

Abstract

Tattoos have become increasingly common in the United States, and academic focus on tattoos has increased concurrently. Despite the ubiquity and variety of tattoos in America, tattooed individuals still face stigma. This stigma is especially salient towards those with visible tattoos – those on the face, neck, or hands. Research on tattoos and tattoo stigmatization abounds, but seemingly absent from the literature is an examination of any interactions between tattoos and race. This research attempted to determine if visibly tattooed people of color are likely to face more stigma than their white peers. Utilizing a 3 x 2 between-subjects factorial design, this experimental study sought to uncover potential relationships between visible tattoos and race by presenting respondents with a randomly assigned photo of a man (black, Latino, or white) with or without a digitally-added facial tattoo and measuring responses about his likability, desired social distance, and source credibility. While results indicated that visible tattoos significantly influenced ratings, no interaction effects of race and tattoos were discerned.