

**PERCEIVED ACADEMIC SUPPORT OF STUDENT NURSES AT A PUBLIC
NURSING COLLEGE IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Nqatyiswa Sineke**, declare that the study on “*Perceived academic support of student nurses at a public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province*” is my own work and has never been submitted for any qualification. I further declare that all the sources that I have used to support the study have been acknowledged.

.....

SIGNATURE

.....

DATE

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all nurse educators and professional nurses who are committed to the provision of education and training of nurses, to produce competent, knowledgeable nurse cadres, who are sensitive to the needs of the community.

This study is further dedicated to student nurses undergoing training in the nursing colleges, who need to stay motivated and committed to success.

I also dedicate this work to my loving and supportive family, including my children; Sikhokele and Milisa .

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ABSTRACT

Academic support is critical in promoting success among student nurses. Support for student learning is a key element in optimizing student learning experiences, in any learning environment, and its importance has been widely discussed. Student academic support is closely related to motivation for learning, and helping students achieve their learning goals and objectives.

Student nurses continue to struggle during their training, to the point of failing a year or being excluded from the course, in spite of the academic support provided through classroom facilitation, and remedial teaching provided by academic staff. They frequently complain that the course is difficult, the workload is heavy, and they are unable to integrate theory with practice. As a result they are too stressed, throughout their training.

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the perceptions of student nurses about the academic support provided to them at a public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province.

This study was guided by the Caring Curriculum Model, based on Watson's Theory of Caring. The core of this theory is the implementation of ten carative factors to promote health and equilibrium. Caring was endorsed as a core value in nursing education and practice, by the National League of Nursing and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, while the centrality of a caring-healing relationship was recognized as a basis for all health professional education by the Pew Health Professions Commission.

A quantitative approach, using a descriptive and explanatory design, was used to determine the perceptions of student nurses on the academic support they received from the public nursing college. Participants were selected by a simple random sampling method. A total of 189 student nurses, who registered for the 4-year diploma programme at the East London Campus of the Lilitha College of Nursing, participated in the study. Self-report data was collected by means of the Academic Support questionnaire, using a Likert scale which addressed both the performance and importance of academic support. Data were analysed using Statistical Analysis Systems version 9.3, using mean tables and graphical data analysis.

The findings revealed high performance ratings for aspects relating to academic advising and teaching-learning process, indicating that there is satisfaction among students on these service attributes. Poor performance ratings were identified, relative to campus support services, indicating that student nurses were not happy with the availability and accessibility of library resources, and computer and internet services. Student nurses, at the college under study, were also not happy with aspects of service excellence relating to campus-based health care facilities, and personal student counselling services. The study identified a gap between the perceived performance and the importance of academic support at the nursing college, as the general performance was rated lower than the importance of academic support.

The findings suggest the necessity for improved library facilities and resources, healthcare and counselling services and the establishment of student support programmes, to build the capacity of students and to enhance their chances of success.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 STUDY BACKGROUND

Academic support is critical in promoting success among student nurses (Kotze, 2008: 123). Support for student learning is a key element in optimizing student learning experiences in any learning environment, and its importance has been widely discussed. Student academic support is closely related to motivation for learning, and helping students achieve learning goals and objectives (Lee, Srinivasan, Trail, Lewis, & Lopez, 2011:2).

Colleges and universities are responsible for training nursing students. The academic staff in the institution has the responsibility for developing and providing support services that increase students' chances of success, and their chances of remaining in the programme. Services that can provide support for students include: tutoring programmes, study sessions, student mentoring programmes, tests, time and stress management training (Billings & Halstead, 2009: 47).

The concept of learning support acknowledges the potential of each learner to grow at his own pace, towards his maximum level of independence in his learning, and to reach a level of achievement in accordance with his unique abilities. It further relies on the collaboration of people, from the systems to which the learners belong, to participate variously in the process of their learning (Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2005: 48).

Landsberg *et al.* (2005: 48) state that learners should be supported in reducing, circumventing, breaking through, and even removing the barriers, for each to achieve the maximum possible independence in learning. Kotze, (2008: 123) agrees with this view when she states that a student support system, including academic and personal counselling, life skills, health education and emergency health care service, needs to be available. Bendiel (1988), in a study conducted by Pillay & Mtshali, (2008: 47) also stressed the importance of academic support, when he states that student nurses need a sense of being cared for during the process of

learning to care for others, and they need to feel that they are receiving support and guidance when they experience difficulties.

Each learning institution should establish a school-based support team which is responsible for the provision of learner support, together with teachers involved in teaching and learning (Landsberg *et al*, 2005: 66). The nursing college is no exception in this regard; it bears the same responsibility of providing support to students, which forms the core of a nurse educator's job. The overall responsibility of the institution is that of good corporate governance and the application of sound, ethical management practices, because patients and the public are at the centre of care delivery. They are the reason for the existence of the nursing profession. The education institution should, develop policies and procedures that benefit the institution and the interests of the public (Kotze', 2008: 37).

According to Meyer & van Niekerk (2008:107), it is the responsibility of the education and training institutions to ensure that student nurses are offered high quality education and training, to enable them to withstand the challenges as health care providers. It is the task of the education and training institution to create an environment that will optimally enhance learning.

The nursing college is responsible for the academic development of learners, which encompasses training and orientation as regards subject content. The learners should be helped to understand the significance of every subject in nursing, and empowered to use the correct methods for studying each subject. Learners should be encouraged to think quickly and efficiently with regard to evaluating, analysing, synthesizing and using content (Meyer & van Niekerk, 2008: 93).

The development of a learning climate requires an educator who is knowledgeable, clinically competent, skilful and committed to teaching. The educator's attitude towards learners and staff affects personal interactions, as well as relationships that are established in the educational environment (Meyer & van Niekerk, 2008: 107).

Learners should not be regarded as academic sponges that can simply absorb information; they should be accompanied and taught to develop effective skills, a positive attitude to the reality of nursing, cognitive reasoning abilities, the ability to conceptualise, and proactive conduct regarding their studies. They should be

supported to develop a wider perspective of learning, through what a person thinks about how he/she learns, and is aware of how to approach the content, in order to learn (Meyer & van Niekerk, 2008: 94).

Race, (2010:19) and Landsberg *et al.* (2005:48) agree that learners are kept going by strong support and encouragement, which often comes from teachers or tutors, but also from mentors, friends, family and just about anyone. For some people, support was indeed essential, and, without such support, they probably would not have succeeded, or would have taken much longer to succeed. Developing and providing support services for students with academic difficulties and personal problems, helps ensure that students receive the assistance they need, at the earliest possible point of intervention (Billings & Halstead, 2009: 47).

Professional learning communities cannot be developed without the necessary support. The aim of the support is to develop a culture that focuses on learning, so it should therefore develop learning capacity, collaborative relationships and leadership (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:116). The importance of supporting students has been highlighted by many authors, who state that support for student learning is a key element in optimizing student learning experiences in any environment (Billings & Halstead, 2009: 47; Kotze'2008: 123; Landsberg *et al.* 2005:48 & Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:116).

The main aim of these support interventions is to enable students to develop their literacy, quantitative and study skills so that they can achieve success in a particular course, and ultimately attain a higher education qualification (Smith, 2009: 1009).

Support for nursing students is an important aspect, especially for those institutions with significant numbers of students from disadvantaged academic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Ooms, Fergy, Marks-Maran, Burke & Sheehy (2012: 90) identified the provision of academic support as resource-intensive, thereby requiring education institutions to have a clear understanding of which support services are being used by students, and how students perceive the effectiveness of these support services. Ooms *et al.* (2012: 90) state that The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2008) found that some university students may feel

that the academic and pastoral care do not meet their needs and that universities need to give high priority to personal tutoring, including training and support to help tutors to be fully effective in their supportive role.

This study is aimed at exploring the perceptions of student nurses on performance, and the importance of academic support, so as to identify whether there is a gap between the support provided and that required by students.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Student nurses at the public nursing college under study continue to struggle during their training, to the point of failing a year, or being excluded from the course, in spite of academic support being provided through classroom facilitation and remedial teaching by the academic staff. They complain of how difficult the course is throughout their training, and frequently speak of being too stressed. They relate this to the uncertainty of course work, the heavy workload, the inability to integrate theory and practice, and lack of funds to purchase the expensive prescribed learning material. They struggle to keep up with the demands of the course, including tests, assignments, class activities, group presentations and practical requirements. When academic support and guidance is provided, students are not expected to struggle much to meet their learning needs.

The situation in the college under study is that the students depend on the lecturing staff for support only with their learning needs. There are no established student support programmes in the college to enhance learning opportunities, and the resultant success with nursing training programmes.

The question is whether the academic support that is provided to the student nurses is adequate and effective in contributing to their success, and whether or not it addresses their learning needs. The researcher became interested in exploring the views of student nurses on adequacy of academic support provided to them at the nursing college, and also investigate whether there is a gap between the support provided by the college, and what is regarded as important by student nurses.

1.3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the perceptions of student nurses on the academic support provided to them at a public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate and describe the student nurses' perceptions on academic support provided to them in the nursing college
- To investigate whether there is a gap between the perceived academic support, and the importance student nurses attach to academic support

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are student nurses' perceptions on academic support provided at the public nursing college?
- Is there a gap between the performance and the importance of academic support, as perceived by student nurses at the public nursing college?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings and recommendations will be made available to the nursing college where the study was conducted, as well as other colleges, and, on request, to help them identify areas of improvement in service delivery. This will help the college to identify gaps in the provision of academic support to students, and to build effective support systems for students, thereby helping them to succeed in the programme. More nurses will qualify as professional nurses, and so curb the overwhelming shortage of nurses in our hospitals, which will result in high quality patient care.

The study will contribute new knowledge to the nursing college, because no similar study has been conducted at the chosen nursing college, even though the college has been experiencing a high failure rate and the exclusion of student nurses from the course.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The main concepts used in this study are defined for clarification purposes.

1.7.1 Perceptions

Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe (2004: 232) define 'perception' as the active interpretation of sensory impressions, or information received through the senses from the surroundings. Therefore, our perception of something simply means the conscious awareness of objects through some or all the senses, while simultaneously interpreting the information. Perception implies that a person hears, sees, touches, smells and tastes, and then an interpretation and thinking process begins in order to make sense of what is being experienced.

Cullen, Higgleton and Collinns (2002:616) further clarify perception, by stating "Your perception of something or someone is your understanding of them".

In this study, perceptions refer to views of student nurses on the performance and importance of the academic support provided to them at the nursing college.

1.7.2 Student nurse

A nursing student is defined as a person undergoing education and training at an approved nursing school, and who is registered with the South African Nursing Council (SANC) under section 23 of the Act (The Nursing Act no. 33 of 2005:5).

A student nurse, in this study, refers to a person who is undertaking the 4-year diploma, which is the basic nursing education and training programme, leading to registration as a nurse (General, Psychiatric and Community) and Midwife, and is registered with the South African Nursing Council (SANC, R425:1985).

1.7.3 Academic support

'Support' means the help or encouragement given to somebody, or something, especially in a difficult situation (Crowther, 1995: 1200).

Simpson (2002: 7) describes academic support as consisting of defining the course territory, explaining concepts, exploring the course, providing feedback on assessments, developing the competencies applicable to the programme requirements, and monitoring progress.

Academic support in this study means the provision of appropriate conditions or facilities, such as academic advising, instructional effectiveness, campus support services and service excellence, to enable student nurses to succeed in their education and training programme.

1.7.4 Public nursing college

This refers to a post-secondary educational institution which offers professional nursing education at basic and post-basic levels, where such nursing education has been approved in terms of section 15 (2) of the Nursing Act no 33 of 2005 (SANC, R425:1985).

For the purpose of this study, 'public nursing college' refers to the East London Campus, which is one of the campuses of Lilitha College of Nursing in the Eastern Cape Province.

1.7.5 A gap

A gap is defined as the lack of something that is needed, or a difference that separates people's opinions (Crowther, 1995: 486-487).

In this study the gap refers to the difference between the performance and the importance of academic support as perceived by student nurses.

1.7.6 Academic advising

In this study, academic advising assesses the comprehensiveness of the institution's academic advising programme. Academic advisors, which are nurse educators in the case of the current study, are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, competence and personal concern for student success, as well as their approachability (Bryant, 2006: 25).

1.7.7 Teaching- learning process

For the purpose of this study, the teaching-learning process refers to the instructional effectiveness which assesses students' academic experience, curricula and the campus's overriding commitment to academic excellence. It covers aspects, such as courses offered, and the effectiveness of lecturing staff, both in and out of the classroom (Bryant, 2006: 25).

1.7.8 Campus support services

In this study “Campus Support Services” encompass library facilities and services, computing and internet facilities, and availability of academic and career services utilized by students to make their educational experiences more meaningful and productive (Bryant, 2006: 25).

1.7.9 Service excellence

In this study “Service Excellence” assesses the perceived attitude of staff towards students, and pinpoints areas of the campus where quality service and personal concern for students are rated the most and the least favourably. For the purpose of this study, those areas are, for example, healthcare services, student counselling, complaints procedures and information on campus activities (Bryant, 2006: 25).

1.7.10 Performance

For the purpose of this study, performance relates to performance ratings given by student nurses showing how satisfied they are, that the college has met their expectations. The higher the score, the more satisfied the student is (Bryant, 2006: 26).

1.7.11 Importance

Importance in this study refers to importance score ratings given by student nurses reflecting how strongly they feel about the provision of services by the college. The higher the score, the more important the expectation is to the student (Bryant, 2006: 26).

1.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter an overview of the research study has been presented to introduce the reader to the background, problem statement, purpose, research objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, significance of the study and the terminology used.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an in-depth discussion on the literature reviewed for the purpose of this study. A literature review is an organised written presentation of what has been published on a topic, by scholars, and includes a presentation of research conducted in the researcher's field of study (Burns & Grove 2009: 92). Brink (2006:67) further clarifies this by stating that a literature review involves finding, reading, understanding and forming conclusions about the published research and theory, as well as presenting it in an organised manner.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of student nurses on the academic support provided to them by the nursing college under study, and to investigate whether there is a gap between the performance and the importance that students attach to academic support. This literature review was undertaken, using the keywords: academic support, student support programmes and student support services at colleges and universities. The researcher has conducted this literature review for the purpose of placing the current study in the context of the general body of knowledge (Brink 2006: 68).

The reviewed literature consists of books, journals, theses and dissertations, reports, and computer databases. Several studies related to academic support for students in universities and colleges for general education and nursing education, have been found and reviewed internationally, but not much research has been found in the South African nursing context. The literature presented here describes the importance of academic support, studies in student support services internationally and in South Africa, factors affecting academic support and the role of educators in the provision of academic support.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW ON ACADEMIC SUPPORT

2.2.1 Importance of academic support

The importance of student support as a means of improving retention and increasing the chances of success in the field of education is well researched and documented internationally. The United Kingdom government policy and legislation have directly, and indirectly, emphasized the importance of providing support to university students (Ooms, Fergy, Marks-Maran, Burke & Sheehy, 2012: 90).

To highlight the importance of academic support services, Galardi, (2012:74) conducted a study, comparing graduate student support services between on-campus and off-campus locations. This study advanced the research on adult learners, by identifying the usage, satisfaction and importance of support services to the graduate student population enrolled at several institutions.

The results revealed that library facilities and services, academic advising, computer services, parking, financial aid services, food services and college orientation services were used by the majority of students. High levels of satisfaction with these student services were self-reported, indicating that the graduate students agree that these services are important. (Galardi, 2012: 77). These results indicate that student support services are, indeed, important to students.

A similar study was conducted to compare the availability, quality, similarities and differences in student support services offered at two universities; Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Pakistan and The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). The study aimed at identifying deficiencies that students of both universities face in student support services (Gujjar, Chaudhry & Chaudhry, 2009: 355).

The findings of this study are consistent with the previous studies, confirming the provision and usage of support services by graduate students. The results indicated that the overall mean score on all student support services at OUSL was significantly better than the services at AIOU, and therefore it can be concluded that students at OUSL are more satisfied with student support services, as compared to students at AIOU (Gujjar et al, 2009:362).

Lee *et al.* (2011: 19) in their study of examining the relationships among student perceptions of support, course satisfaction and learning outcomes in online learning,

added that appropriate support strategies to meet students' needs and learning styles are likely to enhance their learning experience and increase their chances of success. Ooms *et al.* also agreed that support for nursing students is an important issue, especially for those institutions where there are significant numbers of students from non-traditional backgrounds (2012: 90). Since provision of this support can be resource-intensive, it is also important that universities and colleges have a clear understanding of which support services are being used by students, and how students perceive the effectiveness of these support services (Ooms *et al.* 2012: 90).

The Ministry of Education of New Zealand commissioned a systematic review of international research on the impact of support services on student outcomes, to provide tertiary institutions with a guide to the most effective types of support for students. The review was undertaken by a research team from the Massey University College of Education.

Their synthesis is based on a robust and comprehensive search of national and international studies on student support systems, and how they affect student success. This synthesis of the literature looked at 146 international studies. The evidence from the studies indicates that institutions can influence the integration, retention and course completion rates of their students, by providing comprehensive and well-designed support services. However, the effectiveness of these efforts will be affected by the context in which the education takes place, and the qualities which students bring to their study (Rivers 2005:1-2).

2.2.2 Student support services

Most of the studies reviewed relating to academic support, explored and discussed Student Support Services provided as additional programmes designed to benefit disadvantaged students. Karp, O'Gara & Hughes found, in their study, that quality advising and special support programmes which resulted in student success, were mostly available to those students who have the cultural and social resources to seek and take advantage of them (2008: 22). Students who enter the college without the cultural capital are unlikely to have repertoires to justify them approaching the academic staff for academic advice.

The same happens with students lacking social networks, who may also lack access to information that could help them navigate the college. Karp *et al.* therefore recommended that colleges should consider assigning all students their own advisors and making the student support services available for all students in the first year of a degree programme (2008: 24).

In order to help students overcome social, economic and academic disadvantages, community colleges have implemented an array of student support services which address various student needs. Purnell & Blank (2004) in Karp *et al.* (2008: 2) divide these student services into five categories:

- Academic guidance and counselling, through which students get information on course planning and graduation requirements
- Academic support such as tutoring, through which students gain additional help in meeting their academic goals
- Personal guidance and counselling to assist those who are not coping with personal problems
- Career counselling which provides information on careers
- Supplemental services which help with child care and transportation

From the categories stipulated, the current study focuses only on academic counselling, academic guidance and academic support.

Karp *et al.* further maintained that offering student support services enables institutions to meet the varied needs of college students (2008:3). The philosophy behind this is that such services can increase student success in college, and, ultimately, persistence to complete the course. In addition, providing student support services enable disadvantaged students to overcome their lack of information, cultural capital or academic preparedness.

Lotkowski, Robbins & Noeth, (2004:15-16) compiled an Act Policy Report, after conducting a study on the role of academic and non-academic factors in improving college retention. Findings from this study suggest that retention programmes can be improved if they combine both academic and non-academic factors, because all these factors are related to college retention. Along with structured academic advising programmes, retention efforts can also involve the implementation of

special registration strategies that combine both academic and non-academic factors.

In the report, Lotkowski *et al.* recommended that colleges and universities take an integrated approach in their retention efforts that incorporate both academic and non-academic factors in the design and development of programmes. This would create a socially inclusive and supportive academic environment that addresses the social, emotional and academic needs of students (2004: 22).

Integrating academic and non-academic information enables colleges to design and implement programmes that address all types of needs of students. Such programmes may include orientation programmes, academic advising and tutorials, workshops in study skills, time management skills, planning and organizing, critical thinking, assertiveness training, library use and cultural awareness. These programmes should aim to increase levels of academic self-confidence, achievement motivation, goal commitment, social involvement and support (Lotkowski *et al.* 2004: 22).

In his study of “The Effectiveness of Student Support Services (SSS)” at a Research Extensive University in the South, Penalber (2005: 27) also alleged that the Student Support Services programme is designed to provide students with a variety of services, aimed at establishing a network of support for participants, which will ensure student academic success and completion of degree programmes. Wolanin (1997) in Penalber (2005: 27) further added that Student Support Services are designed to assist students with the completion of postsecondary education. These students are usually identified as those who are educationally disadvantaged, lacking home and community resources to complete undergraduate programmes.

The Student Support Services Programme serves as an academic and social support system for educationally challenged students, and other similar groups of students, who enrol in postsecondary educational programmes. Student Support Services helps low-income, first generation and/or disabled students to stay in college until they earn their baccalaureate degrees. Participants receive tutoring, counselling, and remedial instruction (Penalber, 2005:53).

Results of the investigation by Penalber (2005:59) revealed that the SSS Programme positively impacted on the six-year graduation rate for the SSS participants.

2.2.3 Factors affecting academic performance

In his study of Hispanic Nursing Students' Journey to Success, Planas (2009:511) identified factors, as cited by many students, which affected them and caused barriers to their success. These factors included unsupportive academic staff, perceived discrimination by staff and peers, lack of advisement, and scarcity of mentors and role models. All of the cited barriers point to academic support. It can be argued, therefore, that academic staff needs to be supportive and caring in order for their students to succeed in the programme. Faculty-student relationships form an integral part of either success or failure, which means that if this relationship is positive, it results in success, and if it is negative it results in failure (Planas, 2009:511).

Some of the reasons for dropping out, highlighted by students, included the workload and the demands of the programme, together with the unrealistic expectations of the course, as well as travelling times and finances (McIntosh, Gidman & McLaughlin, 2013:1). This indicates that students need to be supported and guided in order to carry this workload and cope with the demands of the programme.

In a study by Jafta (2013: 161) students identified factors that influenced their academic performance, namely; a sense of belonging, learning material, access to computers, classrooms, library, accommodation, food, student support, curriculum structure, clinical experience, study skills and social life. In the same study, nurse educators also identified factors that could influence students' academic performance, such as selection criteria, commitment to theory and practicum, clinical issues, lifestyle responsibilities, interpersonal relationships, financial support, curriculum issues, teaching and learning, and professional development.

These factors do actually coincide, even though they were mentioned from different perspectives. Some of the recommendations made by the researcher in this study indicate the need for guidance and support of students, in an endeavour to enhance success. These include reinstatement of supplementary instruction, which needed to

be investigated, motivation by the college for more funds to ensure provision of adequate resources, and proper guidance of students during selection, and upon entering college (Jafta, 2013: 162-169).

2.2.4 The role of educators in academic support

According to Kotze' (2008:50), student support and guidance is an important responsibility of the nurse educator. The educator is also required to be where the student is. Students do not always verbalize their issues, and the educator must be observant and sensitive so that early intervention can be made.

The study conducted by Gammon & Morgan-Samuel (2004: 169) suggested that nurse educators have a central role in providing students with information and structured tutorial support, as part of their academic studies. Nurse educators should consider the need to be proactive and innovative in the support provided to students, and should recognize the positive benefits it has on learning. Learning should not be perceived as a stressor, due to lack of support. Students must be supported to ensure that academic stress is minimized, autonomy is promoted and self-esteem developed.

Structured tutorial support promotes personal control, empowerment, assertiveness and confidence, thus students experience less uncertainty and cope with academic demands more effectively (Gammon & Morgan-Samuel, 2004:168). It can be argued, therefore, that self-esteem is positively influenced by the provision of structured tutorial support. This enables students to acquire skills and knowledge that help them to maintain their independence and a more realistic perspective of academic and programme demands. This ensures that they feel more positive about actively confronting academic requirements and demands, and situations perceived as difficult, so that they are more able to cope with them.

Gammon & Morgan-Samuel (2004:169) further alluded to this by suggesting that nurse education departments should examine and evaluate how nursing students are empowered, and how their coping abilities are maximised, thus improving their self-esteem and academic performance.

According to Sleeter, (2008: 214) diverse students need teachers who hold high expectations of their learning, regardless of how they are doing, teachers who can engage them academically by building on what they know and what interests them. These teachers must also be able to relate to their families and communities and read them in culturally accurate ways, and be able to envision them as constructive participants in a multicultural democracy. These are the characteristics that teacher education needs to support.

In an evaluative study of the support services provided to undergraduate nursing students in the United Kingdom, over 94% of respondents indicated that module teachers were helpful in providing support, and almost 90% agreed that module teachers helped with assignments and in developing study skills. Approximately 79% agreed that module teachers helped them to feel less anxious and built their confidence. 84% helped them to be successful students and 75% agreed that module teachers were a most important source of support for them (Ooms et al, 2012: 91).

The imperative role of effectively supporting students in practice is well recognised, with the key role being that of the mentor. Many authors considered that lecturers are optimally placed to provide the individual support that students need in the academic setting, with the focus of support ranging from academic writing to pastoral care (McIntosh et al, 2013:1; Kotze',2008:50; Gammon & Morgan-Samuel (2004:163).

Hamrin, Weycer, Pachler & Fournier (2004:42) concur with other authors when concluding that universities can enhance the academic performance of graduate students by supporting a sense of belonging through appropriate social support.

In previous research, the relationship between students and tutors has been highlighted as the most important aspect of a successful academic support scheme. The authors in these studies suggest that the establishment of a good relationship between nurse educators and students is the most important factor contributing to the success of the academic support scheme (Malik, 2000: 635, Planas, 2009:511).

Griffith & Bakanauskas (1983), cited in Shelton, (2001: 70) compared the teacher-student relationship to the nurse-client relationship, in which development of trust and support is essential for the establishment of a therapeutic working relationship. A positive teacher-student relationship results in self-actualization, self-fulfilment, improved self-concept and enhanced motivation for learning.

Metz, Cech, Babcock & Smith (2011: 388) surveyed undergraduate nursing students participating in a university-sponsored Native American nursing student support programme, and examined which social support factors influenced the students' success. Using validated quantitative measures from social psychology, these authors found that overall perceived social support, as well as support from the university sponsored programme, positively influenced the native American students' identification with nursing. It also influenced their interest in nursing, their perception of the value of nursing and their motivation to continue pursuing nursing as a career.

The findings of this study emphasize that the social, academic, and financial support afforded to students played a large part in their positive feelings about nursing, and in their intentions to remain in the programme (Metz *et al*, 2011: 393).

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The project, entitled "Enhancing Success in Advanced in Advanced Practice Nursing (ESAPN)" was for culturally and ethnically diverse students, and was designed to increase the opportunities for nurses from Hispanic, African-American, and Asian backgrounds to successfully enrol in and graduate in the Master of Science in Nursing degree. The overarching goals of this project are to improve access to quality health care, through the appropriate preparation, composition and distribution of health professionals (McNeal & Walker, 2006: 10). These goals coincide with the significance of the current study, which is to enhance the quality of patient care.

In addition, the project plan included the development and implementation of a comprehensive programme that incorporates academic support services, career advisement and mentoring activities, to retain and to graduate an increased number of culturally, racially and ethnically diverse advanced practice nurses. The project also sought to improve the quality of care by preparing advanced practice nurses, to

provide culturally competent and sensitive care for the State of New Jersey (McNeal & Walker, 2006: 10).

The researcher pursued this study, sharing the same goals of improving the education and training of nurses, and thus ensuring competent health professionals who will leave no doubt about providing quality patient care.

2.2.5 Perceptions on academic support in other countries

There is limited research-based literature related to specific support needs of nursing students. Ooms et al (2012: 90) confirm this, stating that there is an increasing amount of literature available, related to student support in higher education, especially within the context of high numbers of students entering universities and colleges. However, much of the literature is related to higher education in general, rather than nursing students. The perceptions are discussed in both contexts.

An earlier study in West Virginia, conducted by Shelton (2001: 71), explored the relationship between nursing students' perception of faculty support, and nursing students' retention. He explored the perceptions of students, according to two categories of academic support; psychological and functional. The study was based on the following theories:

- Bandura's Theory of Self efficacy, which is psychological and involves internal processes within individuals that interact with the environment, to influence behaviour. The theory proposes that an individual's motivation to continue with a course of action, and the way the individual makes use of environmental supports, are affected by self-efficacy.
- Tinto's Theory of Student Retention, which proposes that students' persistence is related to the degree of integration students attain within an institution. For this integration to occur, students must have adequate interactions, and feel that their abilities, goals and values are similar to those of others within the institution.
- Shelton Model of student Retention, which portrays the application of Bandura's theory to the specific outcome of student retention, and combines the psychological and sociological perspectives.

The study used a cross-sectional design and yielded results that the students who reported greater perceived support were more likely to finish the programme. The academic institutions, therefore, need to provide an atmosphere of caring and direct assistance to facilitate student learning. This study emphasizes the necessity for nursing programmes to provide resources to facilitate success, so that students will remain in the programme and later graduate as competent nurses (Shelton, 2001:68).

A similar study in Florida examined the relationship among students' perception of support, course satisfaction and learning outcomes in a university. The authors looked at student support in a particular course, focusing on the guidance provided to students. They identified three categories of support, namely; instructional, peer and technical support (Lee, Srinivasan, Trail, Lewis & Lopez, 2011:158-163). The results in this study concur with those of the previous study, that students' perception of support is directly related to their course satisfaction.

In a study conducted in the United States of America, on stress and perceived faculty support among foreign-born Baccalaureate nursing students, an interpretive phenomenological design was used to examine experiences of stress, and perceptions of faculty support. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used. The findings were that these students needed acceptance and support from other students, from academic staff and from the educational institution, in order for them to experience less stress (Junious, Malecha, Tart & Young, 2010: 261).

The findings of studies undertaken at two universities in the United Kingdom, on the provision of learning support, were that, programme leaders and module teachers, provided a significant amount and range of support to students. Nursing students at both universities appeared to value the support they received, to enable them to succeed in their nursing programmes and perceived the support services as accessible and available to them (Ooms *et al*, 2012:93).

2.2.6 Perceptions of academic support in South Africa

Fewer studies were found in South Africa, relating to the academic support in the field of nursing education. The research carried out in South Africa shows that factors such as attitude, lack of motivation, ineffective learning and teaching strategies, and structural adjustments, contribute to poor academic performance at higher education institutions (Mokgokong, 2007: 40). The findings of the study at Medunsa by the same author, and the literature he reviewed, revealed that both prepared and under-prepared students benefited from peer tutoring and mentoring services.

Peer tutors refer to students who have been identified, through their academic capabilities, to help their fellow students who are struggling with their academic work. Peer mentors refer to senior students who have been chosen to assume the role of advisors, mainly to first year students, in order to help them adjust to the demands of higher education. Students benefit more from these services, because they relate better to one of their own (Mokgokong, 2007: 54).

In a study conducted at the University of Witwatersrand, Onsongo (2006: 279) assessed the impact of academic support programmes on first and second year engineering students. The programme provided students with increased contact with staff, in small group tutorials, to discuss course content that students struggled to understand. The programme was designed to be challenging and to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success in engineering (Onsongo, 2006: 279).

Such programmes need to be implemented by all faculties in colleges and universities, to help students succeed. Onsongo (2006: 286) added that a more efficient use of the academic support programmes, which should be viewed positively by both staff and students, coupled with better teaching and learning methods, may produce improvements in student performance.

Mkhwanazi (2007: 103) found, in Kwa-zulu Natal, that pupil nurses also agreed that they were assisted in their progression from dependence to a state of independence, where they would be able to take care of themselves. Most of the respondents in this study rated the encouragement and support from nurse educators as high, indicating satisfaction. They also agreed to adequate support with classroom teaching and

facilitation of learning. There was also satisfaction with the assessment and motivation of learners.

In agreement with other authors, Smith (2009: 1011) stated that students, who successfully complete remedial courses, develop their literacy and numeracy skills, are able to pass their mainstream courses and are less likely to drop out. These students exhibit higher persistence rates. According to Smith (2009: 1022), a variety of academic support initiatives are offered to students from academically disadvantaged backgrounds at tertiary institutions in South Africa.

The findings of this study suggest that appropriate educational interventions in the students' first year at a tertiary institution may impact positively on their academic performance, through to graduation. In particular, the type of educational interventions implemented in the accounting, economics, statistics and information systems courses, may have enabled students to profit, not only in these courses, but in further courses, both in these and in other subjects.

The implications of a higher education policy in South Africa, recommended in this study, was that the emphasis of the educational interventions should be on improving students' writing, quantitative, learning and study skills, which are the skills that may enable students to achieve greater success in subsequent higher education Smith (2009:1022).

Perceptions of staff and students at the University of South Africa yielded the same results as with previous studies, showing satisfaction with support services. It appeared that students were mostly happy with the support they received, although some concern was noted regarding the resources of the unit of Social Behaviour Studies in HIV/AIDS. Most students rate support services as either adequate, good or excellent (Matee, 2011: 76).

Having found that students' perception of support does affect overall course satisfaction, the question remaining is, how can teachers and instructional designers ensure that students feel supported in their learning experiences? Building upon the platform laid by previous research, and the implications of the results of previous studies, several key elements can be identified as necessary for creating a learning

environment that provides adequate support to the learner. This environment includes, but is not limited to, providing varied types of support, and then providing adequate access to that support. Feedback and immediate communication also play key roles in ensuring that students feel supported in a course (Lee et al, 2011:158-163).

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is an abstract, logical structure of meaning which guides the development of the study, enabling the researcher to link findings to the body of knowledge used (Burns & Grove, 2009:126).

This study was guided by the Caring Curriculum Model, which integrates the pioneering work of Bevis (1989a), Leininger (1981), Murray (1989), Watson (1988) and others who believe that caring is the essential core of nursing. The model integrates, within a human science orientation, concepts and principles drawn from the humanistic-existentialist perspective and feminist philosophy, as well as from phenomenology (Billings & Halstead, 2009: 219).

An assumption of Watson's theory is that all persons require human caring to quell a need, and this can be achieved through a transpersonal process between the nurse, the environment and the client. The core of this theory is the implementation of ten carative factors to promote health and equilibrium (Cherry & Jacob, 2008: 98). Billings & Halstead, (2009: 219), state that Watson (1989) indicated that "the ethic of caring provides an expanded context for nursing education, by calling upon the highest ethical self in the process of an evolving consciousness".

This is strengthened by the findings of Malik (2000:640), in his study conducted on medical students, when he states that it seems likely that a student's readiness to discuss personal and/or academic problems with their tutor is dependent upon the formation of a good relationship, and it is this relationship which is directly related to the perceived success of the academic support scheme.

Caring was endorsed as a core value in nursing education and practice, by the National League of Nursing, and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The centrality of the caring-healing relationship was recognized as a basis for all

health professional education, by the Pew Health Professions Commission. Therefore, if caring is the central focus of nursing, then attention should be given to the practice, study and teaching of caring (Wade & Kasper, 2004:162).

Watson's Theory of Transpersonal Caring serves as a guide to both the discipline and professional development of nurses. The theory is based on non-paternalistic values that honour another's existence, autonomy and freedom of choice. The human caring element that connects people is the basis for therapeutic relationships between human beings. In nursing education, caring is an evolutionary, transpersonal process between nurse educators and students, and it occurs when educators use teaching moments as caring occasions, Bevis & Watson (1989) cited in Wade & Kasper, (2004:163).

The Caring Curriculum Model implements the ten carative factors of Watson's theory, to promote success in nursing education. For the purpose of this study, only the following four carative factors were chosen to guide the study:

1. The development of a helping-trusting relationship.
2. The promotion of interpersonal teaching-learning.
3. The provision of a supportive, protective and or corrective mental, physical, socio-cultural and spiritual environment.
4. Assistance with the gratification of human needs.

http://www.currentnursing.com/nursing_theory/Watson.html

The researcher has chosen the above carative factors on the basis that they focus on assessing the interactive relationship between nurse educators and student nurses, which has been highlighted in previous studies as the most important aspect of a successful student support scheme (Kotze, 2008:50; Shelton, 2001:71). The modified theoretical framework is presented in Figure 1.

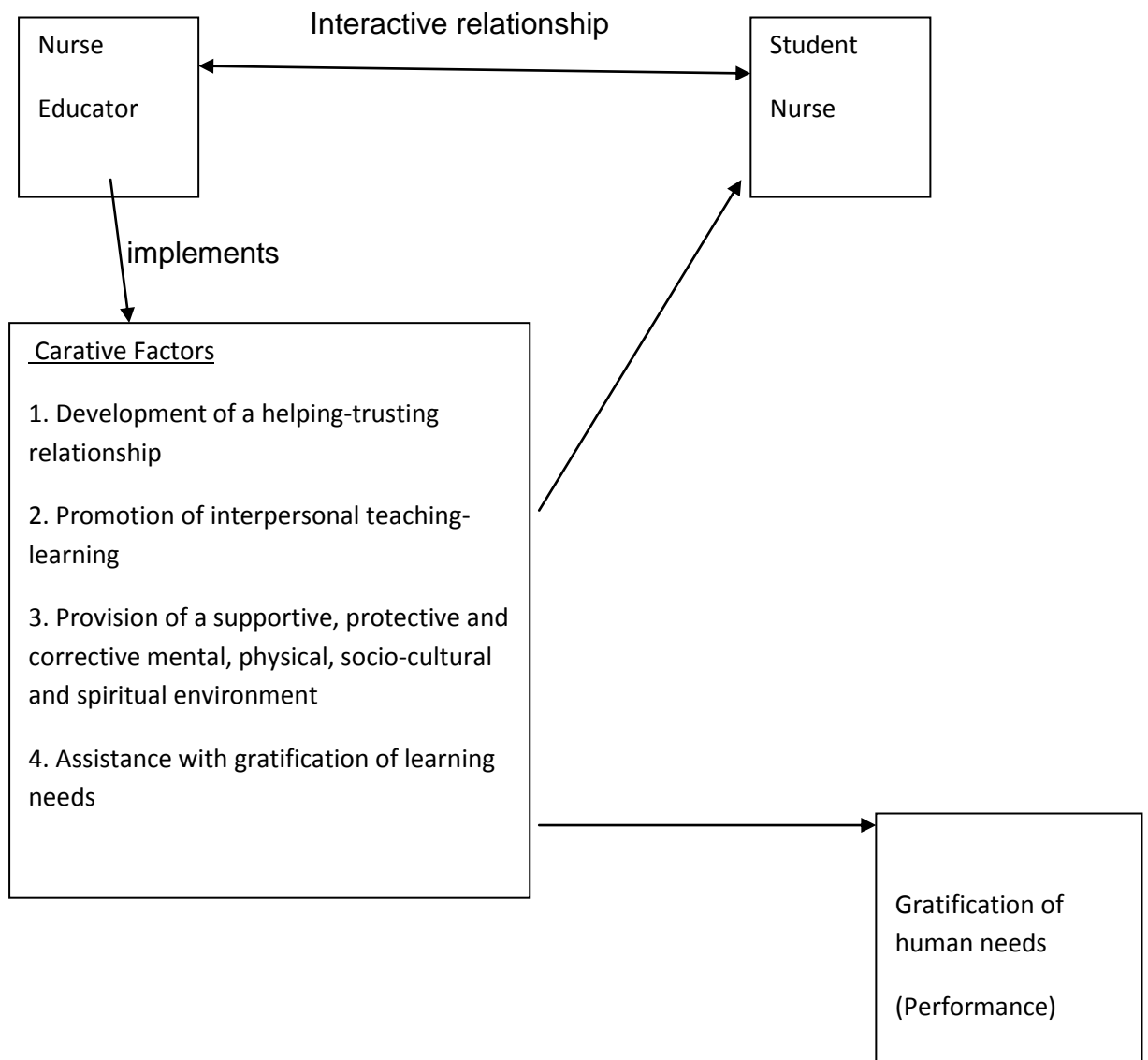


Figure 1: Modified Caring Curriculum Model (based on Watson's Theory of Caring)

2.4 SUMMARY

It should be noted that previous research reviewed here does not address only nursing education but also general education, because principles of teaching and learning are the same in any field of education. A lot of studies on student support services, reviewed by the researcher, revealed that academic support is a critical element which enhances student success in any learning programme.

Most of these studies highlight the effect of academic support on course satisfaction and retention in training programmes, yielding results that indicate that academic support is directly related to course satisfaction and retention. In many of these studies findings confirm that students, who reported greater perceived support, were more likely to finish their programme.

No study has been found in the field of nursing education, to have investigated the gap between performance, which is the provision of academic support, and the importance identified by student nurses as consumers. Ooms *et al* (2012: 90) recommend that higher education institutions need to constantly review the support services they offer to their students. That can only be achieved through collating the views of students.

The researcher has therefore identified the necessity to explore nursing students' perceptions on the adequacy of the academic support provided to assist them to succeed in the programme, and to investigate whether there is a gap between what is actually provided and what is most important in the opinion of the students. This knowledge will, in the future, help education institutions to identify improvement opportunities.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine perceptions of student nurses on the academic support provided to them at the public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province. The participants need to describe their perceptions on academic support, and the importance thereof to them, as recipients of education.

This chapter describes the research method used in this study, and gives details of the research design, the sampling procedure and the sample, inclusion and exclusion criteria, the instrument, data collection and analysis methods. Ethical aspects, considered before conducting the research, are also described.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative approach, using a descriptive and explanatory design, was used to determine perceptions of student nurses on the academic support they received from the public nursing college. Descriptive designs are used in studies where more information is required in a particular field, through the provision of a picture of the phenomenon, as it occurs naturally (Brink, 2006: 102).

In this study, information is required from students in the field of nursing education, to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the academic support provided to them at the nursing college. Student nurses described their perceptions of the academic support received at the college, as well as interpreted the meaning thereof, regarding whether they viewed the support as important to them.

3.3 STUDY POPULATION

Population refers to all the elements, that is, individuals, objects, events or substances that meet the criteria, for inclusion in a given universe (Brink, 2006: 54). The campus chosen for the study consists of the main campus and five satellite

campuses, but the study was conducted only in the main campus, as the satellite campuses train enrolled categories of nurses.

The population for the study consisted of all the student nurses from the second, third and fourth year levels from one campus of the public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province. These student nurses were registered in 2012 with the South African Nursing Council for education and training of a nurse (General, Psychiatric and Community) and Midwife, in terms of Regulation No.R.425 of 22 February 1985 (SANC, R425:1985). The first year students were excluded from the study because they were still new in the college, and would therefore not contribute confidently to the study.

A total number of 329 student nurses, (63 second years, 182 third years and 84 fourth years) formed the total population for the study.

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND THE SAMPLE

Sampling involves selecting a group of people, events, behaviours, or other elements with which to conduct a study. A sample denotes the selected group of people or elements included in a study (Burns & Grove, 2009:343). The researcher selected 50% from each group of student nurses from second to fourth year levels, and increased that number by 18% to accommodate non-returned questionnaires. The sample consisted of 32 second years, 91 third year and 42 fourth year student nurses, making a total of 165 participants, to which 30 participants (18%) were added resulting in a total of 195 participants.

Subjects were drawn randomly from the sampling frame formed by student lists. The sample frame is presented in table 1. The simple random samples were drawn using the fishbowl technique (Brink, 2006:127). Each of the subjects in the frame was written on a separate piece of paper. All the pieces of paper were folded and placed in a bowl, and then each name drawn out, one by one. The name chosen was written down and replaced in the bowl before choosing the next name, so that each participant had an equal chance of being included in the sample (Brink, 2006:127). The procedure continued until 195 - the desired number of participants - was reached.

3.5 THE SAMPLING FRAME

The sampling frame is a comprehensive list of the sampling elements in the target population (Brink 2006: 124). The sampling frame for this study was drawn from the lists of East London Campus nursing students.

Table 1: The sampling frame

Level of training	Population size
Second year students	63
Third year students	182
Fourth year students	84
Total	329

3.6 INCLUSION CRITERIA

The participants met the following criteria in order to be included in the study.

- Be registered as student nurses at East London Campus of Lilitha College of Nursing.
- Be registered with the South African Nursing Council as students for the four year diploma, leading to registration as nurse (general, community and psychiatric nursing science) and midwife.
- Be at second. Third and fourth year levels of training at the time of the study.

3.7 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

The following students were excluded from the study:

- Student nurses at first year level of training.
- Post-basic course students.
- Student nurses undergoing training for enrolled categories in satellite campuses.
- Part-time fourth year students registered for direct entry into examinations.

3.8 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument chosen for this study is a Likert scale, which is a self-reporting data collection instrument that asks respondents to report their attitudes, feelings or opinions on a continuum. It is composed of a set of numbers or symbols that have rules and that can be used to locate the individuals on a continuum (Brink 2006: 153). Burns & Grove (2009: 410) states that a Likert scale determines the opinion or attitude of a subject, and contains a number of declarative statements with a scale after each statement. Each response category is assigned a value from 1 to 5, with a value of 1 given to the most negative response and a value of 5 to the most positive response. A Likert scale for this study was developed with the help of the supervisor, to determine the level of satisfaction with academic support among student nurses at a public nursing college. The scale is a modified form of the Student Satisfaction Inventory by Noel-Levitz (1997).

The Student Satisfaction Inventory measures students' satisfaction with a wide range of college experiences. Principles of consumer theory serve as the basis for the construction of the inventory. In this study, student nurses are viewed as consumers who have a choice of whether or not to invest in education in the nursing colleges. Student nurses are also seen as individuals who have definite expectations about what they want from their college experience.

The following areas of interest were selected from the Student Satisfaction Inventory for inclusion in the questionnaire for the purpose of this study; academic advising, teaching-learning process, campus support services and service excellence. Some areas were deliberately omitted as they did not address the situation of the nursing college under study.

The scale used in this study is two-fold, in that it first addresses how student nurses perceive the academic support provided to them at the nursing college, and secondly it seeks to identify the importance of these aspects of academic support to student nurses as recipients. Respondents are therefore required to respond twice to each statement.

3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Brink (2006:159) states that instrument validity seeks to ascertain whether an instrument accurately measures what it is supposed to measure, given the context in which it is applied. The scale used in this study is a modified form of the Student Satisfaction Inventory by Noel-Levitz (1997) which has been in use in universities and colleges since 1997. The Student Satisfaction Inventory is a reliable instrument which also shows high internal reliability. Cronbach's coefficient alpha is .97 for the set of importance scores, and .98 for the set of satisfaction scores. The tool also demonstrates good score reliability over time. The three-week, rest-retest reliability coefficient is .85 for importance scores and .84 for satisfaction scores.

There is evidence to support the validity of the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), correlated with the College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ) which is also a reliable instrument. The Pearson correlation between the two instruments ($r=.71$; $p<00001$) is high enough to indicate that the SSI's satisfaction scores measure the same satisfaction construct as the CSSQ's scores, and yet the correlation is low enough to indicate that there are distinct differences between the two instruments. <http://www.noellellevitz.com/student->

The scale for the current study was also presented to a statistician for evaluation of content validity, and the instrument's overall suitability for use, before being used for collecting data.

3.10 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is a small-scale study conducted prior to the main study, on a limited number of subjects, from the population at hand (Brink 2006: 166). A pilot study was conducted on 10% of the population, using student nurses who were not going to participate in the study. The aim of the pilot study was to refine the data collection instrument, ensure the instrument's validity and reliability, and to give the researcher experience with the subjects, setting, methodology and methods of measurement (Burns & Grove, 2009:44). Unclear and ambiguous statements on the scale, as shown by the results of the pilot study, were identified and restructured, with the help of participants.

3.11 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the process of selecting subjects and gathering data from these subjects. The actual steps of collecting data are specific to each study, and depend on the research design and measurement methods (Burns & Grove, 2009:441). In this study data was collected through a self-report scale. Surveys can be used to gather data through self-reporting about an identified and specific population (Moule & Goodman, 2009:179).

An orientation session was held for student nurses, to clarify the role of a participant, what the research study is about, and the instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, two weeks before actual data collection. This information was given again in writing on the day of data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to participants and collected in person by the researcher on the same day, in a classroom setting for different groups of student nurses on different days. The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

3.12 DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) version 9.3. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarise data, with the assistance of a statistician. Data were converted and condensed into an organised, visual representation in a form of tables, so that the data have some meaning for the readers of the research report (Pallant, 2010: 56). A descriptive approach employs measures such as frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and dispersion or variability, and measures of relationships (Brink, 2006: 171).

A principal components factor analysis, based on the minimum eigenvalue and factor loading of at least 0.4 criteria, was used to determine the underlying structure of the dataset. A varimax rotation of the factors yielded four major factors, resulting in four constructs. The construct variables were derived as arithmetic means of the items within the factors. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the constructs. The importance and performance variables were compared, using the students' t test' carried out at a 5% significance level. The analysis was performed using the Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS) version 9.3.

The statistical associations between various variables were calculated and analysed, using the Traditional Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), which is a simple and effective technique that can be applied to guide quality-based marketing strategies to prioritise attributes, enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction (Deng, Kuo & Chen, 2008: 1).

Practitioners apply IPA to analyze two dimensions of product or service attributes; performance level, and importance to customers. Analyses of the two service attributes are then integrated into a matrix, yielding results that help a firm to identify primary drivers of customer satisfaction, and to set improvement priorities based on their findings. Business managers can therefore make rational decisions about how to deploy scarce resources, to attain the highest degree of customer satisfaction. (Deng et al, 2008: 2).

In the Importance-performance analysis matrix, service attribute importance is depicted along the x-axis and performance along the y-axis using the means of self-stated importance and performance. The means of performance and importance, commonly utilized in practice, divide the matrix into four quadrants, as shown in figure 2.

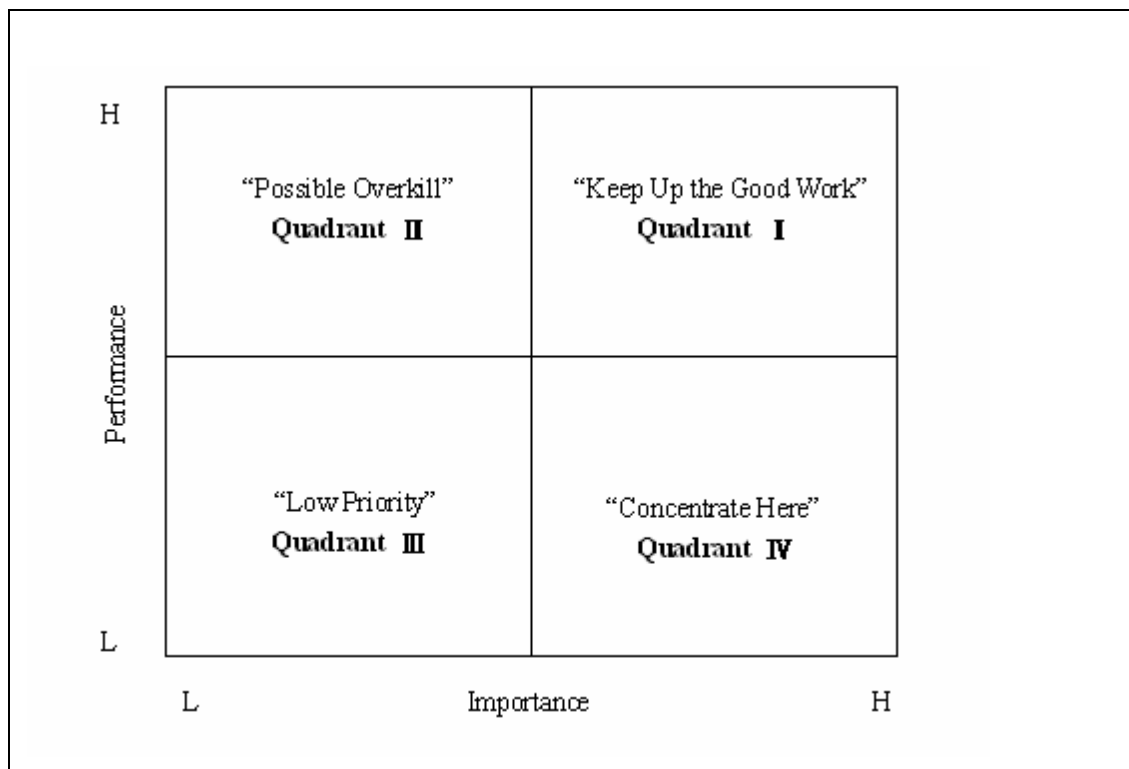


Figure 2: Traditional Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix

Based on cell location, customer satisfaction, or service quality, attributes are deemed as major or minor strengths and weaknesses (Deng et al, 2008:4). Attributes located in Quadrant 1 are major strengths which may just need to be maintained or improved. Attributes in Quadrant II are minor strengths which indicate that resources for these attributes could be used elsewhere. Attributes in Quadrant III are minor weaknesses and do not require additional effort. Attributes in Quadrant IV are major weaknesses and require immediate attention for improvement.

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Burns & Grove (2009:184) state that ethical research is essential to generate a sound evidence-based practice for nursing, and involves protecting the rights of human subjects, balancing benefits and risks in a study, obtaining informed consent from subjects, and submitting a research proposal for institutional review. This is supported by Brink, (2006:31) who believes there are three ethical principles that guide researchers, namely; respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

All of these principles have been adhered to in the process of conducting the current study. This research study was conducted only after its proposal had been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Fort Hare. Permission to conduct the study was requested, and granted by the Department of Health, the Principal of the nursing college, and the Campus Head of the chosen campus - all before data collection.

In this study, student nurses had the right to decide whether or not to participate in the study, without the risk of penalty or unfair treatment. They also had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, to refuse to give information or to ask for clarity on the purpose of the study. To ensure student nurses' right to protection from discomfort and harm, they were informed that their names will not be revealed, to protect them from humiliation, if they should say negative things about the college.

An informed consent was signed by participants, after providing them with written information clarifying his/her role as a participant, what the research is about, and the right to participate or to refuse to participate. Only members of the research team will have access to the data (Burns & Grove, 2009:201).

3.14 SUMMARY

This chapter gave an explanation of the research design followed to conduct this study. A quantitative, non-experimental design, using a descriptive, explanatory approach, was used to explore and describe perceptions of student nurses on academic support at a public nursing college. The population for the study consisted of all the student nurses from second to fourth year level at one campus of the public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province, consisting of a total population of $n = 329$. A total of 189 student nurses participated in the study.

Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire, with 34 items on the students' perception of their educator's performance, and the corresponding importance of the items in assessing performance.

Data were analysed, using the Statistical Analysis Systems software, version 9.3. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarise data with the assistance of a statistician. Data were converted and condensed into an organised, visual representation in the form of tables, to give meaning to the readers of the research report. Ethical considerations adhered to were also discussed in this chapter. The following chapter deals with the discussion of findings of the research.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was carried out with the purpose of determining the perceived adequacy and effectiveness of academic support, through the opinions of student nurses. The research was limited to a public nursing college in the Eastern Cape. These student nurses are assumed to have had no other experiences with another service provider. This is slightly different from the guiding paper on Importance Performance Analysis (IPA). The method adopted for the paper is based on relative performance through a performance ratio measure. Due to the fact that no mention of experiences with other service providers is made in this study, the traditional IPA analysis would be more attractive and simpler in terms of interpretability.

The data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire, with 34 items on students' perception of their educator's performance, and the corresponding importance of the items in assessing performance. The findings presented in this chapter answer the following research questions:

- What are student nurses' perceptions on academic support provided at the public nursing college?
- Is there a gap between perceived academic support and the importance student nurses attach to academic support provided by the nursing college?

4.2 FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor analysis revealed four dimensions in the dataset. The four dimensions explained a total of about 60% of the variability in the data, which reflects on the acceptability of the construct validity. The 34 items of the questionnaire were theoretically classified into four dimensions, namely, Teaching-Learning Process, Service Excellence, Academic Advising and Campus Support Services. The dimensions extracted closely followed the theoretical classifications reflected in the questionnaire.

Cronbach's reliability coefficient alpha was calculated for each of the four dimensions and these were found to be at least 0.79 for the Academic Advising dimension, while the highest was 0.88 for the Campus Support Services dimension. All the reliability coefficients were greater than the acceptable threshold value of 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire was acceptably reliable.

The results of the factor analyses are presented in Tables 2a to 2d.

Table 2a: Structure of the campus support services dimension

Campus Support Services extracted dimension	Factor Loading	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Library staff are helpful and approachable	0.724	1.3	5	0.88
Library resources and services are adequate	0.819			
Library services are available after hours	0.746			
Computer laboratories are adequate and accessible	0.741			
Internet services are available and accessible	0.652			

Table 2b: Structure of the teaching and learning dimension

Teaching and Learning extracted dimension	Factor Loading	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Nurse educators help me set goals to work Towards	0.496	13.7	40.2	0.86
Nurse educators care about me as an Individual	0.625			
Class time tables are provided to students Timely	0.465			
Instructions on study guides are clear and easy to follow	0.476			
Use variety of teaching methods to facilitate learning	0.472			
Timeous provision of feedback on tests	0.574			
Timeous provision of feedback about student progress in a course	0.666			
Fair and unbiased treatment of individual students	0.744			
Nurse educators take into consideration student differences as they teach them	0.698			
Follow up for poor performance in tests is done by nurse educators	0.524			
The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent	0.706			
Nurse educators are usually available to help students with problems	0.528			
Nurse educators are sensitive to student learning needs	0.416			

Table 2c: Structure of the service excellence dimension

Service Excellence extracted dimension	Factor Loading	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Availability of tutoring services	0.416	3.8	11.2	0.83
Accessibility of healthcare services	0.663			
Availability of student counselling services	0.789			
Counselling staff care about students as individuals	0.742			
Accessibility of information on campus	0.53			
Awareness of campus events	0.717			
Availability of friendly complaints channels	0.638			

Table 2d: Structure of the academic advising dimension

Academic advising extracted dimension	Factor Loading	Eigen-value	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Approachability of educators	0.537	1.6	5	0.79
Educators' commitment to student success	0.468			
Communication of theory requirements for entry into examination	0.733			
Communication of practical requirements for entry into examination	0.781			
Availability of annual academic information	0.451			
The content of my major courses is valuable	0.599			
Study guides are provided to students timeously	0.51			
Freedom to participate actively in the teaching-learning process	0.646			

4.3 PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT NURSES

The questionnaire items were summarised using their means. The tables of the mean performance and mean importance are given for each item in Tables 3a – 3d, according to the sections of the questionnaire. See Appendix G for questionnaire coding.

4.3.1. Academic Advising

Table 3a: Mean for Academic Advising

Academic advising	Importance	Performance
PAA1: Approachability of educators	4.45	3.89
PAA2: Educator commitment to student success	4.44	4.01
PAA3: Assistance of educators in students' setting of goals	4.25	3.84
PAA4: Communication of theory requirements for examination	4.61	4.29
PAA5: Communication of practical requirements for examination	4.53	4.22
PAA6: Clarity of major subject requirements	4.34	3.76
Mean	4.44	4.00

The highest perceived performance was 4.01, corresponding to the 'educators' commitment to student success' item, while the least was 3.76 corresponding to 'clarity of major subject requirements'. The overall mean for performance was 4.00, reflecting high performance.

The overall mean for self-reported importance was 4.44, indicative of high importance.

4.3.2 Teaching-learning process

Table 3b: Mean for Teaching and Learning process

Teaching and learning	Importance	Performance
PTLP1: Educators' concern with individual students	4.10	3.67
PTLP2: Availability of major course materials	4.35	3.97
PTLP3: Timeous provision of lecture timetables	4.42	4.07
PTLP4: Timeous provision of study guides	4.48	4.32
PTLP5: User friendliness of study guides	4.34	3.43
PTLP6: Facilitation of learning by use of different teaching methods	4.29	3.52
PTLP7: Timeous provision of feedback on tests	4.37	3.86
PTLP8: Timeous provision of feedback on overall student progress	4.21	3.74
PTLP9: Fair and unbiased treatment of individual students	4.09	3.39
PTLP10: Consideration of individual student differences in teaching	4.16	3.44
PTLP11: Educators' follow-up on poor test performance	4.40	4.01
PTLP12: Freedom to actively participate in the learning process	4.40	4.20
PTLP13: Excellent quality of instruction	4.20	3.61
PTLP14: Educators' availability for consultation	4.23	3.44
PTLP15: Educators' sensitivity to student learning needs	4.07	3.31
Mean	4.27	3.73

The highest perceived performance was found to be 4.32, corresponding to the 'timeous provision of study guides' item. The least perceived performance is 3.31, corresponding to the item of 'educators' sensitivity to student learning needs'. The overall mean for performance of teaching and learning was 3.73 which reflect that performance is generally high.

All the means for self-reported importance were above 4, with an overall mean score of 4.27 which means the importance of teaching and learning was rated high.

4.3.3 Campus Support Services

Table 3c: Mean for Campus Support Services

Campus support services	Importance	Performance
PCSS1: Helpfulness and approachability of library staff	4.16	2.12
PCSS2: Adequacy of library resources and services	4.13	2.10
PCSS3: Availability of library services after hours	4.08	1.91
PCSS4: Adequacy and accessibility of computer facilities	4.18	1.66
PCSS5: Availability and accessibility of internet services	4.03	1.65
PCSS6: Ready availability of tutorial services	4.13	2.53
PCSS7: Availability of academic student counselling services	4.27	2.69
Mean	4.14	2.09

The least mean perceived performance was 1.65, recorded for the 'availability and accessibility of internet services' item. This is closely followed by 1.66 for the 'adequacy and accessibility of computer facilities' item. The rest of the items have mean scores in the close neighbourhood of 2. This means that for these items the perceived performance was quite low, and at best the respondents were not sure how they would rate the performance in those instances. The overall mean for performance was 2.09, denoting low performance in the area of campus support services.

The overall mean for self-reported importance was 4.14, meaning the importance level is high.

4.3.4 Service Excellence

Table 3d: Mean for service excellence

Service excellence	Importance	Performance
PSE1: Availability of campus-based healthcare facilities	4.32	2.19
PSE2: Availability of social/personal student counselling services	4.37	2.72
PSE3: Professionalism of student counsellors	4.24	2.74
PSE4: Easy availability of general information	4.12	2.83
PSE5: General awareness about campus events	4.22	2.57
PSE6: Availability of friendly student complaints channels	4.26	2.56
Mean	4.26	2.60

The least mean perceived performance was 2.19, recorded for 'availability of campus-based health care facilities' item. The overall mean for performance of all attributes for service excellence was 2.60, indicating low performance. The overall mean for importance reflected a high rate of 4.3, which means importance level is high.

4.3.5 Overall mean for the questionnaire items

Table 4: Overall mean performance and mean importance

Service Attribute	Self-reported Importance	Perceived Performance
PAA1: Approachability of educators	4.45	3.89
PAA2: Educator commitment to student success	4.44	4.01
PAA3: Assistance of educators in students' setting of goals	4.25	3.84
PAA4: Communication of theory requirements for examination	4.61	4.29
PAA5: Communication of practical requirements for examination	4.53	4.22
PAA6: Clarity of major subject requirements	4.34	3.76
PTLP1: Educators' concern with individual students	4.10	3.67
PTLP2: Availability of major course materials	4.35	3.97
PTLP3: Timeous provision of lecture timetables	4.42	4.07
PTLP4: Timeous provision of study guides	4.48	4.32
PTLP5: User friendliness of study guides	4.34	3.43
PTLP6: Facilitation of learning by use of different teaching methods	4.29	3.52
PTLP7: Timeous provision of feedback on tests	4.37	3.86
PTLP8: Timeous provision of feedback on overall student progress	4.21	3.74
PTLP9: Fair and unbiased treatment of individual students	4.09	3.39
PTLP10: Consideration of individual student differences in teaching	4.16	3.44
PTLP11: Educators' follow up on poor test performance	4.40	4.01
PTLP12: Freedom to actively participate in the learning process	4.40	4.20
PTLP13: Excellent quality of instruction	4.20	3.61
PTLP14: Educators' availability for consultation	4.23	3.44
PTLP15: Educators' sensitivity to student learning needs	4.07	3.31
PCSS1: Helpfulness and approachability of library staff	4.16	2.12
PCSS2: Adequacy of library resources and services	4.13	2.10
PCSS3: Availability of library services after hours	4.08	1.91
PCSS4: Adequacy and accessibility of computer facilities	4.18	1.66
PCSS5: Availability and accessibility of internet services	4.03	1.65
PCSS6: Ready availability of tutorial services	4.13	2.53
PCSS7: Availability of academic student counselling services	4.27	2.69
PSE1: Availability of campus-based healthcare facilities	4.32	2.19
PSE2: Availability of social/personal student counselling services	4.37	2.72
PSE3: Professionalism of student counsellors	4.24	2.74
PSE4: Easy availability of general information	4.12	2.83
PSE5: General awareness about campus events	4.22	2.57
PSE6: Availability of friendly student complaints channels	4.26	2.56
Overall mean	4.27	3.24

The overall mean for all the service attributes combined was 3.24 for performance and 4.27 for importance, as shown in table 4. These results indicate that performance is lower than importance.

4.4 IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The data in Table 3 were used for the Traditional Importance-Performance Analysis, whose results are shown in figure 3.

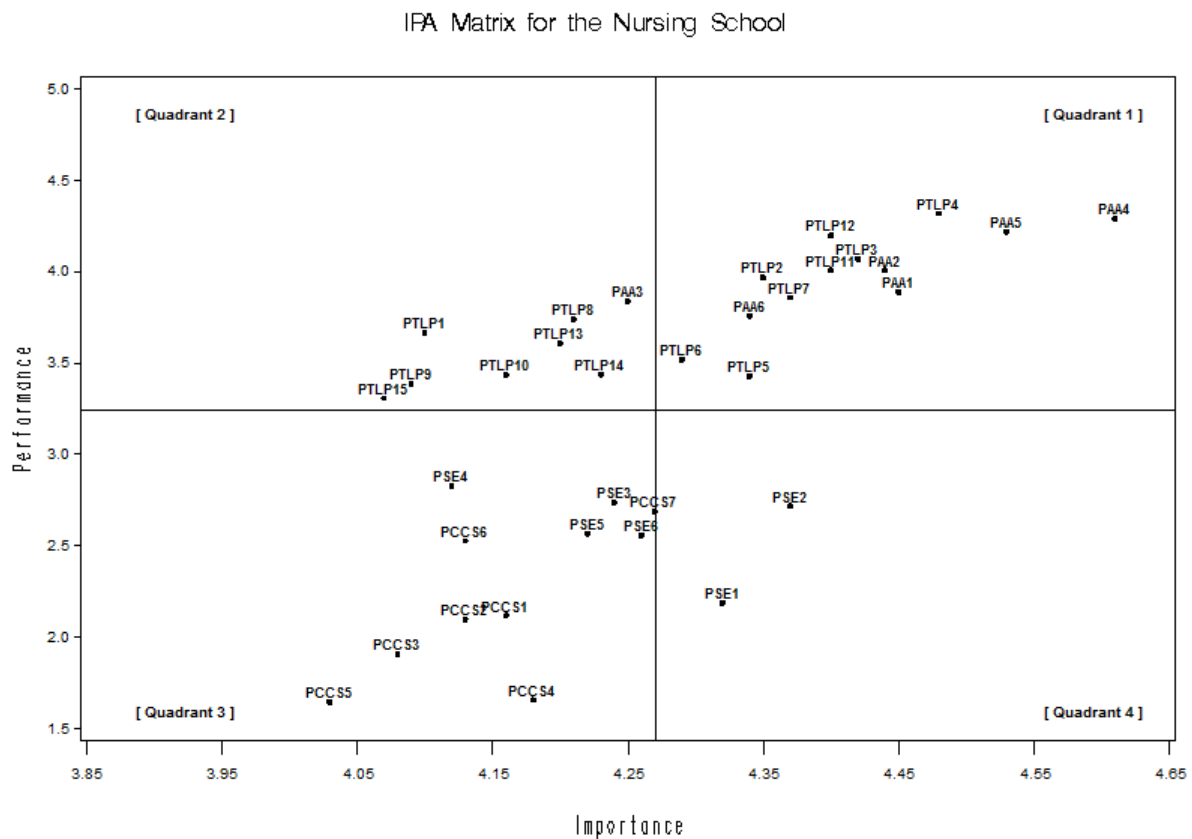


Figure 3: Importance-Performance Matrix for nursing college

Figure 3 shows the quadrant location of the service attributes performance and importance, on an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix. Three of the quadrants are almost equally represented, with the fourth quadrant having only two attributes. All the service attributes assessed by the questionnaire were plotted in the IPA matrix, according to their means, in relation to importance and performance. The detailed distribution of the service attributes in the IPA matrix is given below according quadrants.

4.4.1 Quadrant 1

Service attributes in Quadrant 1

PAA1: Approachability of educators
 PAA2: Educator commitment to student success
 PAA4: Communication of theory requirements for examination
 PAA5: Communication of practical requirements for examination
 PAA6: Clarity of major subject requirements
 PTLP2: Availability of major course materials
 PTLP3: Timeous provision of lecture timetables
 PTLP4: Timeous provision of study guides
 PTLP5: User friendliness of study guides
 PTLP7: Timeous provision of feedback on tests
 PTLP11: Educators' follow up on poor test performance
 PTLP12: Freedom to actively participate in the learning process

In this quadrant both performance and importance are high. These are the major strengths that are such that, if maintained or improved, they would directly benefit the institution. These are the service attributes in which institutional performance and the expectations of the service recipient have their most desirable relationship. They are the ones for which both parties are satisfied with the status quo.

These results show that educator's approachability and commitment to students, communication of theory and practical examination requirements, clarity of major subjects, timeous provision of user friendly study materials, timetables and feedback on tests, follow up on poor performers and conduciveness of the environment to learning, are the attributes with which both parties are satisfied. Management needs to make sure that these attributes are maintained, or maybe improved, for excellence.

4.4.2 Quadrant 2

Service attributes in Quadrant 2

PAA3: Assistance of educators in students' setting of goals

PTLP1: Educators' concern with individual students

PTLP6: Facilitation of learning by use of different teaching methods

PTLP8: Timeous provision of feedback on overall student progress

PTLP9: Fair and unbiased treatment of individual students

PTLP10: Consideration of individual student differences in teaching

PTLP13: Excellent quality of instruction

PTLP14: Educators' availability for consultation

PTLP15: Educators' sensitivity to student learning needs

In this quadrant, performance is high, while importance is low. The fact that importance of these attributes is low is an indication that whatever good the institution might be doing on these attributes is not necessarily of interest to the students. As such, management would be advised to channel resources committed to these attributes elsewhere, preferably to attributes in Quadrants 1 or 4. The results show that students do not really care about:

- i). assistance with setting their goals
- ii). individual attention or fairness/unbiasedness of educators
- iii). use of a variety of teaching methods by their educators
- iv). educators' sensitivity to student needs and availability for consultations
- v). general quality of instruction

As such, resources that were dedicated to improving these service attributes should be dedicated to other attributes of service provision. It should be noted that all these attributes are about the educators putting extra effort into making the teaching and learning process a pleasant experience.

4.4.3 Quadrant 3

Service attributes in Quadrant 3

PCSS1: Helpfulness and approachability of library staff
 PCSS2: Adequacy of library resources and services
 PCSS3: Availability of library services after hours
 PCSS4: Adequacy and accessibility of computer facilities
 PCSS5: Availability and accessibility of internet services
 PCSS6: Ready availability of tutorial services
 PCSS7: Availability of academic student counselling services
 PSE3: Professionalism of student counsellors
 PSE4: Easy availability of general information
 PSE5: General awareness of campus events
 PSE6: Availability of friendly student complaints channels

All the campus support service attributes, and most of the service excellence attributes, belong to this quadrant. In this quadrant both performance and importance are low. Attributes in this quadrant are those that are not important to both the provider and the recipient. This shows that campus student support services are not important to the students, and coincidentally, the management does not seem to be investing in those either. Those attributes of service excellence that have to do with professionalism of student counsellors, complaints channels, campus events awareness, and availability of information in general, are not of general interest to both parties.

4.4.4 Quadrant 4

Service attributes in Quadrant 4

PSE1: Availability of campus-based healthcare facilities
 PSE2: Availability of social/personal student counselling services

In this quadrant performance is low, while importance is high. This study identified two attributes belonging to this quadrant, namely, availability of campus based healthcare facilities and personal student counselling services. This shows that the institution needs to pay more attention to campus-based healthcare facilities and personal counselling services.

This suggests that resources may need to be redirected from Quadrants 2 and/or 3 to healthcare and counselling services. It should be noted that the counselling services deemed important by students are not of an academic nature, but rather personal.

4.4.5 IPA Summary

The results of the Importance-Performance Analysis show that those attributes of the teaching and learning process that have to do with the provision of learning materials and the actual learning process, are important both to the students and the management. The same applies to academic advising, where all the attributes are in Quadrant 1. On the other hand, students expressed a need for healthcare and counselling services on campus, to which they feel the management is not paying enough attention. The rest of the attributes were found to be in Quadrants 2 or 3, where the importance is low. As such, whether or not the management improves on these attributes, the overall student satisfaction is not going to be affected. This means that the management may have to consider shifting resources from those quadrants to Quadrant 4, so that performance ratings in healthcare and counselling services can rise. At the same time, they may have to consider channelling more resources to Quadrant 1 attributes in order to widen the institution's competitive advantage.

4.5 DERIVATION OF CONSTRUCT VARIABLES AND THEIR ANALYSIS

Based on the item groupings suggested by the factor analysis, new variables representing the extracted dimensions were derived. These were derived as the arithmetic mean of the items within a given extracted dimension. These are the variables that will be subjected to further analysis. The further analysis was to compare if there is any significant difference in the mean performance and importance of service attributes. The paired samples t-test was used to test for the significance of differences.

The results are contained in Table 4. The table contains the mean of the self-stated performance and importance, mean of their difference and its corresponding 95% confidence interval, the t-statistic value, and the p-value. All the means of the

importance of the service attributes were greater than 4.0, which indicates that the students generally place high importance on all aspects of the services offered by the nursing college. On the other hand, the means of all the performance of service attributes were at most 4.1 for the Academic Advising Service. The results suggest poor performance in the areas of student support services on campus, and service excellence, with means of 1.9 and 2.6, respectively. The corresponding importance means for these services were 4.1 and 4.3, respectively. This shows a rather big gap between the importance placed on the services and the actual performance in the delivery of such services.

All the means of the Performance-Importance differences were negative, which shows that performance is lower than importance. All the corresponding 95% confidence intervals of the mean differences have negative confidence limits, showing statistical evidence of significant differences between performance and importance, with importance being higher. The p-values are all very small, confirming a highly significant difference between performance and importance.

Table 5: Performance-Importance paired samples t-tests

Construct	Mean performance	Mean Importance	Mean Difference	95% CI	t value	p-value
Teaching and Learning	3.6	4.2	-0.6	(- 0.7; - 0.5)	-11.5	<.0001
Service Excellence	2.6	4.3	-1.7	(- 1.8; - 1.5)	-19.4	<.0001
Academic Advising	4.1	4.5	-0.4	(- 0.5; - 0.3)	-9.1	<.0001
Campus Support Service	1.9	4.1	-2.2	(- 2.4; - 2.0)	-23.1	<.0001

4.6 INCORPORATION OF DERIVED CONSTRUCTS INTO IPA MATRIX

The mean performance and importance values of the derived constructs are presented in Table 4. Based on those, it can be seen that Teaching and Learning is in Quadrant 2. This means that the teaching and learning process has a high performance but low importance. Service excellence has low performance but has a mean importance score that exactly coincides with the mean importance of all the service attributes combined. This suggests that service excellence can be viewed as an aspect of customer satisfaction that has moderate importance and is of low priority for the institution. Academic advising belongs to Quadrant 1, which means that both the institution and the students are happy with the performance and importance.

Students find academic advising to be of high importance, and they feel the institution is doing a good job of it. Campus student support services belong to Quadrant 3, which suggests that students are not so concerned about support services on campus, and feel that the institution is also not doing much in so far as these services are concerned.

4.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher presented the analysis and findings of the study, according to factor analysis, mean for perceptions, Importance-Performance Analysis, derivation of construct variables, and incorporation of derived constructs into the IPA matrix. The following chapter will discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4 the researcher gave a detailed description of the results of the study. This chapter presents the discussion and summary of findings, together with recommendations based on the results of this study. These findings are discussed, based on the information obtained from participants in the current study. The discussion also takes into account the literature related to the academic support of students, and the purpose of this study, which is to explore and describe the perceived performance and importance of academic support of student nurses at a public nursing college.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings will be discussed in relation to the questionnaire items, with service attributes grouped under academic advising, teaching-learning process, campus support services and service excellence. The discussion addresses the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of student nurses on academic support at a public nursing college?
- Is there a gap between the performance and the importance of academic support, as perceived by student nurses?

5.2.1 PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE

5.2.1.1 Academic advising

The overall means of all performance of service attributes for Academic Advising were at the most 4.00, as shown in Table 2a, with the highest mean recorded at 4.01 and the lowest at 3.76. These results suggest that student nurses reported high performance by nurse educators as academic advisors, in the areas of approachability, competence, personal concern for student success and communication of examination requirements.

These results are consistent with findings of previous studies, which reported high levels of satisfaction among students, with student support services. In a study by Galardi in the United States of America, (2012: 77); adult learners identified academic advising and other facilities, such as parking and library facilities, as the support services that would best help them meet their needs, and directly support and facilitate their education. High usage of these services was revealed in the findings of the study. Academic advising and library services assisted students in attaining their goals, unlike social activities and cultural programmes (Galardi, 2012: 76).

Another study by Gujjar *et al*, (2009:362) revealed that general support services provided at the Open University of Sri Lanka, were significantly better, and students were more satisfied, as compared to those at Allama Iqbal Open University.

The results support literature that states that students' perception of academic support is directly related to their course satisfaction. It can then be concluded that if students are satisfied with the provision of academic support, it is more likely that they will remain in the programme and be successful. Lee *et al*. 2011, in their study, added that appropriate support strategies to meet students' needs and learning styles, are likely to enhance their learning experience and increase their chances of success.

The fact that student nurses reported high performance with academic support, resulting in satisfaction with student services, indicates that nurse educators are doing an effective job in supporting the students. Previous authors on education and training of students supported the principle that learners should be supported to achieve the maximum possible independence in learning (Landsberg *et al*, 2005:48; Kotze'2008: 123).

5.2.1.2 Teaching-learning process

The overall mean performance for teaching and learning is 3.73 (see table 2b). The highest perceived performance was found to be 4.32, corresponding to the 'timeous provision of study guides' item, while the least was 3.31, corresponding with the educators' sensitivity to student learning needs (see table 2b).

These results show high satisfaction from students in the aspect of teaching and learning, which includes instructional effectiveness, in and out of the classroom, the curriculum, courses offered, provision of learning needs, and sensitivity of nurse educators to the learning needs of their students.

According to Lee *et al*, 2011(online), Instructional effectiveness refers to guidance to learning, which includes answering students' questions, correcting their misunderstandings, providing clear instructions on course requirements, giving relevant resources and giving constructive feedback on assignments and performance. It also includes dialogues and course structures to motivate and encourage students to learn and master the course content and achieve learning outcomes.

The results confirm that student nurses agree that nurse educators are doing their job, in providing learning support to ensure the academic development of learners, which encompasses training and orientation as regards subject content. These results are consistent with previous research findings that it is the responsibility of the education institution to ensure that students are offered high quality education, producing competent health care professionals, ready to provide quality patient care (Meyer & van Niekerk, 2008:107).

5.2.1.3 Campus Support Services

The overall mean performance for service attributes, relating to Campus Support Services, is 2.09, as reflected in table 2c, indicating the worst performance of academic support reported by students in this study. The least mean perceived performance is 1.65, recorded for the 'availability and accessibility of internet services' item. This is closely followed by 1.66 for the 'adequacy and accessibility of computer facilities' item. The remainder of the attributes relating to adequacy and availability of library resources and services, have mean scores, ranging between 1.91 and 2.69 (see table 2). From this, one can conclude that students are not happy with the availability and accessibility of computing and internet facilities, library resources and tutorial services.

These results suggest poor performance related to library resources and services, computing and internet facilities, tutoring and counselling services. These services were identified by Shelton (2001:71) as, “Functional Support” and by Lee *et al*, (2011: 158- 163) as “Technical Support”, and highlighted as the essential element of student support services.

The results indicating poor performance in the aspect of campus support services, causes great concern, since students need support in the use of technology in the 21st century, and access to a well-equipped library. Shelton (2001) indicated that, in order to promote retention of nursing students, the college needs to provide students with both functional and psychological support.

Based on the researcher’s knowledge as a lecturer in the institution, the poor performance reported by student nurses may be due to the fact that the library, computer and internet services at the nursing college under study are grossly inadequate. For example, a library with limited space and resources is available only in one site of the campus, making it impossible for the students in another site to access the library. The library operates within working hours only.

Again, a very small computer laboratory is available only in one site of the campus, for both nurse educators and students. Students in another site cannot access these services. Accessibility of the computer laboratory is even restricted during office hours, by allocating certain days and times during which it is available for use. Even nurse educators may only access internet services under these conditions.

5.2.1.4 Service Excellence

The overall mean performance for service excellence attributes, is 2.6, as shown in Table 2d, also suggesting poor performance in this area. The services offered here include health care services, counselling services - especially for personal problems - information on campus activities and facilities, and channels for expressing student complaints.

The findings of poor performance in service excellence, indicates improvement priorities needed by the college, as most authors highlighted the need for integration of academic and non-academic support services, which enable colleges to

implement programmes that address all types of student needs. Students need to be supported in totality. A study into the role of factors for improving retention in higher education, showed that non-academic factors, especially self-confidence and motivation to achieve, were the strongest reasons for student success in higher education (Ooms et al : 90).

In the report by Lotkowski *et al* (2004: 22), they recommended that colleges and universities take an integrated approach to their retention efforts that incorporate both academic and non-academic factors into the design and development of programmes, so as to create a socially inclusive and supportive academic environment that addresses the social, emotional and academic needs of students. Integrating academic and non-academic information enables colleges to design and implement programmes that address all types of student needs..

5.2.2 SELF-REPORTED IMPORTANCE

The results show that the self-reported importance of the service attributes was generally high. The mean for all service attributes of academic support related to all four areas covered in the questionnaire is above 4. The least mean for self-reported importance was 4.03, for the 'availability and accessibility of internet services' item. It should be noted that, while this might be the least mean for importance, its importance level is still high.

These results are consistent with existing literature that identified academic support of students as a crucial element for any learning institution. In an earlier study by Galardi, (2012: 77), in the United States of America, high levels of satisfaction were self-reported, for student support services such as; library facilities and services, academic advising, computer services, parking, financial aid services, food services and college orientation services. These findings are indicative of the fact that students find student support services to be important, irrespective of the country.

5.3 IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

This analysis was performed to answer the second research question, which sought to investigate any gap between the performance and importance of academic support at the nursing college.

5.3.1 Quadrant 1

In this quadrant, both performance and importance are high. This means that the service provider is doing an effective job, and the service recipient is satisfied.

The results show that performance is high for service attributes relating to academic advising and teaching-learning process. Service attributes for academic advising refer to the nurse educator's approachability, commitment to students, communication of theory and practical examination requirements and clarity of major subjects. Teaching-learning process refer to timeous provision of user friendly study materials, timetables and feedback on tests, follow up on poor performers and conduciveness of the environment for learning. These are the service attributes with which student nurses are satisfied, as recipients.

Consequently, the college management needs to make sure that these attributes are maintained, or improved, so that the college excels in the provision of these services (Deng, Kuo & Chen, 2008: 4).

5.3.2 Quadrant II

In this quadrant performance is high, while importance is low. This means that the service provider is doing well, but the recipient does not care much about it.

The results show that students at the college under study are not much concerned about assistance with setting their goals, individual attention or fairness of educators, the use of a variety of teaching methods, educators' sensitivity to student needs, availability for consultations and the general quality of instruction. The fact that the importance of these attributes is low is an indication that whatever good the institution might be doing on these attributes is not necessarily of interest to the students.

The management scheme for this quadrant is "Possible Overkill". This means, therefore, that the college, as the service provider, would rather shift interest to some other issues that the students find important for the attainment of their goals (Deng, Kuo & Chen, 2008: 4-5).

5.3.3 Quadrant III

In this quadrant, both performance and importance are low. Attributes in this quadrant are those that are not important, neither to the provider nor the recipient. If performance and importance are both low, it means the institution is providing poor service, but fortunately the recipients are not much bothered about it, because the issues under consideration are of no value to them.

According to the IPA matrix of the college, all the campus support service attributes, and most of the service excellence attributes, belong to this quadrant. This shows that campus student support services are not important to the students, and coincidentally, the management does not seem to be investing much in those either. The attributes of service excellence that are not of central interest to both parties are those that have to do with professionalism of student counsellors, complaints channels, campus events awareness and availability of information in general

The management scheme for this quadrant is indicated as “Low Priority”. As such, resources that were dedicated to improving these service attributes should now be dedicated to other attributes of service provision. All these attributes are about the educators making an extra effort to make the teaching and learning process a pleasant experience (Deng, Kuo & Chen, 2008: 5).

5.3.4 Quadrant IV

In this quadrant, performance is low, while importance is high. This means that the service provider is providing poor service, because the recipients find the aspects to be important for the attainment of their goals, while the provider is found to be lacking.

This study identified only two attributes belonging to this quadrant, namely:

- i). The availability of campus-based healthcare facilities
- ii). Personal student counselling services.

These results show that there is a big gap between the performance of these services and the importance perceived by students. This shows that the institution needs to pay more attention to campus-based healthcare facilities and personal counselling services. The management scheme for this quadrant is “Concentrate Here”. Improvement is therefore necessary in these aspects. This suggests that

resources may need to be redirected from Quadrants 2 and/or 3 to healthcare and counselling services, even though the counselling services, deemed important by students, are not of an academic nature, but are rather personal (Deng, Kuo & Chen, 2008: 5).

These results are consistent with existing literature, as stated by Matee (2011: 77), that student performance in the degree programme should be viewed as more than a mere function of ability, effort and motivation, or agent-level attributes that can be shaped to effect good pass rates. Instead, the orientation meant that student experiences and expectations of support were seen as having been formed by the psychological, social and infrastructural resources, in dynamic interaction with the individual-level attributes of students.

Globally, higher education institutions do have health centres which are expected to provide adequate health care for the community of the institution. Health services cover a wide range of services in health promotion, illness prevention, early detection of diseases and management of health problems within the community, which, in this case, is the students. Health services are designed to meet the health needs of the students, through the use of available health facilities by health professionals (Obiechina & Ekenedo, 2013: 454-457).

Obiechina & Ekenedo (2013: 454-457) further stated that a study conducted in Tanzania on evaluation of health services, revealed that most students benefitted from, and utilized, modern health services. The results of this study also confirmed that a modern health system is likely to benefit the student population.

These services are crucial for nursing students in this era of HIV and AIDS, where large numbers of people are either infected or affected by the pandemic. According to Statistics South Africa, the prevalence of HIV was estimated at 5.26 million in 2013 (Statistics South Africa, 2013:4). Another aspect that needs to be considered is that the students at the college are adults with social and psychological or emotional challenges, who could benefit from professional counselling services.

5.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by the Caring Curriculum Model, which integrates the pioneering work of Bevis (1989a), Leininger (1981), Murray (1989), Watson (1988) and others, who believe that caring is the essential core of nursing (Billings & Halstead, 2009: 219). According to Cherry & Jacob (2008: 98), the core of this theory is the implementation of Watsons' ten carative factors to promote health and equilibrium (Billings & Halstead, 2009: 219).

The core values of the Caring Curriculum Model are supported by the findings of this study, in that students expressed a need for healthcare and personal counselling services on campus. This clearly indicates that they need to be cared for. Wade & Kasper (2004:162) assert that when students perceive the climate of nursing education as caring, they learn a professional way of caring for their patients. Caring interactions between the academic staff and students reflect the very nature of the professional -- client relationship, Watson (1988a) cited in Wade &Kasper, (2004; 162).

The carative factors from Watson's theory, that were chosen to guide this study, included the development of a helping-trust relationship, the promotion of interpersonal teaching-learning, the provision for a supportive, protective and or corrective mental, physical, socio-cultural and spiritual environment, and assistance with the gratification of human needs.

The need for the factors chosen as the theoretical basis of this study is highly supported by the results, which identified healthcare and personal counselling services as areas that needed much improvement.

In support of the theoretical framework of this study, literature reveals that the care given by nurse educators to their students is important in replicating this behaviour when delivering patient care, Jinks(1997) cited in Ooms *et al*, (2013: 90).

5.5 LIMITATIONS

The study was conducted only in one campus of the public nursing college, and the results cannot therefore be generalised for other campuses of the College of Nursing.

The study followed a quantitative design only, giving no opportunity for participants to expatiate on their agreement or disagreement in responding to the survey.

5.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.6.1 Perceived performance

The results reflect that student nurses reported high performance by nurse educators for academic advising, which included approachability, competence and personal concern for student success.

The highest perceived performance was found to be 4.32, corresponding to the 'timeous provision of study guides' item. This was followed by the communication of theory and practical requirements for examinations items.

Regarding service attributes related to campus support services, the perceived performance was quite low for:

- library resources
- computer facilities
- internet services.

5.6.2 Self-reported importance

The results show that the self-reported importance of the customer attributes was generally high, with an overall mean of 4.27. The least self-reported mean importance was 4.03, recorded for the 'availability and accessibility of 'internet services' item. While this might be the lowest of the means for importance, its importance level is still high.

5.6.3 Importance-performance Analysis

The results of the Importance-Performance Analysis show that:

Performance and importance is high for academic advising, indicating that both the institution and the students are satisfied with the service provided.

The service attributes of the teaching and learning process, that have to do with the provision of learning materials and the actual learning process, are important to students, and the college is performing well on these services.

In the IPA analysis, Campus Student Support services fell in the quadrant with low performance and low importance, which suggests that students are not very concerned about support services on campus, and feel that the institution is also not doing much, in so far as these services are concerned. It can be argued that, even though these service attributes were rated with high importance by students, some are less important than others. Whether importance is high or low is relative to the mean importance. Anything that is lower than the mean importance is considered to be of low importance relative to the mean.

Service excellence has low performance but has a mean importance score that coincides exactly with the mean importance of all the service attributes combined. This suggests that service excellence can be viewed as an aspect of customer satisfaction that has moderate importance, and is of low priority for the institution.

Service attributes relating to the availability of campus-based healthcare facilities and personal counselling services, are rated with low performance but high importance, indicating that students expressed a need for healthcare and personal counselling services on campus, which they feel is not paid sufficient attention by management.

All the means of the Performance-Importance differences were negative, which shows that performance is lower than importance. This shows a big gap between the importance placed on the services, and the actual performance in the delivery of such services. Under normal circumstances, performance should not rate lower than importance.

The study has identified improvement areas for the education and training of nurses, which the college management might have overlooked, as they appear to be areas not directly related to academic support.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

Perceived performance for aspects relating to academic advising is rated high by the student nurses; hence there is satisfaction among the students regarding:

- approachability and accessibility of nurse educators
- concern of nurse educators for their students
- communication of theory and practical requirements for examinations
- clarity of major subjects of the course.

Performance for aspects relating to 'Teaching and Learning Process' is also rated high, indicating student satisfaction on matters relating to:

- timeous provision of timetables and study guides
- timeous feedback on tests and student progress
- excellent instruction in class, and on study material.

The results suggest poor performance in the areas of student support services on campus; hence students are not happy with the following:

- availability and accessibility of library resources and services
- availability and accessibility of computer and internet services.

Student nurses at the college are not happy with aspects of service excellence, relating to:

- campus-based health care facilities
- personal student counselling services.

The study has identified a big gap between perceived performance and importance of academic support at the nursing college under study, as the general performance was rated lower than importance.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

5.8.1 Maintenance of strengths

The college management need to devise strategies to maintain the strengths relating to academic advising, and the teaching and learning process, as the nurse educators were identified by this study as doing an effective job on these aspects.

This can be achieved by equipping nurse educators with up-to-date knowledge in the field of nursing, nursing education, and health industry, through personnel development, in-service training, and attending and partaking in workshops, seminars and conferences.

The management therefore needs to ensure the availability of resources, such as funds for infrastructure for fully equipped classrooms, modern equipped libraries, textbooks, and computers, both for students and nurse educators.

5.8.2 Healthcare and counselling services

Availability of healthcare and counselling services on campus is required. Resources may need to be redirected from other aspects which were found to be of low importance by recipients, to healthcare and counselling services which are badly needed. These are the facilities that bother students most at the college. Even though the healthcare and counselling services seem not to be of academic nature, they may have an impact on academic progress.

5.8.3 Student support programmes:

The establishment of additional student support programmes is necessary, to assist students who are struggling to succeed in the course of their training. These programmes should be available and accessible to all the students in need, and can include the following:

- Tutorial services and
- Peer mentoring.

Jafta, (2013: 166) recommended that students should be given the task and responsibility of searching for information for themselves, rather than being passive

absorbers of knowledge from nurse educators. Students should be actively involved in knowledge searches, through the use of modern technology, so as to enhance their learning skills and improve active knowledge construction, which they will remember for longer periods and retrieve easily when needed.

The programme offered by a nursing education institution has to make provision for sufficient learning opportunities, to ensure competent, critical, thinking and autonomous nurses who are able to provide nursing and healthcare within their legal scope of practice (Kotze', 2008: 64).

5.8.4 Library and information resources

Improvement in availability and accessibility of library resources and services is necessary, to build the capacity of students to access information independently, and to facilitate research within the college. The college needs to provide fully equipped libraries, which are accessible even after hours, with adequate staff who are willing to assist students in accessing resources.

Improvement in availability and accessibility of computing and internet facilities for students and nurse educators is needed. Computer laboratories with adequate resources need to be provided.

Supportive technology is an essential tool in every organization, and it assists in organising activities, receiving and disseminating information and managing all types of resources (Kotze', 2008: 156). According to Mokgokong (2007: 54), technology has advanced to the extent where computers are used as instructional tools which assist in enhancing the academic achievement of students. Computers can have a powerful motivating effect on a student, by compelling the student to frequently interact with the learning content.

5.8.5 Research

Further research needs to be conducted on a bigger sample representative of the total population of nursing colleges in the Eastern Cape and throughout South Africa

Further research is required to investigate the impact of the lack of health care and counselling services within the nursing college.

Research is needed to investigate the effects of poor performance in providing student support, such as library and information services.

Other studies should be conducted, using a qualitative approach in order to get in-depth information on student support.

5.9 CONTRIBUTION

The application of the Traditional Importance-Performance Analysis to identify the gap between performance and importance is new, and was not found in literature in the field of general education or nursing education. The IPA is a simple and effective technique that has been applied to guide quality-based marketing strategies, and to assist practitioners in prioritizing attributes when enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction. The IPA was used effectively in the context of nursing education, in which it was applied for identification of improvement priorities in the nursing college.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE FROM UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR:
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**
Private Bag X1314, Alice 5700
Tel: +27 (0) 40602 2403
Fax: +27 (0) 86 628 2944
tsnyders@ufh.ac.za



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Reference Number: YAK011SSIN01

Project title: **Perceived academic support of student nurses at a public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province**

Nature of Project: M.Cur

Principal Researcher: Nqatyiswa Sineke

Supervisor: Dr EM Yako

Co-Supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribe format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

The UREC retains the right to

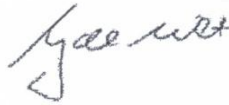
- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principles or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require

2

- The conditions contained in this Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project

The Ethics Committee wishes you well in your research.

Yours sincerely



Prof Gideon de Wet
Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic Affairs and Chair

16 July 2012

2

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

From:

To: 0437434265

17/08/2012 09:15

#237 P. 002/002

**Eastern Cape Department of Health**

Enquiries: Zonwabele Merile

Tel No: 040 808 0830

Date: 16th August 2012

Fax No: 043 642 1409

e-mail address: zonwabele.merile@impilo.ecprov.gov.za

Dear Ms N Sineke

Re: Perceived academic support of student nurses at a public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province

The Department of Health would like to inform you that your application for conducting a research on the abovementioned topic has been approved based on the following conditions:

1. During your study, you will follow the submitted protocol with ethical approval and can only deviate from it after having a written approval from the Department of Health in writing.
2. You are advised to ensure, observe and respect the rights and culture of your research participants and maintain confidentiality of their identities and shall remove or not collect any information which can be used to link the participants.
3. The Department of Health expects you to provide a progress on your study every 3 months (from date you received this letter) in writing.
4. At the end of your study, you will be expected to send a full written report with your findings and implementable recommendations to the Epidemiological Research & Surveillance Management. You may be invited to the department to come and present your research findings with your implementable recommendations.
5. Your results on the Eastern Cape will not be presented anywhere unless you have shared them with the Department of Health as indicated above.

Your compliance in this regard will be highly appreciated.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR: EPIDEMIOLOGICAL RESEARCH & SURVEILLANCE MANAGEMENT

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE COLLEGE PRINCIPAL



Room: 1st Floor • Global Life Building • Independence Avenue • Bhebe • Eastern Cape
 Private Bag X1025 • Bhebe • 5905 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
 Tel: +27 (0)40 808 3619 • Fax: +27 (0)40 808 3690/3668/6407
 Website: www.eodco.gov.za
 Email: nomuyiseko.links@impro.eoprov.gov.za

MEMORANDUM

TO	MS N. SINEKE
FROM	MRS N LINKS: PRINCIPAL: LILITHA COLLEGE OF NURSING
SUBJECT	PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ONE OF LILITHA COLLEGE CAMPUSES: (EAST LONDON CAMPUS)
DATE	24 AUGUST 2012

1. The subject matter above refers.
2. This correspondence serves to confirm that permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research in one of Lilitha Nursing College Campus: East London Campus.
3. The College will be waiting to be forwarded the results/recommendations from your study for implementation purpose by the college campuses.
4. The organization takes this opportunity to wish you success in your studies.

.....
 Mrs N Links: Principal Lilitha College of Nursing



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Imvavala eNingqanawo

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE CAMPUS HEAD

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
HEALTH



LILITHA COLLEGE OF NURSING IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CONSORTIUM OF
UNIVERSITIES (WSU, NMMU & FORT HARE)
Private Bag X9023, EAST LONDON, 5200
Tel: (043) 742 0684 Fax: (043) 761 1802

Enquiries: X. M Mali

Date: 04 - 10 - 2012

TO: MS N. SINEKE
LECTURER
EAST LONDON CAMPUS

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT THE EAST
LONDON CAMPUS

Your request for permission to conduct a research study at the campus is granted. Let us know the date and time when you will doing the study.

We wish you success.

C N DLABANTU (CAMPUS HEAD)

CN/xmm

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Title of the Research:

Perceived academic support of student nurses at a public nursing college in the Eastern Cape Province

Researcher: Ms Sineke N.

Purpose of the study:

The main purpose of this study is to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of academic support provided to student nurses at the public nursing college and identify gaps in the provision of support and make recommendations on building effective support systems.

You are requested to participate in this research study by filling in a questionnaire.

Participation or non participation will have no impact on you in any way. Answering the questionnaire will take you approximately 30 minutes.

Potential Risks and Discomfort

There are no known risks or discomfort associated with your participation in this research.

Potential Benefits

You will not benefit directly from your participation in this study. However, the recommendations resulting from this study may influence the future development of policy guidelines for support of student nurses in the College.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be respected. Unless required by law, no information that might directly or indirectly reveal your identity will be released or published without your specific consent to the disclosure.

Participation or withdrawal from the study:

Taking part in this research study is your choice and you are free to withdraw at any time, should you decide. However your participation will be highly appreciated. There will be no penalty if you decide to decline and your choice to leave the study will not affect your relationship with your institution.

Contact details

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research you may contact my supervisor, Dr E.M Yako at this number: cell 073 181 3123 or at eyako@ufh.ac.za

Rights of the research subject

For questions about your rights while participating in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at University of Fort Hare, The Research Ethics Committee at 043 704 7588.

My signature below indicates that I have agreed to participate in this study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep with your records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Investigator's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F: PERCEPTION OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

IDENTIFICATION CODE:

SITE:

DATE:

PERSONAL DETAILS

AGE : -----YRS

GENDER : MALE-----FEMALE-----

LEVEL OF TRAINING : 2ND YEAR----- 3RD YEAR----- 4TH YEAR-----

INSTRUCTIONS: The attached questionnaire forms part of a research project on perceptions of academic support. You are not requested to furnish your name; you are requested to answer all the questions as honestly and as accurately as you can. There is no right or wrong answer.

For each of the following statements mark the response that best reflect your views about academic support in your institution (part A) and also indicate how important is each statement to you (part B), by rating your responses as per scales provided from 1-5. Mark with X in the box appropriate to your response.

PART A: 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE, 2 =DISAGREE, 3 = NOT SURE, 4 = AGREE =, 5 = STRONGLY AGREE

PART B: 1= UNIMPORTANT, 2= LEAST IMPORTANT, 3= NOT SURE, 4= IMPORTANT, 5 = VERY IMPORTANT

[illegible]

[illegible]

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DIS-AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	UNIMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT SURE	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Campus Support Services										
22. Library staff are helpful and approachable										
23. Library resources and services are adequate										
24. Library services are available after hours										
25. Computer laboratories are adequate and accessible										
26. Internet services are available and accessible										
27. Tutoring services are readily available										
28. Student counselling services for academic problems are available										
Service excellence										
29. Health services clinics are available for students within the college										
30. Student counselling services for personal problems are available										
31. Counseling staff care about students as individuals										
32. I seldom get to run-around when seeking information on this campus										
33. I generally know what is happening on campus										
34. Channels of expressing student complaints are readily available										

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

RESEARCHER'S NAME : N. Sineke

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Source: Adapted from Bryant J.L. 2006. Assessing expectations and perceptions of the campus experience: The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory. In Cohen, A.M. (ed). *New directions for community colleges*. Wiley InterScience. [Online at www.interscience.wiley.com DOI: 10.1002/CC.234]

APPENDIX G: PERCEPTION OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT QUESTIONNAIRE CODING

STATEMENT	CODING	
	Performance	Importance
Academic advising		
1. Nurse educators are approachable	PAA1	IAA1
2. Nurse educators are concerned about my success as an individual	PAA2	IAA2
3. Nurse educators help me set goals to work toward	PAA3	IAA3
4. Theory requirements for entry into examination are communicated to me as a student	PAA4	IAA4
5. Practical requirements for entry into examination are communicated to me as a student	PAA5	IAA5
6. Major subjects of the course for each academic year are clear and reasonable	PAA6	IAA6
Teaching-learning process		
7. Nurse educators care about me as an individual	PTLP1	ITLP1
8. The content of my major courses is valuable	PTLP2	ITLP2
9. Class time tables are provided to students timely	PTLP3	ITLP3
10. Study guides are provided to students timeously	PTLP4	ITLP4
11. Instructions on study guides are clear and easy to follow	PTLP5	ITLP5
12. A variety of teaching methods is used to facilitate learning	PTLP6	ITLP6
13. Nurse educators provide timely feedback on tests	PTLP7	ITLP7
14. Nurse educators provide timely feedback about student progress in a course	PTLP8	ITLP8
15. Nurse educators are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students	PTLP9	ITLP9
16. Nurse educators take into consideration student differences as they teach them	PTLP10	ITLP10
17. Follow up for poor performance in tests is done by nurse educators	PTLP11	ITLP11
18. I am given a chance to participate actively in teaching-learning process	PTLP12	ITLP12
19. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent	PTLP13	ITLP13
20. Nurse educators are usually available after class and during office hours for helping students with problems	PTLP14	ITLP14
21. Nurse educators are sensitive to student learning needs	PTLP15	ITLP15

Campus Support Services	CSS	
22. Library staff are helpful and approachable	PCSS1	ICSS1
23. Library resources and services are adequate	PCSS2	ICSS2
24. Library services are available after hours	PCSS3	ICSS3
25. Computer laboratories are adequate and accessible	PCSS4	ICSS4
26. Internet services are available and accessible	PCSS5	ICSS5
27. Tutoring services are readily available	PCSS6	ICSS6
28. Student counselling services for academic problems is available	PCSS7	ICSS7
Service excellence	SE	
29. Health services clinics are available for students within the college	PSE1	IPSE1
30. Student counselling services for personal problems are available	PSE2	IPSE2
31. Counseling staff care about students as individuals	PSE3	IPSE3
32. I seldom get to run-around when seeking information on this campus	PSE4	IPSE4
33. I generally know what is happening on campus	PSE5	IPSE5
34. Channels of expressing student complaints are readily available	PSE6	IPSE6