Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. This is well planned, level IV, quantitative repeat descriptive cross-sectional research study to improve the educational environment among nursing students at two nursing colleges (Dushanbe & Kulob) in Tajikistan, focusing on strengthening clinical skills and competency-based learning. The researchers used a validated evidence-based tool known as the Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM). Descriptive statistics included the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test, Welch's two sample t-test, multivariate non-parametric regression, Cronbach's a (internal consistency, and used the statistical software R.

The study population included 2nd and 4th year nursing students. Sample size include 1239 students. Setting: two nursing colleges in Dushanbe & Kulob in Tajikistan.

The DREEM instrument was a 50-statement closed question questionnaire. There were five aspects focusing on the educational environment based on the nursing students' perceptions that included 1) students' perception of learning, 2) students' perception of teachers, 3) students' academic self-perception, 4) students' perception of atmosphere, and 5) students' social self-perception.

Results: for the baseline study there were 629 questionnaires and the endline study included 609 questionnaires. The perceived educational environment improved for both colleges. A significant increase of all sub-scores related to students' social self-perception demonstrating the smallest progress.

Conclusion: Even though general improvements were observed, analyzing at the single items still revealed persistent weaknesses that included a lack of competency-based learning and stress.

Of interest, no literature search nor a theoretical framework was mentioned or noted in the study.

Line 31 states - "family nurses" - Please clarify and define what "family nurses" are.

Line 88 states - "inventory designed to measure the educational environment at medical schools - has been - Please clarify as other studies demonstrate the use of the DREEM in health professions besides medical school.
Line 343 states - "This disparity may led to a comparatively low α-value indicating that" - Please change the word "led' to "lead".

Line 389 states - "improved didactical competences" - Please change the word "competences" to "competencies"

This reviewer was not familiar with the DREEM instrument, therefore this reviewer read the article by Roff, S. (2005). The Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure (DREEM) - a generic instrument for measuring students' perceptions of undergraduate health professions curricula, Medical Teacher, 27(4), 322-325. DOI: 10.1080/01421590500151054

This reviewer was not familiar with R statistical software, therefore this review read the website. The Regents of the University of Michigan. (2019). What is R? How do I use it? Retrieved from https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/ICPSR/faqs/what-is-r.html

This reviewer would like the authors' to make the suggested revisions. This reviewer recommends to accept after minor essential revisions.

Thank you.

Dr. Johnstone

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published
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