

## **Students' evaluation of teaching and the academic environment in the University of Traditional Medicine: Implications and directions for the system improvement**

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** Evaluation of teaching and the academic environment using a valid and reliable tool is a key to deliver a high quality education and to implement a good and appropriate educational environment. The objectives of this study are 1) to evaluate the student's perception on teaching and the academic environment in the University of Traditional Medicine and 2) to identify problems and needs of students.

**Methods:** It was a cross-sectional study using a mixed-method design conducted in 2017. The quantitative data was collected from 319 undergraduate students from the first to the fourth academic year of the five-year bachelor's degree program using an anonymous self-administered questionnaire, namely the Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM). As a qualitative data collection method, four focus group discussions were conducted with both male and female students attending at different academic years.

**Results:** According to the DREEM score interpretation guide, the study found the students evaluated their teaching and academic environment as positive. Some students believed that there were areas that need improvement such as in the dimensions of learning, atmosphere, and social life. The findings showed the more the junior, the more positive view they had on their teaching and academic environment, and female students had a significantly better perception than male students on three out of five dimensions, such as perception of learning, teaching and academic self-perception. The areas that students wanted to improve were prolonged learning hours at the university, scarce relaxed time between lectures, lack of canteens in the university, need to update the text books, and demanding for more facilities and more support from the university's authoritative persons.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** This study evaluated the important issues and problematic areas at the University of Traditional Medicine, Mandalay from the students' perspectives. The educators and policy makers should make effort to improve the quality of the educational system and academic environment based on the findings from this study.