Clash of Generations: Attitudes Toward Tattoos in Counselor Education

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Abstract

Counselor Education doctoral students, administrators, and faculty (N=244) were surveyed nationally to assess current generational differences in attitudes toward tattoos in higher education. Results offer information and implications regarding tattoo placement, attitudes, hiring in higher education, comfort levels, ramifications for graduate student admission, and impact of tattoos on faculty hiring.

Keywords

Tattoos, Counselor Education, Stigma, Generations

Tattoos have been present throughout history in numerous cultures around the world, including those of the ancient Egyptians, Celts of Medieval Europe, Māori across New Zealand, as well as peoples of Brazil, Africa, and Japan (Bell, 1999). While the purpose of tattoos varies among cultures, they are most often used for ornamental, ritual, or group identity-oriented reasons (Bell, 1999). Historically tattoos have also been present throughout U.S. culture and most often associated with the military, bikers, carnival workers, prisoners, and lower-class citizens (Elzweig & Peeples, 2011; Kosut, 2006; Laumann & Derick, 2006). According to Zestcott et al. (2018), tattoos have been tied significantly with aggression and delinquency, thus resulting in stereotypes of criminality that have influenced workplace attitudes in the United States. However, now rapidly increasing in popularity with about 40% of millennials having a tattoo (Pew Research Center, 2010; Verissimo et al., 2017), tattoos have spread across ages, social classes, cultures, and ethnicities (Aslam & Owen, 2013).

Increasingly, the growing prevalence of tattoos in society and positive portrayal by the media have brought forward the idea of tattoos as creative status symbols (Dickson et al., 2015). The initial impetus for most individuals to be tattooed is to commemorate a significant life transition and demonstrate a unique expression of identity. Whether the tattoo is visible or not, this method of claiming or expressing identity can result in higher self-esteem and a positive sense of individuality (Ball & Elsner, 2019). Also, both tattooed and nontattooed college students view being tattooed as acceptable mainstream behavior across diverse groups in young adult culture. Nevertheless, despite their growing popularity, tattoos continue to be perceived in a negative light by some (Dickson et al., 2015).

Overall, current consumer attitudes have been found to be generally negative regarding the competence and success of professionals, particularly white-collar workers, who display visible

tattoos (Verissimo et al., 2017). Specifically, consumers perceive tattooed health care workers as less professional than nontattooed workers (Pfeifer, 2012). No matter the gender of the consumer, male health care professionals with tattoos are rarely seen in a positive manner and females even less so (Verissimo et al., 2017; Zestcott et al., 2018). At the same time, consumers beyond the age of forty are significantly more negative overall in their attitude toward people with tattoos (Dickson et al., 2015; Pfeifer, 2012), and of those consumers within that age range, those with higher education and income levels are especially negative (Bowman, 2010).

Despite the increasing prevalence of tattoos, older generations have an increased tendency to regard those with tattoos as lacking in good looks, less intelligent, and less dependable as compared to those without tattoos (Dean, 2010). Also, university graduates with visible tattoos tend to be less likely to be hired than those with no visible tattoos (Foltz, 2014). Thus, issues related to credibility, consumer satisfaction, and hiring practices remain on the forefront of tattoo culture within the workplace. Since institutions of higher education welcome numerous millennial students into their classrooms, such views may be of concern to faculty and supervisors as they prepare graduating students to be competitive for employment in a U.S. workplace with increasingly limited job opportunities.

As with all issues in counseling, members of the counseling field must examine their own attitudes, beliefs, biases, and experiences with the tattoo culture. Counselor educators and supervisors, who prepare mental health professionals and engage with college students of various ages, may be in particular need of increasing their own personal awareness and attitudes as well as examining any possible discriminatory hiring practices of any kind, including potentially biased feelings surrounding tattoos, whether in favor of or against. Therefore, this study investigated the attitudes toward tattoos across different generations of current counseling students, faculty, and

administrators within counselor education. The purpose of this study was to examine if differences in attitudes exist between generations of those individuals within counseling higher education, and then discuss the implications of these attitudes in relation to the counseling profession.

Growing Prevalence of Tattoos in Modern Society

Despite the historical associations in the United States, literature supports that tattoo popularity continues to grow outside of the historically correlated populations and shows that tattoos are becoming more common within the general population, especially the younger generations (Pew Research Center, 2010; Verissimo et al., 2017). Laumann and Derick (2006) found that 24% of a national sample reported having at least one tattoo (n=120) in which 47% of those respondents were female (n=56) and 53% were male (n=64). In this study, an additional 104 (21%) nontattooed participants considered tattoo placement based on whether their tattoos would be visible or hidden in a professional setting.

Following the trend noted in the Pew Research Center findings (2010), the Harris Poll (2015) showed that 29% (n=2,225) of U.S. adults reported having at least one tattoo. This is an increase from the Harris Poll in 2012 that surveyed 2,016 adults online wherein 21% of U.S. adults reported having at least a single tattoo, which is also an increase from the same poll in 2008 indicating 14%. A 5% increase in the U.S. adult population with a single tattoo equates to an increase of slightly over 12.26 million adults in the United States, compared to the population estimate as reported by the United States Census Bureau in July of 2014, with a total of approximately 51.5 million adults with at least one tattoo. Referring to the 2015 Harris Poll, nearly half of Millennials and just over one third of Generation X individuals reported having at least one tattoo. This growing popularity and acceptance of tattoos among younger generations seems to evidence a shift in attitudes occurring within the U.S. society and workforce, including higher

education and, specifically, counselor education and the emphasis the counseling profession places on empowering diverse individuals.

The Generational Shift

As higher education moves from predominantly long-term tenured faculty to a majority number of contingent employees (Coalition of the Academic Workforce's 2012 report), three generations now dominate the higher education workforce: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. Each of these generations plays a vital role in the development of the counseling field. Although interests can be shared intergenerationally, each generation has some distinct characteristics that influence the way members view and move through the world (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010). These characteristics seem to contribute to individual biases within the workplace (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007). One specific area in which generations tend to differ when focused on those primary characteristics is in the perceptions of individuals with tattoos.

Generations Defined

The Baby Boomer generation, born between years 1946 and 1964 (Fingerman et al., 2012), represents the upper echelon of counseling higher education and administrative positions and thus includes those individuals typically in charge of hiring and evaluative roles (Fujii, 2014). However, individuals in this generation are entering into late adulthood and, in many cases, preparing for retirement. "Nearly 10,000 baby boomers are retiring every day in the United States" (Fields, 2015, p. 44). As this generation of Boomers retire, the members leave not just a legacy of accomplishments within the field, but are the predecessors, mentors, and educators to those moving into the faculty and administrative roles.

As a commonality within this Baby Boomer generation, tattoos tend to be viewed differently than those of post-boomer generations (Generation X and Millennial) (Gochenouer &

Hale, 2017). Post-boomer generations are more than three times as likely to have tattoos as Boomers (Hargrove & Stempel III, 2003). In addition, Western society has historically considered tattoos to be associated with seemingly dangerous types of persons such as prisoners and punks (Kosut, 2006). Although research on Boomers' perceptions of tattoos is thin, the research that does exist has evidenced that those in administrative hiring positions tend to view tattoos more negatively than those in lower tier positions (Arndt et al., 2017; Timming et al., 2017).

The next generation, Generation X, born between years 1963 and 1982 (Bickel, & Brown, 2005), represent the generation between the Boomer and Millennial generations. While little to no research has been done on the attitudes of the Generation Xers toward tattoos, some researchers have discussed general prevalent attitudinal differences found between Generation X and the Boomer generation including work-family conflict, attitudes toward authority, and length of employment in one job (Bennett et al., 2017; Bickel, & Brown, 2005). Generation Xers tended to question authority more than Boomers, spent shorter terms in career jobs, and more readily embraced technology as a normal part of life (Bickel & Brown, 2005). Also, Generation Xers in the academic setting typically accounted for junior faculty positions, while Boomers tended to reside in senior faculty and administrative roles. It should be noted that although these differences exist, there is no specific evidence showing how these differences may affect Generation Xers' attitude toward tattoos.

The newest generation beginning to inhabit faculty roles, the Millennial generation, includes those born between years 1982 and 2002 (Gardner, 2016). As this generation includes those ranging in age from 16-37 years, it makes sense that the majority of research in higher education involving this generation may be on educating these individuals in their role as students (Mangold, 2007; Park, 2013; Villena-Alvarez, 2016), rather than focusing on Millennials as those

entering the workforce. However, a few researchers have begun to discuss this generational transition and what it means for higher education (Gardner, 2016; Mallard & Singleton, 2007). This Millennial generation, as with prior generations, has characteristics of its own that help to make sense of the individuals encapsulated within it; one of these characteristics being a desire for self-expression through tattoos (Hodges, 2014; Leader, 2015). Various authors have noted challenges and concerns faced by those with tattoos in the workplace and in the hunt for a vocation (Elzweig & Peeples, 2011; Jones & Hobbs, 2015; O'Regan, 2015), which are important to examine because "it is not debatable that tattoos are present in American society and are likely here to stay" (Foltz, 2014, p. 589).

In summary, with so many individuals in the workforce having tattoos and the Millennial generation moving into junior faculty and administrative roles in higher education, it is relevant to explore the attitudes of current doctoral students, faculty, and administrators within counselor education toward tattoos. As suggested by Pfeifer (2012), acknowledging Millennials as an increasing population within the higher education workforce, strict dress codes and expectations regarding appearance may harm the organization's culture and actually reduce recruitment opportunities for new students and faculty. With a dearth of empirical studies related to tattoos in counselor education, understanding attitudes of current doctoral students, faculty, and administrators may offer implications for workplace culture, hiring practices for new faculty, and recruitment for graduate students. To better examine and understand these implications, the driving research question for this study was: Are there differences in attitudes toward tattoos between generations of individuals within counseling higher education?

Method

Participants

The primary purpose of this cross-sectional study was to examine the attitudes of the representative sample of those in higher education and discuss the implications of these attitudes in relation to the counseling profession. Participants for this pilot descriptive study were recruited through a national counselor education listserv (CESNET) via email, and then provided an anonymous link to the informed consent and survey. Members of this listserv include faculty, administrators, doctoral students, and other members of counseling higher education ranging in location across the United States. This listserv was chosen because of the direct access it provides to members of the counseling higher education community.

Initially, the survey was sent to members of CESNET with a follow up request delivered two weeks later. A total of three hundred and sixteen people started the survey, however only two hundred and forty-four members completed the survey. Participants who completed the survey included 41 males (16.8%), 198 females (81.1%), and 5 who identified as other (2.0%). These participants included totals of 133 Millennials (ML) (54.5%), 89 Gen X (GX) (36.5%), and 22 Baby Boomers (BB) (9.0%). One Silent generation member, the generation prior to Baby Boomers, completed the survey as well. Since this participant was only one year older than the cutoff from the Baby Boomer generation, the researchers included the participant with the data for the Baby Boomers. The total of the participants consisted of 54 (22.2%) tenured faculty, 47 (19.3%) non-tenured faculty, 110 (45.1%) students, 22 (9.4%) administrators, and 9 (3.7%) others who proclaimed themselves as holding primary roles within higher education, e.g., consultant.

Instrumentation

This study utilized a pilot survey research design via a questionnaire (See Appendix A) that was developed and distributed using the Qualtrics survey software. To develop the survey, the researchers drew upon available literature and personal experiences to construct a set of items to measure the frequency of tattoos in counseling higher education among three different generations and their attitudes toward visible tattoos within counseling higher education. The research team consisted of two individuals from different generations: one, a Millennial with tattoos, and the other, a Boomer without tattoos. Throughout the development of the survey, the researchers used several strategies to reduce potential researcher bias as they generated the questionnaire. Weekly, the researchers held ongoing discussions regarding biases and values due to their different experiences and attitudes surrounding tattoos. They kept individual notes regarding the different concepts and the language they used to label the concepts and worked to bracket their own experiences while investigating that of one another. Finally, reflecting together, the researchers came to a hard-won consensus for the final questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of 31 total items, which included binary response questions, Likert-Type Scale response items, a single "check all that apply" item, and demographic questions. Section 1 included a series of binary response questions, of which four were included in the study and two were removed due to potentially leading wording. The second section included items such as "Tattoos are deviant" and "Tattoos are professional," requesting participants rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. A single "check all that apply" item was used to gain understanding of which body placements might be viewed as acceptable to have a tattoo within higher education. This item included selection responses of "Upper Arms," "Legs," "Neck," "Forearms," "Face," "Chest/Abdomen," and "None."

Results

This study utilized quantitative analyses including descriptive analysis and one-way ANOVA analysis to establish results. While reviewing the descriptive results of the first six items, items 1, 4, 5, and 6 were included, and items 2 and 3 were removed due to wording issues that were potentially leading in the results. For example, item 2 stated: "I have had a positive experience with my tattoos at my institution," and item 3 stated: "I feel my workplace is supportive of my tattoos." These items were presented to all participants regardless of having visible tattoos or not having visible tattoos, and were therefore removed from the data. Of the 287 participants who completed item 1, 206 (71.78%) indicated that they have tattoos, and 81 (28.22%) stated they did not. Item 4 (n=281), showed that 271 (96.44%) of the participants would accept a job in higher education if the faculty at that institution had visible tattoos, whereas 10 (3.56%) would not. Of the participants who completed item 5 (n=281), 104 (37.01%) noted that faculty with whom they work had visible tattoos, and 177 (62.99%) stated that faculty with whom they work did not have visible tattoos. Item 6 (n=283) showed that 59 (20.85%) respondents indicated that administrators with whom they work had visible tattoos, and 224 (79.15%) indicated that administrators with whom they work did not have visible tattoos.

While reviewing frequencies of responses for the item, "If any, which body placement would be acceptable for an individual in higher education to have a tattoo? (Select all that apply)," 228 (93%, N=244) participants indicated that upper arms would be acceptable; 212 (86%) believed legs would be acceptable; 84 (34%) answered the neck would be acceptable; 191 (78%) stated forearms would be acceptable; 25 (10%) noted a face tattoo would be acceptable; 213 (87%) participants said a chest/abdomen tattoo would be acceptable, and 9 (4%) participants selected the option that no tattoos are acceptable.

Table 1

If any, which body placement would be acceptable for an individual in higher education to have

a tattoo?

Placement location	*n*	*%*
Upper Arms	228	93
Legs	212	86
Neck	84	34
Forearms	191	78
Face	25	10
Chest/Abdomen	213	87
None are acceptable	9	4

Note. N=244

After conducting a one-way ANOVA, significant differences were found in six of the 17 items. In item 1, "Tattoos are deviant," the results indicated a statistically significant difference of $F(2, 241)=4.984$, p<.05 between the three groups. Upon reviewing Post Hoc analysis, a statistical difference was present between Millennials (*M*=1.51, *SD*=0.849) and Baby Boomers (*M*=2.09, *SD*= 1.065) with Millennials tending to agree with this statement more than Baby Boomers. However, no significance was found between Millennials and Generation Xers, or between Generation Xers and Baby Boomers.

The next item, "Tattoos are professional," resulted in significant differences between all groups of $F(2,241)=12.155$, p<.05. Post Hoc analysis showed statistical differences between all groups, with the greatest significance between Millennials (*M*=2.82, *SD*=0.903) and Baby Boomers (*M*=3.77, *SD*=.973), and the least significance between Generation Xers (*M*=3.19, *SD*=.915) and Baby Boomers. Overall, Millennials tended to agree more with this statement than previous generations.

The third item of the six, "I would hire someone into higher education who has visible tattoos," $F(2, 241)=6.098$, p<.05 indicated significant differences between the Millennial

generation (*M*=1.50, *SD*=.724) and Generation Xers (*M*=1.85, *SD*=0.924), with Generation Xers agreeing with this statement slightly less than Millennials. No significance was found between the Millennial and Baby Boomer generations, or the Baby Boomer and Generation Xers.

The next item, "I am happy working with someone in higher education who has visible tattoos," indicated significant results of $F(2, 240)=10.115$, p<.05 between groups. Post Hoc analysis indicated statistically significant differences between Millennials (*M*=1.30, *SD*=0.617) and Generation Xers (*M*=1.71, *SD*=0.894). Differences were also found between Millennials and Baby Boomers (*M*=1.86, *SD*=0.990). No statistical differences were found between Generation Xers and Baby Boomers. This evidenced a difference in attitude toward the presence of visible tattoos in higher education between Millennials and the prior two generations with Millennials tending to agree more with this statement.

Results indicated statistical differences between groups of $F(2, 241)=3.634$, p<.05 for the item, "Graduate students are evaluated the same during the interview process at my institution if they have visible tattoos." On this item, statistical difference was only found between the Millennial generation (*M*=2.36, *SD*=1.157) and the Baby Boomer generation (*M*=1.68, *SD*=0.894), with Millennials tending to disagree more with this statement than Baby Boomers.

The sixth item, "Potential faculty with visible tattoos are considered equally for hire at my institution as candidates without visible tattoos," overall statistical significance was found between groups $F(2, 241)=3.180$, p<.05. Upon reviewing Post Hoc analysis, no major differences between specific groups were evident.

Discussion and Implications

The overall results of this study support the idea that attitudinal differences exist between generations in Counselor Education, with younger generations appearing to have a more positive

attitude toward tattoos. In addition, younger generations believe that persons with obvious tattoos are evaluated differently than others who do not have visibly displayed tattoos. This quantitative research study yielded helpful information regarding tattoo placement, comfort levels, stigmatized attitudes, ramifications for graduate student admission, and the impact of visible tattoos on hiring practices in higher education.

With the growing appearance of tattoos as a constantly evolving art form in American society, the current culture of the counselor education profession seems to be changing slowly in keeping with society as a whole. In addition, recognition of the profession's stance is reflected by the Preamble of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (2014), which states a core value of the counseling profession: "honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts" (p. 3).

Tattoo Placement

When considering tattoo placement, the results indicated the majority of surveyed participants believe that tattoo placements less visible in professional attire, such as upper arms, chest/abdomen, legs, and forearms are more acceptable than more obvious placements, especially neck and face tattoos. These findings are consistent with those of Dean (2011), in whose study the participants accepted blue-collar workers with visible tattoos but were significantly less accepting of tattooed white-collar workers. At the same time, feeling a need for freedom of expression accompanied by the expense of tattoos (Foltz, 2014), younger generations may be more likely to want to gaze openly upon their body art. In addition, Timming (2017) found that strategic placement of tattoos can appeal to younger generations and draw in consumers by means of an edgy, modern appeal.

However, these study results demonstrate the clear majority of participants currently work with faculty and/or administrators without visible tattoos. Thus, although tattoos may be growing in acceptance, tattoo placements easily covered by work attire may be viewed as more compatible and respectful for diverse consumers of counseling services, and therein for the counseling profession itself. As noted by the Pew Research Center (2010), more than 70% of tattooed individuals can easily conceal their tattoos.

At the same time, in this study, the lowest frequency of selection was that "no tattoos are acceptable." With almost three-fourths of the study participants having tattoos themselves, it seems participants responded thinking of themselves with personal relevance. Perhaps checking their own tattoo placement for visibility acceptance was a prime consideration in their choice as compared to no tattoo. In summary, insightful consideration of the context and possible interpersonal contact seem key considerations related to tattoo placement and need for concealment in professional settings.

Stigmatized Attitudes

In this study, a significant difference exists between Millennials and Baby Boomers regarding the deviance of tattoos. As previously noted, with the ever-growing popularity of tattoos in the United States, Zestcott et al. (2018) purported in their overview of literature that tattooed and nontattooed individuals are increasingly likely to view tattoos as body art. As this perspective spreads across mainstream U.S. society, stigmatized attitudes toward tattoos may decrease among younger generations, and tattooed individuals may be perceived more positively. On the other hand, negative stereotypes appear to be still lingering, particularly dependent upon the placement and visibility of tattoos. Especially for tattoos on the neck near the face, suspicion of deviance

continues in U.S. society and is often frowned upon by consumers, particularly older individuals (Pfeifer, 2012; Verissimo et al., 2017).

As found in this study, the Millennials are much more likely to perceive tattoos as professional in nature than other age groups, especially Baby Boomers. In his mixed methods study, Timmings (2017) found that the environmental context is a primary determinant in the acceptance of visible tattoos. For work settings, such as an art gallery, which encourages and appeals to the unique and creative nature of people, visible tattoos may be a positive draw. A university or counseling clinic in higher education, where qualified teaching, learning, and research occurs with expectations of wisdom and maturity, may not welcome the tone set by visible tattoos of professionals. Thus, perceptive recognition of the environment's covert and overt rules is crucial for professional success.

Hiring Practices in Higher Education

Conservative attitudes regarding tattoos still exist across a variety of work settings (Foltz, 2017). While higher education is often seen as a more liberal environment, this study evidences that the Generation Xers in higher education perceive tattoos in a more negative light than Millennials. Meanwhile, no significance was found between Baby Boomers and Generation Xers or Baby Boomers and Millennials. The researchers wonder if Generation Xers are slightly more judgmental in their views as they continue to work hard within a system to advance, while the Baby Boomers already have achieved desired status in higher education. A competitive nature may influence Generation Xers to see Millennials as those who must prove themselves in the higher education system, thus discounting those with tattoos as not serious and unable to succeed. Such perceptions may affect hiring of those with tattoos, especially visible tattoos. The findings of Timmings (2017) are congruent with the implication of analyzing work settings, realizing the

covert rules of the system, and then carefully considering desired appearance when applying for employment to maximize hiring possibilities.

Comfort Levels

Consistently in this study, as compared to Baby Boomers or Generation Xers, the Millennials appear much more at ease, accepting of, and more readily willing to work closely with others who have visible tattoos. While tattoos are gaining in popularity, according to Foltz (2017), Millennials realize this difference in attitudes and take such discrepancies into account when applying and working on the job. Foltz's study of 100 students in higher education yielded 86% believing that a non-tattooed graduate would more likely obtain a job in the workforce than a tattooed graduate. Therefore, as implied, considering the work environment, individuals with visible tattoos often cover up to conform to expectations and comfort of colleagues.

Ramifications for Graduate Admission

The researchers believe implications for graduate school admission appear to emerge from the results of this study. Similar to this study's other findings, a significant difference is seen between Millennials and Baby Boomers regarding the evaluation for graduate school admission of applicants with visible tattoos. While higher education and counseling are often characterized as settings that encourage independent thinking and creativity, the results of this study indicate that Baby Boomers observe a difference in the outlook toward those with and without visible tattoos. Realizing issues between generations, social media includes established Facebook groups whose goals are to help tattooed individuals secure jobs and advance in the workplace. Knowing that different treatment may exist, those with visible tattoos must realize the potential impact of this visible and permanent form of self-expression. Overcoming negative perceptions, most often from

older individuals, when applying for entry into the workforce and throughout their working career is crucial for Millennials in more conservative work-settings.

Impact of Visible Tattoos on Faculty Hiring

As younger generations of Counselor Educators and Administrators tend to view tattoos as more acceptable in professional settings than prior generations in most cases, the question needs to be asked: "How are visible tattoos influencing the hiring of new faculty and administrators in Counselor Education?" This is a challenging question to answer, as no research currently examines the effects of tattoos on hiring practices within Counselor Education; however, the research of Timming et al. (2017) has suggested that tattoos negatively impact overall employment chances, especially in customer-facing roles. This negative impact exists despite studies such as the one by Martin and Dula (2010) that showed no significant differences in the grade point averages of college students with tattoos and those without tattoos. However, no research has been conducted to determine whether the presence of tattoos correlate with the performance success of a faculty or administrator in Counselor Education.

As a field, Counseling prides itself on acceptance of others despite differences in values and attitudes, as reflected in the ACA Code of Ethics (2014). Conversely, evidence shows that even in this progressive and accepting field, biases toward tattoos still exist. Therefore, those in Counselor Education must examine their own attitudes and find a moderate approach to tattoos that balances public expectations for competence and professionalism with individual freedom of expression, while keeping an eye toward future employment for graduates (Pfeifer, 2012).

Limitations

The potential bias of the researchers may be a limitation, despite the care each researcher took to bracket experiences, values, feelings, and assumptions regarding tattoos. The researchers

were quite comfortable with each other, meeting weekly to discuss their ideas and thoughtfully challenge each other regarding biases. As the unconscious agenda of each researcher emerged, these bracketing interviews with one another proved beneficial in sensitively addressing boundaries and ethical considerations throughout the study. Nevertheless, the researchers acknowledge the challenges of skillful reflexive capacity needed for bracketing and realize the limitations.

At the same time, this study is potentially limited in that most of the respondents have tattoos, thus perhaps skewing the data. It may be that the crucial perspective of many respondents without tattoos is essentially excluded. In addition, the number of administrators who completed the survey is noticeably smaller than faculty and students. Consequently, the perspectives of policy and decision makers may not be as expansive as possible regarding the implications of tattoos in the workplace.

Future research can build upon the establishment of this pilot instrument and proceed with empirical study to validate it. Researchers need to use recruitment techniques that enhance the possibility of a substantial number of respondents who are likely to have tattoos and not have tattoos. In addition, future investigations should seek to find strategies to include multiple voices in various roles across higher education to determine widely diverse factors and implications germane to tattoos in higher education.

Conclusion

As counselors, we devote a portion of our lives to transition and change. Rarely do we experience clients that seek us out in the wonderful event that their life is going perfectly. More commonly, we experience clients who are seeking change within their lives or dealing with transition; therefore, it is vital that those in the counseling profession invite and embrace change

while continually working to evaluate and understand our resistances. As stated in the ACA Code of Ethics (2014), counselors must strive in the direction of the continued embrace of diversity and inclusion within our field, not just for our clients but within ourselves. Although this is only one arena of diversity, the counseling field should continue to move forward in embracing the diversity that exists within the client population. Also, we should work to accept the diversity of counselors, counselor educators, and counseling students as well, regardless of how they choose to display their skin.

Despite the growth and movement toward inclusion and diversity within counseling, some individuals in counseling higher education may still hold values and opinions different than those who no longer view tattoos as deviant. It is possible that as younger generations continue to move into academic roles and earlier generations continue to retire, the shift toward tattoo acceptance may continue. However, as every person is equally entitled to their own opinion and viewpoint regarding tattoos, it may never be that tattoos in the workplace are fully accepted by everyone. Also important is for those with tattoos to consider the workplace environment into which they wish to enter, the stakeholders within that environment, and their own personal values regarding their tattoos. While some may choose to seek employment at institutions where tattoos are more openly accepted, others may choose to cover their tattoos in the workplace, and still others may take the chance in more conservative settings despite the potential for negative attitudes toward tattoos to exist. Ultimately, tattoos and acceptance thereof have the potential to be an added complexity in the search for fit in higher counselor education.

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Appendix

Survey Questions

Please indicate Yes or No by filling in the appropriate circle:

I personally have tattoos.	◯ Yes	◯ No
I have had a positive experience with my tattoos at my institution.	◯ Yes	◯ No
I feel my workplace is supportive of my tattoos.	◯ Yes	◯ No
I would accept a job in higher education if the faculty had visible tattoos.	◯ Yes	◯ No
Faculty that I work with have Visible tattoos.	◯ Yes	◯ No
Administrators that I work with have visible tattoos.	◯ Yes	◯ No

Please fill in the circle for the best response to the following items:

Tattoos are deviant.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

Tattoos are popular in today's society.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

Tattoos are professional.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

Tattoos are accepted within my institution.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

I would hire someone into higher education who has visible tattoos.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

I am happy working with someone in higher education who has visible tattoos.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

A person with tattoos should cover them up when they instruct a course.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

A person with tattoos should cover them up in the higher education workplace.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

Graduate Students at my institution have visible tattoos.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

Graduate Students are evaluated the same during the interview process at my institution if they have visible tattoos.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

Graduate students are given the same expectations at my institution if they have visible tattoos.

◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree
Potential faculty with visible tattoos are considered equally for hire at my institution as candidates without visible tattoos.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree
Faculty with visible tattoos are respected at my institution on the same level as those without.				
◯ Strongly Disagree	◯ Disagree	◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree	◯ Agree	◯ Strongly Agree

Please fill in the circle with the best response to the following items:

I consider myself …				
◯ Creative	◯ Somewhat Creative	◯ Equally Creative/Logical	◯ Somewhat Logical	◯ Logical
My political views are…				
◯ Conservative	◯ Somewhat conservative	◯ In the Middle	◯ Somewhat Liberal	◯ Liberal

If any, which body placement would be acceptable for an individual in higher education to have? (Please Circle Any That Apply)

Upper Arms   Legs   Neck Forearms   Face   Chest/Abdomen

None are acceptable

Demographics

Age: _____   **Gender**:   Male   Female   Other: Please Specify _____

Department: _____

Please indicate your standing by filling in the appropriate circle:

◯ Doctoral Student/Candidate	◯ Faculty (non-tenure)	◯ Faculty (tenure)
◯ Administrator (please specify): _____	◯ Other (please specify): _____	

Thank you for completing this survey!