Body Art in Business: Confronting a New Generation

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Body art (tattoos) are an increasingly popular phenomenon among millennials. According to the Pew Research Center (PRC) (2019), millennials (53.5%) have surpassed all generations in the U.S. labor force. This is of particular importance because baby boomers currently manage/lead and own the majority of businesses, therefore, determining the professional landscape. The problem is that little research exists to determine if negative stigmas and stereotypes of tattoos exist between generations. The purpose of this two-phase study was to statistically determine the attitudes of millennials and baby boomers toward tattoos to see if tattoos are perceived and acted upon differently by generations.

Keywords: tattoos, millennials, baby boomers, corporate management and executives, generational behavior and biases, cultural differences

BODY ART IN BUSINESS: CONFRONTING A NEW GENERATION

The purpose of this study was to statistically determine the attitudes of millennials toward tattoos (visible or non-visible) to see if a problem in business arenas existed. This became a critical question because the millennial generation have been getting tattoos (visible and non-visible) at increased rates, while the baby boomers' perceptions of tattoos appears to have stigmas attached to visible body art. Despite the increases in tattoos, the legal oversight agencies (primarily consisting of baby boomers) have not yet grappled with the efficacy of tattoos in the workplace (Jones & Hobbs, 2015).

Organizational behavior research seeks to predict the likely behaviors of employees, employees who may eventually become managerial heads of these organizations (Robbins & Judge, 2017). This means that understanding the needs and wants of all employees, including generational differences between these generations, become directly pertinent. Just as management principles of the 1930's and 1940's did not resonate with management concerns in the 1980's, it is not likely that the 1980's will resonate with management principles in the 2020's. Technological advancements continue to accelerate at rapid rates that will naturally change the way organizations do business (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Information assimilation is changing, as glimpses of the generation Z (born 1995-2010) are beginning to show different characteristics of their predecessors too. The dichotomy between the power of the baby boomers and the desires of the millennials must be examined so pathways can be designed to accommodate the cultures of both generations. According to Braunberger, (2000), current research has addressed concerns of customers and employees' viewpoints about tattoos (Swami & Furnham, 2007;

Resenhoeft, Villa, & Wiseman, 2008), but the problem is that little research exists to determine if negative stigmas and stereotypes of tattoos, believed to stem from the conservative baby boomer generation, exist as standards in the workplace.

The amount of body art and the number of millennials getting body art is increasing rapidly. This phenomenon is causing difficulties for baby boomers and millennials in today's business world because, despite the fact that more millennials are in the workforce than are baby boomers, more baby boomers' control (own, manag e, and operate) the culture and structure of organizations. The term millennial (sometimes also referred to as generation Y) refer to a sub-cultural generation of people born generally between 1977-1994 (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Culiberg & Mihelič, 2016). In 2015 the workforce consisted of 53.5% millennials, 52.7% of generation X's (born between 1965 and 1980), and only 44.6% baby boomers (PRC, 2019). By 2025, millennials will make up 75% of the workforce (Deloitte, 2014). At the same time that the millennial generation is filtering into organizational relevancy, those baby boomers, remain at the peak of corporate hierarchy (Putre, 2013). Given the vast differences in culture and behavior between baby boomers and millennials, the clash of ideologies, values, and techniques is prevalent. The question begs how will today's organizations define, anticipate, embrace, or accommodate these inevitable challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Identifying key behavioral differences between baby boomers and millennials is necessary because little research exists to identify perceptions, between these two populations, about tattoos in the workplace. Behavioral differences impact employees and employers in significant ways. For instance, baby boomers may be reducing in numbers, but the ways in which each generation learns, performs, and develops expectations from work environments is critical. Research indicates that effective organizations must develop ways to enable employees to be happy in the workplace to ensure the organization achieves performance excellence (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Identifying differences between these two powerful generations in information assimilation, productivity, expectations, core values and work values, and liabilities will enable organizations to develop new policies and procedures designed specifically to meet the needs of all employees. This process will enable organizations to increase fiscal sustainability by driving performance excellence and creating loyalty and commitment.

Information Assimilation

Laura Putre (2013), observed and reported on the strengths and weaknesses of the different generations in Promedica Toledo Hospital's unit in Toledo, Ohio. How millennials assimilate information draws a stark contrast to the orthodox methods of lectures and textbook lessons to which the older generation is so accustomed (Putre, 2013). Due to millennial digital competence, one of the more helpful ways of teaching a millennial is directing him/her toward trustworthy sources of information, since he/she has access to innumerable refereed databases (Putre, 2013). Effectively navigating the internet, despite inundated multi-media exposure, represents a major cognitive departure from the brick and motor book-based assimilation of information typical of baby boomers (Noguera Fructuoso, 2015).

Productivity

Productivity is another behavioral difference found in the workplace today. According to Putre (2013), flexibility is most important to millennial workers (Mayer, 2016). Interesting are the results from PRC (2019) positing that millennials believe collaborative, achievement oriented, and highly creative work tasks are more important. Putre (2013) suggested baby boomers do not share the same productive work day: Baby boomers believe in long hours (60+), if necessary to get the job done. A qualitive analysis according to Mayer (2016) reported on statistics from a survey administered to human resources managers at WorldatWork and FlexJobs Inc, which found that millennials prefer a work-life balance and flexibility. This means millennials prefer an 8-hour work day, five (5) days a week (Mayer, 2016). Putre (2013) results found, "they may still be as productive as the boomers—it's just how they do their work

that's different" regarding technological talent of working millennials. The comfort and ease of millennials to embrace technology points to distinct differences between these two groups. However, expectations may raise additional differences between millennials and baby boomers.

Expectations

Millennials' expectations of how work factors into their lives is noteworthy, given the fact that they make a distinction between work and non-work activities. Myers and Sadaghiani's meta-analytical review of contemporary literature on organizational communication and the millennial generation confirmed that work-life balance is not just a priority for millennials, it is an expectation that his/her work-life balance is expected to be adhered to in the workplace (Putre, 2013; Foltz, 2014; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Contrary to millennials, baby boomers are hesitant to take time off for fear of compromising his/her collaborative team efforts (PRC, 2019).

Of special note, it appears that the concept of work-life balance is readily being adopted by baby boomers (Putre, 2013). The Bernard Hodes Group (BHG) (2012) published survey results from a quantitative study exploring employer branding strategies from 175 professionals and 250 general employees, which indicated baby boomers are more concerned with benefit packages that include health and retirement, although baby boomers are in (or near) retirement which may influence these expectations. This is of particular importance because millennials expect to retire much earlier than baby boomers (PRC, 2019). This expectation is likely to align more closely with baby boomers as millennials age (PRC, 2019). Indicative of continued differences, millennials interpret work expectations to include personal and professional development and fulfillment of corporate social responsibility (Singh, 2013). The PRC (2019) stated baby boomers view jobs as a career, unlike millennials who see a job as a means to an end.

Cultural Values, Work Values, and Beliefs

Values and beliefs are critical components that represent additional differences. Millennials continue to advance into their respective professions, professions that baby boomers have already developed and established a definitive culture, complete with norms, values, and beliefs systems already entrenched in organizations. According to the PRC (2019), baby boomers are ethical, while millennials view a "me first" attitude in the workplace. Compounding these value system differences include a millennial preference for mutual respect (without merit), an inability to take risks, a lack of communication skills, a need for supervision, and a disrespect for authority. This millennial attitude may impact the ethical fortitude of its generation.

As a new, innovative, mechanistically different generation emerges into the corporate world, countless points of contention are bound to manifest, one of those being perspectives of body art, referred to as tattoos. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) reviewed and commented on the current literature surrounding millennials in the workplace: not all baby boomers will be retired by the time the majority of millennials are functioning and adjusting to the post-graduate workplace, which is estimated roughly to be around 2022 (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). This leads to necessity for further speculation on how millennials plan on approaching the coexistence of old-world culture and their new body art presence of tattoos in the workplace in this era.

Tattoos in the Workplace

The positive correlation between employee appearance and reputation is irrefutable. Working with the public comes with certain expectations to please customers, and study results indicate customers prefer cleanliness and care in appearance (Vilnai-Yavetz & Rafaeli, 2011; Karl, Hall, & Peluchette, 2013). Professionalism is demonstrated through a persons' personal presence and has been maintained as a business rule extending across generations (Miller, McGlashan, & Eure, 2009).

Historically, grooming and hygiene referred to the cleanliness and ability to dress according to corporate policies. Body art (tattoos) presents a subset of new issues. The practice of body art dates back at least 6,000 years old (Jones & Hobbs, 2015), so it is hardly a new concept, but the context of tattoos in

society tells an interesting story about the social history of this type of body modification. Tattoos, for the purpose of this study, follow the definition provided by The Harris Poll in 2016, "ink-based tattoos that have been permanently placed on your skin and that you have not had removed" (Shannon-Missal, 2016).

Ellis (2015) details the identity factor of tattoos, as in tribal-natured symbols that externally tied subgroups of human beings together including sailors, prison gangs, motorcycle clubs, and organized crime, women in the circus, ethnicities, and nationalities. Given the cultural signals of traditional tattoos representing and assembling marginalized members of society, especially those (both previously and modernly) associated with crime and violence, a stigma of tattoos thrives in American society. A stigma is a real or perceived discrepancy between an individual's actual and virtual social identities (Goffman, 1963). Presently, the intention of tattoos has expanded past gang membership and/or religious or ethnic assimilation, in demonstrable ways, even though the stigma continues to exist (Ellis, 2015; Shannon-Missal, 2016).

Koch, Roberts, Armstrong, & Owen (2010) maintain that, among many, one of the reasons millennials get tattoos includes the value of self-expression and individualism. This means that millennials desire to set themselves apart from the mainstream and this process is identified by body art. The conflict seems to arise when millennials introduce intentional creativity and individual form of personal expression (tattoos) to baby boomers who have an ingrained memory of crime symbolism, which is exacerbated by the conservative traditions created by baby boomers in the workplace.

The PRC (2008) survey data results found that 36% of millennials have at least one tattoo, and in that same survey two-thirds believe their generation is distinct from the rest. More recently, another survey done by The Harris Poll found that, by 2016, that number grew to 47% of millennials with one or more tattoos, 37% two or more, and 15% five or more. While tattoos come in all shapes and sizes, this is still a significant number of millennials. At the same time, millennials are aware of the stigma associated with tattoos as well as the expectation to hide them in a business setting or during job interviews, and are therefore mindful of the placement of their tattoos (Foltz, 2014).

An awareness of traditional resentments about tattoos and their physical appearance may exist, but these perceptions may not be linked to job performance. However, perception is a person's reality (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Research also indicates a presumed expectation to cover tattoos exists that may cause a feeling of inauthenticity (Ellis, 2015), which directly conflicts with millennial values of individualism. Karl, Hall, & Peluchette (2013) posited that the strain and physical discomfort of covering tattoos may impact job performance because employees in the case study were not as comfortable.

For example: Working under constant exposure to heat while wearing double-layers for work did not produce a positive condition, even though it improved customer perception (Karl, Hall, & Peluchette, 2013). Although it may be more pleasing to the eye for the customer, an issue of millennial productivity levels might exist. Ellis (2015, p.111) stated that, "Although organizations have no legal obligation to consider the needs of employees and potential employees with body modification, they marginalize this population at their peril."

METHODS

Participants

All of the participants were university undergraduate students over the age of 18. A total of 97 undergraduate students took the survey. Of these students:

1. 76 of the student participants reported to be general majors and were recruited from general psychology classes. These participants were self-reported as freshman, sophomores, and seniors.
2. The remaining 21 student participants reported to be business majors. These students were recruited from business major core business classes and were classified as sophomore, junior, and seniors.
3. Of all the participants surveyed in this study, 70.1% had no tattoos. 29.9% had at least one tattoo.

4. The participants were not asked questions pertaining to age, sexual identity, and classification was not considered in this analysis.

The researchers complied will all IRB requirements and maintained compliance with the American Psychological Association (APA) regulations. The students who participated received and completed an informed consent prior to beginning the study and were debriefed at the end of the study. No harm to any student existed before, during or after the study. The students were encouraged to contact the researchers (contact information was provided) for the results of this study and for any concerns experienced before, during, or after the survey was completed.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

According to Pew Research Center (PRC) (2019), in 2015, the millennials became the largest employed generation (53.5%) in the U.S. labor force. However, 76% of American organizations are currently owned, operated, and managed by baby boomers with conservative values suggesting negative attitudes toward visible tattoos exist. The question begs how millennials view tattoos in general, and view displayed tattoos, in particular. This became directly pertinent to these researchers because the growth of tattoo and body art businesses have grown exponentially in recent years according to LaRosa's (2018).

The LaRosa (2018) report summarized the tattoo parlor and removal market research, suggesting that millennials are partially the driving force. The problem is that little research exists to determine if negative stigmas and stereotypes of tattoos, believed to stem from the conservative baby boomer generation, exist as standards in the workplace today. The far-reaching question driving this study was to ascertain if, in light of conservative business stigmas attached to tattoos in the workplace, to what extent tattoos would the presence of tattoos impact these millennial employees and conservative managers, executives, and owners. The researchers view this as the first of a two-part research study. The first step was to determine the attitudes of millennials about tattoos in the workplace. The second step will be to determine the extent to which baby boomers viewed the desire to have and to display tattoos in the workplace. Therefore, the following foundational hypotheses was developed:

Ha1: No significant differences will exist in student acceptance of tattoos in the workplace.

Ho1: Significant differences will exist in student acceptance of tattoos in the workplace.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The descriptive quantitative 19 question five-point Likert-type scale survey was designed to determine students (millennials) attitudes about body art (tattoos) and the visibility of body art in the professional workplace. The Likert-type scale using a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree was used to determine if students accepted visible or hidden tattoos in the workplace. The survey was divided into three parts. Part one was designed for demographics in questions 1, 2, 7-9. The second part (questions 3-6 and 10-14) was to assess general cognitive attitudes about people who have tattoos. The third part of this survey (questions 15-19) was designed to solicit choices based in attitudes toward visibly seen tattoos in the workplace which is labeled Exposure and Emotional Performance.

Part One: Demographics

There were 3 primary demographic questions. Questions 1 and 2 consisted of demographic criteria; degree major and university classification. The survey self-reported results indicated that 52.6% were freshman, 22.7% were sophomores, 11.3% were juniors, and 13.4% were seniors. The final question was designed to determine if the students surveyed planned on entering a business-based environment (management, economics, informatics, entrepreneurship, or accounting).

Additional demographics questions 7-9, were used to classify students with or without tattoos and if participants had tattoo's; how many and how visible. Question 7 identified participants who currently had

no tattoos, or currently had tattoos, providing yes or no responses. Question 8, asked participants how many tattoos, if any, providing response choices ranging from "One to three" to "Three to Six" "Six or more" or "Do not have any." Question 9 asked participants if these tattoos were hidden or visible using the same scale. We expected bias would exist for those 29% who had hidden or visible tattoos, which is why these questions (7-9) were placed in the body of the survey instead of in the standard demographic section.

Part Two: Cognitive Attitudes

The second part (questions 3-6 and 10-14) of the survey was designed to assess general cognitive attitudes about people who have tattoos by evaluating participant responses on the Likert-type scale. Agreement rated (1 strongly agree to 2 moderately agree), disagreement (4 moderately disagree to 5 strongly disagree) and Neutral 3 in the following questions 3-6: "Tattoos are generally offensive," "People with tattoos are generally less responsible," "People with tattoos are generally less trustworthy," and "People with tattoos are generally less competent." In questions 10-14, participants were asked in question 10, "co-workers with tattoos should not be able to show them at work," question 11, "Visible tattoo's unprofessional in a business setting," question 12, "Visible tattoos should not be permitted in business settings," question 13, "I would not hire someone with tattoos", and question 14, "If I held an authoritative role, I would not allow visible tattoos in the workplace."

Part Three: Exposure and Emotional Performance

The third part of this survey (questions 15-19) were designed to solicit immediate responses to a graphic exposing of tattoos in a workplace picture. This graphic tattoo exposure was obtained from Google. It is an image depicting a Caucasian male's mid-section starting from the bottom of the neck and stopping at the upper-thighs. The male's sleeves are rolled up to the elbows, exposing the visible tattoos along his forearms and extending to the backs of his hands, but he is otherwise dressed casual-professionally with a white button-down, yellow tie, brown belt, and nice jeans. The participants were shown this picture to illicit emotional responses indicative of how they would respond in the following circumstances based on the same rating scale used throughout this survey.

The subsequent questions applied directly to this picture by asking participants to rate (1-Strongly Agree to 5-Strongly Disagree) how they feel about potentially seeing this display of tattoos in the workplace if they were in leadership roles: question 15, "If I were to see this display of body art in my place of work, it would shock me," question 16, "If I were to see this display of body art in my place of work, I would think less of the person," question 17, "If I were to see this display of body art in my place of work, I would complain," question 18, "If I were to see one of my employees displaying body art in this way, I would bring them in to discuss their unprofessionalism," and question 19, "If I fulfilled an authoritative role at my future place of work and were to see one of my employees displaying body art in this way, I would have no choice but to fire them."

This survey took less than 30 minutes to complete. The researchers assumed that the participants were honest in their answers and represented their true feelings. The questions were based on a 5-point Likert-type scale and were presented in an easy to understand format to solicit honest answers. The survey instrument was deemed valid and reliable with a Cronbach Alpha of .961, but will be re-evaluated, and changes made prior to step two (surveying baby boomers) of this project.

The primary demographic section consists of the first two questions. The second set of questions make up the primary focus of this study regarding preliminary attitudes, where general antecedent attitudes towards tattoos and people with tattoos (as it relates to basic employee qualities) are evaluated by asking participants to rate their agreement on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 representing Strongly Agree and 5 being Strongly Disagree of the following statements: In question 3, "Tattoos are generally offensive," in question 4, "People with tattoos are generally less responsible," in question 5, "People with tattoos are generally less trustworthy," and in question 6, "People with tattoos are generally less competent."

Questions 7-9 were designed to illicit potential bias. Question 7 asked the participants if they had any tattoos. The participants answered either "Yes" or "No." Question 8 asked, "how many tattoos," and the

answers ranged from "One" to "Six or more," or "None." In question 9, the participants were asked if their tattoos were concealed, with answers ranging from "Yes, all of them" to "No, none of them," or "Do not have any." These questions were necessary because, whether a person has a tattoo, or not, impacts their viewpoints and becomes an implicit and explicit bias relating directly to workplace attitude and perceptions.

Questions 10- 14 were designed to see how participants how they viewed co-worker tattoos and how they might feel about tattoos if they were in management roles. Question 10 stated, "Coworkers with tattoos should **not** be able to show them at work," and question 11 stated, "Visible tattoos on coworkers are unprofessional in a business setting." Questions 12-14 allows the participant to project themselves into current professional workforce culture assuming visible tattoos were inappropriate in the workplace. Specifically, the participants were allowed to project themselves into a position of leadership in an attempt to predict the future attitude toward tattoo-visibility. In question 12, "Visible tattoos should **not** be permitted in business settings," in question 13, "I would NOT consider hiring someone with tattoos," and in question 14, "If I fulfilled an authoritative role within my future place of work, I would not allow tattoos to be visible on my employees."

Prior to answering questions 15-19, all participants were shown a picture obtained from Google images of a Caucasian male's mid-section starting from the bottom of the neck and stopping at the upper-thighs. The male's sleeves are rolled up to the elbows, exposing the visible tattoos along his forearms and extending to the backs of his hands, but he is otherwise dressed casual-professionally with a white button-down, yellow tie, brown belt, and nice jeans. The subsequent questions apply directly to this picture in asking participants to, once again, rate on a scale (1-Strongly Agree to 5-Strongly Disagree). In question 15, "If I were to see this display of body art in my place of work, it would shock me," in question 16, "If I were to see this display of body art in my place of work, I would think less of the person," in question 17, "If I were to see this display of body art in my place of work, I would complain."

In the remaining two questions (18-19), participants were asked to indicate their response as if they were in a leadership role. In question 18, "If I were to see one of my employees displaying body art in this way, I would bring them in to discuss their unprofessionalism," and in question 19, "If I fulfilled an authoritative role at my future place of work and were to see one of my employees displaying body art in this way, I would have no choice but to fire them."

The survey took less than 30 minutes (approximately 15-30 minutes) to complete. The researchers believe the participants were honest in their responses which enabled a deeper understanding of the participants' attitudes toward tattoos, tattoos in the workplace, their individual feelings regarding tattoos in the workplace, and their projected plans of potentially challenging this status quo.

Design

This quantitative descriptive study was designed to begin the process of determining basic university student attitudes about body art. From these results, the need for further research unveiled itself. We used a five-point Likert-type scale survey instrument (strongly agreed to strongly disagree) to evaluate the attitudes of business versus general majors in a state university in Kansas. The survey questions helped to determine if prejudice, stigma, or accepting attitudes toward visible tattoos in the workplace existed. The independent variables were the business and general major students taking the survey and the dependent variables were the student attitudes and perceptions represented by their survey answers. Although the researchers did not control for the intervening variables in this study, the intervening variables were the attitudes of those students who already had tattoos.

Procedure

To eliminate the incentive to answer dishonestly and to reach as many students as possible the researchers were not physically present while the participants completed the survey. Instead, the survey was administered online via Google Docs following these procedures: a script was emailed to psychology and business professors requesting their assistance in making students aware of, and encouraging students, to take the survey on Google Docs. An additional script was emailed to those professors, and

once approved by those professors, the researchers provided the link to the survey (which included a consent form at the beginning and debriefing statement at the end). No rewards or punishments were offered and no requirements were made to entice students to participate in this study.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Analysis

To test the hypothesis in this quantitative descriptive study, an independent-sample t-test was performed comparing levels of tattoo acceptance of students at a university in Kansas. Tattoo acceptance rates were calculated by adding fourteen items for a total tattoo acceptance score. Higher scores indicated less acceptance. Scale reliability was very high (Cronbach's Alpha = .961). Results of the independent-samples t-test showed no difference in attitudes between business majors (M =30.71, SD =11.71,) and general majors (M = , SD =), $t(95)$ = -.82, p = .413

Results

The survey data results rejected the null hypothesis among students at this university in Kansas. The results were structured according to its three key parts (demographics, cognitive attitudes, and exposure and emotional performance). However, there were significant yet unexpected findings that will also be discussed in this section. The unexpected findings indicated that attitudinal differences may exist because quite a few participants would not report their beliefs (chose the neutral response) regarding tattoos.

Part One: Demographics

Of the 97 participants, over 75% of the survey participants believed they would seek professional business employment. 51% of the participants were freshman, 22.7% were sophomore, 11.3% were juniors, and 13.4% were seniors. Only 29.4% of the participants reported they had tattoos with 70.1% reporting no tattoos. Based on these data, it was unexpected to find that 33% viewed tattoos as offensive. This was a higher percent than anticipated because in question 7, only 29.4% had tattoos, while 69.6% responded that most (or all) of their tattoos were hidden, which begs the question if they do not believe people with tattoos are less responsible, less trustworthy, or less competent (in questions 4-6), then why hide most or all of their tattoos (Tables 1-4).

Part Two: Cognitive Attitudes (See Table 6)

However, in question 11, 26% responded that it was unprofessional to have visible tattoos at work, yet approximately 19% believed visible tattoos should not be permitted in the workplace. However, in question 15 when asked if they would be shocked to see visible tattoos in the workplace, 27% would be shocked. An even lower percent would think less of a person showing sleeved tattoos as in the picture. Only 14.7% would bring in an employee (as in the picture) to discuss their unprofessionalism in question 18, and in question 19, only 2% would terminate the employment for sleeved tattoos. This is of particular importance because more and more millennials are getting tattoos each year. Business majors responded that those with tattoos were less competent and less responsible than did general majors.

Part Three: Exposure and Emotional Performance (See Table 6)

Despite the graphic picture of a young businessman displaying sleeved tattoos in the workplace, over 80% of the participants repeatedly disagreed with expected traditional baby boomer views that tattoos are not accepted in the workplace. In Questions 15-19 the majority of the student participants selected responses supporting tattoos in the workplace. For instance, in question 15, when asked if seeing "body art at work, would shock them," 27% said it would, while 49% said it would not shock them. Also, in Question 16, 78% of the participants would "not think less of a person with tattoos." Question 17, over 80% of the participants would not complain about a person with visible tattoos and yet in question 18, only a little over 60% would not find it necessary to discuss their tattoos with that employee, but 14% would discuss this situation. Interestingly, over 80% would not discuss firing an employee with visible

tattoos, while only 3% would fire an employee with visible tattoos. This means that 3% of hiring or firing a person might be based on the displaying of tattoos instead of the quality of a person's work, ethic, personality or intellect.

Unexpected Results

A discerning factor we encountered were the number of neutral responses. The results indicated a larger than normal percent of participants consistently answered, "Neither agree, nor disagree." Students responded to all the demographic questions, which included (1, 2, 7, 8, and 9), but in questions 3-6, the 'neutral' selection represented an average of 18.5% of all participants. At first, we were not concerned, but in questions 10-12 regarding visible tattoos, almost 30% selected the neutral position. In questions 13, 16-17, and 19 the neutral selections averaged 19%. Questions 14-15, and 18 the neutral selection average was approximately 24.5%. If the neutral selection had not been available perhaps these participants would have needed to select a more definitive response. Another unexpected response was found in question 15. When asked if seeing "body art at work, would shock them," 27% said it would, while 49% said it would not shock them.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the researchers could not guarantee that these behaviors regarding tattoos will be commonplace in the workplace, it is reasonable to assume that university students will enter the workforce with these demonstrated cultural values. The number of participants gathered in this survey was small. With the 97 total participants, 76 were general majors and 21 business majors were represented. The researchers recommend increasing the number of participants, particularly ensuring more business majors are included.

Future demographic questions should be expanded to include racial, religious, ethnic, and gender-diverse populations. This would create a more diverse population to study and might result in more robust findings. The demographic questions only featured a couple of questions about classification and major. The questions about having tattoos, the number of tattoos, and concealment of tattoos could have been used as intervening variables. However, these options came to light after the survey was administered to participants. Further development of the survey is needed. In the picture that was shown to participants, the subject with tattoo sleeves was clearly male. Future researchers may want to include a diverse population with tattoos to display on the survey. Additionally, matching questions will be added to increase the internal validity and reliability of this instrument.

In the picture shown to the participants, the tattoos were blatantly visible and took up almost all of the space on both of the model's arms. Placement and content of tattoos could also impact the perceptions of survey participants. Perhaps a range of tattooed models from subtle to blatant may be appropriate. Further analysis showing both male and female tattoos (on similar body parts) would prevent survey participant bias.

CONCLUSIONS

According to Mills-Senn (2017) Millennials take change in their stride. The question may be if these anticipated changes, found in new management, will contribute to the research concerning organizational behavior and the consequences of tattoos. The responses support the statistics that younger generations are likely to allow tattoos in the workplace. This means future research should identify older generations—baby boomer—to ascertain if a conflict may exist regarding the efficacy of visible tattoos in the workplace. The most compelling finding relates to the millennial business major who felt that job candidates should not be hired at their company. Also, the results suggest that business-degreed, millennial employees are more likely to have a negative response to tattoos.

Additionally, business majors believed terminating employees with tattoos was a valid consideration, suggesting further investigation is needed. The data results and the literature review suggest that a new

research question has emerged. For future researchers, the question becomes, will millennials become more conservative as they age and mature into upper management positions? This is necessary because baby boomers were radical (anti-Vietnam sentiments, burning bra's, and revolutionized sexual activities and attitudes) for their era, which creates suspicion that perhaps this young generation will experience similar shifts from radical attitudes to an aging conservatism like many baby boomers.

The findings suggested a correlation between attitudes toward tattoos and being less competent and less respected. For example, during the hiring process, a candidate might believe he/she interviewed very well, until the candidate returns home and notices (in the mirror) that their sleeve tattoos are showing. Based on these results, it is possible that he/she was not hired because of visible tattoos. It seems that the awareness of this as a potential issue (Foltz, 2014) for career-seeking professionals in the millennial generation is, and may continue to be, warranted. We fully anticipate continuing to explore these dimensions of social psychology and business within the scope of tattoos in the workplace, which will call for re-evaluation and revising of our self-generated survey and redistributing to a larger student sample. We also anticipate administering the revised survey to business faculty themselves, and the older generations (baby boomers) involved in business leadership in order to continue to generate robust results, as well as, to compare those results to the student population.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FR	51	52.6	52.6	52.6
	SO	22	22.7	22.7	75.3
	JR	11	11.3	11.3	86.6
	SR and	13	13.4	13.4	100.0
	above	97	100.0	100.0	
	Total				

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	General Major	76	78.4	78.4	78.4
	Business Major	21	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Tattoos	68	70.1	70.1	70.1
	Has Tattoos	29	29.9	29.9	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No tattoos	66	68.0	68.0	68.0
	One to three	26	26.8	26.8	94.8
	tattoos three to	1	1.0	1.0	95.9
	six tatttoos six or	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
	more tattoos	97	100.0	100.0	
	Total				

TABLE 5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	do not have	62	63.9	63.9	63.9
	tattoos some	7	7.2	7.2	71.1
	most	6	6.2	6.2	77.3
	all	22	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 6
GROUP STATISTICS

	BusinessMajor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Offensive	General Major	76	1.9342	.88447	.10146
	Business Major	21	2.1905	.81358	.17754
Less_Responsible	General Major	76	1.7105	.79692	.09141
	Business Major	21	1.9524	1.07127	.23377
Less_Trustworthy	General Major	76	1.7237	.75892	.08705
	Business Major	21	1.8571	.79282	.17301
Less_competent	General Major	76	1.6842	.76960	.08828
	Business Major	21	2.1429	1.10841	.24187
Shouldnt_show_at_work	General Major	76	2.3158	1.07344	.12313
	Business Major	21	2.4286	.92582	.20203
Unprofessional	General Major	76	2.7763	1.13840	.13058
	Business Major	21	2.4762	.98077	.21402
Not_permitted	General Major	76	2.4737	1.11324	.12770
	Business Major	21	2.3333	.91287	.19920
Shouldnt_hire	General Major	76	1.7368	.86977	.09977
	Business Major	21	1.9048	.88909	.19401
I_wouldnt_hire	General Major	76	2.3026	1.10779	.12707
	Business Major	21	2.1429	.91026	.19863
not_shocked	General Major	76	2.5789	1.18054	.13542
	Business Major	21	2.8571	1.01419	.22131
Think_less	General Major	76	1.7895	.91383	.10482
	Business Major	21	2.0952	.94365	.20592
Would_complain	General Major	76	1.6447	.82791	.09497
	Business Major	21	2.0000	.94868	.20702
Discuss_unprofessionalism	General Major	76	2.2237	1.13840	.13058
	Business Major	21	2.3333	.96609	.21082
Fire_them	General Major	76	1.5921	.76903	.08821
	Business Major	21	2.0000	.89443	.19518