition was found to be 2.279, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.

Shapiro-Wilk values were significant for Traditional Gender neutral No tattoo (p<.001) and Non-traditional Gender neutral No tattoo (p=.003) conditions. These conditions also included extreme outliers (i.e. more than three times the Standard Deviation above or below the mean score) and were not normally distributed.

Extreme outlier scores were identified and winsorised by replacing with the mean plus 3 x SD) as follows:

- Positively-skewed outlier scores above 181.469 were replaced with 181.469.
- Negatively-skewed outliers: scores below 50.531 were replaced with 50.531.

For extremely positively skewed outliers, participants 309, 304, 411, 11, 409, and 307 had their total SPVQ total scores replaced with 181.469. As none of the negatively skewed outliers were below 50.531, no participants SPVQ total scores were replaced. Assumption testing was repeated using the winsorised values. Skewness, Kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk values were calculated as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Winsorised SPVQ Skewness, Kurtosis and Shapiro-Wilk Values by Tradition Condition

					Skewness		Kurtosis		Shapiro-Wilk	
	n	Median	Stat.	Stat.	Stat.	St. Err	Stat.	St. Err	Stat.	Sig.
				Traditional						
Male No tattoo	29	116.000	118.000	17.246	.454	.434	-.849	.845	.946	.144
Male Tattooed	27	112.000	108.704	15.672	-.522	.448	-.355	.872	.950	.220
Female No tattoo	35	109.000	114.914	19.472	.735	.398	.326	.778	.940	.058
Female Tattooed	41	112.000	111.415	22.484	.373	.369	-.391	.724	.976	.517
Gender neutral No tattoo	42	117.000	117.475	24.063	.552	.365	1.340	.717	.959	.137
Gender neutral Tattooed	34	117.000	116.206	17.615	-.224	.403	-.428	.788	.976	.655
				Non-Traditional						
Male No tattoo	31	118.000	121.112	22.574	.576	.421	.975	.821	.961	.301
Male Tattooed	28	113.500	114.357	21.975	.054	.441	.323	.858	.971	.598
Female No tattoo	37	117.000	116.189	18.902	-.015	.388	.324	.759	.989	.964
Female Tattooed	37	119.000	116.622	16.110	-.434	.388	-.749	.759	.951	.103
Gender neutral No tattoo	33	113.000	119.028	26.199	.760	.409	.633	.798	.931	.036
Gender neutral Tattooed	37	116.000	114.932	23.590	.204	.388	.345	.759	.956	.151
Total	411	115.000	115.773	20.842	.376	.120	.617	.240	.986	<.001

The total mean and median values were close. Skewness and Kurtosis values for each condition were within the expected range ± 1.0 except for traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition where Kurtosis was 1.340, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution. The

Shapiro-Wilk test was significant for the Traditional Gender neutral No tattoo condition *(p*=.036), indicating non-normal distribution. Examination of histograms, boxplots, and q-plots (Appendix O) visually confirmed normal distribution.

3.7.1.2 Assumption Testing: Data Distribution – Variance.

To test for homogeneity of variance, Levene's and Box's M tests were carried out. Levene's tests evaluates the homogeneity of variance for each dependent variable. Box's M tests for the equality of covariance matrices for all dependent variables combined. A significant result for either Levene's or Box's M denotes the assumption of variance for MANOVA use has been violated. Levene's test for the SPVQ was 1.464 which was not significant *(p*=.200). Box's M test for the SPVQ was 25.585 which was significant *(p*=.047).

There was one violation (Box's M test for homogeneity of variance-covariance). The decision was taken to continue with MANOVA because the Box's M test is sensitive to slight deviations, especially with a large number of comparison groups which was the case in this study. However, the group sizes were broadly equal, which limited the impact of the violation of this assumption (Stevens, 2009). In addition, as a more robust test for violations (Stevens, 2009) Wilk's Lambda was calculated and supported use of MANOVA for the SPVQ.

3.7.2 MFQ

The MFQ measures individual priorities when making moral decisions such as loyalty, authority etc. (Graham et al., 2011). Participants could respond between 1 and 6 so that the lowest possible score was 32, and the highest possible score was 192. As statements were positively framed, the higher the MFQ score, the more positive the judgment of the value being measured.

None of the participants in any of the conditions scored the MFQ measure at the lowest possible rating of 32 (Appendix O). The actual lowest score for the MFQ

was 40 in the non-tattooed gender neutral non-traditional condition. This means that participants in the condition that saw Sam as a non-tattooed gender neutral non-traditional professional rated them more positively than the lowest possible rating (40 compared to the lowest possible score of 32). Similarly, none of the participants in any of the conditions scored the MFQ measure at the highest possible rating of 192. The actual highest score for the MFQ was 159 in each of three conditions: tattooed female traditional profession, non-tattooed gender neutral non-traditional profession, and tattooed female non-traditional profession. This means that participants in the conditions that saw Sam as either a tattooed female traditional professional or a non-tattooed gender neutral non-traditional professional or a tattooed female non-traditional professional rated Sam less positively than the highest possible rating (159 compared to the highest possible score of 192). Therefore, whilst participants in all conditions used the information provided to judge Sam positively, they did not rate all factors measured by the MFQ as high as possible. Therefore, participants in all conditions felt more positively about Sam's personal and social values across the factors measured by the MFQ than the lowest possible level but did not view Sam as favourably as possible. The mean MFQ score across all conditions was 121.87.

3.7.2.1 Assumption Testing: Data Distribution - Normality

To satisfy the first assumption for MANOVA testing for the MFQ, data were analysed numerically and visually. Skewness and Kurtosis values were calculated. Although the total mean (121.87) and median (122.00) values were close, both the Skewness (-.648) and Kurtosis (2.645) values are greater than twice their respective standard error values (.120 and .240 respectively). Skewness and Kurtosis values for each condition are within the expected range ± 1.0 except for:

- Traditional female no tattoo condition. The Kurtosis of the traditional female no tattoo condition was 2.183, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Traditional female tattooed condition. The skewness of the traditional female tattooed condition was -1.406, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional female tattooed condition was found to be 4.253, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Non-traditional male tattooed condition. The Kurtosis of the non-traditional male tattooed condition was 1.145, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Non-traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition. The skewness of the non-traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition was -1.417, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the non-traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition was 3.781, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.

Shapiro-Wilk values were significant for Traditional female tattooed *(p*=.016); Traditional Gender neutral No tattoo *(p*=.001); and Non-traditional Gender neutral No tattoo *(p*=.006) conditions. These conditions, and the Non-traditional female tattooed condition, also included extreme outliers (i.e. more than three times the Standard Deviation above or below the mean score) and were not normally distributed. Extreme outlier scores were identified and winsorised (by replacing with the mean plus 3 x SD) as follows:

- Positively-skewed outliers above 169.282 were replaced with 169.282.
- Negatively-skewed outliers below 74.458 were replaced with 74.458.

As none of the positively skewed outliers were above 169.282, no participants MFQ total scores were replaced. For extremely negatively skewed outliers, participants

304, 11, and 365 had their total MFQ total scores replaced with 74.458. Skewness, Kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk values were calculated as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Winsorised MFQ Skewness, Kurtosis and Shapiro-Wilk Values by Tradition Condition

					Skewness		Kurtosis		Shapiro-Wilk	
	n	Median	Stat.	Stat.	Stat.	St. Err	Stat.	St. Err	Stat.	Sig.
				Traditional						
Male No tattoo	29	122.000	121.000	11.922	-.326	.434	-.921	.845	.959	.314
Male Tattooed	27	120.000	121.667	15.845	-.211	.448	.265	.872	.958	.325
Female No tattoo	35	114.000	116.229	13.727	.361	.398	.196	.778	.970	.455
Female Tattooed	41	124.000	120.865	16.337	-.656	.369	.871	.724	.952	.084
Gender neutral No tattoo	42	121.000	120.106	16.819	-.648	.365	1.124	.717	.954	.089
Gender neutral Tattooed	34	122.500	120.706	13.893	-.078	.403	-.320	.788	.983	.871
				Non-Traditional						
Male No tattoo	31	123.000	123.968	12.797	.241	.421	.192	.821	.971	.548
Male Tattooed	28	124.000	126.714	14.537	-.166	.441	1.145	.858	.963	.413
Female No tattoo	37	124.000	123.108	13.648	.141	.388	-.604	.759	.973	.480
Female Tattooed	37	123.000	123.541	13.862	.839	.388	.489	.759	.942	.053
Gender neutral No tattoo	33	126.000	126.347	20.555	-.511	.409	-.072	.798	.966	.377
Gender neutral Tattooed	37	123.000	121.811	14.171	-.404	.388	.231	.759	.980	.719
Total	411	122.000	122.042	15.102	-.182	.120	.378	.240	.992	.024

The total mean and median values are close. Skewness and Kurtosis values for each condition are within the expected range ± 1.0 except for:

- Traditional gender neutral no tattoo condition. Kurtosis was 1.124, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Non-traditional male tattooed condition. Kurtosis was 1.145, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.

The Shapiro-Wilk test was not significant for any condition. Therefore, numerical testing identified normal distribution for all MFQ conditions. Examination of histograms, boxplots, and q-plots (Appendix O) visually confirmed normal distribution.

3.7.2.2 Assumption Testing: Data Distribution – Variance

To test for homogeneity of variance, a Levene's test was carried out. Levene's test for the MFQ was 1.109 which was not significant *(p*=.355).

3.7.3 BIS

The BIS measures tendencies linked to impulsiveness (Patton et al., 1995). Participants could respond between 1 and 4 so that the lowest possible score is 30, and the highest possible score is 120. As explained above, although statements were negatively framed, scores were reversed for ease of reference. Therefore, for the BIS a lower score indicates a likely impulse-control disorder.

None of the participants in any of the conditions scored the BIS measure at the lowest possible rating of 30 (Appendix O). The actual lowest score for the BIS was 42 in the tattooed female traditional professional condition. This means that participants in the condition that saw Sam as a tattooed female traditional professional rated her more positively than the lowest possible rating (42 compared to the lowest possible score of 30). Similarly, none of the participants in any of the conditions scored the BIS measure at the highest possible rating of 120. The actual highest score for the BIS was 112 in two conditions: tattooed female traditional professional and non-tattooed gender neutral traditional professional. This means that participants in the conditions that saw Sam as a tattooed female in a traditional profession or a non-tattooed gender neutral traditional professional rated Sam less positively than the highest possible rating (112 compared to the highest possible score of 120). Therefore, whilst participants in all conditions used the information provided to judge Sam positively, they did not rate all factors measured by the BIS

as high as possible. Therefore, participants in all conditions felt more positively about Sam's impulsivity across the factors measured by the BIS than the lowest possible level but did not view Sam as favourably as possible. The mean BIS score across all conditions was 92.56.

3.7.3.1 Assumption Testing: Data Distribution - Normality

To satisfy the first assumption for MANOVA testing for the BIS, data were analysed numerically and visually. Skewness and Kurtosis values were calculated. Although the total mean (92.56) and median (93.00) values were close, both the Skewness and Kurtosis values were greater than twice their respective standard error values. Skewness and Kurtosis values for each condition are within the expected range ± 1.0 except for:

- Traditional male no tattoo condition. The skewness of the traditional male no tattoo condition was found to be -1.268, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional male no tattoo condition was found to be 2.116, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Traditional male tattooed condition. The skewness of the traditional male tattooed condition was found to be -1.157, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional male tattooed condition was found to be 1.268, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Traditional female no tattoo condition. The Kurtosis of the traditional female no tattoo condition was found to be 1.194, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Traditional female tattooed condition. The skewness of the traditional female tattooed condition was found to be -1.904, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional female

tattooed condition was found to be 7.667, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.

- Non-traditional female tattooed condition. The skewness of the non-traditional female tattooed condition was found to be 1.025, indicating that the distribution was right-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of non-traditional female tattooed condition was found to be 1.255, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.

Shapiro-Wilk values were significant for Traditional Male No tattoo ($p=.010$); Traditional Male Tattooed ($p=.015$); Traditional Female Tattooed ($p<.001$); Non-traditional Female Tattooed ($p=.014$) conditions. These conditions also included extreme outliers (i.e. more than three times the Standard Deviation above or below the mean score) and were not normally distributed. The following conditions had extreme outliers (i.e. more than three times the Standard Deviation above or below the mean score and were not normally distributed: Traditional Male Tattooed; Traditional Male No tattoo; Traditional Female Tattooed; and Traditional Female No tattoo. The following conditions Extreme outlier scores were identified and winsorised as follows:

- Positively-skewed scores above 119.776 were replaced with 119.776.
- Negatively-skewed outliers: scores below 65.344 were replaced with 65.344.

As none of the positively skewed outliers were above 119.776, no participants BIS total scores were replaced. For extremely negatively skewed outliers, participants 365, 159, and 292 had their total BIS total scores replaced with 65.344. Skewness, Kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk values were calculated as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Winsorised BIS Skewness, Kurtosis and Shapiro-Wilk Values by Tradition Condition

					Skewness		Kurtosis		Shapiro-Wilk	
	n	Median	Stat.	Stat.	Stat.	St. Err	Stat.	St. Err	Stat.	Sig.
				Traditional						
Male No tattoo	29	97.000	95.414	8.082	-1.268	.434	2.116	.845	.900	.010
Male Tattooed	27	94.000	93.037	8.346	-1.157	.448	1.268	.872	.902	.015
Female No tattoo	35	95.000	92.771	8.758	-.876	.398	1.194	.778	.942	.065
Female Tattooed	41	93.000	93.228	9.664	-.460	.369	1.016	.724	.969	.317
Gender neutral No tattoo	42	95.000	95.262	8.829	.022	.365	-.652	.717	.971	.368
Gender neutral Tattooed	34	94.000	93.059	7.897	-.313	.403	.018	.788	.977	.686
				Non-Traditional						
Male No tattoo	31	94.000	93.677	5.997	.809	.421	.925	.821	.946	.122
Male Tattooed	28	91.500	92.143	7.687	.196	.441	-.351	.858	.976	.758
Female No tattoo	37	89.000	89.757	9.200	-.291	.388	.253	.759	.964	.268
Female Tattooed	37	94.000	92.820	10.037	-1.013	.388	1.213	.759	.923	.014
Gender neutral No tattoo	33	94.000	94.364	7.202	-.153	.409	-.346	.798	.985	.918
Gender neutral Tattooed	37	87.000	86.523	9.277	-.278	.388	-.178	.759	.981	.751
Total	411	93.000	92.623	8.795	-.513	.120	.496	.240	.979	<.001

The total mean and median values were close. Skewness and Kurtosis values for each condition are within the expected range ± 1.0 except for:

- Traditional Male Tattooed condition. The skewness of the Traditional Male Tattooed condition was -1.268, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional male tattooed condition was 2.116, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Traditional Male no tattoo condition. The skewness of the Traditional Male no tattoo condition was -1.157, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional male tattooed condition was

1.268, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.

- Traditional Female no tattoo condition. The Kurtosis of the traditional female no tattoo condition was 1.194, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Traditional Female Tattooed condition. The Kurtosis of the traditional female tattooed condition was 1.016, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.
- Non-traditional Female Tattooed condition. The skewness of the non-traditional female tattooed condition was -1.013, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed. Similarly, the Kurtosis of the traditional male tattooed condition was 1.213, indicating that the distribution was more highly peaked compared to the normal distribution.

The Shapiro-Wilk test was found to be significant for the following conditions:

- Non-traditional Male No tattoo *(p*=.010)
- Non-traditional Female Tattooed *(p*=.014).

Therefore, numerical testing identified non-normal distribution for Traditional Gender Male Tattooed, Non-traditional Male no tattoo, and Non-traditional Female Tattooed conditions.

Examination of histograms, boxplots, and q-plots (Appendix O) visually confirmed normal distribution.

As the results for the BIS measure did not meet the assumption of normality, no further MANOVA assumption testing was carried out. Instead, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used to analyse BIS data in respect of hypotheses 1 and 2.

3.8 Inferential Analysis

3.8.1 Hypothesis One

MANOVA testing was carried out on total mean scores for the SPVQ and MFQ measures to test Hypothesis One that: The impressions formed by participants about traditional professions' character traits will be significantly more positive than for non-traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

There was a statistically significant difference between the participants' total mean SPVQ and MFQ scores for traditional professions compared to the total mean SPVQ and MFQ scores for non-traditional professions, $F(2, 404)=7.264$, $p=.0007$; Wilk's $\Lambda=0.965$, partial $\eta^2=.035$ (Appendix P).

There was no statistically significant difference between participants' total mean scores for traditional and non-traditional professions for the SPVQ measure, $F(1, 409)=1.389$, $p=.239$ (Appendix P).

There was a statistically significant difference between the participants' total mean scores for traditional and non-traditional professions for the MFQ measure, $F(1, 409)=7.609$, $p=.006$ (Appendix P).

Participant scores for each measure for traditional and non-traditional professions are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Participants' Mean SPVQ and MFQ Scores for Traditional and Non-Traditional Professions

	Traditional	Non-Traditional
Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire	114.576	116.999
Moral Foundations Questionnaire	120.028	124.105
Total	117.303	120.552

This means there was a statistically significant difference between participants' judgments of Sam in a traditional profession compared to Sam in a non-traditional profession across the SPVQ and MFQ mean scores combined. This multivariate effect was driven by the differences in MFQ scores.

Average scores for the MFQ were significantly higher in the non-traditional conditions than traditional conditions. This means that participants rated Sam significantly higher in non-traditional professions for traits including fairness, harm, loyalty, authority, and purity than for traditional professions.

Due to the violations of assumptions for the MANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis testing of participant mean scores for the BIS measure was carried out. The Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in participants' means BIS scores between traditional and non-traditional professions, $\chi^2(1)=9.028$, $p=.003$, with a mean rank score of 223.38 for traditional professions and 188.19 for non-traditional professions.

Average scores for the BIS were significantly higher in the traditional conditions than non-traditional conditions. This means that participants rated Sam more positively in traditional professions for traits including the ability to focus on a task, self-control (including planning and careful thinking), the ability to derive enjoyment from challenging mental tasks, stability, and perseverance than for traditional professions.

As higher scores indicate more positive ratings of character traits, the findings of significance for the MFQ and BIS mean that Hypothesis One is partially accepted. The impressions formed by participants about traditional professions' character traits as measured by the MFQ and BIS were significantly more positive than for non-traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

3.8.2 Hypothesis Two

MANOVA testing was carried out on total mean scores for the SPVQ and MFQ measures to test Hypothesis Two that: the impressions formed by participants about non-tattooed professionals' character traits will be significantly more positive than for tattooed professionals when considering total survey measure mean scores.

There was no statistically significant difference between the participants' total mean SPVQ and MFQ scores for tattooed professionals compared to the total mean SPVQ and MFQ scores for non-tattooed professionals, $F(2, 388)=.655$, $p=.520$; Wilk's $\Lambda=0.997$, partial $\eta^2=.003$.

There was no statistically significant difference between the participants' total mean scores for tattooed and non-tattooed professions for the SPVQ measure, $F(1, 389)=1.264$, $p=.262$.

There was no statistically significant difference between the participants' total mean scores for tattooed and non-tattooed professions for the MFQ measure, $F(1, 389)=.425$, $p=.515$.

Participant scores for each measure for tattooed and non-tattooed professionals are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Participants' Mean SPVQ and MFQ Scores for Tattooed and Non-Tattooed Professionals

	Tattooed	Non-Tattooed
Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire	117.470	115.076
Moral Foundations Questionnaire	121.448	122.459
Total	119.459	118.768

Due to the violations of assumptions for the MANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis testing of participant mean scores for the BIS measure was carried out. The Kruskal-Wallis

test showed that there was no statistically significant difference in participants' means BIS scores between tattooed and non-tattooed professionals, $\chi^2(1)=3.292$, $p= .070$, with a mean rank score of 195.30 for tattooed professionals and 216.55 for non-tattooed professionals.

As higher scores in each measure (SPVQ, MFQ, and BIS) indicate more positive ratings of character traits, the findings mean that Hypothesis Two is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted: the impressions formed by participants about non-tattooed professionals' character traits were not significantly more positive than for tattooed professionals when considering total survey measure mean scores.

3.8.3 Hypothesis Three

MANOVA testing was carried out on total mean scores for the SPVQ and MFQ measures to test the interaction effect in Hypothesis Three that: the impressions formed by participants about the professional character traits of males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions will be significantly more positive than for males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

There was no statistically significant difference between the participants' total mean SPVQ and MFQ scores for males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions compared to males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions $F(4, 808)=.334$, $p=.855$; Wilk's $\Lambda=0.997$, partial $\eta^2=.002$.

There was no statistically significant difference between participants' total mean SPVQ scores for males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions compared to males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions $F(2, 405)=.420$, $p=.657$.

There was no statistically significant difference between participants' total mean MFQ scores for males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions compared to males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions $F(2, 405)=.043$, $p=.957$.

Participant scores for each measure for gender condition and professional status condition are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Participants' Mean SPVQ and MFQ Scores for Male and Female and Traditional Status

	Traditional	Non-Traditional
	SPVQ	
Female	113.026	116.405
Male	113.518	117.906
	MFQ	
Female	118.730	123.324
Male	121.321	125.271

As higher scores in the SPVQ and MFQ indicate more positive ratings of character traits, the findings mean that Hypothesis Three is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted: there was no interaction effect between the impressions formed by participants about male non-traditional professionals or female traditional professionals compared to male non-traditional professionals or female traditional professionals.

Chapter 4 – Study Two

4.1 Research Design

To address the research questions and to allow participants the opportunity to express those behaviours and characteristics they feel to be important, a semi-structured interview approach was chosen. As Fylan (2005) notes, semi-structured interviews allow researchers to engage in a conversation with participants to explore their experiences on a topic and find out what the participants think or feel about something the researcher is interested in (Fylan, 2005). Given the emerging but limited research on the impact of body modifications on the impressions formed about professionals, there was a need to provide a forum for participants to talk openly about their views and experiences, whilst acknowledging the scope for the participant interviews to move into a purely conversational style.

Therefore, the decision was taken to adopt a more structured interview schedule (Elliott & Timulak, 2005) that ensured key questions relating to professionalism, trust and competence were explored consistently across all participants, whilst allowing sufficient flexibility for participants to introduce issues they considered important. This consistency across interviews facilitated the subsequent use of Template Analysis, a flexible form of thematic analysis, by enabling patterns of meaning to be explored systematically through the iterative development and refinement of a hierarchical coding template. At the same time, the flexibility afforded by the interview schedule ensured that unexpected themes could develop inductively from participants' accounts, consistent with the principles of Template Analysis (Brooks et al., 2015).

Using an exploratory qualitative design, the research used semi-structured interviews, with participants answering questions about two photographs (one male, and one female as in Appendix L), and two of six professions (either a doctor/vicar/barrister/ police officer/teacher/or nurse). Discussion of photographs

is a form of photovoice methodology that Wang and Burris (1997) suggest is an effective way to facilitate critical exploration of key issues (see also Sutton-Brown, 2014).

4.2 Recruitment Strategy

In response to the adverts shared on social media (see Appendix G), anyone interested in learning more was invited to contact the researcher privately, rather than responding on social media. This ensured that no-one interested in participating could be identified as such from their interaction with the researcher's adverts. Based on the aims and research questions of the study, the intended sample were members of the public, whether in a professional occupation and whether tattooed, over 18 years old.

4.3 Materials

As previous research into professional characteristics had been inconclusive regarding an agreed definition about professionals and their characteristics, it was not possible to use an existing interview schedule from any prior research. Therefore, Study Two interview schedule was created for the current research. Specifically, the interview schedule was designed to explore research questions 1-3: whether any character traits common to all professions were identified; whether the presence of a visible tattoo impacted impressions formed about professionals; and if any aspect of tattoo design impacts the impressions formed about professionals.

Taking Svensson (2006) as a starting position, the questions in the current study were aimed at identifying the contextual, behavioural, and cognitive traits that participants associated with being a professional. Further, these traits were linked to implied power over any member of society not belonging to a particular profession. As a result, the questions reflected the knowledge, competence, and skills that such professional power is derived from. Taking into account both Power

(2008) and Sachs (2003) views of the inadequacy of conventional constructs of professionalism, and the need for individuals to form their own meaning of professionalism, it was important to ask Study Two participants about how they perceived professionals, rather than providing a set definition from the outset. This allowed the participants' individualised definition to determine the impact (if any) that being tattooed had. However, to provide a minimal baseline control to allow template analysis, Study Two participants were asked specifically about the level of trust (Evetts, 2011) and competence (Millerson, 1964) in relation to the images of professionals they saw. The selection of trust and competence as focal areas of questioning was informed by their consistent prominence within the professionalism literature. Trust has frequently been identified as a foundational component of professional status because professions are granted a degree of social authority and autonomy based upon public confidence in their judgment and conduct (Evetts, 2011). Similarly, competence has long been regarded as a defining characteristic of professional practice, reflecting the possession and application of specialist knowledge, skills, and expertise (Millerson, 1964). Together, these concepts represent two of the most widely cited dimensions through which professional legitimacy is evaluated. Their inclusion therefore provided a theoretically informed means of exploring whether visible tattoos influenced participants' perceptions of professional identity whilst remaining sufficiently broad to accommodate diverse participant interpretations. Rather than imposing a predetermined definition of professionalism, trust and competence were used as sensitising concepts that could guide discussion without constraining participants' responses. Within the subsequent data analysis, these concepts functioned as sensitising concepts rather than predetermined coding categories. Consistent with Template Analysis, sensitising concepts provide an initial analytic focus whilst allowing researchers to remain open to new themes emerging inductively from

participants' accounts (Brooks et al., 2015). Therefore, although trust and competence informed the interview schedule, they did not restrict the analysis, enabling participants to introduce ideas and experiences that extended beyond these initial concepts. This forms a key aspect of the current study in making an original contribution to knowledge, by not being dogmatic in exploring participants' views, but instead inviting them to explain their views in their own words. The decision to employ a semi-structured interview schedule was also methodological rather than purely practical. Previous research examining attitudes towards tattoos and professional appearance has frequently utilised quantitative methodologies, including surveys, rating scales, and experimental designs that require participants to select responses from predetermined categories. Whilst such approaches can identify patterns across larger samples, they provide limited opportunity to explore how individuals construct, negotiate, and justify their understandings of professionalism. Given the lack of consensus within the literature regarding the defining characteristics of professionals, an exploratory approach was considered more appropriate. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to articulate their own understandings of professionalism and explain the reasoning underpinning their judgments, thereby generating richer and more nuanced data than would have been possible through fixed-response measures alone. The richness and flexibility of these qualitative accounts made them particularly well suited to analysis using Template Analysis, which supports the systematic exploration of patterned meaning whilst remaining responsive to participants' own constructions of their experiences (Brooks et al., 2015).

The interview schedule was therefore designed to generate rich qualitative accounts that could subsequently be explored through Template Analysis, whilst ensuring sufficient consistency across interviews to enable meaningful comparison between participants (Brooks et al., 2015). Therefore, in order to put participants at

ease, initial questions were factual and established their familiarity with tattoos (for example, “do you have any tattoos?”, “Do any of your friends or family have tattoos?”, “Can you tell me why you chose to get a tattoo?”, “Are there any reasons why you do not have any tattoos?”). Thereafter, participants were asked to define what it means to be a professional (for example, “how would you define a professional occupation?”). Further, acknowledging that the definition provided may be influenced by their individual experience, participants were asked if they had any familiarity with a tattooed professional (for example, “what are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?”, “Can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional who has visible tattoos?”). None of these initial questions were accompanied by any visual images to reflect on, which meant that participants relied on their individual experiences and were not influenced by images provided by the researcher.

An alternative approach would have been to introduce photographic stimuli from the outset of the interview. However, this was considered potentially problematic because participants may have immediately focused upon the specific characteristics of the individuals depicted rather than first articulating their broader understanding of professionalism. By separating the discussion of professionalism from the presentation of photographic stimuli, participants were initially encouraged to draw upon their existing beliefs, experiences, and assumptions. This sequencing increased the likelihood that subsequent responses to the photographs reflected an interaction between pre-existing perceptions of professionalism and the visible presence of tattoos, rather than reactions driven solely by the images themselves.

Following the initial questions aimed at allowing each participant to form an undirected baseline understanding about what a professional was, participants were presented with images of two tattooed individuals and asked more structured

questions about the individuals in the context of one of six professions. This is a type of photovoice methodology in the tradition of Wang and Burris (1997) in which people from an identified community use a specific photographic form to document their reflections about their community. To maintain consistency, the images used in Study One were the same images used in Study Two (see Appendix L). The reason for this was to reduce the likelihood of other influencing factors such as attractiveness (for example Eagly et al., 1991; Feingold, 1992; and Lorenzo et al., 2010). The use of photographic stimuli was selected because visual appearance was central to the phenomenon under investigation. Participants were being asked to form impressions based upon the visible presence of tattoos and therefore required a realistic visual representation from which such judgments could be made. Alternative approaches, such as written vignettes describing tattooed professionals, were considered less appropriate because they would require participants to imagine the appearance, size, placement, and style of tattoos for themselves. Such variability could introduce inconsistency between participants and make interpretation of the findings more difficult. The use of standardised photographic images ensured that all participants responded to the same visual stimulus, thereby enhancing consistency whilst maintaining ecological validity.

Participants were told that the image on the screen was a professional (either a doctor/vicar/barrister/police officer/teacher/nurse) and asked questions about the person in the image that related to that profession. The on-screen image was changed to a different, second image. The participant was told that the person in the second image was in a different profession from image one. The same questions about image one were asked about image two. Participants were asked whether they had anything they wanted to share about professionals with tattoos, and if they had ever formed an opinion about a tattooed person based on that tattoo and whether that opinion had changed (for example., positive opinion

became negative, or a negative opinion had become positive). As necessary, follow-up questions were asked to ensure clarity or to explore responses. Although alternative measurement strategies, including standardised attitude scales, semantic differential scales, and Likert-type ratings, may have enabled statistical comparison between participants, such approaches were not adopted in Study Two because they would have been inconsistent with the exploratory purpose of the study. The objective was not to quantify attitudes towards tattooed professionals but to understand how participants constructed those attitudes and the meanings they attributed to tattoos within professional contexts. Consequently, qualitative interviewing was considered the most appropriate method for addressing the research questions and for complementing the quantitative findings generated during Study One. The interview schedule (see Appendix L) was approved by the Birmingham City University Faculty Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A).

4.4 Data Handling

Interview recordings were stored on Birmingham City University's secure server, accessible only by the researcher using password protection and Multi-Factor Authentication. Participants received by email a Word document with the transcript of their interview. Recordings were securely deleted following completion of the Template Analysis and verification of the interview transcripts.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

To address the concerns about participant privacy as outlined by Gelinas et al., (2017) and to ensure there was no engagement online that could allow inferences to be drawn about participation, the recruitment advert invited anyone interested in learning more to email the researcher privately, rather than responding on social media.

Participants that contacted the researcher were then given an information

sheet and a consent form. Therefore, participants were initially social contacts of the researcher. As an organic approach to participant recruitment (Khatri et al., 2015) this was felt to be an appropriate method of recruitment because anyone interested in participating was able to learn about the aims of the research before providing consent. This meant that it was a decision for each person who saw any of the adverts whether they wanted more information and, having received the information, whether they wanted to participate.

Participant information explained the purpose of the research, that they would be presented with two images of people working in professional occupations and answering questions about them, the intended use of the data obtained, and a brief summary of what participation would involve. The wording of the participant information appears in Appendix H, and the wording used in the consent form completed by all participants appears in Appendix I. As part of the consent form participants were presented with demographic questions and asked to provide a Personal Identifier Code. The wording of the demographic questions appears in Appendix J. The information sheet informed participants that they could withdraw at any time, including up to the point when the researcher would begin data analysis.

Each participant was assigned a pseudonym which was used to save their transcript, ensuring no personal identifying information used. University ethical approval is shown in Appendix A.

4.6 Pseudonyms

Participant demographic information and pseudonyms assigned to Study Two interview participants are show in Table 7.

Table 7

Participant Demographics and Assigned Pseudonyms

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Tattooed	Occupation	Friends and family tattooed?	Image one profession and gender photo	Image two profession and gender photo
Martin	45	Male	No	Senior Lecturer	Yes	Female vicar	Male teacher
Stella	42	Female	Yes	Technical & Innovation Lead	Yes	Female nurse	Male police officer
Steve	25	Male	Yes	Casework Support Administrator	Yes	Male teacher	Female barrister
Jemima	50	Female	No	University Manager	Yes	Male nurse	Female vicar
Mary	36	Female	No	Teacher	Yes	Male vicar	Female doctor
Alison	31	Female	Yes	SEN teacher	Yes	Female police officer	Male doctor
Robyn	45	Non-binary	Yes	Unemployed	Yes	Male barrister	Female police officer
Lucy	63	Female	No	Education Manager	Yes	Female barrister	Male nurse
Kitty	29	Female	No	Data Administrator	No	Male doctor	Female nurse
Julian	40	Male	No	Data inputter	Yes	Female doctor	Male vicar
Mike	48	Male	No	Client Services Administrator	Yes	Male police officer	Female teacher
Pat	47	Female	No	Special Needs Support Worker	Yes	Female barrister	Male nurse

4.7 Procedure

In response to the adverts shared on social media (see Appendix G), participants emailed the researcher to express an interest in being interviewed. They were then provided an information sheet (see Appendix H) and a consent form (see Appendix I). Participants returning the completed consent form were emailed to arrange an interview of up to one hour to be conducted using MS Teams.

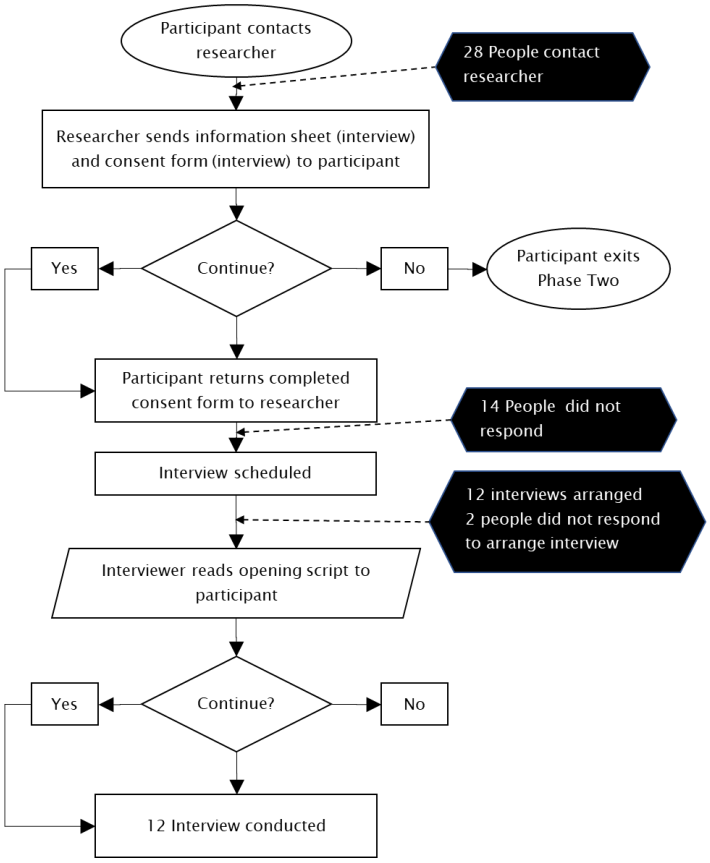
A semi-structured interview schedule was created to address the research questions. The interview questions were mainly open-ended and included sharing images of two people (one male, one female) that had been used in Study One. The professions associated with the images were assigned randomly, with each

interview participant seeing one male image and being told that the person they could see was a professional (a doctor/vicar/barrister/police officer/teacher/nurse) and one female image that was a different profession from the male image. For example, the first participant interviewed saw a male police officer and a female teacher while the second interview participant saw a female doctor and a male vicar.

Each interview was conducted within its allotted hour (min=11.42 minutes; max=54.44 minutes; mean= 27.39 minutes; SD=11.99). At the end of the interviews, participants were thanked for their time and told that the transcript would be emailed to them along with a debrief information sheet (see Appendix K). Figure 5 provides a visual depiction of the participant experience through Study Two.

Figure 5

Participant Experience, Losses, and Completion Through Study Two



Each interview was transcribed following the interview using software available in either MS Word or MS Teams. Transcriptions took place using

headphones to listen back to the recordings. Each transcript was checked by the researcher using the recording as the original source. The checked transcript and a copy of the debrief information (see Appendix K) was emailed to the relevant participants within a day of the interview having been carried out. Participants were asked to return the transcript with any changes they wanted to make. The verified transcripts subsequently formed the dataset used for Template Analysis.

4.8 Demographic Questions

Participants were asked (Appendix I) the following demographic questions:

- Age.
- Gender.
- Occupation.
- Number of tattoos.

4.9 Data Analysis

As acknowledged above, previous study relating to what it means to be a professional, and what impact body modifications might have on impressions formed about professionals is lacking. As such, in order to make an original contribution to knowledge, an experiential qualitative approach was taken in the current research (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2022). This meant that Study Two data collection was designed and carried out with a focus on meaning and experience in order to allow the world "inside the head" relative to the external social world to be seen (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.160). In particular, and to allow exploration of the participants' views of professionals and tattoos not previously researched in this way, the critical research in Study Two was informed by a hermeneutics of suspicion. This allowed an "...unpack[ing] and interrogat[ion of] the truths and claims presented in the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.160).

The interview data were analysed using Template Analysis (Brooks et al., 2015). It allows researchers to combine inductive analysis, in which themes are

developed from participants' accounts, with deductive or a priori concepts where these are theoretically relevant (Brooks et al., 2015). This flexibility made Template Analysis particularly appropriate for the present study because, although previous literature informed the broad focus of the interviews (for example, professionalism, trust and competence), there was little existing research exploring how visible tattoos influence perceptions of professionals. Consequently, the analysis remained primarily data-driven whilst allowing these sensitising concepts to inform interpretation where appropriate. Template Analysis also provides a clear analytic process involving familiarisation with the data, preliminary coding, development and refinement of a coding template, and interpretation of themes across the dataset, which broadly parallels the phases of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006) (Brooks et al., 2015).

Template Analysis was selected because it provides a balance between structure and flexibility. Unlike approaches requiring either wholly inductive coding or rigid coding frameworks, Template Analysis allows researchers to begin with broad sensitising concepts while remaining open to themes that develop through engagement with the data. This made it particularly appropriate for the present study, where professionalism, trust and competence informed the interviews but did not predetermine the findings (Brooks et al., 2015).

As Study One was more directly informed by existing theory regarding professions, professionals, and body modification, Study Two adopted an inductive approach to qualitative analysis. Consistent with Template Analysis, coding was largely inductive, with themes generated from participants' descriptions and interpretations rather than being imposed from a predetermined coding framework (Brooks et al., 2015). Although the analysis was informed by the researcher's interpretations, Template Analysis acknowledges that themes are actively developed through engagement with the data rather than simply discovered within it (Brooks

et al., 2015). Inductive analysis therefore remained closely grounded in participants' accounts rather than seeking support for an existing theoretical standpoint, whilst recognising the active interpretive role of the researcher throughout the analytic process.

Analysis followed the iterative principles of Template Analysis described by Brooks et al., (2015). Rather than producing a fixed coding structure at the outset, an initial coding template was developed from early engagement with the transcripts and then progressively refined as analysis continued. This iterative process enabled themes to be modified, combined, reorganised or discarded where necessary until the final template adequately represented patterns across the complete dataset.

The practical process of familiarisation, coding, theme development and review broadly followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis. However, the overall analytic strategy was Template Analysis, with successive versions of a coding template being developed and refined throughout the analysis (Brooks et al., 2015). Consequently, codes were developed through the researcher's interpretive engagement with participants' accounts, reflecting the active role of the researcher in constructing the coding template (Brooks et al., 2015). The process for engaging with the recordings and transcripts in distinct locations helped to approach the data afresh and ensure that the researcher had not overlooked any themes that might not have been identified up to that point.

Once all interviews had been recorded and transcribed, the researcher listened again to each recording to become familiar with the data and identify meaningful patterns relevant to the research questions. Around a week later (and working in a different location in the house) the researcher read through the interview distillations and coded meaningful segments of text that reflected shared

ideas, experiences and interpretations across participants. The initial codes were organised into preliminary themes, forming the first version of the coding template.

The preliminary coding template and associated transcripts were discussed with the research supervisor to encourage critical reflection on coding decisions, consider alternative interpretations and refine theme definitions. Following these discussions, the template was refined by merging related themes, clarifying theme definitions and reconsidering the hierarchical relationships between themes and subthemes, reflecting the iterative nature of Template Analysis (Brooks et al., 2015).

Around two weeks later (and working in the researcher's home office) the researcher listened to the recordings whilst reading through the developing coding template to name and define the themes. Where necessary, themes were merged, divided, renamed or reorganised to improve the coherence of the developing coding template. The distilled summaries were reviewed, cross-referenced and compared with the other participants' responses to identify and consolidate common themes. Relationships between higher-order themes and subordinate themes were also considered, resulting in a hierarchical coding template that represented patterns across the complete dataset (Brooks et al., 2015).

This process of repeatedly reviewing both the transcripts and the evolving template continued until the coding structure provided a coherent representation of participants' accounts across the dataset. Successive revisions of the coding template provided an audit trail documenting how interpretations developed throughout the analytic process, thereby enhancing the transparency and trustworthiness of the analysis (Brooks et al., 2015). Therefore, following transcription, the data were thoroughly examined, reviewed, synthesised and interpreted to ensure understanding of each participant's interview responses.

4.10 Reflexivity Statement

I am a White, middle-class, heterosexual, non-disabled, cisgender female. I consider myself to be a liberal and a feminist. At the time of the Study Two interviews, I was 46 years old and had two tattoos: one on my thigh which was not visible to participants, and one measuring approximately 7 x 6 cm on the inside of my left wrist. This tattoo was unlikely to be visible to participants in the time that I appeared on camera to introduce myself and check audio function before recording began. As a tattooed individual I have experienced criticism and bias and am aware that I have judged other tattooed people on a range of physical attributes, including their tattoo (size, style, artistry, placement, symbolism). I did not volunteer my tattooed status to participants before the interview began. However, at the end of the interview when participants were asked if they had any questions, I referred to my experience of being tattooed if relevant to the conversation. At the time of the interviews, I worked in, or allied to, the UK higher education sector. This was not volunteered to participants, and no participants asked about my occupational or professional status.

4.11 Data Collection

Data collection occurred in 2022 after UK government lockdowns in connection with the global COVID-19 Pandemic. The UK Government's subsequent public safety measures, as well as the convenience in accessing participants (Janghorban et al., 2014; and Quickfall, 2022), impacted the decision to conduct interviews online.

4.11.1 Completion rate

Of the twenty-eight people that responded to the recruitment advert (see Appendix G), 14 did not return the completed consent form. A further two did not

respond to requests for availability to schedule an interview. Figure 5 shows participant completion through Study Two.

Based on the lack of prior research regarding what people think about professionals with tattoos, it was estimated that around thirty participants would be interviewed before any "gold standard" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 28) of data saturation was reached. However, reflecting on each interview's contribution to the richness of the overall dataset (Malterud et al., 2021) after completion of twelve interviews, superordinate themes had been identified, and no significantly new topics emerged. Consequently, the decision was taken to end further interviews.

4.12 Findings

Template analysis was carried out relative to research questions 1-3 which were:

RQ1: Did participants identify any character traits common to all included professional occupations, both traditional and non-traditional professions?

RQ2: Did the presence of a visible tattoo on included professionals impact participants' impressions formed about the character traits of that professional?

RQ3: If so, what features of a tattoo (e.g. size, theme, location on the body) influenced participants' impressions formed about a tattooed professional?

Two superordinate and three subordinate themes (explored below) were identified:

Superordinate theme 1: Ally/ 'othering' in relation to tattoo acceptance.

Subordinate theme 1: Tattoos as conversation device.

Subordinate theme 2: Tattoo position as transgressive.

Subordinate theme 3: Criteria for critiquing tattoos.

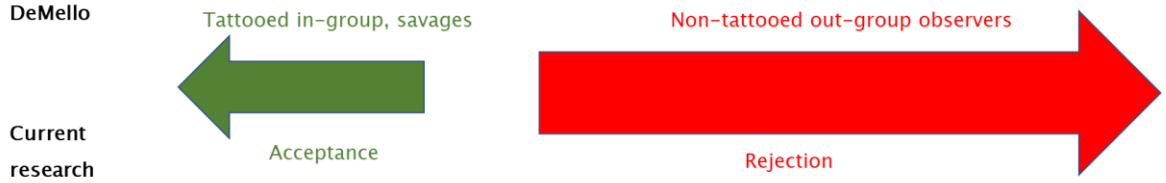
Superordinate theme 2: Stereotypes associated with professions.

4.12.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Ally 'Othering' in Relation to Tattoo Acceptance

As noted above, DeMello (2000) identified that the act of treating tattooed individuals as side show savages led to them being othered. In this regard, the person viewing the side show tattooed individual was situating themself as belonging to the in-group majority: non tattooed (or not visibly tattooed) people who held themselves as higher status and separate from tattooed savages. Figure 6 provides a visual representation of DeMello's (2000) othering of side-show tattooed savages, incorporating the current research findings regarding acceptance and rejection of tattoos.

Figure 4

DeMello's (2000) Othering of Tattooed Savages and Acceptance and Rejection of Tattoos



The data obtained through Study Two identified a different form of othering from DeMello's (2000). Regardless of their own tattooed status, none of the participants expressed feeling that the tattooed people they saw were (as DeMello described) savages. Instead, participants expressed a form of affiliation with tattooed individuals, akin to ally frameworks found in the UK in relation to LGBTQIA+ persons (see, for example, Rotosky, Black, Riggle & Rosenkrantz, 2015; Stonewall, 2022) such that an ally is likely to be cis and/or heterosexual but supports people who identify as LGBTQIA+. In this regard, an LGBTQIA+ ally is not in-group, but supports those that are.

The concept of 'allyship' is used in this study as an analytical lens (or tool or framework) rather than as a direct comparison between tattooed people and

historically marginalised groups, such as LGBTQIA+ communities. Within this context, 'allyship' refers to the position adopted by individuals who are not themselves tattooed but who nevertheless express acceptance of, and support for, those who choose to be tattooed. The value of this concept lies in its ability to distinguish support for a group from membership of that group. Participants frequently described themselves as accepting of tattooed people while also acknowledging that others continued to hold less accepting or negative attitudes towards tattoos. This distinction reflects the broader conceptualisation of 'allyship', in which individuals support a group without claiming membership of it. Consequently, 'allyship' provides a useful analytical lens/tool/framework for interpreting participants' accounts, demonstrating how acceptance of tattooed people can coexist with an awareness of the social stigma that tattooed people continue to experience.

Whilst interview participants were asked what they thought about tattoos (either their own or friends' and family members' tattoos) they were not asked to speculate if or why other people might not be accepting of tattoos. Therefore, the explanations that other people might not like tattoos were spontaneously offered and, in this context, unrequired information. Despite this, participants went on to explain their feeling that rejection of tattoos exists, and in some cases attributed this to specific factors, including characteristics of the group that rejects and 'others' tattooed people, for example age. Julian explained that "some people are very strongly against [tattoos]…I don't even know if it's a generational thing, but it's fine by me" (Julian, no tattoos, lines 114-121. See Appendix Q). Jemima offered a similar opinion regarding age being a factor for rejection of tattoos: "…although [being tattooed] doesn't necessarily put me off personally, I know [it would] put my mom off it would put my nan off" (Jemima, no tattoos, lines 430-431). In both Julian's and Jemima's statements, there is a clear positioning about their respective

allyship – *doesn't put me off personally* and *it's fine by me*. However, this acceptance was set against their perception that not everyone is an ally or feels the same way. For both Julian and Jemima, their explanation of other people not being accepting or an ally was attributed to age (*generational thing* and *it would put my mom…nan off*). Attributing rejection of tattoos to age or generational difference for the non-accepting group provides an implicit justification to the reason for the rejection. For example, applying the acceptance/rejection positions in Figure 6 to Julian's and Jemima's statements shows the delineation between tattoo acceptance and rejection (where people of a different age or generation reject tattoos and 'other' people with them):

> < Othering
> although it doesn't necessarily put me off personally, I know [it would] put my mom off it would put my nan off (Jemima, no tattoos, lines 430-431)
>
> < Othering
> I don't even know if [being against tattoos is] a generational thing, but it's fine by me (Julian, no tattoos, lines 114-125).

Study Two data showed participants acceptance of and allyship with tattooed people that was juxtaposed against the identification of some other group of people (whether identifiable by age or generation as noted above) that rejected tattooed people, to the point of 'othering' them as out-group. However, as an extension of the dichotomy shown in Figure 6, participants explained their own conditional acceptance or rejection of tattooed people.

Although identifying as allies, Study Two participants qualified their acceptance of tattoos by explaining the circumstances in which they might question the nature of a tattoo. For those observing tattooed people this indicates a move away from distinct othering as DeMello (2000) identified, to more nuanced in- and out-groups. This means a simplified acceptance or rejection of tattoos (as shown in Figure 6) is not accurate in capturing those nuanced circumstances in which an ally might reject a tattooed person or, in the alternative, where anyone rejecting

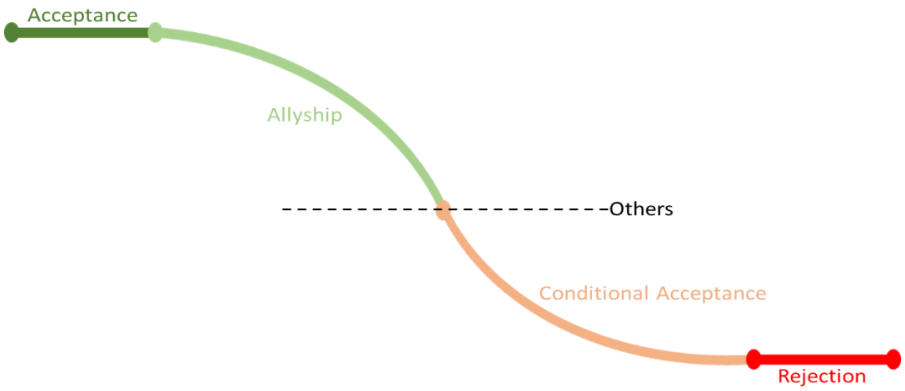
them might accept a tattoo. As a result, based on Study Two data, the impressions formed when observing tattooed people can be placed into one of four overarching categories:

- Acceptance. The observer unreservedly accepts tattoos regardless of style, type, quality, or placement of tattoo.
- Allyship. The observer accepts and supports a person's right to be tattooed, except where a tattoo is poor quality, offensive, or where the observer finds questionable (such as face, neck, eyeball).
- Conditional acceptance. The observer rejects most tattoos except in specific and narrow circumstances (such as nipple reconstruction following surgical mastectomy).
- Rejection. The observer unreservedly rejects all tattoos regardless of style, type, quality, or placement.

Compared to the polarised acceptance of Figure 6, this more nuanced categorisation can be charted on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum (Figure 7) which provides a visual representation of the overarching categories.

Figure 5

Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum Categories



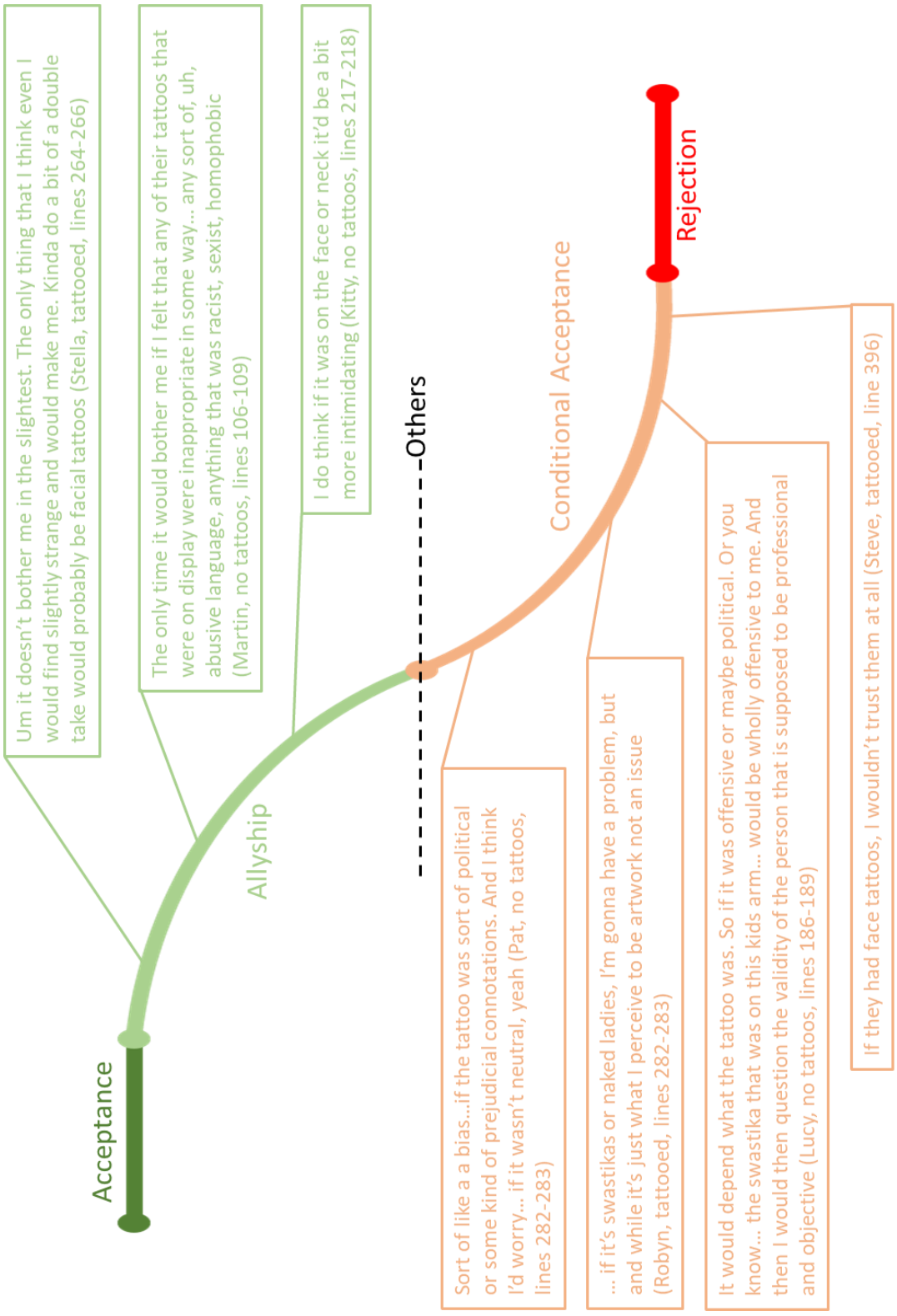
None of the Study Two participants expressed any sentiment that might place them in the Rejection category. However, participants were willing to speculate that other people would reject a tattooed person purely based on having a tattoo. This means that although there was no evidence to support there being a Rejection category, participants believed it exists. Participants' accounts were interpreted as reflecting allyship, in that they consistently expressed support for

individuals' right to be tattooed despite not always being tattooed themselves. However, they also qualified this support by identifying circumstances in which particular tattoos elicited a less accepting response such as being on the face, or being racist, homophobic or politically far-right in design.

However, participants' responses to offensive tattoos were more wide-ranging (for example from finding facial tattoos to be strange through to not trusting at all somebody with a face tattoo). The act of qualifying their response to offensive tattoos means that participants' positions on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum is not fixed. This is because a typical pattern of response through each interview when responding to open questions about tattoos began with an expression of support (Allyship) for a person's right to have a tattoo. When presented with images of tattoos and asked if the location on the body impacted their opinion, participants expressed varying levels of non-acceptance about neck tattoos. Further, participants were more emphatic about their dislike when discussing facial tattoos (Conditional Acceptance). Figure 8 shows examples of participants' statements charted on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum.

Figure 6

Categories Charting Participants' Nuanced Acceptance Statements



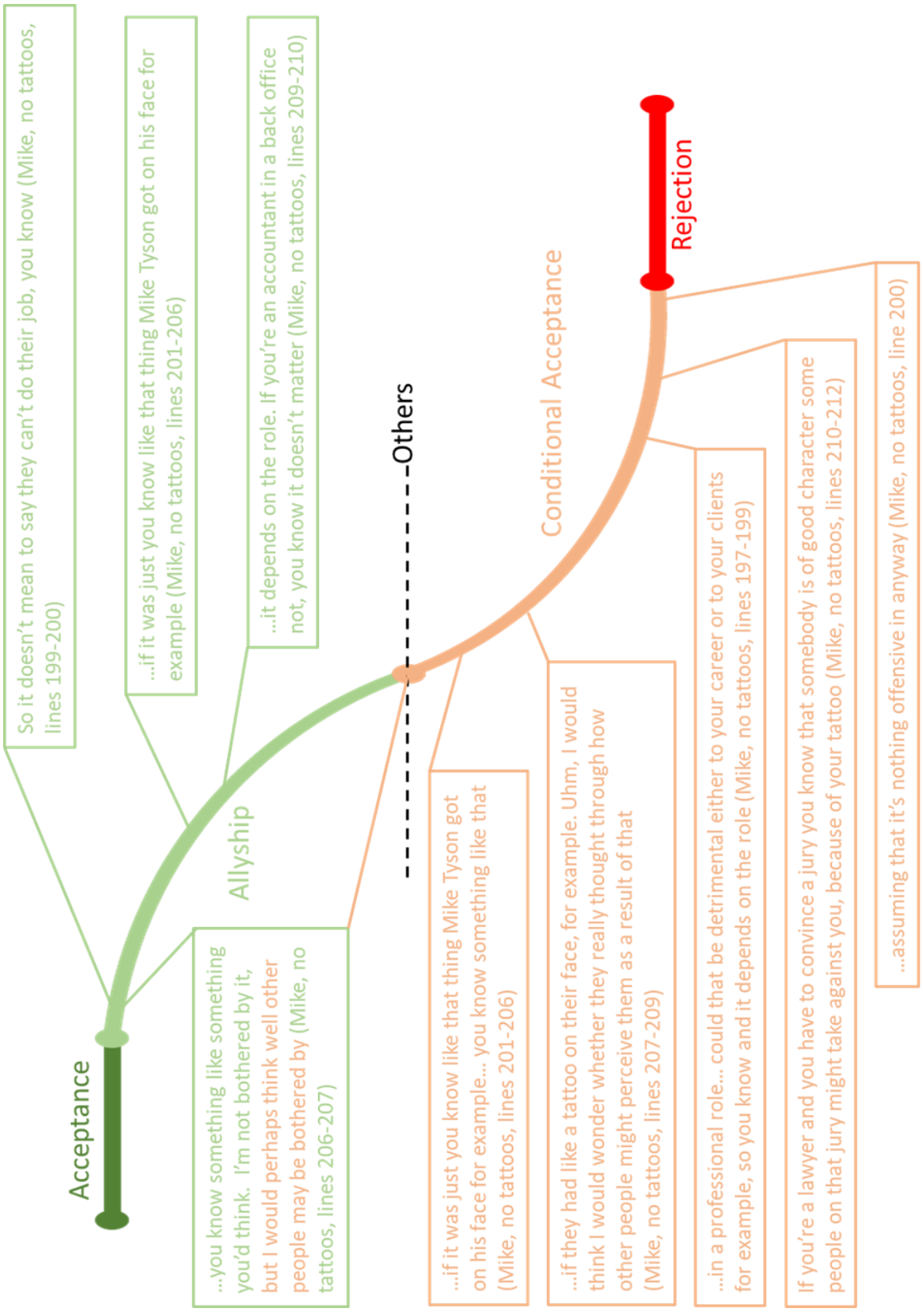
When asked if a professional having a tattoo would influence how they performed their job, participant's responses diverged into either explaining that a tattoo on a professional had no influence on capability (Allyship) or deferring judgment until they had seen whether the professional could do their job (Conditional Acceptance potentially moving to Allyship). It is important to note that participants did not place any further influencing factor (such as type of profession or gender of the tattooed professional) when considering whether the professional being tattooed would have an impact on their capability. For example, analysis of Mike's comments demonstrates the lack of singularly fixed position on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum when explaining his approach to tattooed professionals:

> "…if they had like a tattoo on their face, for example. Uhm, I would think I would wonder whether they really thought through how other people might perceive them as a result of that. So it doesn't mean to say they can't do their job, you know, and again assuming that it's nothing offensive in any way, you know if it was just you know like that thing Mike Tyson got on his face for example…you know something like something like that you'd think. I'm not bothered by it, but I would perhaps think well other people may be bothered by it and you know, in a professional role…could that be detrimental either to your career or to your clients for example, so you know and it depends on the role. If you're an accountant in a back office not, you know it doesn't matter, but if you're a lawyer and you have to convince a jury you know that somebody is of good character some people on that jury might take against you, because of your tattoo (Mike, no tattoos, lines 194-201).

Charting Mike's comments on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum (see Figure 9) demonstrates the unfixed position that the participants (as allies) held, depending on the circumstances of both the professional and their tattoos.

Figure 9

The Unfixed Position of Participant Allyship: Charting Mike's Comments on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum



One consideration of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum is that participants did not fit neatly into a single category. During the interviews, most participants expressed views that reflected more than one position on the spectrum. For example, a participant might initially express strong acceptance of tattooed professionals but later describe circumstances in which they would reject particular tattoos because of their content or their location on the body. Similarly, some participants who were generally accepting still identified situations where visible facial tattoos or tattoos containing hateful symbols would alter their judgment.

This finding does not weaken the model; rather, it reflects the complexity of how people form impressions. The four categories should therefore not be understood as fixed groups into which individuals can be permanently placed. Instead, they represent positions that people may occupy when responding to a particular tattoo in a particular context. An individual's position on the spectrum is therefore fluid rather than fixed and may shift according to the characteristics of the tattoo being considered.

The findings suggest that participants were making judgments through an ongoing process of evaluation rather than applying a single, consistent attitude towards tattoos. The content of the tattoo, its size and its location all influenced where participants positioned themselves on the spectrum. As a result, a participant who demonstrated ‘allyship’ towards one tattoo could demonstrate conditional acceptance or even rejection when considering another. This was particularly evident when tattoos were perceived as hateful or were located on highly visible areas such as the face or neck.

The model should therefore be interpreted as describing responses to tattooed professionals rather than categorising individuals themselves. Its purpose is to illustrate the movement that can occur in observers' judgments as tattoo

characteristics change. In this sense, the spectrum captures the conditional and context-dependent nature of tattoo acceptance identified throughout the study. Rather than suggesting that people belong to one of four discrete categories, the model demonstrates that acceptance exists along a continuum, with individuals moving between positions as different tattoo characteristics are evaluated.

This interpretation is consistent with the broader findings of the study, which showed that tattoos themselves were not viewed uniformly. Instead, participants responded differently depending on the interaction between tattoo theme, visibility and professional context. The value of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum therefore lies in representing this dynamic process of judgment, rather than proposing fixed categories of observers.

Analysis of this superordinate theme has identified that rather than there being a clear in-group and an out-group as was the case with DeMello's (2000) observations, contemporary impressions formed about people with tattoos sit along a spectrum. All Study Two participants made comments that would indicate their allyship for tattooed people. In situating themselves as an ally, participants identified a hypothetical 'other' group of people who would reject a person because of their tattoos, speculating that they may be from older generations. None of the participants in this research would be in the Rejection category. As allies, participants' positions on the spectrum were not fixed, moving from allyship to conditional acceptance depending on the type and position of the professional's tattoo. Therefore, unless within either the Acceptance or Rejection categories, position on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum was context-dependent and changeable.

The following themes are presented as subordinate to the Ally/Othering superordinate theme because they either reinforced or extended the superordinate theme notion of being an ally or having had experience of othering.

4.12.2 Subordinate Theme 1: Tattoos as Conversation Device

Participants were presented with two images (one male, one female) of a professional person with a visible forearm tattoo and asked to share their initial thoughts on seeing the image. Although participants saw both the male and female images (see Appendix L), some saw the male image first and the female image second, and *vice versa*. In sharing their initial thoughts, participants said the presence of tattoos would make them more open to the professional in the image. For example, when asked about whether the tattoo on the male professional would influence their trust in him, both Stella and Pat described him as relatable: "I suppose [being tattooed] might make them more relatable" (Stella, tattooed, line 438, where 'Sam' was a male police officer); "Yeah, more relatable" (Pat, no tattoos, line 263, where 'Sam' was a male nurse). For some, the presence of a visible tattoo would go beyond making the professional in the image relatable, to giving participants scope to begin a conversation with the stranger and demonstrate their ally identity.

Participants said that the presence of a visible tattoo would encourage them to begin a conversation with the professional in the image, explaining that the tattoo would be an icebreaker. Julian, for example, said: "I'm not very good at small talk, so [the tattoo] would help me out actually" (Julian, no tattoos, line 197, where 'Sam' was female and a vicar). However, all the examples that participants shared were positive, none of the participants shared any experience of having approached a stranger for the purpose of expressing a negative view about a visible tattoo. This use of a tattoos as a device for starting conversations demonstrates support for allyship as a category. Regardless of whether they were tattooed, participants explained situations in which they had engaged in an allyship conversation with a stranger on the basis of their tattoos. For example, Stella explained a situation in which a stranger had approached her husband to talk about his visible tattoos:

> "Actually, we went to … secondary school for just a fairly standard parent teacher meeting, I think. And one of the other teachers was walking through reception and came over and chatted to us because he saw [my husband]'s tattoo … And and he'd got short a short sleeve shirt on, and he'd got visible tattoos on his arms" (Stella, tattooed, lines 288-296).

Stella clarified that the teacher who approached them was not known to her or her husband and had changed direction specifically to approach them to talk (from a position of allyship) about the tattoos he had seen. Participants that spoke of tattoos as being a conversation device described situations in which they could be seen in a positive way (that is offering up their status as an ally). However, Stella's explanation of the experience differs from other situations in which participants shared their use of tattoos as a conversation device. This is because Stella's experience was situated as being approached by someone using a tattoo to start a conversation, rather than being the person that made the approach. Therefore, whilst participants might have been presenting their experience of using tattoos as a conversational device in a more positive way than had occurred in the situation being recounted, Stella's experience supports the allyship nature of the approaches described from the point of view of the person being approached. Jemima (responding to 'Sam' as a male nurse) described a parallel experience to Stella's:

> "[I] probably would ask questions… I'm fascinated by tattoos…I would say … that wolf looks beautiful… And I have. I have done that. I have done that when I'm with people who've got massive tattoos, I can't stop staring at them. And I end up, I think I need to ask a question. Otherwise, they think I'm weird…staring at their art" (Jemima, no tattoos, lines 370-374).

For Jemima, the need to ask a question about a visible tattoo had been necessary to avoid being perceived as "weird." This means that, for Jemima, beginning a conversation with a stranger about their visible tattoos had not been optional, but necessary to demonstrate their allyship rather than being unusual or different. By comparison, Robyn explained that she might go further than complimenting a stranger on their tattoo (as Jemima had done), to asking inappropriate questions. In explaining a scenario where a visibly tattooed electrician had visited their home to carry out repair works, Robyn said:

> "…in a different situation where he [the electrician] wasn't up to his elbows in my fuse box, I would certainly have asked him. Not necessarily have you got anymore, 'cause that's inappropriate, but I think about the tattoos I could see" (Robyn, tattooed, lines 282-284).

Robyn contextualised their comments by clarifying that the electrician was physically attractive and, if they had met the electrician outside of their home, they would have used the tattoos as a conversation starter. However, as the interaction with a stranger was in their home, Robyn did not want to express their allyship by asking if they had other non-visible tattoos as this could be misconstrued.

Although for most participants visible tattoos were a means to start a conversation, one participant said they would not begin a conversation for fear of appearing impolite through not knowing the protocol around asking. On the basis that someone is either Conditionally Accepting or Rejecting of tattoos and concerned about being impolite, this clarification of not wanting to appear impolite provides support for being an ally. Although he said that tattoos would help him begin a conversation as he was not good at small talk, Julian expressed concern about the possibility of causing offence as a reason that he would not start a conversation:

> "It would be interesting to have a conversation with him about that [tattoo]… I never really ask about tattoos. I don't… know the social etiquette of of whether people are happy to talk about them" (Julian, no tattoos, lines 252-257, where 'Sam' was a male vicar),
>
> and
>
> "[the tattoo would] probably come up in the conversation. I don't know that I don't wanna offend by asking" (Julian, no tattoos, lines 206-207, where 'Sam' was a female doctor).

Despite Julian's concerns about possibly causing offence by asking about visible tattoos, he clearly indicated that he would be open to talking about the tattoos he had seen. However, as might be expected, the way tattoos are used to start a conversation strongly influences whether offence is caused. As Stella explained in relation to her own tattoos, the approaches she had were mainly positive, being a form of polite curiosity:

> "Most people just say oh, that's cool. What have you got that for or what does that mean? Or does that have a special meaning?" (Stella, tattooed, lines 100-101).

Participants commenting on concerns about appearing impolite when using tattoos as a conversational device provide support for their categorisation as an ally. This is because the concern about causing offence or being impolite is of greater importance in the situation being described than, for example, expressing dislike of the tattoo or its position. The concern about appearing impolite provides support for their categorisation as an ally because the motivation being expressed is a desire to begin a conversation, but one that does not compromise or call into question their allyship status.

Although participants were not expressly asked about any power relationship with any of the professionals they saw, analysis of the data shows that power (or

more precisely, a perceived imbalance of power) was an underlying factor in using tattoos to start a conversation. For example, as noted above, both Stella and Pat saw the visible tattoo as making the professional more relatable. In Stella's case she was responding to the male image of 'Sam' as a police officer whose authority and power to arrest, detain, and remove freedom is clear. Pat, however, explained that the tattoo on 'Sam' as a female nurse would give them some agency if they were undergoing treatment:

> "[the tattoo] might make them more effective in their job because you would be able to relate to them, talk to them … use that as something to distract from treatment or pain or something" (Pat, no tattoos, lines 259-261).

For Pat, the professional's power was the ability to cause pain, and talking about the tattoo would be a way to reduce the impact of that pain. Robyn explained the connection with other visibly tattooed people as a form of 'elective empathy' that would mean they were not being judged for having tattoos:

> "I'd probably trust them more and that kind of elective empathy. Knowing that somebody has kind of saw the same interests that I have, I think I'd find that kind of comforting and reassuring that they wouldn't be looking down their nose at me if they found out I was also disfigured" (Robyn, tattooed, lines 170-172).

For Robyn, the presence of visible tattoos was seen as a way of connecting with the professional (allyship), where the sense of comfort was a way of levelling or equalising the power imbalance between them and the professional. Steve expressed similar feelings of comfort or allyship being around a tattooed professional. When asked how he would feel working with a tattooed teacher, Steve said:

> "…not really anything different to how I would feel if they didn't have tattoos … Actually, I take that back. I think I'd actually be a bit more relaxed" (Steve, tattooed, lines 248-252).

The imbalance of power can be found in situations where the participant had started a conversation with a tattooed person, as well as where they had wanted to but ultimately did not. For example, Jemima said that she had started a conversation with a tattooed stranger to avoid that person thinking her "weird." In this regard, the tattooed person had the power to decide whether Jemima was weird or not. Similarly, Julian had avoided asking questions about a stranger's tattoo for fear of offending them. In this way, the tattooed person had the power to decide whether they would be offended by being asked about their tattoo. Allied to the underlying power of the tattooed stranger to influence whether a participant began a conversation with them is the trust placed in tattooed professionals, explored below.

The findings indicate that, regardless of their own tattooed status, people have used - and are willing to use - the tattoos they can see on a stranger as a way to begin a conversation. From the examples described by participants, these conversations have been positive in a way that demonstrates allyship with and for the tattooed person. It is not clear, however, from the experiences that were described whether the conversation was started for the purpose of demonstrating allyship, or for some other reason such as relieving a social awkwardness or tension. Similarly, whether this willingness to start a conversation with a tattooed person is context-dependent is unclear. Likewise, as it was not within the scope of this research to determine any community or connectedness, it is unclear whether being tattooed does establish having the same interests. The implications for tattooed professionals from this finding are clear: allowing a service user or client to see tattoos on the forearm can facilitate positive engagement and conversation.

Such conversations can be helpful in making the service user or client feel relaxed and, depending on the professional and circumstance, distract from a painful procedure. However, as explored below, this implication for tattooed professionals is limited, depending on where a visible tattoo is on the body.

4.12.3 Subordinate Theme 2: Tattoo Position as Transgressive

None of the people interviewed in Study Two were placed in either the Acceptance or Rejection categories of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum, meaning that all twelve participants were either an Ally or Conditionally Accepting. Within either the Allyship or Conditional Acceptance categories, participants expressed some level of dislike of face and/or neck tattoos. For example, Stella as a tattooed person, said that a person's decision to be tattooed was: "Ohh each to their own … completely up to the person as far as I'm concerned" (Stella, tattooed, lines 203-207). In this way Stella was not placing any conditions on their acceptance of a person that was tattooed. However, Stella went on to express discomfort about facial tattoos:

> "The only thing that I think even I would find slightly strange and would make me kinda do a bit of a double take would probably be facial tattoos … like, whoa, they've got a tattoo on their face (Stella, tattooed, lines 264-282).

Stella's explanation of her reaction to facial tattoos is not a definitive Conditional Acceptance: she has not said that she would dislike or object to facial tattoos. This may be because she had emphatically expressed her view that being tattooed is "completely up to the person" (Stella, tattooed, line 207) just minutes before. However, Participants explained their negative associations related to facial tattoos as indicative of overall poor decision-making. For example, Steve equated facial tattoos with poor decision-making: "I don't think I've ever met a person with face tattoos who has their life together" (Steve, tattooed, lines 492-493). Most

participants shared similar Conditional Acceptance views about being open to tattoos whilst having a dislike of face tattoos. However, this was not the case for all participants. Mike was clear that for a teacher as a professional, a facial tattoo would not be a barrier, and may actually be positive:

> "...going back to the facial example for a teacher, I don't think it matters at all because…that is not going to impact on how the kids learn … It shows that teachers are human perhaps? (Mike, no tattoos, lines 481-490).

In this way, Mike had not placed any conditions on their allyship with teachers as professionals having a facial tattoo. However, Mike was the only participant that positively linked facial tattoos with any of Sam's professions, with participants seemingly not even considering that a professional would have a facial tattoo.

Whilst participants such as Stella and Steve raised their concerns about facial tattoos, other participants drew on media and popular culture references in associating face and/or neck tattoos with criminality. When shown the image of 'Sam' as a male teacher and asked if the location of the tattoo would influence his trust in, or the capability of them as a professional, Martin demonstrated his Conditional Acceptance by referencing his own association with facial tattoos and criminality:

> "I partly associate tattoos on the face specifically with criminals, with the tears and sort of gang culture and stuff, and that's probably a wrong assumption from me, but I think from films and from TV programmes … They use that representation to, uh, suggest criminal" (Martin, no tattoos, lines 827-830).

Further, Martin's description of how the media represent tattooed people appears to be an attempt to distance or justify his Conditional Acceptance, that he is a passive receiver of the suggestion that someone with a face tattoo is a criminal: "That's

probably a wrong assumption from me…**They** use that representation" (bold emphasis added). For Martin, the media's use of facial tattoos is as a simple semiotic device to convey a complex character background rooted in criminal gang activity. In particular, a representation that has transferred across from fiction to his view of the real world. Even within the generalised dislike of facial and/or neck tattoos, there was a gender differential, such that participants expressed different reactions to face and neck tattoos based on the gender of the tattooed person in the image.

Although she held a similar opinion to Martin regarding the link between facial tattoos and criminality, Jemima identified her own Conditional Acceptance depending on the gender of the person with a face tattoo: "… he's a bloke, he's got tattoos, looks cool. I think if that was a woman. I might think differently, which is you know awful, really" (Jemima, no tattoos, lines 204-206, 'Sam' as a male nurse). However, Jemima recognised that she had not thought anything similar about the tattooed female image she saw: "this is gender bias, but because it's a woman, thoughts of being in prison, didn't cross my mind" (Jemima, not tattooed, lines 430-431, 'Sam' as a female vicar). Despite being an example of Conditional Acceptance for an Ally, not all participants associated face and neck tattoos with criminality. However, the data showed support for diverse levels of acceptance for facial and neck tattoos based on the gender of the tattooed person. Robyn recognised their differential level of acceptance of neck tattoos based on gender:

> "Now this is a different reaction because it's female. Again, I wouldn't mind the neck, the collarbones. I wouldn't mind. The neck it's starting to get a little bit icky for me. I don't know why that is" (Robyn, tattooed, lines 265-267).

Although participants reported a general dislike of face tattoos, this feeling was more pronounced for females with face tattoos than for men with face tattoos.

Notably, none of the participants reported being more accepting of females with facial tattoos than males with facial tattoos. This supports Atkinson's (2002) view that to be a tattooed woman is to undermine widespread views of femininity.

This research has made an original contribution to knowledge by extending Atkinson's (2002) view about tattooed women and femininity to the impressions formed about tattooed professionals. This is because, although the images of Sam were introduced with an explanation of the profession they belonged to, participants did not refer to that profession when explaining their dislike of facial tattoos. This demonstrates that the presence of a facial tattoo has an overriding effect that excludes further impression formation of the individual as related to their stated profession. To paraphrase Atkinson (2002) in this regard to be a facially tattooed professional is to undermine widespread views of professionalism.

As noted above, Allies are not static in their support of tattoos, to the extent that participants that had been unequivocal in a person's right to choose if they want a tattoo, freely offered associations between face and/or neck tattoos and criminality. Further, within this association, participants distinguished between men and women with facial and/or neck tattoos, offering a consistent view that they would associate men as having such tattoos as a result of being in prison more so than for a woman with a similar tattoo.

4.12.4 Subordinate Theme 3: Criteria for Critiquing Tattoos

Participants were asked if their friends or family had tattoos and, if they indicated they did, what they thought of those tattoos. Responses were broadly divided depending on whether the participant had tattoos. Where participants did not have tattoos, their views of family and friends' tattoos were general, but positive in nature. For example, Jemima established her allyship status by declaring: "I think [tattoos] are beautiful … stunning pieces of artwork and I think they can look absolutely amazing (Jemima, no tattoos, lines 55-57). Pat expressed

similar views regarding the artistry involved in tattoos, describing them as: “absolutely stunning” (Pat, no tattoos, lines 65-68). By comparison, tattooed participants’ comments were more specific, but also more negative than those of non-tattooed participants. Stella had clear views of tattoos that she would not have: “I know a couple of people have got the kind of lower back tribal or very 90s sort of tattoos. It's like, oh, God, no, I wouldn't have that” (tattooed, lines 191-192). The implication for Stella as a tattooed person is that she Conditionally Accepts the described tattoos as being examples of those she would not have or want. Robyn also identified the 90s as being linked with lower back tattoos, a period they defined as “generation tramp stamp” (tattooed, line 94). Steve disliked “really rubbish badly drawn tattoos … [or ones] infected and been ruined that way” (Steve, tattooed, lines 517-518). Regardless of their own tattooed status, participants referred to the quality of the tattoo as being a factor when critiquing tattoos.

In explaining her appreciation, Pat said that tattoos can be a “work of art if they're done well” (Pat, no tattoos, lines 65-68). The limitation on the quality situates Pat as being Conditionally Accepting of those she sees as artistic. The idea that tattoos are less appealing if they are not ‘done well’ was the main reason behind Martin’s view on tattoos: “My only opinion comes down to … the quality of the artwork and the quality of the tattoo artists that they went to” (Martin, no tattoos, lines 96-97). Steve was clear that his view about a person was informed by the quality of their tattoos: “I also judge people on how good their tattoos are… the types of people who have certain types of tattoos” (Steve, tattooed, lines 512-516). Martin also mentioned that personal characteristics, including professionalism, have been inferred from tattoos. Or, more precisely, a lack of professionalism has been adduced from a visible tattoo leading to their rejection. When describing a situation

where a person applying to study on a teacher training degree at university, Martin said:

> "It [rejection of their application] was almost judging professionalism. Not on somebody's potential to be able to do the job or the role effectively but completely around the aesthetics of that person" (Martin, no tattoos, lines 377-379).

Although Martin had experienced a negative association between tattoos and capability, Robyn was more hopeful that the situation was improving:

> "I think we are moving forward. I think [tattooing is] becoming more, acceptable, I don't know that there's less of that stigma about it. We're not all prostitutes and prisoners, are we?" (Robyn, tattooed, lines 362-364).

The implication from Robyn's summary that tattooed people are "not all prostitutes and prisoners," is that the stigma of being tattooed is not warranted, and that more people are moving towards Allyship. The data obtained shows that, in critiquing tattoos, participants drew clear and direct links between being tattooed and professional capability. In the explanations given by the participants, the general presence of a tattoo was used to critique personal characteristics and abilities about a person, not merely the tattoo itself. However, there were many similarities for participants when explaining what would influence their thoughts about the tattoos their friends and family had.

Participants showed general Allyship with the tattoos that their friends and family had, but with clear (if hypothetical) exceptions. For example, Martin said:

> "The only time it would bother me if I felt that any of their tattoos that were on display were inappropriate in some way. So for example. And if there was any sort of nudity, any sort of, uh, abusive language,

> anything that was racist, sexist, homophobic" (Martin, no tattoos, lines 106-109).

Pat said: "not as long as it wasn't anything like racist" (Pat, no tattoos, line 205). As well as speculating on examples of types of tattoos they would find objectionable, participants spoke about real examples of one specific tattoo they were confident drawing distinctive characteristics from:

> "There's a guy who came to our house once to install our Sky (television service] … and he had a swastika tattoo on his hand.
>
> … And I judged him for it, you know. Had I known he had that tattoo, I would not have wanted to him to to come into our house" (Mike, no tattoos, lines 121 -127).

Lucy also held similar views about tattooed swastikas as being a way to judge the personality of a person:

> "It would depend what the tattoo was. So if it was offensive or maybe political or …straight back to the swastika that was on this kids arm. Yeah, and that you know that would be wholly offensive to me. And then I would then question the validity of the person" (Lucy, no tattoos, lines 182-188).

Robyn also explained their concern for swastika tattoos as being more than decoration: "if it's swastikas or naked ladies, I'm gonna have a problem, but and while it's just what I perceive to be artwork, not an issue" (Robyn, tattooed, lines 282-283). The data obtained shows support for the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum. This is because participants clearly identified as Allies, describing tattoos as having the potential to be 'beautiful,' 'stunning', and 'artwork'. The level of acceptance of tattoos begins to fall as the perceived quality of the tattoo (individually determined by each participant) falls. For participants, this Conditional Acceptance ends at the point a tattoo becomes offensive. By identifying specific

examples that they would (or had) found offensive, participants defined their own conditions for rejecting specific forms of tattoo (e.g., racist, homophobic images). This means that participants would 'other' offensive tattoos such as swastikas, to the point where they might reject the person bearing that tattoo (e.g., Lucy's view about questioning the validity of the person, or Mike's view that he would not want someone with a swastika tattoo in his home).

Overall, the data show that participants had not only critiqued the tattoos that their friends and family had, but they had used the views they formed to judge the tattooed person. The impressions formed about the tattooed person had included character judgments and assessments of professional capability. Whilst participants without tattoos were more generic and praising in their critique of tattoos, tattooed participants were more specific in identifying tattoos they felt were poor (e.g., '90s', 'tramp stamp', and 'badly drawn'). The reasons for this observed division are likely to be twofold. Firstly, the experience of participants without tattoos is more likely to be informed by their friends' and family members' tattoos and by the media (including social media). This exposure to both good- and poor-quality tattoos (howsoever defined by the individual) will be at a more surface level than the tattooed participants have had. This is because the tattooed participants will likely have had similar exposure to family and friends' tattoos, and in the media, but have additional personalised exposure in researching and obtaining a tattoo. Secondly, tattooed participants may have felt more able to critique the quality of others' tattoos as a result of being a member of the tattooed in-group. Conversely, as an Ally, non-tattooed participants may have felt less willing or able to criticise tattoos as being poor quality, as this could be seen as undermining their support of a person's right to have a tattoo.

4.12.5 Superordinate Theme 2: Stereotypes Associated With Professions Go Beyond Tattoos

The second superordinate theme relates to the stereotypes that exist linked to professions, irrespective of tattooed status. Study Two participants were shown both the male and female images of 'Sam' in Appendix L and told that the version of Sam they saw was one of the six chosen professions (teacher/barrister/ doctor/ nurse/ vicar/ police officer). Participants were then asked to share their views about 'Sam.' In response, participants said that the image did not fit with their expectation of a particular profession. For example, participants that saw 'Sam' as a vicar had a stereotyped expectation: "obviously you have the stereotypical image that society portrays to you as a vicar" (Mary, no tattoos, lines 107-108). Martin was clear about his expectation of a vicar: "That person is too young and too attractive to be a vicar … vicars tend to be … Older, grey haired males" (Martin, no tattoos, lines 413-420, 'Sam' as a female vicar). However, Martin was clear that the male image of 'Sam' also did not fit his stereotyped view of a vicar:

> "…if the pictures were flipped and you asked me if this person [male] was a vicar again, I think because of the almost stereotyped image I have of a vicar in my head, the black shirt, the white collar, slightly older greyer male … He wouldn't fit that category either" (Martin, no tattoos, lines 661-667).

Martin's view of vicars being older was a feature of his stereotype that was shared by Jemima. When presented with 'Sam' as a female vicar, Jemima said: "I would also be surprised to hear that she's a vicar because she looks very young" (Jemima, no tattoos, lines 371-374). Jemima went on to explain that as well as 'Sam's' age, the visible tattoo also did not fit with her stereotyped view of a vicar: "You know, [I] probably wouldn't expect [her] to have tattoos" (Jemima, no tattoos, lines 373-374). For Martin and Jemima, 'Sam's' age was incongruent with their stereotyped view of

a vicar. However, age was also a factor in Julian's willingness to accept the female 'Sam' as a doctor: "she looks young for a doctor. That's all … I think that's because I'm getting old" (Julian, no tattoos, lines 129-130). Other aspects of physical appearance led to participants struggling to accept the male 'Sam' in certain professions.

Participants expressed challenges in accepting the male 'Sam' as a teacher because of his body shape. For Martin, 'Sam' appeared too well-built: "he's clearly spending a lot of time in the gym, so can't be a teacher because he's got far too much spare time" (Martin, no tattoos, lines 591-592). A combination of Sam's' body shape and the way he stood led Lucy to struggle to accept him as a nurse:

> "I didn't think he was a nurse…I think maybe it's his pose … he looks as if he sort of works out and therefore probably does something, perhaps a little bit more manual and, and that … doesn't fit with sort of the way perhaps he presents (Lucy, no tattoos, lines 208-16).

Lucy's comments demonstrate that a temporary factor capable of being quickly changed - the way 'Sam' was standing - had an impact on her willingness to accept him as a nurse. In this regard the stance taken was more influential in creating an impression of 'Sam' than the tattoo. Kitty also referred to a temporary feature of the female 'Sam's' appearance but adopted a different approach to Lucy: "[you] look at certain clothing to identify them as nurse … it's just a plain white top … you wouldn't … make assumptions about occupation" (Kitty, no tattoos, lines 232-233). Unlike other participants, Kitty was cautious about assuming 'Sam's' profession from her clothes alone. In contrast to Kitty's view, participants not only made assumptions about the occupation of 'Sam' they offered explanations for why some professionals had tattoos.

Non-tattooed participants that saw 'Sam' as a vicar offered unprompted explanations for why he or she had a tattoo. Mary spoke of a presumed regret for 'Sam' as a vicar:

> "If he's choosing to continue to have the tattoo, it's obviously meaningful or you know, he's accepting of his mistakes if he's seeing it as a mistake" (Mary, no tattoos, lines 134-137).

The idea that 'Sam' as a vicar had regrets about being tattooed (and were therefore Conditionally Accepting of themselves) was also offered as an explanation by Julian:

> "It might be that he's found [his profession as a vicar] later in life and … he may even personally regret the whole arm [tattoo] thing, because he may have lived a different life and found religion" (Julian, no tattoos, lines 247-251).

The use of regret as an explanation was also found where 'Sam' was a female vicar:

> "It might be that this person had a difficult youth. And had actually changed who they were … they're not hiding something that they are. Yes. I've done bad things, but they have made me the person I am. And it's such a shows that journey. They're not hiding from their past" (Martin, no tattoos, lines 479-515).

This indicates that there is a hierarchy of stereotypes such that any image that does not easily fit with the expected presentation of a vicar results in the observer offering mediating explanations to align the presented image more closely with their existing stereotype.

The data obtained in Study Two indicate that stereotypes have a clear role to play in the impressions formed about professionals. When observing an individual believed to be a vicar, participants were sceptical on the basis that neither the female nor the male they saw appeared to be old enough to be in the given profession. Similarly, age (or more specifically not appearing to be old enough) was

a stereotype where participants were told the female in the image was a doctor. Participants were less able to accept that the male image they saw was a nurse or a teacher on the basis that he appeared too well-built. Participants did not express an inability to reconcile either image they saw with the presented profession on the basis of the visible tattoo. The findings provide support for previous research (e.g. Biernat et al., 2003) where participants rely on a pre-determined schema or stereotype as a short-cut. The findings in this research contribute to existing knowledge and research by showing that if a predominant visual cue does not align with the schema or stereotype held by an observer (such as age), other factors (such as a visible tattoo) do not feature in the impressions formed. This means that if the image and information being presented does not align closely enough with the pre-existing schema or stereotype, the image and information are rejected without further detailed consideration.

4.12.6 Summary of Analysed Themes

As noted from the template analysis above, Study Two participants' data show notable similarity of interpretation, even if the alignment with a particular theme differed. For example, the Allyship: Othering Spectrum as an original contribution to knowledge was identified from participant data. None of the participants could be placed in the Acceptance or Rejection categories, but through their narrative explanations, it is possible to extrapolate that some people (specifically people known to participants) could be categorised as Rejecting of tattoos. Therefore, whilst some people outright reject tattoos and tattooed people, it is both reasonable and feasible to conclude that some people will Accept tattoos and tattooed people without conditions. Participants in Study Two, were not permanently fixed in one category. Throughout the interviews, participants expressed views that aligned with a form of allyship seen in other established frameworks (e.g., LGBTQIA+). However, the position of participants as allies

demonstrated a shift towards Conditional Acceptance where the focus of discussion tested their allyship. Whilst not all participants position moved from Allyship to Conditional Acceptance as a result of discussing (for example) facial tattoos, there was a widespread articulation that such a positioning of a tattoo was challenging in terms of acceptance. This positioning of being broadly supportive of – and an Ally to – tattooed people was a repetitive theme for participants regardless of their own tattooed status. Using this categorisation, non-tattooed participants fortified their Ally status in generically describing tattoos as (for example) works of art. Conversely, tattooed participants were more specifically critical of characteristics of tattoos that would lead to Conditional Acceptance (for example, poor quality). For some of 'Sam's' professions, the photo image participants saw was too far adrift from their stereotyped view of that profession to facilitate meaningful engagement about the impact of a tattoo on behavioural and cognitive traits. For example, participants expressed their challenge in accepting either the male or female photo image of Sam as a vicar. Explanations for this challenge were keenly similar as being because Sam was not an older man.

The implications arising from this research for tattooed professionals are broadly positive, albeit limited by Conditional Acceptance. As noted, participants explained circumstances in which they had (or had wanted to) begin a conversation with a stranger on the basis of the stranger's tattoo. This want to connect with a stranger as a result of their tattoo extended to the professions used in this research. This included participants' expressions that they might feel more relaxed or (in the case of medical interactions) experience less pain as a consequence of engaging in conversation with the professional. However, this willingness to engage in conversation based on a visible tattoo was restricted. Participants placed clear limitations on the extent to which a tattoo could facilitate engagement and a feeling of being at ease. Positive feelings or allyship towards a tattooed

professional would be undermined if a participant found a tattoo to be offensive (such as a racist or homophobic emblem or language) regardless of position on the body, or if a tattoo was otherwise inoffensive but appeared on the face or neck. Consequently, the impressions formed about tattooed professionals are context dependent, demonstrating a broad scope for allyship that can support and enhance the professional/client relationship, but which can be immediately undermined by a tattoo that is held to be offensive. As well as the implications for individual professionals arising from this research, there are implications for professional bodies and training organisations. That being the potential positive impact of body modifications on the impressions formed about their members can enhance clients' relationships and make interactions more relaxed and potentially more effective.

Chapter 5 – Study Three

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Research Design

To test the assumptions underpinning the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum developed through Study Two data collection, a second survey was conducted. As the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum was developed from findings from this study, there was no existing measure that could adequately test its ecological validity. Therefore, the measure used in Study Three to test the Spectrum was original and bespoke. Using a within-subjects design participants were asked to use a Likert-type scale ranging from 0-100 to rate how acceptable they felt different themed and sized tattoos were when appearing on different areas of the body. The independent variables were one of 3 tattoo themes (nature / icon / gang), one of 2 sizes (smaller / larger than the palm of the hand), and one of 7 body positions (lower arm / upper arm / lower leg / upper leg / chest or back / face / neck). The dependent variables were the scale ratings (where 0 was totally unacceptable, and 100 was totally fine). Appendix M shows the prompts used.

The intended strategy for analysing data was to carry out cluster analysis to identify the similarity between participants and any patterns in levels of acceptability of tattoo themes and tattoo placement on the body. As an exploratory method, to use cluster analysis, data needed to be representative of the underlying interests for grouping similar observations.

5.1.2 Materials

There was no existing measure that could test the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum developed during the current research. Therefore, on the basis that there is a point, individual to everyone, at which they do not accept tattoos, an original

measure was designed to explore whether theme, size, location on the body (or some combination thereof) was critical in defining that point.

Drawing on Study Two participants' explanations of what they felt made a tattoo acceptable or unacceptable, three different themes were developed. Themes ranged from designs unlikely to cause strong offence (nature, such as animal, flower, tree etc.) to those expected to cause strong feeling (gang, right wing, '88', swastika, teardrop etc.). Icon-themed designs (such as dice, playing cards, a person's name etc.) were used as a midpoint. Location on the body was a feature of conditional acceptance identified as a result of interview participants responses in Study Two. Therefore, different body locations for a tattoo that could be visible in public were used. As Study Two participants identified face and neck as being the point at which they would reject a tattoo, these were included in the measure. Other body locations expected to be less divisive were chosen to determine whether location was critical in accepting or rejecting a tattoo. Finally, as a guide for participants when imagining the combination of theme and location of tattoo, two different sizes were presented to participants to guide their imaginations.

As the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum included the theoretical possibility of total rejection of any tattoo, the scale needed to reflect this. Therefore, it was important that participants could respond to any of the tattoo descriptions using zero. Further, based on the nuanced nature of the descriptions interview participants gave through Study Two, a scale allowing scope for granularity of response. This means that the scale used could not have too few or too many data points: a maximum of 100 was chosen.

To address the research questions, all participants were asked to use a numerical slider ranging from 0 to 100 (where '0' was 'Tattoo is completely unacceptable', and 100 was 'Tattoo is totally fine') to indicate their level of acceptance of a specified themed tattoo on a specific part of the body. The use of a

continuous 0–100 slider was selected to capture nuanced variations in participants' attitudes towards tattoos. Previous research examining perceptions of tattooed individuals has frequently relied upon Likert-type scales, whereby respondents select from a limited number of predetermined response categories. Whilst such approaches can be effective for measuring general attitudes, they may constrain participants' responses by forcing them into broad categories that do not fully reflect the strength or subtlety of their views. The 0–100 slider was therefore chosen because it provides a greater degree of response sensitivity, enabling participants to indicate small differences in acceptability across tattoo themes, sizes, and body locations. This was particularly important given the exploratory nature of the study and the expectation that participants may distinguish between tattoos that are broadly acceptable but differ in perceived appropriateness.

The tattoo themes were developed to represent a spectrum of meanings commonly identified within the tattoo literature. Previous research has suggested that public responses to tattoos are influenced not only by the presence of a tattoo itself but also by the symbolic meaning attributed to the design (Atkinson, 2003; Wohlrab et al., 2007). Consequently, three broad categories of tattoo imagery were selected. Nature-themed tattoos were included because they are generally regarded as decorative and socially acceptable forms of body art. Icon-based tattoos were included because they represent personal affiliations, interests, and identities that may be interpreted differently depending upon the viewer. Gang-related tattoos were included because they are frequently associated with criminality, deviance, and social stigma within both academic and public discourse. The inclusion of these three categories therefore enabled exploration of whether attitudes towards tattoos varied according to the symbolic content of the design rather than simply the presence of a tattoo. Tattoo themes were:

1. Nature: (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of the hand.

2. Nature: (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of the hand.
3. Icon: (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation etc.) up to the size of the palm of the hand.
4. Icon:(dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation etc.) larger than the size of the palm of the hand.
5. Gang: (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm of the hand.
6. Gang (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) larger than the size of the palm of the hand.

The body locations were selected to reflect varying levels of visibility and social exposure. Research examining tattoo stigma has consistently suggested that visibility plays an important role in shaping perceptions of tattooed individuals, particularly within professional contexts (Dean, 2010; Timming et al., 2017). The selected locations therefore ranged from areas that are often concealed in everyday interactions, such as the chest or back and upper leg, to highly visible locations such as the lower arm, neck, and face. This enabled exploration of whether tattoo acceptability was influenced not only by design characteristics but also by the extent to which the tattoo could be readily observed by others. Including a range of body locations also increased the ecological validity of the study by reflecting the diversity of tattoo placements encountered in contemporary society. Body locations for each were on the:

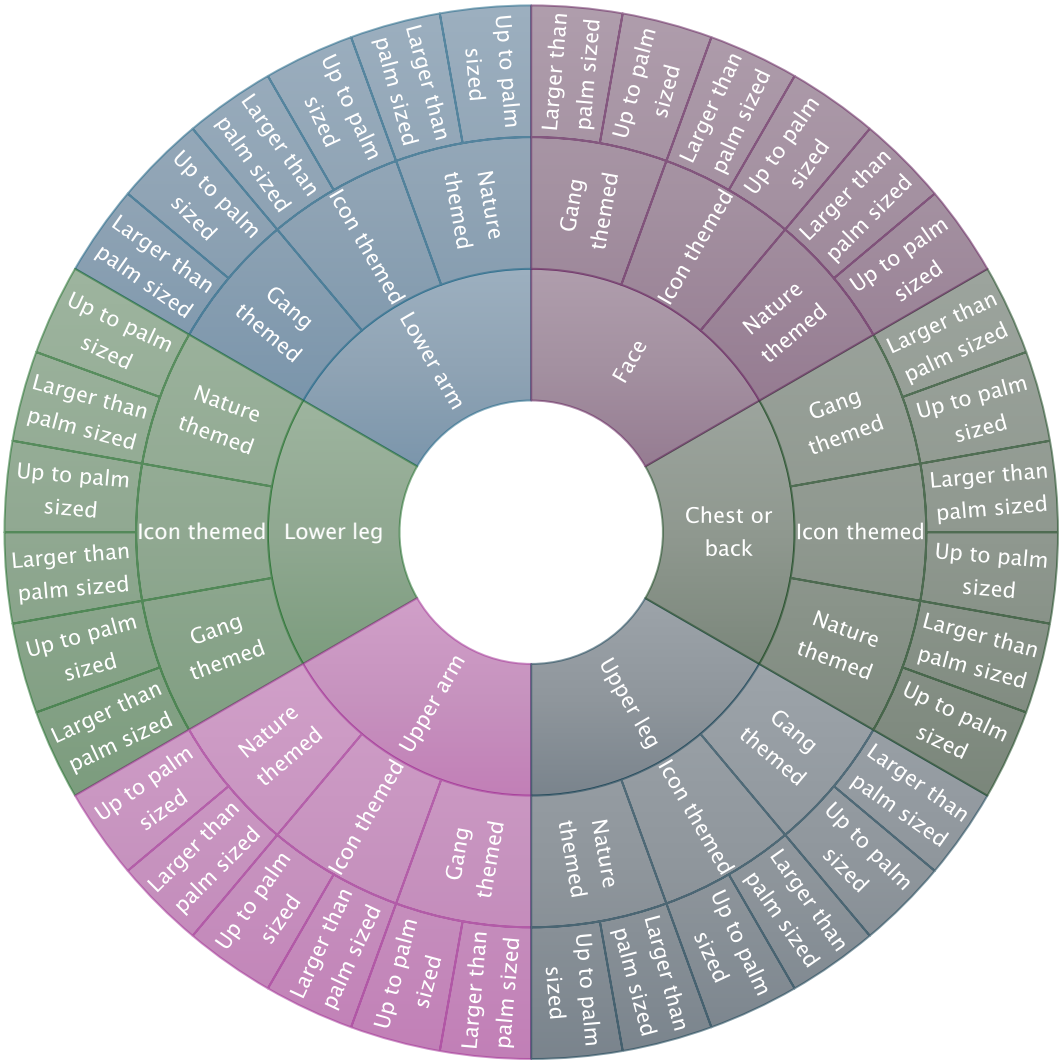
1. Lower arm.
2. Lower leg.
3. Upper arm.
4. Upper leg.
5. Chest or back.
6. Face.
7. Neck.

This means there were 42 questions requiring responses (3 designs x 2 sizes x 7 body parts) as shown in Figure 10. Alternative approaches were considered during

the design period. For example, participants could have been presented with photographic images of tattoos rather than textual descriptions or could have been asked to provide qualitative explanations for each judgment. However, photographic stimuli would have introduced additional variables, such as artistic quality, colour, attractiveness, and style, which may have influenced responses independently of tattoo theme, size, or location. Similarly, requiring qualitative responses for all 42 judgments would have substantially increased participant burden and may have contributed to fatigue effects. The use of brief textual descriptions combined with a quantitative rating scale therefore provided a practical means of systematically examining attitudes towards multiple tattoo characteristics whilst maintaining consistency across participants.

Figure 10

Visual Depiction of Question Groupings



5.1.3 Sampling Strategy

In response to the adverts shared on social media (see Appendix G), participants followed a link to the online data collection platform (Qualtrics). Based on the aims and research questions of the study, the intended sample were members of the public, whether in a professional occupation and whether tattooed, over 18 years old.

5.1.4 Data Handling

Data handling was the same in Study Three as in Study One, with the exception that QuestionPro was used for data collection. This was due to a change in the University's access to Qualtrics software. However, the platforms are similar in terms of functions, security, and password protections.

5.1.5 Data Analysis

The intended strategy was to carry out cluster analysis. This was because the data collection measure was created for the current study and therefore required exploratory analysis. Cluster analysis does not require any assumption testing (DiStefano, 2012; Everitt et al., 2011; and Meyers et al., 2024). Therefore, the outcome of cluster analysis is not any statistical test of significance, but a way of best structuring the data in the context of the variables (Meyers et al., 2024).

There are two types of cluster analysis: K-means or iterative-agglomerative clustering, and hierarchical clustering (Meyers et al., 2024). K-means clustering groups numerically continuous data in a way that minimises the Euclidian distances between variables (Myers et al., 2024). It is most suitable where the number of clusters is known. Hierarchical clustering is used where the number of clusters is not known, as the analysis can be presented as a dendrogram showing the hierarchy of clusters. The dendrogram can then be used to carry out a K-means cluster analysis (Clatworthy et al., 2005; and Myers et al., 2024).

As the survey was created for the purpose of testing the findings from Study Two data collection, there was no information about how many clusters should be used. Therefore, hierarchical clustering was initially carried which identified 3 clusters. A 3-cluster K-means analysis was then carried out.

5.1.6 Procedure

Participants were presented with information about the research (see Appendix H), asked to give consent (see Appendix I), and asked a series of demographic questions (see below and Appendix J). Questions were counterbalanced and ordered (see Appendix M).

Following completion of the final question, participants were presented with a debrief screen, details of which are in Appendix K). Participant experience in Study Three is the same as shown in Figure 5, above.

5.1.7 Demographic Questions

Participants were asked about their:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Highest educational attainment
- Civil status or marital status.
- Occupational group
- Job title
- Number of tattoos
- Religious beliefs
- Religious beliefs and whether they influenced their views about tattoos.

Full details of demographic questions appear in Appendix J.

5.2 Ethical Considerations

To address the concerns about participant privacy as outlined by Gelinas et al., (2017) and to ensure there was no engagement online that could allow inferences to be drawn about participation, the recruitment advert invited anyone interested in learning more to click the link to the survey and read the participant information.

Participants were initially social contacts of the researcher. As an organic approach to participant recruitment (Khatri et al., 2015) this was felt to be an appropriate method of recruitment because anyone interested in participating was

able to learn about the aims of the research before providing consent. This meant that it was a decision for each person who saw any of the adverts whether they wanted more information and, having received the information, whether they wanted to participate.

Participant information explained the purpose of the research, that they would be presented with information about a person working in a professional occupation before answering questions about them, the intended use of the data obtained, and a brief summary of what participation would involve. The wording of the participant information appears in Appendix H, and the wording used in the consent form completed by all participants appears in Appendix I. As part of the consent form participants were presented with demographic questions and asked to provide a Personal Identifier Code. The wording of the demographic questions appears in Appendix J. The information sheet informed participants that they could withdraw at any time, including up to the point when the researcher would begin data analysis.

University ethical approval is shown in Appendix A.

5.3 Data Collection

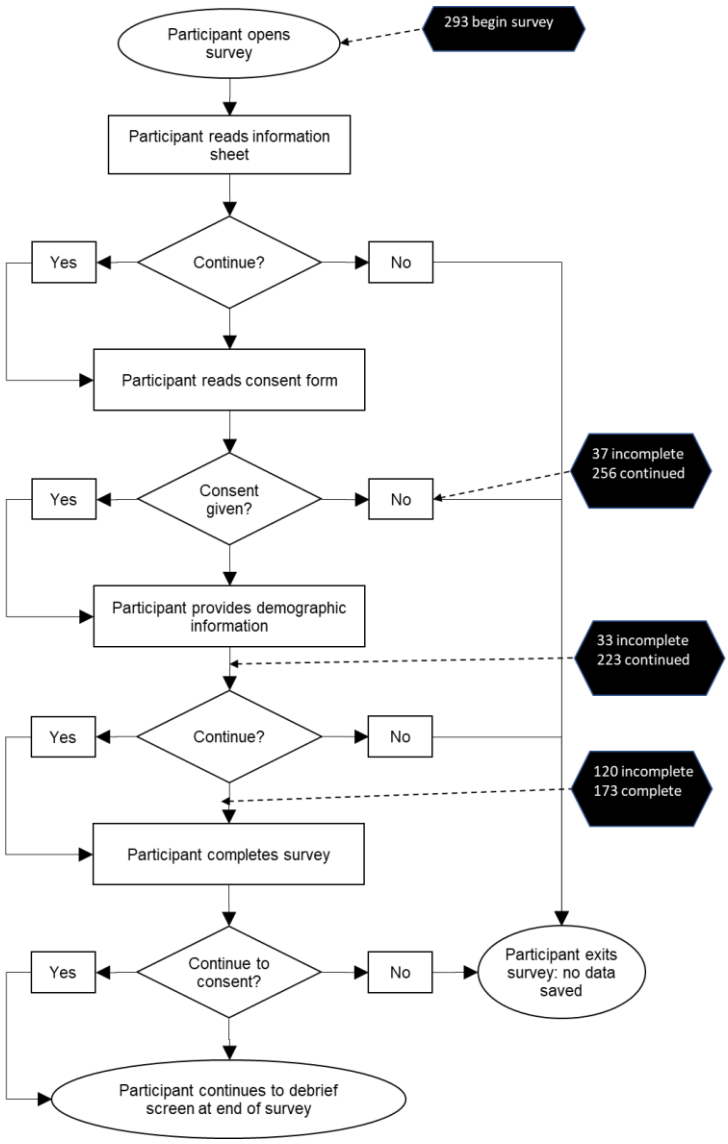
Data collection occurred in 2025, to test the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum developed following Study One and Study Two data analysis. Specifically, to establish the point at which acceptance of tattoos becomes conditional, and the reasons for that conditional acceptance.

5.4 Completion rate

293 people began the survey: 40.95% (n=120) did not complete it (see Figure 11).

Figure 11

Participant Losses and Completion Through Study Three



5.5 Participants

Unless otherwise stated, the following information relates to the 173 participants that completed the survey. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 78 years (M=42.36 years). Office for National Statistics (2016) definitions were used to determine professional/non-professional status of participant occupations (Appendix O). Of the tattooed participants (*n*=87) the reported number of tattoos ranged from 1 to 60 (M=5.76, Median=3.0, SD =7.783).

Participants were mainly female (*n*=128; 74%), White, between 18 and forty-two years old (*n*=89; 51.5%), educated to undergraduate degree level (*n*=60; 34.7%), working in a professional occupation (*n*=117; 67.6%), in a relationship (*n*=101; 58.4%), tattooed (50.3%), and not religious or spiritual (*n*=109; 63%).

5.6 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for each design (Nature; Icon; and Gang) according to either size and location on the body are shown below and in Appendix O.

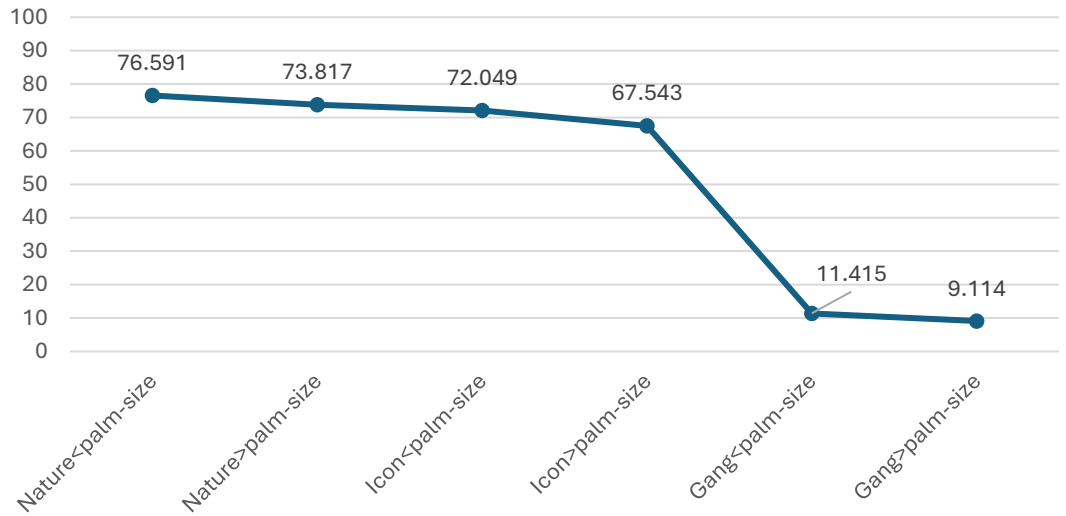
Independent variables were grouped into overall means according to style and size (see Appendix R):

- Nature up to the size of the palm of the hand.
- Nature larger than the size of the palm of the hand.
- Icon up to the size of the palm of the hand.
- Icon larger than the size of the palm of the hand.
- Gang up to the size of the palm of the hand.
- Gang larger than the size of the palm of the hand.

Overall means according to style and size were plotted on a graph as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12

Likert Scale Mean Scores Grouped by Design and Size



5.7 Exploratory Cluster Analysis

As the data collection measure used in Study Three was created for the current study, the number of clusters was not known. Therefore, SPSS was used to carry out an initial Hierarchical Cluster Analysis using squared Euclidian distance as the similarity measure. The resulting dendrogram (Appendix S) showed 3 clusters. A 3-Cluster K-means analysis was conducted to group participants' scores. Of the 173 participants 10% (n=18) were in cluster 1; 66% (n=114) were in cluster 2; and 24% (n=41) were in cluster 3.

Initial cluster centres showed large differences between all clusters. Ten iterations were carried out before clusters showed small differences (Appendix R). Final cluster centres showed:

- Small differences between means score clusters 1 and 2 for:
    - Nature tattoo means up to the size of the palm of the hand.
    - Nature tattoo means larger than the palm of the hand.
    - Icon tattoo means up to the palm of the hand.
    - Icon tattoos larger than the palm of the hand.
- Large differences between mean score clusters 1 and 2 for:
    - Gang tattoo means up to the palm of the hand.
    - Gang tattoo means larger than the palm of the hand.
- Large differences between mean cluster scores between cluster 3 and clusters 1 and 2 for all themed tattoos except for Gang up to the palm of the hand which showed a small difference from cluster 2.

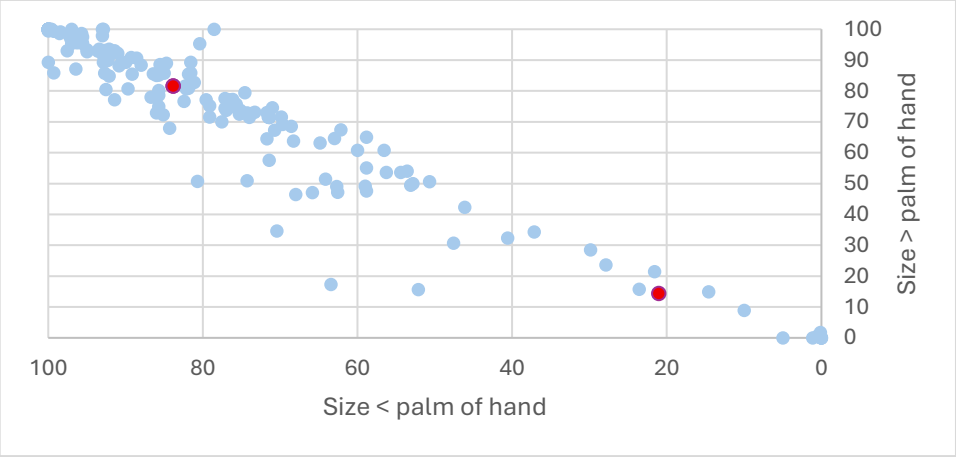
Data were analysed to identify cluster centroids and Euclidian distances from centroids. Establishing X- and Y-axis data, centroid data was iteratively calculated until convergence was achieved (Appendix R). Scatterplots were created to visually represent these data.

5.7.1 Nature, Icon, and Gang Scatterplots

Using size up to the palm of the hand as X-axis values, and size larger than the palm of the hand as Y-axis values, separate scatterplots were created for nature, icon, and gang-themed tattoos. Figure 13 shows the scatterplot for Nature tattoo mean scores, with cluster centres shown in red.

Figure 13

Cluster Analysis Scatterplot for Nature Tattoos



As shown in Figure 13, centroids for clusters 2 and 3 overlapped.

Figure 14 shows the scatterplot for Icon tattoo mean scores, with cluster centres shown in red.

Figure 14

Cluster Analysis Scatterplot for Icon Tattoos

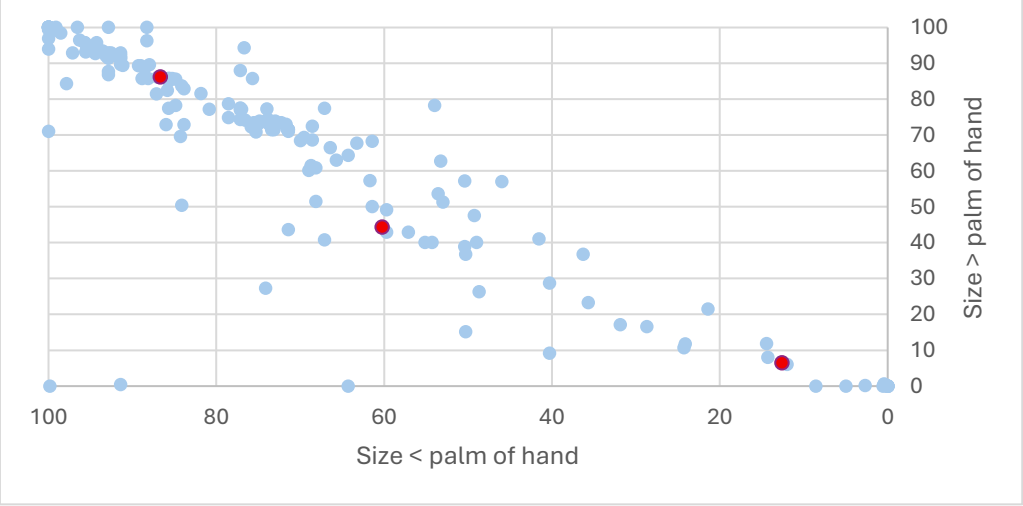
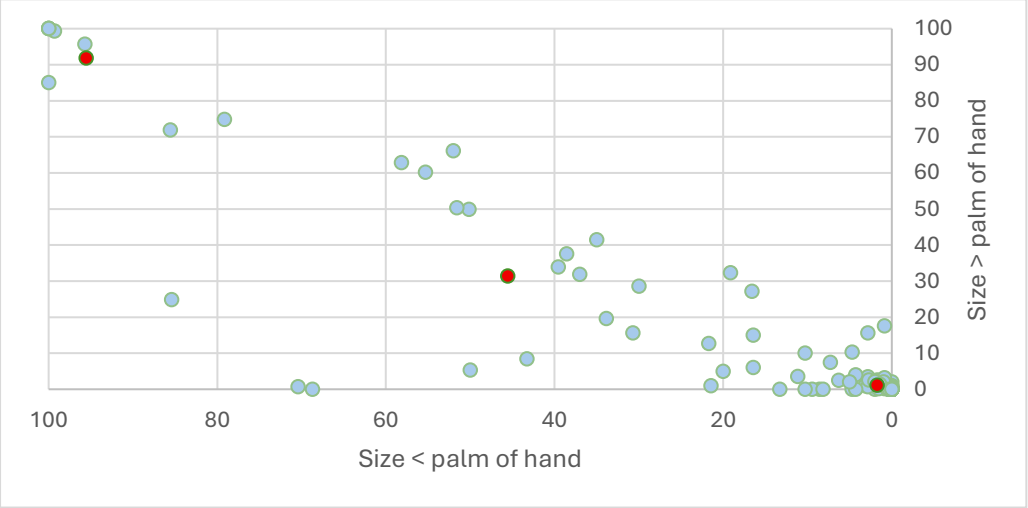


Figure 15 shows the scatterplot for Gang tattoo mean scores, with cluster centres shown in red.

Figure 15

Cluster Analysis Scatterplot for Gang Tattoos

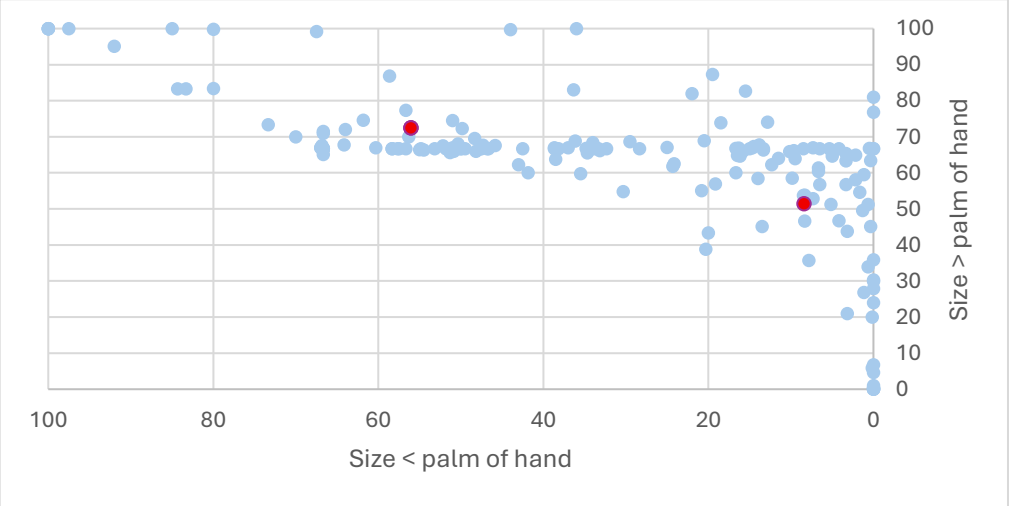


5.7.2 Tattoo Size Scatterplots

Using size up to the palm of the hand as X-axis values, and size larger than the palm of the hand as Y-axis values, scatterplots were created for overall mean scores for nature, icon, and gang-themed tattoos. Figure 16 shows the scatterplot for tattoos up to the palm of the hand, with cluster centres shown in red.

Figure 16

Cluster Analysis Scatterplot for Tattoos up to the Palm of Hand Size

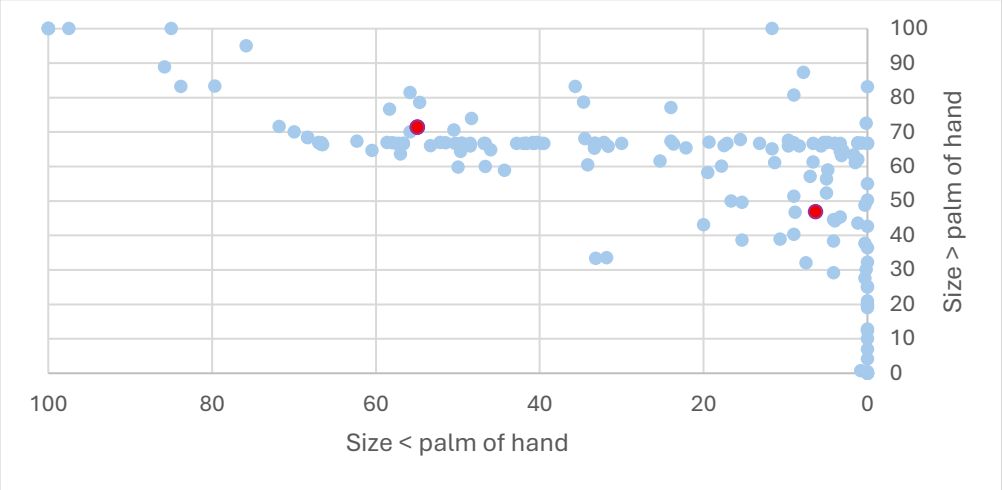


As shown in Figure 16, centroids for clusters 2 and 3 overlapped.

Figure 17 shows the scatterplot for tattoos larger than the palm of the hand, with cluster centres shown in red.

Figure 7

Cluster Analysis Scatterplot for Tattoos Larger Than Palm of Hand Size



As shown in Figure 17, centroids for clusters 2 and 3 overlapped.

Chapter 6 – Study Four

6.1 Research Design

To test the extent to which participants use tattoos as a conversation starter (as identified through the analysis of Study Two) a story completion task was created.

In story completion research, participants create a story based on a hypothetical scenario created by the researcher (Braun et al., 2025; Clark & Braun, 2025). Story completion is a "very different" (Clarke et al., 2019, p. 2) qualitative data collection method compared to interviews or self-reporting. Story completion draws on hypothetical scenarios rather than lived experiences in which participants are given a stimulus prompt or story stem and instructions to follow (Rabin & Zlotogorski, 1981). Story completion has been effectively used to explore emotive topics where binary responses are common. For example, Parker et al. (2023) used story completion in gathering perceptions of refugees, finding emotional narratives in completed stories not usually portrayed in government or media discourse. Pong et al., (2024) explain that completing a hypothetical story rather than conveying a personal lived experience reduces the risk of participants giving socially desirable responses.

Story completion was chosen as a method for testing the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum developed following data analysis obtained through Study One and Study Two. The qualitative nature of the story completion task also aligned with the planned use of Template Analysis (Brooks et al., 2015) which provided a flexible approach to exploring patterned meaning within qualitative datasets whilst accommodating sensitising concepts derived from earlier studies within the research. This was because the framing of the hypothetical scenario would reduce the likelihood of participants giving responses they felt the researcher wanted to receive. Also, participants did not have to have direct experience of the

scenario being described as they could use their imagination to 'fill in the blank'. Participants were able to construct narratives reflective of their own assumptions and interpretations, rather than responding to predetermined response categories. This made the data well suited to qualitative thematic exploration through Template Analysis. This allowed participants to take the story in any direction they wanted whilst not responding only to those issues or prompts set by the researcher.

6.2 Recruitment Strategy

In response to the adverts shared on social media (see Appendix G), participants followed a link to the online data collection platform (QuestionPro). Based on the aims and research questions of the study, the intended sample were members of the public, whether in a professional occupation and whether tattooed, over 18 years old.

6.3 Materials

As Study Four was designed to address the results obtained from Study Two there was no existing measure to collect relevant data and an original story completion task was created. The story stem was therefore deliberately designed to allow exploration of themes identified during Study Two whilst remaining sufficiently open for participants to introduce novel ideas and interactions. This reflects the use of sensitising concepts within Template Analysis, whereby previous findings inform but do not constrain subsequent qualitative analysis (Brooks et al., 2015).

Using an exploratory qualitative design, the research asked participants to complete a story. Participants were told that the study was focused on whether being tattooed is a social barrier. And that they would be given the opening lines of a story about a fictitious 'Sam' before being asked to complete the story. The opening stem of the story was:

> "Sam is travelling on a train in a very busy carriage. They are sat on a table with two others and there are also people stood in the aisles. One of the passengers at the table is reading a book and Sam notices that they also have a tattoo on their neck, the other has been playing on their phone for most of the journey so far. The train slowly comes to a stop and there is an announcement about a problem on the track which means the train will have to stop between stations for about 40 minutes. Sam doesn't have their phone with them or anything to read. What happens next?"

Participants were instructed to write a story at least 10 lines or 200 words long to complete the story. As participants were informed there were no right or wrong answers, their stories could develop in any direction, allowing participants to construct narratives that reflected their own assumptions, interpretations and social understandings. This degree of openness was important because Template Analysis seeks to identify patterns of meaning emerging across participants whilst remaining sufficiently flexible to accommodate unexpected themes (Brooks et al., 2015). Although the story stem was informed by findings from Study Two, participants were given no prompts regarding how the story should develop beyond the initial scenario. This ensured that any recurring themes identified during subsequent Template Analysis reflected participants' own narrative constructions rather than researcher direction. Consistent with Template Analysis, the findings from Study Two therefore acted as sensitising concepts that informed the design of the story completion task without constraining the emergence of additional themes during analysis (Brooks et al., 2015). Therefore, to test whether participants would be inclined to use tattoos on a stranger as a conversation starter, all participants completing the story were asked a series of questions:

1. Whether the participant would talk to the tattooed stranger first (Yes/No responses only).
2. Whether they would ask the stranger about their tattoo (Yes/No responses

only).

3. What gender they imagined the tattooed stranger was (free text response)
4. What job they thought the tattooed stranger might do (free text response).

The interview story completion measure was approved by the Birmingham City University Faculty Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). Full instructions and the post-story completion questions are in Appendix N.

6.4 Data Handling

Data in Study Four were handled the same as for Study Three.

6.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration for Study Four were the same as for Study One. University ethical approval is shown in Appendix A.

6.6 Procedure

Prospective participants who clicked the link in the advert, were directed to the participant information in QuestionPro. If they gave consent to participate, they were presented with the story stem and instructions (see Appendix N). When they had completed the story, the participant was thanked for their time and given information about how to withdraw their story should they want to. Participant experience in Study Four is the same as shown in Figure 5, above. Following data collection, all completed stories were imported into Microsoft Excel for qualitative coding and subsequent Template Analysis.

6.7 Demographic Questions

Participants were asked about their:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Highest educational attainment

- Civil status or marital status.
- Occupational group
- Job title
- Number of tattoos
- Religious beliefs
- Religious beliefs and whether they influenced their views about tattoos.

Full details of demographic questions appear in Appendix J.

6.8 Data Analysis

Stories were downloaded from QuestionPro into an Excel worksheet. All stories were read through before any themes were noted. Consistent with Template Analysis (Brooks et al., 2015), this initial stage of analysis involved familiarisation with the dataset in order to gain an overall understanding of participants' narratives before coding commenced.

With the exception of one, all stories existed in the reality constructed in the story stem. That is, the characters remained on the train in the situation. Many stories had the entire interaction taking place only on the train. However, some stories extended the interaction long after the train encounter, with visits to a café or bar for a coffee or a cocktail, with friendships and romances resulting from the train encounter.

Stories where the characters engaged in conversation ended in one of three ways: characters returned to their book or staring out of the window effectively ending the conversation; the train arrived at the station and the journey ended with characters going separate ways; or leaving the train to find a local café or bar to continue talking.

Storied conversations were informed by the situation: the book being read, the frustration of train delays, or admiring the tattoo on the stranger's neck. In some stories, 'Sam' asked about the stranger's tattoo before sharing or showing their own tattoo. Where the book being read was a component of the story, this was described in terms of real books with author and title provided. Although all stories

were fiction, one was notably whimsical: the story began on the train and ended with the production of a black stone, a muttered incantation, and the passenger having vanished in a flash of bright light.

Total word counts were calculated for each story, along with minimum, maximum, mean, and range. Stories ranged in length from 17 to 785 words (mean length 238 words), which aligns with published research (Pong et al., 2024).

From the post-story questions:

- Eighteen participants (37.5%) said that if they were 'Sam' they would not start a conversation with either of the strangers sat with them. Conversely, 29 participants (60.4%) said they would start a conversation if they were Sam. Of these twenty-nine participants, 23 (79.3%) would talk to the tattooed stranger first, but six (20.7%) said they would not.
- Twenty-seven participants would not talk to the stranger about their neck tattoo, whilst 19 participants would.
- Twelve participants imagined the tattooed stranger was female; 28 imagined the tattooed stranger was male; and 5 imagined the tattooed stranger was non-binary.

Each story was read a second time and columns created in the Excel worksheet based on themes in each story. Meaningful segments of text reflecting shared ideas, behaviours and interpretations were coded rather than individual words or phrases in isolation. These initial codes were organised into preliminary themes, forming the first version of a coding template (Brooks et al., 2015). Specific words or phrases from the story were copied and pasted into the new column with headings according to their apparent meaning.

Template Analysis was selected because it provides a structured yet flexible approach to qualitative analysis, allowing themes to be refined iteratively whilst incorporating sensitising concepts derived from previous research (Brooks et al.,

2015). This was particularly appropriate in Study Four because findings from Study Two suggested that tattoos functioned as conversation starters. Consequently, themes relating to icebreakers, conversation starters and tattoo design informed the initial stages of analysis without constraining the identification of additional patterns within the stories.

The practical process of familiarisation, coding, theme development and refinement broadly followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis. However, the overall analytic strategy was Template Analysis, whereby the coding template was iteratively reviewed and refined throughout analysis (Brooks et al., 2015). Stories, created columns, and comments were read again numerous times and themes were iteratively refined (overlapping themes were merged, columns renamed, and themes that were too broad were divided and redefined). This resulted in 17 thematic columns in the table. Thematic column headings included 'Tattoo as icebreaker', 'Other icebreaker', 'Describe design', 'Tattoo meaning', 'Like the tattoo', 'Talk about tattoo first', and 'Talk about tattoo (not first)'.

Following development of the initial coding template, particular attention was given to themes relating to icebreakers, conversation starters and tattoo design because these addressed the specific research questions and enabled exploration of whether the patterns identified in Study Two were also evident within the story completion data. Although additional themes were identified, these fell outside the scope of the present analysis and are therefore not discussed further. These themes functioned as sensitising concepts within the Template Analysis rather than predetermined coding categories (Brooks et al., 2015). This meant that otherwise important themes were not subject to any further analysis. These included themes about reflection and reminiscing about the past and aspects of regret.

Stories were read again in the context of icebreakers, conversation starters, and tattoo design. Finally, stories were read again in the context of the post-story

completion questions regarding gender and occupational role. Stories were analysed and themed according to whether any character in the story used the visible tattoo on the neck of one of the passengers as an icebreaker, either to start a conversation or as a specific topic of conversation, and whether stories described the design of the tattoo.

Throughout the analytic process, the coding template was revised by merging, reorganising and refining themes where appropriate. Relationships between higher-order themes and subordinate themes were also considered, resulting in a hierarchical coding template that represented patterns across the dataset (Brooks et al., 2015). Successive revisions of the coding template provided an audit trail documenting how interpretations developed during analysis, thereby enhancing the transparency of the analytic process.

The analytic process was informed by reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) in that the choices made by the researcher about both the framing of the story stem and the lens with which stories were analysed were not apart from but "enmeshed" (Clarke & Braun, 2025, p. 7). Designing the story to involve strangers in a confined environment in which 'Sam' had nothing to occupy their time (such as a book) whilst being close to a tattooed passenger, and choosing to focus only on those themes already identified in Study One data collection, were enmeshed choices.

Although the analysis was informed by the researcher's interpretations, Template Analysis acknowledges that themes are actively developed through engagement with the data rather than simply discovered within it (Brooks et al., 2015). This interpretive stance complemented the reflexive position adopted throughout the research whilst providing a systematic framework for developing and refining the coding template.

Eight stories did not include any reference to tattoos. In two stories tattoos were presented as being a barrier to conversation, with 'Sam' exploring their own stigmatised stereotypes associated with bikers and criminals and expressing unease about sitting with the tattooed stranger. However, the overwhelming narrative from the stories was one of using the visible tattoo as either a way to start or continue a conversation. Stories that involved discussion of tattoos were read as being admiring, curious, and a way to connect. Where the stories involved discussion of tattoos, these were outwardly respectful, even if the inner monologue was hesitant or dismissive.

Two superordinate and one subordinate themes (explored below) were identified (numbering continues from previous superordinate and subordinate themes, above):

> **Superordinate theme 3:** Using tattoos to continue a conversation.
>
> **Subordinate theme 4:** Tattoo admiration as an allying conversation device.
>
> **Superordinate theme 4:** In-group identity and connections.

6.9 Data Collection

Data collection occurred in 2025, with the aim of testing Subordinate Theme 1 developed as a result of Template Analysis conducted on Study Two data. Specifically, Study Four was designed to determine whether tattoos are used as a conversation starter more widely than a professional/client situation. Participants were asked to complete the following story stem by writing 10 lines or 200 words:

> Sam is travelling on a train in a very busy carriage. They are sat on a table with two others and there are also people stood in the aisles. One of the passengers at the table is reading a book and Sam notices that they also have a tattoo on their neck, the other has been playing on their phone for most of the journey so far. The train slowly comes to a stop and there is an

announcement about a problem on the track which means the train will have to stop between stations for about 40 minutes. Sam doesn't have their phone with them or anything to read. What happens next?

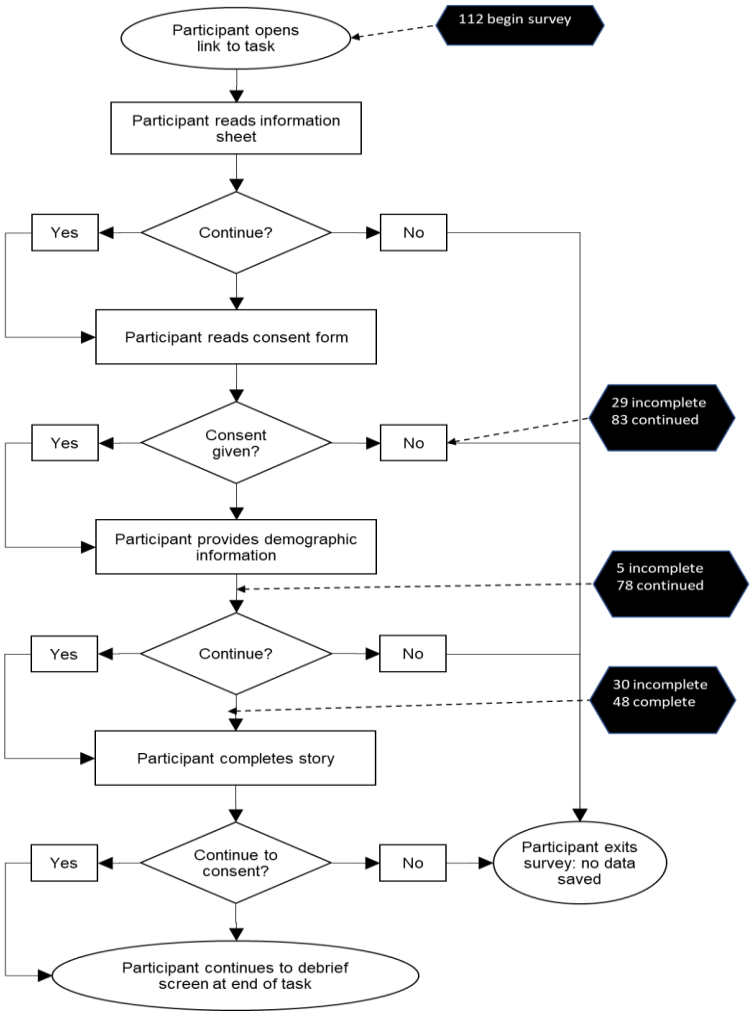
Following completion of the story, participants were asked whether they would start a conversation with the stranger, if they would talk to the tattooed stranger first, if they would talk about the visible neck tattoo, what gender they thought the tattooed stranger was, and what job they thought the tattooed stranger did.

6.9.1 Completion rate

Of the 112 people who began the task: forty-eight stories were analysed; 59% (*n*=64) did not complete a story (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

Participant Losses and Completion Through Study Four



6.10 Findings

Template Analysis was carried out relative to research questions 1-3 which were:

RQ1: Did participants identify any character traits common to all included professional occupations, both traditional and non-traditional professions?

RQ2: Did the presence of a visible tattoo on included professionals impact participants' impressions formed about the character traits of that professional?

RQ3: If so, what features of a tattoo (e.g. size, theme, location on the body) influenced participants' impressions formed about a tattooed professional?

6.10.1 Superordinate Theme 3: Using Tattoos to Continue a Conversation

This superordinate theme specifically addressed research questions 2 and 3 wherein stories used the presence of a visible tattoo to either begin or continue a conversation with a stranger. Specifically, 'Sam' and the stranger engaged in a conversation about other topics before switching the topic to the visible tattoo.

Tattoos being used as a way to begin a conversation was a key feature of the findings from Study Two data collection. Specifically, the context of the conversation was in a professional/client or service user relationship where visible tattoos had been used to initiate conversation. However, the story completion task in Study Four had no structural imbalance of power between a professional and a client or service user. This meant that there was no reason for Sam and the stranger in the story to have engaged in any conversation. Whilst Template Analysis supported previous findings that tattoos can be an effective icebreaker, the story completion task identified that tattoos can also be an effective way to continue or re-energise a conversation between strangers. Participant 8 had a long period of

silence before Sam and the stranger speak to each other, although not initially about the tattoo:

> *Sam sits in silence for what feels like the full 40 minutes...Neck tattoo speaks*
>
> (P8, Female, 41, tattooed)

Similarly, Participant 7 had Sam and the tattooed stranger engage in a conversation about shared music interests before turning the conversation to tattoos:

> *The passenger and Sam begin talking about the concert that they had both attended…The passenger discusses their tattoos with Sam and shares stories behind their creation.*
>
> (P7, Female, 30, tattooed)

Although much shorter as an initial conversation, Participant 12 also used the book being read as an initial conversation starter, swiftly moving to tattoos to continue the conversation:

> *Sam looks at their watch and sighs. they would be late. Sam makes eye contact with the person reading the book and smiles. "Is it any good?" enquires Sam. The person smiles and says "yes it is brilliant, great plot!" Sam has rolled up their sleeves and the book reader notices Sam's tattoo on their forearm 'Nice ink'. Sam grins, "cheers! It was the start of my collection. I noticed your ink" Sam gestures to their own neck. "I'm a collector too' the book reader says. They chat happily about different tattoo artists they know and the 40 mins passes quickly as the train then moves on.*
>
> (P12, Female, 50, non-tattooed)

Participant 13 also used the tattooed stranger's book to initiate conversation, moving the conversation abruptly to tattoos:

> *"What book are you reading?" Asks Sam…"I like your tattoo," says Sam*
>
> (P13, Female, 36, non-tattooed)

Participant 11's use of tattoos to continue a conversation was not as successful:

> *Sam decides to pass the time of day with the passenger reading the book, breaking the ice by saying 'I hope it's nothing too serious on track' with that the book worm glances up and gives a small concerned smile in return, sam then asks ' how's the book?' Bookworm, slightly embarrassed casually replied ' well it's not my usual read, but it was on sale and I've learned a few things about the Simpsons family, I just read about the hidden lentil soup recipe in Lisa the vegetarian episode, it blew my mind!'… Bookworm leans in a little closer to sam and says quietly 'Actually I'm a f*ckin' massive super fan of the simpsons, I'm kinda embarrassed as I'm part of a motorcycle club so have to keep it under wraps because the guys would throw me out…' wow that's great' replied sam ' it's nice to have hobbies' Bookworm appeared to be getting a little aggravated by sams response and replied ' this ain't no hobby buddy, look at this' … Bookworm, this initally unassuming train passenger revealed a tattoo of sideshow bob…Sam said ' well, you really are a super fan, I'm going to go find out what's happening with the train' Sam stumbled over the other passengers making a sharp exit, left wondering if he'd just met the real sideshow Bob.*
>
> (P11, Female, 48, tattooed)

Although not all stories involved conversations between Sam and the tattooed stranger, where there was, the initial topic was mixed. Some participants had the conversation between Sam and the tattooed stranger beginning with

discussion of tattoos, whilst others started with other topics (such as the book being read by the tattooed stranger). Conversations that began with a different topic then switched to discussion of tattoos underscored the change in topic as more than a mere segue, by pointing out the tattoo and following up with a question about it. For example, "*Sam … asks 'do you have more?'* (P7, Female, 30, tattooed). Therefore, this theme shows that tattoos are used as a way to continue as well as initiate conversation with strangers, even where there is no need for a conversation to occur. However, where tattoos were used as a way to continue a conversation, stories used the complimenting of the stranger's tattoo to do so.

6.10.3 Subordinate Theme 4: Tattoo Admiration as an Allying Conversation Device

This subordinate theme specifically addressed research questions 2 and 3 wherein stories used compliments about a visible tattoo to either begin or continue a conversation with a stranger. Specifically, 'Sam' and the stranger exchanged positive comments on the visible tattoo.

Tattoo location was a key feature of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum developed from Study Two data collection. To explore the research questions, the story stem needed to include a character with a visible tattoo. Therefore, it was important to have the stranger's tattoo be somewhere that was visible to Sam and could not easily be hidden. Characters defined in the story were seated around a table seat on a train. This would mean that tattoos below the waist (ankle, calf, shin, foot etc.) would not normally be visible due to the table. In the story stem train setting, tattoos on the back of the stranger's hand could be hidden by gloves, a long sleeve, or the table. As the face and neck were seen by Study Two interview participants as being transgressive, the story stem included that the stranger's tattoo was on their neck.

The use in the story stem of the tattooed stranger reading a book had been intended to be a barrier to conversation to see whether participants would have Sam

interrupt them for any reason. Whilst some stories involved no conversation whatsoever, some saw generalised conversations not directed at the tattooed stranger. It was more common for stories that involved Sam speaking with any of the other passengers to use the book as the conversation starter than tattoos. Those stories, however, often developed to include a conversation about the tattoos (usually instigated by Sam). Participant 13's story began with the book and moved swiftly to the tattoo:

> *… "What book are you reading?" Asks Sam. "It's a little embarrassing" replies the other passenger sheepishly, "it's the Lord of the Rings, I watched the movies and thought I'd give the book a go." "I really enjoyed the films!" Exclaims Sam, "I also have never read the books, is it good?" "It's a bit of a slog, but yes actually it is quite good" replies the passenger. "I like your tattoo," says Sam, "does it have a special meaning?"*
>
> (P13, Female, 36, non-tattooed)

Stories had Sam either begin the whole conversation with a comment about the stranger's tattoo or (as for P13) or Sam mentioned the tattoo in a change of conversation topic. Sam was often direct and succinct in using the stranger's tattoo as a conversation device. For example, both Participants 3, 9 and 17 have Sam saying '*nice tat*' or '*nice tattoo'* to the stranger (P3, Male, 57, non-tattooed; P9, Female, 55, non-tattooed; and P17, Female, 35, non-tattooed). Whereas other participants had Sam express more of an emotional response to the stranger's tattoo:

> *Sam says to the person opposite that he likes the tattoo on their neck and asks can he see it properly*
>
> (P47, Male, 49, tattooed)

> *Sam would say wow I love your neck tattoo, have you got any others.*
>
> (P39, Female, 36, tattooed)
>
> *Sam tries again. 'I like your neck tattoo, have you anymore?'*
>
> (P40, Female, 50, tattooed)

These storied observations from Sam demonstrate allyship with the tattooed stranger. This is achieved in two ways: by complimenting the tattoo using more emotional language such as '*like*' and '*love*' than merely observing the tattoo as being '*nice*'; and by specifically mentioning the tattoo being on the neck. In mentioning the placement of the tattoo on the neck, Sam reinforced their allyship by accepting the tattoo in terms of design and location on the neck: a position which as noted above can be transgressive.

Although none of the stories had Sam outwardly expressing dislike for the stranger's tattoo, one had Sam laugh and question the stranger's tattoo:

> *…lowered their collar to reveal an Avanti West Coast train logo. Sam laughed and said 'why on earth would you get that as a tattoo?... Sam was rolling around the floor laughing. The whole train started laughing, the train driver tooted the horn of the train in celebration. Then the train started moving and everyone enjoyed their journey, chuckling in a jovial manner.'*
>
> (P16, Male, 37, tattooed)

As the reason for the tattoo was as a result of a bet, the tone of the story is read as being a humorous offering rather than bullying behaviour. This is because the stranger volunteers to show their tattoo and explain the bet, after which 'the whole train' laughed with everyone 'chuckling in a jovial manner'. There is no mention of the tattooed stranger being offended or excluded from the jolly reaction to an unusual tattoo. Instead, the tattoo connects the whole train in enjoying the

remainder of their journey. The tattooed stranger goes from being jester to comic hero: from a potential outsider to founding a group sharing a humorous moment. The outcome being that 'the whole train' show allyship towards the stranger with the Avanti West Coast train logo tattoo.

Although not expressed in the stem, stories provided detail about the size and design of the tattoo. Such tattoo descriptions appeared to be stereotypically gendered. Where the stranger was written by the participant as female, tattoos were described as: '*flowers*' (P6, Female, 38, non-tattooed, and P44, Female, 24, non-tattooed) '*delicate'* (P9, Female, 55, non-tattooed), and '*a fairy. It's pretty*' (P43, Female, 58, non-tattooed). Where the stranger was male, tattoos were described as: '*a special symbol with a name and date*' (P4, Male, 31, non-tattooed), '*2 colourful sleeves with an NHS rainbow*' (P7, Female, 30, tattooed), '*angel*' (P8, Female, 41, tattooed), '*scorpion*' (P10, Female, 37, tattooed), '[The Simpsons character] *Sideshow Bob*' (P11, Female, 48, tattooed), '*Avanti West Coast train logo*' (P16, Male, 37, tattooed), '*feather or wing*' (P21, Female, 48, non-tattooed), '*sunshine and a word* [daughter's name]' (P33, Female, 36, non-tattooed). As well as the design being stereotypically gendered, descriptions were also gendered. Female-stranger's tattoos included gendered adjectives such as delicate and pretty. By contrast male-stranger's tattoos used non-gendered adjectives such as special and colourful.

Although described in the story stem as being on the neck, participants described the tattoo as ending at the neck (having started lower down the body) or appearing at the jawline or behind the ear. Participants' stories (where mentioned) did not include a facial tattoo. This supports the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum in that facial tattoos were seen as being transgressive: participants were not willing to tell a story in which the person they were sat with had a facial tattoo.

Participant 7's story provided a detailed inner monologue about the stranger's tattoo. Sam was reluctant to sit with the tattooed stranger:

> *Sam is feeling tired after standing for the journey so far, he chooses to go and sit in the vacant seat. Sam feels uneasy doing so after seeing the passengers tattoo. Their family doesn't have any tattoos and they've always been told that they are for 'bikers and criminals',*

However, after Sam sneezes, a conversation begins during which Sam reevaluates their preconceived ideas about people with tattoos:

> *The tattooed passenger says 'bless you' …and asks Sam about the badge on their lapel, it's from a concert that Sam recently attended. Sam is surprised that the passenger enjoys the same music as them, 'maybe we're not so different' Sam thinks…the passenger was warm and approachable and told Sam that they were travelling for a weekend off from their work as a doctor…The passenger sees Sam glance at the tattoo and asks if Sam has any. Sam shakes their head and asks 'do you have more?', the passenger rolls up their sleeves to unveil 2 colourful sleeves with an NHS rainbow proudly on their forearm. Sam begins to feel like not everyone with tattoos is a criminal or someone to avoid…Before too long, the train arrives at Sam's destination and he says goodbye to the passenger. As Sam walks down the platform he thinks 'what a lovely person, I liked their tattoos'.*
>
> (P7, Female, 30, tattooed)

Beginning with Sam's tattoo prejudice inherited from his parents, within a series of brief exchanges, he connects with and changes his mind about the tattooed stranger, ultimately changing their view about tattooed people more generally. However, this story relied on the tattooed stranger, rather than Sam, offering up

their tattoos as a way of starting and maintaining conversation. Even though Sam begins the narrative inner monologue as rejecting of the stranger's tattoo, they do not express this. However, over the course of the conversation with the stranger, Sam alters their initial positioning of rejection, to move to conditional acceptance.

Therefore, participants' stories actively presented tattoos as being icebreakers and conversation devices in a way that unambiguously framed characters in the narrative as being allies to the tattooed stranger. Even where conversations abruptly shifted to the stranger's tattoo, these *non sequiturs* began by exclaiming acceptance of the tattoo as a way of reassuring the stranger that Sam was an ally. In all cases where Sam discussed the stranger's tattoo this was expressed in a way that showed respectful curiosity and never articulated total or conditional rejection.

6.10.4 Superordinate Theme 4: Tattoo In-Group Identity and Connection

This superordinate theme specifically addressed research question 1: stories used the presence of the stranger's visible tattoo to share their own tattoo.

The story stem did not include that Sam was tattooed. This meant that, for the purpose of the story completion task, there was no need for Sam to be tattooed or display this in any way. Therefore, stories that had Sam as being tattooed demonstrated (at minimum) allyship with the tattooed stranger. Where stories used the presence of Sam's visible tattoo to start or begin a conversation, this was framed as respectful, mirroring the approach noted above. For example, Participant 6 had a stranger comment on Sam's tattoo:

> *"I like your tattoo there" the lady next to her said*
>
> (P6, Female, 38, non-tattooed)

> *Sam has rolled up their sleeves and the book reader notices Sam's tattoo on their forearm 'Nice ink'.*
>
> (P12, Female, 50, non-tattooed)

Therefore, not only did Sam use the presence of a visible tattoo to start a conversation, but strangers also used Sam's tattoo to start a conversation with them, demonstrating the effective use of tattoos as an icebreaker and asserting allyship.

However, some stories went beyond allyship and had Sam share their own tattoo:

> *Sam, ever the quiet observer, finally speaks. "Nice tattoo," they say, nodding toward it …Sam smiles. "I've got one too.*
>
> (P9, Female, 55, non-tattooed)

> *Then the person opposite notices that the other person at the table has got a tattoo on their neck and asks them. Is that tattoo significant to anything? Does it mean anything. … Sam then decides to share that they have a tattoo*
>
> (P22, Female, 42, tattooed)

> *Sam says to the person opposite that he likes the tattoo on their neck and asks can he see it properly. The person obliges and shows Sam the tattoo … Sam then explains about his tattoos*
>
> (P2, Male, 50, tattooed)

In having Sam share their tattoo with the stranger, stories positioned Sam beyond allyship to being in-group. Following the introductions, Participant 8's story had Sam find the stranger's ('Josh') neck tattoo helpful in engaging in conversation about their bad day:

> *…Josh asks Sam about their job and why their day was so shit. Sam couldn't help but start to open up. They didn't know if if was the soft blue eyes or the angel tattoo on his neck, but Sam suddenly at ease and starts to talk about his new boss.*

(P8, Female, 41, tattooed)

However, Participant 8 moved Sam from ally to tattooed in-group member:

> *…Sam starts to ask about Josh's choice of book. Josh laugh's 'it's my favourite book, since I was a kid' he pulls down his black v-neck t-shirt to reveal a hand with thumb and little finger held together. Sam laughs and reveals a mocking jay on their arm.*
>
> (P8, Female, 41, tattooed)

A notable aspect of Participant 8's story is moving the tattooed stranger from being out-group to in-group, and Sam from othering the stranger to becoming an ally. Although the story stem described them as a passenger with a visible tattoo on their neck, Participant 8's story initially shortened this description to simply 'Neck tattoo' before having them share their name with Sam. In this way Participant 8 had reduced the passenger with the visible tattoo to a potentially dismissive and othering two-word description to being Josh and offering a handshake of greeting. Further, by sharing their tattoo Sam had become in-group and ally.

As well as demonstrating membership of an in-group, stories saw Sam and the tattooed stranger's connection evolving to become a long-term relationship. Participant 2's story had the connection develop into a friendship:

> *Sam says to the person opposite that he likes the tattoo on their neck and asks can he see it properly. The person obliges and shows Sam the tattoo, which they follow up with how long they have had it, where they had it done and some minor detail of why, the person felt like they have to explain to anyone that asks to it provides some reason or meaning for the tattoo. Sam then explains about his tattoos …The usual question crops up "Do you have anymore ?" There are more and without showing them all they go into further detail about each one, where it is … they both now have a*

> *commonality between them and both can understand why they had a tattoo and what it means to them. Due to this they have now struck up a small bond, the conversation moves from tattoos … Sam asks to share numbers so they can stay in touch …they both can't forget the chance meeting, the decide to reconnect a few weeks later and meet up over a coffee This is how the friendship was born, through a visible tattoo that in one way was the other persons private marking but in another way it may of also been a cry for connection and possibly, in fact more than likely, a need for acceptance*
>
> (P2, Male, 50, tattooed)

While Participant 9 had the connection be the beginnings of a romantic relationship:

> *…"Nice tattoo," they say, nodding toward it…Sam smiles. "I've got one too. Well, sort of. It's a tiny lemon slice on my ankle. Got it after a very questionable cocktail in Lisbon." … The reader's name is Alex. … They talk tattoos — the stories behind them, the ones they want, the ones they regret. …Alex hesitates, then says, "I know this is wildly impulsive, but… want to grab a drink when we get off? I know a place near the station." … Weeks pass. Then months. The lemon slice and Cassiopeia become shorthand for something bigger — a moment of serendipity, a train delay that turned into a beginning. Eventually, they get matching tattoos. Not identical, but complementary. Sam gets a tiny star. Alex gets a lemon wedge. They joke that together, they make a celestial cocktail. And in a way, they do. Love, after all, is just a mix of timing, curiosity, and a dash of absurdity.*
>
> (P9, Female, 55, non-tattooed)

Stories used tattoo discussions to foster a much richer, deeper connection. These deeper connections were more than merely demonstrating allyship by complimenting the stranger's tattoo. Participants used different ways to create connections between the story characters. Whether asking the stranger if their tattoo held significance (P13, Female, 36, non-tattooed*: "I like your tattoo," says Sam, "does it have a special meaning?"*) or through demonstrating in-group membership by disclosing their own tattoo (P9, Female, 55, non-tattooed: *"Nice tattoo," they say, nodding toward it…Sam smiles. "I've got one too"*). Tattoos were not barriers in participants' stories. Instead, they were the basis of forming a connection with a tattooed stranger and, in the stories noted, pitched Sam as being a member of a tattooed in-group.

6.10.5 Summary of Analysed Themes

Study Four data collection was intended to explore the original contribution to knowledge of this research in relation to the extent to which tattoos were used as a conversation starter. Story completion allowed participants to explore and express views beyond the constraints of the interview questions in Study Two data collection. This meant participants used their creativity to have Sam deploy tattoos as a conversation device. Specifically, participants used the mention of the stranger's tattoo to continue or renew an ongoing conversation with the tattooed stranger.

Participants' story descriptions of the stranger's tattoo demonstrate that design is an important feature of how they perceive both the tattoo and the tattooed person. Again, it was not the intention to find support for the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum through Study Four data collection. The story stem did not require participants to define the tattoo's design. However, the design of the stranger's tattoo was a key feature of many of the completed stories, either as a semiotic device for Sam to begin a conversation with the stranger and

demonstrate allyship, to share tattoos as an in-group identity, or for Sam to forge a deeper, more meaningful connection with the stranger. However, despite the breadth of creative descriptions, none of the stories had the tattoo extend on to the stranger's face. This demonstrates that whilst allies are accepting of neck tattoos, face tattoos may be seen as transgressive.

Chapter 7 - Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the current study, including reflections on aim, hypotheses, methodology, and results obtained through Studies One, Two, Three, and Four. Current study findings are addressed relative to previous research and reviewed literature.

7.1 Summary of Main Findings

The current study found:

- Partial support for the impressions formed by participants about traditional professions being significantly more positive than for non-traditional professions.
- No support for the impressions formed by participants about non-tattooed professionals' character traits being significantly more positive than for tattooed professionals.
- No support for the impressions formed by participants about the character traits of males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions being significantly more positive than for males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions.
- Participants used the presence of a visible tattoo in interactions with a professional as an icebreaker.
- Participants can be placed in one of four categories when forming impressions about tattoos. Those categories can be presented as a spectrum (the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum).
- The design and body location of a visible tattoo have more influence in the impressions formed by participants about a tattooed individual than tattoo size.
- Participants may use the presence of a visible tattoo on a stranger as an icebreaker and also as a way of continuing a conversation.

The 'Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum', was conceptualised as a result of the current research which provides a new framework for understanding how tattoo observers negotiate their acceptance of visible tattoos in professional contexts.

Rather than viewing attitudes as simply positive or negative, the spectrum demonstrates that acceptance is conditional and shaped by multiple interacting factors. Consequently, a tattoo observer's position on the Ally/Other Acceptance Spectrum is unfixed and malleable as a result of various factors about the tattoo being observed. This offers a more nuanced or sophisticated explanation of impression formation than has previously been reported.

In addition, this research challenges the long-standing assumption that visible tattoos primarily signal deviance or unprofessionalism. Instead, participants frequently described tattoos as conversation starters that promoted interaction and rapport. This finding represents a shift in understanding the social function of tattoos within professional settings and suggests that visible tattoos may facilitate, rather than hinder, interpersonal engagement.

Overall, this thesis contributes to the growing body of literature examining professionalism, appearance and impression formation by demonstrating that perceptions of tattooed professionals are more nuanced than previously understood. Rather than reinforcing stereotypes linking tattoos with deviance or reduced professionalism, the findings indicate that judgments are conditional, context-dependent and influenced by a range of interacting factors. Through the development of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum and the identification of tattoos as facilitators of conversation, this research offers two original contributions to knowledge. Together, these findings extend current understanding of impression formation and provide a foundation for future research, organisational policy and recruitment practices within professions where appearance continues to influence first impressions.

7.2 How Research Aims Were Met

The overall aim of the current study was to determine if the perceived character traits associated with being a professional are influenced by the presence of a visible tattoo on that professional. This aim was achieved. The findings demonstrated that participants in the study did not express any change in the impressions formed about a professional as a result of that professional having a visible tattoo. This means that participants did not rate any of the professionals in the study significantly more negatively or positively by being tattooed or not tattooed for any of the survey measures used in Study One data collection. The reason for this is discussed further, below. The absence of statistically significant differences between tattooed and non-tattooed professionals suggests that participants no longer regarded visible tattoos as an automatic indicator of professional competence or character. Rather than relying on tattoos as an immediate heuristic for judging professionalism, participants appeared to evaluate professionals using broader criteria that extended beyond appearance alone. This represents an important shift from much of the earlier literature reviewed in Chapter One, where tattoos were conceptualised as visible markers of deviance, poor judgment or reduced credibility. This finding may reflect a wider cultural shift in which visible tattooing has become sufficiently commonplace that it no longer functions as an automatic marker of deviance or reduced professional credibility. This finding provides partial support for Timming (2017) who found that being tattooed was not only accepted but expected in some sectors. The current study found support for tattoos being accepted on a professional (dependent on the nature of the tattoo as addressed below) but not expected. One explanation for this apparent change is the increasing visibility of tattooed professionals across healthcare, education, emergency services and other public-facing occupations. As tattooed professionals become increasingly commonplace, repeated public

exposure may have reduced the extent to which tattoos function as markers of difference or deviance. Consequently, participants may have become accustomed to separating professional competence from personal appearance in ways that were less evident when much of the earlier literature was conducted. The current study supports prior research that negative connections between tattoos and savagery (DeMello, 2000) are reducing and being replaced by positive associations with respectability (Burgess & Clark, 2000), and increased employment (Flanagan & Lewis, 2019). The findings from the current study show a level of conditional acceptance of tattooed professionals that align with advice for employers to review hiring practices to ensure they are reflective of evolving views about tattoos in contemporary society (Uzunogullari and Brown, 2020). These findings also have practical implications. If tattoos no longer influence impressions of competence for most participants, organisational policies requiring tattoos to be concealed may reflect historical assumptions rather than contemporary public attitudes. Therefore, appearance policies may warrant review to ensure they remain evidence informed. The findings of the current study also support Conway (2013) and Dann (2022) who argue that outdated hiring practices such as advising tattooed applicants to cover tattoos for a job interview to appear 'normal' (Dann et al., 2016; Ellis, 2015) should be challenged. The current study does not support the findings of Resenhoeft et al. (2008) that tattoos have a negative impact on ratings of honesty (Di Luzio, 2006; Evetts et al., 2006; Illich et al., 1977; Le Grand, 1997; Martin et al., 2004; Millerson, 1964; Pfadenhauser, 2006; Sachs, 2003; and Svensson, 2006) or intelligence (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1964; and Corfield, 1995; Waddington, 1985) or that tattoos negatively impact services users' impressions formed about professionalism (Zidenberg et al., 2022).

Participants in the current study broadly positioned themselves as being supportive of a professional in being tattooed. The widespread positioning of

participants as allies represents more than simply increasing acceptance of tattooing. It suggests that participants began from a default position of inclusion rather than suspicion, indicating that visible tattoos were no longer interpreted as requiring justification. This contrasts with much of the literature reviewed in Chapter One, where tattooed individuals were frequently positioned as socially deviant or professionally questionable until they demonstrated otherwise. The shift therefore appears to be away from judging tattooing itself and towards judging the symbolic content communicated by individual tattoos. This was defined through the current study as allyship or being an ally. This supports Conway (2013) and Dann (2022) in concluding that attitudes that see being tattooed as not normal (Dann et al., 2016; and Ellis, 2015) or incongruent with being a professional are outdated. Despite this allyship, participants expressed clear personal thresholds beyond which they would be rejecting of a professional with a tattoo. This was defined in the current study as conditional acceptance: the point at which allyship became conditional. Importantly, the concept of conditional acceptance challenges the binary assumption present within much of the existing literature that individuals are either accepting or rejecting of tattooed people. Instead, participants demonstrated that acceptance was dynamic and context dependent. Their support for tattooed professionals remained contingent upon ongoing evaluations of tattoo meaning, placement and perceived social appropriateness. This suggests that tattoo acceptance operates as a continuum rather than a dichotomous judgment. For example, interview participants expressed being supportive of a professional's right to be tattooed but would no longer be an ally if the tattoo offended them. The threshold for being offended was a matter of personal preference but followed identifiable themes. Although participants differed regarding where this threshold was located, remarkably similar decision-making processes were described. This suggests that participants shared common evaluative frameworks even where their

individual tolerance differed. This finding offers partial support for the advice given Resenhoeft et al., (2008). Specifically, whereas Resenhoeft et al., (2008) advised college students not to get a tattoo, the current study offers no such advice but would suggest careful thought about ensuring the tattoo (if visible in public) is not offensive. Although not exploring the same characteristics, the current study findings offer broader, more generalist support for Zidenberg et al., (2022) in that the impressions formed can be influenced by the type of tattoo that is visible on the professional.

Tattoo themes that caused offence for the interview participants emerged naturally into broad groups: design, artistry, and body position. These findings suggest that participants were not responding to tattooing itself but to the symbolic messages communicated through tattoos. Therefore, the evaluative process appeared to shift from judging body modification to judging perceived personal values. In this way, tattoos functioned as symbolic representations through which participants inferred aspects of identity and morality. Although not all participants included artistry as being a reason to move from allyship to rejection, the aesthetic quality of the artwork (including image, finish, colour work) was mentioned as being factors that would make them more accepting of a tattoo on a professional. This finding supports Foucault's (1979) view that the physical body of the individual and what is considered to be beautiful, is regulated by society, the state, and social relationships. This finding illustrates Foucault's (1979) argument that bodies are subject to social regulation. Participants were not evaluating artistic quality objectively but according to socially constructed expectations regarding acceptable appearance. Consequently, aesthetic judgments became another mechanism through which professionalism was negotiated.

All interview participants concluded that tattoos that were affiliated with hate, oppression, or discrimination would make them move from ally to rejecting

the professional with that tattoo. This distinction is theoretically important because it indicates that participants separated the act of tattooing from the content of the tattoo itself, distinguishing clearly between personal appearance and perceived moral values. Offensive tattoos were rejected not because it was a tattoo but because they appeared to communicate beliefs fundamentally incompatible with participants' own ethical frameworks. Previous literature has often treated tattoos as a relatively homogeneous category. Therefore, the present findings suggest that participants made nuanced distinctions between tattoos according to the values they appeared to communicate. However, this was isolated to that professional: interview participants did not indicate they would move to reject anyone else with a non-offending tattoo as a result of seeing a professional with an offensive tattoo. This distinction demonstrates that participants avoided stereotyping tattooed individuals as a homogeneous social group. Instead, impressions were individualised according to the specific characteristics of each tattoo. In other words, participants seeing (for example) an engineer with a swastika tattoo would not reject another engineer with a football club tattoo. This finding does not support the advice given by Resenhoeft et al., (2008) who did not distinguish between types of tattoo as being accepted, choosing instead to advise against being tattooed altogether.

All interview participants referenced the body position of a tattoo as being a cause of moving from allyship to rejection. The consistent identification of facial tattoos suggests that visibility remained an important element of impression formation despite increasing acceptance of tattooing more generally. Unlike tattoos located elsewhere on the body, facial tattoos are difficult to conceal and therefore become a constant component of interpersonal interaction. Participants may therefore have interpreted facial tattoos differently because they are perceived as permanently communicating identity during every social encounter. The tattoo

positions on the body expressed by interview participants varied to include hands, neck, and face. Although participants demonstrated increasing acceptance of visible tattoos in professional contexts, this acceptance appeared to have clear boundaries. While tattooed hands were generally viewed as acceptable, or at least tolerable, face tattoos represented a threshold beyond which participants' support diminished considerably. Importantly, participants did not simply express a dislike of facial tattoos; rather, their responses suggested that facial tattoos carried a distinct symbolic significance that differentiated them from tattoos located elsewhere on the body.

One explanation relates to visibility. Unlike tattoos on the arms, legs, or torso, facial tattoos are immediately apparent during social interaction and cannot be easily ignored by observers. The face occupies a central role in interpersonal communication, identity recognition, and first impressions. Consequently, tattoos located on the face become inseparable from how an individual is perceived by others. Participants appeared to interpret facial tattoos not as a discrete aspect of appearance but as a defining characteristic of the individual. This finding aligns with Goffman's (1963) conceptualisation of stigma, whereby visible markers become dominant social identifiers that shape interaction and influence judgments before other aspects of identity can be assessed.

The permanence and inescapability of facial tattoos may also explain participants' stronger reactions. Tattoos in other locations can often be concealed, allowing individuals to exercise a degree of control over when and where their body art is displayed. Facial tattoos remove this possibility. Participants appeared to view this lack of concealability as significant, potentially interpreting it as a conscious rejection of prevailing social conventions. This finding extends previous literature suggesting that visible tattoos may challenge traditional expectations of professional appearance (Dean, 2010; Timming et al., 2017). However, the current

findings indicate that participants were not responding solely to the presence of tattoos but to the perceived impossibility of managing or moderating their visibility.

The relationship between facial tattoos and identity was also evident within participants' accounts. Whereas tattoos on the hands could be understood as an accessory or an aspect of personal expression, facial tattoos appeared to be interpreted as a more fundamental statement about the self. Participants frequently implied that choosing to tattoo one's face communicated particular values, attitudes, or personality traits. Such assumptions reflect broader societal processes of categorisation in which appearance becomes a basis for inferring character. This is significant because it suggests that negative evaluations of facial tattoos may be driven less by the tattoos themselves and more by the meanings observers attach to them. In this sense, participants were engaging in identity-based judgments that linked bodily appearance to assumptions about professionalism, credibility, and trustworthiness.

The findings also highlight the continuing influence of professional norms. Although contemporary workplaces have become increasingly accepting of visible tattoos, participants' responses suggest that this acceptance remains conditional. Facial tattoos appeared to be viewed as violating implicit expectations regarding appropriate professional presentation. This supports arguments within the literature that professionalism is socially constructed and often governed by unspoken aesthetic standards rather than objective measures of competence (Evetts, 2013). Participants' willingness to accept tattooed hands but reject tattooed faces suggests that professional appearance is not assessed through a simple tattooed/non-tattooed binary. Instead, individuals appear to make nuanced judgments based on the location, visibility, and perceived social meaning of body art.

The significance of this finding is that it reveals the limits of participants' professed acceptance. Many initially positioned themselves as open-minded and non-judgmental towards tattoos; however, the discussion of facial tattoos exposed boundaries to this acceptance. Face tattoos functioned as a critical test case through which participants' underlying assumptions about professionalism, employability, and social legitimacy became visible. Therefore, the findings complicate claims that tattoos have become fully normalised within contemporary society. While tattoo acceptance may be increasing, participants' responses indicate that certain forms of tattooing remain heavily stigmatised. This suggests that the social acceptance of tattoos is not uniform but exists on a continuum, with facial tattoos occupying a particularly marginalised position despite broader shifts towards normalisation.

Unlike facial tattoos, which were almost universally identified as a threshold beyond which acceptance diminished, neck tattoos occupied a more ambiguous position within participants' accounts. Although most participants discussed neck tattoos as a potentially problematic form of body art, there was no clear consensus regarding whether they would result in rejection of a professional. This lack of agreement is significant because it suggests that neck tattoos exist within a contested social space, reflecting broader tensions between increasing tattoo normalisation and the persistence of traditional expectations regarding professional appearance.

The divided responses indicate that participants were engaged in a process of negotiating the boundaries of acceptability rather than applying a fixed standard. While some participants viewed neck tattoos as an extension of increasingly accepted visible tattooing, others interpreted them as crossing an important social boundary. This finding suggests that attitudes towards tattooed professionals are not simply binary, whereby tattoos are either accepted or rejected. Instead,

participants appeared to evaluate tattoos along a continuum of acceptability influenced by factors such as visibility, placement, perceived intent, and the social meanings attached to particular forms of body modification.

One possible explanation for this ambiguity lies in the unique position of the neck as a bodily site. Unlike facial tattoos, neck tattoos are highly visible during everyday interactions yet may remain partially concealable depending on clothing, hairstyle, size, or design. Consequently, they occupy an intermediate position between tattoos that can be routinely hidden and tattoos that are permanently and immediately visible. Participants' uncertainty may therefore reflect uncertainty regarding how to categorise neck tattoos within existing social norms. The findings suggest that it is not visibility alone that shapes judgments but the extent to which individuals are perceived to retain control over that visibility.

The findings also highlight the fluid and socially constructed nature of professional appearance. Participants who accepted neck tattoos frequently emphasised competence, interpersonal skills, and professional conduct as more important indicators of suitability than appearance. In contrast, those who expressed reservations often drew upon implicit assumptions regarding credibility, trustworthiness, or professional image. Significantly, these concerns were rarely linked to any evidence that neck tattoos affect an individual's ability to perform their role. Instead, they appeared to reflect broader cultural expectations regarding what a professional should look like. The reservations expressed by some participants appeared to stem less from concerns regarding competence than from the social meanings attached to highly visible tattoos. This suggests that assessments of professionalism continue to be influenced by processes of social categorisation, whereby visible bodily markers become associated with assumptions about character, credibility, and occupational suitability (Goffman, 1963). Such findings are consistent with evidence that tattoos remain a basis for appearance-

based evaluations within professional contexts despite having no demonstrable relationship with an individual's capability or performance (Timming et al., 2017).

From a stigma perspective, the divided responses are particularly revealing. Goffman (1963) argues that stigma is not inherent within an attribute itself but emerges through social interaction and collective interpretation. The variation in participants' views suggests that neck tattoos occupy an uncertain position in contemporary society, where their meaning is neither universally accepted nor universally stigmatised. Unlike facial tattoos, which participants largely interpreted as violating accepted professional norms, neck tattoos appeared to generate disagreement regarding whether they should be viewed as expressions of personal identity or as indicators of unprofessionalism. This ambiguity may reflect broader societal changes in which tattoos are becoming increasingly commonplace while certain highly visible forms of tattooing continue to attract scrutiny.

The findings also expose a potential tension between participants' stated commitment to non-judgmental attitudes and the persistence of appearance-based evaluations. Several participants positioned themselves as accepting of tattoos in principle yet expressed discomfort when discussing neck tattoos. This suggests that the normalisation of tattoos may be conditional rather than absolute. Acceptance appeared to diminish as tattoos became more visible and more difficult to separate from an individual's public identity. Consequently, the findings challenge simplistic claims that tattoos have become fully normalised within professional contexts. Instead, they suggest that acceptance remains contingent upon the location and visibility of the tattoo, with neck tattoos representing a point at which competing understandings of professionalism, individuality, and social conformity become particularly evident.

The broader implication of this finding is that professional appearance standards appear to be evolving rather than disappearing. Participants'

disagreement regarding neck tattoos suggests that traditional norms are being renegotiated rather than abandoned. This is important because it indicates that professionals with visible tattoos may encounter inconsistent responses depending on the attitudes of colleagues, employers, service users, or patients. The absence of consensus itself therefore becomes a meaningful finding, demonstrating that visible body art continues to occupy a complex and contested position within contemporary understandings of professionalism.

The offense taken by interview participants was not interdependent. In expressing the point at which they would no longer be an ally to a tattooed professional, interview participants spoke of either the design being offensive (e.g. swastika or hateful insignia) *or* being a tattoo of any design on the face. Therefore, to be offensive enough to move an interview participant from allyship to rejecting of a professional, that professional need only have any kind of face tattoo or an otherwise discriminatory or hateful tattoo anywhere on the body. These findings indicate that participants evaluated tattoo location and tattoo content independently rather than cumulatively. Participants did not require multiple undesirable characteristics before rejecting a tattooed professional; instead, either facial placement or offensive symbolism alone appeared sufficient to exceed their threshold of conditional acceptance. The concept of conditional acceptance extends previous binary conceptualisations of tattoo acceptance. Rather than categorising individuals as either accepting or rejecting tattooed people, the findings suggest that acceptance is dynamic and context dependent. Participants continually evaluated tattoos against their own social expectations before deciding whether allyship would be maintained. This finding provides further support for conceptualising acceptance as a dynamic evaluative process rather than a fixed attitude. This finding offers partial support for Timming and Perrett (2016) regarding the meaning of a visible tattoo as being important to impressions

formed, albeit their research did not define the person with a tattoo as being a professional.

Interview participants were asked to talk about any prior interaction with a tattooed professional. In so doing, participants expressed seeing a professional's tattoo and using it as an icebreaker. Interview participants recounted situations where they had been a service user or client of a professional, thereby indicating a power imbalance: the participant needed the professional to carry out a specific service that they could not do themselves. This finding represents one of the most unexpected outcomes of the study. Whereas much of the literature reviewed in Chapter One focused upon tattoos as potential barriers to professional interaction through stigma or stereotyping, participants instead described tattoos as facilitating communication. Rather than creating interpersonal distance, visible tattoos frequently reduced it by providing an accessible topic through which rapport could be established. Within these scenarios, interview participants had become aware of the professional's tattoo and had either specifically commented on it, or else said that they wanted to, but were unsure of etiquette about doing so. Although interview participants were not asked if they had ever commented on a professional's tattoo, most said that they had done (or would do) as a way to initiate a conversation. None of the interview participants that expressed using tattoos as an icebreaker did so in a way that could be construed as rude. For example, participants frequently responded to visible tattoos by expressing admiration for their design, artistic quality, or craftsmanship rather than questioning the decision to be tattooed in the first place. This distinction is significant because it suggests that participants viewed tattooing as an accepted and legitimate form of personal expression rather than as a behaviour requiring explanation or justification. The focus of attention had shifted from the presence of the tattoo itself to its aesthetic

qualities, indicating that tattooing was largely taken for granted as a normal aspect of contemporary appearance.

Participants' tendency to respond with admiration rather than criticism also suggests that tattoos increasingly function as socially acceptable topics of conversation. Rather than provoking discomfort, suspicion, or moral judgment, visible tattoos appeared to invite curiosity and engagement through positive social interaction. In this context, tattoos were often discussed in ways similar to other forms of creative self-expression, with participants demonstrating interest in the meaning, design, or artistic execution of the tattoo rather than its perceived appropriateness. This finding is important because it indicates a shift in how tattoos are socially interpreted. Curiosity was not expressed as a mechanism for scrutinising difference but as a means of appreciating individuality and creativity.

The prevalence of such responses may also be interpreted as evidence of the normalisation of tattooing within contemporary society. Historically, tattoos were frequently associated with deviance, marginality, or social transgression, resulting in their stigmatisation within many social and professional contexts. In contrast, participants' accounts suggest that visible tattoos no longer automatically function as discrediting attributes. Instead, they appear increasingly integrated into mainstream understandings of acceptable appearance. The expression of admiration therefore reflects more than individual preference; it signals a broader cultural shift in which tattoos are recognised as legitimate and often valued forms of identity expression.

From a stigma perspective, the findings suggest a weakening of the negative social meanings traditionally attached to tattooed bodies. Drawing on Goffman's (1963) conceptualisation of stigma, visible differences become problematic when they are interpreted as indicators of social undesirability or deviance. However, participants' positive reactions imply that tattoos are increasingly being detached

from such assumptions. Rather than serving as markers of social difference that require management or concealment, tattoos appeared to facilitate social connection and conversation. The movement from suspicion to admiration therefore represents not only growing acceptance but also a reduction in the stigmatising power historically associated with visible tattooing.

The broader implication of this finding is that contemporary attitudes towards tattoos may be undergoing a qualitative transformation. Acceptance alone implies tolerance of difference; admiration suggests something more substantial. Participants were not merely willing to overlook tattoos but were often actively appreciative of them. This distinction is important because it indicates that tattooed individuals may increasingly be viewed through a lens of creativity, individuality, and self-expression rather than through frameworks of deviance or social non-conformity. Consequently, the findings provide evidence that tattooing is becoming culturally legitimised, although, as other findings within this study demonstrate, this acceptance remains contingent upon factors such as tattoo location and visibility.

This finding in the current study supports the overall more widespread acceptance of tattooing found by Burgess and Clark (2010), Conway (2013), Dann (2022), and Uzunogullari and Brown (2020).

In recounting these experiences with a tattooed professional, interview participants established their position as an ally. However, many interview participants secured their ally status by offering that someone they knew would not be as supportive as they were. The person interview participants singled out as not being as accepting of tattoos as they were was often an older relative, such as parent or grandparent, indicating a generational or age disparity in their rejection of a tattooed person. This finding suggests that differences in attitudes towards tattooing are better explained by cohort membership than by age itself.

Participants' accounts indicate that perceptions of tattoos are shaped by the socio-cultural environments in which individuals were socialised rather than by the ageing process. Older generations were exposed to dominant narratives that associated tattoos with deviance, criminality, and social exclusion, whereas younger generations have experienced tattooing as a visible and largely normalised form of self-expression. As a result, participants' attitudes appear to reflect historically situated understandings of tattooing rather than personal preference alone. This finding highlights the extent to which the social meaning of tattoos is culturally contingent and subject to change over time. Younger participants frequently viewed tattoos as an ordinary aspect of contemporary identity, while older generations were described as drawing upon more traditional and stigmatising interpretations. The persistence of these contrasting perspectives suggests that tattoo acceptance is not simply increasing uniformly across society but is occurring through a process of generational replacement, whereby older meanings coexist alongside emerging norms. For example, interview participants framed this as having asked the professional about their tattoo (establishing allyship) but that someone they know would not do the same and would reject them (thereby 'othering' the professional). This supports previous findings that perceptions about tattoos are becoming less stigmatised (Burgess and Clark, 2010; Conway, 2013; Dann, 2022; and Uzunogullari and Brown, 2020) but are stubbornly inflexible for some (Owens et al., 2023).

The above discussion refers to professionals. It is important to note that interview participants in the current study were the only participants asked to explain what they thought being a professional entailed. Participants definitions of what it means to be a professional were quite apart from trait theory definitions of professionals. For interview participants, a professional was anyone that had been trained to do a job of any skill level. In this way, interview participants

demonstrated support for functionalist theories of defining professions (Evetts, 2013; Johnson, 1972; 2016; Meeker & Haldeman, 2002; Meinart et al., 1999; Münte & Scheid, 2017; and Parsons, 1939).

Although some interview participants identified formal education as a prerequisite for professional status, this was not the dominant view. Instead, participants frequently adopted a broader understanding of professionalism that encompassed occupations requiring varying levels of training, skill, or expertise. For example, some participants identified office workers as professionals, suggesting that professional status was not necessarily linked to traditional markers such as advanced qualifications, professional registration, or membership of an occupational body. This finding is important because it challenges narrower trait-based conceptions of professions and suggests that participants understood professionalism primarily in functional terms.

This broader interpretation provides an important lens through which to understand the Study One findings. The absence of statistically significant differences between perceptions of tattooed and non-tattooed professionals may not indicate that tattoos are irrelevant to professional judgments. Rather, it may reflect the fact that participants were operating with an expansive and context-dependent definition of what constitutes a professional. Consistent with Evetts (2013) and Münte and Scheid (2017), professional status appeared to be attributed on the basis of occupational function and the performance of skilled work rather than adherence to a fixed set of professional characteristics. Consequently, participants were less concerned with whether an individual occupied a traditionally recognised profession and more concerned with how that individual conducted themselves within their occupational role.

The qualitative Study findings help to explain this pattern further. Participants rarely distinguished between traditional professions, such as medicine

or law, and occupations that have historically been excluded from professional classifications. Instead, occupations requiring any degree of training, competence, or expertise were frequently viewed as professional. This suggests that participants' evaluations of tattooed individuals were not primarily mediated through occupational status. In other words, the presence of a tattoo did not become more or less acceptable because the individual was a member of a particular profession. Rather, acceptance or rejection was generally contingent upon the characteristics of the tattoo itself, particularly whether it was perceived as offensive, inappropriate, or incompatible with social expectations.

Theoretically, these findings lend support to functionalist approaches to professionalism, which emphasise the social contribution, expertise, and specialised functions performed by occupational groups rather than relying solely on traditional professional boundaries (Evetts, 2013; Johnson, 1972; 2016; Meeker and Haldeman, 2002; Meinart et al., 1999; Münte and Scheid, 2017; Parsons, 1939). However, the findings also suggest that contemporary understandings of professionalism may extend beyond classical functionalist formulations. Participants appeared to apply the label of "professional" to a wider range of occupations than many traditional sociological definitions would permit, indicating that professional identity may increasingly be understood as a matter of competence, conduct, and occupational performance rather than occupational category alone.

This has important implications for interpreting attitudes towards tattooed professionals. If participants did not draw strong distinctions between traditional and non-traditional professions, then the concept of the "tattooed professional" becomes less analytically significant than the concept of the "tattooed worker". The key issue for participants was not whether an individual belonged to a recognised profession but whether their appearance violated broader social norms. This helps

explain why tattoo acceptance was more strongly influenced by factors such as tattoo content, visibility, and location than by occupational status. Consequently, the Quantitative findings provided a clear rationale for removing the distinction between traditional and non-traditional professions in the Qualitative Studies, as participants themselves did not consistently recognise or apply such a distinction when evaluating tattooed individuals.The emergence of tattoo allyship and the point at which acceptance is conditional led to the development of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum. Still within keeping of the current study aim of determining if the presence of a visible tattoo influenced the impressions formed about a professional, two further rounds of data collection were carried out. These further data collections were to establish proof of concept for the theories developed as a result of analysing the findings from Study One and Study Two.

Before exploring the specific characteristics that influenced participants' acceptance or rejection of tattooed professionals, it was necessary to establish whether the proposed Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum provided a meaningful framework through which such attitudes could be understood. As a concept developed from the Study One findings, the spectrum required preliminary testing to determine whether participants' responses reflected a simple acceptance/rejection dichotomy or a more nuanced process in which acceptance was conditional and subject to change. Establishing proof of concept was therefore important because it provided an opportunity to assess the explanatory value of the spectrum and its ability to capture variations in participants' attitudes towards tattooed individuals.

Study Three data collection was undertaken to test this concept further. Specifically, it sought to identify the characteristics of tattoos that contributed to participants moving along the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum, from acceptance and allyship towards conditional acceptance, discomfort, or rejection. By examining

participants' responses to different tattoo characteristics, the study aimed to determine whether particular features, such as content, visibility, or placement, acted as thresholds that influenced this movement. In doing so, Study Three provided an initial test of the spectrum's usefulness as a framework for understanding how tattoo-related judgments are formed and negotiated.

A Likert-type survey scale was developed using three independent variables: 2 x size (smaller than or larger than the palm of the hand); 3 x design (nature, icon, or gang); 7 x body position (lower arm, upper arm, lower leg, upper leg, chest or back, face, neck). To test this concept, a 100-point scale was used, where 0 equated to complete rejection of a tattoo and 100 equated to full acceptance. A continuous scale was selected because the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum proposes that attitudes towards tattooed individuals are not simply binary but exist across a range of positions. Measuring responses as either acceptance or rejection would have obscured important differences in the strength and conditionality of participants' views. In contrast, a 100-point scale enabled participants to indicate more precisely where they positioned themselves in relation to a particular tattoo characteristic and the point at which acceptance shifted towards discomfort or rejection.

The use of a continuous measure was therefore consistent with the underlying theoretical assumption that attitudes towards tattoos are negotiated and graduated rather than fixed. It allowed for the identification of subtle variations in participants' responses and provided greater sensitivity in detecting the influence of specific tattoo characteristics. Consequently, the scale enabled a more nuanced examination of movement along the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum than would have been possible using categorical accept/reject responses alone. Participants in Study Three were therefore able to indicate the point at which they would accept or reject a tattoo based on the independent variables under investigation.

In this way, participants identified their own point at which their acceptance of a tattooed became conditional. As noted, although none of the participants in Study Two had expressed outright acceptance or rejection for a tattooed professional, this was projected as being possible. This supports previous findings that perceptions about tattoos are becoming less stigmatised (Burgess and Clark, 2010; Conway, 2013; Dann, 2022; and Uzunogullari and Brown, 2020). The finding also provides partial support for Timming and Perrett (2016) in that tattoo meaning is important in influencing the impressions formed about people based on the tattoo meaning.

Results obtained from the Likert-scale survey demonstrated participant scores of 0 for each of the independent variables tested. This means that there was evidence of (full) rejection of the tattoos based on size, design, and body position. Similarly, results showed participant scores of 100 for each of the independent variables tested. This means that there was evidence of (full) acceptance of the tattoos based on size, design, and body position. This provides support for the Acceptance and Rejection categories of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum.

Analysis of the mean scores for each of the independent variable showed differences in the points at which participants in Study Three no longer (on average) accepted a tattoo based on the independent variable being measured. When represented graphically, the data showed differences in points of conditional acceptance. Specifically, the points at which participants moved from allyship to rejection were higher for nature and icon tattoos than for gang tattoos. This means that participants' average point of conditional acceptance for gang tattoos was closer to full rejection than nature or icon tattoos. Similarly, the points at which participants moved from allyship to rejection were higher for tattoos on the rest of the body compared to face or neck tattoos. This means that participants' average point of conditional acceptance for face or neck tattoos was closer to full rejection

than tattoos on the rest of the body. This provided support for the concept of conditional acceptance in the Ally/Other Acceptance Spectrum.

Cluster analysis of Study Three data demonstrated three cluster centres. Represented graphically, cluster centres for icon and nature tattoos appeared visually closer to each other than for gang tattoos. Similarly, tattoo location cluster centres were closer for rest of body compared to face and neck. However, cluster centres for tattoo size appeared visually similar. This means that for participants in Study Three, size was not as important in determining the point of conditional acceptance of a tattoo.

Overall, data collected and analysed in Study Three of the current study demonstrated support for the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum developed from this research.

Study Four data collection was undertaken to explore the proposition that visible tattoos can function as social icebreakers. The theoretical importance of this question lay in determining whether tattoos are merely accepted forms of body modification or whether they actively facilitate social interaction. If tattoos operate as conversational resources, they may play a role in reducing social distance, encouraging interpersonal engagement, and shaping first encounters between strangers.

To explore this, a story completion task was developed in which narrative characters were placed together in a fixed setting for a period of time. The characters were strangers and therefore had no pre-existing relationship requiring interaction. Similarly, no occupations or professional roles were assigned, removing the possibility that conversation would be driven by workplace expectations, service encounters, or established power relationships. One character was described as having a neck tattoo, although the tattoo itself was not defined in terms of size, content, or design.

These features were theoretically significant because they minimised alternative explanations for social interaction. In the absence of professional obligations, social roles, or prior acquaintance, participants were required to construct their own explanations for whether and how interaction occurred. Consequently, any decision to initiate conversation about the tattoo could be interpreted as reflecting the social meanings participants attached to visible body art rather than external contextual pressures. Story completion was therefore particularly well suited to exploring the symbolic role of tattoos in everyday social encounters, as it enabled participants to project their assumptions about normative social behaviour, curiosity, and interpersonal engagement onto the narrative. In doing so, the task provided insight into whether tattoos were imagined as markers of difference to be avoided, ignored, or used as a basis for social connection.

Stories varied in length, but all began within the scenario described (a full carriage on a delayed train). This indicates that Study Four participants understood both the task they were asked to complete, and the scenario described in the story stem. Some stories did not confine the narrative to the train carriage, having the characters leave the train to go for a drink together in a café or pub.

Although the task instructions did not require participants to have any conversation between the characters in the story, many did. Template Analysis of these stories noted two distinct approaches to storied conversation. Participants' stories had their characters using the presence of a visible tattoo to initiate a conversation and break the ice; or else conversations started on some other topic (such as the book being read by one of the characters) but then developed into a conversation about a visible tattoo (sometimes on the stranger, sometimes on 'Sam'). This provided support for the findings of Study Two, as participants in the story completion task also used tattoos as icebreakers. However, the findings were broader than the service user or client/professional relationship as the characters in

the story stem were strangers with no obligation to speak or otherwise interact with each other. This shows that participants used tattoos as an icebreaker, even where other topics (such as the book being read or train delay) could have been used to initiate conversation.

One of the themes identified following Template Analysis of participants' stories was that as well as an icebreaker, participants used tattoos as a device to continue a conversation that had begun with a different topic. Such conversation devices were demonstrative of allyship by being respectful in both admiring and enquiring about the visible tattoo. This use of tattoos as a conversation device, but not as an icebreaker, may indicate an underlying concern about the etiquette of speaking to a stranger about their tattoos. This was noted by Study Two interview participants, who said that they would ask about a visible tattoo but were unsure of the etiquette about doing so.

In both approaches (tattoos as an icebreaker and to continue a conversation) participants positioned themselves as tattoo allies. This was demonstrated by the admiration of the visible tattoo and the way in which the characters respectfully enquired about the tattoo. In this way stories position Sam as either immediately being an ally (by using tattoos as an icebreaker) or else moving them from unknown or potential ally (given that they had engaged in conversation with the stranger having seen their tattoo) to ally (by using the tattoo as a way to continue the conversation. This journey along the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum was comparably shorter than for some other stories which began closer to rejection but moved to allyship. For example, in some stories Sam was sceptical or othering of the tattooed stranger before engaging in conversation and positioning Sam as an ally or in-group as tattooed.

Consequently, the current study went beyond determining whether the presence of a visible tattoo impacted impressions formed about professionals. This

is because the current study identified specific features of a tattoo that were most influential on the impressions formed about tattooed professionals.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that visible tattooing itself is no longer the principal determinant of impressions formed about professionals. Rather, participants evaluated professionals through a dynamic process in which occupational identity, tattoo symbolism and personal values interacted. Consequently, the current study extends existing literature by demonstrating that impression formation surrounding tattooed professionals is considerably more nuanced than previous binary models of acceptance and rejection have suggested. This provides the theoretical basis for the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum developed within the current research.

7.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the current research were to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of relevant literature.
2. Identify research questions where an original contribution could be made.
3. Identify a suitable strategy for data collection, including relevant survey measures, and suitable professional occupations to present to participants.
4. Obtain ethical approval for the research.
5. Conduct data collection.
6. Analyse data using the most appropriate methods.
7. Conduct further data collection to demonstrate proof of concept for original theoretical contributions.
8. Discuss results in the context of existing research as addressed in the literature.

7.3.1 Conduct a Comprehensive Literature Review

The current study presented and reviewed a range of literature. This included demonstrating the contested nature of defining a professional, the main theoretical approaches used; how impressions are formed and managed and become stereotyped, and how tattoos are perceived generally and in relation to professionals. Literature relating to gender and professions, and gender and tattooing was likewise presented and reviewed.

Reviewed literature was used to establish gaps in existing knowledge (such as an agreed definition of what a professional is), and where an original contribution could be made through the current study. The importance of this objective extended beyond identifying gaps in the literature. The review demonstrated that existing research tended to examine professions, impression formation, and tattooing as separate areas of inquiry. Bringing these bodies of literature together revealed a previously underexplored intersection between professional identity and visible body modification. This was significant because it provided the conceptual foundation for the study's original contributions, particularly in relation to how participants define professionalism and the conditions under which tattoos influence impression formation.

7.3.2 Identify Research Questions to make an Original Contribution

Having reviewed the existing literature regarding defining professions, impression formation and image norms, and tattoos and how they are perceived, the current study identified three research questions. The research questions for the current study were:

RQ1: Would participants identify any character traits common to all professional occupations included, both traditional and non-traditional professions?

RQ2: Did the presence of a visible tattoo on included professionals impact participants' impressions formed about the character traits of that professional?

RQ3: What features of a tattoo (for example size, theme, location on the body) would influence participants' impressions formed about a tattooed professional?

The identification of these research questions was important because they moved the study beyond simply determining whether tattoos are viewed positively or negatively. Instead, the questions were designed to explore how participants construct professionalism, how tattoos interact with those constructions, and the specific conditions under which tattoo-related judgments occur. This allowed the study to address a level of complexity that has often been absent from previous research. Research questions are discussed in the following:

7.3.2.1 Research Question One

As summarised (in 5.2, above) participants in the current study defined professionals as being trained to carry out a role. However, this was not restricted to university-level education. There were no other common or unifying character traits identified by participants in relation to professionals. Participants expressed definitions of professionals in terms of the function they performed rather than the traits they were expected to possess. Therefore, participants in the current study applied functionalist definitions of professionals. Further, as an artefact of the functionalist approach, participants in the current study did not distinguish between traditional and non-traditional professions. Instead, participants used the trained function being performed by a skilled person as the basis for defining a professional. This finding was important because it challenged an assumption underpinning much of the existing literature: that professionals can be readily identified through established traits or occupational categories. Instead,

participants adopted a broader and more inclusive understanding of professionalism. This has implications for future research because it suggests that studies investigating attitudes towards professionals may first need to establish how participants understand the concept itself rather than assuming a shared definition.

7.3.2.2 Research Question Two

As summarised (in 5.2, above) participants in the current study did not use a visible tattoo in a binary way to inform the impressions formed about a professional. In other words, being tattooed was not impactful in forming an impression about a tattooed professional. However, the specific nature of the tattoo (design, meaning, and body location) impacted participants' impressions about tattooed professionals. The significance of this finding lies in its challenge to binary understandings of tattoo acceptance. Rather than demonstrating acceptance or rejection of tattooed professionals as a group, participants made more nuanced evaluations based on specific tattoo characteristics.

7.3.2.3 Research Question Three

As summarised (in 5.2, above) the impressions participants formed about tattooed professionals were impacted by design, meaning and location of the tattoo on the body. Specifically, tattoos perceived to be discriminatory or hateful or on the face had the most notable impact on the impressions formed. Size was not an important feature for participants in forming an impression about a tattooed professional. This finding was important because it identified the mechanisms through which tattoo-related judgments are formed. The results suggest that participants were not responding to the presence of tattooing itself but to the social meanings attached to particular tattoo characteristics. This shifts the focus from tattoo visibility alone towards understanding how symbolism, location, and perceived offensiveness influence social evaluation.

7.3.3 Identify a Suitable Strategy for Data Collection

Taking a pragmatic approach to data collection was determined to offer the greatest amount of flexibility in exploring the identified gaps in existing knowledge. The facilitated mixed-methods data collection according to what was being explored.

The multi-study design allowed for initial quantitative data collection that shaped the interview questions that followed. This was one of the key strengths in the strategy for data collection. The importance of this flexibility became apparent as the study progressed. Had a fixed research design been adopted, the findings may simply have confirmed or rejected existing assumptions about professionals and tattoos. Instead, the iterative design allowed unexpected findings to emerge and be explored further, contributing directly to the originality of the study. This is because it had initially been believed that professionals could easily be defined and therefore identified. And as such would have distinctive traits or characteristics associated with them. According to existing definitions (Flexner, 1915; and Millerson, 1964) these characteristics were initially felt to be knightly (such as altruistic and moralistic service performed for a societal benefit according to a code of conduct or ethical practice). From this point of view, the impact of tattoos on the impressions formed about tattooed professionals was felt to have been possible. However, the partially significant findings for Hypothesis One and the non-significant findings for Hypothesis Two indicated that participants did not use trait theory definitions of professionals and so did not assign the expected characteristics when forming impressions about professionals.

The findings from Study One, shaped the questions used in Study Two, as participants were asked about their definitions of a professional, rather than imposing a solely trait theory definition. This led to the finding that participants applied functionalist theories in defining professionals. This was important because

it demonstrated that participants' understandings of professionalism differed from many of the theoretical definitions presented within the literature. The finding therefore not only informed interpretation of the quantitative data but also highlighted the value of allowing participants' own conceptualisations to shape subsequent stages of the research. Similarly, participants were asked to describe an interaction with a tattooed professional. Rather than using the presence of a tattoo to form an impression, it was found that participants used specific features of a tattoo to form an impression about a professional. This finding was significant because it shifted the focus of the study from whether tattoos influence impression formation to how and under what circumstances they do so. In doing so, it revealed a more nuanced process of judgment than had originally been anticipated.

In using semi-structured interviews, Study Two participants shared situations where they had used the presence of a visible tattoo on a professional as an icebreaker. This was not something that had previously been identified in the reviewed literature and had not been an intended focus of the current study. The emergence of tattoos as social icebreakers was particularly important because it represented a finding that could not have been predicted from the existing literature review. This suggests that tattoos may serve not only as markers of identity but also as resources for initiating social interaction, extending current understandings of their social function. However, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data collection strategy was effective in identifying this finding through allowing a more conversational style of data collection.

As original contributions identified through analysis of data from Study One and Study Two, the use of tattoos as icebreakers, and identifying the key features of a tattoo that influence impression formation had not been tested. To test the original contributions to knowledge, methods for additional data collection were chosen based on what would be the most effective for testing. For Study Three, it

was important to determine whether the features of a tattoo described by participants as being offensive were representative of a wider population. Consequently, a quantitative Likert-type scale was created to determine the specific features of a tattoo that were more likely to be deemed offensive. For Study Four, it was important to obtain contextual data about using tattoos as an icebreaker. As participants may not have been aware that they had used tattoos as an icebreaker or else may have wanted to but not known the etiquette of doing so, a story completion task was created. This allowed the story stem to be devised to remove any prior relationship as service user or client and professional and have the characters be strangers to see if tattoos would be used as an icebreaker. Testing these emerging findings was important because it moved them beyond anecdotal observations within interview data. By seeking proof of concept through additional data collection, the study strengthened the credibility of its original theoretical contributions and provided a stronger basis for arguing that the identified patterns reflected broader social processes rather than isolated participant accounts. Therefore, the mixed methods strategy was extended to additional data collected through Study Three and Study Four.

Consequently, within a pragmatic paradigm, mixed methods data collection was used flexibly to analyse data collection in an organic way as it emerged. Overall, the significance of the data collection strategy was not simply that it generated multiple forms of data, but that it enabled the research design to evolve in response to emerging findings. This flexibility was central to the study's contribution to knowledge, as it facilitated the identification, exploration, and testing of concepts that were not apparent at the outset of the research. The strategy therefore functioned not merely as a method of collecting data but as a mechanism for theory development. Further discussion of the general and specific methodology used in the current study appears below in 7.5.

7.3.4 Obtain Ethical Approval for the Research

University ethical approval for the research was obtained (Appendix A).

7.3.5 Conduct Data Collection

As noted, data collection was carried out and underpins the current study, theories developed and tested.

7.3.6 Analyse Data Using the Most Appropriate Methods

Data collected in the current study were analysed using the most appropriate methods. Chapters 3 and 4 refer.

7.3.7 Conduct Further Data Collection to Demonstrate Proof of Concept

As noted, original contributions to knowledge identified as a result of Study One and Study Two data analysis were collected in Study Three and Study Four. The additional data collected have been analysed and found to provide support for the original contributions to knowledge made.

7.3.8 Discuss Results in the Context of Existing Research

Results obtained through data collected in the current study have been discussed in the context of existing research where available. However, as noted, original contributions to knowledge have been made that (by their nature) have not been reported in prior research.

7.4 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses in the current study were:

Hypothesis One: The impressions formed by participants about traditional professions' character traits will be significantly more positive than for non-traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

Hypothesis Two: The impressions formed by participants about non-tattooed professionals' character traits will be significantly more positive than for tattooed professionals when considering total survey measure mean scores.

Hypothesis Three: The impressions formed by participants about the professional character traits of males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions will be significantly more positive than for males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

7.4.1 Hypothesis One

Hypothesis One: The impressions formed by participants about traditional professions' character traits will be significantly more positive than for non-traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

The current study found partial support for Hypothesis One. The SPVQ measure results were not statistically significant. Results were statistically significant for the MFQ measure, BIS measure, and the combined SPVQ and MFQ measures. The latter finding of significance was driven by the MFQ result.

The measures had been chosen as they linked to characteristics associated with trait definitions of professionals (e.g. Flexner, 1915; and Millerson, 1964).

The partial support for Hypothesis One is theoretically important because it suggests that participants did not conceptualise professionalism solely through the lens of traditional trait-based models. Had participants relied upon classical definitions of professions, stronger and more consistent differences would have been expected between traditional and non-traditional occupations across all measures. Instead, the mixed findings indicate that occupational status alone was insufficient to produce a clear distinction. This finding helps explain the Study Two interview data, where participants frequently defined professionals according to the function they performed rather than through possession of specific professional

traits. Therefore, the partial support for Hypothesis One may reflect a mismatch between established sociological definitions of professions and contemporary public understandings of professionalism.

The significance of this finding extends beyond the current study. It suggests that traditional classifications of professions may have less relevance to impression formation than has often been assumed within the literature. Participants appeared more willing to attribute professional status across a broader range of occupations, indicating that professionalism may increasingly be understood as a matter of competence and role performance rather than occupational prestige. The findings therefore provide indirect support for functionalist approaches to defining professions while simultaneously questioning the continued applicability of narrower trait-based models.

7.4.2 Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis Two: The impressions formed by participants about non-tattooed professionals' character traits will be significantly more positive than for tattooed professionals when considering total survey measure mean scores.

As there were no statistically significant results for the SPVQ, MFQ, or BIS, the current study found no support for Hypothesis Two. This supports Anderson-Gough et al., (2002) that appearance does not impact ability to perform work-related duties. However, this is at odds with previous research that identified a negative correlation between image and perceived professionalism amongst clinicians and doctors Cha et al., (2004); Dewayne Edwards et al., (2012); Henderson et al., (2009); Major et al., (2005); and Shelton et al., (2010).

The absence of statistically significant differences warrants particular consideration because it challenges the assumption that visible tattooing automatically results in negative evaluations of professionals. One explanation for this finding is that participants did not appear to respond to tattooing as a category

in itself. Rather, subsequent Study Two and Study Three demonstrated that participants differentiated between tattoos based on their content, symbolism, and visibility. As a result, presenting tattooed and non-tattooed professionals as broad categories may have obscured the more nuanced processes through which impressions were formed.

This interpretation helps reconcile the apparent contradiction between the current findings and previous research. Earlier studies often examined tattoos as a singular variable and therefore assumed a relatively uniform social response. The current study suggests that such an approach may oversimplify contemporary attitudes towards tattooing. Participants did not appear to evaluate whether a professional was tattooed; instead, they evaluated what the tattoo represented. The non-significant findings may therefore be interpreted not as evidence that appearance is irrelevant, but as evidence that tattoo-related impression formation is conditional rather than categorical. This interpretation subsequently informed the development of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum, which proposes that acceptance is influenced by specific tattoo characteristics rather than the mere presence of body art.

7.4.3 Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis Three: The impressions formed by participants about the professional character traits of males in traditional professions and females in non-traditional professions will be significantly more positive than for males in non-traditional professions and females in traditional professions when considering total survey measure mean scores.

As there were no statistically significant results for the SPVQ or MFQ, the current study found no support for Hypothesis Three. This supports Anderson-Gough et al., (2002) that appearance does not impact ability to perform work-related duties. The findings of the current study support functionalist definitions of

professionals (Meinart et al., 1999; and Parsons, 1939). The findings of the current study help address the exclusion of women from research into gender and professions (Barker, 1998; Davies, 1996; Witz, 1990, 1992). As it was not an aim of the current study, the findings neither support nor argue against the reasons why women may be less prevalent in some professions (Serenko & Turrel, 2021; Sommerlad, 2016). However, the non-significant findings suggest that being a female tattooed professional may not be a barrier for service users and clients which, in turn, may result in more positive attitudes to their employment, increasing this possibility.

The absence of statistically significant findings is particularly noteworthy given the substantial body of literature documenting gendered expectations within professional environments. Based on this literature, differences would have been anticipated between males and females occupying traditional and non-traditional professional roles. The lack of such differences suggests that participants may have relied less on gender-based stereotypes than expected when forming impressions of professionals.

One possible explanation is that occupational role and perceived competence were more salient than gender in participants' evaluations. This interpretation aligns with the broader findings of the study, which indicate that participants adopted a functional understanding of professionalism. If professional status is primarily attributed on the basis of training and role performance, then gender may become less influential in shaping initial impressions. Therefore, the findings raise the possibility that traditional assumptions regarding gendered professional expectations may be weakening, at least within the context examined by the current study.

The significance of this finding lies not only in what was absent but also in what this absence may indicate about contemporary attitudes. While the study

cannot determine whether structural barriers to women's participation in particular professions continue to exist, the findings suggest that visible gender differences may not automatically translate into differences in how professional legitimacy is perceived. This may reflect broader social changes in attitudes towards gender and employment, although further research would be required to determine the extent of such changes.

7.5 Critical Review of the Methodology

7.5.1 General

The use of pragmatism as a framework for the current study was appropriate as it allowed for the effective use of a mixed methods design. This is because it combined qualitative and quantitative data collection that maximised the potential for exploring both the contested field of defining professions, and the perceived status and stigma of tattoos in society and linking the latter with the former. The findings of the current study could not have been achieved through either a solely quantitative or qualitative design. This is because the iterative use of data from Study One was used to inform the lines of enquiry in semi-structured interview questions used in Study Two. Analysis of interview data identified areas outside of the intended aim of the current study which were then triangulated (Clark et al., 2021; Denscombe, 2021; and Kara et al., 2015) to test their validity and applicability. Importantly, this iterative process did more than refine subsequent stages of data collection; it fundamentally shaped the direction of the research. Had the study relied upon a predetermined research design, the emerging findings relating to the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum and tattoos as conversational resources may never have been identified. The methodology therefore acted not simply as a mechanism for collecting data but as a means of facilitating theory generation. This highlights a key strength of pragmatism in

exploratory research, namely its capacity to accommodate unexpected findings rather than constrain inquiry within pre-existing theoretical assumptions.

One significant advantage of this mixed methods approach was methodological triangulation utilising both quantitative and qualitative approaches, which strengthened the validity and reliability of the findings (Cohen et al., 2018; Creamer, 2018; Molina-Azorin & Fetters, 2016; Thomas, 2023). By collecting and comparing data from both qualitative and quantitative sources, the study was able to confirm findings through multiple perspectives, thereby reducing the risk of any methodological bias. Triangulation not only added depth to the analysis but also provided a more holistic view of the research focus (Clark et al., 2021; Denscombe, 2021; and Kara et al., 2015). However, triangulation should not be viewed uncritically as a mechanism that automatically establishes truth. Rather than seeking convergence alone, the value of triangulation within the current study lay in its ability to expose complexity and reveal aspects of tattoo perception that may have remained hidden if a single methodological approach had been adopted. For example, while quantitative findings suggested that tattooed professionals were not evaluated significantly differently from non-tattooed professionals, qualitative findings demonstrated that participants nevertheless made nuanced judgments based upon tattoo location, visibility, and content. The apparent tension between these findings proved analytically valuable because it revealed the conditional nature of tattoo acceptance. Specifically, Study One quantitative data collection led to the development of Study Two interview questions. In its turn, Study Two qualitative data led to the development of two key theories:

(i) That tattoo observers can be placed on an Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum with key factors leading to conditional acceptance.

and

(ii) That services users and clients used visible tattoos on a professional to initiate conversation or to ‘break the ice’.

The emergence of these concepts also raises important methodological questions regarding the relationship between data collection and theory development. Neither concept was hypothesised at the outset of the study, suggesting that participants' lived experiences of tattoos extended beyond the explanatory frameworks identified within the literature review. Therefore, the methodology facilitated the identification of phenomena that existing theoretical models may not have adequately captured. This highlights the value of maintaining methodological openness when investigating rapidly evolving social practices such as tattooing. To test the usefulness and applicability of these theoretical concepts, further data collection (both quantitative and qualitative) was carried out. Quantitative data collection in Study Three not only supported the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum but it facilitated greater insight into the conditions under which an observer accepts a visible tattoo. Qualitative data collection in Study Four supported the theory of tattoos as icebreakers in a professional/client setting but extended this further to situations where there is no power imbalance, and that visible tattoos are used as a way of keeping a conversation going. The decision to undertake additional data collection also warrants reflection. While extending data collection increased confidence in the credibility of the proposed concepts, it simultaneously reflects the inherently provisional nature of theory development within exploratory research. Rather than assuming that emergent findings represented robust theoretical contributions, additional Studies were used to examine whether these patterns extended beyond the original datasets. This strengthened the evidential basis of the proposed concepts and reduced the risk of overinterpreting isolated observations.

Additionally, the pragmatic paradigm underpinning this approach was particularly suited to applied psychology research, where the aim was to generate actionable knowledge that could inform professional practices and societal occupational attitudes. The flexibility of mixed methods research allowed design adaptation in the face of emerging complexities during the data collection and analysis phases. This adaptability was particularly relevant for research on tattoos and professionalism, given the evolving cultural trends influencing perceptions. By employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques, the research remained responsive to these shifts, maintaining both relevance and impact. Nevertheless, this flexibility also introduced potential challenges. Pragmatic research designs can be criticised for prioritising practical utility over philosophical coherence, potentially creating tensions between qualitative and quantitative assumptions regarding knowledge generation. While these concerns cannot be entirely dismissed, the current study prioritised answering the research questions over adherence to a single epistemological position. Given the exploratory nature of the research topic, this flexibility was considered a strength rather than a limitation.

Therefore, the current study's approach supports Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003); Davies & Fisher (2018); Hall (2013); Kelly et al., (2018); Makombe (2017); Mulatu and Negash (2023); and Rahi (2017) in that integrating quantitative and qualitative methods iteratively supported progression from exploration to inference. The current study's approach also supports Johnson et al., (2007, p. 129) as the results obtained were the "most informative, complete, balanced, and useful" possible and fostered a comprehensive understanding of tattoos and professions (Cohen et al., 2018). Gannon et al., (2022, p. 11) reinforced this by noting that the pragmatist approach appreciates the benefits of integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods for robust analysis. However, it is important to acknowledge that no methodological approach can produce a completely comprehensive account

of a social phenomenon. Tattoos, professionalism, and impression formation are influenced by complex cultural, organisational, and interpersonal factors that extend beyond the scope of any single study. Consequently, the findings should be viewed as providing insight into these processes rather than definitive explanations of them.

Overall, the current study aimed to bring together significant and (at times) historic prior research into professionals and professionalism, whilst addressing modern occupational and organisational structures, alongside the impact of body modifications on impression formation. The lack of agreed definition of what a profession is coupled with shifting opinions regarding tattoos as the chosen form of body modification meant the current research attempted to answer complex and large-scale societal questions. To do so required complex and multifarious data collection and analytic strategies as discussed below. This complexity also has implications for interpretation of the findings. The absence of a universally accepted definition of professionalism created both a challenge and an opportunity for the research. While it complicated comparisons with existing literature, it simultaneously enabled the study to demonstrate that public understandings of professionalism may differ substantially from academic and occupational definitions. In this respect, the methodological flexibility of the study was instrumental in revealing a finding that may have been obscured by a more rigid design.

A consideration when interpreting these findings is the possibility of self-selection bias. As participation in this research was voluntary, individuals with an existing interest in tattoos, body modification, or issues relating to identity and appearance may have been more inclined to participate than those with little interest in the topic. This reflects the well-established 'volunteer effect', whereby individuals who choose to participate in research may differ systematically from

those who do not (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1975). Consequently, the sample may have included a greater proportion of participants who were more accepting of visible tattoos than might be expected within the wider population.

Self-selection bias is a recognised possible limitation of voluntary survey research because it can reduce the representativeness of a sample and influence the distribution of attitudes or beliefs being measured (Bethlehem, 2010). Consequently, the generally positive attitudes towards tattooed professionals observed in this research may, in part, reflect the characteristics of those who chose to participate. Across both the quantitative and qualitative phases, participants rarely viewed visible tattoos as inherently incompatible with professionalism. Instead, their judgments were conditional, being shaped by factors including tattoo content, quality, size, placement and occupational context. Although these findings suggest that public attitudes towards tattooed professionals are becoming increasingly nuanced, they should also be interpreted in light of the possibility that the sample included a higher proportion of individuals with relatively accepting views towards tattoos.

However, several factors suggest that the influence of self-selection bias was limited. Participants' views were not characterised by unconditional acceptance of tattoos. Instead, they consistently distinguished between different types of tattoo, with those depicting offensive, extremist or otherwise inappropriate content, or those located in highly visible areas such as the face, being viewed less favourably. These distinctions indicate that participants engaged critically with the scenarios presented rather than expressing uniformly positive attitudes towards tattoos.

The qualitative findings further reinforced this interpretation. Rather than simply endorsing tattooed professionals, participants weighed traditional expectations of professionalism against contemporary understandings of personal identity and self-expression. Their responses reflected careful consideration of the

scenarios rather than a general preference in favour of tattoos. As Breakwell et al. (2021) note, participants' responses should be understood within the context in which they are produced, recognising that attitudes are often shaped by multiple interacting influences rather than representing fixed or straightforward opinions.

Overall, while self-selection bias may have contributed to the generally accepting attitudes observed, it is unlikely to provide a sufficient explanation for the overall pattern of findings. The consistency of participants' conditional judgments across both the quantitative and qualitative phases suggests that the findings reflect more than simply the views of a self-selected sample. Instead, they provide evidence of a broader shift in how visible tattoos are understood within contemporary conceptions of professionalism, whilst acknowledging the methodological limitations associated with voluntary participation (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1975; Bethlehem, 2010; Breakwell et al., 2021).

7.5.2 Study One

Data collection in Study One was effective as recruitment exceeded the power analysis projection (n=411 compared to 360 required). However, based on the number of people starting the survey, the final number of participants could have been maximised improving the validity of the findings from data collected.

As noted, the profile of Study One participants was mainly female (n=324; 78.8%), White (n=343; 83.5%), between 18 and forty years old (n=235; 57.2%), educated to undergraduate degree level (n=143; 34.8%), working in a professional occupation (n=274; 66.7%), in a relationship (n=243; 59.1%), not tattooed (n=235; 57.2%), and not religious or spiritual (n=246; 59.9%). As well as being mainly White, and female, participants were employed in teaching professions (43.8%: Appendix O). The over-representation of White females working in teaching is acknowledged as a potential limiting factor of the current study.

The time taken to complete the data collection of the current research could be an example of a theoretical maturation effect (see, Glass, 1965). In this context, the data collection took place over three years that initially coincided with the COVID-19 global pandemic and numerous UK Government lockdowns during which media attention on four of the six chosen professions in the current research was frequent. The naturally occurring maturation and evolution of thoughts and ideas could have impacted acceptance of nurses, doctors, teachers, and police officers with tattoos. This is acknowledged as another potentially limiting factor of the current study.

7.5.3 Study Three

Data collection was effective as it more precisely identified the features of a tattoo that participants used to influence the impressions formed about tattooed professionals. Specifically, this identified that neck tattoos are more accepted than had been suggested from analysed findings from Study One. Further, data collected confirmed the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum categories of Acceptance and Rejection which had previously been speculative.

7.5.4 Study Two

As noted in 5.3.3, participants in Study Two interviews provided broader information than had been expected. However, the effective use of semi-structured questions allowed the identification of using tattoos as an icebreaker to occur. Simply put, without interview participants offering this information as they did, this observation would not have emerged from the current study.

Similarly, the conversational style of the interviews meant that interview participants offered more granular information about why they liked or disliked a tattoo. Participants had not been asked to identify the features of a tattoo that they

liked or disliked, but this finding informed the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum that was an original contribution of this research.

7.5.5 Study Four

Study Four identified that not only would participants use tattoos as ice breakers outside of service user and client/professional relationships, but they would also use tattoos as a way to continue a conversation with a stranger. Although designed to explore the use of tattoos as icebreakers, participants completing stories provided support for the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum through positioning characters in their story as allies. Additionally, in positioning their characters as allies, participants indirectly supported the findings from Study Three, in that stories did not include face tattoos or tattoos that could be deemed hateful.

7.6 Future Research

Whilst the circumstances of the current study allowed proof of concept testing of original contributions developed through all the Studies reported above, the original contributions to knowledge derived from this thesis require further testing before being accepted by the academic or professional communities. The experience and knowledge gained from the current study affords a unique opportunity to offer suggestions to shape future research. The following suggestions for future research are intended to increase future understanding in the areas of body modifications, impression formation, and professions, as well as addressing potential improvements in the research design.

7.6.1 Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum

The main original contribution that this research made to existing knowledge is the creation of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum. Having acknowledged the limitations of representativeness of participants, to determine the ecological

validity and reliability of the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum, it should be tested with a broader range of participants that do not have the same interest in tattoos as a motivating factor to participate, and in a variety of occupational and professional settings and contexts. Similarly, recruitment strategies should be adapted to address the White/female/teaching/non-tattooed imbalance also noted above. For example, using different social media platforms (such as LinkedIn and research forums) to recruit participants from a more diverse occupational background. Using adverts calling for participants with specific demographics would assist in recruiting a more diverse participant sample.

7.6.2 Improved Research Participant Interface

The high proportion of participants (20%) that did not complete the demographic section of Study One should be addressed in future research. There is likely no single factor that impacted the high drop-out rate during the demographic section, meaning that various approaches could be offered to minimise drop-out at that point (Maveltova & Couper, 2015). Peytchev (2015) identified that survey designs that were deemed to be more burdensome (such as long and open-ended questions) resulted in higher dropouts. Therefore, offering more drop-down choices rather than free-text boxes for participants to type in, or not asking for job title to improve anonymity in responding might reduce the burden of completion and decrease drop-out rates.

7.6.3 Improved Survey Measures

The choice of survey measures used should be considered in any future research. For convenience, the current study identified three existing survey measures that addressed different behaviours, characteristics, and traits that had previously been linked with professionalism. Whilst this offered validity and reliability of measures, as the surveys were not bespoke to either professionalism research or the context in which they were used, they included a broader range of

attributes than were the focus of the current research. This, in turn, increased the overall number of questions which is likely to have negatively impacted the progression rate through Study One. Therefore, it is recommended that future research develop a reliable and valid measure specifically measuring how professionals are defined: whether trait or functional, rather than relying on characteristics that have historically been associated with defining professions.

Allied with the above recommendation, the development of a bespoke survey measure aimed at identifying a definition of professionals should include factors for exploring as independent variables, aspects of intersectionality noted as being absent from the current study. For example, the current study chose to focus on gender, but did not include other intersectional aspects such as ethnicity, disability, sexuality or age. Therefore, it is recommended that future research focus specifically on these omitted characteristics to ensure definitions of professionals are informed by a broader range of characteristics than addressed in the current study.

The creation of a more succinct and keenly focused survey measure would likely involve fewer questions, thereby addressing the speculative reason for drop-out as being boredom through repetition. This would also allow the possibility of exploring any intersectional impact of the fictitious 'Sam' such as disability, age, sexuality, and/or ethnicity that were acknowledged as being deliberately absent from the current study.

7.6.4 Data Collection Timeframe

In recognition of the potential maturation effect (above) it is recommended that data collection for any similar future research occurs outside any similar periods with frequent media attention on the chosen profession. Alternatively, future research could usefully explore different professions than those used in the current research.

Chapter 8 - Conclusions

This chapter summarises the most important findings and signals the broader significance of the current study findings. Recommendations for change are also presented.

8.1 Current Study: Findings

Although limitations of the current study have been noted and explored above with suggestions for future research, there are many strengths to the current study.

The sequential nature of analysing collected data to inform the next iteration of data collection allowed a measured, adaptable, and more targeted use of method than would have been the case if interviews had been carried out at the same time as participants were completing the initial survey in Study One. In other words, it is unlikely the current study would have identified the categories within the Ally/Othering Acceptance spectrum without analysing and reflecting on earlier data collection.

The full integration of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods within an overarching pragmatic approach facilitated the real-world applicability of data analysis. This is demonstrated by the implications for changes to real-world practice in relation to normalising (Dann et al., 2016; and Ellis, 2015), the covering up of tattoos in hiring practices. This pragmatic and symbiotic mixed methods approach afforded flexibility to explore data by the means deemed most appropriate. This provided participants an effective platform to express ideas that had not been planned for or expected.

The current study made two original contributions to knowledge, both of which have undergone additional testing within the current study to establish validity:

8.1.1 Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum

As summarised in the above review of the literature, tattooing has moved from outgroup to ingroup throughout history as influenced by gender, culture, and the media (Butler, 1990, Caplan, 2000; DeMello, 2000; Kaeppler, 1988; Parry, 2006; Rees, 2016; Rubin, 1988; Sanders & Vail, 2008; Steward, 1990). Although the current research did not initially identify participants completely rejecting or completely accepting of tattoos, this was established through further data collection and analysis within the current study. The primary conclusion from the current research is that the impressions formed when observing tattooed people exist in one of four distinct categories that can be plotted on a spectrum: the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum.

8.1.2 Tattoos as a Conversation Device

The second original contribution of this research is that, far from being viewed as a sign of deviance, participants reported seeing tattoos on a professional as being helpful as a conversation starter. This use of tattoos as an icebreaker may extend beyond the client or service user/professional context and also to using tattoos as a way of continuing a conversation with a stranger.

8.2 Broader Significance of the Current Study

Drawing on the current study findings, and the original contribution to knowledge, broader implications have been identified:

8.2.1 Professions and Professionals

As explored above, for more than a century researchers and authors Dietrich & Roberts, Evetts, 2011, 2013; 1999; Flexner, 1916; Houle, 1981; Millerson, 1964; and Vollmer & Mills, 1966) attempted to identify a single authoritative framework to define what a profession is, what it means to be a professional linked to a profession, and the process of turning an occupational group into a profession.

Where participants in the current study provided their own definition of professions and professionals, these did not align with trait theories. For example, the skill and training needed to carry out an occupation was not confined to university education and aligned more with the function being performed than any of the previous definitions found in professionalism discourse. Therefore, the current research supports functionalist theorists such as Johnson (1972, 2016), and Meeker and Haldeman (2002), which place a higher market value on the services provided by an occupation dependent on the context it exists within. In this way, electricians are included in professional definitions because the context of the market their services are offered in places a high value on electrical goods (Evetts, 2013; Johnson, 1972; 2016; Meeker & Haldeman, 2002; and Münte & Scheid, 2017).

8.2.2 Policy Implications for Professional Organisations

As noted above, entry into each of the six professions chosen in this research require (either as a sole or primary route) a university education in an authorised course of study. As applied to the current research, organisations (including universities) recruiting directly to a profession or for entry onto a course that offers eligibility to join a profession should take note to ensure that outdated modes of thinking about tattoos as being deviant should be actively over-ridden. This is because, the public – as represented by the participants in the current research – may no longer associate tattoos with deviancy as much as they once did Burgess & Clark, 2010; Conway, 2013; Dann, 2022; DeMello, 2000; Ellis, 2015; Flanagan & Lewis, 2019, Hawkes et al., 2004; Resenhoeft et al., 2008; Steward, 1990; Owens et al,. 2023). Rather, participants in the current research reported that tattoos (where not offensive) can help break barriers, encourage conversation and facilitate acceptance. In conclusion, the current research identified that members of the public are broadly accepting of tattoos (subject to not being on the face and/or neck and not being offensive). Where admitting students on to a

course leading to eligibility for professional body entry or membership, such professional regulatory or statutory bodies could usefully reflect on the guidance issued to prospective students and, where relevant, expressly state what sorts of body modifications are acceptable for entry into and practice in the profession.

8.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made

8.3.1 Policy Implications for Professional Organisations

In the UK, the Professional Qualifications Act 2022 sets out that the qualification requirements, which may include higher education level instruction, for entry into a profession are set by the relevant professional body. Therefore, there are two distinct types of organisation that can benefit from the findings of the current study: professional bodies, and organisations offering courses leading to professional recognition. As in the UK, it is for professional organisations to set the qualifications required for entry into a profession, it is likely that professional bodies will need to act first. This is so that any policy changes will be binding on organisations offering courses leading to professional recognition. Professional bodies are therefore recommended to review their stance on entry into the profession to ensure it is diverse and takes into account the changing socio-cultural and service user and client views about tattoos. This recommendation is not to say that professional bodies should demand those seeking entry be tattooed. Instead, professional bodies should expressly state whether being tattooed (or having specific types of tattoo or being visibly tattooed in specific body locations) would be a barrier to entry or reason for exclusion from membership. Further in reviewing guidance, professional bodies could usefully advise all professionals in their remit to expect that services users and clients may use a visible tattoo as a way to break the ice. Such guidance could offer advice about how to navigate this in practice as a possible attempt to demonstrate allyship.

Even if professional bodies do not adopt the recommended action above, organisations offering courses leading to professional recognition can still take action. It is recommended that such organisations review their admissions policies for courses leading to professional recognition to expressly state the current position taken by the professional body in recognising entrants into the profession with regard to tattoos. Further, all those involved in making decisions about admitting students on to a course leading to professional recognition should be made aware of the findings of the current study and trained not to exclude an otherwise suitably qualified applicant entry solely based on visible tattoos.

In summary, the recommendations are:

- For professional bodies to issue guidance to prospective members expressly stating what sorts of body modifications are acceptable for entry into and practice in the profession.
- For organisations offering courses leading to professional recognition to ensure admissions processes and decisions taken are inclusive of applicants with visible tattoos (unless expressly excluded by the relevant professional body).

8.3.2 Hiring Practices and Normalising Tattoo Visibility

Employment practices and hiring managers could usefully make clear that those with tattoos ordinarily visible in public are welcome to apply for vacant employment positions. This would assist in destigmatising prior associations with deviancy and likely improve relationships between tattooed staff and clients/users of the service being provided.

Employers are therefore recommended to review their hiring practices to ensure they are diverse and take into account the changing socio-cultural and customer views about tattoos. This recommendation is not that employers should demand those seeking employment be tattooed. Instead, employers could usefully

state whether being tattooed (or having specific types of tattoo or being visibly tattooed in specific body locations) would be a barrier to employment. Further in reviewing guidance, employers could usefully advise their employees that customers and clients may use a visible tattoo as a way to break the ice. Such guidance could offer advice about how to navigate this in practice as a possible attempt to demonstrate allyship.

If an employer does not adopt the recommended action above, hiring managers may still take action to ensure all those involved in making recruitment decisions are aware of the findings of the current study and trained not to exclude an otherwise suitably qualified applicant employment solely based on visible tattoos.

In summary, the recommendations are for:

- Employers to issue guidance to expressly state in job adverts what sorts of body modifications are acceptable for working in the organisation.
- Hiring managers to ensure decisions taken are inclusive of applicants with visible tattoos in accordance with organisational policy.

8.4 Overall Conclusion

The current study concludes that attitudes to tattoos are changing, and as shown by the findings reported above, the mere presence of a tattoo should not be a barrier to working as a professional. Attitudes linking being tattooed with savagery (DeMello, 2000), deviancy (Ellis, 2015; Steward, 1990; and Owens et al., 2023) or being less capable (Resenhoeft et al., 2008) are changing to the extent that they can be helpful in engaging others in conversation, either as a way to start a conversation, or to continue one.

The Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum represents four positions that observers may adopt when evaluating a tattooed professional. Individuals may

move between these positions depending on the characteristics of the tattoo and the context in which it is viewed. The positions being: Acceptance, Allyship, Conditional Acceptance; and Rejection. The Ally/othering Acceptance Spectrum is one of the original contributions made by this research.

Whilst the matter of being tattooed was found in the current study to be less divisive than found in previous research, the nature of the tattoo as being hateful or being visible on certain parts of the body was found to be influential in the impressions formed about tattooed professionals. Tattoos that participants found offensive re-position established allyship to conditional acceptance on the Ally/Othering Acceptance Spectrum.

Finally, the current study concludes that professionals should consider not covering up their tattoos (noting the exception regarding what may be seen as offensive, above) when interacting with services users and clients as these may be used as an icebreaker. By extension, covering up of tattoos is increasingly less necessary to appear 'normal' (Dann et al., 2016; Ellis, 2015) as strangers may use non-offensive visible tattoos to begin or continue a conversation.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Birmingham City University Ethical Approval Letters .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix B: Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix C: Moral Foundations Questionnaire .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix D: Barratt Impulsiveness Scale .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix E: Conditions, Survey Coding, and Photographs Used .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix F: Phase One Pilot Study Information and responses.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix G: Participant Recruitment Adverts .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix H: Participant Information .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix I: Consent .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix J: Demographic Questions.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix K: Participant Debrief .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix L: Study Two Interview schedule and photos.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix M: Likert scale questions .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix N: Story Completion Instructions and Post-Completion Questions ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix O: Descriptive Statistics .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix P: Multivariate, Univariate and Kruskal-Wallis analyses .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix Q: Study Two Interview Transcripts.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix R: Study Three Cluster Analysis Charts of Means ..**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix S: Hierarchical Cluster Analysis Dendrogram .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix T: K-Means Cluster Analysis (ANOVA).....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix U: Draft Article; Towards a Tattoo Taxonomy .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix V: The Conversation Article.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix W: British Psychological Society Article.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendix A: Birmingham City University Ethical Approval Letters

BIRMINGHAM CITY University

Faculty of Business, Law & Social Sciences Research Office
Curzon Building, 4 Cardigan Street
Birmingham
B4 7BD

BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

03/Jun/2020

Mrs Stephanie Talliss-Foster

Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Dear Stephanie ,

Re: Talliss-Foster /3651 /R(A) /2020 /May /BLSS FAEC - The impressions formed about body-modified professionals.

Thank you for your application and documentation regarding the above activity. I am pleased to take Chair's Action and approve this activity.

I only had one further comment but I do not think it is not one that requires another round of amendments so I have included it below just for your consideration:

- You might want to consider formatting the information sheets to aid a little with clarity. Also I would consider putting a short blurb before the support organisations to explain why you have put them there (as well as a direct URL to their web page for ease on the part of the participant).

Provided that you are granted Permission of Access by relevant parties (meeting requirements as laid out by them), you may begin your activity.

I can also confirm that any person participating in the project is covered under the University's insurance arrangements.

Please note that ethics approval only covers your activity as it has been detailed in your ethics application. If you wish to make any changes to the activity, then you must submit an Amendment application for approval of the proposed changes.

Examples of changes include (but are not limited to) adding a new study site, a new method of participant recruitment, adding a new method of data collection and/or change of Project Lead.

Please also note that the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee should be notified of any serious adverse effects arising as a result of this activity.

If for any reason the Committee feels that the activity is no longer ethically sound, it reserves the right to withdraw its approval. In the unlikely event of issues arising which would lead to this, you will be consulted.

Keep a copy of this letter along with the corresponding application for your records as evidence of approval.

If you have any queries, please contact BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

I wish you every success with your activity.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Andrew Whiting

On behalf of the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee

Faculty of Business, Law & Social Sciences Research Office
Curzon Building, 4 Cardigan Street
Birmingham
B4 7BD

BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

22/Feb/2022

Mrs Stephanie Talliss-Foster

Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Re: Talliss-Foster /#3651 /sub1 /Am /2022 /Feb /BLSS FAEC - The impressions formed about body-modified professionals.

Dear Stephanie,

Thank you for your application for approval of amendments regarding the above study. I am happy to take Chair's Action and approve these amendments.

Provided that you are granted Permission of Access by relevant parties (meeting requirements as laid out by them), you may continue your activity.

I can also confirm that any person participating in the project is covered under the University's insurance arrangements.

Please note that ethics approval only covers your activity as it has been detailed in your ethics application. If you wish to make any changes to the activity, then you must submit an Amendment application for approval of the proposed changes.

Examples of changes include (but are not limited to) adding a new study site, a new method of participant recruitment, adding a new method of data collection and/or change of Project Lead.

Please also note that the Committee should be notified of any serious adverse effects arising as a result of this activity.

If for any reason the Committee feels that the activity is no longer ethically sound, it reserves the right to withdraw its approval. In the unlikely event of issues arising which would lead to this, you will be consulted.

Keep a copy of this letter along with the corresponding application for your records as evidence of approval.

If you have any queries, please contact BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

I wish you every success with your activity.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Kyle Brown

On behalf of the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee

Faculty of Business, Law & Social Sciences Research Office
Curzon Building, 4 Cardigan Street
Birmingham
B4 7BD

BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk

07/May/2025

Mrs Stephanie Talliss-Foster

Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Dear Stephanie,

Re: Talliss-Foster /#14598 /sub2 /R(A) /2025 /Apr /BLSS FAEC - Demonstrating proof of concept: Ally/Othership Spectrum established through PhD research

Thank you for your application and documentation regarding the above activity. I am pleased to take Chair's Action and approve this activity.

Provided that you are granted Permission of Access by relevant parties (meeting requirements as laid out by them), you may begin your activity.

I can also confirm that any person participating in the project is covered under the University's insurance arrangements.

Please note that ethics approval only covers your activity as it has been detailed in your ethics application. If you wish to make any changes to the activity, then you must submit an Amendment application for approval of the proposed changes.

Examples of changes include (but are not limited to) adding a new study site, a new method of participant recruitment, adding a new method of data collection and/or change of Project Lead.

Please also note that the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee should be notified of any serious adverse effects arising as a result of this activity.

If for any reason the Committee feels that the activity is no longer ethically sound, it reserves the right to withdraw its approval. In the unlikely event of issues arising which would lead to this, you will be consulted.

Keep a copy of this letter along with the corresponding application for your records as evidence of approval.

If you have any queries, please contact BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk

I wish you every success with your activity.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Ivana Babicova

On behalf of the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee

Faculty of Business, Law & Social Sciences Research Office
Curzon Building, 4 Cardigan Street
Birmingham
B4 7BD

BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk

05/Aug/2025

Mrs Stephanie Talliss-Foster

Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Dear Stephanie,

Re: Talliss-Foster /#14854 /sub4 /R(A) /2025 /Aug /BLSS FAEC - Tattoos as ice-breakers

Thank you for your application and documentation regarding the above activity. I am pleased to take Chair's Action and approve this activity.

Provided that you are granted Permission of Access by relevant parties (meeting requirements as laid out by them), you may begin your activity.

I can also confirm that any person participating in the project is covered under the University's insurance arrangements.

Please note that ethics approval only covers your activity as it has been detailed in your ethics application. If you wish to make any changes to the activity, then you must submit an Amendment application for approval of the proposed changes.

Examples of changes include (but are not limited to) adding a new study site, a new method of participant recruitment, adding a new method of data collection and/or change of Project Lead.

Please also note that the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee should be notified of any serious adverse effects arising as a result of this activity.

If for any reason the Committee feels that the activity is no longer ethically sound, it reserves the right to withdraw its approval. In the unlikely event of issues arising which would lead to this, you will be consulted.

Keep a copy of this letter along with the corresponding application for your records as evidence of approval.

If you have any queries, please contact BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk

I wish you every success with your activity.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Fernanda Steiner Perin

On behalf of the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire

SPVQ (adapted) Female

Thinking about Sam please read each description carefully. Select the option that most closely matches how much the description is like Sam

1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her. She likes to do things in her own original way
2. It is important to her to be rich. She wants to have a lot of money and expensive things
3. She thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. She believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life
4. It is very important to her to show her abilities. She wants people to admire what she does
5. It is important to her to live in secure surroundings. She avoids anything that might endanger her safety
6. She thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. She always looks for new things to try
7. She believes that people should do what they're told. She thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching
8. It is important to her to listen to people who are different from her. Even when she disagrees with them, she still wants to understand them
9. She thinks it is important not to ask for more than what you have. She believes that people should be satisfied with what they have
10. She seeks every chance she can to have fun. It is important to her to do things that give her pleasure
11. It is important to her to make her own decisions about what she does. She likes to be free to plan and to choose her activities for herself
12. It is very important to her to help the people around her. She wants to care for their wellbeing
13. Being very successful is important to her. She likes to impress other people
14. It is very important to her that her country be safe. She thinks the government must be prepared against threats from inside and out
15. She likes to take risks. She is always looking for adventures
16. It is important to her always to behave properly. She wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong
17. It is important to her to be in charge and tell others what to do. She wants people to do what she says
18. It is important to her to be loyal to her friends. She wants to devote herself to people close to her
19. She strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to her
20. Religious belief is important to her. She tries hard to do what her religion requires
21. It is important to her that things be organised and clean. She really does not like things to be a mess
22. She thinks it is important to be interested in things. She likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things

23. She believes all the worlds' people should live in harmony. Promoting peace among all groups in the world is important to her
24. She thinks it is important to be ambitious. She wants to show how capable she is
25. She thinks it is best to do things in traditional ways. It is important to her to keep up the customs she has learned
26. Enjoying life's pleasures is important to her. She likes to 'spoil' herself
27. It is important to her to respond to the needs of others. She tries to support those she knows
28. She believes she should always show respect to her parents and to older people. It is important to her to be obedient
29. She wants everyone to be treated justly, even people she doesn't know. It is important to her to protect the weak in society
30. She likes surprises. It is important to her to have an exciting life
31. She tries hard to avoid getting sick. Staying healthy is important to her
32. Getting ahead in life is important to her. She strives to do better than others
33. Forgiving people who have hurt her is important to her. She tries to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge
34. It is important to her to be independent. She likes to rely on herself
35. Having a stable government is important to her. She is concerned that society is protected
36. It is important to her to be polite to other people all the time. She tries never to disturb or irritate others
37. She really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is important to her
38. It is important to her to be humble and modest. She tries not to draw attention to herself
39. She always wants to be the one who makes the decisions. She likes to be the leader
40. It is important to her to adapt to nature and to fit into it. She believes that people should not change their nature

PVQ (adapted) Male

Thinking about Sam please read each description carefully. Select the option that most closely matches how much the description is like Sam

1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way
2. It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things
3. He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life
4. It is very important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does
5. It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety
6. He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. He always looks for new things to try
7. He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching

8. It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them
9. He thinks it is important not to ask for more than what you have. He believes that people should be satisfied with what they have
10. He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure
11. It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and to choose his activities for himself
12. It is very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their wellbeing
13. Being very successful is important to him. He likes to impress other people
14. It is very important to him that his country be safe. He thinks the government must be prepared against threats from inside and out
15. He likes to take risks. He is always looking for adventures
16. It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong
17. It is important to him to be in charge and tell others what to do. He wants people to do what he says
18. It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him
19. He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him
20. Religious belief is important to him. He tries hard to do what his religion requires
21. It is important to him that things be organised and clean. He really does not like things to be a mess
22. He thinks it is important to be interested in things. He likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things
23. He believes all the worlds' people should live in harmony. Promoting peace among all groups in the world is important to him
24. He thinks it is important to be ambitious. He wants to show how capable she is
25. He thinks it is best to do things in traditional ways. It is important to him to keep up the customs she has learned
26. Enjoying life's pleasures is important to him. He likes to 'spoil' himself
27. It is important to him to respond to the needs of others. He tries to support those she knows
28. He believes he should always show respect to him parents and to older people. It is important to him to be obedient
29. He wants everyone to be treated justly, even people she doesn't know. It is important to him to protect the weak in society
30. He likes surprises. It is important to him to have an exciting life
31. He tries hard to avoid getting sick. Staying healthy is important to him
32. Getting ahead in life is important to him. He strives to do better than others
33. Forgiving people who have hurt him is important to him. He tries to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge
34. It is important to him to be independent. He likes to rely on himself
35. Having a stable government is important to him. He is concerned that society is protected

36. It is important to him to be polite to other people all the time. He tries never to disturb or irritate others
37. He really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is important to him
38. It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself
39. He always wants to be the one who makes the decisions. He likes to be the leader
40. It is important to him to adapt to nature and to fit into it. He believes that people should not change their nature

PVQ (adapted) Gender Neutral

Thinking about Sam please read each description carefully. Select the option that most closely matches how much the description is like Sam

1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to Sam. Sam likes to do things in their own original way
2. It is important to Sam to be rich. Sam wants to have a lot of money and expensive things
3. Sam thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. Sam believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life
4. It is very important to Sam to show their abilities. Sam wants people to admire what they do
5. It is important to Sam to live in secure surroundings. Sam avoids anything that might endanger their safety
6. Sam thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. Sam always looks for new things to try
7. Sam believes that people should do what they're told. Sam thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching
8. For Sam, it is important to listen to people who are different. Even when disagreeing with them, Sam still wants to understand them
9. Sam thinks it is important not to ask for more than what you have. Sam believes that people should be satisfied with what they have
10. Sam seeks every chance to have fun. It is important to Sam to do pleasurable things
11. It is important to Sam to make independent decisions about what they do. Sam likes to be free to plan and to choose their own activities
12. It is very important to Sam to help people who are close. Sam wants to care for their wellbeing
13. Being very successful is important to Sam. Sam likes to impress other people
14. It is very important to Sam that the country be safe. Sam thinks the government must be prepared against threats from inside and out
15. Sam likes to take risks and is always looking for adventures
16. It is important to Sam always to behave properly. Sam wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong
17. It is important to Sam to be in charge and tell others what to do. Sam wants people to do as they say
18. It is important to Sam to be loyal to friends. Sam wants to be devoted to people that are close
19. Sam strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important

20. For Sam, religious belief and trying hard to follow religious requirements is important.
21. It is important to Sam that things be organised and clean. Sam really does not like things to be a mess
22. Sam thinks it is important to be interested in things. Sam likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things
23. Sam believes all the worlds' people should live in harmony. Promoting peace among all groups in the world is important to Sam
24. Sam thinks it is important to be ambitious. Sam wants to show how capable they are
25. Sam thinks it is best to do things in traditional ways. It is important to Sam to keep up the customs that have been learned
26. Enjoying life's pleasures is important to Sam. Feeling 'spoiled' is important to Sam
27. For Sam, it is important to respond to the needs of others and to support people who are close
28. Sam believes in always showing respect to parents and to older people. It is important to Sam to be obedient
29. Sam wants everyone to be treated justly, even strangers. It is important to Sam to protect the weak in society
30. Sam likes surprises. It is important to Sam to have an exciting life
31. Sam tries hard to avoid getting sick. Staying healthy is important to Sam
32. Getting ahead in life is important to Sam. Sam strives to do better than others
33. Forgiving people who have caused pain is important to Sam. Sam tries to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge
34. It is important to Sam to be independent. Sam does not like to rely on others
35. For Sam, having a stable government is important. Sam is concerned that society is protected
36. It is important to Sam to be polite to other people all the time. Sam tries never to disturb or irritate others
37. Sam really wants to enjoy life. For Sam, having a good time is important
38. It is important to Sam to be humble and modest. Sam tries not to draw attention
39. Sam always wants to be the one who makes the decisions. Sam likes to be the leader
40. It is important to Sam to adapt to nature and to fit into it. Sam believes that people should not change their nature

PVQ (adapted) Scale

6 - Very much like Sam, 5 - like Sam, 4 - somewhat like Sam, 3 - a little like Sam, 2 - not like Sam, 1 - not like Sam at all

Individual Level

Conformity - 7, 16, 28, 36. Tradition - 9, 20, 25, 38. Benevolence - 12, 18, 27, 33. Universalism - 3, 8, 19, 23, 29, 40. Self-Direction - 1, 11, 22, 34. Stimulation - 6, 15, 30. Hedonism - 10, 26, 37. Achievement - 4, 13, 24, 32. Power - 2, 17, 39. Security - 5, 14, 21, 31, 35

Appendix C: Moral Foundations Questionnaire

Moral Foundations Questionnaire (adapted) Part One

When Sam decides whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to his thinking? Please rate each statement

41. Whether or not someone suffered emotionally
42. Whether or not some people were treated differently than others
43. Whether or not someone's action showed love for his or her country
44. Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority
45. Whether or not someone violated standards of morality and decency
46. Whether or not someone was good at maths
47. Whether or not someone cared for someone weak or vulnerable
48. Whether or not someone acted unfairly
49. Whether or not someone did something to betray his or her friends
50. Whether or not someone conformed to the traditions of society
51. Whether or not someone did something disgusting
52. Whether or not someone was cruel
53. Whether or not someone was denied his or her rights
54. Whether or not someone showed a lack of loyalty
55. Whether or not an action caused chaos or disorder
56. Whether or not someone acted in a way that their employer would approve of

Moral Foundations Questionnaire (adapted) Part Two

Please read each statement carefully. For each statement indicate if you think Sam agrees or disagrees

57. Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue
58. When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly
59. I am proud of my country's history
60. Respect for authority is something all children need to learn
61. People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed
62. It is better to do good than to do bad
63. One of the worst things a person could do is hurt a defenceless animal
64. Justice is the most important requirement for a society
65. People should be loyal to their family members, even when they have done something wrong
66. Men and women each have different roles to play in society
67. I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural
68. It can never be right to kill a human being
69. It is morally wrong that rich children inherit a lot of money while poor children inherit nothing
70. It is more important to be a team player than to express oneself
71. If I were a soldier and disagreed with my commanding officer's orders, I would obey anyway because that is my duty
72. Self-restraint is an important and valuable virtue

Moral Foundations Questionnaire (adapted) Part One Scale

0=not at all relevant, 1=not very relevant, 2=slightly relevant, 3=somewhat relevant,

4=very relevant, 5=extremely relevant

Moral Foundations Questionnaire (adapted) Part Two Scale

0=Strongly disagrees, 1=Moderately disagrees, 2=Slightly disagrees, 3=Slightly agrees
4=Moderately agrees, 5=Strongly agrees

Individual level

Harm – 41, 47, 52, 57, 63, 68. Fairness – 42, 48, 53, 58, 64, 69. Ingroup – 43, 49, 54, 59, 65, 70

Authority – 44, 50, 55, 60, 66, 71. Purity – 45, 51, 56, 61, 67, 72. #46 and 62 not coded.

Appendix D: Barratt Impulsiveness Scale

Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (adapted)

Think about Sam and carefully read the statements below. For each statement select the option that most closely fits what you think about how often the statement applies to Sam

74. Sam plans tasks carefully
75. Sam does things without thinking
75. Sam makes up their mind
76. Sam is carefree
77. Sam doesn't "pay attention"
78. Sam has "racing" thoughts
79. Sam plans trips well ahead of time
80. Sam is self controlled
81. Sam concentrates easily
82. Sam regularly saves money
83. Sam "fidgets" at plays or lectures
84. Sam is a careful thinker
85. Sam plans for job security
86. Sam says things without thinking
87. Sam likes to think about complex problems
88. Sam often changes jobs
89. Sam acts "on impulse."
90. Sam gets easily bored when solving thought problems
91. Sam acts on the spur of the moment
92. Sam is a steady thinker
93. Sam moves home often
94. Sam buys things on impulse
95. Sam can only think about one thing at a time
96. Sam changes hobbies
97. Sam spends more than they earn
98. Sam often has unrelated thoughts when thinking
99. Sam is more interested in the present than the future
100. Sam is restless at the theatre or lectures
101. Sam likes puzzles
102. Sam is future oriented

Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (original) scale

1=Rarely/never, 2=Occasionally, 3=Often, 4=Almost always/always

Individual items

Attention – 77, 81*, 83, 92*, 100. Cognitive instability – 78, 96, 98. Motor – 74, 75, 76, 89, 91, 94, 97. Perseverance – 88, 93, 95, 102*. Self-control – 73*, 79*, 80*, 84*, 85*, 86*. Cognitive complexity – 82*, 87*, 90, 99, 101*

Appendix E: Conditions, Survey Coding, and Photographs Used

Participants were randomly assigned to one of 36 conditions. Conditions are composed of occupation, gender, body modification status:

Occupation

1. nurse
2. barrister
3. police officer
4. teacher
5. vicar
6. doctor

Gender/photograph

1. Male pronouns and male photograph
2. Female pronouns and female photograph
3. Gender neutral pronouns and no photograph

Body modification status

0. Not tattooed
1. Tattooed

Conditions were coded using three digits. The first denotes the occupation, the second is gender, the third is body modification status. For example, condition 111 is nurse, Male, Tattooed; 530 is vicar, Gender neutral, Tattooed. The full list of conditions coding follows:

	Not Tattooed (0)			Tattooed (1)		
	Male (1)	Female (2)	Gender neutral (3)	Male (1)	Female (2)	Gender neutral (3)
nurse (1)	110	120	130	111	121	131
barrister (2)	210	220	230	211	221	231
police officer (3)	310	320	330	311	321	331
teacher (4)	410	420	430	411	421	431
vicar (5)	510	520	530	511	521	531
doctor (6)	610	620	630	611	621	631

Three survey measures were used:

A. Schwartz Values Survey ('SVS')
B. Moral Foundations Questionnaire ('Moral Foundations Questionnaire ')
C. Barratt Impulsiveness Scale ('Barratt Impulsiveness Scale')

For convenience, and to facilitate the randomisation process in Qualtrics, the statements for each survey measure were presented in blocks of 10 statements. There were 4 blocks of statements for SVS (1-4), 4 blocks of statements for Moral Foundations Questionnaire (1-4), and 3 blocks of statements for Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (1-3). Survey measure statements were adapted to match the relevant gender condition. Using the Gender coding (above) the survey measures were coded as follows:

Male		Female		Gender neutral		Male		Female		Gender neutral		Male		Female		Gender neutral	
1SVS1	1SVS1	2SVS1	2SVS1	3SVS1	3SVS1	1SVS1	1SVS1	2SVS1	2SVS1	3SVS1	3SVS1	1SVS1	1SVS1	2SVS1	2SVS1	3SVS1	3SVS1
1SVS2	1SVS2	2SVS2	2SVS2	3SVS2	3SVS2	1SVS2	1SVS2	2SVS2	2SVS2	3SVS2	3SVS2	1SVS2	1SVS2	2SVS2	2SVS2	3SVS2	3SVS2
1SVS3	1SVS3	2SVS3	2SVS3	3SVS3	3SVS3	1SVS3	1SVS3	2SVS3	2SVS3	3SVS3	3SVS3	1SVS3	1SVS3	2SVS3	2SVS3	3SVS3	3SVS3
1SVS4	1SVS4	2SVS4	2SVS4	3SVS4	3SVS4	1SVS4	1SVS4	2SVS4	2SVS4	3SVS4	3SVS4	1SVS4	1SVS4	2SVS4	2SVS4	3SVS4	3SVS4
1MFQ 1	1MFQ 1	2MFQ 1	2MFQ 1	3MFQ 1	3MFQ 1	1MFQ 1	1MFQ 1	2MFQ 1	2MFQ 1	3MFQ 1	3MFQ 1	1MFQ 1	1MFQ 1	2MFQ 1	2MFQ 1	3MFQ 1	3MFQ 1
1MFQ 2	1MFQ 2	2MFQ 2	2MFQ 2	3MFQ 2	3MFQ 2	1MFQ 2	1MFQ 2	2MFQ 2	2MFQ 2	3MFQ 2	3MFQ 2	1MFQ 2	1MFQ 2	2MFQ 2	2MFQ 2	3MFQ 2	3MFQ 2
1MFQ 3	1MFQ 3	2MFQ 3	2MFQ 3	3MFQ 3	3MFQ 3	1MFQ 3	1MFQ 3	2MFQ 3	2MFQ 3	3MFQ 3	3MFQ 3	1MFQ 3	1MFQ 3	2MFQ 3	2MFQ 3	3MFQ 3	3MFQ 3
1MFQ 4	1MFQ 4	2MFQ 4	2MFQ 4	3MFQ 4	3MFQ 4	1MFQ 4	1MFQ 4	2MFQ 4	2MFQ 4	3MFQ 4	3MFQ 4	1MFQ 4	1MFQ 4	2MFQ 4	2MFQ 4	3MFQ 4	3MFQ 4
1BIS1	1BIS1	2BIS1	2BIS1	3BIS1	3BIS1	1BIS1	1BIS1	2BIS1	2BIS1	3BIS1	3BIS1	1BIS1	1BIS1	2BIS1	2BIS1	3BIS1	3BIS1
1BIS2	1BIS2	2BIS2	2BIS2	3BIS2	3BIS2	1BIS2	1BIS2	2BIS2	2BIS2	3BIS2	3BIS2	1BIS2	1BIS2	2BIS2	2BIS2	3BIS2	3BIS2
1BIS3	1BIS3	2BIS3	2BIS3	3BIS3	3BIS3	1BIS3	1BIS3	2BIS3	2BIS3	3BIS3	3BIS3	1BIS3	1BIS3	2BIS3	2BIS3	3BIS3	3BIS3

Original Male

Cropped Male

Original Female

Cropped Female

The number of participants in each condition were:

Coding	Condition	Frequency	percentage
110	nurse Male No tattoo	10	2.4
111	nurse Male Tattooed	9	2.2
120	nurse Female No tattoo	12	2.9
121	nurse Female Tattooed	11	2.7
130	nurse Gender Neutral No tattoo	12	2.9
131	nurse Gender Neutral Tattooed	11	2.7
210	barrister Male No tattoo	7	1.7
211	barrister Male Tattooed	10	2.4
220	barrister Female No tattoo	10	2.4
221	barrister Female Tattooed	9	2.2
230	barrister Gender Neutral No tattoo	15	3.6
231	barrister Gender Neutral Tattooed	12	2.9
310	police officer Male No tattoo	15	3.6
311	police officer Male Tattooed	9	2.2
320	police officer Female No tattoo	11	2.7
321	police officer Female Tattooed	11	2.7
330	police officer Gender Neutral No tattoo	9	2.2
331	police officer Gender Neutral Tattooed	11	2.7
410	teacher Male No tattoo	6	1.5
411	teacher Male Tattooed	10	2.4
420	teacher Female No tattoo	14	3.4
421	teacher Female Tattooed	15	3.6
430	teacher Gender Neutral No tattoo	12	2.9
431	teacher Gender Neutral Tattooed	15	3.6
510	vicar Male No tattoo	10	2.4
511	vicar Male Tattooed	8	1.9
520	vicar Female No tattoo	14	3.4
521	vicar Female Tattooed	17	4.1
530	vicar Gender Neutral No tattoo	14	3.4
531	vicar Gender Neutral Tattooed	11	2.7
610	doctor Male No tattoo	12	2.9
611	doctor Male Tattooed	9	2.2
620	doctor Female No tattoo	11	2.7
621	doctor Female Tattooed	15	3.6
630	doctor Gender Neutral No tattoo	13	3.2
631	doctor Gender Neutral Tattooed	11	2.7

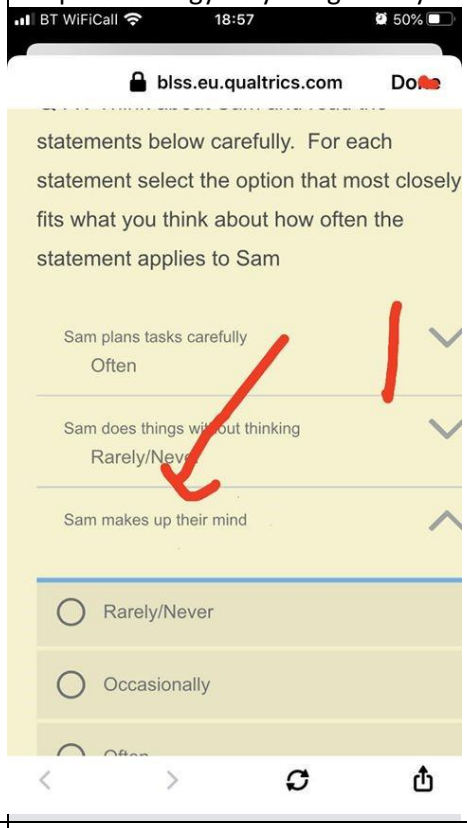
Appendix F: Study One Pilot Study Information and responses

The following message was used to recruit participants to the pilot study:

> Hello! I am sending this message to about 15 of my friends as I am launching my PhD research and need a few people to complete the survey but also let me know if you spot any errors (typos, presentation issues, or ambiguous questions or instructions). The link to the survey is: https://blss.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_09BQdj6RkB4PGjr Please be aware that if you complete the survey to the end your responses will form part of my research data (so your responses count!), I am just selecting 15 friends to give me feedback on any issues you encounter. If possible, could you let me have your feedback on any issues by no later than this Friday? I will then make the amendments you all suggest before launching it more widely next week. Thanks!

The feedback from pilot participants was:

Ref	Feedback/comment
1.	I have competed the survey, all is good except on the debrif could you put an instruction about closing their browser and that the survey is finished.
2.	Completed the survey - liked it and happy with it. No concerns. Perhaps after every "read below" it might be worth adding "Carefully" as the swapping arpund of the direction of the responses could fool some. But nothing major to worry about it in there. Was quite speedy really. Agree about closing the browser.
3.	I would do the same for ethnicity - allow people to describe themselves and collapse later.
4.	If it helps, an easy way to measure education is something like: What is you highest educational attainment? Phd / doctorate Masters degree Other postgraduate qualification Undergraduate degree Diplomas / certificates A levels GCSE
5.	Marital status is easier - rather than offering several groups and risk including anyone you left out, just giving them a blank space with which to categorise their relationship status will be easier. This can be collapsed down later
6.	I'd ask for number of tatts as a true number and not groups. You can do more with the data if it's a true integer. I'd strongly recommend asking about the big 5 (age, job etc) - as it will allow you to analyse the data in a more interesting way. It will help later on.
7.	It looks like you were trying to stay gender neutral, if so early on you missed a pronoun (first few sets of questions, sorry, didn't make a note!) Q8 should be agree/disagree not relevant/irrelevant. That was all I noticed
8.	All done! Happy to be interviewed at any point too
9.	Hello sorry for the delay, I've done it and it looked fine to me. There was just one question something about Sam "doesn't make up his mind" or something, I dont know if it's deliberately confusing because its sneaky psychology but when you come to apply the statements it's a bit confusing. Or I was confused anyway. Apart from that it all looked great!
10.	Hello, have done the survey, I noticed on Q9 you say their earnings should it be her, and also on Q10 you have their minds, should it be her. Not sure how well I did as hard not to

	put your own thoughts down as opposed to how you perceived her, but I guess that is what it is about our perception of a barrister.... Hope I have done ok.... also i did put "prefer not to say "what group i belonged to and thought it would not then want a job title, as obviously if i was a secretary i would say secretarial sector.... But it still wanted a job title so i made one up.... is that too technical
11.	completed thingy only thing I really saw was what I've just posted 
12.	Happy to fill it out, but I've discovered the form is not idiot proof. I'd like to be able to look at the description of Sam again as I'm answering the questions. Would that be possible?
13.	Done the Sam research. I liked it. Thought it was good.

Appendix G: Participant Recruitment Adverts

Study One:
The following adverts were used to recruit participants:

Advert One:

We all have opinions and I want yours!
I want to know what you think about people in professional occupations.
You'll read a short summary about Sam who works as a professional. You will then let me know what you think about Sam by answering a series of statements. It should take you about 15 minutes to participate in my research.
Click here if you want more information or want to be part of my research.
It would be really helpful if you could share this advert on your social media.
Thanks!

Advert Two

I want to know what you think
…about people in professional occupations.
You'll read a short summary about Sam who works as a professional. You will then let me know what you think about Sam by answering a series of statements. It should take you about 15 minutes to participate in my research.
Click here if you want more information or want to be part of my research.
It would be really helpful if you could share this advert on your social media.
Thanks!

Advert Three

I need your help!
I want to know what you think about people in professional occupations.
You'll read a short summary about Sam who works as a professional. You will then let me know what you think about Sam by answering a series of statements. It should take you about 15 minutes to participate in my research.
Click here if you want more information or want to be part of my research.

It would be really helpful if you could share this advert on your social media.
Thanks!

Study Three

Recruitment adverts:

Advert One:

We all have opinions and I want yours!
I want to know what you think about tattoos.
You will use a scale (0-100) to tell me about how acceptable you think certain types, sizes, and locations of tattoos are. It should take you about 5 minutes to participate in my research.
Click here if you want more information or want to be part of my research.
It would be really helpful if you could share this advert on your social media.
Thanks!

Advert Two

I want to know what you think
…about tattoos.
You will use a scale (0-100) to tell me about how acceptable you think certain types, sizes, and locations of tattoos are. It should take you about 5 minutes to participate in my research.
Click here if you want more information or want to be part of my research.
It would be really helpful if you could share this advert on your social media.
Thanks!

Advert Three

I need your help!
I want to know what you think about tattoos.

You will use a scale (0-100) to tell me about how acceptable you think certain types, sizes, and locations of tattoos are. It should take you about 5 minutes to participate in my research.
Click here if you want more information or want to be part of my research.
It would be really helpful if you could share this advert on your social media.
Thanks!

Study Two

Advert one

Seeking interview participants!

I am studying what the public thinks about professionals with tattoos. You don't need to be tattooed or work in a profession to be part of my research. Email me at: stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk. I will reply to arrange a 45-60 min (audio only, no video) interview on MS Teams.

Advert two

Help! I am studying what people think about professionals with tattoos. To be part of my research, email me at: stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk. I will reply to arrange a 45-60 min (audio only, no video) interview on MS Teams. Participants don't have to be tattooed :)

Study Four

Hello all, I'm doing some more data collection around tattoos. I have a theory I am developing about them being effective icebreakers and would love it if you would write a story for me? I will give you the opening lines of the story and then it's over to you to tell me what happens next. If this is something you think you'd like to give a try, then click this link and let me know how you think the story ends:

https://bcu.questionpro.eu/Tattoos-as-icebreakers

Also, if you could share this with others or on your social media timelines that would be great and give me lots of different stories to work with!

Thanks in advance

Appendix H: Participant Information

Study One

What people think about people in professional occupations

I am Steph Talliss-Foster, a postgraduate researcher at Birmingham City University. My supervisors are Prof Jackson and Dr Boag in the School of Social Sciences. I am researching what we think about people in professional occupations and would like to invite you to participate in my research. Participation is anonymous and confidential and this information sheet should help you decide if you want to participate.

If you participate you will be presented with a short description of a person ('Sam') in a professional occupation, followed by a series of statements. For each statement, you will be asked to provide a response. You will need to choose the option that you think most closely applies to Sam. It should take about 15 minutes to complete all the statements. The statements have been adapted from other commonly-used research measures and are designed to ask you about your opinions of people that you might encounter in everyday life. However, you can stop at any time and if you feel uncomfortable you should consult the sources of support listed below. If you stop at any point before the final page, your responses will not be saved. If you complete all the statements but later change your mind about participating, you will need to contact stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk, or craig.jackson@bcu.ac.uk, or elle.boag@bcu.ac.uk to have your responses removed. Please note that you can request removal of your responses at any point until 31 March 2021 when the survey will close and I will begin analysing my data.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in my research. I am asking all participants for their age, gender, ethnicity, relationship status, education level, number of tattoos, religious beliefs, and about their job to see if these have any impact on what we think about people in professional occupations. No other personal information will be taken, so there is nothing that could be used to identify any individual participant either during my analysis of the responses received or in the published findings.

I am looking for participants to interview at a later date in more detail about their responses. If you would like to be interviewed or would like to receive a summary of my findings, please email me at stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk by no later than 31 March 2021.

Your participation is voluntary and unpaid, but your opinions are important to understanding what we think about people in professional occupations. I am using Qualtrics Survey Software to gather participant responses. Your anonymous data will be stored securely and safely and will meet the expectations of the General Data Protection Regulations. The raw data file and my analysis will be stored in password-protected files on the BCU server until July 2025 when they will be confidentially destroyed. Your participation will be used as the basis of my PhD research and subsequent publication in journals, at conferences, in the media and with professional organisations.

If you want to participate in my research, click 'next' below and you will be asked to give your consent.
In the unlikely event that you may wish to make a complaint about my research you should email either BCU_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk or BLSSEthics@bcu.ac.uk. If you have concerns about how the information you provide will be used you should contact Birmingham City University's Data Protection officer at informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk, or +44 (0) 121 331 5288, or in writing to University House, 15 Bartholomew Row, B5 5JU. Alternatively, you can complain directly to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or see www.ico.org.uk. If you have any questions about my research you can email either Craig.Jackson@bcu.ac.uk or Elle.Boag@bcu.ac.uk.
Thank you for considering participating in my research.

Sources of support
Mind.org.uk
Samaritans.org
Friends or family

Study Three

Tattoos as icebreakers

I am Steph Talliss-Foster, a postgraduate researcher at Birmingham City University. My research supervisors are Prof Craig Jackson, Dr Rebecca Wheeler-Mundy in the Faculty of Business, Law, and Social Sciences, and Dr Sam Parker of the University of the West of England. I am researching what we think about people with tattoos and would like to invite you to participate in my research. All participation is anonymous and confidential and this information sheet should help you decide if you want to participate.

If you participate in my research you will be presented with a series of statements. For each statement presented, you will be asked to provide a response to indicate the extent to which you agree with statements about tattoos. For example:

Where do you think you are on the scale (0 being tattoos of any kind are completely unacceptable, 100 being any tattoo, anywhere is totally fine):

1. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the upper leg?
2. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the lower arm?

It should take about 5 minutes to complete all the statements. It is not anticipated that your participation will cause you any discomfort. However, you can stop at any time and if you feel uncomfortable you should consult the sources of support listed below. If you stop at any point before the final page, your responses will not be saved. If you complete all the statements but later change your mind about participating, you will need to contact Craig.Jackson@bcu.ac.uk to have your responses removed. Please note that you can request removal of your responses at any point until 30 September 2025 when the survey will close and I will begin analysing my data.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in my research. I am asking all participants for their age, gender, ethnicity, number of tattoos, highest educational attainment, whether their religion influences their views about tattoos, and about their job to determine if these have any impact on what we think about tattoos. No other personal information will be taken, so there is nothing that could be used to identify any individual participant either during my analysis of the responses received or in the published findings.

Your participation is voluntary and unpaid, but your opinions are important to understanding what we think about people in professional occupations. I am using QuestionPro Software to gather participant responses. Your anonymous data will be stored securely and safely and will meet the expectations of the General Data Protection Regulations. The raw data file and my analysis will be stored in password-protected files on the BCU server until September 2035 when they will be confidentially destroyed

If you want to participate in my research, click 'next' below and you will be asked to give your consent.

If you have any queries of concerns about the research then please contact Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk in the first instance. If your concerns remain you may make a complaint to either BCU_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk or BLSSEthics@bcu.ac.uk. If you have concerns about how the information you provide will be used you should contact Birmingham City University's Data Protection Officer by email: informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk, or by telephone: +44 (0) 121 331 5288, or in writing to Data Protection Officer, Information Management, Legal Services, Joseph Priestley Building, Cardigan Street, Birmingham, B4 7RJ. Alternatively, you can complain directly to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or see www.ico.org.uk. If you have any questions about my research you can email either Prof Craig Jackson (Craig.Jackson@bcu.ac.uk) or Dr Rebecca Wheeler-Mundy (Rebecca.Wheeler-Mundy@bcu.ac.uk) or Dr Sam Parker (Sam2.Parker@uwe.ac.uk). Thank you for considering participating in my research.

Sources of support
Mind: www.mind.org.uk
Information (including services) for people in the UK dealing with mental health issues.
Call the support line on 0300 102 1234
The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
Service for people in the UK an Ireland in need of emotional support.

- Call 116 123
- Text 07725 90 90 90
- Email jo@samaritans.org
- Open 24/7

Shout: https://giveusashout.org/
Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

- Text 85258
- Open 24/7

Friends or family

Study Two
The impressions formed about body-modified professionals

Project summary
I am a postgraduate researcher undertaking this study as part of my PhD research at Birmingham City University. I am trying to find out what the public thinks about people working in professional occupations. I want to understand the opinions formed about people working in professional occupations and establish if these opinions differ if the professional person is tattooed. My research supervisors are Professor Craig Jackson, Dr Elle Boag, and Dr Samuel Parker, and this project has been approved by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee (to be confirmed).

What will you need to do?
You need to complete the consent form. Once this has been submitted, I will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time for us to speak. If you participate in this project, I will interview you to find out your opinions on people working in professional occupations, and how these might differ if they have a tattoo. The interview will be conducted using MS Teams. Interviews will be audio recorded only (no images or video recording will be involved). You will be asked your opinions about people working in professional occupations. You will be asked to look at 2 images of people working in professional occupations. The questions I ask will be

about professionals, and about professionals with tattoos. There are no right or wrong answers, but whatever you say will be useful for me to understand the impressions formed about tattooed and non-tattooed professionals. The consent form asks you for personal information (your age, gender, occupation, and whether you have any tattoos). This data will be used in the thesis to provide contextual information about the participants I interview but will not be used in any way that could identify you.

If you are interviewed, you can stop at any time and if you feel uncomfortable you should consult the sources of support listed below. If you stop and do not want to continue at any point before the interview is meant to end, your interview will be deleted and not used in the research. I aim to interview all participants by the end of May 2022 at which point I will begin analysing the data. Your interview will be transcribed and you can ask for a copy of the transcribed interview at any point up to 30 May 2022. If you receive a transcribed copy of your interview, you can ask the researcher to amend or remove anything in the transcription without having to give a reason for this.

Who is eligible to take part?
To take part in this study you need to be at least 18 years old and have completed the consent form.

How long will participation take?
There will be one interview with the researcher that will take 45-60 minutes.

Are there any risks of taking part?
Taking part in any research can involve risk. However, such risk can be managed by providing as much information about the research as possible, so that you can make an informed decision about whether you want to participate. As you might encounter people working in professional occupations in your daily life, there are no specific risks to this study over and above those experienced in everyday encounters. However, you can refuse to answer any of the interview questions without giving a reason.

Who to contact if you are affected by the topic or content of this study
mind.org.uk Mind is a charity that provides advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Mind's Infoline (0300 123 3393) offers confidential help to callers.
samaritans.org Samaritans is a charity that offers a 24-hour supportive listening

service. They can be called on 116 123

Are there any benefits of taking part?

Although there are no direct benefits from taking part, it is hoped that we can develop specific knowledge about what the public thinks about people working in professional occupations, and whether tattoos influence those opinions. Your participation in the interview is voluntary and unpaid. Your anonymous data will be stored securely and safely and will meet the expectations of the General Data Protection Regulations. The raw data file and my analysis will be stored in password-protected files on the BCU server until my thesis has been examined when they will be confidentially destroyed. Your participation will be used as the basis of my PhD research and subsequent publications in journals, at conferences, and in the media.

Your right to withdraw and withhold information

In line with the regulations outlined by the British Psychological Society, you can stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You are still entitled to the same benefits as an individual who completes the study. You can also have your data withdrawn from the time you complete until 30 May 2022, when your data will have been transcribed before analysis begins on 01 June 2022. If you are using a BCU Office/Teams account, after the study is complete you will be sent a link to a recording of the study, which will be available for 20 days after which it will be automatically deleted from MS Teams. Only you and the researcher will have access to this. If you do not wish to withdraw, the researcher will download their copy of the recording, for this to be transcribed, analysed, and written up. Please see contact details below if you wish to withdraw. During the study, you also have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

Your right to confidentiality/anonymity

The study will not involve the collection of any personal information about you except your age, gender identity, occupation, and whether you have any tattoos. Any personal information given will be unidentifiable to an external party. Any identifiable information will be kept separately from the main study data, which will be stored confidentially, using a Personal Identifier Code. You will be given instructions on how to produce this as part of gaining your consent to participate. Your data will only be used by the researcher for research purposes and there is a possibility this research will be presented at conferences or published in journal publications. All data will be stored in accordance with the University's data protection policy. Data will be anonymised and may be shared between the primary researcher and the supervisor, but it will not be possible to identify your data at any

point. The data will be kept until the degree classification has been awarded, after which point it will be destroyed. If you decide you would like to withdraw your data before 30 May 2022, you will need to provide your Personal Identifier Code by email to one of my supervisors.

Who is organising the research?

Researcher: Stephanie Talliss-Foster stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk
Supervisor: Professor Craig Jackson craig.jackson@bcu.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Elle Boag elle.boag@bcu.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Samuel Parker samuel.parker@bcu.ac.uk

If you want to withdraw from my study you can do so up to 30 May 2022. You do not have to give any reason for withdrawing. To withdraw please email your Personal Identifier Code to me or one of my supervisors. Please use the subject line: The impressions formed about body-modified professionals (withdraw). If you are unhappy at any point in the study, or if there is a problem, please contact the psychology department research ethics committee directly at BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk.

Study Four

Tattoos as icebreakers

I am Steph Talliss-Foster, a postgraduate researcher at Birmingham City University. My research supervisors are Prof Craig Jackson, Dr Rebecca Wheeler-Mundy in the Faculty of Business, Law, and Social Sciences, and Dr Sam Parker of the University of the West of England. I am researching impressions formed about people with tattoos and whether being tattooed is a social barrier and would like to invite you to participate in my research. All participation is anonymous and confidential and this information sheet should help you decide if you want to participate.

If you participate in my research you will be asked to read the opening lines of a story about 'Sam'. You will then be asked to finish Sam's story. There are no right or wrong answers and you can be as imaginative as you like.

Following the story completion you will be asked questions about your story, including what you think happened, and whether you would engage in conversation in the same scenario.

Depending on how much you write, it should take about 15 minutes to complete your story. It is not anticipated that your participation will cause you any discomfort. However, you can stop at any time and if you feel uncomfortable you should consult the sources of support listed below. If you stop at any point before the final page, your submission will not be saved. If you complete your story but later change your mind about participating, you will need to contact Craig.Jackson@bcu.ac.uk to have your responses removed. Please note that you can request removal of your responses at any

point until 30 September 2025 when the research will close and I will begin analysing my data.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in my research. I am asking all participants for their age, gender, ethnicity, number of tattoos, highest educational attainment, whether their religion influences their views about tattoos, and about their job to determine if these have any impact on what we think about tattoos. No other personal information will be taken, so there is nothing that could be used to identify any individual participant either during my analysis of the responses received or in the published findings.

Your participation is voluntary and unpaid, but your thoughts are important to understanding what we think about people with tattoos. I am using QuestionPro Software to gather participant stories. Your anonymous data will be stored securely and safely and will meet the expectations of the General Data Protection Regulations. The raw data file and my analysis will be stored in password-protected files on the BCU server until August 2035 when they will be confidentially destroyed

If you want to participate in my research, click 'next' below and you will be asked to give your consent.

If you have any queries or concerns about the research then please contact Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk in the first instance. If your concerns remain you may make a complaint to either BCU_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk or BLSSEthics@bcu.ac.uk. If you have concerns about how the information you provide will be used you should contact Birmingham City University's Data Protection Officer by email: informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk, or by telephone: +44 (0) 121 331 5288, or in writing to Data Protection Officer, Information Management, Legal Services, Joseph Priestley Building, Cardigan Street, Birmingham, B4 7RJ. Alternatively, you can complain directly to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or see www.ico.org.uk. If you have any questions about my research you can email either Prof Craig Jackson (Craig.Jackson@bcu.ac.uk) or Dr Rebecca Wheeler-Mundy (Rebecca.Wheeler-Mundy@bcu.ac.uk) or Dr Sam Parker (Sam2.Parker@uwe.ac.uk).

Thank you for considering participating in my research.

Sources of support

Mind: www.mind.org.uk

Information (including services) for people in the UK dealing with mental health issues.

Call the support line on 0300 102 1234

The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org

Service for people in the UK an Ireland in need of emotional support.

- Call 116 123
- Text 07725 90 90 90
- Email jo@samaritans.org
- Open 24/7

Shout: https://giveusashout.org/

Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

- Text 85258
- Open 24/7

Friends or family

Appendix I: Consent

Study One

Following the Participation Information page, participants were directed to the consent page. Each statement had a corresponding tick box. All tick boxes were clear until filled by the participant. At the bottom of the page were two buttons: 'Back' and 'I consent.'

What people think about people in professional occupations

I have read the information sheet (click 'Back' if you want to re-read any part). I understand that this research uses statements from other published research in order to determine what I think about 'Sam' who is in a professional occupation.

i. I am at least 18 years old
ii. I understand that my participation is voluntary
iii. I understand that I can stop at any time for any reason without penalty
iv. I understand that none of the information I give can be used to identify me personally
v. I understand who to contact if I have any questions or if I want to make a complaint
vi. I understand that I can ask for my responses to be removed at any point up to 31 March 2021
vii. I understand that I will be asked about my age, gender, ethnicity, relationship status, educational level, number of tattoos, religious beliefs, and occupation
viii. I understand that the responses I give will be used in the researcher's PhD submission, and may be used in subsequent publications, in journals, at conferences, in the media, and with professional organisations
ix. I understand that by clicking 'I consent' below, that I am agreeing to take part in this research.

Study Three

What people think about tattoos

This research aims to determine if the views we all have about tattoos can be categorised depending on their type, size, and placement.

In order to participate in this study, we need to ensure that you understand the nature of the research, as outlined on the Participant Information Sheet click 'Back' if you want to re-read any part). I understand that this research uses statements in order to determine what I think about 'Sam' who is a tattooed person.

Please tick the boxes to indicate that you understand and agree to the following conditions.

I confirm that I have read the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

I understand that in order to take part in this study, I should be at least 18 years old] ☐

I understand that this project will deal with tattoos and that I have been advised not to participate if I believe this will cause me distress ☐

I understand that personal data about me will be collected for the purposes of the research study including age, gender, ethnicity, number of tattoos, highest educational attainment, whether their religion influences their views about tattoos, and occupation and that these will be processed in accordance with the information sheet. ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time until 31 July 2025 without giving any reason. ☐

I understand BCU policy is to retain data for 10 years, however, I consent to have my data deleted at the end of the researcher's degree. ☐

I understand that my data will be shared with the researcher's supervisors, and my anonymised data might be shared with other University officials for audit and verification purposes. ☐

I understand that my deidentified and anonymous data will only be used by the investigators as part of the PhD thesis, and that there is a possibility this research will be presented at conferences or published in journal publications. ☐

I agree to take part in this study ☐

PLEASE CREATE A PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION REFERENCE CODE:

This should be made up of the first three letters of favourite colour (e.g. RED or BLU) followed by the first three letters of a memorable street name (e.g. Acacia Avenue, or Oak Street) so that the participant identification reference would be (e.g.) BLUACA or REDOAK.

<Back> <I consent>

Study Two

The impressions formed about body-modified professionals

Project summary

As part of my PhD research, I am trying to find out what the public thinks about people working in professional occupations. I want to understand the opinions formed about people working in professional occupations and establish if these opinions differ if the professional person is tattooed.

In order to participate in this study, I need to ensure that you understand the nature of the research, as outlined on the Participant Information. Please tick the boxes to indicate that you understand and agree to the following conditions:

I understand and confirm that:

I have read the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

To take part in this study, I should be at least 18 years old. ☐

Personal data about me will be collected for the purposes of the research study including age, gender, occupation, and whether I have any tattoos and that these will be processed in accordance with the information sheet. ☐

My participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason up to 30 May 2022. ☐

My data is anonymous and will be stored on secure university servers. ☐

My data will only be used by the researcher for research purposes and there is a possibility this research will be presented at conferences or published in journal publications. ☐

The interview will be audio recorded via MS Teams ☐

I agree to take part in this study ☐

About you

What is your age (in years)?_____

How do you identify your gender?_____

What is your occupation?_____

Do you have any tattoos?_____

Please create a Personal Identifier Code:

This should be made up of information that is memorable for you. For example, the first two letters of your favourite pet's name followed by your favourite colour e.g. DARED

Return completed consent to stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Study Four

Tattoos as icebreakers

The aim of the current research is to determine if the impressions formed about tattooed people are no longer solely associated with deviancy, but can be an effective icebreaker between strangers..

In order to participate in this study, we need to ensure that you understand the nature of the research, as outlined on the Participant Information Sheet click 'Back' if you want to re-read any part). I understand that this research involves making up a story about a fictitious person 'Sam' and meeting someone with a tattoo.

Please tick the boxes to indicate that you understand and agree to the following conditions.

I confirm that I have read the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

I understand that in order to take part in this study, I should be at least 18 years old ☐

I understand that this project will deal with tattoos and that I have been advised not to participate if I believe this will cause me distress ☐

I understand that personal data about me will be collected for the purposes of the research study including age, gender, ethnicity, number of tattoos, highest educational attainment, whether their religion influences their views about tattoos, and occupation and that these will be processed in accordance with the information sheet. ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time until 30 September 2025 without giving any reason. ☐

I understand that my data will be shared with the researcher's supervisors, and my anonymised data might be shared with other University officials for audit and verification purposes. ☐

I understand that my deidentified and anonymous data will only be used by the investigators as part of the PhD thesis, and that there is a possibility this research will be presented at conferences or published in journal publications. ☐

I agree to take part in this study ☐

PLEASE CREATE A PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION REFERENCE CODE:

This should be made up of the first three letters of favourite colour (e.g. RED or BLU) followed by the first three letters of a memorable street name (e.g. Acacia Avenue, or Oak Street) so that the participant identification reference would be (e.g.) BLUACA or REDOAK.

<Back> <I consent>

Appendix J: Demographic Questions

Study One

1. What is your age? (Responses were numeric. Minimum value was '18'. No maximum value. No decimals permitted)
2. What is your gender? (Radio button options. Choice from: Male/Female/Non-binary/Prefer not to say. Single choice)
3. What is your ethnicity? (Single line of free-text)
4. What is your highest educational attainment? (Radio button options. Choice from: GCSE or equivalent/ A-levels or equivalent/ Diploma/certificate or equivalent/ Undergraduate degree or equivalent/ Masters degree/ Other postgraduate qualification/ PhD/doctorate. Single choice
5. What is your civil status or marital status? (Single line of free-text)
6. What occupational group are you in? (Drop-down menu. Choice from: Corporate managers and directors/ Other managers and proprietors/ Science, research, engineering and technology professionals/ Health professionals/ Teaching and educational professionals/ Business, media and public service professionals/ Science, engineering and technology associate professionals/ Health and social care associate professionals/ Protective service occupations/ Culture, media and sports occupations/ Business and public service associate professionals/ Administrative occupations/ Secretarial and related occupations/ Skilled agricultural and related trades/ Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades/ Skilled construction and building trades/ Textiles, printing and other skilled trades/ Caring and personal service occupations/ Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations/ Process, plant and machine operatives/ Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives/ Elementary trades and related occupations/ Elementary administration and service occupations/ Retired/ Other/ Student/ Unemployed/ Prefer not to say. Single choice only)
7. What is your job title? (Single line of free-text)
8. How many tattoos do you have? (Responses were numeric. Minimum value was '0'. Maximum value was '999'. No decimals permitted)
9. How would you describe your religious beliefs? (Single line of free-text)
10. Do your religious beliefs influence how you feel about tattoos? (Yes/no response)

If you change your mind about participating in my research you will need to contact either stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk,
or craig.jackson@bcu.ac.uk, or elle.boag@bcu.ac.uk with the following information that is unique to you:

11. What are the last 4 digits of your phone number? (Single line of free-text)

What are the last three letters of your mother's maiden name? (Single line of free-text)

Study Three

1. What is your age? (responses were numeric. Minimum value was '18'. No maximum value. No decimals permitted)
3. What is your gender? (Radio button options. Choice from: Male/Female/Non-binary/Prefer not to say. Single choice)
4. What is your ethnicity? (Single line of free-text)
5. What is your highest educational attainment? (Radio button options. Choice from: GCSE or equivalent/ A-levels or equivalent/ Diploma/certificate or equivalent/ Undergraduate degree or equivalent/ Masters degree/ Other postgraduate qualification/ PhD/doctorate. Single choice
6. What is your civil status or marital status? (Single line of free-text)
7. What occupational group are you in? (Drop-down menu. Choice from: Corporate managers and directors/ Other managers and proprietors/ Science, research, engineering and technology professionals/ Health professionals/ Teaching and educational professionals/ Business, media and public service professionals/ Science, engineering and technology associate professionals/ Health and social care associate professionals/ Protective service occupations/ Culture, media and sports occupations/ Business and public service associate professionals/ Administrative occupations/ Secretarial and related occupations/ Skilled agricultural and related trades/ Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades/ Skilled construction and building trades/ Textiles, printing and other skilled trades/ Caring and personal service occupations/ Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations/ Process, plant and machine operatives/ Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives/ Elementary trades and related occupations/ Elementary administration and service occupations/ Retired/ Other/ Student/ Unemployed/ Prefer not to say. Single choice only)
8. What is your job title? (Singl
9. line of free-text)
9. How many tattoos do you have? (Responses were numeric. Minimum value was '0'. Maximum value was '999'. No decimals permitted)
10. How would you describe your religious beliefs? (Single line of free-text)
11. Do your religious beliefs influence how you feel about tattoos? (Yes/no response)

Study Two

About you

What is your age (in years)?_____

How do you identify your gender?_____

What is your occupation?_____

Do you have any tattoos?_____

Please create a Personal Identifier Code:
This should be made up of information that is memorable for you. For example, the first two letters of your favourite pet's name followed by your favourite colour e.g. DARED

Study Four

1. What is your age? (Responses were numeric. Minimum value was '18'. No maximum value. No decimals permitted)
2. What is your gender? (Radio button options. Choice from: Male/Female/Non-binary/Prefer not to say. Single choice)
3. What is your ethnicity? (Single line of free-text)
4. What is your highest educational attainment? (Radio button options. Choice from: GCSE or equivalent/ A-levels or equivalent/ Diploma/certificate or equivalent/ Undergraduate degree or equivalent/ Masters degree/ Other postgraduate qualification/ PhD/doctorate/Prefer not to say Single choice
5. What is your civil status or marital status? (Single line of free-text)
6. What occupational group are you in? (Drop-down menu. Choice from: Corporate managers and directors/ Other managers and proprietors/

Science, research, engineering and technology professionals/ Health professionals/ Teaching and educational professionals/ Business, media and public service professionals/ Science, engineering and technology associate professionals/ Health and social care associate professionals/ Protective service occupations/ Culture, media and sports occupations/ Business and public service associate professionals/ Administrative occupations/ Secretarial and related occupations/ Skilled agricultural and related trades/ Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades/ Skilled construction and building trades/ Textiles, printing and other skilled trades/ Caring and personal service occupations/ Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations/ Process, plant and machine operatives/ Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives/ Elementary trades and related occupations/ Elementary administration and service occupations/ Retired/ Other/ Student/ Unemployed/ Prefer not to say. Single choice only)

7. What is your job title? (Single line of free-text)
8. How many tattoos do you have? (Responses were numeric. Minimum value was '0'. Maximum value was '999'. No decimals permitted)
9. How would you describe your religious beliefs? (Single line of free-text)
10. Do your religious beliefs influence how you feel about tattoos? (Yes/no/prefer not to say options)

Appendix K: Participant Debrief

Study One

Participants that completed the survey were presented with the following debrief message:

> Thank you for your time, I really appreciate it. It would be really helpful if you could share the advert and link to this research on your social media.
>
> My research is aiming to determine if the impressions we have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether they have a tattoo or not.
>
> If you would like to receive a summary of my main findings or would like to be interviewed about your thoughts about 'Sam' please email me at stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk
>
> You should now close your browser, and thank you again for your valuable contribution to my research.

Study Three

> Thank you for your time, I really appreciate it. It would be really helpful if you could share the advert and link to this research on your social media.
>
> My research is aiming to determine if the impressions we have about tattoos can be categorised.
>
> If you would like to receive a summary of my main findings or would like to be interviewed about your thoughts about 'Sam' please email me at stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk
>
> You should now close your browser, and thank you again for your valuable contribution to my research.

Study Two

> **The impressions formed about body-modified professionals**
>
> **Thank you for taking part in this study. Your time is really appreciated.**
>
> **Project summary**

This research aims to find out what the public thinks about people working in professional occupations. I want to understand the opinions formed about people working in professional occupations and establish if these opinions differ if the professional person is tattooed.

Who to contact if you are affected by the topic or content of this study

mind.org.uk Mind is a charity that provides advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Mind's Infoline (0300 123 3393) offers confidential help to callers.

samaritans.org Samaritans is a charity that offers a 24-hour supportive listening service. They can be called on 116 123

Keeping in touch

The data you have provided will be used in my PhD thesis. It may also be used in conference presentations and journal articles. Whether in my thesis, conference presentations and/or journal articles, your data will be anonymous. If you want to withdraw from my study you can do so up to 30 May 2022. You do not have to give any reason for withdrawing. To withdraw please email your Personal identifier code to me or one of my supervisors. Please use the subject line: The impressions formed about body-modified professionals (withdraw). As a reminder, your Personal Identifier code was made up of information that is memorable for you. For example, the first two letters of your favourite pet's name followed by your favourite colour e.g. DARED. If you would like to find out the results and/or any publications that arise from my research, please email me or one of my supervisors using the contact details below. Please use the subject line the impressions formed about body-modified professionals (information).

Any more questions?

We hope that you enjoyed participating in this study. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher or any of my supervisors at the emails below.

Researcher: Stephanie Talliss-Foster stephanie.talliss-foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk
Supervisor: Professor Craig Jackson craig.jackson@bcu.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Elle Boag elle.boag@bcu.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Samuel Parker samuel.parker@bcu.ac.uk

If you are unhappy at any point in the study, or if there is a problem, please contact the psychology department research ethics committee directly at BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk.

Study Four

Tattoos as icebreakers

Thank you for taking part in this study! Your time is really appreciated.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

My research aims to see if the way people think about people with tattoos has moved away from previous strong associations with deviancy and criminality. Specifically, whether the presence of a visible tattoo may help start a conversation between strangers

The potential impact of this research is a new direction in psychological research to move away from traditional stereotypes associated with tattoos.

This research is important because previous research into tattoos has been connected with deviance, and criminality that begins from a standpoint of tattoos (and those with tattoos) as being unacceptable and 'other'. However, this research is based on a nuanced view that tattoos are broadly accepted in society and can be a way of connecting with a stranger (as a conversation-starter).

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU ARE AFFECTED BY THE TOPIC OR CONTENT OF THIS STUDY

Prof Craig Jackson (Craig.Jackson@bcu.ac.uk) or Dr Rebecca Wheeler-Mundy (Rebecca.Wheeler-Mundy@bcu.ac.uk) or Dr Sam Parker (Sam2.Parker@uwe.ac.uk).

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Please note that you have the right to withdraw your data from this study up until 30 September 2025. To withdraw all you will need to do is email me

(Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk) or any member of the supervisory team using the Unique ID code that you created at the start of this study and simply ask that your data be withdrawn. You can also email me at the below address to find out the results of this research or any publications that arise from the study. You will be provided with a summary of the findings, but we are not able to provide individual results or data relating to you or other participants.

ANY MORE QUESTIONS?

We hope that you enjoyed participating in this study. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the researchers at the address below.

Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk Professor Craig Jackson Craig.Jackson@bcu.ac.uk

If you have any queries of concerns about the research then please contact Stephanie.Talliss-Foster@mail.bcu.ac.uk in the first instance. If your concerns remain you may make a complaint to either BCU_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk or BLSSEthics@bcu.ac.uk.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about how we use or handle your information please contact the Data Protection Officer at: Data Protection Officer, Information Management Team, Birmingham City University, University House, 15 Bartholomew Row, Birmingham B5 5JU, email informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk or call +44 (0)121 202 4597.

Thank you for participating in my research.

Sources of support

Mind: www.mind.org.uk

Information (including services) for people in the UK dealing with mental health issues.

Call the support line on 0300 102 1234

The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org

Service for people in the UK an Ireland in need of emotional support.

- Call 116 123
- Text 07725 90 90 90
- Email jo@samaritans.org
- Open 24/7

Shout: https://giveusashout.org/

Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

- Text 85258
- Open 24/7

Friends or family

Appendix L: Study Two Interview schedule and photos

The opening script and questions for Study Two participants appears below:
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research. I have received your completed consent. Although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview it will not be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after 30 May 2022 which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a Personal Identifier Code which will be attached to your interview responses. If you want to withdraw from the research, you will need to email that Personal Identifier Code to one of my supervisors.

I am recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during this interview for any reason. If you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

I have some set questions that I am asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better, I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. I am just trying to determine if the opinions we have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo, so some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that is just so I can be sure I understand what you are telling me. If you would prefer not to answer any question, just let me know and I will move on.

Please let me know if you would like me to repeat a question for any reason or would like me to rephrase a question. I anticipate this interview will take between 45 and 60 minutes. Are you happy for me to begin?

Main	Rephrase	Follow-up
Do you have any tattoos?		If yes: • Can you tell me why you chose to get these tattoos? • What do these tattoos mean to you? • Are your tattoos/any of your tattoos visible? • How do other people respond to you having tattoos? • What has your experience been of having these tattoos in your workplace? If no: • Are there any particular reasons why you don't or wouldn't have a tattoo? • Why do you think that people have tattoos choose to have them?
Do any of your friends or family have tattoos?		If yes: • What do you think of the tattoos they have? • How do you feel about them having tattoos? If no, are there any particular reasons why you think this is the case?

How would you define a professional occupation? What are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos? Can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional who has visible tattoos? What has influenced your attitudes towards tattoos?	Offer definition if participant is unsure	

On the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a teacher/ barrister/doctor/vicar/nurse/police officer*. • What are your initial thoughts when you see this image? • Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with/or used the services of a professional <> who had a tattoo? • How would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional? • How would their tattoo influence how capable you thought they would be in their profession? • How does the location/position/imagery of the tattoo influence your attitude towards them as professionals?		Ask follow-ups about specific professions/locations of tattoos.

On the screen is another image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a teacher/barrister/doctor/vicar/nurse/police officer*. • What are your initial thoughts when you see this image? • Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with/or used the services of a professional <> who had a tattoo? • How would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional? • How would their tattoo influence how capable you thought they would be in their profession? • How does the location/position/imagery of the tattoo influence your attitude towards them as professionals? • Is this the same for all professions? • Why?		Ask follow-ups about specific professions/locations of tattoos.
Are the answers you've given me influenced by your experience with a tattooed person you have encountered? Can you tell me a bit more about this?	Were you thinking of anybody in particular when answering my questions?	

Have you formed an opinion about someone because they have tattoos, and then that opinion has changed?		Could you tell me what you originally thought and how that changed? And why?
Is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me?		

Debrief

That's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Thank you for your time today and for your honesty, I really appreciate it. I will email a copy of the transcript and debrief information to you which has contact information on it should you need it.

Appendix M: Likert scale questions

Using the scale slider, where do you think you are on the scale (0 being tattoos of any kind are completely unacceptable, 100 being any tattoo, anywhere is totally fine):

1. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the lower arm?
2. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the lower leg?
3. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the upper arm?
4. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the upper leg?
5. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the lower arm?
6. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation up to the size of the palm of your hand on the lower leg?
7. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation up to the size of the palm of your hand on the upper arm?
8. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation up to the size of the palm of your hand on the upper leg?
9. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
10. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
11. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?

12. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
13. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
14. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
15. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
16. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation up to the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
17. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the lower arm?
18. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the lower leg?
19. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the upper arm?
20. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the upper leg?
21. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the lower arm?
22. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the lower leg?
23. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the upper arm?
24. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the upper leg?

25. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
26. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
27. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
28. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
29. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
30. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
31. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
32. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the chest or back?
33. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the neck?
34. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the face?
35. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation.) up to the size of the palm of your hand on the neck?

36. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation up to the size of the palm of your hand on the face?
37. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the neck?
38. A nature-themed tattoo (animal, flower, tree, mountain, sky, ocean etc.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the face?
39. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation.) larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the neck?
40. An icon-themed tattoo (dice, playing cards, person's name, sport club or affiliation larger than the size of the palm of your hand on the face?
41. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the lower arm?
42. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the lower leg?
43. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the upper arm?
44. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the upper leg?
45. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the chest or back?
46. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the lower face?
47. A gang-themed tattoo (right wing, 88, swastika, teardrop, 3 or 5 dots, AB etc.) up to the size of the palm or your hand on the lower neck?

Appendix N: Story Completion Instructions and Post-Completion Questions

You are invited to complete a story – this means that you read the opening sentences of a story and then write what happens next. There is no right or wrong way to complete the story, and you can be as creative as you like in completing the story. I am interested in the range of different stories that people tell. Don't spend too long thinking about what might happen next – just write about whatever first comes to mind. Because collecting detailed stories is important for my research, you are asked to WRITE A STORY THAT IS AT LEAST 10 LINES/200 WORDS LONG. Some details of the opening sentence of the story are deliberately vague; it's up to you to be creative and 'fill in the blanks'.

Story stem

Sam is travelling on a train in a very busy carriage. They are sat on a table with two others and there are also people stood in the aisles. One of the passengers at the table is reading a book and Sam notices that they also have a tattoo on their neck, the other has been playing on their phone for most of the journey so far. The train slowly comes to a stop and there is an announcement about a problem on the track which means the train will have to stop between stations for about 40 minutes. Sam doesn't have their phone with them or anything to read. What happens next?

<u>Post story completion questions:</u>

Following submission of the story, participants will be asked the following questions:

1) If you were Sam, would you start a conversation with either of the strangers sat with you?

    a. If yes, would you talk to the tattooed stranger first?

2) If you were Sam, would you talk to the stranger about their neck tattoo?

3) If you haven't indicated already, did you imagine the stranger with the neck tattoo was male or female?

4) What job do you think the stranger with the neck tattoo does?

Appendix O: Descriptive Statistics

Study One Participants' Demographics

	n	%
Gender		
Female	324	78.8
Male	84	20.4
Non-Binary	2	.5
Not known	1	.2
Age		
<=40	235	57.2
=>41	176	42.8
Ethnic group		
White	343	83.5
Asian	20	4.9
Black	8	1.9
Mixed	13	3.2
Other	7	1.7
Not known*	20	4.9
Highest Educational Attainment (or equivalent)		
GCSE	10	2.4
A-Level	20	4.9
Diploma/Cert	18	4.4
UG degree	143	34.8
Masters' degree	80	19.5
Other PG qual	87	21.2
PhD/Doctorate	33	8.0
Not known*	20	4.4
Occupational status		
Non-Professional	137	33.3
Professional	274	66.7
Civil/Marital status		
Single/Divorced	146	35.5
Relationship/Widowed	243	59.1
Not known*	22	5.4
Tattooed status		
Not tattooed	235	57.2
Tattooed	156	38.0
Not known*	20	4.4
Religious or Spiritual status		
Not religious	246	59.9
Religious/spiritual	165	40.1

**Includes pilot participants (n=20) not asked for this information.*

Study One – Participants' occupations. Highlighting denotes ONS (2016) defined professional occupations.

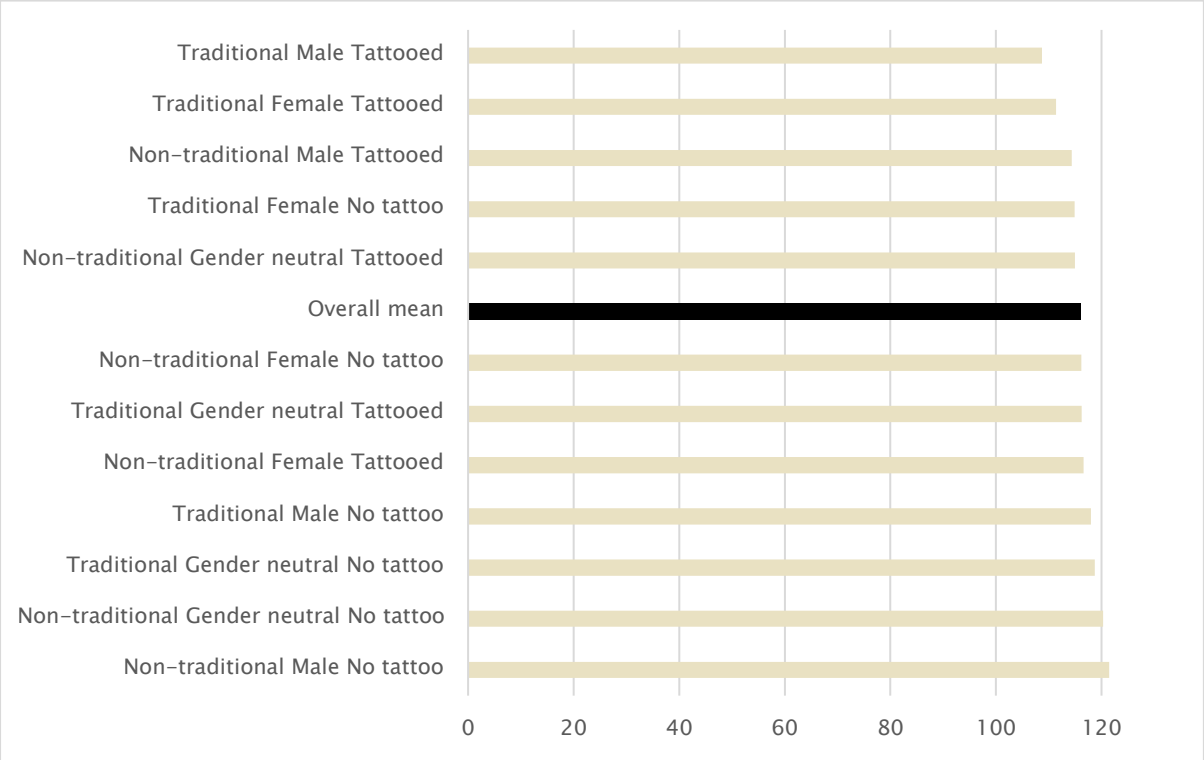
Occupation	%	*n*
Teaching and educational professionals	43.8	180
Health professionals	8.3	34
Administrative occupations	7.3	30
Student	5.8	24
Science, research, engineering, technology professionals	5.8	24
Other	5.4	22
Corporate managers and directors	4.1	17
Retired	3.6	15
Other managers and proprietors	3.4	14
Business, media, and public service professionals	2.9	12
Health and social care associate professionals	2.7	11
Business and public service associate professionals	2.2	9
Science, engineering, technology associate professionals	1.0	4
Customer service occupations	1.0	4
Protective service occupations	0.5	2
Secretarial and related occupations	0.5	2
Culture, media, and sports occupations	0.2	1
Textiles, printing, and other skilled trades	0.2	1
Caring personal service occupations	0.2	1
Sales occupations	0.2	1
Unemployed	0.2	1
Prefer not to say	0.5	2

Study One SPVQ Descriptive Statistics by Traditional Status

	n	Min	Max	Mean
Traditional				
Male No tattoo	29	94	153	118.00
Male Tattooed	27	77	134	108.70
Female No tattoo	35	77	166	114.91
Female Tattooed	41	71	162	111.41
Gender neutral No tattoo	42	63	222	118.74
Gender neutral Tattooed	34	77	148	116.21
Non-Traditional				
Male No tattoo	31	80	192	121.45
Male Tattooed	28	62	164	114.36
Female No tattoo	37	74	162	116.19
Female Tattooed	37	86	142	116.62
Gender neutral No tattoo	33	76	209	120.33
Gender neutral Tattooed	37	75	182	114.95

Total	411	62	222	116.03

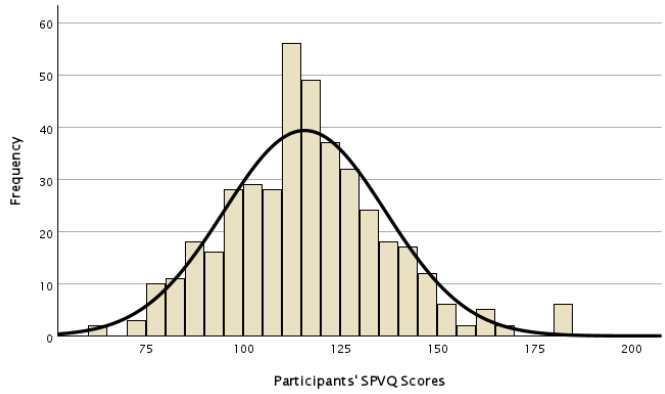
Study One - SPVQ Mean Scores According to Condition Compared to Overall Mean



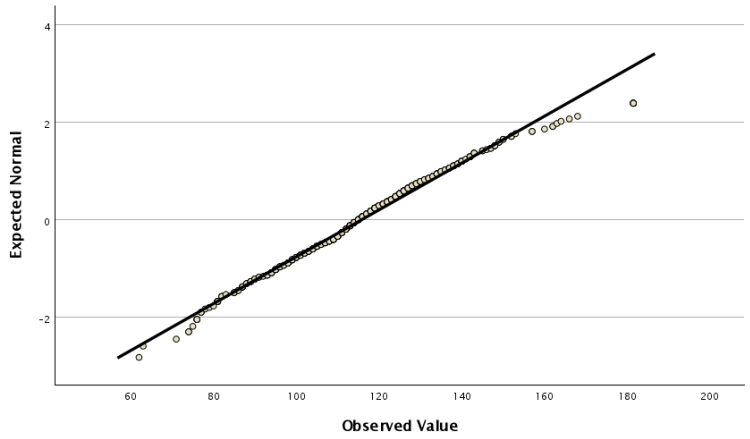
Study One - SPVQ Participant Score Outliers

Participant number	Score
Highest	
309	222
304	209
411	197
11	194
409	192
307	182
Lowest	
208	62
319	63
377	71
153	74
115	74

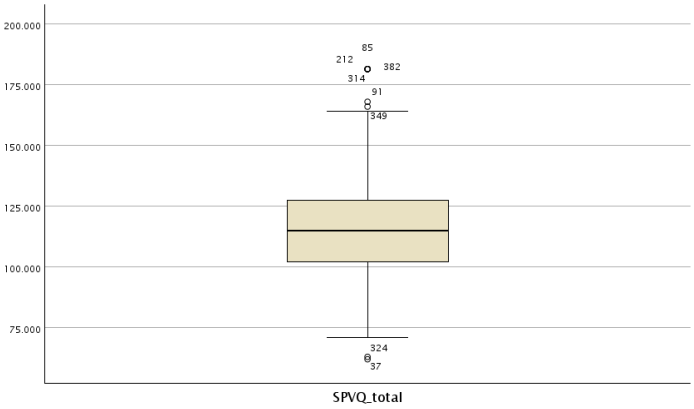
Study One: Histogram of Winsorised Participants' SPVQ Scores and Normal Curve



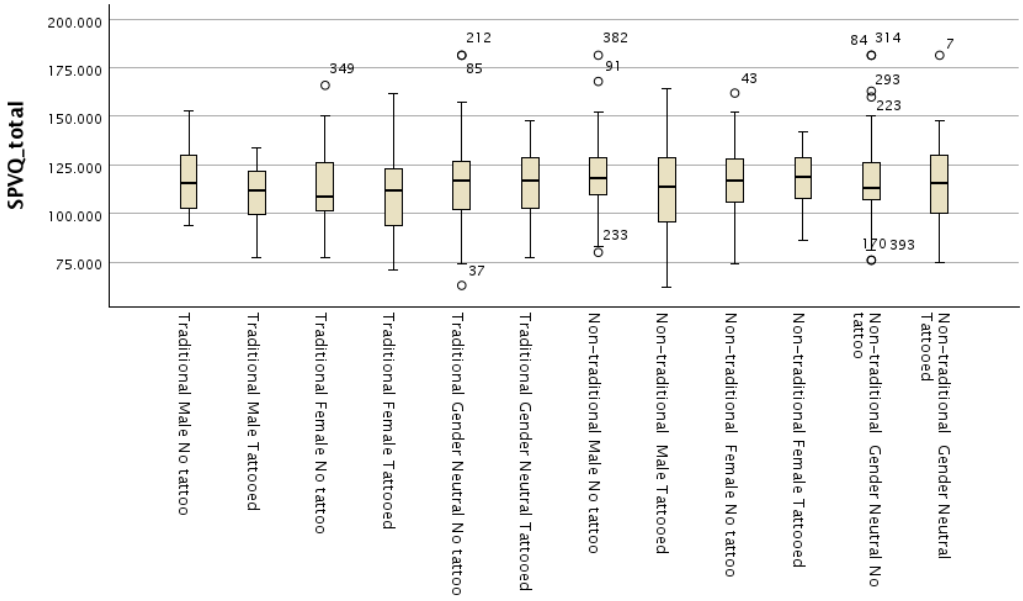
Study One: Q-Q Plot for Winsorised SPVQ values



Study One: Boxplot for Winsorised SPVQ Values



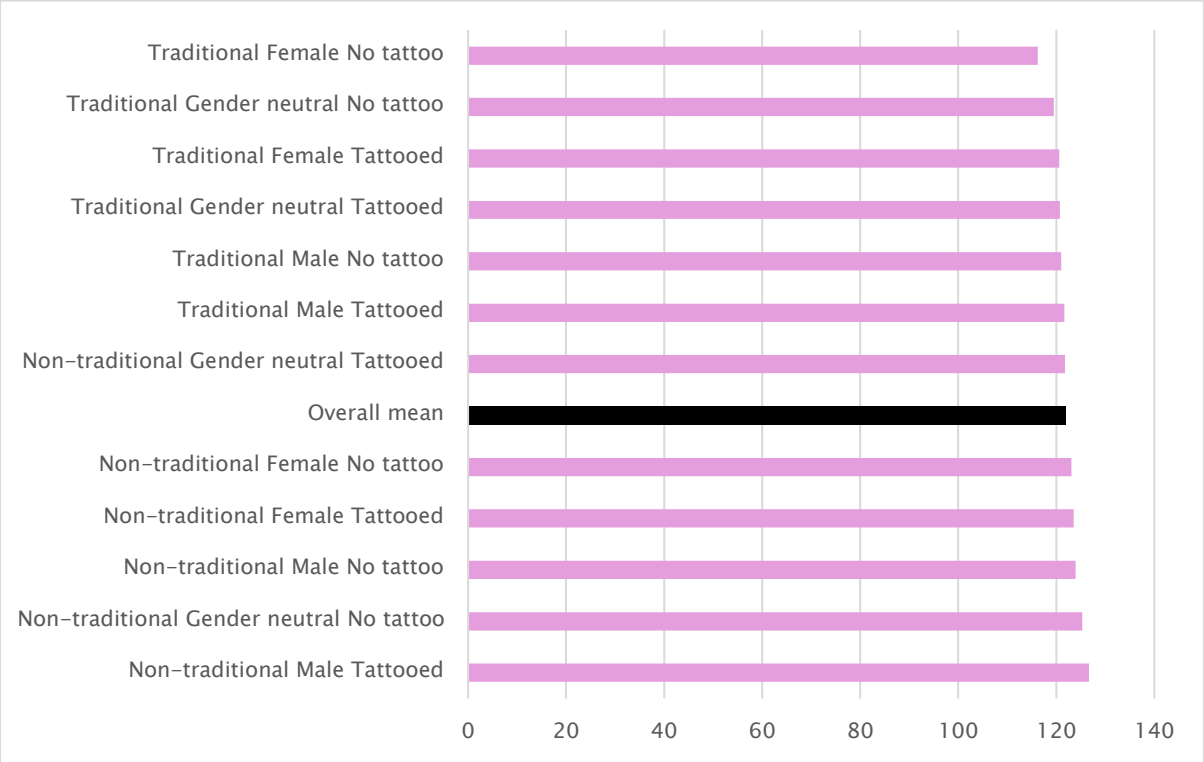
Study One: Boxplot showing Winsorised Participants' SPVQ Scores by Condition



Study One: MFQ Descriptive Statistics by Traditional Status

	n	Min	Max	Mean
	Traditional			
Male No tattoo	29	96	141	121.00
Male Tattooed	27	89	155	121.67
Female No tattoo	35	89	148	116.23
Female Tattooed	41	63	159	120.59
Gender neutral No tattoo	42	48	152	119.48
Gender neutral Tattooed	34	91	153	120.71
	Non-Traditional			
Male No tattoo	34	91	153	120.71
Male Tattooed	31	94	150	123.97
Female No tattoo	28	87	156	126.71
Female Tattooed	37	100	154	123.11
Gender neutral No tattoo	37	102	159	123.54
Gender neutral Tattooed	33	40	159	125.30
Total	37	84	150	121.81

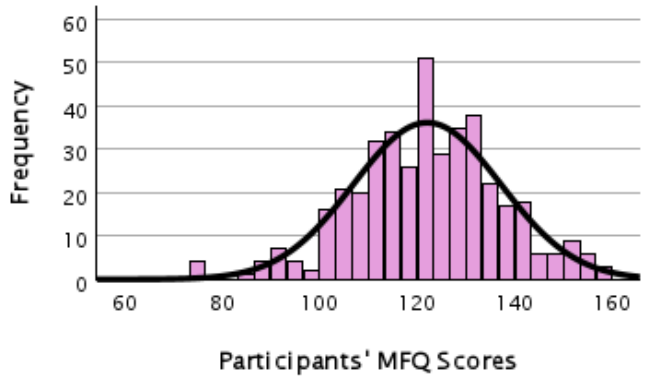
Study One: MFQ Mean Scores According to Condition Compared to Overall Mean



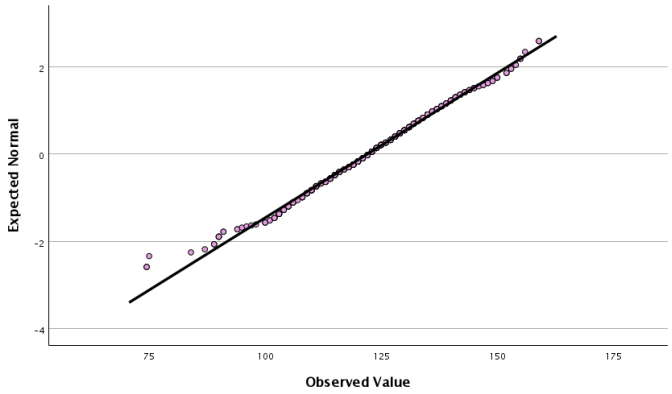
Study One – MFQ Participant Score Outliers

Participant number	Score
Highest	
166	159
247	159
315	159
202	156
35	155
Lowest	
304	40
11	48
365	63
309	75
105	84

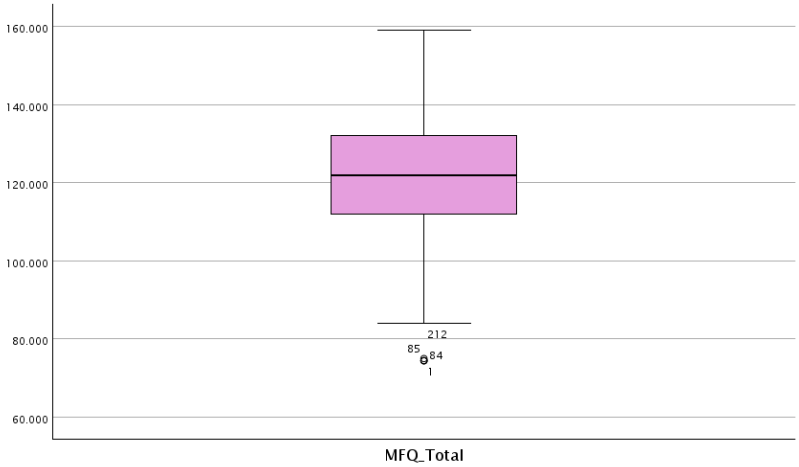
Study One - Histogram of Winsorised Participants' MFQ Scores and Normal Curve



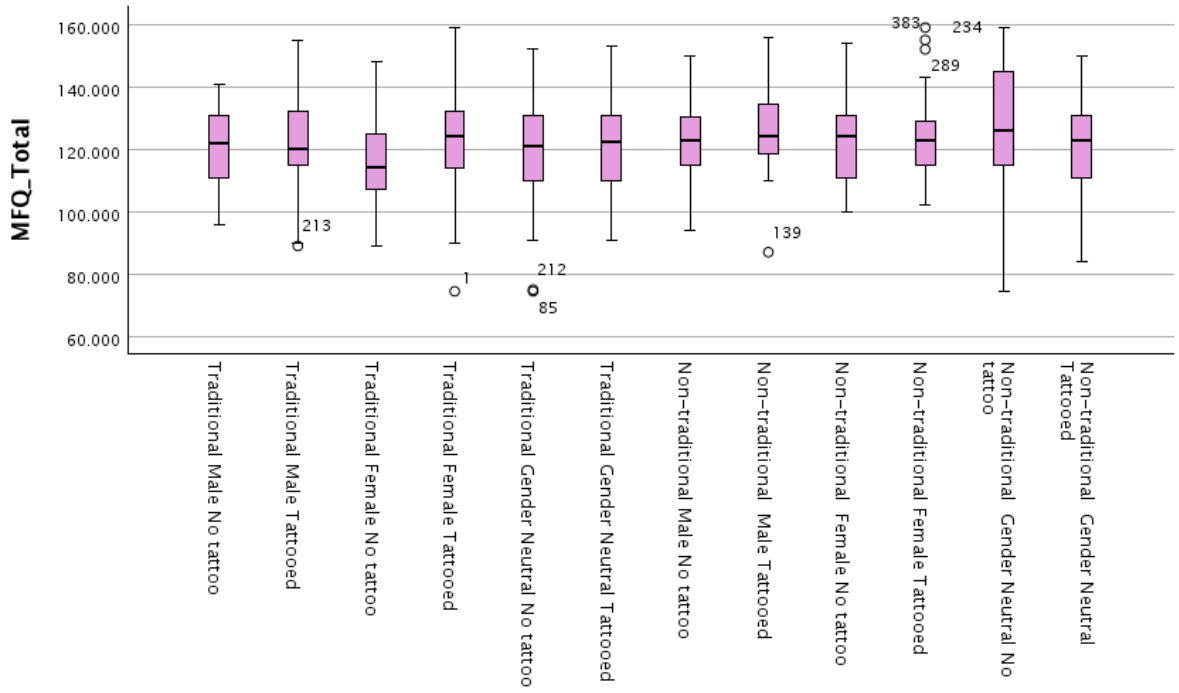
Study One - Q-Q Plot for MFQ Values



Study One - Boxplot for Winsorised Participants' MFQ Scores



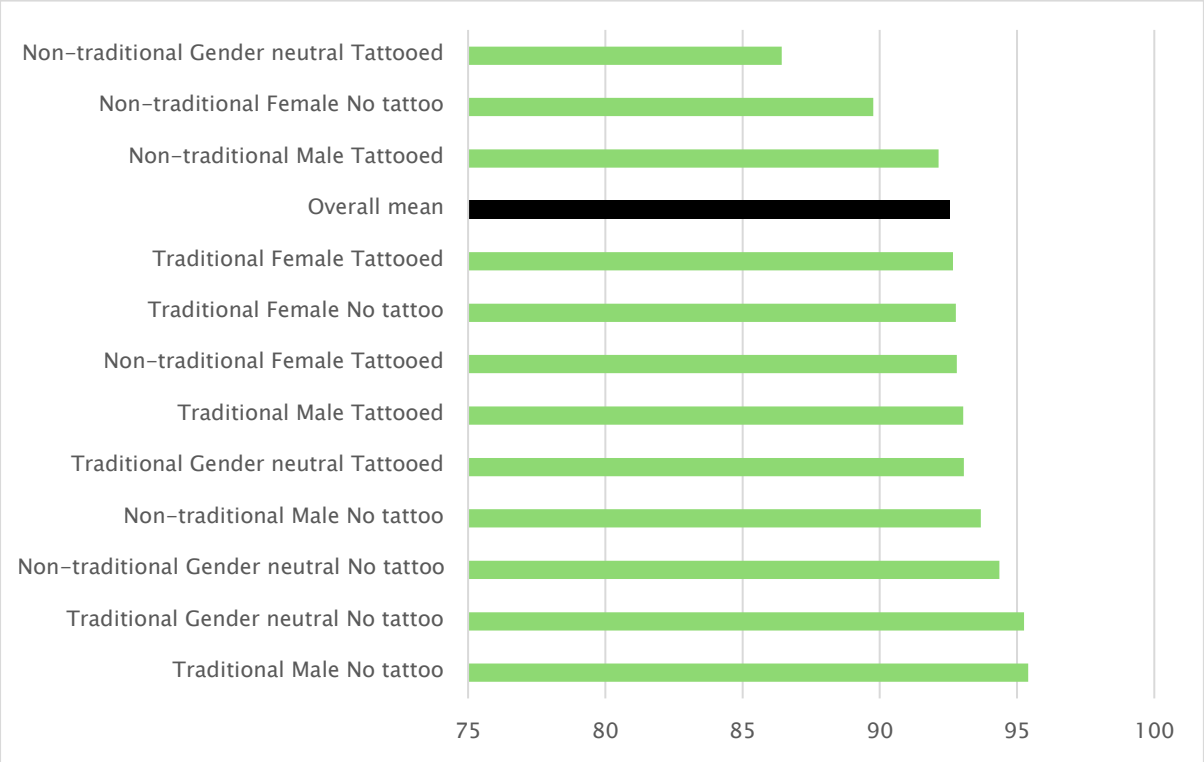
Study One – Boxplot showing Winsorised Participants' MFQ Scores by Condition



Study One – BIS Descriptive Statistics by Traditional Status

	n	Min	Max	Mean
	Traditional			
Male No tattoo	29	73	108	95.41
Male Tattooed	27	70	106	93.04
Female No tattoo	108	108	92.77	8.758
Female Tattooed	35	66	108	92.77
Gender neutral No tattoo	41	42	112	92.66
Gender neutral Tattooed	42	79	112	95.26
	Non-Traditional			
Male No tattoo	31	82	110	93.68
Male Tattooed	28	77	107	92.14
Female No tattoo	37	68	108	89.76
Female Tattooed	37	65	107	92.81
Gender neutral No tattoo	33	79	108	94.36
Gender neutral Tattooed	37	62	104	86.43
Total	411	42	112	92.56

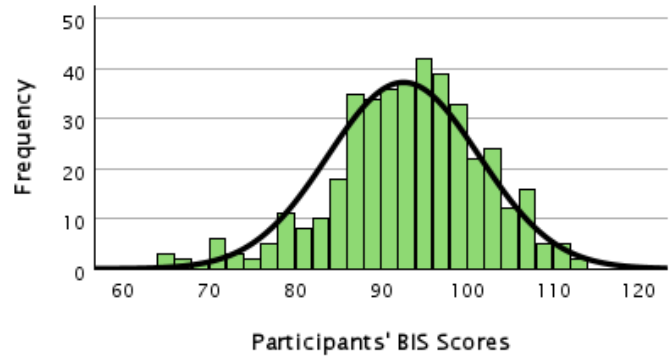
Study One – BIS Mean Scores According to Condition Compared to Overall Mean



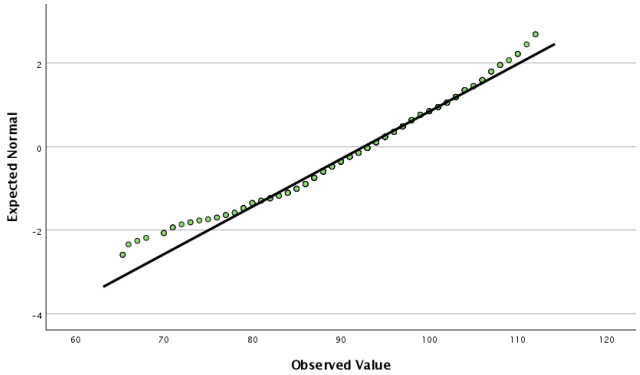
Study One – BIS Participant Score Outliers

Participant number	Score
Highest	
328	112
387	112
399	111
95	110
126	110
Lowest	
365	42
159	62
292	65
374	66
271	67

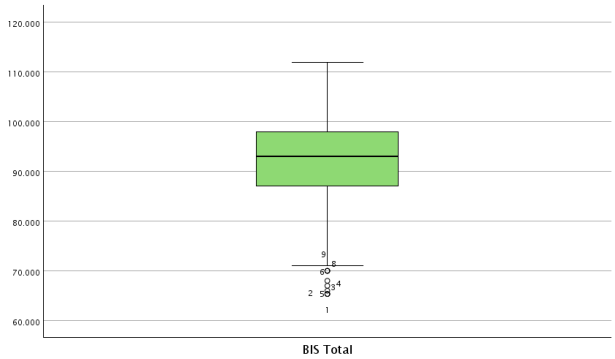
Study One – Histogram of Winsorised Participants' BIS Scores and Normal Curve



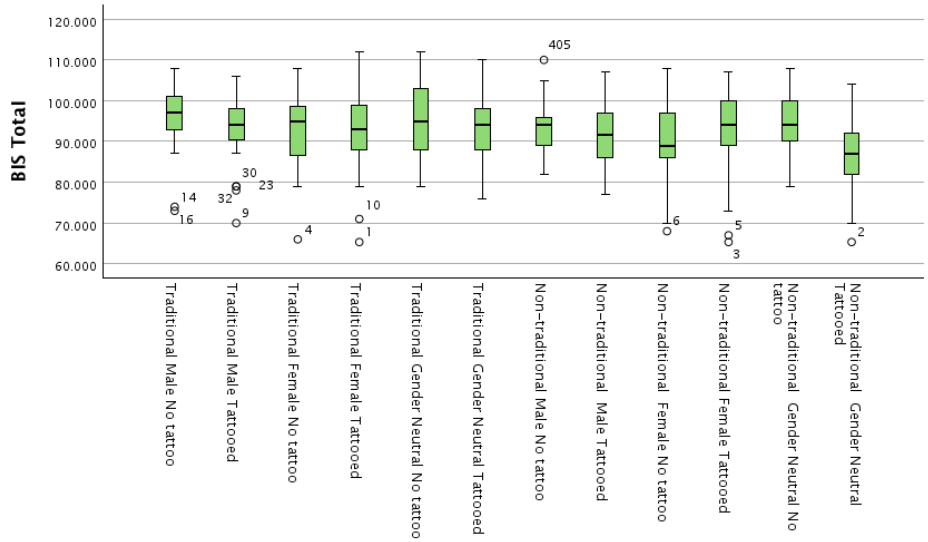
Study One – Q-Q Plot for Winsorised BIS values



Study One – Boxplot for Winsorised Participants' BIS Scores



Study One - Boxplot showing Winsorised Participants' BIS Scores by Condition



Study Three Participants' Demographics

	n	%
Gender		
Female	128	74
Male	39	22.5
Non-Binary	5	2.9
Not known	1	.6
Age		
<=42	89	51.5
=>43	83	47.9
Not known	1	.6
Ethnic group		
White	152	87.9
Asian	10	5.8
Black	2	1.2
Mixed	7	4.0
Other	1	.6
Not known	1	.6
Highest Educational Attainment or equivalent		
GCSE	4	2.3
A-Level	8	4.6
Diploma/Cert	8	4.6
UG degree	60	34.7
Masters' degree	44	25.4
Other PG qual	26	15.0
PhD/Doctorate	21	12.1
Not known	2	1.2
Occupational status		
Non-Professional	56	32.4

Professional	117	67.6
Civil/Marital status		
Single/Divorced	71	41.0
Relationship/Widowed	101	58.4
Not known	1	.6
Tattooed status		
Not tattooed	86	49.7
Tattooed	87	50.3
Religious or Spiritual status		
Not religious	109	63.0
Religious/spiritual	61	35.3
Not known	3	1.7

Study Three - Participants' occupations. Highlighting denotes ONS (2016) defined professional occupations.

Occupation	%	*n*
Teaching and educational professionals	86	49.7
Student	19	11.0
Health professionals	12	6.9
Administrative occupations	10	5.8
Retired	9	5.2
Other managers and proprietors	7	4.0
Corporate managers and directors	5	2.9
Other	5	2.9
Science, research, engineering and technology professionals	5	2.9
Health and social care associate professionals	4	2.3
Culture, media and sports occupations	2	1.2
Caring and personal service occupations	2	1.2
Business and public service associate professionals	3	1.7
Business, media and public service professionals	1	.6
Skilled agricultural and related trades	1	.6
Textiles, printing and other skilled trades	1	.6
Unemployed	1	.6
Total	173	100.0

Study Three - Minimum, Maximum, Range, Mean and Standard Deviation: Nature

	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Mean	Std Dev.
Nature up to Palm-size					
Lower Arm	0	100	100	86.55	26.827
Lower Leg	0	100	100	87.40	27.084
Upper Arm	0	100	100	89.68	24.041
Upper Leg	0	100	100	90.40	24.652
Chest or back	0	100	100	88.53	26.685
Face	0	100	100	40.07	37.594
Neck	0	100	100	53.51	39.531

			Nature Larger than Palm-size		
Lower Arm	0	100	100	83.91	29.386
Lower Leg	0	100	100	84.76	29.697
Upper Arm	0	100	100	87.38	27.004
Upper Leg	0	100	100	87.43	27.092
Chest or back	0	100	100	87.21	27.649
Face	0	100	100	37.99	39.127
Neck	0	100	100	48.03	41.495

Study Three - Minimum, Maximum, Range, Mean and Standard Deviation: Icon

	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Mean	Std Dev.
			Icon up to Palm-size		
Lower Arm	0	100	100	81.99	30.646
Lower Leg	0	100	100	83.63	30.007
Upper Arm	0	100	100	85.56	27.826
Upper Leg	0	100	100	86.25	28.283
Chest or back	0	100	100	83.95	29.686
Face	0	100	100	35.57	36.483
Neck	0	100	100	47.38	40.112
			Icon Larger than Palm-size		
Lower Arm	0	100	100	76.54	35.582
Lower Leg	0	100	100	78.37	34.887
Upper Arm	0	100	100	80.47	33.015
Upper Leg	0	100	100	80.57	33.316
Chest or back	0	100	100	80.51	33.383
Face	0	100	100	32.49	36.856
Neck	0	100	100	43.86	40.704

Study Three - Minimum, Maximum, Range, Mean and Standard Deviation: Gang

	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Mean	Std Dev.
			Gang up to Palm-size		
Lower Arm	0	100	100	11.83	27.160
Lower Leg	0	100	100	12.58	27.721
Upper Arm	0	100	100	12.71	28.377
Upper Leg	0	100	100	13.11	28.615
Chest or back	0	100	100	13.77	29.012
Face	0	100	100	7.21	21.559
Neck	0	100	100	8.68	22.858
			Gang Larger than Palm-size		
Lower Arm	0	100	100	8.90	23.929
Lower Leg	0	100	100	9.50	24.929
Upper Arm	0	100	100	10.12	25.203
Upper Leg	0	100	100	10.98	26.322
Chest or back	0	100	100	10.53	25.751
Face	0	100	100	6.74	21.355
Neck	0	100	100	7.03	21.320

Appendix P: Multivariate, Univariate and Kruskal-Wallis analyses

Study One – Hypothesis one SPSS output

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Powerd
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.994	33988.092b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.994	67976.183	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.006	33988.092b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.994	67976.183	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	168.258	33988.092b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.994	67976.183	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	168.258	33988.092b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.994	67976.183	1.000
Gender_cond	Pillai's Trace	.008	.853	4.000	810.000	.492	.004	3.414	.274
	Wilks' Lambda	.992	.852b	4.000	808.000	.492	.004	3.410	.274
	Hotelling's Trace	.008	.851	4.000	806.000	.493	.004	3.406	.273
	Roy's Largest Root	.008	1.531c	2.000	405.000	.218	.008	3.062	.325
Trad_V_Non_Trad	Pillai's Trace	.035	7.264b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.035	14.528	.935
	Wilks' Lambda	.965	7.264b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.035	14.528	.935
	Hotelling's Trace	.036	7.264b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.035	14.528	.935
	Roy's Largest Root	.036	7.264b	2.000	404.000	<.001	.035	14.528	.935
Gender_cond *	Pillai's Trace	.003	.335	4.000	810.000	.855	.002	1.339	.126
Trad_V_Non_Trad	Wilks' Lambda	.997	.334b	4.000	808.000	.855	.002	1.337	.126
	Hotelling's Trace	.003	.334	4.000	806.000	.855	.002	1.335	.126
	Roy's Largest Root	.003	.651c	2.000	405.000	.522	.003	1.303	.159

a. Design: Intercept + Gender_cond + Trad_V_Non_Trad + Gender_cond * Trad_V_Non_Trad

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

d. Computed using alpha=.05

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Powerc
Corrected Model	SPVQ_total	603.031a		603.031	1.389	.239	.003	1.389	.217
	MFQ_Total	1707.870b	1	1707.870	7.609	.006	.018	7.609	.786
Intercept	SPVQ_total	5509405.019	1	5509405.019	12694.555	<.001	.969	12694.555	1.000
	MFQ_Total	6123145.886	1	6123145.886	27281.241	<.001	.985	27281.241	1.000
Trad_V_Non_Trad	SPVQ_total	603.031	1	603.031	1.389	.239	.003	1.389	.217
	MFQ_Total	1707.870	1	1707.870	7.609	.006	.018	7.609	.786
Error	SPVQ_total	177504.980	409	433.998					
	MFQ_Total	91798.121	409	224.445					
Total	SPVQ_total	5686925.988	411						
	MFQ_Total	6215069.981	411						
Corrected Total	SPVQ_total	178108.012	410						
	MFQ_Total	93505.991	410						

a. R Squared=.003 (Adjusted R Squared=.001)

b. R Squared=.018 (Adjusted R Squared=.016)

c. Computed using alpha=.05

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Powerc
Corrected Model	SPVQ_total	603.031a	1	603.031	1.389	.239	.003	1.389	.217
	MFQ_Total	1707.870b	1	1707.870	7.609	.006	.018	7.609	.786
Intercept	SPVQ_total	5509405.019	1	5509405.019	12694.555	<.001	.969	12694.555	1.000
	MFQ_Total	6123145.886	1	6123145.886	27281.241	<.001	.985	27281.241	1.000
Trad_V_Non_Trad	SPVQ_total	603.031	1	603.031	1.389	.239	.003	1.389	.217
	MFQ_Total	1707.870	1	1707.870	7.609	.006	.018	7.609	.786
Error	SPVQ_total	177504.980	409	433.998					
	MFQ_Total	91798.121	409	224.445					
Total	SPVQ_total	5686925.988	411						
	MFQ_Total	6215069.981	411						
Corrected Total	SPVQ_total	178108.012	410						
	MFQ_Total	93505.991	410						

a. R Squared=.003 (Adjusted R Squared=.001)

b. R Squared=.018 (Adjusted R Squared=.016)

c. Computed using alpha=.05

Test Statistics[a,b]

	RevBISTotal
Kruskal-Wallis H	9.028
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.003

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Trad Prof VS NonTrad Prof

Study One – Hypothesis two SPSS output

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Powerc
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.994	29849.081b	2.000	388.000	<.001	.994	59698.161	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.006	29849.081b	2.000	388.000	<.001	.994	59698.161	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	153.861	29849.081b	2.000	388.000	<.001	.994	59698.161	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	153.861	29849.081b	2.000	388.000	<.001	.994	59698.161	1.000
Tattooed	Pillai's Trace	.003	.655b	2.000	388.000	.520	.003	1.310	.160
	Wilks' Lambda	.997	.655b	2.000	388.000	.520	.003	1.310	.160
	Hotelling's Trace	.003	.655b	2.000	388.000	.520	.003	1.310	.160
	Roy's Largest Root	.003	.655b	2.000	388.000	.520	.003	1.310	.160

a. Design: Intercept + Tattooed

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using alpha = .05

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Powerc
Corrected Model	SPVQ_total	537.163a	1	537.163	1.264	.262	.003	1.264	.202
	MFQ_Total	95.909b	1	95.909	.425	.515	.001	.425	.100
Intercept	SPVQ_total	5070330.563	1	5070330.563	11932.543	<.001	.968	11932.543	1.000
	MFQ_Total	5577851.107	1	5577851.107	24702.014	<.001	.984	24702.014	1.000
Tattooed	SPVQ_total	537.163	1	537.163	1.264	.262	.003	1.264	.202
	MFQ_Total	95.909	1	95.909	.425	.515	.001	.425	.100
Error	SPVQ_total	165292.397	389	424.916					
	MFQ_Total	87838.347	389	225.806					
Total	SPVQ_total	5429989.990	391						
	MFQ_Total	5912926.988	391						
Corrected Total	SPVQ_total	165829.560	390						
	MFQ_Total	87934.255	390						

a. R Squared = .003 (Adjusted R Squared = .001)

b. R Squared = .001 (Adjusted R Squared = -.001)

c. Computed using alpha = .05

Test Statisticsa,b

	RevBISTotal
Kruskal-Wallis H	3.292
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.070

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Tattoo_Cond

Appendix Q: Study Two Interview Transcripts

Martin

STF

So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I've received your completed consent, although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview will not be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May, which is the last point which you can withdraw from this research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview responses. If you do want to withdraw from the research, you'll need to email that personal identifier code.

STF

To either me or one of my supervisors. So I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything.

STF

You can stop at any time during this interview for any reason. If you do, stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted. You happy to proceed.

Martin

Yes.

STF

Thank you. I have some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better, I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. Just to be clear, there are no trick questions and there are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure that I understand what you're

telling me. If you would prefer not to answer any question, just let me know and I can move on. Please also let me know if you'd like me to repeat a question for any reason or if you'd like me to rephrase a question. I anticipate this interview will take between 45 and 60 minutes, but that depends on how the discussion goes. You happy for me to begin?

Martin

Yes. Yeah.

STF

Lovely. Thank you. So do you have any tattoos yourself?

Martin

No, I don't.

STF

OK. Is there any particular reason or reasons why you don't have a tattoo?

Martin

I I for me to have them on my body. I just. I don't like the idea. Of ink being injected into my skin, I get very funny about having pen or anything on my hands. So the idea of having something that's there permanently. It it's yeah. It's just a personal thing. It's just something that I have never liked the idea of for me personally.

STF

OK, so I I think I know the answer to this question, but I'm gonna ask it anyway. Is is that the reason why? I'm guessing you wouldn't have a tattoo in the future, so it's not that you've thought about it. You just haven't got round to it now. It's that you just wouldn't have one at all because of not liking ink under the skin.

Martin

Yes. Yeah. I would never have a tattoo.

STF

OK, lovely. Thank you.

Martin

Well, that's how I feel at the moment.

STF

Yeah, of course. Absolutely. And. And yeah, thoughts and feelings can change, but no, thank you for that. Why do you think then as somebody without a tattoo? Why do you think that people have that have tattoos choose to have them?

Martin

I think I think there's several categories of people really with in terms of tattoos. I think there are those people who have always wanted one. For whatever reasons and those will be personal to the person, but they have always wanted one, I think. Some people and you can have to excuse the terminology here. Some people are sheep and as a result of fashion and influencing and pop culture and key famous people having them, I think some individuals will have them as a fashion accessory or because it's something that is popular.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Martin

And at the time, I think there are also people who. Uh, I have had an event in their life, either a positive thing or a negative thing or something that was negative that has turned into a positive that they in some way want to remember or want to celebrate and hadn't necessarily thought about having a tattoo in the 1st place, like the sort of people from category one and not doing it because of pop culture because it's a fashion statement. But

because of that significant thing that's happened in their life. Want some sort of personal reminder? And and sometimes people, I think go down the line of a tattoo for that.

STF

OK. Lovely. Thank you. I'm so do any of your friends or family have tattoos?

Martin

Yes, I mean. Some of my friends. Uh. Some of my family have tattoos, yeah.

STF

OK. And what do you think of the tattoos they have and you can you can think of either your friends or your family or or or or altogether combined if you want. So what do you think of the tattoos that they have?

Martin

I. Well, I mean firstly I suppose. It doesn't really matter what I think about them. They've had them for their own reasons. It doesn't in any way change my opinion or thoughts about them. UM, it's their body it’s up to them what they do to their body. Sometimes I think some of the tattoos that people have had. Look better and have been done to a better quality than others.

STF

Umm.

Martin

But yeah, in terms of what I think. The there's a, there's an element of ambivalence there. Like I said, it's their body. It's up to them and. Yeah. So it's their decision, really. Yeah. My only opinion comes down to, I suppose, the quality of the artwork and the quality of the tattoo artists that they went to.

STF

Hmm. OK, OK. I'm gonna change my next question slightly then because

you've sort of touched on it, but extended a little bit. So I was originally going to ask you how you feel about them having tattoos, but you've mentioned that. So I think I want to change that slightly and ask how would you feel about your friends and family having tattoos if you were going out with them in, say, a social setting and the tattoos would be visible, how would you feel about that situation?

Martin

Again, that situation wouldn't bother me. The only time it would bother me if I felt that any of their tattoos that were on display were inappropriate in some way. So for example. And if there was any sort of nudity, any sort of, uh, abusive language, anything that was racist, sexist, homophobic.

STF

Yeah.

Martin

But apart from that, irrespective of the actual quality of the artwork, no, I wouldn't. It wouldn't bother me whatsoever.

STF

OK, OK. Lovely. Thank you. OK. I'm just gonna, because obviously I'm talking about and looking at professionals. How would you define a professional occupation? And I'll just remind you that again, there are no trick questions. There's no right or wrong. It's just how, how would you define a professional occupation?

Martin

Well, I mean slightly slightly from my jokey perspective that I talk about, I always say a professional is somebody who doesn't get paid overtime. Because. And I do think it it it, it's the difference between a wage and a salary. And I think professional. Is somebody who has had to be educated

or taught to a particular level to. Uh to develop a specific skill set as specific knowledge set that, uh, you would have to have a certain amount of specific training for. I also think that the phrase professional. I'm sort of going back to the salary thing again now, but somebody who is a professional isn't somebody who necessarily does a 9 till five Monday to Friday job. There is an expectation there to put in the hours, put in the work to get the job done rather than thinking about starting at 9, start finishing at five, I think within our society as well.

STF

Hmm. OK.

Martin

This slightly more pressure on professionals to act in a particular way within our society. I know because I come from a teaching in education background. I know that teachers, even when they're not. Within the classroom or not in work hours are still expected to act in a way that doesn't bring their profession i.e. Teaching into sort of disrepute. So I think a professional is when it's something more than just a job. I think it's something that has wide implications in terms of society and societies expectations, and I'm not in any way disparaging people who work on a till in a shop or in a supermarket. I've been there, I've done it myself, but I think societies expectations have, say, a teacher, a doctor or a lawyer would be higher than somebody who works in a shop or a supermarket.

STF

OK.

Martin

For example. So I think it's that it's that society. Societal expectations of a person to act in a particular way.

STF

OK. And I just, I was gonna ask you about that. So you think it comes from society. Do you think there's any particular area of society that applies that pressure?

Martin

I I just, I think it's all all elements of society really. I think it day to day people. I think the government expect people in certain positions to act in certain ways.

STF

OK.

Martin

Uh, I do think that there are higher expectations on people who work in specific jobs that would fall under the category of professional.

Martin

Umm I I think people expectations of them are higher. I think that's why when you see on the news if a if a doctor. Has been found to have been killing their patients and falls into the category of a serial killer. I think people are more shocked than if it was somebody again working Behind the till at Morrisons say.

STF

Hmm. That expectation of

Martin

Yeah. The expectation of uh, I suppose a a higher level. Uh, that's not the best terminology, but a higher level within society. I think people have got greater expectations of them.

STF

Hmm. OK, OK. So in terms of thinking about your definition of of what is a

professional and and that is that's a good working definition. What do you think about professionals having tattoos?

Martin

Well, I think firstly, we go back to my original point about people's bodies of their own and if they want to have tattoos. You know that's up to them. It's their body. And it's their choice. The same applies if they have piercings, whether that's in their ears, nose, eyebrows, lips, et cetera, or whether they dye, the dye their hair or different colour. And that's down to the individual, I think. The issue arises again, I've mentioned this before. Uh, if those tattoos that are visible. Or in any way could be classed in any way as abusive, disrespectful, racist, homophobic. Pornographic, you know, been nudity and things like that. I think for me that's where the issue arises.

STF

Umm.

Martin

I think.

STF

OK. Yeah, that's that's lovely. Thank you. So using your definition that you've come up with for a professional and you mentioned about education, so you can use education if you want or another profession. Could you tell me about a time when you have interacted with the professional, working in their capacity as a professional who had visible tattoos?

Martin

Trying to think. I'm going back to my definition of what a professional is and my interactions with them, so any interaction I'm just going to think out loud. Any interactions I've had recently or that I can remember of in terms of interactions with lawyers, I can't remember any of them having tattoos.

STF

Umm.

Martin

Any doctors, nurses that I've had anything to do with recently I wasn't aware of anything.

Martin

I'm not aware of any the of had tattoos. They may have had tattoos and they may have been covered up. UM, I have interacted with some teaching professionals. Who have had tattoos, but generally the expectation from most schools. Most I would say, even all schools is that they have had to cover them up. So I've only been aware of these tattoos with my work, with teachers outside of. The classroom setting where I've I've seen them, but I know that they've been covered up when in school.

STF

OK.

Martin

And now I don't know whether that has been a personal choice. Or whether that has been a requirement of the school. I know that some schools have policies relating to professional dress and tattoos are mentioned, and that some schools do expect those to be covered up. So some teachers, male or female, have to wear long sleeves if they've got tattoos on their arms. Even, you know, in the summer months when it's very hot and sweaty, they still have to wear long sleeves. And so really, that's the only. Thinking about it.

STF

So you're aware of professionals having to cover up tattoos, but you haven't had an interaction with one that you that was memorable.

Martin

No, I haven't, no.

STF

Yeah. OK. No, that's fine. That's fine. OK. So in terms of your opinions and attitudes towards towards tattoos, what do you think is influenced your feelings and attitudes towards tattoos?

Martin

I think I think for a little while, I did have a slight. Negative. Perception towards tattooing.

STF

Umm.

Martin

I think that, UM, my knowledge of who had tattoos. And I'm talking sort of 20 25 years ago, when tattoos weren't as prevalent in society as they are now. I think there's been a big shift, particularly over the last sort of 30 25 to 30 years. And you know, to be honest, I would think twice with somebody with tattoos. Uh, just my thoughts were this could sound awful, but I'm trying to be honest. Uh, sort of criminal, or somebody who's been in prison. I know at one stage it was quite popular with army. I'm not saying people in the army are criminals, just like to point that out. But I think when I was younger, I think personally and in society there was the the slightly less people who had tattoos and I think they fell into certain categories in terms of army or, you know, Navy, sort of the military. But then there's this perception of of criminal elements, or if you were in a rock band or a particularly rock star, heavy metal that we was almost part of the uniform and expectations for that. I think as I have grown older, as I've changed as tattoos have become more prevalent in society, my understanding of tattoos.

STF

Hmm.

Martin

I I'm really. I suppose less judgmental that are used to be.

STF

Hmm hmm.

Martin

Because I think people do judge on appearances and I think there are some people and I probably fell into this category a long time ago of judging people based on essentially pictures on their skin. And I think over the last sort of what, 15 to 20 years with more famous people having tattoos with, they're seeming to be more tattoo parlours. I suppose a greater level of cleanliness with tattoos, and I, you know, I remember the outbreak of AIDS and people's concerns about needles and things. So I don't know whether at that time that may be the association would needles and sort of disease and, you know, at the time, a deadly virus that have put a negative connotation for me and other people in society then. I think. Of course, slightly off the question, but I'm going to keep talking and. I think I think it's more accepted now. But I still think there are some people whose attitudes towards them haven't changed.

STF

Umm.

Martin

And if I was going to have surgery and the surgeon came out, if she or he came out and they've got sleeve tattoos, I'll be honest, I might give it a second glance.

296 STF
297 Hmm.
298 Martin
299 And because of the initial sort of opinions that I'd built up when I was
300 younger. But that would go very quickly. But you know you've always got
301 that sort of slight.
302 STF
303 Hmm.
304 Martin
305 Thought uh, because of things that you develop at are suppose a more. Not
306 vulnerable. Uh, what's the word I'm looking for?
307 STF
308 Developing.
309 Martin
310 Yeah, developing. And, you know, in your teens you are developing your
311 views and experience, particularly late team of what the world looks like.
312 STF
313 Hmm.
314 Martin
315 And and I think sometimes those things, even for a split second can still be
316 there.
317 Martin
318 Is equivalent to a T shirt or. It's it's like saying if somebody came out and T
319 shirt or jeans or came out in a full suit, if it's a surgeon, you want them to be
320 good at what they do. They respective of what's you know, drawn on their
321 skin or what clothes they're wearing or what colour their hair is.

Martin

And. But I think. We all judge by appearance at times.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. So it's that initial judgment that then is overtaken, if you like, by rationalising. Yeah, yeah.

Martin

Yeah. Type. The rational? Yeah, but the rational brain.

STF

Yeah. OK. So to kind of summarize what you just said, I'm about 25 to 30 years too late to ask you about your opinions. When you were less less favourable towards tattoos, but but joking aside that actually you're your views have travelled from dislike when you were younger and perhaps because of media and seeing more people with tattoos.

STF

They have now changed to be a little bit more accepting. Would that be fair to say?

Martin

Yes, and and to give you an analogy, part of my role over the the past sort of. 16 17 years has been to interview. Uh people. Uh, perspective people for teacher training courses. And you know, part of an interview is making a judgment about somebody's suitability to go into a profession because teach English class does at profession with professionals. And I know of.

STF

Umm, absolutely.

Martin

All the tutors who will remain nameless.

STF

Of course.

Martin

Who have looked less favourably on individuals with tattoos and piercings in terms of their suitability to become a teacher.

STF

That's really interesting.

Martin

So. Yeah.

STF

And feel free to to draw a line here and say you're not going to answer, but that's looking less favourably in our on. How did that, how did that manifest? So I think there's a couple of layers to my question. One is that you're obviously aware of it, so perhaps something was said or you observed some sort of behaviour that made you aware of that less less favourable view, but did it actually hinder or impact? Uhm, how the interviewee was treated, or whether they were accepted onto or into the profession?

Martin

I I think there's a a various levels again to the answer. I was aware of it because the person openly said it.

STF

Right. OK.

Martin

As a well, that person had got tattoos with very much the intonation and. Understanding that, well, that's not what we want for. Teaching and I I think. My gut tells me, and the reactions of a colleague were that actually if you went into an interview with them with tattoos or maybe even with piercings,

or even to a certain extent not wearing the right clothes based on what that colleague has said there was.

STF

OK.

Martin

Less of a chance of them getting on the course, even to the point where the colleague had suggested. And the the, the, the, the, the candidate or candidate would be more suitable to go to another institution. So I think there was a level of institutional snobbery in terms of the types of candidates they wanted and to be seen putting out into.

STF

Alright.

Martin

The educational system.

STF

OK.

Martin

So I think there was an almost an institutional level there of expectation.

STF

OK. OK. So yeah, OK. So it's sort of protecting the reputation of the institution, but it wasn't strictly limited to tattoos. That was part of it for sure, but it was about the the, the dress and not the right kind of person or or image being presented for that institution perhaps.

Martin

Yes, it was. It was almost judging professionalism. Not on somebody's potential to be able to do the job. The role effectively. But completely around. The aesthetics of that person. Almost.

STF

Yeah. So what? Yeah. Yeah. What you can see? Yeah. OK. Yeah. No, I understand. That's great. Thank you. That's really helpful. Thank you very much. I went slightly off topic there, but I think it was really useful to just make sure I understood what you were, what you were sharing with me. So I'm going to share my screen, so bear with me a second while I just click the correct image. So hopefully now on screen you should see an image.

Martin

Yes.

STF

Lovely, OK, so this is so on on the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo. Hopefully, you can see the tattoo on the arm there and they work as a vicar.

STF

So all of the questions that follow at the moment in this little segment are going to be about this person on screen and their capacity as a vicar. So what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and it can be free for you, don't have to form sentences, just this person working as a vicar.

Martin

This person working as a vicar.

STF

Umm.

Martin

And it it's weird really because the. The thought of the person in the image and being a vicar. I didn't think initially that person shouldn't be a vicar because of the tattoo. Part of me thought that person.

STF

Umm.

Martin

This is I'm I'm trying to be honest here. That person is too young and too attractive to be a victor. And that's an awful thing to say.

STF

No, no, no, no, that's fair.

Martin

Yeah, I mean. I I just look at that the at the picture and think. That person just doesn't look like a vicar, I think. That is more. Because of the experiences that I've had. I associate and I'm not painting myself in a good light here, but you need to be honest with these things as vicars tending to be.

STF

Umm.

Martin

Older, grey haired males.

STF

OK, OK.

Martin

However, you know I'm a big fan of Kate Botley. But my initial instinct was this person doesn't look like a vicar, but not because of the tattoo.

STF

Yeah. OK. No, that that's fair. And I should reiterate that I'm not judging you on your opinions and and the honesty. And I do appreciate the honesty. That's what I'm what I'm after. So. So it's really it's about the fact that this person doesn't look like a vicar regardless of the tattoo anyway.

Martin

Yes, and I suppose because the person isn't in. A vicars attire.

STF

Umm.

Martin

And I'm, I mean, my understanding of religion is limited, but my assumption that you know, if you work as a vicar when you're giving a sermon, there is an expectation to where a certain set of clothes. Whereas I know with, particularly with like surgeons when they're not doing surgery. They were generally wear just ordinary day to day clothes, you know, saying with teachers there isn't a particular uniform that teachers have to wear so.

STF

Yeah.

Martin

My a suppose as well. My assumption is if the person in the picture had been in a vicars outfit. I might have thought of them more as the vicar.

STF

OK. OK. No, that's useful feedback. Thank you. OK. So can you tell me how you would feel if you either worked with or used the services of this person?

Martin

Yeah.

STF

As a in in their capacity as a as a vicar, I appreciate it might not naturally go with the the setting that you work in perhaps, but if you had to work with this person professionally, either you you are also a professional or you are

you are in a social setting, but they are working in a professional setting, how would you feel if you met this person and they were working as vicar?

Martin

I I wouldn't mind. I wouldn't mind. My assumption would be that they have got to that position to that role as a result of. Their experiences, their knowledge, their understanding, and that somebody as with like the teaching profession has determined them suitable for that role. I think if I was there ever going to make any judgment about that person and their ability to do the role would be as a result of interactions with them through that role. But in terms of uh, my interactions with them based on the information I've got, I would be quite happy to interact with them.

STF

OK, OK. OK. So just to kind of drill down, he's had a little bit more. How would their tattoo that you can see there in the image, how would that influence your trust in them as a professional as a vicar?

Martin

It wouldn't affect it in any way.

STF

OK.

Martin

It wouldn't affect anyway.

STF

OK, so I probably know the answer to the next question I'm gonna ask anyway. So how would the their tattoo influence how capable you thought they would be in their profession?

Martin

Yes, it wouldn't matter.

STF

Yeah. OK, fair enough.

Martin

Yeah.

STF

OK, so thinking about the tattoo specifically, how does the the location or the position there on the arm of the tattoo influence your attitude towards them as vicar?

Martin

Not at all.

STF

OK.

Martin

It it doesn't, it doesn't. It doesn't sort of It doesn't make me trust them anymore. As a vicar, it doesn't make me trust them any less.

STF

OK.

Martin

As a vicar.

Martin

I suppose I'm ambivalent. I mean, the only thing that.

Martin

I would think with the ease.

Martin

The quality of the actual picture, the design or not, or where it's placed from a personal aesthetic point of view.

534 STF

535 OK.

536 Martin

537 But that would be in no way change my interactions with that person.

538 STF

539 OK. So just thinking about the image then how if if the image so the imagine

540 the tattoo is exactly where it is in the image, how what if it was a different

541 tattoo, what would that influence your thoughts about them as a vicar in any

542 way?

543 Martin

544 I suppose the only time it would influence me. Me. And my opinion of them

545 as a vicar would be going back to the point of if it was in any way. Abusive.

546 Negative. Homophobic.

547 STF

548 Umm.

549 Martin

550 That would bother me however, though, however.

551 STF

552 Yeah.

553 Martin

554 It might be that this person had a difficult youth. And had actually changed

555 who they were. Had a, you know, a new a, suppose born again.

556 STF

557 OK.

558 Martin

559 And they might have the tattoo there to remind them of who they used to be

and that they don't want to be that person anymore and use it as a reminder. So I think.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Martin

Sometimes the meaning behind the tattoo, even if there is an element of a negative connotations with it. There might be a story behind it in terms of the journey of the person that you wouldn't understand just from looking at the tattoo.

STF

OK. Just speaking up on that last point then, so imagine and I am projecting onto this this person image, imagine this person had had, as you say, difficult childhood and this tattoo is there as a reminder of that. Do you think if you knew that about them, do you think that would influence your responses to the trust and capability questions that I asked you? Did you think if you knew that they'd had a difficult childhood but they were, you know, displaying that tattoo as a vicar, as a reminder of that, do you think? Do you think that would make them a better vicar?

Martin

I don't know. I I think it would. Make them a person who has learnt from their experiences. And my limited understanding of religion is about learning from experiences and it's about understanding things that you've done wrong and sins that you've committed. And I can't remember what the question was.

STF

So would you just thinking particularly about the trust and the capability if you knew that they had sort of a for one bit of phrase a back story to the

tattoo, would that influence how you'd responded about the trusting capability, how you would judge their trust in capability in them?

Martin

I think it might in some instances make me trust them more. Because they've been so open about their past.

STF

OK. OK. That's really interesting.

Martin

But they're not hiding something. That they are. Yes. I've done bad things, but they have made me the person I am. And it's such a shows that journey. They're not hiding from their past.

STF

Yeah, sort of embracing it and facing it. Yeah. OK, yeah, lovely. OK, I'm just gonna stop sharing and then switch to another picture. So just bear with me one second while I find the other picture. Sorry, I'm getting the technology going OK, so hopefully there's a different image on screen for you now.

Martin

Yes, there is, yes.

STF

Can you see that? Yeah. OK. And you can see the tattoo on the arm there.

Martin

Yeah, just about, yeah.

STF

OK.

Martin

Joking.

STF

It's quite a big tattoo. OK, so Umm on the screen is another image of an individual with a visible tattoo and this person works as a teacher. So I'm you mentioned about your teaching experience earlier. This might be quite quite close to close to your heart. So what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and again you can freeform, you don't have to form a sentence.

Martin

My slightly and I know this is a sort of serious interview, but my slightly jokey response is that he's clearly spending a lot of time with the gym, so can't be a teacher because he's got far too much spare time and he's and.

STF

OK. Yeah.

Martin

I think So what was before I did my glib response? What was the question again?

STF

Just your initial thoughts. So you've seen this person and you know they're a teacher. What are the initial thoughts that you'd have?

Martin

My initial thoughts would be. Uh, my my initial initial thoughts would be great. We have got another. Man working in teaching.

STF

OK.

Martin

I mean, you didn't say whether it was primary or secondary, but.

639 STF
640 No.
641 Martin
642 I think you know there is a lack of men within a teaching and I think it's good
643 that there is another man in teaching just to give a a rounded, balanced view
644 and perspectives for children.
645 STF
646 Mm-hmm.
647 Martin
648 In terms of being a teacher, I think because I've worked with so many
649 teachers and trained so many teachers.
650 Martin
651 And a number of those have had sleeve tattoos and things.
652 STF
653 Mm-hmm.
654 Martin
655 I am not surprised to see somebody working as a teacher with a tattoo, I
656 suppose. I didn't think or not think he looked like a teacher, because unlike
657 with the the previous picture, when I think vicar, I think the black shirt with
658 the white collar.
659 STF
660 OK.
661 Martin
662 This you know.
663 Martin
664 Does he look like a teacher? Well, you've told me that he's a teacher. So he's
665 a teacher.

STF

OK, OK.

Martin

So you know it it. It because of that lack of uniform and because of my experience of working with lots and lots of different people who want to be teachers.

STF

Umm.

Martin

You know, younger people, mature people, male, female. You know, range range of sort of genders, shape sizes.

STF

Umm.

Martin

So yeah, the fact that he's a teacher.

STF

OK, OK. So just to think about the the comparison between the two images then the first one because you have perhaps less experience of vicars, that was why you had a sort of I'm gonna use the word stronger, but that might be the right word. You had a stronger viewpoint about the person, didn't look like a vicar, whereas in comparison to the current image on screen, because you have an extensive experience of teachers in all shapes sizes over a number of years, that means that you are perhaps.

Martin

Yeah.

691 STF
692 You don't have such strong views of what a teacher might look like. Would
693 That be fair to say.
694 Martin
695 Yeah. Yeah. And I think if the pictures were flipped. And you asked me if
696 this person. Was a vicar again, I think because of the almost stereotyped
697 image I have of a vicar in my head. The black shirt. The white collar. A
698 slightly older greyer male.
699 STF
700 Mm-hmm.
701 Martin
702 He wouldn't fit that category either.
703 STF
704 Yeah. OK.
705 Martin
706 The female picture if you just said she was a teacher. I'd have gone. Yeah,
707 she could be a teacher.
708 STF
709 Yeah, OK. OK, I understand. OK. I'm so thinking about the image we've got
710 on screen at the moment then.
711 STF
712 And and they are a teacher. Can you tell me how you'd feel if you worked
713 with or engaged with this person as a professional? Umm. And they have
714 that tattoo.
715 Martin
716 I would be quite happy to engage with them in the same way if they didn't
717 have the tattoo.

718 STF

719 OK, OK. Lovely. OK.

720 Martin

721 I mean, based on the guy's muscles and things, I'd do pretty much as what

722 I'm told to do. Uh, because he looks as though he could snap me like a twig.

723 STF

724 OK, OK.

725 Martin

726 Sorry, that's not gonna help your research in any way, but no.

727 STF

728 No, no, no. But it's it's important to know what's kind of going to make the

729 the the overall judgment of a person. And you can't, you can't pull apart just

730 someone's physicality from from the tattoo. So no, it's it's worth noting

731 there. Thank you.

732 Martin

733 Yeah. Yeah, no, the tattoo doesn't bother me. And like I've said before, the

734 only thing realistically that would bother me about the tattoo is more the

735 quality of the artwork and the job that was done.

736 Martin

737 Not the fact that he's got a tattoo.

738 STF

739 OK.. So OK. I'm gonna. Yeah. So we're thinking about the tattoo that that

740 he's got, how would it influence your trust in him as a teacher?

741 Martin

742 My trust in him would not be based upon How he looks.

743 STF

744 OK.

Martin

See the relationship that I develop. If I was a parent and this was my child's teacher. Me personally, I would assume that he had gone through the relevant training, got the relevant qualifications and had been deemed by. The university that he went to the government and the management team at the school. That my trust in terms of him as a teacher if I was a parent. Would lie at the feet of everybody who's decided to put him in front of my child. Not on my. Initial assessment of looking at him.

STF

OK, OK. So it's sort of a a structural trust in that mechanism of becoming a teacher and becoming qualified rather than your initial view of him as an individual. So you sort of looking behind the individual and seeing how they got there?

Martin

Yes. Yeah. How they got their the qualifications, they've got the experience that they've got, the hoops that they've jumped through to get there.

STF

Yeah, of course.

Martin

Umm, that would make sort of that initial trust to be there. Now I suppose from a colleague point of view working with him or as a parent. I suppose working with him with my child would then determine. The level of trust that I had for that person, but that would be as a result of getting to know the person.

STF

OK.

Martin

Uh. Not from initial. Perceptions based on tattoos or what they're wearing or yeah.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. So it's a yeah, it's a more of a deeper understanding of them. OK. I'm just going to call back to something you said earlier about the quality of the tattoo. So I'm going to ask you that question again. So how would their tattoo influence your trust in them as professional? But this time, imagine the tattoo was badly done. Now, however, you want to interpret. Badly done.

Martin

Yeah.

STF

UM do so. Yeah. So, I mean, at the moment it looks like it's done with some level of artistry. So imagine it was a a bad tattoo, which I appreciate is a difficult concept, but imagine it was a bad tattoo. How would a bad tattoo on this person influence your trust in them as a teacher?

Martin

Not at all it wouldn't. It wouldn't have a negative impact in terms of their trust.

STF

OK.

Martin

It would bother me from a personal, slightly OCD point of view. About about the fact that they'd had something that uh. Wasn't to the quality wasn't good enough? It's an artistic thing rather than a.

STF

Wasn't good. OK, so it's OK so. Yeah.

Martin

Judging the person type thing.

STF

OK. So it's like having a wonky table in a pub. It wouldn't make you judge just the quality of the pub. It's just a wonky table.

Martin

Yeah, it's like if somebody was wearing a shirt.

STF

Yeah.

Martin

That had got a design on that I didn't particularly like. I think why you wearing that shirt? Not. I'm not going to like you because you're wearing a shirt that I wouldn't like.

STF

OK. OK. Yeah. Yeah. And I think that's a really useful distinction to make. No, thank you. That's helpful. OK. So do you think? The tattoo would influence your thoughts about how capable they are as a teacher.

Martin

No.

STF

OK.

Martin

It wouldn't me, but I think. There are some very. Outdated. Outdated. Yeah, outdated opinions. Where some people? May question his ability to do his job based upon having a tattoo.

824 STF
825 OK.
826 Martin
827 I think some. I don't think there would be necessarily be a huge issue with
828 the head teacher or a deputy head teacher because they would have
829 interviewed the person. But I think some parents. May have difficulties with
830 it, but I think that would make maybe depend. Sorry, I'm going back to
831 cough. That may. Yes, some parents may. Initially have reservations.
832 STF
833 OK.
834 Martin
835 Particularly with his type of tattoo, with the sleeve tattoo. You know it, it is
836 quite a striking. And significant design.
837 STF
838 Mm-hmm.
839 Martin
840 In comparison to the last picture, which is, you know, still quite a big tattoo,
841 wasn't the whole of the arm.
842 STF
843 Yeah, yeah.
844 Martin
845 But you know that that's me making assumptions about other people's
846 feelings about this.
847 STF
848 OK, yeah. No. But I think given your experience, I think it's, you know you
849 do have a level of insight into that that not as necessarily everybody has
850 that's really useful. Thank you. OK. So thinking about the, the and the, I

said the location of the tattoo, it's it's enormous, one that is on the arm. How would that influence your attitude towards him as a teacher? So I think we're gonna change his slightly. So imagine you, that's that tattoo wasn't on the arm, but you could see some part of it visible, say on the neck or on the face. Of the person that you can see, would that influence your opinion about them as a professional?

Martin

It wouldn't influence them me in terms of them about them as a professional. Uh. But as I said at the very start of the interview, I'm not keen on the idea of tattoos personally. And and the thing I don't know what it is, but the thought of face and the pain on the face and the fact that face is so visible.

STF

Umm.

Martin

And. Yeah, I don't think it would make me trust them any less, but I would think ohh that I bet that was painful. And. I think I would think was if I was going to have a tattoo, I wouldn't have one there. I can't tell you why.

STF

OK.

Martin

I think I partly associate tattoos on face specifically with criminals, with the tears and. Sort of gang culture and stuff, and that's probably a wrong assumption from me, but I think from films and from TV programs. There is an element of. They use that representation to, uh, suggest criminal. Uh, again, because they've gone through the process to get to become a teacher, my assumption would be that they are not a criminal.

STF

Umm yeah.

Martin

Or there are very good one and they haven't been caught yet. Uh, but apart from a personal? I wouldn't have that. I wouldn't have a tattoo. But if I was going to have one, I certainly wouldn't have it there. It's the same with piercings. I'm not particularly keen on piercings. I think because I'm used to people having their ears pierced because. It has been something that society has done for a long time. However, knows his eyebrows, lips and other places. Again, I wouldn't judge somebody for that, but it's not something I'd have done. I just, I don't. I can't. I don't see why.

STF

OK, OK.

Martin

So coming back to trust it. It wouldn't make me trust them any less a just a suppose a personal thing of. If I was going to have one, I wouldn't have it done there and it might hurt more. And also if you have a tattoo that you regret, which is on your arm, there is the element of being able to cover it up. If you have one on your face, that makes it harder to cover up. If you regret having it.

STF

Hmm. Hmm. OK.

Martin

And yeah, there we go.

STF

OK, OK. And we've talked about specifically professions of teacher and vicar. Do the kind of thoughts expressed, would they be the same for all

professions or let's switch it the other way? Is there any profession that you can think of where having a visible tattoo either on the forearm or the entire arm as a sleeve would influence your thoughts about how much you trust them or how capable they are? I appreciate it is about 5 questions in there. I'm trying. I'm trying to spread it as wide as possible, so. Can you think of any profession where them having a tattoo that you can see anywhere on their body would make you trust them or think them less capable?

Martin

I don't think so. Much.

STF

I mean, you mentioned surgeon, but then you explained that, you know you you think about the their ability to do the job.

Martin

Yeah. Yeah, I'd rather try to have a really good surgeon who's got tons of tattoos that are really bad surgeon, who hasn't.

STF

Yep, I think we're probably all with you on that one.

Martin

I I I think the only time I would have an issue with tattoos. Irrespective of where they were. So if I was going to have tattoos. And I went to a tattoo artist. And they had some really bad quality tattoos.

STF

Hmm.

Martin

Anywhere on their body. I would be less trusting of them as a tattoo artist.

STF

Yeah.

Martin

But I wouldn't class really a tattoo artist. As a professional I don't know, but they might be because it is a profession and there is a certain amount of training I assume in terms of using the tattooing guns and you know you've got elements of making sure everything's sterilized and there are health implications there. I just think it's it's like going and having your haircut by somebody who's got a bad haircut.

STF

Or going to a mechanic With the leaky car.

Martin

Yeah, you're you're putting a certain amount of trust into their profession. So I think poor tattoos on a tattoo artist. Would make me question their ability. Yeah, that's the only. Yeah.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, OK. OK. OK, we're coming to the end of the questions now. You'd be relieved to know. So are the answers that you've given me in this interview. Are they influenced by your experience with a tattooed person you've encountered?

Martin

Not particularly, not particularly. I have people around me who are very keen on tattoos.

STF

OK.

Martin

And maybe my interaction with them has slightly changed my perspective on them and made me more open to people having tattoos.

STF

OK.

Martin

Or that might be that society has changed and our perceptions of tattoos have changed. So yeah.

STF

Yeah, of course. Yeah, of course. OK. I'm just gonna take the image off the screen so you don't have to stare at that image any longer. I appreciate the cameras still off, but at least it changes the what you're looking at for a little bit. OK, so have you formed an opinion about someone because they have tattoos and then that opinion has changed. So it could be, as you mentioned, 2530 years ago. It could be more recently, but have you have you formed an impression about someone or thought something about someone? And then change that view.

Martin

No.

STF

OK.

Martin

No, I don't think so.

STF

OK, OK. Is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me? So is there anything that you thought I might ask you today? And I haven't? Or is there something you wanted to tell me about your experience about tattoos and professionals?

Martin

No, not really. I I think I think some people do. Get stuck into a fixed

mindset about things and make assumptions. Around. Uh, sort of. The visual elements of people, whether that be tattooing, uh, what clothes they wear, how they have their hair, piercings and things, I think as a society, we still make judgments based on appearance.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Martin

I think we are getting better at not doing that, but I think there is still a long way to go. Though. And I I think it might be a generational thing. I think how tattoos, how tattoos are perceived, might be related to particular generations. So some somebody in their sort of 70s or 80s may have a very different perception of people with tattoos than maybe somebody in their 20s. It has grown up with a lot of tattoos being around.

STF

Hmm. OK.

Martin

Both in terms of. Their interactions with the world and their interactions with famous people, prominent people on TV and within the media. So. Yeah, I I I still don't think as a society we are great at not judging by appearance.

STF

OK. OK,

Martin

I think being more in general terms, but I suppose tattooing comes in as part of that because it is something that can be seen. I think generally people do judge whether they will admit it or not.

STF

Hmm.

Martin

I think that will be an element of judgment in there, but I think it might be a combination of things not, not just the tattoos. But I think for some people it might be a big factor in their judgment.

STF

Yeah. OK, OK. That's really useful. Thank you very much. So that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Martin

No, that's everything. Thank you very much.

STF

OK, lovely. Thank you for your time today and for your honesty. I really appreciate it. I will email a copy of the transcript and debrief information to you, which has contact information on it should you need it. So thank you very much and goodbye.

Martin

OK, goodbye.

Stella

STF

It’s recording now. Fantastic. Umm, so thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I've received your completed consent form. Although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it will not be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May this year, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview responses. If you do want to withdraw from the research, you'll need to email that personal identifier code to either one of my supervisors. Sorry either me or my supervisors. I'm recording this interview to help you make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during this interview for any reason. If you do, stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

Stella

Yes.

STF

Brilliant. OK Umm I have some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions, there are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions that we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. If you'd prefer not to answer any questions, just let me know and I'll move on. And please let me know if you'd like me to repeat a question for any

reason or if you'd like me to rephrase the question. Uh, these interviews have been taking anywhere between 15 and 45 minutes, so just depends on how in depth the conversation gets. So are you happy for me to begin?

Stella

Yes, absolutely.

STF

OK brilliant. OK, so do you have any tattoos?

Stella

I do.

STF

Yeah. OK. And could you tell me why you chose to get your tattoos, please?

Stella

Yes. So for me it was it was, it was something I'd been thinking about for a really long time. My dad had tattoos and and my brother had a couple of tattoos and I just kind of it was a way of. I suppose it's a form of expression for me.

STF

Umm.

Stella

But they needed to be meaningful. So the first one I got was to represent Pisces, because me and my husband and son are all Pisces.

STF

Oh right.

Stella

And then some of the other ones I've got have been kind of memorials for people that have passed away, so grandparents and that that sort of thing.

STF

OK.

Stella

But since I've had more than one, I think I'm more likely to get others just because they're kind of fun.

STF

OK, fair enough. OK. So I think you've kind of covered it there, but what do these tattoos mean to you?

Stella

Yeah. Yeah. So generally a memory of the person.

STF

OK.

Stella

Or something that's important to me.

STF

Yeah. So an an expression, I mean you, yeah, expression of. So yeah, OK, lovely. Brilliant.

Um

Stella

Yeah.

STF

Are any of you are tattoos normally visible? In public I mean

Stella

Yes. So if I wear short sleeves, the all of the tattoos that I have are on my arms. So I've got 1,2,3,4 kind of below the elbow between the elbow and wrist. And I've got two, one on each arm between my shoulder and my elbow.

STF

OK, OK. And how do other people respond to you having the tattoos when they see them?

Stella

Um. Now I don't even notice if people notice them.

STF

OK.

Stella

When I first got.

Stella

The first one that I had, I was very conscious of. And the manager that I had at the time made it clear that she was unimpressed and that it needed to remain covered as much as possible whilst I was at work.

STF

OK.

Stella

But in the place that I'm at now. Nobody seems to to bat an eyelid to be perfectly honest.

Stella

I felt the need to cover them interview.

STF

OK. Yeah.

Stella

I I don't know whether I would now if I interviewed for another job, because that was seven or eight years ago. Most people just say oh, that's cool. What? What have you got that for or what does that mean? Or does that have a special meaning?

STF

OK. OK, so your experience in the workplace then it it sort of mix. So there's some people will use it as an ice breaker, or a conversation starter to ask you about them.

Stella

Yep.

STF

But then you've had the experience with the manager that was less positive. Would you mind telling me a bit more about the the manager was it, was it the fact that you have tattoos or what the tattoos are?

Stella

I think it was the fact that I had a tattoo at all, so I didn't have any tattoos and and my first one is it's relatively small. It's just on the inside of my right wrist. So it's not immediately obvious, can be covered with a a big bangle or something like that.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Stella

And. I think she was very traditional. I suspect she just didn't either agree with tattoos or agree with tattoos on women.

STF

OK, OK.

Stella

She had a similar reaction when another person in the team had their nose pierced and made comments to the extent that she ended up removing it.

STF

Right. OK.

Stella

She made it clear that it was seemed to be very unprofessional and for somebody in her position to have a that sort of visible piercing.

STF

That's really interesting.

Stella

So whether it's specific to tattoos or not, I'm not sure nobody else that I came across at that place of work seemed to have a problem with it and just her.

STF

It kind of feels without going into, you know, I don't know any other experience of that, but it kind of feels like it's body modifications in general, if it includes tattoos and nose piercings. And again, I'm gonna be prejudicial here. My assumption is that ear piercing was probably, you know, within the acceptable bounds for that person.

Stella

Yes.

Stella

Ohh yeah yeah, I I believe she had her ears pierced.

STF

OK. OK. Well, that's really interesting. OK.

Stella

Yeah.

STF

OK, brilliant.

STF

OK. So you mentioned your dad and your brother have tattoos.

Stella

Yeah.

STF

Do any of your friends or other family have tattoos?

Stella

Yet so my husband has a full sleeve. And which he actually started after I had my first couple of tattoos done. And my uncle has a tattoo now I believe. And and I know a number of other people at work that have tattoos.

STF

OK.

Stella

So yeah, it's I think it it feels like it's more common than it was at one point.

STF

OK. Mm-hmm. OK. OK. And what do you think of the tattoos that they have your friends and family?

Stella

My dad's are all quite old, so some of them he had done probably 50 years ago and they've not held up very well.

STF

OK.

Stella

So they weren't really the sort of things that I would have wanted because they were quite old fashioned. I guess my brother had a couple of really interesting pieces done, but he also had experiences where he had a tattoo quite young and then. Had it covered.

STF

OK.

Stella

Which made me really think twice about what I wanted and probably why I waited as long as I did to get one done.

STF

OK.

Stella

And then the sleeve that my husband has got is really cool. This I love looking at. Posts from tattoo artists it's some of the things that they can do are just so amazing.

STF

Yeah.

Stella

Yeah, I know a couple of people have got the kind of lower back tribe or very 90s sort of tattoos. It's like, oh, God, no, I wouldn't have that. But so I've seen some things that people have had that are just absolutely fab. It's ohh. I'd love something that the same sort of thing and.

STF

Yeah.

Stella

So yeah, there's a range I guess.

STF

OK. So I mean, I I'm kind of guessing here, but I think I I think I know what you're gonna say, but how do you feel about them having tattoos?

Stella

Ohh each to their own.

STF

Yeah.

Stella

It's it's a completely up to the person as far as I'm concerned. If if you don't like tattoos, that's fair enough. If you do like tattoos, that's great. If you're not sure whether you want one or not, I always just say to people just think it through because it, you know, it's a big step.

STF

Yeah, OK. Yeah.

Stella

So yeah.

STF

Yeah, I sort of thought you were probably gonna say that, but I thought I'd ask just in case.

Stella

Yeah, of course.

STF

Yeah. And because I'm looking at professional occupation. And again, I'm gonna just. There's no trick question here, and there's no right or wrong answer. How would you define a professional occupation?

Stella

Yes.

Stella

That's an interesting question actually, because. I suppose typically you would think of things like doctors and nurses and teachers and.

Stella

Possibly things that would at one point have involved you having to go to university.

241 STF
242 OK. Mm-hmm.
243 Stella
244 Maybe more. And I don't know why. I think this may be more office based
245 than retail based. I don't I don't know why I think that.
246 STF
247 OK, OK. Fair enough.
248 Stella
249 But yeah, so kind of not. Yeah, that that's probably the best way I can
250 describe it.
251 STF
252 Yeah. OK. So something that probably requires. An education, more
253 possibly, more likely, university than not.
254 Stella
255 Yes.
256 STF
257 Yeah, OK. OK. I mean, as I say, there's there's no agreed definition really
258 with with what a professional is. It's been such a long time ago that anyone
259 did some substantive research into this.
260 Stella
261 OK.
262 STF
263 So I think that's a really good, good definition for you to have. So if you
264 wanna hold that and your head, when I ask any questions about
265 professionals, generally, if you want to use that definition,
266 Stella
267 OK.

STF

I think that's a really good working definition to use. So.

Stella

Cool.

STF

So what are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?

Stella

Um it doesn't bother me in the slightest. The only thing that I think even I would find slightly strange and would make me. Kinda do a bit of a double take would probably be facial tattoos.

STF

OK, OK.

Stella

And I think that's just. Because I think it's something I would never do. It's something I wouldn't relate to, and I think it's something that's still considered to be quite extreme in terms of marking your face in that way.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Stella

I don't know whether that would make me judge them any differently. I would like to think not.

STF

OK.

Stella

But that's probably the only thing that would really make me think twice to be like, whoa, they've got a tattoo on their face.

STF

Yeah. OK. No, I appreciate your honesty. Yeah. Absolutely. Brilliant. UM, can you tell me about a time when you've interacted with a professional who has a visible tattoo?

Stella

Umm, yeah. Actually we went to um um as in secondary school for just a fairly standard parent teacher meeting, I think. And one of the other teachers as walking through reception and came over and chatted to us because he saw [redacted]'s tattoo my husband.

STF

Umm.

Stella

And and he'd got short a short sleeve shirt on, and he'd got visible tattoos on his arms.

STF

OK. So this isn't a teacher of [redacted]'s necessarily, it's. They've just come across the they've come over for the purpose of talking about the tattoos.

Stella

Yeah, we'd never met him before.

STF

That's. Yeah, that's really interesting that, that whole particularly if it's a a full sleeve as well, that's not at all a barrier. That is a, that is a proper icebreaker, isn't it?

Stella

Yeah, definitely.

STF

That's really interesting. Fantastic. OK, So what do you think has influenced your attitudes towards tattoos?

Stella

Probably the fact that I've been around people that have them. Umm and.

STF

OK.

Stella

I know that kind of air quote normal people have tattoos. Rather than people in biker gangs and prison on the TV.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Stella

I'm into. I'm into rock music and all of those sort of things. So tattoos are very normal in that sort of culture of music. And so again, you get used to seeing them. It's not something that's particularly unusual.

STF

Yeah. Thanks.

Stella

Yeah, I thought that those are probably the main things.

STF

OK, look like right? Just gonna do some clicking here and I'm going to share a photo with you. Hopefully you can see on the screen at the image there of a woman.

Stella

Yeah

STF

And can you see the tattoo there on her forearm?

Stella

I can.

STF

Yeah, lovely. OK. I mean, you might not be able to make out what it is, but that's fine. But so on the screen is an image of an individual work in. Ohh honestly, I can't speak today. Sorry.

Stella

It's alright.

STF

On the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a nurse. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image and find out she's a nurse and they don't have to be full sentences, just freeform. What are your initial thoughts?

Stella

Um. I I don't know that they'd changed when I found out that she was a nurse. To be honest, I thought she was attractive. I thought she. Looked like a nice person. I thought that she'd probably be somebody that I'd be interested to talk to. Yeah.

STF

Lovely. OK. And can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or use the services of this nurse with the tattoo?

Stella

It wouldn't bother me in the slightest.

STF

OK, OK. And how would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a nurse?

Stella

Nothing to do with it, I think. For me, at least, that would be how well I observed what they were doing and how comfortable they made me feel in their nursing practice rather than what they look like.

STF

Yeah. OK. OK. Lovely. OK. And how would their tattoo influence how capable you thought they would be in their profession?

Stella

Not at all.

STF

OK, OK. So I know it's you can see it there. But imagine that tattoo as much as you can see if you if some of that was visible on her face and neck. So it's the same tattoo, but it's on the face and the neck, how would that the location of the tattoo change or influence how much you trust them or think they are capable as a nurse?

Stella

Um. So I think for me, I don't think it would affect me on either account. I think what's it probably would make me do is wonder whether other people would relate to her as well.

STF

Yeah. OK.

Stella

And if it would be a barrier for some of her patients?

STF

OK, OK. I understand. OK. So keeping the tattoo where it is on the forearm then.

Stella

Yep.

STF

If it was a different image, do you think that might influence how much you trust them, or how capable they are as a nurse?

Stella

I suppose if it was one of these kinds of really dodgy, I went and got drunk in Magaluf with my friends and got a bad tattoo, kinds of tattoos it. It might make you kind of question. Her choices a little bit and I suppose that might make you think. Ohh God really. But. And I don't know whether I would be like ohh seriously, or whether I'd be like. And if I, I'd like to think again that I will be able to separate that from. It's actually got nothing to do with her professional capability that she made a bad choice when and got a bad tattoo.

STF

Yeah.

Stella

But I suppose that sort of bad tattoo might have more of an impact on how you assess them.

STF

OK, OK. And is it bad that when you set a tattoo in Magaluf and I immediately could picture what you were talking about?

Stella

We both watched tattoo fixers, haven't we?

STF

Ah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. OK. Well, I'm just gonna switch the image on

the screen, so do a little more clicking. Right, so hopefully now. No, I haven't clicked the thing. Sorry.

Stella

Ohh yeah, I can see a man.

STF

Ohh excellent lovely.

Stella

With a big tattoo.

STF

Yes, wonderful. So um on the screen is in another image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a police officer. So what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and find out that he's a police officer?

Stella

I'm. Not terribly surprised on the basis of his build, he looks like the kind of person that possibly does something active, so I probably wouldn't have been surprised if you'd said policeman, fireman, army, that sort of thing.

STF

OK. Yeah. Yeah. OK. So it's sort of key in keeping with his his physicality.

Stella

Yes. Yeah, that's a good way of putting it.

STF

OK. Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or use the services of this police officer with a tattoo? And I should just qualify because I've had people misunderstand this. I don't mean if he’s coming to arrest you, I mean, say you called the police and this person rocked up.

Stella

OK, I've that. Yeah, that that wouldn't phase me at all.

STF

OK. Yeah. OK. And how do you think the their tattoo influences your trust in them as a as a professional police officer?

Stella

Um. I suppose it might make them more relatable because I have tattoos and I'm used to being around people with tattoos, so I suppose dependent on this situation it might give you a bit of common ground to feel a bit more comfortable. Umm, but I I it wouldn't have a negative impact.

STF

OK, so if anything, it would just be a mildly positive influence.

Stella

I think so, yeah.

STF

OK. OK. That's really interesting. Thank you. And and how would their tattoo influence how capable you think they are as a police officer?

Stella

Not at all.

STF

OK, OK. I'm thinking again about the, the, the location of it. And I mean obviously that's a massive tattoo. So you wouldn't see all of that on the well, you know probably wouldn't see all of that on the face and neck, but imagine you could see some of that tattoo on the face and neck. How do you think that would influence your attitudes towards them as a profession in terms of trust and capability?

Stella

Umm. So again, I think in terms of trusting capability, probably not, I don't

think it would affect it. And I think it possibly might. Cause give me cause me to double take less with it being a man than a woman.

STF

OK. Yeah. Umm.

Stella

But I think I might find it more when you less unusual to see a man with a facial tattoo.

STF

OK. Yeah.

Stella

Umm, but no, I I it wouldn't. I don't think it would particularly bother me either way.

STF

OK. OK, fine. And thinking again. So the the, the, it's the sleeve again, would it would, how do you think if it was a different image on the arm or because it's a series of images, but do you think if it was different images on the arm, would that influence your trust and and how much do you think they are capable as police officer?

Stella

Yep. No, I don't think so.

STF

OK. And do you think you'll what you've said for the for the two images that you seen, do you think that would be the same for all professions? So for example, if it was like, you know, High Court judge with the sleeve or the forearm tattoo or something?

Stella

I think so, yeah. I mean, again, it might be because I have tattoos or are

used to being around people with tattoos. I I don't necessarily draw a link between. Somebody's ability to do their job, and if they choose to have a tattoo or not. And so for me, I I don't think it would matter what profession they they were really.

STF

Yeah, OK, that's lovely. Brilliant. Thank you. And you, I'm coming to the end of my questions. You'll be pleased to know.

Stella

No worries.

STF

And I all the answers that you give me influenced by your experience with the tattooed person that you've encountered.

240 Stella

Ohh yeah definitely.

STF

OK.

Stella

I think. Well. I say that. I. Would like to think not, because I'd like to think I wouldn't judge somebody on that basis anyway

STF

OK. Umm.

Stella

Um but it's difficult to know isn't it? Because it's really easy to make assumptions about people in that way. I'm sure that they're not being unusual to me probably does have an influence.

STF

Yes. Yeah, yeah. No, no. And I and I absolutely, I appreciate your honesty

on that because this is sort of what I'm trying to get at is that that kind of initial reaction when you see it versus the the rationalization that kind of comes as a back fill to kind of think well, I've got tattoos and I'm fine at my job. So why wouldn't they be? But it's that initial. Yeah. Yeah. No, I appreciate that. Lovely. So have you formed an opinion about someone because they have tattoos and then that opinion has changed. So either you thought something negative and then you it's become positive as an opinion or. You thought something positive and then it's become negative.

Stella

Um. That's a good question. No, I don't think so. I think the the thing that I'm the most guilty of is the stupid tattoo fixers people who use it and look at at the TV and think, God, how could you get a tattoo like that? You must be a bit.

STF

Yeah.

Stella

Stupid, which is incredibly unfair because you've got no clue what they are, what they're like, or who they are as people. But no, I I can't think of an example where. A tattoo of I've had a perception that's changed either way really.

STF

OK, OK. Brilliant. OK, is there anything else about tattoos and professionals that you'd like to tell me? Or is there something that you thought we might be discussing, but we haven't?

Stella

Um. No, I don't think it's anything that I thought we would discuss. That we haven't, UM.

558 STF

559 Mm-hmm.

560 Stella

561 I think the only thing that. I think I've noticed over the last. Probably 10

562 years or so is that it feels like it is more acceptable to have tattoos now.

563 STF

564 Mm-hmm.

565 Stella

566 And particularly if the woman with tattoos, I think it's always been more

567 acceptable for men and even my mum. Has issues with some of my tattoos,

568 but never had an issue with my brother having tattoos which I always found

569 really interesting. But she had she was more women don't have tattoos. Or

570 if you do, you're a certain kind of woman.

571 STF

572 Yeah, good girls don't get inked.

573 Stella

574 Good girls don't. Yeah, but interestingly, my Nan thought they were

575 fantastic.

576 STF

577 That's really interesting.

578 Stella

579 Yeah. The only thing she ever said to me was I don't know how you can get a

580 tattoo when you've always been so afraid of injections. But she thought there

581 were fab.

582 STF

583 OK.

Stella

I'm so I think. But yeah, I think attitudes are changing towards them and I feel less conscious of them if I choose to wear a t-shirt. Out and about. I. I don't feel like I'm necessarily that different, different for having them anymore.

STF

Yeah, OK. I mean, I've I've got one question, and one observation on the back of that I must remember them. So my my question is, is your brother older than you or younger than you?

Stella

He's two years younger than me.

STF

OK, I'm just. I'm just thinking, because you your mom's attitude, I wondered whether if your brother was older and say he'd got them before you and or whether.

Stella

No he's two years younger, he did have his tattoos before I did, but he is younger than me.

STF

But still your mum said girls, don't you know, nice girls don't get tattoo kind of thing.

Stella

Kind of she she didn't mind one of them. The first one I had. And then I got a slightly bigger one. And I'd I just you could just tell she just didn't like it at all. And I didn't know if it was more visible or if she just didn't like it. But yeah. And then she said I'm glad you waited to get tattoos until after you were married. I'm like, OK, and should because I had to strapless wedding

dress and I would have had visible tattoos. So it's obviously quite ingrained for her. I think that, like you say, nice girls don't get in.

STF

Yeah, that's really and my my observation is. I mean, a lot of these interviews have have flushed out a kind of a generational difference, and most people in fact, apart from you have said. Older people are not accepting of them, so I've just gotta say it sounds like your nan rocks. The fact that she was accepting of them. But you know, that's just my observation anyway.

Stella

She was amazing. She was amazing cause my second tattoo was actually for my granddad, cause he'd passed away. And she she just loved it. She thought there were. She was really interested in it in them. Every time I got a new one, she always asked about them. So yeah.

STF

That's really made me smile. That really has. Uh-huh. Lovely.

Stella

It was. It was lovely.

STF

Yeah, OK. I mean, that's the end of my questions. Is there anything else that you or is there anything you'd like to ask me?

Stella

Um. No, I don't think so. I think it's just really interesting area of of research to be looking at really because there are so many preconceptions about people with tattoos that I think are starting to change. But it's really nice to try and. Get to the root of why people have them. If they do, and and what

what those perceptions come from. And so I think anything like this, where people are interested in finding out the reasons why is is all for the good.

STF

Well. Thank you. And and thank you very much for your time today and for your honesty. I really do appreciate it. So.

Stella

No, no worries.

STF

I'll I'll email a copy of the transcript and and the debrief information across to you, which has got contact information on should you need it will probably be a bit later on this afternoon and I said that across to you.

Stella

Yeah, no rush.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. Well, thank you very much for your time. It's lovely to speak to you and thank you very much for your opinions. Thank you. Take care. Thanks. Bye. Bye.

Stella

You too, Steph. See you soon. Bye

Steve

STF

So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I've received your completed consent form and although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it will not be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May this year, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview responses. So if you do want to withdraw from the research, you will need to email that personal identifier code to either me or one of my supervisors. I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during the interview for any reason. If you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

Steve

Yep.

STF

Brilliant. OK, so I've got some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better, I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions may feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure that I understand what you're telling me. If you'd prefer not to answer any questions, just let me know and I'll move on. If you want me to repeat a question for any reason. Or rephrase, just let me know. So I anticipate this interview will take well, some of them have taken

15 minutes and some of them taken an hour, so it could be anything depending on how how involved the discussion gets. So are you happy for me to begin?

Steve

Yes.

STF

Brilliant. OK, so do you have any tattoos?

Steve

Yes.

STF

OK. Can you tell me why you chose to get to your tattoos?

Steve

Uh, I thought they looked good. I was. Heavily involved in the rock and metal and alternative scene, and lots of people I know have them lots of people I looked at look up to had them and I thought that it was. A part of my identity, I think. I think it would contribute towards my identity and and the look that I wanted to go for him in my life.

STF

OK, OK. And what do these tattoos mean to you now?

Steve

Ohh they're good. Kind of time stamps, I think to times different times in my life. I can look at a tattoo that I've got and I know exactly where I got it, why I got it and what the intentions were behind getting them.

STF

OK. Are any of your tattoos visible?

Steve

It depends. If I wear a long sleeve shirt, they are not visible. If I wear a short sleeve shirt or roll my sleeves up, they are visible.

STF

OK. So on those occasions when your tattoos are visible in public, how do other people respond to them?

Steve

Umm. Generally I think that they respond positively. I think they were quite coherent with how I carry myself. And I think they look good. So and generally younger people especially, I think that they look good. I went to Japan and they had a whole different. Other feeling towards them and I got a a few kind of negative stairs and interactions in Japan, but that's because I know. Hmm?

STF

Sorry, carry on

Steve

That's because I know how how their culture. Reacts to tattoos and the meaning behind tattoos and their culture is often linked to criminal activity and gang affiliation. But overall, it wasn't. It wasn't bad. You nobody hassled me or my friend John, who we both have tattoos that are visible. Because I think they understood that we were foreigners and it doesn't necessarily carry the same connotation, but I don't think they approved.

STF

OK. And do you think in terms of thinking about that age kind of piece, do you the the the response that you got while you were in Japan, do you think there was any kind of age difference or generational difference or was it just everybody kind of had the same sort of staring reaction?

Steve

Uh. To be honest, I don't know. I mean, the older people in Japan don't tend to like foreigners in general anyway.

STF

OK. So it's part and parcel of that, OK.

Steve

Yeah. So yeah, it was, it would be difficult to distinguish if they didn't like me because I was foreign or they didn't like me because I had tattoos. And also, I don't know the language, so I wouldn't have known if anyone was saying anything.

STF

Yeah. So it's, yeah. And there's a potential cultural mismatch there isn't there as well in terms of, yeah, OK, fair enough. OK. So what has your experience been of having your tattoos in the workplace?

Steve

In the workplace. Uh, I don't think it's been. Either good or bad really think it's been quite neutral. I haven't either suffered any prejudice because of them, nor have I had any advantages because of them.

STF

OK. I guess it was the former I was more thinking of, have you had any prejudice against, but you've you've clarified that, OK, fair enough. OK. So you mentioned your friend John has got a tattoo. Do any of your other friends or family have tattoos?

Steve

Yep. Yes, uh, pretty much all of my younger family members have tattoos. Umm, so I have two biological sisters, two step sisters. Actually. That was

an overstatement, about half of them do. So both of my biological sisters have them. And one of my step sisters has a tattoo.

STF

OK, OK. And what do you think of the tattoos that they have?

Steve

What do I think, uh, the pretty good. For the most part. And one of my stepsisters has a has a I think a stick and poke tattoo and they not known for lasting particularly well. Uh, so that's that's one thing. I think some of my sisters ones my younger sisters. One one of them is not particularly well done. But. Other than that, not I don't really have any feeling other feelings towards them.

STF

OK, so them having tattoos does that change how you feel about them?

Steve

Uh, not really. It was a surprise. Especially for my younger sister because she's shown absolutely no desire to get a tattoo before actually getting one.

STF

OK.

Steve

But my older sister and my step sister. We're all kind of part of the same uh youth culture, I suppose. Growing up with me, so I I was surprised that I was the first one to get one.

STF

OK. D'you in terms of, so you've got your biological sisters and your stepsisters and there's one step sister that doesn't, do you feel there's any kind of them and us with your step sister that doesn't have the tattoo or tattoos versus the

Steve

No. No I also have I sorry I also have three other step brothers as well, but they none of them have to have tattoos.

STF

OK. OK. Right. So it's a bit broader then. If it's not just the one, OK, that's a bit more context. OK, cool. OK, so.

Steve

Yeah, yeah.

STF

So part of my research is looking at how we define what a professional is and there isn't really an agreed definition out there. So how would you define a professional occupation?

Steve

Mm-hmm. A professional occupation. Uh. Something that earns money.

STF

OK.

Steve

I think I think it can vary significantly, I guess you can do anything professionally if you're earning enough money.

STF

OK, so does is there a point where earning money becomes earning money at a level that makes you professional or is it just any money earned makes you a professional?

Steve

I think any money that you earn makes you a professional.

STF

OK, OK.

Steve

Umm, I would have considered myself a professional musician, although it didn't support my lifestyle or support. You know, support my life, I still got money from doing it.

STF

Yeah, OK. OK. I mean, as I say, there's no agreed definition. So whatever you've got as you're working. Definition is absolutely fine. So if you want to hold that definition in your head and that we'll use that for any of the rest of the questions, OK. So what are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?

Steve

I don't generally care about professionals having tattoos, although. It varies depending on what kind of tattoos they are and where they are in the body.

STF

OK.

Steve

Uh. And so stuff like hand tattoos, arm tattoos, leg tattoos, things like that. I don't tend to mind. It's when it comes to neck and face tattoos is where I get I kind of draw the line I think.

STF

OK.

Steve

Uh.

STF

But is that is that for anybody with tattoos rather than just being a professional? So anybody with a tattoo, regardless of their professional status?

Steve

Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I I think I don't think I'll take someone as seriously though in a professional setting, if they have face tattoos.

STF

OK, OK, that's fair. Cool. OK, can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional, who has visible tattoos?

Steve

Hmm, trying to think now. I mean, I yeah, actually, no. I've I used to do it all the time. And again for being in the music scene and also. I mean, lots of people are my age and just above have tattoos.

STF

Umm.

Steve

And very often you talk about them and you ask people about them.

STF

OK.

Steve

And kind of trade stories.

STF

OK, so in that context it's it can be a conversation starter or an ice breaker maybe?

Steve

Yes, sometimes, yeah, definitely.

STF

OK, OK. OK. Brilliant. And what do you think has influenced your attitudes towards tattoos?

Steve

I think the culture that I grew up in. My mom hates them.

STF

OK.

Steve

My dad doesn't have much of an opinion.

Steve

But yeah, because I was in into lots of, you know, heavy music and rock metal and and kind of that sort of thing. It was just kind of part and parcel of that culture of kind of artistry and expressing yourself.

STF

OK, OK. So it was more your peer group than your parental?

Steve

Yeah, yeah, my mum initially said that if I got a tattoo, I couldn't come back home.

STF

OK, that's quite extreme.

Steve

But I knew that was a empty empty threat basically.

STF

OK, OK, fair enough. Still quite extreme, OK.

Steve

Ohh yeah I guess.

STF

Yeah, I'm just gonna put an image on the screen, right. Hopefully you can see that image.

Steve

Umm.

STF

Brilliant. OK. Can you see the sleeve that he's got?

Steve

Yes.

STF

Brilliant. OK. So on the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a teacher. What are your initial thoughts when you see this teacher with a tattoo and you don't have to form sentences, just free form? What are your initial thoughts?

Steve

OK. I'm I like it. I I can't really see what the tattoo is. He's got the the trees and the lake and stuff. Uh, it looks pretty clean. Cut in general pretty buff looks after himself. Umm, and he’s got a big tattoo, but I other than that, not much. Not much else.

STF

OK, OK. OK. Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or used the services of this teacher with a tattoo?

Steve

Ah, not really anything different to how I would feel if you didn't have tattoos.

STF

OK, OK, fair enough. How would

Steve

Actually I take that back. I think I'd actually be a bit more relaxed.

STF

OK, that's interesting. OK.

Steve

Yeah.

STF

More so than if he didn't have the tattoo?

Steve

Yeah, I think so.

STF

OK.

Steve

I think we'd have more in common.

STF

Ohh, OK yeah, OK so a shared bonding thing. OK. Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. OK. So how would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a teacher?

Steve

Yeah. As a teacher, oh, wouldn't really influence it at all.

STF

OK, OK. And how about how capable you think they would be as a teacher?

Steve

Not at all, really. It doesn't affect it. At all.

STF

OK, OK. OK. So thinking about the the location of the tattoo, I mean that is pretty massive as as sleeves go.

Steve

Mm-hmm.

STF

So if if some of that tattoo was visible on his face and neck, I appreciate you wouldn't see the whole thing on his face and neck, given the size of it. But imagine you could see some of it on the face and neck. How would that influence your thoughts about how much you would trust them, or how capable they are as a teacher?

Steve

How capable they are as a teacher, I don't really know. I think I I would believe they make bad decisions in their past.

STF

OK.

Steve

Not so much. The neck tattoos is more the face than anything. I just. Yeah, I think it's the connotations around. Face tattoos again, I think. This is the kind of I associate face tattoos with. Kind of an extreme personality.

STF

OK.

Steve

I'm not. I'm not sure I would go as far as to say, you know, criminal activity, but although they were once synonymous with gang members, uh rappers and and things like that, I just don't think it's a great decision. Yeah, in that in that regards, it as far as they are as a teacher, I'd have to form an opinion on that later on. But my initial assessment would be that's not a great look.

STF

OK. OK, cool. Lovely, right. I'm just gonna switch the image on the screen. Come on, stop sharing.

Steve

I feel the same about knuckle tattoos, but it would depend what it says. Say if they had writing across their knuckles. It would. It would depend what that what that said.

STF

Yeah. Again, that's fair enough, OK. So hopefully on screen now you can see a different image.

Steve

Umm.

STF

Uh, can you see the tattoo on her forearm there?

Steve

Yes.

STF

Brilliant. Lovely. OK, so on the screen is another image of an individual with a visible tattoo and she works as a barrister. What are your initial thoughts when you see her and and the tattoo? And know she's a barrister.

Steve

barrister. Interesting I I don't think it would. I think I'd just wonder. How other people would react to that in in that space?

STF

OK.

Steve

I don't. I don't think I would have any particular opinion, especially as. Usually when you're in the courtroom, that would be covered up. But it would, yeah. I mine would. Basically my reaction probably would be. Ooh, I

wonder. I wonder if other people take her seriously. You know, I wonder if the judges take her seriously.

STF

OK.

Steve

And and the other barristers, because they're all, you know, a bit older and it's usually quite a clean cut environment.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. OK. So sort of third party concern.

Steve

Yes. Yeah, a little bit. Or curiosity you could say.

STF

OK. OK. OK.

STF

OK. Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or use the services of a barrister who had a tattoo and I have to say I clarify here, I don't mean if you were up in court being represented by this person, just mean if you if you to as part of your daily work, if if this was a barrister was appointed by an employer or something.

Steve

OK. I'll have a little reservation.

STF

OK.

Steve

Just a little bit. But I think I'd have that for a lot of barristers. I mean, I've met a fair few lawyers and spoken to a fair few lawyers and I don't like most of them.

STF

[laugh] Sorry. OK. That OK. So that's a whole different thing then.

Steve

Yeah. So I'd be dubious going in regardless. I think again, it would be more kind of. I I think I'd take more. Heed to. Body language what they're saying. What they're saying they can do and how they're gonna do it, basically.

STF

OK.

Steve

That's what I would pay more attention to. Personally, a generally dressed like this with a T shirt. Probably wouldn't take them too seriously as a barrister anyway.

STF

OK.

Steve

But if they were like, you know, dressed professionally, just happened to have their sleeve rolled up or something on their shirt or it just pops out of the bottom of their blazer or something, then probably wouldn't care. But yes, a T shirt. If I'm going to a barristers meeting, I'm probably wouldn't be too impressed.

STF

Yeah. OK, fair enough. So it's other things, not only the tattoo then.

Steve

Yeah.

STF

Yeah. OK, fair enough. And how would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional or as a barrister?

Steve

Not at all really. Probably yeah.

STF

OK, OK. And how would they tattoo influence how capable you think they would be as a barrister?

Steve

Uh, not, not very much. I mean, yeah, it's more of a cultural thing at the moment for us young people. I've. I've heard that they're. Most like more young people, my generation with tattoos than there aren't. So it doesn't really mean anything to me.

STF

OK, OK, fair enough. So. How how thinking about again the location of the tattoo if that tattoo you could see some of it on the face and neck, how would that influence your thoughts about how much you would trust them as a barrister, or how capable they would be as a barrister?

Steve

If they had face tattoos, I wouldn't trust them at all.

STF

OK, OK. Fair enough.

Steve

Uh uh. Fortunately I think it, in my opinion, that's a. Poor life decision.

STF

OK, cool. OK. So keeping the tattoo where it is. So it's on the forearm there.

Steve

Mm-hmm.

STF

What would you think or how much would your thoughts about how much

you trust them or how capable they are if it was a different image, but where it is there on the arm?

Steve

A different image. It depends what the image is. Obviously, if it's like offensive then. That changes everything. I generally don't like the. And depiction of nudity in tattoos.

STF

Umm.

Steve

I just think I don't know. Yeah, I just don't think it's a very good thing, although it depends what it is. If it's like a. A realistic drawing of a Greek god naked or something like that, I would. I'll probably be more blown away by the artistry than anything, but I've seen like a lot of.

STF

OK.

Steve

Pin ups or kind of anime style tattoos of like naked women and stuff like that. I I don't like those at all.

STF

OK, OK.

Steve

I just. I don't think it's appropriate.

STF

OK. And so your thoughts about tattoos into particularly around the face and the neck, would that be the same for all professions?

Steve

Unless they're a tattoo artist or a musician. Or an artist of some some regard.

STF

OK.

Steve

Yeah, I I think that would apply.

STF

OK, that's. OK. That's really interesting. So there are exceptions to that hard rule of no face, no neck.

Steve

Yeah, I I again, I think it's just because it's in the kind of creative arts, etc. Or that kind of culture it's it's generally accepted and I just. I think when I see that sort of choice being made in a more professional setting. Personally, I don't think it looks good regardless of whoever you are.

STF

OK.

Steve

But also. And. Yeah, in a in a more professional like more. How do you say formal setting? That's would be my my take.

STF

OK, OK. So it's it's context dependent really.

Steve

Yeah, because I just know that they're gonna they're. I just think that they haven't thought it through because they are gonna be faced with hardship more so than a tattoo that you could cover up.

STF

OK. That's really interesting. Thank you. OK, alright. So I'm coming to the end of my questions. You'll be pleased to know. So are the answers that you've given me influenced by your experience with a tattooed person you have encountered?

Steve

Uh, yes, I will say that. Yeah, I think so.

STF

OK. Were you thinking of anybody in particular then?

Steve

Yes.

STF

OK. Can you tell me a bit more about this?

Steve

Yeah, sure. I mean, I know a lot of people with face tattoos.

STF

OK.

Steve

Just in it, you know, as again being with the kind of culture that I've grown up in and I've been a part of and and things like that. So I know a lot of people with face tattoos and I just, I know generally that they don't make good decisions.

STF

Right. OK.

Steve

In in terms of, you know drug use and. Uh. Just their life in general is not

particularly organized and. UM, sometimes they're just, you know, straight up bad people.

STF

OK.

Steve

Who, I don't know. I don't know how to explain it, but who who could be criminals or or something like that? Umm it.

STF

OK, OK. But it's sort of wrapped up in that whole thing. So it's in association for you.

Steve

Yeah. Yeah, it is. It is. And I, I don't think I've ever met a person with face tattoos who has has their life together.

STF

That's a really neat way of putting it. Yep, Yep, that sums it up really well. OK, cool. Thank you. Have you formed an opinion about someone because they have tattoos and then that opinion has changed. So either it was a positive opinion that then became negative or a negative opinion that then became positive later on.

Steve

Yeah, I had a lot of ones where positive opinions have become negative.

STF

OK.

Steve

You know, I've been introduced to people, uh, with, with those tattoos and and then they they become negative. I mean, that's just I think that's just

due to how many people in my generation have become, well, have have got tattoos. Sorry have got tattoo. So I can't really.

STF

OK.

Steve

Other than the face tattoo thing, where I've literally never met anyone who has face tattoos, who, who has the life together. Other than that? No. But I also judge people on how good their tattoos are as well, if that helps.

STF

Yeah it does.

Steve

So if someone has like, really rubbish badly drawn tattoos. Say they've been infected and been ruined that way. Or they go to their local place or they get something. Really quite generic as well.

STF

OK.

STF

So more the kind of flash rather than not.

Steve

Yeah, but there's there are a few tattoos where I'm just like, and you can distinguish as well the types of people who have certain types of tattoos.

STF

OK.

Steve

And. The ones that I would tend to avoid personally would be like. The lad tattoos uh, such as? Roses on the hand lions. Uh Roman numerals. There's

554 one where. And it's like a silhouette of trees around the wrist. There's one
555 of military tattoos when you're not in the military.
556 STF
557 Yeah.
558 Steve
559 Uh. And uh Bible. Uh gambling based tattoos such as playing cards and
560 dice. It just? Yeah, it's just like really generic stuff.
561 STF
562 OK.
563 Steve
564 And just poorly done stuff as well. Yeah, I've met loads of people just like,
565 really poor tattoos. I'm not a fan of a couple of mine, but. But then I don't
566 think they're poorly done.
567 STF
568 OK, OK. Lovely. Thank you. OK. So is there anything else about tattoos and
569 professionals you'd like to tell me? Or is this something that you thought we
570 might discuss and we haven't?
571 Steve
572 Oh gosh. Professionals and tattoos. Generally, if I was interacting with a
573 professional, it doesn't really matter if they have tattoos, especially if they're
574 easily covered up again. Not so much hand tattoos, because hand tattoos
575 are quite fashionable at the moment. And I quite like. I think they look good
576 on women who have hand tattoos and and in certain cases.
577 STF
578 Mm-hmm.
579 Steve
580 But tattoos that can't be easily covered up. I generally am. I think it's again,

it's. I'm just dubious of that person's decision making because I know that that it would potentially make their life difficult.

STF

OK.

Steve

And I guess that's, uh, a remnant of. Prejudice that was given to me passed down to me by the generation above because I was always told. If you do ever get a tattoo and make sure you can cover it up and I still abide by that. But I just don't like hand tattoos in general. Really. I don't like them. I don't like the way they look and I don't like face tattoos. I don't like the way they look.

STF

OK.

Steve

And the same with neck tattoos as well.

STF

OK, OK, lovely. Thank you. So that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Steve

Umm. Not formally, I don't think.

STF

OK, you can ask something informal if you want.

Steve

I just would. I would like to know what how your research is going and what other people have said, I suppose.

STF

OK. Yeah. So I've done. I think you're my 11th interview and this is the

second part of my data collection, so I'm gonna. I'm gonna get the image off the screen because I'm sick of looking at her. So yeah, I've I've done eleven of these interviews so far. There's a number of themes emerging and the generational thing is one of them. So a lot of people my age saying ohh some of my friends are starting to get them, but I don't like them and my I would never tell my parents or my grandparents because they'd die of shock. And then people of your kind of age and your generation. It's much more prevalent and much more accepted. There's definitely a generational split there. I think with the the face and the neck tattoos, there's a slight split in that people don't like the face and the neck, but people seem to be slightly more accepting. If it's a male profession that I'm showing them or male image rather than the profession. There were a bit more excusing of a man having a face or neck tattoos and they have been with a woman. But that's that's really really broad.

Steve

Hmm.

STF

But yeah, it's it's interesting. And some people, there's a lot of association with UM, former former service like the Navy or the military, whatever it might be. So there's a lot of that, but some people are saying I'm also finding people doing a lot of othering. So I don't have a problem with the tattoo, but I think other people could. So it's. It's sort of accepting that they may have thoughts about them, but how they would be perceived by other people. So some of what you've said is, you know, you'd worry about how they would be that third party concern. How would they be perceived? So I think it's interesting. I'm getting quite a lot of the same sort of comments back now in terms of, I think generally people might look at them and have

an issue in certain professions, particularly like nursing and the medical doctor one want people are not really very happy with that one or vicar. Because I've got a vicar is one of my scenarios the professions that rolls around. Nobody likes a vicar with the tattoo.

Steve

vicar would be very interesting, that would just be strange.

STF

Yeah. And most people have said that it's just strange to see a vicar that would look, I like either two of the people that I use in the research. So that's more of a. I don't. They don't fit my stereotype of what a professional vicar would look like or what a professional nurse would look like. A professional doctor anyway. So the tattoo was just kind of thrown in there as part and parcel. So it's kind of disaggregating that from what's going on. But it's it's interesting. There is no agreed definition of what a professional is. And everybody's got their own version of it. So then it's really difficult to say, well, a professional should look like this or a professional shouldn't look like this.

Steve

Umm.

STF

Umm but yeah, but it's it. I mean, it's fascinating. It's definitely gonna be something for me to write up there. Does that answer your question?

Steve

Yeah.

Steve

Yeah. Yeah, it's just funny about the professional because I know that at

Hannah’s School today, they have a professional bubble blower coming in to blow bubbles for the kids.

STF

Well, that is a new one on me, professional bubble blower, OK.

Steve

Yeah, yeah. He's, like, really good at blowing really big bubbles that you can like. House a person inside a bubble

STF

OK, OK.

Steve

And I was like, that's a really interesting one. I didn't know that was the thing until yesterday.

STF

No, I wouldn't have known that. I mean, the thing with professionals is the last time there was any focused attention at trying to define it was like 1964, a guy called Wilensky did it and there was like 57 criteria of what it takes to be a professional and now you can put the word professional in front of anything and it's legitimate. So professional journalists, professional photographer, professional football, professional estate agent, it's almost so used as to be meaningless, but because. People use. It was well, why using it then? There must still be some. Some reason you're attaching to it. So that's what I'm trying to pull apart Is there a hierarchy within professions or between professions? And within that is there a gender hierarchy of you know I don't like. I wouldn't like a male barrister or I wouldn't like. I feel like female barrister with a tattoo or whatever it might be so.

Steve

Yeah, that's interesting. Yeah, I think. I I don't know, I think. A lot of the

time as well with older people with tattoos, I just don't think they look great. I think that's just due to the the artistry and technology available at the time.

STF

Yeah. And I think that's another thing that's coming out is people are OK with art, but not flash tattoos or badly done tattoos. So a lot of people have described to me some horrendous sounding tattoos and then said, Ohh and when you get old, it's old and wrinkly. So I think there is some level of it's not only the tattoo, it's what the tattoo is of and what it looks like and how it, how it's how it's gonna be really.

Steve

Yeah. Yeah, no, I I fully understand that cause, yeah, I've seen some real stinkers.

STF

Ohh yeah I I get people emailing me all sorts of things.

Steve

Umm.

STF

Yeah. Which is never, never pleasant when you're opening your email and you get this massive image on your screen, you have to be really careful when you open your images.

Steve

Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's certain tattoos that I would if someone had a certain tattoo. I just never go near them.

STF

Yeah, I mean, my my ex sister-in-law. Is she my? Ohh well, I don't know some some. The mother of my brother's children. If that makes sense. She'd got she let someone who was her friend practice tattooing on her. So

it wasn't art. It wasn't even flash. So she's got like an ant on her knee. And the first time I saw it, I actually went to swipe it off

Steve

That's pretty funny.

STF

And then realised it was a tattoo. And then she's got really bad lettering done. So not I think it was her first kid's name. And the lettering doesn't match. You just think ohh God no. So I think the.

Steve

Yeah, when I get my tattoos, I tend to do a fair bit of research. Doesn't stop things from going wrong.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Steve

Like I went to kind of the wrong person to do my last two. And he was more in, like, his speciality was more kind of fine line work. And I went with Hannah because she was getting a couple of things done. And it was in Blackpool. So it kind of made sense and they didn't turn out badly. They just didn't heal as well as they should have done.

STF

OK.

Steve

And I just need them touched up. Basically I need need cause with fine line work. It's very easy for it to fall out.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah. My my first one was poorly done, really poorly done. And and my most recent one is the one that David designed that I I just basically

went and said do that. And there was no, there was no involvement from them other than basically clicking the needle gun on so.

Steve

Umm, that's cool.

STF

But yeah, there's definitely something around. Whether or not the tattoo is good. So I think people are a bit more accepting and it's that life choice thing of well, it seems like it's a decision you've gone into with open eyes because you've had some artwork done rather than you just had any old crap basically that just because the artist can do.

Steve

Yeah, yeah. I only get stuff that means something to me.

STF

Hmm. Yeah. OK, cool. Well, thank you very much for your time today and for your honesty. I really appreciate it. I will email a copy of the transcript and debrief information to you, which has got contact information on it should you need it. It'll probably I'll probably do the transcript this evening. So it'll be this evening or tomorrow morning. Then I send the transcript across to you.

Steve

Cool. Yeah, sounds good.

STF

Cool. Lovely. Brilliant. Thank you very much. Have a nice afternoon. Take care.

Steve

Alright. No worries. See you later Bye.

768 STF

769 Bye

Jemima

STF

OK, let me just check that it's actually recording. Yeah, brilliant. OK, lovely. So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I've received your completed consent form, and although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it won't be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May this year, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview responses. So if you want to withdraw from the research, you'll need to email that to me to. Or or one of my supervisors. So I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during the interview for any reason. If you do, stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

Jemima

Absolutely yes.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK, so I've got some set questions that I'm asking all participants but to make sure I understand better. I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are absolutely no trick questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions that we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. And if you'd prefer not to answer any questions, just let me know and I can move on. And if you need me to

repeat or rephrase the question for for at all, then I I'm quite happy to do that. I've put an hour in for this interview, but realistically have been taking between 15 to 20 minutes so and it just depends on how in depth the conversation gets, so you're happy for me to begin.

Jemima

Absolutely, yeah.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK, so do you have any tattoos?

Jemima

No, I don't.

STF

OK. Is there any particular reason or reasons why you don't or wouldn't have a tattoo?

Jemima

Umm. For me it's uh, I think historical in that the the era that I grew up in, my parents were sort of very anti tattoo. There was an association of tattoos with perhaps the Navy or the Army and or undesirables if that makes sense. So it would be something that was very edgy considered very.

Out there. Uh, something that you know. Nice young ladies didn't do so. I think I was massively influenced by my parents opinion on that.

Interestingly, my dad has a tattoo because he was in the Navy. He absolutely hates it, and you know, I used to say to him when I was a little, what's that? And he used to say it's a tattoo. I don't like it. And don't you ever have one. And so I think there was a massive generational influence on me about the association of a tattoo not being something that was very nice.

Jemima

Now I, can I go on Steph?

STF

Yeah, please do.

Jemima

So now nowadays I think. They are beautiful. I think that tattoos that the way that they are created now is so different to when back in the day. They are now stunning pieces of artwork and I think they can look absolutely amazing and so I have been tempted at the thought of having one, I like the idea of them and I like the way they they look and and and they can have such meaning attached to them and. And as I say that the artwork now is so amazing. That you can have some very beautiful things. And I don't think I would ever have one in that I. Let's say I wanted a fox. I'd love it. And then next year I might not want a fox. You might wanna. Bird might wanna flower. And they're so they're so permanent. Like they're they're so permanent. And the permanency of them is what puts me off. It's not that I don't like them. I do like the way they look, but I just know that if I had one that it could be a case of I suppose the concern is that I would regret it longer term when I decide it's not fashionable anymore, I don't like it anymore.

STF

Hmm. OK, OK. Brilliant. So thinking about people that do have them, why do you think people have tattoos?

Jemima

I think it's fashionable.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Jemima

Uh, particularly UM the last, say couple of decades, last 20 years. Umm, it's

very you know, it's. It's something that you can. And it's like clothes. Almost, isn't it? You choose to wear clothes to reflect a certain demeanour or personality, or the music that you like. So for example, if somebody was into rock music, they might wear. Rock, Chick gear and having a two becomes part of that that that uniform almost. So I think people have them because it's. It's part showing people part of who they are and what they what they're into, what they like. UM, and also people might have them nowadays because they are. Sentimental. Meaningful. In some ways they might have because of a bereavement. I know you can have the ashes tattooed into your skin of a loved one. Umm, people might have them because they have children and they want to declare that, you know, on a permanency on their skin. So, you know, I think there's a lot of sentiment involved in tattoos nowadays, which in the past perhaps wasn't the case.

STF

Hmm. Brilliant. That's wonderful. Thank you. I think that the sentiment thing is quite key, isn't it, really is it's meaningful. OK, so you mentioned that your dad's got a tattoo. So do any of your friends or other family have tattoos?

Jemima

Yes. Yes, yes, absolutely. I've got cousins with tattoos. Uh, very good friends with tattoos. Who probably had them in the 90s when they're in their 20s.

STF

Yeah.

Jemima

But then I've got older friends who are choosing to have tattoos now in their 40s and their late 40s in their 50s. I just think the the idea of having a tattoo

is different now to in the 80s and the 90s. It's it's sentimental, it's meaningful. It's not just something you go in on a drunken night out and you know. Get get a rose and the dagger tattooed on your forearm. So yeah, I have got lots of friends with tattoos yet.

STF

OK, lovely. And what do you think of the tattoos that they have?

Jemima

I think they're out of date.

STF

OK. Yeah. OK.

Jemima

I think they're old fashioned and uh, I think it was the very much the David Beckham era with the Celtic bands and the, you know, the perhaps the Nirvana Kurt Cobain. The Foo Fighters' kind of influence that kind of era of music. In the 90s, the grunge scene which I was in to, and they all have them and I I didn't know. I thought they were great at the time because I didn't want something that I might. Like I said at the beginning of the interview, that might not feel fashionable to me, or or current or relevant anymore in 20 years time, especially when your skin gets a bit older and wrinkly.

STF

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. OK. So how do you feel about them having tattoos?

Jemima

I think I think it's cool. You know, they they wanted them. It doesn't bother me at all if I've got tattoos. It's I think it's a reflection of who they were. When back, back in the back when they chose to have them. Again, maybe

sentiment. It reminds me of those days. You know, the heady days of of our 20s when we were out clubbing and it was a scene we were part of a tribe and it was a huge scene and. You know, that's a reminder I guess of who we were then and. And yes, they've got tattoos. It's not an issue to me.

STF

Yeah. OK. Brilliant. Lovely. OK. So part of my research is looking at what we think about professionals with tattoos. So how would you define a professional occupation? And again, there's no right or wrong answers.

Jemima

So somebody who is highly educated and who am might be a doctor, a lawyer. Or somebody who's working as a director or or somebody who works in a university even. So I think somebody works in an office like there maybe the white collar jobs. And what we might traditionally call white collar jobs or somebody's who's in the police force perhaps or or even you know somebody who's a in the fire service. Umm. So yeah, I think anybody who has a responsibility to others in in their profession. So yeah, dentists podiatrists. Anybody who has to deal with other people, really is professional

STF

Yeah. OK. And I think that's a really good working definition. So that if you wanna hold that definition in your head when we talk about any kind of professions generally. But I think that's a really good definition to to be working with. OK, So what are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?

Jemima

I think it depends on the tattoo and I think it depends on the job they're doing. So for example. UM. If you went to a I don't know, let's say let's say

you went to the doctors and you've got some sort of physical exam or surgery or something like that. And they had a massive sleeve of tattoo from, you know, all across the hands, right up their arm up their neck. You know. And. Perhaps both arms and legs covered absolutely covered. I would find that unusual for the profession. Uh, it wouldn't make me think they can't do their job. But it would. Make me think, would I employ you, if I was employing you to to deal with the public? And you, you know, you've got a massive sleeve of rock tattoos or whatever, which perhaps be more suited to a rock star.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah. OK, OK, that makes a lot of sense.

Um

Jemima

It the tattoo. Maybe a little butterfly or something on the wrist or that you know something very small and and and in in inconspicuous. You wouldn't even take a second look at it.

STF

OK, OK. So it's about how how kind of visible it is and how big it is and how much of a statement I suppose?

Jemima

I think it is how much of a statement and why it is as well? I mean, you know sometimes they're scantily clad women. Or very graphic horror kind of scenes and you know spiders, webs and Halloween sort of images. Which conjures up different thoughts to something that might be a beautiful flower or a bird, for example. I think it very much depends on how big is, how much it covers the body and what it is.

STF

Yeah, OK. Yeah. No, that I yeah, I get that. OK. So can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional who has a visible tattoo?

Jemima

Yeah, in hospitals, I remember my Nan being in Carina Hospital and some of the nurses there had exceptional amounts of tattoos covering the arms and I just remember thinking that's a bit much. It doesn't make me think anything else. It doesn't. My mom thinks tattoos make you look dirty. I don't think that. I don't think they make people look dirty. I I just think it's like, says a statement. It's a it's a, you know, this is who I am. And this is what I want to show the world. It doesn't make me think that they are any less professional in their job. I think they're still doing their job. And and I say that I think it is that generational thing where, you know, my mum would comment. Go ohh dear. She's covered in tattoos and I go that's that's that's OK you know. Umm. So yeah, yeah, I can't say it wouldn't cross my mind to to have a thought about it, but it wouldn't necessarily be an awfully negative thought.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. OK. I appreciate your honesty. So what has influenced your attitude towards tattoo? So you mentioned sort of your family and your mum thinking they're dirty. What else do you think has influenced your attitudes towards tattoos?

Jemima

I think the way they're portrayed on in the media in films particularly. UM, quite often it's the baddies, isn't it? Or the bad guy or the villain that are covered in tattoos. So there's that negative connotation around people who have tattoos are up to no good uh, the rock scene, as I mentioned earlier, massively into the rock scene, the Grinch scene, when I was younger and

people, the people with tattoos might have been Hell's angels, and their reputation is, you know, they're no good or, you know, rock star types who might be. Umm, considered not good boyfriend material, shall we say? Not the kind of nice guy you want to take home to meet your parents. Let's put it that way. So yeah, there's there's definitely an an an edginess to them that, that's that's um kind of appealing on one level when you're 20 and you're 20s and you wanna be a little bit out there. Umm, but on the same token, I wouldn't have probably taken home a guy to meet my mom and dad who'd got a spider's web tattooed on his neck.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, because of you that you're feeling, your parents didn't. Yeah. OK, OK, that makes a lot of sense. OK. Right. I'm gonna put an image on the screen. Bear with me. Just want to do a couple of clicks here. So hopefully now you can see an image on the screen.

Jemima

Mm-hmm.

STF

OK, so and you can see the tattoo that he's got there. He's got quite a large sleeve.

Jemima

Yeah

STF

Yeah. OK. So on the screen is an image of an individual with you. I'll put my teeth back in on the screen. Isn't an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a nurse. So what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and you don't have to form complete sentences, just what's your initial initial thoughts?

Jemima

Initial thoughts. I can see it's a wolf. I can see it's animals and that makes me think that's quite nice. Chosen something that's perhaps meaningful. You know, I don't see a naked lady or a scantily clad woman, so that's quite tasteful. And. And it's beautiful artwork in that sense. I think and this is terrible Steph, but I think the fact that he's a man. You kind of think, Oh well, he's he's a bloke, he's got tattoos, looks cool. I think if that was a woman. I might think differently, which is. You know awful, really. But that's how I

STF

No. I mean, I I just appreciate your honesty because I think sometimes gender does have a has an influence on these things. So no, I appreciate your honesty with that. OK. So can you tell me how you would feel if you had worked with or used the services of this nurse with this tattoo?

Jemima

I would wouldn't mind about the tattoo as long as he was really good nurse. If he was kind and respectful and you know, did nursing well, I wouldn't really be troubled by that tattoo.

STF

OK, OK, OK. So how would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional, as a nurse?

Jemima

Gosh, that's such an interesting question, isn't it? Because to be really honest does make me think. I don't know. There is something around that Steph. I can't put my finger on it, but it's not that I wouldn't trust him. But I would just think. I don't know. There is something around that. I can't. I can't

269 articulate it, Steph. But if he hadn't got a tattoo. I might think he was more
270 professional if that makes sense.
271 STF
272 OK.
273 Jemima
274 Yeah. And it's just contradicted what I said, but it's just something around
275 having a great big tattoo.
276 STF
277 Yeah. Yeah. OK. So it it could. It could be a barrier to begin with, but as
278 you mentioned before, as long as he's good at nursing and he's kind, so you
279 you. Yeah. OK, so it might. It might put some sort of a barrier there to
280 begin with, but then you you judge him based on whether or not he could do
281 the job.
282 Jemima
283 Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. You wouldn't sort of notice the tattoo after a while.
284 STF
285 Yeah. OK. Yeah. No, no, that. Yeah, that's perfectly fair. OK, so how would
286 the the tattoo influence how capable you think they are as a nurse?
287 Jemima
288 Again, I don't think it would. I think I think. You know, if somebody's
289 demonstrating a that they can do the job well and and they are help helping
290 me and ask answering my questions and I wouldn't think the fact that they
291 have a tattoo would that particular tattoo wouldn't make me think that
292 they're not capable.
293 STF
294 Yeah, yeah. Yeah. OK. Brilliant. OK.

Jemima

There is something Steph around. There's definitely something around my bias around people who've got tattoos might not have had the privileges and the education. That some people in the same more middle class or less working class. I might not have had, you know, might not have those tattoos because. When you are middle class, you might be. You might be on it, you're on a path, aren't you? You might be on a path, to be lawyer or a path to be a doctor. More so a working class person who might have not had that opportunity. And, you know, might have got into the grunge scene and had tattoos and tried to be a rock star and it didn't work out. And then they've had to go and find a career and they've gone into it. Maybe. Maybe they didn't go to university. Maybe they got a job and worked their way up through nursing and the tattoos already there, isn't it? So it's not something you think about when you maybe you're 16, 18. Especially if you're from a working class background like myself and friends, I've got friends with tattoos like that, Steph, and they wouldn't have given it a thought about well it might not look great if I decide to become a lawyer because becoming a lawyer was not on their radar.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. Having the tattoo is more normal and I'm using air quotes here more normal for them rather than the thought of becoming a lawyer.

Jemima

Yes, I think so. It's just part and parcel of how where we live the scene that we're involved in at in our 20s and when we're younger didn't necessarily go to uni. You play guitar with your mates and you got a tattoo she wanted to look like Kurt Cobain. It wasn't. It wasn't a consideration that it might it might impact your job prospects. Umm. But actually if you wanted to be a a

barrister and you and you rocked up with that, it might. It might influence people employing you.

STF

Yeah, it could be career limiting.

Jemima

Umm, so I think class is something about class there and it's not about capability, but actually more middle class people are generally much higher educated.

Jemima

And that's not that's that's, you know, just. That's just life, isn't it?

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely as I said. There's no trick questions and no right or wrong. It's just, yeah, absolutely. OK. So thinking about, I mean, is a massive tattoo there, but thinking about the location of the tattoo, if you could see some of that tattoo say on his neck or his face or neck and face, do you think that would influence your trust in him as a nurse or how capable you think he is as a nurse?

Jemima

Again. I'm not sure it would influence them. My trust in him. But as as I'm trying to articulate to you, it might make me think about why have you got tattoos on your face? You know what? What was your background? What? What made you think that was a good idea? And then you know. You know, you got a massive wide web on your face. You know, just think. Again, I'm a bit ashamed to say this Steph, but has he been in prison has he? Has he got dodgy background? You know, and come good. Make have come good, you know. Male nurse, you brilliant nurse. But you know what's? What road did

you travel to end up massive tattoo on your face? Unless you're a tattoo artist.

STF

Yeah, but it it kind of it throws up questions for you that wouldn't have been there otherwise?

Jemima

Yeah, not necessarily, wouldn't trust them, but it just makes you wonder. You know what? What road did they tread to get and tattoos on the neck and face?

STF

Yeah, brilliant. OK, lovely. And if the if the image on the arm. So again, leaving the tattoo where it is on the arm, we're ignoring the face and the neck. Now if the image was different, do you think that would influence how much you would trust them or how capable they are as a nurse?

Jemima

I think the image does matter. Like I say, if it was a horror scene, or something gory or, you know, a naked woman.

[connection lost]

STF

Oh I can't hear you.

Jemima

Sorry, just went a little bit weird then Steph, but I can.

STF

Yeah, it's come back now. I can hear you now.

Jemima

We're on hold then for some reason. So, yeah, I think, yeah, it does matter what the image is. I'm not sure it would be about me whether I trust them,

but I would be questioning why somebody has got a naked woman on their arm and their attitude towards women or, yeah, or horror scene and, you know, is that appropriate? If you're a nurse?

STF

Yeah, yeah. OK, fair enough.

STF

OK, right. I'm just gonna switch. Stop sharing my screen if I can. And I'm gonna switch to a different image. OK, so hopefully now you can see a different image on the screen.

Jemima

Yeah.

STF

Yeah. And can you see the tattoo on the forearm there?

Jemima

I can.

STF

OK, so on the screen there's another image of an individual with a visible tattoo and she works as a vicar. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image? And again doesn't have to be sentences, just freeform.

Jemima

I can see that it's serpents or snakes of some kind that makes me think of Greek mythology is it's something to do with Medusa. Is it something? you know something personal to her. She got reptiles, perhaps as pets. So again, I think it's. I think it's quite a nice tattoo. It's it's very well done. It's not like a homemade thing, which is obviously had that done by a professional tattoo artist. I I would be surprised to hear that she was a vicar. You know, probably wouldn't expect because to have tattoos necessarily, but

I would also be surprised to hear that she's a vicar because she looks very young.

STF

OK.

Jemima

So and again, that's my bias about thinking of because As fuddy-duddy old men.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, I get that. I get that.

Jemima

So yeah, it's very challenging, definitely challenges you, your, my, you definitely challenging my my. Uh, what's the word? My biases

STF

Stereotypes

Jemima

Yeah, my stereotypes and my preconceptions

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely lovely. OK, so can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or used the services of this vicar with the tattoo?

Jemima

I think again it it depends on how good they are at their job. You know, if she's kind and compassionate and and and lives, her values of of religion and faith. Having a tattoo wouldn't trouble me. Uh, maybe if it was a tattoo of the devil, I might ask why? Why? Why have that image?

STF

Yeah. Yeah. OK. Fair enough

Jemima

But yeah, again, it's about. If she demonstrates to me that she, you know, was a really good vicar wouldn't trouble me.

STF

OK, brilliant. OK. So would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a vicar?

Jemima

Again, no, it it's again, we're talking about the images and. It would make me maybe think what made to have that that tattoo. I might even ask. Interested your artwork, that's amazing or you know, meaning behind that, I might ask the question that would make me not trust her.

STF

OK. So more so for for this uh, with this image with as as being a vicar, that might be a conversation starter, but not necessarily with the male nurse. That would be more of a. You'd have the thoughts, but perhaps wouldn't ask questions about them.

Jemima

Ah, no, I'll probably. I'll probably would ask questions. I'll. I'm fascinated by tattoo, Steph and. I would. I would say, you know, or that that wolf looks beautiful and you know. Yeah, no, I would. And I have. I have done that. I have done that when I'm with people who've got massive tattoos, I can't stop staring at them. And I end up, I think I need to ask a question. Otherwise they think I'm weird because it keeps staring at their art.

STF

Yeah. So it could be a conversation starter or an ice breaker or something.

Jemima

I love the artwork, think these days the artwork is beautiful, yeah.

STF

Yeah, yeah. OK. Brilliant. Lovely. OK. So how would the the, the this vicars tattoo influence, how capable you think they are as a, as a vicar?

Jemima

Again, I don't think it would massively influence me this particular image as well. Again add and if this is gender bias, but because it's a woman. Thoughts of been in prison, didn't have crossed my mind. Doesn't necessarily or or thoughts of a why, you know what? What path did you go down to? End up with a tattoo? You're victor, so you probably had a very. You know. No, no. I was saying nice childhood or childhood that stemmed in faith and. And you know. Hopefully you know caring, caring, community that where church going, you've got that support network be thinking that this person's necessarily unhinged or edgy or been in prison. I think the the fact that she's a vicar makes a difference to somebody who might be a nurse or a carer. May I've had a very different start in life. It’s more the profession. I think the the tattoo.

STF

Sorry, what was that?

Jemima

I think my views of her are more to do with the profession she's in. Than has she got a tattoo.

STF

Yeah. OK. Sorry. I didn't catch the beginning of that. My headphones are not very good. OK, so imagine again the the it's the same tattoo, but if you could see some of it on her neck and her face, would that influence your trust in them as a provider or how capable you think they are as a vicar?

Jemima

Again. I'm not sure it would influence my trusting them. All the capability for demonstrating they can do the job, but it still throws up those questions about. What made you have a tattoo on your face? Where where you seeing people day in day out who are coming to you for spiritual and and you know guidance and counselling and and people who are vulnerable and older people often who don't, who don't have the the same tolerance of tattoos. Could be potentially alienating yourself against you or. Your your churchgoers who tend to be older generation, let's be honest. And why would you do that? Why would you put something on your on your face that might put people off? Come speak to you, although it doesn't necessarily put me off personally, I know. Put my mom off it would put my nan off.

Jemima

Lots of old people who would go oh my goodness, and I'm not going to that church. The vicar's got a tattoo on her face.

STF

OK. Yeah. OK. No, that's brilliant. OK, I'm coming to the end of my questions. You'll be pleased to hear. So are the answers that you've given me influence by your experience with a tattooed person that you've encountered?

Jemima

Yeah, I think probably, yeah. Yeah, definitely. I think you know, as I say back in the day, Steph, I was in that grunge rock scene. I went to some, really. Well, they were really seedy. Really seedy clubs. You know, very edgy. You know, absolutely loved it in my 20s, but I it was like part of that part of loving it was that edginess and that excitement of being. Bucking the you know, bucking my parents trends, really. You know, it's part of that

passage into rebellion and all those things. So, you know, tattoos and the kind of people that were in those clubs. UM. You know, represented. Everything my parents didn't want me to be, so it. See, I guess. Naughty, edgy. You know. Yeah. Risky.

STF

Yeah, boundary challenging.

Jemima

Boundary challenging all those things that are so appealing when you're 18 and 20 and trying to find your own, you know your own identity. And for those people carried knives Steph some of the Angels had guns You know, some of them had took lot of drugs, a lot of drugs and it was a edgy, edgy world and I was very, very young and probably a little bit frightened of them. If I'm honest. And yeah, so there was some some sense of. And I don't wanna get on the wrong side of these people and. You know, trouble would kick off and you might be in the middle of a club where chair start getting thrown in knives got got pulled and you know these massive guys that are covered in tattoos and they've got tattoos on their hands and the knuckles and. That kind of that kind of image again is that? Villain. The villain. I. Yeah, I was frightened, I was frightened of them.

STF

Yeah. OK. And that's kind of informed your thoughts about tattoos and perhaps volatility.

Jemima

Volatility is a very good word for it. Yeah, unhinged. Perhaps people who are. Yeah. Yeah. Maybe on drugs, maybe not.

STF

Yeah. OK. OK. Yeah. Have you formed an opinion about someone because

they have a tattoo and then changed that opinion. So either you thought something negative and then you it's become positive or you thought something positive and it's become negative.

Jemima

Yeah, absolutely. So, Umm, again talking about the same individuals in those clubs that I visited, you know, over the years, it actually started to feel like we were in a A. I use the word tribe, but it actually felt like a a place to go. It felt like a family, actually, in so many ways. Uh, in in the same way that people might join a tennis club or church. You know, my choice of my choice of club was was was, was was the rock scene and. There was lots of people who had tattoos, who became my friends and. UM on and some of the scary people I've talked about weren't scary at all, you know? So were just experimenting and. And and trying to find themselves like every other 20 something person. So yeah, it just became something that people did and had and something that. UM necessarily made me think. I don't wanna hang around with them, and I said I've got friends now. I've got tattoos. Friends who are considering having tattoos and and but what's interesting is my my choice of partner, my husband who who was in that same scene. That's how we met. He never had a tattoo. And and my part of my reason for that being attracted to him is because he didn't enter into that.

STF

Right. OK.

Jemima

So it's it's interesting, isn't it, that he he was edgy, but not not too edgy.

STF

Yeah, really interesting. Yeah, but actually he was rebelling against what was the accepted norm. So he's even more rebellious, isn't he?

Jemima

He is actually, yeah. And he is still. So actually he was like saying no, I'm not gonna conform to the image that everybody else is conforming to with piercings and piercings, particularly in tattoos. And all of that. Umm, you know, he didn't, you know, he had the letter jacket and he had longer hair. That was edgy enough for me.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. That that really is interesting. Brilliant. Thank you. Yeah. Yeah. OK. So is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me, or is there something that you thought we might discuss and we haven't?

Jemima

I don't think so. Steph, it's been absolutely fascinating.

STF

Thank you.

Jemima

I I just. Yeah, it's interesting that you've you've challenged my, my my views and really something I've never really thought about particularly, but it is it is there in the psyche somewhere that tattoos are necessarily associated with goodness who's have this connotation of rebellion. And. And yeah, and and villain villains.

STF

Hmm. Yeah, brilliant. Thank you. Well, that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you'd like to ask me about the research or anything else?

Jemima

I yeah, I'd. I'd love to know what's led you to choose to do this Steph. Is it something that you you, you know, you got tattoos or family tattoos or?

589 STF

590 I do, yes. So I've got tattoos. My brother has tattoos. My dad had tattoos.
591 My mom is absolutely, avidly anti tattoo. So when I had my first tattoo at 17,
592 she hit the roof. When I had my second tattoo at the age of 40, she told me
593 how disappointed she was in me. Bearing in mind the fact that I had quite a
594 successful career and number of degrees and all the rest of that kind of stuff.
595 So my my view of them is is a yeah, a bit a bit weird really, but. I've always
596 researched in how people judge by appearances, so at undergraduate at
597 masters levels I've looked at, particularly with forensic psychology. Whether
598 or not you can get a fair trial if you've got a suit on versus, you know, kind of
599 like a Department of Corrections orange jumpsuit that you see on the TV. So
600 it's about how we judge by appearances and how far we can go with judging
601 by appearances. So for me, it's just morphed into this because as I've kind of
602 gone into studying professionalism and what kind of things affect
603 professionalism. So that's how it's. Impacted me, but I'm I mean I'm not
604 particularly tattooed up. There's one on my wrist that people will only see if I
605 if I don't wear, you know, if I wear a short sleeve shirt and the other tattoo
606 I've got, nobody would see, you know, it's on my leg. And my husband sees
607 it once or twice, and that's about it. Really. So.

608 Jemima

609 Once or twice a year? Yeah.

610 Jemima

611 Yeah, it's interesting. One, one thing, we'll just tell you, Steph, is I have been
612 experimenting with transfer tattoos.

613 STF

614 OK. Yeah.

Jemima

Because as I said, I think I like the way they look and and it it's not permanent. So you know, if I'm going to a festival or it's going away for the weekend, we camping, I might do a a semi permanent thing then I would remove it. Then perhaps when I go back to work or. And yeah, it's it's, it's that permanency for me that that wouldn't have one but. But that's the interesting that. I do like them, but still all those connotations around. You know whether whether having one is a good thing and like you say how you get judged by that.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, my, my second I wanted a tattoo since I was about 12 years old. So it took me 5 years to get the first one. That was only because I'd actually passed my driving test and I could go and do it. And then my second one. It's in honour of my dad dying, and it took me 20 years to to actually get that one. So like you say, it's it's a permanent thing. And and for me, I don't. I don't rush them. I have to really think long burn about them before I actually decided I'm going to do it so. But other people just get them like, say fashion.

Jemima

Yeah, just. Yeah. They're just. Yeah, the couple themselves. And they see what they like and they go and get it. And and that's think there was a massive difference in that and and people who choose to have them like, say, to mark a loved one or a family member and and then the permanency is important then isn't it permanent? So yeah, it becomes what you have where you have it, what it's for reasons behind it.

STF

Yeah, because getting a Pokémon or a powder puff girl when you’re 20 doesn't necessarily look the same when you're 60. Does it really.

Jemima

That's what I like about my mates who got Celtic. You know, David Beckham in the 90s. Don't necessarily look that current anymore, but.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, no, I hear you on that one. I hear you. Lovely.

Jemima

I’d love to read your findings if that's possible.

STF

Yeah, yeah, I'll put you on my list and I can let you know when they're ready. Yeah.

Jemima

Particularly what other people say, and I I'm really interested if there's a an age differential in the in the opinions and and and and also a class differential. And I've really interested if there's gender differential as well in that. Doing think differently. When I see a woman tattooed up do. Yeah, old people, old people. I think I would expect a lot of older people to have a lesser positive spin on them. And. Yeah. So.

STF

Yeah, to be honest, I think the same sort of things. But I'm gonna see what the data says, but yeah, my gut feeling is exactly as you've just described it. There are differences both in the the perceiver and the the person being perceived. So yeah.

Jemima

Love to read it really

STF

Yeah, yeah. I'll keep you on the list. Yeah. Lovely. Brilliant. Well, thank you very much for your time and for your honesty. I really appreciate it. I'll email a copy of the transcript and the debrief information over to you. It will probably be. Probably, but later on this evening, if that's alright.

Jemima

Yeah, yeah, it's fine. Yeah, yeah, probably. Do I need to sign anything else or.

STF

No, no, no, that's fine. That's fine. That's lovely. Brilliant. Thank you very much. Nice to see you. Take care.

Jemima

You too, best of luck with the research.

STF

Thank you. Bye

Mary

STF

OK, let me just check that it's actually recording. Yeah, brilliant. OK, lovely. So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I've received your completed consent form, and although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it won't be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May this year, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview responses. So if you want to withdraw from the research, you'll need to email that to me to. Or or one of my supervisors. So I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during the interview for any reason. If you do, stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

Jemima

Absolutely yes.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK, so I've got some set questions that I'm asking all participants but to make sure I understand better. I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are absolutely no trick questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions that we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. And if you'd prefer not to answer any questions, just let me know and I can move on. And if you need me to

repeat or rephrase the question for for at all, then I I'm quite happy to do that. I've put an hour in for this interview, but realistically have been taking between 15 to 20 minutes so and it just depends on how in depth the conversation gets, so you're happy for me to begin.

Jemima

Absolutely, yeah.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK, so do you have any tattoos?

Jemima

No, I don't.

STF

OK. Is there any particular reason or reasons why you don't or wouldn't have a tattoo?

Jemima

Umm. For me it's uh, I think historical in that the the era that I grew up in, my parents were sort of very anti tattoo. There was an association of tattoos with perhaps the Navy or the Army and or undesirables if that makes sense. So it would be something that was very edgy considered very.

Out there. Uh, something that you know. Nice young ladies didn't do so. I think I was massively influenced by my parents opinion on that.

Interestingly, my dad has a tattoo because he was in the Navy. He absolutely hates it, and you know, I used to say to him when I was a little, what's that? And he used to say it's a tattoo. I don't like it. And don't you ever have one. And so I think there was a massive generational influence on me about the association of a tattoo not being something that was very nice.

Jemima

Now I, can I go on Steph?

STF

Yeah, please do.

Jemima

So now nowadays I think. They are beautiful. I think that tattoos that the way that they are created now is so different to when back in the day. They are now stunning pieces of artwork and I think they can look absolutely amazing and so I have been tempted at the thought of having one, I like the idea of them and I like the way they they look and and and they can have such meaning attached to them and. And as I say that the artwork now is so amazing. That you can have some very beautiful things. And I don't think I would ever have one in that I. Let's say I wanted a fox. I'd love it. And then next year I might not want a fox. You might wanna. Bird might wanna flower. And they're so they're so permanent. Like they're they're so permanent. And the permanency of them is what puts me off. It's not that I don't like them. I do like the way they look, but I just know that if I had one that it could be a case of I suppose the concern is that I would regret it longer term when I decide it's not fashionable anymore, I don't like it anymore.

STF

Hmm. OK, OK. Brilliant. So thinking about people that do have them, why do you think people have tattoos?

Jemima

I think it's fashionable.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Jemima

Uh, particularly UM the last, say couple of decades, last 20 years. Umm, it's

very you know, it's. It's something that you can. And it's like clothes. Almost, isn't it? You choose to wear clothes to reflect a certain demeanour or personality, or the music that you like. So for example, if somebody was into rock music, they might wear. Rock, Chick gear and having a two becomes part of that that that uniform almost. So I think people have them because it's. It's part showing people part of who they are and what they what they're into, what they like. UM, and also people might have them nowadays because they are. Sentimental. Meaningful. In some ways they might have because of a bereavement. I know you can have the ashes tattooed into your skin of a loved one. Umm, people might have them because they have children and they want to declare that, you know, on a permanency on their skin. So, you know, I think there's a lot of sentiment involved in tattoos nowadays, which in the past perhaps wasn't the case.

STF

Hmm. Brilliant. That's wonderful. Thank you. I think that the sentiment thing is quite key, isn't it, really is it's meaningful. OK, so you mentioned that your dad's got a tattoo. So do any of your friends or other family have tattoos?

Jemima

Yes. Yes, yes, absolutely. I've got cousins with tattoos. Uh, very good friends with tattoos. Who probably had them in the 90s when they're in their 20s.

STF

Yeah.

Jemima

But then I've got older friends who are choosing to have tattoos now in their 40s and their late 40s in their 50s. I just think the the idea of having a tattoo

is different now to in the 80s and the 90s. It's it's sentimental, it's meaningful. It's not just something you go in on a drunken night out and you know. Get get a rose and the dagger tattooed on your forearm. So yeah, I have got lots of friends with tattoos yet.

STF

OK, lovely. And what do you think of the tattoos that they have?

Jemima

I think they're out of date.

STF

OK. Yeah. OK.

Jemima

I think they're old fashioned and uh, I think it was the very much the David Beckham era with the Celtic bands and the, you know, the perhaps the Nirvana Kurt Cobain. The Foo Fighters' kind of influence that kind of era of music. In the 90s, the grunge scene which I was in to, and they all have them and I I didn't know. I thought they were great at the time because I didn't want something that I might. Like I said at the beginning of the interview, that might not feel fashionable to me, or or current or relevant anymore in 20 years time, especially when your skin gets a bit older and wrinkly.

STF

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. OK. So how do you feel about them having tattoos?

Jemima

I think I think it's cool. You know, they they wanted them. It doesn't bother me at all if I've got tattoos. It's I think it's a reflection of who they were. When back, back in the back when they chose to have them. Again, maybe

sentiment. It reminds me of those days. You know, the heady days of of our 20s when we were out clubbing and it was a scene we were part of a tribe and it was a huge scene and. You know, that's a reminder I guess of who we were then and. And yes, they've got tattoos. It's not an issue to me.

STF

Yeah. OK. Brilliant. Lovely. OK. So part of my research is looking at what we think about professionals with tattoos. So how would you define a professional occupation? And again, there's no right or wrong answers.

Jemima

So somebody who is highly educated and who am might be a doctor, a lawyer. Or somebody who's working as a director or or somebody who works in a university even. So I think somebody works in an office like there maybe the white collar jobs. And what we might traditionally call white collar jobs or somebody's who's in the police force perhaps or or even you know somebody who's a in the fire service. Umm. So yeah, I think anybody who has a responsibility to others in in their profession. So yeah, dentists podiatrists. Anybody who has to deal with other people, really is professional

STF

Yeah. OK. And I think that's a really good working definition. So that if you wanna hold that definition in your head when we talk about any kind of professions generally. But I think that's a really good definition to to be working with. OK, So what are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?

Jemima

I think it depends on the tattoo and I think it depends on the job they're doing. So for example.UM. If you went to a I don't know, let's say let's say

you went to the doctors and you've got some sort of physical exam or surgery or something like that. And they had a massive sleeve of tattoo from, you know, all across the hands, right up their arm up their neck. You know. And. Perhaps both arms and legs covered absolutely covered. I would find that unusual for the profession. Uh, it wouldn't make me think they can't do their job. But it would. Make me think, would I employ you, if I was employing you to to deal with the public? And you, you know, you've got a massive sleeve of rock tattoos or whatever, which perhaps be more suited to a rock star.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah. OK, OK, that makes a lot of sense.

Jemima

It the tattoo. Maybe a little butterfly or something on the wrist or that you know something very small and and and in in inconspicuous. You wouldn't even take a second look at it.

STF

OK, OK. So it's about how how kind of visible it is and how big it is and how much of a statement I suppose?

Jemima

I think it is how much of a statement and why it is as well? I mean, you know sometimes they’re scantily clad women. Or very graphic horror kind of scenes and you know spiders, webs and Halloween sort of images. Which conjures up different thoughts to something that might be a beautiful flower or a bird, for example. I think it very much depends on how big is, how much it covers the body and what it is.

STF

Yeah, OK. Yeah. No, that I yeah, I get that. OK. So can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional who has a visible tattoo?

Jemima

Yeah, in hospitals, I remember my Nan being in Carina Hospital and some of the nurses there had exceptional amounts of tattoos covering the arms and I just remember thinking that's a bit much. It doesn't make me think anything else. It doesn't. My mom thinks tattoos make you look dirty. I don't think that. I don't think they make people look dirty. I I just think it's like, says a statement. It's a it's a, you know, this is who I am. And this is what I want to show the world. It doesn't make me think that they are any less professional in their job. I think they're still doing their job. And and I say that I think it is that generational thing where, you know, my mum would comment. Go ohh dear. She's covered in tattoos and I go that's that's that's OK you know. Umm. So yeah, yeah, I can't say it wouldn't cross my mind to to have a thought about it, but it wouldn't necessarily be an awfully negative thought.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. OK. I appreciate your honesty. So what has influenced your attitude towards tattoo? So you mentioned sort of your family and your mum thinking they're dirty. What else do you think has influenced your attitudes towards tattoos?

Jemima

I think the way they're portrayed on in the media in films particularly. UM, quite often it's the baddies, isn't it? Or the bad guy or the villain that are covered in tattoos. So there's that negative connotation around people who have tattoos are up to no good uh, the rock scene, as I mentioned earlier, massively into the rock scene, the Grinch scene, when I was younger and

people, the people with tattoos might have been Hell's angels, and their reputation is, you know, they're no good or, you know, rock star types who might be. Umm, considered not good boyfriend material, shall we say? Not the kind of nice guy you want to take home to meet your parents. Let's put it that way. So yeah, there's there's definitely an an an edginess to them that, that's that's um kind of appealing on one level when you're 20 and you're 20s and you wanna be a little bit out there. Umm, but on the same token, I wouldn't have probably taken home a guy to meet my mom and dad who'd got a spider's web tattooed on his neck.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, because of you that you're feeling, your parents didn't. Yeah. OK, OK, that makes a lot of sense. OK. Right. I'm gonna put an image on the screen. Bear with me. Just want to do a couple of clicks here. So hopefully now you can see an image on the screen.

Jemima

Mm-hmm.

STF

OK, so and you can see the tattoo that he's got there. He's got quite a large sleeve.

Jemima

Yeah

STF

Yeah. OK. So on the screen is an image of an individual with you. I'll put my teeth back in on the screen. Isn't an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a nurse. So what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and you don't have to form complete sentences, just what's your initial initial thoughts?

Jemima

Initial thoughts. I can see it's a wolf. I can see it's animals and that makes me think that's quite nice. Chosen something that's perhaps meaningful. You know, I don't see a naked lady or a scantily clad woman, so that's quite tasteful. And. And it's beautiful artwork in that sense. I think and this is terrible Steph, but I think the fact that he's a man. You kind of think, Oh well, he's he's a bloke, he's got tattoos, looks cool. I think if that was a woman. I might think differently, which is. You know awful, really. But that's how I

STF

No. I mean, I I just appreciate your honesty because I think sometimes gender does have a has an influence on these things. So no, I appreciate your honesty with that. OK. So can you tell me how you would feel if you had worked with or used the services of this nurse with this tattoo?

Jemima

I would wouldn't mind about the tattoo as long as he was really good nurse. If he was kind and respectful and you know, did nursing well, I wouldn't really be troubled by that tattoo.

STF

OK, OK, OK. So how would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional, as a nurse?

Jemima

Gosh, that's such an interesting question, isn't it? Because to be really honest does make me think. I don't know. There is something around that Steph. I can't put my finger on it, but it's not that I wouldn't trust him. But I would just think. I don't know. There is something around that. I can't. I can't

articulate it, Steph. But if he hadn't got a tattoo. I might think he was more professional if that makes sense.

STF

OK.

Jemima

Yeah. And it's just contradicted what I said, but it's just something around having a great big tattoo.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. OK. So it it could. It could be a barrier to begin with, but as you mentioned before, as long as he's good at nursing and he's kind, so you you. Yeah. OK, so it might. It might put some sort of a barrier there to begin with, but then you you judge him based on whether or not he could do the job.

Jemima

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. You wouldn't sort of notice the tattoo after a while.

STF

Yeah. OK. Yeah. No, no, that. Yeah, that's perfectly fair. OK, so how would the the tattoo influence how capable you think they are as a nurse?

Jemima

Again, I don't think it would. I think I think. You know, if somebody's demonstrating a that they can do the job well and and they are help helping me and ask answering my questions and I wouldn't think the fact that they have a tattoo would that particular tattoo wouldn't make me think that they're not capable.

STF

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. OK. Brilliant. OK.

Jemima

There is something Steph around. There's definitely something around my bias around people who've got tattoos might not have had the privileges and the education. That some people in the same more middle class or less working class. I might not have had, you know, might not have those tattoos because. When you are middle class, you might be. You might be on it, you're on a path, aren't you? You might be on a path, to be lawyer or a path to be a doctor. More so a working class person who might have not had that opportunity. And, you know, might have got into the grunge scene and had tattoos and tried to be a rock star and it didn't work out. And then they've had to go and find a career and they've gone into it. Maybe. Maybe they didn't go to university. Maybe they got a job and worked their way up through nursing and the tattoos already there, isn't it? So it's not something you think about when you maybe you're 16, 18. Especially if you're from a working class background like myself and friends, I've got friends with tattoos like that, Steph, and they wouldn't have given it a thought about well it might not look great if I decide to become a lawyer because becoming a lawyer was not on their radar.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. Having the tattoo is more normal and I'm using air quotes here more normal for them rather than the thought of becoming a lawyer.

Jemima

Yes, I think so. It's just part and parcel of how where we live the scene that we're involved in at in our 20s and when we're younger didn't necessarily go to uni. You play guitar with your mates and you got a tattoo she wanted to look like Kurt Cobain. It wasn't. It wasn't a consideration that it might it might impact your job prospects. Umm. But actually if you wanted to be a a

barrister and you and you rocked up with that, it might. It might influence people employing you.

STF

Yeah, it could be career limiting.

Jemima

Umm, so I think class is something about class there and it's not about capability, but actually more middle class people are generally much higher educated.

Jemima

And that's not that's that's, you know, just. That's just life, isn't it?

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely as I said. There's no trick questions and no right or wrong. It's just, yeah, absolutely. OK. So thinking about, I mean, is a massive tattoo there, but thinking about the location of the tattoo, if you could see some of that tattoo say on his neck or his face or neck and face, do you think that would influence your trust in him as a nurse or how capable you think he is as a nurse?

Jemima

Again. I'm not sure it would influence them. My trust in him. But as as I'm trying to articulate to you, it might make me think about why have you got tattoos on your face? You know what? What was your background? What? What made you think that was a good idea? And then you know. You know, you got a massive wide web on your face. You know, just think. Again, I'm a bit ashamed to say this Steph, but has he been in prison has he? Has he got dodgy background? You know, and come good. Make have come good, you know. Male nurse, you brilliant nurse. But you know what's? What road did

you travel to end up massive tattoo on your face? Unless you're a tattoo artist.

STF

Yeah, but it it kind of it throws up questions for you that wouldn't have been there otherwise?

Jemima

Yeah, not necessarily, wouldn't trust them, but it just makes you wonder. You know what? What road did they tread to get and tattoos on the neck and face?

STF

Yeah, brilliant. OK, lovely. And if the if the image on the arm. So again, leaving the tattoo where it is on the arm, we're ignoring the face and the neck. Now if the image was different, do you think that would influence how much you would trust them or how capable they are as a nurse?

Jemima

I think the image does matter. Like I say, if it was a horror scene, or something gory or, you know, a naked woman.

[connection lost]

STF

Oh I can't hear you.

Jemima

Sorry, just went a little bit weird then Steph, but I can.

STF

Yeah, it's come back now. I can hear you now.

Jemima

We're on hold then for some reason. So, yeah, I think, yeah, it does matter what the image is. I'm not sure it would be about me whether I trust them,

but I would be questioning why somebody has got a naked woman on their arm and their attitude towards women or, yeah, or horror scene and, you know, is that appropriate? If you're a nurse?

STF

Yeah, yeah. OK, fair enough.

STF

OK, right. I'm just gonna switch. Stop sharing my screen if I can. And I'm gonna switch to a different image. OK, so hopefully now you can see a different image on the screen.

Jemima

Yeah.

STF

Yeah. And can you see the tattoo on the forearm there?

Jemima

I can.

STF

OK, so on the screen there's another image of an individual with a visible tattoo and she works as a vicar. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image? And again doesn't have to be sentences, just freeform.

Jemima

I can see that it's serpents or snakes of some kind that makes me think of Greek mythology is it's something to do with Medusa. Is it something? you know something personal to her. She got reptiles, perhaps as pets. So again, I think it's. I think it's quite a nice tattoo. It's it's very well done. It's not like a homemade thing, which is obviously had that done by a professional tattoo artist. I I would be surprised to hear that she was a vicar. You know, probably wouldn't expect because to have tattoos necessarily, but

I would also be surprised to hear that she's a vicar because she looks very young.

STF

OK.

Jemima

So and again, that's my bias about thinking of because As fuddy-duddy old men.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, I get that. I get that.

Jemima

So yeah, it's very challenging, definitely challenges you, your, my, you definitely challenging my my. Uh, what's the word? My biases

STF

Stereotypes

Jemima

Yeah, my stereotypes and my preconceptions

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely lovely. OK, so can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or used the services of this vicar with the tattoo?

Jemima

I think again it it depends on how good they are at their job. You know, if she's kind and compassionate and and and lives, her values of of religion and faith. Having a tattoo wouldn't trouble me. Uh, maybe if it was a tattoo of the devil, I might ask why? Why? Why have that image?

STF

Yeah. Yeah. OK. Fair enough

Jemima

But yeah, again, it's about. If she demonstrates to me that she, you know, was a really good vicar wouldn't trouble me.

STF

OK, brilliant. OK. So would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a vicar?

Jemima

Again, no, it it's again, we're talking about the images and. It would make me maybe think what made to have that that tattoo. I might even ask. Interested your artwork, that's amazing or you know, meaning behind that, I might ask the question that would make me not trust her.

STF

OK. So more so for for this uh, with this image with as as being a vicar, that might be a conversation starter, but not necessarily with the male nurse. That would be more of a. You'd have the thoughts, but perhaps wouldn't ask questions about them.

Jemima

Ah, no, I'll probably. I'll probably would ask questions. I'll. I'm fascinated by tattoo, Steph and. I would. I would say, you know, or that that wolf looks beautiful and you know. Yeah, no, I would. And I have. I have done that. I have done that when I'm with people who've got massive tattoos, I can't stop staring at them. And I end up, I think I need to ask a question. Otherwise they think I'm weird because it keeps staring at their art.

STF

Yeah. So it could be a conversation starter or an ice breaker or something.

Jemima

I love the artwork, think these days the artwork is beautiful, yeah.

STF

Yeah, yeah. OK. Brilliant. Lovely. OK. So how would the the, the this vicars tattoo influence, how capable you think they are as a, as a vicar?

Jemima

Again, I don't think it would massively influence me this particular image as well. Again add and if this is gender bias, but because it's a woman. Thoughts of been in prison, didn't have crossed my mind. Doesn't necessarily or or thoughts of a why, you know what? What path did you go down to? End up with a tattoo? You're victor, so you probably had a very. You know. No, no. I was saying nice childhood or childhood that stemmed in faith and. And you know. Hopefully you know caring, caring, community that where church going, you've got that support network be thinking that this person's necessarily unhinged or edgy or been in prison. I think the the fact that she's a vicar makes a difference to somebody who might be a nurse or a carer. May I've had a very different start in life. It’s more the profession. I think the the tattoo.

STF

Sorry, what was that?

Jemima

I think my views of her are more to do with the profession she's in. Than has she got a tattoo.

STF

Yeah. OK. Sorry. I didn't catch the beginning of that. My headphones are not very good. OK, so imagine again the the it's the same tattoo, but if you could see some of it on her neck and her face, would that influence your trust in them as a provider or how capable you think they are as a vicar?

Jemima

Again. I'm not sure it would influence my trusting them. All the capability for demonstrating they can do the job, but it still throws up those questions about. What made you have a tattoo on your face? Where where you seeing people day in day out who are coming to you for spiritual and and you know guidance and counselling and and people who are vulnerable and older people often who don't, who don't have the the same tolerance of tattoos. Could be potentially alienating yourself against you or. Your your churchgoers who tend to be older generation, let's be honest. And why would you do that? Why would you put something on your on your face that might put people off? Come speak to you, although it doesn't necessarily put me off personally, I know. Put my mom off it would put my nan off.

Jemima

Lots of old people who would go oh my goodness, and I'm not going to that church. The vicar's got a tattoo on her face.

STF

OK. Yeah. OK. No, that's brilliant. OK, I'm coming to the end of my questions. You'll be pleased to hear. So are the answers that you've given me influence by your experience with a tattooed person that you've encountered?

Jemima

Yeah, I think probably, yeah. Yeah, definitely. I think you know, as I say back in the day, Steph, I was in that grunge rock scene. I went to some, really. Well, they were really seedy. Really seedy clubs. You know, very edgy. You know, absolutely loved it in my 20s, but I it was like part of that part of loving it was that edginess and that excitement of being. Bucking the you know, bucking my parents trends, really. You know, it's part of that

passage into rebellion and all those things. So, you know, tattoos and the kind of people that were in those clubs. UM. You know, represented. Everything my parents didn't want me to be, so it. See, I guess. Naughty, edgy. You know. Yeah. Risky.

STF

Yeah, boundary challenging.

Jemima

Boundary challenging all those things that are so appealing when you're 18 and 20 and trying to find your own, you know your own identity. And for those people carried knives Steph some of the Angels had guns You know, some of them had took lot of drugs, a lot of drugs and it was a edgy, edgy world and I was very, very young and probably a little bit frightened of them. If I'm honest. And yeah, so there was some some sense of. And I don't wanna get on the wrong side of these people and. You know, trouble would kick off and you might be in the middle of a club where chair start getting thrown in knives got got pulled and you know these massive guys that are covered in tattoos and they've got tattoos on their hands and the knuckles and. That kind of that kind of image again is that? Villain. The villain. I. Yeah, I was frightened, I was frightened of them.

STF

Yeah. OK. And that's kind of informed your thoughts about tattoos and perhaps volatility.

Jemima

Volatility is a very good word for it. Yeah, unhinged. Perhaps people who are. Yeah. Yeah. Maybe on drugs, maybe not.

STF

Yeah. OK. OK. Yeah. Have you formed an opinion about someone because

they have a tattoo and then changed that opinion. So either you thought something negative and then you it's become positive or you thought something positive and it's become negative.

Jemima

Yeah, absolutely. So, Umm, again talking about the same individuals in those clubs that I visited, you know, over the years, it actually started to feel like we were in a A. I use the word tribe, but it actually felt like a a place to go. It felt like a family, actually, in so many ways. Uh, in in the same way that people might join a tennis club or church. You know, my choice of my choice of club was was was, was was the rock scene and. There was lots of people who had tattoos, who became my friends and. UM on and some of the scary people I've talked about weren't scary at all, you know? So were just experimenting and. And and trying to find themselves like every other 20 something person. So yeah, it just became something that people did and had and something that. UM necessarily made me think. I don't wanna hang around with them, and I said I've got friends now. I've got tattoos. Friends who are considering having tattoos and and but what's interesting is my my choice of partner, my husband who who was in that same scene. That's how we met. He never had a tattoo. And and my part of my reason for that being attracted to him is because he didn't enter into that.

STF

Right. OK.

Jemima

So it's it's interesting, isn't it, that he he was edgy, but not not too edgy.

STF

Yeah, really interesting. Yeah, but actually he was rebelling against what was the accepted norm. So he's even more rebellious, isn't he?

Jemima

He is actually, yeah. And he is still. So actually he was like saying no, I'm not gonna conform to the image that everybody else is conforming to with piercings and piercings, particularly in tattoos. And all of that. Umm, you know, he didn't, you know, he had the letter jacket and he had longer hair. That was edgy enough for me.

STF

Yeah. Yeah. That that really is interesting. Brilliant. Thank you. Yeah. Yeah. OK. So is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me, or is there something that you thought we might discuss and we haven't?

Jemima

I don't think so. Steph, it's been absolutely fascinating.

STF

Thank you.

Jemima

I I just. Yeah, it's interesting that you've you've challenged my, my my views and really something I've never really thought about particularly, but it is it is there in the psyche somewhere that tattoos are necessarily associated with goodness who's have this connotation of rebellion. And. And yeah, and and villain villains.

STF

Hmm. Yeah, brilliant. Thank you. Well, that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you'd like to ask me about the research or anything else?

Jemima

I yeah, I'd. I'd love to know what's led you to choose to do this Steph. Is it something that you you, you know, you got tattoos or family tattoos or?

588 STF

589 I do, yes. So I've got tattoos. My brother has tattoos. My dad had tattoos.
590 My mom is absolutely, avidly anti tattoo. So when I had my first tattoo at 17,
591 she hit the roof. When I had my second tattoo at the age of 40, she told me
592 how disappointed she was in me. Bearing in mind the fact that I had quite a
593 successful career and number of degrees and all the rest of that kind of stuff.
594 So my my view of them is is a yeah, a bit a bit weird really, but. I've always
595 researched in how people judge by appearances, so at undergraduate at
596 masters levels I've looked at, particularly with forensic psychology. Whether
597 or not you can get a fair trial if you've got a suit on versus, you know, kind of
598 like a Department of Corrections orange jumpsuit that you see on the TV. So
599 it's about how we judge by appearances and how far we can go with judging
600 by appearances. So for me, it's just morphed into this because as I've kind of
601 gone into studying professionalism and what kind of things affect
602 professionalism. So that's how it's. Impacted me, but I'm I mean I'm not
603 particularly tattooed up. There's one on my wrist that people will only see if I
604 if I don't wear, you know, if I wear a short sleeve shirt and the other tattoo
605 I've got, nobody would see, you know, it's on my leg. And my husband sees
606 it once or twice, and that's about it. Really. So.

607 Jemima

608 Once or twice a year? Yeah.

609 Jemima

610 Yeah, it's interesting. One, one thing, we'll just tell you, Steph, is I have been
611 experimenting with transfer tattoos.

612 STF

613 OK. Yeah.

Jemima

Because as I said, I think I like the way they look and and it it's not permanent. So you know, if I'm going to a festival or it's going away for the weekend, we camping, I might do a a semi permanent thing then I would remove it. Then perhaps when I go back to work or. And yeah, it's it's, it's that permanency for me that that wouldn't have one but. But that's the interesting that. I do like them, but still all those connotations around. You know whether whether having one is a good thing and like you say how you get judged by that.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, my, my second I wanted a tattoo since I was about 12 years old. So it took me 5 years to get the first one. That was only because I'd actually passed my driving test and I could go and do it. And then my second one. It's in honour of my dad dying, and it took me 20 years to to actually get that one. So like you say, it's it's a permanent thing. And and for me, I don't. I don't rush them. I have to really think long burn about them before I actually decided I'm going to do it so. But other people just get them like, say fashion.

Jemima

Yeah, just. Yeah. They're just. Yeah, the couple themselves. And they see what they like and they go and get it. And and that's think there was a massive difference in that and and people who choose to have them like, say, to mark a loved one or a family member and and then the permanency is important then isn't it permanent? So yeah, it becomes what you have where you have it, what it's for reasons behind it.

639 STF
640 Yeah, because getting a Pokémon or a powder puff girl when you’re 20
641 doesn't necessarily look the same when you're 60. Does it really.
642 Jemima
643 That's what I like about my mates who got Celtic. You know, David Beckham
644 in the 90s. Don't necessarily look that current anymore, but.
645 STF
646 Yeah. Yeah, no, I hear you on that one. I hear you. Lovely.
647 Jemima
648 I’d love to read your findings if that's possible.
649 STF
650 Yeah, yeah, I'll put you on my list and I can let you know when they're ready.
651 Yeah.
652 Jemima
653 Particularly what other people say, and I I'm really interested if there's a an
654 age differential in the in the opinions and and and and also a class
655 differential. And I've really interested if there's gender differential as well in
656 that. Doing think differently. When I see a woman tattooed up do. Yeah, old
657 people, old people. I think I would expect a lot of older people to have a
658 lesser positive spin on them. And. Yeah. So.
659 STF
660 Yeah, to be honest, I think the same sort of things. But I'm gonna see what
661 the data says, but yeah, my gut feeling is exactly as you've just described it.
662 There are differences both in the the perceiver and the the person being
663 perceived. So yeah.
664 Jemima
665 Love to read it really

STF

Yeah, yeah. I'll keep you on the list. Yeah. Lovely. Brilliant. Well, thank you very much for your time and for your honesty. I really appreciate it. I'll email a copy of the transcript and the debrief information over to you. It will probably be. Probably, but later on this evening, if that's alright.

Jemima

Yeah, yeah, it's fine. Yeah, yeah, probably. Do I need to sign anything else or.

STF

No, no, no, that's fine. That's fine. That's lovely. Brilliant. Thank you very much. Nice to see you. Take care.

Jemima

You too, best of luck with the research.

STF

Thank you. Bye

Alison

(Recording did not work)

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research. I have received your completed consent. Although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview it will not be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after 30 May 2022 which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a Personal Identifier Code which will be attached to your interview responses. If you want to withdraw from the research, you will need to email that Personal Identifier Code to one of my supervisors.

I am recording this interview to help me make sure

I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during this interview for any reason. If you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to

end, then this interview recording will be deleted.

Are you happy to proceed? Yes

I have some set questions that I am asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better, I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. I am just trying to determine if the opinions we have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo, so some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that is just so I can be sure I understand what you are telling me. If you would prefer not to answer any question, just let me know and I will move on.

Please let me know if you would like me to repeat a question for any reason or would like me to rephrase a question. I anticipate this interview will take between 45 and 60 minutes.

Are you happy for me to begin? Yes

Main	Follow-up
Do you have any tattoos?	Yes: Can you tell me why you chose to get these tattoos? Expression of self – in memory of people who have passed Are your tattoos/any of your tattoos visible? No How do other people respond to you having tattoos? Some people ask about them, but they are generally fine with them What has your experience been of having these tattoos in your workplace? Fine – had to ask work if I could wear shorts on sports day as tattoos are below the knee. They were fine about it. Appointed in October so clothes covered up the tattoos until summer.
Do any of your friends or family have tattoos?	Yes: What do you think of the tattoos they have? Like them. Talk about them, breaks barriers, builds friendships. Dad has a tattoo How do you feel about them having tattoos? Fine about it.

How would you define a professional occupation? What are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos? Can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional who has visible tattoos? What has influenced your attitudes towards tattoos?	Someone skilled to do the work they do – heating engineer, doctor. Fine about it TA at work has them – some people don't see them as a profession – they are visible. We've talked about them and I feel that her having them is a good thing, feel confident that I can have them. Seeing them on my dad growing up. He warned me about getting them. Grandparents against tattoos, but that's a generational thing. I did ask my parents permission before getting a tattoo, but I didn't tell my grandparents.
SAM F On the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a police officer. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image? Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with/or used the services	Strong. Powerful Fine with it. Feel in safe hands. Not at all

of a police officer who had a tattoo? How would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional?	Not at all
How would their tattoo influence how capable you thought they would be in their profession? How does the location/position/imagery of the tattoo influence your attitude towards them as professionals?	If on the neck and face – would like to say it wouldn't influence me, but I would be hesitant about them at first until I thought about it and realised they can do their job.
SAM M On the screen is another image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a doctor.	He's attractive. Strong.
What are your initial thoughts when you see this image?	Fine with it
Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with/or used the services of a doctor who had a tattoo?	Not at all. It would make me think they are more normal and easier to talk to.

How would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional? How would their tattoo influence how capable you thought they would be in their profession?	Not at all
How does the location/position/imagery of the tattoo influence your attitude towards them as professionals? Is this the same for all professions? Why?	Same answer as before about face and neck. Would be different if it was a hierarchical position. So for example a judge if I was on a jury. I would think a visible tattoo wouldn't be appropriate.
Are the answers you've given me influenced by your experience with a tattooed person you have encountered? Can you tell me a bit more about this?	Not really. Have been positive experiences.

Have you formed an opinion about someone because they have tattoos, and then that opinion has changed?	Yes, I've met people with tattoos and then changed my mind about them
Is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me?	No

WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

That's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Thank you for your time today, I really appreciate it. I will email a copy of the transcript and debrief information to you which has contact information on it should you need it.

Robyn

STF

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research I've received your completed consent form and although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it won't be linked to your interview responses. I won't. Retain your email address after the 30th of May, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the. Research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview responses. So if you did want to withdraw from the research, you'll need to email that personal identifier code to either me or one of my supervisors. As I mentioned, I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything you can stop. Any time during the interview for any reason. If you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

Robyn

All clear happy to go. Yep.

STF

Wonderful lovely. OK? So I've got some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better I may need to ask you some clarifying. Questions there are no trick questions and there are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. If you would prefer not to answer any question, just let me know and I'm happy to move on. And likewise if you want me to repeat anything or rephrase a question for any reason, just let me know. So I've done a couple

of these interviews so far and they've lasted anywhere between 15 and 60 minutes, so it could be anything depending on how in depth the conversation we end up having. So are you happy for me to begin?

Robyn

Happy to go.

STF

Lovely, brilliant, OK, so do you have any tattoos?

Robyn

Yes, I do OK.

STF

Can you tell me why you chose to get tattoos?

Robyn

The first one was just teenage defiance, and the rest of them were my choices to decorate my body.

STF

OK, and what do these tattoos mean to you?

Robyn

That they're all very symbolic. My tattooist jokes with me that that I weave too much meaning into everything, but they're kind of permanent. They they do mean something to me, so I do it. It's some my history of my journey through life and various points within my life. I've had little markings put on myself.

STF

OK, OK, I understand and are your tattoos are normally visible.

Robyn

Absolutely not.

STF

OK so I'm. I'm just kind of thinking if you're out shopping at some point nobody would see them.

Robyn

No, nobody would see them if I was wearing shorts and a vest then I can be completely comfortable

STF

Thank you so have other people seen them and responded to them.

Robyn

Not very many people. One person apart from me has seen all of them.

STF

OK OK lovely. Have you and I guess I probably know the answer to this because they're covered up but has what has your experience been of having these tattoos in the workplace? Have you had to disclose it to your employer or cover up at work?

Robyn

My previous employer would prefer us not to have had tattoos and for them to have been covered up as far as reasonably possible and my role was covered. I did join, uh, it wasn't a first aid situation, it was a physical intervention situation. My top rode up and and one on my belly was visible for about 30 seconds. So I tucked it away really quickly, it's it's never been called into question.

STF

OK, OK, I understand. Do any of your friends or family have tattoos?

Robyn

Uhm, there's kind of. A split, most of them don't, but a few of them do. Yeah, but most don't.

STF

OK, uhm so for the ones that do have tattoos, what do you think of their tattoos?

Robyn

I think most of them are really lovely. We've got this kind of elective empathy between us, that's some have got really. Naff tattoos, but it's kind of that that's your choice to have that done there. And if you want a tongue. Why or what it means? That's fine, but otherwise it's it's just a cartoon character or a frog or something. But and yeah, we we do discuss it between us.

STF

OK, and how do you feel about them having tattoos?

Robyn

It's absolutely not an issue I. My ex is a biker. I've been surrounded by bikers and heavy metal band members most of my life.

STF

OK, OK, and so for the friends and family that don't have tattoos and this is probably sort of me asking you to project for them, but do you think there are any reasons why they don't have tattoos? Is it they don't like them or they just haven't got them yet or.

Robyn

I'm I'm at that weird generational gap. I'm generation tramp stamp. I'm 45 so the the majority of my family and the older people didn't have tattoos and my brother and half sister are really quite heavily tattooed. They're more tattooed than I am. OK, the the in-laws nobody on that side had tattoos. I was the the the strange, wilful, defiant one of them because I have a tiny little tattoo but OK. And yeah, that there is kind of. Again, another split that that my younger siblings are quite tattooed and the the ex's family. Nobody had tattoos.

STF

OK, and that's sort of along generational age lines, do you think?

Robyn

I think so, yeah. And I can't think of anybody my mum's age that had a tattoo that I was aware of and but the the younger ones I'm I'm the eldest of my generation, the younger ones. They don't seem to care about it so much.

STF

OK, OK, that's really interesting, thank you. OK, so part of my research is looking at tattoos on professionals. How would you define a professional occupation?

Robyn

Oh wow. I say I was one for 15 years, I'm not entirely certain how you define it, and it will be on paper. It's the people who can sign your passport form for you. People in a position of responsibility.

STF

OK, yeah, I know this is the point about there being no right or wrong answer. It's it's really difficult to define what a professional is and I'm just interested to see how other people define it. So thank you, I'm thinking about your definition of a professional and that is a good working definition of a professional. What are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?

Robyn

It genuinely doesn't bother me, but I know some people raise their eyebrows at it. Far fewer people that I worked with had visible tattoos and than didn't. And when you saw someone in a professional role that I I don't know, a gentleman who take his jacket off and you could see a a tattoo through his shirt sleeve. It was a little bit edgy, wasn't it? And then then girls started

having the hands, tattoos and the wrist tattoos and the foot tattoos. It was kind of. Broaching, stepping into it, and I remember one of the girls saying, I don't know I've got a meeting. I've got strappy shoes on has anybody got any socks? She felt that she needed to put someone else's socks on to cover, cover up her horrible foot tattoo. She'd had it done in a visible place.

STF

I just the thought of having somebody else's socks on is. I'd rather have the tattoo personally. So what do you think has influenced your attitude towards tattoos?

Robyn

I don't know if the right word here is liberal. I'm very liberal about other people being allowed to do what they please with their bodies. I don't think I'm. I don't think anyone should say, oh [name], you can't have a tattoo because you're a lady and I apart from my ex did say that quite a bit, which is why I had so many of them. Yeah, there are different attitudes to them, aren't there? Yeah, I'm going off track. I'm autistic Steph. If I start wandering off track. Bring me back.

STF

OK, will do. Uhm, OK, uhm so because you're I mean you have tattoos so you're sort of I would I would consider pro tattoo and you mentioned liberal, is do you think there's anybody that you saw growing up that made you want tattoo or rebellion or? Or uhm, yeah I just wondered why. If there was anything in particular that made you think you wanted a tattoo.

Robyn

I was bunking off biology A level on a Thursday morning. I thought it seemed like a good idea and there was no kind of pre planning to. It I just decided I was going to do this thing and there was no influence my my step.

Dad has some really old ugly tattoos so it wasn't. I wanna be like him It was I'm gonna do this. This is my belly I'm gonna do it.

STF

Uh, it's it's quite interesting that that sounds exactly like my experience. I bunked off an A level class and I did the same thing.

Robyn

Why not

STF

Yeah, absolutely right. I'm just going to click here so hopefully on screen you will see an image of a person if the technology is working

Robyn

Yep

STF

Great, OK and can you see the tattoo on the arm there, it's quite a big one on the sleeve.

Robyn

I can yes

STF

Yeah lovely. OK, so on the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a barrister. Could you tell me your initial thoughts when you see this image and hear that they're a barrister and they don't have to be sentences you can just sort of freeform. Whatever thoughts come into you.

Robyn

That's some really nice ink work, and it would be covered in a suit wouldn’t it.

STF

Yeah, I think so too. OK, uhm, and could you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or used the services of a barrister who had a tattoo like this?

Robyn

I'd probably ask some very unprofessional questions about it. In kind of I like that tattoo, that's that's an attractive piece of work you've got there, but it wouldn't influence my judgement of their profession.

STF

OK, OK so it would be more of a sort of a conversation starter. It would break down a barrier rather than say if he didn't have a tattoo.

Robyn

I think so, yeah, yeah it's a talking point isn't it? A piece of work as big as that is a talking point.

STF

Yeah yeah OK lovely uhm. How would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional?

Robyn

I'd probably trust them more and that kind of elective empathy. Knowing that somebody has kind of saw the same interests that I have, I think I'd find that kind of comforting and reassuring that they wouldn't be looking down their nose at me if they found out I was also disfigured.

STF

Yeah, yeah, that that's really interesting. OK, so similar sort of questions, so how would their tattoo influence how capable you think about them as a barrister?

Robyn

It would make absolutely no difference whatsoever.

STF

OK, OK, so thinking about the, UM, the position of the tattoo. So at the moment it's a sleeve that he's got there. If and again, this is, he's working as a barrister. If that's the the tattoo was visible on the neck in the face for example. Obviously you wouldn't see the whole of it, but if you could see some of it. On the the the neck in the face, how would that influence your thoughts about how much you trust them or how capable they are.

Robyn

The neck wouldn't be an issue, I think I've got a slight ick with facial tattoos though, and that that's just I don't know why that is 'cause you see. I don't know if I'm mis-phrasing as you see, is it Māori people with tattoos on their faces and that's culturally normal, isn't it that that's acceptable. I've just got a little bit of a squick about facial tattoos.

STF

OK, OK, No, that's that's fair. OK, so thinking that with the tattoo where it is so it's still on the it's still on the sleeve. Would the imagery, if the imagery was different, would that change your thoughts about their how much you trust them, or how capable they are.

Robyn

Unless it was offensive no and and offensive is different people's different terms, isn't it? But that frankly looks like some artwork to me, yeah.

STF

Yeah, yeah, not fair enough. OK, I'm just going to put on screen a different image and let's hope the technology works twice in a row. So hopefully you can see a different image there on the screen.

Robyn

Yep

STF

Yep, lovely and can you see the tattoo on the forearm there?

Robyn

I can

STF

Brilliant right. We're two for two, this is good. OK, so on the screen is another image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a police officer. So again, what are your initial thoughts when you see this image? No, it doesn't have to be sentence, it's just freeform.

Robyn

There are there are rules about visible tattoos on police officers, aren't there? They're not supposed to have any after they joined the force. If they were already there, there's not a great deal you can do about it. It wouldn't bother me.

STF

OK, so uhm. If this police officer turned up and you imagine you'd call them to your house for some support for for something, how would you feel about them turning up? And if you could see that tattoo.

Robyn

Personally, I wouldn't have an issue with it unless there's anything offensive on it that I can't see.

STF

Fair enough and and similar to questions before. How would that tattoo influence your trust in them as a police officer?

Robyn

Again, the elective empathy of being another person with tattoos. I'd feel safe and comfortable with that person.

STF

OK, that's a really interesting choice of words there. Yeah, yeah, that's yeah, definitely OK. And how capable do you think they would be doing their job with the tattoo

Robyn

It absolutely wouldn't make a difference to me. It's just a superficial surface thing.

STF

Yeah OK, lovely uhm and again thinking about the locational position, so currently it's on the arm. If you could see some of that tattoo on the neck and the face, how would that change your thoughts about them as a police officer?

Robyn

Now this is a different reaction because it's female. Again, I wouldn't mind the neck, the collarbones. I wouldn't mind. The neck it's starting to get a little bit icky for me. I don't know why that is.

STF

No, no, that's fair enough. That's fair enough. So that kind of squick that you described, which is a great word that I am definitely adopting so that squick on the face for the previous one. Actually it goes down the neck for the female image.

Robyn

Yeah, and I really don’t know why

STF

No, no, that's fair enough. That's fair enough. It's this is what I'm trying to get at is, are the differences. So no that's perfect. Thank you very much for your honesty. So if the if the tattoo there it it looks like it's a snake. I can't quite make it out, but it looks like a snake, so if if the tattoo was where it is

currently on the forearm, but it was a different image, would that influence your thoughts about them as a police officer?

Robyn

Again, if it's swastikas or naked ladies, I'm gonna have a problem, but and while it's just what I perceive to be artwork not an issue.

STF

OK, lovely OK and thinking about tattoos then would that would your thoughts about uhm being tattooed? Do you think that would be the same across all professions?

Robyn

In in respect of me dealing with professions?

STF

Yeah, or or how you would think about them as a uh, as a professional. So your definition of of a professional if you, if you saw them having a tattoo in some way, do you think your reaction to them as a professional would be the same regardless of whether they were, say, for example, a High Court judge or if they were a surgeon? Or a nurse or any other professional.

Robyn

I can't imagine a High Court judge with a tattoo, but anyway like it's superficial, it's it's skin deep, isn't it's not who the person is underneath or what their capabilities or competencies are it's it's just a bit of decorational fluff.

STF

Lovely, brilliant, OK. We're coming to the end of the questions. You'll be glad to know so we're nearly there. Yeah, so are the answers that you've given me today, are they influenced by your experience with any particular tattooed person that you've met?

Robyn

Oh. Sorry I'm gonna go off on a major tangent. An electrician that had to come and replace my fuse box had oh wow he had some amazing tattoos and I had to physically take myself off into the kitchen as far away from him as I could be, so I didn't start asking him questions about his tattoos. 'cause I was fascinated but that wasn't appropriate. I mean, is an electrician professional? I don't know, but this was a a strange man that had come into my house and I wanted to ask him questions. Yeah, I've gone off track haven't I? Pull me back.

STF

No no no, that's that's that's really interesting. That's the kind of thing that I'm trying to look at really. So what I'm getting from that is that you sort of stopped yourself having the conversation, but for you it could have been a conversation starter again, sort of breaking down a barrier or leveller.

Robyn

Oh absolutely. Yeah, in in a different situation where he wasn't up to his elbows in my fuse box, I would certainly have asked him. Not necessarily have you got anymore, 'cause that's inappropriate, but I think about the tattoos I could see

STF

Yeah, the ones that you could see

Robyn

I'm not sticking forks in the plugs to make him come back out again. But he had some really interesting work.

STF

Yeah, and there's also that thing of there's there's a person in your house that you don't know you want them to fix the thing they've come to do and

go, so having a conversation might make them stick around longer. No I I get that now that's that's brilliant. Have you ever formed an opinion about someone because they have tattoos and then that opinion has changed?

Robyn

I don't think so. No, because I usually see the person before I see the tattoos it it's usually unless it's a facial tattoo or the oh the the ones the girls are getting on the backs of their hands now. They there's some obvious and that's me being cagey and covered up, but they're there so visible, aren't they? Unless you've got that clever makeup stuff, you can't really cover that up.

STF

Yeah, and that's really expensive and you gotta be good at doing makeup. And yeah, it's quite involved. Uhm, is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me? Or is this something that you thought I might have asked you that we haven't covered?

Robyn

I don't know. I think attitudes are shifting somewhat that the majority of my managers have been older than me and it's it's been really useful that my tats are all covered up because we don't get into that discussion about will you take that nose ring out or can you cover that up [name]? And because of where I've chosen to have them placed, it's kind of a bit of a protective thing. I'm still allowed to express myself through all this masses of ink I've got about my person and but it's not visible and it's not shoved in peoples faces.

STF

So it's private and personal to you, and you can choose when and if you share it with anyone.

Robyn

Absolutely yeah

STF

Yeah lovely brilliant thank you. Thank you so much. So that's the end of my questions. Uhm, is there anything that you would like to ask me about the research or anything that we've discussed today?

Robyn

No. Enjoy yourself with it and my delicious electrician but yeah, I I. I think we are moving forward. I think it's becoming more, acceptable, I don't know that there's less of that stigma about it. We're not all prostitutes and prisoners are we? You can choose things around bodies

STF

Yeah, and hopefully this is sort of what my research is trying to to look and see if that stigma still exists for people and sort of challenging it to see why does it exist? So yeah, thank you very much and thank you for your time today and for your honesty. I really do appreciate it so I'll email you a copy of the transcript and some debrief information which has got the contact information on it should you need it, but that's that's the end of the interview. Thank you very much.

Robyn

Thank you for your time, Steph.

STF

Thank you too. Have a lovely day.

Robyn

You too enjoy the rest. Thanks bye.

STF

Take care, thank you.

Lucy

STF

So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research. I've received your completed consent form and although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it will not be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May this year, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview response. If you want to withdraw from the research, you will need to email that personal identifier code to either me or one of my supervisors. So I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during this interview for any reason. If you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

Lucy

Yeah

STF

Lovely OK, so I've got some set questions that I'm asking you all participants, but to make sure I understand better I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. If you'd prefer not to answer any question. Just let me know and I'll move on and please let me know if you'd like me to repeat a question for any reason, or would like me to rephrase a question. These interviews have been taking

anywhere between 15 to 45 minutes. It just depends on how in depth the conversation goes. So are you happy for me to begin?

Lucy

Yes please

STF

lovely OK. So the first question is do you have any tattoos?

Lucy

I don't.

STF

OK, are there any particular reasons why you don't have a tattoo or wouldn't have a tattoo?

Lucy

Uhm, interesting because uhm A, I'd never considered a tattoo. Uhm, probably not my frame of reference. But as I'm getting to the ripe old age of 60, well I am 63 but coming up to 64 and I am gonna do the West Highland Way walk as part of that end of retirement stuff, I'm going to get a tattoo kind of celebration of an end of an era, but also something about there's an old body and it really doesn't matter what I put on it. That sounds strange, but that's how it's going through my head at this moment in time.

STF

OK brilliant OK lovely. OK, so do any of your friends or family have tattoos?

Lucy

Yeah, all my three kids have tattoos.

STF

And what do you think of the tattoos that they have?

Lucy

I think they they've got the there's one that's incredibly meaningful for one of them, but I would and I think they probably would agree that the other tattoos that they had was sort of, you know, when they went to Thailand and or went away and it was symbolic of a time and a place where it reminded them of something which is fine, and then they're not so, um, overt. They're in places where they're comfortable with and you know, I don't I don't care one way or t'other, but my son is an alcoholic or a recovering alcoholic and he has got one day at a time on his knee, which is so though it's symbolic to him as when he went through AA and 'cause he's he's doing brilliantly, he's been sober for about three or four years now, and sponsoring other people. You know, he works in an industry in in media where booze and stuff. So actually it is is it a badge of honour or is it a reminder? You know, it's sort of a massive tattoo on just above his, uhm, his knee, so it's interesting how that has impacted all of our lives and actually for him the tattoo is symbolic in a different way to the other ones he's got 'cause he's got the tattoos as well.

STF

Well, congratulations to him on three or four years sober, that's brilliant. That's fantastic, fantastic. So how do you feel about them having tattoos?

Lucy

Neither he nor there uh, very easy. You know, it's their body. They did it for a reason. Uh, my my eldest daughter regrets hers because it was a shoddy tattoo, but you know it was. If she's got it and that's it, and it's sort of it's OK. Yeah, don't don't feel any the less anything about it to be honest.

STF

OK yeah lovely. Thank you OK and and obviously my research is to do with tattoos and and professions and professionals. How would you define a professional occupation?

Lucy

Uhm, oh, that's really interesting. I guess it's, uh, something that requires a certain skill level, a certain experience and and it can be in any sector so and and often, I think professional status is. Brought about by qualifications, but that that actually I think is becoming less important for some professions, so you know, I think it's a changing feast, so it's very broad but equally I would say uhm, there are different scenarios about professions and different etiquette, so it depends on the the profession as to what etiquette is required I guess.

STF

OK OK lovely. Thank you. Uhm using that definition of of professionals, what are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?

Lucy

No problem.

STF

OK OK uhm, can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional who has a visible tattoo?

Lucy

Uhm, OK. That's interesting, isn't it? Yeah, you know, doesn't that stump you? Ah, ah, yes. On an academic school of jewellery has got the most amazing tattoos and piercings and and you know he's the most professional academic. No, not that I've ever come across, but he is a professional academic and and what do I think about him having that absolutely no problem

STF

OK. OK, uhm, what do you think has influenced your attitudes towards tattoos?

Lucy

Ah, influenced my attitude towards tattoos I would say I mean my attitude towards tattoos is fairly comme ci comme ca you know and I think that's probably the way I see life in a you know a very inclusive type of It is what it is and and I you know if I think about my upbringing you know very working class almost left to my own devices, almost feral at times and I probably could have gone one of two ways really, but I think actually it allowed me to just sort of sort out life in a way that has been open I guess. And and and just try and get a sense of what that mean, but I'm not quite sure, what that means.

STF

OK yeah, so is in a broader context of just being accepting generally.

Lucy

Yeah

STF

OK lovely right. OK, I am just going to put an image on screen so bear with me while I do a couple of clicks, so hopefully you can see an image on screen now.

Lucy

Yeah

STF

OK, and can you see the tattoo on her forearm there

Lucy

I can

STF

Lovely. OK, so on the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a barrister. What are your initial thoughts when you see this

image and find out that she's a barrister and it doesn't have to be sentences free form just.

Lucy

No, I'm surprised. Uhm, because you know you, you sort of are taken by the aesthetics of the girl actually taken by the aesthetics of the girl more than I am the tat to be honest.

STF

OK.

Lucy

So you know, and so actually that provokes something about the judgement call for what barrister a looks like and she doesn't fit my idea and actually the the tattoo for me is neither here nor there. It's more about the person and my stereotypical view of a barrister not looking quite that attractive. Interesting.

STF

I can OK, OK, No, that's that's great. Thank you. Uhm, can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or use the services of a barrister who had this tattoo?

Lucy

No problem.

STF

OK, OK, and would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional?

Lucy

No, I but you have made me look deeper at the tattoo in terms of a meaning. So what's interesting and I don't know whether this is allied, but I'll just say it. And you know, I once worked in a school in Worcestershire, whereby,

Uhm we were working with kids who were on the the borderline of being kicked out, so we used to do home visits and 'cause it was. You know, it's very white. It's very uhm small town type of scenario and I went with a Black colleague and we went to sort of do a home visit with this, this kid and he I think he must have been about 13 or 14. He had a swastika tattoo on his arm in. And my colleague was visibly shaken because it sort of conjured up all sorts of things for him and we had to really talk about that. And then actually that tattoo when you asked that question evoked that memory for me, actually.

STF

Oh that's interesting. OK, OK.

Lucy

OK, so you know does it do you know? And I it's it made me then look to see whether I would be offended by the image, not necessarily the tattoo, but what does the image represent?

STF

Yeah, the symbolism. OK yeah yeah I understand. OK so I'm thinking about the the image on screen. How would their tattoo influence how capable you think they are in their profession as a barrister?

Lucy

It wouldn't.

STF

OK, OK, so thinking about the location of the tattoo, imagine you could see some of that tattoo on the neck or the face. How do you think that would change your thoughts about how much you would trust them? Or they're capable in their profession?

Lucy

Not necessarily about capability or trust, but it would elicit different types of thoughts for me about. I wonder why there's a tattoo in that area and I I don't quite know why I would say that, because I would be, you know it. You are definitely then looking at the tattoo in an area that you don't often see. Whereas I guess we've become desensitised when we see tattoos in areas that we see most of the time.

STF

Yeah yeah no, I understand OK. So imagine the tattoo is exactly where it is on the forearm there. If it was a different tattoo would that influence your attitude towards them as a professional?

Lucy

It would depend what the tattoo was. So if it was offensive or maybe political. Or you know. And again, I'd sort of just go straight back to the swastika that was on this kids arm. Yeah, and that you know that would be wholly offensive to me. And then I would then question the validity of the person that is supposed to be professional and objective as to why that would be there. I guess yeah.

STF

Yeah no, that makes that makes perfect sense. OK? I'm just going to switch the image on the screen.

And let's hope this works twice in a row, so hopefully you should see a different image on the screen now. I don't think I've done that right. Hang on a second. Let me try again. I knew this would happen at some point. OK, let's try again. So can you see a different image on the screen there?

Lucy

Yeah

STF

Brilliant OK and you can see the tattoo. It's the sleeve tattoo that he's got

Lucy

Yeah,

STF

Yeah. OK, so on the image is another sorry on the screen is another image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a nurse. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image?

Lucy

I didn't think he was a nurse.

STF

OK, can you explain why?

Lucy

I think maybe it's his pose. I also think maybe it's and this this sounds ridiculous. I'm saying it but I'm gonna say it is sort of he looks Uhm, as if he sort of works out and therefore probably does something, perhaps a little bit more manual and, and that that again you know that then doesn't fit with sort of the way perhaps he presents uhm, if I if I was to sort of chop his so if I could just aesthetically look at himself without that, I probably wouldn't say that. But seeing the whole picture, he conjures up a different image.

STF

OK, OK, that's really interesting, thank you. Uhm, how would you feel if you worked with or used the services of this nurse with a tattoo?

Lucy

No problem

STF

OK, OK and would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a nurse?

Lucy

No

STF

Or what about how capable they are as a nurse?

Lucy

No

STF

OK, right, so thinking again about the location, location of the of the tattoo, I appreciate that's a massive tattoos. You know there would be bits of it that are hidden, but if some of that was visible on his face and neck, how would that influence your thoughts about them as a nurse?

Lucy

Yeah, and again I think that's challenging. Is it challenging because of the tattoo or the location of the tattoo and the fact that we have become so used to seeing tattoos on other parts of the body then when we see them on the my my question would be it wouldn't necessarily make me feel they were any less capable, but my curiosity would be piqued about saying, I wonder why the tattoo's there. Uh, so it's pure curiosity rather than uh. But the capability I think is what I'm saying.

STF

OK yeah, OK and I think it's that thing of like you say, it's it's more acceptable to have tattoos on certain places of the body, but ne- face and neck is still a taboo for quite a lot of people, even if they have tattoos. Yeah, yeah,

Lucy

Yeah

STF

OK, fair enough. OK, so the the thoughts that you have about tattoos so you sound quite liberal and accepting of of tattoos. Is that the same for all professions? So imagine uhm, if either tattoo was on a surgeon or a High Court judge or a police officer or a teacher, would it be do you think it would be different if it was a different profession?

Lucy

Not for me.

STF

OK.

Lucy

You know, I've yet to test that out, but to be honest on on the basis of what we've seen and how you know I, it's about what that person does and what how they are capable in their role yeah and yeah. And for me, I would look you know it's not about looking at something aesthetic in that sense, it's how they do the job.

STF

OK, yeah Yep, fair enough. OK, I'm coming to the end of my questions. You'll be glad to know. So are the answers that you've given me today influenced by your experience with a tattooed person you've encountered?

Lucy

No, not really, I I think maybe having three kids who've all got a tattoo, not massive tattoos, but they've gone through that experience and you know they they talked about it and the rationale, but they're I've not really been in a company of I have actually I have but but not often you know. So I know people who've got tattoos, and I know some of those are deep and meaningful for them. Some of them are less so, and I also think about if you're gonna have a tattoo a bit like that sleeve. That's a massive

commitment, So I just think crikey, if that floats your boat, great. Where does my thinking come from? I don't know, but I I I've never seen a tattoo that has offended me other than that swastika, and that's the only one I keep coming back to so obviously you know had I come across more that was offensive. Maybe my my my responses would be different, but.

STF

OK, no, that's fair enough. That's fair enough. OK, so have you ever formed an opinion about someone because they have a tattoo and then that opinion has changed?

Lucy

Not that I can think of.

STF

OK, OK, fair enough. Is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me?

STF

Or is there something that you thought I'd be asking you that we haven't covered and you wanted to mention?

Lucy

I did wonder if there was gonna be something about, uhm, you know extreme tattoos where you know the whole head and the face you know and some of the the the sort of scenarios where they take it to an absolute extreme, yeah and I wondered if that was the case how I would respond, and whereas I think sort of the attacks that we've been seeing today, and the questions they seem very much in keeping with, you know what you see? Well, whenever you see it, you know and it doesn't hasn't created any sort of uh, major issues or concerns, but actually what it has evoked was that swastika and it made me go straight back. So it's talking about this and and

the question that led to that specifically made me feel that colleague's pain and and and how you know, I I didn't see it at first. It wasn't until he'd point it out, and I thought, well, you know, so it's it's interesting so.

STF

Umm, and it it it is interesting because quite a lot of people will have like you, you.

STF

Said your children have got tattoos because it represents something meaningful and personal to them. But sometimes people will have a tattoo to provoke a reaction like a swastika, so it may be personal for them, but they are having it because it sort of sets out their their views on something, whereas the two that that we've seen today one appears to be a snake or something it doesn't look like a particular motto of any kind or emblem of any any organisation. The other one seems to be just a series of images had been put together as a sleeve. They're not political or provocative in any way. But yes, some people can have them as a personal thing that that are designed to to almost be a barrier really to the world.

Lucy

Yeah, yeah provocative yeah. And and I yeah and my therefore my response would probably be different to the two that we've seen today because it would elicit something within me that's different I guess.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely that's fair enough, lovely. So uhm, that's the end of my questions. Is there anything you would like to ask me about?

Lucy

The research, no, it sounds fascinating.

STF

Thank you.

Lucy

And you know, I and again it's really interesting 'cause it makes you stop and think and I I'm sure you've had lots of different responses in different ways, and it it does make you think. Oh OK, yeah, it's been it's mainly thoughtful. So thank you.

STF

Well, thank you, and I think it's interesting as well because people have got different versions of what professional is as well. It's not just the tattoos uhm, and some people have found that it it is. It is a an ice breaker with people and other people and no, actually it is a it would be a barrier but the the variety of what we think a professional, i so it's just it's, you know, not just my little world view if it's listening to other people's view on all of it. So it's fascinating. So anyway, thank you very much for your time today and for your honesty, I really appreciate it. I will email you a copy of the transcript and the debrief UM information which has got contact information on it should you need it. I'll probably send that over tomorrow, though when I've done this with the transcript

Lucy

Yeah no no. Absolutely no problem. Steph that's the main bit.

STF

Really lovely, that's great.

Kitty

STF

OK. So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I have received your completed consent form. Although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it will not be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May, which is the last point at which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which will be attached to your interview responses. If you want to withdraw from the research, you will need to email that personal identifier code to either me or one of my supervisors. I am recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during this interview for any reason. If you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to end then this interview recording will be deleted. Are you happy to proceed?

Kitty

Yes.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK, so I've got some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better, I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. If you would prefer not to answer any question, just let me know, and I will move on. Please let me know if you'd like me to repeat a question for any reason or if you'd like me to rephrase a question. These interviews are taken

anywhere between 15 minutes and 45, so putting in an hour for this is overestimating it just depends on how much the in-depth the conversation goes. So are you happy for me to begin?

Kitty

Yeah, that's fine.

STF

OK, then so do you have any tattoos?

Kitty

No

STF

OK. Are there any particular reasons why you don't or wouldn't have a tattoo?

Kitty

Umm, I think I. I just generally I wouldn't be able to take the needle and generally just like it's not something I would want to like in terms of piercings as well or like techniques, I wouldn't want to. It's just not something that appeals to me.

STF

OK, fair enough. Fair enough. So this is this is probably an unfair question, but asking you to think about why other people might have them. Why do you think people who have tattoos do choose to have them?

Kitty

Umm, it's kind of their choice if they want to. And like sometimes I think they could have all sorts of reason. Main reason I think is kind of a bit more expressive. Expressing themselves or something they want. To be like they might like something or want to like. I know people like write names of families or like like expression of love sometimes or like. Yes, different

reasons. There's kind like so like things. You you are used to hear in, like subcultures as well.

Kitty

You kind of identify with a group or like, say, if you're part of some sort of gang, even or just like the informal group, they might have it. So. So, yeah, think it's quite varied.

STF

OK. So I guess to sum up what you're saying is it it's it has some meaning for the person who chooses to have it.

Kitty

Yeah.

STF

Yeah. OK. Brilliant. OK, lovely. So do any of your friends or family have tattoos?

Kitty

No, none of my family have tattoos. Friends don't have tattoos either, no.

STF

OK. Do you think there are any particular reasons why your friends or family don't have tattoos?

Kitty

It's not something I've ever asked, and I I would say that kind of like sometimes religious identity might have an influence on what what you kind of do or don't want to do as well. So that might play a part.

STF

Yeah, fair enough. And it's unfair of me to kind of ask you to guess why other people would haven't really had anything done. So. Umm, OK, so part of my research is looking at how we think about professions. So how would

you define a professional occupation? And again, there's no right or wrong answer. There's no trick. Trick question here.

Kitty

Um professional. I think generally what pops to mind when people say professional would be kind of like health professionals. And kind of like. Probably law as well and like kind of. But I I feel it's more stereotypical kind of a sort of like associations because there's kind of like HE professionals as well. They you kind of get them in. Uh, different. Most organisations are kind of like professional, but you don't always refer to their occupation as professional. If that makes sense.

STF

Yeah. I so in terms of you mentioned the healthcare or the law, what do you think it is? Is it about those two that in particular that you mentioned that makes them a professional? Or profession, rather not profession.

Kitty

Possibly because they kind of have kind of more national kind of identity kind of thing probably with like say like NHS or something. It's kind of across all. And yes, and kind of when you come across terms online as well, it kind of refers to health as health professionals or like when you're kind of researching as well.

STF

Yeah. So it's how it's how they've been referred to by other organizations. So as you say, they've been described as a healthcare professional. OK, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. OK. So I mean, that is that is a good working definition of a professional. So that will be the one that when I talk about professions for the rest of this, if you want to use that, that's that's absolutely fine. That fits with, you know, profession is difficult to define. So

that's that's a good definition to use. So what are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos?

Kitty

Umm. I don't think it. From from my point of view, I don't feel it makes much difference in like the work they do, or what they're capable of doing. So like if I do have an interaction with someone and they happen to have a tattoo, I wouldn't kind of say that ohh that's gonna affect their professional performance or anything or like all what I need to gain during it'll still be done kind of.

STF

Yeah. OK. And you, you wouldn't bother you either way. You just know that they're gonna be able to do the job.

Kitty

Yeah. I mean, if I give an example like once I did go to a GP and like. Umm, the nurse did have a tattoo on the arm and it weren't like covered, so it was that stood out to me, but I didn't figure like, I'm like, she's a nurse, she'll do her job. What I've come for happened. So it didn't kind of put me off that. Ohh. You've got a tattoo. So I don't want to kind of have that interactions going. So yeah.

STF

That makes a sense, yeah. OK, brilliant. Thank you. So you've just mentioned one, but can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with the professional who has visible tattoos, so you can either expand on the nurse one or if there's another example that you can think of that's fine.

Kitty

Yeah, I think like that is one of the main ones in terms of professional. But I I know like colleagues who have kinda had tattoos, but they're not always like

visible, but there's kind of a distinction between like, say, if you see someone in summer and like they might wear different kind of clothes with kind of like where it's more visible like in in kind of work environments. You don't always see it. You might know that someone's got it, but you have actually seen it or.

STF

Yeah. OK. Lovely. Brilliant. Thank you. OK, alright. I'm gonna do. I'm gonna put an image on the screen.

Kitty

OK.

STF

Let me just I'm gonna do some clicking here. Ohh right. Hopefully you can see an image on the screen.

Kitty

OK. Yeah.

STF

So and you can, can you see the tattoo that he's got on his arm there?

Kitty

Yeah.

STF

Lovely. OK, so on the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo and he works as a doctor. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image and they don't have to be sentences, you can just kind of freeform whatever you think.

Kitty

Umm. I think they're a bit more visible cause like. In terms of the posture, it kind of gives off a certain vibe. So it depends like if I walk into and come

into the contact and like. The stance or how they kind of pose would kind of influence how I respond, I think. Like, say, if he was standing like that, I would find it a bit intimidating.

STF

Uh-huh.

Kitty

In honesty, but like.

STF

Because he's got his arms crossed and he's got quite a a surly look on his face.

Kitty

I mean, yeah.

STF

So. So the tattoo, do you think the tattoo adds to that kind of feeling of that vibe that you'd get or or is it just more the the way he's standing?

Kitty

Partially I think. If I would say it probably be like a. Uh, probably 70% him how it's standing and the posture 30% probably because it's got the additional tattoo.

STF

Umm. It is a huge tattoo that he’s got

Kitty

And it's quite muscle and that muscle to kind of like make it a bit.

STF

Yeah. So it's it's a combination of it altogether isn't it's his stance, his physicality as well as the tattoo. Yeah, OK, I understand. That's fine. Lovely. OK. So you've sort of started to pick up on it there, but can you tell me how

you would feel if you worked with or use the services of this doctor with the tattoo? Assuming he wasn't standing the way he's standing.

Kitty

No, I think like. I think first time you see you might have some sort of like. Kind of. They kind of pop up automatically, like unconsciously might think these things. But then I think if I was using the service and going a few times, I think the rapport would still be kind of built as a doctor patient. So it wouldn't have that influence like because you can. Like tone of voice. What they're there for? I mean, there's still, like, a profession which, uh, kind of you respect. Like you would if they didn't have a tattoo. They're doing a job to kind of help the public and available to kind of meet the patient needs that I have. So

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah. OK. OK. You mentioned there, but you've kind of your first unconscious thoughts. What what might you? What might your thoughts be if you were, if this was your doctor?

Kitty

I'm I don't know really.

STF

OK.

Kitty

First time. If it was the doctor and like. I would. I guess there's the kind of distinction I have like with if I'm seeing a female doctor. Male doctor, I think that was another layer, so like in terms of comfortable like I haven't had much kind of thankfully any kind of issues where you need to go in depth in different areas and stuff like of your health so.

STF

OK. OK. OK, lovely. OK, so how would their tattoo influence your trust in them as as a doctor?

Kitty

I don't think it would affect the trust.

STF

OK, OK. OK. What about how capable you think they would be as a doctor? Do you think the tattoo has in any impact on that?

Kitty

No, I don't think that.

STF

OK, OK, OK. So I mean that that is a it's it's a big tattoo there on the arm, but Can you imagine if if that tattoo, if you could see some of it say on his neck and his face, obviously you wouldn't see the whole of it because that's just a huge tattoo he's currently got. So imagine you could see some of that tattoo on his neck and his face. How do you think that would impact your thoughts about how much you would trust them or how capable they are?

Kitty

I think in terms of capability, I wouldn't still associate it in terms of like. I do think if it was on the face or neck it'd be a bit more intimidating. In all honesty, like. Or it stand out every time, maybe. Still like until I. But I think the person's like. How communication is and all those non kind of? Appearance things can almost more important in is like knowing if you trust someone. Yeah, but then how they look, I think that's something I strongly kind of believe in, so.

STF

OK, brilliant. Lovely. OK. So then imagine if the if the tattoo is still there on

the arm, it was a different tattoo. If it was a different tattoo, but on the arm, do you do you think that would impact what you think about how much you would trust them or how capable they are?

Kitty

Um, I think in terms of like tattoos like. I normally just would glance. I wouldn't actually stare and to the extent I would know what's on there. So like when I see your tattoo generally anyone having any professional as well, I'd probably just kind of notice kind of just the ink or it's normally just the green black kind of sort of blur. So it wouldn't affect in those ways.

STF

OK. So it's more like noticing, say, hair colour or a freckle on a cheek or something. It's just something you notice and move on.

Kitty

Something noticed, but I wouldn't kind of like stare like kind of acknowledge it too much extent, yeah.

STF

OK, brilliant. OK, I'm just gonna switch the images, so I'm gonna stop sharing that one and then share another one. Let's see if this works twice in a row. Right. So hopefully you can see another image on the screen. There are different image. OK. And can you see the tattoo there on her forearm?

Kitty

Yeah.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK, so on the screen is another image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a nurse. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image and find out she's a nurse?

Kitty

Umm. I mean, the tattoo is quite small so.

STF

Umm.

Kitty

Usually you kind of look at certain clothing to identify them as nurse. Even if it's short sleeve because it's just a plain white top and like you wouldn't kind of. Make assumption about occupation like.

STF

That's fair point.

Kitty

I think that's it.

STF

OK, lovely. OK. Can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or used the services of this nurse with a tattoo?

Kitty

Um it'd be fine.

STF

OK, OK. I mean, you, you you kind of use that example earlier

Kitty

Yeah, yeah, I have. I have come into contact with the nurse who, like I so like. I mean, yeah.

STF

Yeah, absolutely, yeah. Yeah, fair enough. How would they tattoo influence your trust in them as a nurse?

Kitty

Um. Likewise, I think it would affect like the first.

STF

Yeah. OK. Brilliant. OK. Umm. And how would they tattoo influence? How capable you thought they were as a nurse?

Kitty

I wouldn't. Um I wouldn't kind of judge their capability on the tattoo now.

STF

OK, brilliant. OK. So again thinking about the location of the of the tattoo there, if you could see some of that tattoo on her face and neck, how would that influence the answers you've given me about how much you would trust them or how capable you think they would be?

Kitty

I I think I I'd say the same as like what I said before. I mean I would still like because it's on the face, it kind of. Uh stands out more non that. I think it's more the face than like the neck as well. So they could.

STF

OK. So just to make sure I understand, it would be if it was on the face more so than the neck you that would have a slightly negative impact on your how much you would trust them?

Kitty

I think in terms of trust, like I said, like it'd be more of like a communication thing. It I think in terms of how much it kind of affects when you go there like just in general like having seen it. I think in time it might, but like might just kind of. You might lose focus all of it, but I think it stands out more.

STF

OK, OK. Lovely. OK. And if if the tattoo that she's got there on the forearm, if it was again it's still there on the forearm, if it was a different image, do

you think that might influence how much you would trust or think they were capable?

Kitty

Umm. I'd say no, I mean like I have been feeling like it depends what kind of image as well cause. I don't know like this kind of like Umm. Uh, like? I don't know how to phrase it, but like. Something some things like different people might see, see and think old. If it's something visibly like a a bit more like. Say it says a kind of, for example swear or something like you might think as more like something inappropriate in terms of your own views. You might view it then that in that sense I think it might affect.

STF

OK, so if it was something offensive or.

Kitty

Something offensive or like over, like, very noticeably offensive then they're not, I think. Ohh, I'd be honest that in my kind of influence a bit.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, that that's fair enough. I I think from the image is not really easy to see, but I think it looks like a snake. It kind of looks like one of the Hogwarts badges to me. But yeah, if it was something different and it was designed to, to offend or cause someone to be offended, then yeah, I can see how that would. Yeah. OK. Lovely. OK.

Kitty

I mean like in terms of like. From my point of view, like I've done art and I, I was quite obsessed with tattoos in terms of like sketches of dragon ones or like other ones, I'm probably a bit used to seeing those like images in general, so like. It being on the IT depends where on the skin. Umm but but yeah.

STF
But for you, it's more. It's more about what it is rather than say if it's something like a dragon or or a snake that she's got or even a fish or something, that's.
Kitty
Or any kind of like just anything that means something otherwise or like I mean even if someone does have something else, it might mean something to them. But as like public or someone using a service or like if you see something then it might have a different kind of meaning depending on you associate with it.
STF
Yeah. So it's the, it's the, it's how offended or not the viewer is, isn't it rather than, yeah, OK, OK, I get that. I get that. OK. And do you think that would be the same for all professions that you can think of so? Uh, I mean, it's pretty difficult to imagine, but if you encountered a High Court judge with a face tattoo, do you think you would be the same with them?
Kitty
Yeah. Umm. I think. Like I'd still see it as a bit. Uh, like in looking intimidate. Like unless it's something noticeable, but in terms of like each occupation, whether it's like a judge or I, I would still think they've gone through kind of a vigorous like the same sort of process anyone else as and if they've been deemed like, yeah, they can do the job they in that position for a reason and they're doing their work fine, then I don't see it as a kind of it should be something as a downfall or like to scrutinize?
STF
Yeah, yeah, yeah. So you sort of you trust the structures that have got them to the position. Yeah. Yeah. OK, OK, I understand. I understand. That's

brilliant. OK, come in. The last couple of questions I've got now, you'll be very glad to know. So are the answers that you've given me influenced by your experience with a tattooed person that you've encountered?

Kitty

Um. Could be. Umm, I mean like for example, if uh, if I say I I my answers might have been different if I had encountered the nurse or like as at least a kinda one of the encounters with someone who's working and like got it and. I think quite a few things influence my view in terms of what I've studied, maybe as well in terms of we've looked it from different points of view and like like sociology, psychology as well, and that's influential.

STF

OK, OK, that's great. Now I can, I can see how they yeah, they would have influenced you. Yeah. And that makes a lot of sense. So have you ever formed an opinion about someone because they have a tattoo and then that opinion has changed either negative to begin with and then positive or positive, then negative, whatever it might be.

Kitty

I I wouldn't think there's any like that I could properly recall. I think I would be lying if I said that I've never formed such a like a a negative perception or something about someone with a tattoo or just passing or in public because they're like. You get different kind of uh experiences and it depends who you see them doing like.

STF

Yeah. And if that's all you've got to go on.

Kitty

Yeah.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, OK, OK, that makes a lot of sense. OK, is there anything else about tattoos and professions professionals that you'd like to tell me? Or is there something that you thought we might be discussing that we haven't discussed?

Kitty

No, I don't think there is anything that I don't think we have discussed, but I'm.

STF

OK, OK.

Kitty

I mean, I did come across like an image on LinkedIn, which was kind of of a someone maybe in a law firm or something and I recall it being like. Like she had kind of a. Uh, it images of her arm showing in one like sleeveless in one. And then like a suited up in another to kind of like to kind of challenge what we're actually talking about, maybe like in terms of profession, so like seeing that from a point of view of a professional kind of gave a bit of a view that in in terms of me accessing from outside the views are might be a bit more say lenient or fluid, but within our occupation organizations it's a bit more like internally there might be more challenge to such things.

STF

Yeah. OK.

Kitty

In terms of, if you if I was a lawyer or if I was a nurse, then like I'd be influenced by the organizations view.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Kitty

In terms of like, say, like what expectations are and like of someone in that profession. So that's something I've. I kind of think as well.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, no, that makes a lot of sense. Yeah. Lovely. Brilliant. OK, so that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Kitty

Umm. No there isn't.

STF

OK. Well, thank you very much for your time today and for your honesty. I really do appreciate it. I'll email you a copy of the transcript. It might be tonight. It might be tomorrow. It depends on how well the technology goes for me, but I'll also attach a debrief information sheet which has got contact information on should you need it, but that's the end of the interview.

Kitty

OK. Thank you.

STF

Brilliant. Thank you very much. Nice to speak to you. Take care. Bye. Bye bye.

Kitty

Nice to speak to you. Take care. Bye.

Julian

STF

OK the recording is started. OK. So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I've received your completed consent form. Although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it won't be linked to your interview responses, so I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May this year, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you can create sorry you created a personal identifier code which would be attached to your interview responses, so if you do want to withdraw from the research, you'll have to email that to that personal identifier code to either me or one of my supervisors. So I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during the interview for any reason. If you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this recording the interview recording will be deleted. You're happy to proceed.

Julian

Yeah, yeah.

STF

I have some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better, I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions, there are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions that we all have about people who work in a professional occupation are influenced by whether that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions might feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. If you'd prefer not to answer any question, just let me know and I'll move on.

Julian

Yeah.

STF

And if you want me to repeat a question for any reason or rephrase a question, just let me know. I anticipate this interview will take anywhere between 45 and 60 minutes, but some have taken 20 to 30 minutes. Are you happy for me to begin?

Julian

Yeah.

STF

Lovely. OK. So first question then, do you have any tattoos?

Julian

I don't.

STF

OK. Is there any particular reason or reasons why you don't have a tattoo?

Julian

No, just simply never got round to it. That's.

STF

Sorry, I interrupted you there.

Julian

Yeah. No you're talking. Sorry.

STF

So it's not that you don't like them, you you you might have one at some point in the future. It's not that you object to them.

Julian

No, no, you you never know. It's no, I just never. It's never been. On my list of things to do so.

STF

OK, fair enough. OK, then for the people that do have them, do you have any idea why you think people might have tattoos?

Julian

There's sort of form of expression I would assume. That's what it's it seemed seems to be. I didn't know a girl who had them because she enjoyed the pain. And but I think mostly it's to to to project the personality on the world. And yeah.

STF

OK. OK, OK. Lovely. So you mentioned somebody there, but so you've got friends and family that have tattoos, is that right? Yeah. OK. And what do you think of the tattoos that they have?

Julian

They're usually pretty good. Yeah, I don't know anyone who's got one where they've got a mistake on it or anything. But no yeah, yeah.

STF

OK.

Julian

They they they usually are quite good.

STF

OK. And how do you feel about the people that you know that have got tattoos?

Julian

I it makes no difference to me, but. Yeah, yeah, I I get on. And again, I get on with them. Very well. I'm trying to think there's there's no one it wouldn't. It wouldn't be a reason that I wouldn't get on with him. I knew I knew 1 chap had one because he was in the services. I just remembered.

Sorry. I I should have mentioned that on the last. He had a an anchor, so I think I think they got it. When there was stationed somewhere and they they all got one.

STF

OK.

STF

OK. OK. So yeah, part of the armed forces. Yeah. OK. Lovely. OK, so part of my research, is looking at professionals. So how would you define a professional occupation?

Julian

Umm. Personally I say is someone's able to make a living from it basically. So I lived in independence. Sorry I live an independent life.

STF

OK.

Julian

And that that's that's simply how I'd

STF

OK. So it's about the earning.

Julian

Yeah, they've been able to sustain the life you lead with it.

STF

Yeah.

Julian

Yeah, that, that's what I'd. Yeah.

STF

Yeah. OK. Lovely. OK. And what, what were your? What is your general attitude towards professionals having tattoos?

Julian

It really makes no difference to me. Personally. We had a new chap joined this week and he's got I think they called us a sleeve or sleeves. He's got it on both arms it he's very. I keep telling him he's too good for the job so.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Julian

Yeah, obviously doesn't make me think he's not capable of doing the job.

STF

OK. And do you think there's anything in particular that has influenced your attitude towards tattoos, either negatively or positively?

Julian

No, I know some people are very strongly against. But now I don't, don't it it I take very little notice of of what other people. People's opinions on that sort of thing anyway.

STF

OK, OK.

Julian

Umm, but there is definitely. I think I've done it. I don't even know if it's a generational thing, but.

STF

Umm.

Julian

But it's it's it's fine by me.

STF

OK, OK. Look like what? I'm just gonna put an image up on the screen. Hopefully you can see that.

Julian

Yeah.

STF

And can you see the tattoo on the arm there?

Julian

Yep.

STF

OK, so on the screen is an image of an individual with a visible tattoo who works as a doctor. What are your initial thoughts when you see this image and know that they work as a doctor and you don't have to form sentences, just freeform. What do you think?

Julian

Didn't have. Just that she looks young for a doctor. That's all for that's. I think that's because I'm getting old. But now there's there's a. Now it it's fine if you if if I went in and she was treating me that would be fine. There's a good chance she will be.

STF

OK, OK. OK. So I think you you've answered my next question is how would you feel about using them as a service, so we wouldn't bother you? So if that was the doctors treating you, OK, lovely. OK. So the tattoo that they have, do you does that?

Julian

No, not at all.

STF

Ohh, let me ask the question. How would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional?

Julian
It makes no difference to to me personally.
STF
OK. And what about their capability of of in the in the, in the profession of doctor, do you think the tattoo influences that?
Julian
No, not not to me.
Julian
No, it's the work required to become a doctor. And no one gets to. Well, I wouldn't think many people get to that stage without that. You've gotta be pretty. You've got to know your stuff. You've got to be pretty, pretty to get to any kind of medical.
STF
Yeah.
Julian
Even the level of of of getting to. That sounds terrible. Terrible word in it such, but the lower levels of of medic, any medical professional as at to work hard to get there.
STF
Yeah, yeah. OK. So it's faith in the system of training that they've got there. OK, OK. So thinking about the the location of the tattoo there on the arm, do you think that influences your attitude towards them as a professional? So let me put it in a different way. If the tattoo that you could see on the arm, say if you could see that on part of her neck or her face, do you think that would influence your thoughts about her as a professional?
Julian
It wouldn't. It wouldn't influence me. But I know it would influence some

people. No, there's a thing with with face tattoos where it's considered. It it I think it's like the next step up where people see it as. Yeah, it's like a. It's almost like an A new level of commitment to. UM, tattooing. I think once it's on the face.

STF

Umm.

Julian

But yeah, that it wouldn't make a difference to me, but I I know it would make a a difference to to many people or, but that's that's hearsay really. So I'm just going on. On on what what I've heard.

STF

Yeah.

Julian

But but the face seems to be a different ballpark for a lot of people.

STF

OK, OK. So if the so thinking whether the tattoo is at the moment, if it was a different tattoo, do you think that would change your thoughts or feelings about this person as a doctor?

Julian

No, no.

STF

OK.

Julian

And. Yeah, I'm trying. It looks like some kind of snake or.

STF

It does.

Julian

So it so I don't know. I I just, I've just been trying to think what that would be to symbolise, but if if she's treat me, I'd probably it'd probably come up in the conversation. I don't know that I don't wanna offend it by asking but I I can't imagine she would be offended if it's so prominent on her arm. It might might might be a religious thing. I don't know it that would. Then I'll then I'll probably feel terrible for asking. I don't know.

STF

But it might be something that if you were treated by her, you might think about asking. So it might be a conversation starter.

Julian

Yeah, I'm not very good at small talk, so it would help me out actually.

STF

Just gonna switch the images on the screen, so bear with me a second. I wanna do some clicking. You can see the the sleeve that he's wearing the tattoo sleeve. OK, brilliant. So on the screen, he's another image of an individual with a visible tattoo. And this person works as a vicar.

Julian

Yeah.

STF

So again, what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and you know they work as a vicar? It doesn't have to be sentences, just freeform words.

Julian

And he would he would come up to, I would imagine he would get a lot of opposition or. don't know. That might be unfair of me, but I just imagine. In his profession, it would, it would be a problem. It's. Yeah. Just because

it's, I suppose it's a more. It would be more in line more conservative. Not all of it, but it just primarily, I would think it's it's a more conservative area that he's going to be. Dealing with it, I don't know what vicars, if vicars have their arms covered, and I've got a feeling they they sometimes don't have short sleeves. So imagine.

STF

Umm hmm.

Julian

It would make no difference to me if I was religious, but I imagine many people I my knowledge of the Bible's quite. Limited so I don't know if there's any mention of. Anything to do with? Uh, changing my it's not changing the body, but. And almost yeah, I don't know if if if somebody would use.

STF

Inking the body.

Julian

And any any part of the Bible that they could to cause a problem with that I don't. Sorry, I'm not very clear.

STF

That that was really clear of I understood. So so comparing this image to the previous one, this one, you think this person would face some opposition working as a vicar whereas the previous image you don't think that they would necessarily have opposition as a doctor. In fact, it might be a conversation starter.

Julian

Yeah. For for me, ea.'s only I'm only I've only got different opinion on this chap because there's it would be more unlikely for me to have to deal with him in a professional role only because I don't hold any religion and with a

doctor there's a good chance at some point in in our lives that will be dealing with a. A doctor at some point. So that's the only reason why it. And his arm isn't a problem to me, but I just think that he would come up to a lot more opposite. I mean, I don't know if doctors would get. Problems thinking about it with. But they just wouldn't with me. That's the that's the only the only way I can answer really on that score.

STF

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. No, that's fair enough. That's fair enough. So the image on the screen, the, the, the vicar and the the the sleeve tattoo, would their tattoo influence your trust in them as a professional, as a vicar?

Julian

No, no.

STF

OK.

Julian

It's it's a profession that you, I I'd imagine you have to dedicate yourself pretty fully too. And I'm not knocking other professions. I'm just saying that it's it's almost like a lifestyle choice. So. He's got to be pretty serious about what? What he wants to do as a profession. And it it may, it might be. It might be that he's found it later in life and. He may. He may even personally regret the the the whole arm thing, because he may have lived a different life and found religion. And. It's some in my been a recent conversion but. And the the. He may not. He might have had its whilst he was it. It would be interesting to have a conversation with him about that, but I'm just just to see the point where.

Julian

I mean, I never. I never really. Ask about tattoos. I don't, I don't. I I don't

know the social etiquette of of whether people are happy to talk about them. But yeah, sorry.

STF

Yeah. No, no, don't. No. Apologies, Sir. I mean, I guess with with the image that we've got on the screen, he's got it displayed quite proudly. Different people are different about these things in my senses that if someone was displaying it quite proudly, then being approached about it is probably something they might be used to and it's their choice. If they don't want to talk about it as they might not want to talk about being a glasses wearer they can say don't want to talk about it. So yeah, OK. So in terms of their capability in their role as as a vicar, do you think having a tattoo impacts that in any way?

Julian

No, no, not not, not not for me.

STF

OK.

Julian

The biggest problem I have in that sense is it's very unlikely I'll ever. Umm not cross paths with the vicar but never actually need to deal with them in a professional capacity.

Julian

Umm, that's all but it, but it wouldn't wouldn't affect me dealing with him as a as a professional, no.

STF

Yeah. No, I understand. Umm OK. So I mean, he's got a huge sleeve tattoo there. So it's it's quite difficult to imagine. But if the if the image that he's got tattooed was somewhere different. So again on his neck or his face, do

you think that would influence the your thoughts about how much you trust trust them in their professional or their capable and their profession compared to being a slave?

Julian

Yeah. Yeah. I think with the the face thing and and it would mean in his profession he wouldn't be able to. Like, not disguise it, but it it's gonna be seen if it's on his face. On on the arm, there's a there's a good chance it won't be. Or he could wear clothes that would.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Julian

I can't see how he could. Then cover it on the face. If you needed to. If he was getting.

Julian

Problems or people were. Making an issue of the the the fact that he got the a prominent tattoo.

STF

Umm, OK, OK, OK. So if the if if you still asleep, but the imagery was different, do you think that would change your attitude towards him as a vicar?

Julian

Umm, I've just been. Yeah, I've just been thinking that that's that's an interesting point because it. Be in a religious capacity. He's gotta be careful that there's nothing on there that can be. In his professional capacity, construed in. Uh, non anti religious way, but it it just has to be. Imagine in in that profession you'd have to be careful with what you've got on there. And I can't. I can't make out. It looks like a. It's like a skyline and. And that

that wouldn't be an issue. That's that's the world. And the rest. But yeah, if if cause, but I doubt there's anything. A graphic on there but. That would be an interesting. That point, yeah. If he got some. Uh. Featuring just things like nudity and things. And that that's where, that's where it would get interesting. And but he he. Yeah. He may have had it at a time when he didn't. Believing what he believes now.

STF

So the so sorry, the possibility of it being something else. And you mentioned nudity there. So if it was something else that sort of runs counter to to being a Vicky, that might change your thoughts about them in their capacity as a vicar.

Julian

Yeah, only in how they would, how they would be able to work without coming up against resistance. I imagine it would make a hard job even harder.

STF

So thinking about all professions, do you do you think? Do you think your thoughts about tattoos that would be the same for all professions?

Julian

Yeah, personally.

STF

Yeah. OK.

Julian

Yeah, it is a I can't think of a profession it would make. The slightest difference for me. I'm just trying to trying to think of anything there. There's there's nothing that comes to mind.

STF

OK. And the same with the if it was something like nudity or something that could be perceived as being offensive, that again would run across all professions for you?

Julian

Yeah, personally I I'm. I'm dealing with the, the the person not the. Uh, not what they look like. If if I was blind, there'd be treating me in exactly the same. A professional capacity. Regardless of of what I can see or can't see.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's a really good distinction to make. Actually. Yeah. Yeah. OK. OK. So the answer is that you've given me so far. Have they been influenced by your experience with any tattooed person that you've encountered?

Julian

No, no.

STF

That's OK. Yeah. Yep. Yep. That’s fine. OK. So have you ever formed an opinion about someone because they have a tattoo or tattoos and then you've changed that opinion later on? So it's whether you thought it was a negative opinion and then it's become positive or likewise you thought it was positive and then it's become negative.

Julian

No the only the only experience I can remember where I was it's in my my general naivete. I was painting on Corporation Street with an easel and a bloke came up and kicked me and. I had a chat with him he thought. I was begging, so that was the problem.

STF

Right. OK.

Julian

And it got tell you no. Is it tears people have tattooed where it's it's it's. Yeah, it's droplets or something. And I only found out a friend's later that it it's even means they've been in prison. I had. I heard two country stories. They have been it's how many times have you ever been in prison or they've murdered someone.

STF

On the face.

Julian

So that didn't. I wouldn't say that changed my opinion of him, but I just didn't know that. Umm, with my dealing with him until after when somebody informed me of that, I'm still not sure. I probably should Google it but. But it was it wasn't gonna an aggressive confrontation. It was just I understand that.

STF

He thought you on his patch.

Julian

Yeah, that was it. But I it was a learning experience. It was. It was the only thing I could remember because it was very prominent. It didn't. It didn't look good or bad, it just it just remembered that.

STF

Umm, OK. And it's uh, this is probably a bit unfair of me, but if you'd have known what then what you know now that it's either it's about being imprisoned or about murdering someone. Do you think that might have changed your interaction with him? You might when he.

Julian

Unfortunately, probably not.

STF

No, that's fair enough. I it is guesswork anyway, isn't it because you don't

Julian

And I tend to. Acts the same. And regardless of the. Yeah, a situations probably to my detriment, but yeah, it's it's.

STF

OK. Lovely OK, we're coming close to the end now. You'll be glad to know. So is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me? Or is there something that you thought I'd ask and ask and we haven't or anything we haven't touched on?

Julian

No, I'm just trying to think if if I think it has because I've got a few co-workers. Who. And two chaps called Adam, and they've both got quite prominent tattoos and I don't, I don't think it's it's influenced anyone's way of of of. Dealing with him in a professional capacity, but then again, I don't know what's going in in people's minds, but it doesn't appear to have a. I can't. And and the chap that I work with, who had it on his arm for the services that that was. And that was almost considered a non issue because it was. To do with the services. I don't know if that gets treated differently than if people have them. Almost it's it's not recreational, but.

STF

Has a different meaning. But you think he probably was treated differently because he was a force? His tattoo rather than yeah.

Julian

But it's. Yeah, I think I I think it was everyone just sort of said Ohh it's because it was in the army.

STF

So the fact there's an explanation, it's almost I'm gonna use the word justifying, but I don't necessarily mean just fine. But yeah, there's kind of there's a rationale for it rather than a fashion statement. So. OK.

Julian

And.

STF

Yeah. No that's really interesting.

Julian

And. Yeah. And I was just thinking, there's another. One one of my supervisors I didn't know she had a tattoo. It's like in the I don't know what you it's the top part of your back in the middle. It be like where your chest is. But on the back and I didn't know it was only when she wore a dress one day and I could see it and it didn't. It didn't change the way I think about her at all. And I just never know used it was because of where it is. I think that's that's a place where it's mainly covered and.

STF

OK, lovely. OK. Brilliant. OK, so that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you'd like to ask me?

Julian

And no, no, that's that's all fine. You've explained everything.

STF

Brilliant. Thank you and thank you very much for your time today and your honesty. I really appreciate it. I'll email a copy of the transcript and the

480 debrief information to you, which has got the contact information on it
481 should you need it. But that's everything. Thank you very much.
482 Julian
483 Lovely. Thank you.
484 STF
485 Thank you. Bye bye.
486 Julian
487 Thank you. Bye.

Mike

STF

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I have received your completed consent form. Thank you very much as a reminder.

Although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, there is no way for me to link up your responses with this interview other than the personal identifying code that you've given me. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research your email won't be linked to your interview responses, as I say set your personal identifying code which will be attached to this uh, if you want to withdraw from the research, you'll need to email either my supervisors or me with your personal identifying code so that we can find you and and delete this response. I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything you can stop at any time during the interview for any reason, uh, if you do stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then this interview recording will be deleted.

You happy to proceed on that basis?

Mike

I am yes. I've nodded several times while you said that but my camera's not on so you can't see that. That's all okay

STF

OK, lovely OK so I've got some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are no trick questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions we all have about people working in professional occupations are influenced in any way by

whether they have a tattoo - that's by whether the professional has a tattoo, and ourselves as well. If you would prefer not to answer any questions, just let me know and I'll move on.

Mike

That's fine, yeah.

STF

I anticipate this is going to take between 45 and 60 minutes, but that depends on how in depth our conversation gets. So are you happy for me to begin?

Mike

Absolutely yes, fire away.

STF

OK, OK, so the first question is do you have any tattoos yourself?

Mike

I don't, no

STF

Uhm, is there any particular reason why you don't have a tattoo?

Mike

No, there isn't, to be honest, uhm.

STF

OK.

Mike

No, I wouldn't rule getting one in the future, uhm? But yeah, I've just never thought, never had something I wanted so much to put on my skin permanently so far. I have some ideas you know, as I say, I've not ruled it out in the future, so you know, I might get one going forward.

STF

OK. Uhm, so I mean, you sort of touched on it a little bit there, but why do you think people choose to have a tattoo? So you mentioned you haven't thought about something that you wanted to have permanently, but why do you think other people might get tattoos?

Mike

Uhm, I don't. I think it varies I I think for some people it's very symbolic for them. What they have means a lot so. You know, uh, there could be memory of somebody or about something that they feel passionate about, something that they identify with and you know how they define themselves might be an expression of that Uhm, you know whether that's sort of cultural, you know, sort of a you know traditional tattoos for certain cultures. Or it could be you know how they identify in terms of their you know, sporting allegiances or type of music they like. And you know, uh, there may have been very drunk and didn't realize what they were doing and you know so I I think there's loads of different reasons. I think you know, and I guess I don't know and that people will have different reasons for different tattoos perhaps. You know some some may be really seriously considered very thoughtful others may be spur of the moment and you know, they think whatever tattoo they're getting is funny or whatever, so yeah, I don't know. I guess the reasons people have them are probably as varied as there are tattoos.

STF

Yeah, yeah, I've just realized I'm doing the same back. I'm nodding along and realised you can't see me.

Mike

Yes, yeah. I can’t see you either

STF

OK uhm, so do any of your friends or family have tattoos?

Mike

They do, yes, yes.

STF

OK, and do you have any particular thoughts about their tattoos? Do you like them? Do you think they're appropriate? Or any thoughts that you might have?

Mike

I'm thinking of my family tattoos now in particular.

STF

Yeah

Mike

I think some of them are just really badly done.

STF

OK.

Mike

So my mum has quite a few. My sister has quite a few and you know. I'm thinking of a yeah, uh, so yeah they are the one that my mum got, for example, is, uh, allegedly a picture of a pie and a pint of beer, which was done for her friend who passed away and they would go and have a pie and a pint of beer together.

STF

Right, OK yeah.

Mike

And that was one of the things they did and but it it just looks like a blob to me, but but to her, it means a lot and uh, so you know she's happy with it, uhm. That's all that matters, really. Don't matter what anyone else thinks. If

she's happy with it, she's happy with it, you know. So yeah, uhm. That that that's what I think, really.

STF

OK, and how do you feel about them having tattoos. So it's two female members of your family that have got tattoos do you think that's important or just how do you feel about the tattoos, well, them having tattoos?

Mike

About them having tattoos? Not at all, I don't feel anything really makes.

STF

OK.

Mike

Doesn't change who they are. And you know, I think it it would depend. It it would depend what the tattoo was. And and if they had something that I felt was inappropriate. Then I would perhaps feel differently, uhm, you know so.

STF

Yeah, OK. It's more the controversy of it, maybe?

Mike

Yeah yes yeah, the fact that they have a tattoo neither here nor there what what they chose to have as a tattoo. I would perhaps have an opinion on.

STF

Yeah, OK, yeah, that makes sense. That makes sense.

Mike

There's a. There's a guy who came to our house once to install our sky and. And he had a swastika tattoo on his hand.

STF

OK.

Mike

And I judged him for it, you know. Had I known he had that tattoo, I would not have wanted to him to to come into our house and and install our sky. Uhm, you know, obviously you don't get a choice in who they send, but uhm. So you know if my family were. Be stupid enough to have something like that, then I wouldn't. I wouldn't be very happy about it.

STF

Yeah yeah, yeah, no, that's a really good example and really interesting as well. Yeah, it's and it's true you don't get the choice of of who you get as an engineer either.

Mike

No,, you know he he was sent to our house and I think we might even have contacted Sky to say we don't want him back if.

STF

Right, OK yeah.

Mike

You know, if we need an engineer out again, we don't want him because of his tattoo.

STF

Yeah, yeah, you felt so strongly about it. You actually did make that contact.

Mike

Yeah, I think so. I think we did, yeah yeah. You know, and and I can't imagine. You know If if he was assigned to a Jewish person's house, for example, you know, I think. Yeah, so I possibly think that companies have a responsibility you know to think about who they send where.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

Which I guess is quite difficult thing to do because they wouldn't know.

STF

Yes, yeah. And how would you know a customer's religious affiliations with something? Yeah, it's an interesting point though.

Mike

Probably quite an extremely. Probably quite an extreme example that, admittedly.

STF

But useful one nonetheless. It does illustrate the point.

Mike

Yeah, but it is it. It did happen, you know? Yeah yeah, it was related to his tattoos and I would feel the same. You know if he had a T shirt with it on. Yes, it wasn't the tattoo that I had the problem with it was the symbolism of it.

STF

Yes, yeah yeah, and that's a really important distinction to make, isn't it? Yeah, that's that's yeah. OK, and that leads nicely onto the my next category of questions, which is about sort of occupations. Uhm, so almost Like You knew what I was going to be asking it's great. Uhm, how would you define a professional occupation? So what is a professional? Or a profession?

Mike

OK, I would. I would say it is one that requires. A reasonably high level of qualifications in order to practice. So there may be some form of professional registration. So you know you may need to be registered with. Uh, General Medical Council or the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Or the accountancy bodies or their Law Society or whatever.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

So I would say yeah, there needs to be probably specific qualifications you need. To do that job? Uhm, and those qualifications would probably be at at a higher level, yeah and and yeah, probably need to be registered with some. I'm trying to think of professions that you wouldn't need to be registered with. But but yeah, that's yeah, that's why I would say.

STF

Yeah yeah, and I think that's that's a good working definition for for a couple of my questions that follow. Well as I mentioned before, there's no trick questions and there isn't sort of a an agreed definition of what a professional is, but whatever your working definition of a professional is, that's that's kind of what we're going to go with as follows. And you know, and I I was nodding along again to a to a camera that's not working so OK. So thinking about professionals and the way you've defined it. What are your attitudes towards professionals having tattoos.

Mike

I don't don't mind. Uhm again, as I mentioned before, I think it would depend on the type of tattoo where it was and what it symbolized. I think for you know visible tattoos I would perhaps think. Do I think it's enough? yeah. Again, depends what it is where it is is yeah, you know, if they had like a tattoo on their face, for example. Uhm, I would think. I would wonder whether they really thought through how other people might perceive them as a result of that. So it doesn't mean to say they can't do their job, you know, and again assuming that it's nothing offensive in any way, you know if it was just you know like that thing Mike Tyson got on his face for example,

STF

Yes yeah, the scroll yeah.

Mike

you know something like something like that you'd think. I'm not bothered by it, but I would perhaps think well other people may be bothered by it and you know, in a professional role should you know? Could that be detrimental either to your career or to your clients for example, so you know and it depends on the role. If you're an accountant in a back office not, you know it doesn't matter, but if you're a lawyer and you have to convince a jury you know that somebody is of good character some people on that jury might take against you, because of your tattoo.

STF

Yes, yeah.

Mike

I'm I'm not saying that's right. I'm not saying that people should judge people. But I think some people still do and you know if I were a lawyer and that was part of my job, I would perhaps have thought twice about having a very visible tattoo that may count against my clients. Or even you know, from a selfish perspective it might reduce my chances of winning, and you know.

STF

Or success in the profession.

Mike

Yeah, yeah. I would perhaps question somebody's judgment which is probably a bad thing, 'cause you shouldn't, but I might I might do if somebody you know had a really obvious facial tattoo that I would think. You know, I'll, I'll say something else as well Uhm which again is probably doesn't reflect very well on me, but Uhm, I think sometimes like people with I

don't know I tend to associate generally tattoos with lower socioeconomic classes and not professionals especially and I know that's, you know, I know that's not the case. But like. I'm thinking of a former colleague I had who had one of her kids names tattooed on her hand.

STF

Right

Mike

Uhm, and it didn't. You know, I don't know. My view on that to me it's just a bit unnecessary. But you know, for them it's it's important, I guess to show you know that they have a child with that name to to everybody so. You know doesn't affect how she did a job or or anything but other people did comment on it.

STF

Right, OK

Mike

in not in A positive way so you know it's like well that people have People have made an assessment about you based on that and.

STF

like you say it's you If it's been an association with the lower socioeconomic class, that's an assumption that sort of goes with with having a child name on a hand or a tattoo, rather on the hand.

Mike

Yeah, I think so. I think I do think. Yeah, and it shouldn't do because. But it's just I guess it's just assumptions that yeah, that people make and and you know, stereotypes and you know? I think I think it's probably changed a lot over the last 20 years.

STF

OK, yeah.

Mike

If I'm being honest, I think you know, maybe 20-30 years ago. Sort of. Or maybe longer than that, maybe? I think over the last. 20 or 30 years tattoos have become. Far more prevalent Across all sections of society and and I think. You know with. I don't know what it's like with sort of. 20 somethings but I would say 30 somethings. I I would guess the proportion of. 30 somethings with tattoos is far higher than 50 somethings.

STF

Right, Yep.

Mike

and you know so I think society as a whole has become a lot more more accepting of. Of people with tattoos and don't probably don't make the same assumptions about people based on the fact that they have tattoos as they once did, I don't know.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

Maybe maybe this is what you'll research Will find out, I don't know, but.

STF

Yeah yeah, yeah. I mean, you've hit the nail on the head there That's that's what I'm trying to find out really so yeah.

Mike

Yeah, so you know, I think someone in their 30s with tattoos it's It's quite common. You know they could. They could be in any job from any social background. I think if you went into sort of 60 year olds you would probably say they. I would associate. Them with people who've been in forces and

Yeah, probably not just the forces, but I'm just you're more likely to have been in The force is if you have a tattoo when you're in your 60s. I would suggest You know and and possibly from a uh non professional background as well. I think the people in their 60s who were in a professional back then. Were less likely to have tattoos than. Than in the past? Yeah sorry, then then then now I would say.

STF

Yeah yeah OK yeah no I I know what you mean. I know what you mean. OK I'm I'm thinking only that and you can you can think about either a social capacity or a work capacity for the next question. So whichever, whichever comes to mind, so can you tell me about a time when you've interacted with a professional. Who has a visible tattoo or tattoos? Uhm, so if you think of either somebody you've you've met, they are working as a professional.

Mike

Only that colleague that I mentioned earlier really.

STF

OK.

Mike

I 'm trying to think of. Professionals that I've worked with that have visible tattoos. I must be honest I can't say that. I mean, I don't have a lot of interaction with lawyers and accountants and teachers.

STF

OK.

Mike

Visible tattoos. I can't think of many teachers That haven't covered them up. You know that like they've worn a long sleeve shirt, for example, and you.

STF

OK.

Mike

You know, I know of teachers that have tattoos, but. You wouldn't know they had tattoos in their. Teaching role and.

STF

Yeah yeah, yeah.

Mike

Yeah, so so OK I've thought of a couple. Sorry, what was your question.

STF

When I was going to say, uhm, what do you can you tell me about a time when you've interacted with professional, but because you've already mentioned the one and you, you're struggling to think of something else. We'll we'll move on to another question. So we've we've done the the the colleague that you had previously. That's fine, that's fine. I'm going to put on the screen. Uh, an image of A person, so hopefully you can see that image.

Mike

OK yeah yeah.

STF

Lovely, OK, so uh, that's a person who works as a police officer, so questions are going to be around them in their capacity as a as a as a police officer. So what are your initial thoughts when you see this image of them and thinking about them as being? A police officer You can just freeform if you want so it doesn't have to be sentence, it's just any thoughts that come into your head.

Mike

Nothing really, no. I don't. Know maybe it's the, maybe it's the glasses, but. I thought that that person would be more of an office role rather than there,

and I know it's crazy to to think that, but you know, he's got quite. A neatly trimmed beard glasses looks quite. You know, sober, respectable, sort of person, and. Yeah, uhm. Tattoos wise. This just looks looks a nice sleeve I think.

STF

OK, OK.

Mike

Very quite quite modern and.

STF

Yeah, yeah, that's fine, that's fine. He's just just kind of those initial thoughts of yeah, that's great. OK so uhm, can you tell me how you'd feel if you interacted with this person? As a police officer, so if you had to call a police officer and this person turned up in a in a police officer's uniform, how would you feel about that?

Mike

I, I guess it depends what he's coming for. If he was coming to arrest me, I'd probably feel slightly different than you know. If he was coming to respond to a query.

STF

OK, now that's a fair point, but I think I get an absolutely fair point. I think in this sense you imagine you'd called for them to help out with something Help out situation.

Mike

I wouldn't feel anything to be honest.

Mike

Just come to do his job aint he?

STF

OK so yeah, OK so their their tattoo wouldn't influence how you would trust them as a professional.

Mike

No not at all

STF

OK. And you wouldn't. You wouldn't worry about their position in the police force and whether or not they could they were capable, or how they would work is 'cause. I'm only mentioned that because you mentioned about the lawyer and possible career progression, so you don't think.

Mike

Yeah, no, not at all and. And you know, and I think. The only thing with with the. Lawyer was If it was something they. Couldn't choose to cover up if they wanted to, you know so, so the point.

STF

Yeah, OK.

Mike

The point about the lawyer was like look, you've made a decision to have this done. Presumably in the knowledge that it will affect the way a jury would view you, and therefore may impact on your clients.

STF

Yeah, OK.

Mike

So I don't see how this guys tattoos would impact on. How he would be? Perceived maybe that maybe that's my prejudice Coming through that I. Think people judge. People with facial tattoos more than they judge people with a sleeve like that.

STF

Yeah, OK.

Mike

And I mean we, I might be wrong on that. You know there might be people who wouldn't trust him because of the tattoo he has on his arms.

STF

Yeah, OK, so just kind of to extend that thought then and it it it. It is interesting that do you think if if the tattoo he's got in his sleeve and I appreciate his sleeve and it wouldn't necessarily translate somewhere else? But if that if that tattoo was somewhere else, if it wasn't on his arm, so you could see see it on his neck or his face or part of that tattoo. 'cause I appreciate It's quite a large tattoo. Would would if you could see it on a different part of his body or the tattoo itself was different where it is. Do you think that would influence your attitude towards him as a police officer? I've asked you two questions there in one, so let's go with Sorry, let's go with it. If if part of that tattoo was visible from the neck up, would that influence your thoughts as police officer?

Mike

No, no it wouldn't.

STF

OK, and if the tattoo as a sleeve sorry, I interrupted you there.

Mike

Yeah no, no, it wouldn't. No it wouldn't I I can't. I don't see how that would influence his job at all.

STF

OK, OK OK so I yeah OK so if if the if the sleeve was something different. Would that influence your attitude towards him?

Mike

Again, and as long as it wasn't Offensive or stupid? Then so. Personally, I think. If he's a police officer, he shouldn't have anything sexist, racist and homophobic, etc.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

You know, I think he's there. As a policeman, he is there to serve everybody. And treat everybody. Fairly and equally and if his tattoos. Demonstrate that he doesn't feel that way. then I would say that that would influence his ability to do his job.

STF

OK, yeah, so you wouldn't have less confidence in him if he didn't have the if you would have more confidence in him if he didn't have the tattoo.

Mike

Uhm, Oh no no. Are we talking about content of the tattoo now rather than whether it is a tattoo?

STF

Any of it. Any of it.

Mike

OK, so. The fact he has a tattoo, not a problem. Something that don't think if, You know If it's on his arms on his neck or whatever. Not a problem, uhm, but if he had. Insignia that was. Uhm, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

I would say that. That would indicate that he it would influence how he would do his job because it's a representation of how he feels.

459 STF

460 Yeah, yeah.

461 Mike

462 So I don't think I I would have less trust in him. So I don't know.

463 STF

464 Yeah, so it's not so much.

465 Mike

466 Again, going back, going back to. The the obvious one the the you know the
467 guy with the swastika tattoo. You know if I were Jewish, you know we
468 reported a crime and he came out to me and he had a swastika tattoo, I
469 wouldn't. I would feel that well whether I'm Jewish or not. Actually, so if if a
470 policeman came to me with and he had a swastika tattoo, or in a National
471 Front or whatever EDL or whatever, I would not have confidence in them
472 doing their job.

473 STF

474 Yeah, so it's not necessarily about the fact that he has a tattoo, it's about
475 what it represents, so it could be a a badge opinion or something that he's
476 carrying.

477 Mike

478 Absolutely yeah yeah yeah. Well, if he had the same thing on. His uniform
479 Pinned to his uniform again before you know like the guy has said with guy
480 with the T shirt, you know. Anything that says. You know this is who I am.
481 This is what I believe and what I believe is against what a police officer
482 should be doing. You know, uh? Again, yeah, so I guess even political
483 things.? So if they had say You know, a Countryside Alliance badge or tattoo
484 or whatever you know, and they were policing a hunt.

485 STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

I'm guessing they may not be wholly impartial in how they police that event and so, so yeah, that. I think the content of the tattoo. Would matter more than the tattoo in itself.

STF

Yeah, more than the yeah. OK, yeah I got it OK OK.

Mike

Uh, I'm trying to think of another example. Something came to mind then and I can't remember what. It was and.

STF

Well, I've got. I've got another example so I'm gonna stop sharing the image of that that one.

Mike

OK, yeah.

STF

And I've I've got another one. And apologies, these questions are going to be a bit repetitive because I'm looking at different professions, so hopefully on screen now you should see an image of a different person with a tattoo.

Mike

OK. OK, I can't see the tattoo, but.

STF

Uh, on the arm.

Mike

Yeah, the oh there we go, no the UM, the thingy. Uh teams thing was covering it. OK

STF

OK so you can see their tattoo there.

Mike

Yes yeah yeah.

STF

Yeah brilliant lovely OK so uhm. This is a person who works as a teacher, so we're no longer thinking about the police officer. This is a person who's working as a teacher.

STF

Uhm, what are your initial thoughts when you see this image? And again, freeform don't have to have sentences, just what your initial thoughts.

Mike

Alright Yeah, apart from looking a bit like Michael Jackson, which as a teacher maybe not a good look and but the tattoo the tattoo wise, uhm. Yes, it's alright, I Don't really have any thoughts On it at all, to be honest.

STF

OK, that's fine. That's absolutely fine. So if uhm if this person was a teacher for one of your children, do you think that would impact how you interacted with them? So had a parents evening or a parent teacher?

Mike

Do I I think that her. Tattoo would influence how I would interact with her?

STF

yeah.

Mike

Not at all, no problem.

STF

OK, OK, and it wouldn't undermine. Your trust in them to do their job or teach your child?

Mike

Absolutely no, no. No way you know. She if she's a good teacher, she's a. Good teacher with or without tattoo.

STF

Yeah, OK, and I think I probably then know the answer to your next question, but I'm going to give you some scope to say so. Do you think the location or imagery in the tattoo would influence your attitude to them as as a teacher?

Mike

Uh, only the imagery? Yeah sorry. Yeah only the imagery yeah, not the location.

STF

Yeah, yeah, so it wouldn't matter where it was. It would just be as you said before, if it was something offensive, that would be the thing that would.

Mike

Yes, yes.

STF

Yeah I thought so but I thought I'd ask anyway.

Mike

Yeah, I think. You know, going back to the facial example for a teacher, I don't think. It matters at all because.

STF

OK.

Mike

That is not going to impact on how The kids learn. So so yeah.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

It shows that teachers are. Human perhaps?

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Mike

You know they they. They don't, you know, get shut in in the school cupboard over an evening. They're they're actually real people with. Real lives outside the classroom

STF

And I, I think I again, I probably know the answer to this. Question, but I'm going to ask you is is is. Are the answers or the responses you've given me are they Would they be the same for all? Professions, however, you define a profession.

Mike

Yeah, pretty much.

STF

Yeah, I thought so. I just thought I'd just double check in case you said yes. Except for this profession I would hold them differently.

Mike

Well, I think I. I can't think of any. Any where it would. Make a difference. You know, I think. If I were in a profession. I would perhaps. Like a doctor for example, where you don't generally have a choice of which doctor you see. You know if you're if you're an accountant or a lawyer, whatever you can pick and choose. But I think if I. I might consider how my tattoos would make. People feel and I know, I know they shouldn't feel certain ways about things. But you know, I'm thinking like you know. Would an old lady. Trust me less, UM, which might influence my choice whether to have them or. Not but. But for me it doesn't matter.

STF

Yeah OK, OK. Uh, you've probably again answered this, but I'm just going to see if there's anything more in this. So are the are the answers that you've given me influenced by your experience with the tattooed person you've encountered? So you meant mentioned the the sky engineer, but have you been influenced? Do you think by anybody else with tattoos?

Mike

Uhm, not really. No OK. No, I you know I've met about people with tattoos. Who are dicks and I've met people without tattoos. Who are dicks and I've met. Wonderful people with tattoos and I met wonderful people without tattoos so.

STF

Yeah Yep. Yep, fair enough. Fair enough.

Mike

You know?

STF

Uhm, have you ever formed an impression about someone because they had a tattoo? And then you've changed your mind at some later point?

Mike

No, I don't think so.

STF

OK, Uhm, is there - we're coming to the end. Now you'd be relieved. Is there anything else about tattoos and professions you professions or professionals you'd like to tell me or any anything else you'd like to share with me about that?

Mike

No no.

STF

Or is there anything you thought I'd ask you and I haven't?

Mike

No

STF

OK so that's the the end of my questions. Have you got anything you wanted to ask me about the questions or the research or anything else?

Mike

No, not at.

STF

OK lovely. OK, well I I appreciate your honesty. Thank you very much for sharing. Sharing your honest responses today and for your time.

Mike

So I hope you don't think any less of me as a. Result of my answer.

STF

No, not at all, no. And I really appreciate you participating. Thank you. It's really just interesting to to hear other peoples' opinions, because obviously I have my opinions, but I just want to check and See whether they are out of line with what other people think, so it's really, really really helpful for you to be so honest with sharing this, so thank you.

Mike

That's alright,

STF

I'm going to be - there. Will be recording of this, but I won't send you the recording, but I'm going to make a transcript of the interview, which I will send you. And I'll also send you. A debrief information. So that, uh, there's

this contact information on there. Should you need it so. So that's the end of the interview. And thank you very much.

Mike

It's alright, no. Problem good luck with the rest of your research.

STF

Thank you very much.

Mike

Hope It goes well.

STF

Have a lovely day.

Mike

Thank you you too.

STF

Bye.

Mike

Bye.

Pat

STF

OK. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my research, I have received your completed consent form. Although your email address was used to contact you to arrange this interview, it won't be linked to your interview responses. I won't retain your email address after the 30th of May this year, which is the last point which you can withdraw from the research. As a reminder, you created a personal identifier code which would be attached to your interview responses. So if you did want to withdraw from the research, you will need to email. That personal identifier code to either me or one of my supervisors I I'm recording this interview to help me make sure I don't miss anything. You can stop at any time during the interview for any reason. If you do, stop at any point before the interview is meant to end, then the interview recording will be deleted. The you happy to proceed?

Pat

OK Yes, happy to proceed.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. Thank you. So I've got some set questions that I'm asking all participants, but to make sure I understand better, I may need to ask you some clarifying questions. There are absolutely no trick questions. There's no right or wrong answers. I'm just trying to determine if the opinions that we all have about people that work in professional occupations are influenced by whether or not that professional has a tattoo. So some of my questions may feel a bit repetitive, but that's just so I can be sure I understand what you're telling me. If you'd prefer not to answer any questions, just let me know and I will move on again as well. If you want me to rephrase anything or repeat any questions then I'm quite happy to do so. I

anticipate this interview will take between 45 and 60 minutes, but it depends on how sort of in depth we get with conversation. So are you happy for me to begin?

Pat

Yeah, definitely.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. Thank you. OK, so the first one, the first question is, do you have any tattoos?

Pat

No, I don't.

STF

OK. Is there any particular reason why you don't have a tattoo?

Pat

I'll be the cost, to be honest. It's the just the cost and and I've always, there's always a reason that I've got money. If I have got money, I've gotta spend it on something else. So it's just cost.

STF

OK. So it's not that you wouldn't have a tattoo. It's just that other factors mean that you haven't. You haven't been able to do it yet.

Pat

Yeah, I've got the design and everything. I know I'm having, but I just haven't got the money. Yeah.

STF

OK. OK, fair enough. OK, thank you. About people that do have them. Why do you think they have tattoos?

Pat

Based on the people that I know that have them, it's usually to remember

some think it. And commemorative. Whether it's a relative that's passed away or a significant event, or the children's names when they were born, or their wedding day. And usually it's signifying something in their life that they want to remember.

STF

OK, so I take it by that that you have friends or family that have tattoos.

Pat

Both. Yep.

STF

OK. And what do you think about the tattoos that your friends and family have?

Pat

Some of them are very. Tasteful and I mean others look. Like they won't age well. It's only some of the colours are a little bit dodgy so I don't think they've had the best quality necessarily because I think the colour ones haven't. Haven't been of a high enough standard as the as the sort of the monocolour ones.

STF

So how do you feel about the individuals having tattoos? Irrespective of whether they're kind of quality or or not.

Pat

Yes, that's that's it's up to them. It's their choice. Uh, I always find it interesting why people do it cause I've got, like, my own reason for wanting one and and why people want to have them. I think they look absolutely stunning if they are done really well. And I think it's a really nice way of expressing yourself. You know, as it would be if you coloured your hair or

whatever. I just think it's it's a way of expressing yourself. And I I just think they can be like a work of art if they're done well.

STF

Yeah, if if they're done well, yeah. OK. So part of looking at it in my research is looking at what professional occupation is. So how would you define a professional occupation? And again, there's no right or wrong answer. It's just what what you think of professional is.

Pat

That's an interesting one in itself, isn't it? A profession. Something that you're qualified and trained to do. Really. So that could be anything from being a plumber to a post. Postal work or doctor or nurse police officer. A profession, something you trained in that field to do.

STF

OK, so using that definition of a professional occupation, what are your attitudes towards professionals that have tattoos?

Pat

It doesn't bother me.

STF

OK, OK. So can you tell me about a time when you have interacted with a professional who has a visible tattoo or tattoos?

Pat

Yep. When I was last in hospital, the nurse that treated me had uh visible arm tattoos like a sleeve. Which were I was asking her about. Umm, which was quite interesting because I I wondered. How people? The saw it because I know like older generations can sometimes be judgmental about it, but she was just telling me what where she'd had them done and recommending different tattoos. Where the where the best ones and the ones that were

good at their job. But yeah, I mean she it just was a talking point. It was alright. It was something to talk about.

STF

Yeah, yeah. And did you did you get the sense from the nurse that you spoke to that they, they were that kind of barrier breaking for for people? Or was she judged by the older generation, as you mentioned?

Pat

I think she could get judged from her response. I got the impression that sometimes some people would. The older people were prejudicial about it. And but a lot of the time, people were fine didn't really care when they were just using it as a talking point.

STF

OK. Yeah. Yeah. Just as just as something starting conversation.

Pat

Yeah, conversation.

STF

Like lovely. OK, So what do you think has influenced your attitudes towards tattoo? So you mentioned that you did want one, is this do you think there's something that has influenced your desire to get one?

Pat

Just I think the amount of. Of really good. Art body art that you see in and and why people have it done and when you listen to why people have had it done and. And you know, it can be a memento. I mean, I'm one of my uncle's was in the Navy. And he had tattoos or as souvenirs, really. When he went to different places around the world. And I mean, some of those looked terrible, but some of them were were works of art, depending on where we had them done and how much you paid. But. And they were like

for him, they're like a photo album, almost like I've seen veneers of where he's been in the world. It's like a history for him, which I liked. And I think it. To mark his skin in that way is is. It's gotta be something significant for you. I don't. I know you get the old prison tattoos with a bit of ink and the needle and and they look like they were done in prison. I think now I I think I see it as an art, just as I do with with graffiti and street art, I see it as an expression of some think in you. Yeah. So I just, yeah, I think having seen and knowing the reasons why people do it. And it makes sense to me and I know there can be quite addictive from what I've I've been told, people say what they don't stop at one.

STF

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Pat

I think it, yeah, I just think I think you see it as well. I know you've got a lot of. Like music, stars and film stars who have it and it looks, it just looks really nice.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, OK. OK. Lovely, right. I'm just going to share an image with you. Hopefully you can see that on the screen. Yeah. Can you see the image on the screen?

Pat

Nope.

STF

OK, let me try again.

Pat

Yes

STF

OK ohh lovely. Brilliant. OK. And can you see the tattoo there on the arm?

Pat

Yes.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK, I thought for a second. That technology wasn't going to work. OK. So on the screen is an image of an individual with the visible tattoo and they work as a barrister. So what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and know that this person works as a barrier and you don't have to form sentences, just freeform? Whatever thoughts come into your head.

Pat

Right. You wouldn't see if there were a barrister, cause they'd wear those gowns. But it wouldn't bother me.

STF

OK.

Pat

If the barrister had it, I just think it's a shame that you've got such an intricate tattoo and then you don't. Nobody gets to see it.

STF

OK, fair enough. OK. So can you tell me how you would feel if you worked with or used the services of a professional barrister who had this tattoo?

Pat

Fine, be Something to talk about.

Pat

Umm yeah. No it would be wouldn't bother me at all.

STF

OK, so would see if you if you were interacting with the barrister who had this tattoo. Do you think that would influence your level of trust in them to do a professional job?

Pat

No. Wouldn't matter to me.

STF

OK. And the same sort of thing, would it influence your thoughts about how capable they are at doing their job?

Pat

No, it wouldn't bother me. No, I wouldn't question it because it's just it's just, you know, it's the same as if somebody had a scar or most, you know, you or a burn or whatever, you just kind of you don't I don't think about it like that. Yeah.

STF

Yeah. OK. OK. So then in terms of the, the location of the tattoo and you mentioned that you wouldn't see under the gown obviously, yeah, if the tattoo was somewhere else, say for example you could see part of it on the neck or the face would do you think that would influence your attitude towards them in either trust or capability?

Pat

Not so much. I'd question why they did it on their face when it's not really. A good idea? It's something you can't. Ever. Yeah, don't know. I just think having it done your face, he's just peculiar because it must be so painful. I just be curious if what as to why? They had it there a guess, but no, it wouldn't bother me. Trust wise, I'd just be. Well, I know why they did it.

STF

OK. Yeah, OK. It's more questioning rather than judging. Yeah. OK. OK. So again, I appreciate that it would be covered up by a gown, but imagine it wasn't if it was a different tattoo on the arm. Do you think that would influence your thoughts about this person as a barrister?

Pat

It would depend. And no, not, not as long as it wasn't anything like racist because anything like. And that would, you would think would prejudice them against you in some way?

STF

Hmm hmm.

Pat

And if it was sort of like a Celtic band or a or whatever it is, it looks like a drug and I don't know whether it is that, but something like that is quite. You know, it doesn't. If it was something a bit more, I don't know. Like a swastika or or whatever, then you would. You wouldn't have.

STF

Yeah.

Pat

You wouldn't be so impressed. I don't think I would question them their their ability to be impartial and and to represent me fairly because or to question me fairly when they had.

STF

OK.

Pat

Sort of like a a bias, maybe that that would influence me, but not the, but it

just. If the tattoo was sort of political or some kind of prejudice, I would or had some like prejudicial connotation. And I think I'd worry.

STF

Yeah, it's not neutral in some way.

Pat

Yeah, if it wasn't neutral, yeah.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, OK. Lovely, right. I'm gonna trust that the technology works. I'm just gonna get another image up on the screen. And let me just click on that one. OK, took a couple of seconds last time, so.

Let's just see, can you see a different image on the screen yet.

Pat

Yep.

STF

Lovely. Brilliant. OK. And you can see the tattoo on the arm there. Yeah. Yeah. OK. So on the screen is an image of somebody who works as a nurse Again, what are your initial thoughts when you see this image and you, you know that this person works as a nurse?

Pat

Yeah, that's fine. It's really well done. Yeah. No, no, no issue at all.

STF

Okie Dokie and I think I probably know the answer to this one based on the experience you shared with me earlier. But how would you feel if you worked with or used the services of this nurse with a tattoo?

Pat

No problem whatsoever.

STF

OK. And their tattoo wouldn't influence your trust in them to do their job

Pat

No, I've got quite like it actually. It tells a story. I'll be. I just wanna talk about it. Really. It takes away for the pain.

STF

OK. OK. So again with the IT wouldn't influence your thoughts on how capable they are in their job and actually it kind of sounds from what you said that you think that it might make them more effective in their job because you would be able to relate to them, talk to them use, yeah, use that as something distract from treatment or pain or something.

Pat

Yeah, more relatable. Yep, yeah, I would say so. Because it's. Yeah, I always think it. It's. You can spend a lot of money having something like that sleeve doing so I think you've got to really want it and you know it's it's so it must mean something. So yeah.

STF

Yeah. OK. So again, thinking about the the location and position, I appreciate that it's a sleeve and it isn't. It's a big old sleeve there. If that tattoo was visible, say on the neck and the face again, would that influence your feelings towards them as the nurse?

Pat

Not if it was that sort of design. Again, if it was something like a. Umm something? That was a bit racist or whatever, which I don't think there would be like to have. If there were a nurse, but you never know if it was something like that, then I would. I would. Then I would query, but if it's something like that slave or wherever if it was on the whatever stripes on the

face or no, it's fine, but it it would be what it what that tattoo represented really.

STF

Yeah. OK. And and the same I guess is if the tattoo wasn't the way it is at the moment, if it was something that was more emblematic, say like a swastika or a right wing or something. Yeah, yeah.

Pat

I would have issue with that because. And because it's it that tells you if you're gonna implies in yourself, we don't think like that. That's going to represent you in some way. And I I would say if you are in a. A profession where you're dealing with the public and if you have got a source sticker and you are dealing with people who are of not necessarily Jewish faith, I think it affects people from all faiths, but particularly Jewish faith that tells you something about that person.

STF

Yeah.

Pat

And how they would look at you and how you would be perceived and I and how they would treat you. And I think that would make me nervous. Really.

STF

OK, OK. And do you think that would be the same for all professions? So it's not so much about the?

It's not so much where the tattoo is, unless it's questionable on the face, or if it's something that's emblematic of an A biased view. Do you think that be the same for all professions?

Pat

I think for me it would. I think it doesn't matter what you do if you have got.

If you are, I don't know, you've got. An EDL emblem on your hand or. Uh, I don't know if you click what's current, whatever. Anything like that that would show me that you have a distinct prejudice. And I would I would. It would make me question, it would even the tattoo in itself, any kind of tattoo in itself wouldn't it's the what? It's the tattoo represents that would bother me because it would be the. It's the same if somebody starts a conversation with me in the park and they. And they come out with something that's particularly racist or homophobic, because I think that's not a person I would particularly wanna be near again. And it goes the same if you're displaying that. As a tattoo? My feelings would be the same as if it was in a conversation.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, OK. OK. I'm going to take that image off the screen so you don't have to look at it anymore. OK. So have you formed an opinion about someone because they have a tattoo or tattoos and then that opinion has changed. So either negative or positive to begin with.

Pat

No, not not really. And I did encounter somebody who had. A very anti Semitic message once.

STF

OK.

Pat

And on the when I wanted them to leave my house and they were tradesperson and I, I did ask them to leave my house and I did report them to the company because it was antisemitic and I didn't. I found that offensive. It would be the same if they'd have said that out loud.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Pat

And if they just said it? And it would have been the same if they'd like worn a T shirt with the on. It wasn't the tattoo per se. It was what the tattoo said.

STF

Yeah, yeah.

Pat

Umm. And that's the only time I've ever been offended by a tattoo. And otherwise. But then I've been offended by people who haven't got tattoos, so, you know And but that's the only time where I a tattoo has caused me an issue otherwise and I've met so many people with them over the years. I mean, I said uncles and my granddad had the. And my aunts have have them a cousins, loads of friends have them. They don't bother me because they aren't offensive. But it will be the same if somebody had said that to me verbally and it would be the same if they had it on a T shirt. It it was the message it conveyed.

STF

Yeah. Yeah, it's kind of the thinking behind it rather than the tattoo itself. Yeah. Like, OK. Yeah, that makes sense. OK. And we've raced through this. We are coming to the end. You'll be glad to know, is there anything else about tattoos and professionals you'd like to tell me, or do you think were you expecting me to ask you something? And I haven't.

Pat

No I mean, I know I've worked with teachers who have asked to have been told to cover their tattoos. And a friend of mine had a job in a school. And she had to spend a load of money on this expensive makeup to cover the one

up on her hand, which had a child's name on it. Wasn't. There was nothing about that tattoo that was in any way offensive. And. I've worked with others other staff who have been told to wear longer tops because when they bent over the tattoo on their back was revealed. And and there's a guy who works in my pharmacy who has to wear a long sleeve top to cover his tattoos, which I don't think is fair because they're absolutely amazing. But. And I think it's a shame. That there is this perception that having a visible tattoo. Changes the way you do job because it doesn't. Then people didn't know that with did they? And they, you know, it doesn't matter if you were a longer like the pharmacy guy. If he wore a longer coat, no one would see it. Just he wears for short, save one for hygiene purposes. But he has to wear a long sleeve T underneath it now. And that's because somebody made a comment. And I don't think that's fair. But that's the sort of. And attitude that some people have. I just think it's a shame.

STF

Umm can I just ask with the with the examples you gave, I mean perhaps not the pharmacy one with the teaching one. Was it the school that that had made them or asked them to cover?

Pat

Yeah. The school. Parents had got an issue with it. As far as I know, but I think the parents seen them. You wouldn't notice if you weren't looking cause the ones on the side of a hand were a little finger is. So it's just a name and you know how people write messages on their hands. Anyway, you would just think it was that.

STF

OK.

Pat

And and the one on the back. You wouldn't notice if you weren't in the room looking, and so I don't. I don't think it was an issue, but the school felt it was in. Well, it was two separate schools, so.

STF

OK. And to your knowledge, was it threat of disciplinary action if you don't cover up the tattoos then this will happen?

Pat

Was for the one on the hand? It was for the one on the hand they were.

STF

OK, OK.

Pat

I don't know how. I don't. I couldn't see how it related to the teacher standards myself because it wasn't put in the profession into disrepute.

STF

Mm-hmm.

Pat

So UM. I would question that and the unions would as well, I imagine, but this she was an NQT, so the school felt that they could so.

STF

Yeah, in a vulnerable position. Yeah. OK, that's really interesting. OK.

Pat

Yeah. It's always it really got me that did. It's not working there anymore. So I'm really glad.

STF

Yeah. OK. Lovely. That's brilliant. So that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Pat

No, no, thank you for giving me the opportunity to say something.

STF

Brilliant. Thank you. Well, thank you for your time today and for your honesty. I really appreciate it. I will email a copy of the transcript and the debrief information over to you, which has got the contact information if you need it. That's brilliant. Thank you very much.

STF

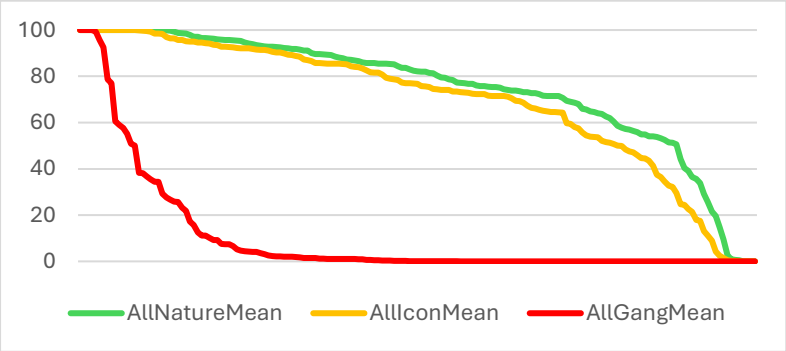
Take care. Bye.

Pat

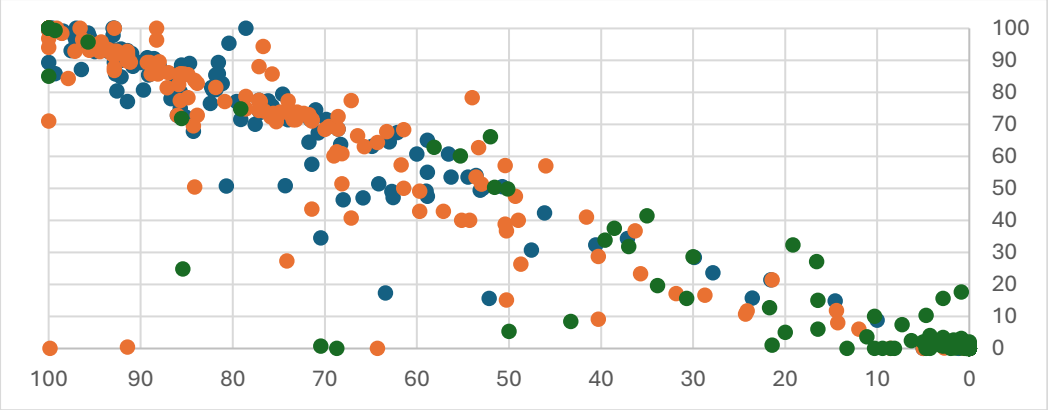
Bye.

Appendix R: Study Three Cluster Analysis Charts of Means

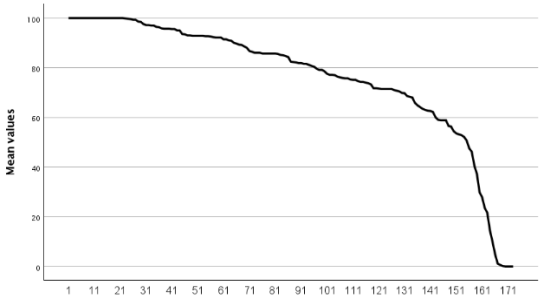
All Means (All Nature, All Icon, All Gang)



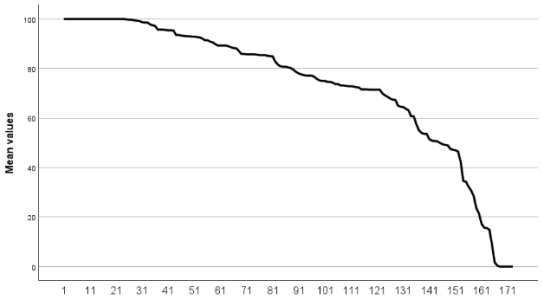
Scatterplot: All Means (All Nature, All Icon, All Gang)



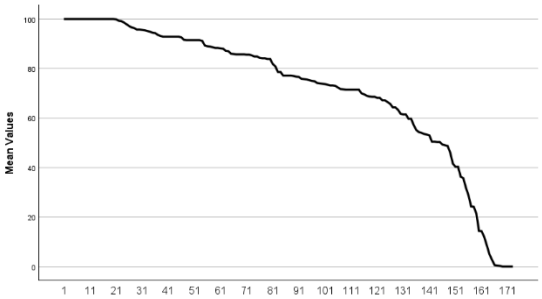
Nature means up to size of the palm (all participants, sorted by descending values)



Nature means larger than size of the palm (all participants, sorted by descending values)



Icon means up to size of the palm (all participants, sorted by descending values)



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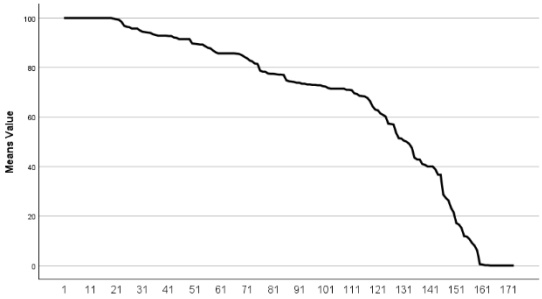
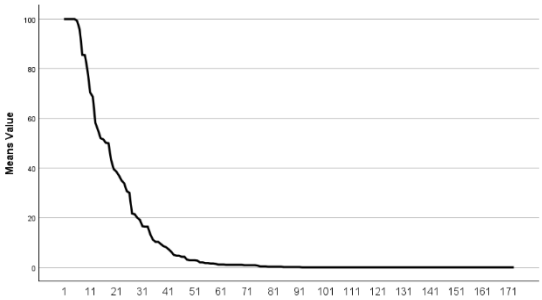
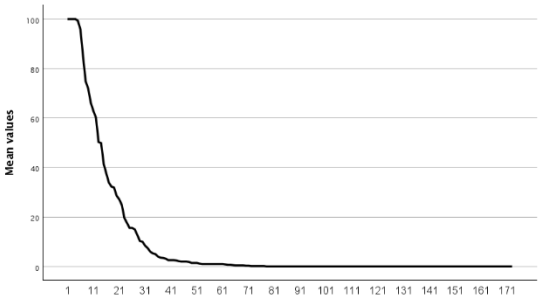


Gang means up to size of the palm (all participants, sorted by descending values)



Gang means larger than size of the palm (all participants, sorted by descending values)



Initial Cluster Centres Based on Themed Mean Scores

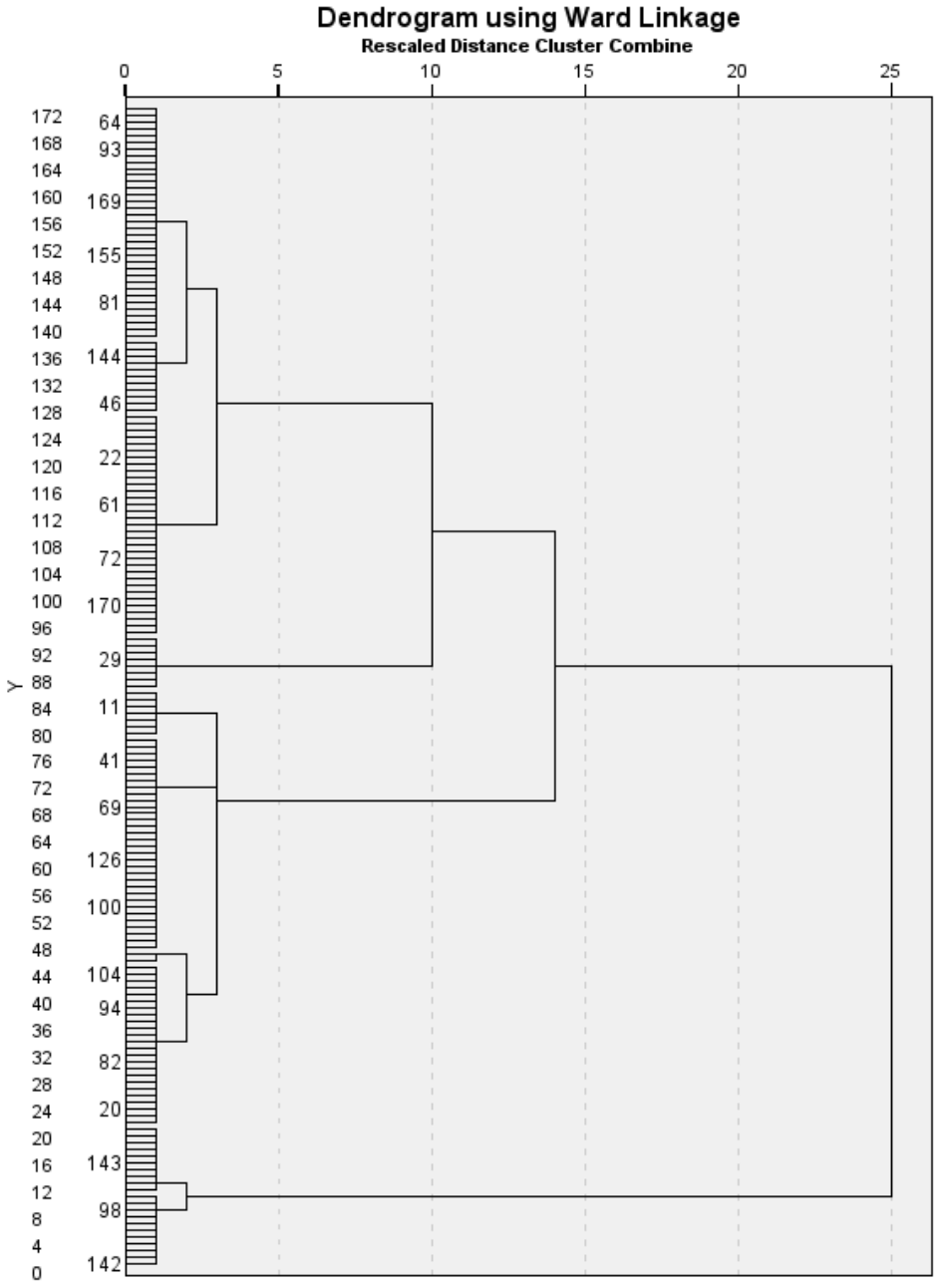
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Initial			
Nature up the palm of the hand	100.000	85.714	.000
Nature larger than palm of the hand	100.000	75.000	.000
Icon up the palm of the hand	100.000	24.286	.000
Icon larger than palm of the hand	100.000	10.714	.000
Gang up the palm of the hand	100.000	.000	.000
Gang larger than palm of the hand	100.000	.000	.000
Converged cluster centres			
Nature up the palm of the hand	89.198	86.558	43.345
Nature larger than palm of the hand	88.389	85.711	34.352
Icon up the palm of the hand	89.500	83.549	32.411
Icon larger than palm of the hand	88.627	80.439	22.429
Gang up the palm of the hand	75.349	4.149	3.547
Gang larger than palm of the hand	67.810	2.479	1.794

Three-Cluster Centroid Mean Scores

	X Axis	Y Axis
	Nature	
Cluster 1	21.06	14.37
Cluster 2	83.85	81.59
Cluster 3	83.85	81.59
	Icon	
Cluster 1	12.61	6.51
Cluster 2	86.70	86.15
Cluster 3	60.25	44.35
	Gang	
Cluster 1	45.55	31.39
Cluster 2	1.72	1.06

Cluster 3	95.52	91.86
	Up to palm sized	
Cluster 1	8.39	51.40
Cluster 2	56.03	72.45
Cluster 3	56.03	72.45
	Larger than palm sized	
Cluster 1	6.32	46.89
Cluster 2	54.92	71.33
Cluster 3	54.92	71.33
	Face and Neck	
Cluster 1	57.24	55.20
Cluster 2	9.91	6.60
Cluster 3	9.91	6.60
	Rest of body	
Cluster 1	68.87	66.01
Cluster 2	22.27	15.89
Cluster 3	22.27	15.89

Appendix S: Hierarchical Cluster Analysis Dendrogram



Appendix T: K-Means Cluster Analysis (ANOVA)

	Cluster		Error			
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df	F	Sig.
N<1_Lower_arm	31952.389	2	352.236	170	90.713	<.001
N<1_Lower_leg	38621.879	2	287.787	170	134.203	<.001
N<1_Upper_arm	27694.634	2	258.943	170	106.953	<.001
N<1_Upper_leg	28814.827	2	275.894	170	104.442	<.001
N<1_ChestBack	29608.504	2	372.142	170	79.562	<.001
N<1_Face	24434.031	2	1142.512	170	21.386	<.001
N<1_Neck	35506.376	2	1163.344	170	30.521	<.001
I<1_Lower_arm	58527.249	2	261.662	170	223.675	<.001
I<1_Lower_leg	55328.377	2	260.092	170	212.727	<.001
I<1_Upper_arm	47806.416	2	220.952	170	216.366	<.001
I<1_Upper_leg	49029.497	2	232.549	170	210.835	<.001
I<1_ChestBack	49985.188	2	303.549	170	164.669	<.001
I<1_Face	26844.482	2	1030.832	170	26.042	<.001
I<1_Neck	37597.076	2	1185.592	170	31.712	<.001
G<1_Lower_arm	50016.248	2	157.896	170	316.767	<.001
G<1_Lower_leg	48782.026	2	203.612	170	239.584	<.001
G<1_Upper_arm	51956.231	2	203.489	170	255.327	<.001
G<1_Upper_leg	49076.479	2	251.106	170	195.442	<.001
G<1_ChestBack	45326.154	2	318.341	170	142.383	<.001
G<1_Face	25860.442	2	166.036	170	155.752	<.001
G<1_Neck	27447.905	2	205.728	170	133.419	<.001
N>2_Lower_arm	47220.025	2	318.186	170	148.404	<.001
N>2_Lower_leg	49964.692	2	304.470	170	164.104	<.001
N>2_Upper_arm	38018.338	2	290.519	170	130.864	<.001
N>2_Upper_leg	42615.643	2	241.231	170	176.659	<.001
N>2_ChestBack	42957.691	2	268.092	170	160.235	<.001
N>2_Face	27441.552	2	1226.052	170	22.382	<.001
N>2_Neck	37875.471	2	1296.529	170	29.213	<.001
I>2_Lower_arm	69005.101	2	469.145	170	147.087	<.001
I>2_Lower_leg	73811.770	2	363.075	170	203.296	<.001
I>2_Upper_arm	63456.289	2	356.262	170	178.117	<.001
I>2_Upper_leg	65860.007	2	348.167	170	189.162	<.001
I>2_ChestBack	63517.605	2	380.283	170	167.027	<.001
I>2_Face	24764.301	2	1082.980	170	22.867	<.001
I>2_Neck	34056.105	2	1275.678	170	26.696	<.001
G>2_Lower_arm	35473.017	2	162.024	170	218.937	<.001
G>2_Lower_leg	41630.113	2	139.018	170	299.459	<.001
G>2_Upper_arm	39422.620	2	178.873	170	220.394	<.001
G>2_Upper_leg	38973.904	2	242.477	170	160.732	<.001
G>2_ChestBack	37359.949	2	231.384	170	161.463	<.001
G>2_Face	19239.152	2	235.076	170	81.842	<.001
G>2_Neck	21754.829	2	203.930	170	106.678	<.001

ANOVA

	Cluster		Error			
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df	F	Sig.
MeanUPTONature	29751.209	2	273.279	170	108.868	<.001
MeanLARGERNature	41902.653	2	231.782	170	180.785	<.001
MeanUPTOIcon	42487.682	2	247.675	170	171.546	<.001
MeanLARGERIcon	55203.594	2	315.204	170	175.136	<.001
MeanUPTOGang	41066.493	2	151.574	170	270.934	<.001
MeanLARGERGang	34614.345	2	123.365	170	280.585	<.001

Appendix U: Draft Article; Towards a Tattoo Taxonomy

Full title: Towards a Tattoo Taxonomy

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On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest

Abstract

Body modifications exist in a wide variety of forms including tattoos, scarification, branding, piercing, implants, and cicatrisation (Caplan, 2000), and provide a valuable resource for study. As such, a clear and precise system for defining body modification types could facilitate effective communication and further study across a range of disciplines. The promise of a taxonomy is the creation of order from chaos, of scientific legitimacy. As something that can be an expression of a deeply personal belief or experience, body modifications – including tattoos – have yet to be classified taxonomically. This article summarises the development of tattooing, gender differences, its historical association with deviancy, its impact on occupational opportunities, and the continually evolving nature of body modifications, before arguing that a framework defining body modification types is long overdue. Given the potential breadth for an overarching taxonomy of body modifications, this article proposes beginning this classification process with the creation of a taxonomy only for tattoos, suggesting factors for inclusion.

Keywords Taxonomy, tattoo, gender, deviancy, occupation, outsider

Tattoos can be divisive, with some people viewing them as subversive, unclean, or wrong (see, for example, DeMello, 2000). For those expressing extreme dislike, it can be remarkably easy to change their mind simply by assigning reason for the tattoo. From my experience as a tattoo researcher, those people expressing extreme dislike for tattoos will often concede that medical-related tattoos (such as a tattooed nipple following a mastectomy of breast reconstruction) are acceptable. Tattoos are therefore not homogenous; they are not all created equal. For that reason, this article argues that a taxonomy is necessary.

Definition, Development, Flash

Caplan (2000) defines tattooing as the puncturing of the skin with an instrument to insert an indelible pigment or ink, where the instrument can be dipped in ink before creating the puncture, or ink can be rubbed into the punctures after they have been created. Applying that definition historically, tattoos are not new, with archaeological evidence suggesting that "tattooing was probably practiced among people living during the late Stone Age" (Sanders & Vail, 2008, p.9). In 1991, a frozen Bronze Age man was found on a mountainside between Italy and Austria and was found to have several tattoos on his legs and torso (Gilbert, 2000; Spindler, 2001). Further evidence of tattooing exists throughout Egypt and the Polynesian Islands from the second millennium BC (Gathercole, 1988). Tattooing in ancient Egypt was reserved only for women – particularly priestesses – who wore the symbol of the protector goddess Bes (Sanders & Vail, 2008). As well as for protection, tattoos could serve a function in overcoming language barriers. Before the creation of the Phoenician alphabet, tattoos were a form of *curriculum vitae*. Travellers seeking to barter their skills in return for some form of payment required graphic symbols communicating an accurate depiction of the skill they possessed. Tattoos were a simple means to convey skills, allowing a stone mason or carpenter to bypass differences in language by referring to their body art before being allowed to demonstrate and prove their skill.

The process of tattooing exists globally with localised differences (Caplan, 2000). Various theories exist for the spread of tattooing, including that a nomadic group called the Ainu spread the practice to Japan (Chang, 2011), or that Samoan explorers encountered tattooed Westerners before passing on the markings to New Zealand, Australia, and Fiji (Sanders & Vail, 2008). Prior to Captain James Cook's accounts of his Pacific Island voyages between 1768 and 1779, tattoos had been known as pricks or marks. Adopting the Tahitian *ta-tu*,

(Burgess & Clark, 2010; and DeMello, 2000) Cook's sailors returned to England bearing their own tattoos and brought with them Polynesians who were "publicly exhibited as human oddities, and their heavily tattooed bodies were contrasted with the 'civilised' appearance of Western bodies" (DeMello, 2000, p.746). Initially including geometric designs, lines and animals, tattoos served to record genealogy as well as to provide spiritual protection (Kaeppler, 1988). Sustained contact between Polynesians and European sailors resulted in an evolution of tattoo designs that by the nineteenth Century included language to mark the deaths of chiefs, and weapons including rifles and canons (DeMello, 2000).

Soon after, different occupational groups came to develop their own visual language based on tattoos. Sailors, for example, used tattoos to document their travel history and service: an anchor was used as a basic symbol for anyone who lived their life at sea, whilst a turtle denoted a sailor who had crossed the equator (see, for example, Breathnach & Farrell, 2015). In 1846 Martin Hildebrand established the first permanent tattoo shop in New York City, with his initial clientele including sailors and soldiers on opposing sides of the civil war (Parry, 2006; Sanders & Vail, 2008). The adoption of tattoos by Western sailors came to represent freedom, adventure, and travel such that tattooing amongst working class North Americans was seen as acceptable. In England in 1862, Tom Riley and George Burchett tattooed the Prince of Wales who later became King Edward VII, beginning a tattooing fad amongst the aristocracy of England and Europe which persisted until the outbreak of the first World War (DeMello, 2000). Although the development of the electric machine or gun made tattooing quicker and more accessible it led to a decline in its popularity as it became "more affordable and accessible to the working- and middle-classes" (Kosut, 2015, p.34) and thus more commonplace.

By the time of the Second World War, the influence in tattooing of sailors that had undertaken service in China and Japan was again felt in the form of Asian designs such as tigers, Chinese characters, and dragons (DeMello, 2000). The consistent and pervasive influence of military service and war on the development and evolution of tattooing is not coincidental. Enterprising tattooists capitalising on the patriotism of departing sailors set up shops near military bases in port towns (Tuttle, 1985). Despite this populism, the Navy rejected from service any applicant bearing an "indecent or obscene" tattoo (Tuttle,1985, p.11). By the 1940s tattooists extended augmented services by offering to ink over previously naked lady tattoos with, for example, hula skirts and nurse's uniforms. Whilst such tattooists may have been able to identify a way to make fast money, they were not necessarily skilled artists. Tattooists developed a series of set pieces (or flash) based on standard images that they could reliably draw. There was little or no artistry or originality on offer, patrons simply chose the image or wording they wanted from a catalogue of pre-drawn options.

Tattooing experienced a 'renaissance' in the 1960s (see for example, Rubin, 1988) because of multiple significant changes. Sanders and Vail (2008) argue that in North America an influx of young tattooists with art backgrounds and university education explored tattooing as an alternative to fine art forms. The emphasis on artistic rather than merely economic motivations led to new styles and larger, thematic tattoos becoming more popular (as opposed to the fragmented badge-like designs common as flash). Practitioners no longer described themselves as tattooists, but as artists. The shift to artistry led to the development and widespread use of single-needle tattoo machines which allowed more detailed designs to be created. As with other notable artists, tattoo artists became legend in their field. For example, in his last year at the San Francisco

Art Institute influential artist Ed Hardy gave a lecture on what he viewed as the forgotten folk art of tattooing (Hardy & Selvin, 2013). Trained by Phil Sparrow (formerly Professor Samuel Steward), Hardy declined a teaching position at Yale to pursue tattooing. With this tattoo renaissance came academic interest: anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists began to recognise tattooing as a rich seam of human behaviour that had previously been associated with deviant behaviour or unusual occupations. More recently, biomedical engineers have developed biomedical tattoos "to report in real-time health metrics with disease value" (Geisler, 2018, p.1329) that measure sun exposure. Bandodkar *et al* (2015) report that tattoos could soon be used to report on glucose levels, as a non-invasive way to support patients with diabetes. However, despite the developments and potential benefits being explored, the prevalence of tattooing differs depending on demographic characteristics.

Gender

Despite being practised regardless of gender, much of the research and documented history relating to tattooing centred on males (see, for example, DeMello, 2000; Lane, 2014). Atkinson, (2002), contends that amongst North American women, the increasing incidence of tattooing is a non-normative subversion of hegemonic ideologies of femininity. DeMello (2000) notes that 'tattooed ladies' entered the sideshow limelight in the 1880s often with elaborately engineered narratives about how they came to be tattooed:

> *Irene 'La Belle' Woodward, the first tattooed lady in 1882, said that her tattoos were required protection that she needed in the 'Wild West of Texas' to escape the sexual attentions of hostile 'Red Indians'. Nora Hildebrandt… reported that her 365 tattoos were crafted by her father under threat of death by his captor, Sitting Bull (DeMello, 2000, p.58).*

Aged 17 Betty Broadbent became the youngest of these tattooed ladies.

Taking on the stage-name 'Tattooed Venus' Betty would begin her act wearing a demure gown that stretched to the floor which she removed in front of the audience to reveal an above-the-knee bathing suit displaying her tattoos. The fantastical explanations of how these women attained their tattoos were exploited to maximum effect, emphasising the narrative vulnerability of the innocent maiden contrasted with a sexually charged assault that provided a profitable (if voyeuristic) distraction for their audience. The narrative of a forced event being the reason for women getting a tattoo persisted into the 1950s because "nice girls don't get tattoos" (Steward, 1990, p.71).

It is impossible to know with any certainty the prevalence of tattooing in any society. Estimates range from 20% (Pound, 2015), to nearly 40% (Breuner & Levine, 2017), as such research relies either on self-report or a limited participant population. However, a common finding in body modification research is that it is on the increase. Despite the generalised increase in body modifications, contemporary gender differences persist in relation to tattoos. For example, Stirn et al*.,* (2006, p.202) noted that tattoos are "more common amongst men than women", and that women are more likely than men (52% compared to 11%) to have a tattoo that can be covered by clothing (Laumann & Derick, 2006). Accepting that younger respondents had fewer tattoos than their older counterparts due to less time in which to accumulate them, Laumann and Derick, (2006) observed that women with tattoos were more likely to obtain their first tattoo when over 30 years old (30% of women compared to 11% of men). Although increasingly prevalent in society (Burgess & Clark, 2010), it seems that for women being tattooed is to be part of a fringe sub-culture. Resenhoeft et al., (2008) carried out two experiments with 158 college students. In the first, participants viewed a photograph of a female model either with or without a visible tattoo (a dragon) before rating on thirteen personal characteristics. In the

second experiment, different participants viewed a different model with or without a visible tattoo (a dolphin). For experiment one, ratings of the model with a visible dragon tattoo were significantly more negative ($p < .05$) for five of the thirteen characteristics than the same model with no visible tattoo. For experiment two, ratings of the model with a visible dolphin tattoo led to more negative ratings on two of the thirteen characteristics. This led Resenhoeft et al., (2008) to conclude that, for women at least, physical attractiveness decreases when a tattoo is present; a conclusion which confirmed Swami and Furnham's (2007) findings. Criticisms of Resenhoeft et al's findings include the reliability of the sample. Participants in experiment one (n=85) had a mean age of 21.64 years (SD=5.34), and nearly a third reported having permanent tattoos of their own. In experiment two, participants (n=73) had a mean age of 28.9 years (SD=10.32), and 25% reported having permanent tattoos. In both experiments the mean age of participants was similar, meaning that the images they had been exposed to in popular culture (including their overall familiarity with and acceptance of tattoos) would be more homogeneous than a broader societal sample. Nevertheless, to update Steward (1990) using Resenhoeft et al.'s (2008) findings: *nice girls* still *don't get tattoos*.

Deviant Associations

Within different societies, tattooing has been used to represent various aspects of life including religious affiliations, coming of age, and social status (Schildkrout, 2004; Gilbert, 2000; Gathercole, 1988). However, despite this diversity, the association between tattoos and deviancy is well noted. Adams (2009) documents the delinquent associations between tattooing and criminals, with strong associations held between those with highly visible tattoos (such as on the face, neck, and hands) and criminality. Steward (1990) specifically addressed the use of tattoos within US gang cultures as a form of member-

bonding, of belonging. Whilst the Japanese organised crimes 'Yakuza' are well-documented as having tattoos depicting the attributes the individual is known for (Motta & Biagini, 2017). Societal acceptance of tattooing has changed in recent times to become more accepting. Originally considered to be a deviant subculture (see, for example Swami et al, 2015), the increase of tattoos in mainstream culture is increasingly accepted (Burgess and Clark, 2010). No longer just a deviant practice, the presence and use of tattooing in different societal groups is rarely addressed in research literature.

Sociologists Elias and Scotson (2008), considered the factors necessary to determine whether a group is mainstream or an outsider group, determining that differences in opportunities provide a framework for whether a group becomes established or exists on society's fringes. In the main, a longer history affords a group greater access to power domains: political, cultural, economic, and moral. Outsider groups are often less embedded within society, excluded from the social, economic structures that influence power and facilitate control. Rees (2016) applied Elias and Scotson's (2008) established-outsider theory to tattooed individuals as an outsider group having "little social, financial or cultural power [such as] sailors, fairground workers, prostitutes" (Rees, 2016, p.171). According to Rees, a series of connected developments facilitated tattooing's move from outsider to established, including: the increasing use of the body to construct identity, cultural and societal diversity, increased visibility of tattooing in popular culture, and systematic legitimisation of tattooing as art within popular culture and academia. Despite being established, the link between tattoos and different occupations remains polarised.

Tattoos and Occupations

Tattoos are more readily accepted in some occupations than others. For example, less rigid occupational groups (blue collar workers) are more likely to

hire tattooed workers than professions (Dean, 2010). Caution is advised in respect of Dean's findings as the experimental design used presented participants with an abstracted definition of a tattoo, rather than a tangible image. Therefore, it is not possible to know what participants imagined when asked about a theoretical tattoo on a fictional subject. Despite Dean's (2010) findings, Ellis (2015) observed a lack of empirical research exploring visible body art in some industries, most notably business. A growing body of research has explored the influence of the recruiters' stereotypes in relation to a range of demographic and physical factors – a process that Antonellis, Berry, and Silsbee (2016, p.78) call screening discrimination. Koval and Rosette (2020) researched the professionalism and competence attributed to job applicants, linking perceptions of competence with level of professionalism with hairstyles. They found that Black women with natural hairstyles were rated less professional, less competent, and less likely to proceed to a job interview than Black women with straightened hair or White women with either straight or curly styles. Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) carried out research into the relationship between the perceptions that recruiters had of job applicants and their stereotyped image norms. They defined image norms as being the: "belief that individuals must present an image that is consistent with occupational, organizational, or industry standards in order to be hired or promoted" (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006, p.155). They also suggested that image norms extend beyond the expected standard of performance or competence to factors that are not actually required to perform a job. Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) argued that those involved in staff recruitment are likely to have an image norm that is informed by occupational and individual opinions and perceptions. The image norm held by the recruiter will either be confirmed or disproved following the applicant's performance in the job interview. The

resulting perception is measured against the job requirements to determine if there is a sufficient match. Organisational roles requiring regular contact or interaction with clients are increasingly subject to control, including of uniform or dress codes and overall appearance (Wu et al., 2019). Roles involving regular contact with clients (such as receptionist or concierge) specify professionalism in behaviour and appearance as a requirement of the job, but do not clearly explain the standard to be achieved (Uzunogullari & Brown, 2020). However, research into the process of recruitment has identified that the impressions and pre-confirmatory biases formed by interviewers before an interview may result in a change in their questioning strategy (Binning *et al*, 1988; and Dougherty *et al*, 1994). Eisenkraft (2013) suggested that individuals should not trust their intuition when recruiting staff:

> *"Individual-level intuitive judgments are too encumbered by idiosyncratic biases and random noise to consistently produce valid predictions of job performance. Intuition-based first impressions should only be trusted when there is an opportunity to collect and combine the judgments of multiple independent raters" (Eisenkraft, 2013, p.279).*

Ellis (2015) reports the anecdotal feedback from job applicants with body modifications. In particular, the sense of inevitability that some form of cover-up is needed when going through recruitment for a job. For example, buying specific interview clothes that have long sleeves to cover tattoos is commonplace. Ellis describes such activity as an attempt to appear "normal" (Elis, 2015, p.105). Ellis justifies the use of this descriptor in relation to the academic literature, noting that articles addressing body modifications "appear frequently in the journal *Deviant Behavior"* (Ellis, 2015, p.106). Dann et al., (2016) also uses 'normal' in defining a comparison for non-tattooed individuals (Dann et al.,

2016). Consequently, the occupation someone is on or wants to enter has a bearing on their tattoo activity.

Taxonomy Need

Given the disparity in historical development, prevalence, age at first being tattooed, and placement on the body to facilitate cover-up, any tattoo taxonomy must account for gender differences. However, as gender identity is only one aspect of overall identify it is proposed that any taxonomy account for a broad range of demographic factors that may be relevant. This suggestion could helpfully form the basis of the initial classification of body modification taxonomy: internal factors versus external factors. For example, a person's gender identity, age, ethnicity, religion may be the source of the overriding factor about getting a tattoo, more so than any life event or external factor.

Initial attempts have been made to classify the motivations for having a tattoo. For example, Goulding *et al* (2004) explored the consumer market that exists for tattooists and their customers. They concluded that the tattoo market can be divided into three types: Fashion and aesthetic (whose motivation is to identify with a peer group rather than with a tattooed community), committed but concealed (being extensively tattooed except the hands, face and feet to belong to a tattooed community but avoid being judged by others), and committed collectors (having made a conscious decision to step away from mainstream society, choosing to tattoo their hands and face in order to belong to a tattooed subgroup as family). Goulding *et al*'s (2004) system of classification hints at psychological explanation, but blends physical placement, tattoo style, and motivational reasoning in a semi-structured form. A true taxonomic classification would disaggregate the form and location of tattoos before any attempt at motivational categorisation can begin. The earlier example of a post-mastectomy tattooed nipple recreation would be a concealed tattoo (Argitis *et al*,

2017). However, this does not make the person with the tattooed nipple committed to having other tattoos, nor does it signal a gateway into a tattoo subculture. Such a tattoo would have clear psychological motivations that are unlikely to be about joining any tattooed community as much as regaining self-esteem and return to normality. Therefore, a taxonomic classification system encompassing all forms of body modification must clearly delineate between what the modification is, where on the body it exists, and any functional or motivational aspect., including occupational influence.

As noted, no taxonomy addressing all forms of body modifications exists. To summarise the above, it is suggested that the framework for such a taxonomy should:

1 Encompass all forms of body modification, including none. It is suggested that, in the first instance, the relevant taxonomic factors could be developed taking into account tattoos. This would allow updates and developments to the taxonomy, based on the usefulness of the tattoo taxonomy.

2 Account for demographic factors, including (but not limited to) differences based on:

   a. Gender, including gender non-binary.
   b. Ethnicity.
   c. Culture.
   d. Age.
   e. Socio-economic status, including occupation, education level.
   f. Religion.

g. Medical history, including traumatic experiences.

3 Categorise the type of body modification, including whether it performs a medical function (such as surgical implant or post-surgery adaptation), is wholly temporary, permanent, or can be reversed. For tattoos the categorisation should include whether:

a. It has a specific meaning or is purely decorative (i.e., has no specific meaning).

b. It is an image and, if so, what is the image of (including to signal membership of a group – whether coded or overt).

c. It is script-based and, if so, what is the wording (for example an affirmation or motto, or to deliberately convey offence).

d. It is standalone and unlinked to other tattoos (if present) or is part of a broader theme or scene.

4 Area(s) of the body modified, including whether usually visible in public spaces.

5 Motivational reasons, including whether:

a. As a souvenir of a life event.

b. To establish in-group or out-group status (such as gang membership, occupation affiliation, or spiritual community).

c. As cover up or camouflage (including scars or prior but now unwanted tattoo).

d. For financial reasons or other personal gain including pecuniary/sponsorship reward.

Data availability

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest. The article involves no human or animal participation. As there were no participants, informed consent was not necessary.

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Appendix V: The Conversation Article

https://theconversation.com/from-the-manchester-bee-to-the-pompey-dot-the-psychology-of-regional-tattoos-198695

THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair

From the Manchester bee to the Pompey dot: the psychology of regional tattoos

Published: May 17, 2023 5.25pm BST

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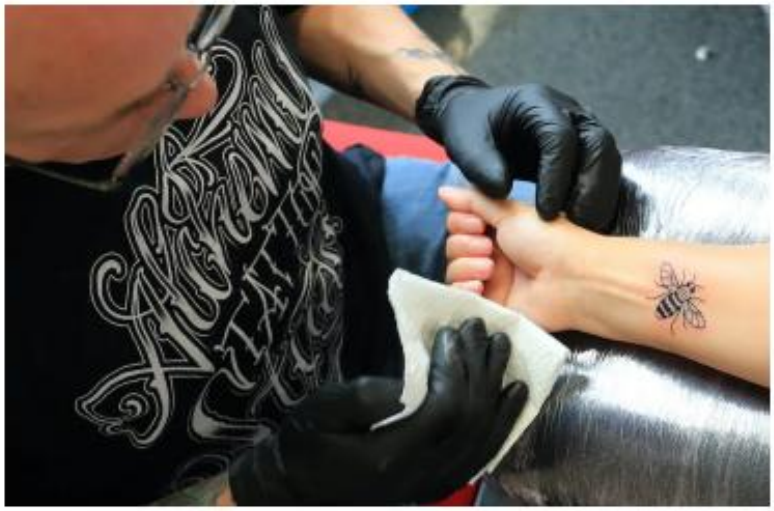


Staff members at Northern Rail got a bee tattoo in memory of the victims of the Manchester Arena terror attack. PA Images/Alamy Stock Photo

Few things divide us like tattoos. Tell someone you research tattoos, as one of us (Steph) does, and their eyes will often wander, searching for inked designs on your body before compulsively sharing their views.

Steph's research looks at the assumptions that people in the UK make about those with tattoos – their jobs, class, history and competence. For example, the notion of a vicar with a tattoo is still shocking to many people.

Despite the big rise in the popularity of tattoos – a YouGov poll in August 2022 found that more than 25% of Britons have them – some people (and researchers too) still associate them with deviant personalities. Equally, many may see them as mere fashion accessories with no significance beyond the aesthetic.

But what people may overlook is that tattoos are often about connection to local culture, unity and collective identity.

A Polynesian man with traditional tattoos. Michael Preston/Alamy Stock Photo

And that's not just the case for places often considered to have a strong cultural link with tattooing, such as Polynesia, whose famously intricately designed tattoos have recorded origins stretching back to 2000BC.

The UK also has its own history of tattoos interlinked with places and communities. And that history is still evolving.

Growing up in Birmingham in the 1970s, Steph was not aware that there were any historical Birmingham-inspired tattoos beyond the local football teams. But recent civic pride has seen a growth of Black Country chain tattoos, represent the manufacturing heritage of the area, and tattoos of a bull, a symbol of Birmingham.

Some surveys suggest Birmingham is the most tattooed city in England, with 48% of locals sporting at least one tattoo, and six tattoos the average for those who are inked. The same data also shows locals in Norwich and Glasgow are heavily inked too.

But the regional status of tattoos isn't just about how common they are. It can relate to a certain aesthetic with a meaning linked to the local area. And often it's about people categorising themselves to reinforce a sense of community or form a sense of identity.

Perhaps the most recognisable regional tattoo in recent years is the Manchester bee. Representing hard work, defiance and commemoration, the bee has gained global recognition and brought people together following the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing in a way that badges and wristbands could not.

Tattoos can also be a form of secret communication known as steganography. They show hidden messages within other information, a code that is meaningless to outsiders who just "see" the image without knowing the meaning that is in plain view.

For example, the Pompey dot tattoo (one to five dots on the back of the hand, between thumb and forefinger) marks the wearer as being from Portsmouth. It's an exclusive brand for those "in the know".

If you're not with us, you're against us

Tattoos can also be about telling people, "You're not one of us." Football fandom, and hometown allegiances all show proud kinship that veers into this territory.

A Millwall lion tattoo. PA Images/Alamy Stock Photo

Take, for example, Millwall FC, whose emblem is a lion. Millwall's reputation is that "no one likes us" and, for some fans, wearing body art depicting the lion is as much a part of fandom as attending matches. The sense of unity in being disliked becomes its own cohesive in-group.

Millwall's tattoos work in two ways: the lion is a fierce in-group symbol, while the proud chant, "No one likes us / We don't care," reinforces the barrier between members and the rest of the world (the out-group).

Notorious football fans Chelsea Headhunters show off their tattoos in online galleries. Like Millwall, they are widely disliked, due to their historic links to white supremacist groups such as the National Front, Combat 18 and paramilitary outfits. Tattoos are a way of belonging, yet at the same time, not belonging to wider society.

Ancient roots

If you follow the tendrils of tattoo history back far enough, their association with defiant out-groups is historical. Evidence of ancient tattooing has been found throughout Egypt, where it was mostly the preserve of concubines and dancers wearing the symbol of protector goddess Bes.

Around 1050BC, before the Phoenicians invented the alphabet that would become the basis of many modern scripts, Phoenician craftsmen such as stone-cutters or rope-makers would tattoo images depicting their skills on their skin as a kind of CV to display their trades.

People no longer need to advertise their trades and skills on their skin, and instead choose to show allegiances and identities. Now, flag tattoos of nations, sexuality and genders have become a kind of social CV.

Many gay communities sport tattoos that go beyond the traditional rainbow. The leather pride and bear brotherhood flags serve dual purposes. They are recognisable to those in the know, yet impenetrable to those who are not (who may wish the wearer harm).

The international bear brotherhood flag, at an LGBT pride event in Lima. Fotoholica Press Agency/Alamy Stock Photo

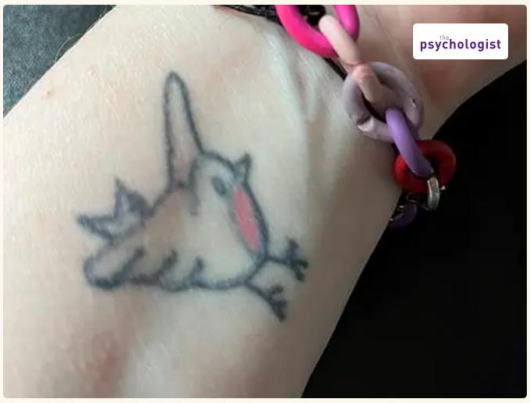
Appendix W: British Psychological Society Article

Human Rights, Social and behavioural

Tattooed and feeling judged?

It's probably not for the reason you think, says Steph Talliss-Foster

18 August 2025



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I was 12 when I first thought of getting a tattoo. Back then, anyone who knew me would describe me as shy... 'she wouldn't say boo to a goose!'. By the age of 17, I was a prefect, Head Girl, straight-A student, netball star, and Cadet Leader in the St John Ambulance Service. I was less shy, but my penchant for following the rules was a dominant character trait. Except for that idea I'd been nurturing for years about getting a tattoo.

Within a month of passing my driving test I borrowed the family car to go shopping. You already know where this is heading. I didn't go shopping. I used a free period to get the Depeche Mode rose tattooed on my thigh. Not only had I broken a rule, but I'd also broken the law by getting a tattoo. The few friends I told about it were impressed but not surprised. I was still me, just with a tattoo. However, my mother didn't see it that way. Despite my dad and older brother having tattoos, being tattooed was not what she expected of her rule-following daughter. That was the first time I felt judged for having a tattoo.

The second time was by my mother again when, aged 40, I had a tattoo on my wrist in memory of my late dad. At that time, I had seven degrees, was working on my PhD, had a very good job as a Director of Student Services in a large university, and had been married nearly 15 years. Very much still a rule-follower. Still, she judged me and was disappointed.

The third time I was judged for having a tattoo was during a job interview for a senior manager position in a red brick university. Half an hour in and all was going well. Plenty of nods, smiles, and agreement with my suggestions for areas to focus on if appointed. I casually lifted my hand to brush my hair back and, in so doing, the Chair of the interview panel saw my tattoo. How do I know this? She froze mid-sentence, mouth open, staring at the small robin on my wrist. I didn't get the job.

Savage or renaissance

The precise origin of tattooing is contested: evidence from the Stone- and Bronze-Ages exists across the world (Caplan, 2000; DeMello, 2000). Before common languages were developed, anyone with trade skills (such as stone carving or woodworking) would etch images into their skin depicting their specialty. These portable CVs allowed the wearer to travel far and wide, setting aside any barrier that language posed in trading their skills.

There are various theories about how tattooing became the widespread practice it is today. The nomadic Ainu group spread the practice to Japan, or else Samoan explorers spread tattooing to New Zealand, Australia, and Fiji. Perhaps the most popular theory is attributed to Captain James Cook in the mid-1700s. Cook returned home with tattooed sailors following voyages to the Pacific islands. With him, Cook brought heavily tattooed Polynesians to be displayed as curiosities to the largely unmarked and

'civilised' Westerners (DeMello, 2000).

Being paraded throughout England's pubs and fairs as 'primitives', the association between being tattooed and being savage took hold. Despite this, seeing tattooed sailors living lives of freedom and adventure, and travelling to far-off lands, led to an increase in tattooing amongst working class society both in the UK and also North America. However, tattooing wasn't only popular amongst sailors and the working class. King Edward VII getting a tattoo when he was still the Prince of Wales prompted a tattooing fad amongst the aristocracy that lasted until the First World War (DeMello, 2000).

The invention of the electric tattoo pen saw the incidence of tattooing flourish in the UK and North America. Anyone with the means to buy the equipment could set up shop, even if they had no artistic skill; designs that the tattooist could reproduce quickly and reliably contributed to the widespread popularity of tattooing.

The 1960s saw a shift in tattooing, largely due to better, more capable artists entering the workforce. An influx of university educated artists exploring tattooing as an alternative to fine art forms (Sanders & Vail, 2008) led to a renaissance, with tattooists replaced by tattoo artists. No longer unoriginal highly reproduced designs, tattoos became larger, thematic works of original art on the skin.

However, the association between being tattooed and a deviant outgroup member also grew.

Owens and colleagues (2023) found that although tattooing is prevalent, perceptions about tattooed people being deviants, criminals, and addicts are stubbornly resistant to change. The savage and negative connotations around tattooing still persist. Indeed, a search of The British Psychological Society's site for 'tattoo' reveals the top four results referring to regret, self-harm, and promiscuity.

Forming and managing impressions

All of this plays into how we form impressions of people with tattoos. Park and Judd (1989) found that we make decisions about colleagues, partners, and friends, based on first impressions. According to Uleman and Moskowitz (1994), the length of time needed to form an impression about someone is irrelevant, as the judgments we make are spontaneous. However, the less time we have to form an impression, the more we rely on stereotypes (Biernat et al., 2003). Those stereotypes extend to behavioural traits and characteristics. For example, sports teams wearing black were perceived to be more aggressive than if they wore white (Vrij, 1997); a medical clinician in a lab coat is perceived to have supreme authority and an almost supernatural ability to heal the sick (Blumhagen, 1979). Hippocrates

(quoted in Rowland et al., 2005, p.214) felt that appearance was of greater importance than verbal communication:

"The physician must have a worthy appearance... for most people are of the opinion that those physicians who are not tidy in their own persons cannot look after others well... he must wear decent clothes".

Research confirms that people do make judgements around professionalism – in the form of character traits including competence, confidence, and trustworthiness – on the basis of visual appearance (Rowland et al., 2005). A range of studies have found similar results (Cha et al., 2004; Dewayne Edwards et al., 2012; Henderson et al., 2009; Major et al., 2005; Shelton et al., 2010). Despite this body of evidence, anyone who has been judged for their physical appearance knows that 'There is no necessary connection between appearance and the performance of work tasks. Wearing a wig and gown does not make a lawyer a better lawyer, for example' (Anderson-Gough et al., 2002, p.42).

Organisations and employers rely on the link between physical appearance and branding when recruiting staff. Lookism is the prejudicial and discriminatory treatment a person receives based on their appearance (Ayto, 1999). Jones et al. (2024) argue that Lookism in Australia is legal in the service or hospitality and tourism sector, through linking branding and commercial activity with image norms.

Judge not

My own PhD research is about the interplay between tattoos and professionalism. Specifically, whether being tattooed as a professional impacts the impressions people form about traits associated with being a professional (e.g. trust, competence, capability). Based on my personal experience of being judged, I thought I had a fair idea of where my data would lead. However, my data collection has shown that attitudes are changing.

Through interviewing my participants I found that impression formation of tattooed people is less about having a tattoo and more about the tattoo itself. Whilst I had expected the stigma around tattoos to be whether a person has them or not, it seems that it is not the overriding factor in impression formation. My participants told me that they were accepting of anyone with a tattoo unless it was offensive (such as a swastika), or of poor quality (including poor execution and poor spelling), or on the face and/or neck. This conditional acceptance often came with a generational steer, with participants identifying someone they knew who would not tolerate tattoos. Usually an older person (examples given to me were parent and grandparent), participants framed it as *I'm fine with a* [professional occupation] *being tattooed, but my grandmother would not like it, would not accept it.*

My participants also told me they have (or would) use a visible tattoo on a professional as an icebreaker but were not always sure of the etiquette of asking so as not to offend.

I'm developing a model to explain my findings, which show that although tattooed people are judged by their tattoos it is less about having them, and more about whether they are felt by the perceiver to be any good. Thinking back, who knows? Perhaps my interviewer had a fear of birds rather than a presumed dislike of tattoos.

Some things have changed for me, and some have not. As I near the end of my PhD, I am approaching 50, am a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and am about to celebrate my silver wedding anniversary. My proclivity for rules has led me to being the Head of Registry in a UK university where I get to write regulations and policies. And the tattoos? I have designs drawn up for two more I plan to get when I complete my PhD.

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