

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AS THEIR
WELLNESS INTERVENTION IN PUBLIC TVET INSTITUTIONS IN NYERI
COUNTY, KENYA**


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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a
degree of Master of Counseling Psychology in the department of counseling
psychology in the school of humanities of Africa Nazarene University**

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DECLARATION

This is to declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been presented in any other university for academic examination.

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This is to declare that this this was conducted under our supervision and is submitted with our approval as the University supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Betty Guchu for supporting me during my educational journey and her encouragement and inspiration in my career as a counselor and a teacher.

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ABSTRACT

Guidance and counseling services could be a panacea to some of the some of the issues and challenges limiting the wellbeing of students in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. This research proposes to study the perceptions among TVET college students about guidance and counseling (G&C) as wellness interventions for them during their college years. The objectives of the study were to: investigate the influence of students' perception about guidance and counselling programs on their wellness; establish the influence of students' awareness of the need for guidance and counselling on their wellness; find out the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counselling services and; determine the influence of students' attitudes about G&C services on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. Based on the self-perception theory and Andersen's behavioral model, the study adopted the descriptive survey design. Using proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques, the research sampled 286 TVET students out of a total of 19737 from the three Public TVET colleges in Nyeri County. Consequently, all the 10 teacher-counselors from these institutions were purposively sampled. Data was collected from students using self-administered questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) while the teachers were interviewed. Quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data from interviews and FGDs was subjected to content analysis. The instrument was tested for reliability and validity. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was computed for each item in the instrument. Reliability coefficients ranging between 0.78 and 0.89 were obtained. The instruments were thus found to have sufficient internal reliability of an instrument. To ensure the validity of the study instrument, the researcher got the input of seasoned researchers supervising the research as well as conducting pilot testing for it. The findings show that G&C enhanced holistic wellbeing of students in Public TVET institutions. There was a significant relationship between students wellness (the DV) and perception towards G&C Services ($r= 0.949, p>0.05$); awareness of counseling needs ($r=0.950, p<0.05$); access to information about G&C ($r=0.892, p<0.05$) and; students' attitude towards ($r=-0.925, p<0.05$). It is thus evident that students' perceptions, awareness, access to information and attitudes affected their proclivity to seek G&C services which could go on to affect their wellness. The study recommends the need for dedicated efforts aimed at strengthening the perceptions, awareness, knowledge and attitudes of students towards guidance and counselling services in Public TVET institutions through regular sensitization on the need to seek timely G&C. This could be through awareness students on guidance and counselling needs.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic performance- This is the academic achievement of students (Maziya & Mafumbate, 2019). In this study, it is indicated by what grades or marks they score in a test.

Attitude-Attitude is a personal predisposition that impels an individual to react to an object, situation, or proposition in unfavorable or favorable ways (Agaba, 2020). In this study, this is the attitudes of students towards guidance and counseling programs reflected by their willingness or resistance to accept, patronize or utilize these services.

Counseling- Counseling is a helping process that takes place within a trusting relationship between a counselor and a student(s) (Launikari & Puukari, 2005). In this study, it entails a counselor assisting the student (s) to make personally relevant decisions that they can live with.

Guidance- guidance is a service offered by counselors to students to both instruct and guide through their development in educational settings, the world of work, and personal and social growth. Guidance helps to enhance overall discipline in schools and colleges (Corey, 2015). In this study, this is the guidance given to students to actualize their learning objectives.

Perceptions: The process through which we identify, interpret, or assign meaning to the information provided to our brains through our five senses (Upoalkpajor, Eggle, & Namale, 2018). It means the way students recognize the importance of seeking guidance and counseling services.

Self-disclosure: refers to the process of making the self-known to others (Kamunyu, Ndungo, & Wango, 2016). In this study, this means students being willing to disclose any information about themselves to counselors.

Wellness: This is a state of wholeness and complete wellness (WHO, 2018). In this study, it means a student being holistically (physically, mentally, and socially) well.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
G&C:	Guidance and Counselling
GOK:	Government of Kenya
MoEST:	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
ROK:	Republic of Kenya
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WHO:	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background, purpose, objectives, research questions, significance, and limitations in addition to delimitations of the study. It also includes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

1.2 Background to the Study

The world over, the important role played by guidance and counseling (G&C) services in institutions of higher learning cannot be gainsaid. To have a maximum impact, these programs target three key areas in the lives of the students, namely, academic, personal/social, and career (Boitt, 2016). This ensures that students can resolve emotional, psychosocial, or even behavioral problems as well as develop self-awareness that can provide them with an idea of what direction to follow. Thus, G&C services are instrumental to the establishment of a healthy institutional climate as well as boosting the academic achievement of students.

Although G&C are often used together when referring to the psychological services provided to college students, they do not refer to the same thing. Used in a broad sense, the guidance refers to activities designed to assist students in making informed choices and well-thought-out transitions as far as their educational, vocational, and personal development is concerned. Such activities involve but are not limited to “informing, advising, and counseling, assessing, enabling, advocating and giving feedback” (Launikari & Puukari, 2005). On the other hand, counseling involves activities in which a counselor helps his or her client to solve their issues and make their

own choices. This process is undergirded by a safe and trusting relationship formed between the counselor and his/her client.

While the definitions appear to establish a clear difference, G&C are similar in several ways; both are centered on assisting the client and doing so as confidentially and as beneficially as possible so that in the end the client feels heard and helped (Hannon, 2016). As such, it is noteworthy that the two should, as a matter of principle, complement each other, and college students need to be guided in matters to do with career choices, their sexuality, how to deal with difficult emotions, how to resolve conflicts as well as how to build a healthy self-image, open up about their worries and share about their aspirations. Thus, G&C are like the two pedals of a bicycle that will help propel the students forward.

Mental health professionals have come up with several angles in their attempt to define clearly what psychological health means. Some have argued that psychological wellness may be construed as subjective and therefore carrying an inherent value judgment as to what it is and what it is not (Galderisi et al., 2015). As such, an accurate definition and measurement of the construct are deemed difficult to arrive at, at least not a universally accepted one. Despite that, the fact remains that we need something as researchers to work with, a foundation to begin us on the journey to further understanding as we explore the subject deeper. Interestingly as expected, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) started us off with a definition of health seen as somewhat holistic. It sees health as a state of wholeness and complete wellness (including physical, mental, and social well-being) and not just the absence of illnesses.

The Oxford Learners Dictionary observes perception to be an idea, a belief, or an image an individual has resulting from the way he/she sees or understands

something. Two individuals subjected to the same stimuli will interpret or attach meaning to the stimuli differently. In other words, two students exposed to the same counseling experience will differ in the way they experience counseling (Agaba, 2020). In other words, students will deem the importance or function of guidance and counselling services differently and as a result, this will influence their reaction and attitude towards it. This means that it will either facilitate positive attitude and behavior such as getting the services of guidance and counselling providers or on the contrary, negative attitude and behavior like staying away (Mwangi Otanga, 2015). It is noteworthy that our perception of a thing is affected by among other things our drive and expectations, culture, previous experiences, and acquired knowledge as well as our beliefs, values, and attitudes.

Perception is the process whereby we can identify, interpret, or subjectively attach meaning to the information acquired through the sense organs. In interpreting stimuli or events, individuals often construct them in their ways (Hutmacher, 2019). Thus, perception is not merely how we go about interpreting issues or events in the inside or outside world as they exist, but in addition to that, it is also about how we construct those issues and events as an individual. While perception is a mechanism of meaning-making, it is important to realize that, after all, it may not constitute reality. That said, it nevertheless potently influences how humans understand reality and as a result drives their behavior and decisions.

Guidance and counseling have grown in importance as an essential component in matters education. As a result of economic and social changes which have given rise to the altering and subsequent loosening of the structures of societies as we traditionally knew them, students in TVET colleges need to be assisted to make the right choices

regarding their relationships, trained on productivity skills, and the skills and attitudes that give rise to success or failure in life (Eyo, Joshua, & Esuong, 2010). Counseling is instrumental in helping college students to secure educational and vocational opportunities during their time in college (Gysber & Henderson, 2016). Most importantly, guidance and counseling are pivotal in ensuring that the students acquire values and attitudes that make them well-rounded and useful citizens.

Guidance and counseling services' effectiveness in helping college students is because they are grounded on growth and development theories. Guidance and counseling services content, goals, and interventions are grounded on a theoretical foundation that is entrenched in empirical research. Therefore these programs, if put to good use, can be instrumental in equipping students with requisite techniques, skills, and aptitudes necessary for the successful mastery of their developmental tasks (Milner, 2017). They also promote academic performance and success. The G&C programmes provided in TVET Colleges are designed to address specific needs among the student population across the country. These services are organized around several broad categories such as information giving, career placement, appraisal services, career guidance, counseling, referral, psychometric assessments, evaluation, follow-up, and consultancy and research services (Eyo et al; 2010, p. 88). As a result, colleges have been at the forefront of promoting access to guidance and counselling.

These services and programs help students to resolve problems in their psychosocial, emotional, and behavioral domains. As a result, they can gain the focus needed to help them get focused on what decision to make and what path to pursue. The effectiveness of counseling programs in enhancing the college ecosystem cannot be gainsaid, they, therefore, form a crucial element when it comes to improving the overall

college student achievement (Wambu & Fisher, 2016). Research studies seeking to understand counselling needs of students in public TVET colleges have revealed that not all counseling needs of college students are met. These felt needs which are yet to be met include debilitating problems related to drugs and substance abuse, the effects of childhood trauma, results of both physical and emotional abuse, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, vocational un-decidedness, inertia, poor presentation skills, fear of failure among others (Kandi, 2018).

Citing Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2010), Maziya and Mafumbate (2019) view wellness as a way of life that encompasses maximum health and wellbeing whereby the person integrates the body, mind, and spirit, helping him/her to live more fully within the human and natural community. This definition affords us an understanding that G&C cater to the optimal health of students in TVET colleges and therefore form an integral part in establishing a healthy campus. Further, Maziya and Mafumbate (2019) argue that wellness enhances the students' academic performance and develops their potentialities to the greatest extent possible.

Therefore, mental health allows us to achieve developmental milestones expected to be achieved at that age. In addition, psychological and emotional wellbeing helps us to establish effective coping mechanisms, form wholesome relationships with significant others, as well as make positive social relationships. Moreover, mental health disorders manifest as anxiety, depression, or problematic behavior such as aggression and violence.

It is expected that as students go to college, the transition process is stressful because of being away from home and having to get used to the added stress of academics. Then there is social pressure as they try to find new friends and fit in in a

completely new community. Besides, their growth demands that they take up largely adult responsibilities such as looking after themselves and dating. All these eventualities make it critical that they get psychological help through G&C. Nonetheless, as Kamunyu, Ndungo, and Wango (2016) report, only a minority (that is, 35%) of students seek these services. In America, the numbers for local university students were 2% and for international students 3% (Kamunyu, Ndungo, & Wango, 2016)

A study like this one was done in the Ghanaian senior secondary schools to investigate the factors supporting student patronage of counseling services. In the study, 2696 Form 2 and Form 3 students participated. Even though the students were aware of the services, patronage was nevertheless low. This was because of poor accessibility to the services, preconceived misconceptions held as true by the students, fear of lack of confidentiality, and the dual relationships occasioned by the counsellor doubling as a teacher (Upoalkpajor, Egglely, & Namale, 2018). It is thought that a good majority of college students never visited a mental health practitioner before getting into college. Thus, most of their perceptions may be formed from merely other people's opinions of them.

There was uptake of G&C services among primary school students in Nyeri County registered mixed results (Kabaya, 2015). Although most pupils utilized guidance and counselling programmes, there were numerous others who shied away from disclosing personal details to guidance and counselling teachers. There were also limitations pegged to lack of professionalism among G&C teachers which affected the quality of the services offered. Regrettably, the former study was focused on primary

schools and may not relate to college students in the County. This calls for follow-up studies to investigate this situation.

This study focuses on four objectives. Firstly, it looks at the TVET college students' perception of G&C services. Secondly, it seeks to find their awareness of their own counseling needs. Thirdly, it will investigate the role played by their access to information and how that influences their perception. Finally, it will examine the influence of the students' attitude on their perception of G&C services.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

College students have different perceptions about the function played by guidance and counselling services in their education, growth, and development. As a result, these perceptions determine whether they will seek guidance and counselling services or not. The perceptions also affect their behavior, academic performance, and everyday experiences. Kamunyu, Ndungo, and Wango (2016) stated that challenges faced by college students contribute to a lot of stress. These challenges include academic demands, financial constraints, unemployment, and problems in personal relationships. However, despite the availability of guidance and counselling programs in TVET colleges, the initiative to seek the service is still the prerogative of the individual student.

This study focuses on the Nyeri County of Kenya. As far as G&C services provided in public TVET colleges is concerned, there is paucity of research to determine the role perception of students plays in the whole process (Studies conducted in the county have concentrated on the provision of guidance and counselling in primary and high schools and universities with none aimed at TVET colleges (Mungai, 2011;

Ngure, 2016). In addition, the studies have emphasized the ill equipment of the counselors without necessarily prosecuting the G&C challenges in colleges from the receivers' end. Exploring the attitudes, awareness of counseling needs and access to information by college students is critical to implementing relevant and effective intervention strategies to better address these needs. At the root of it all is the need to identify the perception that may be aiding or preventing the uptake of counseling services. Otherwise, holistic wellness for college students may be very difficult to achieve. Some of the challenges facing college students in the country have been responsible for dismal academic performance (Njogu, 2020).

Though there is lack of current data on performance of students in TVET colleges, Gatundu (2014) showed that between 2008 and 2011 the average number of students who passed electrical engineering course was only 23.8% (142 out of 621) within the four year's period. For Diploma in Building Technology, only 28% of candidates passed KNEC examinations during the same period of time. Males were more likely to be certified compared to females. Poor attitudes towards the courses were blamed for such dismal performance. Although G&C could play an important role in changing the attitudes of these students, it was not systematically studied by the Gatundu's study. The study by Njogu (2020) focused on high school students and may not expressly relate to college students. This leaves an empirical gap that is hard to bridge without studies such as this one. To this end, this study sets out to examine students' perception of counselling services as an intervention for their wellness in public TVET institutions in the Nyeri County of Kenya.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study sought to determine the perception that college students in public TVET colleges in Nyeri County have towards G&C programs offered in their institutions. Specifically, the study investigated whether there is a relationship between college students' perception about and the uptake of G&C services. To this end, the researcher seeks to explore the attitude of the TVET College students, their level of awareness of their counseling needs, and the availability and access to information that can aid their psychological health.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

- i) To investigate the influence of students' perception about guidance and counselling programs on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County
- ii) To establish the influence of students' awareness of the need for guidance and counselling on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County
- iii) To find out the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counselling services in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County
- iv) To determine the influence of students' attitudes about G&C services on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses:

H₀₁: Students' perception about guidance and counselling programs does not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County

H02: Students' awareness of the need for guidance and counselling does not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County

H03: Students' access to information about counselling services does not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County

H04: Students' attitudes about guidance and counseling services do not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County

1.7 Significance of the Study

The results of the study could inform the TVET college managers of ways they can incorporate measures in its counseling programs to create awareness and uptake of counseling services by its student fraternity. The study aimed at investigating and deepening the psychological framework behind the students' reluctance or willingness to seek counseling services to determine the current and potential future influence of counseling services on the psychological health of the students. The insights obtained would help us to deeply understand some of the emerging mental health challenges faced by the student population which can then be addressed through policy and practice.

The findings of the study could be beneficial to college students. To this end, the findings would guide them to achieve self-awareness about their needs, interests, and aspirations. The knowledge gained could support them with the necessary

techniques and know-how to better handle the problems they face in life and to make the decisions to solve those challenges.

The information realized through this study could provide policymakers at the Ministry of Education with real-time information to make the necessary changes to bolster G&C programs in TVET colleges and therefore maximize their impact. Policymakers could use this research to draft policies aimed at increasing advocacy programs targeted at the students to encourage participation in college counseling programs. Finally, other researchers could benefit because the study has heuristic value.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This project is geographically constrained to public Technical and Vocational institutions within Nyeri County. The focus of the present study was to investigate how college students perceive G&C services offered in their institutions. Moreover, the study examined how the awareness of their counseling needs, attitude towards and access to information about the services influences that perception. The study did not delve into the availability of those services or the experience and qualifications of their providers as this has been extensively studied. In addition, public TVET institutions were chosen since they have the largest pool of students sponsored by the national government. The study was based on the descriptive research design with data being collected using questionnaires, interview guides and FGDs. The study targeted respondents drawn from the twelve public TVET institutions in Nyeri County who are involved with counselling activities in these public institutions.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

Several factors affect the provision of counselling services in public TVET institutions but this study sought to establish the students' perception of counselling services as an intervention for their wellness in public TVET institutions in Nyeri County only. The study was limited to Public TVET colleges in Nyeri County but the data could apply to other public TVET institutions in Kenya.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

All good research studies face limitations. Limitations as conditions that go beyond the researcher's control (Theofanidis Fountouki, 2019). Limitations can negatively affect the results of a study and their applicability or usability in real-life situations. To this end, the researcher needs to minimize their effects as much as possible. This research study's major limitations were the lack of cooperation by some respondents to divulge information besides time constraints. In addition, the study was also limited to public TVET colleges in Nyeri County which may not reflect other parts of the country.

The current Covid-19 protocols necessitated the use of virtual data collection measures. This may cause some delays in getting all the questionnaires filled and returned. The researcher incurred telephone call expenses to follow up with the respondents. Again, even for the college student counselors, interviews had to be done virtually. This brought to bear another challenge; the digital skills of the respondents. For those not tech-savvy, this portended a problem as they needed assistance from technical people.

Time constraints were also expected since the researcher was in full-time employment. Again, the bureaucratic procedures to be followed to gain permission to carry out a research study in public TVET institutions took a toll on the research. The researcher obtained an official letter to go to the field to collect data from the supervisor. Lack of confidentiality regarding the data to collect presented another headache to the researcher. The colleges were cautious to ensure that the researcher did not access information regarded as personal and confidential. The researcher provided assurance and commitment to keep all information provided confidential as best he could to persuade the respondents to participate in the study.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the assumptions that respondents would co-operate and provide information willingly and sincerely; that data collected would be comprehensive enough to draw conclusions that will be extrapolated to all public TVET institutions in Kenya and that; the results of the study would be replicable in other public TVET institutions of other Counties.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

Two main theories guided this research study: Self-Perception Theory and Andersen's Behavioral Model, as explained below.

1.12.1 Self-Perception Theory

The Self-perception theory was first postulated by a psychologist named Daryl Bem (Bem, 1967). The theory aims at explaining the formation of attitude. The theory posits that "people determine their attitudes and preferences by interpreting the meaning of

their own behavior.” Perception theories have one thing in common. At the bare minimum, Charles (2017) argues, they should state how a person’s ability to perform is improved by his/her living in a world full of all-encompassing forces. The self-perception theory has been termed a self-awareness theory. This is because it describes the procedure through which individuals, without prejudgments, based on bias or emotional inclinations, create them by observing their actions and arriving at judgments about what attitudes must have driven those actions(Hirshfield, Downing, Jr., Horvath, Swartz, & Chiasson, 2016). Therefore, according to this theory, a college student forms an attitude or belief about a matter mainly by observing and reflecting on how it will likely affect them and how they are likely to respond. As a result, college students believe that their attitudes and feelings are a result of their external behaviors, or how he or she interacts with the world.

Originally developed by a psychologist, Daryl Bem in the early 1970s, this theory of attitude formation informs us how we perceive others or things based on our worldview and experiences. So we already have general ideas about the world and people. For instance, when we meet a person for the very first time, we will perceive them and define them based on our own formed and preconceived ideas (Baumeister & Bushman, 2017). This happens subconsciously whether we have any previous information about the person or not. This is counterintuitive as it is expected that the opposite would happen. That is, a person’s personality and attitudes should drive their actions instead of them emanating from their actions.

In this study, self-perception theory explains attitude creation towards guidance and counselling among students. In terms of college students patronizing G&C services, a student may form an attitude towards the services based on something he experiences

in the way the services are outwardly presented or from the opinions of others. For example, say a student hears another say that the information shared with the college counselor will not be held confidential. This may freak the student out and based on that one experience, this may deter him from seeking professional help from the college counselor going forward.

1.12.2 Andersen's Behavioral Model

Andersen developed his behavioral model to articulate factors that gave rise to the uptake of medical services (Andersen, 1995). The behavioral approach to understanding perception proposed four components; predisposing factors, need factors, other predisposing factors, and enabling factors. Predisposing factors are theoretically proceeding to illness and include such factors as education, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Need factors on the other hand are based on how the students perceive their psychological health and overall wellbeing while the evaluated need is a need determined by a mental health care provider, in this case, a student counselor. Other predisposing factors include the stage of life, sex, and marital status. Lastly, enabling factors are the factors involved in the process of obtaining G&C services. This will include such things as having a psychological counselor available, who meets the cost of treatment, geographical area, and the size of the population being served. For students, psychological care is provided free of charge, hence no need for medical insurance cover or direct payment (Hirshfield et al., 2016).

These factors can assist us to interrogate the factors that lead to various mental health outcomes, such as the use of mental health care services by college students. In short, this model helps us to understand the difference between fair and unfair access

to care. As Hirshfield et al. (2016) put it; fair access is determined by demographic characteristics and need. On the other hand, unequal access to psychological health care derives from poor social structure and a lack of enabling resources. Andersen's Behavioral Model is of paramount importance to this study since it underlines the factors that guide the uptake of G&C services. In this light, it will provide a platform for understanding how predisposing, enabling and need factors such as perception, access to information and attitudes influence the uptake of guidance and counselling services and how these influence the wellness of students in TVET institutions in Kenya.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

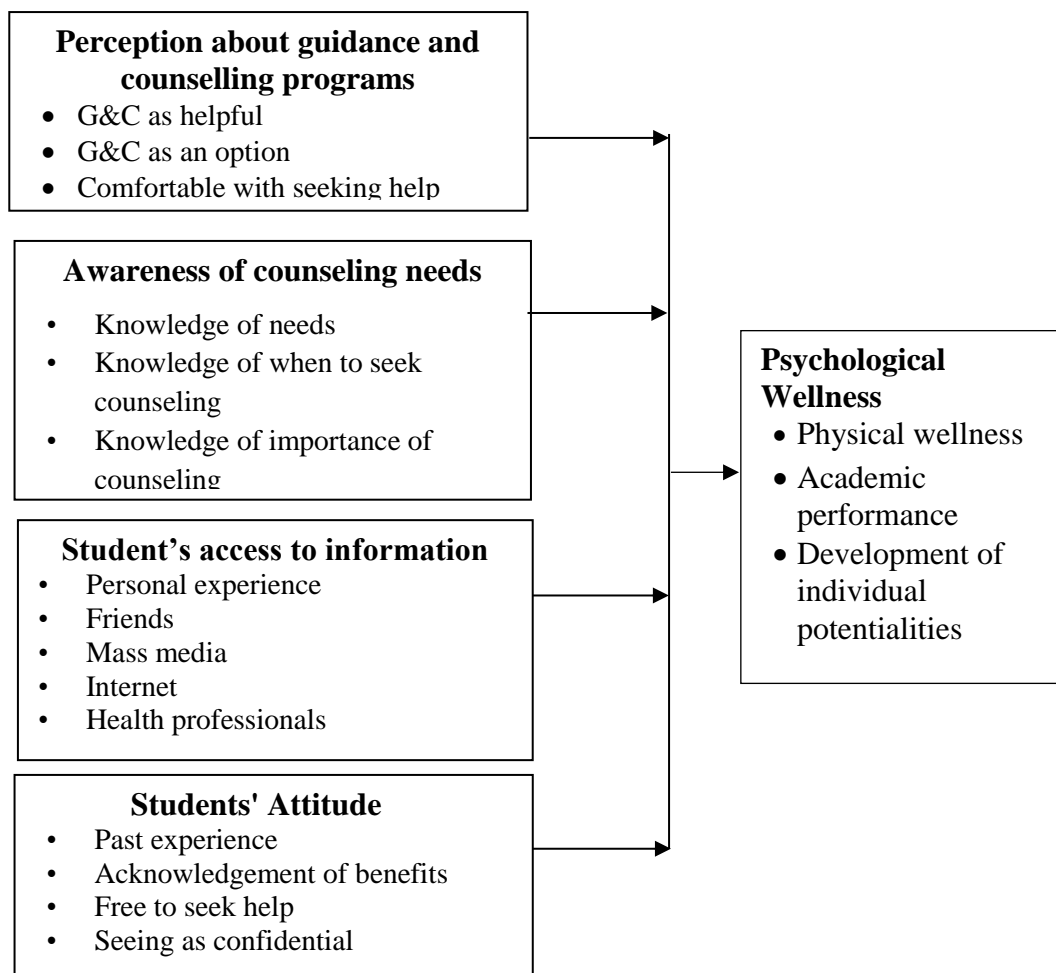


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework on Students' Perception of Counselling Services as an Intervention for their Wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County, Kenya

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter empirically reviews scholarly articles on the current knowledge and substantive findings of the interrelated concepts, which are supported by facts to guide the researcher on what things to measure, and the statistical relationships to look out for. To help establish the influence of perception of public TVET college students on G&C services, the empirical literature covers the four study variables: insight into G&C services, awareness of counseling needs, access to information, and attitude towards mental health care services in general.

2.2 Review of the Literature

Arshad, Tahir, Khan, and Basit (2018) acknowledge the fact that Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET) plays a pivotal role in national development through human resource development. It is a sure way of creating skilled manpower. It assists young people by equipping them with the requisite skills to become productive members of the society in future.

Although G&C are often used together when referring to the psychological services provided to secondary school students, they do not refer to the same thing. Used in a broad sense, the guidance refers to activities designed to assist students in making informed choices and well-thought-out transitions as far as their educational, vocational, and personal development is concerned. Such activities involve but are not limited to “informing, advising, and counseling, assessing, enabling, advocating and

giving feedback” (Launikari & Puukari; 2005). On the other hand, counseling involves activities in which a counselor helps his or her client to solve their issues and make their own choices. This process is undergirded by a safe and trusting relationship formed between the counselor and his/her client (Corey, 2015).

While the definitions appear to establish a clear difference, G&C are similar in several ways; both are centered on assisting the client and doing so as confidentially and as beneficially as possible so that in the end the client feels heard and helped. As such, it is noteworthy that the two should, as a matter of principle, complement each other and school students need to be guided in matters to do with career choices, their sexuality, how to deal with difficult emotions, how to resolve conflicts as well as how to build a healthy self-image, open up about their worries and share about their aspirations. Thus, G&C are like the two pedals of a bicycle that will help propel the students forward.

The changes that have occurred in the society and the values guiding families, the traditions and disconnect in the modern community form the foundation of psychological and social problems experienced in learning institutions (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). Mapfumo and Nkoma (2018), argue that students undergo serious and monstrous socioeconomic and psychological problems and duress in their daily lives in today’s world. As a result, this has a negative effect on their learning abilities. These negative effects of societal tendencies have punctuated the ever-growing need for the services offered by professional lecturer counsellors. Hence, there is a dire need for the provision of comprehensive and detailed G&C care services in colleges to address student needs effectively. To answer this appeal, G&C programmes were effected in

America which saw them become part and parcel of American colleges after World War 1 (Corsini, 2017 as cited in (Boitt, 2016). In support of these, Taylor (2018) indicates that the college guidance and counselling programme were affected in all the British colleges in response to the shifts that had occurred in the society, in the family set up and in colleges which then created an environment where individual students were accorded all the necessary attention that they required.

According to UNESCO (2016), even though G&C is a relatively novel idea in Africa, African governments have nonetheless embraced it and affected it in their education systems with urgency. Administratively, considerable progress has been noted in setting up proper structures to provide better Guidance and Counselling services in colleges. This was done to improve the individual, educational and vocational development of the students. Therefore, mental health care services as a series of proceedings have offered college's lifeline with which to solve the numerous problems in existence. These were given rise by the complex science as well as technological development witnessed in the world (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2014).

Guidance and Counselling were formally commissioned in Kenyan schools and colleges back in 1971 to help students competently unravel emotional, psychological, educational, vocational, and social problems that they grappled with in their daily lives (Wango, 2017) as cited by (Boitt, 2016). The commissioning was arrived at after a raft of suggestions and guidelines in various Education Commissions Reports, National Development Plans, and Government Sessional Papers (MOEST, 2004). To bolster, enhance and empower the programmes, the National Committee of Education Objectives and Policies in its report, proposed the supply and equipping of schools and

colleges with all the resources needed to make guidance and counselling services a reality (G.O.K, 2016).

The Report of the Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and beyond suggested that the programmes cascaded to the district level. They also recommended that the programmes be implemented in colleges and qualified and experienced lecturers to be placed in leadership (G.O.K, 2018 as cited by Boitt (2016). On the same note, the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya advocated for professional and experienced counselors to lead and manage guidance and counselling departments in TVET colleges. Initially, this was not the practice and therefore their ineffectiveness. In addition, the Ministry of Education Report on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Colleges (MOEST, 2017), ratified the positioning of lecturers qualified and experienced in Guidance and Counselling to tertiary colleges to provide services in the Guidance and Counselling departments set up. Since then, Guidance and Counselling became and central, essential, and indispensable part of the educational system in Kenya. This was further stressed after the banning of corporal punishment in schools and colleges in 2001.

Lecturer-counsellors are required to formulate and implement effective psychological care programmes in colleges to develop students into well-rounded people. To make this a reality, the programmes should aim at all facets of guidance and counselling which, as per MOEST (2018), should cover individual, social, career, health, and educational guidance and counselling among others. Despite all the well-meaning intentions, countries still vary in their implementation of guidance and counselling programmes. Guidance and Counselling services are accessed much more

easily in most developed countries. However, that is not the case with developing and third world nations which do not get such benefits (Hiebert&Bezanson, 2017). Unfortunately, some nations consider the offering of G&C services a luxurious exercise and one that should be offered only as a choice just like it is in choosing subjects (Gysber& Henderson, 2016).

Although college counseling in most American colleges is gaining traction towards a more comprehensive approach (Gysber& Henderson, 2016), Kenyan colleges are still in dire need of better coordination and relevance. The absence of a hierarchical structure specifying how G&C ought to be implemented in colleges has led to irregularities and variations with each college doing it the way they see fit (Wambu& Fisher, 2016). As a result, many matters that should have long been addressed by effective guidance and counselling services not only remain but also grow in severity. Such controversial matters include poor academic achievement, drug and substance abuse, student strikes, indiscipline, cheating in examinations among others. These are signs that the psychological services as currently provided are ineffective, or inadequate. Students still need well-organized guidance and counselling services in academic, vocational, personal, and psychological areas supplied by well-trained providers.

Psychological care has come to assume a critical part in advancing learning in colleges. As indicated by Pecku (2019), G&C are not just an approach limited to students and staff in colleges only. Matter of fact, it is equally incorporated out of college exercises, in work, in job encounters, and low maintenance organizational programs. The teacher-counselor must open doors to help the students to shape their

character and conduct to acclimate to the general public, make them ready to connect with others and be rationally and physically sound. This is requesting and calls for the duty of all gatherings worried for compelling G&C. The lecturer counselor is an extension between secondary college and group through follow up of investigations of college students, to achieve learning of the activity and prepare students for future changes in the general public and in addition, teaching students close to home issues and formative needs other than professional and instructive parts.

Cochran and Peters (2017), argue that the true value of counselors is felt I providing guidance and counselling to students. This should occupy most of their time. In essence, this means that there is thus a need to make counseling the sole lecturer-counselor's workload. This will in effect allow adequate time for effective counseling to take place. Lecturer-counselors argue that guidance is not an extra load, since its goal has the same objectives that good teaching has, maximum adjustment and growth for every individual student. However, the researcher's view is that learning and application of guidance techniques require a considerable amount of the lecturers' time. For effectiveness, it may call for a reduction in other types of services in the beginning but in the end, it should greatly increase teaching efficiency. Milner (2017) indicated that counselors spend the largest part of their time on educational programs and college advice. This means that much time is taken by Quasi-Clerical and administrative duties. Kimathi (2018) indicated that lecturer counselors feel that, since they also double up as subject teachers, their fellow teachers may negatively view them.

They view them as quasi administrators who do not put a lot of emphasis on counseling and expressed feelings that they acted more as advisors rather than

counselors and are sometimes busier with discipline and clerical duties. He additionally expresses that, it is once in a while restricted to instructive exhorting with the instructor advisors going about as a resourceful individual. There are few cases of personal problems being brought for counseling, partly as a result of students' distrust, time pressure, and a feeling of inadequacy. There is a necessity therefore for teacher counselors to advocate for effective G&C in colleges and all its usefulness.

2.2.1 Perception of College Students towards Guidance and Counseling services

Perception is the way by which we identify, interpret, or attach meaning to the information we get through our sense organs. In interpreting stimuli or events, individuals often construct them in their ways. Agaba (2020) affirms that four factors affect perceptions of college students. Firstly, perceptual learning is based on past experiences or learning. Secondly, it is a mental set that refers to a person's preparedness or readiness to receive some sensory input. This is the reason we pay rapt attention to some information and not another. Thirdly, a person's motives and needs do affect their perceptions. For instance, someone who fears dogs will be quick to notice the presence of one. Lastly, we also differ in the way we cognitively process information and thus have different ways of understanding issues. As long as students perceive G&C or its concepts difficult to learn, their pursuit of its benefits will wane (Agaba 2020).

The perception of tertiary students towards G&C has been poor as most studies show (Kamunyu, Ndungo, & Wango, 2016). In a study investigating the contributors of students' use of counseling in Kenyan universities, Kamunyu, Ndungo, and Wango

(2016a), 37% of the female and 28% of male students were reluctant to seek counseling although they had challenging issues facing them. For a majority of college students, the college years present special challenges that require the assistance of professional mental health practitioners. Such issues include interpersonal relationships, challenges in choosing a career, and other pertinent life issues all of which impinge on their psychological health. Due to this poor perception, college G&C services remain underutilized. A similar study needs to be done in public TVET colleges as none has so far been done.

The negative perception of guidance and counselling services is a major challenge faced by lecturer-counsellors (Nyamwaka et al., 2018). Research studies indicate that the decision to seek help proceeded by several factors. Sanders (2017) suggest that peer evaluation and prior reviews by family and friends to a large extent determine the decision to seek help among depressed people. The perception that confidentiality may not be assured also influences a student's help-seeking attitude. Confidentiality in college settings is however hampered the dual relationship as the counsellor is also a lecturer (Lunderthal, Amaranto, Jordan & Wepman, 2018). The study by Mwangi and Otanga (2015) investigated the perception of students towards G&C. While this is similar to this study, it was however done in a teacher training college, which is slightly different from TVET Colleges.

2.2.2 Students' Awareness of the Need for Guidance and Counselling on their Wellness

Nuku, John-Bright, and Xoesse (2020) affirm that the college-going age is a stage where the college student needs career guidance and counselling mostly. Kandi

(2018) points out that counseling needs are the needs or problems that the student needs to seek counseling for to better cope with them. In essence, this means that, alone, the student is not able to do so. Broadly speaking, the counseling needs may be categorized into psychological, academic, social and personal, economic, health, physical, vocational, and spiritual needs (Kalkbrenner, James & Pérez-Rojas, 2020).

Kandi (2018) is of the view that most of these counseling needs emanate from drug abuse, trauma from childhood sexual abuse, relationship problems, depression, anxiety, panic, career foginess, lack of personal initiative, social anxiety, and fear of the unknown (p. 132). These needs may be aggravated by changes brought about by age, experience, earning ability, gender, race or ethnicity, and social upheavals. Left unattended, these psychological difficulties may have serious ramifications even causing academic failure and discontinuation of studies. Campeau (2018) paints a more desperate picture. Citing Bohon (2016), he asserts that an increasing number of college students have been diagnosed with mood and anxiety disorders. In a 2013 Canadian study, 15.4 % of students acknowledged suffering from depression, 28.4 % could not function although they had no official diagnosis of depression while 8.3 % of the students were being treated for their depression. The study by Bohon (2016) had indicated that 59.6 % of students were feeling sadness, 31.3 % experiencing depression, 51 % experiencing anxiety, and 7.9 % had suicidal ideation (1.5 % of these had attempted suicide).

The transition into university and the lifestyle change coupled with demanding academic pressure thrown upon the students has roundly been blamed for the increasing mental health challenges among the college students. Besides, studies have shown that developmentally students are susceptible to the onset of psychological disorders which

arise during this normative age of emerging adulthood (ages eighteen to twenty-four), and this is a particularly sensitive time in brain development (Hunt and Eisenberg 2010).

Kamunyu et al. (2016a) see social and behavioral problems bedeviling college students as including drunkenness, drug and substance abuse, poor relationships with other students, and sexual relationships which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In addition, they report conflicts related to identity crises due to disintegration of social support structures, peer pressure, drug, and substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, grief, anger management, family problems, self-esteem, loneliness, adjusting to new life, and academic issues.

The study by Kamunyu et al. (2016b) identified 34% of male college students and 49%, of female students, as reported to have academic achievement issues that needed G&C. Poor academic results can frustrate students to the point of losing interest in studying. This is true due to pressure from parents and sponsors who pay the exorbitant fees for their education. When college students are suspended, deregistered, or discontinued for a year or so, this means more time on campus and more money, thus delaying their shot at working life. According to an Australian metropolitan university study done by Russell et al. (2008) and cited by Kamunyu et al. (2016b), 76% of the 268 students polled needed academic-educational counseling, 60% vocational assistance, and 56% requested psychosocial counseling.

Choosing a career is a critical life goal for almost every young person and the burden is lessened with the help of a professionally trained counselor. Left to chance, this can lead to life-long frustrations and regrets in one's work experiences leading to work-life imbalance and unemployment or underemployment. Besides, the world of

work has rapid technological developments that grow in complexities and the human capabilities demanded to execute them (Nuku, John-Bright, & Xoesse, 2020). Career counseling helps college students to explore their interests and helps them to choose a career suitable to their strengths, weaknesses, resources, and opportunities. Moreover, a counselor helps the students to develop self-awareness about self-interests, talents, know-how, capabilities, and areas of improvement to take advantage of available career opportunities. In this regard, the student is assisted to know employment drift, requisite skills needed in the field, job descriptions, and other requirements. Additionally, the student is assisted to cultivate job-searching skills which include identifying potential employers, preparing résumés, preparing for interviews (Arshad, Tahir, Khan & Basit, 2018).

Kamunyu et al. (2016a) identify some of the psychological issues among college students that require counseling intervention as including shyness, inferiority complex, poor or low self-esteem, the influence of peer pressure, and immaturity in intellectual development. The impact of HIV/ AIDS and engendered stigma and discrimination, stress resulting from social isolation from family members; drug and substance abuse, and bereavement through death of significant others also belong here. The study also categorizes issues emanating from family problems like separation, divorce, and chronic illnesses among family members as bringing psychological distress to students (Kamunyu et al., 2016b).

In the study by Kamunyu et al. (2016a) economic issues affected 17% male and 23% female students. These included difficulties in paying tuition fees, accommodation expenses, and personal upkeep costs. This in turn affected the students' academic performance as they had to miss exams, further compounding the problem. Besides this,

there was the gnawing feeling that the courses they were studying may not be marketable and thus afford them the life they dreamed of when they were joining college.

There is a dearth of research that studies this variable among TVET College students in Kenya. Studies reviewed only investigate the perceptions of college students of (Bett & Sigilai, 2013), attitudes of college students about (Mwangi Otanga, 2015), the impact of (Gatua et al., 2015), and challenges facing (Nyamwange, Nyakan, & Ondima, 2012) G&C services. While it remains un-researched, the researcher holds the view that this could be at the core of the poor uptake of G&C services in TVET colleges and thus warrants attention.

2.2.3 Students' Access to Information on their Perception about Counselling Services

According to Silva (2020), access to information refers to the unrestricted concession to any information deemed necessary for decision-making. For college students, access to mental health information is key for two main reasons. Firstly, it affords them greater access to independence as it gives them the awareness of available resources necessary to help them maneuver their way to adulthood. At this age, decisions have a far-reaching impact on their lives and as such, they need to be empowered with unbiased, complete, and comprehensive information to help them arrive at the right decisions. Life in college serves the students with myriad dilemmas and G&C departments should therefore provide the youth with information covering most of the critical topics that are of interest to them (Karim & Widen, 2020).

Simply put, making sound decisions is premised on the availability and knowledge about the options and alternatives one has. The European Youth Information Charter envisions that such information provided to young people should be independent, accessible, inclusive, needs-based, empowering, participative, ethical, professional, and proactive. Thus, according to Silva (2020), college students need and expect access to timely, factual, accurate, and comprehensive information about their mental health. Secondly, information helps college students to find their place in society. G&C should anticipate college students' needs and provide mitigating measures (Karim & Widen, 2020).

Of late, TVET colleges have admitted surging numbers of students and the numbers keep rising. Most of these students come from different backgrounds. Equally, they are also presenting with increasingly prevalent and complex mental disorders. Such concerns involve anxiety, depression, lack of concentration, sexual victimization, sleep disorders, alcoholism, low self-esteem, negative legal consequences, attempting or completing suicide in the most severe cases, and stress which may give rise to poor academic performance and violence among other issues. With decreasing budgets, G&C departments cannot rely on providing direct one-on-one services to the students. Therefore, G&C departments would serve students better if they provided system-level interventions that help students recognize warning signs of mental health disorders (Kalkbrenner et al; 2020).

A study done in 12 European countries, surveyed 6000 youths aged between 12 and 29 years old and enrolled in learning institutions to find out how the youth perceived the quality and reliability of the information they received and more importantly how they evaluated it. It was discovered that information about recreation,

health, and academics was prominently available, whereas subjects such as business, living conditions, and work had very little reliable information shared. Their preferred channels of communication included one-on-one youth information and counselling, internet searches, and social media although they trusted online information the least as there was no way to validate its veracity. The most trusted source of information was that supplied by youth information and counseling centers. The students were satisfied enough and had sufficient trust in these centers to recommend them to fellow students (p. 7). This galvanizes the importance of such information and counseling centers. The information sources that most directed perceptions were oral, general knowledge, movies, basic education, colleagues, books, and TV (Wantz & Firmin, 2011).

Further, Wantz and Firmin (2011), disqualified the overarching notion that college students use the internet on a large scale to seek information about mental health. The reality on the ground is that they lack the critical thinking skills necessary to determine the relevance and veracity of what they find. Yet, as the research found out, this generation is more likely than previous ones to demand reliable information provided in convenient formats. There is therefore an urgent need for G&C departments in TVET institutions in Nyeri County to profile and promote themselves as a reliable information source about matters of mental health. Besides, the G&C departments should seek the institutions' management to set up such centers.

Literacy about mental health issues has been positively correlated with the uptake of counseling services. A study was done to identify differences in counselling-seeking behaviors, awareness of warning signs, and recognition of assets for mental distress between college students enrolled in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) majors and mental health majors revealed interesting findings. 32% of

students enrolled in Mental Health majors reported greater consumption of counseling as opposed to 20% of students in STEM majors. This is expected and not the least strange. The academic fields of psychology, nursing, and human services that form the mental health majors have a personal and professional mental health-care component that provides the students with information on the need for counseling and therefore their uptake of such services is higher compared to the STEM major who doesn't get similar information.

Auerbach et al. (2016) reported in a study done in the United States that only 16.4% of college students with mental health challenges sought counseling. In yet another national survey with a large sample of college students ($N = 51,294$) and faculty members ($N = 14,548$), Albright & Schwartz (2017) found that over half the sample could not recognize the warning signs of psychological disorders among students.

Studies done in Kenyan TVET colleges have investigated the perceptions of college students of (Bett & Sigilai, 2013), attitudes of college students about (Mwangi & Otanga, 2015), the impact of (Gatua et al., 2015), and challenges facing (Nyamwange, Nyakan, & Ondima, 2012) G&C services. There is hardly any study that has interrogated the role availability and access to information about counseling services and mental health issues plays in making college students seek G&C services. This study seeks to fill that gap.

2.2.4 College Students' Attitude towards Guidance and Counselling Services

An attitude is any picked-up persisting inclination to react in reliably good or troublesome approaches to specific individuals, gatherings, thoughts, or circumstances, it is a man's emotions about something (Effinger, 2015). Attitudes are assumptions and

feelings that color our reactions to subjects, people, and events. Gitonga (2019) is of the opinion that an attitude consists of three types of ingredients. These are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. The cognitive constituent is related to thoughts and beliefs, the affective unit relates to emotions or feelings and action. These three factors of attitudes relate in such a way that specific feelings and reaction tendencies become confidentially related with the attitude object.

Gender has been argued as playing a pivotal role in determining attitude towards help-seeking. Good and Dell (2019) reported that there appear to be obvious differences in help-seeking tendencies between the two sexes as two-thirds of all clients seeking psychological care are female. They hypothesized that one possible reason why men are more hesitant to use counselling services is in agreement with the conservative male gender stereotype. Seeking psychological assistance would be misconstrued as admitting failure, weakness, and defeat. However, Ojenge and Muchemi (2016) in Ibrahim, Aloka, Wambiya, and Raburu (2018) found out that most girls did not believe in the counsellors for lack of privacy in the counselling rooms.

Attitudes sit at the heart of college students' reluctance to seek G&C services although these services are provided free of charge in their respective institutions. For instance, in their study Kamunyu et al. (2016a) concluded that masculine conviction encourages males to seek help for academic issues only whereas female students seek social-psychological counselling to help them gain an understanding of the root causes of their problems. This shows that female students are more willing than their male counterparts to disclose personal information that makes them vulnerable to student counselors. Further, they found that female students engage in more open and personal self-disclosure than male students. According to the counselors they interviewed, male

students only sought counselling services when they felt personal dissatisfaction or feelings of inadequacy, exhibited addictive behavior, had problems with intimate relationships, or when they realized that they were developing pathological patterns of violence and abuse of others (p. 42).

In a different study carried out the same year, Kamunyu et al. (2016b), found that some students held the belief that attending counseling took away precious time they would otherwise spend studying. Moreover, cultural values that prohibit men from seeking help from females even if they are trained professional counselors also contributed to the negative attitude towards counseling. In addition, college students had the unfortunate attitude that counselling was a service reserved for students with problematic behaviors or poor academic performance. A study by Upoalkpajor, Egglely, and Namale (2018) revealed that the three major reasons students did not seek counseling help were accessibility, the belief that counseling was for academically weak students, and the perception that they would not find the help they sought. Other reasons include lack of trustworthiness, having a dual relationship with the counsellor as teacher and counselor, tight schedules of the counsellors, stigma attached to visiting the counsellors.

In realization of the psychosocial and monetary challenges facing learners at various levels of learning, there is a need for them to be properly inducted into and guided through the education system. In Kenya, this was attained through the initiation of guidance and counselling programs in learning institutions (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2019). The program was commenced in the country in 1963 at the first Guidance and Counselling Career Conference held to discuss career choices among students in educational institutions (Oketch Ngumba, 2019). The guidance and counselling

program help students to develop their full individuality and career capabilities. However, the program is faced with a bleak future from the threat of lack of demand and making good use of its services. Mainly, this has been attributed to lack of awareness by the students; poor advocacy and awareness creation of the program to students; and students' negative perception and attitude towards the importance and role of the program, among others.

The role of guidance and counselling in TVET institutions is vastly important as the students are expected to put what they learned into good use upon graduation. However, this will largely depend on how they perceive the function of guidance and counselling and its services. Students may perceive the role of guidance and counselling services differently. This in turn influences their attitude towards it and either facilitates positive attitude and behaviors like the use of such services or negative attitude and behaviors like ignoring them. Specifically, TVET institutions have witnessed low demand and uptake of guidance and counselling services from students. This has mainly been thought to be a result of negative perceptions and attitudes of the students about the place of guidance and counselling services in the institution.

Help-seeking attitudes are also influenced by awareness of the availability of such services. In Kenya, the importance of creating awareness of guidance and counselling services has long been recognized. Studies have also shown that awareness of such programs determines students' attitudes and whether they are utilized in the end or not. Nyingi (2014) found students from public TVET institutions to be more aware of the availability of guidance and counselling services in their institutions than their counterparts in private TVET institutions. Additionally, though most students were not informed of the importance of guidance and counselling, they rated nonetheless it

highly. Gitonga (1999) also found out that the majority of those sampled were aware of the existence of guidance and counselling services. Rutondoki (2000) found out that although students have a generally favorable attitude towards counselling related services, only a few have a basic knowledge of the specific services being offered. In the study, it also emerged that some students do not seek help because they felt capable of solving their issues or getting help from their friends. Similarly, Nyokabi and Thinguri (2015) reported that the majority of students knew of the existence of the programs and had positive attitudes towards them.

Nevertheless, contradictory findings have been reported (Gitonga, 2019; Nyamwange, Nyakan, & Ondima, 2012) who realized that students did not consider counselling necessary in TVET institutions. They overwhelmingly returned negative feelings towards guidance and counselling programs. Contrastingly, however, students felt that available counselling resources were inadequate to meet their counselling needs. Negative attitudes towards guidance and counselling have been explained in the literature due to the lack of value attached to guidance and counselling from students' perspective and ability to solve their problems or with peers (Muema & Kiilu, 2018), and fear of being seen with a counsellor and fear of the lack of confidentiality (Gitonga, 2019).

Gender has been reported as playing a significant role in determining attitude towards seeking help. Good and Dell (2019) reported that there appear to be distinct differences in help-seeking tendencies between the two sexes as two-thirds of all clients seeking psychological help are female. They hypothesized that one possible reason why men are more hesitant to use counselling services is adherence to traditional gender roles. Seeking psychological help would be seen as admitting failure, weakness, and

defeat. However, Ojenge and Muchemi (2016) in Ibrahim, Aloka, Wambiya, and Raburu (2018) found out that most girls did not believe in the counsellors for lack of privacy in the counselling rooms. The findings of the study were finally analyzed using content analysis.

In Kenya, Nyingi (2017) found gender differences in students' perceptions of the benefits of guidance and counselling services with more female than male students rating guidance and counselling more highly. Similarly, Muema and Kiilu (2015) found higher though insignificant numbers of female than male students seeking help. Contrastingly, Njeri, Sindabi, and Njonge (2015) found no significant gender differences in attitudes towards seeking help. Studies have shown that class level is related to the appreciation of the importance of guidance and counselling. Ibrahim et al., (2016) found out that as students moved to upper-class levels they developed a more positive perception towards guidance. While some studies have focused on gender and year of study, another line of study has narrowed down on the location of the institution. In one such study, Njeri et al., (2015) found significant differences in students' attitudes towards guidance and counselling in favour of Nairobi (as compared to Nyeri). As is evident, literature on students' attitudes and perceptions is contradictory and therefore requires further study.

2.3 Summary of Reviewed Literature and Research Gaps

Various studies were reviewed on students' perceptions of guidance and counselling services. These include: Agaba (2020); Kamunyu, Ndungo, and Wango (2016); Ndungo, and Wango (2016a); Nyamwaka et al. (2018) and; Sanders (2017) among others. However, most of the studies are not reflective of the situation in Nyeri

County since they were undertaken in various parts of the world with no direct focus of the county.

Numerous studies were also reviewed on student's awareness of the need for guidance and counselling. These included Kalkbrenner, James and Pérez-Rojas (2020); Kandi (2018); Bohon (2016); Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) and; Kamunyu et al. (2016a) among others. However, most of the studies delved into the subject under investigation without any special focus on students in Nyeri County or uptake of G&C services in TVET colleges which warrant attention.

Regarding access to information several studies were reviewed. These includes: Silva (2020); Karim and Widen (2020); Kalkbrenner et al. (2020); Wantz and Firmin (2011); Albright and Schwartz (2017) and; Mwangi & Otanga (2015), among others. Regrettably though, there is hardly any study that has interrogated the role availability and access to information about counseling services and mental health issues plays in making college students seek G&C services. This study seeks to fill that gap.

The study also reviewed various studies on the influence of students' attitudes on guidance and counselling. Some of the studies reviewed were Effingerthe (2015); Gitonga (2019); Good and Dell (2019); Ojenge and Muchemi (2016); Kamunyu et al. (2016a) Upoalkpajor et al. (2018); Mutie & Ndambuki (2019) and; Oketch & Ngumba (2019) among others. However, most of the literature is contradictory and therefore requires further study. Furthermore, there is scanty of literature focused solely TVET colleges in Kiambu county. This current study sets out to bridge these knowledge gaps.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This portion specifies the approach that was applied when carrying out the study. Here, the research design, research site, target population, how the size of the sample was acquired, and how sampling was done are laid down. Moreover, the chapter details the research tools and data analysis techniques that were used (Kaau, Githii, & Njau, 2014). This chapter explains the way the research study was carried out, how the research was designed, the target population selected, sample size determined, and sample selected. In addition, it shows how the data was collected and what tools were used.

Research is a systematic inquiry that is supposed to provide information that can be used to arrive at managerial decisions (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). It can also be said to be an “organized, systematic, empirical, critical, objective, scientific investigation of a specific topic of interest, done to find answers or solutions to a problem. According to Bardis (2012), a research process involves several steps. These include planning for and acquiring all the necessary tools and data for the study, then analyzing and disseminating the acquired data, and information to make sense of it. The researcher carried out a non-probability sampling of the college student population and teacher-counselors. She distributed questionnaires for self-administration, collect and analyze the data and finally draw conclusions.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a structure used by a researcher when carrying out his or her study. It is what makes a research project well-ordered and focused in its mission to study a phenomenon (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It is a general approach, framework or blueprint applied in carrying out a research study (Kamau, Githii & Njau, 2014). This study used a descriptive research design. Creswell (2012) argues that descriptive research seeks to provide facts about the character and condition of a phenomenon as it appears at a certain time- the time it is studied. Descriptive studies are the methods best suited to collect data that is required to show what relationships exist among variables and elucidate the world as it appears. This arrangement is suited for this study because the study is an attempt to discover facts and seeks to determine students' perception of counselling services as their wellness intervention in public TVET institutions in Nyeri County. In descriptive studies, data can be using the mixed methods approach by use of questionnaires, interviews and FGDs among other methods. In this study, the mixed methods approach was used for triangulation purposes.

3.3 Research Site

Nyeri County is located in central Kenya. The county government is headquartered in Nyeri, its largest town and which the County is also named. Nyeri County is nestled between Laikipia County, Kirinyaga County, Murang'a County, Nyandarua County, and Meru County. It has 6 Constituencies, 8 administrative sub-counties, and 30 wards. The eight Sub-Counties are Nyeri Central, Nyeri South Mukurweini, Kieni East, Kieni West, Tetu Mathira East, and Mathira West. In addition,

the county has 21 divisions, 69 locations, and 256 sub-locations which constitute the administrative sub-units of the National Government.

There are six public TVET institutions in Nyeri County. These include Kieni Technical and Vocational College in Kieni Constituency, Mathenge Technical Training Institute in Othaya, Mathira Technical and Vocational College Mathira, Mukurweini Technical Training Institute in Mukurweini, Nyeri National Polytechnic in Nyeri town, and Tetu Technical and Vocational College in Tetu constituency respectively. The site was targeted because in the recent past there have been a lot of suicide cases from both young and old persons.

3.4 Target Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a target population comprises the subjects or items that a researcher examines to generalize the results of the research. The County focused on public TVET institutions in Nyeri County that have a students' population of at least 100. Out of the 6 such institutions in the county, only 3 meet that criterion. These include: Mathenge Technical Training Institute, Mukurweini Technical Training Institute and Nyeri National Polytechnic. The three TVET institutions have a total population of 9737 students and 10 teacher-counselors. The school teacher-counselors and the student populations are as reflected in the table below.

Table 3.1 Target Population

Name of Institution	Student Population		No of Counselors
	Male	Female	
Mathenge Technical Training Institute	980	770	3
Mukurweini Technical Training Institute	900	422	3
Nyeri National Polytechnic	4215	2450	4
Total Population	6095	3642	10
	9737		

Source: TVET Office

3.5 Study Sample

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

A sampling procedure, also known as a sampling design, is the process by which a portion of the target population that is to be included in a research study is identified (Kamau et al., 2014). Since it is an exact approach arrived at before the data is collected for acquiring a sample from a given population, the statement about the sample should be true in relation to the population (Orodho, 2009). Wanjohi (2012) states that sampling answers the question about how to pick the sample characters from the population. The sample is to contain elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group.

This research employed the proportionate stratified sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to obtain individuals for this study. To this end, each institution formed a stratum. The college students were then sampled proportionately from each stratum. Next, the number of students sampled per stratum was proportionately divided into male and female samples to reflect their respective distribution in the target population. Thirdly, simple random sampling technique was used to obtain the actual participants from each institution. Lastly, purposive sampling was used to include all the teacher-counselors from the institutions.

3.5.2 Sample Size

A sampling frame represents the elements of the target population that were picked for the study sample. It lists members of the population. First and foremost, proportionate stratified and random sampling techniques were used to obtain the students' sample. The sample size was obtained using the formula developed by Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1967). The formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$$

Where:

n=the sample size;

N= the population size and;

e=the acceptable sampling error (assumed at 0.1).

The formula was applied for each stratum to obtain the sample. Thereafter, the sample per stratum was proportionately divided per stratum into male and female based on total population for each gender as follows:

Sample (male) = male population/Student population * sample per stratum.

Sample (female) = Female population/Student population * sample per stratum.

The totals for each stratum were then collated to make a total students sample size. The sample size is shown in Table 2

Table 2: Sample Size

Institution	Population (N)			Sample (n)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Mathenge TTI	980	770	1750	53	42	95
Mukurweini TTI	900	422	1322	63	30	93
Nyeri NP	4215	2450	6665	63	36	99
Total Population	6095	3642	9737	179	108	287

Source: Author

As shown in Table 2, the overall students' sample was 287 (179 male and 108 female).

On their part, all the 10 teacher-counselors were purposively sampled.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

The study collected data from primary sources using self-administered questionnaires, interview schedules and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides. Yilmaz (2001) views a questionnaire as a tool for extracting, registering, and gathering information. The questionnaires had both open and closed items according to the study objectives. Polit and Beck (2003), argued that this made it to be both potent and ample with individual perceptions in participants' responses.

3.6.1.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires captured self-reported demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, and course of study as well as assess the students in four areas. These form the independent variables of the study, which are, students' perceptions, level of awareness, access to G&C information, and attitudes towards G&C programs. Questions on students' wellness (the dependent variable) were also

included. The questionnaires were issued to students who were not in leadership positions within the school.

3.6.1.2 Interview Schedules

Interview schedules were used with the teacher-counselors to collect the counseling needs most prevalent among college students, awareness creation about counseling services, patronage of counseling services what was influencing the wrong assumptions about counseling services.

3.6.1.3 FGD Guides

Focus group guides were used to collect data from student leaders. In this light, one FGD was undertaken in each institution encompassing 8-12 student leaders. This made a total of 6 FGDs. The FGD guides had questions pegged to the study questions in areas such as attitudes towards guidance and counselling, awareness of the need for guidance and counselling, access to information on guidance and counselling, perceptions about guidance and counselling as well as students' wellbeing.

3.6.2 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

According to Schindler and Cooper (2010), pilot testing is giving the research instruments a trial with a small number of respondents to test their validity and reliability. In this regard, the researcher conducted a pilot study on at least twenty students, and a teacher-counselor at Michuki Technical Training Institute in Kangema, Murang'a County public TVET College to test the instruments' reliability and validity. This college has a student population of 3259 and 3 teacher-counselors. Data collection

methods like those used for the main study, which is questionnaires and FGD guides, were used.

3.6.3 Instrument Reliability

Reliability has been defined as a measure to which an instrument consistently yields the same results on repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). While reliability has to do with how stable and consistent the actual measuring instrument or procedure is, validity on the other hand has to do with the instrument's ability to accurately and meaningfully give results of what it measures. These two aspects move hand in hand, and one cannot do without the other if a research study is to be both sound and credible. This study tested the tools and instruments used by carrying out a pilot study.

The researcher used data from the pilot test to test for instrument reliability. Further, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was computed for each item in the instrument. According to Bengtsson, (2016) a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or above is assumed to reflect the internal reliability of an instrument. In this study, coefficients ranging between 0.78 and 0.89 were obtained. The instruments could thus be relied upon for data collection.

3.6.4 Instrument Validity

According to Lyons and Doueck (2010), research validity is a basic tenet expected and required for every research study to make it interpretable. They further state that validity is the accuracy with which an instrument yields similar results in different experiments. Thus, validity is the degree to which a test accurately measures

the specific concept it purports to measure. While internal validity seeks to determine if the study on its own makes a difference, external validity is concerned with whether it could be generalized. As such, if a test is not reliable, it cannot hope to achieve validity. Therefore, as we see, reliability on its own, although a necessary condition, is not enough. To ensure the validity of the study instrument, the researcher gets the input of seasoned researchers supervising the research as well as conducting pilot testing for it.

3.6.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher visited the targeted TVET colleges and administered the questionnaires as well as interviews the teacher-counselors. Arrangements were done with the targeted technical colleges before the visits to minimize instances of inconveniences to the respondents. The researcher conveyed the questionnaires to the student respondents, wait for their administration, and collected them. This provided a chance for the respondents to seek clarification on the research items where needed. Therefore a drop-and-pick-later method was not deemed appropriate as it may result in lower total responses or some questions left unanswered by the students. The researcher also interviewed the teacher-counselors using structured questionnaires aimed at covering every necessary question (Omandi, 2015).

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the evaluation and interpretation of the data collected in a research study from which deductions, inferences, and conclusions are made. In other words, data analysis involves the tallying of certain indices or measures while at the

same time looking for motifs of the associations that exist within the data groups (Kothari; 2004, p.130). In essence, it involves making an educated guess about the values of the scope of the target population and testing the postulates used to make conclusions.

The collected data was first and foremost screened for correctness and completeness. This was to ensure that there was no bias in the data collected and that all instruments were filled and logged correctly. The data was then coded. This involved grouping and coding responses to the questions obtained on the questionnaires. Quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive (mean, mode, percentages, and frequencies) and inferential statistics (Pearson and regression analysis). To aid in the analysis, the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS version 24) was used. The findings were presented in Tables and Graphs. On its part, qualitative data from interviews and FGDs was subjected to content analysis with the findings presented in prose.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

McCormack (2011) sees ethical issues as intrinsic to the research process. As such, he argues that “they weave themselves in every stage of the study process, right from the initial ideation of the research questions up to the actual interviews, to logging in of the data and analysis, up until when results are finally published” (p. 87). Again, he is of the view that the researcher must be ethical as ethical problems may arise given the difficulties of studying private entities and exposing their confidential information to public scrutiny. This places a lot of responsibility on the researcher to ensure no harm is done during the process of his/her study.

The researcher sought the permission of and approval of the TVET College Managements to conduct the study in the research sites. Moreover, the researcher abided by the protocols of the TVET Colleges as stipulated and also sought the informed consent of the research participants. The inquirer ensured that the privacy, confidentiality, and dignity of the respondents was safeguarded during the research. Respondents' anonymity and privacy was pursued by making sure they did not reveal their identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the perception that college students in public TVET colleges in Nyeri County have towards G&C programs offered in their institutions. The specific objectives of the study were to investigate the influence of students' perception about G&C programs on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County; to establish the influence of students' awareness of the need for G&C on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County; to find out the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counselling services in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County and; to determine the influence of students' attitudes about G&C services on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. This chapter provides an analysis of the responses from the questionnaire in addition to interviews and FGDs.

4.2 Response Rate

The study targeted 287 respondents. These included 287 students and 10 teacher-counselors. Out of these, 224 and 8 key informants (teacher-counselors) responded. These made return rates of 91.1% for the students and 78.6% for the key informants as indicated in Table 4.1. These findings show that the various categories of study participants adequately responded to the study. The response rate was thus sufficient for analysis.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

Response	Students		Teacher-Counselors	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Responded	224	78.0	9	90.0
Non-Respondent	63	22.0	1	10.0
Total	287	100	10	100.0

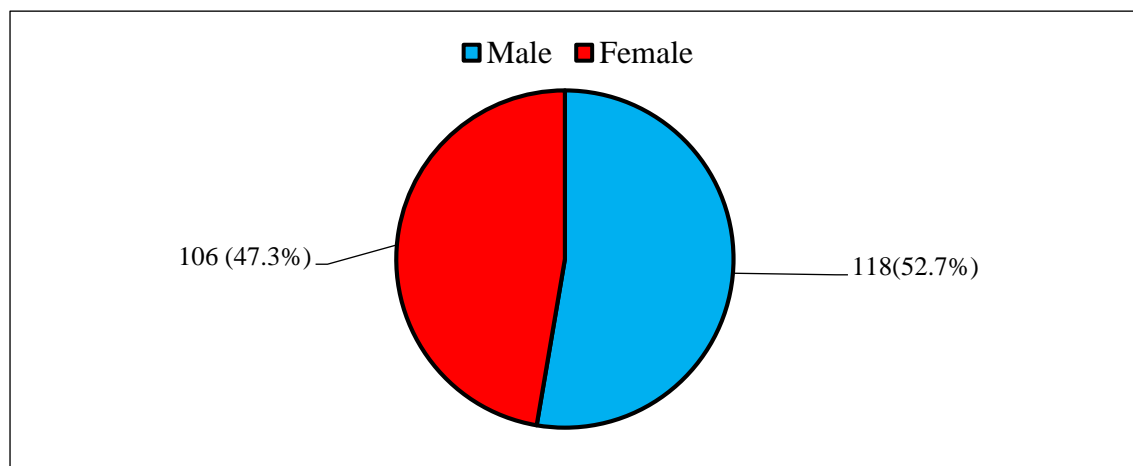
(Source: Field Data, 2020)

4.2.1 Social Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

General information about the students that were assessed in the study included gender, age, course of study and, marital status.

4.2.1.1 Gender of Respondents

The study sought to find the gender of the respondents. The findings are presented in Figure 4.1.



N=224

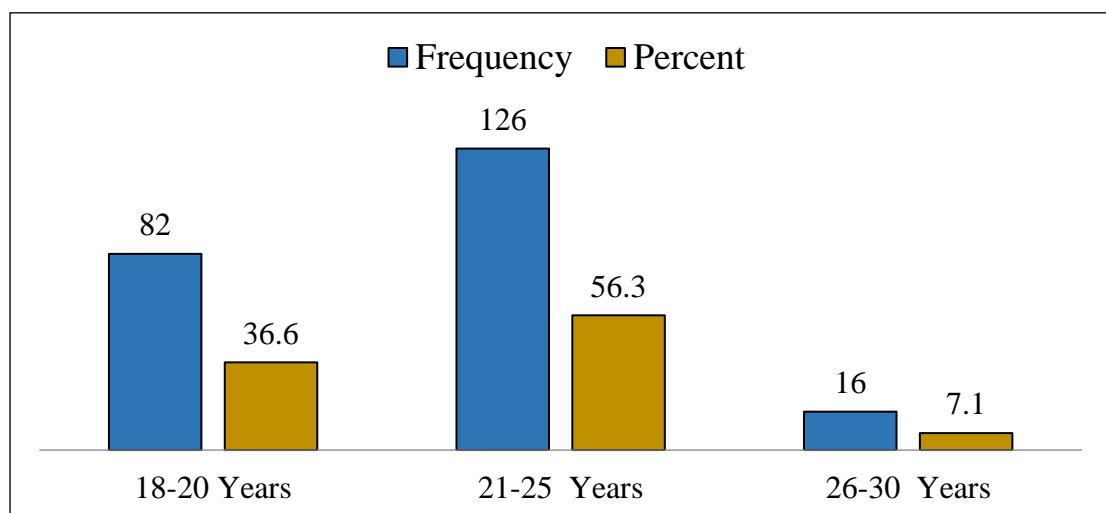
Figure 4.1 Gender of Students

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

As shown in Figure 4.1, more than half of the respondents were male (52.7%) while females were 47.3%. This shows that both genders were well represented in the study. It was thus possible to avert gender bias in the findings since studies such as Nyingi (2017) found gender differences in students' perceptions of the benefits of guidance and counselling services with more female than male students rating guidance and counselling more highly.

4.2.1.2 Age of Respondents

The study went on to investigate the age of the respondents. The findings obtained are shown in Figure 4.2.



N=224

Figure 4.2 Age of Students

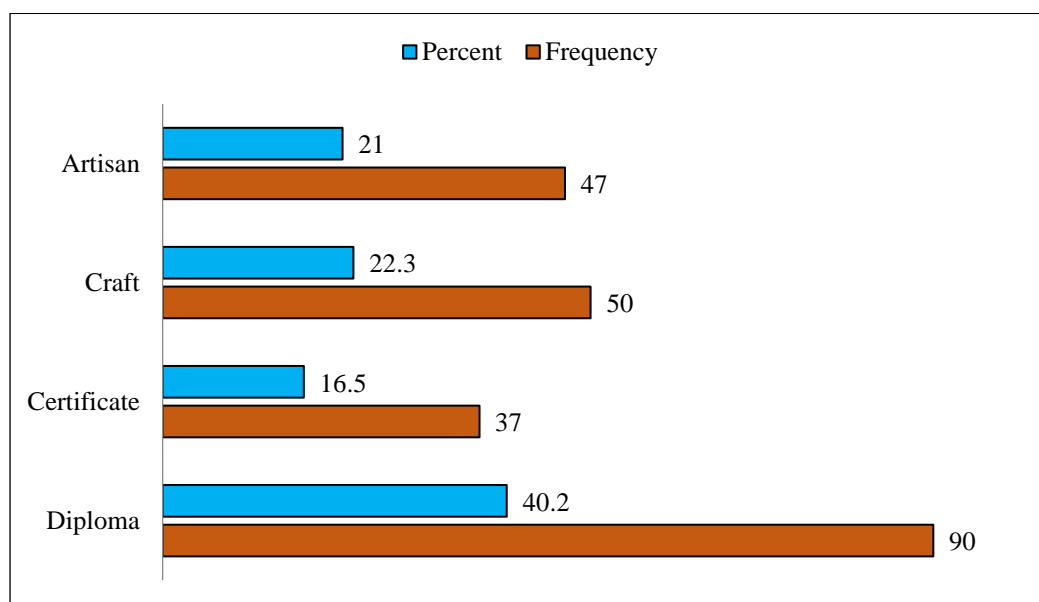
(Source: Field Data, 2022).

Most of the students, more than half at 56.3%, were aged between 21 to 25 years. These were followed by those aged between 18 and 20 years at 36.6%. The least were aged between 26 and 30 years at 7.1%. The findings show that most of the

students were aged between 21 and 25 years although there were younger and older students than this age bracket with the younger being more. This shows that students of diverse age groups were included in the study which could mitigate age-related bias. This is pivotal since studies such as Hirshfield et al. (2016) found out that gender affect perceptions towards G&C services.

4.2.1.3 Course Pursued by the Students

The study went on to investigate the course of study of the students and the findings are presented in Figure 4.2.



N=224

Figure 4.3 Course Pursued by the Students

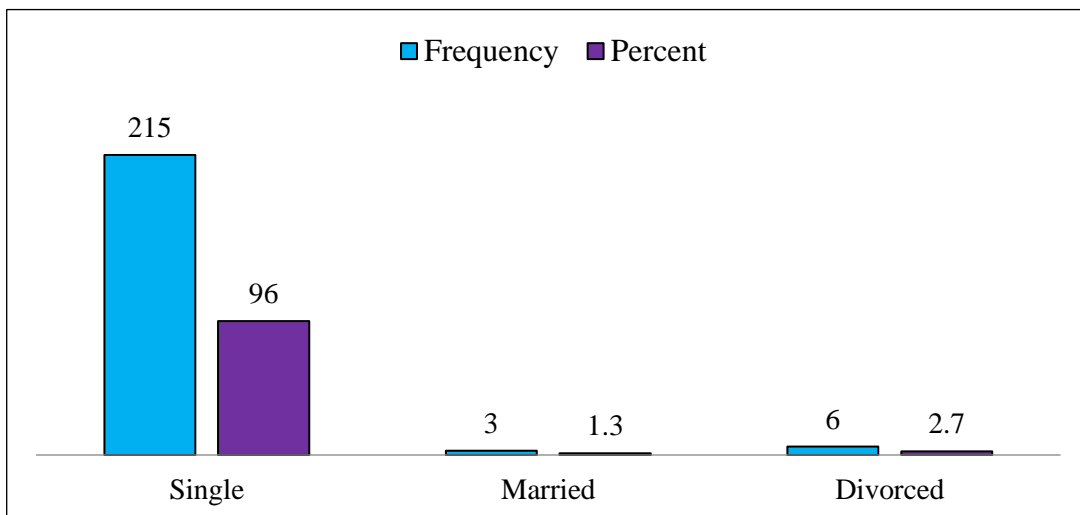
(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The findings indicate that most students who participated (40.2%) in the study were pursuing diploma courses. These were followed by those undertaking craft and artisan

courses at 22.3% and 21% respectively. The rest were enrolled in certificate courses at 16.5%. The findings show that the respondents were drawn from different courses although diploma students were significantly more.

4.2.1.4 Marital Status of Students

The study sought to establish the marital status of the students. The findings obtained were presented in Figure 4.4.



N=224

Figure 4.4 Marital Statuses of Students

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The findings show that the vast majority of them (96%) were not married. Those who were presently married were 1.3% while another 2.7% were divorced. This made it manifest that most of the students were students were single. This means that they faced similar challenges and possibly had similar guidance and counselling uptake behaviours. This is key since Hirshfield et al. (2016) shows that marital statuses has significant influence on tendency to seek G&C services.

4.3 Presentation of Research Analysis and Findings

This section presents the findings in line with the study objectives.

4.3.1 Students' Perception about Guidance and Counselling Programs and Their Wellness

The first objective of the study was to investigate the influence of students' perception about G&C programs on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. The findings obtained are presented in two parts. Whereas part one presents the study findings on students' wellness (the dependent variable), part two presents findings on students' perception about G&C programs.

4.3.1.1 Students' Wellness

The students were presented with selected statements on their wellness. Their level of agreeability with the statements was gauged "on a scale of 1 to 5 where: 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) and 5-Strongly Agree (SA)." The means (M) of the responses were used to explain the levels of agreement with each variable. The findings are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Students' Wellness

		Descriptive Statistics											
		SD		D		N		A		SA		Mea n	Std. Dev.
Statement		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
(i)	Students who undergo counselling have enhanced physical well-being	29	12.9	6	2.7	6	2.7	6	2.7	6	2.7	21.9	1.23
(ii)	Counselling contributes to the mental well-being of students	12	5.4	21	9.4	21	9.4	21	9.4	21	9.4	37.9	1.15
(iii)	Counselling has positive contributions to the social well-being of students	11	4.9	5	2.2	5	2.2	5	2.2	5	2.2	37.9	1.02
(iv)	Students who undergo counselling relate better with other students, teachers, and the wider community	19	8.5	13	5.8	13	5.8	13	5.8	13	5.8	30.4	1.18
(v)	There is an undeniable link between guidance and counselling and the academic performance of students	16	7.1	27	12.1	27	12.1	27	12.1	27	12.1	20.5	1.15
(vi)	Counselling enables students to develop their individual potentialities to the greatest extent possible.	7	3.1	17	7.6	17	7.6	17	7.6	17	7.6	29.5	1.01
(vii)	My life has seen general improvement since I started undergoing counselling	12	5.4	16	7.1	16	7.1	16	7.1	16	7.1	37.9	1.16

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The students agreed (M=4) that students who underwent counselling had enhanced physical well-being. They also agreed that counseling contributed to the mental well-being of students (M=4) and that counseling had positive contributions to the social well-being of students (M=4). They went on to agree (M=4) that students who underwent counselling related better with other students, teachers, and the wider community. Furthermore, the students agreed (M=4) that counselling enabled students to develop their individual potentialities to the greatest extent possible.

The students also agreed (M=4) that their lives had seen general improvement since they started undergoing counseling. However, the respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that there was an undeniable link between G&C and the academic performance of students. Nevertheless, those who agreed or agreed strongly with the statement at 25.9% and 20.5% respectively (totaling 46.4%) were more than those who disagreed or disagreed strongly to the statement at 12.1% and 7.1% (totaling 19.2%). The findings thus show that perceptions of students towards G&C influenced students' wellbeing.

The interview participants (teacher-counselors) and the GDG participants (student leaders) were asked if counseling influenced students' physical, mental and social wellness and if counselling affected students' academic performance and personal potentialities. In response, the interviews opined that indeed G&C helped students considerably since it helped them deal with the issues that could affect their social and physical wellbeing. In support of this, one of the students said:

“It is true counselling helped students physically. It helped them shun behaviours that could lead to injuries in their lives such as fights, excessive drunkenness as well as drug and substance abuse. This enhanced the quality of their social relations and made them live at peace with other students, teachers and members of the larger community.”

(Teacher-counselor A, April 2022).

Mentally, counselling helped students deal with overwhelming problems that they faced. This could emanate from school, family as well as social relations. In support of this, one of the students said:

“Counselling made students better prepared to deal with overwhelming challenges that could limit their ability to concentrate on their studies. It also helped them have positive states of the mind; which could mitigate adverse mental consequences among the students.”

(Teacher-counselor A, April 2022).

Counselling could also help students register better academic performance and enhance their personal potentialities. Students who were distracted from school could get valuable help that could make them make adjustments in their studies irrespective of the challenges they were passing through. These words were echoed by the words of participants in FGD 2 who said:

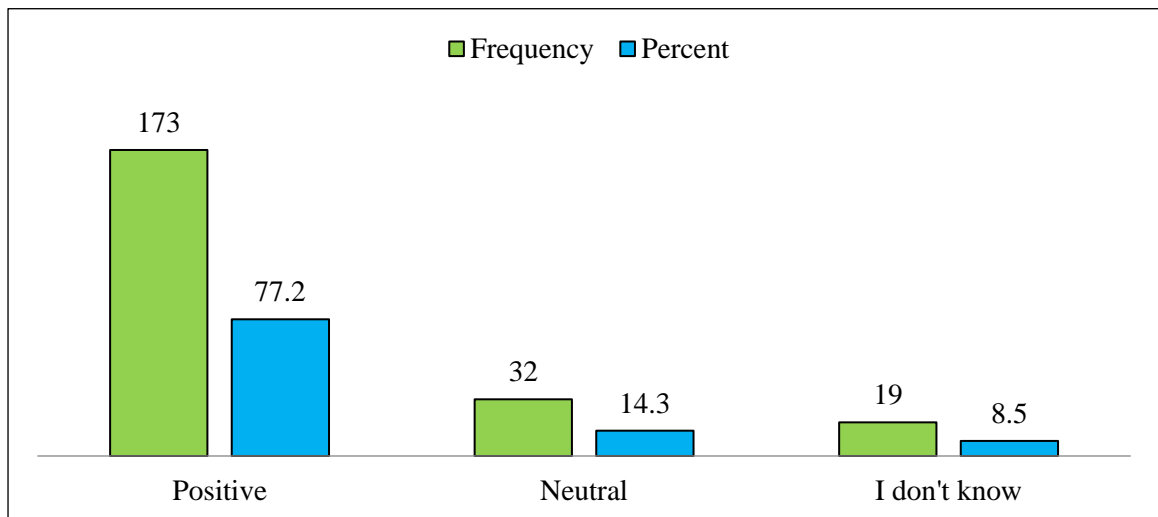
“Counseling helps students refocus on their studies. This is important since, in some instances, students can get distracted from their studies due to bad company and personal problems. If such students got timely counselling, they could reflectively alter their behaviours and adopt positive study habits.”

(FGD 2, April, 2022).

The findings show that the student counselors and student leaders had similar opinions regarding students' wellness.

4.3.1.2 Perception towards G&C Services

The study sought to examine the perceptions of students towards G&C. First and foremost, the students were asked to indicate their perceptions on how effective professional counselors would be in helping a mental health consumer. The findings were presented in Figure 4.5.



N=224

Figure 4.5 Perception of Effectiveness of Professional Counsellors

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The findings in Figure 4.5 show that most of the students (77.2%) had positive perceptions about the effectiveness of professional counselors in helping mental health consumers. This was followed by 14.3% who were neutral to the question and 8.5% who said that they did not know. These findings show that the students had good perceptions towards the efficacy of G&C services.

Furthermore, the respondents were presented with selected statements on their perceptions about the effectiveness G&C programs on their wellness. These were assessed on a 5-point psychometric where: 1=Strong Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree (SA). The findings were presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Perception towards G&C Services

Statement	Descriptive Statistics											
	SD		D		N		A		SA		N	St d. D ev .
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
(i) There are many benefits of seeking guidance and counselling services	12	5.4	5	2.2	16	7.1	83	37.1	108	48.2	4	1.04
(ii) Guidance and counselling is not a helpful way of discussing issues and solving problems	119	53.1	74	33	12	5.4	15	6.7	4	1.8	2	0.97
(iii) Guidance and counselling only helps people with serious mental problems	93	41.5	89	39.7	20	8.9	11	4.9	11	4.9	2	1.07
(iv) The guidance and counselling department is not able to address my problems	85	37.9	75	33.5	36	16.1	16	7.1	12	5.4	2	1.14
(v) The teacher-counsellor is too busy to listen to my problems	98	43.8	55	24.6	32	14.3	23	10.3	16	7.1	2	1.27
(vi) I am comfortable with the teacher-counsellor because of his/her religion	55	24.6	34	15.2	35	15.6	67	29.9	33	14.7	3	1.42
(vii) I am comfortable with the teacher-counsellor because of his/her age	31	13.8	27	12.1	36	16.1	82	36.6	48	21.4	3	1.32
(viii) The guidance and counselling team in the college do not observe client confidentiality	83	37.1	69	30.8	28	12.5	21	9.4	23	10.3	2	1.32
(ix) The guidance and counselling office lacks the privacy and comfort required for effective counselling	92	41.1	61	27.2	23	10.3	22	9.8	26	11.6	2	1.38
(x) The location of the guidance and counselling department is not conducive for seeking counselling services	71	31.7	67	29.9	17	7.6	43	19.2	26	11.6	2	1.4

N=224

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

First and foremost, the students agreed (M=4) that there were many benefits of seeking G&C services. On whether they were comfortable with the teacher-counsellor because of his/her religion and or age, the students were neutral (M=3). However, those who agreed with or agreed strongly with the statement about religion (29.9% and 14.7%, totaling 44.6%) were more than those who disagreed or strongly disagreed with

the statement (15.2% and 24.6% respectively, totaling 39.8%). This applied to the statement on age with those who agreed or strongly agreed being 58% as opposed to those who disagreed or strongly disagreed at 25.9%.

Moreover, the students disagreed with all the negatively formulated statements on their perceptions. To this end, they disagreed (M=2) that G&C was not a helpful way of discussing issues and solving problems and that G&C only helped people with serious mental problems. They also disagreed (M=2) that the G&C department was not able to address their problems and that the teacher-counsellor was too busy to listen to their problems. Furthermore, the students disagreed (M=2) that the G&C team in the college did not observe client confidentiality and that the G&C office lacked the privacy and comfort required for effective counseling. Lastly, the students disagreed (M=2) that the G&C department was not conducive for seeking counselling services. These findings show that the students had good and positive perceptions towards G&C.

The teacher-counselors were presented with the question, “what is the students’ perception of your effectiveness as professional counsellors?” They pointed out that most students had favourable perceptions about G&C and saw counselors as being helpful to them in dealing with day-to-day challenges. To this end, one of them said:

“Most students see us as being important to them as confidants. Whenever they faced challenges in their daily activities or when they had problems at home, they come to us for help. This is vital since most of them are often unable to deal with the challenges they face by themselves which call for our intervention.”

(Teacher-counselor F, April 2022).

The teacher-counselors also said that they were a bulwark against negative behaviours such as alcohol abuse and other vices among students. This was evidenced in the responses of one teacher-counselor who said:

“Often, some students cannot control negative behavior. Some are caught in irresponsible behaviours such as risky sexual activities, drug and substance use as well as alcoholism. Some are referred to us for help by their colleagues who acknowledge the pertinent roles we play in behavior change initiatives.”

(Teacher-counselor G, February 2020).

On their part, the student leaders were asked to point out their general opinion on students’ perception of the need for G&C. The responses provided show that students saw G&C as an important pathway for getting help in case of psychological problems. To this end, members of FGD 3 said:

“Most students have positive attitudes towards G&C. They see it as a sure pathway to getting help especially when they were faced with major challenges such as trauma or when they got heartbroken in a relationship. To this end, they willingly sought help when faced with serious problems that could affect them negatively.”

(FGD 3, April, 2022).

The responses show that whereas teacher counselors had positive attitudes regarding students’ uptake of guidance and counselling services. This was not the case with student leaders who opined that students had poor attitudes towards guidance and counselling which could affect their uptake of such services.

4.3.2 Awareness of Counseling Needs

The second objective of the study was to establish the influence of students’ awareness of the need for G&C on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. This section presents the findings from questionnaires, interviews, and FGDs. First and foremost, the respondents were presented with psychometric scale statements to measure this construct. The findings were presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Awareness of Counseling Needs

Statement	Descriptive Statistics										M e a n	Std. Dev.
	SD		D		N		A		SA			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
(i) A college student reporting homesickness	44	19.6	42	18.8	45	20.1	50	22.3	43	19.2	3	1.4
(ii) A student suffering from depression, feeling sad and empty most days, with little or no interest in what s/he once enjoyed, has problems with sleep, and can't concentrate	29	12.9	23	10.3	24	10.7	65	29	83	37.1	4	1.4
(iii) A student with identity crises, poor self-esteem, loneliness, failure to adjust to college life	19	8.5	14	6.3	26	11.6	88	39.3	77	34.4	4	1.21
(iv) A once bright student who begins to have a pattern of poor performance	14	6.3	26	11.6	25	11.2	74	33	85	37.9	4	1.23
(v) A student experiencing job dissatisfaction and uncertainty about career choice.	18	8	59	26.3	34	15.2	55	24.6	58	25.9	3	1.33
(vi) A student from a family unit reported communication problems, negative interactions, criticism, and withdrawal among family members.	22	9.8	25	11.2	48	21.4	69	30.8	60	26.8	4	1.27
(vii) A student who abuses drugs and substances that impair his/her daily academic, occupational and social functioning.	27	12.1	17	7.6	21	9.4	74	33	85	37.9	4	1.35
(viii) A student with persistent patterns of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity that affects his/her academic, occupational, and social functioning.	23	10.3	34	15.2	40	17.9	52	23.2	75	33.5	4	1.36
(ix) A student whose relationships, romantic or otherwise are having problems including fights, verbal or physical abuse	27	12.1	21	9.4	45	20.1	69	30.8	62	27.7	4	1.31
(x) A student having sexual relationships which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).	27	12.1	23	10.3	27	12.1	66	29.5	81	36.2	4	1.37
(xi) A student exhibiting psychiatric symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized speech, besides being unable to meet ordinary demands of college life.	24	10.7	27	12.1	32	14.3	61	27.2	80	35.7	4	1.35

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

As shown in Table 4.4, the students agreed (M=4) that a student suffering from depression, feeling sad and empty most days, with little or no interest in what s/he once enjoyed, had problems with sleep, and could not concentrate needed counselling help. They also agreed (M4) that a student with identity crises, poor self-esteem, loneliness, and failure to adjust to college life needed G&C services. Furthermore, the students agreed (M=4) that a once bright student who began to have a pattern of poor performance also need G&C services. This also applied (M=4) to a student from a family unit who reported communication problems, negative interactions, criticism, and withdrawal among family members. The respondents also agreed (M=4) that a student who abused drugs and substances that impair his/her daily academic, occupational and social functioning needed G&C services.

Moreover, the students agreed (M=4) that a student with persistent patterns of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity that affects his/her academic, occupational, and social functioning as well as a student whose relationships, romantic or otherwise were having problems including fights, verbal or physical abuse required G&C services. Additionally, the respondents agreed (M=4) that a student having sexual relationships which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as a student exhibiting psychiatric symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized speech, besides being unable to meet ordinary demands of college life (M=4) required G&C help.

Lastly, the respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that a college student reporting homesickness required G&C services. They were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that a student experiencing job dissatisfaction and uncertainty about career choice (M=3) needed G&C services. However, more than half of the respondents

agreed or strongly agreed with the two statements at 50.5% and 57.6% respectively. This shows a tendency to agree with the two statements. The findings indicate that the students had high levels of awareness of counselling needs.

The interview and FGD participants were asked to indicate students' level of awareness of their counseling needs. They were also asked if students were aware of the existence of G&C services in your college, and the types of services offered. First and foremost, the respondents point out that there was no single student who has never heard of the presence of G&C in the schools. However, some of them were not aware of the instances in which they required counselling. In this regard, one of the teacher-counselors pointed out that:

“There is no single student who does not know about the existence of G&C services in the schools. Students are given thorough orientation when they report to the institution. However, some of them may be facing serious problems and fail to seek help due to lack of awareness of situations or conditions that need help.”

(Teacher-counselor G, April 2022).

On the issue of lack of awareness of counselling needs, one of the teacher-counselors said that there was a poor counseling-seeking behavior may be due to a culture of not seeking counsel in Kenya. To affirm this, one teacher-counselor pointed out that:

“There is a very bad culture in Kenya whereby most people do not appreciate counselling. Some students might have problems and decide to “kufa kiume [Swahili for suffering alone]. This means that there were instances of dismal awareness of counseling needs among students.”

(Teacher-counselor G, February 2020).

The FGD participants pointed out that most students were aware of the G&C services available for them since a significant number of them had seen their colleagues seek help. This was attested by one of the respondents who said:

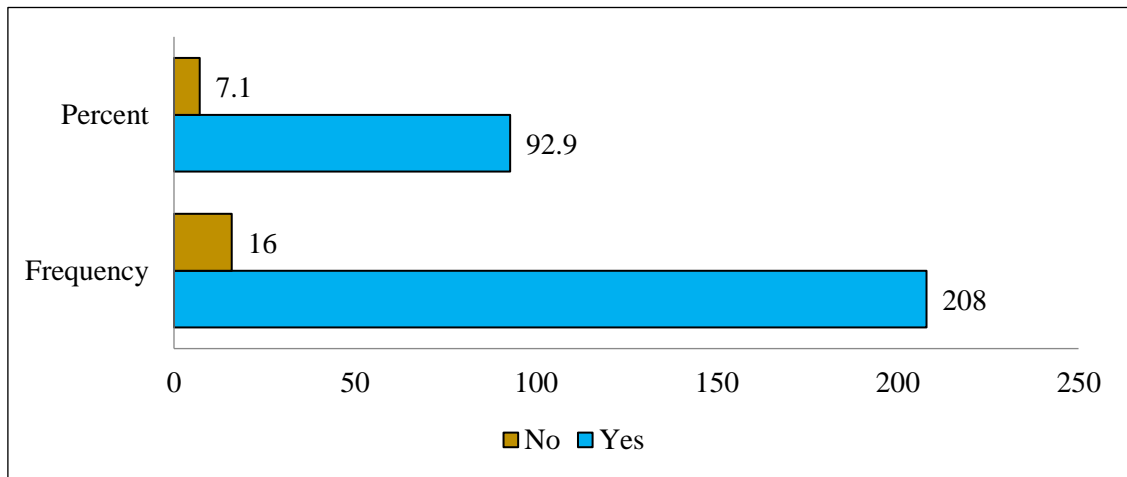
“Most students know where to get help. This is particularly so since the majority of them had seen their colleagues seeking help at one time or another. This meant that they were well aware of the services provided and where to go for them. Regrettably, a large number of them were not seeking counselling help when need is due to personal attitudes or failure to know exactly when to seek such help.”

(FGD 3, April, 2022).

The findings show disparities between student leaders and teacher counselors. Although the student leaders said that students knew where to look for help, teacher counselors said that the poor culture kept students from looking for help even when they had need for help. However, they all acknowledge that students knew where to look for help.

4.3.3 Students' Access to Information about Guidance and Counselling

The third objective of the study was to find out the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counselling services in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. To begin with, the respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of G&C services available in their college, and the types of services offered. The findings were presented in Figure 4.6.



N=224

Figure 4.6 Awareness of Guidance and Counselling Services

(Source: Field Data, 2022)

The findings show that most of the students (92.9%) were aware of the existence of G&C services available in their college, and the types of services offered. Those who said that they were not aware of such services were only 7.1%. The study went on to examine the sources of information about G&C services for the students. From the list of possible sources provided, the vast majority of the students (64.3%) opined that they obtained information from the school.

These were followed by slightly more than a fifth (11.6%) who obtained information from friends and 7.1% who relied on common sense. The next important sources of information were books and guidance counselor each at 4%, personal experience (2.7%), physician or nurse (1.8%) as well as internet (1.3%). The rest obtained information from movies as well as seminars and workshops at 0.9%. Nevertheless, 1.3% said that the various sources of information did not apply to them. These findings show that students mostly obtained information from school and education as well as friends. These findings are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Sources of Information about Guidance and Counselling Services

Source of Information	Frequency	Percent
School and education	144	64.3
Friends	26	11.6
Common knowledge	16	7.1
Books	9	4
Guidance Counselor	9	4
Personal experience	6	2.7
Physician or nurse	4	1.8
Not applicable	3	1.3
Internet	3	1.3
Movies	2	0.9
Seminars & Workshops	2	0.9
Total	224	100

The study went on to examine students' access to information about G&C services using psychometric scale statements as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Students' Access to Information about G&C

Statement	Descriptive Statistics											M e a n	Std. Dev.
	SD		D		N		A		SA				
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
(i) Information about guidance and counseling services in the college is easily accessible	38	17	14	6.3	21	9.4	79	35.3	72	32.1	4	1.51	
(ii) Information about guidance and counselling is frequently communicated to students	26	11.6	38	17	37	16.5	70	31.3	53	23.7	3	1.32	
(iii) Information about guidance and counselling is sufficient	23	10.3	42	18.8	30	13.4	73	32.6	56	25	3	1.32	
(iv) Access to information about guidance and counselling services influences the ability of students to seek such services	32	14.3	19	8.5	44	19.6	90	40.2	39	17.4	3	1.27	
(v) Guidance counsellor create forums for passing information on guidance and counselling	23	10.3	45	20.1	36	16.1	72	32.1	48	21.4	3	1.3	
(vi) The college has a guidance and counselling bulletin	40	17.9	24	10.7	48	21.4	75	33.5	37	16.5	3	1.34	
(vii) The college has either a website, blog, or social media platforms for passing information on guidance and counselling services in the school	44	19.6	59	26.3	50	22.3	32	14.3	39	17.4	3	1.37	
(viii) Guidance and counselling rooms are clearly marked with information on visiting hours clearly indicated	41	18.3	59	26.3	34	15.2	48	21.4	42	18.8	3	1.4	

N=224

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The students agreed (M=4) that information about G&C services in the college was easily accessible. However, they were neutral (M=3) that information about G&C was frequently communicated to students and that information about G&C was sufficient (M=3). The students were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that access to information about G&C services influenced the ability of students to seek such services and that; guidance counsellor created forums for passing information on G&C. Furthermore, the students were neutral (M=3) to the statement that the college had a G&C bulletin and that the college had either a website, blog or social media platforms for passing information on G&C services in the school. Lastly, the students were neutral (M=3) that G&C rooms were clearly marked with information on visiting hours clearly

indicated. Although some students agreed more with some and less to other statements, these findings show that the students had poor perceptions towards access to information about the existing G&C services in the schools.

The interview and FGD participants were asked to point out where students generally got information about G&C services. The findings show that the most important source of information was school and learning processes in which students take lessons on the importance of G&C in their earlier levels of education (primary and secondary school). This can be attested by one of the respondents who said:

“Students are exposed to the need for guidance and counseling throughout their school years. They grow up with the knowledge about guidance and counselling and come to tertiary institutions with such knowledge. This institution also orientates students on the available guidance and counseling services.”

(Teacher-counselor I, April 2022).

The preceding findings were also affirmed by another teacher-counsellor who said that the school system was the most important source of information about G&C.

In this light, the respondent said:

“The students obtained most of their information from the school system from primary to secondary school. The college also availed information about G&C to students. There were also occasional communications in the school notice board about the importance of counselling services.”

(Teacher-counselor E, April 2022).

Friends and parents were highlighted as other important sources of information about counselling services. Students were thus likely to be referred by friends and parents to counselling services. To affirm this, members of FGD1 said:

“Friends are the most important sources of information about G&C services. Parents also come in handy since they can advise or link their children (students) to professional counsellors. They can also tell them to seek counseling help at the institution.”

(FGD 1, April 2022).

There were some differences between student leaders and teacher counselors regarding sources for information about guidance and counselors. Whereas students said that information was mostly obtained from friends and parents in the school, the teacher counselors opined that the most source of information was the school system. It is thus evident that there were various sources of information about guidance and counselling services and that there were divergent opinions about the main sources of information.

4.3.4 Students’ Attitudes about Guidance and Counseling Services

The fourth objectives were “to determine the influence of students’ attitudes about G&C services on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County.” First and foremost, the respondents were presented with psychometric scale statements on students’ attitudes about G&C. The findings were presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Students’ Attitudes about G&C

Descriptive Statistics

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	Me an	Std. Dev.	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F			%
(i) I seek counselor's help when I have personal or emotional problems	26	11.6	50	22.3	37	16.5	70	31.3	41	18.3	3	1.3
(ii) I would not recommend a friend with a problem to see a counsellor	100	44.6	52	23.2	20	8.9	38	17	14	6.3	2	1.33
(iii) At no time in the future will I seek counselling help	91	40.6	69	30.8	22	9.8	21	9.4	21	9.4	2	1.7
(iv) Concentrating on my studies helps me to resolve personal anxieties and concerns	31	13.8	30	13.4	39	17.4	84	37.5	40	17.9	3	1.3
(v) I would prefer counselling from a friend than a counsellor	62	27.7	53	23.7	47	21	42	18.8	20	8.9	3	1.31
(vi) I would confide in a counsellor only if and when I have a crisis in my life	70	31.3	52	23.2	38	17	43	19.2	21	9.4	3	1.34
(vii) I can overcome mental health problems by myself without a counselor's help	46	20.5	67	29.9	49	21.9	36	16.1	26	11.6	3	1.29
(viii) If I had to receive counselling services, I would not hide it	24	10.7	24	10.7	51	22.8	72	32.1	53	23.7	3	1.26
(ix) Seeking guidance and counselling services consumes a lot of time and effort	60	26.8	79	35.3	38	17	34	15.2	13	5.8	2	1.2
(x) Going to see a counselor carries a burden of shame and stigma	76	33.9	62	27.7	39	17.4	23	10.3	24	10.7	2	1.33
(xi) It is difficult to talk about personal affairs with a counsellor	46	20.5	46	20.5	52	23.2	50	22.3	30	13.4	3	1.33
(xii) I am not sure the counsellors in the institution can maintain confidentiality	71	31.7	44	19.6	39	17.4	41	18.3	29	12.9	3	1.42

N=224

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that they sought counselor's help when they had personal or emotional problems and; that concentrating on their studies helped them to resolve personal anxieties and concerns. They were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that they preferred counselling from friends than counselors. The students were also neutral (M=3) that they would confide in a counsellor only if and when they had a crisis in their life and that they overcame mental health problems by themselves without a counselor's help. Furthermore, the students

were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that if they had to receive counselling services, they would not hide it and that seeking G&C services consumed a lot of time and effort (M=3).

Moreover, the students were neutral (M=3) to the statement that going to see a counselor carried a burden of shame and stigma and; that it was difficult to talk about personal affairs with a counsellor. They disagreed (M=2) with the statement that they would not recommend a friend with a problem to see a counsellor. The student also disagreed (M=2) that at no time in the future will they seek counselling help. They also disagreed (M=2) that they were not sure the counselors in the institution could maintain confidentiality. These findings show that the students had favourable attitudes towards G&C services which could enhance their propensity to seek assistance.

The interviews and FGDS were asked to indicate the general students' attitudes towards G&C services. To this question, mixed responses were obtained. Whereas some students had positive attitudes regarding counseling services, others were not. Some saw it as being helpful while others saw it as something they could live without. In support of these findings, one of the teacher-counselors said:

“Not all students see counselling services as important. Some of them prefer to keep their problems to themselves since they do not think that they can get any significant benefits from counselling. Nevertheless, some of them readily access counselling services and see them as being helpful.”

(Teacher-counselor C, April 2022).

The attitudes of students towards G&C were dependent on feedback from their colleagues. To this end, what their colleagues said about these services influenced the propensity of students to see such services as helpful. If a student said that G&C were

not worth the effort, then his/her friends could pick such attitudes. This was affirmed by one of the respondents who said:

“Some students had bad attitudes about guidance and counseling services. This was often augmented or made worse by colleagues. If a friend said that guidance and counselling was not important, then his or her friends could develop similar attitudes and fail to seek help.”

(Teacher-counselor B, April 2022).

Other significant persons in the life of a student such as teachers, parents and role models could also influence the attitudes of students towards G&C services. Some students said that they preferred to keep things to themselves and were not willing to share their secrets with counsellors since they had never seen any of the significant persons in their lives seeking or appreciating such help. Conversely, some had positive attitudes towards G&C due to help and support from the significant persons in their lives. These responses were supported by student leaders from FGD3 who said:

“The significant persons in the lives of a students’ such as parents, religious leaders, mentors, siblings as well as relatives affected the attitudes of students towards guidance and counselling services. In cases where some of them appreciated these services, the students’ proclivity to seek them increased and vice versa.”

(FGD 1, April 2022).

The findings show that attitudes of student towards guidance and counselling were developed by various persons. According to student leaders, attitudes of students towards guidance and counselling was influenced by the significant persons in the lives of a student such as parents, religious leaders, mentors, siblings while according teacher counselors, the most important sources of influence were fellow students. All in all, it is evident that those in the context of students affected their attitudes toward guidance and counselling services.

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

The study hypothesized that perception towards G&C Services; awareness of counseling needs; access to information about G&C and; students' attitudes towards G&C did not have statistically significant effects on students' wellness. Pearson and regression analyses were carried to test the relationships between the study variables.

4.4.1 Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation analysis was employed to test the significance of the relationships between the independent variable (IVs) and the dependent variable (DV) of the study. Table 4.8 presents the findings.

Table 4.8 Pearson Correlation

		Correlations				
		Perception towards G&C Services	Awareness of Counseling Needs	Access to Information about G&C	Students' Attitude towards G&C	Students' Wellness
Perception towards G&C Services	Pearson	1				
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	224				
Awareness of Counseling Needs	Pearson	.950**	1			
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	224	224			
Access to Information about G&C	Pearson	.891**	.916**	1		
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	224	224	224		
Students' Attitude towards G&C	Pearson	.950**	.975**	.940**	1	
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	224	224	224	224	
Students' Wellness	Pearson	.949**	.950**	.892**	.925**	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	224	224	224	224	224

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Field Data, 2022)

As shown in Table 4.8, there were significant relationships between students' wellness (the DV) and all the IVs ($p < 0.05$). Based on these findings, all the research hypotheses were rejected as follows: The first hypothesis, **H₀₁**: Students' perception about guidance and counselling programs does not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County, was also rejected ($r = 0.949$, $p < 0.05$). These findings affirm the literature reviewed (Agaba, 2020; Kamunyu et al., 2016; Ndungo & Wango, 2016a; Nyamwaka et al., 2018 and; Sanders,

2017) that shows that students' perceptions enhanced their propensity to seek G&C services and that this went on to influence their psychosocial wellbeing.

The second hypothesis, **H₀₂**: Students' awareness of the need for guidance and counselling does not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County was rejected ($r=0.950$, $p<0.05$). These findings agree with the studies reviewed that show that student's awareness of the need for G&C services influenced their tendency to seek such services and that this went on to affect their wellness (Kalkbrenner et al., 2020; Kandi, 2018; Bohon, 2016; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010) among others.

The third hypothesis, **H₀₃**: Students' access to information about counselling services does not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County, was also rejected ($r=-0.925$, $p<0.05$). These findings are also in line with the reviewed literature that show that access to information indeed impacted tendency by students to seek G&C services and that this affected their wellness (Silva, 2020; Karim & Widen, 2020; Kalkbrenner et al., 2020; Wantz & Firmin, 2011; Albright & Schwartz, 2017; Mwangi & Otanga, 2015) among others.

The fourth hypothesis, **H₀₄**: Students' attitudes about guidance and counseling services does not have a statistically significant influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County, was also rejected ($r= 0.949$, $p<0.05$). These findings corroborate the reviewed literature that shows that students' attitudes on G&C affected their wellness since it was a predictor of their propensity to seek help (Effingerthe, 2015; Gitonga, 2019; Good & Dell, 2019; Ojenge & Muchemi, 2016; Kamunyu et al., 2016a) among others.

4.4.2 Multivariate Regression Analysis

Multivariate analysis was undertaken to find out the level to which the IVs predicted the dependent variable. Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 present the findings obtained. As shown in Table 4.9 below; the independent variables explained 93.4% of the change in students' wellness (r squared = 0.934). This means that the model was very strong.

Table 4.9 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.966a	.934	.932	.10769

a. Predictors: (Constant), Students' Attitude towards G&C, Awareness of Counseling Needs, Access to Information about G&C, Perception towards G&C Services

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The findings in Table 4.10, show that perception towards G&C Services; awareness of counseling needs; access to information about G&C and; students' attitude towards G&C statistically significantly predict students' wellness as shown by a significant test ($F= 770.492, p < 0.05$).

Table 4.10 Analysis of Variance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.742	4	8.935	770.492	.000 ^b
	Residual	2.540	219	.012		
	Total	38.281	223			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Wellness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Students' Attitude towards G&C, Awareness of Counseling Needs, Access to Information about G&C, Perception towards G&C Services

(Source: Field Data, 2022).

The findings also indicated that all the IVS (awareness of counseling needs; access to information about G&C; perception towards G&C Services and; students' attitude towards G&C) significantly predicted students' wellness ($p < 0.05$). As a result, all the IVs were fitted in the regression model. To this end, the fitted regression model was as shown below:

$$\text{Students' wellness} = 0.087 + (0.539 * \text{Perception towards G\&C Services}) + (0.710 * \text{Awareness of Counseling Needs}) + (0.195 * \text{Access to Information about G\&C}) - (0.485 * \text{Students' Attitude towards G\&C}) + 0.032.$$

Table 4.11 Regression Coefficients

Model	Co-efficient			t	Sig.
	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.087	.032		2.770	.006
Perception towards G&C Services	.539	.059	.547	9.198	.000
1 Awareness of Counseling Needs	.710	.082	.730	8.712	.000
Access to Information about G&C	.195	.049	.205	4.012	.000
Students' Attitude towards G&C	-.485	.095	-.499	-5.128	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Wellness
(Source: Field Data, 2022).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the perception that college students in public TVET colleges in Nyeri County have towards G&C programs offered in their institutions. The specific objectives of the study were to investigate the influence of students' perception about G&C programs on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County; to establish the influence of students' awareness of the need for G&C on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County; to find out the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counselling services in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County and; to determine the influence of students' attitudes about G&C services on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. This chapter provides a discussion and summary of key findings. It also presents the conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 Discussions

In this section, a discussion of the study findings is presented. This is done in line with the study objectives. The findings are also analysed in line with findings from other studies.

5.2.1 Social Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

5.2.1.1. Response Rate

The study targeted 287 respondents. These included 287 students and 10 teacher-counselors. Out of these, 224 and 8 key informants (teacher-counselors)

responded. These made return rates of 91.1% for the students and 78.6% for the key informants. This was considered sufficient since, in paper-based questionnaires, a response rate of 60 is considered sufficient (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). The tools were thus considered sufficient to deploy in data collection.

5.2.1.2 Gender, Age, Course, and Marital Statuses of respondents

More than half of the respondents were male (52.7%) while females were 47.3%. Though both genders were well represented in the study. Most of the students, more than half at 56.3%, were aged between 21 to 25 years. These were followed by those aged between 18 and 20 years at 36.6%. The least were aged between 26 and 30 years at 7.1%. The findings show that most of the students were aged between 21 and 25 years although there were younger and older students than this age bracket with the younger being more. It is thus evident that age bias could not negatively affect the study findings as various age groups were represented.

Most students who participated (40.2%) in the study were pursuing diploma courses. These were followed by those undertaking craft and artisan courses at 22.3% and 21% respectively. The rest were enrolled in certificate courses at 16.5%. The findings show that the respondents were drawn from different courses although diploma students were significantly more. Nevertheless, the opinions of students from various courses of study could be captured hence reducing any possible course-related bias. The findings show that the vast majority of them (96%) were not married. Those who were married were presently married were 1.3% while another 2.7% were divorced. This made it manifest that most of the students were students were single. This is reflective of tertiary learning institutions where most learners are single.

5.2.2 Perception about Guidance and Counselling Programs and Students'

Wellness

The first objective of the study was to investigate the influence of students' perception about G&C programs on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. The first part of this section presents the findings on students' wellness (the dependent variable). The students agreed (M=4) that students who underwent counselling had enhanced physical well-being. They also agreed that counseling contributed to the mental well-being of students (M=4) and that counseling had positive contributions to the social well-being of students (M=4). These findings are in line with WHO (2018) which sees "the state of wholeness and complete wellness (including physical, mental, and social well-being) and not just the absence of illnesses." It is thus evident that G&C enhanced holistic wellbeing of students in Public TVET institutions.

The students went on to agree (M=4) that students who underwent counselling related better with other students, teachers, and the wider community. These findings agree with Wambu and Fisher (2016) who posit that services and programs help students to resolve problems in their psychosocial, emotional, and behavioral domains and make them better at relating with others. Furthermore, the students agreed (M=4) that counselling enabled students to develop their individual potentialities to the greatest extent possible. This aligns with the findings by Maziya and Mafumbate (2019) who argue that wellness enhances the students' academic performance and develops their potentialities to the greatest extent possible. It is thus evident that G&C services were pertinent for the education and future career and personal prospects of students.

The students also agreed (M=4) that their lives saw general improvement since they started undergoing counseling. These findings agree with Nuku, John-Bright, and

Xoese (2020) who posited that G&C enabled students to see improvements in schools and other aspects of their lives. However, the respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that there was an undeniable link between G&C and the academic performance of students. Nevertheless, those who agreed or agreed strongly with the statement at 25.9% and 20.5% respectively (totaling 46.4%) were more than those who disagreed or disagreed strongly to the statement at 12.1% and 7.1% (totaling 19.2%). The findings thus show that perceptions of the student towards G&C influenced students' wellbeing within the wider definitions of the WHO (2018).

The interview participants (teacher-counselors) and the GDG participants (teacher-counselors) were asked if counseling influenced students' physical, mental and social wellness and if counseling affected students' academic performance and personal potentialities. In response, the interviews opined that indeed G&C helped students considerably since it helped them deal with the issues that could affect their social and physical wellbeing which aligns with WHO (2018) on the definition of wellbeing. Mentally, counselling helped students deal with overwhelming problems that they faced. This could emanate from school, family as well as social relations. These findings corroborate the findings of Silva (2020) who said that G&C enhanced the mental wellbeing of students and made them well prepared to face the challenges of life.

Counselling could also help students register better academic performance and enhance their personal potentialities. Students who were distracted from school could get valuable help that could make them make adjustments in their studies irrespective of the challenges they were passing through. This agrees with the findings by Nuku et al. (2020), as already pointed out who posited that G&C enabled students to see

improvements in schools and other aspects of their lives. It is thus, evident that G&C enhanced the overall wellbeing of students and helped them physically, mentally, socially, and academically.

First and foremost, the students were asked to indicate their perceptions of how effective professional counselors would be in helping a mental health consumer. The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students wellness (the DV) and perception towards G&C Services ($r= 0.949, p>0.05$). These findings are in line with the study by Agaba (2020) that shows that perceptions influenced the tendency of students to seek G&C services.

Most of the students (77.2%) had positive perceptions about the effectiveness of professional counselors in helping mental health consumers. This was followed by 14.3% who were neutral to the question and 8.5% who said that they did not know. These findings show that the students had good perceptions towards the efficacy of G&C services. These findings show that there had been improvements in perceptions of tertiary students towards G&C which is in disparity with the study by Kamunyu et al. (2016a) that shows that there were poor perceptions among college students of G&C services.

Furthermore, the respondents were presented with selected statements on their perceptions about the effectiveness G&C programs on their wellness. First and foremost, the students agreed ($M=4$) that there were many benefits of seeking G&C services. These findings agree with a study by Nyingi (2017) that found that students had positive perceptions of the benefits of G&C services although more female than male students rated G&C more highly.

On whether they were comfortable with the teacher-counselor because of his/her religion and or age, the students were neutral (M=3). Moreover, the students disagreed with all the negatively formulated statements on their perceptions. To this end, they disagreed (M=2) that G&C were not a helpful way of discussing issues and solving problems and that G&C only helped people with serious mental problems. These findings agree with a study by Galderisi et al. (2015) that shows that G&C were helpful for all people irrespective of their perceived mental health problems.

The students also disagreed (M=2) that the G&C department was not able to address their problems and that the teacher-counselor was too busy to listen to their problems. Furthermore, the students disagreed (M=2) that the G&C team in the college did not observe client confidentiality and the G&C office lacked the privacy and comfort required for effective counseling. These findings disagree with the findings by Upoalkpajor et al. (2018) that stipulated that fear of lack of confidentiality and the dual relationships occasioned by the counsellor doubling as a teacher contributed to poor perceptions about G&C. Lastly, the students disagreed (M=2) that the G&C department was not conducive to seeking counselling services. This shows that the institutions had put in place mechanisms for creating a good environment for G&C as envisaged by Taylor (2018). These findings show that the students had good and positive perceptions towards G&C.

The teacher-counselors pointed out that most students had favorable perceptions about G&C and saw counselors as being helpful to them in dealing with day-to-day challenges. The teacher-counselors also said that they were a bulwark against negative behaviours such as alcohol abuse and other vices among students. These findings buttress the findings of Kalkbrenner et al. (2020) that show that G&C were important

in dealing with challenges related to alcoholism and other behavioral problems among students. The student leaders opined that students regarded G&C as an important pathway for getting help in case of psychological problems. This makes it clear that students had positive perceptions regarding G&C as bulwarks against psychological problems as suggested by Albright and Schwartz (2017). It is thus clear that students tended to have positive perceptions towards G&C.

5.2.3 Awareness of Counseling Needs

The second objective of the study was to establish the influence of students' awareness of the need for G&C on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students wellness and awareness of counseling needs ($r=0.950$, $p<0.05$). These findings are in line with the study by Oketch and Ngumba (2019) that shows that G&C programs help students to develop their full individuality and career capabilities and that for that to happen, they had to be aware of its existence.

The students agreed ($M=4$) that a student suffering from depression, feeling sad and empty most days, with little or no interest in what s/he once enjoyed, had problems with sleep, and could not concentrate needed counselling help. They also agreed ($M4$) that a student with identity crises, poor self-esteem, loneliness, and, failure to adjust to college life needed G&C services. These findings are in line with the study by Kalkbrenner et al. (2020) that underlines the need for G&C for numerous behavioral problems. Awareness of the role played by G&C in reining in on these challenges was thus pivotal.

Furthermore, the students agreed (M=4) that a once bright student who began to have a pattern of poor performance also need G&C services. This also applied (M=4) to a student from a family unit who reported communication problems, negative interactions, criticism, and withdrawal among family members. This is still in line with the study by Kalkbrenner et al. (2020) that showed that students with these problems needed G&C help.

The respondents also agreed (M=4) that a student who abused drugs and substances that impair his/her daily academic, occupational and social functioning needed G&C services. Moreover, the students agreed (M=4) that a student with persistent patterns of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity that affects his/her academic, occupational, and social functioning as well as a student whose relationships, romantic or otherwise were having problems including fights, verbal or physical abuse required G&C services. These findings align with the study by Kandi (2018) that show that some of the most important counselling need to be emanated from “drug abuse, trauma from childhood sexual abuse, relationship problems, depression, anxiety, panic, career foginess, lack of personal initiative, social anxiety, and fear of the unknown (p. 132).”

Additionally, the respondents agreed (M=4) that a student having sexual relationships which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as a student exhibiting psychiatric symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized speech, besides being unable to meet ordinary demands of college life (M=4) required G&C help. These findings agree with the study by Kamunyu et al. (2016a) who posits that social and behavioral problems bedeviling college students as including drunkenness, drug and substance abuse, poor

relationships with other students, and sexual relationships which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and STIs needed G&C interventions.

Lastly, the respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that a college student reporting homesickness required G&C services. They were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that a student experiencing job dissatisfaction and uncertainty about career choice (M=3) needed G&C services. However, more than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the two statements at 50.5% and 57.6% respectively. This shows a tendency to agree with the two statements. The findings indicate that the students had high levels of awareness of counselling needs. These findings are in disparity with earlier studies that show that students tend to have a low level of awareness of their counselling needs (Kamunyu et al., 2016a; Kandi, 2018).

The interview and FGD participants pointed out that there was no single student who has never heard of the presence of G&C in the schools. However, some of them were not aware of the instances in which they required counselling. On the issue of lack of awareness of counselling needs, one of the teacher-counsellors said that there was a poor counseling-seeking behavior may be due to a culture of not seeking counsel in Kenya. These findings corroborate the findings by Mwangi and Otanga (2015) who point out that culture, previous experiences, and acquired knowledge influence a person's attitude. These findings are in line with the study by Kandi (2018) who shows a low level of uptake of G&C services despite their existence. It is thus evident that there was a high level of awareness about G&C services in Kenya but this did not translate to enhanced uptake of such services in some instances.

5.2.4 Students' Access to Information about Guidance and Counselling

The third objective of the study was to find out the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counseling services in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students' wellness (the DV) and access to information about G&C ($r=0.892$, $p<0.05$). These findings corroborate the findings of Karim & Widen (2020) that show that access to information could enable students to seek help hence enabling their wellness through targeted mitigating measures

To begin with, the respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of G&C services available in their college. The findings show that most of the students (92.9%) were aware of the existence of G&C services available in their college, and the types of services offered. Those who said that they were not aware of such services were only 7.1%. These findings show high awareness levels about the existence of G&C services. This is in line with the study by Nyingi (2014) that found students from public TVET institutions were more aware of the availability of G&C services in their institutions than their counterparts in private TVET institutions.

The study went on to examine the sources of information about G&C services for the students. From the list of possible sources provided, the vast majority of the students (64.3%) opined that they obtained information from the school. These were followed by slightly more than a fifth (11.6%) who obtained information from friends and 7.1% who relied on common sense. The next important sources of information were books and guidance counselor each at 4%, personal experience (2.7%), physician or nurse (1.8%) as well as internet (1.3%). The rest obtained information from movies as well as seminars and workshops at 0.9%. Nevertheless, 1.3% said that the various

sources of information did not apply to them. These findings show that students mostly obtained information from school and education as well as friends. These findings agree with the study by Wantz and Firmin (2011) that shows that perceptions towards G&C were influenced by basic education, colleagues, general knowledge, movies, books, and TV among others. It is thus evident that there were multiple sources of information on G&C for students in TVET institutions.

The students agreed (M=4) that information about G&C services in the college was easily accessible. This could enhance their ability to seek G&C services since as posited by Upoalkpajor et al. (2018) one of the major reasons students did not seek counseling help was accessibility. However, they were neutral (M=3) that information about G&C was frequently communicated to students and that information about G&C was sufficient (M=3). The students were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that access to information about G&C services influenced the ability of students to seek such services and that; guidance counselors created forums for passing information on G&C.

These findings are indicative of the fact that there were no strong strategies to pass information about G&C services to students which could hinder their propensity to seek help as recommended by Wantz and Firmin (2011). Furthermore, the students were neutral (M=3) to the statement that the college had a G&C bulletin and that the college had either a website, blog or social media platforms for passing information on G&C services in the school. Lastly, the students were neutral (M=3) that G&C rooms were clearly marked with information on visiting hours clearly indicated. These findings further buttress the findings by Upoalkpajor et al. (2018) that show that there were challenges regarding meagre and accurate information on G&C services that limited the ability of students to seek help. It is thus evident that although some students

agreed more with some and less with other statements, these findings show that the students had poor perceptions towards access to information about the existing G&C services in the schools. This could limit their ability to seek help in line with the study by Kamunyu et al. (2016a) which posited that due to poor perception, college G&C services remain underutilized.

The interview and FGD participants were asked to point out where students generally got information about G&C services. The findings show that the most important source of information was school and learning processes in which students take lessons on the importance of G&C in their earlier levels of education (primary and secondary school). Teacher-counselors affirmed that the school system was the most important source of information about G&C. Friends and parents were also highlighted as other important sources of information about counselling services. Students were thus likely to be referred by friends and parents to counselling services. These findings buttress those of Wantz and Firmin (2011) that basic education, as well as friends (colleagues), were key sources of information among students. It can thus be concluded that access to information had direct effects on the extent to which students in TVET colleges sought G&C help.

5.2.5 Students' Attitudes about Guidance and Counseling Services

The fourth objectives were “to determine the influence of students’ attitudes about G&C services on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County.” The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students’ wellness (the DV) and students' attitude towards ($r=-0.925, p<0.05$). These findings are in line

with the study by Upoalkpajor et al. (2018) who also found a link between attitudes towards G&C and propensity to seek help hence better psychosocial wellbeing.

First and foremost, the respondents have presented with psychometric scale statements on students' attitudes about G&C. The respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that they sought a counselor's help when they had personal or emotional problems and; that concentrating on their studies helped them to resolve personal anxieties and concerns. They were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that they preferred counselling from friends over counselors. These findings show that some of the students had negative attitudes toward G&C hence the average ratings for these statements. This could affect their propensity to seek G&C services as posited by Oketch and Ngumba (2019). The students were also neutral (M=3) that they would confide in a counsellor only if and when they had a crisis in their life and that they overcame mental health problems by themselves without a counselor's help. This is in line with the study by Rutondoki (2000) that found that some students do not seek help because they felt capable of solving their issues or getting help from their friends.

Furthermore, the students were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that if they had to receive counselling services, they would not hide it and that seeking G&C services consumed a lot of time and effort (M=3). Moreover, the students were neutral (M=3) to the statement that going to see a counselor carried a burden of shame and stigma and; that it was difficult to talk about personal affairs with a counsellor. This rating does not pose strong evidence for the study by Upoalkpajor et al. (2018) that revealed that "the three major reasons students did not seek counseling help were accessibility, the belief that counseling was for academically weak students, and the

perception that they would not find the help they sought.” This shows that students had increasingly overcome these limitations in seeking help.

The students disagreed (M=2) with the statement that they would not recommend a friend with a problem to see a counsellor. The student also disagreed (M=2) that at no time in the future will they seek counselling help. They also disagreed (M=2) that they were not sure the counselors in the institution could maintain confidentiality. These findings show that the students had favourable attitudes towards G&C services which could enhance their propensity to seek assistance. This is in line with the study by Nyokabi and Thinguri (2015) who reported that the majority of students knew of the existence of the programs and had positive attitudes towards them.

The interviews and FGDS were asked to point out the general students' attitudes towards G&C services. To this question, mixed responses were obtained. Whereas some students had positive attitudes regarding counseling services, others were not. Some saw it to be helpful while others saw it as something they could live without. Overall though, it is evident that students had improved attitudes towards G&C (Nyokabi & Thinguri, 2015).

The attitudes of students towards G&C were dependent on feedback from their colleagues. To this end, what their colleagues said about these services influenced the propensity of students to see such services as helpful. If a student said that G&C were not worth the effort, then his/her friends could pick such attitudes. These findings study the findings from Wantz and Firmin (2011) that highlighted the influence of friends among others on attitudes towards G&C.

Other significant persons in the life of a student such as teachers, parents, and role models could also influence the attitudes of students towards G&C services. Some

students said that they preferred to keep things to themselves and were not willing to share their secrets with counsellors since they had never seen any of the significant persons in their lives seeking or appreciating such help. Conversely, some had positive attitudes towards G&C due to help and support from the significant persons in their lives. This is in agreement with a study by Karim and Widen (2020) that highlights the importance of the context of the student towards the formation of attitude towards G&C services. Overall the study findings show that there had been improvements in attitudes toward G&C among students. This could influence their tendency to seek help and as a result, have enhanced wellbeing.

5.3 Summary of main findings

This section presents a summary of the main study findings which is done in line with the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

5.3.1 Students' Perception about Guidance and Counselling Programs

The first objective of the study was to investigate the influence of students' perception about G&C programs on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. The first part of this section presents the findings on students' wellness (the dependent variable). The students agreed (M=4) that students who underwent counselling had enhanced physical well-being. They also agreed that counseling contributed to the mental well-being of students (M=4) and that counseling had positive contributions to the social well-being of students (M=4). It is thus evident that G&C enhanced holistic wellbeing of students in Public TVET institutions.

The students went on to agree (M=4) that students who underwent counselling related better with other students, teachers, and the wider community. Furthermore, the students agreed (M=4) that counselling enabled students to develop their individual potentialities to the greatest extent possible. The students also agreed (M=4) that their lives saw general improvement since they started undergoing counseling. However, the respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that there was an undeniable link between G&C and the academic performance of students. Nevertheless, those who agreed or agreed strongly with the statement at 25.9% and 20.5% respectively (totaling 46.4%) were more than those who disagreed or disagreed strongly to the statement at 12.1% and 7.1% (totaling 19.2%).

The interview participants (teacher-counselors) and the GDG participants (teacher-counselors) opined that indeed G&C helped students considerably since it helped them deal with the issues that could affect their social and physical wellbeing. Mentally, counselling helped students deal with overwhelming problems that they faced. This could emanate from school, family as well as social relations. Counselling could also help students register better academic performance and enhance their personal potentialities. Students who were distracted from school could get valuable help that could make them make adjustments in their studies irrespective of the challenges they were passing through.

The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students wellness (the DV) and perception towards G&C Services ($r= 0.949, p>0.05$). Most of the students (77.2%) had positive perceptions about the effectiveness of professional counselors in helping mental health consumers. This was followed by 14.3% who were neutral to the question and 8.5% who said that they did not know. These findings show

that the students had good perceptions towards the efficacy of G&C services. Furthermore, the respondents were presented with selected statements on their perceptions about the effectiveness of G&C programs on their wellness. First and foremost, the students agreed (M=4) that there were many benefits of seeking G&C services.

On whether they were comfortable with the teacher-counselor because of his/her religion and or age, the students were neutral (M=3). Moreover, the students disagreed with all the negatively formulated statements on their perceptions. To this end, they disagreed (M=2) that G&C were not a helpful way of discussing issues and solving problems and that G&C only helped people with serious mental problems.

The students also disagreed (M=2) that the G&C department was not able to address their problems and that the teacher-counselor was too busy to listen to their problems. Furthermore, the students disagreed (M=2) that the G&C team in the college did not observe client confidentiality and the G&C office lacked the privacy and comfort required for effective counseling. Lastly, the students disagreed (M=2) that the G&C department was not conducive to seeking counselling services.

The teacher-counselors pointed out that most students had favourable perceptions about G&C and saw counselors as being helpful to them in dealing with day-to-day challenges. The teacher-counselors also said that they were a bulwark against negative behaviours such as alcohol abuse and other vices among students. These findings buttress the findings of Kalkbrenner et al. (2020) that show that G&C were important in dealing with challenges related to alcoholism and other behavioral problems among students. The student leaders opined that students regarded G&C as an important pathway for getting help in case of psychological problems. Lastly,

findings from Pearson correlation showed that perception towards G&C Services ($r=0.949, p>0.05$) did not have a statistically significant influence on students' wellness.

5.3.2 Awareness of Counseling Needs

The second objective of the study was to establish the influence of students' awareness of the need for G&C on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students wellness and awareness of counseling needs ($r=0.950, p<0.05$). The students agreed (M=4) that a student suffering from depression, feeling sad and empty most days, with little or no interest in what s/he once enjoyed, had problems with sleep, and could not concentrate needed counselling help. They also agreed (M4) that a student with identity crises, poor self-esteem, loneliness, and, failure to adjust to college life needed G&C services. Awareness of the role played by G&C in reining in on these challenges was thus pivotal.

Furthermore, the students agreed (M=4) that a once bright student who began to have a pattern of poor performance also need G&C services. This also applied (M=4) to a student from a family unit who reported communication problems, negative interactions, criticism, and withdrawal among family members.

The respondents also agreed (M=4) that a student who abused drugs and substances that impair his/her daily academic, occupational and social functioning needed G&C services. Moreover, the students agreed (M=4) that a student with persistent patterns of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity that affects his/her academic, occupational, and social functioning as well as a student whose relationships,

romantic or otherwise were having problems including fights, verbal or physical abuse required G&C services.

Additionally, the respondents agreed (M=4) that a student having sexual relationships which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as a student exhibiting psychiatric symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized speech, besides being unable to meet ordinary demands of college life (M=4) required G&C help. Lastly, the respondents were neutral (M=3) to the statement that a college student reporting homesickness required G&C services. They were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that a student experiencing job dissatisfaction and uncertainty about career choice (M=3) needed G&C services.

The interview and FGD participants pointed out that there was no single student who has never heard of the presence of G&C in the schools. However, some of them were not aware of the instances in which they required counselling. On the issue of lack of awareness of counselling needs, one of the teacher-counsellors said that there was a poor counseling-seeking behavior may be due to a culture of not seeking counsel in Kenya. Pearson correlation showed that awareness of counseling needs perception ($r=0.950, p<0.05$); had a statistically significant influence on students' wellness.

5.3.3 Students' Access to Information about Guidance and Counselling

The third objective of the study was to find out the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counseling services in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County. The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students' wellness (the DV) and access to information about G&C ($r=0.892,$

$p < 0.05$). To begin with, the respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of G&C services available in their college. The findings show that most of the students (92.9%) were aware of the existence of G&C services available in their college, and the types of services offered.

The study went on to examine the sources of information about G&C services for the students. From the list of possible sources provided, the vast majority of the students (64.3%) opined that they obtained information from the school. These were followed by slightly more than a fifth (11.6%) who obtained information from friends and 7.1% who relied on common sense. The next important sources of information were books and guidance counselor each at 4%, personal experience (2.7%), physician or nurse (1.8%) as well as internet (1.3%). The rest obtained information from movies as well as seminars and workshops at 0.9%. Nevertheless, 1.3% said that the various sources of information did not apply to them. These findings show that students mostly obtained information from school and education as well as friends.

The students agreed ($M=4$) that information about G&C services in the college was easily accessible. However, they were neutral ($M=3$) that information about G&C was frequently communicated to students and that information about G&C was sufficient ($M=3$). The students were also neutral ($M=3$) to the statement that access to information about G&C services influenced the ability of students to seek such services and that; guidance counselors created forums for passing information on G&C.

These findings are indicative of the fact that there were no strong strategies to pass information about G&C services to students which could hinder their propensity to seek help. Furthermore, the students were neutral ($M=3$) to the statement that the college had a G&C bulletin and that the college had either a website, blog or social

media platforms for passing information on G&C services in the school. Lastly, the students were neutral ($M=3$) that G&C rooms were clearly marked with information on visiting hours clearly indicated.

The interview and FGD participants were asked to point out where students generally got information about G&C services. The findings show that the most important source of information was school and learning processes in which students take lessons on the importance of G&C in their earlier levels of education (primary and secondary school). Teacher-counselors affirmed that the school system was the most important source of information about G&C. Friends and parents were also highlighted as other important sources of information about counselling services. Students were thus likely to be referred by friends and parents to counselling services. The study further shows that students' access to information about guidance and counselling ($r=0.892, p<0.05$) had statistically significant effect on students' wellness.

5.3.4 Students' Attitudes about Guidance and Counseling Services

The fourth objectives were “to determine the influence of students' attitudes about G&C services on their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County.” The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students' wellness (the DV) and students' attitude towards ($r=-0.925, p<0.05$). First and foremost, the respondents have presented with psychometric scale statements on students' attitudes about G&C. The respondents were neutral ($M=3$) to the statement that they sought a counselor's help when they had personal or emotional problems and; that concentrating on their studies helped them to resolve personal anxieties and concerns. They were also neutral ($M=3$) to the statement that they preferred counselling from friends over

counselors. These findings show that some of the students had negative attitudes toward G&C hence the average ratings for these statements.

Furthermore, the students were also neutral (M=3) to the statement that if they had to receive counselling services, they would not hide it and that seeking G&C services consumed a lot of time and effort (M=3). Moreover, the students were neutral (M=3) to the statement that going to see a counselor carried a burden of shame and stigma and; that it was difficult to talk about personal affairs with a counsellor. The students disagreed (M=2) with the statement that they would not recommend a friend with a problem to see a counsellor. The student also disagreed (M=2) that at no time in the future will they seek counselling help. They also disagreed (M=2) that they were not sure the counselors in the institution could maintain confidentiality. These findings show that the students had favourable attitudes towards G&C services which could enhance their propensity to seek assistance.

The interviews and FGDS were asked to point out the general students' attitudes towards G&C services. To this question, mixed responses were obtained. Whereas some students had positive attitudes regarding counseling services, others were not. Some saw it to be helpful while others saw it as something they could live without.

The attitudes of students towards G&C were dependent on feedback from their colleagues. To this end, what their colleagues said about these services influenced the propensity of students to see such services as helpful. If a student said that G&C were not worth the effort, then his/her friends could pick such attitudes.

Other significant persons in the life of a student such as teachers, parents, and role models could also influence the attitudes of students towards G&C services. Some students said that they preferred to keep things to themselves and were not willing to

share their secrets with counsellors since they had never seen any of the significant persons in their lives seeking or appreciating such help. Conversely, some had positive attitudes towards G&C due to help and support from the significant persons in their lives. Lastly, the findings from Pearson correlation showed that students' attitude towards guidance and counselling services ($r=-0.925$, $p<0.05$) had a statistically significant influence on students' wellness.

5.4 Conclusion

This section presents the conclusions of the study findings which are based on the objectives of the study.

5.4.1 Students' Perception about Guidance and Counselling Programs

The findings show that G&C enhanced holistic wellbeing of students in Public TVET institutions. The findings show there was a significant relationship between students wellness (the DV) and perception towards G&C Services ($r= 0.949$, $p>0.05$). Indeed, most students had favourable perceptions about G&C and saw counselors as being helpful to them in dealing with day-to-day challenges. It was a bulwark against negative behaviours such as alcohol abuse and other vices among students. It can thus be concluded that the perceptions of students towards guidance and counselling had improved significantly in TVET colleges.

5.4.2 Awareness of Counseling Needs

There was a significant relationship between students' wellness and awareness of counseling needs ($r=0.950$, $p<0.05$). To this end, most students were aware of the

role played by G&C in reigning in on the challenges they faced in their day-to-day lives. Indeed the findings are contrary to earlier studies that show that students tend to have a low level of awareness of their counselling needs. It can thus be concluded that there was a high level of awareness about G&C services in Kenya but this did not translate to enhanced uptake of such services in some instances.

5.4.3 Students' Access to Information about Guidance and Counselling

The findings show that there was a significant relationship between students' wellness (the DV) and access to information about G&C ($r=0.892$, $p<0.05$). Most of the students were aware of the existence of G&C services available in their college, and the types of services offered. There were also several sources of information about G&C services for the students with most of them obtaining information from school and education (school system), friends, and parents.

5.4.4 Students' Attitudes about Guidance and Counseling Services

There was a significant relationship between students' wellness (the DV) and students' attitude towards ($r=-0.925$, $p<0.05$). To this end, most of the students had favourable attitudes towards G&C services which could enhance their propensity to seek assistance. These attitudes were affected by significant persons in the life of a student such as teachers, parents, and role models. The positivity or negativity of students' attitudes towards G&C due to help and support from the significant persons in their lives. It can thus be concluded that students' attitudes affected their proclivity to seek G&C services which could go on to affect their wellness.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

5.5.1 Students' Perception about Guidance and Counselling Programs

There was a need for dedicated efforts aimed at strengthening the perceptions of students towards G&C services in Public TVET institutions. This could be done through regular sensitization on the need to seek timely G&C.

5.5.2 Awareness of Counseling Needs

There was a need to educate the students through dedicated interventions in the areas in their lives where they needed G&C. This could be done through the integration of topics on G&C in all areas of study. Parents and all significant persons in the lives of students should play key roles in enhancing the awareness of students on G&C services.

5.5.3 Students' Access to Information about Guidance and Counselling

Efficacy of the various channels through which students obtained information about G&C should be enhanced. TVET colleges should allocate resources for passing information on the G&C services at their disposal. Information on G&C should be integrated into the learning curriculum at all levels of study in the school system in Kenya to start sensitizing students on the importance of G&C from a tender age.

5.5.4 Students' Attitudes about Guidance and Counseling Services

Various measures should be put in place to ensure that students' attitudes towards G&C services remained positive. This could be through robust communication measures, involvement of parents as well as significant persons in the lives of students, seminars, and workshops on G&C and its importance among others. Advocacy campaigns by not-for-profit organizations could also come in handy.

5.6 Areas of Further Research

The study focused on the perception that college students in public TVET colleges in Nyeri County have towards G&C programs offered in their institutions. The following areas of further research are proffered:

- (i) There is a need for comparative studies focused on private TVET colleges in the county as well as in other parts of the country.
- (ii) In-depth studies on each of the variables under investigation in this study would also suffice.
- (iii) Lastly, studies focused on perceptions towards G&C in higher institutions such as universities and other middle-level colleges based on a desk review of extant literature as well as survey of other education stakeholders would also suffice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent

Study Title: Students' Perception of Counselling Services as their Wellness Intervention in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County

Principal Investigator: Ruth Kinyua Master's Student, Counseling Psychology Department, Africa Nazarene University

Email: ruthruita@yahoo.com

Please read this consent information carefully.

Dear Student,

My name is Ruth Ruita. I am a student of Africa Nazarene University, Main Campus Nairobi. I am conducting a survey on students' perception of counselling services as their wellness intervention in public TVET institutions in Nyeri County as part of a graduate thesis in Counseling Psychology. The participant must be fluent in the English language, and a full-time student in a Public TVET college within Nyeri County. I anticipate a total of 369 participants in the study.

The total time required to complete the study is between 10 and 15 minutes. You will be asked to provide some basic demographic information (e.g., gender, year in school) and answer survey questions about your perception of guidance and counseling services in your institution and related experience. Your responses to the questions are anonymous; please do not include your name. The results reported will be in aggregate; that is, I simply will report totals and not responses of individuals.

Your participation is totally voluntary; you can answer some, none, or all of the questions. If you do join the study and change your mind later, you may quit at any time without fear of penalty or loss of benefits by informing the researcher. There is no foreseen risk associated with participation in this study. One potential benefit from completing the survey(s) is that participants will gain a better understanding of their patterns of online gambling. I also anticipate that the results of the study will add to the growing body of literature on online gambling by college students.

Please try to answer all questions honestly and thoughtfully. You may choose to leave a question blank if necessary. All possible measures will be taken in order to keep your answers and identity from being traced back to you.

By completing this survey(s) you are consenting to participate in the research. When you are done, please place them in the box at the front of the room. I appreciate your time and thank you for your participation.

Appendix B: Students' Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS

Fill the blank spaces provided or tick where applicable.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

- a) *Gender:* () Male () Female
- b) *Age bracket:* () 18-20 years () 21-25 years () 26- 30 years () above 30 years
- c) *Level of Study :* () Craft () Artisan () Certificate () Diploma
- d) *Marital status?* Single () Married () Separated () Divorced ()

SECTION B: Perception towards Guidance and Counseling Services

1. In general, what is your perception about how effective professional counselors would be with helping a mental health consumer?

Positive [] Neutral [] Negative [] I don't know []

2. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1-5 where "1=Strong Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) and 5-Strongly Agree (SA)." Please tick where appropriate (√).

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
(i) There are many benefits of seeking guidance and counselling services					
(ii) Guidance and counselling is not a helpful way of discussing issues and solving problems					
(iii) Guidance and counselling only helps people with serious mental problems					
(iv) The guidance and counselling department is not able to address my problems					
(v) The teacher-counsellor is too busy to listen to my problems					
(vi) I am comfortable with the teacher-counsellor because of his/her religion					
(vii) I am comfortable with the teacher-counsellor because of his/her age					
(viii) The guidance and counselling team in the college do not observe client confidentiality					
(ix) The guidance and counselling office lacks the privacy and comfort required for effective counselling					
(x) The location of the guidance and counselling department is not conducive for seeking counselling services					

SECTION C: Awareness of Counseling Needs

3. Counselling needs are the student's needs/problems for which you may want to seek counselling in order to cope with them. The following are statements concerning your awareness of these needs. Please indicate by a tick (√) where you agree with the statement based on a scale of 1-5 where "1=Strong Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) and 5- Strongly Agree (SA)." Please tick where appropriate (√).

Counseling Need Among Students	SD	D	N	A	SA
(i) A college student reporting homesickness					
(ii) A student suffering from depression, feeling sad and empty most days, with little or no interest in what s/he once enjoyed, has problems with sleep, and can't concentrate					
(iii) A student with identity crises, poor self-esteem, loneliness, failure to adjust to college life					
(iv) A once bright student who begins to have a pattern of poor performance					
(v) A student experiencing job dissatisfaction and uncertainty about career choice.					
(vi) A student from a family unit reported communication problems, negative interactions, criticism, and withdrawal among family members.					
(vii) A student who abuses drugs and substances that impair his/her daily academic, occupational and social functioning.					
(viii) A student with persistent patterns of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity that affects his/her academic, occupational, and social functioning.					
(ix) A student whose relationships, romantic or otherwise are having problems including fights, verbal or physical abuse					
(x) A student having sexual relationships which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).					
(xi) A student exhibiting psychiatric symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized speech, besides being unable to meet ordinary demands of college life.					

SECTION D: Access to Information about Guidance and Counseling Services

4. Are you aware of the existence of guidance and counselling services available in your college, and the types of services offered? Yes No

5. If yes to question 1 above, where did you get information about guidance and counseling services? Common knowledge Movies School and education Friends Books TV Personal experience Internet Newspapers & Magazines Physician or nurse Guidance Counselor Seminars & Workshops

6. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding access to guidance and counselling services based on a scale of 1-5 where “1=Strong Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) and 5- Strongly Agree (SA).” Please tick where appropriate (√).

	SD	D	N	A	SA
(i) Information about guidance and counseling services in the college is easily accessible					
(ii) Information about guidance and counselling is frequently communicated to students					
(iii) Information about guidance and counselling is sufficient					
(iv) Access to information about guidance and counselling services influences the ability of students to seek such services					
(v) Guidance counsellor create forums for passing information on guidance and counselling					
(vi) The college has a guidance and counselling bulletin					
(vii) The college has either a website, blog or social media platforms for passing information on guidance and counselling services in the school					
(viii) Guidance and counselling rooms are clearly marked with information on visiting hours clearly indicated					

SECTION E: Students' Attitude towards Guidance and Counselling Services

7. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1-5 where “1=Strong Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) and 5- Strongly Agree (SA). “ Please tick where appropriate (√).

	SD	D	N	A	SA
(i) I seek counselor's help when I have personal or emotional problems					
(ii) I would not recommend a friend with a problem to see a counsellor					
(iii) At no time in the future will I seek counselling help					
(iv) Concentrating on my studies helps me to resolve personal anxieties and concerns					
(v) I would prefer counselling from a friend than a counsellor					
(vi) I would confide in a counsellor only if and when I have a crisis in my life					
(vii) I can overcome mental health problems by myself without a counselor's help					
(viii) If I had to receive counselling services, I would not hide it					

(ix)	Seeking guidance and counselling services consumes a lot of time and effort					
(x)	Going to see a counselor carries a burden of shame and stigma					
(xi)	It is difficult to talk about personal affairs with a counsellor					
(xii)	I am not sure the counsellors in the institution can maintain confidentiality					

SECTION F: Students' Wellness

8. Respond to the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree.

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
(i) Students who undergo counselling have enhanced physical well-being					
(ii) Counseling contributes to the mental well-being of students					
(iii) Counseling has positive contributions to the social well-being of students					
(iv) Students who undergo counselling relate better with other students, teachers, and the wider community					
(v) There is an undeniable link between guidance and counselling and the academic performance of students					
(vi) Counselling enables students to develop their individual potentialities to the greatest extent possible.					
(vii) My life has seen general improvement since I started undergoing counseling					

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix C: Counselors Interview Schedule

1. How do students' perception about guidance and counselling programs influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County? Please explain.
2. To what extent does students' awareness of the need for guidance and counselling influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County? Please explain.
3. What is the influence of students' access to information on their perception about counselling services in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County? Please explain.
4. In which ways do students' attitudes about guidance and counseling services influence their wellness in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County? Please explain.
5. How does counseling influence students' physical, mental and social wellness?
6. How does counselling affect students' academic performance and personal potentialities?

Appendix D: Student Leaders' Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. In general, what is the general students' perception of the need for guidance and counselling? Please explain.
2. What is students' level of awareness of their guidance and counseling needs? Please explain.
3. Are students aware of the existence of guidance and counselling services in the college, and the types of services offered? Please explain.
4. In general, where do students get information about guidance and counseling services?
5. What is the general students' attitude towards guidance and counselling services? Please explain.
6. How does counseling influence students' physical, mental and social wellness?
7. How does counselling affect students' academic performance and personal potentialities?

Appendix E: Research Authorization Letter



20th May, 2022

RE: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Ruth Ruita (**18J03DMCP017**) is a bonafide student at Africa Nazarene University, in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Counseling Psychology department. She has finished her course work and has defended her thesis proposal entitled: - *"Perception of Counseling Services as a Wellness Intervention for Students in Public TVET Institutions in Nyeri County"*.

Any assistance accorded to her to facilitate data collection and finish her thesis is highly welcomed.

Sincerely,




Dr. Titus Mwanthi.

Ag. DVC, Academic & Student Affairs

Appendix F: Research Permit


REPUBLIC OF KENYA



RESEARCH LICENSE

Ref No: 742922 **Date of Issue: 27/May/2022**

License No: NACOSTI/P/22/17914

Applicant Identification Number: 742922

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

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