MARKED: A POLICY CAPTURING INVESTIGATION OF JOB APPLICANT TATTOOS AS STIGMATIZING MARKS IN BLUE AND WHITE COLLAR EMPLOYMENT

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People are getting tattooed more often than ever before, and this is particularly true of younger generations. However, little is known about how applicant tattoos influence the employee selection process. This study presented tattoos as stigmatizing marks, and used a policy-capturing methodology to examine the way in which specific dimensions of tattoo stigma – visibility, intentionality, perilousness, and context – are combined when making decisions about the suitability of tattooed applicants for blue and white collar jobs. Relative weights analysis revealed that tattooed applicant suitability was most negatively influenced when applicants had visible tattoos and were applying for white collar work. Additionally, there were differences in how the perilousness and job type cues were used in the decision task that were associated with stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people and right-wing authoritarianism.
Dedicated to my wife, my mom, and my dad, three people who have always helped me achieve great things.
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INTRODUCTION

Much research in Industrial-Organizational psychology concerns understanding the employee selection process and how decisions are made about who is chosen for jobs. The goals of this research include identifying two kinds of information: (1) information that assists in the prediction of success on the job, and (2) information that allows for the fairest selection process by identifying bias or discrimination. Considering the size of these two bodies of literature, it could be said that a goal of I-O psychologists is to maximize the amount of relevant information while minimizing the amount of irrelevant information. Information relevant to the selection process includes concerns such as job knowledge (Dye, Reck, & McDaniel, 1993; Hunter & Hunter, 1984; Ones & Viswesvaran, 2007), cognitive ability (Hunter, 1980; Hunter, 1986; Ree, Earles, & Teachout, 1994; Schmidt, Hunter, & Outerbridge, 1986), and personality (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; McHenry, Hough, Toquam, Hanson, & Ashworth, 1990; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991; Salgado, 1998). These factors are relevant to predicting who will be a successful employee and who will not. There is evidence, however, that those responsible for selecting employees for jobs often use irrelevant information to make decisions about applicants (Constatin, 1976; Highhouse, 1996; Weiner & Schneiderman, 1974). Such information could lead to non-optimal employment decisions.

One mechanism through which irrelevant information enters the selection decision process is through the process of stigmatization. Stigmatization is the process through which a person is perceived as having some undesirable mark that is representative of their membership to a group that is considered deviant in some context by the perceiver (Goffman, 1963). The mark then activates stereotypes of the group to which the target is a member, which can reduce the quality of the opinion of the perceiver of the stigma and lead to prejudicial behavior.
Research on stigmatized groups has shown that their mark has negative implications for them when applying for jobs, with much of this research focused on appearance-related variables (Benson, Severs, Tatgenhorst, & Loddengaard, 1980; Hebl & Mannix, 2003; Kutcher & Bragger, 2004). Deviations in appearance from what the hiring person assumes to be characteristic of an ideal employee have been shown to have an influence on hiring attitudes and decisions. Marks relevant to the employee selection literature include being perceived as overweight (Larkin & Pines, 1979; Pingitiore, Dugoni, Tindale, & Spring, 1994; Rudolph, Wells, Willer, & Baltes, 2009), too old (Bedrick, Brown, & Wall, 1999; Gordon & Arvey, 2004; Morgeson, Reider, Campion, & Bull, 2008), and unattractive (Heilman & Satuwatari, 1979; Marlowe, Schneider, & Nelson, 1996). Understanding how these characteristics influence the selection process as well as the conditions under which they are more likely to occur is an important step toward improving the ratio of relevant and irrelevant information that contributes to hiring decisions.

The presence of applicant tattoos has emerged as a topic of concern for those charged with hiring new employees (e.g., Miller, Nicols, & Eure, 2009; Swanger, 2006). Historically, tattoo culture in the United States has been associated with unsavory groups: drunken sailors, gang members, circus freaks, and the mentally ill. More recently however, tattoos have become a mainstream method of self-expression and identity enhancement, with increasing prevalence in younger generations and across all levels of education and socioeconomic status (Laumann & Derick, 2006). Tattoos are present on the bodies of movie stars and professional athletes, and have even reached the public consciousness in the form of reality television concerned with tattoo artists and their clients. Although the deviant subcultures historically associated with tattoos still exist and identify themselves with tattoos, it is now more likely than ever that presence of a tattoo (or many tattoos) is not indicative of deviance in Western culture. The ranks
of the tattooed include doctors and nurses, graduate students, and even conservative congressional politicians, not to mention groups who include tattooing as part of their cultural heritage (i.e. Samoans, Tahitians, and Hawaiians).

This growing change in the demography of those who bear the tattoo mark appears to outpace the acceptance of tattoos as a form of personal expression that is similar to choice to dress and hairstyle. Tattooed people are still viewed negatively due to their appearance and are unprotected by fair employment laws. A better understanding of this issue is needed, but the specific mechanisms through which the tattoo stigma operates on selection decisions remain unclear.

The proposed study is intended to illuminate our understanding of how applicant tattoos influence the hiring process. To begin, I present tattoos as stigmatizing marks and their associated stereotype. Then I describe how the dimensions on which the stigma of tattoos vary, and how these dimensions may be related to differential effects of tattoo stigma on the judgment of potential employers. Next, I discuss individual difference variables that may be associated with negative perceptions of tattooed applicants. Finally, I present the proposed study, which applies policy capturing methodology (Cooksey, 1996) to examine how the characteristics or cues associated with tattoos influence evaluations of job candidates applying for white and blue collar jobs.

**Tattoos as Stigmatizing Marks**

The origins of stigma can be traced back to ancient Greece, where society marked traitors and criminals with cuts or brands (Neuberg, Smith, & Asher, 2003). The purpose of these marks was to provide a means by which those with poor character could be easily identified. The mark worn by these unsavory people altered the ways in which others perceived them, as there was a
communal understanding of the meaning of these disfigurements. Men and women alike were marked with the stigma, and were subsequently treated with disdain and mistrust by others. The reputation of these people became simplified, with others potentially knowing nothing of the person aside from what they inferred from their permanent mark of shame.

In terms of the psychological use of the word, the term stigma was first used by Goffman (1963) in his monograph *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Stigma can be described as some mark or identifying characteristic that designates the person as deviant or undesirable in some way, generating a downward comparison by those around them. The stigmatizing mark influences what Goffman called the virtual social identity, or the attributes and characteristics that a person is assumed to possess. The virtual social identities of stigmatized groups can be called stereotypes, as they are overgeneralizations of an outgroup (Allport, 1954).

Biernat and Dovidio (2003) described stereotyping as a process of generalizing some physical characteristic to a specific set of traits assumed to describe others who have that characteristic. Stereotyping is a normal mental process, providing a reduction in cognitive load by allowing perceivers to utilize mental shortcuts in their thinking and evaluation of others. Stereotypes are commonly associated with negative traits, though exceptions exist (e.g., Asian people and math ability). While often based in some accurate information, the stereotyping process also includes distortion of information.

A type of distortion commonly associated with stereotyping is illusory correlation, or the mental bias that occurs when people have inaccurate perceptions of group characteristics and size (Hamilton, 1981). Perceivers make faulty assumptions about all members of an outgroup based on a misunderstanding of who belongs to that group and how they typically behave (Ford...
& Stangor, 1992). One reason why illusory correlation occurs is the failure to take into account situational constraints that alter the nature of the relationship between the outgroup membership of the target and the behavior they are expecting. Schaller and O’Brien (1992) refer to this phenomenon as an intuitive analysis of covariance, which has been linked to the formation of erroneous group stereotypes (Schaller, Boyd, Yohannes, & O’Brien, 1995). People are also resistant to changing their ideas about outgroups, and are more likely to remember information that confirms their prior beliefs (Fyock & Stangor, 2011).

The distortion of information that is at the heart of stereotyping is relevant to stereotyping of tattoos especially, given that the history of tattoos in Western culture is a sordid one. The practice of tattooing in the United States, for example, is commonly associated with negatively perceived groups like criminals and the mentally ill. These two commonly-tattooed groups are discussed below, along with evidence that these groups no longer accurately represent the tattooed population in Western culture, if they ever did in the first place.

**Criminals, Prisoners, and Gang Members**

People commonly think of tattoos as the trappings of the criminal underworld, and this perspective is rooted in fact. Tattoos are disproportionately common in prison populations, and seminal criminological writings by Lombroso (1885) and others have secured this connection in the history of tattoo culture by describing tattoos as a means to record one’s criminal behavior and accomplishments. Certainly, the association between tattoos and criminals is a strong one, often presented in media. For example, the villain in the 1991 Martin Scorsese remake of the film *Cape Fear* wore tattoos across his torso, arms, and neck, describing his criminal history and future intentions (De Fina, De Niro, & Scorsese, 1991).
In addition to a general association with criminality, there is also an association between gang membership and the wearing of tattoos as a means to demonstrate affiliation with a particular street gang. These types of tattoos are typically worn on the face or some other highly visible body parts. Given the intentionally conspicuous nature of these tattoos, their presence often results in violence between rival gang members in city streets and in prisons (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006).

Whereas the stereotypical association between criminality, violence, and tattoos is well supported in history and is perpetuated by contemporary offenders, there is good reason to think that criminals are merely a subset of the whole rather than being representative of the whole of the tattooed community. Lozano, Morgan, Murray, and Verchese (2011) conducted comparison research in which they examined tattooed prison inmates, nontattooed prison inmates, and tattooed college students. The authors found two interesting differences in these groups. First, the tattooed prisoners were more likely to have self-reported behavioral issues and both violent and general criminal thought than the nontattooed inmates. Second, the college students were markedly different from both inmate groups, with substantially smaller rates of negative behavior and thought. The college students were simply from a different subset of the tattooed population, more representative of the contemporary body art movement that engages in modification as a means of self-expression or adornment (DeMello, 2001; Forbes, 2001; Swami, 2011; Tiggeman & Golder, 2006).

**Tattoos and the Mentally Ill**

The presence of tattoos is also associated with mental illness, in part because the tattooing process is painful and requires a temporary damaging of the skin, which can be
perceived as risky behavior (for a discussion of the health risk associated with tattooing, see Huxley & Grogan, 2005). This association, similar to that between criminality and tattoos, is based on historical (and more recent) evidence and is perpetuated by Western media. This aspect of the tattoo stereotype can be observed in film *Red Dragon*, where a serial killer wears a very large and detailed dragon tattoo based on an image from a William Blake painting and is “possessed” by the dragon when stalking and torturing victims (De Laurentis, De Laurentis, & Ratner, 2002).

Historically, the medical community has viewed tattoos as a “red flag” commonly associated with schizophrenic and other psychotic disorders (Ferguson-Rayport, Griffith, & Straus, 1927) and this view has persisted across time. This perspective is appropriate for clinical populations, but does not extend to the more general population. More recent research on the relationship between tattoos and mental illness has been conducted in non-clinical samples, with no association reported between presence of tattoos and likelihood of mental illness (Rooks, Roberts, & Scheltema, 2000). Research of this type lends credibility to the argument that, like criminals and gang members, people living with mental illness are another unrepresentative subset of the larger tattooed population. Nonetheless, contemporary medical publications still indicate that doctors and healthcare providers should look at tattoos as a warning sign of mental disturbance (e.g., Raspa & Cusack, 1990). It is not so surprising then to find that healthcare providers who work with the general public have a negative view of tattooed patients and admit, in anonymous surveys, that this view may impede their ability to provide the best possible care (Stuppy, Armstrong, & Casals-Ariet, 1998).

**The Content of the Tattooed Person Stereotype**
Several researchers have examined the attributions made regarding people with tattoos. The general theme of their findings is that the unsavory history of tattoo culture and its contemporary deviant subgroups continues to frame the perspective people have about tattooed others (Durkin & Houghton, 2000; Swami & Furnham, 2007) Much of this research has involved the selection of adjectives to describe tattooed targets. Evidence shows that tattooed people are perceived as Unattractive (Swami & Furnham, 2007; Degelman & Price, 2002; Forbes, 2001), unmotivated (Degelman & Price, 2002), dishonest (Dean, 2010; Degelman & Price, 2002), less intelligent (Dean, 2010; Seiter & Hatch, 2005; Degelman & Price, 2002), untrustworthy (Dean, 2010), and bad (Burgess & Clark, 2010; Houghton, Durkin, & Carroll, 1995). This perception extends to lifestyle expectations as well, with tattooed people being viewed as heavy drinkers and sexually promiscuous (Wohlrab, Fink, Kappeler, & Brewer, 2009; Swami & Furnham, 2007).

In addition to being viewed possessing general negative attributes, tattooed people are perceived to be different in terms of personality. In his examination of the personal histories and perceptions of tattooed people, Forbes (2001) asked non-tattooed participants to provide both self-report Big Five ratings and ratings they believed to be descriptive of people with tattoos. Participants indicated that tattooed people were expected to be significantly more neurotic and less agreeable, extroverted, open, and conscientious than they were themselves. Further, the variability in the distribution of ratings for tattooed people was smaller (SD = 3.82) than that of the self-report data provided by the participants (SD = 5.66). This effect is consistent with findings by stereotype researchers, who have reported that perceptions of the traits of stigmatized groups have less variability than non-stigmatized groups (Ford & Stangor, 1992).
Little research has been conducted on the actual personality differences between tattooed and non-tattooed people and the available evidence is not consistent. Tate and Shelton (2008) examined this issue using a large sample of American college students \((n = 1375)\), of which approximately half were tattooed. In comparison to the reference group, the tattooed group did in fact have significantly lower scores on the agreeableness and conscientious traits (Cohen’s \(d = .38\) and \(.21\), respectively). Swami et al. (2012) found conflicting results in a large European sample \((n = 540)\), of which approximately 22.2% were tattooed. The researchers observed no significant differences between tattooed and non-tattooed participants on agreeableness and conscientiousness. However, tattooed participants in this study were more extraverted and thrill seeking \((d = .32\) and \(.18\), respectively) and scored substantially higher on need for uniqueness \((d = .67)\).

Beyond examinations of their personality, no clear picture of the tattooed person has emerged in the psychological literature. On one hand, some research suggests that tattooed people are not unlike the general population. Forbes (2001) found that people with tattoos have had similar childhoods to non-tattooed people, and Swami (2011) reported that the tattooing process may yield positive personal outcomes for those who choose to get tattooed, including increases in self-esteem, body appearance, perceptions of a distinctive appearance, and personal uniqueness after the tattoo was healed when compared to one week before the tattoo procedure. In addition to examining perceived big five differences, Forbes (2001) also asked participants to complete inventories containing questions about their childhood. Tattooed people were not different from their non-tattooed counterparts in terms of a wide variety of childhood variables, including having quality social networks, levels of physical punishment during childhood, having many worries, and having a close relationship with one’s mother (small differences
existed for relationships with fathers). On the other hand, other recent research suggests that tattoos remain associated with deviant behavior. Koch, Roberts, Armstrong, and Owen (2010) examined a large sample of college students \((n = 1753)\) and compared tattooed and nontattooed participants. The authors found behavioral differences between tattooed and non-tattooed participants, suggesting tattooed students are more likely to have been arrested, binge drink, and experiment with drug use.

The information available on the content of these stereotypes shows that tattooed people in general are subjected to perceptions based on shared knowledge of the history and the current existence of the least desirable members of the tattooed community (criminals and the mentally ill). These perceptions are negative and global, and possess qualities typical of those found of stereotypical perceptions in social psychological research (i.e. reduced variability). While based on a “kernel of truth,” these perceptions may not reflect the true nature of tattooed people in general.

The Expanding Demography of the Tattooed Population in the United States

The contemporary reality of tattooed people in Western society provides a stark contrast to the sordid history and attributions made in the past. Rather than being indicative of deviance, tattoos are now seen by many as socially acceptable and representative of status, possibly due to the influence of tattooed movie stars and professional athletes (Kosut, 2006). The best estimate of tattoo base rates in the U.S. comes from a national probability prevalence study by Laumann and Derick (2006). These researchers found that 24% of the population has at least one tattoo, and gender differences in base rates have disappeared, indicating increase interest in tattoos by women. The prevalence of tattoos was found to be related to age, with younger people reporting
having tattoos more often than older people, though all age groups contained tattooed people. Many of these participants indicated having tattoos visible in street and professional dress (e.g., tattoos on the hands, neck, face, and lower arms).

Polling research has also found greater instance of tattoos in younger adults. A recent Pew Center polling study on the millennial generation (born between 1980 and 2000) included reports on tattoo base rates, showing that 38% of adults of ages 18-29 and 32% of adults of ages 30-45 reported having at least one tattoo (Kohut, 2010). This research echoes the findings by Laumann and Derick (2006) on the similarity in tattoo base rates in men and women and the inverse relationship between age and likelihood of being tattooed. Other researchers have reported similar findings (Armstrong, Owen, Roberts, & Koch, 2002; Cronin, 2001; Roberts & Ryan, 2002).

In sum, the typical expansion of a “kernel of truth” into a stereotype of a group appears to have occurred with tattooed people. The history (and parts of the present) of tattoos in Western culture is rife with deviant behavior (Steward, 1990), and the illusory correlation between the presence of tattoos and both criminality and mental imbalance likely informs the stereotypical set of traits are associated with tattooed people in general. Though tattoos remain a part of unsavory subcultures, they are also now part of popular culture and are commonly worn by functioning adults.
CHAPTER I. DIMENSIONS AND CONTEXT OF TATTOO STIGMA

Goffman (1963) identified three types of stigma in his seminal essay: (1) Tribal identities, stigma associated with one’s heritage or demography, (2) abominations of the body, characterized by physical disabilities, such as having missing limbs, and (3) blemishes of individual character, which are personal or situational qualities that suggest deviance in some respect (e.g., criminals, the unemployed, and the mentally ill). The classic countercultural motivations for tattooing are similar to the motivations of the Pacific Islanders of Hawaii, Tahiti, and Samoa, who wore tattoos for community status and identification (DeMello, 2000). Tattoos as a stigma cannot be readily classified in this framework, as tattoos are themselves bodily markings but also indicate a conscious choice to be marked through a painful and time-consuming method. Further, tattooed people may also be viewed as possessing poor character in some way, given their choice to endure the tattoo process and expose themselves to the health risks associated with getting a tattoo (see Huxley & Grogan, 2005 for a discussion of tattoo-related health risks).

In contrast to a categorical framework, Jones et al. (1984) integrated the stigma literature and provided a review of dimensions of stigma on which all stigma varies. One of these is the concealability of the mark, or the degree to which the stigma can be hidden from others. The intentionality of the mark can vary as well, with some stigma being due to accidents and others being purposeful. A third important dimension on which stigma varies is the perilousness, or degree to which others perceive the stigma as indicative of danger (e.g., the elderly are viewed as innocuous while criminals are seen as dangerous).

The dimensions of concealability, intentionality, and perilousness are likely related to the perception of tattoos as a stigmatizing mark. Stangor and Crandall (2003) theorized that these dimensions are important determinants of the strength of the association between a stigma and
the activation of the associated stereotype, as low concealability makes stigmatized people easy
to recognize, and negative attitudes are associated with perception of threat and the
intentionality of the stigma. Unlike other forms of stigma, which tend to be consistent in their
presentation across these dimensions, tattoos as stigmatizing marks can vary across these
dimensions, as the location, number and content of tattoos can vary. Each of these topics is
examined below.

**Tattoo Concealability**

The concealability of a tattoo is varies a function of its location on the body and the
clothing worn by the person. Goffman (1963) discussed how having a visible stigma distracted
others from viewing them as regular people with regular attributes, such as those attributes
needed for employment. The employment context is an important venue for normification, the
process by which stigmatized people can hide their mark and present themselves as normal. Such
efforts are not without consequence, however. Frable, Platt, & Hoey (1998) examined the
dimension of concealability, comparing the self-esteem of those with concealable stigmas (e.g.,
being gay/lesbian, lower socioeconomic status) with those whose stigma is apparent in
interpersonal encounters (e.g., stuttering, being overweight). Those with concealable marks were
found to have lower self-esteem than those with obvious stigmatizing traits.

In terms of hiding tattoo stigma, the only kinds of tattoos that are of concern in the
employee selection context are the kinds that can be seen by an employer. Tattoos on the back or
shoulders would be easy to hide during an encounter with a potential employer, whereas tattoos
on the hand or neck would be more difficult to conceal. Concealed tattoos are of less concern for
employers, who may not even know when their employees have such tattoos, and job interviews
and other points of contact between applicants and organizational representatives are unlikely places for an applicant to divulge information about their hidden body art.

The concern about the effects of visible tattoos on the hiring process is born of two realities: Base rates for visible tattoo locations and the evidence that employers generally do not want their employees to have visible tattoos. Popular locations for tattoos vary by sex, but both men and women commonly have tattoos in locations where others will see them. In a sample of British tattooed people, Swami (2011) found that 25% of men had tattoos on their lower arm, and 28% of women had a tattoo on their ankle. In an American tattoo prevalence study, Laumann and Derick (2006) found that 89% of men and 48% of women with tattoos had at least one tattoo visible while wearing short sleeves and pants (including tattoos on the face, neck, arms, hands, and ankles). For those with tattoos in these locations, tattoos can be considered a visible stigma. Meanwhile, Swanger (2006) found that most managers and recruiters would perceive applicant tattoos negatively, and Bekhor, Bekhor, and Grandrabur (2007) found that employers in some employment sectors (i.e. beauty, retail, and office work) were substantially less likely to hire a person if they could see that the applicant had a tattoo. For these reasons:

Hypothesis 1: The visibility of applicant tattoos will negatively influence the perceived suitability of the applicant for a job, such that applicants with visible tattoos will be perceived as less suitable for the job.

Tattoo Intentionality

Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, and Ethier (1995) conducted general research on collective social identities using a multidimensional scaling approach. Their results indicated that stigmatized groups (e.g., welfare recipients, smokers, people living with HIV) were more similar to each
other than other groups (e.g., daughters, teachers, democrats), and that the stigmatized groups varied on the dimensions of preventable-unpreventable and harmless-threatening, dimensions highly similar to the perilousness and intentionality dimensions, respectively, proposed by Jones et al. (1984).

Virtually all tattoos are administered voluntarily, so tattoos can be considered an intentional and self-inflicted stigma. Controllable stigma appears to result in generally negative evaluations by others. Weiner, Perry, and Magnusson (1988) examined how reactions to stigma vary due to perceptions of mark controllability, and found a relationship between perceptions of stigma controllability and affective reactions. In this study, those with stigmas that were rated as controllable (e.g., the obese, drug abusers) were viewed with less pity, more anger, and less deserving of charity and other types of assistance, such as job training and welfare benefits.

The stigma mark of tattoos would likely seem more intentional when the tattooed person has several tattoos, rather than just one. Whereas a single tattoo can be explained away as a mistake or the evidence of youthful rebellion, a person with many tattoos has made a choice to be perceived as a tattooed person. Given how common tattoos have become, the view of the “tattooed person” has shifted from anyone with tattoos to those who have obviously chosen to be tattooed several times. This effect was demonstrated by Whorton and Highhouse (2013), who reported that heavily tattooed applicants were viewed significantly more negatively by hiring managers while those with a single tattoo were viewed similar to applicants with no tattoos at all. Thus:
Hypothesis 2: The number of times than an applicant is tattooed will negatively influence the perceived suitability of the applicant for a job, such that applicants with more tattoos will be perceived as less suitable for the job.

Tattoo Perilousness

Finally, perceivers of tattoos may perceive those with tattoos representative of a threat. It is likely that those without tattoos perceive people with tattoos, especially the heavily tattooed, as different from them in terms of social identity. Research on perceptions of outgroup members indicate that there is a tendency to mistrust those who do not share one’s ingroup membership (Brewer, 2001). This information, combined with the historical associations of tattoos with gang members (Steward, 1990), criminals (Lombroso, 1885), and the mentally ill (Ferguson-Rayport, Griffith, & Straus, 1927) suggest that there may be a perceived association between the presence of tattoos and potential for violent behavior.

This perceived association may be dependent, however, on the content of the tattoo itself. Tattoo design subject matter is increasingly more diverse, given the expanded demography of tattooed people, improved tattooing methods, and recent emphasis of self-expression as a reason to get tattooed (DeMello, 2000; Forbes, 2001; Swami, 2011; Tigger & Golden, 2006). Given the changes in tattooing and the content of tattoo designs, not all tattoos are likely to be perceived the same way. In their examination of tattoos and employment, Burgess and Clark (2010) asked participants to sort pictures of tattoos into logical groups and assign a name to each group. Two groups of tattoos were always grouped together, and the groups were given names such as traditional, aggressive, and bad versus modern, friendly, and peaceful. Further, there were differences in the way aggressive looking designs (e.g., snakes, black tribal designs) and friendly
designs (e.g., suns, brightly colored shapes) influenced perceptions of the suitability of job applicants. Thus, the degree to which a tattoo is associated with danger may vary due to the content of the tattoo design, and this difference may translate to differences in perceptions job applicants wearing more or less aggressive-looking tattoos.

**Hypothesis 3:** The content of the tattoo design will negatively influence the perceived suitability of the applicant for a job, such that applicants with more aggressive tattoos will be perceived as less suitable for the job.

**Tattoo Stigma in Different Work Contexts**

Aside from aspects of the stigma itself, more recent views of stigma take into account the environmental context. Goffman (1963) suggested that stigma can be less obvious in situations where the mark is consistent with the expected social identity of the target. Crocker, Major, and Steele (1998) discussed the importance of social context in the evaluation of a stigma, pointing out that some situations could provide conditions under which stigma can be more or less detrimental to the evaluations made about the target person. For example, a deaf person using sign language in public would be more likely to be stigmatized than a person conversing in sign language in a school for the deaf.

The notion of context as an important determinant of stigmatization of tattooed people can be further expanded to include the differences in job types, as the work context can vary considerably based on the type of job. For example, white collar jobs are commonly conducted in formal office-type environment, which is a different type of work environment than that of blue collar work, work typically performed on construction sites and in factory settings. Given
these differences, hiring managers and human resource professionals are likely to have different expectations of the type of applicant that would be a successful hire.

Expectations of the ideal person for a job are part of role congruity theory (Eagly & Diekman, 2005; Eagly & Karau, 2002), which states that incongruity between characteristics associated with the social context surrounding a role and the characteristics associated with the stereotype of the person filling that role can lead to prejudicial thoughts about that person. Evidence from the literature on tattooed people in the workplace suggests that the stereotype of tattooed people is incongruent with that of white collar work. Dean (2011) found that participants viewed a tattooed tax service provider as incompetent, even when they were satisfied with their service. Further, Dean (2010) asked participants to indicate how appropriate a tattooed person would be for specific jobs, and found that tattooed people were viewed as appropriate for blue collar jobs such as automotive mechanic and construction worker, but inappropriate for stockbrokers, dentists, and accountants. This may also be due to the historical view of tattoos as a working class activity, seen as crude and uncivilized by those of higher social classes (DeMello, 2000).

Hypothesis 4: The type of work (blue vs. white collar) will influence the perceived suitability of the applicant for a job, such that applicants with be perceived as less suitable for white collar jobs.

Sympathy for the Tattoo Stigma: The Own and the Wise

Most of the present discussion has described tattooed applicants as being outgroup members. The assumption is reasonable, as most people in the United States are not tattooed (Laumann & Derick, 2006). However, given the increasing acceptance of tattoos as self-
expression, it is likely that there are tattooed people within the ranks of employers, hiring
managers, and human resources personnel. Rather than being viewed as outgroup members,
tattooed applicants may be subject to ingroup favoritism on the part of a tattooed hiring manager
(Allport, 1954; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Even if this is not the case, the applicant’s tattoos will be
less likely to be viewed as a stigmatizing mark and more as an indicator of shared identity as the
applicant would be viewed as “one of their own” (Goffman, 1963). Potential employers or
representatives who have tattoos will be less likely to use stereotypes to describe applicants,
understanding that the tattooed appearance of a job candidate is not necessarily indicative of
deviance.

Hypothesis 5: Across profiles, the raters who have tattoos themselves will give higher
suitability ratings than raters who do not have tattoos.

It is also important to consider the possibility that those involved in hiring decisions may
have some prior experiences with tattooed people. Such experiences could potentially reduce
reliance on the typically negative tattooed person stereotype in their perception of a tattooed
applicant. Goffman (1963) referred to outsiders with intimate knowledge of that stigmatized
group as the “wise,” and suggested that people become wise due either a personal relationship
with a member of the stigmatized group or as a consequence of life experience.

“Wise” by choice. Normal, unmarked people are often sympathetic to the plight of a
stigmatized group due to their personal relationship with a member. These people are viewed as
“honorary members” of the stigmatized group by its members, and this is particularly true when
the relationship is chosen rather than by birth, as is the case of parents of stigmatized individuals
(Goffman, 1963). Jones et al. (1984) discussed these relationships, and pointed out that those
with this sort of intimate knowledge of the stigmatized community (but are not members themselves) are likely to have a more positive view of members of the stigmatized group than the typical outsider. For example, a person who marries an ex-convict would likely be willing to look past a person’s criminal history in evaluating that person.

This logic could be similarly applied to prospective employers and their view of tattooed people. If a hiring manager or interviewer has a close personal relationship with a tattooed person, this may alter the ways in which they perceive a tattooed job applicant. They may be willing to look past the applicant’s appearance, understanding that being tattooed does not preclude the person from being a competent, motivated worker.

*Hypothesis 6:* Across profiles, the raters who have had close, personal relationships with heavily tattooed people will give higher suitability ratings than raters who do not have such relationships.

“Wise” by occupation. The workplace is a setting where common goals are shared and cooperation with others is needed for success. These same factors have been noted as important for effective integration of social groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, Sharif, 1966). Previous professional experiences with tattooed people have potential for reducing negative attributions towards tattooed people, as such experiences would provide the opportunity for the tattooed person to exhibit behaviors and traits inconsistent with tattooed person stereotype. Experience with a tattooed person that is friendly and helps their coworkers at work could reduce the degree to which a person would judge an applicant based solely due to their body art. Prior experience with a member of a stigmatized group has been associated with improved attitudes towards the group as a whole, and this effect has been observed to persist over time (Batson et al., 1997).
Hypothesis 7: Across profiles, the raters who have had close working relationships with heavily tattooed people will give higher suitability ratings than raters who do not have such relationships.

Individual Differences in Stereotyping and Prejudice Against Tattooed People at Work

Research conducted on the topic of tattooed people at work suggests that tattooed people are subject to prejudice in the workplace context (Dean, 2011; Bekhor, Bekhor, & Grandrabur 1995; Burgess & Clark, 2010; Miller, Nicols, & Eure, 2009; Whorton & Highhouse. 2013). In addition to the effects of job type and the dimensions of stigma on which tattoos can vary, there is reason to believe that individual differences on the part of the hiring manager or human resource professional can influence their perceptions of the appropriateness of a tattooed job candidate for the job. Individual differences can influence the relationship by increasing the likelihood of prejudicial thought. The present study examines stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people; the two factors associated with generalized prejudice: social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism; and other factors, such as participant tattoo status, and previous experience with tattooed people.

Differences in stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people. Tattoos are stigmatizing, and lead to the activation of stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people as a group. These beliefs are what Goffman (1963) referred to as a virtual social identity, or the set of traits and experiences that the stigmatized person is assumed to possess. These beliefs may include beliefs about job-relevant characteristics shared by tattooed people, such as those about poor mental health or tendencies towards violence. If a person believes that, as a group, tattooed people
possess undesirable traits or are prone to engage in undesirable behavior, it is likely that they would view a tattooed person as less suitable for most jobs. For these reasons:

**Hypothesis 8:** Across profiles, more stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people will be associated with lower applicant suitability ratings.

**Factors relevant to prejudicial thinking: Generalized prejudice.** Allport (1954) noted that those with prejudice towards one outgroup were likely to have prejudices against other outgroups as well. Recent research on this topic refers to the trait that Allport described as generalized prejudice, a higher-order individual difference construct comprised of high social dominance orientation and high right-wing authoritarianism. Both factors have been observed to account for unique variance in the prediction of prejudicial views of stigmatized groups (Backstrom & Bjorklund, 2007; McFarland, 2010). Each of these constructs is described below.

Social dominance orientation is an individual difference in preference for a worldview where some groups are better than others (Sidanius & Protto, 1999). Social dominance orientation operates on thought through legitimizing myths, or ideologies such as sexism and nationalism, to justify their beliefs about the classification and ordering of social groups. Due to the associations between tattoos and criminality (e.g., Lozano et al., 2011), a person who is high in social dominance orientation is likely to view tattooed people in a negative way that could influence their perception of the appropriateness of a tattooed person for a job:

**Hypothesis 9:** Across profiles, higher levels of social dominance orientation will be associated with lower applicant suitability ratings.

Altemeyer (1981, 1988) describes right-wing authoritarianism as having two primary characteristics: A view of outgroup members as a threat to dominant, ingroup values and goals,
as well as a sense of moral authority that allows for the person to justify any action taken against 
outgroup members in an attempt to stop them from harming those values and goals. Certainly, 
tattoos have a strong association with rebellion and countercultural norms (DeMello, 2000). 
While there is an increased acceptance of tattoos in popular culture (Kosut, 2006), it is likely the 
case that those high in right-wing authoritarianism would still be mistrustful of a tattooed job 
applicant. Thus:

_Hypothesis 10:_ Across profiles, higher levels of right-wing authoritarianism will be 
associated with lower applicant suitability ratings.

The Present Study

This study used policy-capturing methodology to assess how different aspects of the 
tattoo stigma influence perceptions of tattooed job applicants. This methodology was ideal for 
achieving the primary goal of the proposed study, as it allows the researcher to evaluate how 
participants use situational cues to make decisions (Cooksey, 1996). In a policy-capturing study, 
participants are presented with a series of profiles or scenarios that vary along the independent 
variables of interest. Participants are then asked to make a judgment about each profile or 
scenario using the dependent variable as the criterion. Regression analysis is then employed to 
compute the relative importance of each independent variable and how it influences judgment 
regarding the dependent variable. In the present study, the visibility, amount, and content of 
applicant tattoos and the type of work the hypothetical applicants were applying for was varied 
and served as the situational cues provided to participants. Participants were asked to indicate the 
degree to which they viewed the applicant as appropriate for the job in question. Data was 
collected at two levels of analysis: Within and between-person. Participants rated multiple
profiles, allowing for within-person analysis of individual judgment. In addition, participants completed measures of individual differences associated with stereotyping and prejudice, comprising the between-person level.
CHAPTER II. METHOD

Participants

Participants \((n = 375)\) in this study were adults, working full-time and living in the United States, recruited via the online service Mechanical Turk. Mechanical Turk is a virtual labor marketplace that can be utilized for collecting research data (Burmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). The study was advertised as “a study about job applicants,” where participants would be asked to “React to a series of hypothetical scenarios in which a person is applying for a job and then answer some questions about your beliefs and views.” Participants were given a cash payment of $2.00 in return for their participation.

The sample was mostly male (64%), mostly white (77%), and had a mean age of 34 years \((SD = 9.70)\). More than half of participants (55%) had at least an undergraduate degree. The typical participant was employed five years. Participants reported working in a variety of industries, including retail (13%), information services (13%), and healthcare (9%). Almost half of the sample (47%) reported having at least some employee selection responsibilities in their current position, and had had these responsibilities for an average of 3.6 years \((SD = 3.27)\). Specific responsibilities included interviewing (38% of the total sample), reviewing applications (36%), providing applicant feedback (33%), recruiting (18%), and making final hiring decisions (16%).

Materials/Measures

**Development of profiles.** Hypothetical applicant profiles were comprised of four cues: (1) The visibility of the applicant’s tattoo(s), (2) the intentionality (amount) of the applicant’s
tattoo(s), (3) the danger associated with the applicant’s tattoo(s), and (4) the title of the job for which the applicant was applying. These profiles included photographs of actual tattoos. Examples of applicant profiles are provided in Appendix A. The development process for the situational cues is presented below.

All hypothetical applicants in this study were presented as male. The available research on tattoos and physical attractiveness suggests that women with tattoos are seen as generally less attractive (Degelman & Price, 2002; Swami & Furnham, 2002), but this effect has not been observed for men (Seiter & Hatch, 2005). Moreover, Swami and Furnham (2002) observed that the content of tattoos worn by women influences attractiveness, with more aggressive designs seen as less attractive. Given the well-documented association between attractiveness and employment (e.g., Hosada, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003), there was concern that these complex gender effects of tattoos on attractiveness could cloud the results and interpretation of the study outcomes.

**Tattoo stigma visibility and intentionality cues.** The stigma dimensions of visibility and intentionality were represented by information about whether or not the tattoos were visible in the employment setting and whether targets were heavily tattooed or had a single tattoo, respectively. Each of these cues was presented via a single statement about the location and amount of tattoos. For the *visibility* cue, the statement read “You cannot see the applicant’s tattoo(s) when he is dressed appropriately for the job.” or “You can see the applicant’s tattoo(s) when he is dressed appropriately for the job.” For the *intentionality* of tattooing cue, the statement read “The applicant has a single tattoo.” or “The applicant has many tattoos.”
**Tattoo stigma perilousness cue.** Photographs of high and low danger tattoos were used in the applicant profiles. However, other factors (e.g. tattoo size) needed to be controlled to reduce the potential for effects of extraneous variables, and multiple stimuli would need to be used in each condition to eliminate idiosyncratic treatment effects associated with any one tattoo (Highhouse, 2009). To do this, I chose images of 30 different tattoos and presented them to a set of judges ($n = 43$) and asked them to use a 5-point response scale to rate each tattoo on overall quality, size, and degree to which the tattoo would make the wearer look intimidating. The space around the tattoos has been cropped and blacked out so the tattoo is the only thing that can be seen in the image. The content of the tattoos included in the pilot study was varied, including common themes in tattoo design (e.g. animals, skulls, and sports team logos) and unique, custom designs.

Based on the judges’ ratings, two groups of five images were chosen to represent high and low tattoo perilousness. The final sets of stimulus tattoo images did not differ in perceived quality, $t(42) = 0.995, p = 0.33$, or perceived size, $t(42) = 1.23, p = 0.23$.

**Job type cue.** Job titles representative of blue and white collar jobs were selected using O*NET (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Specifically, Job Zone, O*NET’s composite measure for describing job complexity, was employed to identify low and high skill level jobs. The Job Zone assignment for jobs is based upon educational requirements, needed training, and work experience necessary to do the job effectively. Job Zones range from 1 (“little to no preparation needed”) to 5 (“extensive preparation needed”). Blue collar jobs were operationalized as jobs that were assigned Job Zones 1 and 2, and white collar jobs were operationalized as jobs from Job Zones 4 and 5. A set of 15 job titles was selected to represent each job category. Examples of blue collar jobs included *Steel Worker, Restaurant Cook,* and *Janitor,* and examples of white
collar jobs included Chemist, Investment Analyst, and Architect. A complete list of the jobs included in the hypothetical applicant profiles is presented in Appendix B.

**Cue presentation.** All participants were presented with the same 32 scenarios, which were created using the 16 possible combinations of situational cues (i.e. two levels of the tattoo visibility cue, two levels of the tattoo intentionality cue, two levels of the tattoo perilousness cue, and two levels of the job type cue. All possible combinations of cue conditions were included twice to increase the cue-profile ratio to 1-8, balancing the dueling concerns for having sufficient statistical power while avoiding participant fatigue (Stewart, 1988). The specific tattoo perilousness and job type cue information were randomly assigned for each profile, chosen from the sets of stimulus materials for each condition of the cue categories. Two profiles, chosen at random, were presented to all participants twice to allow for assessment of reliability.

**Criterion measure.** After considering the stimulus cues, participants were asked to rate the degree to which the applicant’s tattoos impact his suitability for the job. Possible responses ranged from 1 = *does not affect suitability for the job at all* to 4 = *seriously negatively affects suitability for the job*.

**Stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people.** Stereotypical beliefs were measured using items developed for this study. The items were based upon attributions made about tattooed people observed in the tattoo stigma literature. This includes beliefs about mental illness, impulsive decision-making, drug and alcohol abuse by tattooed people, and others. Participants replied to these items using a 6-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*. An example item from this scale is “Tattooed people make bad employees.” The item list is provided in Appendix C.
Social dominance orientation. I measured social dominance orientation (SDO) using the scale by Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle (1994). This scale consists of 16 statements, including “If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems,” and “All groups should be given an equal chance in life,” (reverse-keyed). Participants were asked to indicate how they feel about each statement, with responses ranging from $1 = \text{very negative}$ to $7 = \text{very positive}$ ($\alpha = .96$). The complete SDO scale is provided in Appendix C.

Right-wing authoritarianism. Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) was measured with a shortened version of the original Altemeyer (1998) scale developed by Zakrisson (2005). This 15-item RWA scale uses less extreme wording than the original but includes content reflective of the three aspects of the construct: conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, and authoritarian submission. Participants indicated their reaction to the items using a Likert scale using a response scale ranging from $1 = \text{very negative}$ to $7 = \text{very positive}$, with the mean across item responses serving as the overall score ($\alpha = .93$). An example item from the scale is “There are many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things; the society ought to stop them.” The complete RWA scale is provided in Appendix C.

Participants’ “own” tattoo status. Applicant tattoos was assessed with a single item: “If you have tattoos, please tell us how many you have in the space provided. If you do not have tattoos, please write zero.” However, this variable will not be treated as continuous, as Whorton and Highhouse (2013) observed that participants viewed people with a single tattoo less negatively than those with more than one tattoo. Thus, the responses to these items were grouped into three categories: No tattoos, one tattoo, and more than one tattoo.
**Previous interaction with tattooed people.** Participants were asked about previous experiences with tattooed people in both their personal and working lives. To collect information regarding these experiences, participants were asked “To the best of your knowledge, have you ever had a close personal relationship or working relationship with a person who has tattoos?” Participants were asked to provide a yes or no response to these questions.

**Demographic variables.** Demographic information was collected both to describe the sample and to test the study hypotheses. Participant age was statistically controlled, given the finding by Whorton and Highhouse (2013) that participant age was negatively related to attitudes about tattoos. Additionally, participants were asked if they were involved in employee selection tasks as a function of their job, including recruiting applicants, interviewing applicants, and making final hiring decisions. The Demographics questions are provided in Appendix D.

**Study Procedure**

Participants were introduced to the study via a brief description on the Mechanical Turk website: “React to a series of hypothetical scenarios in which a person is applying for a job and then answer some questions about your beliefs and views.” Once people chose to participate in the study, they navigated to a webpage with the study URL. Participants were required to copy the experiment URL from the Mechanical Turk study posting into a new browser tab or window, and provided consent by reading the study consent form and clicking the “next” button. Participants completed a brief demographic form followed by a set of instructions:

This study is comprised of two major sections. After clicking the “next” button below, you will be presented with a series of 34 unique scenarios in which tattooed people are applying for jobs. You may see the same image more than once, but the content of each
scenario will be different. After reading each scenario and examining the provided image, you will be asked to rate how much the applicant’s tattoos affect their suitability for the job. You can then click the next button to move onto the next scenario.

In the second section, you will be asked to answer some questions about your beliefs and views. Specific instructions will be provided for how to respond to these items. After completing each page of questions, you can click the button at the bottom of the page to move on to the next page.

After completing ratings of acceptability for all the hypothetical applicants, participants were then presented with the individual difference measures and instructions for completing each scale. Screening questions were included in this section to verify that participants were reading and thinking about the content of the study materials. This section included the items measuring whether or not the participant had tattoos themselves as well as whether or not they had had personal or working relationships with tattooed people. There was also an opportunity for participants to leave comments. After completing the individual difference measures, participants reached the final section of the survey, where they were informed of the specific purpose of the study and thanked for their participation. They were also asked to provide their Mechanical Turk ID code in order to credit them for participating on the study. Participants were credited with participation after I verified that they have completed the study materials and successfully answered screening questions.

Analyses

Two different sets of analyses were conducted to better understand the decision-making processes associated with evaluating tattooed job applicants. The first set was conducted to
examine the within-person decision-making processes and the relative importance of the situational cues. The second set of analyses was between-person, conducted to examine the degree to which individual decision-making strategies were associated with individual differences.

**Within-person analyses.** Linear regression was employed to test the study hypotheses at the within-person level of analysis. Unlike studies designed to answer *idiographic* questions, which are concerned with individual decision-making outcomes, the present study was designed to investigate the *nomothetic* question regarding overall tendencies in decision-making (Aiman-Smith, Scullen, & Barr, 2002). To evaluate the hypotheses associated with policies regarding tattooed applicants across all participants, ratings from the suitability measure were regressed onto the four applicant profile cues for each participant. The mean values for each standardized coefficient were then calculated to describe the tendencies of the sample as a whole. These mean group-level analyses were employed to test hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4. Prior to analyzing the data, each predictor was centered around the individual participants’ mean to isolate the within-person variance in the predictor cues (Hofmann, Griffin, & Gavin, 2000).

In addition to the regression analyses, relative weights were calculated for the applicant profile cues. Relative weights provide a measure of the contribution of each predictor variable in a model to the total predictable variance in the criterion variable (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2011). Similar to the regression analyses, the relative weights were calculated using the mean correlations between the predictor and criterion variables across participants (Johnson, 2000). This analysis provides clear, practical information on which attributes of applicant tattoos made the most difference in raters’ views of applicant suitability.
**Between-person analyses.** Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was used for testing the between-person study hypotheses. HLM allows for effectively accounting for both the within-person (i.e. employee selection policy) and between-person (i.e. individual differences) effects simultaneously. To test the between-person effects of individual differences on participants’ employee selection decisions, the slopes and intercepts associated with participants’ decision-making policies were regressed onto the individual difference variables. These Level 2 predictors were centered around the grand mean to standardize the coefficients for interpretation. The between-person analyses were used to test hypotheses 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.
CHAPTER III. RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all between-person study variables are reported in Table 1. The strongest relationship observed here is between suitability ratings (average rating per participant across scenarios) and stereotypical tattooed person beliefs ($r = .47, p < .01$). This relationship is consistent with the notion that beliefs about the suitability of tattooed people for work are related to individual beliefs about tattooed people as a social group. RWA is also associated with suitability ($r = .37, p < .01$), as is SDO ($r = .35, p > .05$).

The reliability of the judgment task materials was assessed using the limited duplication approach recommended by Karren and Barringer (2002). Two randomly-chosen profiles were presented to all participants twice and their suitability ratings were correlated. The test-retest correlation for the two repeated profiles was the same ($r = .82, p < .01$), suggesting that participants were reasonably consistent in their evaluation of the profiles in the judgment task.

**Within-Person Analyses**

Prior to testing hypotheses, the control variable age was entered into an unconditional means model. This model included intercepts at both within and between levels of analyses, and age was included as a fixed effect at the between-person level of analysis. The effects of age on ratings of suitability were not significant ($\gamma_1 = .00, p = .46$), and were thusly excluded from further analysis.

**Hypothesis testing.** Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 predicted that characteristics of job applicant tattoos and the type of job applied for would negatively impact raters’ decisions about applicant suitability. In particular, I hypothesized that, when rating the impact applicant tattoos have on suitability, suitability would be negatively impacted when the tattoo(s) was visible,
when the applicant had more than one tattoo, when the tattoo content was aggressive, and when the applicant was applying for white collar work. The hypotheses were tested using a random coefficients model by regressing suitability ratings on the concealability, intentionality, perilousness, and job type cues. No between-person variables were included in this model. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Hypothesis 1, which predicted that the concealability of applicant tattoos would negatively influence perceived suitability of the applicant for the job, was supported. Hypothesis 1 was supported, as indicated by the positive and significant mean slope for the visibility cue ($\beta_1 = .76, p < .001; r = .80$). Participants were more likely to view applicants as less suitable for jobs when their tattoos were visible while they were dressed for work.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the number of times a person was tattooed would increase the negative impact on suitability. This hypothesis was supported, as indicated by the positive and significant mean slope for the intentionality cue ($\beta_2 = .14, p < .001; r = .53$). Participants were more likely to judge applicants as less suitable when they had been tattooed multiple times as compared to having only one tattoo.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the content of the tattoo design would negatively influence perceived suitability of the applicant for the job. Hypothesis 3 was supported. Participants were more likely to perceive tattooed job applicants as less suitable when the design content of their tattoo(s) was aggressive in nature ($\beta_3 = .25, p < .001; r = .49$).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the type of job applied for would influence perceived suitability of the applicant, such that tattooed applicants would be perceived as less suitable for white collar jobs. This hypothesis was also supported, as indicated by the positive and significant
slope for the job type cue ($\beta_4 = .55$, $p < .001$; $r = .78$). Participants were more likely to view applicants as less suitable for white collar work.

**Relative weights.** The mean regression coefficients and relative weights across participants are presented. Collectively, the judgment cues account for 48% of variance in suitability ratings. Across participants, the visibility of the tattoo(s) and the type of job applied for appear to be the first and second most important factors in the judgment task, respectively, such that the negative impact on perceived suitability was greater for applicants with visible tattoos and for those applying for white collar jobs.

The results of the relative weights analysis are also presented in Table 2. According to this analysis, the visibility of applicant tattoos is the most important cue in the judgment task, explaining 61.6% of explained variance in suitability ratings. Information about the type of job applied for was also weighed heavily by participants making judgments about suitability, explaining 29.3% of explained variance in suitability ratings. Amount of tattooing and the content of the tattoo design appeared to matter less to participants when making judgments regarding suitability of tattooed applicants for jobs. These two cues explained less than 10% of the explained variance combined.

**Between-Person Analyses**

Hypotheses 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were between-person hypotheses, requiring examination at the second level of the analysis. To test these hypotheses, I regressed the random intercept from Level 1 onto raters’ self-reported personal tattoo status, experience with tattooed people in their personal and work lives, stereotypical tattooed person beliefs, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation. This allowed for examination of the effects of these between-
person variables while controlling for the effects of the policy-capturing cues (concealability, intentionality, perilousness, and job type) on tattooed job applicant suitability. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.

**Tattooed raters and associates of tattooed people.** Hypotheses 5, 6, and 7 stated that ratings of tattooed applicant suitability for jobs would be predicted by whether or not the rater was tattooed, the raters’ personal experiences with tattooed people, and the raters’ workplace experience with tattooed people, respectively. More specifically, I hypothesized that the perceived suitability ratings of the tattooed job applicants for various jobs would be higher when raters had tattoos themselves, and when raters have had close personal or working relationships with tattooed people.

Hypothesis 5 was not supported, suggesting that whether or not a person has tattoos themselves does not influence perceptions of suitability of tattooed people for jobs. This is evidenced by a nonsignificant gamma coefficient, though the coefficient was in the correct direction (\( \gamma_{01} = -.05, p = .12 \)). Hypotheses 6 and 7 were also unsupported, as indicated by positive, nonsignificant coefficients. This suggests that experiences with tattooed people in personal (\( \gamma_{02} = .11, p = .07 \)) and work (\( \gamma_{03} = .02, p = .70 \)) contexts are not related to perceptions of suitability of tattooed applicants for jobs.

**Individual differences in tattooed person beliefs and generalized prejudice variables.** Hypotheses 8, 9, and 10 predicted that ratings of tattooed applicant suitability for jobs would be predicted by stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people, social dominance orientation, and right-wing orientation. All three variables were expected to predict a greater negative impact of tattoos on applicant suitability across jobs, as indicated by higher suitability ratings. These effects were
examined after controlling for the policy capturing cues at Level 1. The results suggest that some of these individual difference variables are related to ratings of tattooed job applicant suitability.

Hypothesis 8 was supported. Greater agreement with tattooed person stereotypes was associated with lower perceptions of suitability of tattooed applicants for jobs. This was evidenced by a positive and significant gamma coefficient ($\gamma_{04} = 0.16, p < .001$).

Hypothesis 9, which stated that social dominance orientation, a component of generalized prejudice, would predict ratings of tattooed job applicant suitability, was not supported. The coefficient was very small and in the negative direction ($\gamma_{05} = -0.01, p = .41$). However, hypothesis 10, concerning the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism and ratings of suitability, was supported. As the second component of generalized prejudice, higher self-reports of right-wing authoritarianism were associated with lower perceived suitability ($\gamma_{06} = 0.07, p < .001$).

Post-hoc Analyses

**Cross-level moderation.** In addition to testing the stated hypotheses, I conducted additional analyses to examine how individual differences at Level 2 influenced the use of situational cues in decision making strategies at Level 1. To test for these cross-level moderator effects, the beta coefficients for the situational cues in Level 1 were regressed onto the Level 2 variables. The summary of these analyses is presented in Table 5.

None of the Level 2 variables accounted for a significant portion of variance in the slope coefficients for the concealability or intentionality cues. However, cross-level moderator effects were observed in the use of the perilousness cues as a situational cue for rating the suitability of tattooed applicants for jobs. First, stereotypical beliefs about people with tattoos significantly
moderated the effect of the perilousness cue for predicting tattooed job applicant suitability. The gamma coefficient was positive, indicating that raters’ who agree with stereotypes of tattooed people were more likely to view tattooed applicants as less suitable for jobs when applicants had tattoos with aggressive content ($\gamma_{34} = .05, p = .03$). Second, the cross-level moderator effect for RWA on the use of the perilousness cue was significant. The associated coefficient was positive as well, indicating that raters’ who scored higher on the RWA measure were more likely to view tattooed applicants as less suitable for jobs when their tattoo(s) was aggressive in nature ($\gamma_{36} = .04, p = .03$).

Additionally, a cross-level moderator effect was observed in the raters’ use of job type as a situational cue. Specifically, stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people accounted for a significant portion of the variance in the Level 1 slope associated with job type. The associated coefficient was positive and significant, indicating that raters’ who agree with stereotypes of tattooed people were more likely to view tattooed applicants as less suitable for jobs when the applicant was applying for a white collar position ($\gamma_{44} = .07, p < .01$).

**Interaction between situational cues.** Additional post-hoc analyses were conducted to examine how interaction effects between the situational cues predicted applicant suitability ratings. The interaction terms were created by multiplying all possible pairs of centered situational cue values. A random coefficients model was used to test these effects by regressing suitability ratings on both the direct effects and interaction effects. All variables were entered into the model simultaneously, and no between-person variables were included in this model. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

In addition to the main effects of the situational cues, some interaction effects were observed. The interaction of tattoo concealability with intentionality was significant ($\beta_5 = .14, p$...
< .001), such that applicants were rated as less suitability for work when the applicant had many
tattoos visible while the applicant was dressed for work. Tattoo concealability also interacted
with job type ($\beta_7 = .67, p < .001$) to predict suitability. Applicants that had visible tattoos and
were applying for a white-collar position were rated as less suitable for work.

Tattoo intentionality interacted with other cues as well. The interaction between
intentionality and perilousness was significant ($\beta_8 = .13, p < .001$), meaning that applicants were
rated as less suitable when they had many tattoos that were aggressive in appearance. The
interaction between intentionality and job type was also significant ($\beta_9 = .08, p < .001$), such that
applicants were rated as less suitable when they had many tattoos and were applying for white-
collar work. Lastly, the interaction between job type and perilousness was significant ($\beta_{10} = -.19,
p < .001$) but in the negative direction, meaning that applicants were rated as less suitable for
jobs when they had aggressive tattoos and were also applying for blue-collar work.
CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to examine how different aspects of tattoo stigma influence perceptions of tattooed job applicants. Additionally, the present study examined how individual differences associated with stereotyping and prejudice influenced the importance of aspects of tattoo stigma for influencing those perceptions. The results revealed that the impact that job applicants’ tattoos can have on raters’ perceptions of their suitability for jobs is influenced by characteristics of the applicants’ tattoos, the type of work, and individual differences.

Situational Cues

In the policy-capturing tasks, participants were consistent in their use of the aspects of tattoo stigma for making decisions about the suitability of tattooed applicants. Raters used information about the concealability, intentionality, and perilousness of the applicants’ tattoos, as well as the type of job applied for as cues for the applicants’ suitability for the job. In general, raters indicated less applicant suitability when the tattoo(s) was not concealed, when the applicant had more than one tattoo, and when the design content of the tattoo was aggressive in nature. Rater’s also indicated that the applicant was less suitable for a white collar job than for a blue collar job. The relative weights analysis indicated that the most important factors for raters’ evaluations of suitability were the concealability of the tattoo and the type of job, which accounted for 62% and 29% of the variance, respectively.

These results suggest that personal biases against tattooed people may not be the primary determinant by which participants evaluated tattooed applicants. The fact that concealability was the most important cue for raters suggests that raters may relate applicant tattoos to their
perceived suitability for work by the anticipated perceptions of customers and coworkers of a
tattooed person as a representative of their organization. These findings are consistent with Dean
(2010, 2011) and Miller, Nicols, and Eure (2009), who observed negative effects of body art on
impressions of tattooed employees in roles with customer-facing responsibilities. Those
applicants with tattoos visible in work clothes could be seen as having potential for tarnishing the
image of the organization in the eyes of customers. This could also provide an explanation for
the results of Whorton and Highhouse (2013), who found that hiring managers had significantly
more negative attitudes towards applicants that were heavily tattooed. The stimulus persons in
the heavily tattooed condition all had tattoos that were visible above the collar of their shirt, and
would thusly be visible in work clothing that would be appropriate for virtually all jobs.

The importance of job type as a situational cue is also reflective of both the literature and
practical concerns associated with tattoos and employment. DeMello (2000) observed that
tattooing is historically viewed as an activity engaged in by working class people, allowing them
to record their cultural affiliations and religious views. Eagly and colleagues (2002, 2005) noted
that incongruity in characteristics between a job applicant and the envisioned ideal candidate
could lead to prejudicial thoughts about the applicant. Despite the changing demography of
tattooed people in the United States, it is likely the case that the incongruity between
expectations of the appearance ideal candidate for a white collar job and the appearance of a
tattooed person caused raters to view the tattooed people presented in the judgment task as less
suitable for white collar positions. Moreover, Dean (2010, 2011) found that participants viewed
tattooed people in white collar jobs (e.g., tax services provider, stockbroker, dentist) as
inappropriate, even when the tattooed white collar worker was effective at their job. These
findings provide additional evidence that being tattooed is inconsistent with expectations of what a white collar worker should look like.

The perilousness of job applicant tattoos was a significant predictor of suitability, but predicted less of the variance in suitability ratings (7.0%) than concealability and job type. While its’ significance as a predictor is consistent with findings of Burgess and Clark (2010), who found that job applicants with more aggressive-seeming tattoos were seen as less suitable for jobs, the low relative weight associated with this cue is notable. This could be an indication that society is becoming more accepting of tattooing in general, including the fact that aggressive imagery is common in contemporary tattooing and less likely to indicate criminal/violent activity (e.g., Griffin & Hepburn, 2006) or mental illness (e.g., Raspa & Cusack, 1990).

Finally, the intentionality of applicant tattoos was a significant predictor of tattooed applicant suitability, though examination of the relative weights analysis reveals that this cue contributed little to the criterion in contrast to the other three cues (2.2% of the predicted variance at Level 1). The number of tattoos a person has appears to matter, but not that much. This is likely due to much of the thinking about the visibility of tattoos being associated with whether or not they can be concealed. Based on the results of this study, people do not care how many tattoos a person has as long as they are hidden while they are at work.

**Tattooed People as Ingroup Members**

The hypotheses stating that tattooed people would be less likely to indicate applicant tattoos as causing a negative impact on their suitability for the job was not supported. While the literature supported the notion that tattooed people might have more positive views of other tattooed people through the mechanism of in-group favoritism (Allport, 1954; Goffman, 1963;
Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it could also be the case that tattooed people have a greater awareness of the tattoo culture and thusly understand the lack of homogeneity of tattooed people as a group. If this were the case, the fact that the applicants were tattooed would be unrelated to a tattooed raters’ ratings of suitability. Additionally, these results are consistent with Miller, Nicols, and Eure (2009), who found that people with tattoos and body piercings preferred not to work with other tattooed and pierced people. This could be due to the influence of group norms on perceptions of stigmatized individuals (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). Despite having tattoos themselves, these people are likely aware of the negative view of tattoos at work and form their opinions accordingly.

Additionally, the hypotheses concerning raters’ prior experiences with tattooed people in the personal and work lives were also not supported. Jones et al. (1984) suggested that those that had intimate knowledge of the stigmatized community would be more likely to view its members more favorably. However, for the same reasons as those who are tattooed themselves, those with an intimate awareness of the reality of tattoo culture may not see a relationship between the applicants’ tattoos and their suitability for jobs.

**Individual Differences**

This study revealed that raters’ agreement with stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people as a group predicted job suitability ratings, with those who reported more agreement with the stereotypes indicating increased impact on suitability. Given the consistent evidence suggesting that people have a generally negative view of tattooed people (Burgess & Clark, 2010; Swami & Furnham, 2007; Seiter & Hatch, 2005; Degelman & Price, 2002; Forbes, 2001; Houghton, Durkin, & Carroll, 1995), this is not a surprising discovery. Items in the tattooed person beliefs
scale developed for this study were endorsed in a very consistent fashion, indicating that if a person agrees with one statement (e.g., Heavily tattooed people cannot be trusted), they are likely to agree with others (e.g., Tattooed people make bad employees). This globally negative evaluation of tattooed people is consistent with the observations made by Allport (1954) in his reflections on prejudice, where people make wide generalizations about outgroups based upon a narrow sampling of information. Other researchers have found a relationship between observance of tattoos and specific attributions made about the person wearing them (Wohlrab, Fink, Kappeler, & Brewer, 2009; Swami & Furnham, 2007).

The tattooed person stereotype, including beliefs about their personality and lifestyle choices, easily extend to expectations of poor performance at work. Any person who is seen as dishonest, less intelligent, and unmotivated is not likely to also be viewed as a productive employee. The context of the workplace may assist in activation of the stereotype (e.g., Blair, 2002). Moreover, awareness of the fact that some companies have policies against tattoos may have also influenced ratings of suitability. Agreement with tattooed person stereotypes appears to include beliefs about their employability, and this may be due in part to an awareness of rules against tattoos at their own job.

Stereotypical beliefs exhibited cross-level moderation effects on both the perilousness and job type cues, providing evidence of the mechanisms through which these beliefs manifest in decision-making about tattooed people applying for jobs. Those with global, negative opinions about tattooed people would likely see aggressive design content as an indication that the person is aggressive themselves, a quality that is undesirable in most occupations. The moderation of the job type cue by stereotypical beliefs could be due to the expectation that tattooed people are not
fit for professional jobs, which tend to me more complex and require more training. These factors may seem incongruent with the raters’ expectations of tattooed people as a group.

Social dominance orientation did not significantly predict ratings of tattooed applicant suitability. This is surprising, given the significant correlation between these variables and the theoretical basis of anticipation of the relationship. The effects of SDO were only examined after controlling for the effects of the situational cues. It is possible that the variance shared between SDO and suitability ratings was accounted for at the within-person level of analysis. It is also possible that those high in SDO may also be likely to get tattoos themselves, meaning that tattooed people would not be seen as an outgroup.

In contrast, right-wing authoritarianism significantly predicted reduced perceptions of tattooed applicants for jobs. Given the association between tattoos and rebellious countercultures (Steward, 1990), it makes sense that a person who views outgroup members as threatening would view a tattooed person as less suitable for work. Additionally, RWA exhibited a moderation effect through the perilousness cue, which corresponds to the perception of threat experienced by high RWA people by outgroup members. People whose tattoos are seen as aggressive could seem more threatening that those with more innocuous or feminine designs.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study had several important strengths. First, this is the first study to examine multiple attributes of tattoo stigma in the employment context simultaneously. While other researchers have examined the effects of tattoo concealability (Bekhor, Bekhor, & Grandrabur, 2007; Swanger, 2006), intentionality (Whorton & Highhouse, 2013), and design content (Burgess & Clark, 2010) as well as the effects of job type Dean (2010), this study builds upon
these contributions by examining the practical importance of each cue in the presence of one another. The policy capturing methodology is particularly useful for this type of research, as it allows for indirect assessment the importance of explanatory variables, reducing the influence of social desirability on the results (Arnold & Feldman, 1981; Judge & Bretz, 1992) as well as the need for raters to be aware of their decision making strategies. This is important, considering the observed disconnect between stated and observed decision policies that occurs when raters are asked about their decision making strategies directly (Sherer, Schwab, & Heneman, 1987; Stumpf & London, 1981). Moreover, the present use of policy capturing in combination with multilevel analyses allowed for examination of between-person effects on the use of decision making cues. This approach has been used in the organizational sciences before and has resulted in important contributions to the literature (e.g., Judge & Bretz, 1992; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002).

This study benefits from the use of relative weights analysis, which allow for examination of how the situational cues were used. Unlike regression coefficients, relative weights allow for quantifying the individual contributions of each situational cue to the variance predicted in the suitability measure (Johnson, 2000). The present study contributes practical information to the psychological literature on what factors matter most when decisions are made about tattooed job applicants.

Another strength of this study was the use of stimulus sampling in the development of the job type and tattoo perilousness cues. Given that a lack of external validity is commonly cited as a criticism of experimentation in the social sciences (e.g., Highhouse, 2009; Wells & Windschitl, 1999), use of a selection of jobs and tattoos distinguishes this research from similar investigations (e.g., Burgess & Clark, 2010; McElroy, Summers, & Moore, 2014). The stimulus materials employed in this study were intended to better reflect the environment that the present
study was intended to measure and allowed for the elimination of idiosyncratic effects associated with any one job or tattoo as a potential cause for the observed effects.

A third strength of this study was the use of images in the policy capturing task. Rather than using written descriptions of the tattoos worn by the hypothetical applicants, this study used images of actual tattoos as examples of what the applicants’ tattoos may look like. The tattoos were chosen to be similar in size and artistic quality but reflective of high and low aggression in their design content. This approach is more appropriate given the visual nature of the subject matter and has been used in prior organizational policy capturing studies (Gorman, Clover, & Doherty, 1978).

Like all research, this study possesses limitations that need to be discussed. First, only tattoo stigma information was included as cues in the policy capturing task. Cooksey (1996) encouraged policy capturing researchers to consider all information that may be relevant to the decision task, noting that omitting important cues from the study design could lead to misinterpretation. Given the practical concerns about the qualifications a person needs to be successful in any job, it is possible that the other factors would be considered in a real-world decision about a tattooed job applicant. For example, the degree to which a person is qualified for a job would influence the degree to which applicant tattoos affect their suitability for work. It is unknown how much this information would contribute to evaluations of applicant suitability.

Another limitation of this study is the nature of the sample. While the raters were all working adults, employment decisions are made by a specific subset of this population (i.e., hiring managers). The present study is useful for understanding how people integrate tattoo stigma information when making evaluations about applicant suitability for jobs, those charged
with staffing organizations may have other concerns that outweigh their concern about applicant tattoos. A hiring manager under pressure to find a person with a unique skill set in a small pool of applicants may be willing to overlook a qualified applicant’s tattoos. A related limitation of this study is that it does not consider specific organizational policies prohibiting tattoos. Such policies add additional complexity onto the topic of how applicant tattoos affect their suitability for jobs.

This study is also limited by an exclusive focus on how suitability decisions are made about male applicants with tattoos. Multiple studies have found that women with tattoos are seen as less attractive (Degelman & Price, 2002; Swami & Furham, 2007). Women were not included in the stimulus materials of the present study to avoid confounding the effects of applicant tattoos with the effects of applicant attractiveness on the suitability outcome. The effects of attractiveness bias on employee selection are well-studied in the psychological literature (Dipboye, Arvey, & Terpstra, 1977; Jackson, 1983; Marlow, Schneider, & Nelson, 1996).

**Future Directions**

Additional research is needed to provide addition clarity on the topic of how applicant tattoos influence suitability for jobs. One of the questions that arise from the present study is the influence of applicant qualification for the job applied for. While the present study examines the relative importance of the various aspects of tattoo stigma in making judgments about the suitability of tattooed applicants for jobs, these decisions are not made solely on the appearance of an applicant. It may be the case that applicant tattoos negatively influence their suitability to a lesser extent if they are highly qualified for a job. Researchers should examine the effects of varying levels of job qualification on the decisions made about tattooed applicants.
Another potential topic for future research is the influence of industry on tattooed job applicant suitability. Bekhor and colleagues (1995) found that while there was a general negative attitude toward hiring people with visible tattoos across industries, employers in the building trades and public service fields had less negative attitudes and even noted that some of their current employees had visible tattoos. It would be interesting to examine these attitudes in the technology industries, where there is a clear preference for younger workers (Perry & Finkelstein, 1999). This preference could also allow for a greater tolerance body art, given the increased prevalence of tattoos in younger generations (Laumann & Derick, 2006).

Future research should also examine how applicant gender influences decisions about tattooed job applicants with visible tattoos. Burgess and Clark (2010) examined how gender and tattoo status interacted when people are evaluated as job applicants, but the stimulus materials only depicted applicants with small tattoos that could easily be covered with clothing. Female applicants with tattoos that cannot be concealed in work dress may experience particularly harsh judgment, both for their unconcealed tattoo and the effect that their tattoo may have on how attractive they are viewed to be (Swami & Furnham, 2007). Additional research is needed to better understand the interaction of gender and tattoo status on perceptions of applicant suitability for jobs.
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### APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1  
*Means, standard deviations, and correlations of suitability impact and individual differences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Suitability Impact</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Own Status</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Wise Status (Personal)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wise Status (Workplace)</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tattooed Person Beliefs</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. RWA</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>(.93)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SDO</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>(.96)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. α reliabilities (in parentheses) appear in the diagonal. N = 375. * p < .05. **p < .01*
Table 2. Within-person analysis: The effects of tattoo characteristics and job type on job suitability ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( \beta_u^a )</th>
<th>SE (^b)</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>Variance component (^c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, ( \beta_0 )</td>
<td>1.72**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>72.13</td>
<td>.203**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Concealability, ( \beta_1 )</td>
<td>.76**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>25.56</td>
<td>.284**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Intentionality, ( \beta_2 )</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Perilousness, ( \beta_3 )</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>.152**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Type, ( \beta_4 )</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>24.19</td>
<td>.145**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo ( R^2 ) (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* \( N = 375. \)

\(^a\) Unstandardized coefficient.

\(^b\) Average estimated standard error of the Level 1 regression coefficients.

\(^c\) Variance in Level 1 parameter estimates and \( \chi^2 \)-test of significance of variance.

\(**p < .001.\)
Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and relative weights of standardized regression coefficients of situational cues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>RW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Concealability</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Intentionality</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Perilousness</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Type</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\bar{R})</td>
<td>0.696</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note.} \(N = 375\). RW = relative weight. All coefficients were significantly different from one another as assessed by Tukey's honestly significant difference test, \(p < .01\).
Table 4. Between-person analyses: Personal tattoo status, personal experience with tattooed people, workplace experience with tattooed people, stereotypical tattooed person beliefs, social dominance orientation, and right-wing authoritarianism predicting job suitability ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>βu (a)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, (γ_{00})</td>
<td>1.72**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>83.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal tattoo status, (γ_{01})</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal relationships with tattooed people, (γ_{02})</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace relationships with tattooed people, (γ_{03})</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people, (γ_{04})</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>6.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dominance orientation, (γ_{05})</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-wing authoritarianism, (γ_{06})</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 375.

\(a\)Unstandardized coefficient.
SE = standard error.
**p < .001.
Table 5. Post-hoc analyses: Cross-level moderator effects of between person variables on use of situational cues in tattooed job applicant suitability ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suitability Ratings</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta_u^a$</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Concealability, $\beta_1$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, $\gamma_{10}$</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>25.55***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>- .12</td>
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<td>.03</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Intercept, $\gamma_{30}$</td>
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<td>-.74</td>
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Personal relationships with tattooed people, $\gamma_{32}$ & .06 & .06 & 1.07
Workplace relationships with tattooed people, $\gamma_{33}$ & -.06 & .07 & -.98
Stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people, $\gamma_{34}$ & .05 & .02 & 2.20*
Social dominance orientation, $\gamma_{35}$ & .00 & .02 & .19
Right-wing authoritarianism, $\gamma_{36}$ & .04 & .02 & 2.33*

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<tr>
<th>Job Type, $\beta_4$</th>
<th>$\gamma_40$</th>
<th>$\gamma_41$</th>
<th>$\gamma_42$</th>
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<th>$\gamma_44$</th>
<th>$\gamma_45$</th>
<th>$\gamma_46$</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>24.37***</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal relationships with tattooed people</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workplace relationships with tattooed people</td>
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<td>.07</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Stereotypical beliefs about tattooed people</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>3.15**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dominance orientation</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-wing authoritarianism</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** N = 375.

*a Unstandardized coefficient.
SE = standard error.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Table 6. Post-hoc analysis: The interactive effects of tattoo characteristics and job type on job suitability ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suitability Impact</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \beta_u ) (^a)</td>
<td>SE (^b)</td>
<td>( t )</td>
<td>Variance component (^c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept, ( \beta_0 )</td>
<td>.87**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>35.70</td>
<td>.175**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tattoo Concealability, ( \beta_1 )</td>
<td>.76**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>25.45</td>
<td>.294**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo Intentionality, ( \beta_2 )</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>13.43</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tattoo Perilousness, ( \beta_3 )</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>10.70</td>
<td>.159**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Type, ( \beta_4 )</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>24.43</td>
<td>.155**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concealability X Intentionality, ( \beta_5 )</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>.023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concealability X Perilousness, ( \beta_6 )</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.073**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concealability X Job Type, ( \beta_7 )</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>20.47</td>
<td>.255**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality X Perilousness, ( \beta_8 )</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality X Job Type, ( \beta_9 )</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perilousness X Job Type, ( \beta_{10} )</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-9.06</td>
<td>.022**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo ( R^2 ) (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( N = 375. \(^a\)Unstandardized coefficient. \(^b\)Average estimated standard error of the Level 1 regression coefficients. \(^c\)Variance in Level 1 parameter estimates and \( \chi^2 \)-test of significance of variance. **\( p < .001 \).
APPENDIX B: FIGURES

Figure 1. The cross-level moderation effect of stereotypical tattooed person beliefs on the relationship between the perilousness situational cue and ratings of tattooed job applicant suitability ratings.
Figure 2. The cross-level moderation effect of right-wing authoritarianism on the relationship between the perilousness situational cue and ratings of tattooed job applicant suitability ratings.
Figure 3. The cross-level moderation effect of stereotypical tattooed person beliefs on the relationship between the job type situational cue and ratings of applicant suitability ratings.
APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE PROFILES

Example Profile A

This job applicant has a single tattoo. The tattoo is not visible. He is applying for a job as a janitor.

The applicant has a tattoo similar to this:

![Tattoo Image]

Please indicate the degree to which the applicant’s tattoo impacts his suitability for the job

1 = Does not affect his suitability for the job at all

2 = Slightly negatively affects his suitability for the job

3 = Negatively affects his suitability for the job

4 = Seriously negatively affects his suitability for the job
Example Profile B

This job applicant has several tattoos. The tattoos are visible. He is applying for a job as a stockbroker.

The applicant has a tattoo similar to this:

![Tattoo Image]

Please indicate the degree to which the applicant’s tattoo impacts his suitability for the job

1 = Does not affect his suitability for the job at all

2 = Slightly negatively affects his suitability for the job

3 = Negatively affects his suitability for the job

4 = Seriously negatively affects his suitability for the job
**APPENDIX D: LIST OF BLUE AND WHITE COLLAR JOBS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blue Collar Jobs</th>
<th>White Collar Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction Laborer</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Operator</td>
<td>Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly Line Worker</td>
<td>Software Developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockroom Clerk</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor-trailer Truck Driver</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway Maintenance Worker</td>
<td>Chemist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subway and Streetcar Operator</td>
<td>Investment Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitor</td>
<td>Systems Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Materials Removal Workers</td>
<td>Stockbroker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Cook</td>
<td>Statistician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Painter</td>
<td>Research Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Equipment Operator</td>
<td>Environmental Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Worker</td>
<td>Copywriter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaper</td>
<td>Graphics Designers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Mechanic</td>
<td>Finance Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E: INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE MEASURES

Tattooed Person Attitudes and Beliefs

Please read each of the following statements and indicate your level of agreement using the response scale provided.

1 = strongly disagree
2 = moderately disagree
3 = slightly disagree
4 = slightly agree
5 = moderately agree
6 = strongly agree

1. People with a lot of tattoos are dangerous.
2. Tattooed people make bad employees.
3. Heavily tattooed people are more likely to use drugs than other people.
4. People who are heavily tattooed likely suffer from some mental illness.
5. Customers do not want to interact with employees that have visible tattoos.
6. People with many tattoos are different than other people.
7. Many tattoos are an indicator of poor decision-making.
8. Heavily tattooed people cannot be trusted.
9. When someone has a lot of tattoos, there is a good chance they have been arrested before.
10. People with a lot of tattoos usually drink too much.
Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 1994)

Please read each statement below and indicate your reaction to them using the response scale provided. The response scale is 1 = very negative to 7 = very positive.

1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
3. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
5. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.
8. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.
9. It would be good if groups could be equal.*
10. Group equality should be our ideal.*
11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.*
12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.*
13. We need increased social equality.*
14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally.*
15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible.*
16. No one group should dominate in society*

Note: * = Reverse keyed
Right-wing Authoritarianism (Zakrisson, 2005; based on Altemeyer, 1998).

Please read each statement below and indicate your reaction to them using the response scale provided. The response scale is 1 = very negative to 7 = very positive.

1. Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today.

2. Our country needs free thinkers, who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people.*

3. The “‘old-fashioned ways’” and “‘old-fashioned values’” still show the best way to live.

4. Our society would be better off if we showed tolerance and understanding for untraditional values and opinions.*

5. Gods laws about abortion, pornography and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, violations must be punished.

6. The society needs to show openness towards people thinking differently, rather than a strong leader, the world is not particularly evil or dangerous.*

7. It would be best if newspapers were censored so that people would not be able to get hold of destructive and disgusting material.

8. Many good people challenge the state, criticize the church and ignore “‘the normal way of living’”. *

9. Our forefathers ought to be honored more for the way they have built our society, at the same time we ought to put an end to those forces destroying it.

10. People ought to put less attention to the Bible and religion, instead they ought to develop their own moral standards. *

11. There are many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things; the society ought to stop them.

12. It is better to accept bad literature than to censor it. *
13. Facts show that we have to be harder against crime and sexual immorality, in order to uphold law and order.

14. That situation in the society of today would be improved if troublemakers were treated with reason and humanity.*

15. If the society so wants, it is the duty of every true citizen to help eliminate the evil that poisons our country from within.
APPENDIX F: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Thank you for participating in this study. Please provide the following information about
yourself. Please be honest. All information you provide is confidential and will only be seen by
the research team. Some of these questions require a typed answer and others require you to click
the button next to your choice.

Age (in years): ___________________________________

Gender (please choose one):

Male
Female
I prefer not to respond

Race (please choose one):

African-American  Middle Eastern/West Asian
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)  Native American
Asian/Pacific Islander  Other: ________________________

Please indicate your highest level of education (please choose one):

High School
Attended College
Undergraduate Degree
Graduate School/Professional Degree
Please indicate the area of the economy in which you work (please check one):

- Mining
- Utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale trade
- Retail trade
- Transportation & warehousing
- Information
- Finance & Insurance
- Real estate & Renting & Leasing
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- Management of Companies & Enterprises
- Administration & support
- Waste Management & Remediation
- Service
- Educational Services
- Healthcare & Social Assistance
- Arts, Entertainment & Recreation
- Accommodation & Food Service
- Public Administration
- Other

Please indicate your level of employment (please choose one)

- Staff/Employee
- Shift/Assistant Manager
- Area/Department Manager
- Middle Management
- Executive management

How long have you been in your current position (in years):

___________________________________
Are you involved in the hiring of new employees as a part of your job (please choose one)?

   No, I am not involved in the selection of new employees as part of my job
   Yes, selecting new employees is a primary function of my job
   Yes, I sometimes assist in selecting new employees at my job

How long have you been involved in hiring new employees (in years):

___________________________________

Please indicate what aspects of employee selection you participate in as part of your current job (please check all that apply):

   Recruiting applicants
   Interviewing applicants (face-to-face interaction with applicants)
   Reviewing applicant materials
   Making the final choice about who is hired
   Providing feedback to a manager about job applicants
APPENDIX F: HSRB MATERIALS

DATE: March 10, 2014
TO: Ryan Whorton
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [556090-3] Marked: A policy capturing investigation of job applicant tattoos as stigmatizing marks in blue and white collar employment

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: March 7, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE: February 3, 2015
REVIEWS TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please add the text equivalent of the HSRB IRBNet approval/expiration date stamp to the "footer" area of the electronic consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 350 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on February 3, 2015. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsr@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT FOR:

Marked: A policy capturing investigation of job applicant tattoos as stigmatizing marks in blue and white collar employment

You are invited to participate in a research study by Ryan Whorton (rwhorto@bgsu.edu) of the Department of Psychology at BGSU. We ask that you read this form and email Ryan with any questions before agreeing to participate in the study. Please note that you must be over the age of 18 to agree and be living and working full-time in the United States to participate in this research.

TIME: This survey should take approximately 25 minutes to complete. You will need to complete your participation all at once, as there is no way to save your progress.

STUDY PURPOSE & BENEFITS: The study has two major purposes. First, this study is intended to expand our understanding of how people make employment decisions about people with tattoos. Second, this study is an examination of how differences in beliefs or views of the world are related to judgments about tattooed people in the employment setting. Aside from financial incentive, individual participants are provided with an opportunity to reflect on the way they make decisions about others around them.

NUMBER OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS: If you consent to participate in this research, you will be one of approximately 350 subjects who will participate in this study.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY: This study has two major sections: A judgment task section and a questionnaire section. The first page you will see is a demographics form. After completing this form, you will move onto the first major section, where you will be asked to rate how the suitability of 34 job applicants for the given job is influenced by the applicant’s tattoos. After this section, you will be asked to answer some questions about your beliefs and the way you view the world.

POTENTIAL RISK: The risk of participation in this study is no greater than that found in everyday life.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. Your data will be saved on a password-protected computer. Your MTurk ID number is the only identifying information that will be collected, and it is used solely to verify participation and issue payment. No other personally identifying information will be gathered, and nobody will be able to link your name to your responses for this particular study. After completion of the study, please clear your browser cache and close the window to ensure confidentiality.

PAYMENT: You will receive payment for taking part in this study. Payment will be in the form of $2.00 USD awarded through the MTurk payment system. Payment is contingent on completion of the survey in full and your MTurk ID number being entered into the appropriate box correctly.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS: For questions about the study contact the researcher, Ryan Whorton, at rwhorto@bgsu.edu or Dr. Scott Highhouse, at shighho@bgsu.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, contact the Human Subjects Review Board at http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/orc/hsrb/ or call 419-372-7716.
VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY: Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study early will forfeit your payment. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with BGSU or the researcher. If you would like a copy of this study information sheet to keep for your records, please save an electronic copy. If you choose to participate, please choose “Yes, I Agree” below and click the button below to continue to the questionnaire.

Thank You,

Ryan Whorton, M.S., ABD
Graduate Student
Bowling Green State University
rwhorto@bgsu.edu
419-372-4414

Scott Highhouse, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor
Bowling Green State University
shighho@bgsu.edu
419-372-8078