



**NAVIGATING PEER PRESSURE: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION
OF STUDENTS' DECISION-MAKING EXPERIENCES**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of peer pressure on students' academic decision-making, focusing on both positive and negative impacts. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research examines how students at the University of Batangas navigate peer influence in their academic, social, and personal lives. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 students from various academic departments, analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings reveal that while peer pressure can motivate students to excel academically, it can also create stress, anxiety, and decision-making challenges. Students with strong personal values and support systems demonstrated greater resilience against negative peer influences. The study underscores the importance of school counseling, peer mentorship, and institutional support in helping students develop independent decision-making skills. Recommendations include strengthening mental health programs, fostering awareness of peer influence, and implementing strategies that promote positive academic motivation while

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minimizing negative pressures. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how peer dynamics shape student behavior and decision-making processes within educational environments.

Keywords: *Peer pressure, academic decision-making, qualitative study, student behavior, social influence, higher education, mental health, resilience, support systems*



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