

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**



**INFLUENCE OF VISIBLE BODY MODIFICATION ON EMPLOYABILITY OF JOB**

**APPLICANTS**

**BY**

**TETTEH DUKE LERMEH K.**

**(10315251)**

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER  
OF PHILOSOPHY INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE**

**JULY 2018**

**DECLARATION**

This is to confirm that this thesis is the final product and a true reflection of a research conducted by **Tetteh Duke Lermeh K** in pursuant of an award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology at the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana. This thesis was supervised by Dr. Francis Annor and Dr. Inusah Abdul-Nasiru. This thesis has not been presented in whole or in part for the award of a degree anywhere and the ideas of other persons used in this study have been duly acknowledged.

.....

Date: .....

Tetteh Duke Lermeh K.

*This thesis has been submitted for examination with the approval of:*

.....

Date: .....

Dr. Francis Annor

(Principal Supervisor)

.....

Date: .....

Dr. Inusah Abdul-Nasiru

(Co-supervisor)

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my entire family; parents, lovely sisters, uncles and aunts for their unflinching support over the years.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special acknowledgement goes out to my family for their support; I appreciate your social and financial support. I also acknowledge the support and advice supervision I had from my supervisors for the past year. To my colleagues and friends who assisted me in gathering data and in other ways, I thank you all. I am also grateful the various recruitment agencies who gave me the opportunity to talk to them about my research as well as persons with tattoos and piercings. Above all, I am most grateful to the Almighty God for his protection throughout this programme.

## **ABSTRACT**

The popularity of visible body modification has soared in recent times especially among the millennial generation. However, research on visible body modification has focused predominantly on its health implications. Little is known about the impact of visible body modification in the organizational context. The objective of this study was to examine the perception of visible body modification and experiences of persons with visible body modification. Using a mixed method approach, 32 in-depth qualitative interviews were carried out with recruiters and persons with visible body modification in Study 1. Study 2 involved a quasi-experiment in which 240 Master of Business Administration students rated pictures of job applicant with different kinds of visible body modification. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data showed that persons with visible body modification experienced negative and positive attitude and that visible body modification constitute a major constraint to employability. However, the type of job, industry effect and competence of the applicant with visible body modification were also determining factors in some cases where visible body modification is permitted. Results from the quasi-experiment showed that visible body modification is detrimental to employability. These findings call for much attention to be paid on the consequence of wearing a visible body modification for the individual and the organization.

**TABLE OF CONTENT**

DECLARATION .....	i
DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENT .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.0 Background .....	1
1.1 Problem statement .....	6
1.2 Objectives of this study .....	9
1.3 Significance of the study .....	9
1.4 Organization of the thesis .....	11
CHAPTER TWO .....	12
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	12
2.0 Overview .....	12
2.1 Theoretical framework of VBM and work .....	12
2.1.1 <i>Theory of Stigma</i> .....	12
2.1.2 <i>Prejudice Theory</i> .....	14
2.1.3 <i>The concept of aesthetic labour</i> .....	18
2.2 Review of Related Studies .....	21
2.2.1 Perception of VBM among different cultures .....	21
2.2.2 VBM and experiences of stigma, prejudice and discrimination .....	24

VBM and employability

2.2.3 Type of job (customer and non-customer facing) .....	26
2.2.4 Gender differences in perception VBM.....	29
2.2.5 Critique of literature .....	32
2.3 Research questions .....	35
2.4 Statement of Hypotheses.....	35
2.5 Operational definition of terms .....	36
CHAPTER THREE .....	38
METHODOLOGY .....	38
3.0 Overview .....	38
3.1 Research Design.....	38
3.2 Methods for Study I – Qualitative Phase .....	41
3.2.1 Participants .....	41
3.2.3 Instrument/ Materials.....	47
3.2.4 Data Collection Procedure.....	48
3.2.5 Data analysis.....	49
3.2.6 Bracketing, reliability and validity of findings.....	52
3.3 Methods for Study II – Quantitative Phase .....	53
3.3.1 Participants: study II.....	53
3.3.2 Demographic characteristics.....	54
3.3.3 Instrument/ materials .....	55
3.3.4 Procedure for study II.....	56

VBM and employability

3.3.5 Method of analysis.....	57
3.3.6 Pilot study.....	58
3.4 Ethical Considerations.....	60
CHAPTER FOUR.....	62
RESULTS .....	62
14. Overview.....	62
4.1 Findings of Qualitative Study (Study I) .....	62
14.5.3 Attitudes towards VBM.....	62
14.5.3 Experiences of wearing VBM.....	67
14.5.3 VBM as a constraint to employment .....	69
14.5.3 Conditions for hiring people with visible body modification.....	70
Attitudes towards VBM.....	75
Experiences of wearing VBM .....	75
VBM as a constraint to employment .....	75
Conditions for hiring people with visible body modification.....	75
14.5 Findings of Quantitative Study (Study II).....	76
14.5.3 Preliminary Analysis.....	76
14.5.3 Hypotheses testing .....	77
14.5.3 Summary of findings (Study I and II) .....	84
CHAPTER FIVE .....	85
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	85
5.0 Overview.....	85

VBM and employability

5.1 Discussion of Qualitative Study (Study I) .....	85
5.2 Discussion of Quantitative Study (Study II) .....	92
5.3 Limitations/ Recommendation for future research.....	95
5.4 Implications of the study .....	97
5.5 Conclusion.....	98
REFERENCES .....	100
APPENDICES .....	116

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Interaction between applicant gender and VBM..... 79

Figure 2: Interaction between type of job and VBM ..... 80

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Demography for recruiters.....	45
Table 2: Demography of Persons with VBM .....	46
Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants .....	55
Table 4: Summary of means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis .....	76
Table 5: Main effects of VBM, type of job, applicant gender and gender of the rater.....	81
Table 6: Two way interaction effect between VBM and applicant gender .....	82
Table 7: Two-way interaction effect between VBM and type of job .....	83

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background

Body modification (body art) has been practiced in almost every culture around the world for several decades (Grief, Hewitt & Armstrong, 1999). Featherstone (1999) described body art as a long list of practices, which includes branding, cutting, tattooing, piercing, binding, and insertion of implants to modify the appearance and form of the body. Contrary to the assertion that the history of body modification is difficult to track (Fisher, 2002), body modification has an extensive history dating back longer than one might imagine. The oldest body art ever found in history was on an Egyptian mummy around 2000 BCE. Researchers recorded about 61 tattoos on Iceman, a mummy that dates back 5300 years (Samadelli, Melis, Miiccoli, Vigl, & Zink, 2015). Besides this discovery, many other mummified body art examples have been revealed and documented in history (Samadelli et al., 2015).

In the West, Captain James Cook and his group of tattooed sailors are credited with introducing tattoos in the mid-years of 1700s (DeMello, 2000). Similar to tattooing, piercing of the body has also been in existence in almost every society as far back as it is possible to trace, but it has usually been confined to the ears, nose, and lips. Moreover, sculptural studies have shown earrings are the most common type of body modification (Waugh, 2007). For instance, although it is a common practice for people to wear earrings, clinicians have reported patients with single or multiple earrings on various parts of the body (Waugh, 2007). Remarkable exceptions are the practice of penis piercing by some popular tribes in Borneo, Southeast Asia (Ferguson, 1999).

Once regarded as low class or dangerous symbols, body art began to be seen as trendy and dazzling in the 1990s (Irwin, 2000). In recent times there has been resurgence in body

VBM and employability

modification in the West dating back to about three decades (Adams, 2009). Most notable is the increased rate at which people acquire body art on their skin and other parts of the body (noses, ears, eyebrow, tongues, and navels) (Laumann & Derick, 2006). Dermatological studies have revealed that about one-third of the US adult populace has a tattoo and 14% a body piercing (Laumann & Derick, 2006). Moreover, the Pew Research Center (2010) in the US reports that 38% of 18 to 29-year-old Americans have a tattoo, of which 30% are described as visible. Interestingly, Laumann and Derick (2006) estimated that 30% of the US adult population has a tattoo, a body piercing, or some combination of the two.

In terms of body piercing, prevalence reports have ranged between 4-56% (Armstrong, Roberts, Owen, & Koch, 2004; Laumann & Derick, 2006; Skegg, Nada-Raja, Paul, & Skegg, 2007; Wohlrab, Stahl, Rammsayer, & Kappeler, 2007). In a representative sample of adults in Britain, a survey estimated that 10% of all respondents had piercings at spots other than the earlobe (Bone, Ncube, Nichols, & Noah, 2008). It is likely, however, that prevalence rates are higher among select samples, including young adults (Schorzman, Gold, Downs, & Murray, 2007; Suris, Jeannin, Chossis, & Michaud, 2007). Similarly, an international chain of body piercing parlours (Gauntlet) in California, New York, and Paris reports at least about 30,000 demands for piercings each year (Michaela Grey, personal communication, June 17, 1997, as cited in Grief et al., 1999). Grief et al. (1999) also reported that 51% of the respondents in their study had body piercings and the earliest age to have initial piercing was 11 whereas the oldest at the time of their first piercing was 42.

Unfortunately, obtaining accurate figure for the prevalence of body art in Africa is difficult if not impossible (even though there are a number of people wearing body arts), due to lack of research on body art in the African context. Consequently, a true indication of the scale

of the problem and its potential implications in the African context remains difficult to estimate. Yet evidence suggests that in Nigeria, awareness on the prevalence of body art among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan is 95.2% (Ezeibekwe, Ojedokun, & Aderinto, 2016). In Ghana, Van-Ess (2013) in his study of HIV/AIDs among prisoners revealed that about 20 percent had body art before going to prison whereas 0.5 percent had theirs during their custodial term. In August 2013, XYZ news reported that 20 female students from T.I Ahmadiyya Senior High School in the Ashanti region have been sent home as a result of their body art (“20 SHS girls sacked”, 2013). These and other anecdotal evidence suggest the prevalence of body art in Ghana or Africa.

There exist several reasons behind the wearing of body art. For example, anthropologists have described body modification as a way of classifying oneself as being affiliated to a particular group; a religious sect, a tribe (an ethnic group), or gang; of symbolizing one’s financial or marital status; or even as a way of enhancing the body (Myers, 1992). As cited by Ellis (2015), body arts are personal choice and there are varied reasons why people wear them. They can be worn for aesthetic reasons or to derive a sense of empowerment over surviving a terrible ordeal, such as breast cancer or covering a scar. They can be applied in remembrance of a loved one or to identify with, or show affiliation with, a particular group such as gang or club (Mendez, 2016).

Some research evidence also points to cultural motives to obtaining body art. For instance, Grief et al. (1999) revealed that 90% respondents reported continual satisfaction with their tattoos. Antoszewski, Sitek, Fijałkowska, Kasielska, and Kruk-Jeromin (2010) in a study in Lodz (Poland) suggested some motives for wearing body art may include the desire to enhance one’s self, aesthetic value, peer pressure, and subculture affiliation. In Germany, Stirn and Hinz

VBM and employability

(2008) reported different motivation for wearing body art: anticipated feeling of pain, pressure to conform, the dire need to get over undesirable life experiences, the desire to change one's personality, and yearning to attain equivalence between feelings of embodiment and real body. Moreover, in Kenya, Nyambura, Waweru and Nyamache (2013) reported that body art serves as a means of indicating a person's place in a community, life transition, a type of trend or a mark of special occasion. Thus, these trends indicate how one's cultural background and upbringing can affect the motive for acquiring a body art (Hill, 2016). Meanwhile, some studies (e.g., Brooks, Woods, Knight & Shrier, 2003; Tate & Shelton, 2008) have also shown a linkage between personality and substance abuse.

Arguably, it stands to reason that there is no doubt about the link between personality type and body modification (Nathanson, Paulhus & Williams, 2006). Tate and Shelton (2008) in their comparison between body modified and non-body modified on personality traits found that participants adorned with tattoos scored higher on agreeableness and conscientiousness. In a recent study, Ajayi and Ifeoluwa (2014) found that there exists a link between personality and body modification. Thus, a significant relationship exists between neuroticism and body modification. Also associated with body modification is the use and abuse of drugs and related criminal activities. There has been a reported linkage between substance abuse and body modification; for example, Brooks et al. (2003) found that substance use is common among people with body modification. Moreover, people with body art are more likely to be involved in risky life styles than those with no body art; they are engaged in activities like drug use, violence and suicide (Carroll, Riffenburgh, Roberts, & Myhre, 2002).

Despite its value in different cultures and associated determinants, body modification is linked with health complications. Essentially, the methods of conducting these modifications

have raised a lot of concern, thus both tattoo and piercing use needles that cuts the skin.

Anderson (1992, p.207) a dermatologist, who had many encounters with patients with body arts, lamented that there was “little or no regulation of the training of tattooists, the sterilization of tattooing instruments, the screening of customers, or the inspection of tattoo parlours” (as cited in Armstrong, 2005).

Studies have also reported problems such as allergic contact dermatitis, scarring and keloid formation, bleeding and infection (Holbrook, Minocha & Laumann, 2012). Høgsberg, Hutton Carlsen and Serup (2013) reported complaints that were associated with tattooing after some months. Among the reported complications, skin destruction and itching were common. Other recalled complications that were reported include ulceration, redness and swelling, long healing, fever and infection. In addition to reports of infection and other sicknesses, Armstrong, Koch, Saunders, Roberts, and Owen (2007) cited psychosocial problems associated with body modification such as low levels of happiness, low self-esteem, disappointment and embarrassment. A number of studies have also shown how people with body art are stigmatized. In his findings, Mendez (2016) reported negative attitudes (stigma) towards people of the tattooed individuals when their tattoos were visible.

One area that has recently gained attention in the literature is the potential impact of body modification on individuals' labour market outcomes, particularly its effects on employability. The impetus to this line of research stems from changes in the processes of recruiting new employees, which have become much more extensive and rigorous due to an increased competition in the labour market. Indeed, organizations vary in terms of their expectations of future employees depending on a number of factors like the sector in which they are based and their corporate policy and culture. Physical appearance has been noted to have an important

## VBM and employability

influence on individuals' employment chances, with studies suggesting that the probability of being offered a job decreases if an applicant is perceived to be physically unattractive (Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003) and unfashionably or inappropriately dressed (Christman & Branson, 1990).

Since body modification ultimately alters physical appearance, it can be surmised that visible body modification (VBM) has the potential to influence individuals' employment chances though the empirical evidence on this relationship is inconclusive. In certain sectors it may be of greater importance that the employees have an appearance that is representative of the company, whereas in sectors where the employees do not have much contact with customers or clients, appearance may be of less importance (Warhurst, Nickson, Witz & Cullen, 2000). For instance, Timming (2015) found negative prejudice of body art on selection by employers. Contrary to this finding, Timming concluded that employers were mostly less prejudiced against body modifications when hiring for jobs that the customer does not have direct relationship with the worker. Furthermore, in line with Timming's finding, French, Maclean, Robins, Sayed and Shiferaw (2016) reported that tattooed and non-tattooed workers are treated similarly in the labour market. Arguably, in line with this finding, it is apparent that the type of job and the position could perhaps affect the degree to which employee can expect their body modifications to be approved or not Ikonen (2017).

### 14.5 Problem statement

As indicated earlier, one attribute that has not received much attention in this literature is body art and how it negatively affects employment chances (Mendez, 2016). Research on body modification has mostly focused on its potential health complications. Most of these dermatological studies perhaps might have raised issues leading to the recent focus on body

modification and employment chances. Thus, only recently have researchers attempted to study the employment implications associated with body art. According to Timming (2015), there exist a number of social, epidemiological, and anthropological researches on body modification, however, just a few of studies have considered body modification in the perspective of employment.

In addition, the little research in the area of body modification and work is mostly Western-centered, and based on Laumann and Derick's (2006) findings; it is obvious that body art (visible body modification) is prevalent in most Western societies. It is apparent that Africa and the Western countries operate in different cultural and environmental background and therefore what might be accepted by certain cultures and religions might not be condoned in other cultures. For example, Western tattooing practices have been restricted because of Christian beliefs against body alteration, thus the bible vehemently speaks against this in Leviticus 19:28 (you must not put tattoo marking upon yourselves). Thus, the findings of these studies cannot be generalized in other context like Ghana (a non-Western country). It will be therefore appropriate if studies are replicated in other non-Western environment to see if there are similarities or differences.

A study by Proehl (2004) to understand the moral passage of body art found that moral tenets of body art are different along ancestral, subcultural, and situational dimensions. In a study to assess how body modifications affect failure or success in a work environment, Ikonen (2017) reported that cultural background was one of the significant factors that determined how positively or negatively body modifications were perceived. Ikonen further posits that: considering that the culture surrounding body modifications is very new and has grown and developed very rapidly it is no surprise that individuals of different age and background in the

## VBM and employability

present society may have drastically differentiating experiences, perceptions and reactions to body modifications, especially in a professional context. In addition, sociologists and other scholars have also described tattooing as cultural deviance (Atkinson, 2003; DeMello, 2000; Irwin, 2000). Thus, culture and morality affect most aspects of our life including acceptance and rejection of body modification.

In addition, studies that have attempted to link body modification to employability are mostly limited in scope and frequently looked at the perspective of employers with little emphasis on the experiences of people with body art and recruiters. Thus, a large number of studies have examined the perception of managers (and sometimes students who act as managers) leaving out the experiences of people with VBM and recruiters. Ellis (2015) has called for studies focusing on the experiences of people with body modifications at work. Furthermore, with the emergence of recruitment agencies, it would be worth examining their experiences as well.

Studies are mostly limited in methodology, with most studies relying on quantitative methods. In this regard quantitative studies on Visible Body Modification (VBM) only give a general perception of how people feel about VBM and cannot explain the reasons for this perception unlike qualitative where much can be explored to understand the reality and experiences of people with VBM and perhaps recruiters who might have had an encounter with persons with VBM. Thus, there is therefore the need for qualitative studies that would augment the gap in literature. Thus, with qualitative studies essential contextual distinctions might evolve which may include cultural and moral issues.

## **1.2 Objectives of this study**

The main objective of the study is to examine whether VBM has an effect on employability. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine how people rate job applicants with VBM and their employability
2. determine factors that drive recruiters' perceptions regarding the employability of people with VBM
3. assess how people with VBM perceive their body modification
4. examine how people with VBM assess their employability

## **1.3 Significance of the study**

There is growing evidence that evaluators (employers) seem to make decision that depends on whether the applicant's appearance is appealing and appropriate (Christman & Branson, 1990; Hosoda, Stone-Romero & Coats, 2003). As an empirical measure of employers and recruiters' perception of potential job applicants adorned with VBM, this study provided employers and recruiters with new perspectives in decision-making process. In addition, it provided potential job applicants with other criteria than qualification and work experience which are vital in winning one a job.

By investigating the experiences of individuals with body modification, this research extends how past research has focused predominantly on employers. The study provides evidence on how individuals with body modification are perceived and treated within their society. With this it would serve as information for young job seekers who are considering wearing one. Second, having made the point that VBM has moral and cultural implications, the study explored the usage of VBM in the Ghanaian context in relation to employment by comparing it with what pertains in the Western world. By doing so, it would provide an in-depth

knowledge of body art in Ghana and future researchers can draw from this study to further advance the area of body art in our society especially drawing on the moral and cultural implications of wearing body art.

Thirdly, several studies focused on the perception of employers. With the emergence of recruitment agencies, it is important that current studies consider interviewing employers and hiring authorities as well to determine if there exist any negative perceptions or stigmatization toward body art in the workplace (Mendez, 2016). Possibly there could be prescribed criteria that organisations might require from hiring authorities or perhaps they may use their own discretion to make a decision based on one's qualification and experience and not necessarily one's look or physical appearance.

Fourthly, this study would have policy implication for organizations in Ghana. The Ghana Labour Act, 2003 (ACT 651) clearly stipulates that: "an employer shall not in respect of any person seeking employment, or of persons already in his employment discriminate against the person on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, social or economic status, disability or politics". This Act perhaps makes room for human resource policies to be revised looking at the millennial generation that will soon dominate the labour market and tend to have preference for body art (Solomon, 2014). For example, in a related story, Starbucks Corporation, an American coffee company and coffeehouse chain in Seattle declared the need for flexibility in the wearing of body art at work. Starbucks made changes to its body art policy permitting employees who deal face-to-face with customers to display their body art anywhere with the exception of the employee's face (hitherto, workers had to conceal their body art under clothing) (Solomon, 2014).

Finally, this study adds to the limited body of literature on VBM and employment by providing an in depth understanding of the experiences of people with VBM in the non-Western context. In addition, even though studies have been conducted on the cultural origins and significance of VBM, there is little or no study to identify how such cultural elements can be related to the work setting. This study thus fills that gap and will serve as a blueprint for future studies.

#### **1.4 Organization of the thesis**

The study is divided into five main chapters. The first is the introductory section which gives an overview of the issues surrounding VBM. The second section is the literature and theory chapter which was used to discuss theoretical approach and relevant literature in relation to VBM. The methodology part is used to describe the philosophical approach adopted and furthermore the research design, the method of analysis, sampling methods and instrument/materials used for each of the separate studies. The fourth section discusses the findings of the study. Finally, the last chapter elaborates on discussing findings in relation to literature. It as well throws light on the implications of the findings, limitations, direction for future studies and ends with a conclusion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Overview

Studies on body modification predominantly focused on the medical implications. It is only recently that most studies have focused their attention on its consequence on work. This growth in research is linked to the rate at which people are demanding or wearing body art. The growth to some extent can be attributed to social media impact on the commercialization of body art. The objective of this chapter is to review theories and concepts that explain body modification and also to review empirical studies done in the area of visible body modification and work. The chapter is divided into six main sections: theories and concepts, and literature review. Other sections that are part of this chapter include critique of literature, research questions, statement of hypotheses and operational definition of terms.

#### 2.1 Theoretical framework of VBM and work

Theories of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination, and the concept of aesthetic labour have been widely used to advance our understanding and to explain the causes of the views held against persons with body art at work (Ikonen, 2017). In the present study, these theories and concepts were explored and used to explain the reasons persons with VBM are viewed negatively. Finding and understanding the reasons and root causes for these perceptions and behaviors can further help in realizing how the negative implications of these perceptions and behaviors could be possibly reduced.

##### 2.1.1 Theory of Stigma

Goffman (1963) is believed to be credited for the social psychology of stigma (Link & Phelan, 2001; Pescosolido, Martin, Lang, & Olafsdottir, 2008). Apparently, Greeks coined the

## VBM and employability

term stigma to mean physical bodily signs that pose something morally unacceptable about the bearer of the stigma (Goffman, 1963). “The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor; a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places” (Goffman, 2009. P1). Goffman suggests that physical appearance provides an important clue about people’s social identity, which in turn fuels our expectations about them in terms of good or bad behaviour. According to the stigma theory, VBM entails social identity by the bearer which makes the bearer go through some discrimination. Arguably, VBM are utilized as a method for self-articulation by many people, yet there are limits set by society in connection to what is and what is not satisfactory depending on how pronounced the VBM may look and its location.

From the social identity perspective of stigma, Goffman (1963) articulates that stigma is something of incredible dishonor. The process of stigmatization comes from social interaction and may consequently reveal those unaccepted behaviours and hence, those classes of people are not given equal treatment compared to their other counterparts who behave appropriately. In a situation where an individual is treated differently by the general public as said above, it can cost him/her a character change among the stigmatized (Goffman, 1963).

In addition to Goffman’s view of stigma, Jenkins believes that it is possible to utilize the differences between deviants and normal people in a positive way as it helps distinguish each person among others (Jenkins, 2006). Goffman believes that the view can be negative; this is in light of the fact that the process of stigmatization is an extremely complex thing. It is not something that happens to an individual within a twinkle of an eye. As a result, the process may influence the social collaboration with others relying upon the person’s view over his/her stigma and the way others see it. Jenkins (2006) is of the conviction that the stigma is not something

## VBM and employability

which occurs on a short-term basis; however, it is a procedure and all individuals experience it in order to find themselves, and to discover their identity and where their place is in society. As indicated by Link and Phelan (2001) there are a wide range of segments which can be related or considered as a part of the stigma, for example, unjust treatment, over generalized belief, and labelling of people. Another view is that one's social identity may incorporate physical activities, professional roles and the concept of self. The adjustment in one of these identities may cause stigma (Markowitz, 1998).

VBM as an object of stigma has been well established (e.g. DeMello, 1995; Phelan & Hunt, 1998). Even though historically rooted to the Egyptian mummy bearing VBM, in an act of subversion, criminals later began to wear VBM as a means of documenting their criminal activities (DeMello, 1993). VBM continued to be thought of as “freakish” (Fisher, 2002), associated with those on the fringes of society, maintaining allusions to deviance, and steeped in stigma (DeMello, 1995), a life lived differently from everyday society (Steward, 1990). In Western society, VBM has historically signified deviance and those who wore it were often stigmatized as a result (Larsen, Patterson, & Markham, 2014). The reasoning for this is because people make a quick, stereotypical judgment based on being in, or out, of a specific group of people, in this case VBM people and non-VBM people (Arndt & Glassman, 2012). In the organizational context, it is believed that stigma has an impact on organizational processes including hiring decisions (McElroy et al., 2014), recruitment (Dineen & Soltis, 2011), performance evaluation (Link & Phelan, 2001) and promotion (Puhl & Brownell, 2001).

### ***2.1.2 Prejudice Theory***

Allport (1954, p.9) defined prejudice as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he

VBM and employability

or she is a member of the group”. Prejudice often comes about as a result of stereotypical views people have, unjustified misconceptions of a specific group of people and usually linked with unfounded beliefs developed as a result of overgeneralization from limited experiences (Katz, 1991). Katz (1991) also posits that prejudices were ‘stubbornly persistent’ even when contradictory evidence was provided. Nonetheless, these beliefs about a social group could perhaps not be completely true.

Deeply rooted in the American society, Allport believed about 80% of whites developed hatred for minority groups and this was manifested in many roots in personality, society, and culture (Katz, 2001). Most often people are prejudiced based on religion, gender, and ethnicity (Zick, Küpper & Hövermann, 2011). It is against these groups that hostility is directed and it is they who are mostly at a disadvantaged and victims of discrimination. Historical case of prejudice can be traced to the Apartheid in South Africa in 1948. Apartheid created a structural system that made majority of the population underprivileged because of skin colour. For example, it led to separate development of the racial groups in South Africa.

Widely recognized for his deep thoughts on prejudice, Allport organized opinions on prejudice and grouped them around three basic concepts: cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural processes. However, pertinent to the issue of VBM and work are cognitive and sociocultural processes. The social cognitive process in Allport’s work focused on social categorization. Allport’s work on prejudice concentrated on the normality and inevitability of categorizing social groups in life. He noted, “The human mind must think with the aid of categories.... Once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends on this” (Allport, 1954, p.20). The significance of social categorization serves not only a basic process in the growth but also in the maintenance of

VBM and employability

prejudice in such a diverse means like identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Allport describes how social categorization is dominant in our mental life with new experiences merging into old experiences and that it selects and interprets sensory information serving as a guide for our perception. In prejudice, cognitive processes are part of normal functioning and are influenced by people's motivation and goals (Yzerbyt & Corneille, 2005).

Allport drew the attention of social psychologists on the role of stereotypes through group description and cognitive structures that shape thoughts and action. Allport believes that racial and ethnic categories shape stereotypes. This idea comes about as a result of differences in physical appearance that are visibly outstanding. For instance, he noted that "Even a fragment of visibility...focuses people's minds on the possibility that everything may be related to this fragment" (p.109). In addition, Allport identified that overt influences and subtle pressures, like identification, help in the transmission of across people and generations which he referred to as sociocultural processes. Allport believes parents imbibe ethnocentrism in their children but often unaware of the process. Allport also believed that the effects of maturation processes on the development of 'fear of the strange' and the dawn of racial awareness, as well as social learning, peer influence, and cultural immersion later in our life. To Allport, social prejudices are rooted in social mechanisms such as language, which maintained these biases and transmitted them across a group of people. The masses of people do not become converts in advance; rather they are converted by the *fait accompli*. . . . They allow themselves to be re-educated by the new norm that prevails" (Allport, 1954, p. 471). Thus, Allport believed that sociocultural influences from parental influence, to peer pressure, to laws could both create and maintain prejudice and be a fundamental key to eliminating prejudice.

## VBM and employability

The acquisition of negative reaction from minority groups through verbal and non-verbal communication plays an essential role. At the point when the young person begins to grow and develop, he forms an affiliation to groups (in-group) ensuring utmost loyalty and a sense of separation and enmity towards other groups (out-group). Thus, people are more likely to trust and associate with members of the in-group and this strengthens attachment to in-group unlike out-group members. In relation to VBM, employers or customers are the out-group (those without VBM) and are less likely to employ or entertain persons with VBM (in-group) and therefore have less trust and attachment (Arndt & Glassman, 2012).

VBM was brought to Europe as an art work done by the primitive people of Polynesia (DeMello, 2000). Captain Cook's sailors adopted the practice of VBM from the Polynesians and started wearing it. Completely new to the European culture, it caused scandal when people started wearing VBM. It was perceived as abnormal for a person to have VBM- soon the connection between criminality, drug abuse, risk taking behaviours (Anderson, 2006) and VBM was established and the stereotype of VBM came to life. Researchers have therefore suggested that although the rate at which people are wearing VBM has increased drastically, it seems that people have distinct motivation for having such modifications. As such these practices of VBM are mostly viewed negatively by others and can result in prejudice and stigma (for example Fisher, 2002; Roberts, 2012). Remarkably, the intensity of prejudice and stigma differs depending on the nature and where the VBM is located (Roberts, 2012). Perhaps not startling, recent research reveals that such stigma and prejudice have resulted in workplace discriminatory problems related to hiring prospects and organizational policies (Arndt & Glassman, 2012; Miller, Nicols & Eure, 2009).

### ***2.1.3 The concept of aesthetic labour***

Aesthetic labour, as used by Warhurst, Nickson, Witz, and Marie Cullen (2000, p. 4), is defined as the “supply of ‘embodied capacities and attributes’ possessed by workers at the point of entry into employment”. This aesthetic labour incorporates personal characteristics and job requirements in terms of excellent customer relation and technical skills that are needed for a successful job. By aesthetically geared, it implies that the physical appearance of employees is shaped to appeal the senses of customers in a visual way. This aesthetic skill includes individual characteristics in terms of providing an appropriate interaction with customers.

In relation to VBM, the possession of a VBM serves as an asset or a liability to the individual depending on the organization. Witz et al. (2003) then contend that workers are not only seen as ‘software’ but also as ‘hardware’ in the sense that they are instrumental in portraying the image of the organization. In a nut shell, most organisations operate based on certain values and culture and as such these values are portrayed by employees who serve as “walking billboards” as posited by Zeithaml and Bitner (as cited by Timming et al., 2017, p.137). Within this framework it is apparent that the concept of aesthetic labour is useful to organisations especially in marketing and more importantly in the recruitment and selection process (especially when one is entering fresh into the organisation).

The concept of aesthetic labour has widely been used in different studies that have discussed VBM and work (e.g. Dashper, 2013; Timming, 2017). In their various studies, Hrac and Leslie (2013) and Witz et al. (2003) argued that aesthetic labour is the manifestation of social and physical capital. According to Hrac and Leslie (2014), aesthetic labour is an expression of social and cultural capital. As it features are identified with age, gender, race, class and ethnicity (Pettinger, 2004). Symbolic values are connected to bodies, prompting the

VBM and employability

improvement of physical capital, which is a sign of a specific habitus -a socially developed arrangement of psychological and bodily outlooks that guarantee a consistency and strength to performances (Bourdieu, 1993). Embodied features include methods for walking, talking, standing and feeling (Witz et al., 2003). Witz et al. (2003) attest to the fact that, although physical capital is an aggregate manifestation, it is likewise created by organisations. Organisations employ persons with specific epitomized properties (Bourdieu, 1993). Once employed, employers build up or develop these embodied features further, preparing and changing the employee so as to create a specific style of service. Through this procedure, the physical capital of workers is changed over into financial benefit or economic capital by service workers. The corporate generation of aesthetic labour subsequently activates physical capital to organisational ends and furthermore teaches new methods of embodiment within the working subject. As Entwistle and Wissinger (2006, p.775) contend “employees” bodies are connected to market the organisation’s image, literally by actually epitomizing it”

Lately, researchers have begun to conceptualize how creative workers execute aesthetic labour (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006). As claimed by Entwistle (2002, p. 321), in creative industries, “aesthetic is not something ‘added on’ as a decorative feature or after-thought once a product has been defined; they are the products and as such, are at the center of the economic calculations of the practice”. Creative industries depend mostly on symbolic knowledge which is about grooming the features of a product. Dean (2005) in his work made use of the concept of aesthetic labour to television and theatre production. In his view, the main focus of these jobs is to catch the attention of the audience. Similarly, Entwistle and Wissinger (2006) believed that in fashion modelling, there is much attention on the body than in the service industries, since it serves as the vital product of the profession or industry. Models and actors in the beauty and

VBM and employability

entertainment industry respectively have become managers of their self (Hracs & Leslie, 2013). They take responsibility for managing their image and bodies. As Entwistle and Wissinger (2006) contend, the independent aesthetic worker cannot leave the product which is their whole embodied self.

Another important aspect of aesthetic labour is the significant link with appearance discrimination in employment. Much less is known about whether aesthetic labour is legal. Cavico, Muffler and Mujtaba (2012) provide a valuable insight into appearance discrimination in employment. Many employees can have attributes which may make them perceived to be physically appealing in the workplace and some evidence indicates that employability is linked with attractiveness (Maryam & Aiman, 2013). In organizational behavior literature, much emphasis is placed on actual and potential employees and how they readily fit into the organisations Warhust and Nickson (2000). It is also argued that such characteristics may contribute to the future career of the individual.

Nonetheless, since aesthetic labour possess some commercial advantage, it is important to bear in mind that it may differ from one organization to the other. The immense contributions of Swanger (2006), Timming (2015), Timming et al. (2017) and Whyte (1948) provides understanding of the nature of customer facing jobs. Their research on body modification at work provides insight into how people (especially customers) perceive workers with VBM. It is obvious in much of the studies that aesthetically decent employees are mostly placed in customer-facing roles (Timming et al., 2017). There is also growing evidence to show that body modification is appealing to some extent depending on a number of factors like the type of job or industry (e.g., Hracs & Leslie, 2013) and perhaps the gender of the VBM applicant. As a way to

## VBM and employability

explain the nature of how some employers perceive embodied qualities that a potential employee might have, aesthetic labour as a concept was developed to explain these behaviours.

### **2.2 Review of Related Studies**

As stated in the introduction, this study explored the implications of wearing VBM and its effect on being hired for a job. Having explored literature, there exist a number of studies that have reported that VBM has a negative consequence on hirability and otherwise. This section presents a review of empirical research on the implications of visible body modification on employability. These empirical reviews are based on themes or factors that affect employers' perception (rating) of VBM; gender of the rater and photograph, age of the respondent and type of job (customer-facing and non-customer facing). In addition, it was necessary to review studies on perception of VBM among different cultures, relating to how VBM is perceived (in terms of stigma, prejudice and discrimination) before connecting it to work related issues. Debates surrounding these themes have been helpful in examining the similarities and difference among VBM literature.

#### ***2.2.1 Perception of VBM among different cultures***

VBM has evolved through an enormous cultural exchange, beginning with conventions of VBM during the ancient period where it was seen as an ethnic means of identification in some cultures and correctional means in other cultures like Japan and Europe (Ankirskiy, 2014). With differences in perception and stereotypes based on cultural beliefs and religion, it is therefore critical to understand how these differences pertain in order to better appreciate the context-driven stereotype about VBM.

One of the most difficult terms to define in sociology and social psychology is the concept of culture (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). There has been seemingly conscious effort

VBM and employability

to have a consensus on how to define culture over the years. Many definitions have been provided by different scholars. One of such definitions is Tyler's 1870 explanation of what culture entails. To Tyler (as cited in Avruch, 1998, p.6), "Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society".

On the other hand, morality has been defined as conscience, as a set of cultural rules of social action which has been internalized by a group of people (Kohlberg, 1964). Inferring from the definitions of morality and culture by Kohlberg and Tyler respectively, it is apparent that the two are intertwined if not the same. Thus, it is therefore impossible to talk about culture without making reference to morality and vice versa. Morality is the central point for defining social relationships and development in our society (Kohlberg, 1964). Referring to the definitions of culture and morality, it is possible to say culture and morality is embedded in us from our social environment from which we learn and develop attitudes and beliefs. These attitudes and beliefs we imbibe in us serve as a means through which we perceive things around us. In relation to VBM, certain cultures might be more receptive than others. For example, in the Maori culture (New Zealand), the 'moko' – facial body art was a form of family identification and was used in signing documents (Bell, 1999). Unlike the people of New Zealand, body art was a tribal customary rite for the people of Ainu in Japan which signified religious expression and sexual maturity (Ankirskiy, 2014). Ainu women mostly had the body arts around their cheeks, lips, eyebrows and forehead. In Africa, history has it that body art started from the people of Egypt and was common to women as a form of social status or punishment (Ramion, 2012).

In Africa, body art was seen as an affiliation to an ethnic group, social status of the bearer, and as a means of protecting against evil spirits (History of tattoos in Africa, n.d.).

## VBM and employability

However, with North Africa dominated by Islamic religion, some strict Muslims see body art as unholy. It is difficult if not impossible to obtain data on the level of acceptance in Africa, even though body modification is seen especially among the younger generation. However, Nigeria is reported to have its younger population accepting and wearing VBM. Ezeibekwe et al. (2016) believes body modification have been widely consumed among cultures in Nigeria with majority being the youth. In other parts of Africa, like the Ko tribe (Burkina Faso), Yoruba tribe (Nigeria) body modification has metamorphosed into different forms of scarification, which is seen as part of their traditional practices (Brooks, 2017).

It will be unfair to talk about body arts without making reference to other cultures that upheld the practice. Body arts appear to be thriving in the United States as well, and this is as a result of social media's propagation. A survey from the US conducted by Statista in 2015 on people's attitude towards body art revealed that 54% did not perceive any difference between body modified and non-body modified when it comes to deviance. In addition, 40% stated they see body modified person as more deviant whereas 6% stated they did not see them as deviant (Statista, 2015).

Evidence from studies conducted gives an indication that perception towards body art in the Western world has improved compared to some three decades ago (e.g., Ankirskiy, 2014). In New Zealand, body arts are generally accepted, and Pacific/Maori body art seems to become a very common preference in the world. However, there still are instances when tattooing is frowned upon, such as the incident when a woman was dismissed from an interview for a hostess position at Air New Zealand because she had a body art with a Maori motif on her forearm ("Air New Zealand", 2013, para. 1). The perception of the general population, especially the older population is that they do not have a relaxing attitude towards traditional body art (Tokyo Times,

2013). On the other hand, the younger generation of the Japanese seem to have a more positive and relaxed stance on body arts. A survey conducted by Ankirskiy (2014) indicated that the majority of Japanese respondents are not wearing body art and do not have the intention to acquire one.

### ***2.2.2 VBM and experiences of stigma, prejudice and discrimination***

A noticeable theme in VBM research has been the negative consequences suffered by persons with VBM. Research on VBM has indicated how persons with VBM mostly suffer from stigma, prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Ellis, 2015; Timming, 2015). There seems to be some level of outright disapproval of VBM at all levels of endeavor. In a sample obtained via 'Mturk', Zestcott, Tompkins, Willimas, Livesay and Chan (2018) reported negative implicit and explicit attitudes towards person with VBM. Negative attitudes were associated with incompetence, less warmth and negative evaluation. Related to these negative attributes is perception of potential threat of violence on part of the perceiver. Again, Timming and Perrett (2017) in their study compared various forms of body art genres and realized that body art depicting nudity and violence was related to lower levels of trustworthiness, whereas those depicting floral and tribal genres had the highest level of trustworthiness and neutral stance on stance of trustworthiness respectively.

Contrary to the generally held view, using 14 colleges and universities from the United States, Totten, Lipscomb, and Jones (2009) reported both negative and positive attitude associated with persons wearing VBM. Although majority of the respondents did not have any negative perception about VBM, they believed that society portrayed persons with VBM negatively. Totten et al. (2009) however reported that over 40% of respondents had some form of VBM which possibly could be the reason for the perception. Interestingly, even though expected

## VBM and employability

of such a population, younger respondents saw VBM as aesthetically appealing compared to older respondents. In addition, majority of respondents agreed that VBM should be done in moderation and denounced the assertion that VBM is connected to drug abuse, promiscuity and bad image. These experiences of stigma, prejudice and discrimination that persons with VBM go through are not only limited to the society but to the work environment as well.

Some studies have reported that persons with VBM experience discrimination at the workplace during the process of recruitment, evaluation and promotion. Summers et al. (2018) reported key findings that lead to stigma within organisations. Personal characteristics like VBM, obesity, sexual orientation, and religion are seen to be stigmatizing and may result in unequal access to opportunities within organization. In line with this argument, Arndt, McCombs, Tolle and Cox (2017), revealed that dentists were less likely to employ hygienists with VBM. The major concern of these hygienists as reported was the impact VBM will have on the image of the profession.

Beyond these studies that have been discussed, there have been outstanding authors who have also offered current literature to the subject matter in relation to the experiences of body modified persons. One of such authors is Andrew Timming. Timming (2015) adopted a qualitative approach to understand the experiences of hiring managers and VBM respondents. The study reported that VBM constitutes a major setback in an applicant's chance of being hired with themes relating to the negative acceptance of VBM. Thus, employees or job applicants adorned with VBM suffered prejudice and stigma as a result of their VBM. Interestingly, the study also reported other themes played a role or affected one's possibility of being hired. For example, he stated that the type of industry, type of VBM, genre of the VBM and whether the job is a customer facing type of job. Similar to Timming's work, Ellis (2015) in his work on

## VBM and employability

VBM explores the experiences of VBM employees and potential VBM applicants via an online discussion platform. Narrating issues in relation to job search and experiences at work, it was found that recurrent in the discussion were issues of prejudice, stigma and discrimination. Considering the nature of prejudice and stereotype that body modified employees and potential job applicants' experience, some studies have distinguished between customer facing and noncustomer facing jobs to help understand how some jobs are receptive to VBM.

In what seem to be a mixed reaction, Fountain-Jagodzinski (2014) was to examine stereotypes within the context of enlistment into organisations. The study explored the perspectives of hiring managers and contrasting those perspectives with current court cases and corporate culture or policies. To understand the hiring managers' perspective of the issue, interviews were conducted and the perspective showed that most of them were indifferent (had neutral stance), thus hiring managers were neither liberal nor conservative about the issue of VBM at work. Nonetheless, if a decision is needed to be made where employees would have to expose their VBM, hiring managers often sided with conservative perspective.

In contrast, Barrett and Aspen (2009) attempted to design a quantitative study that sought to understand the perception of professional hiring managers in offering jobs to VBM applicants. Even though the interview process entails an adherence to conservative professionalism during the recruitment process, it was reported that hiring managers would hire persons with VBM. In addition to this revelation, hiring managers disagreed that persons with VBM were abnormal, criminals, mentally ill, lesbian or gay and had low economic status.

### ***2.2.3 Type of job (customer and non-customer facing)***

To this end, the literature is inconclusive regarding the impact of VBM on employability. Recent scholarly efforts have been directed at understanding the conditions under which an

## VBM and employability

individual with VBM may be employed or otherwise. Studies in this regard mostly examine whether the effect of VBM on employability varies depending on the type of job. Researchers have thus, distinguished between customer-facing roles and non-customer-facing jobs.

Drawing from studies (e.g., Ikonen, 2017; Swanger, 2006; Timming, 2015), in customer facing roles, employees have face-to-face contact or relationship with customers, for example bank teller, bar tender, filling station attendant etc. On the other hand, in noncustomer facing job, employees do not have direct contact with customers. Some examples of noncustomer facing jobs are kitchen staff, workers in the manufacturing sector etc.

In relation to issues of job effect, Swanger (2006) conducted an online survey to determine the attitude of hospitality industry human resource managers and college recruiters towards job applicants with VBM. In all 37 human resource managers and recruiters took part in the survey comprising human resource managers from hotels, restaurants, service businesses, and recreation center. The result showed that 26 human resource managers/ recruiters (86.7%) expressed a negative attitude towards applicants with VBM whereas 3 (10%) had neutral feelings. However, only one participant (3.3%) had a positive attitude towards VBM. Similarly, Timming, Nickson, Re, and Perrett (2017) conducted an experimental study on the hirability ratings of prospective job applicants in a customer facing and a non-customer facing job. Paramount to their study is the hirability or selection ratings of body modified persons and the study revealed that there were lower ratings for body modified persons applying for customer-facing jobs. The study also revealed that body modified faces had lesser rating compared to the non-tattooed or pierced pictures shown both in terms of jobs that employees have direct contact with customers and non-customer-facing jobs.

## VBM and employability

Contrary to these studies, Timming (2016) after conducting the study on the experiences of hiring managers and body modified persons in 2015, set forth to explore the effects of body modification as form of “branded labour” in customer facing jobs using mixed methods research design. Surprisingly, the results indicated that body modification serves as a positive feature of organisations especially when the target group is the younger generation. One phenomenal contribution of this study according to Timming (2016) lies in the fact that it integrates two fields of study (relationship marketing and employee selection) to understand reverse prejudice and the importance of VBM to organisations. The difference in perception and acceptance of VBM has also been attributed to age of the perceiver.

The millennial generation seems to be more tolerant of VBM. Perhaps this could be as a result of the popularity of VBM as they see it to be trendy and dismiss the stereotypes that come with it (Ankirskiy, 2014). Ellis (2014) posits that regardless of whether all individuals from the same generation and society, people do not have same perception about VBM, the age of the perceiver can have huge impacts. In his work on customers impression of visible art employees and to determine whether their perception varied based on the age of the rater, type of work and whether the rater had visible body art or not, Dean (2010), using a quota sample of age-grouped subjects recorded their perceptions of the suitability of visible arts on service personnel in nine different occupations; white and blue-collar (supermarket representative, stockbroker, bank loan officer, nurse (RN), accountant (CPA), bartender, barber/hair-stylist, dentist, and auto mechanic) as well as their inferences about VBM people on five personality traits (intelligent, artistic, honest, rebellious and attractive). Dean (2010) reported that there exists a difference in white and blue-collar job when comparing younger and older participants. Older respondents have an unfavourable opinion about body art service providers compared to younger respondents. Older

## VBM and employability

respondents differed on six out of nine occupations on the appropriateness of VBM on service providers, thus, overall, VBM on white-collar employees were perceived as unsuitable whereas similar VBM on blue-collar employees were viewed as appropriate. Both young and old respondents and VBM versus non-VBM believed that financial services employees should not wear VBM. Moreover, older subjects held the opinion that VBM persons are less intelligent, less attractive, less honest and more rebellious than non-VBM persons.

Following his findings in 2010, Dean (2011) again sought to explore how young people perceive VBM on white-collar service provider jobs, specifically tax service providers. Using textual scenario to a sample of university students aged 18-24, subjects responded to questions regarding the appropriateness of employee appearance, confidence in the ability of the service provider, satisfaction with the service, and likeliness to recommend the service provider to others. In contrast to earlier study (i.e., Dean, 2010) that the younger generations have some level tolerance to VBM compared to the much older generation, this study proved otherwise. The young (18-24 years) sample considered visible body art on a tax service provider to be very inappropriate, and therefore held significantly less confidence in the ability of the body art versus non-body art employee. Satisfaction with the service (across three levels of outcome) was significantly lower in the VBM employee scenario (as compared to the non-VBM employee), and subjects were significantly less likely to recommend the VBM service provider, even when their services was favorable.

### ***2.2.4 Gender differences in perception VBM***

Gender arguably plays a role in VBM acceptance and marginalization. Depending on one's socialization, object in life assume masculine and feminine features as a result of stereotypical views that males and females have. For example, males are generally perceived as

## VBM and employability

strong and risk takers whereas females are seen as compassionate, caring and communal (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). These stereotypes for males and females are therefore translated into how people perceive VBM based on gender norms as to what is accepted and unaccepted.

Nevertheless, studies on gender difference in VBM have been quite inconclusive. Some studies have found significant differences in male and female in terms of the pictures to be rated and rater's gender such that in some cases women obtain favourable ratings compared to men, whereas in other cases, men report favourable ratings. In addition, there were some studies where there was no significant difference in the ratings. These inconsistencies could be due to methodological artifacts of studies such as manipulation of data to favour either males or females that examined gender differences in perception of VBM.

For example, Brabant and Mizer (2010) examined differences between male and female undergraduate students' perceptions of VBM in a work setting. The study reviewed connection between VBM and future employment. Overall, it was found that female college students compared to males perceived VBM to be a threat to their future employment. Similarly, Antonellis, Berry, and Silsbee (2017) in their qualitative study of how interview screeners view applicants with body modification found interesting responses related to physical appearance of job applicants with VBM, location and meaning of VBM. The study used data collected from a professional social media human resource management discussion board in an effort to account for what people think of body art and the employment interviewing screening process. The study included a total of 578 participants. The discussion post included a colour photo of a woman in a short sleeve dress shirt with her arms exposed and her skin covered with full colour tattoos sitting in a chair. Responses emerging from the theme indicated that 33% of females and 67%

## VBM and employability

males view body arts as appropriate and acceptable, indicating a sharp difference between genders.

On the other hand, studies comparing males and females indicate inconsistent gender difference in perception of VBM. For instance, Brailler et al. (2011) examined the decision of managers to employ waiters and waitresses with VBM in the restaurant service industry. Using a survey instrument and other instrument like resumes and photographs of visible and non-VBM applicants, their study revealed that regardless of one's experience in the sector, restaurant managers would not employ job applicants with VBM as a result of the negative perception that comes with body modification. Additionally, the study revealed that gender does not affect decision of employing either a male or female body modified applicant.

Westerfield, Stafford, Speroni and Daniel (2012) sought to find how patients perceive care givers (nurses) with VBM. Employing a cross sectional survey, 150 patients were interviewed from a community hospital in the Atlantic region. Respondents were shown four set of photographs: female with tattoo on the upper arm and one without tattoo; female with nose piercing and one without; male with tattoo on the upper arm and one without and one with eyebrow piercing and one without. For each of the four set of photographs, respondents were to provide ratings on eight adjectives (caring, confident, approachable, attentive, cooperative, professional, reliable, and efficient) based on the photographs. Upon analysis, the study's results gave an indication that both male and female caregivers with VBM are viewed as less caring, confident, approachable, attentive, cooperative, professional, reliable, and efficient compared to their non-VBM photographs. Thus, in effect the study found no gender difference in relation to VBM.

## VBM and employability

Drawing on two samples of undergraduate students, McElroy, Summers, and Moore (2014) found that gender of the applicant had no influence on employability ratings of individuals with facial piercings. In other words, employability ratings of male applicants with facial piercing did not differ from those of their female counterparts.

Furthermore, using scenario-based experiment to explore the gendered effects of VBM on customer reaction, Baumann, Timming, and Gollan (2016) reported factors that affect customer's perception in terms of sex of VBM face, job type (job context) and the stimulus type (the presence or absence of VBM). In the first scenario of their study, a case was made of a doctor (surgeon) with a VBM both male and female (with supporting photographs of eight control faces, eight stimulus faces and eight diversionary faces presented randomly) and one is asked to rate them on a scale of 1-7 how likely one would like to be their doctor. Similarly, the second experiment had the same procedure but respondents were to rate how likely they would make that person (mechanic) with or without VBM to fix their car. Results indicated that overall, faces with VBM scored lower compared to faces without VBM. In the same way it was found that female faces with VBM scored lower compared to male faces with VBM, giving an indication that gender is of much importance than the presence of VBM in this context. In addition, the surgeon had a lower rating compared to mechanic.

### ***2.2.5 Critique of literature***

The studies reviewed so far have shown how VBM is perceived in the society and the work environment. In addition, most studies have revealed how VBM can be a stumbling block to employability. Some of these studies have also shown that in situations where it is permitted, then it must be concealed, or may be dependent on the industry or whether the job is customer facing or non-customer facing.

## VBM and employability

These findings from studies on VBM even though useful by in some aspect lack important facet which needs to be explored. VBM being a preserve of certain cultures serve as a form of identification and power, in modern times this has changed drastically. Extant literature that have been reviewed have drawn our attention to the fact that VBM is often misconstrued with criminality, gang and prostitution. These negative perceptions are well grounded in stigma and prejudice literature. This negative perception is not different in the work environment as well. Many studies have also shown that VBM can be a major setback to organisations and therefore managers are not willing to employ persons with VBM especially when the employee has direct contact with customers (Brallier et al., 2011; Swanger, 2006; Timming, 2015). However, few of the studies have confirmed otherwise claiming that persons with VBM compared to persons without VBM do not have worst labour outcomes (Timming, 2016). In addition, some studies have also confirmed that manager's perception were as a result of protecting the goodwill of the organisation and the customer (Dean, 2010). Apparently, nuances in these studies may be attributed to the methodological variations across studies. Whereas some studies have described scenarios only to capture one angle of the different dimensions of the study, they fail to address the other side of it. For example, possible perceptions could be attenuated by the type of job, and gender as well. Therefore, in obtaining an accurate picture, studies must also look at the both sides of the issue. Thus, in addressing these nuances, studies must create scenarios that capture customer facing and non-customer facing jobs, and male and female interaction effects. The present study looked at the various factors in order to determine the interaction effects among them.

Again, most of the studies reviewed have not examined the effect of new or trendy forms of piercing (e.g. nose rings) that may be a useful variable to study especially in the Ghanaian

## VBM and employability

context. Undeniably, evidence from studies show that various forms of piercing may suggest different degrees of nonconformity or unacceptability of VBM depending on the cultural background one may be coming from. However, even though Westerfield and Stafford (2012) explored nose piercing, this condition was only for the female photograph whereas the male photograph had eyebrow piercing making it difficult to make a comparison when genders are involved.

In addition, in relation to the first critique, none of the studies have explored the combined effect of tattoo and piercing. Timming et al. (2017), asserts that exploring the effect of both piercing and tattooing is important to understand the wider range of body modification. In the present study, it was therefore necessary to combine both piercing and tattoo to see its effect on people's perception. Perhaps the effect of this combination of VBM may be different from a single VBM which is mostly common in the studies that have been conducted.

Furthermore, another important facet which has been overlooked in extant literature is the moral and cultural influences that affect people's perception of VBM. VBM has evolved across different parts of the world. Although different studies have been conducted in different geographical areas, it fails to add how culture can influence one's perception. Arguably, morality and culture play an essential part in our lives. The effect of these two elements cannot be underestimated in one's life as they may have an effect on the development of values in life. For example, one's beliefs, values and social influence may determine how he or she perceives VBM.

### 2.3 Research questions

The study was an exploratory study involving two phases. The first phase of the study was a qualitative study of the employment and experiences of people with VBM as well as interview with recruiters. This study was guided by four overarching research questions:

1. How do people with body modification assess their employment chances?
2. How do people with body modification perceive their body modification?
3. How do recruiters perceive the employability of people with VBM?
4. What factors shape the perception of recruiters on the on the employability of candidates with VBM?

### 2.4 Statement of Hypotheses

The second phase of the study a quasi-experimental study on employability ratings of people with VBM. This phase of the study was tested the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Photos job applicants with tattoo, piercing and both tattoo and piercing will obtain lower ratings than applicants without tattoo, piercing and both tattoo and piercing

**Hypothesis 2:** Ratings for female job applicants with VBM (i.e., tattoo, piercing and both tattoo and piercing) will be significantly higher than male applicants with VBM (i.e., tattoo, piercing and both tattoo and piercing).

**Hypothesis 3:** Ratings for candidates with VBM (i.e., tattoo, piercing and both tattoo and piercing) applying for noncustomer facing roles will be significantly higher than ratings of candidates with VBM applying for customer facing roles.

## 2.5 Operational definition of terms

**Visible body modification (VBM):** is any form of tattoo or piercing (alteration) which can be seen or observed on any part of the body (usually face, hand, neck etc.) even when one wears a dress.

**Visible tattoo/ tattoo:** a tattoo is any drawing that can be seen or observed on any part of the body (usually face, hand, neck etc.) even when one wears a dress.

**Visible piercing/ piercing/ multiple piercing:** any form of alteration in the skin (ear, nose, lip, tongue, and eyebrow) which can be seen even when one wears a dress. In the case of men (who are not supposed to wear earrings) a single earring constitutes piercing. On the other hand, more than two earrings constitute multiple piercings for women.

**Customer facing role:** these are jobs where employees (workers) have direct contact (relationship) with clients or customers, for example receptionist, waiters, bank tellers/ cashiers, marketing and sales executives etc.

**Non customer facing role:** these are jobs where employees (workers) do not have direct contact (relationship) with clients or customers, for example kitchen staff of a restaurant, chef, and central back office staff of a bank.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter presents the methods adopted in the study. The research consists of two main phases: Study I and Study II, where different research approaches were employed in each phase. Study I was the qualitative phase where people with VBM and recruiters were interviewed and study II is the quantitative phase where Master of Business Administration (MBA) students were asked to rate pictures of people with VBM. This chapter presents the research design, participants, inclusion and exclusion criteria, materials and instrument, procedure for data collection, strategies employed in analysing data collected for each study. The chapter ends by explaining how pertinent ethical issues were addressed in the research.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a concurrent mixed-method approach. According to Tashakkori and Creswell (2007, p.4), in a mixed-method research “the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study”. Mixed method research generally obtains viewpoints from multiple sources in order to address an issue or a research problem. The reason for using this type of design, borrowing from Morse (1991, p.122), was “to obtain different but complimentary data on the same topic”. Moreover, it is argued that results from the use of two or more methods is deemed more appropriate and “enhances our beliefs that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact” (Bouchard, 1976, p. 268). According to Patton (2002) with this approach, the nuances in the methods (both qualitative and quantitative methods) would be addressed or catered for (as cited by Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Thus, mixed methods

## VBM and employability

research provides strengths that will offset the weaknesses in both quantitative and qualitative methods (essentially both methods play complimentary roles).

Most studies on VBM in the organizational psychology literature have been predominantly quantitative and only a few have employed mixed methods (e.g., Timming, 2017). This might perhaps be as a result of the nature of the different approaches and the pros and cons each may bear. In social science, quantitative experiments unlike qualitative do not occur in the natural environment and therefore do not give respondents the opportunity to give more details to questions asked (Carr, 1994). On the other hand, it can be argued that absolute reliance on qualitative method can be time consuming and costly. Besides one major concern that most researchers have raised is the issue of validity and reliability of qualitative data. As a result of the subjective nature of qualitative approach and the involvement of the researcher, results obtained are often not replicated (McLeod, 2017).

In the present study, the use of mixed method was considered useful to answer the research questions being asked. Considering the limitations in previous studies and the limited number of studies on the perspective of recruiters and persons with VBM, the qualitative approach made it possible to explore the experiences of recruiters and individuals with VBM. The quantitative approach, on the other hand, made it possible to examine the broader perception of VBM and its impact on employability. Thus, the adoption of a mixed-methods approach made possible to address the research questions from multiple perspective or to enhance the significance of a singular perspective. Other reasons for combining qualitative and quantitative data were to develop a more complete and deeper understanding of the problem of VBM at work, to develop a complementary picture of findings and also to triangulate findings. Triangulation is the process of collecting data, reporting findings using more than one method to

## VBM and employability

explain a phenomenon. By this means data is cross-validated and information is obtained from different perspective of the same topic. In addition, it provides illustrations of context for trends or to examine experiences along with outcomes (Plano Clark, 2010). In each of the studies, separate approaches (research designs) were employed. In the next paragraph detailed explanation of the various approaches that were adopted are given for Study I and II.

In Study I, a qualitative research design was used. Qualitative research is any kind of research that leads to findings not arrived by means of statistical approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Thus, the focus of qualitative study lies on understanding experiences. The choice of the research methodology depends mainly on the nature of the research question. For rather an explorative study like this part of the study, qualitative seem to be the suitable option. The phenomenological approach in qualitative studies was adopted for this study. In qualitative research, phenomenological studies explore the lived experiences of people through in-depth description of the phenomenon which is mostly obtained via interviews. This type of research approach is mostly used when there is little knowledge about the phenomenon (Donalek, 2004). Phenomenologists describe what participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Cresswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). Phenomenological studies involve a combined textural and structural account to express the essence of the experience (Cresswell et al., 2007). This approach was appropriate to understand the everyday experiences of persons with VBM by employing a face-to-face semi-structured interview. This strategy allows for the study to generate rich comprehension of persons with VBM and recruiters and permits probing for deeper understanding of the phenomenon of VBM.

The second phase of the research, Study II, was a quantitative study and it adopted quasi-experimental design. Quasi experimental research designs test causal effects. Quasi experiments

test how treatment actually caused the observed differences in the dependent variable of interest. A quasi-experimental design by definition lacks random assignment; assignment to conditions (treatment versus no treatment or comparison) is by means of self-selection or administrator selection. In this circumstance, it was difficult to tattoo confederates whose faces were used in the experiment considering ethical reasons. Specifically, the non-equivalent group (post-test only) quasi-experimental method was adopted. The present study adopted a  $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 4$  mixed factorial design. There were four independent variables: gender of the respondent, gender of the photo (applicant gender), type of job, and type of VBM, with respondent gender and type of VBM being between-participant variables and applicant gender and type of job being within-participant variables. Respondent gender (male vs. female), applicant gender (male vs. female), and type of job (customer-facing vs. non-customer facing) each had two levels, while type of VBM (no VBM, tattoo, piercing, and both tattoo & piercing) had four levels. In the next section details of participants, instrument/materials, procedure for data collection and method of analysis are presented separately for Study I and II as they involve different approaches.

### **3.2 Methods for Study I – Qualitative Phase**

#### ***3.2.1 Participants***

Participants used for Study I were recruiters in the Greater Accra region as well as persons with VBM. Recruiting agencies have recently become major channels through which many job seekers get employed in Ghana. Obtaining an accurate figure is difficult, however, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are over one hundred employment agencies (recruiters) in Ghana and each is specialized in a particular aspect of employment. Some recruit for local companies whereas others for multinational organizations. Thus, recruitment agencies might have some encounters with job applicants who have some form of VBM. It was also necessary as

## VBM and employability

a new area to explore (which most of the studies have not done) their perspective of what employers look out for in a candidate. Currently, there are more than 17 licensed agencies located in Greater Accra (Kuatsinu, 2015). Greater Accra (the capital city of Ghana) arguably has the largest location of businesses and organizations to which some recruiters offer services. Consequently, it was appropriate for such a study to be done in the capital city where most of recruiters are well established.

Sixteen recruiters were selected for this study. Upon a Google search of recruitment agencies in Ghana, it was possible to have recruiters' business location and contacts. In all, 30 recruiters were contacted for the study. The main means of contact was through e-mails, phone calls and visitation to the office by the researcher in order to formally introduce the study to the prospective respondents (recruiters). The decision on the number of participants for the qualitative phase was guided by recommendations by Smith and Osborn (2007) as well as previous qualitative studies on VBM. Eventually, at the point of interviewing 16 participants, saturation had been achieved. By saturation, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006, p.65) operationalize the concept as "the point in data collection and analysis when new information produces little or no change to the codebook." Most scholars claim that the most important factor to consider when contemplating about sample size determination in qualitative is to result to saturation (Mason, 2010). For example, Timming (2015) conducted interview with 15 hiring managers and 10 VBM respondents. Again, Timming (2016) conducted 20 qualitative interviews with managers, VBM employees and potential customers.

One strategy used for selection of participants was the purposeful sampling technique. Purposeful sampling usually involves identification and selection of people who have experience and knowledge in a particular area of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clarke, 2007). Purposive

VBM and employability

sampling technique is a nonprobability sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses respondent due to the characteristics that the respondent possesses (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). As Patton (2002) rightfully noted, purposive sampling is mostly used in qualitative studies to select participants who have rich information about a particular phenomenon. There was the need to select participants who have knowledge or experience about recruitment and were willing to communicate experience and views on the issue of VBM at work.

On the other hand, as part of the participants for study I, sixteen (16) persons with VBM were also interviewed. These persons include people who had visible tattoos and multiple piercing on their face. For legal reasons, age limit was considered before one was allowed to partake in this study. It was considered prudent that participants must be of working age, thus eighteen (18) years and above. With respect to the technique for data collection for persons with VBM, initial leads were made which resulted in personal introduction to VBM respondents by friends and some recruiters. Subsequently, a snowball sampling technique was employed to identify other respondents. This non-probability based process of convenience sampling, whereby one respondent refers the researcher to another, is a well-established method in qualitative research. The snowballing technique was adopted because the participants for this study were a hard to reach or rare population (Henry, 1990). On the other hand, recruiters with two years of experience were selected for the interview. It was expected that at least with a minimum of two years of work experience most recruiters might have come into contact with VBM applicants.

Table 1 and Table 2 depict the demographic data of recruiters and persons with VBM respectively in Study I. As shown in Table 1, majority of the recruiters were males (9) representing 56.25 %, whereas there were 7 females representing 43.75%. The age range of

VBM and employability

recruiters was between 26-55 years ( $M = 34.25$ ,  $SD = 9.48$ ). The years of experience of the recruiters was between 1-15 years ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 4.14$ ). In all there were more Christians (93.75%) than Muslims (6.25%). As shown in Table 2, 11 (68.75%) of the persons with VBM were females and 5 (31.25%) males. Persons with VBM were mostly Christians, belonged to various ethnic groups, and indicated varying profession. The least level of education was Junior High School (JHS) and highest was masters. Interestingly, majority of participants, who were females, reported having multiple piercing. The age range of these participants was between 18-37 years ( $M = 28.19$ ,  $SD = 6.50$ ).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of recruiters

<i>NO.</i>	<i>ID</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>Years of experience</i>
1	ALJ	32	Male	Christian	HND	4
2	BYF	26	Male	Christian	HND	2
3	ERA	26	Male	Christian	Degree	2
4	GhH	28	Female	Christian	Degree	2
5	HJ	26	Female	Christian	Degree	2
6	AfB	29	Male	Christian	HND	3
7	OIC	28	Female	Christian	Degree	1
8	JB	31	Female	Christian	Degree	5
9	JIG	55	Male	Christian	Degree	15
10	KU	36	Female	Christian	Degree	6
11	LG	31	Female	Christian	Masters	10
12	PLA	55	Male	Christian	A-level	10
13	PIC	40	Male	Christian	Degree	11
14	REC	36	Female	Christian	Degree	8
15	ROPS	27	Male	Muslim	Degree	3
16	TPN	42	Male	Christian	HND	8

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of persons with VBM

<i>NO</i>	<i>ID</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Level of</i>		
						<i>Education</i>	<i>VBM Type</i>	<i>Profession</i>
1	AI	18	Female	Muslim	Yoruba	Degree	Multiple piercing	Student
2	AJ	26	Female	Christian	Guan	Masters	Multiple piercing	Student
3	DN	34	Male	Muslim	Nanumba/Chamba	SHS	Both tattoo and piercing	Building contractor
4	DB	19	Male	Christian	Ga	Degree	Nose piercing	Student
5	DL	23	Female	Christian	Ewe	Degree	Multiple piercing	Student
6	FT	37	Female	Muslim	Ga	JHS	Both tattoo and piercing	Beautician
7	HT	22	Female	Muslim	Gonja (Guan)	Degree	Nose piercing	NGO/Petty trading Pharmacy assistant and
8	IS	28	Female	Christian	Akan	Diploma	Multiple piercing	Beautician*
9	JS	34	Female	Christian	Fante	SHS	Both tattoo and piercing	Petty trading/ cook
10	KJ	37	Female	Muslim	Hausa/Ga	SHS	Multiple piercing	Factory assistant
11	KO	38	Male	Christian	Akan	SHS	Both tattoo and piercing	Artist/designer
12	KUD	30	Male	Christian	Akan	SHS	Both tattoo and piercing	Barber
13	RA	21	Female	Muslim	Tamale/ Gonja	Primary	Multiple piercing	Koko seller
14	RI	29	Male	Christian	Ga	Degree	Both tattoo and piercing	Cook
15	RT	28	Female	Christian	Akan	SHS	Tattoo	Dancer
16	ZU	27	Female	Muslim	Busanga	SHS	Both tattoo and piercing	Beautician

### **3.2.3 Instrument/ Materials**

An interview guide was used in collecting data for the study. Qualitative interview guide was useful in this study in order to describe the meaning and understand the core themes in the experiences of the participants. Basically, it was useful in getting the story behind the research respondents' experience where it was impossible for a questionnaire (an instrument) to measure. Since Study I consisted of different participants, there were separate interview guides for both recruiters and persons with VBM.

The interview guide was developed from the broader set of research questions that needed to be answered by the study. The interview guide for recruiters had questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 (as shown in the appendix) which were preliminary questions that served as an introduction prior to asking of questions that were directly linked to the research questions. Critical to the research question that was addressed by the study are questions 5, 6, and 7 which sought to understand the impression/ perception recruiters have about VBM and factors that affect their perception. As part of probing further and obtaining a broader understanding of the subject matter, Questions 8, 9, and 10 were asked to explore recruiters' experience with job applicants with VBM. On the other hand, for persons with VBM, the initial set of 6 questions for the interview guide asked was to obtain background information of the respondent. These questions (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12) were developed from the research questions of the study focusing on their experiences over the years.

Other useful materials that were used for the study include pen, book (field note) and tape recorders for data collection. These materials were used to complement audio-taped recordings. Many researchers often complement audio-recorded interviews with the use of note taking (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The importance of field notes in this present study as Sutton and Austin

VBM and employability

(2015) argued was to observe critically and take notes on impressions, behavior, nonverbal cues and environmental conditions that cannot be captured through the audio-recording. This process of note taking took place simultaneously during the interview. It provided contextual information to the interpretation of recorded data and helped in reminding of situational cues during analysis of data.

***3.2.4 Data Collection Procedure***

Following approval from the Ethics Committee for the Humanities (ECH) at the University of Ghana, an introductory letter was also taken from the department of psychology. Copies of the introductory letters were sent to the selected recruitment firms to seek approval and gain access to conduct the study. With respect to individuals with VBM, after personal introduction from friends, details of the study were elaborated. Also, they were given a copy of introductory letter.

After relationship was established with recruiters and persons with VBM, appointments dates were set for the interviews. Prior to conducting the interviews, further and more elaborate explanation was provided about the nature of the study once more. In order to clear all doubts, respondents were given the opportunity to ask questions before the actual interview begins. In addition, respondents were made aware that the conversation was going to be audio-recorded. In a few cases where participants declined to have interviews recorded, written notes were taken of the interviews. Once rapport was established and doubts cleared, respondent was asked to sign a consent form for both participation and tape recording (one to be kept by the respondent and the researcher keeps the other copy). Upon completion, recorded data was stored in file (with password) in order to ensure the participants' confidentiality of responses. Interviews were conducted at the various offices of recruiters and for VBM applicants the researcher had to travel

to their homes and in some cases their place of work. In both cases (recruiters and VBM persons) interviews lasted between 30-40 minutes.

### ***3.2.5 Data analysis***

Thematic analysis was used in analysing the qualitative data. Thematic analysis as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting of themes within data. Thematic analysis extends further than simple word or phrase counting to analysis that involves “identification and description both implicit and explicit ideas” (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012, p. 10, as cited in Fugard & Potts, 2015). Thus, thematic analysis provides a valuable analytical tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed account of data. In order to do an analysis of qualitative data, Braun and Clark (2006) outlined six steps that researchers must follow. The present study went through all the steps outlined in order to search for themes for data analysis. The six steps are: familiarization with the data obtained, generating initial codes from the data, searching for themes, reviewing of themes, defining and naming themes and finally reporting on findings.

The first step involved a familiarization process where the researcher familiarized himself with the data and this was done through listening attentively to the audiotaped interviews and through repeated reading in order to find meaning and patterns. Immediately after thoroughly listening to the audio, transcription was done. Generating initial codes was the next step after the researcher had familiarized with the data. At this point in the study, initial codes were developed and this was done by writing notes and highlighting on the texts in order to identify patterns within data. Codes are “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998 p.63). Ensuring validity in research is something that is commonly done during entire research process

VBM and employability

from data collection to analysis (O'Connor & Gibson, 2003) especially in qualitative studies. Meanwhile, Huberman and Miles (1994) have stressed the need for code checking in order to ensure reliability of codes and one way this was done in the present study was to make a comparison of coded data to that of a colleague teaching assistant who had knowledge about how coding is done. During the process, interesting codes were discovered by both the researcher and the colleague coder. In addition to interesting facts that were discovered, there were some narrations which departed from the dominant story but were not ignored during coding (thus, close attention was paid to these departed narrations).

After codes were identified, searching of themes began and this involved organizing all codes into potential themes. Thus, there was sorting of various coded data (codes) into potential themes and collating all relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. In addition, analysis of codes was done to determine which could form a predominant theme. Essentially important at this phase was the use visual representations which helped in sorting out the different codes into themes. Moreover, the name and a short description of each of the generated codes was written in the field note and organized in theme-piles. After relationship was established between codes, themes and different levels of themes, it was realized that some were fit to be main themes, whereas others as sub-themes. However, it was observed that some codes needed to be discarded. Even though some codes were worth discarding, a temporary theme 'house' was created to house group of codes that neither belonged anywhere but acceptable to create a theme in the future.

The fourth stage involved refinement of themes after a cluster of themes had been devised. However, it was discovered that some themes were not themes as they were initially thought to be whereas others eventually merged into other themes. Other themes that looked

complex and large were then broken down into individual themes. This phase of the analysis was made up of two levels. The first level involved reviewing of the coded data extracts of each theme and this was done through reading again coded extracts to see if it formed a coherent pattern. At the second level there was the need to ensure the various themes appear in tandem with the entire data set that is collected and whether the thematic map actually represents the meaning as provided in the data. Again, at this stage, even though coding had already been done it was necessary to look out for additional data that were not coded initially in the various themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that coding and generation of themes is an unending process in the course of analysing data. After this process a fair idea was gained about each theme and what part of the story it explained.

Immediately after reviewing themes, the reviewed themes were defined and named and it started when there was a convincing map of data that was gathered. Defining and naming themes implies explaining what each theme was about and directing each theme to the aspect of the data it captures. At this point, there was the need to identify essence in the themes by defining and refining what facet of the data it captures. Each theme was accompanied by interesting and vivid narration of a story in relation to the research questions. This was to ensure that there was not too much overlap among themes. During the refining of themes, the study discovered sub-themes which were part of the broader theme and were useful in organizing large themes and illustrating the importance of meaning within the data. Sub-themes are themes within a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, sub-themes are specific themes within a larger theme and they tend to have similar characteristics of broader or mother (main) themes.

Finally, a report was done after themes were fully identified. The final stage begun when there was a full set of well-established themes and the final analysis and write-up of findings in

relation to the study's research questions. The analysis provided as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the data within and across the various themes established in the course of analysis. In addition, the report provided not just a narration of events but compelling story about the data and it included analytic arguments and discussions which reflected the core objectives and research questions.

### ***3.2.6 Bracketing, reliability and validity of findings***

Validity in qualitative studies is about the accuracy of results from the researcher, participant, and the readers account (Creswell, 2003). Reliability on other hand is relates to transferability of findings, thus reliability can be achieved through transparent process. It is suggested by Williams and Morrow (2009) that there are three major ways trustworthiness can be ensured; integrity of data, balance between reflexivity, and clear communication of results. The study employed all these strategies to enhance integrity. Steps were taken to avoid biases, for instance, the researcher brings to bear his idea of possible effects of body arts on employment and its negative implications. In the course of coding, the researcher generated codes which were independent of the second coder to allow for comparison. In the final analysis, this study is the outcome of re-written drafts that sort to ensure analysis was grounded in the data.

In qualitative studies, the researcher is arguably the basic unit for analysis (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The values and beliefs of the researcher indirectly influence how data is gathered, analysed and interpreted (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Bracketing as a method in qualitative studies is a way by which a researcher suspends his or her biases, assumptions, and expectations in order to give an accurate account of a phenomenon. Starks and Trinidad (2007) posit that researchers must be honest about their pre-existing thoughts and engage in the process of bracketing throughout the process from data collection to analysis in order to ensure validity

## VBM and employability

and credibility of the findings. In the present study, the researcher having preconception of the issues surrounding VBM and work, employed bracketing to address possible thoughts of VBM and develop an unbiased perspective of the phenomenon. One way this was done in the present study was to ensure utmost honesty in the course of coding and subjecting the coded extracts to comparison from a second coder.

### **3.3 Methods for Study II – Quantitative Phase**

#### ***3.3.1 Participants: study II***

Participants for study II were graduate students from the University of Ghana Business School, University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) and the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). In all, the sample consisted of 240 graduate students. With this sample it was expected that some of the participants have acquired substantial experience and might be at the middle level of their career. As such one of the criteria for selection into the program is that one must have at least five years of working experience as a middle or top (senior) level manager.

In addition, a statistical power analysis was done to obtain the sample size estimation. The effect size in this present study was .25 which is considered to be adequate enough using Cohen's (1992) criteria. With an alpha of .05 and power of .99, the estimated sample size needed with an effect size is approximately  $N = 104$  participants for a between/ within group comparison. The study used a sample size of 240 which was more than adequate for an analysis to be conducted.

In all, the study involved equal number of males and females; thus 120 males and 120 females were used for the study in order to ensure that data was not skewed to the disadvantage of a group and to ensure comparison between males and females. Dillman (as cited in Needham,

Vaske & Vaske, 2008) recommends sample size determination using a sampling error of 5%, hence, 196 respondents are acceptable to run analysis. Previous studies have also used similar number of respondents. Thus, the sample size is consistent with previous studies that have been done. For example, Brailer et al. (2011) used 192 managers, Timming (2016) used 192 respondents and again Timming (2017) used 182 respondents. The sampling technique adopted is the convenience sampling technique. With this in mind, the researcher decided to choose respondents as result of the closeness and accessibility to the researcher.

### ***3.3.2 Demographic characteristics***

Table 3 depicts the demographic characteristics (gender, religion, managerial level, qualification, age and working experience) of Study II participants. The total number of participants for Study II was 240. There were equal number of males and females; 120 each. Majority of the participants were Christians, thus 220 representing a total of 91.7% of the sample, with only 2 participants (representing 0.8%) belonging to other religions. There were 94 participants (representing 39.2% of the entire sample) having experience at the middle-managerial level whilst 91 participants representing 37.9% held junior ranks with the rest of 55 participants (22.9%) being at the senior level of their career. Out of the 240 participants, 130 had a postgraduate degree (54.2%), 104 (43.3%) had an undergraduate degree and 6 participants (2.5%) had other professional certification. The age range of participants was between, 22-57 years old ( $M = 32.57$ ,  $SD = 7.25$ ) and they their working experience ranged between 1-30 years ( $M = 8.07$ ,  $SD = 5.96$ ).

**Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants**

Characteristics	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Min–Max
Sex			
Male	120 (50%)		
Female	120 (50%)		
Religion			
Christian	220 (91.7)		
Muslim	18 (7.5)		
Other	2 (.8)		
Managerial level/rank			
Junior	91 (37.9)		
Middle	94 (39.2)		
Senior	55 (22.9)		
Education			
Undergraduate degree	104 (43.3)		
Postgraduate degree	130 (54.2)		
Other	6 (2.5)		
Age		32.57 (7.25)	22-57
Years of working experience		8.07 (5.96)	1-30

*N* = 240

### 3.3.3 Instrument/ materials

For the purposes of data collection, an instrument was developed to assess the ratings. In the instrument, a scenario was created where a male and female job applicant who both meet the requirements of a vacant position. In the instruction, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how likely they are to employ based on the photo they see in both customer and noncustomer facing roles. Colour photographs (3.51 cm width × 4.50cm length) of a woman and

## VBM and employability

a man who are in their late 20s were used. Two photographs (male and female) were taken and used for the experiment. Each face was photographed with neutral expression at a 0° angle under similar lighting for both sexes. As it is usually done in face perception experiment, the photographs were standardized to promote comparison between the two images. The photos were manipulated using Photoshop to design the tattoo of a dragon-like image retrieved from the internet. The tattoo image was placed on the right side of the neck. On the other hand, for the nose piercing, a ring was stuck into the nose before the photo was taken. Both male and female photos had similar conditions because using different tattoo and piercing could have the tendency of creating a confound into the experiment. Thus, in all eight faces were used for the study, four faces for the male and four for the female. Aside the main/control faces (no tattoo or piercing), the photos were tattoo only, piercing only and both tattoo and piercing for both male and female.

### ***3.3.4 Procedure for study II***

In study II, data was collected from graduate students. Instrument for the experimental study was counterbalanced to include pictures of both VBM individuals and non-VBM individuals (male and female). Pictures used in the questionnaire were solicited from course mates (friends) of the researcher. The instrument includes the same two people; these two individuals provided written consent for the researcher to use their photo for the study.

After formal introduction of the researcher and study, the following steps were followed. First, participants were thanked for volunteering. Next, the purpose of the study was explained. Respondents were told they were going to answer questions about some pictures. Thus, they were asked to rate how likely they would hire each person on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = less likely to hire and 10 = more likely to hire. Participants were asked if they had any questions

## VBM and employability

before the questionnaire was given out. If they had no questions participants were then given the questionnaire. The instrument for data collection was distributed in a way that participants were placed in either one of the four experimental conditions (control, tattoo, piercing and both tattoo and piercing) randomly. Each of the experimental groups represented the different forms of VBM, and then in each group participants were instructed to rate a male applicant and a female job applicant for customer-facing and non-customer facing role based on a scenario that was created. The scenario was about a male and female job applicant who have applied for the same job and given that they both qualify for the position, one is expected to rate them based on what they see. Once this was verbally explained, they were asked to read carefully before they appended their signature on the consent. Upon completion of the questionnaire, it was placed in an envelope provided. This was to ensure confidentiality of participants' responses. Study II took place at the classrooms of each of the schools and it took approximately 15-20 minutes to administer.

### *3.3.5 Method of analysis*

Prior to analysis, scores of the various conditions were added to obtain total scores for each condition in order to make it possible to run analysis. Mixed design analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypotheses. The mixed design analysis of variance typically compares means of different groups that are grouped in between and within group subjects of different levels. Thus, employing a  $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 4$  design, this was how the matrix looked like: gender of picture (2 levels- male vs. female)  $\times$  gender of rater (2 levels- male vs. female)  $\times$  type of job (2 levels- Customer vs. non-customer facing roles)  $\times$  type of VBM (levels- control vs. tattooed vs. pierced vs. both tattooed and pierced). Hence, analysis was appropriate because there were

## VBM and employability

one or more repeated-measures independent variables, and one or more between-group independent variables (Field, 2016).

### ***3.3.6 Pilot study***

Prior to the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). A 10% of the projected sample size is suggested for determination of sample size for the pilot study (Treece & Treece, 1984). Hertzog (2008) also made several recommendations for sample size depending on the purpose of the pilot study in her recent and comprehensive article. For a feasibility study, her recommendations were, “samples as small as 10-15 per group sometimes being sufficient” (p. 190). Hence, 10% of the actual sample size was used for the pilot study for study I. The 10% resulted in 2 participants for recruiters and 2 participants for VBM persons.

In addition, prior to the actual pilot study for study II, another pilot test was conducted. The main purpose of the pilot test was to ascertain the extent to which the tattoo and piercing was visible and to establish whether there exists any difference in the ratings of male and female photographs. A total of 80 students (40 males, 40 females) participated in the pilot test from the University of Ghana from the various halls of residence with each participant belonging to only one of the eight conditions (groups). They were asked for participation, through random assignment into the various groups. In all there were 10 participants to each group.

A 13-item adjective scale was developed for the pilot test, photographs of both male and female was obtained with different conditions (control condition, piercing, tattoo and both piercing and tattoo). Thus, in all, there were 8 photographs; 4 male conditions and 4 female conditions. The scale asked participants to critically observe the photograph and rate it based on the adjectives provided on a 7-point rating scale. Color photographs (3.51 cm width × 4.50cm

VBM and employability

length) of a 28-year-old woman and a 27-year-old man were used. The faces (both male and female) for the experiment were the no tattoo nor piercing face, a tattoo on the neck, a pierced nose (nose ring) and both tattoo and piercing.

After it was established that there exists no significant difference in the ratings of male and female photographs, it laid the foundation to conduct the main pilot study. This pilot study was also necessary to test the photos that were used. The purpose of the pilot study was to establish whether there was a difference in the ratings of customer facing and noncustomer-facing jobs in the various conditions. Forty participants were obtained from undergraduate students of the Department of Psychology (University of Ghana) offering Industrial and Organisational (I-O) Psychology as an elective course. The purpose of using undergraduates offering I-O psychology was because they were easily accessible. In addition, this category of people had an introductory course in selection and placement during last semester and therefore it is expected they have an idea about what pertains in recruitment and selection; participants were tested in their classroom. In a briefing, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and further questions were asked and clarified. Based on recommendation as cited above (e.g., Hertzog, 2008; Treece & Treece, 1984), 16.67% ( $\approx 17\%$ ) of the actual sample size was used for the pilot study. Participants signed an informed consent and were told to complete the materials. Participants were assigned to one of four groups. With the help of three research assistants, questionnaires were randomly distributed with a predetermined order of conditions to reduce or eliminate the possibility of participants sitting next to each other to view the same photograph.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

In accordance with American Psychological Association (APA, 2002) Ethical Code, the study was guided by ethical principles in the use of humans as participants for any research. First and foremost, the purpose of the study was explained to participants both in words and writing. Thus, respondents in this study were allowed to carefully read the informed consent and append their signature (thumb print) if they agree to participate in the study. Also, in the case of the interviews, consent was sought from participants in order to use audio recorders to record information. In situations whereby respondents were not comfortable with the audio recording, their rights were respected. However, in such cases where audio recording was not done, extensive note taking was carried out.

In addition, in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, participants were under no circumstance tagged with their responses. Information shared by these respondents was strictly confidential and thus, information (audio recording) kept under a password. Assurance was given that information under no circumstance will be released or shared with any third party and that the purpose of this study was for academic use. Respondents were assured that any information given would be kept in a secured docket for which only the researcher would primarily be the person to have access.

Moreover, participants were assured that the study does not contain any procedures that would cause them pain or discomfort; however, they may experience some reflection of experiences they might have gone through as a result of their VBM (in the case of interviewing people with VBM). Participation in this study lasted for about 30-40 minutes in the case of study I and for study II, it took less than 15 minutes to administer. Even though the study was not designed to benefit participants directly, participants were assured that it was going to give an in-

VBM and employability

depth understanding of what pertains in the Ghanaian context (looking at the fact that Ghana has a different cultural setting from what pertains in the Western world) and this might affect human resource and organizational policies.

In addition to the general ethical consideration that was considered, study II had a peculiar ethical consideration since it was an experiment and that participants faces were involved. Thus participants (male and female) involved were course mates of the researcher who were confronted and briefed about the nature of the study. Upon confrontation, participants were given enough time (two weeks) to think about using their faces for the experiment, after which they consented through signing for their faces to be used. This was to allow them to ponder over the risks of the study so as not to sound like they were forced or they acted out of their own will.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### 14. Overview

This chapter presents findings of both qualitative (study I) and quantitative (study II) separately. First to be discussed is qualitative findings followed by the quantitative results. It also includes preliminary analysis of findings and descriptive statistics as well for Study II. As both studies involved different approaches, it required that different analyses were conducted for separate studies. The findings are thus presented below.

#### 4.1 Findings of Qualitative Study (Study I)

As stated earlier, the qualitative data from both recruiters and individuals with VBM were analysed using thematic analysis. Four main themes emerged from the data. These include attitudes towards VBM, experiences of having VBM, VBM as a constraint to employment, and conditions for hiring people (job applicants) with VBM. The first two themes reflect separate narratives from recruiters and individuals with VBM, while the remaining two themes reflect narratives from both groups of participants. The labels given to the emerging themes in this study were carefully selected to reflect similar themes seen in other studies, by this way comparison can be easily made. As the purpose was to explore the main themes among the pool of data, verbatim quotations were provided to illustrate each theme and subtheme extracted from the various groups.

##### 14.5.3 *Attitudes towards VBM*

This theme mainly draws on narratives from only recruiters. The theme reflects both negative and positive attitudes held by recruiters towards body art and individuals with VBM. The analyses indicate that participants' attitudes toward VBM were largely negative. This is

VBM and employability

demonstrated by majority of recruiters expressing the view that VBM is indicative of a negative personal character. Specifically, a number of recruiters linked VBM with behaviours such as prostitution, drug use, being part of gangs, and crime in general. Having a VBM, to a number of the recruiters, provided an initial impression of a person's possible association with such behaviours, which they considered as negative. For example, one said: *"...It's bad; it's bad, it's named with bad... negativity which is not good..."* (Respondent 8, recruiter). The view that VBM reflects a bad personal character is further illustrated by the following quote:

From my time of university, I've never seen anyone with a lot of piercing and tattoo having a good character. Generally, when you see them, you know even the way they move about you can tell that this person is... has a bad attitude or something.  
(Respondent 3, recruiter)

Further, two recruiters associated VBM with being "wayward" and "irresponsible". One remarked that: *"People generally see it as linked to gang, criminals and prostitution, so if you have it that's how you are seen"* (Respondent 5, recruiter). The other recruiter also made a similar assertion saying that:

...We are in a Ghanaian society and our appearance speaks a lot about us. So, someone with a tattoo, there is this mentality that this person is either a criminal or an irresponsible person. (Respondent 7, recruiter)

Another recruiter, who studied Agricultural science in secondary school, viewed the act of body modification as totally absurd and believes it is a preserve of animals. He noted:

I studied Agricultural science and I know tattooing started from animals ok, so if you are a normal human being, as a rational human being I don't know what will trigger you to maybe go do something like that. (Respondent 6, recruiter)

## VBM and employability

Additionally, recruiters' perception of VBM was mostly drawn from religious or moral values. In a sample where most of them were Christians, about 9 related VBM by making reference to their Christian beliefs. Specifically, most of them considered it as forbidden, evil, sinful, and against church and moral values. For example, one said:

Morality... I don't think so and from which point of view are you talking... in Christianity, tattoos are forbidden. On moral grounds, it is never accepted! Like I said earlier, it is never condoned from where I come from. (Respondent 1, recruiter)

Similarly, one recruiter believes it is solely his Christian belief that makes him think in that direction. He posits: *"My church is against it, because I am an assemblies of God and my family, they are a stunt Christian."* (Respondent 2, recruiter)

Moreover, cultural issues were also dominant in relation to VBM. Majority of the recruiters described VBM as culturally unaccepted and that it constitutes a taboo in some cultures. In other words, most recruiters saw VBM as alien to most sub-cultures in Ghana. Recruiters' expressions on the unacceptability of VBM were mostly situated within the beliefs and norms of their various ethnic groupings. For instance, one recruiter who described himself as an Ashante, bemoaned how the practice of VBM is highly unacceptable and seen as a taboo for Kings or royals (a highly revered institution). This expression of unacceptability of body modification is illustrated below:

As I said it is not something that is in our culture. With our cultural values people with these things (VBM) are seen as bad and they don't understand our culture. Myself I'm an Ashante and Akan and in our setting probably it wouldn't be prudent for a king to have a tattoo, why because it is a respected institution and it is not accepted! (Respondent 1, recruiter)

## VBM and employability

In a similar voice, another recruiter said that: *“My culture (Ga) doesn’t accept it. I don’t think Ghanaians encourage that.”* (Respondent 5, recruiter). The views expressed by these different recruiters give the general perception of how different cultures abhor the act.

In spite of the negative expressions from some recruiters, others expressed various kinds of positive views related to the VBM. These positive views are personal choice, ambivalent expressions and cultural acceptability of VBM. With respect to personal choice, majority of recruiters explained that VBM is an expression of one’s identity and personal preference and that it is never related to anything negative like criminals as perceived by society. For example: *“...I mean it’s your body you choose what you want to use it for, it’s up to you.”* (Respondent 4, recruiter)

Similarly, another recruiter posited that:

I just mentioned it. I think it’s a personal preference for everyone you know, in general it depends, maybe you might have a tattoo here that just doesn’t look okay but I don’t have any personal preference on it. It’s your body so you do to it what you want... (Respondent 10, recruiter)

In some few cases, recruiters expressed VBM as being culturally accepted in some tribes in Ghana. Juxtaposing VBM with traditional practices like tribal marks and writing names on the skin, they believed that VBM is a cultural phenomenon which has evolved over the years. Recruiters’ claim of favourability of VBM was to make the point that it is not something that is new and that it was part of our culture. The following quote supports this claim:

...but you know something funny, do you know that when we were kids, if you look in your...ethnic groups, they do natural tattoos [tribal marks]? Have you heard about that? So, it becks on the question that you just asked. It’s a form of tattoo!  
(Respondent 9, recruiter)

VBM and employability

Similarly, another recruiter noted emphatically making reference to an ethnic group that practice traditional body arts. Even though he is not a member of the ethnic group, he claims it is a practice where children are tattooed before they grow up. He noted that:

Culturally yes! It is possible there is someone who had the tattoo on the skin by their parents and its accepted as a way by the society but not everyone likes it. For instance, in Ghana, the Gas tattoo their names before they grow up by their parents during... (Respondent 15, recruiter)

Additionally, in what seems to be a liberal opinion, several recruiters expressed their thought of VBM. Describing persons with VBM as more fun and sociable and agreed not to have any negative thoughts of VBM. Apart from the positive views expressed, recruiters asserted not being judgmental. This expression of positivity was expressed as, *“My personal impression is more of a fun person, a social person! ...I just don’t have any judgmental sentiments.”*

(Respondent 5, recruiter)

While expressing opinions about body art, about three recruiters made mention of the fact that they had or had previously worn a body art. *“I have tattoos, am not judgmental.”*

(Respondent10, recruiter). For this recruiter she has a tattoo on her body (not visible though).

The second recruiter also had a belly piercing and the third had multiple ear piercing. Even though they see it to be an expression of one’s identity, they believe it is part of life transition.

Once you grow to some age you stop wearing it. Interestingly, this was also imputed by the recruiter’s background or exposure to the Western world. Thus, in all about six recruiters had lived in UK, US or Europe, hence, their perception. For example, one of them said:

...well maybe my background is one of the things, but for your information I grew up in Ghana I was born and raised in Ghana and I left for the UK at the age of 20 so

## VBM and employability

I have had the both ends of it and for me having a piercing for me I don't I don't judge... (Respondent 14, recruiter)

### 14.5.3 *Experiences of wearing VBM*

Considering the views that recruiters have about VBM, it was also necessary to examine the experiences of persons with VBM as well. This theme specifically draws on narratives from persons with body art only. The theme connotes prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, social approval and disapproval as experienced by people with body art. This is illustrated in the results which showed that persons with body art experienced varying forms of dislike. A number of them cited instances where they were prejudiced as a result of their body art. In many cases they were misconstrued in different or negative manner. One respondent said:

...usually it happens with guys, because they feel like you are a bad girl, they treat you in a certain kind of way. Like they have certain conversations with you which I feel like it is inappropriate but because they feel like "oh if she has multiple piercings... (Respondent 2, person with VBM)

About six respondents also reported cases of discrimination resulting from their body art. These respondents reported that in some cases they were being treated in a negative way. The voice below illustrates a situation where one was discriminated because of her body art:

So, I went, I wanted to get pizza and I ordered before some other two people, I was talking to the woman, she was not really minding me...she just left and talked to the other people, and they were about my age. So, she served them before she came back to me. (Respondent 1, person with VBM)

In addition, conceptions of VBM as reported by respondents with VBM were mostly a reflection of an overgeneralized perception people have about them. Specifically, most of them reported situations where people perceived them in a negative manner. Some examples of this

VBM and employability

negativity are being seen as wild, bad girl and lesbian. For example, one of them said that: *“Oh I mean you get the occasional “Eii you are a bad girl!”* (Respondent 2, person with VBM). This assertion is further exemplified in this voice: *“I have heard worse things. So people tell me I am a bad girl... I mean even my mum asked me if I was a lesbian.”* (Respondent 4, person with VBM)

In what seem to be an outright disapproval, almost all the participants agreed that society disapproves of body art. This disapproval either came from family, friends or the society in general. For example, one respondent said:

I remember the first time I came home from school and my mum saw it. That day, I remember very well! I didn't sleep at home because my dad was going to kill me. My father is wild ooh ...” (Respondent 11, person with VBM).

This voice of a young man who had returned from school with a body art gives an example of how body art is rejected by his family as a teenager who came from school. In other scenarios, this was how respondents cited VBM was disapproved: *“My mom per say, she doesn't like it at all, she doesn't like it, she frowns upon it. Other people in my family also frown upon it.”* (Respondent 8, person with VBM). Another also said that, *“I have a friend who doesn't like it. Like she will say “Aisha take it off” ...and she will be telling me about the bible...”* (Respondent 1, person with VBM)

However, despite this societal disapproval, some experienced or expressed societal approval from friends, family members and sometimes the general public. A number of respondents cited receiving positive comments and compliments and, in some cases, people getting attracted to them because of their VBM. One of the respondents said that *“Well I am lucky that my fiancée's parents had no problem with it.”* (Respondent 9, person with VBM). In some few cases, approval was even obtained before one had to get the VBM. For example, one

## VBM and employability

lady said: *“Okay before I did it, I asked my mum and she said she was cool with it, so that also pushed me to go ahead with it... if my mum is cool with it, why not?”* (Respondent 5, person with VBM)

### 14.5.3 *VBM as a constraint to employment*

Discussions from both recruiters and VBM respondents led to similar themes that emerged from both sides which explained that VBM constitute major setback when it comes to employability. This theme draws on narratives from both recruiters and persons with VBM. For persons with VBM, half of the respondents agreed that VBM constitute a major constraint in organisations. These constraints enumerated by respondents were related to unacceptability in the work environment and a problem for customers. One agreed that: *“I can be denied the job, yes I think”* (Respondent 15, person with VBM). The view that VBM is a constraint to employment is further illustrated by the following quote:

Our community especially Africa, it is not easy at all with tattoos. So, if you want to do a tattoo make sure that you have a personal work but if you don't have a personal work, I swear to you that you will suffer. Nobody is going to take you for work.  
(Respondent 3, person with VBM)

Majority of the VBM respondents had their personal business; however, the few who worked in formal settings narrated how they were sometimes badly treated by customers. One of them indicated that:

...a customer walked in and was like “where is your boss?” My boss came out and was like what's going on and the customer was like “why is your girl dressed like this, she is so beautiful why is she having multiple piercing and you are not talking?” (Respondent 8, person with VBM)

## VBM and employability

Most of the recruiters also reported an outright rejection and unacceptability of body arts within organisations. The qualification of the argument that body arts affects one's employability is that some employers view body arts with prejudice and do not seek to engage individuals with body art, regardless of one's experience and qualification. Some recruiters had these to say:

It is not accepted in the work place to show it, period! If someone is showing it, it's probably because they didn't know or they weren't aware of but we do not really show it in the work place. (Respondent 10, recruiter)

Well I will say that tattoo and piercing do not help people to get employment maybe the person is very good, a university graduate but you have visible tattoo and organisations do not accept that so maybe there is an opportunity for you but because of that thing (VBM), it will prevent you from getting that opportunity, so it is not advisable for people to have visible tattoos and piercing. (Respondent 3, recruiter)

In addition, the reason for outright rejection was due to the fact that body art is destructive in the work setting for co-workers as expressed by some recruiters. Meanwhile, not only is it a destruction for co-workers but employees seek to protect their image by not employing people with body arts as they believe it might affect their relationship with customers. The voice below connotes how the customer factor plays a role:

The customer first of all is going to be difficult clients won't be comfortable because we all grew up with that perception. They wouldn't like it even if it's here at Jobberman they wouldn't like it that the client walks in and sees a receptionist with a tattoo. (Respondent 8, recruiter)

### 14.5.3 *Conditions for hiring people with visible body modification*

Discussions from both recruiters and VBM respondents led to similar themes that emerged from both sides which explained the conditions under which persons with VBM can be

VBM and employability

considered for employment. Thus, this theme is drawn from both recruiters and persons with VBM to explain how VBM can be accepted under some circumstances. These narrations were centered on factors such as industry effect, type of job, competence of the VBM applicant and concealment of VBM. However, one of the subthemes was solely based on views of the recruiters, thus, clients' requisition or approval of job applicant with VBM.

Recruiters apart from perceiving body art as bad believed certain industries are receptive of VBM. This assertion is evident in the sample of recruiters. Specific industries were mentioned that did not really require paying much attention to VBM. For example, some of these industries were the hospitality, fashion and creative, manufacturing, advertising, construction and information and communication technology sectors. For these recruiters, in the above-mentioned industries, the work environment suits persons with VBM better as they may in some situations have customers with similar appearance. This view is illustrated by the quote below:

...But there are some positions I don't care, I remember last time, I was doing a recruitment for a bar attendant, and one guy came, he had a lot of tattoos, I gave him the job looking at the fact that the industry where he is going to work is okay with that. But I cannot employ someone for an accountant with tattoos... so the environment suits him, because he will be meeting a lot of people with the same nature... (Respondent 2, recruiter)

This recruiter who shortlisted a VBM person for a bartender role believes that people who enter the bar are of the same or similar characteristics, hence, customers will not have any problem with someone who is seen as an 'in-group' member. Thus, in industries where clients are demographically more inclined to be body modified, potential employees may be chosen to reflect that in-group characteristics. In the similar voice, one recruiter said:

## VBM and employability

It depends on the industry you are recruiting for. If I'm recruiting someone for a manufacturing, if you have a tattoo that is not relevant but an institution like a bank... (Respondent 12, recruiter)

Similarly, persons with VBM contended that some industries accommodate body art. One of them shared his experience of how he has worked under different employers with his body art in an advertising firm. He noted: *"As for them...like I'm saying, I've worked with four people, four different companies and I left on a good note...the other ones were advertising where I was doing graphic designing. As for advertising, it's different..."* (Respondent 16, person with VBM). For this particular respondent, all her career has mainly been in the entertainment sector and as such feels comfortable in that sector where one is allowed to display body art. She posited that: *"Well, all my employments have been around entertainment, so they don't see anything wrong with that because it is accepted in the entertainment world."* (Respondent 9, person with VBM)

Closely related to the industry is the type of job that was prescribed for persons with body art. While talking about the industries that were suitable for persons with body art, a number of them described particular jobs. In other words, most recruiters found body art to be acceptable when hiring for back office or noncustomer facing jobs as opposed to frontline roles. For example, one of the VBM respondents said: *"...yeah... back office and my supervisor never complained about it"* (Respondent 5, person with VBM). Commenting further on this, one narrated that:

It will be back office job because organisations do not accept those things...as in their employees having tattoos facing customers, as in visible ones that customers can see and visible piercing. It should definitely be back office or a factory work. (Respondent 3, recruiter)

## VBM and employability

The call for recruiters to overlook physical appearance and focus more on applicants' abilities and competences is something that widely echoed from both sides of the discussion. The analysis revealed that 8 of the recruiters believed VBM should not be the basis upon which a job applicant should be disqualified. Their point of reference in most cases was the qualification and the experience that the person brings on board. In what seems to affirm his support for competence over VBM, this is what one recruiter has to say:

...As I'm saying, you know it's not important to me because I have programmers and all those things who are supposed to be 'deepy', they work on my website and all that and so I don't have the time to even worry about the person's tattoo. I'm more worried about how good the person is and capable of doing work on my website for me... I would love to hire someone with a tattoo if the person is very very good at what he does and he definitely fits into my corporate environment, I will take him... (Respondent 9, recruiter)

Thus, visible body art is irrelevant in job search and that provided job applicant with body art has the knowledge, skills and competent enough to execute tasks, he won't look any further than to employ the person. In addition, VBM persons also sided with views expressed by recruiters in considering competence over VBM. In exploring whether VBM will be a hindrance in employment, majority of them disagreed, implying competence is what matters at the end of the day. One of respondent who operates a restaurant said: "*Naah! It shouldn't. I don't see why it should. Is it my piercing that I am going to use to work? No, it is my mind; you need my brains, my intelligence not my tattoo*" (Respondent 9, person with VBM). Moreover, it is also worth noting that for some body art respondents who have worked before or are in the process of pursuing their career, the story is not different. An instrumental part of this is the fact that these persons know their worth and trust that their ability speaks more than their body art. For example, one of them said:

## VBM and employability

...because I believe that when I open my mouth and speak you know how intelligent I am. Sorry, I am not blowing my horns but yeah. So, if you can't see pass that then it speaks more about you than it does speak about me. One thing about my piercings is that it doesn't change my qualification. (Respondent 2, person with VBM)

In addition, for about 4 of the VBM respondents who had work experience, they claimed that their body arts were not much of a problem to their employers and co-workers especially when it is concealed or covered in most cases. This experience for them corroborates what other recruiters shared, not to say it is accepted but it should be concealed in order not to destruct others. For example, one said that:

Ok if I'm to employ someone with a tattoo ok, then it means the tattoo shouldn't be visible. For instance, if it's on the person's arm and the person will wear a long sleeve to cover it or maybe the person will wear a long sleeve to cover it before even coming for the interview fine that's. I'm cool with it. (Respondent 6, recruiter)

As stated earlier, sometimes the decision to recommend a VBM applicant also depends in the clients (employers). As such these narrations were obtained from recruiters only. In instances where the recruiter was left with no option, especially in situations where the VBM applicant was the most qualified, recruiters had to consult their clients for further advice as to whether they will be comfortable with someone with VBM. This notion shared by recruiters is illustrated in the voices below:

...we consider but first of all we have to talk to our client and say okay we got someone who is qualified but he or she has tattoos or piercings, we will talk to the client if he or she is comfortable enough and wants the person fine, they'll hire the person. (Respondent 4, recruiter)

Every company has its own policy, some company may say you know what I don't have any problem with a tattoo or I don't want anybody with...then that's up to the company... (Respondent 9, recruiter)

VBM and employability

Overall, Study I revealed 4 main themes from both recruiters and persons with VBM. The first theme talks about the attitude towards VBM, the second theme relates to the experiences that persons with VBM face. The third theme narrates VBM as constraint in the organizational setting, and the final theme elaborates on some conditions that permit VBM to be employed. To further understand VBM in the organizational context, Study II provides quantitative results of student’s perception about VBM in the next section.

Table 4: Summary of themes and subthemes (Study I)

<b>Main themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
<i>Attitudes towards VBM</i>	Negative and positive attitudes
<i>Experiences of wearing VBM</i>	Prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, social approval and disapproval
<i>VBM as a constraint to employment</i>	Unacceptability of VBM in the work environment and a problem for customers
<i>Conditions for hiring people with visible body modification</i>	Industry effect, type of job, competence of the VBM applicant, concealment of VBM and, clients’ requisition or approval of job applicant with VBM

#### 14.5 Findings of Quantitative Study (Study II)

This phase of the study was an experimental study of people's rating of photos with VBM. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyse the quantitative data. This chapter presents preliminary analysis of the data.

##### 14.5.3 *Preliminary Analysis*

This part presents the normality as well as the descriptive statistics of the study. The assumption of normality after the analysis showed that scores were normally distributed which is a prerequisite for further analysis. According to Garson (2012), skewness should range between +2 to -2. However, others use a more flexible range of between +3 to -3. The skewness and kurtosis together with the standard deviations and means are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 5: Summary of means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis

Applicant gender /job role	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Male – customer facing	3.75	2.68	0.60	-.74
Female – customer facing	4.41	2.99	0.34	-1.19
Male – non customer facing	5.67	2.53	-.24	-.80
Female – non customer facing	6.36	2.49	-.50	-.58

*N*= 240

From Table 1, the mean and standard deviation for male candidate - customer facing are 3.75 and 2.68 respectively. For the female candidate - customer facing mean and standard deviation are 4.51 and 2.99 respectively. On the other hand, for noncustomer facing jobs male candidate had a mean of 5.67 and standard deviation of 2.53, whereas the female candidate had a mean of 6.36 and standard deviation of 2.49.

### 14.5.3 *Hypotheses testing*

Data was analysed using a mixed design analysis of variance (ANOVA) with between-subjects factor of the type of VBM (control, tattoo, piercing, and both tattoo and piercing) and gender of the rater (male, female) and within-subjects factor of gender of the photo (male, female) and type of job as between-subjects factor (customer facing, non-customer facing). Conducting of analysis for mixed design ANOVA requires some assumption to be met. In the present study the analysis indicated that the scores from the data were normally distributed. However, the assumption of Levene's test of equality of variance was violated. According to Pallant (2011) for the Levene's test to be significant, it should be greater than .05. From the data the assumption of homogeneity of variance was also violated. Although sphericity is considered an important assumption for repeated measures analysis variance, the fact that dependent measures the present had only two levels obviated the need to test for this assumption.

Table 2 reports the main effects of the study's independent variables. The main effect of the type of VBM on employability rating was found to be statistically significant,  $F(1, 649.81) = 48.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = .39$ . The mean comparisons showed that participants rated applicants without VBM ( $M = 7.49, SE = .24$ ) significantly higher than applicants with tattoo ( $M = 4.43, SE = .24$ ), piercing ( $M = 4.37, SE = .24$ ) and both tattoo and piercing ( $M = 3.89, SE = .24$ ). These results provide support for Hypothesis 1, which stated that applicants without VBM would obtain significantly higher ratings compared to applicants with VBM. However, no significant differences were found in the mean ratings of applicants with tattoo only, piercing only, and both tattoo and piercing. Thus, participants rated applicants with tattoo, piercing, and both tattoo and piercing similarly.

There was also a main effect of applicant gender,  $F(1, 108.53) = 45.47, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$ . Specifically, participants rated female applicants ( $M = 5.38, SE = .13$ ) significantly better

## VBM and employability

than male applicants ( $M = 4.71, SE = .13$ ). However, respondents' gender had no significant main effect on applicant's employability ratings  $F(1, 14.54) = 1.11, p > .001, \eta^2 = .01$ . Thus, male ( $M = 5.17, SE = .17$ ) and female ( $M = 4.92, SE = .17$ ) applicants did not differ significantly in their ratings of job applicants.

In addition to the main effects, there was a significant interaction between the type of VBM and applicant gender,  $F(3, 50.25) = 21.05, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$  as shown in Table 3. Thus, female applicant ( $M = 5.38, SE = .13$ ) was rated better than male applicant ( $M = 4.71, SE = .13$ ). Among males, the job applicant without VBM (control condition) was rated the highest ( $M = 6.97, SE = .25$ ), followed by tattoo applicant ( $M = 4.69, SE = .25$ ), then the applicant with both tattoo and piercing ( $M = 3.63, SE = .25$ ) and the applicant with piercing ( $M = 3.54, SE = .25$ ). Among females, the applicant without VBM was again rated the highest ( $M = 8.01, SE = .26$ ). The non-VBM applicant rating was directly followed by applicant with piercing ( $M = 5.19, SE = .26$ ), then applicant with tattoo and applicant with both tattoo and piercing ( $M = 4.15, SE = .26$ ), however, the difference between the last two applicants was not that big. These are illustrated in Figure 1. These results provide support for Hypothesis 2, which stated that female job applicants with VBM would be significantly higher than male applicants with VBM.

## VBM and employability

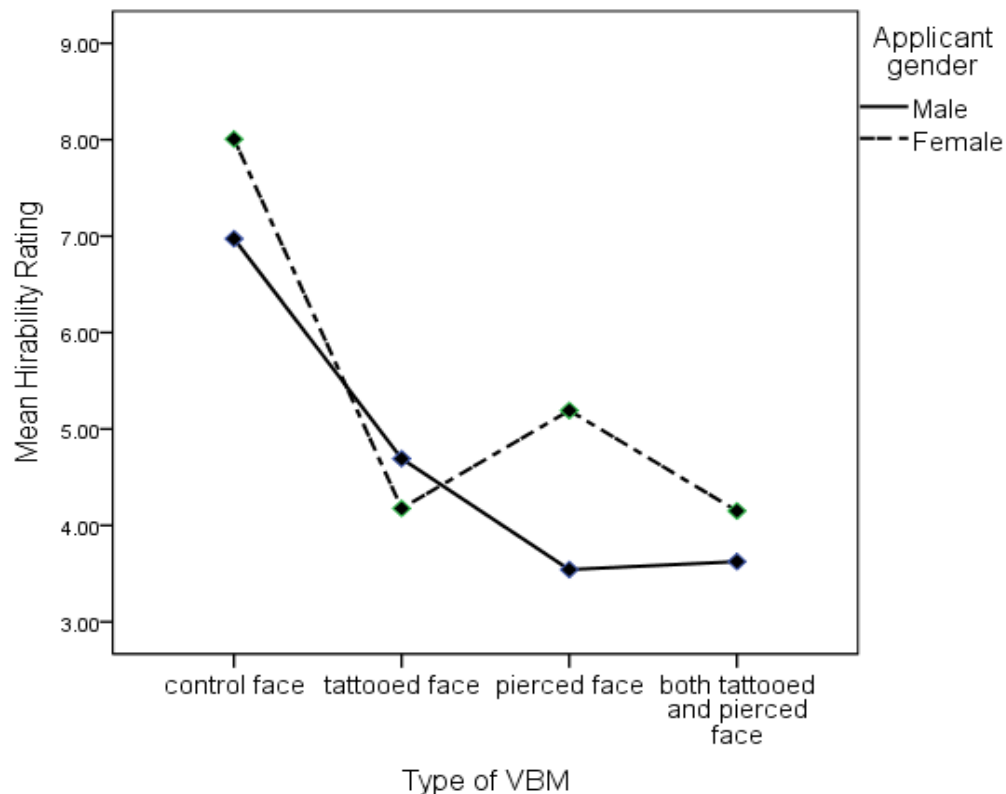


Figure 1: Interaction between applicant gender and VBM

There was also a significant interaction between VBM and the type of job  $F(3, 45.06) = 14.37, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$  as depicted in Table 4. Specifically, participants rated applicants for noncustomer facing jobs ( $M = 6.01, SE = .13$ ) better than for customer facing jobs ( $M = 4.08, SE = .13$ ). For customer facing roles, job applicant without VBM had the highest rating ( $M = 7.15, SE = .26$ ), followed by applicant with piercing ( $M = 3.33, SE = .26$ ), applicant with tattoo ( $M = 3.23, SE = .26$ ) and applicant with both tattoo and piecing obtaining the lowest rating ( $M = 2.59, SE = .26$ ). For noncustomer facing jobs, job applicant without VBM had the highest rating ( $M = 7.83, SE = .27$ ), followed by applicant with tattoo ( $M = 5.64, SE = .27$ ), applicant with piercing ( $M = 5.41, SE = .27$ ), and applicant with both tattoo and piercing ( $M = 5.18, SE = .27$ ). Although not hypothesized, there was also a significant main effect of type of job on

VBM and employability

employability ratings  $F(1, 899.14) = 286.71, p < .001, \eta^2 = .55$ . Therefore, Hypothesis 3, which stated that VBM candidates applying for noncustomer facing roles will be significantly higher than ratings of candidates applying for customer facing role was also supported. These results are further illustrated in Figure 2.

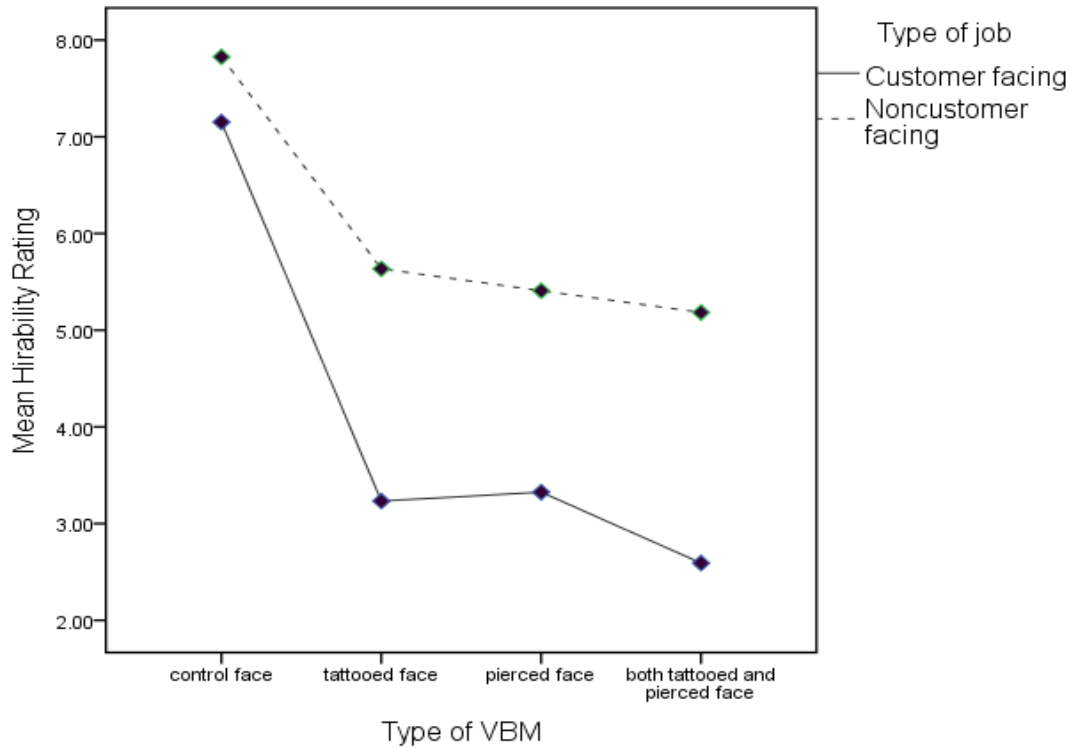


Figure 2: Interaction between type of job and VBM

Table 6: Main effects of VBM, type of job, applicant gender and gender of the rater

	Effect type	Mean rating (SE)	Mean rating difference	<i>F</i>	$\eta p^2$
VBM type	Within- subjects	Control: 7.49 (.24) Tattoo: 4.43 (.24) Piercing: 4.37 (.24) Both tattoo & piercing: 3.89 (.24)	Control vs. both tattoo & piercing = 3.54* Tattoo vs. both tattoo & piercing = .54 Piercing vs. both tattoo & piercing = .48	48.92***	.39
Job type	Within- subjects	CF: 4.08 (.13) NCF: 6.01 (.13)	1.93	286.71***	.55
Applicant gender	Within-subjects	Male: 4.71 (.13) Female: 5.38 (.13)	-.67	45.47***	.16
Rater gender	Between- subjects	Male: 5.17 (.17) Female: 4.92 (.17)	.25	1.11 <sup>ns</sup>	.01

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

\*Note: CF is customer facing role and NCF is non-customer facing roles

VBM and employability

Table 7: Two-way interaction effect between VBM and applicant gender

	Mean rating (SE)	Mean difference	<i>F</i>	$\eta^2$
Male	Control: 6.97(.25)	Control vs. piercing = 3.43	21.05***	.214
	Tattoo: 4.69 (0.25)	Tattoo vs. piercing = 1.15		
	Piercing: 3.54 (0.25)	Both tattoo & piercing vs. piercing = 0.09		
	Both tattoo & Piercing: 3.63 (0.25)			
Female	Control: 8.01 (.26)	Control vs. both piercing & tattoo = 3.86		
	Tattoo: 4.18 (0.26)	Piercing vs. both tattoo & piercing = 1.04		
	Piercing: 5.19 (0.26)	Tattoo vs. both tattoo & piercing = 0.03		
	Both tattoo & Piercing: 4.15 (0.26)			

Table 8: Two-way interaction effect between VBM and type of job

	Mean rating (SE)	Mean difference	F	$\eta^2$
Customer facing (CF)	Control: 7.15 (.26)	Control vs. both tattoo & piercing = 4.56	14.37***	0.157
	Tattoo: 3.23 (0.26)	Tattoo vs. both tattoo & piercing = .64		
	Piercing: 3.23 (0.26)	Piercing vs. both tattoo & piercing = .74		
	Both tattoo & Piercing: 2.59 (.26)			
Non customer facing (NCF)	Control: 7.83 (.27)	Control vs. both tattoo & piercing = 2.05		
	Tattoo: 5.64 (0.27)	Tattoo vs. both tattoo & piercing = .45		
	Piercing: 5.41 (0.27)	Piercing vs. both tattoo & piercing = .23		
	Both tattoo & Piercing: 5.18 (0.27)			

### 14.5.3 Summary of findings (Study I and II)

The findings from Study I (qualitative study) revealed four main themes relating to the attitudes towards VBM, experiences of persons with VBM, VBM as a constraint to employability, and conditions for permitting VBM in the workspace. In addition, all the hypotheses for Study II were supported. Thus, for hypothesis 1, job applicants without VBM obtained higher ratings compared to job applicants with VBM. Also, in hypothesis 2, female job applicants with VBM were rated higher than male applicants with VBM. Finally, in hypothesis 3, ratings for non-customer facing jobs were higher than ratings for customer facing jobs.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Overview

This study was conducted to examine the employability of job applicants with VBM in the Ghanaian context. The study was guided by four main objectives. The first objective was to examine how people rate persons with VBM and their employability. The second objective was to determine factors that drive recruiters' perception regarding the employability of people with VBM. Third was to assess how people with VBM perceive their body modification and fourth was to examine how people with VBM assess their employability. The study's objectives were addressed through a concurrent mixed-methods approach where both qualitative and quantitative phase were done simultaneously. This chapter presents the discussion, limitations and recommendation for future studies, as well as implications of the study. The chapter ends with a conclusion from the study's findings.

#### 5.1 Discussion of Qualitative Study (Study I)

This study particularly found that recruiters' perception was largely negative. Analysis indicated that majority of recruiters were not in support of VBM especially at work. This supports the studies conducted by Mendez (2016) in the United States and Sauren (2014) in Poland which indicated that body arts on the face or neck elicits negative reaction on the bearer. Employers are concerned about the image of a business and what it represents. Negative public cognitions surrounding body art individuals discourage its visibility in the work environment thus discouraging employers from hiring any person who could be seen as a risk to the company (Dean, 2011; Miller et al., 2009; Timmings, 2015; Timmings, Nickson, Re, & Perrett, 2017).

## VBM and employability

Interestingly, these characteristics of negative attitudes are attributed to the moral and cultural tenets of the recruiter (perceiver) as revealed in the study. Thus, these socially constructed conceptions of body art reflect the socio-cultural context of Ghanaians. Ghana as a religious nation abounds with a lot of cultural heritage. Researchers are increasingly recognizing the role of culture as a source of variation in many phenomena of central importance to consumer research (Kastanakis and Voyer (2014). Psychologists interested in perception have always been intrigued by cultural variations as well (Pick & Pick Jr., 1978). What this means is that for this present study, perceptions were fully grounded on recruiters' background. Religion and culture are ubiquitous across nations and one cannot undermine its influence on our perception. Studies have found consistently a link between religion and active religious practices reduce the likelihood that individuals will engage in deviant act. Religiosity affects behavior when people identify with the norms and practices of religious subculture which they belong (Brock, Cochran & Beeghley, 1987). These norms obviously emerge from core interpretations of the Bible.

Several studies have drawn upon Merton and Rossi's reference group theory (1968) to explain how associating with religious people may reduce deviant behaviour (Beeghley, Brock, & Cochran, 1990; Cochran & Beeghley, 1991). In the study majority of the recruiters were Christians and most of them made reference to religious abhorrence of VBM. As such it is therefore clear that Merton and Rossi's reference group theory better explains the behaviour or perception of these recruiters. These religious reference to groups produces conformity or resistance to deviance because they provide a context for the convergence of norms and values as observed in some churches in Ghana. It is therefore not surprising as some recruiters clearly made reference to their religious groups of worship. In line with this finding, Chan-Serafin, Brief, and George (2013) have found religion to play a salient role in organisational life. One

## VBM and employability

fundamental aspect of religion and culture is that they prescribe rules and regulations that guide one's behaviour in the society.

It is also not surprising to find that recruiters' perception was based on their background as some studies have shown that body art is a cultural and religious practice. For example, major religions have expressed negative view of body modification as a deviant act (Lin, 2002). Lin (2002) found that religion is significantly related to perception of body modification. As the finding of the present study depicts, recruiters' attitude toward religion can be associated with their perception of body art. An individual's positive attitude towards religion reflects the positive influence of religion on this individual. Major religions have been negative about body art; as a deviant activity, body art has always been associated with people such as criminals and gang members (Anderson, 2006). Therefore, non body modified individuals who may regard religion positively would be expected to be less positive about body art. Koch, Roberts, Armstrong and Owen (2004) have also shown that religious faith had a weak, negative correlation with having a body art, being interested in body art, and being likely to get a body art. Even though statistics is not available to know whether Ghanaians are more conservative, there seem to be more conservative views in relation to body art from the findings. In spite of the unavailability of statistics, survey report indicates that more than half of black people identify themselves as conservative (Bakken, 2013), hence, the study's finding of negative attitude towards VBM.

In addition, culture was found to be a dominant sub-theme that explained the reasons why VBM is not accepted. There has also been growing evidence to support that culture affects perceptual processes. These perceptual processes are also linked to how people perceive VBM. For example, in their review, Kastanakis and Voyer (2014) suggested that culture conditions perception. Kantner (1968) argues that culture affects perception and visual perception in

## VBM and employability

particular. These differences in the way people think and perceive things obviously are as a result of their way of life or their sociocultural background and that might be reflected in the way they perceive body art.

In spite of these negative expressions linked with VBM, positive attitudes were also exhibited by recruiters. Thus, it was found that body art also has positive connotation that did not necessarily mean something bad. Thus, from the findings, body art was seen as an expression of self and not related to criminality or prostitution as reported by others. Perhaps Seiter and Hatch's (2005) prediction of VBM becoming acceptable was accurate. Consistent with this study, Seiter and Hatch predicted that if body modifications continue to gain popularity the general stance towards them might become more accepting. This idea is in agreement with the commonness factor in stigma, discussed by DiPopolo (2010) which implies that the commonness of VBM has made it acceptable to some extent. In continuum, a manager interviewed by Saurén (2014) contemplated that VBM used to be a deviant act but currently, as VBM has gained popularity, they have become a part of the norm and subsequently have far less, if any, significance when assessing an individual. This explanation of commonness of VBM could be true. VBM as a practice is something that is gradually becoming common in the Ghanaian setting. This can be supported by the study's finding which revealed that some recruiters had had an encounter with persons with VBM in the past. In addition, even though there are no statistics to support the commonness of the practice in Ghana, some anecdotal evidence has found people to be wearing VBM (e.g., Van-Ess, 2013).

A possible explanation why recruiters expressed positive attitude could center on the degree of similarity between the job candidate and his evaluators, in this case similarity of VBM job applicant to the recruiter. The study reported that some recruiters (about 3) had VBM or close friends or family members had body art, hence, expressing a positive attitude. In line with

## VBM and employability

this, Orpen (1984) reported that job applicants are more likely to experience favourable outcomes when they are similar to their evaluators. In short, the applicants may have been perceived favourably because they were perceived as similar or conforming to in-group practices. This further supports the point made by Ashforth and Mael (1989) in applying identity formation in organizational settings. Thus, in particular, where recruiters are demographically more inclined to be body modified, potential employees will be chosen to reflect that in-group characteristics.

Participants with VBM in the study also reported several kinds of negative experiences including stereotypes, stigma and prejudice. Consistent with the theories of stigma (Goffman, 1963) and prejudice (Allport, 1954) wearing a VBM was seen as a viable ground for which people with VBM were discriminated. These experiences were related to stereotype, stigma, prejudice and discrimination. As a result of their VBM, they were perceived to be criminals, prostitutes and drug users. Similar to the present study, some studies have also observed a link between VBM and deviant behaviour in the following areas: binge drinking, multiple sex partners (Wohlrab, Fink, Kappeler, & Brewer, 2009), criminality, prostitution (Anderson, 2006) and accidental death (Dhossche, Snell & Larder, 2000). In the study VBM respondents also reported varying forms of stigmatization and, stereotype. This finding supports Pryor and Reeder's (2011) study on negative attitudes toward persons with VBM resulting from stigma. In addition, other studies like Martin and Dula (2010) have also illustrated negative attitude towards VBM.

Stereotypes of VBM seem to emanate from societal misconceptions about VBM. For example, Fyock and Stangor (2011) suggested that once people develop stereotypes, they are more likely to remember facts about a person if the information conforms to their prior ideas and beliefs. These stereotypes are transferred from the society and are manifested during an

## VBM and employability

employment screening process; the evaluator is more likely to identify with the candidate whose ideas and/or beliefs are aligned with the recruiter. The recruiter may also tend to resist altering his/her belief on the topic of tattoos (out group) and this resistance to alter a prior belief may result in a negative rating for the candidate with a tattoo. The recruiter may remember facts about the exposed VBM on the body or face because of a preconceived bias about VBM. Research has shown that employment candidates with VBM being assessed for employment received lower ratings by evaluators than those candidates without VBM (Ellis, 2015; Swanger, 2006).

Thus far, the wider psychological and sociocultural frameworks, as well as aspects affecting the perception of body modifications, have been discussed. The next step is to consider how the professional context and its nuances furthermore affect this perception. The study suggests that VBM poses a significant constraint on an individuals' chance of being employed. This view was strongly shared by both recruiters and persons with VBM in the study. This assertion from recruiters that body art affects one's employability is based on the fact that some employers view body arts with prejudice and as a matter of fact do not seek to engage employees with body art. In line with this, some studies (e.g., Singer, 2016; Timming, 2016) have supported this finding by revealing that VBM can be a constraint especially when one is entering the organization. As inferred from the present study, most recruiters asserted that the reasons for their outright disapproval were driven by customers' reaction. This finding suggests that recruiters' attitude was largely imputed by fear of customer's reaction. This finding is consistent with Timming's study (2015) which revealed that recruitment of persons with VBM were driven by the negative attitudes of hiring managers, and these attitudes in turn were driven by managers' perceptions of customer expectations.

To some extent certain industries require what is referred to as 'aesthetics' of the potential employee. Thus, results showed how some industries accept VBM within the Ghanaian

## VBM and employability

context. The call for recruiters to overlook physical appearance and focus more on applicants' abilities and competences is something that was widely echoed from both recruiters and persons with VBM. Jackson, Hunter and Hodge (1995) point out that bias for physically attractive people should be of concern in order not to result in disadvantage for the less attractive. Thus, in relation to VBM, caution must be taken to avoid biases that might lead to persons with VBM being victims of discrimination when they are very competent at what they do. Moreover, excluding persons with VBM from recruitment has the tendency of disallowing very qualified persons from the pool of applicants.

One of the conditions identified by respondents from both sides showed that persons with VBM can be placed in work setting where there is less customer interaction. With reports on issues related to customer satisfaction with services of VBM persons (e.g., Swanger, 2006), it was important to understand how persons with VBM are allowed in the work environment. Without being left out of the work space, many recruiters prescribed back office roles for job applicants with VBM. As a matter of fact, not all customer service is customer facing, with the emergence of technology, customer service can be thrilling via the internet (for example online customer service and call centers). This finding is consistent with Timming (2015) who found that generally employers are less prejudiced when employing for non-customer facing roles. This suggests the consequence of spatial distance to customers. As such the effect of VBM to the customer is reduced drastically.

The type of industry (industry effect) was also identified as one of the conditions for employability of persons with VBM. Respondents, especially recruiters indicated that industries like the advertising, fashion and entertainment industries were more receptive to persons with VBM. Some respondents (both recruiters and persons with VBM) also mentioned industry effect, and competence of the VBM applicant. Thus, for industries that have less regard for VBM, it is

## VBM and employability

rather a valuable asset. This asset is referred to as aesthetic labour in organisational context. This finding further support Timming's (2017) which indicated that VBM is accepted in a skateboard shop especially when the customer base is the younger and the 'edgier' type. In addition, it is therefore not surprising that Starbucks, US based coffee giant allows employees to have VBM. This sharply contradicts Swanger's (2006) finding of not allowing employees with VBM to work in the service industry.

### **5.2 Discussion of Quantitative Study (Study II)**

Using quasi-experimental methods, this study sought to test the effects of different types of VBM on the hirability of male and female job applicants. Three main hypotheses were tested in this study: first, photos of job applicants with VBM will obtain lower ratings than applicants without VBM; second, ratings for female job applicants with VBM will be significantly higher than male applicants with VBM; and finally, ratings for VBM candidates applying for noncustomer facing roles will be significantly higher than ratings of candidates applying for customer facing roles.

Regarding the first hypothesis, the analysis suggests that job applicants with VBM stand a lower chance of being employed in the Ghanaian context compared to their non-VBM applicants, thus supporting the study's hypothesis. Consistent with the theory of prejudice (Allport, 1954) and stigma (Goffman, 1963), this implies that people have a negative perception towards job applicants with VBM. This further points to the fact that one's outlook serves as a clue for drawing inference about the person. For example, Harrison and Thomas (2009) found prejudice to be common in the work setting especially during selection of job applicants. Their finding suggests how colour of the skin is considered over an applicant's work experience and qualification.

## VBM and employability

The findings of the present study also suggest that stigma was dominant in the experiences people with VBM faced. Due to the diverse nature of stigma, it is possible to say that stigma can potentially affect people. Consequently, what this implies is that many people are likely victimized in many ways and may be deprived of opportunities available. This is to say that stigma is also experienced in the work environment. For example, Summers et al. (2018) have enumerated some imputed characteristics such as facial piercing, tattoos, physical disability, obesity etc. which can be seen as deleterious within organisations. From the results it is therefore evident that VBM was categorized and conceptualized by raters. As such, anticipation of an associated behaviour is triggered or stimulated and the person with VBM is judged on the basis of these category-based expectations. In line with this assertion and the study's finding, studies like Timming and Perrett (2017), Timming et al. (2017), have also found that VBM affects peoples' chances of employment because of the impression it creates to the recruiter or the employer.

Regarding the second hypothesis, results from the study showed that female job applicants with VBM obtained higher ratings than male applicants with VBM. The effects of gender on body modification can be determined in relation to how negatively or positively it is perceived. Thus, the gender of the person wearing the body art is a significant factor. The present study's finding supports Timming's (2016) study which revealed that body arts are seen as positive effects for both men and women, however, when compared, women had more positive effects. In addition, Timming et al. (2017) again have reported that body modification has a negative effect for men compared to women.

In other words what this implies is that females enjoy some advantage over males in employment (recruitment and selection). Contrary to this finding, Baumann et al. (2016) found that female job applicants with VBM were rated lower compared to their male applicants with

## VBM and employability

VBM. In some areas of work such as academia, females have remarkably received positive evaluation and high success rates than males. A study by Van den Brink, Brouns and Waslander (2006) shows that women appeared to receive higher evaluation that was not related to work. There was also evidence to suggest that men were assessed based on merit whereas women were not. This variation between how male and female job applicants are evaluated perhaps could be explained by recent calls for equal representation of women in the workplace (e.g., The 30% Club, 2010).

In addition, the gender role theory can also be applied to the gender in the context of VBM at work. First as noted earlier, the role theory suggests people who do not conform to traditional expectations may be perceived negatively (e.g., Workman & Johnson, 1994). With regard to this study, when the male candidate wore a nose ring, he may have been perceived as violating expectations for suitable dress in social and job seeking conditions. Consequently, his image suffered compared to that of the female. Similarly, the study also showed that females were rated lower when they wore tattoos compared to their male counterparts. However, when the female candidate wore both tattoo and piercing, she was rated relatively better than the male counterpart who also wore both tattoo and piercing. This notion of gender difference in relation to VBM is consistent with both popular literature (Molloy, 1975) and empirical research (e.g., Bardack & McAndrew, 1985) suggesting that traditional appearance is the preferred style in work settings. The explanation also seems likely when one compares perceptions of the candidate wearing an earring to the candidate wearing a nose ring. Specifically, since nose rings are not common compared to earrings, a person wearing a nose ring is probably perceived as a nonconformist than a person wearing an earring in the traditional Ghanaian setting.

Moreover, another possible explanation for this outcome could be the product of a more accepting modern culture in light of the current technological age, more tolerant of androgyny

## VBM and employability

(Wohlrab, Stahl, & Kappeler, 2007). The twenty first century has brought about a current trend of tolerance, including the right to expression. Furthermore, the current millennial generation, unlike previous generations, has emerged as a socially progressive generation, making strides towards the tolerance of gender equality and sexual orientation (Ellis, 2015).

The hirability ratings for job applicants were considerably lower for all VBM photos applying for customer facing jobs compared to photos of job applicants applying for noncustomer facing jobs. Thus, the negative effect of VBM is lessened in noncustomer facing jobs, confirming hypothesis three. This finding suggests how VBM can be threatening to customers and how spatial distance to the customer is an important factor. From the study, this suggests that closeness to the customer is an important factor in relation to VBM. In line with previous findings like Swanger (2006), the study revealed an outright disapproval for employees with VBM in hospitality setting. Similarly, in a close to customer situation, patients did not find care giver with VBM as caring, professional and approachable (Westerfield, Stafford, Speroni & Daniel, 2012). The effect of this finding also confirms Dean's (2010) study of how VBM can be threatening in the professional context to customer. This possibly suggests how peoples' ratings are based on the perception that customers might have about the brand of the organization. The finding here also gives an indication of how in recent times organisations seek to protect their image and win over customers in order to make more profits. What this suggest in the study leads to issues of goodwill about the organization that they may suffer if employees with VBM are placed on the frontline representing the organisation.

### **5.3 Limitations/ Recommendation for future research**

The present study has some limitations that need to be discussed. First, this study was limited by the fact that Study II was done in the classroom setting and it was difficult to control

## VBM and employability

for factors (like being observed by other participants) that might affect the outcome of the study. Most of these experimental studies on VBM and work are done in the laboratory where photos are displayed on the screen for participants to observe and rate with little or no interference from others. However, this study was done in the classroom where it was possible for participants to influence each other.

Another limitation to this study is the possible disadvantage that most experimental studies may face. The biggest challenge is assuming real life experience conditions in the experiment in terms of the qualification and experience. Obviously, knowledge, skills, abilities and qualification are never constant in employee recruitment. Nonetheless, experimental studies like this present study can add to the extant field studies that have been conducted on the consequence of VBM on employment.

Although customer concerns seemed to be an important influence on recruiters' attitudes towards VBM, the perspectives of customers were not captured in the present study. Indeed, past research (e.g., Dean, 2010) suggests that preference or abhorrence for VBM is to a great extent driven by customers' desires. Future research should consider customers' attitudes towards VBM and the factors that shape their perception of VBM.

In Study I, most of the respondents especially recruiters made mention of the fact that tribal marks were also some form of body modification. To them since tribal mark does not elicit any negative attitude then same must be attributed to body art since both signify one's identity. Tribal marks have arguably been practiced among many cultures in Africa. The primary reason for these tribal marks is to serve as a form of identification. Tribal marks generally are known as 'zani' in Hausa and they vary from mere to deep cuts on the body or face using unsterilized sharp object. Tremearne (1911). As a preserve of some cultures in Africa, there have been limited studies on it. There is therefore the need for research to be directed towards its practice in

## VBM and employability

modern times and to know whether people with tribal marks do experience some form of prejudice and stigma in the general society and in their search for jobs or work life.

### **5.4 Implications of the study**

This study has practical implications for potential job seekers and particularly the youth. It can help people make informed decisions as to whether or not they should have VBM and also to be particular about where on the body to have it. VBM displayed on the face has a detrimental effect on employability. Body modification that is covered or concealed is generally non-threatening as reported by some recruiters. This study would inform organisations as well as people with VBM to make an informed decision as to the type of jobs and the industry they should consider in order not to decrease their prospects. To this end, organisations must advise persons with VBM to cover or conceal their VBM during interview and at work and should be aware that they have no recourse to employment protection once on the job.

Another important finding this study brought to bear is how competence (in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities and other qualities) supersedes wearing of VBM. In recent times organizations are looking out for the best employees to work with. This study should inform organisations to be cautious of their policy on appearance (thus, make flexible policies on VBM) as they may lose out important employees who have may possess the requisite skills and the knowledge to execute some tasks.

It also recommended that organisations must take steps to educate and train those involved in recruitment on the possible impact of an applicant's visible body art may have during recruitment interview, and to ensure screening is done to minimize the impact of visible body art may have on the interviewer. Additionally, employers must be careful about employees' religious and cultural background which could be a source of contention such that organisations

## VBM and employability

must be tolerant of religious and cultural customs, for example Muslim women piercing their nose and wearing of hijabs.

The study underscores the importance of physical appearance in the recruitment process as reported by recruiters. Hosoda, Stone-Romero and Coats (2003) have reported how attractiveness can serve as a determining factor in employment. This appearance formed cues are related to the trustworthiness and credibility of the bearer of the VBM. Supporting this finding, Seiter and Sandry (2003) found that candidates wearing jewellery obtained lower rating on credibility, attractiveness and hirability. It is therefore important for job seekers especially fresh graduates who are about to enter the world of work to be cautious of how they look since it has a possibility of affecting their chances.

The Ghana Labour Act, 2003 (ACT 651) clearly stipulates that persons should not be discriminated on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, social or economic status, disability or politics. This research suggests that discrimination against persons with VBM is likely taking place in organisations. But the absence of legal sanctions does not suggest that people should be discriminated. Organisations can take clue from this research by ensuring that people with VBM are protected and that measures should be taken in order not for job applicants with VBM to feel discriminated because of their VBM. As a guide it is always best for organisations to reflect on the potential legal implications that denying persons with VBM can cause them.

## 5.5 Conclusion

There is an immense measure of variables that can possibly affect the way body alterations are seen in the work settings, for example, age of the perceiver and generational difference, work industry, occupation, and position, and in addition the gender of the individual

## VBM and employability

donning body modification. From the study's findings, body modification has negative effects especially when it comes to hiring, body modification results in decreased chances of employment. This is often due to employers having prejudice against job applicants with visible body arts. Body modified persons are often seen as less credible, less attractive, unprofessional and less qualified as compared to their non-modified job applicants (Seiter et al., 2003). Moreover, these negative attitudes often stem from the fear of customer reaction, rather than being based on the managers' personal opinions as reported and further supported by Dean (2010). In such cases, where managers' decision making is based on the possible negative outcomes of the worst-case scenarios, it is probable that the organisational culture ends up being more conservative.

This above-mentioned prejudice resulting from stigmatized views can furthermore bring about many negative implications. For example, the study found that job applicants with VBM who are victims of discrimination resulted from cultural and moral implications that recruiters attached to the wearing a body art. This highlights the importance of culture and morality in the lives of Ghanaians and how it influences our everyday life.

In the addition, the study revealed how persons with VBM assess their employability. Persons with VBM underscored the fact that VBM should not be a reason why they should be denied jobs. They therefore argue that VBM serves as an asset to them in some job context where customers are more likely to be younger or have a VBM. For example, they enumerated factors like the type of job, where they felt non-customer facing or back office jobs is preferably the appropriate place for them. Lastly, persons with VBM made mention of some suitable industries that accept VBM; advertising, creative arts and entertainment.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, J. (2009). Bodies of change: A comparative analysis of media representations of body modification practices. *Sociological Perspectives*, 52(1), 103-129.
- Air New Zealand rejects job applicant over arm tattoo. (2013, May 28). *The Australian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/air-new-zealand-rejects-job-applicant-over-arm-tattoo/news-story/d8927edd73474fc6e0b68380b24f4bfc?sv=69558cbb8fda5d57effc8c47c501c612>
- Ajayi, O., & Ifeoluwa, S. (2014), *Journal of Harmonized Research in Applied Sciences* 2(4), 347-358.
- Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*/Gordon Allport.- Cambridge, MA.
- American Psychological Association. (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist*, 57, 1597-1611.
- Anderson, R. R. (2006). Commentary: Tattoos and body piercing. *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, 55(3), 422.
- Anderson, R.R. (1992). Tattooing should be regulated. *New England journal of Medicine*, 32(60), 207.
- Ankirskiy, A. (2014). *Perception of tattoos: Now and then. Japan vs. the Western World* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Antonellis Jr, P. J., Berry, G., & Silsbee, R. (2017). Employment interview screening: Is the ink worth it?. *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5(2), 38.
- Antoszewski, B., Sitek, A., Fijałkowska, M., Kasielska, A., & Kruk-Jeromin, J. (2010). Tattooing and body piercing-what motivates you to do it?. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 56(5), 471-479.
- Armstrong, M. L. (2005). Tattooing, body piercing, and permanent cosmetics: a historical and current view of state regulations, with continuing concerns. *Journal of Environmental Health*, 67(8), 38.
- Armstrong, M. L., Ekmark, E., & Brooks, B. (1995). Body piercing: Promoting informed decision making. *Journal of School Nursing*, 11(2), 20-25.

VBM and employability

- Armstrong, M. L., Koch, J. R., Saunders, J. C., Roberts, A. E., & Owen, D. C. (2007). The hole picture: Risks, decision making, purpose, regulations, and the future of body piercing. *Clinics in dermatology*, 25(4), 398-406.
- Armstrong, M. L., Owen, D. C., Roberts, A. E., & Koch, J. R. (2002). College tattoos: More than skin deep. *Dermatology Nursing*, 14(5), 317.
- Armstrong, M. L., Roberts, A. E., Owen, D. C., & Koch, J. R. (2004). Contemporary college students and body piercing. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 35(1), 58-61.
- Arndt, A. D., & Glassman, M. (2012). What tattoos tell customers about salespeople: The role of gender norms. *Marketing Management Journal*, 22(1).
- Arndt, A. D., McCombs, G., Tolle, S. L., & Cox, C. (2017). Why are health care Managers biased against hiring service providers with tattoos?. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 38(2), 88-99.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 20-39.
- Atkinson, M. (2002). Pretty in ink: Conformity, resistance, and negotiation in women's tattooing. *Sex Roles*, 47(5), 219-235.
- Atkinson, M. (2003). *Tattooed: The sociogenesis of a body art*. University of Toronto Press.
- Avery, D. R., McKay, P. F., Tonidandel, S., Volpone, S. D., & Morris, M. A. (2012). Is there method to the madness? Examining how racioethnic matching influences retail store productivity. *Personnel Psychology*, 65(1), 167-199.
- Avruch, K. (1998). *Culture & conflict resolution* (Vol. 31). US Institute of Peace Press.
- Baken J. (2013, April). *Many black people are conservative, but not the way most think*. Retrieved from <https://www.uab.edu/news/research/item/3336-many-black-people-are-conservative-but-not-the-way-most-think>
- Barrett, M., & Aspen, S. (2009). Visible body modification in hiring practices. *UW-Stout Journal of Student Research*, 1-16.

VBM and employability

- Baumann, C., Timming, A. R., & Gollan, P. J. (2016). Taboo tattoos? A study of the gendered effects of body art on consumers' attitudes toward visibly tattooed frontline staff. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 29, 31-39.
- Beeghley, L., Bock, E. W., & Cochran, J. K. (1990, June). Religious change and alcohol use: An application of reference group and socialization theory. In *Sociological Forum* (5)2, 261-278. Kluwer Academic Publishers-Plenum Publishers.
- Bell, S. (1999). Tattooed: A participant observer's exploration of meaning. *The Journal of American Culture*, 22(2), 53.
- Bock, E. W., Cochran, J. K., & Beeghley, L. (1987). Moral messages: The relative influence of denomination on the religiosity-alcohol relationship. *The sociological quarterly*, 28(1), 89-103.
- Bone, A., Ncube, F., Nichols, T., & Noah, N. D. (2008). Body piercing in England: A survey of piercing at sites other than earlobe. *British Medical Journal*, 336(7658), 1426-1428.
- Bouchard Jr., T. J. (1976). Unobtrusive measures: An inventory of uses. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 4(3), 267-300.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature*, edited by R. Johnson.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brabant, W., & Mizer, A. (2010). Visible body modifications and future employment. *Journal of Student*, 9(9) 43-58.
- Brallier, S. A., Maguire, K. A., Smith, D. A., & Palm, L. J. (2011). Visible tattoos and employment in the restaurant service industry. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(6), 72-76.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brooks, K. (2017). *This is the last generation of scarification in Africa*. Huffpost. Retrieved from <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/23/scarificationn5850882.html>

VBM and employability

- Brooks, T. L., Woods, E. R., Knight, J. R., & Shrier, L. A. (2003). Body modification and substance use in adolescents: is there a link? *Journal of Adolescent Health, 32*(1), 44-49.
- Carr, L. T. (1994). The strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research: What method for nursing? *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 20*(4), 716-721.
- Carroll, S. T., Riffenburgh, R. H., Roberts, T. A., & Myhre, E. B. (2002). Tattoos and body piercings as indicators of adolescent risk-taking behaviors. *American Academy of Paediatrics, 109*(6), 1021-1027.
- Cavico, F. J., Muffler, S. C., & Mujtaba, B. G. (2012). Appearance discrimination in employment: Legal and ethical implications of “lookism” and “lookphobia”. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 32*(1), 83-119.
- Chait, J (2018, March). *New Survey Shows Young People Are Staying Liberal and Conservatives Are Dying Off*. Retrieved from <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/03/new-survey-young-staying-liberal-conservatives-dying-off.html>
- Chan-Serafin, S., Brief, A. P., & George, J. M. (2013). Perspective: How does religion matter and why? Religion and the organizational sciences. *Organization Science, 24*(5), 1585-1600.
- Christman, L. A., & Branson, D. H. (1990). Influence of physical disability and dress of female job applicants on interviewers. *Clothing & Textiles Research Journal, 8*(3), 51–57.
- Cochran, J. K., & Beeghly, L. (1991). The influence of religion on attitudes toward nonmarital sexuality: A preliminary assessment of reference group theory. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 45*-62.
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological bulletin, 112*(1), 155.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods design*. London: Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Choosing a mixed methods design: Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, California: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counselling Psychologist, 35*(2), 236-264.

VBM and employability

- Creswell, J. W., Klassen, A. C., Plano Clark, V. L., & Smith, K. C. (2011). Best practices for mixed methods research in the health sciences. *Bethesda (Maryland): National Institutes of Health, 2013*, 541-545.
- Dashper, K. L. (2013). The “Right” Person for The Job: exploring the aesthetics of labor within the events industry. *Event Management, 17*(2), 135-144.
- Dean, D. H. (2010). Consumer perceptions of visible tattoos on service personnel. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal, 20*(3), 294-308.
- Dean, D. H. (2011). Young adult perception of visible tattoos on a white-collar service provider. *Young Consumers, 12*(3), 254-264.
- DeMello, M. (1993). The convict body: Tattooing among male American prisoners. *Anthropology Today, 9*(6), 10-13.
- DeMello, M. (1995). “Not just for bikers anymore”: Popular representations of American tattooing. *The Journal of Popular Culture, 29*(3), 37-52.
- DeMello, M. (2000). *Bodies of inscription: A cultural history of the modern tattoo community*. Duke University Press.
- Dhossche, D., Snell, K. S., & Larder, S., (2000). A case-control study of tattoos in young suicide victims as a possible marker of risk. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 59*(2), 165-168.  
Doi:10.1016/S0165-0327(99)00136-6
- Dineen, B. R., & Soltis, S. M. (2011). Recruitment: A review of research and emerging directions. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA Handbooks in Psychology. APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, Vol. 2. Selecting and developing members for the organization* (pp. 43-66). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.
- Donalek, J. G. (2004). Phenomenology as a qualitative research method. *Urologic Nursing, 24*(6), 516-517.
- Eagly, A. H., & Steffen, V. J. (1984). Gender stereotypes stem from the distribution of women and men into social roles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*(4), 735.
- Edo V.O (2005). Concepts of culture and civilization. In G.O Oguntomisin & V. O. Edo (Eds.), *African Culture and Civilization*, Ibadan: GSP, University of Ibadan.

VBM and employability

- Ellis, A. D. (2015). A picture is worth one thousand words: Body art in the workplace. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 27(2), 101-113.
- Ellis, B. (2014). *The philosophy of nature: A guide to the new essentialism*. London: Routledge.
- Entwistle, J. (2002). The dressed body. In *Real Bodies* (pp. 133-150). Palgrave, London.
- Entwistle, J., & Wissinger, E. (2006). Keeping up appearances: aesthetic labour in the fashion modelling industries of London and New York. *The Sociological Review*, 54(4), 774-794.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4.
- Ezeibekwe, U. P., Ojedokun, U. A., & Aderinto, A. A. (2016). "Love for artwork": Tattooing and body piercing among undergraduate students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues*, 19(3), 87-95.
- Featherstone, M. (1999). Body modification: An introduction. *Body & Society*, 5(2-3), 1-13.
- Ferguson, H. (1999). Body piercing. *British Medical Journal*, 319(7225), 1627-1629.
- Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.
- Fisher, J. A. (2002). Tattooing the body, marking culture. *Body & Society*, 8(4), 91-107.
- Fiske, S. T., & Neuberg, S. L. (1990). A continuum of impression formation, from category-based to individuating processes: Influences of information and motivation on attention and interpretation. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 23, pp. 1-74). Academic Press.
- Forsythe, S., Drake, M. F., & Cox, C. E. (1985). Influence of applicant's dress on interviewer's selection decisions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 70(2), 374-378.
- Fountain-Jagodzinski, D. L. (2014). The Implications of Body Modifications on the Hiring Process. *Albion*.
- French, M. T., Maclean, J. C., Robins, P. K., Sayed, B., & Shiferaw, L. (2016). Tattoos, employment, and labour market earnings: Is there a link in the ink?. *Southern Economic Journal*, 82(4), 1212-1246.

VBM and employability

- Fugard, A. J., & Potts, H. W. (2015). Supporting thinking on sample sizes for thematic analyses: a quantitative tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(6), 669-684.
- Fyock, J. & Stangor, C. (2011). The role of memory biases in stereotype maintenance. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33, 331-343. Doi: 10.1111/j.2044-8309.1994.tb01029.x
- Garson, G. D. (2012). *Testing statistical assumptions*. Asheboro, NC: Statistical Associates Publishing.
- Goffman E. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Goffman, E. (1949). The presentation of self in everyday life. *American Journal of Sociology*, 55, 6-7.
- Goffman, E. (2009). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Grief, J., Hewitt, W., & Armstrong, M. L. (1999). Tattooing and body piercing body art practices among college students. *Clinical Nursing Research*, 8(4), 368-385.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Harrison, M. S., & Thomas, K. M. (2009). The hidden prejudice in selection: A research investigation on skin color bias. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 39(1), 134-168.
- Henry, G. T. (1990). *Practical sampling* (Vol. 21). London: Sage Publications. Doi: 10, 9781412985451.
- Hertzog, M. A. (2008). Considerations in determining sample size for pilot studies. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 31, 180-191.
- History of tattoos in Africa. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://francistapon.com/Travels/Africa/History-Of-Tattoos-In-Africa>.
- Holbrook, J., Minocha, J., & Laumann, A. (2012). Body piercing. *American Journal of Clinical Dermatology*, 13(1), 1-17.

VBM and employability

- Holler, J., Shovelton, H., & Beattie, G. (2009). Do iconic hand gestures really contribute to the communication of semantic information in a face-to-face context? *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 33(2), 73-88.
- Hosoda, M., Stone-Romero, E. F., & Coats, G. (2003). The effects of physical attractiveness on job-related outcomes: A meta-analysis of experimental studies. *Personnel Psychology*, 56(2), 431-462.
- Hracs, B. J., & Leslie, D. (2014). Aesthetic labour in creative industries: The case of independent musicians in Toronto, Canada. *Area*, 46(1), 66-73.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/12170-002>
- Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data management and analysis methods. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 428-444.
- Ikonen, H. (2017). *Body modifications in professional contexts: Examining body modifications' effects and implications for success in work environments* (undergraduate thesis), Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland.
- Irwin, K. (2000). Negotiating the tattoo. *Patricia A. Adler e Peter Adler, Constructions of deviance: Social power, context, and Interaction*. Belmont, Wadsworth, 469-479.
- Jackson, L. A., Hunter, J. E., & Hodge, C. N. (1995). Physical attractiveness and intellectual competence: A meta-analytic review. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 108-122.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: NYU press.
- Johnson, F. J. (2007). Tattooing: Mind, body and spirit. The inner essence of the art. *Sociological Viewpoints*, 23, 45.
- Kantner, L. A. (1968). The influence of culture on visual perception.
- Kastanakis, M. N., & Voyer, B. G. (2014). The effect of culture on perception and cognition: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(4), 425-433.
- Katz, C. (2001). On the grounds of globalization: A topography for feminist political engagement. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 26(4), 1213-1234.
- Katz, I. (1991). Gordon Allport's "The nature of prejudice". *Political Psychology*, 125-157.

VBM and employability

- Koch, J. R., Roberts, A. E., Armstrong, M. L., & Owen, D. C. (2004). Correlations of religious belief and practice with college students' tattoo-related behavior. *Psychological Reports, 94*(2), 425-430.
- Kohlberg, L. (1964). Development of moral character and moral ideology. *Review of Child Development Research, 1*, 381-431.
- Kosut, M. (2006). An ironic fad: The commodification and consumption of tattoos. *The Journal of Popular Culture, 39*(6), 1035-1048.
- Kuatsinu, J.E. (2015, November 27). 70 illegal recruitment agencies operating in Ghana. *The Ghanaian Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh/70-illegal-recruitment-agencies-operating-in-ghana>
- Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings. *Qualitative Inquiry, 5*(1), 64-86.
- Larkin, J. C., & Pines, H. A. (1979). No fat persons need apply: Experimental studies of the overweight stereotype and hiring preference. *Sociology of Work and Occupations, 6*(3), 312-327.
- Laumann, A. E., & Derick, A. J. (2006). Tattoos and body piercings in the United States: A national data set. *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, 55*(3), 413-421.
- Lin, Y. (2002). Age, sex, education, religion, and perception of tattoos. *Psychological reports, 90*(2), 654-658.
- Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual review of Sociology, 27*(1), 363-385.
- Manusov, V., & Patterson, M. L. (2006). *The Sage handbook of nonverbal communication*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Markowitz, F. E. (1998). The effects of stigma on the psychological well-being and life satisfaction of persons with mental illness. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 335*-347.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*(2), 224.

VBM and employability

- Martin, B. A., & Dula, C. S. (2010). More than skin deep: Perceptions of, and stigma against, tattoos. *College Student Journal, 44*(1).
- Maryam, H., & Aiman, S. (2013). Attractiveness and employability: A qualitative investigation into Bangladeshi perspective. *Journal of Applied Management and Investments, 2*(1), 49-57.
- Mason, M. (2010, August). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. In *Forum qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: qualitative social research* (Vol. 11, No. 3).
- McElroy, J. C., Summers, J. K., & Moore, K. (2014). The effect of facial piercing on perceptions of job applicants. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 125*(1), 26-38.
- McLeod, S.A. (2017). Qualitative vs. quantitative. Retrieved from [www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html)
- Mendez, M. (2016). Attitudes toward tattoos in the work place. *Angelo State University Social Sciences Research Journal, 2*(2).
- Miller, B. K., McGlashan Nicols, K., & Eure, J. (2009). Body art in the workplace: Piercing the prejudice? *Personnel Review, 38*(6), 621-640.
- Molloy, J. T., & Potter, S. (1975). *Dress for success* (pp. 24-25). New York: Warner Books.
- Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing research, 40*(2), 120-123.
- Myers, J. (1992). Nonmainstream body modification genital piercing, branding, burning, and cutting. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 21*(3), 267-306.
- Nathanson, C., Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2006). Personality and misconduct correlates of body modification and other cultural deviance markers. *Journal of Research in Personality, 40*(5), 779-802.
- Nickson, D., Warhurst, C., Witz, A., & Cullen, A. M. (2001). The importance of being aesthetic: Work, employment and service organisation. *Customer service: Empowerment and Entrapment, 170-90*.

VBM and employability

- Nisbett, R. E., & Miyamoto, Y. (2005). The influence of culture: holistic versus analytic perception. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 9(10), 467-473.
- Nzherald.co.nz. (2013). Air NZ Stands By Tattoo Policy. Retrieved from [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10889054](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10889054)
- O'Connor, H., & Gibson, N. (2003). A step-by-step guide to qualitative data analysis. *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Indigenous and Aboriginal Community Health*, 1(1), 64-90.
- O'Hara, D. (1995, December 18). Risky fashions. AM News, pp. 11-12, 21-22.
- Orpen, C. (1984). Attitude similarity, attraction, and decision-making in the employment interview. *Journal of Psychology*, 117, 111-120
- Pallant, J. (2011). SPSS Survival manual: a step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS. Crows Nest, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods. 3d ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pentina, I., & Spears, N. (2011). Reasons behind body art adoption: What motivates young adults to acquire tattoos? *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 10(1), 73-94.
- Pescosolido, B. A., Martin, J. K., Lang, A., & Olafsdottir, S. (2008). Rethinking theoretical approaches to stigma: A framework integrating normative influences on stigma (FINIS). *Social Science & Medicine*, 67(3), 431-440.
- Pettinger, L. (2004). Brand culture and branded workers: Service work and aesthetic labour in fashion retail. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 7(2), 165-184.
- Pew Research Center. (2010). Millennials: A portrait of generation next. Retrieved June 12, 2017, from [www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millinials-confidentconnected-open-to-change.pdf](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millinials-confidentconnected-open-to-change.pdf)
- Phelan, M. P., & Hunt, S. A. (1998). Prison gang members' tattoos as identity work: The visual communication of moral careers. *Symbolic Interaction*, 21(3), 277-298.
- Pick, A. D., & Pick Jr., H. L. (1978). Culture and perception. *Handbook of Perception*, 10, 19-39.

VBM and employability

- Plano Clark, V. L. (2010). The adoption and practice of mixed methods: US trends in federally funded health-related research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 428-440.
- Proehl, N. L. (2014). Investigating changing moral boundaries through tattooing. *Journal of Undergraduate Research at Minnesota State University, Mankato*, 4(1), 13.
- Pryor, J. B., & Reeder, G. D. (2011). HIV-related stigma. *HIV/AIDS in the Post-HAART Era: manifestations, treatment, and Epidemiology*, 790-806.
- Puhl, R., & Brownell, K. D. (2001). Bias, discrimination, and obesity. *Obesity Research*, 9(12), 788-805.
- Ramion, S. (2012). *Tattoos: The road to acceptance in Western society, an exploration of gender, misconceptions, and workplace acceptance* (Honours thesis), Indiana State University, Indiana, United States of America.
- Roberts, S. C. (Ed.). (2012). *Applied evolutionary psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Samadelli, M., Melis, M., Miccoli, M., Vigl, E. E., & Zink, A. R. (2015). Complete mapping of the tattoos of the 5300-year-old Tyrolean Iceman. *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 16(5), 753-758.
- Sarngren, E., & Aberg, A. (2007). The Importance of Appearance-A study of the importance of appearance when attending a job interview. *Rapport nr.: Organisation ICU 2006: 11*.
- Saurén, T. (2014). Impact of tattoo on job search process (master's thesis), Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Laurea Lohja, Finland.
- Scheinfeld, N. (2007). Tattoos and religion. *Clinics in dermatology*, 25(4), 362-366.
- Schorzman, C. M., Gold, M. A., Downs, J. S., & Murray, P. J. (2007). Body art: Attitudes and practices regarding body piercing among urban undergraduates. *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, 107(10), 432-438.
- Seigle, C. S. (1993). *Yoshiwara: The glittering world of the Japanese courtesan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Seiter, J. S., & Hatch, S. (2005). Effect of tattoos on perceptions of credibility and attractiveness. *Psychological Reports*, 96(3\_suppl), 1113-1120.

VBM and employability

- Seiter, J. S., & Sandry, A. (2003). Pierced for success: The effects of ear and nose piercing on perceptions of job candidates' credibility, attractiveness, and hirability. *Communication Research Reports*, 20(4), 287-298.
- Singer, A. (2016). Tattoos in the Workplace: The research forbes was too Lazy to do. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anniesinger/tattoos-in-the-workplace-\\_b\\_9321408.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anniesinger/tattoos-in-the-workplace-_b_9321408.html)
- Skegg, K., Nada-Raja, S., Paul, C., & Skegg, D. C. (2007). Body piercing, personality, and sexual behaviour. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 36(1), 47-54.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2007). Pain as an assault on the self: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the psychological impact of chronic benign low back pain. *Psychology and Health*, 22(5), 517-534.
- Solomon, M. (2014, October 17). Starbucks to allow tattoos, piercings: Wise or risky customer service, HR move? Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com>
- Spencer-Oatey, H., & Franklin, P. (2012). What is culture. *A compilation of quotations. GlobalPAD Core Concepts*, 1-22.
- Starks, H., & Brown Trinidad, S. (2007). Choose your method: A comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative health research*, 17(10), 1372-1380.
- Statista. (2015). Survey on the perception of people with tattoos in the U.S. 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/512244/qualities-tattoos-acquired-usa/>
- Steward, S. M. (1990). *Bad boys and tough tattoos: A social history of the tattoo with gangs, sailors, and street-corner Punks, 1950-1965* (No. 3). Binghamton, New York: Haworth Press.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Summers, J. K., Howe, M., McElroy, J. C., Ronald Buckley, M., Pahng, P., & Cortes-Mejia, S. (2018). A typology of stigma within organisations: Access and treatment effects. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 1-16. Doi.org/10.1002/job.2279

VBM and employability

- Suris, J. C., Jeannin, A., Chossis, I., & Michaud, P. A. (2007). Piercing among adolescents: Body art as risk marker-A population-based survey. *The Journal of Family Practice*, 56(2), 126-130.
- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, 68(3), 226.
- Swanger, N. (2006). Visible body modification (VBM): Evidence from human resource managers and recruiters and the effects on employment. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 25(1), 154-158.
- Sweetman, P. (1999). Anchoring the (postmodern) self? Body modification, fashion and identity. *Body & Society*, 5(2-3), 51-76.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 33(47), 74.
- Tashakkori, A, Creswell, J.W (2007). Editorial: the new era of mixed methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1:3 –7.
- Tate, J. C., & Shelton, B. L. (2008). Personality correlates of tattooing and body piercing in a college sample: The kids are alright. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 45(4), 281-285.
- The 30% Club. (2010). Our vision. Retrieved from <https://30percentclub.org/>
- The Ghana Labour Act, Act 651. (2003). Retrieved from <http://www.melr.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/LABOUR-ACT-2003.pdf>
- Timming, A. R. (2015). Visible tattoos in the service sector: A new challenge to recruitment and selection. *Work, Employment & Society*, 29(1), 60-78.
- Timming, A. R. (2017). Body art as branded labour: At the intersection of employee selection and relationship marketing. *Human Relations*, 70(9), 1041-1063.
- Timming, A. R., & Perrett, D. I. (2017). An experimental study of the effects of tattoo genre on perceived trustworthiness: Not all tattoos are created equal. *Journal of Trust Research*, 7(2), 115-128.

VBM and employability

- Timming, A. R., Nickson, D., Re, D., & Perrett, D. (2017). What do you think of my ink?: Assessing the effects of body art on employment chances. *Human Resource Management, 56*(1), 133-149.
- Tokyo Times. (2013). Japan learns to accept tattoos despite connection to Yakuza, Tokyo Times. Retrieved from <http://www.tokyotimes.com/2013/japan-must-learn-to-accept-tattoos-despite-connection-to-yakuza/>
- Totten, J. W., Lipscomb, T. J., & Jones, M. A. (2009). Attitudes toward and stereotypes of persons with body art: Implications for marketing management. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal, 13*(2), 77.
- Treece, E. W., & Treece, J. W. (1984). Elements of research in Nursing. *Journal of Enterostomal Therapy, 11*(4), 162.
- Tremearne, A. J. N. (1911). Notes on some Nigerian tribal marks. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 41*, 162-178.
- Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work, 11*(1), 80-96.
- Twenty SHS girls sacked for sporting tattoos on bums-breasts. (2013, August 19). Retrieved from XYZ news <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/20-SHS-girls-sacked-for-sporting-tattoos-on-bums-breasts-282885>
- United States Army. (2012). Army regulation 670-1, wear and appearance of army uniforms and insignia. Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army Retrieved from [http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/pdf/r670\\_1.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/pdf/r670_1.pdf).
- Van den Brink, M., Brouns, M., & Waslander, S. (2006). Does excellence have a gender? A national research study on recruitment and selection procedures for professorial appointments in The Netherlands. *Employee Relations, 28*(6), 523-539.
- Van-Ess, P. B. (2013). *HIV related risk behaviours among male prisoners in selected prisons in Ghana* (master's thesis) University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana.
- Warhurst, C., Nickson, D., Witz, A. & Cullen, A.M. (2000). Aesthetic labour in interactive service work: Some case study evidence from the 'new' Glasgow. *The Service Industries Journal, 20*(3), 1-18.

VBM and employability

- Waugh, J. (2007). DNA barcoding in animal species: progress, potential and pitfalls. *BioEssays*, 29(2), 188-197.
- Westerfield, H. V., Stafford, A. B., Speroni, K. G., & Daniel, M. G. (2012). Patients' perceptions of patient care providers with tattoos and/or body piercings. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 42(3), 160-164.
- White, M. (2011, October). Food, inglorious food. *North & South*, 307, 96-97
- Whyte, W. F. (1948). *Human relations in the restaurant industry*. Oxford, England: McGraw-Hill.
- Williams, E. N., & Morrow, S. L. (2009). Achieving trustworthiness in qualitative research: A pan-paradigmatic perspective. *Psychotherapy research*, 19(4-5), 576-582.
- Wiseman, D. B. (2010). Perceptions of a tattooed college instructor. *Psychological reports*, 106(3), 845-850.
- Witz, A., Warhurst, C., & Nickson, D. (2003). The labour of aesthetics and the aesthetics of organization. *Organization*, 10(1), 33-54.
- Wohlrab, S., Fink, B., Kappeler, P. M., & Brewer, G. (2009). Perception of human body modification. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46(2), 202-206.
- Wohlrab, S., Stahl, J., Rammsayer, T., & Kappeler, P. M. (2007). Differences in personality characteristics between body-modified and non-modified individuals: Associations with individual personality traits and their possible evolutionary implications. *European Journal of Personality*, 21(7), 931-951.
- Workman, J. E., & Johnson, K. K. (1994). Effects of conformity and nonconformity to gender-role expectations for dress: Teachers versus students. *Adolescence*, 29(113), 207-223.
- Yoshioka, I. (1996). *Irezumi no jinruigaku (The Anthropology of Tattooing)*. Tokyo: Yuzankaku.
- Zestcott, C. A., Tompkins, T. L., Kozak Williams, M., Livesay, K., & Chan, K. L. (2018). What do you think about ink? An examination of implicit and explicit attitudes toward tattooed individuals. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 158(1), 7-22.
- Zick, A., Küpper, B., & Hövermann, A. (2011). *Intolerance, prejudice and discrimination-A European report*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No.....

1<sup>st</sup> November, 2017

Mr. Duke Lermeh Kwabena Tetteh  
Department of Psychology  
University of Ghana  
Legon

Dear Mr. Tetteh,

**ECH 037/17-18: VISIBLE BODY MODIFICATION (VBM) AND EMPLOYMENT CHANCES:  
PERSPECTIVES OF MANAGERS, RECRUITERS AND JOB SEEKERS**

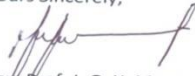
This is to advise you that the above reference study has been presented to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities for a full board review and the following actions taken subject to the conditions and explanation provided below:

Expiry Date: 31/05/18  
On Agenda for: Initial Submission  
Date of Submission: 18/09/17  
ECH Action: Approved  
Reporting: Quarterly



Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Rev. Prof. J. O. Y. Mante  
ECH Chair

CC: Dr. Maxwell Asumeng, Department of Psychology, University of Ghana.

APPENDIX 2

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Ref. No. .... PSYC 2/33/03

December 4, 2017

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**  
**MR TETTEH DUKE LERMEH KWABENA - ID NO: 10315251**

The above-named student is an MPhil Industrial and Organizational Psychology student in the University of Ghana.

As part of the requirement, Mr. Tetteh Duke Lermeh Kwabena has to write and submit an original thesis. The title of his thesis is **“Visible Body Modification (VBM) and Employment Chances: Perspectives of Managers, Recruiters and Job Seekers”**.

To enable him collect data for his research work, he would need to administer questionnaires and conduct interviews. He has selected Organisations/Firms, Recruitment Agencies and Job Seekers (individuals) in Accra.

Any assistance you may give him would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,



**Dr. Maxwell Asumeng**  
**(Head of Department)**

---

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**  
P. O. Box 14, Legon, Accra, Ghana

APPENDIX 3

PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



**Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH)**

Official  Use only  Protocol  number
--

PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM

Section A- BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION

Title of Study:	Influence of Visible Body Modification (VBM) on employability of job applicants
Principal Investigator:	Tetteh Duke Lermeh Kwabena
Certified Protocol Number	

Section B- CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE  
IN RESEARCH

VBM and employability

**General Information about Research**

In recent times, there has been growing evidence of how Visible Body Modification (VBM) affects people’s chances of winning a job. Most of these studies are Western-centered with no or just a few in the African context (specifically Ghana). This study would examine (in the Ghanaian context) how managers rate people with VBM and their employability. It would also determine factors that drive recruiters’ perception regarding the employability of people with VBM. Moreover, it seeks to assess the chances of people adorned with VBM getting a job and experiences they have had in their previous work and job search.

The study would be in two different parts (study I and II). Study I would involve a qualitative study of the employment/ job search experiences of people with VBM as well as interview with recruiters. On the other hand, study II would be a survey of managers’ rating about people with VBM

**Benefits/Risk of the study**

There are no risks associated with this study. As such, all that is required is your availability and willingness to participate.

Even though this research might not be of benefit to you directly, participation might ensure that revisions are made in the Labour/ employment Act. Thus results of this study would be relevant to Human Resource Managers and other stakeholders.

**Confidentiality**

In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, you are not supposed to write your names, contact number, email or mark the response sheet that might reveal your identity. Information shared (recorded) by you would be termed as confidential and thus, information would not be released or shared to a third party without the authorization of you. Assurance would be given that the ultimate purpose of this study is for academic purpose.

**Compensation**

Due to the academic nature of this research, no extrinsic rewards would be given.

**Withdrawal from Study**

You are not obliged by law to partake in this study. As a result, there would be no retribution in situations whereby you decide not to participate or withdraw from the study. If you begin to participate in the research, you may at any time, for any reason, discontinue your participation without any negative consequences.

**Contact for Additional Information**

You can contact the following for any answers to any questions about the research.

Tetteh Duke Lermeh Kwabena. Post Office Box OS 100, Osu-Accra. Contact: +233(0)541265465. Also, if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant in this study you may contact the Administrator of the Ethics Committee for Humanities, ISSER, University of Ghana at [ech@isser.edu.gh](mailto:ech@isser.edu.gh) / [ech@ug.edu.gh](mailto:ech@ug.edu.gh) or 00233- 303-933-866.

Section C-VOLUNTEER  
AGREEMENT

**“I have read or have had someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study, and am willing to give consent for me, my child/ward to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records.”**

VBM and employability

Name of Volunteer

---

Signature or mark of volunteer

Date

**If volunteers cannot read the form themselves, a witness must sign here:**

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

---

Name of witness

---

Signature of witness

Date

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

Tetteh Duke Leremh Kwabena

Name of Person who Obtained Consent

---

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

Date

APPENDIX 4  
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide for Study I (Qualitative study)

Table 1

*Interview questions for recruiters*

Question number	Question
1.	Please tell me about your role in this organization?
2.	Which industries do you usually recruit for?
3.	What guides your selection of job applicants for clients across the various industries you recruit for?
4.	How does the physical appearance of a job applicant influence your decision or recommendation about the person?
5.	What do you think about job applicants having tattoos or piercings on visible parts of their body?
6.	Probe about their perception of VBM in general and whether they consider VBM as morally and culturally acceptable.
7.	What factors affect your perception of VBM?
8.	Have you had an encounter with a job applicant with VBM? If, so, what was your recommendation and what influenced it? a. Did the fact that the person had VBM influence your decision and how?
9.	If recruiter has no previous encounter with applicants with VBM ask: would you recommend or hire an individual with VBM? Why? Or Why not?
10.	What do you consider when you have to employ someone with VBM? And for what kind of job (non-customer/customer facing role)?-probe
11.	Anything you want me to know that I have not asked

Table 2

*Interview guide for VBM persons*

Question number	Question
1.	Please can you tell me about yourself? (what do you do)
2.	Please tell me about your VBM (encourage person to tell you how, where and when he/she had it and the meaning or significance of it, what do you like about your VBM?)
3.	Why did you decide to have a VBM? a. Probe: What are the reasons for obtaining this VBM/ what influenced your decision to wear a VBM (ask about friends, family, celebrities, etc.)?
4.	How do your friends and family feel about it? And how does it affect you?
5.	What do people say about your VBM? How do they react to it? Probe: do you think people consider it as morally or culturally acceptable? Probe on their responses, whether 'Yes' or 'No'.
6.	Have you ever been treated differently because of your VBM? Can you describe your experience? Probe into what led to it and how they felt about it.
7.	Have you been engaged in any gainful employment? / have you ever been employed before? Yes...what kind of work? No...why?
8.	Are you currently working? Yes.... what kind of work? No.... why?
9.	In both your previous and current job (if employed or ever worked before), did you have your VBM?
10.	Can you describe how you are or were treated by i. customers, ii. Co-workers and iii. Employers as a result of your VBM? a. Probe: Did you /do you feel discriminated in the work place because of your VBM? (e.g. You are due for promotion and because of your VMB you were not promoted)
<i>If interviewer has no previous working experience or did not have VBM in their previous job ask the following questions:</i>	
11.	Have you ever been treated differently in your job search because of your VBM?
12.	Do you think your VBM affects your chances of being employed?

VBM and employability

- a. Follow up: How do you feel about that? (explain how it has affected you)
  - 13. \*Would you encourage a friend or a family member to have it? Why?
  - 14. \*Anything you want me to know that I have not asked?
-

APPENDIX 5

FACES FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL STUDY AND INSTRUMENT (STUDY II)

Figure 3: non-tattooed/pierced faces



Figure 4: pierced face



Figure 5: tattooed face



Figure 6: both tattooed and pierced face



APPENDIX 6

Table 3 DIAGRAMMATIC MATRIX OF 2×2×2×4 FACTORIAL DESIGN

<b>Between-participant variable (Groups)</b>	<b>Within-participant variable (conditions)</b>			
	<i>Tattoo</i>	<i>Piecing</i>	<i>Both tattoo &amp; piecing</i>	<i>Non tattoo &amp; piecing</i>
<i>Rater /Applicant (picture)/ Job type</i>				
Male/ male/ CF				
Male/ female/CF				
Female/ male/CF				
Male/ male/NCF				
Male/ female/NCF				
Female/ male/NCF				
Female/ female/NCF				

*Note:* \*CF= customer facing role, NCF= non customer-facing role. Sample size per group = 30

QUESTIONNAIRE

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Thank you for your consent to take part in this study. My name is Duke Tetteh and I am currently pursuing Master's degree in Industrial and Organizational (I-O) Psychology at the University of Ghana under the supervision of Dr Francis Annor and Dr Inusah Abdul-Nasiru. This study seeks to examine the effects of visible body modification (tattoo) or piercing on the hireability of job applicants. Your responses are thus vital to the success of this study.

The questionnaire has two sections and will take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept **anonymous** and **confidential**. You are not required to write your name on the questionnaire. You are therefore encouraged to respond as sincerely as possible, as this will make the information you provide more useful. Please read each question carefully and answer by circling (or ticking) the appropriate number (or box) or writing your response in the space(s) provided. There is no right or wrong answers.

Please, feel free to make any comments about the survey. If you have any questions or would like further information please contact me at [dlktetteh@st.edu.ug.gh](mailto:dlktetteh@st.edu.ug.gh). /0541265465

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

*This section asks you to tell us a bit about yourself and work history. Please answer by ticking the appropriate box or writing your response in the space provided*

1. Gender: Male      Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ (yrs)
3. Religion:  Christian      Muslim      Other (Please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Highest level of education: Diploma      Undergraduate Degree (e.g., BA/BSc) Postgraduate degree (e.g., MA/MSc/MPhil) Other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Years of working experience: \_\_\_\_\_
6. In which sector do you work? (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Managerial level/rank: Junior      Middle      Senior
8. Do you have visible body modification (a tattoo or multiple piercing)? Yes      No
9. Have you ever worked with someone with a visible body modification? Yes      No
10. Does any family member or friend have a visible body modification? Yes      No

VBM and employability

**SECTION ONE**

*Please read the scenario, familiarize yourself with the response scale, and then complete the questions that follow the scenario.*

**Scenario:** the photographs presented below are faces of job applicants who have applied for a vacant position in your organization. Both applicants are best qualified in the sense that they all meet the requirements of the job. As a hiring manager you are to score each photograph to indicate the extent to which each of the job applicants is likely to be hired. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate each of them, where 10= most likely to be hired for the job and 1= less likely to be hired.

Based on this I would like you to provide your response to the questions that follow by observing the pictures carefully.



**Candidate X**



**Candidate Y**

*On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate each photograph based on how likely you are to hire the candidate for a **Customer Facing Role** (a customer facing role/job refers to the kind of job that customers have direct contact with workers, example; waiter, bank teller, bar attendant, filling station attendant, etc.)*

*Candidate X* \_\_\_\_\_

*Candidate Y* \_\_\_\_\_

*On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate each photograph based on how likely you are to hire the candidate for a **Non-Customer Facing Role** (a non-customer facing role/job refers to those jobs that customers do not have direct contact with workers, example; chefs/ kitchen staff in a restaurant, workers in the manufacturing sector, etc.)*

*Candidate X:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Candidate Y* \_\_\_\_\_

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Study II)

	GENDER OF RESPONDENT	EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
RATING FOR MALE CUSTOMER FACING ROLE	male	control face	6.9375	1.79493	32
		tattooed face	3.3929	2.02465	28
		pierced face	2.9333	2.50425	30
		both tattooed and pierced face	2.6000	2.23761	30
		Total	4.0250	2.77583	120
	female	control face	6.0714	2.25961	28
		tattooed face	3.5625	2.24237	32
		pierced face	2.3333	2.08993	30
		both tattooed and pierced face	2.1333	1.59164	30
		Total	3.4833	2.55357	120
	Total	control face	6.5333	2.05407	60
		tattooed face	3.4833	2.12724	60
		pierced face	2.6333	2.30671	60
		both tattooed and pierced face	2.3667	1.93948	60
		Total	3.7542	2.67524	240
RATING FOR FEMALE CUSTOMER FACING ROLE	male	control face	8.0313	1.44768	32
		tattooed face	2.8214	2.14396	28
		pierced face	4.4667	2.86156	30
		both tattooed and pierced face	2.9333	2.19613	30
		Total	4.6500	3.06142	120
	female	control face	7.5714	1.57359	28
		tattooed face	3.1563	2.30160	32
		pierced face	3.5667	2.72515	30
		both tattooed and pierced face	2.7000	2.08690	30
		Total	4.1750	2.90656	120
	Total	control face	7.8167	1.51257	60
		tattooed face	3.0000	2.21704	60
		pierced face	4.0167	2.80732	60
		both tattooed and pierced face	2.8167	2.12724	60
		Total	4.4125	2.98824	240
RATING FOR MALE NON-CUSTOMER FACING ROLE	male	control face	7.5625	1.38977	32
		tattooed face	6.2500	2.39792	28
		pierced face	4.5333	2.63574	30
		both tattooed and pierced face	4.7667	2.69972	30
		Total	5.8000	2.61412	120
	female	control face	7.3214	1.49204	28
		tattooed face	5.5625	2.22794	32
		pierced face	4.3667	2.69717	30

VBM and employability

		both tattooed and pierced face	5.0000	2.22834	30
	Total	Total	5.5333	2.43895	120
		control face	7.4500	1.43119	60
		tattooed face	5.8833	2.31496	60
		pierced face	4.4500	2.64527	60
		both tattooed and pierced face	4.8833	2.45703	60
	Total	Total	5.6667	2.52629	240
RATING FOR FEMALE NON-CUSTOMER FACING ROLE	male	control face	8.2813	1.27594	32
		tattooed face	5.3214	2.65349	28
		pierced face	6.3000	2.56165	30
		both tattooed and pierced face	5.5667	2.58221	30
	Total	Total	6.4167	2.57846	120
	female	control face	8.1429	1.40671	28
		tattooed face	5.4063	2.28402	32
		pierced face	6.4333	2.34423	30
		both tattooed and pierced face	5.4000	2.44385	30
	Total	Total	6.3000	2.41355	120
		control face	8.2167	1.32884	60
		tattooed face	5.3667	2.44233	60
		pierced face	6.3667	2.43538	60
		both tattooed and pierced face	5.4833	2.49400	60
	Total	Total	6.3583	2.49282	240

Table 4: Mauchly's test of sphericity

Within subjects conditions	Mauchly's W	Approximate d Chi square	df	Sig.	Greenhouse-Geisser
Type of job	1	.00	0	.00	1

Table 5: Test of between-subjects effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Intercept	24375.355	1	24375.355	1835.225	.000	.888
Gender of respondent	14.745	1	14.745	1.110	.293	.005
Type of VBM	1949.432	3	649.811	48.924	.000	.387
Gender * Type of VBM	6.464	3	2.155	.162	.922	.002
Error	3081.411	232	13.282			

Table 6: Test of within-subjects effects

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Type of job	Sphericity Assumed	899.138	1	899.138	286.709	.000	.553
	Greenhouse-Geisser	899.138	1.000	899.138	286.709	.000	.553
	Huynh-Feldt	899.138	1.000	899.138	286.709	.000	.553
	Lower-bound	899.138	1.000	899.138	286.709	.000	.553
Type of job * Gender of respondent	Sphericity Assumed	4.018	1	4.018	1.281	.259	.005
	Greenhouse-Geisser	4.018	1.000	4.018	1.281	.259	.005
	Huynh-Feldt	4.018	1.000	4.018	1.281	.259	.005
	Lower-bound	4.018	1.000	4.018	1.281	.259	.005
Type of job * Type of VBM	Sphericity Assumed	135.172	3	45.057	14.367	.000	.157
	Greenhouse-Geisser	135.172	3.000	45.057	14.367	.000	.157
	Huynh-Feldt	135.172	3.000	45.057	14.367	.000	.157
	Lower-bound	135.172	3.000	45.057	14.367	.000	.157
Type of job * Gender of respondent * Type of VBM	Sphericity Assumed	14.152	3	4.717	1.504	.214	.019
	Greenhouse-Geisser	14.152	3.000	4.717	1.504	.214	.019
	Huynh-Feldt	14.152	3.000	4.717	1.504	.214	.019
	Lower-bound	14.152	3.000	4.717	1.504	.214	.019
Error (type of job)	Sphericity Assumed	727.567	232	3.136			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	727.567	232.000	3.136			
	Huynh-Feldt	727.567	232.000	3.136			
	Lower-bound	727.567	232.000	3.136			
Applicant gender	Sphericity Assumed	108.530	1	108.530	45.472	.000	.164
	Greenhouse-Geisser	108.530	1.000	108.530	45.472	.000	.164
	Huynh-Feldt	108.530	1.000	108.530	45.472	.000	.164
	Lower-bound	108.530	1.000	108.530	45.472	.000	.164
	Sphericity Assumed	1.532	1	1.532	.642	.424	.003

VBM and employability

Applicant gender * Gender of respondent	Greenhouse-Geisser	1.532	1.000	1.532	.642	.424	.003
	Huynh-Feldt	1.532	1.000	1.532	.642	.424	.003
	Lower-bound	1.532	1.000	1.532	.642	.424	.003
Applicant gender * Type of VBM	Sphericity Assumed	150.741	3	50.247	21.053	.000	.214
	Greenhouse-Geisser	150.741	3.000	50.247	21.053	.000	.214
	Huynh-Feldt	150.741	3.000	50.247	21.053	.000	.214
	Lower-bound	150.741	3.000	50.247	21.053	.000	.214
Applicant gender * Gender of respondent * Type of VBM	Sphericity Assumed	2.829	3	.943	.395	.757	.005
	Greenhouse-Geisser	2.829	3.000	.943	.395	.757	.005
	Huynh-Feldt	2.829	3.000	.943	.395	.757	.005
	Lower-bound	2.829	3.000	.943	.395	.757	.005
Error (Applicant gender)	Sphericity Assumed	553.723	232	2.387			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	553.723	232.000	2.387			
	Huynh-Feldt	553.723	232.000	2.387			
	Lower-bound	553.723	232.000	2.387			
Type of job * Applicant gender	Sphericity Assumed	.040	1	.040	.052	.820	.000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	.040	1.000	.040	.052	.820	.000
	Huynh-Feldt	.040	1.000	.040	.052	.820	.000
	Lower-bound	.040	1.000	.040	.052	.820	.000
Jobtype * Applicant Gender * Gender of respondent	Sphericity Assumed	.068	1	.068	.090	.765	.000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	.068	1.000	.068	.090	.765	.000
	Huynh-Feldt	.068	1.000	.068	.090	.765	.000
	Lower-bound	.068	1.000	.068	.090	.765	.000
Type of Job * Applicant Gender * Type of VBM	Sphericity Assumed	8.749	3	2.916	3.827	.011	.047
	Greenhouse-Geisser	8.749	3.000	2.916	3.827	.011	.047
	Huynh-Feldt	8.749	3.000	2.916	3.827	.011	.047
	Lower-bound	8.749	3.000	2.916	3.827	.011	.047
	Sphericity Assumed	4.506	3	1.502	1.971	.119	.025
	Greenhouse-Geisser	4.506	3.000	1.502	1.971	.119	.025

VBM and employability

Jobtype * Appgender *	Huynh-Feldt	4.506	3.000	1.502	1.971	.119	.025
Gender of Respondent *	Lower-bound	4.506	3.000	1.502	1.971	.119	.025
Type of VBM							
Error (type of job * Applicant Sphericity Assumed gender)	Greenhouse-Geisser	176.801	232	.762			
	Huynh-Feldt	176.801	232.000	.762			
	Lower-bound	176.801	232.000	.762			

Table 7: Mean difference of applicant gender and type of VBM

Type of VBM	Applicant gender	Mean difference	F	p
Control face	Male = 7.00	0.52	11	0.16
	Female = 8.12			
Tattooed face	Male = 4.68	-0.5	6.56	0.1
	Female = 4.18			
Pierced face	Male = 3.54	1.65	43.09	0.42
	Female = 5.19			
Both tattooed and pierced face	Male = 3.63	1.12	33.59	0.36
	Female = 4.15			