# Factors Influencing Undergraduate Nursing Students' Perception of Educational Quality

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**ABSTRACT**

***Context:*** Quality education is a contemporary concern. Students' evaluations of teaching (SET) are universal measures applied in almost every higher educational system in the world.
***Aim:*** The present study aims to explore student perception of factors that influence educational quality among undergraduate nursing students.
***Methods:*** A survey research design was utilized to achieve the aim of this study. The study was conducted in the obstetrics and gynecology classroom. Faculty of Nursing, El-Minia University. The study subjects consisted of all 3rd year nursing students (male & female) who registered in Obstetrics & Gynecological course (the total number was 125 students) during the academic year 2017- 2018. Three tools were used to achieve the aim of this study; they are student achievement record, student's evaluation of educational quality scale, and factor affecting educational quality scale (FAEQS).
***Results:*** This study revealed that students' perception of the components of educational quality named learning experience, instructor rapport, enthusiasm, and tests grading, organization and clarity, theoretical breadth coverage, group interaction, and course texts and reading materials. The students also ranked course organization, examination system, student communication and group dynamics, availability of course materials, instructor performance, and academic values as top factors that could affect their educational quality.
***Conclusion:*** Obstetrics and gynecology students' perceive factors that affected the provision of quality education were explored, incorporating four categories named the organization, student, instructor, and course-related factors. The study recommended that all institutions and departments use self-evaluation as an essential tool in striving to educational quality and consider the students' perception of factors that might affect their educational quality. Further research is expected to shed light on the number of higher-order factors that could affect educational quality.

***Keywords:*** student perception, factors, educational quality

## 1. Introduction

Quality education is a contemporary concern. In a competitive world, the provision of quality of service is a strategic approach for organizational effectiveness. The American Society of Quality (ASQ) denotes quality service as the entire organization's capability to satisfy specific needs for the served population *(Briggs & Wilson, 2014)*. Also, *Coles (2012)* hypothesized that the quality of service is the ability to fulfill the consumer's expectations. It is sometimes looked at as the excellence and superiority in service delivery compared to other service providers. *Galloway (2015)* contended that the quality of service incorporates the commitment to the needs and requirements of the customer. Built on the previous delineations, customer satisfaction is a significant indicator of service quality *(Ivy, 2017)*.

Moving ahead, the provision of quality service by higher education organizations has become a central topic in today world for its profound impact on these institutions as it also influences their customers, who mainly are the students *(Buela-Casal, Gutiérrez-Martínez, Bermúdez-Sánchez, &Vadillo-Muñoz, 2013)*. Works of literature explored the concept of academic quality as perceived by students. The results designate the influence of quality service on student satisfaction and how it could reflect the institutional reputation. Consideration of student perception of quality service can help higher education institutions enhance their service quality by improving student satisfaction levels that will further reflect on improving institutional reputation *(Sokoli, Koren, & Gutierrez, 2018)*.

In higher academic institutions, it is not uncommon to consider undergraduate's perception of quality education as they are the primary customers of these services. Besides, they deliberately select and pay for what is supposed to be the best service *(Oosterbeek, Groot, & Hartog, 2012)*. *Parameswaran and Glowacka (2015)* emphasized that student consummation of service is the single sign of the quality of that service provided by universities. The appraisal of student's perception of the quality of service provided by the academic institution from a business view may help in the detection of the pitfalls and drawbacks in

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the educational system, besides fulfilling the fundamental requirements the student consider during the selection process of their future career *(McMahon, 2012).* The student always searches for evidence of premium service quality of their education *(Oldfield & Baron, 2012)*.

*Krampf and Heinlein (2007)* relate student satisfaction to the positive perception of quality education and consider student satisfaction as a primary indicator of quality education. *Krampf and Heinlein (2007)* also recommend considering student opinion regarding their needs and preferences when planning for quality education services.

Concerning the factors affecting students' satisfaction, *Price, Matzdorf, Smith, and Agahi (2013)* classified them into institutional and personal factors. Institutional factors included; promptness, clarity, and quality of instruction, instructors' teaching style, the constructiveness of instructor feedback, class size, and organizational interest in research *(Sadiq Sohail & Shaikh, 2014)*. Personal factors were age, gender, temper, preferred style of learning, grade point average (GPA), and employment status *(Srikatanyoo, & Gnoth, 2002)*. Every higher education institution should consider both institutional and personal factors during the planning and managing their services *(Soutar & Turner, 2012).*

The nursing education must ensure the preparation of competent, creative professionals who can respond to current and future demands of health care and adapt to the continually evolving knowledge and technology, besides providing safe and quality care (*Brackenreg, 2004).* It is crucial to think that the quality of nursing education can significantly impact the quality of medical care and professional enhancement *(Maciá, Orts, Galiana, & Ors, 2013)*. Undergraduate nursing students are going through a phase of life that offers changes and new prospects. These changes can generate a profound impact on their current and future quality of practice. Therefore, the discussion about the education of future professional caregivers in the universities is highly significant *(Beuter, Alvim, & Mostardeiro, 2005).*

Universal measures applied in the most higher education system are to use the student evaluation for teaching (SET) *(Zabaleta, 2007).* Universities have been developing and implementing instruments based on student perception for their academic quality, analyzing the results and using them to evaluate the provided instructional quality *(Spooren, Brockx, & Mortelmans, 2013; Grammatikopoulos, Linardakis, Gregoriadis, & Oikonomidid, 2014).* Many studies used questionnaires to collect quantitative data on students' perceptions of educational quality *(Qureshi & Raza Ullah, 2014)*. Among many instruments that have been developed to measure education quality in the classroom. One of the best of them was the Student's Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) developed by *Marsh (1987).* The SEEQ was developed using a construct validity approach and not based on learning theory. A review of existing evaluation forms, faculty, and student interviews supported student perception in testing educational quality *(Marsh, 1987).*

## 2. Significance of the study

Higher education systems worldwide have undertaken extensive reform and change over the past years with the plan of improving quality. Higher education organizations have progressively employed more systematic, validated quality assurance processes, considering this to achieve greater efficiency and accountability within their institution. The development of quality assurance processes within the universities has occurred in concert with establishing governmental quality models designed to audit and review university performance across the nation.

A research gap exists regarding the study of student perception of their academic quality and less research that determines what the precise components of perceived educational quality are. Research still needed to satisfy the scarcities discovered in preceding researches. The present study was designed to fill a knowledge gap in terms of student perception of educational quality.

## 3. Aim of the study

To explore factors influencing undergraduate nursing students' perception of educational quality.

### 3.1. Research questions

- What are the multi-faceted components of educational quality in nursing education from the student perspective?
- How important do nursing students perceive these factors?
- Are there relations between educational quality and different demographic characteristics of nursing students?

### 3.2. Operational definition

In this study, academic quality is defined in terms of the eminence of the learning experience, instructor' rapport with students, instructor enthusiasm, test grading, organization and clarity, theoretical breadth coverage, group interaction, and texts and reading materials.

## 4. Subjects & Methods

### *4.1. Research design*

A descriptive exploratory cross-sectional survey research design was utilized to achieve the aim of this study.

### *4.2. Research setting*

The study was conducted at Obstetrics and gynecology classroom, Faculty of Nursing, El-Minia University.

### *4.3. Subjects*

The study subjects consisted of all 3rd year nursing students (male & female) who registered in Obstetrics & Gynecological Nursing course in the second term during the academic year 2017-2018 and agreed to participate in this study (the total number was 125 students).

### 4.4. Tools of the study

Three tools used in this study for data collection as follows:

#### 4.4.1. Student Achievement Record

It encompassed two parts; the first part includes the students' demographics in terms of gender, qualifications, and hometowns. The second part includes a record for student achievement in the previous year. The academic achievement was considered fair ≥50% to 65%, good ≥65% to 75%, very good when a student gain ≥75% to 85%, and excellent when a student gain ≥85% to 100%.

#### 4.4.2. Factor Affecting Educational Quality Scale (FAEQS)

It is a Likert-type scale. It is revised and modified by the researchers after a thorough review of related literature; then, it is submitted to a jury of five experts in the nursing field to determine its applicability and content validity. The tool aimed to explore factors affecting educational quality during classroom teaching. The factors are classified under four main headings.

It covered the *organization*-related factors that involved academic values, course organization, examination system, and workload and logistic difficulties. Secondly, it covered the *student*-related factors, which encompassed student communication and group dynamics. The third factor was related to the *instructor*. It comprised instructor communication and performance in the classroom. The fourth factor included evaluating the *course*-related factors, which comprised the availability and effectiveness of course materials in helping students achieve learning goals.

*Scoring system*

The students were asked to rate each factor against 5 points Likert scale ranged from not important (1), somewhat important (2), moderately important (3), very important (4), and extremely important (5).

#### 4.4.3 Student's Evaluation of Educational Quality Scale (SEEQS)

It is a Liker-type scale designed by *March (1987); March and Hocevar (1991)* and modified by the researcher to measure the student perception of the component of educational quality during classroom teaching. It consists of eight domains of classroom teaching which are, learning experience (4 statements), instructors' rapport with students (4 statements), instructors' enthusiasm (4 statements), tests grading (3 statements), organizational clarity (4 statements), breadth of theoretical coverage (4statements), group interaction (4 statements), texts, and reading materials (2 statements).

*Scoring system*

Students' responses scored under a five-point Likert scale ranging from one to five in which strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), to some extent (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The scale is then modified into 3 points Likert scale in the interpretation of the study results as disagree/strongly disagree =1, to some extent =2, agree/strongly agree =3. The overall scores of each factor are calculated by taking the average (total scores divided by the number of items) of the student's score for each factor.

### 4.5. Procedures

The operational design included a preparatory phase, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, pilot study, and fieldwork. The preparatory phase included reviewing relevant literature to develop data collection tools. Testing the validity of the study instruments used to face and content validity. It was done by a jury of 5 experts in nursing education and Obstetrics & Gynecological Nursing at El-Minia Faculty of Nursing. The experts reviewed the tools for clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, simplicity, and applicability. No modifications were done. The internal consistency measured using Cronbach's alpha test to identify the extent to which the items of the tool measure the same concept and correlate with each other (0.87).

Ethical research considerations were assured as the researcher clarified the aim of the study before the process of data collection. Written approval was obtained from the ethical research committee of the Faculty of Nursing, El-Minia University. Anonymity and confidentiality of the students' data were maintained. The students informed that the collected personal data is only for research purposes and will not affect their academic grades. All students were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without rationalization and penalties.

A pilot study was conducted to test the study tools' applicability and the feasibility of the study process. It was carried out on 10% of the total studied students. They were selected randomly apart from the study sample, which further added to the studied subjects as there was no modification done on the study tools.

Necessary approvals for study conduction issued from the head of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecological Nursing. Faculty of Nursing, El-Minia University. Data were collected at the beginning of the 2nd term during the academic year 2017- 2018 at the Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing Department classroom. Questionnaire copies were distributed among the study subjects at approximately the same time. Upon agreement, the students were given the questionnaire to fill it and return it during a class period. Anonymity was assured by telling the students to avoid putting their names on the questionnaire.

### 4.6. Data analysis

A Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 20.0) was used to analyze data for this study. The data coded, labeled, recorded, and revised on SPSS datasheets. Data displayed using descriptive statistics for the qualitative variables in frequencies and percentages and mean & standard deviation (SD) for quantitative variables. The correlation coefficient test was also used to explore the correlation between academic achievement and student perception of academic quality. Student-t-test was used to

test the gender difference in perceiving academic quality. Statistical significance was considered at P<0.05.

## 5. Results

Table 1 displays the personal characteristics of the study subjects. Regarding gender, the results reveal that 68% of them were females, 77.5% enrolled in nursing faculty from secondary school, 50.4 had lived in rural areas, and 64% of them got an excellent grade in the last academic year.

Table 2 shows the student perception of four components of educational quality: learning experience, instructor rapport, enthusiasm, and test grading. Regarding student learning experience, 87.2% of students have perceived the course as increasing their interest in the subject, and 84% of them perceived what they learned as valuable with a mean score of 11.1±1.1 SD. Concerning instructor rapport with the student, 70.4% of students viewed their instructor as having a genuine interest in the individual student. They are adequately accessible to the student during and after office hours.

The table also displays the student perception of instructor enthusiasm, 83.2% of students perceived their instructor as enthusiastic about course teaching with a mean score of 11.0±1.3 SD, as regards to tests grading the students perceived feedback on examination and graded material as valuable as well as methods of evaluation as fair and appropriate 72%.

Table 3 displays the students' perception of organization and clarity, theoretical breadth coverage, group interaction, course texts, and reading materials. 80.8% of students perceived that the proposed course objectives had matched with those taught, 76% of them perceived their instructor's presentation as facilitating note-taking, and 75.2% of them perceived the instructor's explanation as clear with a mean score of 11.1 ± 1.4 SD. Regarding theoretical breadth coverage, 76% of the students perceive their instructor as contrasting the implications of various theories.

Group interaction that displays in this table reveals that 83.2% of students had encouraged to participate in class discussion, where 85.6%, 89.6%, 84% of student were neutral about their invitation to share their idea and knowledge, their encouragement to ask questions and given meaningful answer, and expression of their ideas respectively with a mean score of 11.4±0.97 SD. Regarding text and reading materials, 77.6% of students stated that the required course materials were valuable, and 74.4% of them perceived readings, assignments, and laboratories contribute to appreciation and understanding of the subject with a mean score of 5.5±0.8 SD.

Table 4 reveals the students' perception of the factor affecting their educational quality. The table presented four groups of factors related to the organization: student, instructor, and course. Regarding organization-related factors, 52% and 37.6% of students estimated the course organization as very and extremely important. They also rated the examination system as very and extremely important 48.8%, 35.2% successively, and set the academic values as very and extremely important 54.4%, 24% consequently.

The table also points out student-related factors that are student communication and group dynamic as very and extremely important (52%, 32%), respectively, in addition to instructor-related factors that showed student perception to instructor performance. They rated them as very and extremely important (53.6%, 27.2%) consequently. Finally, the student perception of the importance of course-related factors, 48.8%, and 33.6% of students valued the availability of course material as very and extremely important. One of the surprising findings: that no one of the students perceived course organization, workload, and logistic difficulties, instructor-related factors, and course-related factors as not important.

Table 5 reveals the student rank of the importance of each factor. They were ranked the course organization as the most important (89.6%), next it was the examination system and student communication and group dynamic (84%). They also ranked the availability of course material at the third rank (82.4%). The students ranked performance (80.8%) and academic values (78.4%) at the fourth and fifth levels.

Table 6 reveals no statistically significant correlation between student perception of the components of education quality and students' academic achievement.

Table 7 shows a higher mean score observed among male student, but it did not reach the level of significance; except for tests grading and texts and reading materials, there was a statistically significant difference at p-0.002 and 0.005 respectively.

**Table (1): Frequency and percentage distribution of students' personal characteristics (n= 125).**

| Personal data | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 40 | 32.0 |
| Female | 85 | 68.0 |
| **Qualification** | | |
| Secondary school | 96 | 77.5 |
| Technical Institute of Nursing | 29 | 22.5 |
| **Student home town** | | |
| Rural | 63 | 50.4 |
| Urban | 62 | 49.6 |
| **Student's academic achievement** | | |
| Fair | 1 | 0.8 |
| Good | 4 | 3.2 |
| Very good | 40 | 32.0 |
| Excellent | 80 | 64.0 |

**Table (2): Frequency distribution of the student's perception of their learning experience, instructor rapport, enthusiasm, and tests grading (n=125).**

| SEEQ | Strongly Disagree/ Disagree | | Neutral | | Strongly Agree/Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| **Learning experience** | | | | | | |
| The course was intellectually challenging and stimulating. | 4 | 3.2 | 31 | 24.8 | 90 | 72.0 |
| What is learned is considered valuable. | 1 | 0.8 | 19 | 15.2 | 105 | 84.0 |
| The course increased interest in the subjects | 0 | 0.0 | 16 | 12.8 | 109 | 87.2 |
| The student understood the subject materials of the course | 4 | 3.2 | 25 | 20.0 | 96 | 76.8 |
| Mean±SD | | | 11.1±1.1 | | | |
| **Instructor rapport with students** | | | | | | |
| The instructor was friendly towards individual students. | 12 | 9.6 | 48 | 38.4 | 65 | 52.0 |
| The instructor makes students feel welcome in seeking help/advice in or outside of class | 6 | 4.8 | 41 | 32.8 | 78 | 62.4 |
| The instructor has a genuine interest in individual students. | 4 | 3.2 | 33 | 26.4 | 88 | 70.4 |
| The instructor is adequately accessible to students during office hours or after class | 2 | 1.6 | 35 | 28.0 | 88 | 70.4 |
| Mean±SD | | | 10.4±1.5 | | | |
| **Instructor enthusiasm** | | | | | | |
| The instructor is enthusiastic about teaching this course | 0.0 | 0.0 | 21 | 16.8 | 104 | 83.2 |
| The instructor is dynamic and energetic in conducting the course | 22 | 17.6 | 103 | 82.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| The instructor enhances presentations with the use of humor | 1 | 0.8 | 37 | 29.6 | 87 | 69.6 |
| The instructor's style of the presentation held students' interest during class | 39 | 31.2 | 86 | 68.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Mean±SD | | | 11.0±1.3 | | | |
| **Tests grading** | | | | | | |
| Feedback on examinations/graded materials is valuable | 4 | 3.2 | 28 | 22.4 | 93 | 74.4 |
| Methods of evaluating student work are fair and appropriate | 9 | 7.2 | 26 | 20.8 | 90 | 72.0 |
| Examinations/graded materials tested course content as emphasized by the instructor | 7 | 5.6 | 31 | 24.8 | 87 | 69.6 |
| Mean±SD | | | 8.0±1.4 | | | |

**Table (3): Frequency distribution of the student perception to their organization& clarity, theoretical breadth coverage, group interaction, and texts & reading materials (n=125).**

| SEEQ | Strongly Disagree / Disagree | | Neutral | | Strongly agree/ Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| **Organization and Clarity** | | | | | | |
| The instructor's explanations are clear | 4 | 3.2 | 27 | 21.6 | 94 | 75.2 |
| Course materials are well prepared and carefully explained | 4 | 3.2 | 29 | 23.2 | 92 | 73.6 |
| Proposed objectives agree with those taught, so the student is aware of where the course is going | 2 | 1.6 | 22 | 17.6 | 101 | 80.8 |
| The instructor gives presentations that facilitate taking notes | 3 | 2.4 | 27 | 21.6 | 95 | 76.0 |
| Mean±SD | | | 11.1±1.4 | | | |
| **Theoretical breadth coverage** | | | | | | |
| The instructor contrasts the implications of various theories. | 3 | 2.4 | 27 | 21.6 | 95 | 76.0 |
| The instructor presents the background or origin of ideas/concepts developed in class | 27 | 21.6 | 98 | 78.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| The instructor presents points of view other than his / her own when appropriate | 39 | 31.2 | 86 | 68.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| The instructor adequately discusses current developments in the field | 1 | 0.8 | 41 | 32.8 | 83 | 66.4 |
| Mean±SD | | | 10.9±1.2 | | | |
| **Group interaction** | | | | | | |
| Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 21 | 16.8 | 104 | 83.2 |
| Students are invited to share their ideas and knowledge. | 18 | 14.4 | 107 | 85.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Students are encouraged to ask questions and give meaningful answers. | 13 | 10.4 | 112 | 89.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Students are encouraged to express their ideas and question with the instructor | 20 | 16.0 | 105 | 84.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Mean±SD | | | 11.4±0.97 | | | |
| **Texts and reading materials** | | | | | | |
| Required readings and texts are valuable. | 3 | 2.4 | 25 | 20.0 | 97 | 77.6 |
| Readings, assignments, laboratories contribute to appreciation and understanding of the subject. | 1 | 0.8 | 31 | 24.8 | 93 | 74.4 |
| Mean±SD | | | 5.5±0.8 | | | |

**Table (4): Frequency distribution of students' perception of factors affecting educational quality (n=125).**

| Factors | Not important | | Somewhat important | | Moderately important | | Very important | | Extremely important | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| **Organization-related factors** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Academic Values | 1 | 0.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 26 | 20.8 | 68 | 54.4 | 30 | 24.0 |
| Course organization | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 13 | 10.4 | 65 | 52.0 | 47 | 37.6 |
| Examination system | 3 | 2.4 | 1 | 0.8 | 16 | 12.8 | 61 | 48.8 | 44 | 35.2 |
| Workload and logistic difficulties | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 3.2 | 36 | 28.8 | 58 | 46.4 | 27 | 21.6 |
| **Student-related factors** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student communication and group dynamic | 1 | 0.8 | 1 | 0.8 | 18 | 14.4 | 65 | 52.0 | 40 | 32.0 |
| **Instructor related factors** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors' communication | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 4.8 | 42 | 33.6 | 48 | 38.4 | 29 | 23.2 |
| Instructor performance | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 24 | 19.2 | 67 | 53.6 | 34 | 27.2 |
| **Course-related factors** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Availability of course material | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 3.2 | 18 | 14.4 | 61 | 48.8 | 42 | 33.6 |
| The effectiveness in achieving learning goals | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 1.6 | 45 | 36.0 | 55 | 44.0 | 23 | 18.4 |

**Table (5): Students' ranking of their perception of the importance of factors affecting educational quality (n=125).**

| Factors | Percentage of important | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Course organization | 89.6 | 1 |
| Examination system | 84 | 2 |
| Student communication and group dynamics | 84 | 2 |
| Availability of course materials | 82.4 | 3 |
| Instructor performance | 80.8 | 4 |
| Academic values | 78.4 | 5 |
| Workload and logistic difficulties | 68 | 6 |
| Instructors communication | 61.6 | 7 |
| Effectiveness of course materials in achieving learning goals | 62.4 | 7 |

**Table (6): Correlation between academic achievements and component of educational quality (n= 125).**

| Components | Academic achievements | |
|---|---|---|
| | r | *P*-value |
| Learning experience | 0.144 | 0.110 |
| Instructor enthusiasm | 0.046 | 0.613 |
| Organization and Clarity | 0.022 | 0.805 |
| Instructor rapport with students | 0.012 | 0.964 |
| Group interaction | 0.175 | 0.151 |
| Theoretical breadth coverage | 0.109 | 0.224 |
| Tests grading | 0.249 | 0.725 |
| Texts and reading materials | 0.152 | 0.091 |

**Table (7): Gender differences regarding the students' perception of components of educational quality (n= 125).**

| Components | Male | Female | t-test | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean ± SD | Mean ± SD | | |
| Learning experience | 11.6±0.7 | 11.4±0.7 | 1.125 | 0.32 |
| Instructor enthusiasm | 11.4±1.1 | 11.1±1.3 | 0.975 | 0.83 |
| Organization and Clarity | 11.4±1.1 | 10.8±1.3 | 1.200 | 0.44 |
| Instructor rapport with students | 10.7±1.3 | 10.1±1.7 | 0.780 | 0.22 |
| Group interaction | 11.7±0.7 | 10.9±1.2 | 0.791 | 0.27 |
| Theoretical breadth coverage | 11.1±1.2 | 10.9±0.9 | 0.542 | 0.14 |
| Tests grading | 6.7±1.4 | 8.2±1.4 | 3.125 | 0.002 |
| Texts and reading materials | 4.1±0.8 | 5.6±0.8 | 4.521 | 0.005 |

## 6. Discussion

Central to nursing education is the concept of quality, and central to quality is the valuation of customers' satisfaction who mainly are students. This paper reports on the findings from a study undertaken to explore students' perception of factors that influence educational quality among undergraduate nursing students. In the present study, more than two-thirds of the study subjects were female students. This result might be attributed to the fact that most student nurses entering secondary diploma schools, technical institutes, or nursing faculty were mostly females. This result is supported by *Yousef, El-Maged, and El-Houfey, (2014),* who mentioned that while the proportion of men entering the nursing profession has been growing, it remains a female-dominated occupation. The current study also revealed that more than three-fourths enrolled in faculty from secondary education, and half were from rural

areas. Similar findings reported by *Safan and Attalla (2014)* in a study done in Menoufia University entitles "Effective clinical instructor teaching behaviors and educational quality by nursing students."

The current study students exhibit their perception of quality education in terms of eight primary components: learning experience, instructor rapport with students, instructor enthusiasm, tests grading, organization and clarity, theoretical breadth of coverage, group interaction, texts, and reading materials. Regarding learning experience, the results showed that most of the studied students were perceived the course as increasing their interest in the subjects, and what is learned is considered valuable. Besides, about three-fourths of them understood the subject material of the course and considered the course intellectually challenging and stimulating. This result may reflect the high awareness of students with the essential elements of quality education, that is, their learning experience with the course.

These findings are supported by the findings of a study done by *Walker (2008)*. The study mentioned that educational materials studied in the university; professional skills that are needed either in or outside the college, and the acquired life skills useful in all aspects of extracurricular life mainly developed during the undergraduate courses.

Another crucial aspect of educational quality is the instructor. The instructor perceived by more than four-fifths of the studied students perceives their instructor as "enthusiastic about teaching the course," and about three-quarters of them perceiving the rapport with the student as a factor that they agreed and strongly agreed with it. The student mentioned the instructor expressing genuine interest in individual students and the adequacy of accessibility to the instructor during office hours and after class as very important. This result could reflect the importance of teacher preparation as a critical measure in improving educational reform to reach a quality education. This perception is supported by a study done by *Schonwetter, Lavige, Mazurat, and Nazarko (2006)*. The study explores seven sets of effective teaching qualities among undergraduate dental students. The students perceived the instructor rapport with students and instructor enthusiasm as the most crucial effective teaching behaviors in the classroom based on the frequency of the themes.

Another study done by *Webb and Barrett (2014)* analyzed the process of rapport building into a total of 514 teacher behaviors described as rapport building that further categorized into five subthemes: information sharing behaviors, connecting behavior, courteous behaviors, common grounding behaviors, and attentive behaviors. The study concluded a positive relationship between classroom rapport building and positive learning outcomes.

Regarding organization and clarity, theoretical breadth coverage, group interaction and texts, and reading materials, the present study's findings display that more than three-quarters of the studied students agreed and strongly agreed upon the component of organization and clarity of instructor explanation, course materials, and instructor facilitation of taking notes. A similar finding was reported by *Schonwetter et al. (2006).* Their study examined the perception of students in dental education. One hundred fifty student comments portrayed the organization as "instructor clear explanations," "well-prepared subjects," "lecturing that facilitated note-taking," an organization of outlines that provides students with a knowledge structure that influences comprehension and facilitates encoding and retrieval of the material. A definite course objective comes next after organization.

The current study also reveals that about three-quarters of the studied students agreed and strongly agreed that their instructor contrasts the implication of various theories. The required learning materials were valuable, and the reading assignments and laboratories contribute to appreciation and understanding of the subject. More than four-fifths of them agreed and strongly agreed upon their encouragement to participate in the class discussion as a component of quality education. In the same study by *Schonwetter, et al. (2006).* Twenty-one student comments describing the breadth of coverage with such statements as "instructor presented theories, contrasted implications of various theories," and "discussed background of those theories and current developments." Each sub-theme denotes the importance of students' exposure to diverse information they seek in learning from the experts.

*Mödi, Momanyi, and Kamau (2013)* reported that the highest mean score was related to group interaction followed by learning and instructor enthusiasm, organization, & breadth of course coverage. These findings were also emphasized by *Santiago and McKenzie (2006),* who emphasized the importance of applying active learning in the classroom as a new paradigm of enhancing the quality of teaching that renovates teaching into active student-centered approaches.

Regarding texts, reading material, and assignments *Schonwetter, et al. (2006)* reported similar findings. A significant percentage of the studied students mentioned that their course provided the right notes, handouts, and online material that are concise; and does not contain unnecessary material. *Taylor, Scotter, and Coulson (2007)* also emphasized the importance of using various teaching materials to enhance the quality of their lessons and quality of their teaching. In contradiction with these results, *Ogata (2012)* pointed out the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials for both students and teachers in developing countries. However, it is a crucial requirement and recommended for quality education.

The current study also examines the students' perception of factors affecting educational quality. The study classifies the factors under four main headings. They were the organization, student, instructor, and course-related factors. Among those factors, most of the students stated course organization as very important and ranked it first among their factors to affect their educational quality. More than four-fifths of them reported examination system and student communication and group dynamic as very and extremely important as they ranked them second in factors affecting their educational quality.

Additionally, more than four-fifths of them signify the availability of course materials and instructor performance in the classroom as a third and fourth factor affecting their quality education. At the fifth level, the students stated academic values as very and extremely important. This finding shed light on the factors that the students had appreciated as critical to educational quality.

While it is difficult to capture the notion of educational quality in absolute terms, *United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2005)* noted that the quality education specifically that occurred in the classrooms is primarily related to the future well-being of the learner as it satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living. It also noted that quality education could influence what students learn and how well they learn, and the learning outcomes they achieve. It also impacts their values and skills and the future decisive role in their societies *(Shadreck & Hebert, 2013).*

In a study by *Talwar and Weilin (2005)*, their findings suggest that, for didactic instruction, the precise organization was most important. This study also shed light on the significant effect of classroom behaviors such as clarity, enthusiasm, empathy, general knowledge, organization, rapport, and availability of teachers *(Buskist, & Saville, 2004).* In a study done by *Schonwetter et al. (2006),* the content analyses of 695 responses yielded seven significant teaching qualities that reflect Marsh's nine effective teaching factors. These included organization (n. 150), learning (n. 66), examinations system and assignments (n. 30), group interaction (n. 25), and breadth of coverage (n. 21). *Mödi et al. (2013)* added that the availability of teaching aids such as visual aids, books, supplies, games, and technology support could improve the learning milieu by facilitating the learning and teaching process.

The current study findings are going with *Sokoli et al.'s (2018)* findings. Their study investigated the importance of measuring student satisfaction with quality service delivered by high education. The study findings recognized that the level of undergraduate student satisfaction is strictly related to the student's ability to access sufficient resources, which helps them to attain their social and academic objectives.

Another published result close to the result of the current study are from the United Kingdom: Students indicated that teaching highly thought of (77%), the students perceived the educational institution as having model teachers (77%), students assured regarding their academic success (79%), and students felt positive atmosphere (79%). Their respectable social self-perceptions (79%) (*Palmgren & Chandrarilake, 2011)*.

In contrast to the current study findings, many studies stated that students' perception of learning and students' perception of teachers scored the lowest in these studies. Interestingly, these items have been rated low in many other studies *(Till, 2001; Al-Hazim et al., 2004; Dunne, McAleer, & Roff, 2006; Al-Ayed, & Sheik, 2008)*. Hence, they can be generically weak areas of the educational environment. A closer look at each of these qualities' psychological dynamics may justify why students appreciated them. In most cases, the research literature supports the positive impact of these teaching qualities on student learning. However, other distinctions identified in our study can be drawn to expand the concept of quality education to clinical teaching and compare between programs.

Unexpectedly the current study reveals no correlation between academic achievement and educational quality. This finding may refer to a local situation for students in Upper Egypt where the student from rural and remote areas used to try hard to continue their education and eager for learning although financial toughness. The present study results evidenced this as more than half of the students were from rural areas.

Regarding gender differences, the students' perception of components of educational quality. It was observed that female students have higher mean scores than male students with a highly statistically significant difference p-value 0.0002 & 0.005 respectively regarding tests grading, and texts, and reading material. *Eswi and El-Sayed (2011)* explained the learning experience of Egyptian male student nurses during attending maternity nursing clinical courses at Cairo University Maternity Hospital. The study mentioned that 50% of male student nurses described their experience in maternity nursing clinical courses as useful. In comparison (39%) described it as very embarrassing formal student nurses, in addition to (18%) described it as exciting.

A study done by *Palmgren and Chandrarilake (2011)* does not support this result on the perception of the educational environment among undergraduate students in chiropractic using a similar study tool, showed a non-significant difference detected between male and female students regarding their perception of components of educational quality.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, the following conclusions were made. The students perceived their quality education in terms of many practices such as course increase their interest in the subject; learning content is valuable. Instructors exhibit genuine interest in the individual student, instructor accessibility during and after class, instructor enthusiasm about the course, valuable feedback, and fair evaluation. In addition to other practices, most of the student either agreed and strongly agreed upon them; such as the proposed course objectives had matched with those taught, the instructor's presentation facilitate their note-taking, instructor contrasting the implications of various theories, students' encouragement to participate in class discussion, valuable course materials, and readings, assignments, and laboratories contribute to appreciation and understanding of the subject.

Factors that affected the provision of quality education as Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing students perceive them explored in four categories: the organization, student,

instructor, and course-related factors. It included course organization, examination system as well as academic values. The student also perceived students' communication and group dynamics as very important, and the student perceived instructor performance as a crucial element in educational quality, and finally, the availability of course materials. Most of the students ranked course organization, examination system, student communication and group dynamics, availability of course material at the top rank for importance. The study also disclosed a non-significant difference between the components of educational quality and student achievement, and female students have higher mean scores than male students regarding tests grading and texts and reading materials.

## 8. Recommendations

- All institutions and departments should use self-evaluation as an essential tool for educational quality and consider the students' perception of educational quality.
- Preparing undergraduate educators for their current and future teaching environment by identifying effective teaching qualities and factors that may enhance and hinder the achievement of quality education.
- This research carries value to education policymakers and university authorities. They can use these findings to formulate policies, regulations and target specific groups of students and teachers to ensure a positive academic environment and increase the brand image of their institutions.
- Further researches are expected to shed light on the number of higher-order factors that could affect educational quality. In nursing education, expansion of the concept to improve clinical education research can enhance teaching in nursing schools.
- Further research on gaining insight into the role and effectiveness of instructors. Moreover, research on whether there is a relationship between student and instructor perception concerns educational quality.

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