

# Students' engagement in an anonymous peer review:

## Applying self-determination theory

**Abstract:** There is a need to provide quality education without discrimination or prejudice to all students. However, there are challenges in implementing quality education in large classes of diverse students especially during remote learning. Literature indicates that providing lecturer feedback can become a tedious task, especially in large undergraduate classes. Students do also not perceive review in any form as positive, regardless of how constructive the feedback is. Literature states that involving students in the peer review process can improve the quality of their submissions. This research used the interpretivist case study and thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data collected from 179 third-year Information Systems students. Students reviewed another student's report, without knowing their identity. The research used self-determination theory as a theoretical basis. Results indicated that anonymous peer review helped students to empower themselves. Therefore, perceived autonomy was achieved. Perceived competence was also achieved as the anonymous peer review improved the quality of work submitted and the development of workplace skills. Perceived relatedness is supported as students indicated that the anonymous peer review exercise allowed them to learn from their peers. It also improved their understanding and the ability to see errors in their work. Negatively perceived autonomy aspects highlighted that anonymous peer review gives students too much decision-making ability in marking assignments. The amount of lecturer time required to deal with student queries evidenced a negatively perceived competence theme. The number of students who did not complete the exercise also indicated a negative theme for perceived relatedness. However, this method can be used as an alternative assessment mechanism, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** equality education, students' feedback, students' perceptions, anonymous peer review, diverse large classes, low resource universities