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### Factors Influencing Consumer Choices in Graduate Nursing Education at Andrews University

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Andrews University  
School of Education

FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER CHOICES  
IN GRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION  
AT ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
Catherine Keith Turner

October 1994

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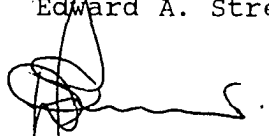
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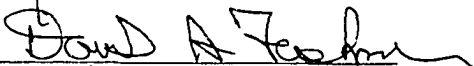
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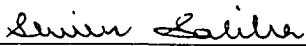
  
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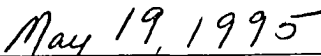
  
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ABSTRACT

FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER CHOICES  
IN GRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION  
AT ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

by

Catherine Keith Turner

Chair: Edward A. Streeter

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER CHOICES IN GRADUATE  
NURSING EDUCATION AT ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

Name of researcher: Catherine Keith Turner

Name and degree of faculty chair: Edward A. Streeter, Ed.D.

Date completed: April 1995

Problem

Universities and colleges are increasingly interested in marketing strategies in order to improve enrollment. Nursing programs have likewise become more conscious of the need to be more market-oriented. Knowing the factors that influence consumer choices in higher education can enhance marketing strategies. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the factors related to marketing nursing graduate education that affect consumer choices in a particular program. Of special interest was the nursing

student population in the Andrews University Graduate Nursing Program.

#### Method

From the literature and from focus groups of a sample of the student population, data were obtained. The researcher conducted all focus group data gathering. The interview schedule was sent to three of the outreach sites for completion as a paper-and-pencil test as suggested in the literature for the quantitative value that is unobtainable by strictly qualitative analysis.

The sample was voluntarily self-selected for all groups. Out of the 110 master's students, 66 were actually involved in data collection for this study.

#### Results

The study indicated that out of the marketing factors of product, place, price, and promotion, product and place are the most important. Accessibility, scheduling convenience, quality of the program, and quality of the faculty, the image, the Christian focus, and the emphasis on research were the most frequently reported factors that influence student choices in Andrews University master's of nursing program.

#### Conclusions

Knowledge provided by this research indicates that certain factors are identifiable that influence registered nurses in a choice of a particular program for graduate

study. The analysis of the data obtained is applicable in developing a strategic marketing plan for the Department of Nursing at Andrews University. If the 10 highest-ranking factors consistently occur in repeated research, market planning for the master's students in nursing can be executed more profitably in every program.

The pragmatic value of this study is that the information can be applied immediately in the formulation of a strategic marketing plan. The tentative SWOT analysis and the marketing plan can be enhanced and actually used within the current academic year.

## DEDICATION

With heartfelt appreciation and love to my husband and best friend, Dr. Lawrence E. Turner, Jr.; to my daughters, Jody, Cheryl and Jill; and to my parents, William J. and Nellah Keith, for your continuing love and support.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous individuals deserve recognition for their contribution to this research. At the least, they include:

The chair of the dissertation committee, Dr. Edward Streeter, whose advice and support were invaluable to the completion of this project;

Dr. David Penner, whose advice, expertise, and insights into the pragmatic aspects of educational marketing made this project possible;

Dr. Dave Faehner, whose continued friendship, counsel, and support were both needed and most appreciated;

Dr. Slimen Saliba, whose friendship and knowledge at the outset of this project were indispensable;

Mark Farmer, who helped throughout with the task of production, formatting, and editing;

and Dr. Rilla Taylor, who graciously granted time from teaching for the completion of this research.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Marketing theories and techniques for non-profit organizations have become well established over a period of years. In fact, Stone (1988) described the growth of marketing strategies during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s as explosive. Educators were somewhat reluctant to consider marketing in the academic setting because marketing was often associated with "selling or gimmickry" and was felt to be a non-scholarly activity (Grossman, 1987, p. 15). Dienemann and Wintz (1992) described the fear of commercialization of health care as well and discussed the fact that marketing was felt to be unethical. For that reason, "nursing in particular has been slow to perceive a need to market itself" (Autonberry, 1988, p. 40).

With declining enrollments, departments of nursing cannot simply wait and hope that students will "flood the classrooms. Half as many nurses graduated in 1988 as did in 1982" (Barta & Neighbors, 1989, p. 7). As a result, a growing number of schools of nursing are turning to marketing strategies to enhance enrollment (July, 1988; Richardson & Sherwood, 1988; Rawlins, Riordan, Delamaide, &

Kilian, 1991) and, as Dienemann and Wintz (1992) observed, administrators "typically now have marketing responsibilities as part of their work" (p. 23).

In comparison to the volumes of material in business and higher education, there is a limited amount of literature regarding the marketing of nursing education. Consequently, information is limited regarding whether factors related to the marketing mix or other factors contribute most significantly to educational choices in higher education in nursing. As Tilbury and Fisk (1989) pointed out, "knowledge of marketing concepts and principles is imperative for nurse educators" (p. 13). It is important in planning effective marketing to know the clients, and to understand their needs and the factors most influential in their choices (Paré, 1993).

Recent changes have brought about a reevaluation of old thoughts and responses. Contemporary authors suggest that "competitive recruitment of nursing school applicants requires a thorough understanding of why they pick a particular school" (Rawlins et al., 1991, p. 197). In addition, administrators should be aware that the old stereotypical view of college students is changing. Ellis and Hartley (1988) discussed the steadily increasing age of nursing applicants. Not only would the nursing student of the future be older (Barta & Neighbors, 1989), but Keating

(1989) reported that more males were attracted to the profession as well.

Dulin (1993) stated that "administrators in schools of nursing . . . should develop a marketing orientation that focuses on market needs and wants" (p. 6). The rapidly changing market required marketing know-how that met the needs of the student in higher education in nursing. Planning marketing strategies for specific populations is no longer considered a radical approach to solving the problems of non-profit organizations (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991, p. 29). It is now considered an effective management tool in the academic setting.

According to Waltz, Chambers, and Heckenberger (1989), the changing health-care arena requires "more effort . . . for marketing in nursing to keep in touch with the times" (p. 19). It is therefore important for schools of nursing to utilize strategic marketing strategies and to analyze factors that are the most effective in attracting potential students to a program. "A clear perception and understanding of the unique environment in which a population operates" is the point from which marketing strategies initiate (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991, p. 30).

If colleges and universities are able to market programs successfully to prospective students, problems related to financial pressures and declining enrollments can be better controlled. Attracting adequate numbers from

the available pool allows programs to fulfill the goals and purposes of the institution, as well as supply health care providers with needed education.

#### Statement of the Problem

Analysis of marketing principles provides some answers for strategic marketing in nursing education. What is not known are the specific factors leading to consumer choices in master's education in nursing. Prospective clients may respond to a variety of factors. To determine effective marketing strategies, nurse educators must determine the factors to which adult students respond most consistently.

#### Purpose of the Study

It is important for any university to understand how to market most successfully to the targeted population. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the factors related to marketing nursing graduate education that affect consumer choices in a particular program, namely Andrews University.

#### Significance of the Study

Since marketing strategies from business have been adapted to higher education in the recent past, those most appropriate for use in nursing education should be studied. From this research, it may be possible to effectively market a master's program, particularly at Andrews University. First, through a review of literature,

information was obtained that indicated effective factors of influence in marketing master of science education to registered nurses at other institutions.

The possibility exists that after identifying factors of influence, strategies can be utilized which are most effective in increasing enrollment, in improving tuition and donation income, and at the same time enhancing the communication from and image of the program of nursing.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Introduction and Background

For years, nursing educators looked upon consumers in collegiate settings as a select few "chosen" for the discipline. Both financial aid and jobs were readily available and students sought the coveted positions in educational programs. Many considered their career more of a "calling" than simply a job.

Recruitment activities were considered an aspect of academia that tended toward an assessment of potential student qualifications rather than the "selling" of a product. In fact, to consider the marketing of a career that consumers and educators both viewed as an altruistic mission was so foreign as to be considered unethical.

Social changes including: (1) a dwindling population of potential college-age students, (2) gender-role changes (3) alterations in health-care delivery, and (4) adults

seeking higher education, have all changed the profile of nursing education.

In the mid-1980s, bright young female students turned to business, law, and medicine. The potential population of females seeking nursing decreased. A changing economy in health care created a setting of jobs increasingly requiring graduate education.

General educational marketing became a viable mechanism for maintaining enrollment in the early 1970s. Nursing, however, was among the very last of the educational disciplines to consider marketing strategies. Long-held views in relation to nursing education still made marketing highly resisted, and more so than in almost any non-profit organization and service. The religious connection of the first nurses serving humankind, as God had served humanity, has overtones to the present.

Resistant as nursing educators have been, however, the 1980s brought radical changes. With multiple choices of institutions and a dwindling population of consumers, educational nursing administrators found themselves thrust from a resistive to a dynamic pose in marketing. Population demands and the need to market for the sake of survival brought nurse educators to a sudden consumer-consciousness.

The early 1990s have seen a new administration on Capitol Hill dealing pointedly and decidedly with health

care and health-care delivery. The resulting shift in focus has left nursing educators questioning how best to meet consumer needs.

Literature in business and educational marketing has been helpful to nursing educators. What was really needed, however, was a theoretical or conceptual model that could be modified or developed specifically to the needs of both marketers and consumers.

#### Theoretical or Conceptual Model Development

##### Theory defined

An early definition of theory described by Rudner in 1966 is: "A systematically related set of statements, including some law-like generalizations, that is empirically tested" (p. 10). The empirical testing of marketing in nursing is obviously missing. In fact, at this point the most basic exploratory research is being conducted, and nothing akin to "law-like" generalizations are possible. Even Kerlinger's (1973) later and more refined definition of a theory is beyond the scope of marketing in nursing, at present. The definition is as follows: "A theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of a phenomena [sic] by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (p. 9).



A conceptual model that suggests a more tentative approach on which early nursing educational marketing can be based is the first step in theory development.

Grunig (1984) described the 2-way model dealing with clients or consumers. The 2-way model involves dialogue rather than the old-style monologue that was used historically in recruitment. Potential students were informed of program offerings and admission criteria. Administrators then waited for the classrooms to fill.

Grunig's Model can serve as a conceptual base for understanding the nursing population of potential students. Monologue will no longer work. Dialogue, in an effort to determine what factors contribute to graduate students' final choice of a program, serves as the model on which to build an understanding of marketing potential. (See Figure 1.)

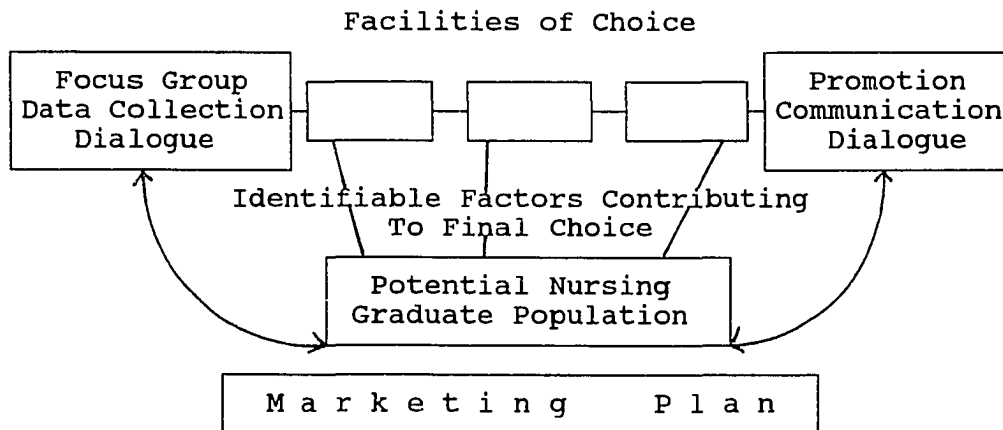


Figure I. An adaptation of Grunig's 2-way symmetric model of dialogue as the theoretical base in marketing nursing graduate education

This aspect of educational marketing is a necessary piece in the consumerization of academic marketing. Universities are clamoring to court potential graduate entrants. Health-care positions are requiring advanced degrees, and clients are highly motivated and well-informed.

The missing brick in the educational marketing base is an understanding of factors influencing consumers to advanced degree programs.

Collegiate research studies involving student choice of educational institutions go back 40 years (Holland, 1958). Research involving graduate educational marketing in nursing is almost nonexistent.

Knowing the top 10-20 factors influencing adults to graduate programs in institutions assists all graduate programs. Some factors, at least, can be assumed to be similar for all adults returning to school. Narrowing a marketing approach to 10-20 known factors provides a research model for other programs.

Paradigm generation is theory development in essence. Research alters, enhances, and/or modifies the basic model. One does not know at the outset whether adults seek the least expensive program or the one where faculty are the most mentor-oriented. Do they choose quality education or employer-suggested programs? Are peers the best recruiters or are one-on-one interviews with an adviser most

effective? Is spiritual care for clients a significant factor or do adult RNs choose the school where research and scholarship are stressed?

Dialogue is paramount in seeking concepts on which a theory of marketing graduate education in nursing is based. Factor-searching studies are often conceptually--rather than theoretically--based, since they are often first-level research. The evident value of even a basic model is the inherent research-generating qualities that contribute finally to theory development.

#### Overview of Methodology

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, a detailed review of literature was undertaken. Since this is a factor-searching study, the first step was a historic review of previous educational marketing research. Based on the factors that previous studies identified as significant, interview questions were assembled. Focus group interviews were then conducted using the usual discussion that focus groups include. In addition, the structured interview schedule was used to which some groups responded verbally and some in writing.

Study subjects were drawn from the current outreach sites operated by Andrews University (AU) Department of Nursing. The total sample was 66 master of science (nursing) students enrolled during the 1992-93 school year from a population of 110 graduate students (NLN Report,

1992). Subjects were divided into two groups: those completing the written interview schedule and those providing verbal responses in the focus groups. The sample completing the written schedule was 28 students from three different geographic sites. The discussion focus groups were from five different locations and involved 38 students. The sites for the focus groups were indicated to the study population, and students voluntarily attended. The population for this segment of data collection was from the following locations: Chattanooga, Tennessee; Hanford, California; and Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, and Berrien Springs, Michigan. The researcher personally conducted all focus groups for consistency of interview techniques. In no way were any coercive tactics used. All participation was voluntary.

No part of the focus group data collection involved class time. Students were informed that the data collection was voluntary, and would in no way be connected with class standing or grading. The group members assembled at the specified time and location.

The subjects were informed at that time that none of the verbatim responses were linked in any way to identifiable information, including name or ID number.

The structured part of the interview that was completed in written form was from students at Kettering, Ohio ( $N = 5$ ); Orlando, Florida ( $N = 14$ ); and Hinsdale,

Illinois ( $N = 9$ ), for a total of 28 respondents. All responses remained anonymous. Professors at those sites distributed and returned the forms. It was not possible to identify participants on the tool. The Human Subjects Review Board at Andrews University gave approval for this study prior to data collection. (See Appendix A.)

### Description of Data Collection

#### Procedures

This study was conducted to determine the factors influencing students to pursue graduate nursing education at Andrews University. The methodology is presented in the following sections: study design; the historical perspective of factors influencing consumer choices in higher education; instrumentation; and the selection of the population and sample.

#### Study Design

The very nature of a factor-searching study is indicative of the need for data from a variety of sources. Since little research has been conducted in educational marketing in nursing, data collection began with a historical review of nursing and general educational marketing in the literature.

In order to understand the selection of a particular program in nursing in higher education, general knowledge of factors influencing consumer choices in higher education

was needed. After factors from the literature search were assembled and analyzed, it was possible to develop instrumentation more intelligently. The instrument was used (1) to obtain data from current students in the Master of Science (nursing) program and (2) to give direction to questioning and interview techniques with study subjects.

Data were obtained from an archival review at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, as well as from a review of literature, focus group interviewing, and written responses. In addition, a pilot study was conducted with on-campus students prior to actual data collection. Students were asked to critique the data-gathering instrument used for interview. (See Appendix B.) Suggestions from that initial data collection were helpful in fine-tuning the tool. The sample for the pilot study was students on campus during the 1991-92 school year.

#### Historical Perspectives of Factors Influencing Consumer Choices in Higher Education

Interview as a method of research was first utilized in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The qualitative approach was developed to seek better understanding of social problems that could not be revealed by quantitative research alone. Lazarfeld and Merton used the group interview in marketing research as early as 1942 (Merton, 1986). Businesses utilized focus groups beginning in the late 1950s as a research approach for marketing. It was

not until the 1970s and the publication of the Oiler's research report that qualitative research in the form of focus groups was accepted in nursing (Alward & Camunas, 1991).

Focus group interviews in marketing are used primarily to discover consumer "needs, wants, preferences and perceptions" (Alward & Camunas, 1991, p. 79). Focus group research is used in marketing where little is known on which to base quantitative research.

The specific research question addressed in data gathering and analysis for this study was: What factors influenced consumer choices in higher education in nursing at Andrews University? Rawlins et al. (1991) described the importance of identifying the reasons students make the choices they do in selecting an educational program or institution. According to them, the marketing "of nursing school applicants requires a thorough understanding of why they pick a particular school" (p. 197).

Of special interest is the Kearney and Kearney study of 1992 with the following ranked factors influencing student choices in higher education: (1) academic quality, (2) variety, (3) tuition costs, (4) location, (5) faculty teaching ability, (6) class size, and (7) social life.

From the review of literature, these factors were identified in addition to those discussed in chapter 4 for the development of an interview tool (see Appendix C).

### Instrumentation

Questionnaires are one of the most common forms of research instrumentation for marketing, but other methods are suggested as the beginning step in data gathering (Kasunic, 1992). More factual information is obtained when focus groups and interviews are used to begin the marketing process. In fact, Topper (1983) stated that qualitative research should be used as "the first phase of a quantitative research project" (p. 31).

Even though qualitative research provides data that describe human responses in the affective domain, the written responses yield numerical values to describe the population of interest. In addition, verifying both interview and written responses adds validity to a study (Kasunic, 1992; Paré, 1993).

One reason for including written responses to the interview tool for the targeted population in this study is that such data provided the most current information. The world changes rapidly, and focus groups and interviews are time-consuming. Information may be outdated before the population can be adequately sampled by that method, especially when outreach sites are involved. Further discussion of the instrument occurs, along with the method of data collection, in chapters 3 and 4.



### Selection of Population and Sample

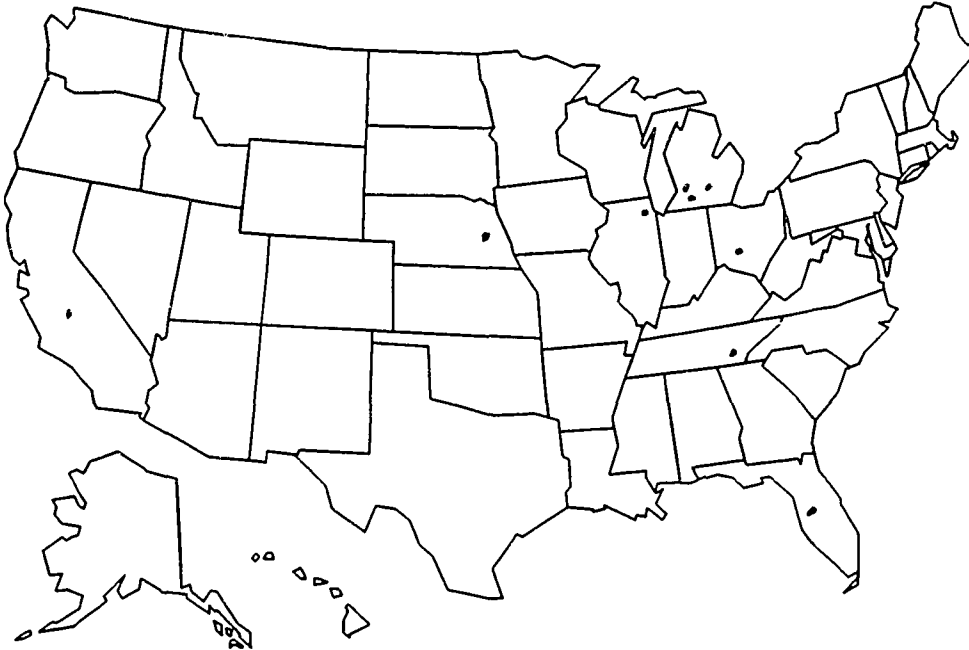
The question of particular interest is: Which factors influenced graduate nursing students' choice of the Andrews University program for their master's degree? Clarity was sought regarding the factors on which currently enrolled students based their choice.

Andrews University Department of Nursing provided graduate education at nine sites nationwide during the 1992-93 school year. (See Figure 2.)

The population of interest is a diverse group of registered nurses, all adults, seeking higher education. A convenience sample of students in the program was used for collection. The sample was self-selected and no names or identifying information were retained.

### Delimitations

The focus of this study was to determine the specific marketing strategies that appeal most to the adult nurse returning to the University for a graduate degree. The population of interest is, in particular, those students enrolled in the Master of Science Program at Andrews University, Department of Nursing. Because the Andrews University Department of Nursing has on-going outreach sites, the multi-institutional students are in a variety of geographic settings. Generalizations to other programs are therefore limited to schools of similar size and multi-longitudinal affiliations.



Battle Creek, Berrien Springs and Grand Rapids, Michigan; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Orlando, Florida; Hinsdale, Illinois; Lincoln, Nebraska; Kettering, Ohio; and Hanford, California.

Figure 2. Geographic distribution of Andrews University Graduate Program in Nursing Sites, 1992-93.

### Assumptions

Much of the literature discussing consumer choices in college and universities deals with baccalaureate programs. It would be unwise to assume that adults choose graduate education programs for the same reasons that undergraduate students choose baccalaureate programs. Mature and experienced adults may make choices based on very different factors than the adolescent or young adult. It is not safe to assume that marketing practices will be equally effective or accepted by both the young and the older clientele.

If current literature in marketing is clear on any one issue, it is on the point of knowing the consumer. Talking directly to prospective clients provides the most direct and thorough method for understanding specific needs. Marketing methods can then be tailored with a measure of comfort when specific needs are understood.

### Definition of Terms

Educational Marketing: Educational marketing is a planned and managed process whereby a quality educational program is assessed and developed, and the availability of the service is communicated to the segmented population at an appropriate price, time, and place in exchange for fees and donations.

Strategic Marketing: Current literature discusses strategic marketing as including marketing in the strategic

planning of the institution. Inherent in the concept of strategic marketing is the idea of long-term planning for years to come and not just the next fiscal or academic year. In addition, strategic marketing is based on a thorough SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis is an identification of the strengths and weaknesses of a department or institution, as well as the opportunities and threats observed or anticipated for the foreseeable future.

Product: The product is whatever is offered in order to meet a need. In education, the product is a service. It is all that students receive upon enrollment. The major product in nursing education is the curriculum itself. In the truest sense, the environment, the prestige of the institution, the quality of the program, classmates, faculty, and even the social activities are all a part of the product.

Place: Place or distribution in education is the location of classes as well as convenience and scheduling. Place has to do with access, especially if a school is involved in course offerings at satellite sites. Place may involve expanding the distribution of educational course work by offering courses at hospitals and health-care facilities at times convenient to the consumer.

Price: Price or cost is established at a level that is competitive, but not at a level that suggests questionable quality. Price is the actual monetary outlay

in the form of tuition and fees, and also the hidden costs in the form of the expenditure of psychological, emotional, and kinetic energy. It is the entire cost of the educational experience.

Promotion: Promotion is any activity to remind, persuade, and inform. It is also called communication and begins with an audit and update of all communication materials and a review of all potential clients, publics, and community, so that those in the targeted population will be most likely to respond.

Personalize: There is an added "P" in the latest marketing literature that means customer orientation. Personalized or customerized marketing involves an institution being more aware of current customers' interests and needs and being better able to attract new clients.

Factors: Factors include any elements in the decision-making process for determining the choice of a graduate program for registered nurses. In addition to the marketing mix, other factors are identified in the literature as influencing consumer choices in education (e.g., friends attending, influences of employer, and family members, etc.).

Consumer: The consumer in this study is the registered nurse returning to school at the graduate level. In general, the consumer is the person who purchases the

product or service. Recently, the client or consumer has been labeled the "new consumer." The implication of the new consumer is that those purchasing the market offering are better informed, more shrewd, quite demanding and unwilling to settle for less than the desired product. Meeting consumer demands is what marketing involves.

Higher Education: Generally, the term "higher education" includes everything from generic baccalaureate degrees through doctoral and post-doctorate education. The conclusions of the outcomes of this research study focus on a particular aspect of higher education. Although the literature review includes discussion of various studies in higher education, the factors and findings on which this study is based involve specifically graduate education in nursing.

Nicheing: This is the process of finding how the service or product offered meets the needs of clients not well met by other marketers and then targeting the population particularly with that strength.

Positioning: A determination of how one's department or institution ranks with other similar programs or institutions in the minds of potential clientele or target populations is what the term "positioning" implies. It is possible, through marketing research, to determine the position of a program in the minds of prospective students.

Imaging: The process of imaging involves conducting marketing research in order to determine the image perceived in potential students' minds when the institution is named. If the image is less than that desired, changing the image is possible through corrective measures and advertising.

Target Markets: The identification of the most attractive potential student markets is considered the target markets. Criteria are set by the school or university regarding potential students for a program, and evaluating those who qualify provides an estimate of the number who may actually enroll. This group of eligible students becomes the focus of the most earnest marketing methods.

### Overview of Literature

The late 1960s and early 1970s was the period when interest in educational marketing began to grow. Kotler, who became the foremost authority on educational marketing, wrote extensively regarding marketing appropriate to colleges and non-profit organizations during that time to the present (Kotler, 1967, 1975, 1976, 1979, 1982; Kotler & Andreasen, 1991; Kotler & Clark, 1987; Kotler & Fox, 1985; Kotler & Levy, 1969).

Today all service organizations, including private educational institutions, realize that the "good ol' days are over" (Burton, 1991, p. 115). Enrollment figures are

down in colleges and educational providers flood the market.

Dr. Tom Hayes (1990), as a board member of the newly established Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, discussed how important the marketing of higher education has become. He stated that the importance is especially true in light of all the "environmental shifts impacting higher education" in general (p. 177).

Even nursing education began to realize the necessity of marketing to the potential pool of nursing students in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Andreoli, Carollo & Pottage, 1988; Sloan, 1985; Stanton & Stanton, 1988). In 1989, the National League for Nursing published a book called Strategic Planning, Marketing and Evaluation for Nursing Education and Services (Waltz et al.). This book, focused as it is on nursing, serves as a guide to marketing in the collegiate setting. Frequent references are made to this source in nursing articles and research studies.

Already in the 1990s marketing is becoming a more frequent topic in the literature. There are at present some 27 books on the topic of marketing in nursing education, and journal articles are becoming more abundant.

Leigh and Frauman (1990) presented a case study of marketing nursing education for the 1990s and quoted Kotler and Levy's early article (1969), which is still applicable today:



The choice facing those who manage non-business organizations is not whether to market or not to market. The choice is whether to do it well or poorly, and on this necessity the case for organizational marketing is basically founded. (p. 134)

Targeting populations carefully is as significant as the strategies employed in recruitment. Frequent reference is made in the literature regarding the environmental change in higher education which addresses the increasing pool of adults returning to school (Conn, 1989; Levine, 1990; Ostroff, 1989). Important in that consideration is the ability to market effectively by learning what factors appeal to the potential population of adults seeking advanced degrees.

When organized according to topic, the literature naturally divides into two categories:

1. A discussion of marketing and marketing strategies in higher education
2. Factors influencing the choices consumers make in selection of a school or program. Inherent in that discussion is literature pertaining to adults returning to school.

A variety of studies deal with factors in higher education. Most of those are at the college level and deal with general education. Sevier (1986) conducted an exhaustive study of consumer choices, and included an early research project regarding college choice by Holland (1958).

In addition, more recent studies address the same issue of what influenced students in their choice of programs and institution. Krukowski's (1985) research asked the question: What do students want? In a similar vein, MacGowan (1985) discussed students' input in recruitment techniques describing what was effective and what was not.

Specific to nursing is the study by Rawlins et al. (1991) who conducted the project entitled: Student Nurse Recruitment: Determinants for Choosing a Nursing Program. Three other research projects in the late 1980s and in 1990 address that same issue of factors attracting students or contributing to their choice of nursing programs (Cassello, Redman, & Jackson, 1986; Naylor & Sherman, 1988; Schumann, 1990).

Rawlins et al. (1991) are quoted as saying that "there are (relatively) few articles on nursing program recruiting and marketing" (p. 198). Naturally then, there is a paucity of studies specifically related to the marketing of nursing education. Only those cogent to this project were included from marketing generally, since 1700 articles and nearly that many books on marketing in general education exist. Sources for this project were selected primarily from those dealing specifically with nursing except for the foremost authorities in the area of marketing and educational marketing.

### Summary

Marketing has been a significant aspect of nursing education since the late 1980s. Using qualitative data related to the population of interest is suggested as a first step in developing the marketing plan. Since marketing is a consumer-focused process, knowing clients and client behavior can only enhance marketing in nursing education.

The value of the qualitative focus group interview is the understanding of items for which numbers or quantitative data provide only limited understanding. The combined aspects of interview, written response, and historical techniques gave a clearer understanding than any one of those research methods could provide alone.

In addition, the historical review of literature provided a strong basis for identifying common factors, prior to actual data gathering from the subjects. Data analysis is discussed in chapter 4.

### Organization of Study

Chapter 1 provides the introduction, background, problem, purpose, significance, the data collection process, definitions, delimitations, and assumptions of the study, in addition to an overview of the literature.

Chapter 2 contains the review of literature pertaining to marketing in business, in education, and nursing education, in addition to literature regarding factors

influencing choices in education and particularly the adult student returning to school.

Chapter 3 describes the interview techniques for data collection from study subjects in focus group discussions as it relates to factors in literature.

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis, utilizing particularly narrative reporting in historic style and the development of the marketing plan.

Chapter 5 contains the summary, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The literature pertaining to marketing in higher education ranges from thesis and textbooks to journal articles and books. There is an even greater variety of written material in marketing generally. Certain guidebooks provide the "how to" aspects of marketing college and university education. There are very few volumes specific to marketing nursing education, although an increasing number of articles are appearing in journals year to year. Literature related to data collection appears in Chapter 4.

To provide the broadest sampling of all the literature available on the subject of marketing and higher education would create an extremely extensive document. Some literature reviews deal exclusively with scholarly studies; but because student recruitment and marketing are pragmatic in focus, it seems appropriate to consider non-scientific business literature in this review as well as focusing on marketing education and nursing education.

This chapter is divided into two main topic areas:

1. Marketing and educational marketing including nursing
2. The adult population in collegiate education, including factors influencing educational choices. The final section discusses related research.

### The History of Marketing

It is generally accepted that marketing began in this country about 1950. The 1870s to 1930 have been described as the production era. The 1930s to the 1950s were called the sales era, and the general understanding is that marketing began about 1950. A careful review of social and business history reveals that marketing was not something that developed quite that suddenly (Alward & Camunas, 1991).

Consider even the history of automobiles. Colors and styles changed dramatically based on market demands. The public would not always be content with sturdy black cars. Realizing that consumers influenced marketers' products as early as the 1920s and 1930s is important for two reasons. First, marketing is really an old art. Second, assessing clients' needs is as vital as the development and production of the product (Alward & Camunas, 1991).

Marketing strategies have been developed over the years to the finely honed tool of business that it is today. By 1988, even communist countries were resorting to marketing theory and strategy to bolster flagging

economies. Equally interesting is the surge of marketing activities among the more elitist service providers and health-care organizations (Lohr, 1988).

Burton (1991) reported a California survey indicating a more positive attitude by the general public toward the advertising of professional services. The competition in every area of service, including education, mandates a current and workable knowledge of marketing strategies.

As recently as the 1970s, there was disdain for professionals "selling" their services (Kotler & Conner, 1977). Several things have contributed to a change in view during the 1980s. In addition to the competition in education and services, legal and ethical views have changed (Berry, 1980; Kotler, 1989; Kotler & Bloom, 1984; Lovelock, 1983). Many of the paternalistic restrictions and regulations to the selling of services were altered in the 1980s (Kotler & Bloom, 1984; Skenazy, 1988). Awareness-arousing social events have contributed to the public interest in informed decisions and freedom in market enterprising.

Professional groups have gradually changed their views regarding marketing (Heischmidt & Hekmat, 1991). The most reluctant to change have been educational institutions, followed by health care and health-care education.

Critics of marketing as a technique for generating admission to colleges and universities have been vocal in expressing their displeasure about the application of commercial tools to

higher education. They believe that 'hawking' an institution through common sales . . . diminishes the institution and the services it offers to its constituents. (Grossman, 1987, p. 15)

As early as 1932, Abraham Flexner had disparaging remarks to make about higher education "selling their wares" (p. 620). Even in recent years, marketing was viewed almost exclusively as salesmanship, carrying as that does the negative connotation of the hard sell (Anderson, 1987; Evanson, 1990; Froberg, Salmon, & Spradley, 1986).

There are numerous other criticisms of marketing, as well. Comments range from wasting precious dollars to personal intrusions by promotional activities. Even the competitive climate that marketing creates was negatively viewed. Kotler and Clarke (1987), however, reported that marketing benefits far outweighed the negative aspects. The management of exchange is more efficient when marketing strategies are utilized. Something currently understood much better than in the past is that marketing is more than mere selling. When marketing strategies are properly applied, both client and provider needs are better served (Sellers, 1993).

In recent years, even the most reluctant provider has realized that marketing must be strategized, planned, and utilized for survival assurance (Paré, 1993). Steeples in 1988 acknowledged that colleges and universities had "entered a realm long familiar to business . . . the realm of competition" (p. 3).



Thole (1991) reported that marketing problems are present in all educational institutions. There are many providers, and enrollment is down. Promotion is important, even vital, and marketing must be understood by educators.

Strategic marketing is a relatively new term in educational marketing. Only current publications discuss aspects of long-term planning with the ongoing policies of marketing the program. As Dasai and Margenthaler (1987) described it, consideration must be given to past, present and future, thinking specifically of prospective student perceptions and needs. Wheelwright and Sasser (1989) suggested further that such planning involved an analysis of strengths and weaknesses evident, while aligning to the threats and opportunities of the changing needs of students. Obviously, marketing is much more than simply selling a product.

Chambers (1989) described selling, advertising, and recruitment as only elements of marketing. Selling alone is not sufficient to bring results. Marketing involves much more than advertising. Marketing is a "decision-oriented approach" that can be most successful in higher education (July, 1988, p. 13).

In the early 1980s, marketing was described as a "business strategy designed to provide information about the potentials of a service or product to consumers of a given service, in order to entice the potential consumer to

that given service" (Wise & Yoder, 1981, p. 3). Literature of the 1990s suggests that rather than enticing clients, the marketer must be very knowledgeable about the client, or in other words, to be consumer-conscious, as never before (Loeb, 1993; Paré, 1993; Quelch, 1989; Rice, 1993).

About a decade ago, Strangis (1984) described the consumer as "King." Kotler and Andreasen (1991) call the same idea customer-centeredness or as is described in literature in the 1990s, "the consumer is in the saddle . . . driving" (p. 30). To educators, that is a somewhat frightening idea. Allowing parents and students to decide what is taught may seem disagreeable. The last decade indicates that, to a degree at least, students' needs have dictated what colleges and universities have provided in the way of education and curriculum.

It is important to know consumers and the factors that influence their choices and decisions. It is important also to clearly define marketing and marketing strategies in order to plan effectively.

#### Marketing Defined

Marketing has been defined by Crompton and Lamb (1986) as a set of activities aimed at facilitating and expanding exchanges. It involves

gathering information about the environment,  
finding out what benefits or wants people desire  
the agency to deliver, setting market objectives,  
deciding exactly which wants and which sections of  
the community posing those wants it is going to

serve, developing and implementing the appropriate mix of marketing activities and evaluating the marketing efforts. (p. 16)

An early, frequently quoted, concise definition by Berry and George (1975) explained that marketing was "providing the right product at the right place at the right time and at the right price to the right market segment and effectively communicating this offering to that market segment" (p. 16).

The definitions sound simple, but it would be naive to assume they are accepted and applied without any ambiguity of meaning or application.

Kotler in 1982 and Litten in 1983 indicated a debate in not-for-profit organizations about what marketing really meant. Administrators in not-for-profit organizations often called public relations and/or recruiting, marketing. They did not consider developing a product with consumers in mind, with an attitude of the possibility of exchange.

Some of the debate and confusion exists even to the present in the marketing of nursing education. The discipline is still too new to marketing for strategies to be totally understood. McKenna (1985) said that recruitment and all strategies related to marketing functions need to be understood and combined into one marketing organization within the facility or department. Chambers (1989) stated that until the confusion regarding

the roles and strategies are clear, the value of marketing on enrollment in nursing will not be realized.

In the early part of the last decade, Kotler (1982) reviewed and analyzed how clearly marketing was understood by administrators whose not-for-profit colleges were in trouble with enrollment figures. About half said that marketing was a combination of selling, advertising and public relations. A quarter said that it was only one of those three things. Only a small percent were close to the common meaning of marketing.

The most frequently quoted definition of educational marketing is by Kotler and Fox (1985):

Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets to achieve institutional objectives. Marketing involves designing the institutions offerings to meet the target markets needs and desires and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and service the markets. (p. 5)

More than two decades ago, authors like Krachenberg (1972) defined marketing in a manner that is still cogent today. The definition is as follows: "Marketing is the concept of uncovering needs and wants, satisfying those needs by development of appropriate goods and services, letting people know of their availability, and offering them at appropriate prices at the right time and place" (p. 389).

### The Concepts of Needs and Wants in Marketing

The concepts of needs, wants, and product are basic to understanding marketing. Defining those terms serves as a good starting point for the discussion of educational marketing. Kotler and Fox (1985) distinguished between needs and wants by saying "people need food, air, water, clothing and shelter to survive" (p. 20). On the other hand, they want such things as recreation, education, and other services. They generally have strong preferences for the services that they desire and want. If they are questioned, there are identifiable factors or reasons behind the choices they make.

Actually, wants are usually the satisfiers of deep needs. These concepts are often confused by educational institutions. Needs are not created by markets or by society, they tend to be inborn in the individual. The marketer's role is shaping the consumers' wants by attaching them to a particular pre-existing need (Chambers, 1989).

Kotler and Fox (1985) used the example of presenting formal education as meeting the need for a job, developing competencies, and enhancing maturity. As Chambers (1989) described it, "a need is a state of condition, while a want is awareness of the condition" (p. 43).

Matching needs and wants and products are tasks in themselves. When the product is a service, defining needs

and identifying wants for an intangible service such as nursing education can be difficult indeed. Not-for-profit organizations have the task of "selling" the quality of education or of faculty. "Services are intangible, inseparable, variable and perishable" (Chambers, 1989, 52). Chambers stated further, whatever the objectives established for a not-for-profit organization are, devising marketing strategies is more difficult than for-profit organizations.

Table 1

Considerations in Marketing for a Profit versus Not-for-Profit Organization

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Nonprofit</b>	<b>Profit</b>
Number of publics	Multiple--at the minimum clients and funders	Primarily one--customer or consumers
Number of objectives	Multiple--number and importance of each depends on situation	Primarily one--to obtain a profit
Type of products	Usually services or ideas--are intangible, inseparable, variable, and perishable	Usually goods--more controllable than services and ideas
Level of public scrutiny	High--because providers of public services	Low--because are rarely providers of public services

Note. From Strategic planning marketing and evaluation for nurses education and service, (p. 53), by S. B. Chambers, 1989, New York: National League for Nursing.

There is no way to know the satisfiers of deep needs without knowing the clientele or potential students of an educational institution. That is the first step in market planning. After that, matching consumer needs with services is begun.

At this point, marketing has been defined and some applications to nursing educational marketing addressed. The manner in which marketing can be applied in an organization will be described.

### The Marketing Mix

The central basic concept of marketing is exchange. Exchange is a transfer of something of value to each party while satisfying wants and meeting basic needs (Chambers, 1989). The institution offers satisfaction, goods, services or benefits. In return it receives needed resources (Kotler & Fox, 1985).

Marketing decisions are based on variables called the four "Ps" of the marketing mix: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. The products in educational institutions are more complex than those in businesses. Products generally fall into the three categories of goods, services, and ideas. "Goods have tangible physical properties. Services are applications of human skills, while ideas are new concepts or different ways of looking at a situation" (Chambers, 1989, p. 43). Educational institutions are selling more than the degrees (Brooker & Noble, 1985).

They are selling the development of knowledge and ideas. They are also selling consulting and advising services, and programs for special students.

Strangis (1984) suggested that prestige, reliability, safety, and personal service are all part of the package. Froberg et al. (1986) add further that faculty, job placement services, athletic programs, as well as libraries, are all part of the product of a college or university.

Important to marketing planning is the fact that the product is something that can be altered or changed. Consumer demand is a major factor contributing to the alteration of the institutional product. For example "some schools of nursing have expanded curricular offerings to meet the needs of the black nursing market segment" (July, 1988, p. 33).

Since product is both tangible and intangible in education, and since product is what is being offered, careful assessment of the target population regarding the needs and wants related to the product is necessary (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991; Wheelwright & Sasser, 1989).

Price is important because the product must be priced so that it is affordable. It is true, though, that products priced too low may seem inferior. In general, consumers will pay more for quality products. When the



"price is right," consumers are more likely to respond (Kotecki, 1991).

In addition to tuition, books, and health care, there are non-monetary costs to consider. Such things as the cost in effort, time, and energy are important considerations in student choices of a school. All aspects of price must be part of the planning process since all are considered by prospective students. How much emotional energy and sacrifices made in the way of work opportunities are factors affecting the willingness of potential consumers to commit to a program of nursing education (Chapman, 1991).

Place is the third P of the marketing mix. "Being in the right place at the right time is a crucial factor in marketing" (Kotecki, 1991, p. 109). Place, according to Penner (1987), was described as the "location, time scheduled or the method of distribution" (p. 85). Place involves giving consideration to how accessible, available, and convenient the product is to the prospective student.

Place is particularly relevant to the adult learner. Making the course work accessible at the time the working older student is available is a part of marketing strategy. The market cannot always come to the institution and products that do well are those most accessible to the consumer or student (Kotecki, 1991). Assessment and

research of the population give direction to better plan the distribution of higher education for adults.

Promotion is the fourth P of the marketing mix and is also called communication in educational marketing. In businesses, marketing managers plan the marketing mix; in academics, faculty make those decisions. As has been suggested, the literature of the 1990s in educational marketing suggests that promotional approaches must be very consumer-conscious, particularly when the mature student is involved (Holt, 1991).

Wallman (1987) succinctly defined the promotional aspects of the marketing mix in higher education as "comprising the combination of advertising, publicity and individual selling or recruiting" (pp. 6-7). July (1988) further described promotion as involving "activities such as public relations, advertising, direct mail, publications and other forms of communication" (p. 17).

#### The Marketing of Nursing Higher Education

Graduate education in nursing historically has not been marketed according to an organized marketing plan. Englehart (1990) described societal issues that have affected marketing in nursing education. Enrollment, environment, and economic changes have all affected graduate enrollment. Baron (1987) described a period of unprecedented growth followed by a stabilization of the numbers in both graduate and undergraduate institutions of

higher learning in the United States. In recent years, there has been a somewhat steady decline, according to Goldgehn (1989) and Johnson (1989). Educational institutions are compelled to market when enrollment figures are down (Kirk, 1990).

Making recruitment work for nurses involves "both the selling of the institution as competitively superior and appealing to the self-interest of qualified candidates" (Pattan, 1991, p. 17).

Thole (1991) described a marketing plan to increase enrollment in an RN-completion nursing program in a private church-affiliated college in Chicago. The marketing plan was based on data from a focus group of 23 nurses. As a result of the focus group interview and subsequent marketing strategies, 24 new students were enrolled in the next semester.

Enter the adult graduate student. It has taken about 15 years for colleges and universities to develop programs geared specifically to "mature adults seeking to incorporate higher education into already busy lifestyles" (Holt, 1991, p. 6).

Graduate students are hampered by certain restraints that undergraduate students do not face. There are, of course, mobility issues, family and career considerations, as well as financial constraints, due to limited funding and available grants.

It is important to know what it is that adults want in graduate education in nursing. Englehart (1990) reported that the "literature revealed very little had been written to address the issue of marketing graduate education" (p. 17). Of the few studies conducted, research by Malaney (1987), and Dehne, Brodigan, and Topping (1991) indicated that what students wanted varied with such attribute variables as gender, ethnic background, and age.

Adults are not as interested in friends at the university or the aesthetic quality of the grounds and buildings. Neither is cultural diversity a drawback. Some variables are more significant to adults. For example, the adult generally prefers part-time course work versus full time. Education is usually in preparation for a career change whether or not an individual is employed. The model of the graduate-school student is even less predictable than that of undergraduate students.

Institutions need to understand what graduate nursing students need and want. Strategies can then be developed to "maximize consumer satisfaction" (Autonberry, 1988, p. 42).

Institutions have minimal or no control over certain factors. Inflation, national disasters, or wars influence enrollment figures dramatically (Hutchinson, 1988). What a department of nursing can control is an understanding about the current and potential student population. Grunig and

Hunt described a public relations model in 1984. They discussed the significance of dialogue rather than monologue with potential and current students. The two-way approach should be considered since it is just as important in marketing, for the university, to hear students' viewpoint, as it is for the students to see the brochures or talk to recruitment advisors.

Grunig wrote: "The 2-way symmetric model consists more of dialogue than of monologue" (p. 23). Hearing what past, present, and future students have to say is an important first step in the marketing plan (Englehart, 1990). Webster (1990) described the marketing research strategy of interview as being a flexible tool that provides more information about potential students in nursing education (p. 143).

Webster (1990) described the marketing strategies required for a school of nursing as:

1. Research of existing or potential markets
2. Developing the course work
3. Facilitation for adults through flexible hours and stress reduction in returning to school
4. Valuation in nursing education (referring to the service provided compared to the cost in energy and monetary outlay) including:
  - a. ease of entry
  - b. skills on entry

c. the skills on exiting the program

5. Promotional communication (including recruitment activities, advertisement, printed materials, presentations, and invitations to campus).

Stanton and Stanton (1988) suggested a similar model of marketing for nursing, stating that the first step is incorporating the four "Ps", proceeding then to marketing research, development of specific strategies for the market segments, establishing goals and objectives, followed by implementation and evaluation of the program.

Stanton and Stanton (1988) and Dorsey and Hale (1987) believed that environmental and social changes have made marketing in nursing education a must for economic survival. The bottom line is survival. If nursing education is compromised, then survival refers to survival of the profession as a whole. For professional growth, students must enroll, and they must be well educated. In the current environment, nursing (education) has to be "flexible, innovative and take risks" (Curtain, 1986, p. 7).

#### Adults in Higher Education

All the studies dealing with the marketing of higher education emphasize the importance of understanding the student (Englehart, 1990; Grace & Fife, 1986; Malaney, 1983, 1987a; Malaney, 1987b; Olson & King, 1985). Conn's (1989) and Levine's (1990) research suggested that

marketing selection in education should be directed more to the adult, mature student. The adult group is the primary target group for master's education in nursing. As research has indicated, the younger undergraduate student is influenced by factors that the adults are not. Enrollment in traditional college programs either declined or had grown only slightly in the past few years. It is the weekend and part-time evening classes that have grown at a phenomenal rate. "College and university finances will depend increasingly upon marketing education to non-traditional students," according to Conn (1989, p. 3).

Certain illuminating aspects of adults in general are known even from previous research where they were questioned through interview. For example, Holt (1991) described the K. P. Cross (1981) Paradigm of Adult Learning, known as the CAL Model, which described adults as "preferring part-time rather than full-time learning and that their learning is voluntary rather than compulsory" (p. 8).

Holt further discussed Brookfield's study where adults were questioned about higher education. Brookfield "uncovered some illuminating self-concepts" as cited in Holt, 1991, (p. 68):

Adults are very emotional about learning.

Adults often feel as if they don't have what it takes to be successful students regardless of their success in life.

Adults often feel they will be cut off from family and friends if they return to school.

Adults long to feel like part of the "learning community."

Adults like to feel challenged but the classroom presentations are terrorizing to them. They need special help in feeling comfortable about such learning.

Adults learn in a pattern Brookfield calls incremental fluctuation (two steps ahead, one back). (pp. 8-9)

This information is helpful in defining the population and in determining what marketing approaches will appeal to them. Obviously, the items listed are different than the profile of an undergraduate.

The parents of undergraduate students often make decisions for their children about college enrollment based on campus security and aesthetics (Sevier, 1986). Adults returning for higher degrees are influenced more by convenience (Baron, 1987).

General knowledge about adults returning for further education is not all the information needed in order to market effectively. Specific things are unknown about any targeted population. Breen and Blankenship (1989) and Quelch (1989), as well as Narramore (1992) and Paré (1993), suggested the focus group or group interview as the beginning point in the marketing process. The value of that method of gathering data for marketing is that groups generate ideas in their discussion that surveys alone and one-to-one interviews cannot accomplish. Magarth (1988)

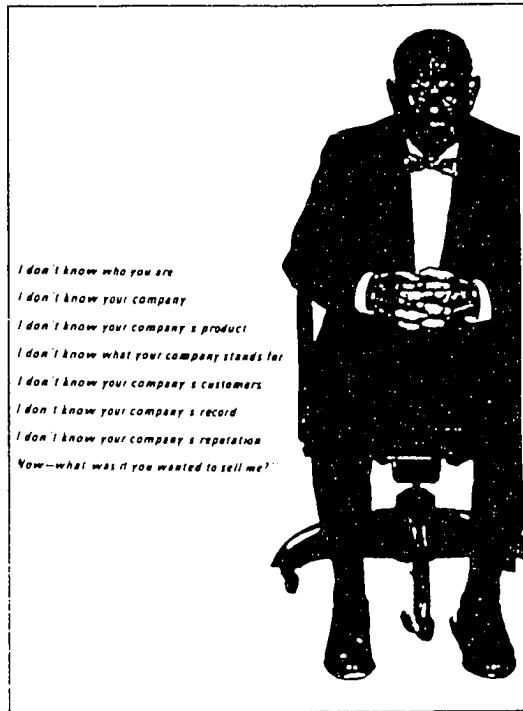


stated further that customers must be able to "articulate their marketing needs" (p. 233). Marketers must know what it is that influences nurses in making their choices.

Stone (1988) stated emphatically that "if you haven't already, you should do a comprehensive analysis to develop a profile of your typical customers" (p. 113). Knowledge about clients and what factors affect choices in a graduate program needs to be clear before you educate them on what is available for their education.

The classic McGraw-Hill advertisement depicting the skeptical customer can be very typical of the adult students being sought by educational institutions (see Figure 3 and Appendix D for a larger copy).

The lack of information regarding colleges and universities is particularly acute at outreach sites where courses are offered for the first time. The nurses wishing to enroll are not known by the institution and the institution is not known by the potential students.



The prospective adult student may be saying:

I don't know who you are.

I don't know your university.

I don't know what course work you offer.

I don't know your graduates.

I don't know your university's record.

I don't know your university's reputation.

Now--what was it you wanted me to register for?

Figure 3. The "Man in the Chair" ad. Ad used with permission from McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, NY.

Stone (1989) felt that marketers must conduct research to understand consumer attitudes and needs. Rawlins et al. (1991) stated that by applying marketing techniques, nursing schools can identify their institution's perceived strengths and tailor their recruitment efforts to applicants' needs (p. 197).

In 1991, Chapman conducted a study to determine whether it was possible to determine the factors most influential in determining college students' choice of a school. Chapman asked the question, "What is the structure of college choice?" (p. 1). Choice refers to the final selection of a college to be attended, and structure refers to the factors lending the greater weight in making a final choice. Chapman was interested in determining from an almost "uncountable universe of possible items, variables, and measures that might be included in college choice studies, what were the right ones to include in college choice studies" (p. 1). The buying factors were drawn from and consistent with past research that identified and consolidated 20 factors that determined student choices in college education (Astin, Green, Karn, Schalit, & Berz, 1990; Chapman & Jackson, 1987):

1. Quality of faculty
2. Quality of majors of interest to you
3. Academic reputation
4. Quality of academic facilities

5. Variety of courses
6. Access to faculty
7. Undergraduate education concentration
8. Prominent intercollegiate athletics
9. Cost of attendance
10. Athletic participation possibility
11. Extracurricular activities
12. Off-campus culture and recreation
13. Availability of religious activities
14. Quality of social life
15. Attractiveness of the campus
16. Surroundings (town, neighborhood)
17. College location
18. Quality of housing
19. Ease of getting home
20. Student heterogeneity.

Chapman and Jackson's (1987) study was a factor-searching study of undergraduate students. They drew the 20 factors above from previous studies in an effort to develop a tool to determine which factors influenced a choice of educational institution most significantly or consistently.

This current study also utilized previous research to identify factors significant to higher education but at the graduate level. Factors were identified and a tool was developed; then the tool was used to collect data from

current master's students in nursing. Group interview or focus groups were utilized to clarify meanings not evident through the questionnaire alone.

### Related Research

#### Introduction

Research involving the marketing of nursing education is almost non-existent prior to the mid- to late 1980s. The reported projects that are available, even though topically similar, involve a focus different from the current study. Even so, the studies available provide needed information as far as methodology and conceptual and theoretical development. Populations of interest at various educational levels differ significantly enough to encourage examining variables in original research prior to generalizing to different populations.

Related research at the graduate level of education primarily involve: (1) the population of subjects hiring master's-prepared nurses, or (2) the population of graduate faculty seeking to develop a "salable" master's degree. Research involving nursing students and their choice of a program was more frequently at the baccalaureate level, as is evident in the research reported by Leigh and Frauman in 1990.

Methods of Marketing Research  
in Nursing Education

In the 1990 report, Leigh et al. discussed the beginning of marketing research in nursing education. When enrollment declined in colleges and universities in the mid-1980s, nursing educators were forced to begin the marketing of nursing education. Leigh et al. described the value of marketing research beginning with focus groups of registered nurses. Focus-group research was used in an effort to better understand the likelihood that the registered nurses of nearby medical centers would enroll at the University of North Carolina for the Baccalaureate Completion Program in Nursing.

Earlier articles by Whitley and Malen (1987) and Sullivan, Printz, Shafer, and Schultz (1988) suggested research strategies that used needs assessment, which provided data on "what is" rather than "what might be" (p. 134). The suggestions from the earlier authors prompted the nursing faculty at the University of North Carolina to utilize focus groups to better understand the registered nurse population that might seek a baccalaureate degree. The value in using the focus-group research for determining consumer needs in nursing higher education is described as follows:

Unlike conventional survey research whose object is to find statistically significant measurements . . . focus groups are of great value in exploratory and diagnostic research in which not only are answers unknown, but also the relevant

questions are unclear. It's value in institutions such as this lies in the greater insights obtained into respondents' general thought processes even if samples from which they are obtained are generally small. (Leigh et al., 1990, 135)

These studies are significant for nursing research in indicating the value of interview research when exploring areas as yet unclear.

The need for marketers of nursing education to become schooled in marketing strategy and to understand the populations of interest is described in four research projects in 1989. Boersiter et al. at the University of Colorado sought to meet the demands of clientele while at the same time developing an appealing degree. The faculty developed an MS/MBA or dual degree for the two reasons stated (clients' needs and the need of the department to have an appealing degree). In addition, patient care was becoming so complex that the faculty felt that graduates should have more knowledge in the area "of human resource management" (p. 20).

The faculty used student evaluations as part of their data collection. Input from an advisory committee and information from other schools of nursing helped to direct the decision-making. This program served as a national model. Problems, issues, and difficulties are included in the report. Further research is suggested "to identify the specific components of a graduate program that will enable

the nurse executive to develop advanced nursing practice skills while developing management skills" (p. 23).

The value of this report, though the focus is not specific to the current research, is the information on data gathering and the report of identified problems and problem-solving techniques.

Brophy et al. (1989) reported research conducted at an unnamed university in the Midwest. Data collection for the study involved subjects who would be employing master's-prepared nurses rather than the students themselves. By interviewing and polling potential employers, the functions expected of graduate-level nurses, upon graduation, became clearer. Based on the findings from 23 respondents, the faculty was able to prepare a program that would attract consumers.

Of interest in this article is the question raised even in the late 1980s about the impact employers have on graduate education. If educational degrees are not compensated with increases in salaries, enrollment in nursing graduate education will decrease. Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated that they would hire master's-level nurses. Only 56% guaranteed salaries commensurate with graduate-level education.

In the 6 years since this research was reported, the salaries, positions, and roles have all changed for master's-prepared nurses.



A similar study in the same year as the one just reported was the Scalzi and Anderson (1989) survey. They sought to understand the best level of educational preparation for top executives in nursing. The questions addressed to the nurse executives were: (1) what educational degree or degrees would improve their own marketability? and (2) what factors would be important in choosing a program. In answer to the second question, the nurse executives ranked five factors on an scale of 1 to 5 as follows: (1) paid residency, (2) reasonable tuition, (3) length of the degree, (4) location, and (5) reputation of the university.

The findings of the study indicated the need for either dual degrees or formal links to graduate business schools. As of 1995, the links to graduate business schools have actually occurred in only a minority of programs. A strong nursing background with a few business cognates has been shown the better choice, due to the need for nurse executives to understand the complex health care delivery system much more than business content.

The second question addressed in the Scalzi et al. (1989) study (as described above) provided information about certain factors influencing the population of RNs seeking graduate degrees. The topic is pertinent to the current study even though the population was different from the study population.

Keating, also in 1989, reported that adults returned for collegiate education in nursing with a desire for increased job security, and increased salary and benefits. A unexpected finding of the study indicated that males comprised 40% of all adults returning for a nursing degree. The obvious finding from the data analysis was the need for accelerated programs of nursing for adults with degrees in other disciplines.

Rawlins et al. (1991) reported findings from a cogent research project. Though data collection was from baccalaureate-level study subjects, the value of their study to the present research was the background information and the description of the methodology. They suggested that even in 1991 there was still little research in the area of marketing and recruitment in nursing. In fact they stated that "most data are from the Generic Baccalaureate Nursing Data Project, a nationwide sample of the American Association of Nursing" (p. 198).

Due to the scarcity of data and findings in marketing research in nursing, Rawlins et al. set about to conduct original research. The purpose was to determine the importance of various factors influencing the students' decision to attend St. Mary of the Plains College, Division of Nursing, in Kansas.

The study involved both current and former students. From the data analysis, the researchers were able to plan a

workable marketing approach. The study had identified factors that could be appropriately promoted to the potential market populations.

The method of obtaining data was through mailed surveys. The study subjects were current students and alumni. The best method of promotion reported by the study subjects was information they received by mail about the institution.

Apropos to the current research was the finding that students under 25 years of age chose the program because of the quality of clinical instruction and availability of financial aid. Married students over the age of 25 made the choice for quite different reasons. They chose the program based on convenience. Perhaps the most meaningful findings to other programs seeking to market, based on data from current students in a program, are as follows: (1) their study would encourage similar nursing programs to provide convenient and flexible schedules for married students over age 25, and (2) the older married student is an important and essentially "untapped market" for small Christian colleges and universities (p. 201). Equally important is the final statement of the Rawlins et al. study, that (3) "The research resulted in the development of recruiting materials emphasizing the unique strengths of the nursing program" (p. 197).

This study addresses specific and similar methods and variables of interest in the current study. The major difference is the level of education addressed. The Rawlins et al. study involved current students in a small church-affiliated college, as does the current research. From the data analysis, a successful marketing program was developed, as Andrews University Department of Nursing is attempting to do. The success of such research encourages others to build upon or replicate the study with different populations and at different educational levels.

In the previous year, Hagemaster (1990), at the University of Kansas Department of Nursing, collected data from RNs without baccalaureate degrees to determine what would influence the older adult to return to school. Most were women and most were 30-40 years of age. Almost all (82%) wanted a baccalaureate degree. More than half wanted to eventually obtain a master's degree in nursing.

The population of interest reported that the primary considerations in their returning to school would be based on: (1) the convenience of classes, (2) the reputation of the school, and (3) the length of time to complete the degree.

Based on the findings from this study, the University of Kansas Department of Nursing completely restructured their program to accommodate the non-traditional student. They streamlined both the baccalaureate and master's tracks

to a 2-year program for baccalaureate/master's for the registered nurse returning to school.

The population was not comprised of current students in the program nor baccalaureate students seeking a straight master's degree. But meaningful to the current project is the reported importance of research findings in shaping a program of study or the marketing of that program.

Zemaitis and Kosmatch (1991) reported that the accelerated track of baccalaureate/master's for non-traditional students was catching on nationwide. The flexible schedule and accessibility of classes were important considerations. "The idea of returning to school is not new to most nurses" (p. 137). Knowing how best to meet their needs involves asking them the right questions.

In conclusion, Rawlins et al. (1991) described private college and university nursing programs as "costly." They discussed the expected "continued budget constraints and declining grants in the years ahead. Those that survive will do so because of aggressive and carefully planned marketing to recruit new populations of students" (p. 197). The first step of marketing the school of nursing according to them "was to determine the strengths of the program by asking why students chose [the] program" (p. 198).

Summary

Chapter 2 has provided a history of marketing and a summary of selected studies on marketing and adults in higher education. An attempt has been made to describe factor-related research and the choices of educational institutions. The remainder of the study deals with the reasons for the choice of a graduate program in nursing education, both from the literature and from graduates in a particular program.

The essence of the understanding gleaned from the literature is that in order to market effectively, the targeted population must be understood. In addition, the population members must have knowledge of the institution from which they wish to obtain a degree. The implications are that marketing must be intense, focused, and permeate the institution, department, with a clear understanding of the population. Educational marketing is not effective when it is perceived as the role of one researcher. Everyone must be involved and contribute to the final strategic marketing plan. The awareness of the needs and wants of prospective students is the basis of an effective plan.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

A special issue of Fortune magazine, dated Autumn/Winter 1993, devoted an entire issue to the fifth dimension of the marketing mix, called customerization. Unisys (1993) defined "customerize" as "making a company more responsive to its customers and better able to attract new ones" (p. 12). The aspect of customerization appears in some of the latest literature as the fifth "P" (of the four "Ps" of the marketing mix) or personalization. Kotler and Andreasen (1991) referred to that aspect of marketing as "personal selling" (p. 595).

The managing editor of Fortune described the new customer as "tough" (Loeb, 1993, p. 1). The same author stated emphatically that the new customer was no longer "king"--the new customer was more likely "a dictator" (p. 6). Due partly at least to the economy, the new customers were more demanding, more shrewd, better informed, and very smart buyers (Loeb, 1993; Rice, 1993).

As Paré (1993) stated, "Know thy customers . . . and the most obvious way to know them is to talk to them" (p. 39).

#### Procedures

What applies to marketing in business applies also to marketing in education. The potential consumers or students, especially if they are adults, know what they want and for what they are willing to pay. Some of the literature already addressed and some in subsequent chapters discusses how even in education the client has had much to say about the product he or she is purchasing. Included in the discussion are directives about marketing research which must include talking to potential students as a first step in educational marketing research. The type of research that involves personal encounters with human subjects as subgroups of society is known as ethnographic qualitative research.

According to Fetterman (1989), a paper-and-pencil approach to data gathering gives much valuable information about numbers, but with the ethnographic method of personal contact, much of the "how" and the "impact" of certain programs is accessible that is not obtainable otherwise (p. 13).

Kirk and Miller (1985), in a discussion of the reliability and validity of qualitative research, described a four-phase process. The four phases are as follows:



Invention--denotes a phase of preparation or research design which produces a plan of action. [This phase was described in chapter 1 of this current study.]

Discovery is the phase of observation and measurement or data collection and produces information. [Chapters 3 and 4 describe this phase as well as the Interpretation phase.]

Interpretation denotes a phase of evaluation or analysis; this phase produces understanding.

Explanation denotes a phase of communication or packaging; this phase produces a message. (p. 60)

The above aspects are discussed in both chapters 4 and 5 of this current study. The primary method for knowing consumer interests through interview as a "discovery" or data collection method is described in both business and educational marketing literature. Paré (1993) described focus group data collection as "the primary method of marketing research, to assess the aspects of human motivation" (p. 40). Paré continued:

Focus groups have been around since the end of World War II . . . and it is easy to see why Madison Avenue likes them. Market researchers gather 10 or so customers to talk about a product or service. A moderator leads the discussion group and elicits the group's opinions--good or bad--about the product. During the group, the consumers' comments are transcribed. (pp. 40-41)

Specific to educational marketing, Dulin (1993) stated that focus groups, along with other marketing attempts, "have been successful in recruiting a larger number of students for new or existing programs" (p. 38). The success seemed to be based on knowing what consumers wanted (Sullivan, Printz, Shafer, & Schultz, 1988).

### Data Gathering

The focus groups in this current study were arranged following regularly scheduled classes. Students were informed in class of the location and time that the group interview would take place. They were told that the focus group was part of research data collection and that their responses, though anonymous, would be included in the research report.

After the groups assembled, the researcher began by asking the study subjects to explain the primary reason for the choice of Andrews University's graduate program. Some discussion followed which was recorded by the researcher. During the discussion, students were allowed freedom to discuss their reasons for choosing Andrews' Master of Science program. After the non-structured discussion was completed, the study questionnaire was used to guide in a more structured interview process. This is described by Field and Morse (1985) as the guided interview. Consistency in dealing with all of the interview groups was one reason for that approach. In addition, using the instrument for the focus group provided affective (cognitive or feeling) descriptions from the data which quantitative statistics alone would fail to provide from survey groups (Wilson, 1992). Field and Morse (1985) encouraged that approach "when information is required about a topic." They stated further that a real value of

this technique is the assurance that all information is "obtained at the same time, permitting the informant freedom of responses and description to illustrate concepts" (p. 67).

Paré (1993) described the interpretation phase or data analysis phase of this type of research as taking the transcribed consumer comments and then "combing through the comments looking for themes" (p. 41).

Various authors on qualitative data analysis described the steps to data analysis in a variety of ways. Thomas (1990) stated that "the quantification of qualitative data is called content analysis or data reduction" (p. 128). She referred to Berelson who, in 1971, described the five possible units of analysis as "words, themes, characters, items and space or time" (p. 128).

Burns and Grove (1987) stated that qualitative research utilized communication as a primary means of gathering data. Since data are gathered in the form of communication, "the researcher identifies categories for sorting and organizing the data" (p. 37).

Some descriptions of data analysis in qualitative research provide very complex descriptive models. Tesch (1990), on the other hand, posited the following four main headings and ten subheadings as steps to consider in data analysis:

1. The characteristics of language
  - a. as communication
    - i. with regard to its content
    - ii. with regard to its process
  - b. as it mirrors culture
    - i. in terms of the cognitive process
    - ii. in terms of the interactive process
2. The discovery of regularities
  - a. as the indication and categorization of elements and the establishment of their connections
  - b. as the identification of patterns
3. The comprehension of meaning of text or action
  - a. through discovery of themes
  - b. through interpretation
4. Reflection (p. 78).

The data analysis for this project followed Tesch's model rather closely. In organization, data from the focus groups, in the form of verbatim comments, were transcribed and later arranged under common headings. Each group was analyzed separately in order to review the content and the group interaction and process. Comments were used as headings that encompassed the theme of several in the discussion group. These are reported in separate tables in chapter 4.

Paré (1993) described a problem that can be encountered in focus groups during data collection: a

phenomenon known as the "Twelve Angry Men" effect. In this phenomenon, "someone in the group ends up acting like Henry Fonda in the classic movie, persuading other jurors to change their minds," which, of course, changes the value of the data collected (p. 218).

Field and Morse (1985) questioned the validity of such studies and whether or not the study represents reality. If the "Twelve Angry Men" phenomenon occurs, how can the researcher be sure that the data are representative of the population of interest?

In light of validity issues with focus group research alone, Paré (1993) made the following suggestion: "Focus group research without further research (not involving discussion groups) may not be totally representative of reality" (p. 218).

For that reason, the structured interview questions were completed in paper and pencil format, without group discussion, by study subjects at three of the outreach sites. The data completed in this way were then ranked according to responses from all three groups and appear in chapter 4. (See Appendix E for ranking under the four "Ps.") The narrative accounts of data analysis thus ranked, including comments from the focus groups, appear in chapter 4.

A 4-point Likert Scale was utilized with values as follows: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; and, (4) Strongly Agree. (See Appendix C.) The total score possible was figured by multiplying the total possible on the Likert Scale (4) by the total number of students ( $N = 28$ ) or 112. Weighted scores for each item were then calculated by adding the total who marked 4, 3, 2, and 1. The average or mean equals the total weighted score for each item divided by the total number of subjects responding.

#### Summary

Graduate students at a total of eight outreach sites provided the data for this study of educational marketing. Data from five of the sites were obtained by focus group discussion with transcripts of verbatim comments. Part of the focus group at each of the five sites was non-structured, meaning that students were asked to make comments regarding their primary reason for choosing Andrews University as their program of choice. The second half of the focus groups was the directed interview with specific questions about the factors contributing most to influencing their choice. (See Appendix F for a thorough discussion of qualitative data gathering.)

At the other three sites, the directed interview schedule was completed in paper and pencil format to provide more validity to data collection. These data and

those from the discussion groups are described more thoroughly in chapter 4.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS AND MARKETING PLAN

#### Introduction

"Marketing in higher education is suddenly the subject of the most intense scrutiny in history" (Sevier, 1986, p. 195). Marketing is a primary means of meeting enrollment figures and the needs of universities and colleges for endowments and funding. The meaning of marketing strategies to consumers is of vital interest to those preparing strategic marketing plans.

The literature clearly indicates that there are a variety of reasons for which consumers make choices in educational institutions or programs. Accordingly, understanding the relationship of the factors that actually motivate students to enroll assists in market planning for a school of nursing. Of interest in this study are the factors influencing consumer choices in the master's degree (nursing) program at Andrews University.

Gathering data in an educational setting presents special problems related to randomization and control. Often intact groups are utilized since students cannot easily be reassigned to another class or professor. The



constraints presented in such settings imply a need for replication prior to generalizing findings to other groups or settings. This chapter describes the process of data collection in a university setting involving several outreach sites.

The findings from data analysis are presented as follows:

1. Results of the data from the literature search
2. Report of data findings
3. Data analysis
4. Summary of findings.

In order to better understand the nuances of the data findings, this report appears primarily in narrative form and tables. Some of the data are presented as actual quotations with themes sorted under statements according to the consensus of the group.

Second, the factors on the directed interview schedule completed in paper and pencil format are ranked. This section is presented in narrative form as well, with comments interspersed that give a more accurate description of responses.

#### Results of Data from the Literature Search

Historically, recruitment to nursing programs began about the time of World War I (Appendix G). Posters were distributed on a national scale to support the war effort

for nursing personnel. Due to the poor physical condition of recruits to the military, and later, the casualties of the influenza epidemic, federal funds were made available to support nursing education, beginning in the 1920s. With a focus on improving public health in the general population, nursing education was made available through federally subsidized programs.

Recruitment measures to programs of nursing were not as necessary during those years since tuition was reasonable and jobs were readily available. It has only been in the decades since the 1970s, when nurses were again in short supply, that marketing efforts were needed.

The pool of potential college students in education generally was evaluated as early as 1958, however. Holland (1958) conducted a study of student explanations of college choice in relation to college popularity.

In the early 1970s and 1980s, research regarding choices of educational institutions identified such factors as: (1) available information about a specific college or university, (2) available funding and cost (tuition and fees), and (3) preparation for graduate school, etc. (Druesne, 1977; Kinnick, 1975; Rowe, 1980; Sevier, 1986).

More specific to higher education and nursing are the contemporary studies of student choices in programs and institutions. There were two studies in particular in the mid-1980s, each identifying a major factor of influence in

student choices of programs or institutions. Thornbury (1984) described a conservative Christian atmosphere as an important reason for choice among his population. Sevier's (1986) study indicated a lower tuition rate or financial incentives as the significant factors.

Forni and Welch in 1987 described a study of nursing and other professional degrees by survey indicating the selection of a program of study for nurses, as based on the degree or course work providing the greatest financial reward. The next year at the University of Alberta, Kerr (1988) described a study in how best to reach all nurses needing advanced degrees. The three primary factors influencing enrollment were: (1) an advanced degree that seemed to have the most supportive faculty, and (2) a degree that was most likely to enhance previous education, and (3) was accessible to outreach sites.

Four research studies of interest in 1989 described the following unranked factors in planning programs that attract and influence adults to higher education in nursing: job security, improved salary, increased benefits, improved or new leadership positions, ease of entry and the reputation and location of the university, as well as the cost of tuition (Boersiter & Suver, 1989; Brophy, Rankin, Butler, & Egenes, 1989; Keating, 1989; Scalzi & Anderson, 1989).

Similarly in 1990, research indicated that programs of choice in higher education were based on the following factors: course work that provided the greatest knowledge update and the greatest enhancement in status and promotion opportunities. In addition, potential students identified as significant: the proximity of classes, the reputation of the institution, the length of time required to obtain the degree, the cost in energy and the accreditation of the program (Emblem & Gray, 1990; Hagemaster, 1990; Leigh & Frauman, 1990).

Zemaitis and Kossmach reported in 1991 that recognizing the need for flexibility in offering advanced degrees in nursing, universities nationwide have provided options for the population seeking a program that provided for specialization and preparation for complex and comprehensive care. The development of clinical expertise and professional development were also significant factors. Two other related research projects in 1991 described the following reasons for a choice of programs: convenience of scheduling, length of the program, qualified faculty, and the success of the graduates (Miklich & Overall, 1991; Noll & Keen, 1991).

Because the factors were non-ranked in the literature, it is impossible to tell which are the most significant or carry the most weight. The marketing plan is difficult to develop from that information alone, because all that is

evident is the breakdown of factors from the literature non-ranked according to the four "Ps" of the marketing mix.

1. Product
  - a. Reputation of the University or program
  - b. Length of the program
  - c. Reputation of the faculty
  - d. Accreditation of the program
  - e. Better preparation for a particular specialty or rank
  - f. Clinical exposure time
  - g. Success of the graduates
  - h. Supportive faculty.
2. Price
  - a. The cost (time, energy and funds) expended.
3. Place
  - a. The location of classes (proximity)
  - b. Flexibility of class schedule.
4. Promotion
  - a. None identified by students as influencing their choice.

It was possible to utilize these factors to form an instrument to obtain data from study subjects. The instrument was used as a guide to direct topic discussion in the focus groups and in paper-and-pencil format in three groups.

Andrews University had 110 master's students in nursing at the time of this study. For the purpose of this research, intact class groups were utilized from which students volunteered to be included ( $N = 66$ ). The purpose for that approach was an attempt to survey the entire population but without coercion. The study subjects were divided into two groups. Students from five sites were involved in the focus groups ( $N = 38$ ). Three sites completed the paper and pencil format ( $N = 28$ ).

#### Report of Findings

The focus group responses are important because of the insights included that are not obtainable through paper and pencil tests.

One interesting aspect and a factor that would have been overlooked was disclosed in discussions at all sites: All of the students felt that the executive secretary for the graduate program was a significant influence. They stated that she was cordial and responsive and had the answers or directed them to those who did.

That factor did not appear on the instrument, but it is a definite aspect of product. The first person one contacts at an institution plays a significant role in "selling" the program or department. That person also bespeaks the quality of the institution by his or her appearance, behavior, and demeanor.

Tables 2-4 indicate student responses in the focus groups. (See Tables 2, 3, and 4.)

The data collection of the focus group interview provides valuable information in the affective domain but lacks some clarity that numbers provide. Since the literature suggests the use of both qualitative research discussion and directed interview, with verification of data not involving group discussion in the beginning stages of strategic marketing, both types of research were conducted. (See Appendix F for more extensive discussion of focus group data.)

#### Structured Interview Schedule

The structured part of the interview schedule was developed by the researcher (see Appendix C). The procedure was to first identify constructs or factors from the literature. In addition, other factors were added that were representative of all areas of the marketing mix.

Face validity was established through advice from the dissertation advisor, from a published researcher, and from a marketing specialist. In addition, a pilot study was conducted using as a sample the adult students in the master's degree program of the previous year (as described) and a focus group from both the baccalaureate and master's students on campus the year prior to actual data collection. (See Appendix B.)

Table 2

Focus Group I: Factors Influencing Their Choice of Andrews University's Master's Program (N = 16)

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Item Response

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1. Quality of the program.
  2. The scheduling is flexible and the location is convenient.
  3. The intense two weeks of classes per quarter are preferred over one class a week for the entire quarter.
  4. Everyone is so nice and there is humanness about contact with Andrews. There are three schools in the community, but I gave consideration only to Andrews due to the humanness factor.
  5. The receptionist deserves a raise. She is always pleasant and knows the answers. Plus, the 800 number is so convenient.
-



Table 3

Focus Group II: Factors Influencing Their Choice of  
Andrews University's Master's Program (N = 14)

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Item Response

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1. Promises are kept by Andrews compared to other schools in the area.
  2. The availability of the classes and scheduling 9-10 days out of the quarter with evening classes, definitely influenced the choice.
  3. Tuition was up compared to other schools, but Andrews was quality. The people met displayed professionalism.
  4. Student morale is important--we are treated as adult human beings.
  5. Entrance requirements make for easier access than some schools.
  6. An accredited program was important.
  7. The image is friendly.
  8. Faculty were friendly.
  9. The Christian influence was significant. I wanted a parochial influence.
-

Table 4

Focus Group III: Factors Influencing Their Choice of  
Andrews University's Master's Program (N = 9)

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Item Response

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1. It was convenient.
  2. The timing and the location.
  3. Accessibility.
  4. Flexibility--it fit my work schedule.
  5. It was recommended by a co-worker.
  6. I live by [a large university] and work on that campus  
but I chose Andrews University because it met my  
needs for:  
  
The option of a clinical track.  
  
The flexibility of the program. Some universities are  
not as tolerant of part-time students.  
  
The site was convenient as were the evening classes.
  7. It is geared to the working woman/man.
  8. The hours were part-time.
  9. The faculty are helpful with research, and  
approachable and hardworking. They don't talk  
down to students.
  10. I like the spiritual aspect of the program--that is  
very important.
  11. I have a program 15 minutes from me in California, but  
it is not accredited.
  12. We are treated as adults.
  13. The executive secretary is terrific.
-

Students identified the marketing strategies that were most influential in attracting them to Andrews University.

Data sorts out by rank as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Data Analysis: Factors of Influence Ranked by Weighted Scores\* and Averages\*

Weighted  
Scores Averages

<b>Place</b>			
101	3.61	3.	The location of classes was convenient.
96	3.43	5.	The part-time approach to the class schedule was most suitable.
<b>Product</b>			
95	3.39	30.	The faculty seemed professional.
94	3.36	10.	The faculty members that I met seemed friendly.
<b>Place</b>			
94	3.36	1.	The flexibility of the program appealed to me.
<b>Product</b>			
93	3.32	23.	The university had a positive image.
<b>Place</b>			
93	3.32	6.	Classes meeting for an intensive two weeks rather than all quarter was a plus.
92	3.29	2.	The time that classes met fit my schedule best.
92	3.29	4.	The facilities where classes are offered were pleasant.
<b>Price</b>			
92	3.29	8.	Travel time was minimal.
<b>Product</b>			
91	3.25	44.	The Christian focus was significant.

90	3.21	24.	The curriculum met my needs.
90	3.21	22.	There was emphasis on quality of education.
90	3.21	13.	The advisors were knowledgeable.
89	3.18	40.	There was emphasis on research.
89	3.18	26.	The degree offered seemed to meet my personal goals.
88	3.14	25.	The University had something unique to offer.
87	3.11	53.	Teacher/student rapport was evident.
86	3.07	35.	The faculty seemed available as mentors toward professional growth.
<b>Price</b>			
86	3.07	18.	Loss of potential earning time was less.
<b>Product</b>			
85	3.04	58.	Teacher/teacher relationships seemed congenial.
<b>Price</b>			
84	3.00	21.	The investment, timewise, was acceptable.
<b>Product</b>			
84	3.00	62.	Entry requirements seemed to ease the enrollment process.
83	2.96	55.	Good teacher morale appealed to me.
83	2.96	57.	Opportunity was provided to make up missed classes.
83	2.96	27.	The course work was such that I felt most assured of success.
<b>Promotion</b>			
83	2.96	15.	The "selling" of the program was convincing.
82	2.93	14.	The written materials from Andrews University were attractive.
<b>Place</b>			
81	2.89	7.	The sequencing of courses was appealing.

<b>Product</b>			
81	2.89	34.	The accreditation of Andrews' Department of Nursing affected my choice.
80	2.86	49.	The commitment of faculty in keeping appointments was impressive.
80	2.86	42.	The masters program was more broad-based than some.
80	2.86	61.	Students were kept informed.
<b>Product</b>			
80	2.86	37.	The reputation of the school influenced me.
79	2.82	48.	Promises to students seemed to be kept.
<b>Promotion</b>			
79	2.82	11.	Verbal and written communication from and with the University was suitable.
<b>Product</b>			
79	2.82	64.	Andrews' program seemed most likely to enhance my previous education.
<b>Promotion</b>			
78	2.79	41.	Communication at all levels helped me to decide.
78	2.79	12.	The recruitment strategies were personal.
<b>Price</b>			
78	2.79	20.	The expenditure in physical and emotional energy seemed reasonable.
<b>Product</b>			
77	2.75	33.	Faculty research was impressive.
77	2.75	54.	Student achievement (e.g., GPA, research ability, etc.) indicated a quality program.
76	2.71	60.	The commitment of teachers to students was a reason for my choice.
75	2.68	29.	The overall image was of scholarship.
75	2.68	51.	Student morale seemed good.

75	2.68	52.	The socio-economic level of the students was similar to my own.
75	2.68	36.	The individualized specialization in education was unique.
75	2.68	65.	The opportunity to actually conduct research was appealing.
73	2.61	56.	The student ethnic group seemed similar to my own.
72	2.57	38.	The inclusion of business classes was an important consideration.
71	2.54	28.	The visibility of the University's program was impressive.
<b>Promotion</b>			
69	2.46	31.	The alumni from AU had positive things to say.
69	2.46	9.	The advertisements were attractive.
<b>Product</b>			
68	2.43	59.	The health care relationship between the community and the University seemed good.
68	2.43	50.	The health care community's perception of Andrews' program was a positive influence.
67	2.39	47.	The age of other students was similar to my own age.
67	2.39	43.	Dissatisfaction with my current career choices caused me to enroll.
67	2.39	32.	Andrews' degree allowed for greater career advancement than other degrees.
66	2.36	39.	Skill development appeared to be greater with this degree.
<b>Price</b>			
63	2.25	17.	Financial aid was available.
62	2.21	19.	Student fees (e.g., for statistician, for library searches, etc.) seemed reasonable.
56	2.00	16.	The tuition was affordable.

56	2.00	63.	The monetary rewards seemed to be greater with a degree from Andrews.
<b>Promotion</b>			
55	1.96	46.	My friends in the program were influential in convincing me.
52	1.86	45.	My employer encouraged me to enroll in this program.

\* Weighted scores are figured by multiplying the number of respondents ( $N = 28$ ) by 4 (items of Likert Scale) - 112. Average on mean scores are figured by dividing respondents ( $N = 28$ ) into the weighted score. (See Appendix E for ranking under four "Ps.")

#### Discussion of Data Analysis

The location and scheduling of classes ranked the highest with the groups of students completing the paper/pencil schedule without group discussion. This was supported in the focus group comment that "scheduling classes 9-10 days out of the quarter definitely influenced my choice."

The faculty being friendly to students and the professional behavior of faculty (which is part of the marketing mix--Product) ranked third and fourth, respectively. Similarly, faculty ranked high in the focus groups with comments such as, "Everyone is so nice, there is just a humanness about the faculty." And, "There are three schools in my community, but I gave consideration only to Andrews University, due to the humanness factor." Another student stated, "Promises are kept by Andrews faculty."

The flexibility of the program for working RN's and the intensive 2 weeks of classes ranked fifth and sixth (out of 65), respectively. Focus group comments regarding the class schedule included statements such as:

"Scheduling is flexible and the location is convenient."

The image of the University tied with the class scheduling for sixth place.

The quality of education ranked eighth, along with the curriculum and the knowledgeable advisors. The spiritual focus was even higher, ranking seventh in the influence of a choice of institutions. The parochial affiliation of the program ranked higher than such things as the courses (29th) and the accreditation (ranking 30th out of 65).

One student stated, "The Christian influence definitely affected my choice. I wanted a parochial influence." Another said, "I wanted the exposure to Seventh-day Adventists. I have knowledge of how Adventists deal with people." Eight out of 16 in that group agreed that the church-affiliated University was a primary reason for their choice.

The emphasis on research and a degree meeting personal goals tied for ninth. The three items ranking eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth are: Teacher/student rapport, the faculty available as mentors, and teacher/teacher relationships being seen as congenial. Teachers available as mentors was clarified in one focus group as meaning that



"faculty are available to help students or to mentor students." A significant comment related to student/teacher rapport came from the first focus group. The statement was: "Student morale is important and we are treated as adults." Another two are as follows: "The image was friendly," and "The faculty were friendly," which supports the importance of faculty relations with students as part of the "selling" of a program of education.

The fact that peer relations are important was not reported in any of the groups. The socio-economic level of colleagues in the program, similar ethnic groups and the age of other students ranked very low, which was a somewhat surprising finding. Though older students often comment on entry that they have been out for some time or that they will be in school with such "young people," the attribute and demographic variables of other students ranked as follows: socioeconomic level, 46th; ethnic group, 49th; and age similarity, 56th. The focus groups did not mention these variables as important in their decision.

The emphasis on research as a positive influence in the survey was balanced by statements in the discussion groups. Comments such as "The program is very hard" were countered by statements such as "Yes, but faculty are available to assist with research."

The study indicated that students had a desire to understand or be exposed to research, a tie for ninth place

with "the degree meeting my personal goals." At the same time, respondents expressed the need for faculty to serve as mentors. As high as the emphasis is on research ranked with students (ninth place), the item addressing the impressiveness of faculty research ranked low, at 41st, in importance.

The promotional aspect of the marketing mix ranked lower than was expected in this study. The factor ranking highest, as far as promotion was that the "advisors seemed knowledgeable" (14th). The "selling" of the program as a convincing factor was only 27th. Written materials from the University were rated even below that at 28th. Communication at all levels with the university ranked low at 38th. Attractive advertisements ranked only 53rd out of 65. One student wished to make clear that ranking these items low was not to indicate that they were negative, but rather low regarding the influence in their choice. A handwritten note stated: "Many of these things are true, but they are not the reason for my choice."

The interview groups did identify a communication or promotional item that they felt was a positive influence, but was not included in the survey. The 800 phone line was mentioned by two out of three of the focus groups as a factor of influence. In fact, 13 out of 16 in one group felt that was a very strong influence in their choice. It is true that eight out of nine master's sites are off-

campus. The easy access to Andrews University was a real advantage and helped to persuade students to choose its program.

Price ranked fourth and fifth from the bottom, as far as influence. The availability of financial aid was 60th, and the item related to student fees (meaning the reasonable cost of a statistician on campus, and the cost of library services, etc.) was slightly lower at 61st. Affordable tuition was ranked 62nd out of 65.

It cannot be determined from the survey whether Price was ranked low because hospitals and agencies most often support students with financial reimbursement for tuition, or whether the cost of tuition is a negative factor.

One focus group stated that Price was a negative influence for them. The cost of tuition at Andrews University was reported as more expensive than state universities, generally. There was, however, an interesting phenomenon mentioned by Kotler and Fox (1985). A program with a reputation for quality and excellence could be a little "pricey" and not detract from or reduce enrollment figures. People are generally willing to pay more for quality. Jacob (1993) described it this way: "Giving customers more instead of slashing prices is the smart way to do it" (p. 10).

The literature search revealed certain items that were influential in student choices in previous studies but were

unrelated to the marketing mix. Two of these were included in the study instrument. These two factors ranked at or near the bottom in the data analysis. "Friends in the program were influential in convincing me" was second from the bottom. "Employer encouragement" was the very lowest factor.

Students clarified their responses by writing on the tool that they did not know anyone in previous classes. The only discussion of those factors in the focus groups was the report that three students had been "influenced by friends to join the program," and three had been "influenced by employers encouraging them to enroll in Andrews' program."

In one discussion group, a student related the very positive image that Andrews University had in the health-care community in Chattanooga. Another student summarized the group's sentiments about the program by saying they "appreciated the justice and fairness of the program as well as the global level of the content and the worldview."

Three items that dealt with the uniqueness of Andrews University's offerings were: The University has something unique to offer ranked 10th. The individualization of specialties was 23rd, and the inclusion of business classes ranked 25th.

In reviewing the data, an area of interest was that several students left certain items blank. Four students

left blank the factor of influence dealing with the commitment of faculty in meeting appointments. Four students left blank the item relating to student achievement indicating a quality program. Six student left blank the item dealing with the image of the University in the health-care community. Five students left blank the item that alumni had positive things to say.

It would not seem that the wording was confusing. It may be that the indecision in marking those items was due to lack of knowledge. Further research would indicate why those particular items were confusing to study subjects. One can only speculate as to the meaning of those data.

#### Summary of Findings

The qualitative, anecdotal, and written data gathered in this study confirm and support basic assumptions in this research. Are there factors that can be identified that most often contribute to adults' choices of programs in higher education?

The literature indicates that friends and family strongly influence undergraduate student choices (Sevier, 1986). This is not true of the adult student in graduate education.

There is also a great deal of "shopping" for the best college offer (Krukowski, 1985; Moll, 1985). Adults often do not have the choice of being mobile or shopping around. The top-ranking item in the survey and in two of the focus

groups dealt with convenience and accessibility. This also appears among the top eight factors in the literature.

One item of influence that was consistently identified in all areas of data collection was the marketing mix factor, Product. The reputation of the program, the reputation of the faculty, and the fact that "promises are kept" were all significant "selling" points. The importance of Product as an influence was supported by the review of literature. In two studies, college students ranked the reputation of the school as the single most important influencing factor (Maguire & Lay, 1981; Krukowski, 1985).

Similar to Sevier's (1986) research was the rather surprising finding in this study that cost or the marketing factor Price carried very little influence. Tuition or fees were not mentioned in any of the focus groups until the question was directly asked, and ranked low in the written reports as well (fourth from the lowest). Perhaps more research will reveal whether people are simply willing to pay more for convenience or quality or that they are willing to pay for the degree they desire.

It is possible then to draw a portrait of adult RNs returning to school for graduate education and the factors influencing their choice. Since the picture is based on data from this and similar studies, it is possible to express a certain sense of confidence in basing a marketing

plan on the factors identified, though generalizations may be premature.

The Andrews University master's degree nursing students want convenience in the sequencing of classes, in scheduling, and in location. They want assurance of the quality of the program, the course work, and the faculty. They desire a Christian influence and a faculty that are available as mentors. They cherish student/teacher and teacher/teacher rapport. They are not so worried, however, about similar age of peers or their socio-economic or ethnic background.

They are adults who make their own choices. They are not as influenced by friends or employers as undergraduate students report in other research (Maguire & Lay, 1981; Moll, 1985; Sevier, 1986).

As a group, they are not as influenced by cost and are willing to pay higher tuition for the program they desire. Promotional materials and communication with the University were not as important as the friendliness and knowledge of the faculty. The availability of faculty was more important than their time investment or the accreditation of the program.

The scholarship of faculty members (i.e., their research) was not as important as the interest potential students had in conducting their own research. The fact

that research was a possibility at Andrews University was a "selling" point.

Knowing the profile of Andrews University graduate students in nursing will assist in the marketing of nursing education. Replication of the study in other settings may provide support for the conclusions and will indicate how near the portrait is of Registered Nurses seeking graduate education, generally.

Hassel and Palmer (1992) stated that "customers' expectations of service delivered equals service quality" (p. 21). They stated further that students' expectations and perceptions can be discovered by asking them. If they have not been queried, then no one knows how the marketing plan is working.

#### Marketing Analysis

Marketing analysis is the "most important step in the strategic marketing process," according to Chambers (1989, p. 82). Marketing analysis involves data collection and data analysis or marketing research, which is what this study addresses. According to Fusan (1984), research is what places a product. Research focuses on people's perceptions of the product and can help uncover misinformation or lack of information (Litten, 1983). This type of research gives guidance in improving the institution's position in the market.



Obviously, much valuable information was obtained through the interview approach in this project. The "humanness" factor would not have been evident from the survey alone, nor the meaning of the Christian focus in education. When an organization has something unique to offer, it is possible to capitalize on that aspect.

Nicheing is the process of finding a target population and meeting the particular needs of that group in a way not met by other competitors (O'Brien, 1987; Kotler & Andreasen, 1991). This is not a matter of seeking to be as similar to the Ivy League institutions as possible, but seeking instead a place to make a unique contribution. Nicheing strategies must be accomplished prior to any actual advertising or recruitment. The Christian focus may be a niche that needs to be advertised, based on research findings in this study.

In most nursing organizations, there are several levels of marketing analysis because there are several levels of the program. Chambers (1989) suggested (in developing the marketing plan) the use of a grid with all levels identified, as well as all geographic locations needing to be assessed (i.e., local, regional or nationwide). This way, information needed during each phase of planning is easily accessible.

Organizing all the data can be overwhelming. Chambers (1989) suggested further strategies both for organizing and

analyzing the data. Several aspects of the market can determine how the data are divided (i.e., being very specific about the segment of the market to which advertising and promotion are directed is economically sound, as well as attracting students appropriate to the program being offered).

The first step in Chambers' process model is marketing systems development. This step involves establishing the marketing function in the organization. The steps involved are as follows:

1. Determining at what level(s) marketing will be placed within the organization, i.e., where on the organizational chart.
2. Identifying who will be responsible for the conduct of marketing activities within the organization.
3. Establishing a system by which marketing information is obtained and marketing activities are reported.
4. Determining the objects or defining the desired outcomes of the marketing effort.
5. Identifying the time frame in which specific marketing activities will be conducted.
6. Allocating resources to support accomplishment of the objectives within the time frame.
7. Insuring that a marketing orientation is provided to personnel at all levels of the organization.  
(p. 69) (See Appendix H.)

Andrews University Department of Nursing is ready to begin the first steps Chambers has identified. The system of establishing how marketing information is obtained and reported is revealed in this study.

### Summary of Factors

From marketing research, certain factors are obvious. Geographic location, convenient scheduling, and quality of the program and faculty are the sine quo non of the marketing mix from Andrews University Department of Nursing. The factors ranking in the top 10 scores as influencing current students' choice of Andrews University's program are listed below. Interestingly, the results of the focus group findings were remarkably consistent with the ranked factors so that it was not necessary to modify either the quantitative or qualitative values.

Certain questions are raised by that knowledge. How creative can a university be in seeking to make a program of study accessible? Obviously, the on-campus program is somewhat place-bound and the population limited.

The off-campus sites present their own challenges of location, faculty energy, and time constraints. In addition, there are the considerations of liaison personnel locally and the sites for the class meetings. How convenient, accessible, and flexible can nursing higher education be made? Students were obviously quite satisfied with location and convenience in this study, especially since many classes are offered at major medical centers which are convenient to the working Registered Nurse.

Table 6

Data Analysis of Ranked Factors

Average Scores	Item Response*
3.61	The location was convenient.
3.43	The part-time approach to class schedule was most suitable.
3.39	The faculty seemed professional.
3.36	The faculty seemed friendly.
3.36	The flexibility of the program.
3.32	The University had a positive image (reported by students where the program has been in place for a number of years).
3.32	Classes meeting an intensive two weeks rather than all quarter, was a plus.
3.29	The time classes met fit my schedule best.
3.29	The facilities where classes are held are pleasant.
3.29	Travel time was minimal.
3.25	The Christian focus was significant.
3.21	The curriculum met my needs.
3.21	The emphasis on the quality of education was important.
3.21	The advisors were knowledgeable.
3.18	There was emphasis on research.
3.18	The degree offered seemed to meet my personal goals.
3.14	The University had something unique to offer.

\* Based on 4-point Likert scale.

In this study, the flexible schedule ranked number 2 with the adult master's degree student. Classes meet at 4:30 p.m. In the focus groups, much discussion dealt with the fact that the intensive 2 weeks of classes were ideal. The class projects and study could be accomplished at home before and after the class met. Going to school Monday through Thursday for 2 weeks out of each quarter from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. worked well with family and work schedules. These were things that were seen as positive.

Andrews University's Department of Nursing needs to address those items ranked lowest by survey and interview. One item that ranked 27th and 28th (out of 65) had to do with promotional activities. Unanswered questions include such things as: Does the response indicate that communication with the University was poorly handled? Would more attractive brochures be a more forceful marketing tool? Englehart's (1990) study of master's-level students indicated that "brochures and catalogs ranked low in influencing graduate students" (p. 71). A previous study in 1987 by Baron ranked written materials in fourth place in effective recruitment.

Kotler and Fox (1985) and Baron (1987) indicated that the most effective means of communicating with prospective students is still a one-to-one interview with a representative of the school or university. Andrews University Department of Nursing has practiced this

one-to-one technique for the past several years. The Director of the Graduate Program in Nursing has advertised by news release, posters, and word of mouth the date and time of an information meeting. At that time, students come and go and questions are answered individually. Almost all students have had a personal interview by the time classes start.

Marketing research and analysis must, of course, continue in order to understand the meaning of study subject responses and the value of the strategy. One disturbing factor in this analysis of data was that the visibility of the University ranked tenth from the bottom. This raises two questions: Are potential students aware of Andrews University? How does the awareness factor affect enrollment?

Something discussed in very early marketing literature, called "segmenting," needs to be decided. How will the market be approached? Smith (1956) discussed undifferentiated marketing, wherein, a university or the nursing department goes after the entire market with perhaps one program. The market is not targeted to specific offerings, nor are categories established. This approach is similar to mass production in business. Since there are limited offerings, the cost of advertising to the entire population is minimal. (For further discussion of

differentiated versus undifferentiated marketing, see Appendix I.)

What is often forgotten is that every contact with the institution declares something about Product. A telephone conversation, how a faculty member is dressed, how the flower beds are groomed--all speak to the quality of the program. Every person that contributes to the plan must be aware of every aspect of marketing.

Certainly in this study, the importance of such things was evident. In every focus group, there was discussion regarding the importance of positive contacts with people in the department. The unanimous response and the significance of that factor were overwhelming.

All visits with faculty and staff should be positive, professional, and informative. If all are involved in planning the marketing strategies, the likelihood increases that this will be so.

Since the reputation of the faculty ranked third, this aspect of the marketing plan appears to be quite successful. Not known, of course, is whether this is an initial image or reality as students proceed through and exit the program. Alumni research can provide a clearer picture of this factor.

The quality and reputation of the University ranked differently at different geographic sites. Andrews University is not as well known in a remote city such as

Hanford, California, where the classes are offered for the first time. Cities nearer the main campus such as Hinsdale, Illinois, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, where several classes have already graduated, have greater awareness of the program and the University. The Department of Nursing must evaluate the ranking of those factors in this project.

It is true that institutional and "even departmental reputation" is a most influential factor in studies of undergraduate students (Sevier, 1986, p. 188). As with the image of faculty members, the early perceptions regarding the institution or department may or may not reflect reality. Sevier (1986) discussed the "vagarious" nature of reputation (p. 188). Regardless of whether a department or institution can maintain a solid reputation, the value of that factor in influencing potential students is inestimable. For example, because of Ivy League institutions' reputations, it is assumed that the educational quality is superior. In reality, a better education might be obtained in a private school where classes are smaller, allowing greater student/teacher interaction.

The reputation of the institution ranked 10th in this study. The master's students at Andrews University were more interested in faculty reputation and rapport with



their teachers. Ranking third was the professional behavior of the faculty.

Evaluating reputation is a long-term process. Understanding the basis for a reputation may take years, and reversing or enhancing the image takes time, as well. Image building becomes a significant part of strategic market planning.

The ease of enrollment was cited as a significant factor by focus groups. This is another factor over which a department has some control. Making the process of enrollment, and subsequently registration, as expedient as possible is a positive factor for busy adults.

Since financial aid and tuition ranked low as factors of influence, it is not known whether students could be attracted with certain financial incentives. There may be creative measures for reducing costs. For example, there is pressure from a variety of sources to alter the clinical track. There is considerable discussion that administrative health-care changes on Capitol Hill are making fiscal resources more available as grants for nursing programs with practitioner options. Recent feedback from potential students, as well as requests from the State Board of Nursing, indicates that altering the clinical track to a practitioner option would be well accepted. It may be possible to offer that track with some financial support to the student in the future. The

marketing plan will of course include both the curricular and financial implications of that plan.

Interestingly, job dissatisfaction was not a significant factor in students' choice of Andrews' master's degree program. If it were a significant factor, job placement would be something students would desire. Other than a few individual students wishing to change roles eventually, there was no discussion of that factor at all.

The literature indicated that there was no item in the category of Promotion that ranked as influential with students wishing graduate education in nursing. There was only one item under the Price category in the list from the literature, and that item dealt with the cost of tuition. As indicated by the preceding list, this current study indicated what the previous studies indicated: that Price and Promotion are not the factors of influence with adults seeking graduate nursing education. This is not to say that if funding became available, more students would not apply.

Penner in a 1987 study of marketing in secondary education discussed the concept of the marketing plan which suggests as a first step the SWOT analysis. The concept is very current in the literature of the 1990s. It is part of strategic marketing. The SWOT analysis begins with mission or vision statements for a department or institution. The strengths and weaknesses are then identified and

opportunities and threats assessed, with a view of planning for 5 to 10 years in the future.

With that in mind, the nursing faculty developed a suggested SWOT analysis (see Appendix H) and an example of a marketing plan based on the findings as presented.

The value of the data analyzed is that the information is pragmatic and applicable in the immediate future for the Department of Nursing. In meeting the current demands from the market for the practitioner masters program, the suggested SWOT analysis will become part of the expanded structure on which the actual market plan will be based. A market plan was developed as an example from which the nursing faculty as a group will develop a model of market planning. (See Appendix J.)

#### Summary

As the study findings and analysis of this dissertation are concerned, the vital question is: What do they mean to the Department of Nursing at Andrews University? Price is not influential at this time, but the cost of education can affect the life cycle of a program of nursing in a critical manner. Suggestions for promotional activities have been made and are not as important to adults as Place and Product.

Substantive information and sound evidence indicated that it was possible to answer the question: "What factors influenced student's choice of the graduate nursing program

at Andrews University?" It is possible to use that information in developing a strong marketing plan, as described. Final conclusions are discussed in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

Colleges and universities are marketing-conscious. Administrators, admission officers, alumni, and constituencies are demanding greater and sometimes unreasonable assurance that marketing strategies are adequate in each department to maintain programs of study. Marketing is defined in a variety of ways and is often equated with only the aspects of "selling" and "recruitment."

As has been demonstrated, marketing is much more than either selling or recruitment. Marketing strategies are consumer-conscious. Elements of the marketing mix were reported as the most significant factors in student choices of Andrews University Master's of Science (nursing) program.

A key purpose of this study was to determine marketing factors affecting student choices in Master's of Science (nursing) education. The reason was to market more effectively. In the process of the research data gathering and analysis, the hope was always present that more than

one program of nursing would benefit from the information gathered and reported herein. In fact, some of the information applies to adults generally who are seeking advanced degrees. Another thing of which the researcher was constantly mindful is that regardless of the value of data collection and analysis, no single individual can effectively implement a successful marketing plan.

Marketing involves people. All individuals in a single department or in the entire institution must be involved. Peters and Austin (as cited in Sevier, 1986) state: "The most effective marketing strategist is the worker who decides not to drop the computer on the loading dock" (p. 202). Marketing involves everyone. The researcher gathers and reports marketing data, but that is only the beginning of the process. Each individual must perform his or her task effectively in order for the marketing plan to work.

This chapter presents a brief summary of each chapter of the study. In addition, suggestions are made regarding future research in the area of educational marketing. The conclusion section summarizes the purpose and goals of this educational marketing project.

#### Summary

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, there has been a growing interest in marketing in educational institutions.

Principles of business marketing have been modified to apply to educational institutions.

Colleges and universities have had to deal with more than one problem recently. Not only has enrollment declined among high-school graduates, faculty and administrators have had to be more flexible in providing for increasing numbers of adults returning to school.

Services are a different type of product to "sell." Ideas and curriculum, advisement, and student counseling are not tangible products in the sense of business products. In addition, consumers are well informed and make demands to which educational institutions are increasingly more attuned.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the factors related to marketing nursing graduate education that affect consumer choices in a particular program. A thorough review and analysis of the literature provided some items for an interview tool on which to base data gathering from the study population. Sixty-six of the 110 students enrolled in the master's degree nursing program during the 1992-93 academic year were the voluntary study subjects.

### Review of Literature

The literature naturally divided into the two main categories of: (1) marketing literature, including business, educational, and nursing references, and (2) adults in higher education, including studies involving factors on which college and university choices are made.

The concern about marketing being nonacademic in education and unethical in service areas such as health care made nurse educators among the slowest group to respond to the necessity of marketing. As reluctant as that group has been, the observation was made that most nurse administrators now find marketing as part of their role description. There has naturally been some catching up in areas of market planning, and particularly in strategic marketing.

There are currently approximately 27 books on marketing in nursing, not all of which deal strictly with educational marketing. This is compared to references numbering in the thousands in the literature in marketing generally.

Since educational marketing principles are applicable to marketing nursing education, the literature is most helpful in suggested marketing plans and research.

### Procedure

The purpose of this study involved as a first step analysis of the literature in order to develop a conceptual



model of data collection. The factors from previous studies influencing consumer choices in graduate education were assembled unranked. To those were added factors from all aspects of the marketing mix. The tool that was developed was used as a directed interview schedule after the pilot study revisions were made.

In order to validate findings, three of eight groups completed the interview schedule as a paper and pencil test, rather than by discussion, as the other five groups had done. The findings were analyzed and factors ranked.

#### Conclusions

Scheduling, convenience, and the quality of the program and faculty are the primary factors that influenced consumer choices in the nursing master's program at Andrews University. The "human touch, warmth and kindness" were unanimously identified as more important factors in the choice than were the cost of education, printed materials from the University, or even word-of-mouth advertising by either alumni or current students. Accreditation and image are of almost equal influence.

Use of the qualitative approach enhances the understanding of quantitative data analysis. The reporting and responses of students at outreach sites regarding the warmth, helpfulness, and knowledge of the faculty and staff as a significant factor was impressive. Such information supports the idea that the product in educational marketing

includes everything that negatively affects or positively contributes to the image of the institution.

The ease of entry was verbally reported as a factor of influence at Andrews University. Comparisons were made with other institutions where the process was much more difficult. In fact, some students gave up the effort and came to Andrews University for that reason alone.

Other factors such as the socio-economic level of students, the ethnic background of other students, and the inclusion of business courses were near the bottom as far as importance in the selection of a master's program. Physical and emotional expenditures of energy were reported as reasonable, as was travel time, since the quality of education seemed assured.

Students being kept informed was almost as important as the curriculum. The faculty commitment to meeting appointments was more important than scholarship.

A finding that was somewhat confusing was the price factor of marketing. Was the cost of tuition a negative factor or positive in the sense of demonstrating quality? There were no clear insights regarding the low ranking of tuition.

Another factor of interest is the promotional aspect of marketing. For the adults returning for graduate education, written material from the institution had very little influence. Bulletins, brochures, and other

communications did not influence the study subjects in this research. Although adults enjoy the challenge of the academic setting and want to feel a part of the learning community, they may find aspects of higher education intimidating. Faculty who provide assistance can ameliorate much of the uncertainty. It makes sense that friendliness and one-to-one interviews with faculty members, as the knowledgeable contact persons at the institution, facilitated the decision to return to school.

Based on the review of related literature, and within the constraints of this research, the following observations and conclusions are made:

1. In spite of declining college enrollments, adults are seeking higher education in new numbers. They are informed and know what they want, and they are willing to pay for it.

2. Universities, and particularly schools of nursing, have been reluctant to participate in something so foreign as the "selling" of a service discipline. The evidence is clear, however, that in order to meet both the needs of the consumer and the needs of the institution, marketing requires both research and strategic planning. Throughout the process, not only must the client be informed of the educational offerings and locations, but the clients' needs must also be identified and addressed.

3. Within the literature review, as well as during the actual research process, the value of qualitative data collection was clearly evident. In order to understand the client and for the potential student to understand the institution, communication in the form of verbal exchange is inestimable. Focus groups provide such a setting as a beginning step in understanding consumer needs. In addition, the quantitative approach of numerically sorted data with responses help to control bias that could occur in the interview setting when a university representative is present. In addition, potential consumers are not influenced by hearing others' responses when marking their interview instrument as a paper and pencil test.

4. Literature is just beginning to become available in the area of marketing higher education in nursing. No standard marketing plan is available for the strategic marketing of master's-level education. Obviously any plan developed will be unique and suited to the population described. Certain items are clearly evident even in these early stages of development:

a. The consumer must be known to the institution and the needs clearly defined.

b. The first suggested step is reviewing mission statements and stating vision statements.

(See Appendix G for the beginning steps.)

c. In areas of the country where the institution was well-known, the image was positive. In other areas, the potential student had never heard of Andrews University. The need for media releases and advertising prior to informational sessions is evident.

More concerted effort is needed to improve the image in those areas. The segments of the market as a focus of recruitment cannot be identified until that is done. Creating the product at the right price and place can only occur when the communication or promotion involves the feedback of the receiver.

5. The marketing effort for a department of nursing must have the support of all faculty, staff, and administrators.

#### Personal Conclusions

In the process of data collection from both study subjects and the literature, certain observations may be valuable.

1. Nursing administrators and faculty have been slow in becoming involved in the process of organized and strategic marketing. In the meantime, consumers have moved from the point of influencing a market to the point of making market demands. Thus, programs of nursing can find themselves in the position of being forced in a curriculum direction for which they are ill-prepared.

2. Convenience and scheduling flexibility are paramount in planning marketing strategy for busy, career-minded adults. That knowledge alone gives immediate direction to administrators in nursing education in planning the location and times that classes meet.

3. Image is a critical element in dealing with adults seeking higher education. Image, in the sense of a quality program, is something for which registered nurses will spend their educational funds, even if the program is costly.

Institutions such as Andrews University need to assess the quality of the educational offering at each outreach site. Determining the quality of education and reported value of the curriculum is needed to ensure that consumer needs are met at each of the nine sites.

Research data in this project indicated a particular deficit as far as image described verbally by many students currently enrolled. Some students had no image in mind prior to enrollment, and many had never heard of the institution in their community where the program was new. Image-building is not necessarily a quick or easy task. The first step is assessing the image that potential students possess and then marketing based on image-building, advertising, and communication. Important in such consideration is that all institutional policies and factors play a role in the image of any single department.

Image-building involves commitment in terms of public relations, community relations, as well as admission personnel and marketing. A marked weakness indicated in this study was the poor communication regarding the institution. Brochures and bulletins need to be representative. Written materials must be attractive in order to attract clients.

Changing tactics requires a well-orchestrated plan in which each faculty member in a department is involved. The tentative marketing plan described in chapter 4 must be further developed and placed on a time line with various marketing activities assigned to each faculty member, with deadlines indicated for completion of those duties. (See Appendix G.) The value of that approach is that the implementations of the marketing plan are a communal project and not administratively dictated.

Duties should be assumed or assigned with some knowledge and consideration of individual talents and interests. Faculty who are interested would be chosen to screen all literature and communications from the department. The review of such things should include the themes or messages and images portrayed with suggestions for change. Asking potential students what such documents convey to them is generally a helpful way to begin.

Recommendations for the Department of Nursing

Eight recommendations are made based on the research findings as guidelines for the development of a marketing plan for the Andrews University graduate program in nursing.

1. Clarify program goals (i.e., clinical track focus and academic distinction).

2. Initiate activities that make the University more visible at outreach sites.

3. Study the effectiveness of the financial aid program as a possibility for providing incentives for potential students.

4. Actively recruit at outreach locations to inform the potential population of course offerings.

5. Provide more individualized contact with currently enrolled students to meet with potential students.

6. Segment the market by advertising core content and two tracks at each site. (Not every student will meet the higher GPA requirement for the practitioner program--two tracks will allow other interested potential students to enroll.)

7. Devise and develop strategies for bringing Andrews University nursing faculty into a more active marketing process.



8. Develop a marketing plan based on the knowledge of the ranking of the marketing mix by current students.

9. Define a niche that the faculty finds appropriate to advertise. From the data analysis, it appears that, with the current population, the Christian focus would be meeting a need not addressed by other graduate programs.

### Discussion

As mentioned, the niche that seems apparent and reported by students as a strength of the program under study is the spiritual focus in patient care. The niche as described earlier is finding an aspect of the service not well met by other marketers and then specifically targeting the market with that strength.

The meaning and value of the spiritual focus of patient care would not have been addressed as clearly in data collection in any but a qualitative study. The finding was unexpected. The discussion of that topic came up spontaneously in each focus group. With the discussion and findings, the uniqueness of that aspect of the graduate program became clearly apparent.

Many students expressed that this factor was a primary influence in their choice. The response to that discussion was so convincing and pervasive that, in the largest focus group, the researcher felt compelled to determine by some quantitative value the meaning of that one factor. Over half of the group raised their hands indicating that their

primary reason for choosing the Andrews University program was for the spiritually-focused philosophy of patient care.

That finding would not be so surprising if the population of nursing graduate students was made up of believers in the faith of the affiliated church. The population was not. In fact, only a small percentage are Seventh-day Adventists, and at many sites, only one or two were Adventists, at the mcst. The population of graduate students is from all religious faiths, including protestants and catholics and even some Eastern religions (e.g., Buddhists).

How else but through qualitative research could such a finding have been evaluated? The discovery that the program is meeting such a need among the general population of nurses from the various sites nationwide was not a finding the researcher set out to discover.

One might wonder about those who did not choose the program for the same reason. Some might not enroll in a church-affiliated program due to fear of being proselytized. That is exactly what nicheing is about. If adequate numbers can be attracted and maintained through the marketing of a unique strength which has been identified, then that is the population a department will seek to attract. It is important to realize that no unit or department can be all things to all people. A department in a small church-affiliated university would

not even try. That makes more imperative the need to know consumers and their choices, their reported needs, and their view of strengths and the factors related to their choice.

If long-held views of nursing as a consecrated service prevented educators in the past from marketing nursing, what is the ethical view of marketing nursing education with a Christian focus of patient care? How does a service-oriented, non-profit university resolve the debate concerning the ethics of marketing?

Only since the beginning of the current decade have social changes created an entirely new view of marketing. At former President George Bush's 1989 inauguration, he told the American people that his desire was to make the United States a kinder nation. He discussed the "thousand points of lights" that were identified in non-profit organizations. That type of marketing, appealing as it was to the altruistic senses of society, set the stage for a new marketing awareness and acceptance.

Social marketing was the next societal orientation. Things such as family planning, AIDS prevention, and child survival were widely marketed to the point that even international social marketing is now accepted.

If services such as these socially-altruistic ventures can be marketed on an international scale, certainly a societal service such as nursing can be marketed, as well.

Actually, the changes at the beginning of the decade have finally resolved the debate over the marketing of nursing. Many of the international social issues, as well as many in this country, involve nursing. Things such as child welfare and abuse, AIDS treatment and prevention are actually nursing focused. The organization for child survival has changed names and is now known as Communication and Marketing for Child Survival.

These recent but profound changes have set the stage for acceptance of marketing in every aspect of nursing, health care and related services. In fact, a recent national poll indicated that members of society are now accepting the marketing of even the most elitist service professions such as physicians and dentists.

In answer to the question whether it is ethical to market such things as Christian service in nursing, one must consider the results of such marketing. Drawing to the discipline professionals best qualified and whose integrity is above reproach seems like the most obvious result of such action.

As reported earlier, in any organization, whether for profit or nonprofit, and whether a product is consumable or less tangible, marketing cannot be avoided in today's world. Instead, a successful marketing process depends on decisions regarding organization and planning. Complacency must now be replaced by increased attention to consumers

and their needs, based on knowledge of values to be exchanged. An identified strength allows a program to advertise its uniqueness to a particular population.

Original research in one's own population, as described and suggested in the few nursing studies reported, is of value because it allows identification of the niche unique to a particular institution.

Beginning with consumer research through the qualitative approach is also encouraged in current literature. Comparative and completely quantitative research is not as profitable in seeking to market a discipline's own program. Utilizing research from a current population allows for significantly increased enrollment. One of the few available research reports in nursing education, which was described in an earlier chapter, was able to accomplish that goal within one semester of the focus group data gathering session.

A final statement summarizes the value of the research report. Focus group research is the starting point of marketing to nurses in education. Data gathering from current adult students makes obvious the unique strengths of the program, as well as the needs of consumers. Consumer-based research allows for nicheing that capitalizes on the identified strengths of the existing program. Mutual needs are met in this way, and programs are strengthened as new ones are created.

### Recommendations for Further Research

It is possible from this research to declare the 10 factors most likely to attract registered nurses to a Master's of Science Degree (Nursing). Those factors are prioritized in chapter 4.

It would be naive to assume that all registered nurses would be attracted by the same factors at any location and at any institution. In research involving human behavior, in which true randomization cannot occur, replication is not only encouraged but highly recommended. In fact, generalization beyond the current population requires further research by replication in order to assume a profile of universal generalizability. A profile for all registered nurses seeking advanced degrees would make marketing much more profitable for any university. If repeated studies indicate that certain factors are always in the top 10, those factors would become the marketing focus for any higher degree program for nurses.

Research involving several master's programs at one time with several research assistants could provide valuable comparative data. Realizing that university choice is a highly individualized and sometimes complex process, involving some emotional lability, one does not know in any given set of data at what extreme the average respondent was when answering. Due to that, quantification of data is difficult. A combination of qualitative and

quantitative research is recommended to clarify points of confusion.

Adding to data-collection questions regarding such things as the receptiveness of individuals to unique learning opportunities could provide information for strategic planning. The institution may eventually find air travel too costly to a variety of outreach sites. A new trend in nursing education is international outreach. Third-world countries, for example, are needing educational guidance and advanced degrees for their health-care leaders and look to the United States for the provision of advanced degrees. If the economy is such that international travel is prohibitive, some sort of interactive learning may be instituted. Including the international population in data collection and research will make strategic planning and goal-setting possible for several years in the future.

APPENDIX A  
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL





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ANDREWS  
UNIVERSITY

March 9, 1993

Cathy Knarr  
Nursing - 0200

Dear Cathy:

The Human Subjects Review Board has reviewed your proposal, "Factors Influencing Consumer Choices in Higher Education in Nursing," under the exempt review procedure. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

If there are any modifications to the proposed research protocol or consent form, or you encounter problems as a result of the study, please notify us in writing. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

If your research is going to take more than one year, you must request an extension of your approval in order to continue with this project. The present approval duration is for one year. We wish you success on this project.

Sincerely,

*Kent Randolph*

Kent R. Randolph  
Assistant to the Director,  
Office of Scholarly Research

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APPENDIX B  
PILOT STUDY

**ANALYSIS OF PILOT STUDY DATA--RANKED**

**PLACE**

Schedule - part time.

Two weeks of intensive classes per quarter.

Time classes met.

Flexibility of Program.

**PRODUCT**

Quality of Education.

Degree met personal goals.

Andrews' program seemed most likely to enhance previous education.

Teacher-teacher relationships were congenial.

Faculty seemed professional.

Andrews degree allows for greater career advancement.

Accreditation of the program.

Emphasis on research.

Commitment of the teachers to students.

**PLACE**

Sequencing of classes.

Facilities where classes offered are pleasing.

**PROMOTION**

Advisors were knowledgeable.

Written materials were attractive.

**PRODUCT**

Faculty as mentors toward professional growth.  
Reputation of the school.  
Entry requirements seemed to ease enrollment process.  
Teachers/student rapport.

**PRODUCT**

Student input is sought in decision making.  
The commitment of faculty to keeping appointments.  
The curriculum met my needs.  
The good teacher morale appealed to me.  
Opportunity is provided to make up missed classes.  
The course work was such that I felt most assured of success.  
Scholarly activity is emphasized.  
The university has a positive image.  
Students are kept informed.  
Student achievement (i.e., GPA., etc.).  
The age of students was similar to my own.  
Promises to students are kept.  
The "selling" of the program was convincing.  
The individualized specialization in education is unique.  
This program is more broad-based than some.  
Student morale seemed good.  
The student ethnic group was similar to my own.

**PLACE**

Travel time was minimal.

**PROMOTION**

The advertisements were attractive.

The faculty members that I met seemed friendly.

Recruitment strategies were personal.

Student fees were reasonable.

The visibility of the universities.

**PRICE**

Expenditure in physical and emotional energy seemed reasonable.

**PRODUCT**

Scholarship was emphasized.

The university had something unique to offer.

The perception of the university in the health care Community was a positive influence.

The opportunity to actually conduct research was appealing.

The Christian focus is significant.

The socio-economic level of the students is similar to my own.

The overall image is of scholarship.

The inclusion of business courses is an important consideration.

Skill development is greater with this degree.

The monetary rewards seemed greater with this degree.

**PROMOTION**

Communication at all levels helped me decide.

Faculty research is impressive.

My friends in the program influenced me.

**PRICE**

The tuition is affordable.

Financial aid is available.

**OTHER**

Dissatisfaction with my career choices caused me to enroll.

My employer encouraged me to enroll in the Andrews University program.

**APPENDIX C**  
**INTERVIEW TOOL**



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ANDREWS  
UNIVERSITY

October 25, 1992

Dear Participants,

This data collection is part of my doctoral dissertation research study on factors influencing consumer choices in higher education. The study is seeking to determine the most effective marketing approaches for RN's for Masters degree education. I am asking students currently enrolled in the Master of Science (Nursing) program to respond to questions regarding their choices. In addition, I am surveying some Andrews masters students by interview.

Participation is completely voluntary. Anonymity of all responses is assured since there is no way to identify those who responded. Your participation in completing the following survey is considered evidence of informed consent.

If you wish an abstract of the results sent to you, or if you wish further information, please call at 1-800-877-2863.

Sincerely,

Catherine Knarr

Department of Nursing

Andrews University

Berrien Springs, MI 49104



I chose the Master of Science Nursing Program from Andrews University (rather than from another university) for the following reasons:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The flexibility of the program appealed to me.	1	2	3	4
2. The time that classes met fit my schedule best.	1	2	3	4
3. The location of the classes was convenient.	1	2	3	4
4. The facilities where classes are offered were pleasant.	1	2	3	4
5. The part-time approach to the class schedule was most suitable.	1	2	3	4
6. Classes meeting for an intensive two weeks rather than all quarters was a plus.	1	2	3	4
7. The sequencing of courses was appealing.	1	2	3	4
8. Travel time was minimal.	1	2	3	4
9. The advertisements were attractive.	1	2	3	4
10. The faculty members that I met seemed friendly.	1	2	3	4
11. Verbal and written communication from and with the University was suitable.	1	2	3	4
12. The recruitment strategies were personal.	1	2	3	4
13. The advisors were knowledgeable.	1	2	3	4
14. The written materials from Andrews University were attractive.	1	2	3	4
15. The "selling" of the program was convincing.	1	2	3	4
16. The tuition was affordable.	1	2	3	4
17. Financial aid was available.	1	2	3	4
18. Loss of potential earning time was less.	1	2	3	4
19. Student fees (e.g., for statistician for library searches, etc.) seemed reasonable.	1	2	3	4
20. The expenditure in physical and emotional energy seemed reasonable.	1	2	3	4
21. The investment, time-wise, was acceptable.	1	2	3	4
22. There was emphasis on quality of education.	1	2	3	4
23. The university had a positive image.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. The curriculum met my needs.	1	2	3	4
25. The University had something unique to offer.	1	2	3	4
26. The degree offered seemed to meet my personal goals.	1	2	3	4
27. The course work was such that I felt most assured of success.	1	2	3	4
28. The visibility of the University's program was impressive.	1	2	3	4
29. The overall image was of scholarship.	1	2	3	4
30. The faculty seemed professional.	1	2	3	4
31. The alumni from AU had positive things to say.	1	2	3	4
32. Andrews' degree allowed for greater career advancement than other degrees.	1	2	3	4
33. Faculty research was impressive.	1	2	3	4
34. The accreditation of Andrews' Department of Nursing affected my choice.	1	2	3	4
35. The faculty seemed available as mentors toward professional growth.	1	2	3	4
36. The individualized specialization in education was unique.	1	2	3	4
37. The reputation of the school influenced me.	1	2	3	4
38. The inclusion of business classes was an important consideration.	1	2	3	4
39. Skill development appeared to be greater with this degree.	1	2	3	4
40. There was emphasis on research.	1	2	3	4
41. Communication at all levels helped me to decide.	1	2	3	4
42. The masters program was more broad-based than some.	1	2	3	4
43. Dissatisfaction with my current career choices caused me to enroll.	1	2	3	4
44. The Christian focus was significant.	1	2	3	4
45. My employer encouraged me to enroll in this program.	1	2	3	4
46. My friends in the program were influential in convincing me.	1	2	3	4
47. The age of other students was similar to my own age.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
48. Promises to students seemed to be kept.	1	2	3	4
49. The commitment of faculty in keeping appointments was impressive.	1	2	3	4
50. The health care community's perception of Andrews' program was a positive influence.	1	2	3	4
51. Student morale seemed good.	1	2	3	4
52. The socio-economic level of the students was similar to my own.	1	2	3	4
53. Teacher/student rapport was evident.	1	2	3	4
54. Student achievement (e.g., GPA, research ability, etc.) indicated a quality program.	1	2	3	4
55. Good teacher morale appealed to me.	1	2	3	4
56. The student ethnic group seemed similar to my own.	1	2	3	4
57. Opportunity was provided to make up missed classes.	1	2	3	4
58. Teacher/teacher relationships seemed congenial.	1	2	3	4
59. The health care relationship between the community and the University seemed good.	1	2	3	4
60. The commitment of teachers to students was a reason for my choice.	1	2	3	4
61. Students were kept informed.	1	2	3	4
62. Entry requirements seemed to ease the enrollment process.	1	2	3	4
63. The monetary rewards seemed to be greater with a degree from Andrews.	1	2	3	4
64. Andrews' program seemed most likely to enhance my previous education.	1	2	3	4
65. The opportunity to actually conduct research was appealing.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D  
THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGE

*"I don't know who you are.  
 I don't know your company.  
 I don't know your company's product.  
 I don't know what your company stands for.  
 I don't know your company's customers.  
 I don't know your company's record.  
 I don't know your company's reputation.  
 Now—what was it you wanted to sell me?"*



**MORAL:** Sales start **before** your salesman calls—with business publication advertising.

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New York, New York 10020-1095  
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FAX 212/512-3050

McGraw Hill World

October 11, 1994

Catherine Turner  
Doctoral Candidate  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

Dear Ms. Turner:

Your request to use McGraw-Hill's "Man-in-the-Chair" ad has been forwarded to me during Dwight Rangel's absence. I regret that the paper trail has taken so long. If I understand your request correctly, you wish to substitute the word "university" where the word "company" appears in this ad. Unfortunately, the message in the ad, which is copyrighted by McGraw-Hill, cannot be altered. Additionally, it cannot be used to endorse another product or company.

I am forwarding a copy of the ad and you may feature it with the permission line "Reprinted by permission of McGraw-Hill, Inc." Perhaps you could place a body of copy below with your message about the "university." The ad itself cannot be changed.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ann Trainor".

Mary Ann Trainor  
Director, Internal Communications

APPENDIX E  
RANKING OF DATA UNDER FOUR "Ps"

DATA SORTS OUT BY RANK UNDER THE FOUR "Ps" AS FOLLOWS:

A. Place

1. The location of classes was convenient.
2. The part-time approach to the class schedule was most suitable.
3. The flexibility of the program appealed to me.
4. Classes meeting two intensive weeks rather than all quarter was a plus.
5. The time the classes met fit my schedule.
6. The facilities where classes are offered is pleasant.
7. The opportunity to make up missed classes was provided.
8. The sequencing of classes was appealing.

B. Product

1. The faculty seemed professional.
2. The faculty seemed friendly.
3. The University had a positive image.
4. The Christian focus was appealing.
5. The curriculum met my needs.
6. The emphasis was on the quality of education.
7. The advisors were knowledgeable.
8. There was an emphasis on research.
9. The degree offered met my personal needs.
10. The University had something unique to offer.



11. Teacher/student rapport was positive.
12. The faculty seemed available as mentors.
13. Teacher/teacher relationships were congenial.
14. Entry requirements seemed to ease the enrollment process.
15. The good teacher morale appealed to me.
16. The course work was such that I felt assured of success.
17. The accreditation of the department affected my choice.
18. The commitment of faculty in meeting appointments was impressive.
19. The master's program was more broad-based than some.
20. Students were kept informed.
21. The reputation of the school influenced me.
22. Promises to students seemed to be kept.
23. Andrews' programs seemed most likely to enhance my previous education.
24. Faculty research was impressive.
25. Student achievement indicated a quality program.
26. The commitment of teachers to students was a reason for my choice.
27. Student morale seemed good.
28. The overall image was of scholarship.
29. The socio-economic level of students was similar to my own.

30. The individualized specialization in education was unique.

31. The opportunity to actually conduct research was appealing.

32. The student ethnic group was similar to my own.

33. The inclusion of business courses was positive.

34. The visibility of the University's program was impressive.

35. The alumni from AU had positive things to say.

36. The age of other students was similar to my own age.

37. Dissatisfaction with my current career choices caused me to enroll.

38. Andrews' degree allowed for greater advancement than other degrees.

C. Price

1. Travel time was minimal.

2. Loss of potential earning time was less than with other programs.

3. The investment timewise was acceptable.

4. The expenditure in physical and emotional energy seemed reasonable.

5. Financial aid was available.

6. Student fees seemed reasonable.

7. The monetary reward seemed greater with a degree from Andrews University.

8. The tuition was affordable.

D. Promotion

1. The written materials from Andrews University were attractive.

2. Verbal and written communication from and with the University was suitable.

3. Communication at all levels helped me decide.

4. The "selling" of the program was convincing.

5. Friends in the program were influential in convincing me.

6. My employer encouraged me to enroll in this program.

APPENDIX F  
UNABRIDGED REPORT OF QUALITATIVE  
DATA COLLECTION

## QUALITATIVE DATA

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Focus Group Responses from Sixteen Students  
Combined Group From Grand Rapids and Berrien Springs

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Asked to state reasons for choice of Andrews University  
(In order of response):

Everyone is so nice--There are 3 other programs in the community but I gave consideration only to one due to my work and the scheduling of the courses and due to humanness factors. One student stated that she had a bachelor's Degree in another field and then decided that she wanted nursing, her comment follows: Andrews University had the only program for students that didn't have a Berrien Springs in Nursing. The faculty worked with students to work out their program--still with a humanness approach. (About three-fourths of the group joined this discussion in a positive way).

A total of about half of the group joined in at this point discussing the following issue:

Grand Valley didn't want to admit certain students for their graduate program (see comments above).

Three students--Agreed with the comment: A friend told me about the program.

A certain level was not required on GRE--Entrance requirements made for easier access than some schools. (The ease of entry was discussed positively by almost all students--all but about 3).

Exposure to SDAs--The Christian influence was significant. I wanted a parochial influence. (All but 5 students joined the discussion in expressing that this was a positive factor in their choice).

Structured Interview from schedule two items elicited most discussion:

The item that generated the most response in the entire focus group was the direct question about the marketing mix factor, Product--All but one student stated during the discussion that the quality of the program was the single most influential factor in their choice.

Out of items on Promotion: Students stated that out of all the communication with the University, the 800 number and verbal contacts were the most influential, as well as all contacts with the department.

Out of items on Place: Students' comments focused on scheduling flexibility--(time wise), and the location of classes. One student commented that they didn't really like the intensive 2 week schedule.

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Focus Group Responses from the Second Group  
This Group Consisted of Fourteen Students  
From Chattanooga, TN

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The discussion was limited on ideas that the group generated. Their comments are as follows:

Promises are kept by Andrews, compared to other schools in the area. This comment was supported by all but one in the group as a very positive factor of influence of their choice.

The next eight items seemed equally important to the group. The availability of the classes and scheduling 9-10 days out of the quarter with evening classes definitely influenced my choice.

Tuition was up compared to other schools, but Andrews was quality. The people met displayed professionalism.

Student morale is important--we are treated as adult human beings.

Entrance requirements make for easier access than some schools.

An accredited program was important.

The image is friendly.

The faculty are friendly.

The Christian influence was significant. I wanted a parochial influence.

From the structured interview from the instrument the items that were identified as important are as follows:

The health care community's perception of Andrews program as a positive influence, was discussed as significant. Andrews University has had classes at the Southern College as an outreach site for a long enough time for the community to be well aware of the image of the university and the quality of the program. Six out of 14 spoke of that factor as influencing their choice.

One person said that the morale of students in the program in the prior class was so positive that she wanted to obtain her degree from the same institution.

Four students described their understanding of the rapport between students and faculty as the factor that was very significant in their choice.

Two of this group were influenced by students achievement who had attended Andrews University.

Interestingly, one student said that she was most impressed by the rapport that she understood existed between teachers who taught at Andrews.

Along the same line, a total of five students said that the commitment that they had heard that faculty demonstrated to students was the reason for their choice.

A final comment was that the student appreciated the justice and fairness of the faculty, and the global level



and world view of the course content in the masters of nursing program.

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Focus Group Responses from the Third Group  
of Nine Students from Hinsdale, IL; Hanford, CA;  
and Battle Creek, MI

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The group dynamics were different in each focus group. In this group, there were some very brief statements and some people that were verbal and made lengthy comments, which might have stifled the group interaction without some intervention.

Comments occurred as follows:

My number one choice was Andrews when I heard that the masters degree was coming to Kalamazoo: It was convenient.

The timing at the location.

It was accessible.

The flexibility--it fit my work schedule.

It was recommended by a co-worker. Another student said that it was recommended by her chief nurse.

A more lengthy discussion was as follows:

I live by (a large university) and work on that campus but I chose Andrews University because it met my needs for: the option of a clinical track; the flexibility of the program. Some universities are not as tolerant of part-time students-which was problematic. The site was convenient, as

were the evening classes--there are daytime classes otherwise.

Another student told a personal experience as follows: I was actually enrolled in another university and the director of graduate programs for nursing at Andrews called me--This was a big school I was in--the personal approach was meaningful and she said all our students have a job and many have children; that is what the program is geared toward. That was what persuaded me.

The next student agreed saying, "Yes, it is geared to the working man and woman."

One student discussed that the hours are part time (for class scheduling), meaning 4-hour sessions daily for a two-week period.

Another personal experience followed with a student saying that they were getting their masters degree for a personal challenge and not for her career. She stated that she enjoyed the spiritual aspect and to her that was very important. She also took time to comment on the Intercampus Seminar that was just concluding saying that they were really tied together as a group and that they had been really coddled while they were here (on campus). She stated that the two-week period was arranged so well and the speakers (Andrews Professors from other disciplines) were superior.

Another comment followed about faculty, particularly. The faculty mostly have doctorates but they are very hardworking and approachable. They don't talk down to students. I was out of the program but came back, in fact (the student continued) everyone that I know that was out has finally come back to finish.

A student stated that there was a university 15 minutes from where they lived in CA but they did not have an accredited program--and they would not consider a degree from a school that was not accredited and recognized.

One comment by a student was that she was already using the learning, meaning that the knowledge was pragmatic and already making a difference in the work place.

Another student said that a certain University (she mentioned the name) was directly across the street from the hospital where she worked but she wanted a program that was consistent with adult learning. At Andrews she felt that the students were treated as adults.

A student from Chicago said that she had observed that the program was flexible and convenient and not only that, the atmosphere was Christian. Those three things were the factors influencing her choice.

The next comment dealt with the executive secretary, who she though was terrific.

One student talked again about the out-reach sites being convenient in the communities.

The final statement was interesting--the reputation was that the program was hard but that it was a first-class program. The quality was excellent but one had to be willing to slave away.

This group generated much individual discussion rather than coming to consensus about any one idea. Even though the group was the smallest, there was not as easy a method of combining thoughts of assessing the number agreeing with any given statement as with the other two groups since so many were eager to give personal experiences and state unique ideas.

APPENDIX G  
WORLD WAR I RECRUITMENT

# WANTED 25000 STUDENT NURSES



## U.S. STUDENT NURSE RESERVE

ENROLL AT THE NEAREST RECRUITING STATION OF THE  
WOMAN'S COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

Kalisch PA and Kalisch BJ The advance of American nursing  
Boston 1978 Little Brown & Co

World War I student-nurse  
recruitment poster.

World War I nurse recruitment poster



THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE

The World War I recruitment drive yielded a 25 percent increase  
in admissions to classes of nursing



APPENDIX H

SUGGESTED SWOT ANALYSIS, STRATEGIC PLAN  
AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Purpose

The development of a strategic plan for the Department of Nursing at Andrews University was the first step in beginning the implementation of a marketing plan. Andrews has approximately 300 Nursing students in four programs, with eight out-reach sites nationwide. The four programs are Generic Baccalaureate, BS Completion for Registered Nurses, and Master of Science with a major in Nursing and a BS/MS track for students with baccalaureate majors in disciplines other than nursing.

The first step in strategic planning is the development of the SWOT analysis. The acronym SWOT stands for: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. SWOT analysis is a careful assessment of a department or business, thinking of the immediate future as well as five to 10 years in the future.

In preparing for the SWOT Analysis for the Department of Nursing some brainstorming occurred regarding the department in thinking of the strengths and weaknesses of the present and the future. In addition, ideas regarding the market and the pool of potential students was addressed. From that session ideas were grouped in categories and a SWOT chart was developed as follows:



**SWOT ANALYSIS**

Consideration	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Students	MS programs contain high-quality students, and enrollment is up with the marketing of new practitioner program.	Provision of consistency of education at outreach sites--some interactive internet connections may be required.	Recruitment of high-quality students with equivalent admission standards will be continued so that success can be assumed on certification examinations required of practitioners.	If the curriculum and offered course work does not change with the changing health care community, students will seek programs offering the desired degree.
Faculty	Generally committed and well-qualified faculty.	Great need for more PhD prepared faculty who are also practitioners.	Faculty in progress with doctoral program should be encouraged to complete their degrees and return full time; as well as doctorally prepared faculty obtaining additional classwork in preparation for leading out in the practitioner program.	Attrition of faculty--workloads remain too heavy.
Environment	There is a good structure in which department is housed. Good facilities at each outreach site.	Building is aging and currently in need of remodeling. Provision of supervised clinical opportunities for those enrolling in the practitioner program.	Redecorating has made the environment more attractive for students and faculty. Several sites have requested to become outreach locations.	A program is often judged by its facilities. Continuous disrepairs are demoralizing to students and faculty. Lack of continuity of clinical and classroom experience at all sites.
Program	Strong program that is well-perceived by adult students. New curriculum currently being developed.	Some of the older published and scholarly faculty will be retiring soon. The demands for immediate course work by the potential pool of students has almost exceeded the ability to respond quickly enough.	Provision of mentoring to prepare new faculty now to fill those positions. Well-qualified and organized contract professors on campus.	Potential loss of excellence in Masters level teaching staff. Contract professors preparing syllabi and content are unable to travel due to professional commitments locally.

Identified Weaknesses

1. Doctorally prepared faculty are needed to lighten the work load of the current faculty.
2. Practitioners with higher degrees are needed as professors in the new track.
3. The building is old and remodeling is needed.
4. An older faculty means that some will be retiring soon.

Vision Statement I

Adopt appropriate marketing strategies to assure that students are properly informed about the program and that they meet admission standards.

Operational recommendations

1. The Department of Nursing will maintain admission standards for the MS students.
2. The Department will also utilize marketing strategies that present the proper information and enhance the image of the university in communities where there is limited knowledge.
3. Professional accreditation will be maintained.
4. Scholarship assistance in the form of endowments will be sought.

Vision Statement II

The Department of Nursing will seek to obtain qualified nursing faculty.

Operational Recommendations

1. Active recruitment will be undertaken to obtain suitable faculty particularly for the new practitioner track.
2. Manageable workloads will be the goal so that faculty can be successfully recruited.
3. Incentives in the form of scholarly activities will be encouraged (i.e., one quarter per year for writing and research and clinical update).

Vision Statement III

Provision of an environment that bespeaks the quality of the program will be begun and then maintained.

Operational Recommendations

1. The building that houses the Department has been redecorated. Remodeling should be requested in the new fiscal year.
2. Establishment of a plan to maintain the continuous upkeep of the building.

Vision Statement IV

Provision will be made for faculty development of those who will be replacing the older faculty that are retiring and in recruiting developing faculty to develop the new practitioner masters degree.

Action Plan

A suggested action plan is as follows in Figure I.

Figure IV

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**Action Plan Format**

Tasks to be accomplished	Chronology	Who's responsible	When to be accomplished	Resources needed

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Implementation

There are advantages and disadvantages to top-down vs. bottom-up management of strategic planning. Success in such strategies in nursing in the past involved one of the top administration being in charge. The reason for that approach at Andrews University Department of Nursing is that the plan is more likely to be implemented if top administration assume the leadership role.

Several of the recommendations are already undertaken and the following ideas are planned for the current academic year.

### Operational Recommendations

1. Mentoring should be provided so that new faculty are prepared to maintain the excellence of the program.
2. Networks with those in other institutions in similar positions should be strengthened.
3. Provision should be made for formal classwork and workshops for faculty. (As of August 1994 the faculty are preparing by advanced classwork and actually working in the practitioner setting to head the new track).

### Organization of the Strategic Plan

A check sheet of questions for the associate chair who is directing the process is suggested as a beginning step in organizing strategic planning. Adapting the check sheet to Andrews University Department of Nursing, the associate chair might address the following questions:

- How do personal beliefs compare with the beliefs of faculty, students?
- Who should be involved in carrying out the visions identified?
- Are all the trends affecting the department addressed in the visions that are identified?
- What personal goals should be added?
- How best can follow-up occur to be sure that tasks are accomplished by the given time?

1. All the nursing faculty will be involved with the strategic marketing process just as they were all involved in developing the SWOT analysis.

2. Faculty will be given a choice of chores and care will be taken to pace activities to avoid overload. Some faculty enjoy designing brochures, some like the media advertising. Several especially enjoy active recruitment in assembly sessions at high schools and one to one interviewing. There are faculty particularly adept at product development. They enjoyed writing and building and curriculum development.

3. The plan is to break work segments into manageable parts.

4. Work sessions will be staged so that people know well in advance what the agenda is and what the objectives are, and then be well prepared to lead out.

5. The department will only use consultants if they build on what is valued in the department.

The implementation phase has to do with how the strategic plan will be achieved. The leader must inspire the followers who in turn inspire others to allocate resources to carry out the strategy.

To implement the visions identified for Andrews University Department of Nursing, the associate chair will utilize the action plan format and prioritize each vision.

They will then be written into the format, chronologically as to when each item will be accomplished.

The next step after completing the action plan, would be to bring copies to faculty meeting with the four committee chairman identified and allowing faculty to select on which committee they wish to serve (one committee for each vision).

One reason for prioritizing the visions is due to the allocation of funds. Those identified as needing first attention, will naturally receive first budgeting focus and the necessary resources.

The action plan can then be completed with the tasks identified and priority rating given. In addition, each committee member (involving finally the entire faculty) will have their names under the appropriate task, with realistic dates for completion of the reports, in the proper column.

The associate chair of the department will need to keep in close contact with each chairman to determine the progress of each committee, to trouble-shoot and to bolster morale as needed. The entire faculty will need to review the final document before implementation is completed.

A determination of who will be in charge of on-going planning must be made, as well as how often the faculty need to be involved in review and upgrading the plan.

APPENDIX I

DIFFERENTIATED VERSUS UNDIFFERENTIATED MARKETING



DISCUSSION OF DIFFERENTIATED VERSUS  
UNDIFFERENTIALTED MARKETING

In contrast to undifferentiated marketing is differentiated marketing. An example of differentiated marketing would be offering and advertising two separate programs to different specific groups (i.e., those nursing students wishing an administrative track and those wishing a clinical focus [Kotler & Fox, 1985]).

A third approach to target marketing is termed "concentrated marketings." This type of marketing is described as being risky with high stakes. The market is segmented selectively and a specific program developed for that very specific group. This type of program can decline very rapidly.

A variety of segmentation variables can provide marketing opportunities. Kotler and Clarke (1987) list several that include geographic region, age, sex, income, occupation, education, religion, race, psychographic features, behavioristic variables, and attitude toward the product.

Andrews University has advertised to and segmented the market according to several of those variables. In the last 3 or 4 years, two tracks--administrative and clinical--have been advertised and offered at certain geographic sites. Other variables divide the market further for graduate education. The standard for the variable of educational background must be met since an applicant must have a baccalaureate degree. The behavioristic variables of readiness and attitude are reviewed on admission and may further

segment the potential population.

When the segmenting of the market is thus determined, as well as the research having been analyzed, the marketing plan can be developed. Englehart (1990) stressed in her study (as mentioned by Kotler & Fox [1985]) that all members of the faculty and staff should have a part in the marketing plan. The only way a department or institution becomes truly "market oriented" is by involving everyone (p. 67).

**APPENDIX J**  
**MARKETING PLAN**

## A SUGGESTED MARKETING PLAN

Educational marketing is a planned and managed process whereby a quality educational program is assessed and developed, and the availability of the service is communicated to the segmented population at an appropriate price, time and place in exchange for fees and donations.

The marketing plan is determining the actual marketing mix (four or five "Ps") for a department or institution. Modifications of Chambers' (1989) model provided the basis for the marketing plan described here.

The assessment of the product, as based on the data analysis in this study, ranked very well. The factors ranking lowest are the ones for which particular planning is required. Included are the individualized specialization in education and the image and reputation of the program that ranked lower than might have been expected. Further research is suggested to determine the significance of those data. Product includes a determination about the content to be taught and the level of difficulty deemed appropriate. Whatever evolves regarding the practitioner track at the outreach sites, some of the content will naturally be changed, and the level of difficulty evaluated and planned, particularly since that track will require standardized certification examinations of graduates.

Price must be established in any marketing plan. Tuition costs are often a primary factor in selling a program to the

targeted population. In the case of working registered nurses, tuition reimbursement is often available and therefore not as critical a factor as in some disciplines. Of more importance to this group are the non-monetary investments in time away from the family and work. Overall, current students did not evaluate high tuition as a negative factor. Recommended changes are therefore minimal, except to determine, through further research, the significance of tuition costs to potential students and to seek information on federal funding for the new track.

How accessible a program can be made for the target market is a necessary determination regarding place. Place has to do with location, scheduling, and distribution. Place ranked highest among the sample groups, as a whole. Recommendations regarding this aspect of marketing have to do with future possibilities. What about TV classes or Internet interactive classes or home study and clinical preceptors for the advanced clinical- or practitioner-focused tracks? For regularly scheduled classes, an assessment of all possible locations may indicate even more convenient class sites. Polling potential students about their choice of locations is a method of adapting to specific needs. It may be possible to meet somewhere between two locations with students commuting a minimal distance--but reaching more students in one area.

Promotional activities obviously need to be adapted to the target group. This study indicated that the communication aspect of the marketing mix was the weakest factor. All the unique

features of the program must be conveyed to this market. Even advertising higher tuition may not be a negative strategy for such an elite group. The image portrayed must be of a quality program. A special reception at a hotel by invitation only can be especially effective in the recruitment of nurses at this level.

#### Developing a Communication System

Much emphasis has been placed on the personalized approach to marketing. Knowing the potential customer is considered vital in the 1990s' approach to educational marketing.

How feasible is the one-to-one contact with potential students, and how can a department really demonstrate personalized marketing? If one element of this project has provided insight, the aspect of focus group information gathering is that element. This study focused on retrospective values or factors influencing currently enrolled students.

Focus group data gathering for potential students is a methodology of choice in further marketing strategy. The value is that the one-to-one contact is still possible, although groups of 10 to 12 may be gathered. Since each individual is encouraged to speak, the sample subjects are heard, and the questions are answered even when data are being gathered. In addition, several potential students can hear discussion of the University and the program offerings at one time. Invaluable research is obtained

at the same time information, brochures, and bulletins are distributed.

#### Suggestions for Plan Implementation

Elliott, Crane, Ubricht, and King (1990) ask some pertinent questions related to a marketing plan in education. For example, how non-traditional can our college be made? How can the services and curriculum best be adapted to the needs of different populations? Finally, how can the unique values of the department and program be communicated most effectively to each student group? These are specific questions to be answered by the Andrews University nursing faculty.

Some aspects of strategic marketing are familiar activities for nursing administrators. Curriculum development, determining the locations for course offerings, establishing tuition fees, and even recruitment are all common activities in nursing education. What is more unfamiliar are the current methods of "selling" the program. Since promotion ranked low among factors of influence for master's students, that area of the marketing mix requires particular focus.

The literature suggests obtaining as much free time as possible from all the local TV and radio stations. Obtaining free advertising in such a respectable manner is "good sense" recruitment. With a little know-how, one is able to be involved in promotional activities in public-service programs or to be invited to participate in public talk shows.

The use of press releases is another form of free advertising. It is important that press releases be well written, cogent, and interesting. Providing telephone numbers is a good idea so that prospective students can call in after the media releases.

A certain selectivity is suggested when it comes to advertising. Reaching nurse administrators can best be accomplished by advertising in nursing journals rather than by radio. If the radio is used for the market, a program on health would be more likely to reach the nurse than usual broadcasting. Using a number of other promotional methods is suggested by Chambers (1989), such as preparing videos and posters, planning an open house, and making promotional speeches and presentations.

Discovering which of the methods is most effective is important in overall planning. Feedback in the form of evaluation is valuable after every effort to carry out the marketing strategy. This cyclical approach to marketing keeps the process targeted and specific to given needs. Figure IV provides the model for strategy implementation.

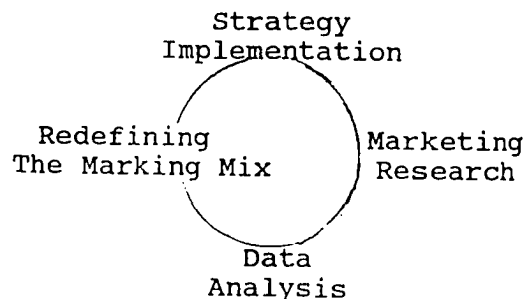


Figure IV: Cyclical approach to marketing.



Summary of the Marketing Plan  
and Implementation

How does a department develop a marketing plan that will hold up to the scrutiny of adults wishing higher education. At the same time, can sound decisions be posited that ensure satisfactory enrollment figures? Based on the factors of influence indicated by data analysis from this study, it is evident that a functional plan can be implemented.

In-house management is recommended. The budget will be meager, but the factors of influence are not costly to implement, based on data from the current group. As indicated, radio spots and news releases can provide free advertising if planned in advance. Meeting larger groups in come-and-go sessions allows for individual conversation with an advisor with minimal financial outlay. The various subsystems of the marketing planning process will be kept functional through use of a time line. (See suggested SWOT analysis in Appendix H.) Included in the suggested plan is the need for continued data gathering and research analysis.

The curriculum is constantly monitored to be sure that the product is meeting identified needs. The accessibility of classes and flexible scheduling should be a priority in planning.

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