

Tamara Bonet

RQ: Why do people get tattoos?

### Data Synthesis

**Introduction:** Knowing the primary reason of why people get tattoos isn't exactly accurate. The results can vary based on the area, demographics, and even questions that one may come across when interacting with someone. During the research process (survey, interview, observation), there happened to be a Hispanic/Latino presence, which wasn't found odd but interesting. White Plains services persons from all background, but these Latinos happened to stand out. Themes such as personality and cover-ups were prominent amongst two out of three, respectively.

**Themes:** Hispanic/Latino population, Cover ups, Personality

**Hispanic/Latino:** The Hispanic/Latino population in the United States is rapidly growing. In White Plains and the surrounding area, the population is steady but with a few limitations. During the observation portion of research, there was a noticeable four Latinos that walked in and out of the shop, not including those who were there before and after. It happened to be that when looking for an interviewee at Addicted to Ink, there was a few Latino males scheduling appointments and working with the artists. Because they were the only ones in the shop that day, I interviewed a young man named Angel Perez. What was different about him in particular what that he was Puertorican, while the others were of different backgrounds (Dominican, Columbian, mixed background). During the survey portion of my research, 33% of participants were of Hispanic/Latino background. After going through the other questions, it was fairly simple to possibly guess what type of tattoos this population preferred.

**Personality:** Personality and cover-ups were two themes that appeared from at least two of three research assignments. Cover ups happened to come up only in the interview and the participant observation. While interviewing with Perez, he had mentioned a client requesting a large tribute

piece to be covered up which has a similar reason to why many get cover ups anyway. On a different level, cover ups can also replace a tattoo that was cheaply or quickly done (conventions). Personality also came up a lot, however in different ways. During the observation, there were common pieces but also pieces that had been added to or changed in some way. Another way to add personality, which sparked an odd but effective question, was the color of ink used. In the survey, it was found that 68% of participants preferred black ink. Basic black ink is generally used for more modest or simple pieces. Those who incorporate color generally incorporate more personality (not that a black and grey sleeve doesn't have personality). Another way to incorporate personality is through the type of art that's being done.

During all three research pieces, the type of tattoo was a major theme. While interviewing Perez, he had mentioned that tattoos generally tell a story. This story can be about an event, lifestyle, or the story of the person themselves. While analyzing the survey, it was found that the most preferred type of tattoo was symbolic or a memory. This allows others to see that many people who do get tattoos don't necessarily get them to have them, but to remember someone or something. From this, it is evident that one of the primary reasons of why people get a tattoo is to have the memory of someone or something.

**What did I learn?** : Throughout the entire research process I learned many skills and life lessons, both inside and outside of the classroom. Some of the things I learned were what types of questions to ask in order to get more information, patience and observance, and how to analyze themes and measure data. I knew that asking questions would obviously give me an answer, but taking on question and letting the interviewee talk allowed me to learn more about the topic and about the person's opinion. Patience and observance was difficult to get over because the day(s) I did the participant observation was relatively slow at Addicted to Ink.

Because of this, I had to learn to 1) make the most out of what I had in front of me and 2) engage in conversation with clients to get them to talk about particular trends that may come out as a theme later on. I also learned how to analyze themes and measure data, which allowed me to measure the style of those in White Plains and those surrounding. In terms of data, I was able to use Qualtrics and interpret my findings to properly make an educated decision on why people get tattoos based on the question of ranking preferred tattoos. Typically when you prefer something, it shows that you find it higher than others depending on what it is, along with other characteristics.

**What did I learn about myself?** : When I think of what I learned about myself, I think of how I went from knowing very little about research to knowing the different ways to research. By this, I learned that I am not the greatest at developing interview questions, although I am good at engaging and keeping a conversation going with a total stranger. I also learned that I am a very good observer. I don't know if it's from working retail or with children, but I noticed a lot of things that I probably wouldn't have ever noticed before. I paid attention to race/ethnicity, gender, age groups, clothing styles, etc...which gave me a rough idea of the audience of Addicted, but also to their cliental and the type of work they get done. This enabled me to see that I was truly able to multitask and still gather accurate information.