Nursing education is strongly integrated with theoretical and clinical teaching. In this regard, Nursing students’ clinical experiences is an important element of the nursing profession as well as clinical teaching which is cornerstone of the nursing education. The clinical learning environment (CLE) provides students a platform to apply nursing knowledge, nursing skills, patient communication and professionalisation and prepare them for practice in future workplaces.

It has long been suggested that student learning outcomes from clinical practice can be improved by calibrating the clinical environment to suit their expressed needs. A positive clinical learning environment, an imperative for the success of education, is largely dependent on good co-operation of staff members in the clinical ward; good atmosphere; and student nurses included in the interactions as younger colleagues (Papp et al, 2003). It is important to understand students’ perceptions of the clinical learning environment in order to maximise their learning.

**Statement of the Problem:** A comparative study to assess the Perceptions and Satisfaction of Nursing Students with their clinical learning environment among selected Government and Corporate Hospital settings at Jammu.

Research Question: Are some clinical experiences better than others?

**Objectives**

1. To explore and describe the perception of nursing students with regards to the CLE.
2. To examine the differences between student nurses perceptions of actual and preferred dimensions of CLE.
3. To compare the actual and preferred student nurses perception with regard to the CLE of government and private hospitals.

**Hypotheses**

H_0: There is a significant difference between the student nurses’ perceptions of actual clinical learning environment and their preferred clinical learning environment.

H_1: There is a significant difference between the student nurses’ perception with regard to the clinical learning environment of government and private hospitals.

**Materials and Methods**

It was a non-experimental cross-sectional study conducted in two selected nursing colleges offering baccalaureate programme in nursing at Jammu. One was a college attached with corporate hospital and another one was attached with government hospital for clinical practice of their nursing students. The population for this study was the entire cohort of second-year undergraduate nursing students enrolled in the 4-year bachelor program at selected colleges (n=99). The sample size was 99 BSc Nursing students studying in 2nd year participated in the study. All students had prior exposure to clinical settings for more than 8 weeks. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to eligible respondents at the two participating colleges, of which 99 were returned. Non-probability purposive sampling was used for sample selection.

**Eligibility and exclusion criteria:** Eligible participants were all second-year nursing students practiced at Government Hospital, Jammu and at corporate hospital (N = 99). All eligible participants were recruited if they volunteered to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria comprised first year nursing students who had not yet been exposed to the clinical environment and the students who were not present at the time of data collection.

**Data collection tool:** The structured tool i.e. Clinical learning environment inventory was developed with reference of Dr Dominic S Chan’s Clinical learning environment inventory. Structured CLEI consisted of two parts: an ‘Actual’ form and a ‘Preferred’ form, each with six domains and 42 items. The ‘Actual’ form asks students to rate their actual clinical learning environment experiences. The ‘Preferred’ form asked them to indicate their preferred CLE for the same domains and items. The six domains in the CLEI contain items associated with the psychosocial aspects of the clinical climate from a student’s
perspective, entitled Personalisation, Student Involvement, Task Orientation, Innovation, Satisfac-
tion, and Individualisation. The students were asked to rate their perceptions on a 4-point Likert scale under six domains. Students’ perceptions were measured using quantitative data.

Data collection: The Inventory was administered in the week after participants had finished a clinical practice rotation. The participants were given 45 minutes to complete the Inventory and then returned the completed Inventory to the researcher.

Review of Literature

Raj Lakshmi Nishant Kurian conducted a study to assess the level of satisfaction of student nurses with their clinical learning environment. Quantitative research approach using descriptive survey design was adopted. The study was carried out during March - April 2017, at College of Nursing, New Delhi, on 90 student nurses selected by convenient sampling. The study revealed that the most satisfactory area for student nurses was the leadership style (1.44) of their mentors in their clinical learning environment and they were least satisfied by the student-nurse relationship (1.41) and content context balance (1.41) in their clinical learning environment. The study concluded that emphasis must be on content context balance, for which the mentors should focus on aligning the content and context.

Farkhondeh Sharif and Sara Masoumi investigated the student nurses’ experience about their clinical practice. Focus groups were used to obtain students’ opinion and experiences about their clinical practice: 90 baccalaureate nursing students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery) were selected randomly from 200 students and were arranged in 9 groups of 10 students each. To analyse the data the method used to code and categories focus group data were adapted from approaches to qualitative data analysis. Four themes emerged from the focus group data. From the students’ point of view, “initial clinical anxiety”, “theory-practice gap”, “clinical supervision”, professional role”, were considered as important factors in clinical experience. The results of this study showed that nursing students were not satisfied with the clinical component of their education. They experienced anxiety as a result of feeling incompetent and lack of professional nursing skills and knowledge to take care of various patients in the clinical setting.

Evridiki Papastavrou, Maria Dimitriadou, Haritini Tsangari et al investigated the nursing students’ satisfaction of the clinical settings as learning environments. The sample had 463 undergraduate nursing students from three universities in Cyprus. Data was collected using the Clinical Learning Environment, Supervision and Nurse Teacher (CLES + T). Nursing students were highly satisfied with the clinical learning environment and their satisfaction was positively related to all clinical learning environment constructs namely the pedagogical atmosphere, the Ward Manager’s leadership style, the premises of Nursing in the ward, the supervisory relationship (mentor) and the role of the Nurse Teacher (p<0.001). Students who had a named mentor reported more satisfaction with the supervisory relationship. The frequency of meetings among the students and the mentors increased the students’ satisfaction with the clinical learning environment. It was also revealed that 1st year students were more satisfied than the students in other years. The supervisory relationship was evaluated by the students as the most influential factor in their satisfaction with the clinical learning environment.

Table 1 compares the mean scores, mean difference and standard deviation of students’ perceptions with respect to the each scale of clinical learning environment inventory in the actual and preferred form in term of Corporate hospital settings. The mean scores for the actual form ranged from 18.2 (individualisation) to 22.05 (satisfaction) with standard deviations of 1.37 and 2.10 respectively. The scale means for each scale reveal that students perceived that Satisfaction is the most important domain in the hospital learning environment, followed closely by Task orientation, and then Personalisation. The least important scale perceived by the cohort lies in individualisation with the mean scores of only 18.2. The overall mean scores for all scales in the preferred form are significantly higher than actual form in regard to corporate settings. The mean scores for the preferred form range from 23.6 and 23.3 (task orientation, satisfaction) to 19.9 (individualisation) with standard deviations of 2.85 and 1.83 respectively.

Interestingly, it was noticed that satisfaction, task orientation scored the highest mean and individualisation scored the lowest mean in both versions of CLEI. It is apparent that students recognised Satisfaction and task orientation as the most important requirement in the hospital learning environment. These data indicate students generally prefer a more positive hospital learning environment to the actual environment.

Table 2 compares the mean scores, mean difference and standard deviation of students’ perceptions with respect to the each scale of clinical learning environment inventory in the actual and preferred form in term of Government hospital setting.

The mean scores for the actual form range from 18.2, 18.4 (individualisation, involvement) to 21.54 (satisfaction) with standard deviations of 2.2, 2.8 and
Table 1: Students’ actual and preferred (Ideal) perceptions of their Corporate Hospital learning environment with each scale of modified CLEI (n=55)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Actual Mean</th>
<th>Preferred Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD Actual</th>
<th>SD Preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalisation</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student involvement</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>21.19</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task orientation</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>23.62</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>18.44</td>
<td>20.89</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualisation</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student satisfaction</td>
<td>22.05</td>
<td>23.35</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Students’ actual and preferred perceptions of their Government hospital learning environment with each scale of modified CLEI (n = 44)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Actual Mean</th>
<th>Preferred Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD Actual</th>
<th>SD Preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalisation</td>
<td>19.38</td>
<td>19.81</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>3.113139</td>
<td>2.846631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student involvement</td>
<td>18.47</td>
<td>19.47</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2.369202</td>
<td>2.856322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task orientation</td>
<td>20.04</td>
<td>21.47</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.779426</td>
<td>2.832351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>19.77</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>2.597679</td>
<td>2.770491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualisation</td>
<td>18.27</td>
<td>18.63</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>2.299838</td>
<td>2.287226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student satisfaction</td>
<td>21.54</td>
<td>23.04</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.528807</td>
<td>3.744417</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 respectively (Table 1). The scale means for each scale reveal that students perceived that Satisfaction is the most important domain in the hospital learning environment, followed closely by task orientation, and then innovation and personalisation. The least important scale perceived by the cohort lies in individualisation with the mean scores of only 18.2. The overall mean scores for all scales in the preferred form are significantly higher than actual form. The mean scores for the preferred form range from 23.04 (satisfaction) to 18.6 (individualisation) with standard deviations of 3.74 and 2.85 respectively. Interestingly, it was noticed that satisfaction scored the highest mean and student individualisation scored the lowest mean in both versions of the CLEI. Thus, students recognised Satisfaction as the most important requirement in the hospital learning environment. These data indicate students generally prefer a more positive hospital learning environment to the actual environment.

In comparison with the actual hospital environment, in respect to both settings, students prefer an environment with higher levels of individualisation, student involvement, innovation, personalisation, task orientation (Tables 1 & 2). This scale emphasises an opportunity for individual students to make decisions which are treated differentially according to the ability and possess to participate actively in class discussions and activities. Satisfaction and task orientation dimension scored the highest mean in both versions of the CLEI regardless of the hospital settings. This scale emphasises the extent for enjoyment of clinical classes and occupied more clear and organised picture of clinical classes.

Table 3 depicts the significance of a difference between the means of two groups i.e. actual and preferred form of CLEI in regard to students’ perception practiced in corporate hospital. The mean, mean difference, standard error of mean difference of CLEI were 117.6 (actual) and 131.6 (preferred) with a significant mean deviation of 14.01. The t-tests for paired samples among the actual and preferred form of CLEI were carried out: the results indicated that the difference between the different forms of CLEI i.e. Actual and Preferred were significantly different with very high t-value of (7.6) (Table 4). Nursing students practicing in corporate hospital prefer a much better clinical learning environment in comparison with their actual Clinical learning environment.

Table 4 depicts the significance of a difference between the means of two groups i.e. Actual and preferred form of CLEI in reference to students perception practiced in government hospital. The mean, mean difference, standard error of mean difference of CLEI were 119.68 (actual) and 126.61 (preferred) with a significant mean deviation of 7.0. The t-tests for paired samples among the actual and preferred form of CLEI were carried out; the results indicated that the difference between the different forms of CLEI i.e. Actual and Preferred were significantly different with very high t-value of (6.0). This statistical analysis also indicates that nursing students practicing in government hospital prefer a much better clinical learning environment in comparison with their actual Clinical learning environment.

Table 5 depicts the significance of a difference between the means of two groups. The mean, mean difference, standard error of mean difference of the actual form in different settings were 119.6 (Govt. Hospital) and 117.6 (Corporate Hospital) with a mean deviation of 2.02. The t-tests for unpaired samples among the different hospital settings in regard to the actual form of CLEI were carried out and the results indicates that the difference between the means of different hospital settings (Govt. hospital and corporate hospital) were not significant. Thus, perceptions of students with regard to actual form of CLEI were not significant with different Hospital settings.

Further, the mean, mean difference, standard error of mean difference of the preferred form in different settings were calculated and the results were 126.61 (Govt. Hospital) and 131.67 (Corporate Hospital) with a mean deviation of 5.05. The t-tests for unpaired samples among the different hospital settings in regard to the preferred form of CLEI indicated that the difference between the means of different hospital settings (Govt.
hospital and corporate hospital) were significant. Hence, perceptions of students in regard to Preferred form of CLEI were trivial significant with different Hospital settings.

**Discussion**

For the corporate and government setting in actual dimension the satisfaction of students domain was highest (mean score 22.05, 21.54 respectively). In preferred dimension, the task orientation domain was highest mean score at 23.62 in govt. setting; student satisfaction was highest (23.04) and they were least satisfied with individualisation domain (mean score 18.2, 18.27 and mean score 20.89, 18.63 respectively) in actual and preferred dimensions of both setting. Raj Lakshmi Nishant Kurian also found that the most satisfactory area for student nurses was the leadership style (1.44) of their mentors in their clinical learning environment and they were least satisfied by the student-nurse relationship (1.41) and content context balance (1.41) in their clinical learning environment.

The present study revealed the difference between student nurses perceptions of actual and preferred dimension of clinical learning environment among both settings. The t-tests indicated the difference between the different forms of CLEI i.e., actual and preferred were significantly high (t-value 7.6, 6.0 respectively). Nursing students of corporate hospital prefer a much better clinical learning environment in comparison with their actual Clinical learning environment. Chan (2004) also found significant differences between students’ actual and preferred perceptions of the clinical learning environments. In terms of the CLEI scales, students preferred a more positive and favorable clinical environment than they perceived as being actually present.

The present study indicates that the difference between the means of different hospital settings (Govt. hospital and corporate hospital) were not significant, so perceptions of students with regard to actual form of CLEI were not significant with different hospital settings. Similarly the t-tests among the different hospital settings in regard to the preferred form of CLEI indicated that the difference between the means of different hospital settings (Govt. hospital and corporate hospital) were not as much significant. Thus, perceptions of students in regard to preferred form of CLEI were hardly different in various hospital settings.

**Recommendations:** A similar study can be undertaken with with a larger sample. A study may be conducted to assess the factors that obstruct or facilitate nursing student’s learning within their clinical environment. Nursing student should be involved in decision making of ward activities.

**Implications on nursing practice & education:** A supportive clinical learning environment is of foremost importance in securing the required teaching and learning process. The practice place should provide the students with an environment where they can receive learning opportunities.

**Conclusion**

The study found that there were significant differences between student’s perceptions of the actual and preferred dimensions of clinical learning environment inventory irrespective of their settings.

**References**


