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## **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE FACULTIES OF NURSING AT ASSIUT, SOHAG AND SOUTH VALLEY UNIVERSITIES**

By

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Learning environment is an important stone for the success of learning processes. This study aimed to assess the student perception of educational environment in the Faculties of Nursing at Assiut, Sohag and South Vally Universities. Using a descriptive research design and convenient sample technique. The total number of the studied sample was 328. A self-administered questionnaire was adopted to collect the needed data. The questionnaire contains the following two main parts: socio-demographic and data related to educational environment which include physical environment and non physical environment. The mean age was 21.1 year, and the vast majority of students were females. 66.8%, 19.8% and 13.4% respectively were from Assiut, Sohag and Qena City. Their is a statistically significant relation between the three faculties about classroom size, suitability between number of students and the size of classroom, the availability of modern technology in teaching and noise level. According to the total score of perception about educational environment it was found that more than two thirds of nursing students at Assiut, Sohag, and Qena had poor level of perception, nearly one third had satisfactory level and only (1.5%) of the students perceive their educational environment is good. The present study concluded that all groups of the studied nursing students perceived the learning environment negatively. The study also indicated a widespread and large defects in the educational environment in these faculties as perceived by students, so;

we recommends that encourage administrative staff of the studied faculties to analyze the source of poor perception, then develop, implement and evaluate suitable plane for improve and correct weak areas.

*Keywords: Educational environment; Learning environment, Perceptions, Nursing students; Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM).*

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## INTRODUCTION:

Learning environment is an important stone for the learning processes of students and for preferences of future workplaces (*Skaalvik et al., 2011*). It is not limited to student-teacher interaction, teaching and learning activities, but also includes having good physical structures and facilities provided by the university (*Alhajjar and Abu Daf, 2013*).

The learning environment has been defined as everything that is happening in the classroom, department, faculty and university (*Roff et al., 2001*). The concept of the educational or learning environment is “the conditions, forces, and external stimuli which challenge on the individual. These forces may be physical, social, as well as intellectual forces and conditions. Therefore, the learning envi

ronment is an interactive network of forces within the teaching and learning activities that influence students’ learning outcomes. Specifically, in nursing education, the learning environment has to be integrated between theory and clinical practice in order to obtain balanced learning outcomes (*Said et al., 2009*).

The educational environments, both academic and clinical, are important determinants of students’ attitudes, knowledge, skills, progression and behaviors. Students’ perception of the environment within which they study has been shown to have a significant impact on their behavior, academic progress and sense of well-being (*Al-hazimi, 2004 and Soemantri, 2010*).

Students and teachers should be aware of curriculum, educational environment and consider whether it is competitive, authoritarian, relaxed, stressful, the courses within the curriculum motivate or de-motivate (*Roff, 2005*).

Today's classrooms, including studios, laboratories, auditoriums, and other indoor environments, have a wide variety of physical structures that support and facilitate student learning (*Jakobsson et al., 2011*). There is no perfect classroom physical design to accommodate all types of academic activities. Because students learn in diverse ways, The L-Shaped classroom well-designed classrooms, not only promote teamwork and interest in student learning, but also encourage active class participation (*Niemeyer, 2003*). College classrooms can be viewed from a physical perspective such as size, shape, interior lighting, finishes-color, thermal condition, noise level, furniture and seating arrangement, as well as location and availability of modern technology (*Safer et al., 2005*).

Unfortunately, classrooms are not always a location that empowers faculty and that is conducive to student learning. Physical settings and factors can motivate or discourage to students learning hence, a classroom's arrangement of visual, furniture, and equipment should be carefully considered in order to empower both instructors and students (*Niemeyer, 2003*).

Student assessments of the teaching performance and effectiveness of their college instructors are influenced by physical structures of the classroom while taking into account the number of enrolled students (*Safer et al., 2005*).

Learning depends on several factors but a crucial step is the engagement of the learner, this is affected by their motivation and perception of relevance. These, in turn, can be affected by learners' previous experiences and preferred learning styles and by the context and environment in which the learning is taking place (*Aghamolaie and Fazel, 2010*). The International Community of Nursing has recognized the need for common educational

standards in order to prepare nurses competent to practice in the global community (*Kreye, 2011*).

#### **Significances of the study:**

Educational environment makes an important contribution to student learning (*Wilkinson et al., 2006*), it has greatly impacted on students' satisfaction with the course of study, perceived well-being, aspirations and academic achievement (*Edgren et al., 2010*). The educational environment can also be changed; thus enhancing the quality of the environment for the nursing and medical education process itself (*Mayya and Rof, 2004*).

The hypotheses of researchers for selecting this study, is the fact of comparing the old and recent Nursing Faculties by date of inauguration. Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University was inaugurated in 1982, while Faculty of Nursing, Sohag University was inaugurated in 2006 and South Valley Universities was inaugurated in 2008.

Assessment of the educational environment at both academic and clinical sites is key to the delivery of a high

quality, student centered curriculum. In order to conduct such evaluation across many sites, specialties and student groups' use of a comprehensive, valid and reliable instrument is essential (*Bennett et al., 2010*). The DREEM instrument is able to assess both components- theory and clinical practice. It also includes all aspects involving teaching and learning in health professional schools (*Awdah et al., 2004*).

#### **Aim of the study:**

The current study aimed to assess students' perceptions of educational environment in the Faculties of Nursing at Assiut, Sohag and South Valley Universities.

#### **Subjects and Methods:**

**Research design:** Descriptive research design was used in this study.

#### **A) Target Population and Study**

##### **Settings:**

The target population of this study involved undergraduate nursing students at fourth year (final or baccalaureates year) during the second semester in the

academic year 2012-2013, to be sure that the students are aware about educational environment and passed through different experiences. All nursing students at Assiut and South Valley Universities were female but Sohag University accepts both sex's male and female.

This study was conducted at the following settings: Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University in Assiut city. Faculty of Nursing, Sohag University in Sohag city and South Valley Universities in Qena city.

### **B) Sampling:**

A convenient sample technique was adopted to recruit the study participants, it involve total coverage of all nursing students at the previously mentioned settings. As for exclusion criteria, only students who disagreed to participate in the study were not included. The total number of the studied sample was (328) of them: 219 students from Assiut, 65 students from Sohag and 44 students from Qena City.

### **C) Data Collection Tool:**

In order to collect data about perceptions of educational environment the following tool was developed based on reviewing current and past relevant literature on community health nursing, medical textbooks, journals and internet resources. Then collected data was analyzed to obtain the necessary content for the study. After construction of the tool, it was rewired by (3) experts from community health nursing, nursing administration, public health and preventive medicine, so content validity was obtained. The tool included the following parts:

#### **Tool: (I) Self-administered questionnaire:**

A self-administered questionnaire was adopted to collect the needed data. The questionnaire contains the following two main parts: socio-demographic and data related to educational environment.

**Part (1): Socio-demographic data:**

It was developed by the researchers; it covered university students' age, sex, marital status, and college place.

**Part (2): Education Environment data:**

**A) Physical environment:**

This section contained questions about physical attributes of the classroom; the participants were asked directly to rate the criteria of place of studying, using closed ended question. It was developed by the researchers and consisted of questions about: classroom size, shape of classroom, seating arrangement, suitability between number of students and classroom size, the type of furniture, availability of data show, the location of data show, intensity of lighting in the classroom, classroom thermal condition, ventilation condition, presence of noise, noise level and presence of refuse baskets in the classroom or near it.

**B) Non physical environment:**

The (DREEM) inventory was used (Roff, 2005). An Arabic version of the questionnaire was applied it was translated by (Al-Ayed and Sheik, 2008) and modified by researchers to suit university students and Egyptian cultures. Also, it revised and refined to remove any possible un-clarity and ambiguity of wording or phrasing. The questionnaire was produced in a dual language (Arabic & English). The inventory consists of 50 items divided into five subscales: Students' perceptions of teachers, this subscale consisted of 11 items, the maximum score is 22; Students' perceptions of learning, this subscale consisted of 12 items, the maximum score is 24; Students' academic self-perception, it consisted of 8 items, the maximum score is 16; Students' perceptions of atmosphere, consisted of 12 items, the maximum score is 24; Students' social self-perception it consisted of 7 items and the maximum score is 14. The total score for all scales is 100. Each item is scored from 0 to 2.

The Dundee Education Environment Measure (DREEM) inventory is a validated inventory with proven high reliability and has been used in various countries around the world to assess the educational climate of health professionals and medical schools. It has been used in 20 countries, including: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, India, Iran, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, the UK and the West Indies. It has been translated into at least eight languages (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish).

As regards the scoring system, each item was answered by selecting only one answer from three alternatives (always, sometime and never); if students answered " always ", take a score of (2); however, if answered "never", given a score of (zero) and sometime given a score of (1). There are nine items are negative questions number they were scored in reverse manner. However, for all items, results are presented so that the higher a

score indicate more positive or (more favorable educational environment) and vice-versa.

#### **D) Methodology:**

##### ***1) Preparatory phase and administrative design:***

1- Before embarking on the study, an official letters were obtained from the Dean of Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University to the Deans of Faculty of Nursing, Sohag University and Faculty of Nursing, South Valley University. These letters explained briefly the purpose and nature of this study. The researchers met all Deans to take their written approval, explaining to them the purpose, nature and data collection methods of the study. Some deans gave their approval directly, while others referred the researchers to the vice-deans for students' affairs to take their permission.

2- Pilot Study: after developing the tool, a pilot study was carried out on (10) students. The students who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the sample. The aim

of the pilot study was to test the feasibility and clarity of the tool and also to estimate the time required to fill in the questionnaire. According to the result of the pilot study, some necessary modification was made to avoid the ambiguity of the questionnaire.

## ***II) Data collection:***

### **A) Ethical consideration:**

At the initial interview, each student and teaching staff member was informed about the purpose and nature of the study, and the researchers emphasized that participation would be voluntary; hence every student had the right to participate or refuse to be included in the work. The consent for participation was taken orally. In addition, the confidentiality of the data was maintained, explained and also printed in the questionnaire as follows: collected information will be used only for the purpose of the study without referring to the personnel's participation through anonymity of the subjects that will be assured by the coding of all data.

### **B) Practical work:**

Data was collected in the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February to the end of May, 2013. The researchers harmonized and organized the field work with teaching staff members who were responsible for the desired sections. They ranged from demonstrators to professors. If they agreed, then the researchers asked them about the preferred time for data collection, either in the first or last part of the selected sections or lectures.

Data was collected from both sections and lectures when students were in small groups because the researchers were able to control students; however, the majority of the sample was collected from sections. The response rate was higher (more than 95%) in the small groups than in large group of students.

At lectures or sections the researchers introduced themselves to the students; the purpose and nature of the study were explained and complete confidentiality of data was assured. Students were asked if they

were interested and agreed to participate in the study. The researcher explained the main parts of the questionnaire. After that, the questionnaire forms were distributed to students and the students were asked to complete the questionnaires by selecting only one answer that reflects the actual situation in their educational environment honestly. The questionnaire took about (10-15) minutes.

The researchers asked about any difficulty that students might face during answering the questionnaires to answer it. Finally, the researchers thanked the students and teaching staff for their cooperation.

### **C) Statistical analysis:**

- Collected data was coded and verified prior to data entry. The entered data were revised before conducting the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation, etc..) were calculated using SPSS PC version 16.
- Chi-square test was used to compare differences in the distribution

of frequencies among different groups; it is considered significant when  $P < 0.05$ .

- Using the following scoring system to assess the students perception (poor = score  $< 50\%$ , satisfactory = score  $50-70\%$ , and good = score  $> 70\%$  (Shalkamy, 2012).

### **RESULTS:**

Table (1) shows the distribution of studied sample regarding their socio-demographic characteristics. It was found that more than three quarters (77.5%) of nursing students aged from 20-22 year with the mean age 21.1 year. Regarding their sex the vast majority (95.4%) of students was females and the great majorities (98.8%) of them were single. According to the place of faculty the result revealed that (66.8%, 19.8% and 13.4%) respectively were from Assiut, Sohag and Qena City.

Table (2) shows the distribution of the studied sample regarding physical attributes of their classroom. (68.9%) of Assiut students, (75.4%) of Sohag students and (43.2%) of Qena students reported that the size of their classroom

was medium. As for the suitability between number of students and the size of classroom (52.1%, 43.1% and 88.6%) of Assiut, Sohag and Qena students' respectively mentioned the size hadn't suitable.

Regarding the availability of modern technology in teaching (56.6%, 35.4% and 75.0%) of the student shows the modern technology in teaching had available in Assiut, Sohag and Qena faculties respectively. Only (24.2%, 33.8% and 15.9%) of Assiut, Sohag and Qena students' respectively reported that the classrooms were suitable ventilation.

There is a statistically significant relation between the three faculties about classroom size, shape, seating arrangement, suitability between number of students and the size of classroom, types of furniture, the availability of modern technology in teaching and noise level.

Table (3) represent the distribution of the studied sample regarding their perception of teachers, it was found that (21.5%) of Assiut students and only (9.2%) of Sohag nursing students reported that their teachers always provide feedback to them.

60.7% of Assiut nursing students, but only more than one third (35.4%) of

Sohag and (6.8%) of Qena nursing students mentioned that their teachers always knowledgeable, while 61.6%, 20.0% and 25.0% respectively of Assiut, Sohag and Qena nursing students stated that their teachers were patient with patients.

In additions there is no statistically significant relation between the three faculties and the teachers communication skills with patients, moreover; the degree of irritation which induced by the students to their teachers.

We can roughly read from table (4) that, more than half (54.8 %) of Assiut and only (3.1%) of Sohag, (2.3%) of Qena stated always encourage to participate in class. More than three quarters (79.5%) of student in Qena and more than one quarter (26.5%) of student in Assiut revealed that the teaching is never stimulating to them.

Concerning the student perception about the learning objectives of the course, more than half (53.4%) of them always were clear in Assiut but (66.2%, 47.7%) respectively were sometime clear in Sohag and Qena. The mean score of student perception of learning were (12) in Sohag and there is statistically significance

relation between the mean score of the three faculties.

Table (5) illustrates that more than half (56.2 %) of Assiut student mentioned that, the learning contents is always relevant to the career of nursing. On the other hands nearly one third of Sohag and Qena nursing reported that learning contents is not relevant. Concerning the perception about problem-solving skills, (47.0%, 9.2% and 2.3%) respectively of Assiut, Sohag and Qena nursing students stated that the skills were not developed through the faculty.

Table (6) revealed that only 42.5% of Assiut, 49.2% of Sohag and 56.8% students reported that the atmosphere was always relaxed during lectures. 30.6% of Assiut, 20.0% Sohag and 56.8% of Qena students mentioned that the atmosphere is never motivates them as a learner.

Table (7) demonstrates the distribution of the students regarding their social self perceptions (41.1%, 16.9% and 6.8% respectively) of Assiut, Sohag and Qena reported that they never get a good support system for stressed students.

The majority (85.8%) of Assiut, more than half of Sohag and Qena students' stated that their social life is not good.

Table (8) illustrates more than half (53.3%) of male students and more than two thirds (67.1%) of female students perceive their educational environment in a poor quality; this difference indicates a statistically significant relation between sex and students' perceptions of their educational environment  $P (0.001)$ .

Concerning the perceptions' of educational environment totally table (9) shows that more than two thirds (65.9%) of nursing students at Assiut, Sohag, and Qena had poor level of perception, nearly one third (32.6%) had satisfactory level and only (1.5%) of the students perceive their educational environment is good.

In additions to there is no statistically significant relation between the three faculties.

**Table (1): Distribution of the studied sample regarding their socio-demographic characteristics**

Variables	Nursing students (No.= 328)	
	No.	%
<b>Age / years :</b>		
• 20 -≥ 22 year	254	77.5
• 22 - 24 year	74	22.5
Mean ± SD	21.15 ± 0.86	
<b>Sex:</b>		
• Male	15	4.6
• Female	313	95.4
<b>Marital status:</b>		
• Single	324	98.8
• Married	4	1.2
<b>Place of faculty:</b>		
• Assiut	219	66.8
• Sohag	65	19.8
• Qena	44	13.4
Total	328	100 %

**Table (2): Distribution of the studied sample regarding physical attributes of their classroom**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)		Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)		Qena nursing students (No.= 44)		X <sup>2</sup> & P- value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>1- Classroom size:</b>							
• Small	40	18.3	4	6.2	25	56.8	46.5 0.001*
• Medium	151	68.9	49	75.4	19	43.2	
• Large	28	12.8	12	18.5	0	0.0	
<b>2- Classroom shape:</b>							
• Square	74	33.8	11	16.9	20	45.5	16.0 0.003 *
• Oval	13	5.9	1	1.5	0	0.0	
• Rectangle	132	60.3	53	81.5	24	54.5	
<b>3-Seating arrangement</b>							
• Near from instructor	85	38.8	9	13.8	31	70.5	36.2 0.001*
• In the middle	128	58.4	54	83.1	13	29.5	
• Far from instructor	6	2.7	2	3.1	0	0.0	
<b>4-Suitability between number of students and the size of classroom</b>							
• Yes	105	47.9	37	56.9	5	11.4	24.6 0.001*
• No	114	52.1	28	43.1	39	88.6	
<b>5- Type of Furniture:</b>							
• Flexible	87	39.7	11	16.9	33	75.0	36.9 0.001*
• Permanently attached to floor	132	60.3	54	83.1	11	25.0	
<b>6- Availability of modern technology in teaching ( data show)</b>							
• Yes	124	56.6	23	35.4	33	75.0	20.8 0.001*
• No	15	6.8	3	4.6	0	0.0	
• Sometime	80	36.5	39	60.0	11	25.0	

**Cont. table (2): Distribution of the studied sample regarding physical attributes of their classroom**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)		Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)		Qena nursing students (No.= 44)		X <sup>2</sup> & P-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>7- Location of ( data show):</b>							
• Near to the students	159	72.6	48	73.8	43	97.7	9.6 0.008*
• Far from the students	45	20.5	14	21.5	1	2.3	
<b>8-Intensity of lighting in classroom:</b>							
• Low	19	8.7	5	7.7	1	2.3	3.7 0.451
• Moderate	145	66.2	45	69.2	35	79.5	
• High	55	25.1	15	23.1	8	18.2	
<b>9- Classroom thermal condition</b>							
• Suitable for outer atmosphere	111	50.7	32	49.2	25	56.8	0.7 0.712
• Not suitable for outer atmosphere	108	49.3	33	50.8	19	43.2	
<b>10- Ventilation:</b>							
• Suitable	53	24.2	22	33.8	7	15.9	10.2 0.032*
• Not suitable	166	75.8	43	66.2	37	84.1	
<b>11- Presence of noise</b>							
• Yes	171	78.1	48	73.8	29	65.9	3.1 0.214
• No	48	21.9	17	26.2	15	34.1	
<b>12- Noise level:</b>							
• High	75	34.2	13	20.0	4	9.1	16.0 0.003*
• Low	37	16.9	12	18.5	5	11.4	
• Middle	59	26.9	23	35.4	20	45.5	
<b>13- Presence of refuse baskets:</b>							
• Yes	200	91.3	63	96.9	38	86.4	4.0 0.132
• No	19	8.7	2	3.1	6	13.6	

- (\*) Significant at P < 0.05

X<sup>2</sup>: Chi -Square test

**Table (3): Distribution of the studied sample regarding toward their perception of teachers**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)			Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)			Qena nursing students (No.= 44)			P-value
	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
The teachers are good at providing feedback to students	12.8	65.8	21.5	16.9	73.8	9.2	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.002*
The teachers have good communication skills with patients	21.0	59.4	19.6	10.8	58.5	30.8	13.6	61.4	25.0	0.172
The teachers are knowledgeable	19.6	19.6	60.7	3.1	61.5	35.4	15.9	77.3	6.8	0.001*
The teachers give clear examples	23.3	57.1	19.6	1.5	61.5	36.9	13.6	75.0	11.4	0.001*
The teachers are well prepared for their classes	18.3	59.8	21.9	12.3	61.5	26.2	31.8	61.4	6.8	0.031*
The teachers provide constructive criticism here	21.0	52.5	26.5	30.8	49.2	20.0	50.0	47.7	2.3	0.001*
The teachers ridicule the students	20.1	49.3	30.6	6.2	43.1	50.8	22.7	36.4	40.9	0.008
The teachers get angry in class	16.4	55.3	28.3	15.4	73.8	10.8	27.3	68.2	4.5	0.001*
The teachers are authoritarian	25.1	48.9	26.0	13.8	52.3	33.8	2.3	63.6	34.1	0.007
The teachers are patient with patients	25.1	13.2	61.6	10.8	69.2	20.0	4.5	70.5	25.0	0.003*
The students irritate the teachers	25.6	58.9	15.5	26.2	66.2	7.7	27.3	56.8	15.9	0.576
<b>Subtotal</b>	11 ± 4.3			12 ± 3.8			10.5 ± 3.3			0.120

- (\*) Significant at P &lt; 0.05

**Table (4): Distribution of the studied sample regarding their perception of learning**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)			Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)			Qena nursing students (No.= 44)			P-value
	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
I am encouraged to participate in class	21.9	23.3	54.8	46.2	50.8	3.1	63.6	34.1	2.3	0.001*
The teaching is sufficiently concerned to develop my confidence	27.4	49.3	23.3	44.6	36.9	18.5	45.5	45.5	9.1	0.016*
The teaching encourages me to be an active learner	28.8	52.1	19.2	35.4	46.2	18.5	29.5	50.0	20.5	0.888
The teaching is well focused	27.4	57.5	15.1	27.7	56.9	15.4	45.5	34.1	20.5	0.071
The teaching is sufficiently concerned to develop my competence	33.3	47.5	19.2	32.3	55.4	12.3	52.3	45.5	2.3	0.018*
I am clear about the learning objectives of the course	24.7	21.9	53.4	21.5	66.2	12.3	40.9	47.7	11.4	0.036*
The teaching is often stimulating	26.5	42.9	30.6	41.5	46.2	12.3	79.5	18.2	2.3	0.001*
The teaching time is put to good use	27.4	50.2	22.4	35.4	53.8	10.8	34.1	54.5	11.4	0.156
The teaching is student-centered	29.2	56.2	14.6	15.4	49.2	35.4	13.6	56.8	29.5	0.001*
Long term learning is emphasized over the short term	27.4	46.6	26.0	9.2	50.8	40.0	27.3	34.1	38.6	0.010*
The teaching is too teacher-centered	29.7	42.5	27.9	32.3	55.4	12.3	86.4	13.6	0.0	0.001*
The teaching over-emphasized factual learning	21.5	52.5	26.0	9.2	43.1	47.7	4.5	59.1	36.4	0.001*
<b>Subtotal</b>	11.5 ± 4.3			12 ± 3.7			9.8 ± 4.7			0.025*

- (\*) Significant at P < 0.05

**Table (5): Distribution of the studied sample regarding their academic perception**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)			Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)			Qena nursing students (No.= 44)			P-value
	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
I am able to memorize all I need	23.7	53.0	23.3	46.2	41.5	12.3	68.2	25.0	6.8	0.001*
Much of what I have to learn seems relevant to a career in nursing	23.3	20.5	56.2	32.3	53.8	13.8	36.4	50.0	13.6	0.251
I feel I am being well prepared for my profession	23.7	21.0	55.3	29.2	53.8	16.9	27.3	50.0	22.7	0.884
Last year's work has been a good preparation for this year's work	39.7	35.6	24.7	9.2	49.2	41.5	13.6	52.3	34.1	0.001*
My problem-solving skills are being well developed here	47.0	37.4	15.5	9.2	46.2	44.6	2.3	45.5	52.3	0.001*
I am confident about passing this year	28.3	53.0	18.7	27.7	55.4	16.9	38.6	52.3	9.1	0.482
I have learned a lot about empathy in my profession	32.9	49.3	17.8	20.0	70.8	9.2	52.3	38.6	9.1	0.001*
Learning strategies which worked for me before continue to work for me now	31.5	51.1	17.4	20.0	61.5	18.5	54.5	36.4	9.1	0.005*
<b>Subtotal</b>	7.5 ± 4.2			7.9 ± 3.6			7.1 ± 3.9			0.610

- (\*) Significant at P < 0.05

**Table (6): Distribution of the studied sample regarding their perception of atmosphere**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)			Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)			Qena nursing students (No.= 44)			P-value
	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
The atmosphere is relaxed during lectures	19.2	38.4	42.5	9.2	41.5	49.2	6.8	36.4	56.8	0.001*
I feel able to ask the questions I want	35.6	50.2	14.2	24.6	49.2	26.2	11.4	54.5	34.1	0.001*
I feel comfortable in the class socially	29.2	42.0	28.8	60.0	24.6	15.4	40.9	40.9	18.2	0.001*
There are opportunities for me to develop interpersonal skills	25.6	50.7	23.7	55.4	41.5	3.1	59.1	36.4	4.5	0.001*
The atmosphere is relaxed during seminars / tutorials	22.4	59.8	17.8	24.6	69.2	6.2	27.3	61.4	11.4	0.187
The enjoyment outweighs the stress of studying medicine	27.4	42.5	30.1	53.8	40.0	6.2	61.4	34.1	4.5	0.001*
The atmosphere motivates me as a learner	30.6	45.2	24.2	20.0	44.6	35.4	56.8	36.4	6.8	0.001*
I am able to concentrate well	28.3	50.2	21.5	27.7	52.3	20.0	9.1	52.3	38.6	0.001*
The atmosphere is relaxed during the ward teaching	27.9	32.9	39.3	47.7	32.3	20.0	34.1	34.1	31.8	0.033*
This school is well timetabled	23.7	27.9	48.4	6.2	23.1	70.8	0.0	25.0	75.0	0.020*
I find the experience disappointing	21.9	42.0	36.1	7.7	47.7	44.6	31.8	50.0	18.2	0.001*
Cheating is a problem in this school	21.9	49.3	28.8	41.5	41.5	16.9	36.4	47.7	15.9	0.007
<b>Subtotal</b>	11.8 ± 3			11.8 ± 2.6			12 ± 0			0.889

- (\*) Significant at P &lt; 0.05

**Table (7): Distribution of the studied sample regarding their social self perceptions**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)			Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)			Qena nursing students (No.= 44)			P-value
	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	Never	Sometime	Always	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
I have good friends in the school	26.0	45.7	28.3	35.4	50.8	13.8	52.3	38.6	9.1	0.010*
There is a good support system for students who get stressed	41.1	44.7	14.2	16.9	41.5	41.5	6.8	45.5	47.7	0.001*
I am too tired to enjoy this course	25.1	41.6	33.3	29.2	49.2	21.5	25.0	54.5	20.5	0.001*
I am rarely bored on this course	74.0	26.0	0.0	72.3	27.7	0.0	79.5	20.5	0.0	0.214
My accommodation is pleasant	71.7	28.3	0.0	86.2	13.8	0.0	90.9	9.1	0.0	0.676
My social life is good	85.8	14.2	0.0	58.5	41.5	0.0	52.3	47.7	0.0	0.003*
I seldom feel lonely	74.9	25.1	0.0	70.8	29.2	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.793
<b>Subtotal</b>	3.3 ± 3.5			4.2 ± 3.5			4.1 ± 3.5			0.083
<b>Total</b>	47.9 ± 10.1			45.1 ± 12.7			43.5 ± 9.2			0.126

- (\*) Significant at P < 0.05

**Table (8): Relationship between sex and nursing students' perceptions of their educational environment**

Variables	Sex				P. value
	Male		Female		
<b>Good</b>	3	10.0	2	0.7	0.001*
<b>Satisfactory</b>	11	36.7	96	32.2	
<b>Poor</b>	16	53.3	200	67.1	
<b>Total</b>	30	100.0	298	100.0	

(\*) Significant at  $P < 0.05$

**Table (9): Total score for nursing students' perceptions of educational environment**

Variables	Assiut nursing students (No.= 219)		Sohag nursing students (No.= 65)		Qena nursing students (No.= 44)		Total		P. value
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
<b>Good</b>	4	1.8	1	1.5	0	0.0	5	1.5	0.503
<b>Satisfactory</b>	75	34.2	22	33.8	10	22.7	107	32.6	
<b>Poor</b>	140	63.9	42	64.6	34	77.3	216	65.9	
<b>Total</b>	219	100.0	65	100.0	44	100.0	328	100.0	

(\*) Significant at  $P < 0.05$

## **DISCUSSION:**

Educational environment is one of the most important factors in determining the success of an effective curriculum (Abraham et al., 2008). The learning environment is not limited to student-teacher interaction, teaching and learning activities, but also includes having good physical structures and facilities provided by the university (Harden, 2001). The university has to be concerned about students' psychosocial and emotional needs. By providing all these features, the university has the potential to offer a productive learning environment. Studying the learning environment is important in improving the quality of an educational program (Said et al., 2009).

In a nursing program, the main objective is to produce nursing graduates who can provide comprehensive care and treatment to the community. A good approach to the systematic design of a learning environment can lead to positive outcomes for graduates (Demirören et al., 2008 and Said et al., 2009).

Students' perceptions of the educational milieu can be a basis for implementing modifications and thus optimize the educational environment. It influences how, why and what students learn. It also makes possible to assess and modify the educational environment. Accordingly, it is essential to utilize appropriate methods and instruments to assess it (Mayya and Roff, 2004).

The present study aimed to identify and compare students' perception of the educational environment at the three faculties in Assiut, Sohag, and Qena University students so that remedial measures could be taken to enhance students' learning experiences in order to suggest feasible and appropriate remedies.

Regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of studied sample in the present; it was found that more than three quarters of nursing students aged from 20 less than 22 year with the mean age 21.1 year and the vast majority of students were females. These findings

agree with *Amr et al., (2012)* who found that the mean age of the subjects was 21.3 years; (48.5%) were males and (51.5%) were females. It's congruent with *Hammond et al., (2012)* who found that (70.2%) were female and (36.5%) were male and the ages ranged from 19 to 39 years. *Bahri (2012)* reported that more than three fifths of students were female. Also it is agree with *Said et al., (2009)* who found that only (17.10%) were males and (82.9%) were females and the ages ranged from 19 to 23 years, with a mean age of 21.1 years.

In the present study, Assiut students represented the largest cohort, making up (66.8%) of the respondents. This was followed by Sohag (19.8%) and the lowest number of respondents was from the Qena (13.4%), from the fourth years, while Sayed and El Sayed, (2012) who illustrated that the majority (80%) of students were second year and the rest (20 %) of them were fourth year.

Regarding the classroom physical attributes, it was represented that large number of student from the three faculties mentioned the size of

the classroom was medium and hadn't suitable to their numbers. Also the availability of modern technology in teaching is high available percentage in Assiut, and Qena than Sohag, and their is a statistically significant relation between the three faculties about classroom size, shape, seating arrangement, suitability between number of students and the size of classroom, types of furniture, the availability of modern technology in teaching and noise level.

Students perception of classroom physical attributes as a bad criteria, subsequently leads to exclude large groups of students; who may have a particularly negative reaction to teaching staff and all learning process as a whole. These implicitly have a negative effect on students' motivation to learn and cognitive development (*Ambrose et al., 2010*).

The present study reported that about two thirds of Assiut nursing students, but only more than one third of Sohag and (6.8%) among Qena nursing students mentioned that their

teachers were always knowledgeable. (61.6%, 20.0% and 25.0%) respectively of Assiut, Sohag and Qena nursing students stated that their teachers were patient with patients, and (21.5%) of Assiut students and only 9.2% of Sohag nursing students reported that their teachers were provide feedback to them. On the contrary *Al-Ayed and Sheik (2008)* reported that a majority of their students pointed out that the teachers are knowledgeable.

Also our findings disagree with *Amr et al., (2012)* who stated that an interesting observation was the perception by a majority of the students about the teacher quality is good, which include being able to hold student attention, well-organized, clear and content expert and provide encouragement and motivation.

A growing body of research shows that student achievement is more heavily influenced by teacher quality, and one of the great criteria of teachers is the degree of his knowledge, lack of these qualities more likely to produce ineffective teaching. We propose that it

may be attributed to, there is no time for teaching staff to update their knowledge or may had a good knowledge and had poor techniques for presenting or conduct that knowledge, in additions, a poor preconception of students to all physical criteria of the classroom from size, shape, seating arrangement, suitability between number of students and the size of classroom, types of furniture, the availability of modern technology in teaching and noise level, all of these affect negatively on the perception even the real environment is good.

In present study (41.1%, 16.9% and 6.8%) of Assiut, Sohag and Qena respectively) reported that they never get a good support system for stressed students. The majority (85.8 %) of Assiut and more than half of Sohag and Qena students' stated that their social life is not good. The present study is greatly consistent with *Al-Ayed and Sheik (2008)* who found that only (3.6%) of students agreed that there was a good support system for stressed students'. On the other hand this study not in line with *Al-Ayed and Sheik*

(2008) who found that (91.5%) had good friends in the school.

This may be attributed to the academic environment may be particularly stressful according to different studies *Neville et al., (2004) and Smith et al.,(2007)* or may be related to other characteristics of the academic setting, such as enrollment size, selectivity, competitiveness, supportiveness of academic personnel, and field of study (*Hunt and Eisenberg, 2010*).

These findings may be attributed to stress from college matriculation, specifically in regards to gaining independence, caring for oneself, and collegiate academic pressure has been cited in the literature (*Grace, 2007*).

The top items of stressors among university students in Mansoura, Egypt, were troubles with the instructors, excessive workload, financial problems, problems with course mates, accommodation problems, close contact with serious illness and personal injury or illness. Egyptian university students try to begin more intimate relationships and seek acceptance from their peers. Also they have

difficulty in maintaining relationships with the opposite sex, especially students from rural communities and facing a world of mixed values. They have to cope in cramped campuses and congested classrooms, the heavy demands of the university, and inadequate recreational facilities. In college students, some stress is motivating; whereas too high a level interferes with teach (*El-Gilany et al., 2008*).

Concerning the total score perceptions' of student about educational environment in this study it was represented that large number of nursing students at Assiut, Sohag, and Qena had poor level of perception. In addition to, there is no statistically significant relation between Assiut, Sohag and Qena students' perceptions of their educational environment.

This study indicated a statistically significant relation between gender and students' perceptions regarding their educational environment, it is in the same line with (*Roff et al 2001 and Bassaw et al., 2003* ). This could be rationalized by females stress is two times more than

males stress indicating they felt overwhelmed than men (*Dusselier et al., 2005*), and the majority of the sample in the present study were females.

We suggested that this poor perception could be due to the fact that students genuinely believed that the learning environment was deteriorating, and thus were psychologically tired of being a student and looking forward to leaving student life. This report may act as a baseline for future studies.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

This study indicated widespread and large defects in the educational environment in these faculties as perceived by students. A larger study may need to be undertaken to verify the above results.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based on the study findings, we suggest that:

1. Encourage administrative staff of the studied faculties to analyze the source of poor perception then develop; implement and evaluate a suitable plane for improve and corrects weak areas.
2. Further studies are needed to analyze educational environment for all year levels objectively by the researchers.
3. The researchers would like to investigate students' insights relating to the items that were scored as unsatisfactory by conducting focus groups in the near future.

#### **Acknowledgement:**

The authors acknowledge all students and teaching staff members who involved in this study.

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## إدراك طلاب كليات التمريض للبيئة التعليمية بجامعات أسيوط وسوهاج وجنوب الوادي

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تعتبر البيئة التعليمية حجر الأساس لنجاح العملية التعليمية. ومن ثم فقد استهدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم مدى إدراك طلاب كليات التمريض للبيئة التعليمية بجامعات أسيوط وسوهاج وجنوب الوادي. وتم استخدام النمط الوصفي للبحث، والعينة المتاحة أثناء تجميع البيانات، وكان العدد الإجمالي للعينة ٣٢٨ طالب، وقد تم جمع البيانات عن طريق استخدام استبيان تم ملئه بواسطة الطلاب أنفسهم، ولقد احتوى الاستبيان على النقاط التالية: بيانات شخصية وبيانات حول البيئة المادية والغير مادية. حيث وجد أن متوسط أعمار الطلاب ٢١,١ سنة و كان الغالبية العظمى إناث و ٦٦,٨% كانوا من أسيوط و ١٩,٨% من سوهاج و ١٣,٤% من قنا. ووجدت علاقة قوية الارتباط بين الثلاث كليات و حجم المدرج، ومدى تناسب عدد الطلاب مع حجم المدرج، وكذلك مدى توافر الداتاشو، ومستوى الضوضاء. حيث وجد أكثر من ثلثي طلاب التمريض في أسيوط و سوهاج وقنا لديهم إدراك ضعيف عن البيئة التعليمية وتقريباً كان ثلث الطلاب مستوى الإدراك مرضى، و فقط ١,٥% كان مستوى الإدراك لديهم جيد. واستخلصنا من هذه الدراسة أن هناك عيوب كبيرة في البيئة التعليمية في هذه الكليات من وجهة نظر الطلاب. من ثم أوصت هذه الدراسة على تشجيع المسؤولين الإداريين للكليات لدراسة وتحليل مصادر الضعف في إدراك الطلاب، ثم تطوير وتنفيذ وتقييم خطط مناسبة لتحسين وتصحيح مواطن الضعف.