

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Art in Pain on Becoming A Tattooed Person: A Grounded Theory

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Abstract: This study utilized a Straussian grounded theory approach to create a theory of being and becoming a tattooed person. Co-researchers were chosen using purposive and snow-balling sampling. A semi-structured interview was audio-recorded. This study answered the grand tour question “What does it mean to be a person with tattoos?” The data was meticulously transcribed, coded, and analyzed using constant comparative analysis. The findings revealed that there were quite a few changes that happened after acquiring a tattoo. Changes in physical, social, emotional, and mental aspect were shown. However, the perception of the society about tattoos was explored wherein those in favor of tattooing urges others to acquire tattoos, yet negative ideas are still associated with tattoos like delinquency. Prejudice and its psychological and social effects were also tackled in this study. Moreover, there were concepts and roots expounded in uncovering the decision making in undergoing tattoo. Thus, 13 categories emerged from the data and were connected and analyzed to create a successful theoretical grounding and process on becoming a tattooed person.

Keywords: tattoo, tattooing, tattooed person, society, grounded theory

“Tattoos go on a person’s skin, and so they cannot be separated from the ego of that person” (Bauerlain, 2014, par. 2). This statement connects the significance of tattoos on the psychological aspect of a tattooed individual. Historically, tattoos are worn as decorations, and it was discovered that there were tattooed mummified bodies way back 10 thousand years ago (3300 B.C.) (Lineberry, 2007). Also, according to the website of Polynesian Cultural Center (n.d.), the word tattoo comes from the Polynesian word *tatao* or *tatau*, meaning “to write,” “correct or workmanlike.” It was also called scarring, staining, and painting.

Tattoos marked in Philippine history way back when the people were termed Pintados or “the painted ones” by the Spaniards. The Pintados covered almost of their entire body with ink except for their hands and feet bare (One Tribe, 2017). The number of tattoos that the person had was based on the number of people he or she killed. This explained why the *datus* [ruler] way back have ink on their body. Also, those tattoos signify their rank in the government (Ollè, 2012). In Luzon, there are inhabited places like the Cordillera region that the mountain tribespeople is popular for their extensive tattoos and rituals—the indigenous groups are also known as the “Igorots” or “Cordillerans.”

According to Anderson (2014), tattoos are permanent markings on the skin on which the needle with a spot of ink is punched through the epidermis (first layer of the skin) allowing it to seep deep into the dermis (second layer of the skin). Tattoos are considered a work of art, just like paintings that are hung in the museum (Ocampo & Castronuevo, 2016). Drawings, letters, and designs make the standard definition of art similar to the goal of tattooing.

Local researches focused on the ethnographic side of tattooing, and few have approached this topic in theoretical and modern experiences. On the other hand, tattooing is more prominent in the western countries; therefore, most tattoo researches are studied there. This study aims to discover the experiences of tattooed young adults. Also, the study focuses on society's perception of tattoos, whether positive or negative. Lastly, this study aims to formulate a theory based on the data that was collected in this study.

Literature Review

One of the fads that are genuinely risk-taking and worthwhile to tackle is the art of tattooing. Tattoo incidences are not yet outdated. In fact, millions of people all over the world already have tattoos. Most of the tattooed people can be seen in Western countries because the contemporary practice of tattooing emerged there. The popularity of tattooing rises that 1 out of 5 persons in the United Kingdom had undergone a tattoo session (Dann & Callaghan, 2017). Moreover, a study made by Camacho (2014) stated that one-third of the population of people in the United States have tattoos. The number of populations involved in tattooing is intriguing. There have been many questions about this fad and why people continue to patronize it. Tattoo enthusiasts always claimed that a tattoo is a form of art, yet others were still trying to look deeper into its meaning.

Philippine culture paved the way to explore different practices and traditions that will mark our country at its finest. The news about Apo Whang-Od, a ritual tattoo artist of the Bubut tribe of the Kalinga ethnic group, reminisced the traditional tattooing in the Cordillerans. By her sudden exposure to the public, the conventional tattooing called "Batuk" was explored and many people, including foreigners, were visiting her to get inked. A study made by Calimag, Zafra,

Ambion and Demeterio (2002) explored the differences of tattoo traditions, practices, and culture of the seven ethnolinguistic tribes in the Cordillera region. The study discussed and concluded that there were Western influences involved in the said tattooing practices. Those different tribes had similar and opposite ways of tattooing designs and locations. Results showed that the practice of traditional tattooing in the 20th century was still happening due to its aesthetic value and sexual appeal—mostly in women. Moreover, it was proven that traditional tattooing among the Cordillerans still exists and among those ethnic groups, the Bontoks and the Ifugaos are more likely to strive for the survival of traditional tattooing in the country.

On the other hand, the contemporary practice of tattooing evaded our culture as well as our society. To expound this practice in the Philippines, there is a tattoo exposition named "Dutdutan." This event is the grandest and biggest tattoo fair in the country that is held annually. The organizer of the said event was the Tribal Gear Philippines. Based on the interview from Ocampo and Castronuevo (2016) to Torrero, the president and the organizer of Dutdutan, shared that there were over 15,000–16,000 tattooed people who are attending the exposition annually and there were 200 local and foreign tattoo shops joining in Dutdutan.

In this world, there are two kinds of people, a person who has tattoos, and the other who is afraid of tattooed people that carry meaning and identity (Jabrica, 2013). One of Jabrica's (2013) respondent stated that getting involved in tattooing appears psychological to them. This includes the following manifestations: self-expression, attention or social interaction, artistic freedom, and therapy. This is supported using impression management theory by Erving Goffman. It is a conscious or unconscious process of the mind wherein we control or influence others' perceptions on a certain aspect such as people, event, and things (Mazarin 2017). This proved that peer pressure is a big factor in why people get inked.

Lucas (2009) understood the meanings of tattoos for tattooed individuals. She explored the decision making, intentions and the experiences of tattooing regarding the context of the participants. Tattoo visibility and commercialization of tattoos are the factors to be considered in choosing their preferred tattoos. The participants also expounded their choice of tattoo

shops, design, and its meaning. The importance of pain also emphasized in the said study. For tattooed individuals, pain is a necessity to achieve their desired tattoo (Siorat, 2006). Moreover, knowing the health-related risks of tattooing was not a factor that hinders the participants from pursuing tattooing. The pride of art was highlighted in the study that they ensured the individualism and the originality of their tattoos. The modified behaviors on tattooing showed in the study were associated with the theory of planned behavior. This theory shows how an individual predicts to engage in a specific behavior at a specific scenario. It explains the behavior of how people handle their self-control (LaMorte, 2016).

Due to the rampant stereotyping of tattooed people, this explored the “deviant” practices as labeled by many. Camacho (2014) showed that the police were most likely to charge felony on those people who have tattoos compared with those who are non-tattooed. The visibility of the tattoo was also a predictor in giving felony charges. The tattoo location and being “black” also increased the chance of being caught and being charged. The theoretical framework used was Foucault’s concept of subtle coercion, wherein the mindset of the majority that tattoos are for lower classes and those tattooed persons having visible tattoos are responsible for what society thinks. Therefore, tattoo wearers are not yet totally acceptable. In contrast, today that tattoos are considered as a product of art, “the school of thought retains the bond between tattoos and deviance, remains in society’s subconscious” (Camacho, 2014, p. 49).

In another study, social stigma and gender stigma of tattooing in India were elucidated by Dey, Das, and Mukhopadhyay (2014). Despite the increasing popularity of tattooing, there were still negative aspect and stigma among tattooed individuals. Participants shared their experiences in job discriminations wherein they were not hired due to their visible tattoos. Also, there have been negative judgments whenever they pass by people that caused them to hide their tattoos most especially in public places and business places. Gender stigma shows that female tattoo wearers are prone to criticisms as a tattoo is perceived as a “masculine thing.”

Compared to tattooed men, tattooed women have a higher chance of getting judged by society. Women with tattoos are perceived as unattractive, immoral, and wild persons (Swami & Furnham, 2007, as cited by

Dann & Callaghan, 2017). Dann and Callaghan (2017) explored the experiences of mothers who have tattoos and analyses were as follows: First, tattooing the child’s name on the parent symbolizes the physical bond between them and becomes part of his or her identity. The trope of being a tattooed woman was reinforced to be a responsible tattooed mother to their children. It was also embedded that tattoo is a poor decision that tends to make poor choices. “The imagery produced from the ‘rough area’ suggests poverty, crime and not an ideal upbringing for children” (Dann & Callaghan, 2017, p. 11). Tattooed women are also linked to “having children from different fathers” (Dann & Callaghan, 2017, p. 13). By this trope, having heavily covered tattoos and having multiple children destructs the femininity of tattooed women.

The target population of tattooed people is the young adults because several changes in social activities, roles, and beliefs occur during this stage. Janney (2013) proved that there was a significant relationship between academic success and tattooing and explored the stigma of tattooed college students having lower grades. The original hypothesis was supported by concluding that tattooed college students have a lower GPA than those non-tattooed college students.

On the other hand, a study made by Ocampo and Castronuevo (2016) found out the activities and behavior of tattooed people nowadays compared to the traditional practice of the “pintados” [the painted ones] during the Spanish era where tattooing denotes proof of rank in the community. Some respondents are employed, but the unemployment of others are not due to their visible tattoos. Also, they were still involved in brawls today just like when they were still in school. The respondents also shared their different vices like using marijuana, alcohol abuse, and cigarette use. The research also showed the psychological decision making of tattooed enthusiasts in getting a tattoo. The respondents claimed that they imitate the tattoo of their favorite band, artist, or personality because they wanted to feel that they are like them. Also, the influence of the group persuaded the respondents to have tattoos.

Moreover, Koch, Roberts, Armstrong, and Owen (2005) studied the psychological well-being of tattooed students. Based on the initial survey that was gathered, suicide ideation, depression, and low self-esteem were reported, and this alarmed the researchers to come up with the study. The study used a scale

from existing literature in measuring the self-esteem (10 items), depression (6 items), and suicide ideation (2 items). Findings were as follows: First, females tend to attempt suicide and get easily depressed. Second, there was no correlation between the number of tattoos and suicide attempts. Lastly, suicide attempts and depression connects to each other, but self-esteem does not associate with suicide ideation.

Given the mentioned researches, knowing the idea of being a tattooed person is part of living in a society needs to be understood. Based on the scenarios presented, persons with tattoos are experiencing different challenges in life starting from its discovery of interest in tattooing up to everyday living with a permanent mark that displays who they are, living in the societal perceptions that affect them psychologically.

Therefore, the need to explore the lives and experiences of being a tattooed person paved the way for us to pursue this study. Based on some of the literature presented in this section, it is too crucial to understand how to become a tattooed person. In this section, it was discussed that the popularity of tattooing increases, as the generation is getting younger. Local reports of tattooing urged us to bridge the research gap by formulating a theory that will contribute to society by exploring the ethnographic approach and phenomenological studies. The review also focused on the process of becoming a tattooed person. Current studies were sourced out to support identified axial codes to fully understand the phenomenon. It demonstrated the various stereotyping such as having the stigma, labeling, criticisms, and judgments of tattooed persons, especially women who typically receive such negativities. Also, we elucidated the activities, behavior, and psychological perspective of tattooed persons by knowing some of the researches that display their present activities, academic performances, and their psychological well-being.

To further develop the constant need for answers based on the given researches about tattoos, we elucidated the notion of being a tattooed individual by exploring the following:

1. What does it mean to be a person with tattoos?
 - 1.1. What are the changes that a person underwent before and after a tattoo session?

- 1.2. How does society perceive tattooed people regarding social image and prejudices?
2. How do tattoos identify the psychological decision making in undergoing tattoo?
 - 2.1. What are the rooted reasons for their decision to be tattooed?
3. What concepts can be coded from the narratives?
4. What theoretical framework can be formulated from the narratives?

Methods

Qualitative research tends to express better about beliefs, values, thoughts, reaction, feelings, motivations, and culture of an individual (Berkwitz & Inui, 1998). This study used a Straussian grounded theory to ensure “systematic and rigorous” analysis of codes by supporting it with a literature. Thus, this approach is notably designed for its step-by-step process and techniques for the enhancement and certainty of data (Kenny & Fourie, 2015).

Grounded theory aims to generate enough data which highlights the arrangement, ideas, divisions, characteristics, and depth of a phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Straus & Corbin, 1998, as cited by Thomson, 2011). Twenty-one tattooed people, a mix of male and female, are considered as the co-researchers. Selected co-researchers are based on the following inclusion criteria: (a) should have a tattoo, regardless of location (visible or not visible), size, and number; (b) aged 18–39, considered as young adults; (c) must have the first tattoo experience for at least a year; and (d) should be willing to share and to express his or her tattoo experiences and thoughts.

This research used a purposive (criterion) sampling to find specific individuals who meet the needed criteria (Palys, 2008). In addition, the use of snowballing sampling was beneficial to gather more respondents, as the initial respondents will refer subjects who also meet the needed criteria.

We developed an intensive, semi-structured interview in gathering data as a pursuit to the construction of grounded theory. Hence, “by creating open-ended, non-judgmental questions, you encourage unanticipated statements and stories to emerge” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 26). We asked the participants to share and to express their experiences or thoughts

about a certain question. Questions such as, “How is it like to be tattooed person?”, “What are the reasons of your decisions to be tattooed?”, “Tell me about your before and after first tattoo session experience and how it feels like”, “Are there changes in your life after you underwent a tattoo session?” and “How like you, a tattooed person, perceive by the society regarding of social image?”. The questions were asked using the preferred language of the participants whether in English or Tagalog. To gather data, the interview was audio recorded which had the consent of the participant.

In this research, providing informed consent and maintaining confidentiality is strictly considered. To provide ethical research, the guide questions used must be validated by a research expert. We informed the qualified participant upon response to the invitation letter that was sent. If there were no clarifications from the participant, the interview was scheduled based on the participant’s availability. Before conducting an interview, we personally explained the nature and the purpose of research, as well as the informed consent. Other factors such as data gathering procedures, tools, and storage were also discussed. A face-to-face interview included building rapport and clarifying details to ensure that the data gathered are sufficient. Afterward, we initially asked “How is it like to be a tattooed person?” follows a series of questions that were asked during the entire interview. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify thoughts, experiences, and statements as discussed above. Reflective questions were answered to reflect a certain condition that will give such rich data.

This research used constant comparison analysis wherein the collected data was meticulously checked line by line, and each category that has emerged was labeled conceptually. As the process continues, these data were coded and, therefore, the coding process continues. To further expound the method of constant comparison analysis, Glaser and Holton (2004) enumerated the three levels of the said analysis: (1) codes are compared with codes, (2) codes are compared with emerging categories, and (3) categories are compared with one another. Before the end of the research process, we suggested that a successful analysis of data must consider the fourth level: “The emerging theory is compared with literature” (Kenny & Fourie, 2015, p. 1271).

Straussian grounded theory has a clear analysis of data, compared to other grounded theory

approach. First, open coding is a process by which the categories that were extracted from the data are identified. It was analyzed line by line from the transcripts, and each category (event, occurrences) will be identified by a keyword which reduces the data. It is later compared and grouped conceptually. Second, axial coding is a process which analyzes the connection between the categories and the sub-categories will emerge in the data. Also, the sub-categories will be supported by existing literature. Third, selective coding arises when the core variable was sought, and the other dimensions and categories were interconnected and discovered (Simmons, 2014). This also shows the inter-relationships between the categories that emerged to create a solid foundation of theory. Lastly, a conditional matrix, discussed by Kenny and Fourie (2015), that this is not a kind of coding, but rather it summarizes and integrates the previous coding analysis discussed above. This structure was design to guide us in connecting the proposed theory to reality. Afterward, the creation of a grounded theory will be achieved.

Results

Coding

The narratives elicited 13 categories that show different concepts on how to become a tattooed person. Each category has unique codes and sub-codes which strengthens the formulation of categories. The categories that emerged are essential in making a grounded theory. The following categories are: roots, concepts, vigor, meaning, tattoo session, benefits, downsides, favorability, impetus, coping strategies, metamorphosis, identity, and experiential learning.

Axial Coding

This coding stage proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) served as the framework for this study. It shows how data was analyzed and systematically coded. Kenny and Fourie (2015) stated that axial coding might “appear complicated...that this is because human life is complicated” (p. 1275). In analyzing the data, we discovered 13 categories that will explain the process of the phenomenon on how these categories are linked between the sub-categories that emerged from the data.

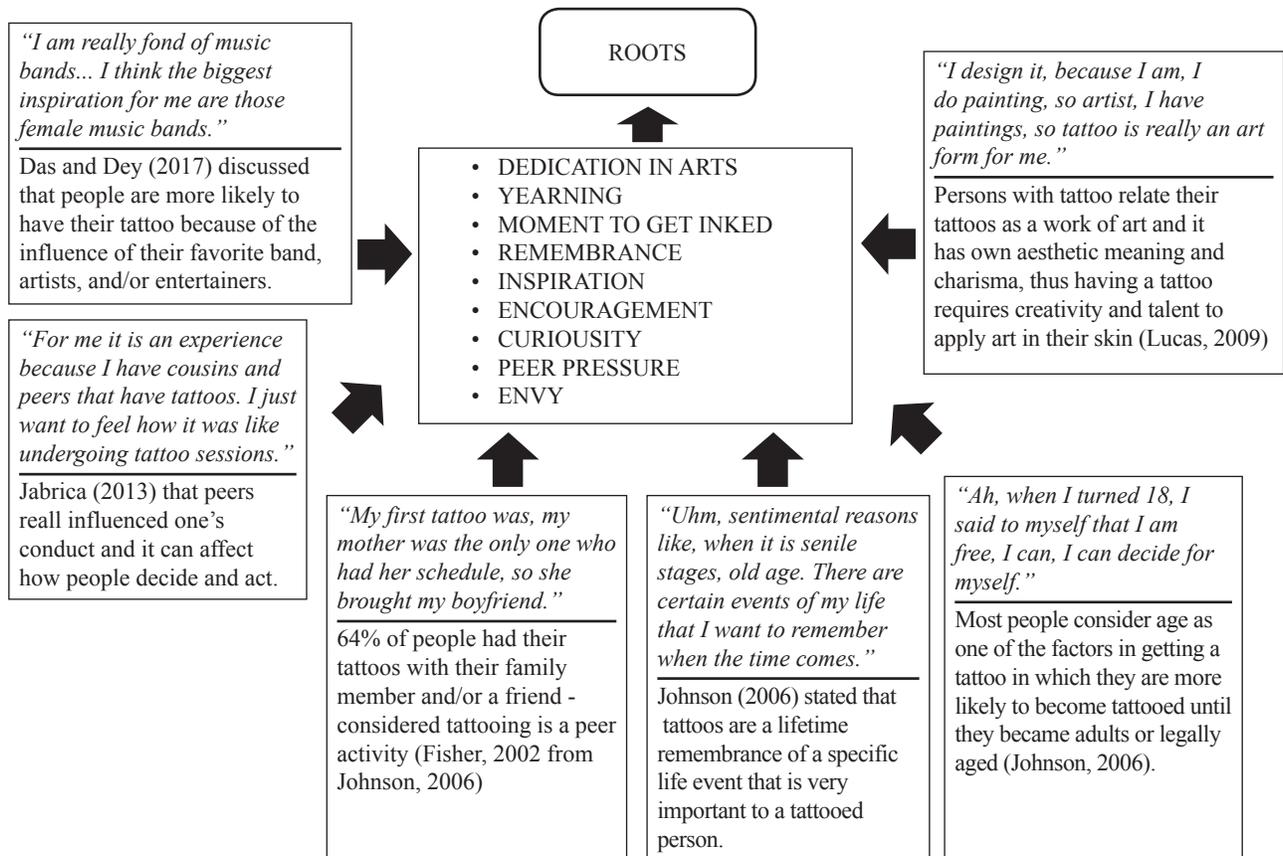


Figure 1. The Roots of deciding to be a tattooed person.

Figure 1 shows the different scenarios that lead the respondents to decide on getting inked. This illustrates how tattooed people vary in making decisions. Moreover, it shows that the right time, right age, and right tattoo are some of the roots in getting inked. Society is a big factor in having tattoos and this refers to social influence wherein a person will intentionally or unintentionally change his/her behavior to make a connection to the influencer (Changing Minds.org, 2018). Also, it appears how dedicated the participants are when it comes to art—they make their own design that encapsulates meaning in each tattoo they have. Hence, the tattoo serves as a remembrance of a significant memory that will last a lifetime.

Figure 2 shows the different ideas to consider in getting tattoos. Most of the participants claimed that tattoo is an art form and tattooing is their way of appreciating the art. Most of the participants stated that having a permanent body art is a way of self-expression

and it must have a meaning that will describe you as a person. Moreover, self-expression through tattoos will catch the attention of people that will reflect the owner’s personality and life experiences (Lucas, 2009). Additionally, a tattoo is a form of non-verbal communication of expressing through artform that does not need a verbal explanation from the owner.

Figure 3 displays the importance of considering tattoo meaning and location. Most of the participants stated that tattoo symbolizes their love and dedication to a person, thing, or event that they want to remain until death. It could be a portrait or a name of a significant person, a thing, or a memorable life event. Despite showing symbolic meanings through tattoos, the meaning of the tattoo is decreasing if the number of tattoos is increasing (Johnson, 2006). This applies to full sleeves tattoo, a tattoo design covering the whole arm from bicep to wrist that most tattoo enthusiasts have. Moreover, tattoo visibility will truly affect the

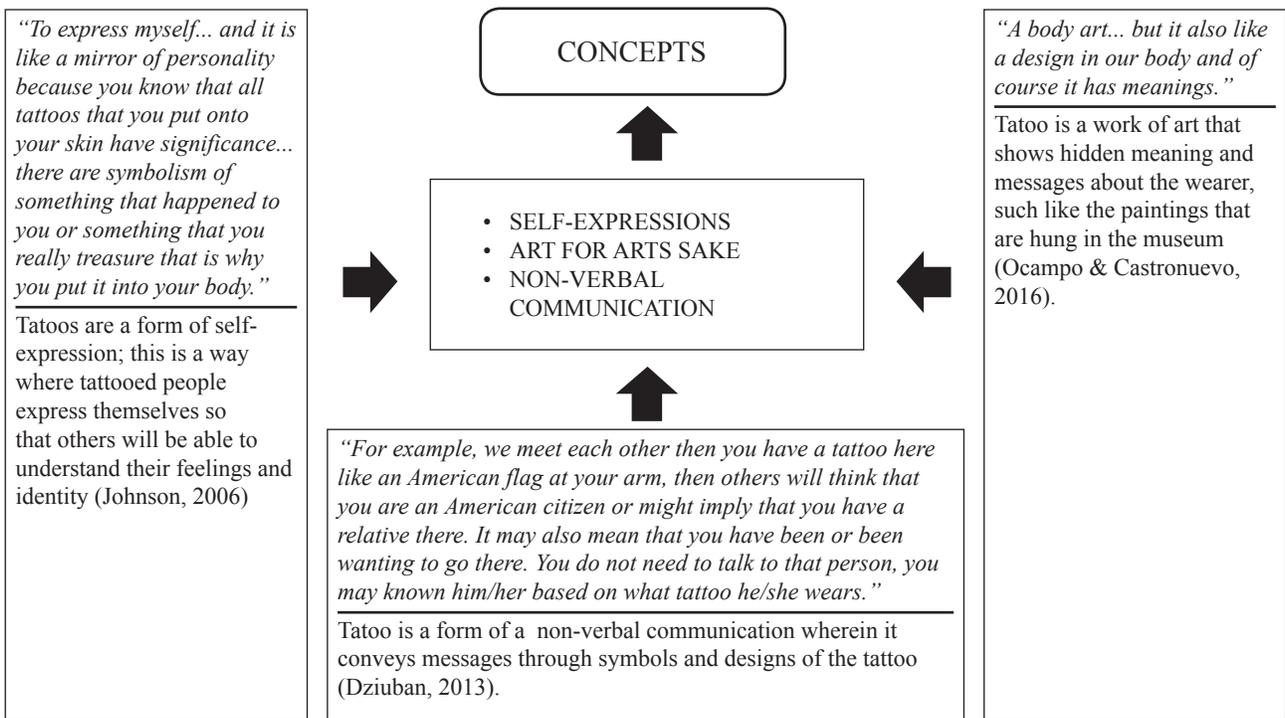


Figure 2. The concepts of their decisions in getting inked.

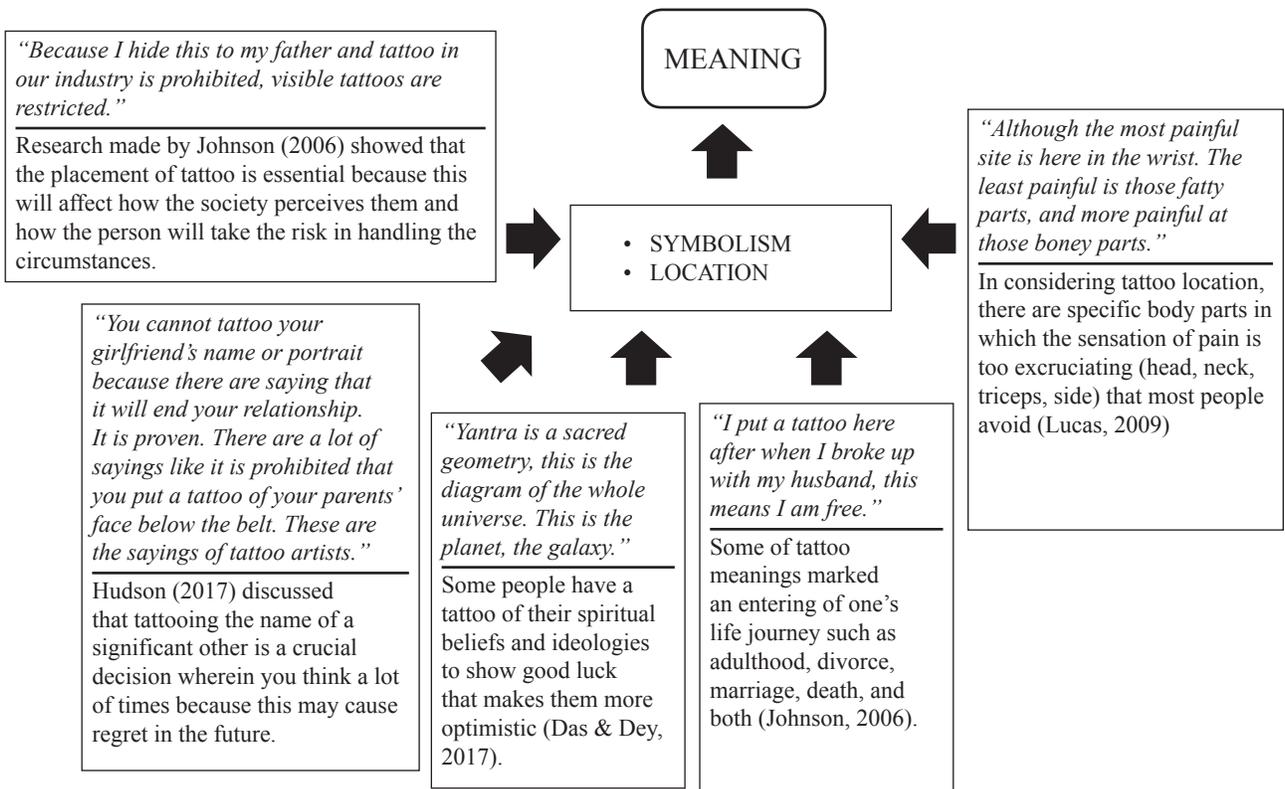


Figure 3. The value of tattoo meaning and its location.

wearer when it comes to job application and prejudices although pain location of tattoo serves as a guide to consider several parts of the body that are susceptible to most pain and least pain. Hence, careful decision making in choosing a tattoo could prevent regrets in the future.

Figure 4 shows the intensity of their decision to being tattooed. Being committed to be tattooed requires a lot of decision making. The participants claimed that knowing the permanency of tattoo is a lifetime commitment that will remain onto a person’s skin, unless that person will decide to have the tattoo removed, which involves more cost and pain. Moreover, knowing the health-related risks of having a tattoo does not hamper the participants to get their desired tattoo (Lucas, 2009). Participants claimed that they are aware of the possible risks of Hepatitis B, HIV, and skin infections, but they ensure that the right choice of an artist will lessen this kind of risks. However, stereotyping among tattooed individuals is inevitable by being prepared and understanding the consequences of being tattooed will aid them to lessen their regrets.

Figure 5 displays how a person enters the experience of being tattooed. Knowing the right tattoo artist will avoid health-related risks from tattooing. Just like paintings, a tattoo is also expensive wherein the cost of a tattoo is based on the popularity of the tattoo artist. Significantly, the pain experience while having a tattoo session marked a person’s dedication in getting inked. Indeed, the experience of pain is truly remarkable which enters them whether to a life full of art or full of pain.

Figure 6 shows the positive outcome of having tattoos. Contentment among the participants resulted in positive attention from people, and they were often asked about the experience which results in admiration of their courage. The feeling of contentment boosts their morale (Jabrica, 2013). It empowers them to control their self-concept with body modification (Lucas, 2009). Moreover, it appears that tattooed people shared the same interest and stories that make them fit in a group. This refers to the concept of ingroup in social psychology wherein a person classifies oneself as a member of the group because of its shared values and thoughts.

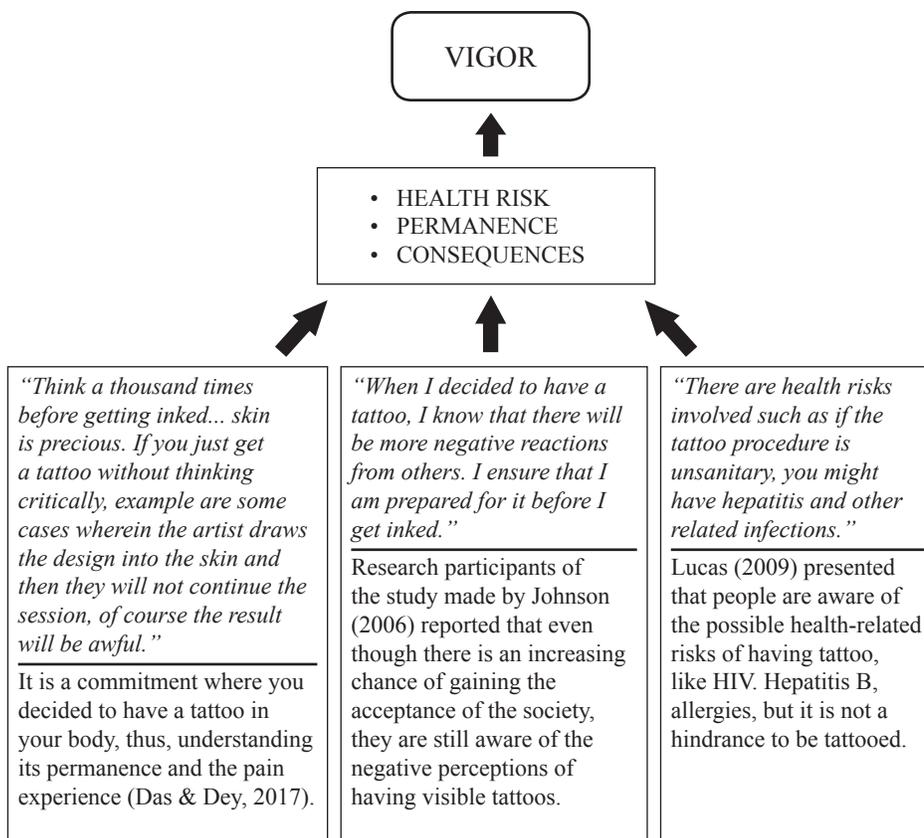


Figure 4. The vigor in decision making.

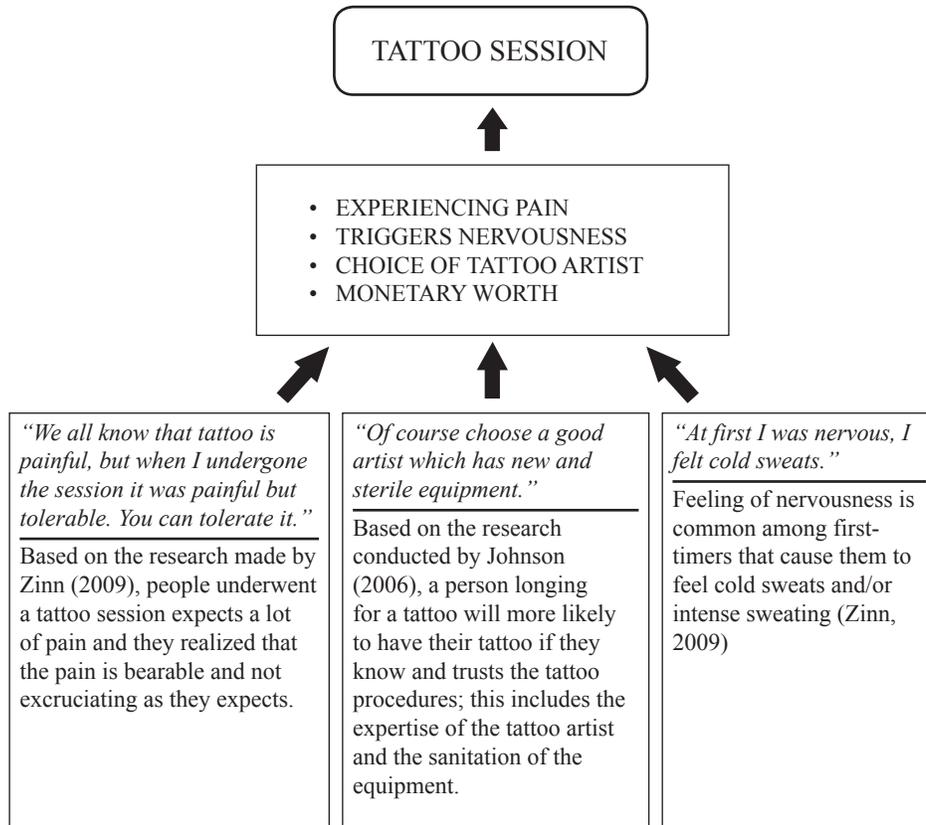


Figure 5. The circumstances of being tattooed.

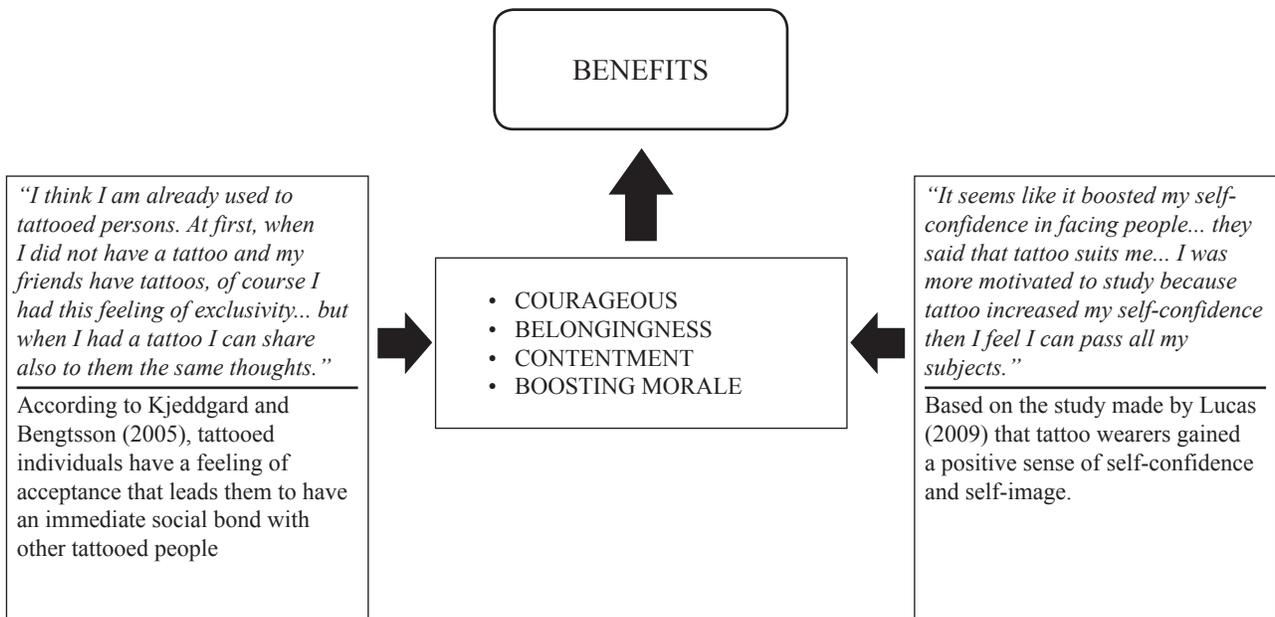


Figure 6. The benefits of having a tattoo.

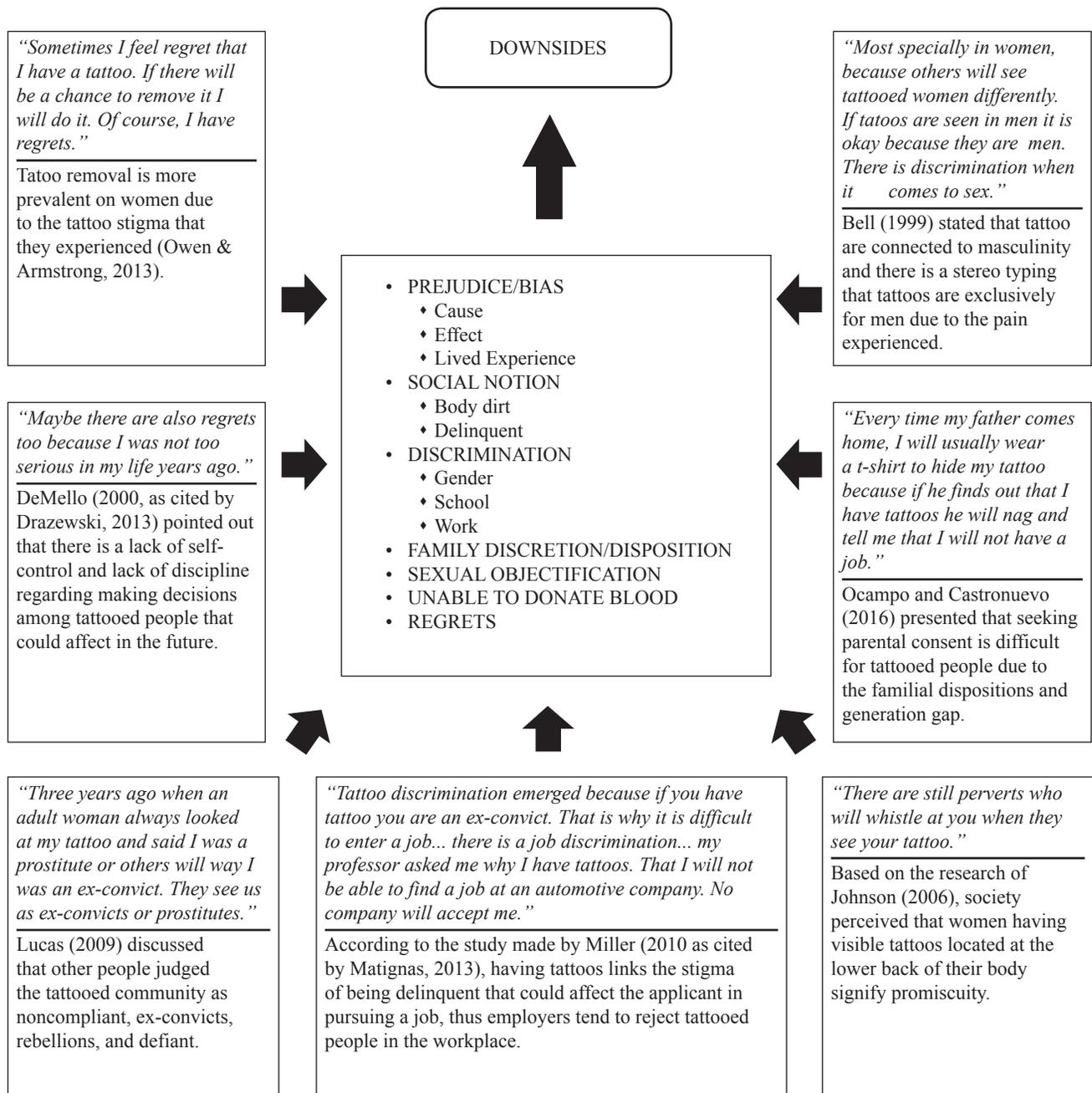


Figure 7. The negative results of having a tattoo.

Figure 7 displays the negative outcome of having a tattoo. “Prejudice is an unjustifiable negative attitude towards a group and to its individual member” (Al Ramiah, Hewstone, Dovidio & Penner, n.d.). Some of the participants stated that they were treated differently in school and public places. The notion of being delinquent is present among tattooed people in which prior tattoo studies (Nowosielski, Sipiński, Kuczerawy, Rup & Plinta, 2012; Koch et al., 2005) showed that tattoos are linked to poor attitude. Discrimination in the tattooed community is truly inescapable which shows that most of the participants worry about their job employment because of having a tattoo. On the other hand, familial issues also impede the idea of having a tattoo due to the generation gap between parents and the child, which may cause conflict. Also, tattooed women appear to be more promiscuous that they often experienced catcalling and judged as a prostitute. Moreover, there is a fallacy that tattooed people cannot donate blood and they are restricted from donating.

Figure 8 displays how the tattoo becomes mainstream today. Based on the study of Rohrer

(n.d., as cited from Jabrica, 2013), when generation changes, the perceptions of people within the society also changes. Also, the initial reaction of the family varies: at first, they got angry and disappointed but later on, they accepted the situation. Moreover, the acceptance of the society is widespread that most people are open-minded about the art of tattooing. In the business process outsourcing companies, visibly tattooed employees became mainstream that even the company’s superiors have it.

Figure 9 displays the catalyst of repeating the desire of getting inked. Tattoo “addiction” reflected the urge of tattooed people in enjoying the experience of being in pain. Being passionate about getting a tattoo drives a tattoo enthusiast to have more tattoo design because it is their way of expressing themselves and at the same time a hobby. Also, the tattoo brings relief to a person as this is a way of therapy (Jabrica, 2013). It appears that it is psychological for the tattoo enthusiasts to engage in a tattooing session as a form of stress relief.

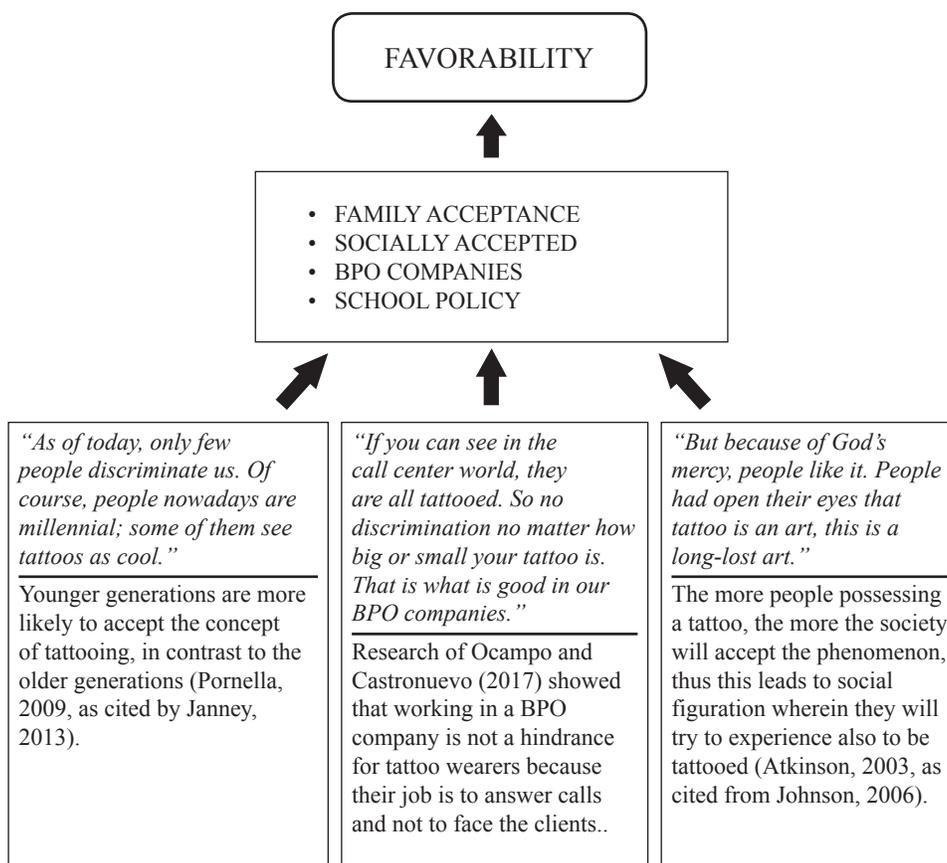


Figure 8. The approval of different agents of society.

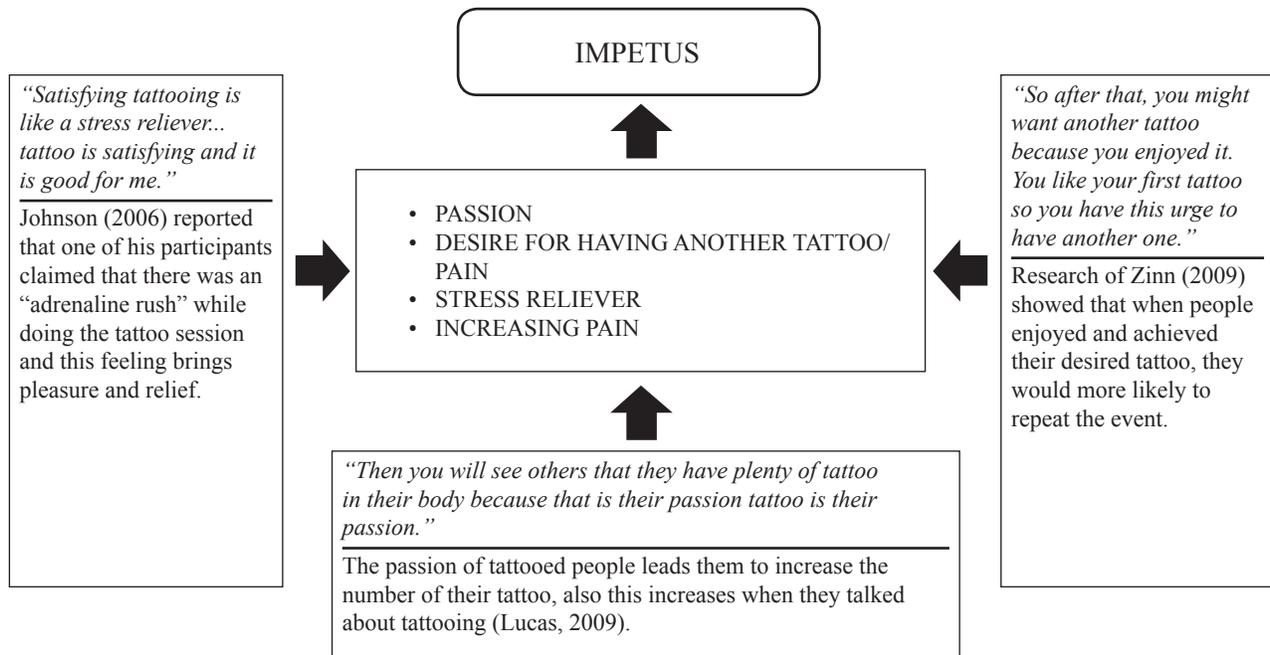


Figure 9. Repeating the act of tattooing.

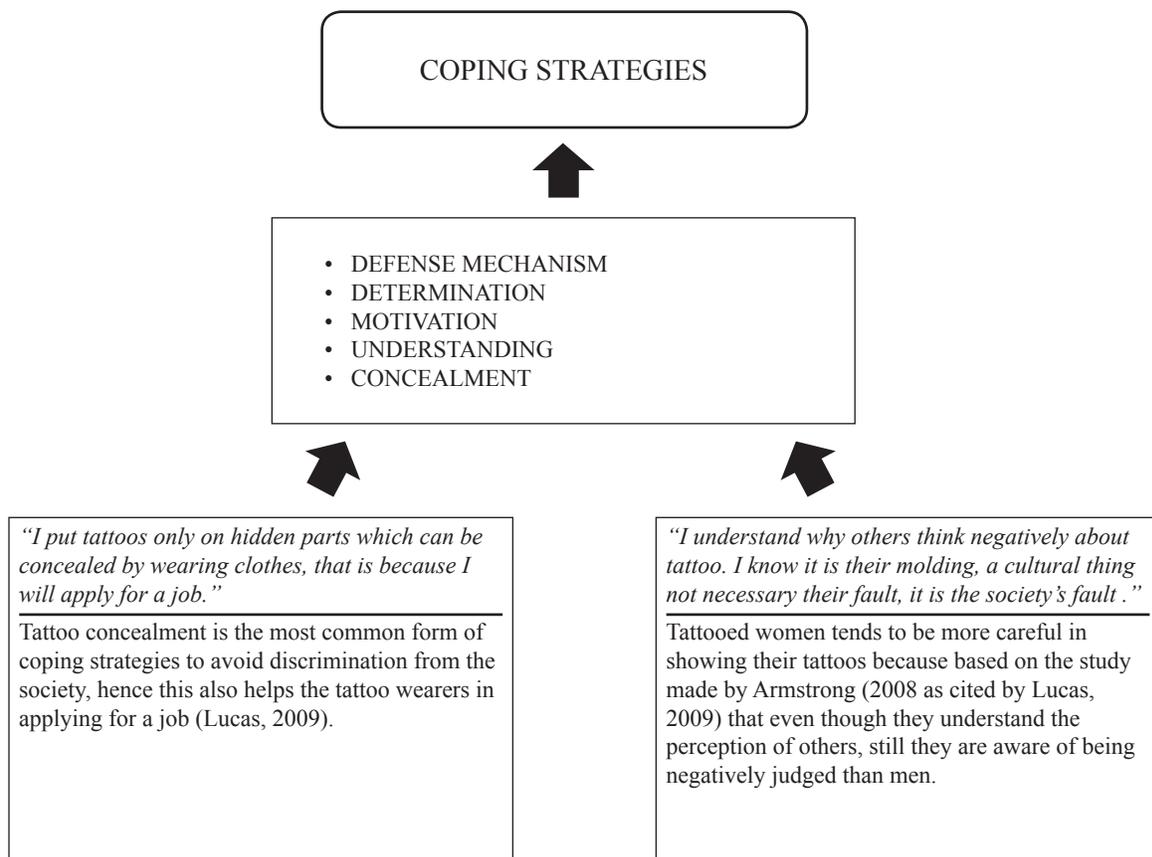


Figure 10. Coping strategies of tattooed people.

Figure 10 displays how a tattooed person copes with negative experiences. Some of their defense mechanisms are selective inattention and repression. Tattooed persons are used to understanding other people’s views and reactions in seeing their tattoo. Judgments drive some of the participants to prove that even though they have tattoos, they can still be their ideal self. On the other hand, concealing tattoos is the best way of dealing with such downsides which is very common in applying for a job because there are still companies that do not accept a visibly tattooed applicant.

Figure 11 displays how tattooed people distinguish themselves. Bearing a second identity for a tattooed person is natural. Having a trademark for them is an advantage because they are easy to recognize, and at the same time, other people will remember them because of their tattoo. Moreover, tattooed people are longing for uniqueness. The pride of art was highlighted that they ensure the individualism and originality of their tattoos.

Figure 12 shows the life-changing events of the tattooed person. In this research, it has emerged that tattoos can transform one’s life and belief. The realization proves that tattooing in today’s society is imminent. Moreover, the widespread influence of having a tattoo makes a tattooed person aspire to become a tattoo artist. However, having a needle phobia will hinder a person from getting inked. Nevertheless, facing your fears is one of the most effective treatments that will desensitize your fear (Fritscher, 2017).

Figure 13 shows how tattooed people learn from their experiences. Due to rampant stereotyping among the tattooed community, there is still a positive light among other non-tattooed people. The feeling of power and optimism in defending a tattooed person makes them more confident to correct society’s fault in stigmatizing the tattooed community. Furthermore, showing respect to parents is a great cognizance among tattooed people. The reason for their tattoo concealment is to give due respect to their parents who had their own dispositions in life about tattoos.

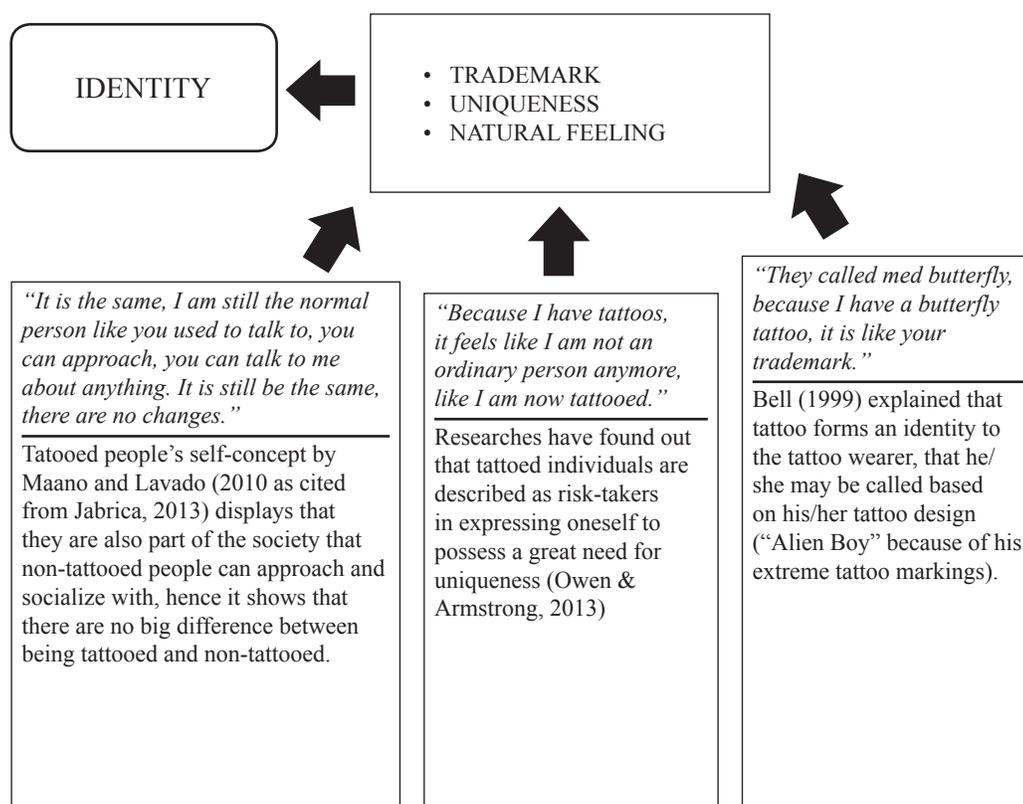


Figure 11. The characteristics of being tattooed.

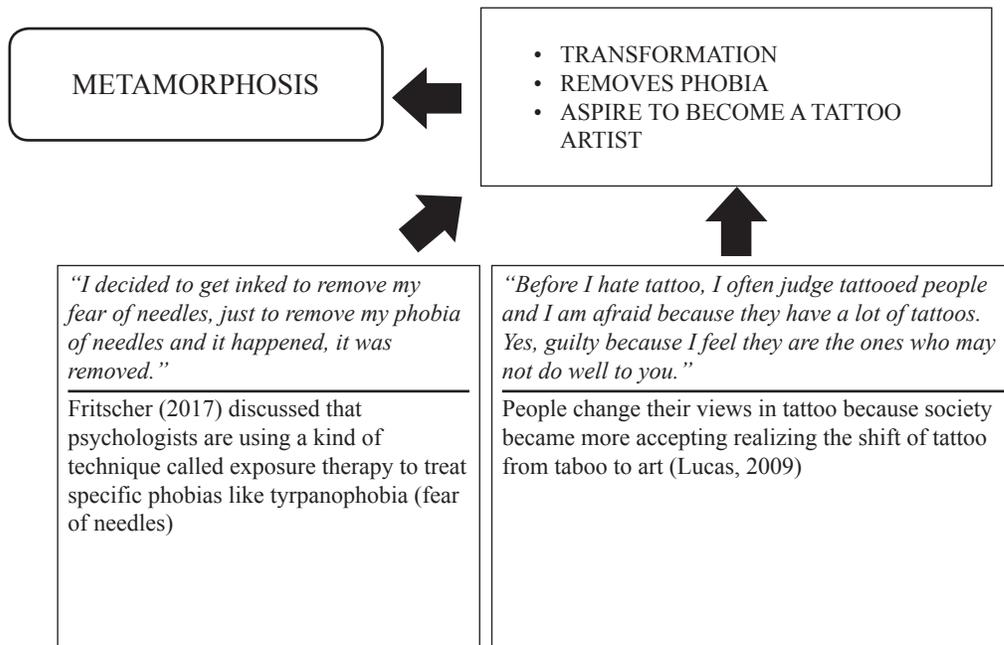


Figure 12. Changes occurred in becoming a tattooed person.

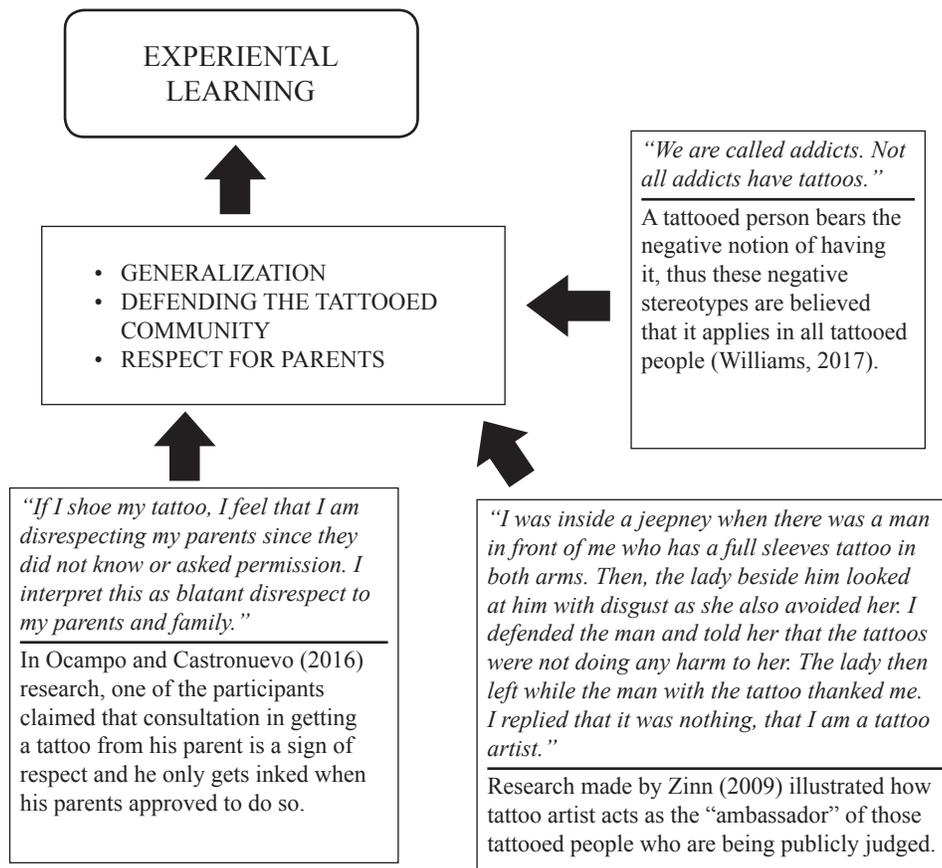


Figure 13. Reflections of being a tattooed person.

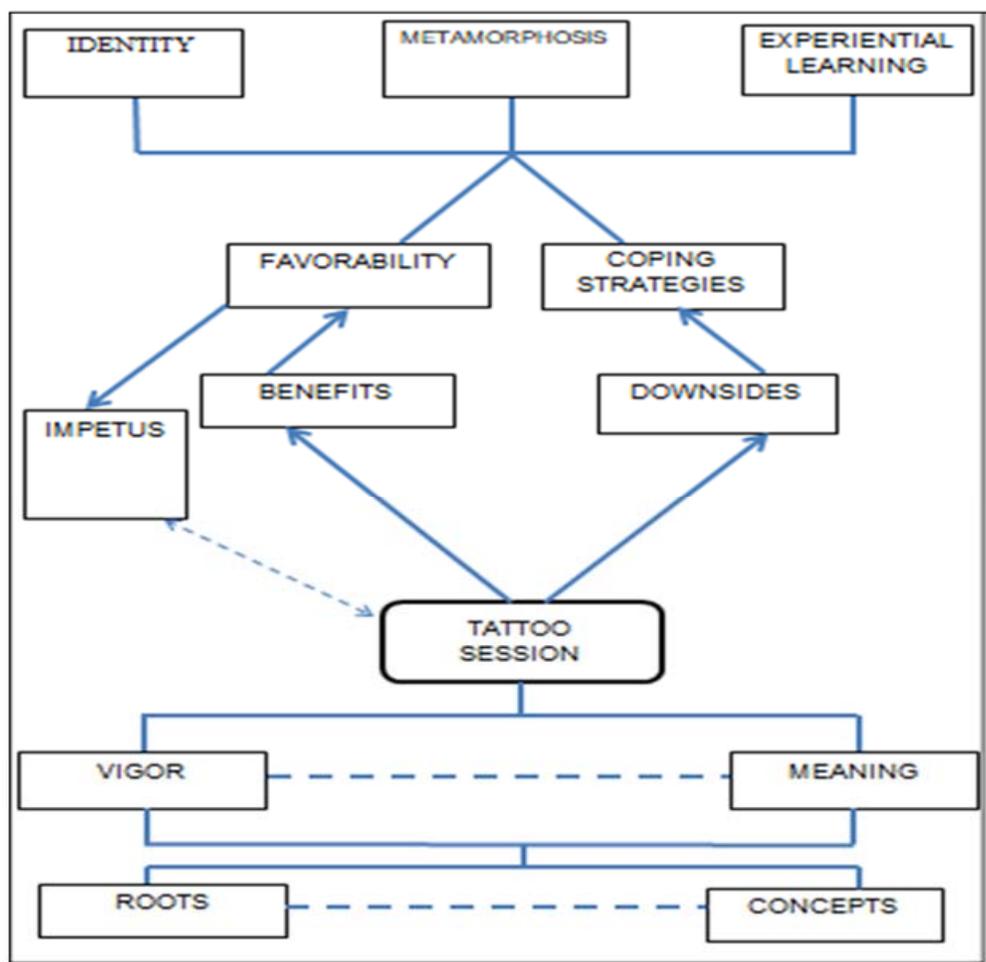


Figure 14. Proposed theoretical model and process on becoming a tattooed person.

The model (Figure 14) shows the emerged theory of becoming a tattooed person. The occurrence of the experience starts from its Roots or Concepts. These are the causal conditions of the emerged theory wherein these are the intrinsic or extrinsic elements used in deciding to become tattooed. After these conditions are met, this will bring another causal condition that strengthens the decision of getting inked. The Vigor or Meaning is the ultimate point before a person enters the phenomenon. These explicate the intensity and value of their decision.

Subsequently, the Tattoo Session served as the phenomenon that all tattooed people experienced. This life event plays a big role in this theory because it best describes the pain of becoming a tattooed person. After the extensive first tattoo session, there are Benefits

and Downsides in getting inked. These are the set of context that refers to the phenomenon and causal conditions of this theory. It shows direct positive and negative outcomes of becoming tattooed. Focusing on the Benefits of getting inked leads to Favorability. This shows the approval of society and today’s generation in the idea of tattooing. Favorability is an intervening condition which leads to action. The action in this theory is the Impetus. This includes factors that cause a tattooed person to repeat the phenomenon the tattoo session.

On the other hand, being a tattooed person leads them to establish interaction strategies that lessen the Downsides of having a tattoo. Coping Strategies in this theory provides them with how to respond and handle criticisms and judgments in society. Unlike

on the portion developed under Benefits, the course developed under Downsides does not show any intervening condition that could lead to repeating the Tattoo Session. Thus, these two contexts vary in the process of becoming a tattooed person.

Moreover, after undergoing the process, the theory presents consequences that mark the end of the theoretical process. The Identity, the Metamorphosis, and the Experiential Learning are the outcomes gained by a tattooed person in encountering and enduring all the components of this theory.

Discussion

The study aims to discover the changes experienced among tattooed people, know society's perception about tattooed people, know the psychological decision making in getting tattoos, and formulate a theory on becoming a tattooed person.

The model (See Figure 14) presents the emerged theory of this study. It started from the Roots or Concepts which are the causal condition in deciding to become tattooed. Second, the Vigor or Meaning is the causal condition which strengthens the decision making. Subsequently, the phenomenon in the study is the Tattoo Session wherein this plays a big part in describing the experience of becoming tattooed.

After the phenomenon arises, there are two set of contexts that refer to the phenomenon and causal conditions of the theory—the Benefits and Downsides. Benefits link to favorability wherein it shows the approval of society nowadays. Afterward, there is an action called Impetus which explains the causes of the phenomenon to be repeated. On the other hand, Downsides lead to the foundation of Coping Strategies which represents different responses in handling criticisms and judgments. In contrast to Benefits, this category does not show any intervening condition that will lead to repeat the phenomenon.

To end the theoretical process, there are consequences presented like the Identity, the Metamorphosis, and Experiential Learning. These categories are gained by a tattooed person after experiencing the phenomenon.

Changes that happened among tattooed people are the following: displays courage, developed sense of belongingness, became more contented on how they look, gained social attention, and boosted one's morale. On the dull side, their experienced of being refused to make blood donation had changed their mindset

that they cannot help humankind. Also, they try to conceal their tattoos when seeking a job or to avoid criticisms. These changes are supported by Maslow's hierarchy of needs which explains that an individual has belongingness and esteem needs that one must achieve (Feist & Feist, 2008). Having friends with tattoos will drive a person to also get a tattoo to feel he or she belongs. The desire of having a tattoo is also a desire for strength, achievement, and fulfillment. Yet, having adverse changes like unable to donate blood, being rejected to a job, and getting discriminated might be the causes of regret and could lead to different psychological issues like depression, inflated self-esteem, worthlessness, and anxiety (Pedro, 2016).

However, society has diverse beliefs and values that interferes the total acceptance of tattooing. In this research, tattooed people are perceived as courageous and adored because they overcome the tattooing experience. Some families accept the art of tattooing but others continue to criticize it. Moreover, tattooed people are still associated with the social notions of being ex-convicts, drug addicts, rebels, prostitutes, and other negative activities that deviant people do. Discrimination is prevalent in the tattooed community (job, school, and gender). Also, the data of this study claimed that most of the participants received comments about having tattoos as body dirt.

Articles in psychology discussed the meaning of courage and experts. Pury (2010) argued that courage happens when a person does not only overcome the fear but also achieved the goal by risking. In relation to tattooed people, some of them are seen as courageous because they overcome the pain and at the same time they get their desired goal. Social psychologists studied different forms of discriminations and how it is manifested. Blaming the disadvantages, avoidance, initiative stereotypical thinking, preferring ingroup values as the right choice, and equivocal responses which leads to "avoidance and passive harm" among outgroup members are the manifestations of discriminations (Al Ramiah et al., 2012).

On the other hand, childhood yearning among the co-researchers claimed that being in a legal age indicates the right moment to get inked. Instances like peer pressure are one of the social influences wherein peers is one of the most influencers that encourages and triggers the curiosity of an individual to perform such actions. Concepts like tattoos as a form of self-expression and art provide symbols and

meanings that convey messages as a form of non-verbal communication. Also, the data shows that tattooed people are still motivated in getting inked and they are aware of the impediments in having tattoos like the health risk, permanency of tattoos, and consequences associated tattooing. Moreover, the location and the visibility of the tattoo are essential to the wearer, especially in seeking a job, as stereotyping and prejudices are imminent.

The psychological decision making of these tattooed people is influenced by the concept of causality which Thagard (2017) discussed that knowing the causes of the decision leads to good results. In relation to this, tattooed people explicate the consequences and the possible risk of getting inked. Causal thinking affects our cognitive side in preparing for possible interventions that may happen after the decision, and this justifies the finding of this research by displaying coping strategies as one of the categories that emerged. Furthermore, psychologists explained that being committed is not only thinking about what motivated the decision but it also considers the effort of being committed to that decision (Perry, 2013). The co-researchers strengthen their commitment to be tattooed by having another tattoo and living with these tattoo marks on their body which might affect their identity (eg., being stereotyped, discriminated, avoided, etc.).

Conclusion

The study aimed to create a theory on becoming a tattooed person. The results suggest that a tattoo is a form of self-expression and art which requires intrinsic motivation before undergoing a tattoo session. The favorable and adverse consequences of having a tattoo could guide the person in psychological decision to acquire or not to acquire a tattoo. Family, as one of the support system, may help their tattooed family members in acquiring tattoos by acknowledging the mainstream of it.

Job discrimination among tattooed people resulted from the negligence of observing the nature of the job which confuse employers in hiring tattooed applicants. Prejudice and judgment among tattooed people, are constant and society may minimize this stereotyping, knowing that prejudice is the root of discrimination. Tattooed people bear negative connotations that affect their personality which becomes an effective coping strategy in dealing with criticisms.

Furthermore, re-educating the people, especially healthcare professionals, in the common misconception of donating blood among tattooed people through seminars and lectures is a need. Mental health among tattooed people is essential. Tattoo wearers are inclined to the idea of being accepted in society. The tattoo stigma and the social notions served as their lifetime disease which they usually fight.

The recommendations are based on the findings, implications, and proposed theory emerged in this research. We recommend an increase in the awareness of the intrinsic motivations in getting tattoo by knowing its psychological readiness and providing freedom of speech among tattoo enthusiasts. Social psychologists and developmental psychologists may focus on the stigma, social issues, and life events among tattooed people by making articles about them.

Moreover, schools' and companies' handbook should specify dress codes and grooming policies. The proposed theory should be utilized in doing future researches in psychology and sociology for innovation in the field of research.

The proposed theory can be applied in making decisions on getting tattooed and in further understanding of the tattooed people. The proposed theory supports the exploration of the family orientation of the tattooed people for a deeper understanding of the roots of getting inked.

Ethical clearance:

The study was approved by the institution.

Conflict of interest:

None.

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