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### **Abstract**

Using the Self-determination theory as a framework, this thesis studies students' motivational regulation in an art classroom and explores how their innate psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are satisfied in a collaborative setting. The study involved an eight month long phenomenological study of a secondary three express art class in a secondary school in Singapore. Qualitative data from collected from field observations and group interviews from the fourteen participants indicated that within a collaborative learning art classroom, where students worked in groups on open-ended art tasks, students became more self-determined in their learning as they perceived that their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are satisfied. It was also discovered that these perceived psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are inter-related. The study also noted certain cultural differences in terms of students' need for autonomy, which do not concur with the self-determination theory. The study concluded with recommendations for art educators on how self-determined behaviour can be promoted in the art classroom.