

Public Perceptions of Hair Tattoos on Middle-Aged Men's Image

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effect of hair tattoos on middle-aged men's image and acceptance. Through survey analysis, participants expressed a sense of renewal and reduced self-consciousness after undergoing the procedure, particularly in professional and social settings. While public perception remains mixed, most respondents did not associate strong stereotypes with hair tattoos, attributing growing acceptance to changing beauty standards and social media influence. Satisfaction was highest among those with realistic expectations, viewing the procedure as an enhancement rather than a permanent solution. Findings suggest that hair tattoos contribute positively to self-image, though public attitudes remain neutral to slightly positive. Future research should expand demographic representation and examine long-term social and psychological effects.

INTRODUCTION

- The global tattoo market size was valued at \$2.04 billion in 2023 and is expected to reach \$3.93 billion by 2030 (GlobeNewswire, 2023).
- Tattoos (also called body art) are a form of body modification performed using inks, pigments, and dyes (Farley et al., 2019).
- Tattooing, a type of body art that marks human skin with indelible design, is growing in popularity (Farley et al., 2019).
- Tattoos occur when exogenous pigment is introduced into the dermis by piercing the skin with a needle or other sharp object laden with pigment until an image is created (Ho & Goh, 2015).
- There is a rapid growth of tattooed individuals in the United States as almost half of American adults have permanently modified their bodies through tattooing (Statista, 2023).
- 32 % of Americans have a tattoo, including 22% who have more than one tattoo. Tattoos used to be stigmatized as rebellious, anti-social, and criminal (Schaeffer & Dinesh, 2023).
- However, the described deviant nature of the tattooed individual has transformed as more get tattooed to adorn their bodies to demonstrate their commitment to their lifestyle and as an act of resistance against established cultural norms (Walzer & Sanjurjo, 2016).
- The prevalence of tattooed individuals within greater communities necessitates a deeper consideration of what motivates individuals to become tattooed, form their identities with a subcultural group, and engage in their local communities (Frankel et al., 2023).
- The hair loss market had a global size of USD 52.37 billion in 2022 in terms of sales of hair loss products and treatments (Scott, 2024).
- Approximately 85% of men and 33% of women experience hair loss, primarily due to genetic factors, along with diet, stress, lifestyle, and illness. In the United States, over 65% of men will experience hair loss to some extent by age 35, increasing to around 85% by age 50 (Scott, 2024).

This study aimed to investigate the effect of hair tattoos on middle-aged men's image and acceptance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1. How do middle-aged men perceive their own image before and after getting hair tattoos?
- RQ2. What is the general public's perception of middle-aged men with hair tattoos in terms of attractiveness and professionalism?
- RQ3. How do middle-aged men's self-esteem and confidence levels change after getting hair tattoos?
- RQ4. Are there any societal stereotypes or judgments associated with middle-aged men who choose to get hair tattoos?



Figure . Before and After of Hair Tattoos on Middle-Aged Men's Image

METHODS

- For content analysis, based on the taxonomy developed by William and Ramaprasad (1996), participants' reports were carefully read multiple times to identify the main themes and understand public perceptions of hair tattoos and their impact on middle-aged men's self-image, attractiveness, professionalism, confidence, and satisfaction
- Participants were recruited via snowball sampling
- Through Zoom, each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes
- A qualitative approach was employed through in-depth interviews with 40 participants (n = 21 females, n = 19 males)
- 81% of participants were college students, followed by employed full-time (14%)

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RESULTS

- The study identified four key themes: dissatisfaction (45%), attractiveness (25%), social media (12%), confidence (8%), and others (10%).
- The findings highlighted that 75% of respondents reported a noticeable improvement in their self-image after undergoing the procedure, with many describing a sense of rejuvenation and increased confidence.
- Several respondents noted that hair tattoos helped middle-aged men feel less self-conscious, allowing them to engage more freely in social and professional settings.
- However, while 20% of respondents viewed hair tattoos positively, 68% held neutral opinions, and 13% perceived them negatively.
- Many emphasized that confidence was not solely dependent on physical appearance but rather on how they felt about themselves post-procedure.
- Furthermore, 83% of participants stated that they held no strong stereotypes about hair tattoos, attributing this to the influence of social media and younger generations.
- Satisfaction levels were highest among individuals with realistic expectations before undergoing the procedure.
- Respondents who viewed the tattoo as a cosmetic enhancement rather than a permanent solution to hair loss were more likely to be satisfied with their results.
- Middle-aged men who receive high-quality hair tattoos from experienced practitioners will probably have more positive outcomes than young participants.

CONCLUSION

- Hair tattoos generally contribute positively to middle-aged men's self-perception, confidence, and satisfaction, though public opinions remain mixed. While some societal stereotypes persist, they do not significantly hinder acceptance of the procedure.
- Professional implications are minimal, as most individuals view hair tattoos as a personal choice rather than a defining feature.
- As the cosmetic industry continues to evolve, hair tattoos are likely to become increasingly normalized.
- Since this study was conducted by young participants, future research should include middle-aged men and women experiencing hair loss.
- Based on these findings, further studies should develop a conceptual framework.

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