

## **Tinta: A Tattoo Profession Documentary**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study is about the tattoo profession in the Philippines. As a tattoo artist for six years, the researcher himself experienced the challenges in learning the art of tattooing since there are no schools that offer programs on the particular art. And so, the researcher wanted to help the community by producing multimedia outputs in the form of documentary video, video teaser, and poster. The main objectives are as follows: (1) to promote the tattoo profession in the Philippines; (2) to inspire aspiring tattoo artists; and (3) to educate them about the profession and their responsibility to the clients and the community; (3) to produce beneficiary materials for future tattoo artists about the tattoo profession in the form of documentary video, documentary video teaser and poster (4) to determine the assessment of the target audience on the multimedia and marketing materials in terms of attractiveness, comprehensibility, acceptability; self-involvement and persuasion. Product testing of the outputs shows that the overall assessment of the documentary video in all the components were all rated as outstanding. Marketing materials, on the other hand, were both rated as outstanding. The study is concluded to be successful as it has reached its objectives with positive comments of the target audience with all the outputs assessed as outstanding. The researcher suggests some improvements for the project outputs.*

**Keywords:** tattoo profession, art, documentary video, documentary video teaser, poster

### **INTRODUCTION**

Jack London in 1883 once said, “*show me a man with a tattoo and I'll show you a man with an interesting past.*” For thousands of years, humans marked themselves permanently using various types of pigments and inks. Each has its own story and meaning. Furthermore, Holmes, Jr. (1935) said, “*we are all tattooed in our cradles with the beliefs of our tribe; the record may seem superficial, but it is indelible.*” It is a culture of many tribes to show their rank or how many enemies they have killed. Moreover, Hemingson (2010) said, “*if the body is a temple, then tattoos are its stained-glass windows.*” For women, tattoo signifies beauty, the more tattoos in their body, the more beautiful they are.

In the past years, the image of tattoos changed because most people involved in crimes and are in jail have tattoos that they use for protection and power in prison. Today, it has become a common stereotype that if someone has a tattoo, he or she is a criminal or an ex-convict. In some states, however, the image of the tattoo became acceptable as a form of body art and an expression of people. They get tattoos of the names of their family members, a portrait of their loved ones who have passed away, or simply just an art form to express beauty by getting a tattoo.

Behind the ink and needles, there is a profession that needs an artistic and creative mind that produce extraordinary art using the human skin as a canvas. They are called tattoo artists; this profession is not like any other profession because it is also a passion. As a tattoo artist for six years, the researcher himself experienced the challenges in learning the art of tattooing since there are no schools that offer programs on the particular art. It is a self-taught art with responsibilities. He noticed the need for information regarding the profession because of the growing population of tattoo artists in the country. This led the researcher to explore this kind of project. The researcher aimed to promote the tattoo profession in the Philippines; to inspire future aspiring artists in this field; to educate the new tattoo artists as well as experienced tattoo artists about this kind of profession. These will be shown in the form of documentary video, documentary video teaser and poster.

## Review of literature

### *Tattoo then and now*

Tattoos have been present since the dawn of men and history itself; it has played a significant role in early cultures as it was used to symbolize significant meanings to people during those periods (DocSpot YouTube channel, 2017). Tattoos are pieces of scarred and ink-colored skin that are made into patterns. They originated from native cultures as symbols of their tribes and the different statuses people obtained within their societies—different symbols set them apart from everyone else. They quickly became part of Western culture along with piercings and now have become a defining aspect of the millennial generation Seibnaler (2016). Tattooing in native Filipino culture symbolizes might and valor among warriors, and wealth and power among tribesmen. As time passed by, it has been used for other meanings and mostly just for decorations on the body in recent times (Taruc, 2017). In fact, according to Abergos, a sociologist, in a documentary entitled *Brigada: Ano ang kahalagahan ng pagpapa-tattoo sa modernong panahon?* tattoo scene in the Philippines is already accepted and has a good impression among Filipinos.

Just like any other thing related to a person, a tattoo is an extension of one's own personality. Everything that a person owns, admires, or believes in reflects his personality and core beliefs (Tewari, 2014). Hence, a tattoo became art if a person intends for it to be art (McGrath, 2017). Most people get tattooed to mark a significant aspect of themselves or their lives (Michalak, 2017). This can be done with a simple yet symbolic zodiac tattoo symbol or a more detailed design based on a favorite movie, character, or any other significant piece.

### *Tattoo as a profession*

The vision of a tattoo artist is very important because the art is permanent and it will show great symbols for the one who is getting it (Abresch, 2018). It is very important, too, to know who creates the tattoo. There is some art in it and there are some skills needed to properly create tattoos (Kellog, 2017).

Hudson in 2017 wrote about *What makes a good tattoo artist*. He stated that a tattoo artist needs dedication that inspires one to action and enough dedication to stick with it for long term. This is not a get-rich-quick scheme; it is an art form. Some painters become famous and get rich from it, but most do not—and all do it for the love of the art. The same goes with tattoo artists. If one loves it so much, he or she would be willing to do whatever it takes to become a competitive artist with a honed talent.

It is difficult to understand why people would choose to have ink injected under their skin as this means taking themselves a mark that will last longer than they remain on this earth. There can be multiple constructs. The very common preconception focuses on abnormal characteristics associated with tattooed people. Historically, in many places of the world, tattoos are regarded as signs of social marginalization for lower socioeconomic groups as well as for marking criminals. However, with the large prevalence that has taken place over the last 20-30 years, it has become mainstream, particularly among young people to present and express themselves. Over time, it has crossed continents, cut across class and gender lines, flowed between high and low cultural milieus. Though there are many scholarly articles on tattoos that have been found concentrating on American and European contexts, there are few documentations from India. Present exploratory research is an attempt to understand motivational dimensions from the lived experiences of tattooed people in the Metropolitan City of Kolkata. A qualitative approach was adopted using in-depth interviews. Overall evidences suggest that there are many perceptions that prompted people to have tattoos that range from art, individuality, spirituality, memories of affection, fashion, scar hiding, idealizing someone, and sometimes even influence from social media (Dey & Das, 2017).

Swami (2011) wrote a study entitled *Marked for life? A prospective study of tattoos on appearance anxiety and dissatisfaction, perception of uniqueness and self-esteem* on the psychosocial aspects of tattooing. In the present study, 82 British residents who got their first tattoos completed measures of state appearance anxiety and dissatisfaction prior to, and immediately after, obtaining a tattoo. They also

completed measures of trait body appreciation, distinctive appearance investment, self-ascribed uniqueness, social physique anxiety, and self-esteem before getting a tattoo. Three weeks later, results showed that both women and men had significantly lower appearance anxiety and dissatisfaction immediately after obtaining their tattoos, and significantly higher body appreciation, distinctive appearance investment, self-ascribed uniqueness, and self-esteem after three weeks. Women reported greater social physique anxiety after three weeks, whereas men reported lower anxiety. These results are discussed in relation to the positive impacts of obtaining body art and the mainstreaming of tattooing in Western societies. Khosla et al. (2018) wrote in *Tattoos: What is their significance?* that the motivations for acquiring a tattoo are varied and tattoos can give clues to the presence of particular psychiatric conditions and to the inner world of patients.

Psychiatrists need to be aware of the health and safety issues surrounding the tattooing procedure and be able to give appropriate advice to their patients if they wish to acquire a tattoo. The issue of capacity must be considered. This may be particularly relevant for clinicians working with adolescents, the most common age group for acquiring tattoos. Owing to the high proportion of adults who subsequently regret their tattoos and the associated psychological and social distress, clinicians should also be aware of methods of tattoo removal.

#### *Tattoo discrimination awareness*

In a documentary by Royo (2015) entitled *Imahe*, Tanyamo stated that when he was asked what it was like to have many tattoos, he said that it feels like he felt like an alien, everybody was looking at him, in trains and buses that he boarded, and even on the streets he walked on.

In an article by Kennedy (2015) on *Tattooism: Where body art meets employment discrimination*, Garret stated that the concern of employers, however, is that visible body art is increasing. This trend may be at odds with the image that an employer wishes to convey to its clients and customers, particularly given the negative stereotypes associated with body art. Studies reflect negative biases against individuals with tattoos which include assumptions that they are less intelligent and attractive, and more rebellious. Not surprisingly, 60 percent of human resource professionals reported that visible tattoos would have a negative impact on an applicant's chance of being hired, and 74 percent said the same thing about facial piercings.

Moreover, the Support Tattoos and Piercing at Work Movement (STAPAW) in 2018, wrote in *Tattoo discrimination in the workplace*, that the issue of tattoos to be allowed in the workplace is a sticky issue. It is easy to make a case showing the negative business impacts of discrimination against tattoos and piercings in the workplace. It affects company loyalty, productivity and staffing issues, and finding qualified employees. However, forcing businesses to fill a quota or be fearful of lawsuits because of someone else's personal choice to be tattooed or pierced is just as negative. Encroaching on the right of the business owner to hire and fire is no more limiting and discriminatory than banning tattoos and piercings in the workplace. However, almost everyone agrees that employment should be based on the merit of the individual.

#### **Review of related project**

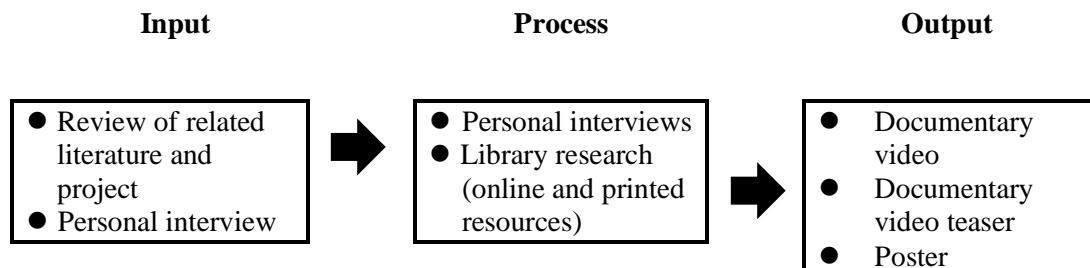
Taruc's documentary, under GMA Public Affairs (2017) entitled *I-Witness: Bagong balat*, is a documentary about the life of a tattoo artist and piercing artist. This is a 27-minute video that talks about the tattoo artist's struggles and his life before he became tattoo artist. It also shows how he ended up being a tattoo artist and the meaning behind the ink on people's skin.

Another documentary by GMA Public Affairs (2017) entitled *Brigada: Ano ang kahalagahan ng pagpapa-tattoo sa modernong panahon?* talks about the modernization of the tattoo in the Philippines. From the traditional hand-tapped tattoo to the modern materials used and how Filipinos accept it as an art form.

Moreover, a video by Abresch (2018) entitled *The last Kalinga tattoo artist, Whang Od*, is a documentary about the life of the last *mambabatok*, Whang Od, of Kalinga province, Philippines. It also

shows how she does the tattoos and her life in Kalinga province. Whang Od stated there is no school for tattooing, one either has talent or does not.

## Research framework



**Figure 1. Research framework of the study**

Research framework of the study shows the input of the study which includes the review of related literature and personal interview through the conduct of library research for both online and printed resources and personal interview. All the inputs coming from the processes were converted into outputs in the forms of documentary video, documentary video teaser, and poster. The tattoo profession documentary features five iconic professional tattoo artists and pioneers that have extensive experiences in the profession. They shared their opinions on what the tattoo profession is and their experiences about how they started, as well as the struggles they went through for the audience to relate their own experiences today. They also shared their secrets to their success and some tips and tricks on the profession.

The documentary video teaser and poster served as marketing materials for the tattoo profession documentary. The documentary video teaser features b-roll shots of the five professional tattoo artists to show who are featured in the documentary while the poster has a picture of a tattooed man, the title of the documentary, and the logo of the five professional tattoo artists.

## Objectives of the project

This project aims to promote the tattoo profession in the Philippines, to inspire aspiring artists and to educate them on what they need to become professionals. Specifically, the project aims:

1. to promote the tattoo profession in the Philippines. There is a negative image about tattoos and this project will give information on what the tattoo profession is and what professional tattoo artists do to help the tattoo community and to gain more respect like other professionals.
2. to inspire future aspiring artists in this field by featuring iconic professional tattoo artists who have a lot of experiences in the profession. These artists serve as inspiration, they can relate to the artists about the experiences they went through before they became successful.
3. to educate the new tattoo artists as well as experienced tattoo artists about this kind of profession—how to become professional and responsible in this field and most importantly, to the community.
4. to produce beneficiary materials for future tattoo artists about the tattoo profession in the form of:
  - a) documentary video;
  - b) documentary video teaser; and

- c) poster
- 5. to determine the assessment of the target audience on the multimedia and marketing materials in terms of:
  - a) attractiveness;
  - b) comprehensibility;
  - c) acceptability;
  - d) self-involvement; and
  - e) persuasion

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher conducted personal interviews with five professional tattoo artists with extensive experiences in the field. He developed a bond and deeper relationship with the artists to gain deeper insights and honest opinions about the tattoo profession. The researcher visited their shops two to three times for the interview b-rolls for the success of the documentary.

After the interview, the researcher post processed the clips using the Adobe software to stitch them and placed color moods and background music to make it more interesting to the audience. After the production of all the outputs, the researcher posted them in social media, particularly in a Facebook group called Pinoy Newbie Tattoo Artist (PINTA) to conduct an online survey among 15 respondents for each output to determine the assessment of the target audience on the multimedia output and marketing materials.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The tattoo profession documentary video consists of four major colors, black and white for the title, the pop-up text inside the documentary, and the credits. Orange and green were used as ambient and mood of the video. According to Bourn (2010), black represents power and elegance; white color represents cleanliness, safety, sterility, and perfection; orange represents joy, creativity, and success; and green represents nature, energy, and environment, it is also associated with money and ambition.

The typefaces used for the project's title and subtitles are *Tattoo Ink*, also known as an American traditional font which provides the simplicity, and *Rockwell* for the subtitles to support the simplicity of the title and to look elegant.

The typeface used for the pop-up text and credits is *Lemon Milk*, one of the common and yet very elegant-looking typefaces. It is uppercase style, this typeface is very easy to read because of its simplicity and the spacing between letters are perfect. The audience will enjoy reading this typeface and will give more impact to the documentary.

Below are the screenshots of the multimedia materials produced:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-7wLdjiWXw&t=6s>

[See Translation](#)



 1.5K

202 Comments 1.8K Shares

 Like

 Comment

 Share

Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-7wLdjiWXw&t=6s>

**Figure 2. Screenshot of documentary video**

TINTA - Tattoo profession documentary  
Featuring Mr. Ricky Sta Ana, Draz Palaming, Lotus Astilla, Max Caunca and Raymart Redondo.

#DocumentaryTeaser



 Aira Belen, Dale Amon and 55 others

8 Comments 24 Shares

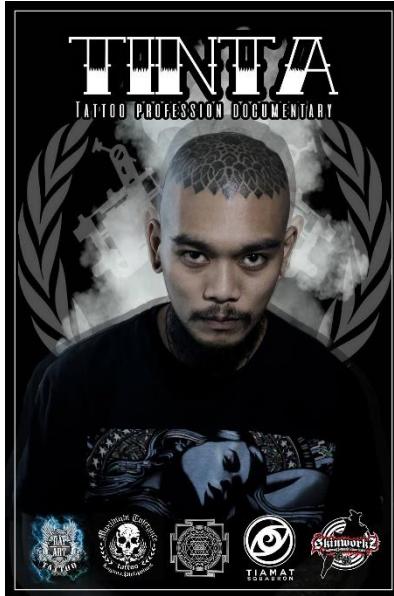
 Like

 Comment

 Share

Available at [https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=tinta%20video%20teaser&epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=tinta%20video%20teaser&epa=SEARCH_BOX)

**Figure 3. Screenshot of documentary video teaser**



*Available at*

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=903579243176629&set=a.119058374962057&type=3&theater>

**Figure 4. Poster**

A group of sampled target audience of Grades 4 to 6 were surveyed to assess the effectiveness of the multimedia materials and Facebook page. Results of the assessment are discussed below:

*Assessment of documentary video, documentary video teaser and poster*

Table 1 shows the overall assessment of the documentary video. Results show that the video's comprehensibility and acceptability got the highest weighted mean of 3.88, interpreted as *outstanding*; followed by attractiveness with a weighted mean of 3.79, ranked as second; and lastly, self-involvement and persuasion ranked third with weighted mean of 3.77, both interpreted as *outstanding*.

**Table 1. Overall assessment of documentary video**

Components	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation	Ranking
Comprehensibility	3.88	Outstanding	1.5
Acceptability	3.88	Outstanding	1.5
Attractiveness	3.79	Outstanding	2
Self-involvement	3.77	Outstanding	3.5
Persuasion	3.77	Outstanding	3.5
Overall weighted mean	3.86	Outstanding	

*Interpretation: 3.26 - 4.00 - Outstanding (O); 2.51 - 3.25 - Satisfactory (S); 1.76 - 2.50 – Fair (F); 1.00 - 1.75 - Needs Improvement (NI)*

Overall assessment of the documentary video teaser shows that it is persuasive as assessed by the respondents with the highest weighted mean of 3.97, followed by comprehensibility with 3.88;

attractiveness with 3.85; acceptability with 3.83, and self-involvement with 3.83. The documentary video teaser has an overall weighted mean of 3.88, interpreted as *outstanding*.

Table 2. Overall assessment of documentary video teaser

Components	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation	Ranking
Persuasion	3.97	Outstanding	1
Comprehensibility	3.88	Outstanding	2
Attractiveness	3.87	Outstanding	3
Acceptability	3.85	Outstanding	4
Self-involvement	3.83	Outstanding	5
Overall weighted mean	3.88	Outstanding	

*Interpretation: 3.26 - 4.00 - Outstanding (O); 2.51 - 3.25 - Satisfactory (S); 1.76 - 2.50 – Fair (F); 1.00 - 1.75 - Needs Improvement (NI)*

Overall assessment of the documentary poster shows that the video is comprehensive as assessed by the respondents with the highest weighted mean of 3.98; followed by acceptability with 3.96; attractiveness with 3.95; self- involvement with 3.93; and persuasion with 3.90. The documentary poster has an overall weighted mean of 3.94, interpreted as *outstanding*.

Table 3. Overall assessment of poster

Components	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation	Ranking
Comprehensibility	3.98	Outstanding	1
Acceptability	3.96	Outstanding	2
Attractiveness	3.95	Outstanding	3
Self-involvement	3.93	Outstanding	4
Persuasion	3.90	Outstanding	5
Overall weighted mean	3.94	Outstanding	

*Interpretation: 3.26 - 4.00 - Outstanding (O); 2.51 - 3.25 - Satisfactory (S); 1.76 - 2.50 – Fair (F); 1.00 - 1.75 - Needs Improvement (NI)*

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

With the help of the data and information gathered, the researcher was able to produce a documentary video and marketing materials—documentary video teaser and poster—about the tattoo profession that can help inspire and educate aspiring tattoo artists to become motivated and successful in this field and to promote the tattoo profession.

The product testing results were *outstanding* for all outputs in all the components which include attractiveness, comprehensibility, acceptability, self-involvement, and persuasion.

Based on the results gathered, the documentary video is rated high in terms of acceptability and comprehensibility, its weakest being self- involvement and persuasion though both are still rated as *outstanding*. For the marketing materials, the documentary video teaser is strongest when it comes to persuasion, its weakest is self-involvement, similarly both are rated as *outstanding*, and the poster's

strongest suite was its comprehensibility, its weakest is persuasion, though both are still rated as *outstanding*. Out of all the outputs, for the main output, it is positively rated as *outstanding*. For the marketing materials, both are rated as *outstanding* with a difference of 0.06 percent between them.

## Recommendations

Based on the results gathered from the survey, the recommendations are as follows:

For different kinds of artists who want to know about the tattoo profession and for those who want to improve their medium, they can use this study as a starting point.

For organizations or groups that conduct seminars about tattoos, they can use these outputs to motivate, educate, and inspire aspiring artists.

For future researchers, they can use this as reference to look further into the tattoo profession or tattooing itself.

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