Tattooed employees in the modern workplace: navigating judgement and acceptance, and the impact of changing work patterns

Matthew Tucker m.p.tucker@ljmu.ac.uk, Gemma Dale , g.l.dale@ljmu.ac.uk and Hannah Wilson h.k.wilson@ljmu.ac.uk

Liverpool Business School, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

Matthew Tucker can be contacted at: m.p.tucker@ljmu.ac.uk

Purpose

This research explores perceptions of tattoo acceptability in the workplace from the perspective of those who have them. It further considers how increases in remote working arrangements have influenced workplace tattoo acceptance.

Design/methodology/approach

A qualitative survey was used to collect data from 435 tattooed individuals. Data were analysed thematically, allowing for nuanced insights into employees' personal experiences, utilising the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory as a theoretical framework.

Findings

Attitudes towards tattoos in the workplace may be changing, resulting in reduced stigma and increased acceptability. This research demonstrates how tattoos can act as both a job demand and resource, depending on the orientation of the organisation and others. Furthermore, tattooed individuals engage in perception management and a form of aesthetic labour to counteract negative perceptions. Visible tattoos in the workplace retain negative connotations, amounting to a job demand that can negatively influence wellbeing. Increased remote working has provided more freedom to tattooed individuals.

Practical implications

The findings from this study provide practical guidance to Human Resources practitioners concerning appearance policies and organisational culture.

Originality/value

The research expands extant knowledge on the perception of tattoos in the workplace. Although previous research has examined perceptions of tattoos in the workplace and tattoo stigma in particular, research to date has not considered the influence of changing work patterns.

Keywords:

Tattoos, Job demands-resources theory, Dress code policies, Authenticity, Remote work, Aesthetic labour

Introduction

Tattoos are becoming more common. A total of 26% of UK adults have a tattoo (Kirk, 2022). Tattoos are especially common amongst younger people; prevalence globally in people under 40 is estimated at between 30 and 40% (Dodig et al., 2024). Historically, tattoos in the workplace have had a problematic reputation, associated with negative career outcomes and prejudice. Previous research established that tattooed individuals experience employment challenges resulting from their tattoos, including difficulty in getting a job (Timming et al., 2017) and barriers to career progression (Nath et al., 2016).

Some organisations have policies prohibiting visible tattoos or requiring tattoos to be covered whilst working. An XpertHR (2018) survey found that over two-thirds of employers had dress code policies that prohibit or restrict tattoos in the workplace. However, some organisations, including Virgin (Clarkson, 2022), Disney (Durkee, 2021) and the Metropolitan Police (Simpson, 2018) have in recent years reduced or removed restrictions on tattoos within their workplaces, indicating that prior negative attitudes towards tattoos may be relaxing.

During the Covid-19 pandemic government mandates required employees to work from home where possible. In some circumstances, this resulted in a reduced formality of workplace dress (Feldman, 2020; Martin and Guevara, 2022). Employee visibility was reduced to screen presence, potentially reducing the visibility of tattoos on some parts of the body. Since the pandemic, remote work has become a core feature of the global labour market (Felstead, 2022; Hobsbawm, 2024) with estimates that 100m workers globally now undertake hybrid work (Bloom et al., 2024).

This study examined whether negative attitudes to tattoos in the workplace have lessened from the perspective of those who currently have them. Furthermore, the study sought to explore whether remote work may have contributed to perspectives on tattoos in the workplace.

Literature review

Tattoo prevalence is increasing and is now considered a "mainstream practice" (Kjeldgaard and Bengtsson, 2005). Some tattooed individuals see them as a means of self-expression (Zestcott et al., 2018). Other motivations include a desire for individuality, group affiliations, spirituality and cultural reasons, to express a personal narrative and for artistic purposes (Wohlrab et al., 2007). Despite the increase in prevalence, tattooed individuals can experience stigma and negative associations (Broussard and Harton, 2018). Historically, tattooing was associated with groups including, bikers, people with convictions, sailors or gang members, some of whom are associated with negative stereotypes (Zestcott et al., 2018). Previous research has found a range of negative connotations attributed to individuals with tattoos. This includes a belief that they may be more rebellious and likely to engage in deviant behaviour (Elzweig and Peeples, 2011), are irresponsible, less professional and less qualified that non-tattooed people (Ellis, 2015) and untrustworthy (Timming and Perrett, 2017). Negative connotations tend to be greater when tattoos are in prominent areas such as the face or neck, or when tattoos are more visible and less able to be concealed (Timming, 2015). Prejudice can vary according to age group; older people tend to hold greater negative views towards tattooed individuals (Zestcott et al., 2018; Deam, 2010).

Such stigma and negative associations extend to the workplace; this appears to be more prevalent in more traditional organisations and some employment contexts (Nath et al., 2016). For example, tattoos on "white collar" workers were found to be considered inappropriate, but such views did not extend to "blue collar" occupations (Dean, 2010). Similarly, there is reduced stigma when tattooed individuals are in "back of house" or non-customer facing roles (Timming et al., 2017). Employee appearance has been found to influence employer perceptions and can influence perceptions of skills and abilities, even when such factors are unrelated to job performance (Mahajan, 2007).

A YouGov (2018) survey found that six in ten employers (61%) say that they would be "substantially" less likely to hire someone with tattoos on their face, with a further 17% saying they make them "slightly" less likely to recruit (Smith, 2018). A range of studies have considered the impact of tattoos and the recruitment process. Stigma (specifically in recruitment) has also been found to be greater in tattooed men than tattooed women (Timming et al., 2017). Henle et al. (2022) found that tattooed job applicants were less likely to be hired, offered lower salaries and had lower competence ratings. Visible tattoos have also been found to reduce the chances of securing a job interview (Jibuti, 2018

) and to be appointed in industries including hospitality (Swanger, 2006), tourism (Uzunogullari and Brown, 2020), health care (Arndt *et al.*, 2017) as well as retail and office sectors (Bekhor *et al.*, 1995).

Some studies established that tattoos can also have a negative impact on income and employment status (Dillingh *et al.*, 2020); however, others have not found negative career outcomes resulting from tattoos (French *et al.*, 2019). This may indicate a difference in job roles/industries, shifting of perceptions or reducing prejudice in line with the increase in tattoos in society. Previous literature has associated tattoo stigma with concerns about corporate brand image (Arndt *et al.*, 2017), colleague prejudice towards tattooed individuals (Miller *et al.*, 2009) and customer expectations (Timming, 2015). Managers are more comfortable recruiting employees with tattoos when their customer demographic is also likely to be tattooed (Uzunogullari and Brown, 2020).

Workplace dress codes are common; according to one survey, almost three-quarters of employers have some form of dress code or policy (XpertHR, 2018). Dress codes may be introduced to convey a consistent image, for health and safety or hygiene reasons or to set a particular standard (appearance management) (ACAS, 2021). Dress codes can be formal and explicit, or informal and implicit (Nath *et al.*, 2016). Policies, which are often driven by social and cultural norms, are a form of employer regulation of employees (Mahajan, 2007). Some dress codes expressly prohibit employees from having tattoos or displaying visible tattoos in the workplace (XpertHR, 2018).

Policies that prohibit visible tattoos may be associated with employer preferences to have homogeneity of appearance amongst employees or "lookism", a desire for employees to have a certain "look" (Flanagan and Lewis, 2019). This preference for a particular appearance, where an employee is required to portray a particular image to "look and sound right" which is then used by the organisation for competitive advantage is known as "aesthetic labour" (Warhurst and Nickson, 2020). They provide as an example the hiring of attractive persons to work in a bar which may result in repeat custom; the "look" of the employee thus becomes a required characteristic that is then exploited by the employer. What is considered a "good look" is subjective and influenced by management opinions, industry and the organisation itself (Nath *et al.*, 2016).

Dress codes and other organisational norms can lead to individuals presenting a version of themselves that is "ideal to the organisation", which may involve changing appearance between home and work; known as impression management this can help to avoid stereotyping. It can however result in incongruence and stress (Hunter and Ogungbure, 2013). In contrast, authenticity at work (being able to be one's true self) has been positively linked with job satisfaction, work engagement and performance (Metin *et al.*, 2016)

Those who experience stigma because of tattoos have been found to engage in different types of stigma management strategies (Larsen *et al.*, 2014). These include legitimation techniques, such as seeking to prove that they still engage in conventional behaviour, justifying their tattoos, and conforming to conventional aesthetics in certain situations (covering or having discreet tattoos). They may also engage in concealment from disapproving individuals or psychological processes such as seeking to disconfirm stereotypes about tattooed people (such as working harder) or managing multiple identities of self.

Turning to the issue of remote work, this working arrangement significantly followed the Covid-19 pandemic and work from home mandates; remote work is now at approximately five times the pre-pandemic level (Bloom, 2024). A range of terminology is used to describe different forms of remote work, including distributed work, work from home and teleworking. Remote work exists on a spectrum from fully remote work to occasional remote work. The term "hybrid work" has emerged to describe employees undertaking a mix of in-person and remote work (WHO, 2021). Hybrid work is now the dominant form of remote work globally; a UK CIPD survey found 83% of organisations were offering some form of hybrid work (CIPD, 2023). Remote forms of work have been associated with benefits for organisations and individuals, including improved wellbeing and work-life balance (Dale *et al.*, 2024) reduced sickness absence (Bloom *et al.*, 2024), employee retention (Felstead and Henseke, 2017) and attraction (De Lucas Ancillo *et al.*, 2021) and cost savings (Dale, 2020). Conversely, it can also be associated with work intensity (Kelliher and Anderson, 2010), stigma (Chung, 2018) and sedentary behaviour (Almarcha *et al.*, 2021).

Theoretical Underpinnings

The Job Demands-Resource (JD-R) theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) suggests that every job has both inherent demands and resources, some of which can be typical of many roles and others unique to the specific situation. Job

demands are defined as the "physical, psychological, social, or organizational" aspects of a particular role such as those that require physical, cognitive or emotional effort, and which have the potential to become work stressors. Examples of demands include workloads, job insecurity (Scaufeli, 2017), time pressure and role conflicts (Lesener et al., 2019). Excessive job demands can result in exhaustion and burnout, which are theorised in JD-R as leading to strains (Demerouti et al., 2001). Excessive exposure to job demands may also result in employees engaging in harmful behaviours or coping strategies (Bakker and De Vries, 2021) or reduced performance and achievement (Van den Brokeck et al., 2010).

Job resources are elements of a role that are motivational, can support an individual with performance or development at work, and which can act as a buffer against job demands, therefore increasing motivation. Employees are better able to cope with job demands when they have high levels of resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Examples of job resources includes workplace support, job control and feedback on performance (Scaufeli, 2017). Included, there are also personal resources, which are also important determinants of individuals adaptations to work (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Recently, Monje-Amor et al. (2021) argued that personal resources play the same role as job resources in the motivational process and may have similar functions in explaining employee's productivity. Personal resources, defined as psychological and social attributes that individuals draw on to manage stress and achieve goals (Hobfoll, 1998) can support employees through the workday when their resources are being depleted (Gilbert et al., 2018). Personal resources have also been identified as playing a key role in professional identity work and can support their socioemotional competence (Zhou et al., 2024). Therefore, enhancing employee's personal resources through the de-stigmatisation of tattoos are key in supporting employee engagement and work communities.

Job demands and resources can result in two opposing outcomes; work motivation or health impairment (Bakker and Demerouti, 2014). Health impairment results from depletion of physical, emotional and cognitive resources. The motivational process is stimulated by the satisfaction or employee psychological needs and can result in positive organisational outcomes including work engagement and improved performance (Bakker et al., 2023).

The JD-R theory is a versatile framework for understanding workplace dynamics, particularly how employees' perceptions, attitudes and behaviours are shaped by the interaction between demands and resources. When applied to understanding the perceptions and attitudes of tattooed employees in the workplace, JD-R offers insight into how employee aesthetics such as visible tattoos interacts with organisational and social expectations. As such, this research applies JD-R theory to examine whether attitudes to tattoos in the workplace have changed.

Perceptions of tattooed employees as job demands

Tattooed employees may experience job demands related to the stigma or bias associated with tattoos in certain professional contexts. Tattoos, particularly in conservative industries or customer-facing roles, can be perceived as a violation of professional norms or company image, leading to potential discrimination or negative perceptions from colleagues, managers, or customers (Timming et al., 2017). This form of workplace stigma can result in increased job demands, as tattooed employees may feel pressured to manage others' perceptions of their professionalism or suitability for the role.

The perceived mismatch between an organization's expectations of professional appearance and an employee's tattooed appearance can contribute to job strain. This strain may manifest in various forms, such as heightened emotional labour, where employees must constantly regulate their behaviour to counteract negative judgments (Hochschild, 1983). The emotional and cognitive demands of managing these perceptions can negatively impact job satisfaction, leading to stress, disengagement, or turnover intentions.

Job resources for tattooed employees

The JD-R theory also emphasises the importance of job resources that can help mitigate the demands experienced by employees. Social support from coworkers, supervisors, and organisational policies that promote diversity and inclusion can act as job resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017).

Furthermore, autonomy and organisational justice are job resources that influence the work experience of tattooed employees. Employees with higher levels of autonomy in their roles may feel more empowered to express their individuality, including their choice to have tattoos, without fear of reprisal (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Likewise, when

organisations implement fair and transparent policies related to appearance standards, tattooed employees may be less likely to experience discrimination or unfair treatment, thus reducing stress and enhancing their job satisfaction (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001).

Despite this, the connection between the JD-R theory, specifically person resources as a job resource and personal appearance (such as tattoos) in the workplace is not directly established in the literature. Based on the apparent lack of literature linking the JD-R theory with personal appearance, it is argued that the elements of job resources and job demands are unclear when considering the impact of individuals' tattoos in the workplace. A such, this study sought to uncover these elements and is illustrated in the adapted JD-R framework (Figure 1).

Figure 1
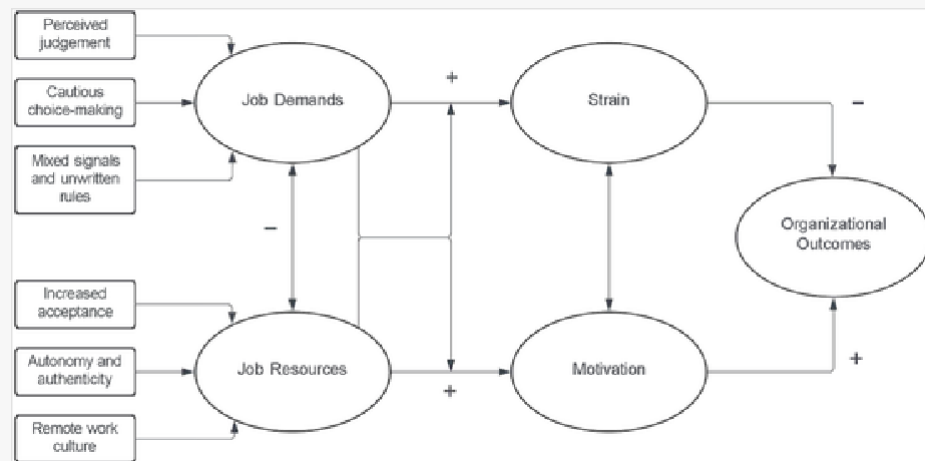
Job demands-resources framework for tattooed individuals in the workplace. *Source:* (adapted from Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) -

Figure alternative text

Short Description: A framework shows relationships among job demands, job resources, strain, motivation, and organizational outcomes.

Long Description: The framework consists of five ovals. Two ovals are vertically arranged on the left, labeled "Job Demands" and "Job Resources". Two ovals are vertically arranged in the center, labeled "Strain" and "Motivation". One oval is positioned on the far right, labeled "Organizational Outcomes". Three vertically arranged rectangular text boxes are present on the left of "Job Demands", labeled from top to bottom as "Perceived Judgement", "Cautious Choice-Making", and "Mixed Signals and Unwritten Rules". Each of these three text boxes connects to "Job Demands" with individual rightward arrows. Similarly, three vertically arranged rectangular text boxes are present on the left of "Job Resources", labeled from top to bottom as "Increased Acceptance", "Autonomy and Authenticity", and "Remote Work Culture". Each of these three text boxes connects to "Job Resources" with individual rightward arrows. "Job Demands" and "Job Resources" are connected with a vertical double-headed arrow labeled with a minus sign. A rightward arrow labeled with a plus sign emerges from "Job Demands" and connects to "Strain". Another rightward arrow labeled with a plus sign emerges from "Job Resources" and connects to "Motivation". Two arrows emerge from "Job Demands" and "Job Resources" respectively, merge, and then diverge again; one points to the arrow connecting "Job Resources" to "Motivation", and the other points to the arrow connecting "Job Demands" to "Strain". A vertical double-headed arrow connects "Strain" to "Motivation". A rightward arrow labeled with a negative sign emerges from "Strain" and points to "Organizational Outcomes". A rightward arrow labeled with a plus sign emerges from "Motivation" and points to "Organizational Outcomes".

Methodology

The survey was conducted in July 2022, two years after implementation of work-from-home mandates. A qualitative survey approach was used to gain insights into the experiences of tattooed individuals in the workplace.

A qualitative survey was chosen for its potential to take a "wide-angle lens" (Braun *et al*., 2021) and to capture a diverse range of perspectives. Qualitative surveys can generate a "thick description" of the phenomena under investigation (Gibson and Brown, 2009). This method is particularly useful for exploring un-or under-researched areas. Through open-ended questions, qualitative surveys can gather rich, complex data that reflect participants' subjective experiences providing deep insights into the topic. Moreover, Jansen (2010) notes that while traditional statistical surveys focus on measuring frequencies and distributions of variables, qualitative surveys aim to capture the variation and complexity of characteristics in a population.

The survey specifically targeted "knowledge workers" who predominantly performed tasks in office setting. Responses from tattooed individuals were solicited; data from non-tattooed individuals were excluded. Survey was disseminated via social media, utilising researchers' networks and through snowball sampling, requesting participants to share the survey with their own connections. In addition to the demographic questions and queries to gather details about the respondents' tattoos, open-ended questions were posed. This set of questions allowed for a broad exploration of diverse perspectives, capturing in-depth data rather than limiting participants' responses (Braun *et al*., 2021).

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis, a method used to "identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This approach, widely used in qualitative research (Braun *et al*., 2021), is employed to uncover themes (Braun and Clarke, 2013) within the data set, utilising patterns to interpret the studied phenomenon (Boy atzis, 1998). To ensure consistency in interpretation, internal consistency of themes was regularly assessed through systematic analysis of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Furthermore, to ensure rigour, the stages of effective thematic analysis, identified by Braun and Clark (2021), were employed.

A total of 435 survey responses were received, of whom 368 (85.6%) had a tattoo. To provide insight into the demographics of respondents, relevant questions were included and analysed. These questions established that 91.1% of respondents were from the UK Most respondents were female (68.1%); the remaining 31% described themselves as male, 0.7% as "other" and a further 0.2% who chose not to disclose. Respondents were mainly aged between 25–39 (47.5%) and 40–54 (40.6%) with smaller proportions aged between 16–24 (5.1%) and 55 or over (6.9%). A total of 39.6% of respondents had had new tattoos since the beginning of the pandemic. At the time of completion, just under half (47.6%) of respondents primarily worked a hybrid pattern with 24.8% working mainly from home. The remainder worked mainly in an office. Respondents were asked to state to what extent they chose to cover their tattoos whilst working, whether from home or in the office. More employees chose not to cover their tattoos when working from home (58%) compared to working in the office (49%).

Empirical findings

Analysis of the data identified six themes related to the experiences of tattooed individuals in the workplace. Three of these six themes are further identified as having the potential to cause strain through cognitive or emotional effort, and which therefore have the potential to become work stressors (job demands). Three further themes are identified as potential job resources, including a theme about the impact of remote work on tattoo perceptions in the workplace.

Job demands

Theme 1: perceived judgement

Tattooed individuals have concerns about the perception of their tattoos, even when there are no formal policies or restrictions; this concern appears to act as a job demand. Individuals are conscious of negative connotations associated with tattoos, and they recognise that the presence of tattoos is not always accepted: *Based on the looks that I get, tattoos have not been fully accepted.*

Tattooed employees are aware of potential for judgement: *when meeting the clients face to face, I feel like I'm always waiting for one of them to pass a comment.* Sometimes, employees lack clarity on expectations or rules: *in my new role it's hard to gauge as it feels more conservative, so I keep them covered.*

Those who choose to conceal their tattoos link this specifically to concerns about professionalism and being seen as professional: *It's a professional environment and I'm in a senior role so have chosen not to show it,* suggesting that either they believe they may be deemed as not professional if their tattoos are visible. Those who choose to cover their

tattoos at work, regardless of organisational policy, typically reference professionalism or a desire to appear professional when explaining this choice: *My employer is inclusive, however, I wish to display a professional appearance whilst in a place of business so choose to wear long sleeves.*

Other concerns from respondents included the potential for tattoos to hinder career progression: *I've noted that I would be less likely to have opportunities at the executive level because of my tattoos,* and what external parties such as client may think: *I am conscious that my clients may not fee it presents the right image; It would be career-limiting to display them.* Similarly, tattooed employees manage visibility in certain elements of work, including job seeking. One respondent described concealing during an interview process, only showing them to colleagues when they had started work and felt that they had '*proved their worth*'.

Tattooed individuals look for signs about acceptability, such as checking whether other people have tattoos: *always worried because there aren't any people that have any around me.* Some respondents, when new to organisations, described initially covering their tattoos until they were certain of acceptance. *I covered them up initially as I lacked the confidence to show them to students and colleagues, but this is changing with time.* Similarly, some respondents wait until they have established relationships with colleagues or clients prior to visibly showing their tattoos: *I think it would be appropriate to cover tattoos when dealing with external partners … at least at first.*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents have strong views about the stigma and judgement that can result from having visible tattoos in the workplace. They reject negative connotations and are keen to note that the presence of body ink bears no relation to capability or professionalism: *There is no correlation between someone's tattoos and their ability to do their jobs. Having them is not a negative/does not diminish someone's capabilities.*

Theme 2: cautious choice-making

In line with existing research, respondents with tattoos make choices, sometimes on a continuous basis, about whether to show their ink or when and in which context. This is a job demand, that requires management by tattooed individuals, that is influenced by concerns about acceptability and judgement. Nath *et al*. (2016) highlight that appearance is a signalling device; individuals make conscious choices about what to publicly communicate about their personal selves; these decisions are influenced by a range of factors including age, culture, gender and personal values. This form of communication also influences other people's appraisal of the individual – including their professionalism. Such approaches accord with stigma management strategies identified in the extant literature.

Some respondents talk about different expectations driven by circumstances: *perhaps there would be the expectation for them to be covered when out on site with a client.* Work contexts influence this choice-making process; tattooed individuals take into account, for example, who they are meeting and the type of activity that they are undertaking at any particular time: Wi*th clients I chose to cover up until I know them better and understand how they will respond to them; I very rarely have face to face meeting but I do attend court. This has been remote recently but when in person I would probably wear black tights to disguise the tattoo. I feel that I should out of respect for the judge and my client.*

However, it is unclear whether these are express (or even implicit) requirements of their organisations or personal choices. Often, respondents err on the side of caution, especially when they are not clear about the level of acceptability: *I don't think senior management would care but I choose not to test that.* Such choices result from mixed signals about acceptance – discussed in the next theme.

Some respondents opt out of ongoing choice-making, taking a permanent decision not to display their tattoos, regardless of policies: *There are no explicit rules about visible tattoos. It is my choice not to have my tattoos visible at work.* Some do so expressly to avoid negative connotations, especially that they might not be professional: *I choose to cover up in the office as I do not want my colleagues to associate my tattoos with my professionalism; I prefer to keep them hidden to avoid any potential judgement in the workplace which may impact the perception of me.* This suggests that some individuals are aware of the potential for stigma and stereotypes related to tattoos and seek to manage this through concealment strategies.

Theme 3: mixed signals and unwritten rules

Findings highlight, although there were not necessarily express workplace policies about tattoos, individuals who have tattoos must navigate a range of unwritten rules and expectations, including those of other people. This job demand is

also often related to perceptions of "professionalism", with an inference that visible tattoos may not be sufficiently seen as professional in the workplace: *There is a strong preference from senior management to not display them, but nothing is formally documented.* This may compound issues discussed in the previous theme regarding acceptance concerns, especially where there are conflicting signals from the organisation, managers and colleagues. Sometimes, these mixed signals result from the behaviour of a single individual, typically a manager or leader: *There is a company policy, but my manager does not enforce it - my manager is open in her belief that she does not think appearance affects work performance.*

Personal resources

Theme 4: increased acceptance

For many respondents, having tattoos at work is considered a non-issue. Several respondents report that there are no policies restricting tattoos in their workplace. Others go so far as to say that their tattoos are welcomed, are seen as interesting or conversation starters, or are viewed as part of an inclusive workplace. Some also reflected that it was now more acceptable to have visible tattoos in the workplace than previously: *The current job role is fine but have covered them for the last 30 years as most organisations did not like them.* Some respondents discussed how in the past, they have engaged in greater levels of concealment than they now feel is necessary: *I have mine on show, multiple people who work for us have them, and no one considers it to be an issue.* Acceptance may be considered a job resource, especially where individuals feel that this allows them to express their personality (linked to theme 5).

However, in some cases, acceptability depends on placement, visibility and type of tattoo. Respondents frequently caveat their perceptions of increased acceptability with suggestions that some tattoos, in line with existing literature, are still not generally accepted in the workplace: "*as long as*   ". Face and neck tattoos are recognised by respondents as being more controversial and less acceptable. So are tattoos that are deemed "offensive". Acceptability is also dependcant on task: *I would expect them to be covered up in a professional business meeting but on a day-to-day basis they can be visible.* Findings suggest that whilst acceptability of tattoos in the workplace has increased, acceptance remains conditional on adhering to a certain type of tattoo and placement.

Theme 5: autonomy and authenticity

For some individuals being able to have visible tattoos is about authenticity and having autonomy to express themselves; *for me, use of tattoos is a way of expression.* Findings indicate this may act as a job resource through increased motivation and buffered demands. Tattoos allow some individuals to bring your whole self to work: *My employer enables me to be my authentic self at work.*

In direct contrast to the concerns about perceptions of professionalism is a small but strong view from some respondents that their tattoos do not define them, nor their ability to perform at work. This appears to be linked with ideas around authenticity and autonomy: *my tattoos don't define how good I am at my job; My tattoos are my personal choice for my body.*

The desire for authenticity and autonomy, an established job resource (Bakker *et al.*, 2023), concerning tattoo choices appears to flow into employment-related decision-making, including where to work. Some respondents state that this is of key importance to them, wishing to work for an organisation that aligns with their values and sense of self. Some respondents indicate that they would not work for an organisation with inflexible tattoo policies or where they would be required to "hide" some part of themselves.

Job resource

Theme 6: remote work culture

Through this final theme we identify the impact of remote work arrangements on tattooed individuals. Whilst for some respondents, working from home during or since the pandemic has had no impact on their approach or decision-making processes about their tattoos, other individuals note differences that have arisen because of increased remote work, some of which may have the potential to act as job resource. The first of these differences is practical changes to the way that they dress when working from home, leading to potential increased visibility: *I am more likely to wear more casual clothing which also shows more of them - so tattoos are more visible more often when WFH is a by-product of*

wearing different attire, as well as a general reduced lack of formality about remote work dress compared to the office environment: *I feel able to dress down at home.* Depending on tattoo placement, some tattooed individuals are freed from concerns about visibility or the need to manage visibility as their tattoos are not visible via online meetings.

Other respondents reflected on the nature of the pandemic work-from-home period itself, and how this had influenced work behaviour: *Because a lot of us saw over Zoom our colleagues in casual clothing this has carried over into the office, and in turn, it has allowed me to feel less anxiety over having my tattoos on show.*

For some, the shift has reduced their concerns about judgement and negative perceptions: *I care a lot less about people seeing them now, I feel like there is less judgment for anyone working remotely, particularly on video calls.* In some cases, this change has occurred alongside a more casual approach to dress at work in general: *I think the …. pandemic has made the overall company more relaxed about dress code.*

For other respondents the changes relate to inclusion and authenticity: *I feel people are freer to express themselves and my workplace is acknowledging greater diversity; I'm certainly more comfortable to bring my whole self, now.*

However, whilst there appears for some respondents to be an increase in flexibility around dress at home (and as a result, tattoo visibility), this does not necessarily extend to the office environment. Largely, this additional freedom stems not necessarily from changed attitudes but the practicalities that arise from being less visible on a screen and able to dress more casually. Concerns about perceptions appears to still influence dress on office days for hybrid workers, and the choice-making process is evident here too: *Able to uncover tattoos more when working at home, no change to office attendance and appearance/covering.* Respondents apply different dress standards depending on whether they are working remotely or in the office. Some respondents dress differently at home too, depending on the task that they are undertaking *I do not cover my tattoos when working from home as I feel I am in the comfort of my home. If I was to have a video call with a client I would cover them.*

This suggests that hybrid or remote tattooed workers have increased freedom and autonomy but with constraints, and they are still cognisant of stigma and judgement, taking what they consider to be appropriate steps to manage these.

Discussion

Our research demonstrates, utilising Job-Demands Resource theory, how an employee's person choice regarding their personal appearance, in this case in the form of tattoos, can be experienced as a job demand and a personal resource, sometime simultaneously. Differences in experience appears to occur depending on the perceptions and treatment from employers, other employees and external parties. When the perceptions from others are experienced negatively, tattoos appear to act as a job demand. Prominently and distinctively, tattoos as a personal resource can be utilised as employees at an individual level to communicate or portray something about themselves. When work practices support individual flexibility and employees experience then they can act as job resources. In contrast, broadly positive attitudes towards tattoos increase autonomy and act authentically. Furthermore, when employees feel empowered, they are a personal resource. The ability for employees to "be themselves" at work has previously been found to act as a job resource (Nath *et al.*, 2016), however this research extends this to personal appearance and aesthetic characteristics.

A paradox for employees of both demands and resources appears to exist, depending on organisational culture and perceptions of others and the empowerment of employees. Although often individuals who have tattoos continue to have concerns about how they are perceived in the workplace, and the extent to which tattoos are seen as "professional" and complying with traditional workplace norms and values. The analysis indicates that employees with tattoos who experience judgement, mixed signals or unclear requirements, or are required to engage in choice making, may experience these requirements as job demands. Tattooed individuals, aware of the potential for judgement, may engage in a range of strategies to ensure that they continue to be seen as sufficiently professional and do not experience negative career outcomes because of their tattoo choices.

Accordingly, this may result in strain and reduce employee wellbeing. High job demands have also been found to result in reduced job satisfaction (Han *et al.*, 2020), turnover (Demerouti and Bakker, 2011) and burnout (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). Burnout is in turn associated with reduced work performance, higher sickness absence and reduced productivity (Schaufeli, 2017). Conversely, high job resources are linked to organisational commitment, engagement, employee retention (Hakanen and Roodt, 2010) and improved work performance (

Schaufeli, 2017). For some individuals and organisations, the presence of tattoos, whilst increasing in acceptability in general, still has connotations of unprofessionalism. Some organisations are replete with mixed signals about acceptability, leaving employees uncertain about what is expected of them and to engage in personal management strategies. Whilst some tattooed individuals opt to cover their tattoos, others appear to engage in a balancing act between their desire for authenticity and the wish to be perceived as professional considering the negative connotations and stigma that can result from visible tattoos.

With increased acceptance, tattoos for individuals can amount to a personal resource as they enable employees to share some of themselves with others or to start conversations, therefore enabling socioemotional competencies (Zhou et al., 2024). For some, tattoos represent authenticity and self-expression. This extends previous quantitative research on the role of personal resources, demonstrating how this can work in context (Zhou et al., 2024). In addition, employees feel that their tattoos and their choice to have tattoos represents autonomy and their authentic self, this can support with employee's identity work, when demands and resources are in balance, employees can enhance their professional selves (Zhou et al., 2024).

In aesthetic labour, the body is seen to be a form of physical capital for the organisation (Warhurst and Nickson, 2020). As Bourdieu (1990, 2004) asserts, it is the condition or manifestation of this physical form, or body that acts as a "memory jogger" to assert power at the societal level or exploited in this example at the organisational level. Although this form of aesthetic labour, used by organisations as a strategy of communication to look and sound right; in an organisation (Warhurst and Nickson, 2020), in regards to tattoos, employees now also may see them as personal resources, to help communicate something about themselves and provide a sense of autonomy and authenticity. This can be seen in the current research in employees noting them as a form of self-expression or utilising them to make conversations or communicate with others. Utilising the JD-R framework, we were able to ascertain how, the personal preference of changed appearance of tattoos are experienced within the workplace for employees. Based on the findings, we seek to argue an extended definition of aesthetic labour and argue that tattooed individuals engage in this form of labour in the workplace from their own perspective. Therefore, aesthetic labour is not only an organisational strategy but may also be on an individual approach to managing their workplace experience by employees.

The upholding of aesthetic labour from an organisational perspective or even individual can cause undue pressure for employees in the current workplace environment. Employees with tattoos are required to adhere to not only organisational policies but implicit requirements that are either imposed by themselves or via the organisation or its representatives. The choice-making processes relating to visibility, and ongoing management of the perceptions of others resulting from their tattoos, use a form of aesthetic labour. This places a burden on employees with tattoos and reduces their ability to act as their authentic self or places pressure to maintain that against obstacles. This aligns with Hochschild's (1983) definition of emotional labour in which employees are required to manage their emotions and those of others (predominantly customers) to undertake their role. Similarly, tattooed individuals must manage the perceptions of others, especially about their perceived professionalism and competency.

When working remotely, tattoos are less visible to others. Judgement and stigma may also be reduced, as will the form of aesthetic labour (and accordingly, associated job strain) associated with impression management and choice making. Authenticity has been defined as "the unobstructed operation of one's true or core self in one's daily enterprise" (Goldman and Kernis, 2002). A more straightforward definition is the extent to which an employee feels that when at work, they are in "touch with their real self" (Van den Bosch et al., 2019). Through remote work, tattooed individuals may have increased opportunities for authenticity and the reduced need to conceal their tattoos; this may act as a job resource or buffer demands. The shift to remote work has relaxed dress codes, allowing more tattoo visibility at home, though this freedom is context-dependent, and traditional concerns remain when in the office.

Implications for practice

Employees with tattoos may experience disadvantage if organisations do not communicate clear policies or expectations regarding the display of tattoos in the workplace. Inconsistent or unclear policies can create ambiguity, leading employees to experience strain and increased job demands as they engage in ongoing choice making activity. These demands may contribute to strain and reduced wellbeing.

To mitigate this, organisations should provide clarity to employees on appearance requirements; policies and guidance can reduce ambiguity and hence job demands. Such policies should be clearly and communicated, including to people

managers, and consistency applied at all stages of the employment lifecycle including recruitment and onboarding. Clear expectations will also reduce ambiguity, alleviating the need for aesthetic labour, and support employee wellbeing. Employment policies should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they reflect changes in norms, society or evolving working practices. Remote and hybrid working arrangements have reduced the visibility of suggesting that pre-pandemic appearance norms may no longer be necessary in these contexts.

Furthermore, organisations should be aware that unnecessarily restrictive tattoo policies may have unintended consequences including on the ability of the organisation to attract talent, especially as social norms in relation to tattoos shift. As noted in the Literature Review, tattoo prevalence is increasing, especially in younger people, and accordingly organisations that enforce prohibitive rules risk limiting their access to a key talent pools.

Restrictive tattoo policies may also be in contrast with employee desires for authenticity (a resource) which may in turn influence their engagement, job satisfaction and wellbeing. Organisations with restrictive tattoo policies may therefore wish to formally review these policies to ensure that they are not deterring potential future talent, nor impacting employees' desires to be authentic at work, considering how this can act as both a potential job resource and demand. Specifically, organisations should consider whether restrictions on tattoos or tattoo visibility are justified.

Organisations that adopt more inclusive policies around tattoos can enhance employees' sense of autonomy and authenticity; this may help to foster a more inclusive environment and can positively impact employee wellbeing and engagement. Employers that position themselves as inclusive in relation to tattoos may reduce job demands, whilst also leveraging a strategic advantage for their employer brand, attracting a broader range of candidates and appealing to employees who value authenticity in their work lives.

Conclusions

This research reveals a nuanced landscape of tattoo acceptability in the workplace. Overall, our research suggests a positive trend towards tattoo acceptance in the workplace. However, despite this broader acceptance, which appears to align with shifting norms about tattoos in general, concerns about judgement and professional persist. Ultimately, this study highlights the complexity of tattoo acceptability, influenced by evolving societal norms, workplace policies, and individual perceptions of professionalism and authenticity. For tattooed employees, the reduced requirement for aesthetic labour and impression management associated with their tattoos can be an additional benefit to remote work.

Limitations of study

Acceptability of tattoos varies significantly across cultures (Bauman *et al*., 2016). Hence what is acceptable in some countries and cultures would not be acceptable in others. This research was set in the UK, and respondents were predominantly based in the UK; accordingly, these findings may not generalise to other cultural contexts.

This study focused on the perspectives of employees with tattoos. Further studies may wish to explore the current perspectives of people managers or assess the extent to which Human Resources policies have developed in line with the increasing prevalence of tattoos.

Suggestions for further research

Future research could build on these findings by exploring several important directions. Given that tattoo acceptability varies across cultures, comparative studies examining cultural attitudes toward tattoos and their impact on workplace norms would enhance the generalisability of the current findings. This research focused on the implications of tattoos on work experiences, that they can be experienced as demands and resources, however it also revealed many interesting conceptualisations around their experiences which was out of the boundaries of this paper. Concepts such as role ambiguity and organisational justice could be examined further in this context to support interventions and implementing policies.

Further research might also investigate the perspectives of people managers and HR professionals to assess how organisational policies and leadership attitudes have evolved in response to shifting societal norms. In addition, the pandemic-induced shift to remote and hybrid work presents an opportunity to further explore how changes in working environments affect aesthetic labour, authenticity, and identity expression. Longitudinal research could examine whether visible tattoos influence career progression, leadership opportunities, or performance evaluations. An

intersectional approach would further illuminate how tattoo-related perceptions interact with other identity markers such as gender, race, and class.

References

ACAS (2021), "Dress codes", available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20210104114137/https://archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4953 (accessed 20 July 2024).

Almarcha, M., Balagué, N. and Torrents, C. (2021), "Healthy teleworking: towards personalized exercise recommendations", *Sustainability*, Vol. 13 No. 6, p. 3192, doi: 10.3390/su13063192.

Arndt, A.D., McCombs, G., Tolle, S.L. and Cox, C. (2017), "Why are health care managers biased against hiring service providers with tattoos?", *Services Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 88-99, doi: 10.1080/15332969.2017.1289789.

Bakker, A.B. and de Vries, J.D. (2021), "Job demands–resources theory and self-regulation: new explanations and remedies for job burnout", *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 1-21, doi: 10.1080/10615806.2020.1797695.

Bakker, A.B. and Demerouti, E. (2007), "The job demands-resources model: state of the art", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 309-328, doi: 10.1108/02683940710733115.

Bakker, A.B. and Demerouti, E. (2014), "Job demands–resources theory", *Wellbeing: a Complete Reference Guide*, John Wiley and Sons, Vol. 3, pp. 1-28. doi: 10.1002/9781118539415.wbwell019.

Bakker, A.B. and Demerouti, E. (2017), "Job demands–resources theory: taking stock and looking forward", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 273-285, doi: 10.1037/ocp0000056.

Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E. and Sanz-Vergel, A. (2023), "Job demands–resources theory: ten years later", *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 25-53, doi: 10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-053933.

Baumann, C., Timming, A.R. and Gollan, P.J. (2016), "Taboo tattoos? A study of the gendered effects of body art on consumers' attitudes toward visibly tattooed front line staff", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 29, pp. 31-39, doi: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2015.11.005.

Bekhor, P.S., Bekhor, L. and Gandrabur, M. (1995), "Employer attitudes toward persons with visible tattoos", *Australasian Journal of Dermatology*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 75-77, doi: 10.1111/j.1440-0960.1995.tb00936.x.

Bloom, N. (2024), Working from Home is Powering Productivity, IMF, available at: https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2024/09/working-from-home-is-powering-productivity -bloom (accessed 16 May 2025).

Bloom, N., Han, R. and Liang, J. (2024), "Hybrid working from home improves retention without damaging performance", *Nature*, Vol. 630 No. 8018, pp. 920-925, doi: 10.1038/s41586-024-07500-2.

Bourdieu, P. (1990), *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2004), "Structures and the habitus", *Material Culture: Critical concepts in the social sciences*, Vol. 1 Part 1, pp. 116-177.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998), *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*, Sage.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013), *Successful Qualitative Research: a Practical Guide for Beginners*, Sage.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021), *Thematic Analysis: a Practical Guide*, Sage.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Boulton, E., Davey, L. and McEvoy, C. (2021), "The online survey as a qualitative research tool", *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 24 No. 6, pp. 641-654, doi: 10.1080/13645579.2020.1805550.

Broussard, K.A. and Harton, H.C. (2018), "Tattoo or taboo? Tattoo stigma and negative attitudes toward tattooed individuals", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 158 No. 5, pp. 521-540, doi: 10.1080/00224545.2017.1373622.

Chung, H. (2018), "Gender, flexibility stigma and the perceived negative consequences of flexible working in the UK", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 151 No. 2, pp. 521-545, doi: 10.1007/s11205-018-2036-7.

CIPD (2023) Flexible and hybrid working practices in 2023: Employer and employee perspectives https://www.cipd.org/globalassets/media/knowledge/knowledge-hub/reports/2023-pdfs/2023-flexible-hybrid-working-practices-report-8392.pdf

Clarkson, N. (2022), "Virgin Atlantic relaxes tattoo policy for employees", available at: https://www.virgin.com/about-virgin/latest/virgin-atlantic-relaxes-tattoo-policy -for-employees (accessed 16 July 2024).

Colquitt, J.A., Conlon, D.E., Wesson, M.J., Porter, C.O.L.H. and Ng, K.Y. (2001), "Justice at the millennium: a meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 86 No. 3, pp. 425-445, doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.425.

Dale, G. (2020), *Flexible Working: How to Implement Flexibility in the Workplace to Improve Employee and Business Performance*, Kogan Page.

Dale, G., Wilson, H. and Tucker, M. (2024), "What is healthy hybrid work? Exploring employee perceptions on well-being and hybrid work arrangements", *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 335-352, doi: 10.1108/ijwhm-03-2024-0041.

Dean, D.H. (2010), "Consumer perceptions of visible tattoos on service personnel", *Managing Service Quality: International Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 294-308, doi: 10.1108/09604521011041998.

Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2000), "The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: human needs and the self-determination of behavior", *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 227-268, doi: 10.1207/s15327965pli1104_01.

De Lucas Ancillo, A., del Val Núñez, M.T. and Gavrila, S.G. (2021), "Workplace change within the COVID-19 context: a grounded theory approach", *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 2297-2316, doi: 10.1080/1331677x.2020.1862689.

Demerouti, E. and Bakker, A. B. (2011), "The job demands-resources model: Challenges for future research", *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 01-09.

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B., Nachreiner, F. and Schaufeli, W.B. (2001), "The job demands-resources model of burnout", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 86 No. 3, pp. 499-512, doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499.

Dillingh, R., Kooreman, P. and Potters, J. (2020), "Tattoos, lifestyle, and the labor market", *Labour*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 191-214, doi: 10.1111/labr.12167.

Dodig, S., Čepelak-Dodig, D., Gretić, D. and Čepelak, I. (2024), "Tattooing: immediate and long-term adverse reactions and complications", *Arhiv za Higijenu Rada i Toksikologiju*, Vol. 75 No. 4, pp. 219-226,

doi: 10.2478/aiht-2024-75-3921.

Durkee, A. (2021), "Disney theme Park employees can now have tattoos and 'Gender-Inclusive' hairstyles for first time ever", Forbes, available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2021/04/13/disney-theme-park-employees-cast-members-can-now-have-tattoos-and-gender-inclusive-hairsty_les-for-first-time-ever/?sh=4f8414524818 (accessed 16 July 2024).

Ellis, A.D. (2015), "A picture is worth one thousand words: body art in the workplace", *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 101-113, doi: 10.1007/s10672-014-9254-1.

Elzweig, B. and Peeples, D.K. (2011), "Tattoos and piercings: issues of body modification and the workplace", *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, Vol. 76 No. 1, p. 13.

Feldman, J. (2020), What People Wore to Work Before the Pandemic Vs. now, Huffpost, available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/work-from-home-outfits_l_5f96feeac5b646c70e9b3475 (accessed 16 July 2024).

Felstead, A. (2022), *Remote Work, A Research Overview*, Routledge, Oxon.

Felstead, A. and Henseke, G. (2017), "Assessing the growth of remote working and its consequences for effort, well-being and work-life balance", *New Technology, Work and Employment*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 195-212, doi: 10.1111/ntwe.12097.

Flanagan, J.L. and Lewis, V.J. (2019), "Marked inside and out: an exploration of perceived stigma of the tattooed in the workplace", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 87-106, doi: 10.1108/edi-06-2018-0101.

French, M.T., Mortensen, K. and Timming, A.R. (2019), "Are tattoos associated with employment and wage discrimination? Analyzing the relationships between body art and labor market outcomes", *Human Relations*, Vol. 72 No. 5, pp. 962-987, doi: 10.1177/0018726718782597.

Gibson, W. and Brown, A. (2009), *Working with Qualitative Data*, Sage. http://digital.casalini.it/9781446202494.

Gilbert, E., Foulk, T. and Bono, J. (2018), "Building personal resources through interventions: an integrative review", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 214-228, doi: 10.1002/job.2198.

Goldman, B.M. and Kernis, M.H. (2002), "The role of authenticity in healthy psychological functioning and subjective well-being", *Annals of the American Psychotherapy Association*, Vol. 5 No. 6, pp. 18-20.

Hakanen, J.J. and Roodt, G. (2010), "Using the job demands-resources model to predict engagement: analysing a conceptual model", *Work Engagement: a Handbook of Essential Theory and Research*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 85-101.

Han, J., Yin, H., Wang, J. and Zhang, J. (2020), "Job demands and resources as antecedents of university teachers' exhaustion, engagement and job satisfaction", *Educational Psychology*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 318-335, doi: 10.1080/01443410.2019.1674249.

Henle, C.A., Shore, T.H., Murphy, K.R. and Marshall, A.D. (2022), "Visible tattoos as a source of employment discrimination among female applicants for a supervisory position", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 107-125, doi: 10.1007/s10869-021-09731-w.

Hobfoll, S.E. and Wells, J.D. (1998), "Conservation of resources, stress, and aging: why do some slide and some spring?", *Handbook of Aging and Mental Health: an Integrative Approach*, Springer US, Boston, MA, pp. 121-134.

Hobsbawm, J. (2024), *Working Assumptions: What we Thought we Know About Work Before Covid-19 and Generative AI and what we Know now*, Whitefox Publishing, London.

Hochschild, A. (1983), *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Hunter, D. and Ogungbure, A. (2013), "Impression management and diversity: challenges of diverse employees and contemporary appearances in the workplace", *Journal of Knowledge and Human Resource Management*, Vol. 5 No. 12, pp. 40-46.

Jansen, H.A.M. (2010), "The logic of qualitative survey research and its position in the field of social research methods", Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum for Qualitative Social Research, Vol. 11 No. 2, 11, available at: http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1002110

Jibuti, D. (2018), "Discrimination against workers with visible tattoos: experimental evidence from Germany", CERGE-EI Working Paper Series No.628

Kelliher, C. and Anderson, D. (2010), "Doing more with less? Flexible working practices and the extensification of work", *Women's Health*, Vol. 63 No. 1, pp. 279-290.

Kirk, I. (2022), "Should visible tattoos be allowed in the workplace?", YouGov.uk, available at: https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/43350-should-visible-tattoos-be-allowed-workplace (accessed 16 July 2024).

Kjeldgaard, D. and Bengtsson, A. (2005), "Consuming the fashion tattoo", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 32 No. 1, p.p. 172-177.

Larsen, G., Patterson, M. and Markham, L. (2014), "A deviant art: tattoo-related stigma in an era of commodification", *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 31 No. 8, pp. 670-681, doi: 10.1002/mar.20727.

Lesener, T., Gusy, B. and Wolter, C. (2019), "The job demands-resources model: a meta-analytic review of longitudinal studies", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 76-103, doi: 10.1080/02678373.2018.1529065.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985), *Naturalistic inquiry*, sage.

Mahajan, R. (2007), "The naked truth: appearance discrimination, employment, and the law", *Asian American Law Journal*, Vol. 14, pp. 165-203.

Martin, R. and Guevara, M. (2022), "The pandemic changed workplace fashion. What does that mean for you? Npr.org", available at: https://www.npr.org/2022/07/07/1109317208/pandemic-workplace-fashion (accessed 16 July 2024).

Metin, U.B., Taris, T.W., Peeters, M.C., van Beek, I. and Van den Bosch, R. (2016), "Authenticity at work– a job-demands resources perspective", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 483-499, doi: 10.1108/jmp-03-2014-0087.

Miller, B.K., McGlashan Nicols, K. and Eure, J. (2009), "Body art in the workplace: piercing the prejudice?", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 38 No. 6, pp. 621-640, doi: 10.1108/00483480910992247.

Monje-Amor, A., Xanthopoulou, D., Calvo, N. and Vázquez, J.P.A. (2021), "Structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, and work engagement: a cross-country study", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 39 No. 6, pp. 779-789, doi: 10.1016/j.emj.2021.01.005.

Nath, V., Bach, S. and Lockwood, G. (2016), *ACAS Research Paper: Dress Codes and Appearance at Work. Body Supplements, Body Modification and Aesthetic Labour*, Kings College, London.

Schaufeli, W.B. (2017), "Applying the job demands-resources model", *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 2 No. 46, pp. 120-132, doi: 10.1016/j.orgdyn.2017.04.008.

Simpson, R. (2018), "London police now allowed visible tattoos – so is body art still rebellious?", The Conversation, available at: https://theconversation.com/london-police-now-allowed-visible-tattoos-so-is-body-art-still-rebellious-104155 (accessed 16 July 2024).

Smith, M. (2018), "That inking feeling: the tattoos employers don't want to see, YouGov.UK", available at: https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/20883-employers-tell-us-which-tattoos-make-them-less-lik (accessed 16 July 2024).

Swanger, N. (2006), "Visible body modification (VBM): evidence from human resource managers and recruiters and the effects on employment", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 154-158, doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2004.12.004.

Timming, A.R. (2015), "Visible tattoos in the service sector: a new challenge to recruitment and selection", *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 60-78, doi: 10.1177/0950017014528402.

Timming, A.R. and 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*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 115-128, doi: 10.1080/21515581.2017.1289847.

Timming, A.R., Nickson, D., Re, D. and Perrett, D. (2017), "What do you think of my ink? Assessing the effects of body art on employment chances", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 133-149, doi: 10.1002/hrm.21770.

Van den Broeck, A., De Cuyper, N., De Witte, H. and Vansteenkiste, M. (2010), "Not all job demands are equal: differentiating job hindrances and job challenges in the job demands–resources model", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 19 No. 6, pp. 735-759, doi: 10.1080/13594320903223839.

Uzunogullari, Serkan and Brown, Alyssa Eve (2020), "Negotiable bodies: employer perceptions of visible body modifications", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 24 No. 10, pp. 1451-1464.

Van den Bosch, R., Taris, T.W., Schaufeli, W.B., Peeters, M.C. and Reijseger, G. (2019), "Authenticity at work: a matter of fit?", *The Journal of psychology*, Vol. 153 No. 2, pp. 247-266, doi: 10.1080/00223980.2018.1516185.

Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D. (2020), *Aesthetic Labour*, Sage, London.

Wohlrab, S., Stahl, J. and Kappeler, P.M. (2007), "Modifying the body: motivations for getting tattooed and pierced", *Body Image*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 87-95, doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2006.12.001.

World Health Organisation and International Labour Organisation (2021), Healthy and Safe Telework, Technical Brief, Geneva, available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240040977 (accessed 28 June 2023).

Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E. and Schaufeli, W.B. (2007), "The role of personal resources in the job demands-resources model", *International Journal of Stress Management*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 121-141, doi: 10.1037/1072-5245.14.2.121.

XpertHR (2018), "Dress and appearance survey 2018", available at: https://www.xperthr.co.uk/survey-analysis/dress-and-appearance-survey-2018/163588/?keywords=tattoos&searchrank=2 (accessed 16 July).

Zestcott, C.A., Tompkins, T.L., Kozak Williams, M., Livesay, K. and 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, Vol. 158 No. 1, pp. 7-22, doi: 10.1080/00224545.2017.1297286.

Zhou, P., Zhou, Y., Li, T., Zhao, R. and Sun, W. (2024), "How do personal resources and homeroom teacher job demands influence teachers' professional identity? A perspective based on the job demands-resources model", *Psychology in the Schools*, Vol. 61 No. 12, pp. 4809-4830, doi: 10.1002/pits.23308.