

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY TATTOOED BSTM WORKING STUDENTS AT BESTLINK COLLEGE OF THE PHILIPPINES: BASIS FOR A SUPPORT GUIDE

ABSTRACT

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Tattoos may be viewed as expressions of identity, culture, or personal experience, yet tattooed students can encounter stigma in academic and workplace settings. This study explored the challenges experienced by tattooed Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) working students at Bestlink College of the Philippines and used the findings as a basis for developing a support guide. The study used a qualitative descriptive research design. Data were gathered from selected participants through surveys and in-depth interviews concerning their academic, workplace, and social experiences. Participants described social stigma, negative assumptions, and pressure to conceal their tattoos. They also reported challenges in balancing academic and employment responsibilities and concerns about workplace acceptance and professional image. Despite these difficulties, participants demonstrated resilience and used personal coping strategies to manage their experiences. The findings indicate a need for more inclusive academic and workplace practices, clearer anti-discrimination guidance, and support mechanisms for tattooed working students. The proposed guide may help raise awareness, encourage respectful treatment, and assist students in navigating institutional and workplace expectations.

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