# THE SUPPORT NEEDS OF STUDENTS AT SEKHUKHUNE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

BY

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# DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

# SUMMARY

This study investigated the support needs of students at Sekhukhune College of Education. The study assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of available support services, AND explored the possibilities for new services based on students' needs, as well as strategies and activities for the delivery of new services.

The questionnaire was administered to 182 (one hundred-and-eighty-two) course three learners in JPTD, SPTD and STD classes at Sekhukhune College of Education. Indications from the research findings were as follows:

- Recruitment, admission and registration, orientation, library, residence and accommodation, health and medical, as well as academic advising were found to be available student support services at Sekhukhune College.
- Among the available student support services, recruitment, orientation, admission and registration were found to be effective and efficient.
- With regard to the possibilities for new student support services for delivery, it was found that the college is not resourceful enough to deal with those services and strategies that are available.

The focus-group interviews were administered to 13 (thirteen) staff members of Sekhukhune College of Education. The most important findings were:

- The issue of academic advising as a way of mentoring learners has been left in the hands of individual subject-lecturers. Hence, the college has not yet adopted any appropriate method of dealing with the issue of mentoring as a student support service.
- The library, financial aid and health care centre were found to be the most needed support services for students.

The summative conclusion the researcher drew from the study was that the available student support services that are ineffective and inefficient override those that are

effective and efficient. The general recommendation was that the college should put more effort into the improvement of student support services that were found to be ineffective and inefficient.

# OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing het die ondersteuningsbehoeftes van studente aan die Sekhukhune Onderwyskollege ondersoek. Die doeltreffendheid en doelmatigheid van beskikbare ondersteuningsdienste is geassesseer, moontlikhede vir nuwe dienste wat op studente se behoeftes gegrond is, is ondersoek, en strategieë en aktiwiteite vir die lewering van nuwe dienste, is verken.

Die vraelys is aan 182 (eenhonderd twee en tagtig) derde jaarstudente in JPOD-, SPOD- en SOD-klasse aan die Sekhukhune Onderwyskollege voorgelê. Die navorsingsbevindings het die volgende aangedui:

- Werwing, toelating en registrasie, oriëntering, biblioteek, inwoning en akkommodasie, gesondheids- en mediese dienste, asook akademiese raadgewing, was beskikbare ondersteuningsdienste aan die kollege.
- Onder die beskikbare studente-ondersteuningsdienste was werwing, oriëntering, toelating en registrasie doeltreffend en doelmatig.
- Met betrekking tot die moontlikhede vir nuwe studente-ondersteuningsdienste en leweringstrategieë, is bevind dat die kollege nie die vermoë het om die beskikbare dienste te hanteer nie.

Die fokusgroep-onderhoude is met 13 (dertien) personeellede aan die Sekhukhune Onderwyskollege gevoer. Die belangrikste bevindinge was:

- Akademiese raadgewing as 'n wyse om leerders te mentor, is in die hande van individuele vakdosente gelaat. Gevolglik het die kollege nog geen toepaslike model aanvaar om die kwessie van mentorskap as 'n studente-ondersteuningsdiens aan te pak nie.
- Die biblioteek, geldelike bystand en 'n gesondheidsorgsentrum is die ondersteuningsdienste wat as die heel noodsaaklikste vir die studente beskou word.

Die summatiewe afleidings wat die navorser gemaak het, was dat die beskikbare studente-ondersteuningsdienste wat ondoeltreffend en ondoelmatig is, dié oorskadu wat wel doeltreffend en doelmatig is. Die algemene aanbeveling was dat die kollege 'n baie groot poging moet aanwend om dié studente-ondersteuningsdienste wat as ondoeltreffend en ondoelmatig bevind is, te verbeter.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC - African National Congress

F - female

Fig. - figure

HSRC - Human Sciences Research Council

JPTD - Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma

M - male

NCHE - National Commission on Higher Education

NDE - National Department of Education

PDE - Provincial Department of Education

RSA - Republic of South Africa

SPTD - Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma

STD - Secondary Teachers' Diploma

STDs - sexually transmitted diseases

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SRC - Students' Representative Council

USA - United States of America

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1    BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Sekhukhune College of Education is experiencing a dire need for student support, as only a limited  number of student support services are presently operating there.

The following student support services are available:
-        Recruitment;
-        admission and registration;
-        orientation;
-        library;
-        health and medical;
-        residence and accommodation; and
-        academic advising.

Academic courses at Sekhukhune College are usually advertised in the media, namely the local radio station, local newspapers and magazines, at the end of each year. Different advertisements of courses and streams are clarified in a way that allows interested parties to make a choice. This helps to recruit prospective students to develop interest in enrolling with the college for the following year.

Admission and registration services deal with those students who qualify to enrol with the college as an institution for higher learning. Initially, they will be officially accepted as members of the college community. Thereafter they will have to submit their personal information to the college stakeholders in order to qualify as bona fide learners. Financial

implications are also considered in the processes of admission and registration.

The orientation programme lasts for a week only, instead of the whole year. In most cases, the programme is not well planned or structured, and generally it is not prepared well in advance. Its content is out-dated. Thus, the programme which is supposed to be based on the learners' needs does not serve much purpose. Furthermore, the orientation period should last for at least the whole academic year, which would result in a strong student retention rate, eliminating high drop-out rates.

Orientation studies is aimed at improving learner's ability to cope with academic work at the college. It also aims at providing learners with necessary skills and expertise. The presentation of orientation studies is not very effective at the college, as the staff in charge have no academic insight into it. Moreover, the programme is still at its inception stage. Owing to lack of proper financial and human resources, the chance that the service will improve further, is very limited.

A small library has to serve the whole college community. The size of the library is equivalent to that of a standard classroom. The library operates only during the week (Monday to Thursday) from 8:00 to 16:30, and Friday (8:00 to 12:00). Only two librarians are employed there, and the situation is exacerbated by the fact that the same librarians are full-time lecturers at the college. As they are responsible for both librarianship and lecturing, their services on both sides are not satisfactory.

For health and medical service, there is a clinic that functions with limited resources only. The relevant professional is one nursing sister who works from 8:00 to 16:30. There is no medical practitioner or doctor to visit the clinic on a regular basis. The only hospital that can serve the college community with health and medical services is located about 60km away from the college. Therefore, to a certain extent, the learners' problems cannot be properly addressed.

For residence and accommodation, there are two house mothers and two house fathers whose responsibility is to assist learners in matters related to the service. House mothers cater for female learners whereas house fathers cater for male learners. But in the absence of mothers,

fathers work on their behalf, and vice versa. The residences are built at two different locations, female residences to the north and male residences to the south of the college buildings. The residences are too small to accommodate all learners who have applied to stay on campus.

All staff members, more especially subject lecturers are responsible for academic advising. For instance, individual lecturers are obliged to allocate on their weekly timetables, one hour for giving academic advise to learners who need it.

## 1.2    PROBLEM FORMULATION/ RESEARCH QUESTION

Ever since colleges of education have been classified under the higher education band, more demands have been made on the institutions to provide quality services to the students as responsible and active participants. Thus, in order to meet the current needs of students, the existing support services need to be rigorously transformed. In addition to the existing support services, other appropriate support services will also have to be introduced, since the improvement of the existing ones will not cater for all the student needs.

From the above exposition, the following questions can be posed, serving as the main research question:
-       How effective and efficient are the available student support services at Sekhukhune College  of Education?
-       Are there any possibilities of strategies towards introducing new student support services?

## 1.3    RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are the following:
-       to determine student support needs;

- to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of available support services;
- to explore possibilities for new services based on students' needs; and
- to explore new strategies and activities for the delivery of new services.

## 1.4 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are based on unanswered research questions and objectives:

- The available student support services at Sekhukhune College of Education are ineffective and inefficient.
- There are no possibilities or strategies for new student support services at Sekhukhune College of Education.

## 1.5    TERMINOLOGY

The researcher uses the following definitions of concepts for purposes of further enquiry in this study:

**1.5.1 Student:** a learner or educand at a particular institution (Delworth, Hanson and Associates, 1989: 254; Dobson and Saunders, 1975: 141, 159; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Polloway and Patton, 1993; Wolfendale and White, 1992: 8, 9).

**1.5.2 Support:** a powerful and positive influence that requires a professional to be able to mentor a student, as well as monitoring his/her situation in the light of the previous experience, so as to diagnose any need for assisting the student in achieving the agreed purposes in practice (Earwaker, 1992; Tomlinson, 1996: 191; Wolfendale and White, 1992: 1).

**1.5.3 Needs:** the conditions of lack or discrepancy on the side of students, which the student services unit must respond to (Dobson and Saunders, 1975: 324 – 325; Kaufman, 1998; Packwood and Pascal, 1988: 51; Polloway and Patton, 1993; Vogel and Adelman, 1993;

Wolfendale and White, 1992).

**1.5.4 College of Education:** a teacher-training institution which awards its education diplomas to teacher-educands within a period of three to four years (Ashcroft, 1995; Cropley and Dave, 1978; Dobson and Saunders, 1975: 8; Duff, 1988; Government Gazette, 1997; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Upcraft and Lewin, 1990).

**1.5.5 Higher Education:** a post-secondary system of education and training provided by universities, technikons and colleges, whose principal functions are teaching, research and service to both staff and students (ANC, 1994: 369; Delworth, Hansen and Associates, 1989: 6; French, 1996; Government Gazette 1997: 7; Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997; NCHE, 1996,).

**1.5.6 Transformation:** a multiple of interrelated changes in various spheres of life, linked to the widespread impact of the information and communications revolution, the growth of transitional scholarly and scientific networks (ANC, 1994; Ashcroft, 1995; Government Gazette, 1997; Innovations in Education and Training International, 1997; NCHE, 1996).

Bitzer (1998: 3) avers that the concept of transformation has different meanings in different contexts. According to Bitzer, literature describes transformation as a concept in relation to fundamental change on the personal level, the organisational level and the systems level. Hence, in his introduction to the third White Paper on Higher Education Transformation, (RSA, 1997a) the Minister of Education writes that higher education should transform to '... reflect the values and practices of our new democracy' (RSA, 1997: ii ).

However, Bitzer (1998: 3) generalises four characteristics of the concept 'transformation' which seem to emerge:

(1) Transformation implies a fundamental change in the underpinning values and assumptions held in the past;

(2) transformation implies a new vision for the future in terms of expectations, opportunities and possibilities;

(3) transformation implies new goals and objectives; and

(4) transformation implies a new direction resulting from completely new perspectives. In short, the term implies effectiveness, efficiency, excellence and equity.

**1.5.7 Student services:** a unit comprising specific services and programmes that integrate or co-operate as guidelines to meet the student needs by providing personal, career, curriculum, health, financial aid, and other related type of assistance, for them (Baird, 1994; Delworth, Hanson and Associates, 1989; Gallagher and Demos, 1983; Kaufman, 1988; Malan, 1982; NCHE, 1996: 205; Ratcliff and David, 1995: 33-34; Walz, 1988; Whittaker, 1993).

**1.5.8 Student Service Professional:** a member of the office personnel and primary knowledge consumer within the unit, who typically favours working with students over the more solitary activities of life, research and writing (Bridges and Kerry, 1993; Craig, 1995; Garland, 1985; Hood and Arceneaux, 1990: 6; Wolfendale and White, 1992).

**1.5.9 Learning Support:** a broad and encompassing term that embraces meeting the needs of those students who request, or perhaps require, a targeted extra/traditional help to progress in their studies (Earwaker, 1992; Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997; Upcraft and Lewin, 1990; Wolfendale and White, 1992).

**1.5.10 Student Learning:** the acquisition of basic knowledge and cognitive abilities such as oral and written communication skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, as well as the development of student values and attitudes towards the student's own learning (Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997; Ratcliff and David, 1995; Tomlinson, 1996).

**1.5.11 Student Development:** a set of programmes or actions that are initiated and implemented to create conditions for a system (entity) so as to improve the student's potential (Anderson and Cresswell, 1990; Gajar, Goodman and McAfee, 1993; Hood and Arceneaux, 1990: 6; NCHE, 1996: 42; Pavlich and Orkin, 1989; Upcraft and Lewin, 1990,

Van Schoor, 1990).

**1.5.12 Programme:** a planned structural learning experience which is designed specially to meet the student needs (Delworth, Hanson and Associates, 1989: 421; Dwadwa, 1997; Hood and Arceneaux, 1990; Nemir and Schaller, 1975).

## 1.6     LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The research involves 182 course three students at Sekhukhune College of Education. They are a heterogeneous group (of females and males) with ages ranging from 20 to 40 years.

The area of study covers Sekhukhune College of Education, in the Northern Province only. The concern will be to explore and identify the support needs of students at the college.

## 1.7     NEED FOR AND POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The study will help to identify critical student services. In addition, the college management will be conscientised about the provision of current and possible future services through which the students can be supported and assisted.

Students' active involvement and participation in orientation activities will result in better academic achievement and higher retention rates. Thus the college should arrange for comprehensive orientation programmes that are based on principles of student development (Ashcroft, 1995; Earwaker, 1992; Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997; Van Schoor, 1990).

Hence, the programmes aiming at the development of students need to be timed and sequenced from the pre-enrolment period throughout the entering period, and also during the first year.

To sum up, the rationale behind the study involves the following:

- The researcher's personal interest in the topic;

- the researchability of the topic;

- the fact that this topic has not been researched before at Sekhukhune College;

- the inadequacy of student support services at Sekhukhune College; and

- anticipated future services at the college.

## 1.8    RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methods and procedures adopted in this study were based on the nature of the data required for the study, research problem/unanswered questions, and research objectives. The study required both primary and secondary data. Thus, a quantitative method was needed for the primary data whereas a qualitative method was needed for the secondary data.

### 1.8.1 Sampling Procedures

With regard to the sampling method, a stratified random sample was applied. This procedure helped the researcher to reduce chance variation between the sample and the population that it represents.

According to Mendenhall, Ott and Scheaffer (1971: 53) a stratified sample is obtained by separating the population elements into non-overlapping groups called strata, and then selecting a simple random sample from within each stratum.

Thus, the stratified random sample makes it conducive for the researcher to determine the total number of units in the sampling frame and then to decide on the size of the sample. In this sense, course three students have been divided into two distinct stratified groups, namely F and M. Stratum F represents female students whereas stratum M represents male students.

The universum constitutes 326 course three students of which 175 are females (stratum F) and 151 are males (stratum M). Therefore, stratum F is assigned to a number of 175 females, and stratum M to a number of 151 males. On the basis of the size of each stratum, the researcher applies a simple random sample of 52% (approximately 91 students) of stratum F, and 60% (approximately 91 students) of stratum M. The formula applied here can be claimed from Bailey (1987: 95) who makes the assertion that the correct sample size is dependent upon the nature of the population and the purpose of the study.

The questionnaire has been utilised as an instrument of gathering data in this study. In total 182 questionnaires (i.e. 91 + 91 = 182) were distributed among 182 course three students for completion. Prior to the final distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher had to do a pilot study.

The researcher found it to be a premature action if one did not start with the pilot study before issuing the final questionnaire among the respondents. Therefore, the researcher distributed 10 questionnaires randomly among course three students. Thus ambiguity and misconceptions in some of the questions within the questionnaire have been avoided. In short, the pilot study ensured some degree of validity and reliability in the questionnaire, for example, in the formulation of questions, wording and relevance.

The target group had to complete the questionnaires under the researcher's supervision, thus the researcher could guide them and at the same time could ensure that all questionnaires were returned to her.

Focus group interviews were also conducted by the researcher. Hence, this would help the researcher to determine both the internal and external validity of the prevailing services' course of operation at the college.

Both close and open-ended questions were used. Open-ended questions would bring about clarity in the responses. In addition, the respondents' viewpoints were also considered for assistance in searching and understanding the students' feelings about the improvement of

their support services, as well as the implementation of the newly identified services.


## 1.9   CONCLUSION

It is essential that different student support services should be implemented as effectively as possible, at higher education institutions. For purposes of general student development, such a practice will be better than just a series of amenities given to students at different campus localities, for example, lecture-halls, laboratories, libraries, administration blocks and residence halls.

The next chapter will deal with the review of literature on various student support services.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW ON STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

## 2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the reader is introduced briefly to past achievements in the field of student support services at Sekhukhune College of Education.

Much attention has been given to literature on a conceptual or theoretical approach on student support services in general.

## 2.2 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AT SEKHUKHUNE COLLEGE IN THE PAST

The information under discussion next, was obtained from the following sectors of Sekhukhune College of Education (1997): Admission, Registration, Financial Assistance, Residence and Accommodation, Health and Medical, and Library.

### 2.2.1 Admission

Prospective students seeking admission to the college were to present themselves to be

interviewed (the date of interview was made known through local media) and sit for a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) admission test (Sekhukhune College of Education, 1997: 9).

### 2.2.2   Registration

Students were not allowed to register before the previous year's financial obligations had been met (Sekhukhune College of Education, 1997: 10).

### 2.2.3   Financial Assistance

The college did not, and continues not to offer bursaries (Sekhukhune College of Education, 1997: 10). Students used to apply directly to the financial institutions for assistance. The college only made addresses available for interested students.

### 2.2.4   Residence and Accommodation

In principle, residential contracts applied to the academic year only, and holidays were excluded (Sekhukhune College of Education, 1997: 10). Students who wished to remain on campus to study during long holidays, had to apply in writing through the house mothers or fathers.

### 2.2.5   Health and Medical

A clinic used to be available on campus for treatment of minor ailments and injuries (Sekhukhune College of Education, 1997: 11).

### 2.2.6  Library

The library used to provide a sizeable store of books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers for academic and leisure reading (Sekhukhune College of Education, 1997: 10).

## 2.3  A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### 2.3.1.  Recruitment, Admission and Registration

Recruitment involves attracting students, including persuading their counsellors, parents and peers to show interest in the institution (Hood and Arceneaux, 1990: 87; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991: 649).

The implication is that recruitment is an educational process whereby outside people or students are attracted, as a way of persuading them to develop interest in enrolling with the college. As a result of the interest generated by recruitment activities, students will apply for admission to the institution.

Admission is the process following recruitment. It is concerned with matriculation, selection and entry of learners-to-be at the college (Benjamin, 1965, Pascarella and Terenzizi, 1991). This implies a process of being accepted to become part of the college student body.

After applying for admission to a college of his/her choice, a student's first experiences are with those services that have a bearing on the college. The student's previous records will be examined, he/she will be interviewed, and a final decision regarding admission will follow.

After prospective students have been admitted to the college, they should satisfy the very first requirement of concluding a contract with the college they have applied to. This concerns the process of registration whereby the admitted students' access to operate fully on campus is

confirmed. Thus, registration will access learners to become bona fide students who are given the right to experience or receive the full support of local services offered at the college.

### 2.3.2. Orientation

First-year students increasingly overestimate their own abilities, rating themselves as 'above average' in virtually all academic areas. They seem to be learning in the existence of a high degree of academic disengagement (Hansen, 1988: 4).

It is important for both students and their institutions that new students should be introduced to aspects such as available support services, key administrators, social life on campus, major and minor academic requirements and course registration. This process of introduction can be enhanced through the programme of orientation.

According to Upcraft and Lewin (1990: 82) orientation is any effort to assist first year or fresher students in making the transition from their previous environment to the current one, as well as enhancing their academic success. Orientation is an educational process through which bona fide students need to pass. This process implies induction, and is, in most cases, associated strongly with seminars for first-year students. Thus it is essential that students should receive a more adequate orientation to campus life in general.

In line with this, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 404) confirm that orientation has a statistically significant positive influence on first-year intake, whereby even short first-year orientations may have a positive indirect effect on student persistence.

A well-planned orientation programme can contribute much to student retention and satisfaction, rather than attrition. Hence Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 650) support the idea that scholars and administrators are increasingly coming to realise that the most effective orientation programmes and activities are being extended throughout the initial semester and

indeed, throughout the entire freshman year.

Upcraft and Lewin (1990: 82-84) emphasise that there is considerable evidence that orientation programmes help to retain students and thus there is a new, serious approach to orientation efforts. In addition, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 645) maintain that student attrition rates are highest during the first two years of college. Thus efforts to increase student involvement in the educational process and life of the institution should be concentrated in the first two years.

### 2.3.3   Financial Aid

This support system empowers students to finance their academic, residential, meal and other accounts with ease. It has become an important facet of all local services and processes that take place at a college of education (Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997).

The concept of need-based financial aid needs to be taken fully into consideration, more especially at institutions of higher learning. Hence the long-term impact of bursaries and loans on students' educational plans has become a very serious concern at colleges of education (Hood and Arceneaux, 1990, Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991).

### 2.3.4   Counselling

Counselling is the co-ordinating force that primarily integrates various services that prevail at a particular college campus (Delworth, Hanson and Associates, 1989). In one way or another, counselling helps to bind the entire support services and the student population together.

Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft (1997: 46) maintain that counselling generally involves working within the affective domain that deals with the emotional baggage that people

accumulate, that gets in the way of their functioning as well as they otherwise might.

The implication is that counselling must be viewed as a way of helping students to benefit from the rigors of academic life, making better vocational and educational decisions, and being more responsible for their social and emotional behaviour.

Counselling is also called role orientation, and it serves as a building block of all student services. It has a profound influence on the development of the overall student support profession (Delworth, Hanson and Associates, 1989: 266). Hence the most enduring approach of student support services lies in the field of counselling.

As such, counsellors serve in a capacity which enables them to integrate the contributions of teachers, administrators, parents, educational specialists, and the students themselves, to create a conducive environment where learners can really learn and achieve successfully.

### 2.3.5   Health and Medical

It is generally accepted nowadays that many of today's major health problems such as heart disease, cancer and stroke are related to the population's habits. Therefore, the effect of certain lifestyles and the importance of disease prevention are being recognised by many health organisations.

Traditionally, student health and medical services have been considered as part of preventive medicine. Such emphasis on prevention is still the main focus in the total health care scheme.

Anderson and Cresswell (1990: 107) state that health services constitute those activities directly concerned with the present health status. In line with this, an individual student's health status is very important. Colleges have traditionally accepted the role of supervising the students' health status during their life on campus.

There is no phase of the college activities which should contribute more to the student than the health and medical service. Since it is closely interwoven with other student services, the health and medical service aims at developing each student in terms of his/her present and future needs. As a life achievement, the aspect of health should be integrated with other aspects of college life which contribute much to the effectiveness and enjoyment of life for every student.

Generally and practically, colleges of education have some form of health and medical services for their students. These range from first aid facilities attended by a nurse, to complete hospital arrangements with physicians, dentists, nurses and psychiatrists.

Nemir and Schaller (1975: 434) point out the fact that health services do not only include the identification and treatment of individual health problems, but also provide broad programmes, namely services for the handicapped, control of communicable diseases, emergency care, services which will ensure a healthful environment and experiences for health education.

Medical and health services help students to achieve, promote and maintain healthier lives. The availability of the service will remain an economic benefit that contributes much to disease control and content of the rising costs of health care. Thus, health promotion is a recognised component of the present-day functional college of education, which is designed to prepare each student to deal with living academic, cultural and practical needs.

### 2.3.6 Academic Advising

This is the type of service through which academic affairs and student affairs meet. It involves a considerable collaboration between academic personnel and student services personnel, and between students and staff members. Regarding this, Hood and Arceneaux (1990: 154) maintain that through such a collaboration, considerable progress may be made in promoting

the concept of student development.

Academic advising focuses on student development as its initial stage of development. It is a very powerful and professional intervention in a student's life, as a way of influencing him/her towards a positive educational and personal development.

According to Delworth, Hanson and Associates (1989: 390) the type of academic advising which focuses on the total development of a student is termed Developmental Academic Advising, which is based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational career and personal goals through the utilisation of a full range of institutional and community resources.

### 2.3.7 Career Development

The term 'career' is often misleading because in most cases it is viewed solely from an occupational perspective rather than in general terms. However, the broader notion of a career includes various adult roles, for example, in the home and community at large. This is emphasised by Gajar, Goodman and McAfee (1993: 11) who state that careers exist only as people pursue them; they are person-centred.

The fundamental aspect of career development is career education and/or guidance which will contribute to the total development of a student. The distinction between career education and career development will be clarified in the following section.

The U.S. Office of Education defines career education as 'the totality of experience through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of his or her way of living' (Gajar, Goodman and McAfee, 1993: 10).

Wolf and Kolb (in Walz, 1998: 109) define career development as involving one's whole life

in this way: it concerns the whole person, needs and wants, capacities and potentials, excitements and anxieties, insights and blind spots, warts and all. Moreover, it concerns the ever-changing contexts of one's life, whereby the environmental pressures and constraints, the bonds that tie him/her to significant others, responsibilities to children and ageing parents. In short, the total structure of one's circumstances also serve as factors that must be understood and reckoned with.

In these terms, career development and personal development converge. Self and circumstances evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction can constitute the focus and the drama of career development.

In this sense, career guidance implies and also demonstrates its effectiveness in influencing career development and adjustment of students as individuals. Thus, career guidance is the type of vocational preparation which is offered to fresher students from the period of admission, throughout the attendance period until the final year. In a broader sense, career education and/or guidance are concerned with the total human being, and his/her adjustment for community working and living.

Polloway and Patton (1993: 325, 460) have identified the major tenets of career education as infusion; stage of development; systematic involvement; experientiality; family/community liaison. In the light of this, it is argued that career education is not simply preparation for a job, but also preparation for other productive work roles that comprise one's total career functioning.

Career development involves the placement services. As such, the services provided by career development overlap with other student support services, more especially academic advising and counselling. Therefore, the service for career development is not only concerned with the traditional function of assisting students to become employed, but also provides help with a variety of job search strategies such as cover letters, résumés, interviewing skills, networking programmes and the provision of an employment library.

### 2.3.8 Library

A library is a facility or building with a collection of the library stock and where all kinds of information can be found, for example books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, cassettes and videos (Baird, 1994: 7).

Whittaker (1993: 1) avers that libraries are but one of a vast range of institutions that supply today's society with some sort of service, being access to large and organised stores of information.

From the researcher's view point, the library is one of the most valuable and useful resources for learning. Its value and usefulness lie in the growing acquaintance of knowledge and information, as well as the transition in different fields of higher education, for example research, teaching and learning.

Ashcroft (1995: 64) raises a concern that changes in teaching and learning methods, and the growth in the availability of information, are likely to mean that the institution's central learning resource facility will become more important to the quality of its work.

The facility that is referred to here, is the library that caters for different sources of information, namely book and non-book information systems. This implies that the main service of the library is to provide recent and relevant information to the users, including the students. In simpler terms, the role of the library is not just to collect and store all sorts of books and related materials in an organised fashion, but also to get those materials utilised as effectively as possible.

According to Whittaker (1993: 7) the five purposes associated with library-based user services are furthering education, assisting research, supplying information, spreading culture,

and leisure activities, especially recreational reading.

The learners' main aim of visiting the library is to gain access to those materials that will satisfy a particular learning need. Thus the library service should essentially exist in order to satisfy the need as efficiently as possible. Without a collection of recent and relevant materials, there is no library, let alone library-based student service.

## 2.3.9 Residence and Accommodation

The type of lifestyle and problems faced by students in external (private) accommodation, campus residence halls, and at home, differ (Benjamin, 1965; Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991).

The way in which many students live when they are at their campus residence greatly differs from the way they live when they are at home with their families. This confirms the fact that a particular student lifestyle greatly affects his/her learning process, either positively or negatively.

Residence, relocation and accommodation are the first set of problems that students may have to deal with or face, once they are admitted at the college. With regard to this, Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft (1997: 49) aver that a fruitful area of investigation is the support a fresher may expect from the institution and the extent to which this varies from college to college or year to year.

The service for residence and accommodation involves various lifestyles that are followed by student residents when they are outside the formal education situation, that is, at their halls of residence. Moreover, the way in which student residents are accommodated and/or paired in the rooms, plays a very significant role in their learning process.

## 2.4 STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT THE AFORE-MENTIONED STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### 2.4.1 Recruitment, Admission and Registration Service

Since the functions of recruitment, admission and registration share common goals and objectives, the idea of common administrators and officers should also be entertained by the college in order to ensure student retention and satisfaction. The need to reduce student attrition and to retain as many students as possible, until their day of graduation, has become essential.

Hood and Arceneaux (1990: 90) maintain that student retention at many institutions has become a total campus effort involving staff and student services, business offices, residence halls and facilities in the academic departments. Well organised programmes of recruitment, admission and registration will always serve as prerequisites for general student retention.

In the interest of retention, other related programmes should concern the additional functions of assisting students with their social, academic, emotional, intellectual, physical as well as political adjustment.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 649) stress that students' recruitment, admission and registration can serve as powerful tools in shaping an institution's intellectual and interpersonal climate, as well as the nature of the influence it exerts on students.

Benjamin (1965: 70) determines a number of criteria that might be followed by colleges for basic requirements regarding admission:

- Graduating from a general or technological secondary school;
- passing an entrance examination or successfully completing a one-year university preparatory course;
- passing a medical examination, including a chest X-ray;

certificate, or two recommendations from notable citizens in the applicant's place of residence; and

- presenting a certificate which states that an applicant has not failed an entrance examination of another higher education institution for the same academic year.

The field of admission needs to become more sophisticated in the collection and use of information regarding the marketing of the institution and recruitment of students. Thus, for the college admission committee and personnel, pressures need to be exerted on student development, rather than on increasing student numbers or massification.

### 2.4.2 Orientation Service

The orientation programme should start with registration as the first item to be rendered to bona fide students. Its primary concern is to process the incoming students with regard to their induction, learning, accommodation and campus life (Newble and Cannon, 1995, Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, Upcraft and Lewin, 1990).

The most important role of orientation is to help first-year students to succeed academically and adjust personally to the college, resulting in maximum personal development. For example, students need to learn how active participation in campus life and learning can help them improve their level of education or make their learning to be more effective.

The main idea is that colleges which have a strong programmatic influence on orientation services experience higher retention and graduation rates than institutions without such emphasis. Thus, the orientation programme serves as the primary function of socialisation for newly admitted students.

The college needs to ensure that the very first orientation programme of the college year helps and directs new students, as well as their families, to understand the academic and personal

adjustments that those students must make. New students should also be informed about how support, advice and encouragement from their loved ones can help them succeed. On the other hand, the same programme should assist the college in knowing more about its new students.

The purpose of introducing students to available support services, key administrators, student social life, major academic requirements, as well as their early course registration, is significant for both students and the college (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991: 650).

The orientation service personnel have to use every effective means available to meet the first year students' needs, including media approaches, group programming, academic courses and individual tutoring, advising and counselling. Furthermore, the programme itself must be appropriately timed and sequenced from the pre-enrolment period, throughout the entering period, up to the post-entering period.

Hood and Arceneaux (1990: 90) maintain that active involvement of new students in orientation programmes will result in their higher academic achievement and higher retention rates rather than attrition. Thus, for the college to achieve such results, it has to build comprehensive orientation programmes that are based on the principle of student development.

The orientation service needs to be evaluated to determine whether it is effective or not. That is, the relationship between the programmes and goals must be determined. Although the faculty, support staff, returning or adult students must all assist with the orientation service, they are not sufficient.

The orientation service must be deliberately co-ordinated by well-qualified professionals, educators and administrators who know and understand various ways of induction and orienting students. Moreover, they need to be well equipped with administrative skills and resources to build an effective student (Hood and Arceneaux, 1990; Newble and Cannon,

1995; Upcraft and Lewin, 1990).

A college is not expected to sit back and wait for prospective and newly admitted students to seek its programmes out. Instead, the college should invite such students and involve them actively in special orientation programmes. Among others, such special programmes can be organised in the form of an open house, or even a tour of the campus.

### 2.4.3  Financial Aid Service

In discussing loan funding for students, Benjamin (1965: 178) states: 'Almost all colleges and universities have student loan funds. Interest charges range from nothing to the legal rate of 6%, but usually the interest charges do not begin until the student has received his degree and is employed...'

Some students, especially first years, commuters and part-time students, might not be aware that the college should render financial aid services to them. So it is the responsibility of the financial aid service to conscientise students about consultations for various types of financial assistance.

There needs to be a professional who is familiar with several aspects of student financial aid, for example bursaries, loans, scholarships, part-time employment and so on. The primary concern is that most often, information on student financial aid programmes does not reach those students who need it most. In many cases where such information reaches them, it is not properly or clearly communicated. In order to eliminate such problems, assistance should be given to students as a way of persuading them to apply for financial aid, if it is available.

For the service to operate successfully and adequately, the professional in charge, with the assistance of the entire college personnel, needs to collect information from students, guardians or parents, and families regarding their financial situation. They can also provide

information upon which the student financial aid should be based.

According to Hood and Arceneaux (1990: 115) the use of financial aid to attract students has become an integral part of the admissions process for many institutions to maintain/increase their enrolments. This implies that the financial aid service should be advertised to prospective students during the time of recruitment, as a way of attracting or prompting them to enrol with the college. At the same time, the service will assist students in enjoying their learning and gaining some more motivation to strive for higher academic achievement.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 406) support this, and emphasise that 'scholarships and grants have a significantly more positive effect on persistence than do loans, even when such variables as student academic achievement and socio-economic origin are taken into account ... such factors as academic aptitude, secondary school grades and residing on or off campus, participation in college work-study programmes was more effective than other forms of financial aid in discriminating persistence from drop-outs'.

Nevertheless, in the absence of any free financial aid, loans can still play a significant role/function in meeting and addressing the students' needs. Thus, the offer of bursaries, scholarships and grants can motivate college students and promote determination in their learning, more so than in the case of loans.

The possibility of a student having part-time employment also serves as an integral part of the students' financial aid service. Thus, student financial aid and part-time job work in tandem. This may ultimately give rise to greater progress in their learning (Hood and Arceneaux, 1990: 113-115; Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft,1997).

Since the problem of finance among full-time students will be eliminated by part-time employment, the college should mandate various departments and sections to offer such opportunities. Otherwise, this problem needs to be taken up with both the Provincial and National Department of Education (PDE and NDE). Part-time employment should first be

made available for students coming from poor or low-income families. The idea is emphasised by Benjamin (1965: 177): 'Students are employed in the business houses and industrial establishments of the communities in which the colleges are located. They drive taxi cabs and buses. They play in dance ochestras. They work as maids and children's nurses in private homes. They serve as night watchmen and auxillary policemen.'

Above all, the student representatives need to be appointed as liaison officers or co-ordinators between the student body and the financial aid service. As co-ordinators, the representatives will have to become involved in the service as actively as possible, to act as spokespersons for all the students. In simpler terms, they bridge the space between students and the service.

To add to this, Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft (1997: 56) say that '... the student union can become involved on behalf of the student. Welfare services within the institution may also give advice on these issues'.

## 2.4.4   Counselling Service

The counselling service needs to be fully recognised by every college. Through counselling, the college can help students plan their development by means of testing, effective interviewing and the provision of information about avenues that are open to them.

Delworth, Hanson and Associates (1989: 65) assert that the counsellor's role is to guide, support and advise students on various aspects. To support this, Van Schoor (1990: 76) says that the student counselling programmes should cover the following areas: effective study skills and habits, various self-control techniques, techniques for controlling test and examination anxiety, and techniques for controlling negative environmental variables.

In the light of the counsellor's role and the nature of the counselling programmes, the counselling model rests on a set of assumptions about the importance of the personal

characteristics of the counsellor. Essential qualities are warmth, responsiveness, genuineness, openness, integrity and sincerity.

In seeking assistance, the majority of students have four basic needs, namely information, appropriate action, inappropriate action or interaction, or understanding and involvement. Polloway and Patton (1993: 480) add that the specific roles and functions of a counsellor include providing personal and career counselling. This also supports the fact that counsellors can play a central role in helping students to learn and achieve with a limited number of barriers in their learning process.

Gallagher and Demos (1983: 7) suggest that the counselling function can be broken up into the following sub-functions for purposes of evaluation:

- Individual personal counselling;

- short-term counselling/therapy;

- long-term counselling;

- group counselling;

- counselling students with severe psychological problems;

- counselling students with normal psychological problems;

- educational/vocational counselling;

- study skills counselling/training;

- reading instruction; and

- tutoring for specific courses.

In line with the stated sub-functions, Gerald (in Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997: 46) supports the view that evaluation of the counselling service can also be affected by some basic counselling skills which have been identified as:

- listening skills;

- non-verbal skills;

- taking time to reflect before responding;

- paraphrasing what the student says;
- questioning, especially asking few, but open questions;
- summarising;
- confrontation; and
- terminating an interview.

A well-planned counselling model can be useful and beneficial to students and the service professionals. This, in a way, prompts them to act as role models for providing helpful precautions as a direct support to their clients, namely students. Ultimately, this will involve aspects such as developing and providing preventive psychological programmes, facilitating groups, requesting psychological expertise from professional counsellors, and advocating system change. Such are some of the activities in which a counselling model can be used by student service professionals in order to benefit both the students and the college environment.

Ultimately, Walz (1998: 199) concludes that counsellors as organisational change agents will have to take steps to research, establish the need, and also work with appropriate powers to perform the following tasks:

- Create programmes to assist low-income families;
- design improved college counselling in the light of continued decline in the number of those seeking admission to college;
- stimulate schools, communities and the college community to provide day care programmes so that the increasing number of teenage mothers and single parents will have nursery care as they attend college (school), work or both;
- provide cross-cultural models and maintain culturally effective counsellors who will be called upon to assist faculties in dealing with different cultures, adapt learning styles, and design learning modalities that enhance each population.

It is clear that the counselling profession is shaped and moulded by what is actually happening

within the society. As a result, those who have developed interest in the counselling profession must be capable of, and willing to acquire, new sets of skills through research, as their clients (students) also need change.

Students are often reluctant to admit to having personal and social problems, and often hesitate to accept the help they require. Problem areas include substance abuse, poor interpersonal relationships with relatives, friends and peers, sexual problems, poor social skills, adjustments, as well as the negative effect of stereotyping. All those areas need to be attended to by the college counselling bureau for students.

One more issue that needs to be considered concerns preventive mental health. Students should be assisted proactively, rather than reactively. Students need to be helped to recognise and cope with potential crises so that maladjustment can be avoided as far as possible. Furthermore, such programmes will promote a general personality growth, and are cost-effective, since students can be treated in groups rather than individually.

The following suggestions are given to enhance the effectiveness of the counselling service:
- Develop a broad range of delivery modes, i.e. be proactive, not reactive; integrated, not separated; inclusive, not exclusive; ingratiating, not intimidating; full service, not specialised; full-time, not part-time; populist, not elitist.
- Provide adequate crisis intervention.
- Be rewarded by offering best quality.
- Be integrated with appropriate staff, faculty and administration, making involvement the key word.
- Meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.
- Focus on the forest and not the trees, i.e. emphasis should be put principally on those developmental issues that are characteristics of typical college student development.
- Develop confidence, i.e. counsellors need to have confidence that their advice and services are based on well-researched and documented developmental theory.
- Know the students' needs and offer assistance without waiting for students to ask.

(Upcraft and Lewin, 1990: 135-141)

As change is an inevitable aspect of life, it will be realised in the counselling profession, either in the form of transmission (i.e. without some intentional force) or by transformation (i.e. through a conscious effort both inwardly and outwardly). The counselling profession has to embark on strategic planning, anticipating change as a significant aspect.

### 2.4.5 Health and Medical Service

Medical, health and welfare promotion programmes and services need to be seriously considered at colleges of education. For instance, an institution that is concerned with the quality of the whole student experience, may wish to consider how it should be involved in health and safety matters such as the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, and other related matters.

The college is in a strategic position to contribute effectively to the health of its learners. As such, the student health and medical service should be planned in such a way that it fortifies and supplements the efforts of the learner as well as his/her family.

Anderson and Cresswell (1990: vii) suggest that a self-contained textbook, designed to serve the optimum professional in-service health preparation needs of college health workers, must be based upon actually experienced needs and practices, whereby successful health workers in the field represent a fertile source of information on the health needs of students.

Seeing that the learner is at the centre of all college activities, attention should be given to an understanding of normal student growth, development and health. Therefore, common departures of health and medical services need to be introduced in order to enable the nurses and academic staff to understand their proper role in contributing to the needs of students who fall outside the normal range. Promoting and conserving the health of students should the

primary objective of not only the health and medical services, but also of the entire college.

Benjamin (1965: 176) recommends that health services should consider, among others, physical examinations which are usually required for entering students, and informal hygiene courses which are usually given by personnel of the health services.

The health and medical service has long been considered as an integral part of the health programme which is provided by physicians, nurses, dentists, health educators, other allied health personnel, social workers, teachers and others to appraise, protect and promote the health of students and personnel.

Such procedures should be designed to achieve the following:
- Appraise the health status of students and the college;
- counsel students, teachers, families and others so that students may obtain health care;
- arrange school programmes in order to meet the needs of the school community;
- help prevent and control communicable diseases;
- provide emergency care for injury or sudden illness;
- promote and provide optimum sanitary conditions and safe facilities;
- protect and promote the health of college personnel; and
- provide concurrent learning opportunities which are conducive to the maintenance and promotion of individual and community health.
    (Nemir and Schaller, 1975: 412)

Health services should therefore be extended to college personnel, whose health most assuredly influences the physical and emotional health of the entire student body. Personal adjustment must be fostered amongst both students and staff in all aspects of life, for example the physical, social and academic spheres. These are not just separate entities, but integrated parts in the whole being.

Even if the issue of adjustment involves many things, it is significant to note that all aspects of adjustment depend upon the learners' attaining status in institutions of learning. Thus,

students should actually learn to adjust to their own problems, with understanding and insight. In order to see themselves fully, learners must also be encouraged to appreciate their own assets, capabilities and outstanding qualities.

### 2.4.6   Academic Advising Service

Academic advising has been evaluated as the single most frequently utilised strategy to increase student retention. Academic advising and counselling should not be viewed as one, but as two intertwined issues. Academic advising should not be confused with psychotherapy or personal counselling.

Even if advising should not be equated with counselling, many successful academic advisors need to understand and use some basic skills related to interpersonal communication, as well as counselling skills. At a college of education, both academic advisors and counsellors should educate students about the opportunities available in the college environment and then promote the ideals of an educated person. Their responsibility is to encourage and assist students in making a personal meaning of their educational experiences.

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 404) there is a statistically positive link between advising and measures of persistence, and a considerable part of the influence exerted by advising is indirectly indicated in a longitudinal study of the effects of academic advising on freshman-to-sophomore persistence.

The formal advising programmes that exist at some of the higher education institutions often involve a considerable collaboration between academic staff (lecturers or tutors) and the student services staff (professionals). Through such collaboration, considerable progress may be made by the staff of student support services, for promoting and extending the concept of student development. Students should be assisted in becoming self-advising, and in developing career decision-making strategies and critical thinking skills.

It is important to know that academic advising is related to educational tutoring, which is the responsibility of every lecturer or tutor. Likewise, educational tutoring is also concerned with monitoring student learning progress. However, in cases where such progress is giving cause for concern, educational tutoring may be supplemented with educational counselling.

Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft (1997: 45) explain that educational tutoring generally takes the form of a regular programme of events directed at supporting students' academic development, for example, the students' ability to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, or the development of study skills.

Earwaker (1992: 56) comments that if tutoring is to be regarded as a kind of counselling, the skilled tutor could be expected to be a good listener who allows the student to talk freely without interruption, and who can elicit from the student with minimum of prompts, whatever it is that the student wants to say. Tutors need to take full responsibility for student support as far as possible. Therefore, they should consciously offer students the help they need, whereby academic help is rated first.

Ender and Scheaffer (in Delworth, Hanson and Associates, 1989: 391) emphasise seven conditions or principles that are essential in the development of the academic advising process. The conditions are the following:

- Advising is a continuous process with an accumulation of personal contacts that have a synergistic effect.
- Advising must concern itself with quality-of-life issues; the advisors' responsibility including attention to the students' total experience in the institution.
- Advising is goal-related, i.e. the advising process should include identification of academic career and personal goals as they relate to the college environment.
- Advising requires the establishment of a caring relationship which the adviser has primary responsibility for initiating.  Good academic advising is intrusive.
- Advisers are models for students with whom they have contact.

- Advising is a focal point for the integration of the services and expertise of both academic and student affairs professionals.
- Advisers should encourage students to utilise the full range of resources, services and learning opportunities available within the institution.

### 2.4.7 Career Development Service

According to Polloway and Patton (1993: 460) career development suggests that individuals should be presented with information that is relevant and practical to community living and working needs required in the real world.

As a conception of vocational education, career education can contribute much in directing the learner towards career development. Thus, career education is not so much a specific way or content of training, as it is a way of formulating the entire set of experiences that an individual student needs in order to develop into an effective responsible adult.

Significant steps towards attaining adulthood are stressed by Brolin (in Gajar, Goodman and McAfee, 1993: 326) when identifying five stages of career development in their order of occurence, namely:

- Awareness, which includes learning about work and developing attitudes towards work;

- exploration, which entails hands-on experience in elements of occupations and leisure activities;

- preparation, which is experiential, and involves the heavy use of community resources such as businesses. Job experiences are an integral part of preparation activities;

- placement or follow-up, which is the most neglected area of career education which should extend into adulthood; and

- continuing education, which is the means by which individuals maintain and extend their skills.

In other words, career education demands substantial staff development. On account of this, career educators need to work rigorously towards disseminating information as effectively as possible.

Lynch and Lewis (1988: 593) suggest that career education should prepare individuals for several life roles which make up an individual's career. This means that different life roles may include both economic and aesthetic roles, which will influence career education to be concerned with the total person, and will encompass his/her adjustment to working and living in the community.

Gybers (in Walz, 1998: 116-117) states that, in order to accomplish the primary goal of career, it is necessary to identify the career development needs of students, of which some are mentioned below:

-       Students need improved and expanded opportunities to become aware of, and develop, their career or self identity.
-       Students need improved and expanded opportunities to conceptualise their emerging career identity through continuous and sequential career exploration activities.
-       Students need improved and expanded opportunities to generalise their career identities through effective placement and follow-through adjustment activities.

This stresses the fact that education should assist students in developing strong, positive work personalities and attitudes that will ultimately lead them to become what they are interested in, and capable of becoming.

In view of this, education providers will need to give learners access to up-to-date labour market information, indicating skills shortages, career opportunities and trends in the job market. As such, the Ministry of Education will have to work closely with other ministries in order to develop better services which will help to meet these requirements (Department of Education, 1998: 33).

Ultimately, Polloway and Patton (1993: 461) outline a few models of career development, of which one is a school-based career education model that emphasises work careers, but still addresses other life careers as well. The principal areas directed by this model are values, attitudes and habits, human relationships, occupational information, acquisition of jobs, and daily living skills.

In view of the experience reported in literature, career development can be regarded as a lifelong process that needs to mould an individual from the pre-school level, throughout the post-school level, and which continues into retirement.

### 2.4.8  Library Service

The college and the community at large need a library so that they can support the academic work of literacy, education and research. Libraries serve many purposes, but essentially they exist because people and organisations require books and related materials, or require the information that is in them.

In this context, any academic (college) library that aims at reaching the highest level of service, by way of providing for the needs of students as individual users, is attempting to be user-centred or student-centred.

Malan (1982: 68) briefly outlines the aims and functions of academic libraries as follows:
- The collection and preservation of literature for the fields of study and research of the college concerned;
- the retrieval of literature and information for the advancement of instruction, study and   research; and
- making literature available to students and teachers for their continued education.

Traditionally, library-based student (user) services have revolved around the mental activity of reading, and have been concerned with the provision of books. Whittaker (1993: 1) adds that the services offered today include the supply of materials that are viewed and/or listed, as opposed to reading, and also include access to machine-readable materials, not just items that can be read by the human eye.

The following diagram shows the relationship of the user to the library, and the process of how the student's (user's) needs are satisfied.

**Diagram 2.1  Possible user relationships to library**

**SELF - ASSISTED  USE**

User    $\equiv$    Library stock    $\equiv$    $\geq$ user satisfied

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**STAFF – ASSISTED  USE**

user   $\equiv$   Library staff   $\equiv$   Library stock   $\equiv$   user satisfied
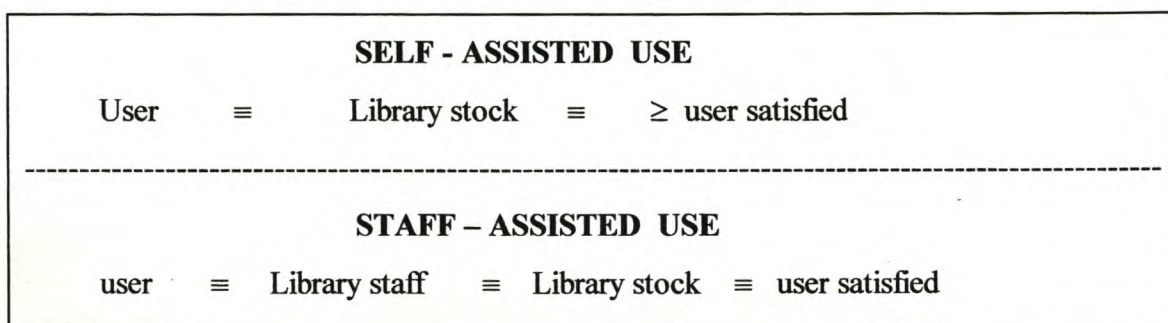
(Whittaker, 1993: 3)

As suggested in diagram 2.1, the librarian, or even the library assistant, is not supposed to know nor concentrate on what the student wants, personally. But rather, the library staff should know or concentrate on what or which items in the stock will satisfy the needs of students as fundamental library users.

If college libraries do not have titles required by their users, they should be able to obtain them from other libraries. This can be done through library co-operation schemes or similar arrangements.

According to Baird (1994: 92) the library staff should encourage students to use the library, which should be a place they enjoy visiting.

This means that the library should be turned into a friendly and enjoyable place which students wish to visit, rather than a place of bondage and boredom. Students need to be encouraged to become actively involved. Hence, 'edutainment' should be anticipated and entertained by the library services at large.

It is interesting to note that, apparently, students can leave a library without obtaining what they had come for, and still feel reasonably satisfied as a result of the staff's positive and helpful attitude. A user-friendly library will enhance the students' interest in academic matters, even if their immediate needs are not met every time they visit the library.

In short, Whittaker (1993: 42) views the library as a place where the users may access services with ease, and where there is an atmosphere that makes the users feel at home. However, such an approach has to emanate from the attitude of the library staff and library management, more than anything else.

How much the library management and staff consider students as its users, can be seen in whether or not there are built into its organisation, any formal methods through which the management can ascertain the views and needs of the students. For instance, a student consultative committee may be set up as part of the administrative structure of the library. Therefore, a student-centred staff which focuses on service to the students, needs appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

## 2.4.9 Residence and Accommodation Service

There are very many factors outside the classroom that influence student learning. Of these factors, residence services are becoming increasingly prominent in the educational and learning processes of students. Thus, student learning is not only a product of the classroom, lecture hall, or academic situations, but also of external factors such as the students'

residential environment.

Benjamin (1965: 175) states that 'more than half of the college and university students live with their families in the communities where they attend school, whereas the remaining students reside in residence halls, or private rooming and boarding houses'. This indicates that, besides being responsible for providing an environment conducive to student learning, residence services should also provide support for off-campus and extra-curricular activities, as well as related programmes.

Blackey (in Jones, Siraj-Blatchford and Ashcroft, 1997: 49) looks particularly at universities and colleges as suppliers of student accommodation within the institution, and how this affects recruitment and choice of course. The private sector is also considered briefly.

The implication is that students should be encouraged to live on or near the college campus, as this will increase opportunities for their type of academic, intellectual and social involvement that in turn directly enhance the development of principled moral judgement. As such, living on or near campus while attending college is consistently one of the most significant determinants of the student's level of integration or involvement in the social system of the college.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 400) state that, as compared to their counterparts who live at home and must commute to college on daily basis, student residents have significantly more interaction with peers and faculty, and are significantly more likely to be involved in extra-curricular activities, and to use campus facilities.

Local organisations such as student unions can act as intermediaries, and the effect of systems such as residence hall committees should be implemented. If such efforts are considered, one can imagine the extent to which problems can be communicated to the college by residence hall student representatives, or if problems tend to be beyond their skills, or occur outside the residence halls, how often an independent arbitrator such as the health and welfare officer

may become involved.

Accommodation in residence halls may lead to serious issues such as the problem of ill-matched house-mates or room-mates. However, this can be dealt with effectively, if the proper structures for problem-solving are in place.

As a way of eliminating many problems, the college may use questionnaires to match students suitably, prior to their arrival on campus. This can prevent many problematic situations in colleges, where many management and study hours are lost as a result of dealing with trauma arising from ill-matched partners, especially where they have to share a room.

Apart from that, colleges need to have apartments for married students. Final-year students should also be included in this strategic plan. Alternatively, the college can provide accommodation lists in which property owners advertise their properties for accommodation. Hence, such an arrangement has to provide students with ready-made lists of addresses, usually divided into the different areas or localities.

Ultimately, the issue of students' close living in residence halls may lead the college to come up with student guidelines for sharing accommodation on campus.

Consequently, living on campus may provide additional advantages for those students who enter college with individual attributes that make them more likely to exploit and benefit from this advantage. In contrast to commuting, campus living may be associated with higher levels of integration in the academic and social systems of the college. Living-learning centre philosophies, activities and climates can be developed in other residence units, and their educational and psycho-social benefits can be extended to more students.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 653) conclude that students' peers, particularly their close friends, appear to exert the greatest shaping influence.

## 2.5    GENERAL STRATEGIES TO BE CONSIDERED IN ENHANCING A STRONG STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEM

### 2.5.1    Collaboration in determining the needs of students

The support service personnel can work together with para-professionals and/or regular educators. For such professionals, various needs of students will be easily identified. Of course, co-working and co-operating will promote the development and maintenance of collaborative relationships, firstly between regular and special educators, and secondly between educators and the student service personnel (Polloway and Patton, 1993: 135). However, the entire support staff should be involved actively in such a relationship as the one already described.

Commensurately, collaboration denotes the co-operative role that is essential to successful integration. This implies that both special and regular educators, together with the other support staff, are in parallel positions to share ideas, talents, training, materials and energy (Gajar, Goodman and McAfee, 1993; Polloway and Patton,1993).

Together, the collaborating group (with the inclusion of the student representatives) can successfully work out best strategies for supporting students initially, or expanding their time. In one way or another, this type of relationship allows all parties to serve as consultants to each other, on an 'as needed'or 'as-requested' basis.

Polloway and Patton (1993: 136) maintain that the primary concern of enhancing a strong student support system is the identification of student needs. Hence, it is of much importance to differentiate between what is needed and what is wanted. Nevertheless, this might not necessarily refer to the real or immediate needs of students.

### 2.5.2 Effecting Drop-out Prevention Programmes

The components of effective drop-out prevention programmes should be planned in such a way that they are highly effective and profitable for the whole student population. However, the identified key elements include alternative classes or attendance, counselling and advising, work-related activities, parental involvement, referral and outreach systems.

In line with this, Gajar, Goodman and McAfee (1993: 124) outline the four common elements of effective dropout prevention programmes as follows:
- They separate potential dropouts from other students;
- they have a strong vocational component;
- they utilise out-of-class learning; and
- they are intensive; that is, they are small, they offer individualised instruction, have low student-teacher ratios, and offer more counselling.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

The review of literature in this chapter clarified that students need sufficient knowledge and information on college matters such as entry requirements; it indicated the relationship between assessment, course requirements and whole programmes; it highlighted alternative routes and services available to students and it pointed towards their own progress and achievements.

The aspect of learner support services has become a central element of the education system. As such, it will provide information on learning programmes, education and training providers, qualifications and job opportunities.

The implication is that, in order to meet the students' needs, colleges need to ensure that provision is made in the new funding arrangements for furthering learner support services

such as academic development, guidance, counselling, health and welfare.

However, the division of the various student support service programmes seems to relate well to the continuum concept. This is viewed in the sense that programmes that have managed to accumulate more full-time staff, a lower student-staff ratio, and more staff with special training in the field of student services, can provide satisfactory services. Thus, the services will have to be managed in such a way that they meet real and immediate needs of college students.

The next chapter will focus on the research methodology. The research design and other procedures will be described in a logical sequence.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the methods and procedures that were followed during data collection. The procedures and methods used were determined by the nature of the data to be collected, by unanswered questions or problem statement, as well as by the research objectives. The type of data needed in this study was both primary and secondary in nature.

Seeing that there was a need for both primary and secondary data, the methods or approaches used in this study were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The reason for a quantitative approach was that primary data had to come from interviews with students and college staff whereas the qualitative method needed information from publications.

## 3.2   QUANTITATIVE METHOD

### 3.2.1   Description of the Population

The population from which the sample was to be drawn for the study was three hundred and twenty-six (326) course three students. Out of the grand total of 326, one hundred and fifty-one (151) were male and one hundred and seventy-five (175) were female. The population represents a variety of diplomas offered at the college, namely Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma (JPTD), Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma (SPTD), and Secondary Teachers' Diploma (STD). Questionnaires were distributed among the already mentioned groups of

learners, namely JPTD 3, SPTD 3 and STD 3.

The ages of the student population range from 20 to 40 years. The age group, the level of study, and the varied diplomas mentioned above justify reasons for the choice of the population. Some of the reasons for the choice of the population group are students= years of study at the college, and students= experiences in the existing support services at the college.

### 3.2.2 Sampling

With regard to sampling, the size of the population necessitated the use of a stratified sampling method so that the chance variation between the sample and the population could be minimised as much as possible.

Mendenhall, Ott and Scheaffer (1971: 53) maintain that a stratified sample is obtained by separating the population elements into non-overlapping strata or groups, and then selecting a simple random sample from within each stratum. It was against this background that the researcher had to classify the population into two strata, namely stratum F (for females) and stratum M (for males).

As already indicated in this chapter, one hundred and fifty-one (151) of the total course three student population are males, whereas one hundred and seventy-five (I75) are females. Thus, the sampling procedure was done with respect to the sizes of the strata. A simple random sample of 52% (approximately 91 students) out of stratum F and a simple random sample of 60% (approximately 91 students) out of stratum M were done respectively.

The two percentages, 52% in stratum F and 60% in stratum M, are different. Hence, the two divisions of the entire population also differ in numbers. Thus, the highest in number (stratum F) has a lower percentage (52%) whereas the lowest in number (stratum M) has a higher percentage (60%). That is how the researcher has arrived at different percentages in the two

cases.

From the percentages that are reflected here, it is clear that the sample size of ninety-one (91) students from each stratum (i.e. F and M) was taken. The implication is that, from the total population of three hundred and twenty-six (326) students, the overall sample size taken is fifty-three percent (53%), which amounts to one hundred and eighty-two (182) students.

The sampling procedure followed here is taken from Bailey's assertion that the correct sample size is dependent upon the nature of the population and the purpose of the study (Bailey, 1987: 95).

In line with this technique, Grinnell (1988: 155) makes mention of a sampling frame which is described as that collection of units (e.g. people, objects, or events) that have a possibility of being selected. In other words, it is the list from which a sample is actually selected.

## 3.3    INSTRUMENTATION

The instruments used in this study are questionnaires and interview schedules. Each of the two instruments can be described separately as follows:

### 3.3.1   Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been divided into *Demographic Profile* and *Support Services.* When the questionnaire was drawn as one of the data generating techniques, certain advantages and disadvantages were realised by the researcher as indicated below.

### 3.3.2 Interview Schedule

The interview schedule has been divided into seven identified student support services, namely, *library; residence and accommodation; recruitment, admission and registration; orientation; financial aid; medical and health;* and *academic advising.* Just as in the case of the questionnaire, the interview schedule has prompted the researcher to identify both advantages and disadvantages. They are discussed below.

### 3.3.3 Type of questions asked

For the questionnaire and interview, both closed and open-ended types of questions were utilised. Among the open-ended type of questions that were asked, a number of advantages and disadvantages had been identified by the researcher, and will as such be reflected below.

Advantages of open-ended type of questions:

- They allow the respondent to answer adequately in all the preferred details.
- They allow the respondent to clarify and qualify his/her own answer.
- They allow added opportunity for creativity or self-expression by the respondent.
- They are preferable for complex issues that cannot be condensed into a few categories.
- They can be used when there are too many potential answer categories to list.
- They can be used when all possible answer categories are not known, or when the investigator wishes to see what the respondent views as appropriate answer categories.
- They are best used in situations where people are able to give their answers verbally rather than in writing.

Disadvantages of open-ended type of questions:

- Data is often not standardised from person to person, making comparison of statistical analysis such as computation of percentages very difficult.
- They require superior writing skills, a better ability to express ones feelings verbally, and generally a higher educational level as compared to closed-ended questions.
- Questions which are designed to explore all dimensions of the subject may be too general for the respondent to understand what is meant, requiring the use of probes or more specific follow-up questions administered by the researcher.
- They are more time-consuming, can require much more of the respondent=s time and effort, and may engender a high refusal rate as compared to closed-ended questions.
- They require more paper and make the instrument look longer, possibly discouraging some respondents who do not wish to answer many and lengthy questions.
- They may lead to collection of worthless and irrelevant information.
- Coding is often very difficult and subjective, leading to low inter-coder reliability.
- Questionnaire summary sheets and schedules consisting of such questions are more time-consuming.
- They inevitably elicit a certain amount of irrelevant and repetitious information. The researcher sometimes finds that such questions elicit responses that are difficult to understand, and/or that are incoherent.
- The satisfactory completion of an open-ended question requires a greater degree of communicative skills than is true for a closed-ended question.
- Statistical analysis requires some degree of data standardisation, e.g. the interpretative, subjective and time-consuming categorisation of open-ended responses by researchers.
- Inconveniences that are brought about by the questions may engender a higher rate of refusal to complete the questionnaire.

## 3.4   PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was designed as follows:

A total number of 10 questionnaires was prepared for completion by 10 lecturers at the college. The main purpose of selecting the lecturing staff for this particular exercise was to detect the possible mistakes and the ambiguities that might be on the questionnaires. One other reason for this kind of a pilot study was to check the logical sequence of some questions and the length of the questionnaire itself.

## 3.5   PROCEDURAL DETAILS

The details of the procedure followed in collecting the data are as follows:

Firstly, the researcher made a review of the literature related to the problem under study. It was out of the related literature where many sub-topics of the research topic were identified. With the help of the information from the literature and the preliminary findings, the questionnaire and the interview schedule were drawn up.

Secondly, the researcher had to produce 10 questionnaires that were used for the purpose of the pilot study. After the pilot study was done, a final questionnaire had to be prepared. A total number of 182 questionnaires, which tallies with a sampled number of course three students, was then produced for actual distribution.

Thirdly, 10 students who did not form part of the sampled group were recruited to come and supervise respondents when completing the questionnaires, while at the same time explaining how the questionnaires must be completed. Each of the 10 recruited students was given 17 questionnaires and 17 respondents to supervise or attend to. The recruited students were thoroughly workshopped on the questionnaire.

An amount of R2, 00 was offered for every recruited student, for each correctly and logically completed questionnaire. Responses on the questionnaire needed to be made strictly in

pencil, so that if a mistake was made, it could be easily erased. Finally, all correctly and logically completed questionnaires were eventually taken for analysis, presentation and interpretation.

With regard to the interview schedule, the researcher opted for focus group interviews. Local staff members who also serve as personnel for student support services were targeted. The researcher had to prepare different schedules which were identified for the purpose of interview. The researcher then made appointments with some of the staff members who work as personnel for different student support services, namely chief and junior librarians, house father and mother, heads of departments, senior and junior lecturers, chief and junior administrators, rectorate, dean of students, and the college nursing sister (who left the college health centre in January 2000).

Ultimately, the interviewees= responses were taken collectively for purposes of presentation, analysis and interpretation, as was the case with questionnaires.

## 3.6    PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The following problems were encountered during data collection:

- Some interviewees would simply leave the interview process while the research questionnaires were half-done.
- A few of the prospective interviewees could not honour the interview appointments.
- Most interviewees would need to spend much time on one question, in an attempt to elaborate their responses further.
- On several occasions, the interview process was interrupted by other people.
- Most respondents were hesitant to respond to questions that they viewed as personal, for example, the question on age.

## 3.7 CONCLUSION

The nature of the problem under research calls for a quantitative approach. Chapter 3 outlined the research methods. The chapter firstly described the population from which the target population was made. It then discussed the sampling method, instrumentation, pilot study, procedural details, and problems encountered when collecting data. It also described the type of approach or philosophy that had been applied when solving the problem.

The next chapter will turn to a discussion on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the gathered data.

# CHAPTER 4

# DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

## 4.1    INTRODUCTION

The methodology that will be used in this chapter is mainly qualitative in nature, and to a lesser extent, quantitative. The reason why the over-riding methodology will be qualitative is that the nature of the study is to provide insight that goes beyond that of statistical tests (McKeachie, Chism, Menges, Svincki and Weinstein, 1994).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme was utilised to summarise and analyse data by using tabulated reports, charts and descriptive statistics. No complex statistics were used.

The researcher utilised two types of instruments to conduct the research, namely questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires and interview schedules were used respectively for learners and staff members. Two examples of the schedules are attached to the research document. As it is essential to analyse both the questionnaire and interview schedules, questions are displayed, analysed, presented and interpreted below.

## 4.2  PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

The overall aims of the research are to **describe, explore** and **observe**. Since the research represents a case study, it focuses on a single institution together with its learner support

services. Two methods of research were applied, namely literature study and empirical study. The empirical part of the study is both qualitative and quantitative.

A stratified random sampling was applied. This procedure helped the researcher to reduce chance variation between the sample and the population that it represents. Two strata were identified, namely stratum F (for females) and stratum M (for males). The universum constituted 326 course three learners of which 175 are females (stratum F) and 151 are males (stratum M). On the basis of the size of each stratum, the researcher applied a simple random sample of 52% (91 learners) for stratum F and 60% (91 learners) for stratum M.

A total of 182 questionnaires were issued and distributed among 182 course three learners for completion. That is, 91 questionnaires for female learners and 91 questionnaires for male learners. Questionnaires were distributed for the first time on Monday 06-08-1999 and only two hours (i.e. from 14:00 to 16:00) were scheduled for learners responding to the questionnaire. The starting time of 14:00 was generally preferred by many questionnaire respondents.

The researcher had already decided that the questionnaires should be completed and submitted almost at the same time, between 14:30 and 16:00, under her own supervision, together with that of other learner assistants who do not form part of the sampled population, and whom she delegated and trained to complete or work on each questionnaire. Whenever the respondents experienced any problems in relation to responding, completing and/or submitting the questionnaires, the researcher and learner assistants were ready to help them. As a result, all of the 182 respondents were able to return the questionnaires to the researcher within two hours.

When the questionnaires were returned, both the researcher and the assistants had to check whether or not they had been completed correctly. At the same time, they had to count the number of questionnaires already submitted at that time. When all the respondents had returned their questionnaires, the researcher and the assistants had to double-check and ensure that all questionnaires had been received.

The researcher immediately decided to start with the process of distributing questionnaires, again with the aid of the same learner assistants. The whole process took a period of approximately two weeks to be completed. It included synthesizing information into smaller parts.

### 4.2.1  Age groups of learners

Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 provide statistical information of male and female respondents who fully responded to the questionnaires. Table 4.1 shows that out of 182 respondents, only 2% were 38 years old and more, while more than half of the respondents (53%) were between 20 and 25 years of age.

**Table  4.1 Age range and gender of respondents**

| AGE RANGE | FEMALE | MALE | TOTAL | % |
|-----------|--------|------|-------|---|
| 20 – 25 | 51 | 45 | 96 | 53 |
| 26 – 31 | 28 | 31 | 59 | 32 |
| 32 – 37 | 11 | 13 | 24 | 13 |
| 38+ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 91 | 91 | 182 | 100 |
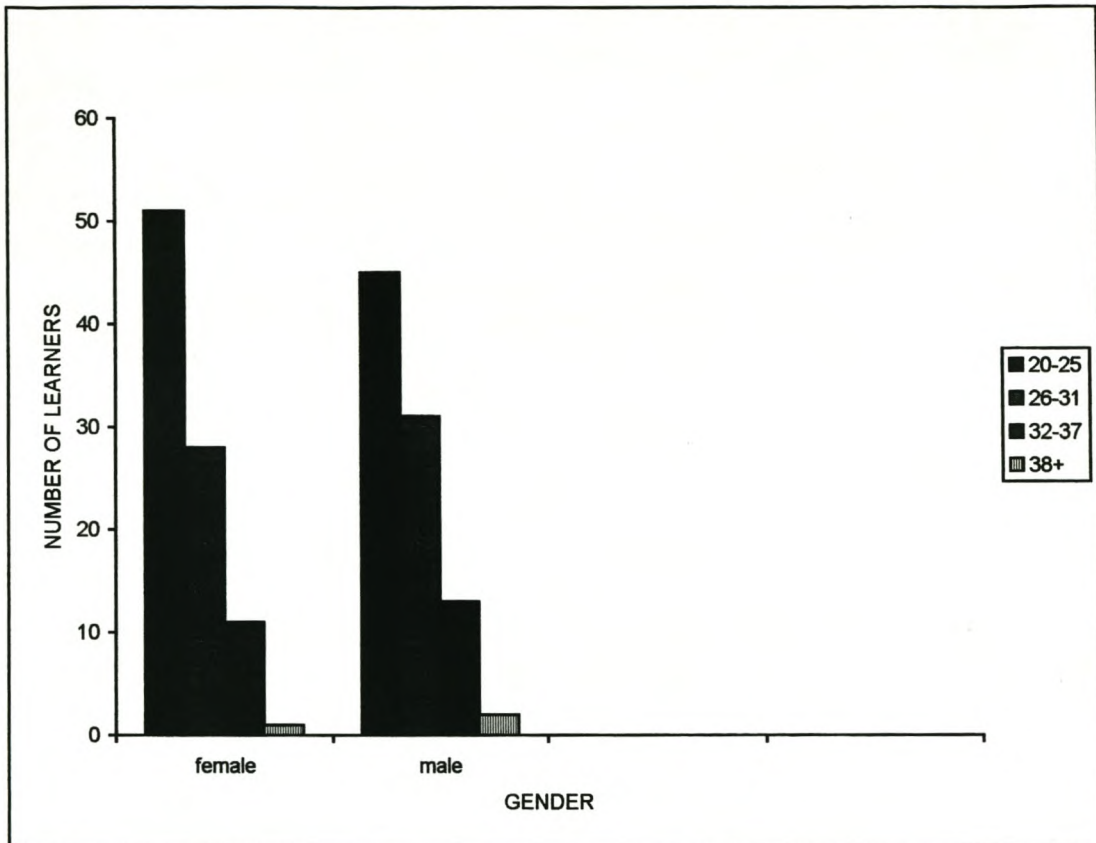
**Fig. 4.1 Age group and gender**

Figure 4.1 is a graphical illustration of male and female respondents with respect to their age range. On average, the college appears to have more young females who fall within the age range of 20-25, than males. One implication from the graph is that most of the third-year learners fall within the age range of 20-31, which is relatively young at the college.

On examining the respondents within age group 20-25 in figure 4.1, one realises that the male learners lag behind the female learners in terms of numbers. Among other factors that might have contributed to the lagging behind of male learners may be the fact that males usually do not like forming discussion groups.

### 4.2.2 Marital status of learners

**Table 4.2    Marital status and age range of respondents**

| STATUS | 20 – 25 YEARS | 26 – 31 YEARS | 32 – 37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Single | 89 | 48 | 14 | - | 151 | 83 |
| Married | 5 | 10 | 10 | 3 | 28 | 15 |
| Widowed | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

Statistics on table 4.2 above show that 83% of the learners who responded to the questionnaire are single. Of the 83%, a larger percentage falls within the age group 20-25. Within the remaining 17%, fifteen percent of the respondents are married, while 2% of the respondents are widowed.

It appears from figure 4.2 below that the third-year student population is dominated by single learners, and relatively few are married. From table 4.2, it appears that the learners' state of being single or widowed decreases with the increase in age, while their state of being married appears to be fluctuating with the increase in age.

The marital status of the respondents as portrayed by the graph shows that most of the learners might not be experiencing domestic problems. Such problems as those that might retard the learning progress of the learners, might be directly or indirectly connected to the families from which they come, or the learning environment at the college. Such a learning impetus may require the full support of the college itself.
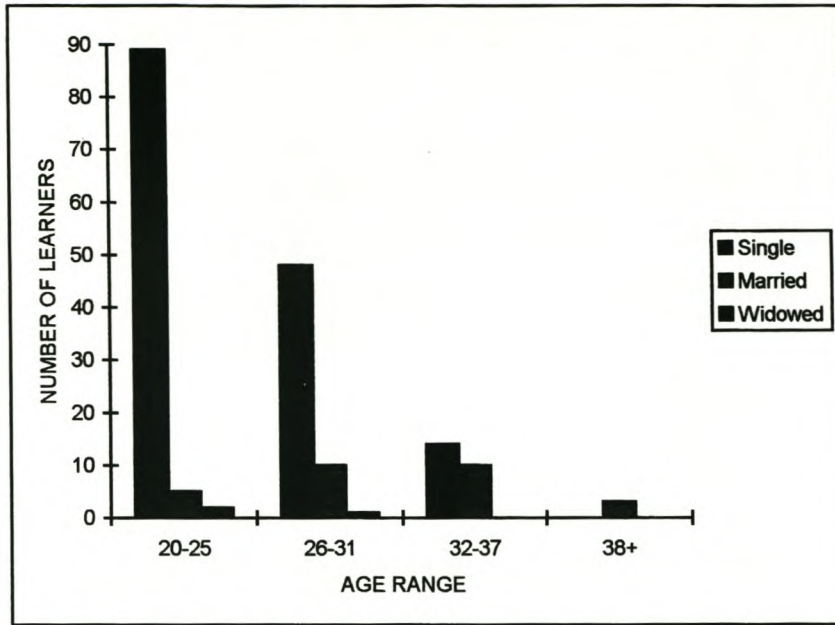
**Fig. 4.2 Marital status and age range**

From both the tabulated and graphical presentations of data, one might conclude that on the average, the respondents are still very young, since the majority are single and fall within the age group of 20-25. Therefore, students within this age group depend upon elders and other authorities, for example parents, seniors or government, to fund their studies. A variety of student support services will be essential to cater for students' learning at the college.

### 4.2.3 Number of children per respondent

**Table 4.3(a) Number of children and age range of respondents**

| CHILDREN | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 30 | 18 | 3 | - | 51 | 28 |
| 2 | 7 | 16 | 12 | - | 19 | 19 |
| 3 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 16 | 9 |
| 4 | 58 | 18 | 3 | - | 79 | 43 |
| 5 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

**Table 4.3(b) Number of children and gender of respondents**

| CHILDREN | FEMALE | MALE | TOTAL | % |
|----------|--------|------|-------|---|
| 1 | 29 | 22 | 51 | 28 |
| 2 | 20 | 15 | 35 | 19 |
| 3 | 10 | 6 | 16 | 9 |
| 4 | 32 | 47 | 79 | 43 |
| 5 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 91 | 91 | 182 | 100 |

With regard to the number of children and age range, table 4.3(a) shows that 43% of the respondents have four children each. This is a relatively high percentage in the sample. Furthermore, within the age group 20-25, about 60% of the 96 respondents have four children each.

On the basis of the findings of table 4.3(a) one can deduce that in relative terms, 43% of learners who were interviewed have four children, while the majority (58) fall within the age group 20-25. In terms of the age group 20-25 and study level (third year) one can further argue that the number of children a particular student has, does not necessarily affect his/her study record.

Table 4.3(b) shows that the majority of male respondents appear to be parenting more children than it is with females. For example, 47 male respondents have four children each, as compared to 32 female counterparts. Even though the study record keeps on fluctuating, it seems as if 79 (43%) of the respondents have no fewer than four children each, but four and more.
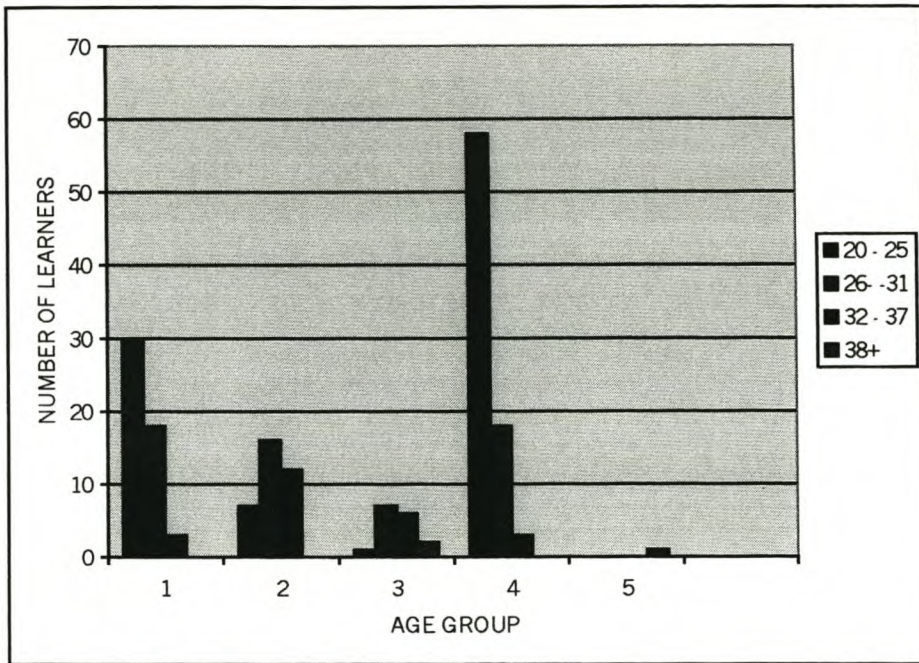
**Fig. 4.3 Number of children and age group**

### 4.2.4 Financing of studies

**Table 4.4     Financing of studies and age group of respondents**

| FINANCE | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spouse | 4 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 19 | 10 |
| Parent(s) | 65 | 39 | 16 | 1 | 121 | 67 |
| Family | 17 | 10 | 1 | - | 28 | 15 |
| Bursary | 10 | 1 | - | - | 11 | 6 |
| Self | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

Out of 182 respondents, 67% receive their financial support from parents while only 6% have bursaries. The majority of respondents who receive financial support from parents fall within the age group 20-25, as figure 4.4 indicates below.
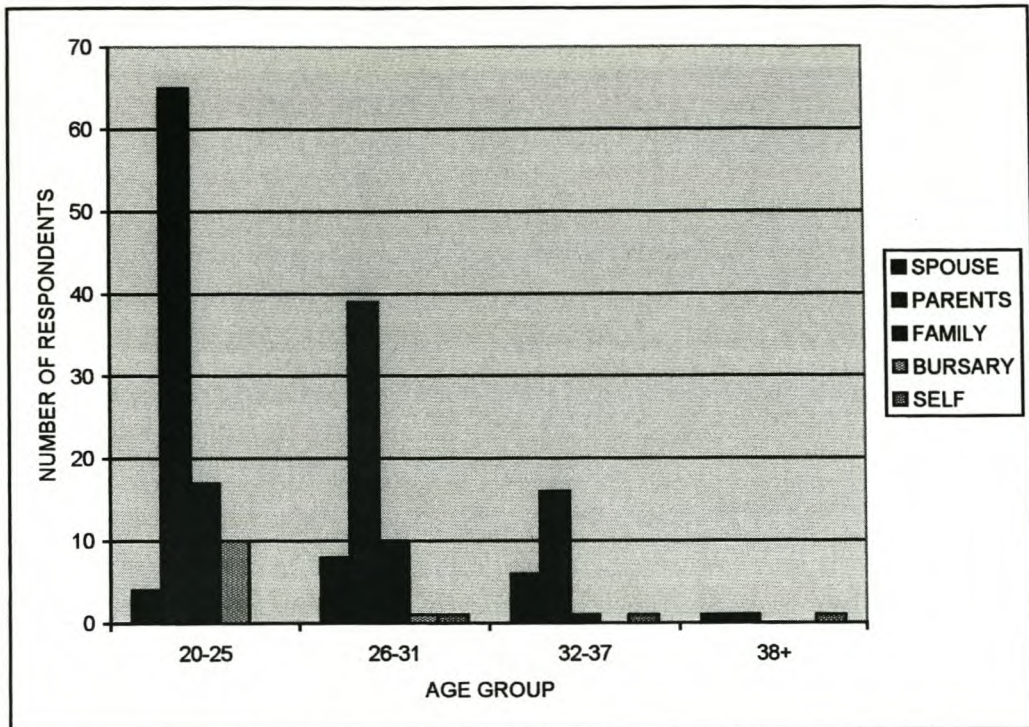
**Fig. 4.4 Financial support and age group**

From the high percentage of learners being funded by their parents, one might conclude that these are students who could not perform well at grade 12 level. Most of these students normally do not get financial aid or grants because many financial aid schemes award bursaries on merit. One would agree with Braunstein, McGrath and Pescatice (1999: 247) that the success of applicants is critical in an environment of rising tuition, decreasing financial aid, and a greater reliance on loans rather than grants in the financing mix.

### 4.2.5   Course of study

**Table 4.5(a)   Course of study and gender of respondents**

| COURSE | FEMALE | MALE | TOTAL | % |
|--------|--------|------|-------|---|
| JPTD   | 67     | 62   | 129   | 71 |
| SPTD   | 5      | 7    | 12    | 7 |
| STD    | 29     | 22   | 41    | 23 |
| Total  | 91     | 91   | 182   | 100 |

**Table 4.5(b)   Course of study and age group of respondents**

| COURSE | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| JPTD | 54 | 53 | 19 | 3 | 129 | 71 |
| SPTD | 11 | 1 | - | - | 12 | 7 |
| STD | 31 | 5 | 5 | - | 41 | 23 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

It is clear from table 4.5(a) and 4.5(b) that 47% of the respondents belong to the junior phase  (JPTD). Within the age groups 20-25 and 26-31 the number of respondents are respectively 67 and 62 [see table 4.5(a)]; and 54 and 53 [see table 4.5(b)]. Statistics [see table 4.5(b)] show that the respondents falling within the age group 20-25 may outnumber the respondents falling within the other age groups, with respect to the courses for which they have registered.

Statistics from both tables 4.5(a) and 4.5(b) show that 71% of respondents in the final year of study have registered for the Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma (JPTD), while only 7% of respondents have registered for the Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma (SPTD). From these figures, one can conclude that the majority of registered college learners in the respondent groups are in the junior primary phase. This implies that among the three diploma courses that the third year students have registered for, JPTD students appear to be in greater numbers, as compared to SPTD and STD students.

With regard to gender issues, the majority of female respondents seem to have a chance of registering with the college, far more than their male counterparts [see table 4.5(a)].
In line with this, The Skills Enterprise Network (1992) in Ashcroft, Bigger and Coates (1996: 118) found that women are more likely than men to stay in post-compulsory education, and are more likely to succeed, but are under-represented in those degree subjects that are most in demand with employers. However, choosing to go into the 'right' courses does not necessarily enable women to succeed.

### 4.2.6. Reasons for registering with Sekhukhune College

**Table 4.6       Reasons and age group of respondents**

| REASONS | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student services | 9 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 23 | 13 |
| Only institution | 32 | 17 | 6 | - | 55 | 30 |
| Diversity of courses | 27 | 24 | 14 | 1 | 66 | 36 |
| The name Sekhukhune | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 2 |
| Other reasons | 27 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 35 | 19 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

Table 4.6 above indicates that most of the respondents have decided to register with Sekhukhune College, either because of the diversity (wide choice/variety) of streams to be chosen and followed by learners, or because it is the only institution in the vicinity. With regard to age group 20-25, out of the total of 96 respondents, 27 had unknown or other individually specific reasons for registering with the college. The implication is that younger learners like to emphasise their own individual reasoning power if they need something, as compared to older learners.

Lack of guidance on the part of the respondents seems to have contributed much in the respondents' reasons to register with Sekhukhune College. Possible explanations for the scenario displayed by table 4.6 above might include the following:
- Respondents might have been less informed about other tertiary institutions (at least within the province);
- they might have found no opportunity of attending career guidance programmes at high school level; and
- some might have realised that their lack of financial support could not allow them to study at any other tertiary institutions beyond Sekhukhune area.

Jacobs, Van Jaarsveld and Van Mollendorf (1991: 33) stress the importance of career guidance with the following points:
- Every learner should be guided to explore, understand, accept and take into account his/her physical, intellectual, social and mental abilities when making educational and occupational choices;

- learners should be helped to explore, understand, accept and realise their potential in their educational and occupational choices by means of individual and group orientation;

- educational and occupational information should be provided to, and interpreted for learners, and they should be guided to explore the educational and occupational possibilities, and to relate them to their own potential with a view of making an educational and occupational choice; and

- the identification of learners who have educational and occupational choice problems, and the rectification of such problems, should be made possible.

### 4.2.7   Definition of student support services

**Table 4.7      Definition and age group of respondents**

| DEFINITION | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Success | 8 | 3 | 2 | - | 13 | 7 |
| Improve | 22 | 23 | 2 | 1 | 48 | 26 |
| Assist | 34 | 14 | 12 | - | 60 | 33 |
| Achieve | 8 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 7 |
| Don't know | 24 | 18 | 6 | 1 | 49 | 27 |
| Total | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

As shown in table 4.7 above, 24 (25%) of respondents within the age group 20-25 do not have a clear understanding of the student support services that should operate at institutions of higher learning. The overall of 49 (27%) in all age groups cannot explain what 'student support services' means. From age group 32-37 as reflected in the table, only four out of 24 (17%) seem to understand that the concept is all about learners' success, improvement and study record. However, 33% of all the respondents seem to be aware that the concept is associated with the act of assisting learners to study and learn more easily.

The term 'student services' appears to be a unit comprising specific programmes that integrate or co-operate as guidelines to meet the learners' needs by providing some

related type of assistance to those learners (Baird, 1994; NCHE, 1996; Ratcliff and David, 1995).

According to Lacey and Lomas (1993: 12) the term 'support' is used to describe various groups of people offering advice and skills to aid the integration and general education of learners with difficulties in learning. Hart, in Lacey and Lomas (1993) argues that in reality, support services differ according to their function, role, development, personnel and the local education authority that employs the service providers. Thus, there is no generally agreed upon definition of 'support service'.

### 4.2.8 Whether or not learners have any valid information on the college catering company

**Table 4.8 Responses and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|-----|
| NO | 66 | 45 | 17 | 3 | 131 | 72 |
| YES | 30 | 14 | 7 | - | 51 | 28 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

It appears as if most of the learners at Sekhukhune College are ignorant about the operation of their catering company. From table 4.8 above, 72% of respondents do not have any valid information on the learners' catering company on campus. The researcher's preliminary study of the area reveals that there is only one company that caters for learners' meals at Sekhukhune College.

One other issue is that many who responded that they have no knowledge about the existence of a catering company, fall within the age groups 20-25 and 26-31. It appears that many respondents are more interested in academic issues and related matters, than in any other issues within the college campus.

### 4.2.9   Satisfaction concerning services provided by the college catering company

**Table 4.9(a)  Response and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|---|
| NO | 70 | 40 | 13 | 2 | 125 | 69 |
| YES | 26 | 19 | 11 | 1 | 57 | 31 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

**Table 4.9(b)  Response and gender of respondents**

| RESPONSES | F | M | TOTAL | % |
|-----------|---|---|-------|---|
| NO | 59 | 66 | 125 | 69 |
| YES | 32 | 25 | 57 | 31 |
| TOTAL | 91 | 91 | 182 | 100 |

Tables 4.9(a) and 4.9(b) show that a higher percentage, that is 69%, emphasise that generally, learners are not satisfied with the services rendered by the catering company, i.e. the respondents of age group 20-25 on table 4.9(a) and female respondents on table 4.9(b). Fifty-seven (31%) of the respondents, of which the majority are of age group 20-25 and female, seem to be satisfied with the services of the catering company. The implication is that many learners at Sekhukhune College prefer to cook for themselves at various places of residence, rather than to be catered for by the company.

### 4.2.10 Whether or not there are any student representatives in the catering committee

**Table 4.10  Response and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|---|
| NO | 10 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 20 | 11 |
| YES | 86 | 52 | 22 | 2 | 162 | 89 |
| TOTAL | 95 | 60 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

It is ironic to notice that 89% of the respondents indicated that learners form part of the catering committee (see table 4.10), in view of the fact that table 4.8 showed earlier on that the majority of the respondents did not have any information about the existence and operation of the company that caters for learners on campus.

If only a few respondents (28% in table 4.8) can provide some information on the college catering company, whereas the majority (72%) cannot provide any information, there will be a very poor chance of having student representatives in the catering committee. This significant observation suggests that the responses provided for table 4.8 and 4.10 are unreliable.

### 4.2.11 Whether student support services affect the learners' learning process or not

**Table 4.11 Responses and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|-----|
| NO | 34 | 19 | 9 | - | 62 | 34 |
| YES | 62 | 40 | 15 | 3 | 120 | 66 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

Statistics from table 4.11 show that about 66% of the sampled population claim that the operation of various student support services strongly affects their learning process. Based on the statistics shown above, one may argue that services such as advertising, orientation and academic advising, as assessed in the questionnaire, play a vital role in introducing learners to other student support services.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 403) argue that the common objectives of orientation programmes are:

- to acquaint students with the administrative regulations and expected behaviours of the institution;
- to introduce them to student services;
- to provide opportunities for students to meet informally with faculty;
- to guide students in designing an academic programme and/or choosing a major;

- to assist them in career planning; and
- to help them develop academic skills essential to their survival as college students.

One other fact is that the learners' financial aid in the form of scholarship, grant or bursary seems to directly or indirectly affect their academic performance and achievement.

After making a quantitative synthesis of the influence of financial aid on persistence, Murdock (in Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991: 406) found that among other sources of learners' financial aid, only a consistently significant effect size may be allotted to scholarships. Thus, only a smaller percentage of a standard deviation, indicates that scholarships are significantly (if only modestly) more effective than a composition of other forms of student financial aid in promoting student persistence.

It appears that student residence as a support service also has an influence on learners' academic achievement. In addition, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991: 400) claim that resident students, as compared to their counterparts who live at home and must commute to college, have significantly more social interaction with peers and faculty; and are significantly more likely to be involved in extra-curricular activities and to use campus facilities.

### 4.2.12 Whether or not the quality of learners' educational experience is affected by non-educational experiences

**Table 4.12      Responses and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|-----|
| NO        | 22          | 19          | 7           | 2         | 50    | 27  |
| YES       | 74          | 40          | 17          | 1         | 132   | 73  |
| TOTAL     | 96          | 59          | 24          | 3         | 182   | 100 |

Table 4.12 above shows that 73% of the respondents admit that the quality of their educational experience also depends upon non-educational influences, from both the college environment and the neighbourhood.

Whitaker and Slimak (1992: 52) contend that although college students generally have more adult-like life experiences, it is not logical to conclude that they are more mature, thus more capable of handling those experiences well, or of taking them into consideration, in relation to their educational experiences.

Among others, life experiences that college learners may have, could be those of coming from single-parent homes, and/or having fewer sources of personal support available to them.

According to Terenzini, Pascarella and Bliming (1996: 15) student academic and cognitive learning are positively shaped by a wide variety of out-of-class life experiences. These influences include such specific experiences as living in an institutional residence hall, particularly one in which the various dimensions of students' academic and non-academic lives are purposefully integrated; working part-time on campus; discussing racial or ethnic issues; socialising with others of different racial or ethnic groups; having an internship; spending a term studying abroad; and interacting with other students and staff members, particularly when the topics of discussion are academically or intellectually related.

In support of Terenzini, Pascarella and Bliming (1996), Kuh (1996: 135) argues that the two most important influences on student learning and personal development are interacting in educationally purposeful ways with an institution's 'agents of socialization' (e.g. staff and peers) and directing a high degree of effort to academic tasks.

Therefore, non-educational influences such as institutional culture, policies and practices indirectly shape or affect learners' expectations, whereas educational influences such as the staff and peers directly shape or influence the quality of learners' experiences through their interaction inside and outside the classroom situation.

**4.2.13 Whether or not there is any provision of college features which could be arranged in a way that prompts a learner-centred type of approach in teaching and learning**

**Table 4.13(a) Responses and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NO | 42 | 26 | 4 | 1 | 73 | 40 |
| YES | 54 | 33 | 20 | 2 | 1O9 | 60 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

**Table 4.13(b) Responses versus gender of respondents**

| RESPONSES | F | M | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NO | 29 | 44 | 73 | 40 |
| YES | 62 | 47 | 109 | 60 |
| TOTAL | 91 | 91 | 182 | 100 |

Tables 4.13(a) and 4.13(b) reflect that 60% (109) of all the respondents responded that they are usually engaged in various learner-centred type of approaches by their individual subject lecturers. More female learners (62%) than males (47%) responded that various educational approaches on learner-centredness are being applied and facilitated at classroom level [see table 4.13(b)].

**4.2.14 Whether or not the operation of available student support services on campus helps to develop learners towards greater independence or increased self-sufficiency**

**Table 4.14     Responses and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NO | 35 | 25 | 3 | 2 | 65 | 36 |
| YES | 61 | 34 | 21 | 1 | 117 | 64 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

Table 4.14 above shows that 64% of respondents claim that the available support services that operate on campus make a contribution in developing them into self-reliant and self-functioning individuals. This may imply that the available support services at Sekhukhune College campus are, in one way or another, helping to involve learners in more active and purposeful learning environments, to such an extent that they automatically develop greater or increased self-sufficiency.

### 4.2.15 Student support services experienced by learners at their places of residence

### Table 4.15    Responses and age group of respondents

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NO | 31 | 16 | 6 | - | 53 | 29 |
| YES | 65 | 43 | 18 | 3 | 129 | 71 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

Statistics from table 4.15 reflect that 71% of the respondents claim that learners experience many difficulties when studying and/or performing their academic tasks at their places of residence.

One factor that might create difficulties for learners to study at their residence halls is that most rooms are shared by three or more learners (of the same sex). Another factor is that female and male learners share floors and/or corridors of residence halls, for example female learners might occupy room number one, and males occupy room number two, females occupy room number three and so on. Thus, the issue of sharing rooms, floors and/or corridors, may result in learners socialising more with those of the opposite gender than those of the same gender. Adding to this, one may find that many residences are noisy and untidy, irrespective of whether they are same or mixed gender residences.

According to Terenzini, Pascarella and Bliming (1996: 135) the academic performance of learners in co-educational (coed) halls is neither better nor worse than that of their peers in single-gender halls. The only conclusive effect appears to be that learners living in a

coed residence hall (versus a single-gender hall) are more likely to become socially involved with members of the opposite sex.

The researcher agrees with Springer, Terenzini, Pascarella and Nora (1995: 16) when they argue that time spent on socialising with friends is usually positively related to gains in orientations towards learning for self-understanding, for both women and men.

Gender as an important issue in education often involves researching sensitive issues that require discussion and forethought. Being part of the education policy, considering the gender issue can serve as one strategy that will help learners to succeed academically.

### 4.2.16 Whether or not learners are given any opportunities to participate actively in managing their own learning environment

**Table 4.16(a) Responses and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-3 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AGREE | 37 | 23 | 10 | 2 | 72 | 40 |
| STRONGLY AGREE (S AGREE) | 20 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 39 | 21 |
| DISAGREE | 8 | 7 | 4 | - | 19 | 10 |
| STRONGLY DISAGREE (S DISAGREE) | 31 | 18 | 3 | - | 52 | 29 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

OR

**Table 4.16(b) Responses and age group of respondents**

| RESPONSES | 20-25 YEARS | 26-31 YEARS | 32-37 YEARS | 38+ YEARS | TOTAL | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AGREE | 57 | 34 | 17 | 3 | 111 | 61 |
| DISAGREE | 39 | 25 | 7 | - | 71 | 39 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 59 | 24 | 3 | 182 | 100 |

From tables 4.16(a) and 4.16(b) above, it can be seen that 61% (i.e. 40% + 21%) of the respondents agree that learners at the college are given a chance to participate actively in the management of their own learning environment. On the other hand, 39% (i.e. 10% + 29%) of them do not agree with this idea.

On the basis of the students' expressed views as portrayed by table 4.16 above, Freedman (1967: 35) maintains that what students might prefer is a community which enables the individuals in it to develop themselves to the fullest degree possible. This means that many learners may be ready to appraise themselves and their own social state with the expectation that their increased understanding will give them greater control over their institutional situation as well as over their own development. As such, they will have support from some members of the faculty and administration in this enterprise.

**Conclusion**

A summative conclusion, drawn from the data collected through students' questionnaires is explained as follows:

Firstly, the data reveals that 53 percent of 182 learners at Sekhukhune College falls between the ages of 20 and 25. Such learners usually get financial support from either their own families or from other financial institutions, in order to complete their studies.

Secondly, statistics indicate that learners coming from the neighbouring villages of Sekhukhune College dominate the campus. The college is situated approximately seven kilometres away from the nearest village. Reasons for domination by local learners revolved around their lack of finances and the fact that they were not informed about various options. This tendency of finding local learners clustering at a local college is prevalent in many rural areas of the Northern Province.

Lastly, statistics reveal that although student support services are regarded to be essential by learners, only a few are considered to be efficient. Among the few, library and residence-accommodation services are cited as practical examples.

Earwaker (1992: 129) provides two reasons why learners need to be supported: Firstly, student support is not just about dealing with problems, but concerns students' on-going development as individuals, and their social relationships. Secondly, the task of helping

and supporting is not just ancillary to what higher education institutions are all about, but a central, integral feature of their task.

## 4.3 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION BASED ON THE FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS

### 4.3.1 Data obtained through interviews with different service providers and staff of Sekhukhune College of Education

The researcher conducted focus group interviews with different service providers at Sekhukhune College, namely library staff, residence and accommodation staff, managerial and administrative staff, heads of departments, lecturing staff, rectorate, administrative staff, and health and medical staff. A series of interviews lasted for two days, that is from Wednesday to Thursday, 1 and 2 September 1999. One hour was allocated to interview a set of interviewees, each spending 30 minutes in the interview. A complete set of interviewees comprised of two staff members. From every student service provider, two professionals were selected as interviewees, except for the health and medical service where only one nursing sister was involved. She was supposed to be interviewed alone for 30 minutes.

Since January 2000, there has been no professional/provider serving in the health and medical service centre of Sekhukhune College. There is no indication that the centre will be opened again.

### 4.3.1.1 *Library Staff*
*(The Library Service)*

The interview took place in September 1999. As the library has two librarians, they had to serve as interviewees. The interview was scheduled for one hour and a period of 30 minutes was scheduled for each interviewee.

**Question 1**: Which services are rendered by your library to learners or users on a daily basis?

Response: The following are services that the library staff claims to be rendering to the users:

- Issuing and receiving of books;
- conducting general orientation programmes for the first-time library users;
- making the library user-friendly;
- giving special attention to users who seek assistance on how to access information from literature; and
- informal training of voluntary library student assistants.

**Question 2**: Which services make the librarian feel happy in performing the work to the best of his/her ability?

Response: The librarians maintain that all the services mentioned in question 1 make them feel proud of their work.

**Question 3**: Do the library staff feel comfortable with rendering their services to users?

Response: The response in general was simply 'no'. The following were mentioned as barriers towards the proper functioning of the college library:

- Lack of photocopying machines for library users;
- lack of updated computer programmes from which library users can access recent information from either journals or any reference materials;
- the fact that the college library operates independently from other college libraries which exist within the Northern Province; and
- the fact that the library receives a very limited budget from the Northern Province Department of Education.

**Question 4**: To what extent do the library services contribute to the success of learners?

Response: The librarians claim that the library can only provide services at a secondary level by their making sure that the learners easily get the supplementary materials available in the library.

**Question 5**: What are the librarians' intentions or plans in cases where the services in the library are not adequate?

Response: In response to the question, the librarians suggested the following:

- Extended opening hours;
- the number of copies per source should be increased;
- the library should have its own photocopying machine; and
- the library should have more than one computer terminal.

**Question 6**: Do the librarians normally receive complaints from learners with regard to services rendered by the library?

Response: The response to this question was that most of the serious concerns or dissatisfaction about library services are normally raised with the management, and not with the library staff.

**Question 7**: How does the library staff address the learners' concerns?

Response: The library staff claims that they usually address problems such as those caused by students themselves. According to the librarians, those are problems such as students tearing pages from reference books, hiding books on shelves or placing books on wrong shelves, and not observing due dates as reflected in the sources. The type of approach that the library staff claims to adopt in such cases is that, if a culprit is found committing such offences, she/he will be black-listed and/or suspended for a certain period prescribed by the librarians.

**Question 8**: Has any concern been raised by the dean of students in connection with the library services?

Response: The library staff maintains that to their knowledge the dean of students has never raised any concern with regard to student services.

**Conclusion**

The results of interviews with college librarians have shown that there is dissatisfaction with regard to services rendered by the college library. Insufficient funding, only one computer, small reading space, absence of photocopiers, and absence of inter-library

lending facilities were singled out as some factors that contributed to the improper functioning of the library. Based on the librarians' information, dissatisfaction with the library services was taken up with the college management, but nothing has been done yet.

### 4.3.1.2 House Mothers and Fathers
#### (Residence and Accommodation Service)

The interview occurred in September 1999. It was scheduled for one hour. Four staff members are involved in this service, namely two house fathers and two house mothers. The researcher was intended to select two interviewees among them, namely one house father and one house mother, to represent the others.

**Question 1**: Which section of the college staff determines the criteria for accepting learners into residences?
Response: House mothers and fathers, together with some members of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) are said to be responsible for room allocations.

**Question 2**: What criteria are used in terms of allocating rooms to learners?
Response: The allocation of rooms to learners is done in a haphazard way, depending on the preference of the individual learners. According to the house mothers and fathers, the only approach followed is that of 'first paid first served' or 'money first'.

**Question 3**: Are there any problems experienced by house mothers and fathers when allocating rooms to learners?
Response: A 'yes' answer was received from the respondents. According to the respondents, senior learners tend to relocate themselves in their previous rooms before producing proof of registration as boarders.

**Question 4**: What general complaints are normally lodged by learners with regard to services rendered at their places of residence?

Response: The complaints normally lodged by learners with regard to services rendered at their places of residence concern the following issues:

- Unattended blocked toilets and drains;

- inadequate security;

- sudden electricity power cuts;

- water shortage;

- untidy corridors and toilets;

- noise; and

- room-mates'/inmates' quarrels owing to personal differences.

**Question 5**: Which solutions are suggested to address problems such as the ones mentioned above?

Response: The following were stated as suggested solutions to problems such as the ones mentioned above:

- Toilets and drains should be checked once or twice per week;

- at least two security guards should be deployed at every student residence;

- immediate attention to the electricity problem when there are power failures;

- existing water-pumping machines should be properly serviced;

- corridors and toilets should be cleaned at least twice a week;

- noise should be prohibited at least from 21:00 to 7:00 the following day; and

- counselling should be provided for the residents.

**Question 6**: Have any of the suggestions given above been implemented at any stage?

Response: The answer to the question was 'yes'. For instance, the issue of the electrical power cut was claimed to be one aspect that always receives first attention from the college management committee on water and electricity.

**Question 7**: Have any concerns been raised by the dean of students in this regard?

Response: According to the house mothers and fathers, the dean of students has never raised any concern with regard to any of the problems mentioned by students regarding their places of residence.

**Conclusion**

Findings from interviews with the house mother and father indicate that the only criteria used by the college for room allocation of learners is 'first paid first served'. Findings further reveal that at the beginning of the year, some influential learners unofficially relocate themselves in their former rooms. As much as the college management understands the financial crisis prevailing among learners, the college is also said to be facing financial problems.

*4.3.1.3 Managerial and Administrative Staff*
    *(Recruitment, Admission and Registration Service)*

The interview took place in September 1999. It was scheduled for one hour. Two people were involved in the interview, namely a member of the rectorate and the chief administrator.

FOR BEGINNERS / FRESHER STUDENTS

**Question 1**: How does the college recruit / attract learners for enrolment?

Response: Referring to recruitment, the staff reported that they usually advertise through the media, namely radio and newspapers. But since 1999, when Curriculum 2005 was introduced at the college, advertisements were stopped and prospectus manuals for learner recruitment were no longer sent out. Currently, the college depends upon what the national and provincial Departments of Education prescribe or mandate for it.

**Question 2**: Does the college experience an influx of learners seeking admission or not?

Response: It was stated that in the past years, greater numbers of prospective students flocked to the college in response to the advertisements. But it is no longer the case.

**Question 3**: How does the college limit the number of learners to be admitted in order to deal with the influx?

Response: According to the respondents, the number of first entering learners to be admitted each year is limited to 250. One point that was emphasised is that the Northern

Province Department of Education comes up with new criteria for the admission of the first-year entering learners every year.

**Conclusion**

According to the research findings, recruitment as a student support service is no longer an issue to be debated as the college will no longer offer Pre-service Training (PRESET) for teachers. Reports show that in the past years, recruitment was used as a tool to guide prospective students towards their choice of courses.

FOR RE-ENTERING STUDENTS / OLDER LEARNERS

**Question 4**: Which mechanisms are normally used by the college to re-admit second-year students?

Response: Interviewees responded that a registration fee as laid down by the Northern Province Department of Education serves as a re-admission criterion. The registration fee is payable at Standard Bank and a copy of the deposit slip should be submitted to the college administration on the day of registration.

**Question 5**: Does the college involve the learners in deriving the formula for student admission and registration?

Response: A response to this question was that the college always strives towards transparency, accountability and democracy in issues that directly affect learners. It is claimed that the management proposes issues, and before those issues can be implemented they first need to be discussed in great depth with representatives of the learners. According to the management and the administration staff, under normal circumstances a management decision was never taken without consulting the representatives of the learners. Registration and admission are claimed to be the most sensitive issues that warrant the involvement of learners when decisions are made.

**Question 6**: To what extent are learners involved in the process of recruitment, admission and registration?

Response: According to the interviewees, recruitment and admission are responsibilities of the college management and administrative staff. With regard to registration, it is claimed that learners' representatives participate only during the day of course registration. These representatives are said to assist first year learners in their choice of courses during the registration period.

## Conclusion

Although it is said that the college does not enjoy full autonomy, reports claim that rules regarding admission and registration are sometimes relaxed in favour of learners. The findings further highlight the fact that the Northern Province Department of Education sets admission standards and registration fees for all colleges in the province. Nonetheless, provision is always made for a particular college with genuine concerns regarding admission and registration issues. In short, findings dictate that the subsidy provided by the National Education Department for learners' tuition and meal accounts is one factor that justifies the two processes of admitting and registering learners, to operate as essential 'student support services' on campus.

### 4.3.1.4 Heads of Departments and Senior Lecturers
### (Freshmen Orientation Programme)

The interview was held in September 1999. One hour was scheduled for the interview. There were two interviewees, namely a head of department and a senior lecturer, of whom each was expected to spend 30 minutes in the interview.

**Question 1**: Is there any committee responsible for the orientation of first entering learners?

Response: The staff confirmed that the college usually has an orientation committee, which operates from January to March of the current year, and thereafter dissolves.

**Question 2**: Who are actively involved in implementing the orientation programme?

Response: It was claimed that all of the following structures are involved in the implementation process: managerial staff, lecturing staff, administrative staff, and the Students' Representative Council (SRC).

**Question 3**: Why does the college prefer to implement the type of orientation programme mentioned in question 2 above?

Response: Orientation programmes such as the ones mentioned in question 2 above are more representative.

**Question 4:** What is the duration of the orientation programme for first-year learners?

Response: The respondents claimed that the orientation programme usually takes two to three weeks.

**Question 5**: How is the orientation programme divided with respect to the stipulated period?

Response: The duration is said to be divided into three weeks. The programmes for each week are as follows:

- First week   : Introduction to Students' Representative Council and other student
                         affairs
                       : Introduction to the general college staff
- Second week: Departmental welcome address by each head of department
                         : Introduction to diplomas and courses
- Third week   : Introduction to the college curriculum, various subject streams and
                          syllabi
                       : Selection of diploma courses and subjects by learners

**Question 6**: Is there any desire to develop the programme further?

Response: According to the respondents the desire of the College Orientation Committee is to develop the programme in such a way that it will be mission and vision oriented.

## Conclusion

It is clear from the report that the college orientation programme is regarded as one of the most important support services for freshmen on campus. The two most important reasons for organising such a programme at the college have been found to be that the learners must be assisted in adjusting to the college environment and they must be introduced to the way in which the library functions. The findings reflect that about four structures are actively involved in the programme, namely managerial staff, lecturing staff, administrative staff and the SRC. A reason for the involvement of all these organisations is simply that the college regards the undertaking as a joint venture between the entire staff and learners.

### 4.3.1.5 Rectorate and Administrative Staff
### (Financial Aid Service)

The interview took place in September 1999. It was scheduled for one hour. Two interviewees were involved, namely one member of the rectorate and the chief administrator.

**Question 1**: Are students made aware of the existence of the financial aid office at the college?
Response: Currently the service exists even though there is presently no relevant office and special officer/professional to attend to the learners' financial support needs.

**Question 2:** In which manner does the college assist hard-working and needy students financially?
Response: It was stated that the college normally issues multiple copies of notices with a list of financial aid institutions and addresses, so that every learner who needs financial support from these institutions can apply.

**Question 3:** Does the college itself offer merit bursaries to best students?

Response: The respondents claimed that, owing to a serious lack of funds, the college is not in a position to grant merit bursaries to students.

**Question 4:** Are there any bursaries or grants offered by the Department of Education, for learners to complete their college diplomas?

Response: The response was 'yes'. The staff responded that the Department of Education usually offers highly performing and needy learners financial assistance.

**Question 5:** Do such bursaries make a meaningful contribution to student learning?

Response: The respondents admitted that financial aid has always made a very significant contribution to a higher academic achievement among learners.

**Question 6:** Could a few suggestions be made for the student financial aid service?

Response: The respondents suggested the following:

- Student financial aid service needs to be included and counted in the college annual budget;
- the college should be granted an annual financial plan that is specially budgeted for student financial aid by the Department of Education; and
- financial aid sponsors should base their offers on the amount of money payable to the college. For example, a student should be granted more or less 80% of his/her college fees.

**Conclusion**

The general understanding of financial aid by both college management and administrative staff is clear from the research findings. The synthesised information from college management and administrative staff indicates that it is clearly essential that the college should have a financial aid office, but presently the sole responsibility is said to be with students themselves. It is clear from the findings that the college as an institution of higher learning does not offer merit bursaries to best or desperately needy students. Furthermore, it is obvious from the data that the college is only able to provide students with addresses and information about some financial institutions upon request. The issue of finance is solely in the hands of students.

### 4.3.1.6 Nursing Sister
#### (Medical and Health Service)

The interview took place in September 1999. It was scheduled for one hour. The nursing sister served as the only interviewee for this service. Owing to the fact that only one interviewee was involved, the duration was limited to 30 minutes.

**Question 1:** What are the reasons behind the installation of a mobile clinic or health service centre on campus?

Response: The respondent was concerned with maintaining and improving good health, as well as eradicating poor and ill health conditions of learners at the college.

**Question 2:** Which mechanisms are devised by the college in order to evaluate the health status of its learners?

Response: Learners' visits serve the purpose of their health evaluation programme.

**Question 3:** How frequently do learners visit the health care centre/clinic?

Response: Learners normally visit the clinic once or twice per week, depending on an individual's health status.

**Question 4:** What type of diseases or ailments appear to be common among learners at the college?

Response: Among others, the respondent mentioned flu, fever, pains, allergies, injuries, infections, stress-related, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

**Question 5:** Do the available health care facilities provide for a long-term remedy to the common diseases and ailments affecting learners' health?

Response: The response was negative due to the fact that the types of medication that are being delivered at the health clinic usually appear to be of poor quality whereas at times, the medication is not effective.

**Conclusion**

Findings show that Sekhukhune College of Education had a functioning student health centre. However, during the data collection it was reported that the centre had ceased to operate, simply because it had been improperly managed by the provincial Health Department. The researcher noted from the findings that in principle, the college acknowledges the fact that the health centre had been very useful, more especially during examinations and emergencies.

### 4.3.1.7 Lecturing Staff
#### (Academic Advising Service)

The interview was conducted in September 1999. It was scheduled for one hour. Two lecturers served as interviewees.

**Question 1**: Do lecturers realise the significance of advising students academically?
Response: According to the respondents, one mission of the college is to ensure that learners are given the necessary academic advice. According to the lecturing staff, most of the first-year students have little or no knowledge of both major and minor courses. So, such students need to be advised properly/fully in their choice of courses.

**Question 2**: Have respondents been aware of any objective type of academic advising at the college?
Response: The lecturing staff responded positively that all the registered students are given non-examination lessons that support them in the improvement of their learning, such as remedial education and guidance.

**Question 3**: How is the service of academic advising implemented at the college?
Response: The respondents indicated that, as the nature of the problems might differ, different approaches are used to deal with the problems.

**Question 4**: To what extent does academic advising have the blessing of the college stakeholders?

Response: The lecturing staff is encouraged by management to participate fully and actively in academic advising.

**Question 5**: Which suggestions can be made in connection with the formal advising service for learners?

Response: The college should try the following:

- Appoint someone who specialises in academic advising;
- organise staff awareness programmes for academic advising;
- encourage collaboration and cooperation between the academic staff and the appointed specialist for the service; and
- prompt learners to be actively involved in their own academic advising, for example, peer advising.

**Question 6**: Was there any concern raised by the dean of students in connection with the service?

Response: The response to this question was simply 'no concern'.

**Conclusion**

According to the feedback on academic advising or mentoring, the college has not yet attained a satisfactory position on the issue. Indications from the research findings are that the issue of mentoring learners has been left in the hands of individual subject lecturers. The college expects that each subject lecturer needs to be an academic advisor of his/her own learners. It appears from the data that currently the college has not yet adopted an appropriate method of dealing with the issue of mentoring as a student support service.

## 4.4    SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

According to the data from questionnaires, 65 percent of 96 learners within the age group 20-25 regarded all the available student support services as efficient. They emphasised that the library, financial aid and health centre are the most needed support services at Sekhukhune College.

A major and obvious question that the reader could ask is: "What actions have been taken to ensure that the most essential services flourish?"

With regard to the library, nothing seems to have been done about highlighted problems. According to the librarians, the library has a small reading section, and is lacking in other major facilities such as computers and photocopiers.

Accommodation has also appeared to be a problem at the college. Hence, the college has decided to embark on the 'first paid first served' strategy. Interviews with the house mother and father reveal that the re-entering learners usually relocate themselves into their former rooms without the knowledge of the authorities.

Although the responsibility for finance currently lies solely on individual learners themselves, it is indicated that the wish of the college management and administrative staff is to ensure that a financial aid office is introduced at the college.

The college medical and health centre was discovered to be a more sensitive issue. Since the interview, the then existing health centre has turned into a white elephant as a result of poor management by the Department of Health.

On the issue of admission and registration at the college, the researcher learned that the provincial Education Department is responsible for setting admission standards and fees, while the college itself is responsible for administering the process of registration. In most cases, the two major variables that determine choices for prospective learners to register with the institution are usually the learner's academic ability, achievement and

his/her socio-economic status. The higher the learner's academic ability and achievement, and the higher the socio-economic status, the greater the opportunity to register.

The researcher realised that lack of career guidance, among other things, could be regarded as one factor that has left many students with no alternative other than to register with the college.

Lastly, academic advising and orientation were also found to be services inadequately and inappropriately implemented at the college. Hence it is the responsibility of the whole college staff and management to ensure that all the existing student support services on campus benefit the students in the process of learning.

# CHAPTER 5

# FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1    INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher restates the objectives and hypotheses of the research. The findings are summarised, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for consideration are made.

## 5.2    RESTATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research were stated as follows:
-       to determine student support needs;
-       to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of available support services;
-       to explore possibilities for new services based on students' needs; and
-       to explore new strategies and activities for the delivery of new services.

## 5.3    RESTATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were based on the posed research questions and objectives:
-    The available student support services at Sekhukhune College of Education are ineffective and inefficient; and
-    There are no possibilities or strategies for new student support services at Sekhukhune College of Education.

## 5.4    FINDINGS

The research reveals that the following student support services exist at Sekhukhune College of Education: recruitment, admission and registration, orientation, library, residence and accommodation, health and medical, and academic advising.

With regard to assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of the available support services at Sekhukhune College, the findings are as follows:

Recruitment as a student support service is used as a tool to guide prospective learners towards their choice of diplomas and courses.

The Northern Province Department of Education sets admission standards and registration fees for colleges of education, even though special provision is always made for a particular college with genuine concerns regarding admission and registration matters. Rules regarding admission and registration are sometimes relaxed in favour of college learners. For instance, if the majority of prospective learners do not meet the required admission standards, such standards are compromised in favour of the learners. This argument rejects the hypothesis that 'available student support services at Sekhukhune College of Education are ineffective and inefficient', in the sense that the relaxation of admission and registration rules are in favour of the majority of students.

The orientation programme has been identified as another efficient support service for freshmen at the college. According to the findings, the orientation programme is offered within a period of two to three weeks. Four college structures are involved, namely management, lecturing staff, library staff, administrative staff and the Students' Representative Council (SRC). All these structures are said to perform specific duties during the orientation programme. The duration allocated for orientation and the sizeable number of structures involved in the programme prove its effectiveness and efficiency. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative.

The library services available at the college are found to be ineffective and insufficient. Some factors that were found to be contributing to the improper functioning of the library

are insufficient funding for library services, small reading space, one computer, absence of photocopiers and non-functioning of inter-library loans. This finding supports the first hypothesis that 'available student support services are ineffective and inefficient'.

At the beginning of every year, some older, influential learners informally relocate themselves in rooms of their choice before other learners can be allocated. The college subsequently decided to embark on the two strategies of 'first paid first served' and to accommodate only course two and three students, as a way of solving the problem of accommodation. The unofficial occupation of rooms by learners, and the decision taken by the college, are clear indicators of ineffective and insufficient accommodation at the college. This supports the first hypothesis that 'available student support services are ineffective and inefficient'.

With regard to financial aid service, the college does not take any initiatives of getting merit bursaries for best or desperately needy learners, but only provides them with addresses and information about a number of financial aid institutions upon request. Currently, many learners are still depending on their parents and guardians for financial support. To acknowledge the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of financial aid service, the college makes a special arrangement with parents of learners coming from poor family backgrounds, regarding the outstanding payments. The finding supports the first hypothesis that 'available student support services are ineffective and inefficient'.

A mobile health and medical aid clinic that used to serve the whole college community (student body in particular) is found to be non-functional. The clinic used to have one nursing sister who would work from 08:00 to 16:30, and after hours when emergencies occurred. Since January 2000, there have been no health or medical services for students. This agrees with the first hypothesis that 'available student support services are ineffective and inefficient'.

The college has not yet reached any satisfactory position on the issue of academic advising as a student support service since it was found that the issue has been left in the

hands of individual lecturers. Currently, the college does not have a policy on academic advising. This supports the first hypothesis that 'available student support services are ineffective and inefficient'.


## 5.5    CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded from this study that colleges of education such as Sekhukhune still regard recruitment as an important tool to market the institutions. It is within the package of recruitment wherein students can have a proper choice of streams to follow.

At almost all institutions of higher learning, there are rules and regulations with regard to admission and registration. Usually, admission rules and requirements are flexible in favour of students, as was also found to be the case at Sekhukhune College of Education.

A period of two to three weeks that has been put aside by the college for an orientation programme, and the involvement of almost every college structure, show that the institution is serious about orientation as a student support service. Usually, institutions of higher learning such as universities also adopt the two to three weeks' period.

One of the important student support services that needs attention at the college, or at any institution of higher learning, is a library. The small reading space, one operating computer, absence of photocopiers, and insufficient funds allocated to the college will directly affect the students' academic performance.

Accommodation is found to be a problem at the college. The strategy followed by the college, of accommodating only students who are at levels two and three as a tentative solution to the problem, has proven unsuccessful in providing a permanent solution to the problem.

For the college simply to provide students with addresses of organisations that offer bursaries is an indication that the college does not have the plight of their students at

heart. It is not enough for the college or any institution of higher learning to make payment arrangements with the parents or guardians of students from poor families. Thus, colleges must be able to provide suggestions to that effect.

The non-functioning of the mobile health and medical aid clinic at the college works against the good health of students. Common health disorders such as headaches and stomach aches need such mobile clinics.

It can be argued that the college has neglected academic advising by simply leaving it in the hands of the individual lecturers. The importance of this student support service cannot just be left without a formal structure that will serve to monitor its progress.

The summative conclusion the researcher draws from findings is that library, residence and accommodation, financial aid, health and medical, and academic advising are found to be ineffective and inefficient. Student support services such as recruitment, admission and registration, as well as orientation, are found to be effective and efficient. The implication here is that the bulk of the available student support services at the college were found to be ineffective and inefficient, whereas relatively few were found to be effective and efficient. Thus, the hypothesis that states that 'available student support services at Sekhukhune College of Education are ineffective and inefficient' can be accepted.

It is therefore in the interest of this research to provide some recommendations on the services that have not been sufficient at the college. It is believed that the recommendations can also be used by any institution experiencing similar problems such as those experienced by the college under study.

## 5.6    RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made on the basis of the findings and conclusions on student support services that were found to be ineffective and inefficient:

- For effective and efficient use of the library as a student support service, it is recommended that the college should make sufficient funds available for the erection of a new library structure, with more reading space and sufficient resources.

- With regard to the accommodation crisis, it is recommended that the college should institute a fund-raising committee to work on raising funds in order to erect new accommodation blocks.

- In the case of financial aid service, it is recommended that the college should initiate its own merit bursaries for best learners at all levels.

- On the question of health and medical service, it is recommended that the collapsed college clinic should be revived, and that a certain amount of money should be contributed for the proper functioning of the clinic, as determined by the college. As the clinic primarily serves the students, it is suggested that fees should be debited into the account of the clinic for every registered student. The fees should be determined by the college.

- As far as academic advising is concerned, the researcher suggests that the college should draw up a policy that deals specifically with academic advising. Academic advising should not be left simply in the hands of individual academic staff members, but there shuould be a special committee to monitor the programme.

## 5.7    RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Further research should replicate the study with a larger sample of respondents in order to determine if significant differences can be found in this particular study, as well as in the future study.

- Future research should determine proper ways in which the available ineffective

and inefficient student support services can be improved.

- It is recommended that more research should be conducted to determine the impact of available ineffective and inefficient student support services on learner performance.

- It is also recommended that more research should be conducted to determine the impact of available effective and efficient student support services on learner performance.

- Since the study had questionnaire and focus group interviews as instruments utilised for data collection, future research might apply further relevant investigations in order to validate some of the findings suggested in this study.

The researcher concludes that if the support needs of students remain effective and efficient at colleges of education, there will be high retention rates and high performance systems among learners. Thus, it is the responsibility of the college stakeholders to make sure that the student service professionals keep abreast with new information on various student support services. As such, the learners' academic achievement will be improved more rigorously through effective operation of the available student support services at different colleges of education.

# APPENDIX : A

# THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain the students' opinions on the student support services and their operation at the college. This is due to fact that the teaching-learning process should be improved whenever and wherever a need arises.

Confidentiality is ensured upon the respondents' views that will be reflected on this questionnaire. That is, your responses are strictly confidential. The questionnaire items are based on comments that students have often made about their experience of tertiary education and the time spent at a college of education. However, the items have been specially selected in order to reflect some aspects of teaching and learning, as well as services that are viewed as significant across a wide range of college activities.

Thank you for offering your time to complete this document thoughtfully and sensibly. Your thinking skills, attitudes and feelings will really benefit the researcher(s), learners, entire college and other prospective learners who will be recruited to the college in the years to come.

## HOW TO ANSWER

- Please use a pencil to answer the questionnaire.
- Simply make a cross ( X ) beside each statement that most accurately reflects your views (i.e. make a cross in the empty brackets).
- Fill in the blank spaces wherever applicable.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

**1.** Gender      1. Female  ☐     2. Male  ☐

**2.** Age range      1. 20 – 25  ☐

     2. 26 – 31  ☐

     3. 32 – 37  ☐

     4. 38 – and above  ☐

**3.** Marital status      1. Single  ☐

     2. Married  ☐

     3. Divorced  ☐

     4. Widowed  ☐

**4.** Number of children      1. One  ☐

     2. Two  ☐

     3. Three or more  ☐

     4. None  ☐

**5.** Who finances your studies?      1. Spouse  ☐

     2. Parents  ☐

     3. Family / guardians  ☐

     4. Bursary / grant  ☐

     5. Self  ☐

**6.** Course and level of study (e.g. STD)    1.   JPTD  ☐

     2.   SPTD  ☐

     3.   STD  ☐

## SUPPORT SERVICES

**7.** What prompted you to register with Sekhukhune College of Education?

     1.   I was attracted to the student support services provided by the college.  ☐

     2.   It is the only institution of higher learning in the neighbourhood.  ☐

3. The diversity of courses and subjects offered at the college. ☐

4. I just like the name " Sekhukhune". ☐

5. Other reasons ☐

**8.** In your own opinion, what do you understand by the 'student support services'?

1. Success ☐

2. Improvement / assistance ☐

3. Achievement ☐

4. Unknown / cannot define ☐

**9.** Make a comprehensive list of all student support services available (operating) on your campus.

.....................................................................................................................................

.....................................................................................................................................

.....................................................................................................................................

.....................................................................................................................................

**10.** Of the student services listed in item 9 above, make mention of the most efficient services in your own order of priority.

a. .........................................................................................................................

b. .........................................................................................................................

c. .........................................................................................................................

d. .........................................................................................................................

e. .........................................................................................................................

f. .........................................................................................................................

**11.** How do you weigh the above-mentioned student services as the most efficient ones?

1. Useful ☐

2. Very useful ☐

3. Useless ☐

4. Very useless ☐

**12.** What are the other student services that seem to be lacking at your college?

.....................................................................................................................................

.....................................................................................................................................

.....................................................................................................................................

**13.** What do you think are reasons for the lack or unavailability of the above-mentioned services?

    1.   College gives much care for learners.    ☐

    2.   Less and/or no care for learners.    ☐

    3.   The Education Department is not actively involved in services' sphere of operation  ☐

    4.   Other    ☐

**14.** Do you think of any strategies that can assist in overcoming the constraints (problems) mentioned under question 13 above?

    1. Yes   ☐         2. No   ☐

**15.** If Yes, what strategies do you have in mind?

    1.   Conduct student and staff interviews    ☐

    2.   Conduct a needs analysis    ☐

    3.   Managerial workshops    ☐

    4.   General counselling    ☐

    5.   Other    ☐

**16.** As a student, do you encounter any problems that you think are not catered for, by the available support services on campus?

    1. Yes   ☐         2. No   ☐

**17.** If yes, what problems have you and other students experienced?

    1.   Poor medication    ☐

    2.   Poor financial support    ☐

    3.   Lack of learning facilities    ☐

    4.   Other    ☐

**18.** Do you have any valid information about the catering company on campus?

    1. Yes   ☐         2. No   ☐

**19.** Are you satisfied with the services rendered to you by the college catering company?

    1. Yes   ☐         2. No   ☐

**20.** If yes, give the main reason why you feel satisfied/content with the company's services.

    1.   Enough food    ☐

    2.   Balanced diet    ☐

    3.  Fresh food ☐

    4.  Tasty / delicious food ☐

    5.  Other ☐

**21.** Do you experience any difficulty in studying or performing various academic tasks at your campus places of residence?

    1. Yes ☐                    2. No ☐

**22.** If yes, state the nature of such problems:

    1.  Noisy ☐

    2.  Untidy ☐

    3.  Congested ☐

    4.  Extra temperature ☐

    5.  Other ☐

**23.** Are students at this college given any opportunity to participate actively in the management of their own learning environment?

    1.  Agree ☐

    2.  Strongly agree ☐

    3.  Disagree ☐

    4.  Strongly disagree ☐

# THANK YOU

# APPENDIX B

# INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

**THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SEKHUKHUNE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STAFF MEMBERS**

## A. LIBRARY

1. Which services are rendered by your library to learners or users on daily basis?
   ...................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................

2. Which services are the most beneficial in helping you as a librarian to succeed in performing the work to the best of your ability?...............................................................................................

3. As staff, are you comfortable with the way you render library services to learners? If not, what ideas do you offer in order to improve your library? ................................................................................

4. To what extent do you think that the library services contribute to the success of learners?
   ...................................................................................................................................

5. If the library services are not adequate, what do you intend to do in order to meet the learners' library needs? ................................................................................

6. Do you normally receive complaints from learners with regard to services rendered by the library? Please specify: a).................................................................................
   b).................................................................................
   c).................................................................................
   d).................................................................................
   e). .................................................................................

7. As library staff, what do you do about learners' concerns or complaints? ........................

..................................................................................................................................

8. Were there any concerns raised by the dean of students in connection with the library service?

   Please specify: ...........................................................................................................

## B. RESIDENCE AND ACCOMMODATION

1. Which section of the college staff determines the criteria /formulae for allocating learners into various residences or rooms? ...................................................................................................

2. What criteria are used in terms of allocating rooms to learners? .........................................

3. Do you usually experience problems from learners in connection with the criteria of allocating them into various residences or rooms? ...................................................................................

4. Can you mention a few general complaints normally lodged by learners with regard to services rendered at their places of residence? ..............................................................................

5. What do you suggest as the anticipated solutions to such problems as the ones mentioned above? ..............................................................................................................................

6. Did you ever try to implement some of the suggestions given above? ...................................

7. If there is any concern that has been raised by the dean of students in this regard, please state it clearly..........................................................................................................................

## C. RECRUITMENT, ADMISSION, AND REGISTRATION
   FOR BEGINNERS / FRESHER STUDENTS

1. Does the college have a way of recruiting/attracting students to this college? .........................
   Please explain how that is done: ..............................................................................

2. After recruitment, does the college usually experience any influx of students seeking admission?
..............................................................................................................

3. In order to deal with the influx, how does the college get a specific number of students for admission? ………................................................................…………………………

FOR RE-ENTERING STUDENTS / STAYERS

4. Which mechanisms are normally used by the college to re-admit second-year students?
……………........................…………………………………………………………...

5. Does the college involve learners in deriving the formulae for student admission and registration? If not, why? ………………………………………………………………………………...

6. If yes, how is that done, and to what extent? ………………………………………………………

**D. ORIENTATION**

1. Is there any committee which is responsible for the orientation of first-year students?
………….......................…………………………………………………………………..

2. Who are actively involved in implementing the orientation programme? Is it a joint venture, between students and staff, or students only, or staff only? ……………………………………

3. Why does the college prefer it that way? ………………………………………………………

4. For how long does the orientation programme for first-year students last at the college? ………..

5. How is the programme divided, with respect to the above-stipulated period? (i.e. life span of the orientation programme)……………………………….....................................……...............

6. Do you think of developing the orientation programme further? ..............................................

   If   yes, how? ............................................................……………………..…................................

## E. FINANCIAL AID

1. Are learners made aware of the existence of the financial aid at the college? ...............…..........…..

   If yes, how do they respond to the office? .........................…………………………………..........…..

2. How does the college assist hard-working and needy students financially? ......................….

   ...................................................................................................................................

3. Does the college itself offer merit bursaries to best students? ...................................................….

   If not, why? .............................................................................................……………..

4. Are there any bursaries or grants from the government that are supposed to be incurred by students after completing their diplomas? ..............….....................................................................

   How are the terms of such bursaries and grants put down?..................…...................................

5. Do you think that such bursaries have a serious contribution to student learning?  ...  .................

   Why?..................….....................................................................................................

6. What are your suggestions for student financial aid service, as members of staff? E.g. special service for student financial aid?..................…………………………………………….........

## F. MEDICAL AND HEALTH

1. What are the objectives of installing a mobile clinic / health centre on this campus?

   ..............................…..............…...........................................................................................

2. Which mechanisms are devised by the college  in order to evaluate the health status of learners on campus? ...................…..........……..............................................................................................

3. How frequently should learners visit the clinic / health care centre? ...............................

4. What type of diseases or ailments appear to be common among learners at the college? .........
.................................................................................................................................

5. Do the available facilities at the clinic / health care centre provide for a long-term remedy to the common diseases and ailments affecting learners' health? ...............................................

Please expatiate: ..................................................................................................................

## G. ACADEMIC ADVISING

1. Do you, as staff realise any significance in academic of advising your students academically? If yes, of what significance can that be?....................................................................................

2. Have you been aware of any objective type of academic advising taking place at the college?...................................................................................................................

Please motivate: ...............................................................................................................

3. Briefly explain how the service of academic advising is implemented at the college.
...............................................................................................................................

4. To what extent does academic advising receive the blessing of the college stakeholders?
...............................................................................................................................

5. Which suggestions can you make in connection with the formal academic advising service for learners that should take place at the college? ...........................................................................

6. If there is any concern raised by the dean of students in connection with the service, please state it clearly. ...............................................................................................................................

## THE END

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

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