

Introduction

- Body modifications: Piercings and tattoos
 - Prevalence in undergraduate students: 51% piercings; 22% tattoos (Mayers & Chiffreller, 2008)
- More research examining body modifications needed due to popularity and acceptance of body modifications
 - Existing research primarily focused on behavioral outcomes (e.g. smoking, violence, gang affiliation, drug use and early sexual experiences) (Carroll, Riffenburgh, Roberts & Myhre, 2002; Deschesnes, Finès & Demers, 2006; Guéguen, 2012; Kertzman, et al., 2013)
- Research has indicated sex differences in correlates of body modifications (Kertzman, et al., 2013; Roberti, Storch & Bravata, 2004)
 - e.g. violence associated with men and women differentially with body modification (Carroll, Riffenburgh, Roberts & Myhre, 2002)
- Impulsivity – related traits (e.g. sensation seeking) implicated as contributing factors in the attainment of, or risk behaviors associated with, body modifications (Kertzman, et al., 2013; Roberti, Storch & Bravata, 2004)
 - Negative and positive urgency reinforce maladaptive behaviors (Berg, Latzman, Bliwise, & Lilienfeld, 2015)
- At this time, research has yet to investigate how impulsivity and aggression could function as driving factors for attaining body modifications through multidimensional analyses

Current Study

- Intended to analyze associations between subdimensions of impulsivity and aggression and number of body modifications in men and women

Hypotheses

Females

• Impulsivity

- More piercings → higher positive urgency

Males

• Impulsivity

- More tattoos → higher negative urgency

• Aggression

- More tattoos → higher aggression

Both genders

• Impulsivity

- More body modifications → higher sensation seeking
- More body modifications → higher lack of premeditation

Methods

Participants

- 308 undergraduate students
- 74% female; 35.4% Black/African American; 35.4% White/Caucasian; 19.5% Asian; 5.8% Biracial; 3.9% Hispanic/Latino

Methods Cont.

Measures

- Body Modification Self Report Survey
- UPPS-P Impulsivity Scale (Whiteside & Lynam 2001; Cyders et al., 2007)
 - (Lack of) Premeditation (e.g. *I have a reserved and cautious attitude toward life*)
 - Negative Urgency (e.g. *I have trouble controlling my impulses*)
 - Positive Urgency (e.g. *When I am very happy, I can't seem to stop myself from doing things that can have bad consequences*)
 - (Lack of) Perseverance (e.g. *I generally like to see things through to the end*)
 - Sensation Seeking (e.g. *I generally seek new and exciting experiences and sensations*)
- Reactive – Proactive Aggression Questionnaire (Raine et al., 2006)
 - Reactive Aggression (e.g. *Yelled at others when they have annoyed you*)
 - Proactive Aggression (e.g. *Had fights with others to show who was on top*)

Data analyses (see Table 1)

- Data log transformation to normalize distribution
- Zero-order bivariate correlations used to examine associations between body modifications and subdimensions of impulsivity and aggression by gender

Results

Table 1. Bivariate Correlations between Body Modifications and Subdimensions of Impulsivity and Aggression

	Men		Women	
	Piercings	Tattoos	Piercings	Tattoos
Impulsivity				
Negative Urgency	-0.050	0.031	0.015	-0.033
Lack of Premeditation	0.190	0.128	0.094	0.196**
Lack of Perseverance	0.154	0.188	0.040	-0.043
Sensation Seeking	-0.113	-0.030	0.150*	0.040
Positive Urgency	-0.040	0.116	0.014	-0.023
Aggression				
Proactive Aggression	0.101	-0.055	0.020	0.134*
Reactive Aggression	0.034	-0.172	0.068	.0185**

Note: N = 308, * p < .05, ** p < .01

• Females

• Impulsivity

- Positive correlation between piercings and Sensation Seeking ($r = .150, p < .05$)
- Positive correlation between tattoos and Lack of Premeditation ($r = .196, p < .01$)

• Aggression

- Positive correlation between tattoos and Proactive Aggression ($r = .134, p < .05$)
- Positive correlation between tattoos and Reactive Aggression ($r = .185, p < .01$)

• Males

- No significant associations found between body modifications and subscales of impulsivity or aggression

Discussion

- Results suggest that psychological factors play an important role in the pursuit of body modifications.
- Females:
 - Impulsivity
 - Of the subdimensions, sensation seeking seems to be most relevant with regard to piercings, where as, in tattoos lack of premeditation seems to be most relevant
 - No significant association found between piercings and positive urgency
 - Surprisingly, despite evidence negative urgency underlies broad psychopathology, no association was found between negative urgency and body modifications (Berg, Latzman, Bliwise, & Lilienfeld, 2015)
 - Could imply body modification may not be a sign of maladjustment despite popular belief
 - Aggression
 - Aggression seems to play a role in attaining increasing numbers of tattoos but no apparent influence with regard to piercings
- Males
 - Lack of significant correlations observed could imply more of an influence of impulsivity and aggression on body modifications in women than in men

Limitations

- Disproportion of women (N=288) to men (N=80)
 - Small sample size of men decreases ability to detect effects
 - Skewed distribution due to number of participants reporting zero body modifications

Implications

- Associations between body modifications and risk behaviors may stem from shared underlying psychological or personality influences that could potentially be used to help identify youths more likely to engage in risky behaviors

Future Directions

- Future research should assess whether subdimensions of impulsivity and/or aggression act as moderators in the association between body modifications and risk behaviors

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