INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

AIM OF THE STUDY

The research objective of this study was to describe the support needs of nursing students in the undergraduate programme by the South African Nursing Council under R425 of the Nursing Act No. 33 of 2005 for their goal of retention-to-graduation.

METHODLOGY

A descriptive, cross-sectional research design was used. The population of the study was nursing students in the undergraduate programme in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa in order to develop a model for retention-to-graduation of nursing students in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

The target population was all the students in the universities that are accredited to offer undergraduate nursing programmes.

The sample comprised 352 students, a number that was representative enough for the study. The sample in this study was recruited according to the distribution of student profile characteristics or demographics in Figure 1. The sample size was determined as follows: 186 (52.9%) respondents at University 1 and 166 (47.1%) at University 2.

The highest number of respondents 102 (29.0%) were in their third year of study, 95 (27.0%) in second year, 82 (23.2%) in first year and 73 (20.7%) in the fourth year.

A standard generating facility (MSEXCELL) was used to select respondents for the study.

While majority of female nurses have traditionally made the profession their career choice, males on the other hand are pressured by the fact that they are traditionally held to higher standards than many other disciplines (Harrison, 2002; 2005).

The sample distribuition was as follows; 186 (52.8%) respondents at University 1 and 166 (47.2%) at University 2.

Notable increase is being realized in countries such as United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia and Ireland where women form a major portion of the nursing profession.

Some even absent themselves and that is bad practice to enhance retention-to-graduation.

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Table 1. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS (n=352)

The study revealed that nursing students have varied support needs in the undergraduate nursing programme in order to realize their goals of retention-to-graduation.