

**GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN COUNSELLING SERVICES  
AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KENYA**

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STUDIES OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.



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## **DEDICATION**

This Thesis is dedicated to my father, the late Joseph Nyoro Muturi.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration .....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Appendices .....	vii
List of Tables .....	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
Operational Definition of Terms .....	x
Abbreviation and Acronyms.....	xii
Abstract.....	xiii

### CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0. Introduction .....	1
1.1. Statement of the Problem .....	7
1.2. Objectives of the Study .....	8
1.3. Research Questions .....	9
1.4. Justification and Significance of the Study .....	9
1.5. Scope and Limitations of the Study .....	11

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction .....	12
2.1. Students' Prevalence of Counselling Services at University .....	12
2.2. Gender and Counselling.....	15
2.3. Factors influencing Gender Preference of the Client .....	29
2.4. Issues that are taken to Male / Female Counsellors .....	34
2.5. Theoretical Framework .....	40
2.5.1. Person Centred Theory.....	41
2.5.2. Social Learning Theory.....	49
2.5.3. Conceptual Framework .....	58

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.0. Introduction .....	60
3.1. Research Design .....	60
3.2. Study Area .....	61
3.3. Target Population .....	63
3.4. Sampling Procedure .....	63
3.5. Research Instruments .....	67
3.5.1. Piloting of Research Instruments .....	68
3.5.2. Reliability .....	68
3.6. Data Collection.....	70
3.7. Data Analysis and Presentation .....	71
3.8. Ethical Considerations and Data Management .....	72

### **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

4.0. Introduction .....	74
4.1. Demographic Information of Participants in the Study .....	74
4.2. Gender of the Counsellor .....	79
4.3. Prevalence of Counselling Services in Kenyan Universities .....	80
4.3.1. Reasons Why Students Seek Counselling Services .....	90
4.3.2. Reasons why Students do not seek Counselling Services .....	96
4.3.3. Period When Students Seek Counselling Most .....	100
4.3.4. Academic Year Students Seek Counselling Services Most .....	101
4.3.5. Counsellors' and Students' Perceptions on the Number of Students Seeking Counselling Services .....	103
4.4. Students Preference of Male or Female Counsellors or any One of Them .....	106
4.5. Reasons why University Students Prefer Male or Female Counsellors .....	109
4.6. Factors that Influence the Gender Preference of the Counsellor by Client .....	113
4.6.1. Factors Students Considered Important When Seeking Counselling Services .....	114

4.6.2. Gender Factor of the Counsellor Considered Important by University Students in Counselling.....	116
4.6.3. Counsellors' and Students' Perceptions on Reasons that Make ...Students Prefer Women Counsellors .....	119
4.6.4. Counsellors' and Students' Perceptions on the Reasons that Make Students Prefer Male Counsellors .....	120
4.7. Issues taken to Male / Female Counsellors by University Students .....	121
4.7.1. Issues Students Discuss With University Female Counsellors .....	124
4.7.2. Issues That Students Discuss With University Male Counsellors .....	127
4.8. Views of Counsellors and Students on Ways to Enhance Gender Counselling in the University.....	131
4.9. Conclusion.....	133

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.0. Introduction .....	134
5.1. Summary of Research Findings .....	134
5.2. Conclusions of the Study.....	136
5.3. Study Recommendations.....	138
5.4. Areas for Further Research .....	139

<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>141</b>
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**APPENDICES**

Appendix I:	Student Questionnaire .....	155
Appendix II:	Questionnaire for Student Counsellors .....	163
Appendix III:	Interview Schedule for Students .....	169
Appendix IV:	Focus Group Discussion Guidelines .....	173
Appendix V:	Table for Determining Sample Size .....	174
Appendix VI:	Pilot Testing .....	175
Appendix VII:	University Students' Tests- Retest Scores .....	176
Appendix VIII:	Research Consent Form .....	178
Appendix IX:	Research Authorization .....	179

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1:	Sample Size .....	66
Table 3.2:	University Counsellors' Test Retest Scores .....	69
Table 3.2:	University Students' Test Retest Scores .....	70
Table 4.1:	Biographical Variables among University Students .....	75
Table 4.2:	Biographical Variables of University Counsellors.....	76
Table 4.3:	Reasons Why Students Seek Counselling Services. ....	90
Table 4.4:	Reasons why Students do not Seek Counselling Services .....	96
Table 4.5:	Period When Students Seek Counselling Most .....	100
Table 4.6:	Perceptions on Students with Issues who Seek Counselling ....	105
Table 4.7:	Students Preference of Male or Female Counsellor .....	109
Table 4.8:	Factors Students Considered Important When Seeking Help ...	114
Table 4.9:	Views of Students and Counsellors on the Existence of Gender Factor in Counselling .....	117
Table 4.10:	Opinions of Counsellors and Students on Reasons why Students Prefer Female Counsellors .....	119
Table 4.11.	Opinions of Counsellors and Students on the Reasons that Make Students Prefer Men Counsellor .....	120
Table 4.12:	Occurrence of Issues Students Would Discuss with a Male or Female in Counselling Process.....	121
Table 4.13:	Issues that Students discuss with University Female Counsellors .....	124
Table 4.14:	Issues that Students discuss With University Male Counsellors .....	128
Table 4:15:	Relationship between Gender of the Counsellor and Issues discussed with male / female students .....	130

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1.	Choice of Counsellor Gender .....	59
Figure 4.1:	Counsellors Responses on Prevalence for Counselling Services .....	80
Figure 4.2:	Students Responses on the prevalence for Counselling Services .....	81
Figure 4.3:	Opinions of Counsellors on Gender Seeking Counselling Services .....	84
Figure 4.4:	Opinions of Students on Gender Seeking Counselling Services .....	84
Figure 4.5:	Counsellors and Students Responses on Students' Frequency in Seeking Counselling .....	89
Figure 4.6:	Academic Year When Students Seek Counselling Services Most According to Counsellors .....	101
Figure 4.7:	Academic Year When Students Seek Counselling Services Most According to Students .....	102
Figure 4.8:	Students' Preference of Male or Female Counsellor according to Counsellors .....	107
Figure 4.9:	Students' Preference of Male or Female Counsellor according to Students.....	107
Figure 4.10:	The Gender Factors in Counselling According to Counsellors .....	116
Figure 4.11:	The Gender factors in Counselling According to Students .....	117

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Client	An individual who seeks help through counselling or psychological services or is referred for counselling or psychological services.
Counselling	A helping relationship in which a counsellor or psychologist assists a client to resolve personal issues.
Counsellor / Therapist	A person who conducts counselling.
Dyad	A group of two people.
Feminine	Having qualities or appearances traditionally associated with women.
Gender	Socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for males and females.
Gender Bias	Belief or attitude that one's gender is of higher power than the other.
Gender Counselling	Counselling process that identifies and acknowledges gendered structures and processes in the society, as well as how they affect men and women's lives.
Gender Role	The behaviour patterns and attitudes that are seen as appropriate or typical for a male or female of a specific society.

Gender Socialization	The process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one's gender.
Gender-stereotyping	Process by which children acquire the values, motives and behaviours viewed as appropriate for males and females within a culture.
Masculine	Having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men.
Self-Actualization	The tendency by all individuals to move forward, grow and reach their fullest potential.
Sex	Biological difference between females and males.
Social Desirability	Tendency for participants to respond in a self-enhancing manner.
Utilization	Help seeking behaviour in which the services of the mental health system are used.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AA	Alcoholic Anonymous
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AT	Actualizing Tendency
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GOK	Government of Kenya
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JKUAT	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
KCA	Kenya Counselling Association
KEMU	Kenya Methodist University
KIPC	Kenya Institute of Professional Counselling
LR	Likert Rating
MKU	Mount Kenya University
PCT	Person Centred Theory
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SA	Strongly Agree
SD	Strongly Disagree
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPR	Unconditional Positive Regard

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates gender perspectives in counselling among university students in Kenya. Due to changes in traditional social set up, individuals have been alienated from their extended family and community that provided the necessary support system, thus an increase in the number of people, both males and females seeking professional therapy. University students who are largely young adults experience emotional and psychological challenges that require counselling. The objectives of this study were: to establish prevalence of students seeking counselling services in universities, investigate the gender preference of students seeking counselling services, investigate factors that influence the gender preference of the counsellor by the client, to determine the issues that are taken to men/women counsellors by either gender, and, suggest recommendations for gender counselling. The study is guided by Person Centred and Social Learning Theories. The study applied descriptive survey research design using quantitative and qualitative data. Stratified, simple random and purposive sampling methods were used to sample three universities, 310 students and seven student counsellors. Data was collected using questionnaires, in-depth interview schedules and Focus Group Discussions Guide. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and is presented in Tables, Pie charts and Bar graphs. For qualitative data, emerging patterns of the content analysis is presented thematically according to research objectives. The study reveals that students are faced with many counselling issues such as academic, psychological, social, personal, economic, health, physical, vocational and spiritual. However, only 35% of students with issues in both private and public universities seek counselling services. The findings also reveal huge gender discrepancies among university counsellors where 57% are women compared to 43% men. The study reveals gender discrepancy among students seeking counselling in the universities where more female students than males seek counselling services according to 86% counsellors and 97% students. Factors which influence gender preference of the counsellor by the client include: nature of issues to be addressed by either gender, communication skills, previous counselling experience of the student, methods used and availability of any gender of the counsellor. The study findings reveal that 54% of students prefer female counsellors as compared to 27% that prefer male counsellors. Female counsellors are preferred for being caring, nurturing and understanding. Issues that students discuss with university male counsellors are academic, family, personal, peer relationship, economic and physical problems. Issues that male and female students discuss with university female counsellors are psychological, social, spiritual, and education/academic challenges. The study recommends that: university counsellors should initiate vigorous campaign to encourage male/female students to seek for counselling services. Intake counsellors should be gender sensitive and allocate the preferred gender according to presenting problems.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.0. Introduction

Counselling is a suitable form of help for a variety of personal challenges for example depression (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; McLeod, 2003a; Palmer, 2010; Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2004). Counselling is mostly dedicated to enhancing or restoring client's own self-understanding, decision making resources, risk-taking and personal growth. Counselling in different forms and interpretations has existed in societies for long (Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2004; Wango 2015). People in all societies and at all times have experienced emotional or psychological distress and behaviour problems. Effectiveness of counselling is determined by the compatibility between the counsellor and client, and gender plays a great role in this compatibility (McLeod, 2003a; Palmer, 2010).

Gender is an important variable in the diagnosis and treatment of a variety of psychological symptoms and mental disorders, for example, depression (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; McLeod, 2013; Nadelson and Notman, 2005). Scholars in counselling, psychotherapy and gender place emphasis on gender as an important component in therapy (American Psychological Association, 2013; Wango, 2015). Gender is also mediated by psychosocial factors, the physiological and metabolic differences between men and women (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and thus an important

aspect of therapy. Gender, as a concept, encompasses “culturally determined cognitions, attitudes and belief systems about females and males; varies across cultures, changes through historical times and differs in terms of who makes the observations and judgments” (Worell and Remer, 1992:58). Therefore, gender influences the client’s choice of counsellor as well as the sequence and content of the clinical material shared in counselling. It also affects the diagnosis, treatment selection, and length of treatment and ultimately the outcome of therapy (Nadelson and Notman, 2005). This study endeavours to investigate the factors that influence client’s choice for a counsellor of a particular gender among university students.

Every person has preferences for and opinions about most aspects of life, including psychotherapy (Sue and Sue, 1999). The influence of gender is very immense (McLeod, 2013) and many people have preferences for the therapist from whom they seek therapy, including the gender of therapist. Stevens and Smith (1995) and Unger (2001) assert that essential differences exist between males and females based upon decades of research and documentation. Men and women perceive, process, and behave differently and regardless of whether those experiences are inherent or learned, gender is one way individuals frame their world and society at large. Stevens and Smith further point out that a counsellor's belief about gender impacts on their approach when working with men and women, regardless of sexual orientation and that counsellors’ should examine their own worldview, not only as cultural beings, but as gendered beings. Understanding human development from a gender perspective is an

important conceptual window to consider in order to provide accurate assessments and counselling approaches to various clients.

Good and Dell (1990) point out that gender and counselling in the contemporary society will require counselling professionals to understand the impact of gender and the way in which society is defined, organized, socialized and functions. This argument is in agreement with McLeod (2003a and 2003b) who incorporates gender as an important component in therapy and in research respectively. Gender related belief systems influence therapeutic decisions and behaviour during counselling if gender schemas are salient for a counsellor. For example, display of emotions plays an important role for many counsellors. Therefore, this study investigates gender perspectives in counselling services among university students.

Past research on clients' preference for gender of the counsellor has indicated that women are more likely than men to state a preference (Landes, 2009). For instance, Landes (2009) classified problems of the clients as either gender-neutral or gender-specific. Gender-neutral problems affect both men and women and are independent of the individual such as depression, anxiety or phobias. Gender-specific problems are those experienced mostly experienced by members of a certain gender. Issues such as pregnancy, abortion and birth are directly experienced by women. Many women tend to be convinced that it is more difficult for a man to empathize with certain issues that are gender specific. This is also true for women who are expected to empathize with men

issues such as erectile dysfunction (Horner, 1992). Rogers (1961) argues that empathizing with a client makes up a major portion of therapy work and those counsellors who immerse themselves in their clients' experience "walk miles in their shoes" and this would appear not to have any gender connotations.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, middle and upper class white women were expected to be frail, weak and to faint regularly as this was considered very feminine and desirable (Greenspan, 1988). This is in agreement with Social Learning Theory adopted in this study. Golombok and Fivush (2004) contend that men and women receive positive reinforcement when they behave in ways appropriate to their gender and negative reinforcement for behaving otherwise. Greenspan (1988) argues that men, more than women, are both socialized to see themselves as authorities and institutionally encouraged to become them. Women, more than men, are socialized to see their problems as emotional in origin and to be willing to report them to male authorities. Such women are likely to choose men counsellors.

In traditional African societies, various forms of social services were provided for by the community to all people, from an early age so that they could grow into productive members of society (Azibo, 2003; UNESCO, 1998; Wango and Mungai 2007). Children, young people and adults were socialised into the community through history, proverbs, riddles, oral narratives, songs and dances especially during initiation. However, the change of social set up in many African societies has alienated individuals, especially students, from their

extended families and the community that provided the necessary support system (Wango and Mungai, 2007). This has led to an increase in the number of people seeking formal counselling services in various sectors including learning institutions, both public and private (Landes, 2009).

Data obtained from Kenya Institute of Professional Counselling (KIPC) demonstrates that clients will state a preference of the gender of the counsellor and are comfortable when this is honoured. For example, between 2006 and 2010, 4,500 clients sought for counselling services. It is notable that 80% women clients sought services of female counsellors, while 60% men clients sought services of male counsellors. However, this was not an empirical study and no factors were given for the preferences. Wango (2006) in a study on guidance and counselling in secondary schools noted the tendency to appoint female counsellors rather than males. Thus, there was need for this clarification as to whether students have a gender preference. This study further investigates this phenomenon.

When Kenya attained independence, the then President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta identified illiteracy as one of the major challenges facing the country (Kiruthu, Kapiyo and Maina, 1996). The Report of the Kenya Education Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1964) was mandated to look into ways of improving education in Kenya. The Commission recommended that students be given courses in education and training best fitted to their needs and provided with advice on careers and openings for employment (Republic of Kenya, 1964).

Career counselling was later to be a major part of the school guidance and counselling programme (Mutie and Ndambuki, 2004; Wango, 2006; Wango and Mungai, 2007).

In spite of the implementation of the commission's report, counselling in universities continues to face challenges (Nyaga, 2011). As indicated in the Sessional Paper No. 1 (Republic of Kenya, 2005), the rapid expansion of university education had several challenges such as mismatch between skills acquired by university graduates and the demands in the industry, admission and students' credit transfers. Thus, although university education was expanding to cater for the increasing demand of the qualified applicants, there was no corresponding growth in the country's economy to absorb the graduates. This calls for social psychological and career counselling. On the other hand, in spite of the massive expansion, gender and regional imbalances have shaped and continue to shape the development of higher education in Kenya as in other African countries (Ngome, 2003). Areas of concern in gender include counselling psychology and hence this study. Students in institutions of higher learning also seek assistance in therapy to enable them cope with life and this is the concern of this study. The utilisation of counselling psychological services assists students individually and in groups to develop academic, social and personal competencies as well as cope with interpersonal issues (Frank and Karn, 2005; Sikolia and Lutomia, 2002).

Biswalo (1996) contends that the need for counselling services today could be due to the ever-growing complexity of the society and people have to learn how to cope with the upcoming challenges. The complexities and challenges of everyday living are experienced by all persons, both adults and students, in developed and developing countries (Wango, 2015). There are increasing social, economic, personal and even educational challenges in the modern society (Biswalo, 1996; Wango, 2015). The unprecedented expansion of educational institutions especially first generation learners create a number of psychological problems that are personal, vocational and social and hence a need for counselling (Nyaga, 2011). This is because, as argued by Frank and Karyn (2005), university undergraduate students are young adults and hence a need for counselling services. This study is an investigation of the extent to which the choice of therapist can be utilised to assist both male and female students in therapy.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

University students as young adults experience emotional and psychological challenges that require counselling. Such include academic and personal challenges. Some students are admitted to universities with very high grades but end up being discontinued because of low academic achievement. Various studies conducted in Kenya indicate poor utilisation of counselling services by university students. Students who seek counselling services are counselled by the counsellor on duty irrespective of his/her gender yet such students do not discuss some issues with a certain gender. This is contributing to fewer

students seeking counselling services. Universities in Kenya have made considerable progress in setting up administrative structures and programmes for provision of guidance and counselling services, but as highlighted in the Vice- Chancellors' Committee Report counselling services seem not to be making much impact in dealing with students' challenges in the higher learning institutions. This could be due to various reasons among them lack of gender sensitivity in counselling. It is in this context that this study sought to establish the gender perspectives in counselling among university students.

## **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were:

1. To establish the prevalence of students seeking counselling services in universities.
2. To investigate students' preference of the gender of the counsellor in universities.
3. To investigate factors which influence the gender preference for the counsellor by the client.
4. To determine the issues that are taken to male/female counsellors by either gender.
5. To offer suggestions on how counselling in universities can be enhanced from a gender perspective.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of students seeking counselling services in universities?
2. Which gender of the counsellor do students seeking counselling services in universities prefer?
3. What factors influence the gender preference for the counsellor by the client?
4. What are the issues that are taken to male/female counsellors by either gender?
5. What strategies can be adopted for gendered counselling?

### **1.4. Justification and Significance of the Study**

This researcher's interest in this study has its origin in her work as a teacher and counsellor, having worked in various secondary schools, counselling institutions and universities where she was involved in teaching and counselling students. She also headed the guidance and counselling department in a secondary school for twelve years. From this wide experience, the researcher realised that there were some issues that students were not comfortable sharing with her or other female teachers and counsellors but would easily be resolved by male teachers/counsellors and vice versa.

The Koech Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1999) report observed that most students especially female students were not very comfortable when seeking

help from a counsellor of the other gender. The commission recommended that learners be counselled by counsellors of their gender unless they make special request to the contrary. A research by Macharia (1991) argued that clients who received their preferred counsellor had more favourable outcome than those with less preferred counsellors. All this motivated this researcher to investigate the importance of the gender of the counsellor in counselling clients, especially since the Vice- Chancellors' Committee Report (2000) indicated that counselling services did not make an impact.

Counselling remains an important intervention in young person's life as they have to adjust to ever demanding situations as they also grow. University life is one dynamic reality students have to face and often, the search for counselling services is a rational option. This study is thus of value as it illuminates on some key issues surrounding counselling in universities. This study can be used to provide information to intake counsellors on the importance of allocating the preferred gender of their client so as to enable the client to receive adequate help. The study can provide information to the students on the need to be attended to by a counsellor of their preferred gender. This study, therefore, provides fundamental information for reference on the importance of gender in dealing with various psychological issues of clients. This will boost counselling services as clients are likely to heal if they get the preferred gender.

### **1.5. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study involved three universities in Kenya namely: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya Methodist University and Mount Kenya University. This could limit the generalization of findings to all universities in Kenya with the number of universities and constituent colleges having increased to 65 as at 2014 (Commission for University Education, 2014). A major limitation of this study was that some of the research participants had never sought counselling services and were therefore not real clients in a practical counselling session. However, their responses were compared with data obtained through in-depth interview and focus group discussions with students who had attended counselling. In addition, information obtained from students was compared with data from university students' counsellors who had been involved in practical counselling of students. Data from university counsellors consisted of information on why students sought counselling services, and also why certain students could have refrained from seeking similar services. This was important to harmonise the data from students seeking services, as well as those who could have failed to seek helping, and thus the study can suggest interventions to enhance student counselling services at university.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0. Introduction**

The purpose of this review is to examine pertinent research and theories in the area of gender and counselling, specifically clients' choice of gender of a counsellor. The chapter reviews the prevalence of students seeking counselling services in universities, their preference of the gender of the counsellor, the factors influencing such gender preference and issues taken to male / female counsellors.

#### **2.1. Students' Prevalence of Counselling Services at University**

Transition to university life can be stressful for all students (Julal, 2013). Studying at university is associated with experiencing significant stressors (Atwarter, 2003). Students experience major changes in academic demands from pre-higher education institutions and are faced with difficulties concerning their finances, finding employment and maintaining their personal relationships (Julal, 2013). Such stressors can have major effects on the student experience, such as negative academic performance (Harding, 2011; Mertler and Vannatta, 2005), inability to progress, decision to remain at university and overall psychological well-being (Bennett and Bigfoot-Sipes, 1991). Research shows that psychological well-being in students' decreases significantly just before starting university to the first semester (Slaa and Barkham, 2010). At this time, many of the negative effects will be experienced. Deficits in ability

to cope will have negative consequences for students' university experience and psychological well-being. Students will attempt to cope with their problems by seeking support from help services such as counselling provided by their respective institution. Most universities offer social support to students in form of counselling, financial assistance, health and academic. The Commission for University Education (2013) includes counselling as an essential service that must be provided to students in higher education and as a condition for accreditation of an institution. The provision of these services is thought to increase the likelihood of students continuing with their courses. Thus, counselling is a significant service (Biswalo, 1996; Commission for University Education, 2013; Wango, 2015).

The purpose of counselling services is to assist and support students with the transition to university life particularly those who experience psychosociological problems that could be potentially disruptive to their academic, inter-personal and campus adjustments (International Association of Students Affairs and Services Professionals, 2001). This purpose acknowledges the responsibility and obligation of universities to have counselling services available to all students. There exists a substantial body of research which suggests that the degree to which counselling as an effective helping relationship is not independent of counsellor characteristics such as age and gender (Landes, 2009; Patterson, 1984; Ruth, 1998). A major characteristic that is the concern of this study is gender perspectives in counselling. In that case, the degree to which clients are helped is often influenced by the characteristics

of their counsellors, such as counsellor gender. This marked the commencement of this study with an aim of finding out the extent to which gender of the counsellor influences therapeutic practise among university students.

It has been documented that only a minority of university students who experience psychological distress seek professional counselling (Khan and Williams, 2003; Raunic and Xenos, 2008). A study by Raunic and Xenos (2008), on utilisation of counselling services rate by local and international students in America, found out that only a very small percentage of between 2% and 4% of university students accessed counselling services with females being more likely to use them than males. A study by Wachira (2012) indicates poor utilisation of counselling services by Kenyan university students and this is in agreement with the Vice Chancellors Committee Report (2000) that stated that counselling services may not have had the desired effect in dealing with challenges. Knowledge about the proportion, issues and gender of students who use university counselling services is an important preliminary consideration in evaluating the effectiveness of such services (Morgan, Ness and Robinson, 2003). Some studies have reported gender differences in the utilisation rates (Cornell, 2003). This study sought to establish the utilisation rates of both gender among university students in Kenya.

Nicholas (1997) in a study of patterns of utilization of counselling services among university students, says that while most of the students who sought

counselling at the University Counselling Centre were first year students, a relatively small percentage of them actually indicated a need for such assistance. This was attributed to the first year students getting assistance from peer facilitators during the eight day orientation period especially for academic concerns.

Nelson and Dore (2004) sought to understand the one year counselling centre utilization rates and presented concerns of international students in order to identify relevant topics for outreach programming. Yi, Lin, and Kishimoto (2003) examined subgroup differences among international students relating to reasons for seeking counselling, referral sources and self-reported concerns. Academics, anxiety, and depression were major concerns for international students. Undergraduates worried more about their grades than graduate students did, whereas graduate students were more likely to report love relationship problems. It can therefore be established that students have issues that could be resolved in helping in form of counselling (Atwarter, 2003; Julal, 2013) and could thus seek help. However Yi, Lin and Kishimoto (2003) did not establish the prevalence of counselling services by gender, a gap that this study sought to fill.

## **2.2. Gender and Counselling**

Every person has preferences for and opinions about most aspects of life including counselling and psychotherapy (Stigall, 2006). Many people have preferences for the particular therapists for a variety of reasons such as gender,

class, race or ethnicity (McLeod, 2013). According to Stigall (2006), therapists, just like teachers and doctors, are not created equal. Stigall emphasizes the need for clients to make their own choices. Preferences for specific characteristics can influence the relationship that clients have with their therapist. Such preferences can influence the outcomes of therapy. For example, a particular client or group of clients can have very definite expectations about what they need and whom they seek to offer assistance. Liddle (1996) found that many gay and lesbian clients placed a great deal of time and effort into finding an 'affirmative' therapist and this includes gender. Thus, this study sought to establish the importance of gender of counsellor in a counselling relationship.

Gender is an important factor which influences help-seeking behaviour (McLeod, 2003a; McLeod, 2013; Turner, 1981; Ussher and Nicolson, 1992). McLeod (2013) states that the counsellor invokes a key category in relation to the client, the gender of the therapist. There are other considerations. For example, women are likely more than men, to seek help and to show positive attitudes towards help seeking (Komiya, Good and Sherrod, 2000). Women are more tolerant of the stigma associated with seeking professional help, more willing to recognize their need for help and more open to disclose their problems. This perhaps could explain why Kennel and Agrestic (1995) found a greater reluctance to report cases of sexual abuse among male than female clients. In this line, Russell, Thompson and Rosenthal (2008) report that most of the students who sought help from a counselling centre were females.

Mahalik and Addis (2003) explain these gender differences in help seeking by the effect of masculine ideologies acquired from society. According to such masculine ideologies, men are supposed to be tough and strong enough to handle their problems and not to express their emotions (Mahalik and Addis, 2003). Expression of emotions is considered a sign of weakness.

Stevens and Smith (1995) asserts that differences exist between men and women based upon decades of research and documentation. Men and women perceive, process and behave differently and regardless of whether those experiences are inherent or learnt, gender is one way that individuals frame their world and society at large. Stevens and Smith (1995) points out that a counsellor's belief about gender impacts on his/her approach when working with men and women, regardless of gender and calls upon counsellors to examine their own world view, not only as cultural beings but as gendered beings. Understanding human development from a gender perspective is an important conceptual window to consider so as to provide assessments on accurate treatment approaches. Male and female therapists will view clients' life experiences differently particularly if the experiences are gender specific (Shapiro, 1993), and hence the necessity to establish factors that influence client's preference for a specific gender.

There are differences of opinion about the importance of therapist experience, with some studies showing that experience is an important variable and that it interacts with gender. Thus, the gender of a less experienced therapist has a

more negative impact on outcome than the gender of a more experienced therapist. Some studies reveal that both men and women prefer therapists of their own gender. Mayer (1992) suggests that males are more likely to be referred to a male therapist and that female therapists get fewer referrals of male patients. These findings imply that gender stereotypes continue to operate. It is apparent that gender is an important treatment variable and that attention to gender effects, together with better understanding of the complex interaction of gender and other variables, will shed light on the therapeutic process and contribute to greater therapeutic effectiveness (Mayer, 1992).

Butler (1985) contends that in the halls of Alcoholic Anonymous (AA), there is a general agreement that men should be counselled by men and women by women. Many heterosexual new comers are discouraged from socializing with members of the other gender entirely because romance can create quite a distraction from the bigger job of getting and staying sober. Thus in an AA setting, females will be assigned female therapists and vice versa. Butler (1985) contends that professionals must be sensitive to gender issues, being aware that men and women approach communication, listening and problem solving differently. If a client prefers a counsellor of a particular gender, the counsellor should explore the thoughts behind the preference and then assign the most appropriate counsellor gender (Butler, 1985). This study investigates the gender of the counsellor among students and how this would improve therapeutic services at university.

Sneil (2002) carried out a study on the impact of counsellor and participant gender on willingness to discuss relational topics. The study examined people's willingness to disclose personal information about their intimate relationship with counsellors. This was accomplished by asking 431 students to indicate how willing they would be to discuss 25 relationship topics as measured by Relationship Disclosure Scale with female and male counsellors. Results indicated that people's willingness to discuss their intimate relationships with counsellors depended on their own gender, gender of the counsellor and the particular relationship topics assessed by the Relationship Disclosure Scale. In addition several personality variables associated with relational esteem and relational consciousness were found to be associated with women's willingness to engage in relationship disclosure with male and female counsellors. These findings underscore the impact of gender on counselling, thus the need for further investigation especially among university students as this could explain their willingness to seek counselling services.

Hill (1987) carried a study to examine the impact of counsellor's gender and level of experience on the counselling relationship. Hill used these variables in actual counselling dyads for an analysis of the amount of verbal activity of the client. Taped portions of the early, middle and late sessions were analyzed noting the amount of verbal activity with 12 men and 12 women counsellors varying in the amount of professional experience and counselling 48 clients. The results suggested that women clients / counsellor pairings produced a significantly greater amount of verbal activity than other men pairings. At the

conclusion of therapy, a client satisfaction instrument revealed that across the experience variable, women counsellors were rated highest. The inexperienced women and the experienced women counsellors were all rated higher than the experienced men showing that women preferred women counsellors, whether experienced or not. It is therefore possible that more clients, even among university students, could prefer a female counsellor but this requires to be established with greater levels of certainty and hence the study.

Harris (2001) points out that both male and female children are bisexual. Either can choose a male or female therapist. Both begin with a strong sexual attraction to their mother. This attraction typically persists in males and results in heterosexual development. However, because of this strong attraction toward his mother, the male child also imagines his mother as a love object and has erotic fantasies about her. Likewise although penis envy cause the female child to turn from the mother to the father, the strong positive feelings she has toward her mother are not completely abandoned because male and female children identify with both their mothers and fathers, thus possess both masculine and feminine characteristics and can choose either therapist (Olson, 2000). This study investigates the actual client preference among university students in response to Brown (1956) and other scholars.

Palmer and Gladeana (2000) carried out a research on children and concluded that during early development in all cultures, the mother remains the primary care giver of young children. Therefore, the earliest bond is more likely to be

made with her. The mother becomes the primary identification figure in early childhood for boys and girls. As girls grow up the same identification will not change in order to conform to the feminine gender identity. They learn maternal identification. But for the boy to consolidate masculine identity, he must shift himself from primary identification with the female figure. This is a complex process of separation from either attachment but necessary in development of masculine identity disorder in American males (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). These findings contradict Mezzano's (1989) findings but agree with Fabricant's (1988) research, an area that this study investigates.

Atkinson and Poston (1998) found that females preferred seeking help from counsellors of their own gender. In their study, female participants were likely to seek counsellors of their own gender whereas male participants preferred opposite-gendered counsellors. However, a person's preference for counsellor gender could change depending on the problem type for which the individual seeks help (Atkinson, 1998). Boulware and Holmes (1970) found that male counsellors were preferred by both female and male students. But Atkinson and Poston (1998) found that both gender preferred seeking help from counsellors of their own gender for career problems, and this study sought to clarify the specific gender perspectives among university students.

Banikiotes and Merluzzi (1981) examined the impact that gender role of counsellors had on female participants in regard to their preferences and

feelings of comfort in seeking counselling for certain problems. Female participants were asked to review descriptions of four types of counsellors: traditional female, traditional male, egalitarian female and egalitarian male (Banikiotes and Merluzzi, 1981). The description of the traditional counsellors indicated that they participated in activities that were considered typical for their gender, enjoyed activities with their same-gender child, and met their spouse in an "unequal status situation" (Banikiotes and Merluzzi, 1981). However, the description of the egalitarian counsellors stated that they participated in activities that were not considered to be typical for their gender, enjoyed activities with their children of both gender, and met their spouse in an "equal status situation" (Banikiotes and Merluzzi, 1981). Further, the participants were asked to rate their level of comfort in discussing a variety of listed problems with each of the types of counsellors described and to complete a measure to assess their perceptions of the counsellors described (Banikiotes and Merluzzi 1981). The results indicated that participants felt more comfortable discussing various problems with female counsellors and egalitarian counsellors. Moreover, participants perceived female egalitarian counsellors as experts and viewed female traditional counsellors as least expert.

Sue and Lam (2002), studied how gender preference affected treatment processes and outcome. In their study, 203 clients with major depressive disorder were selected and were asked which gender of counsellor they preferred. Then, they all received 14 - 15 sessions of treatment as an

opportunity to interact with their counsellors. Some of them had counsellors of their preferred gender and others had counsellors whose gender was different from their preference. The researchers did not find significant difference on therapy outcome between matched and mismatched groups. Clients who had counsellors of their preferred gender were not more significantly different than clients who did not have counsellors of their preferred gender in therapy process and outcome. In addition, the matched and mismatched groups did not differ in client-rated counsellor empathy. However, in the Sue and Lam study, all clients were volunteers and were eager to participate yet Palmer and Gladeana (2000) point out the importance of gender in therapy. Thus, the results might be applicable only to clients who volunteer and thus are eager to engage in therapy, whereas this study included students who may not have considered therapy.

Bernstein and Hofmann (1987) carried out an investigation of male and female clients' expressed preferences for gender of their counsellor. The study addressed two major comparisons: clients with a preference for therapist gender versus those without a preference, and clients with a preference for a male therapist versus those with a preference for a female therapist. Results indicates significant relationships among gender of the client, gender of the intake counsellor, whether or not clients express a preference, and whether they express a preference for a male or female counsellor. Results also suggested an influence of the gender of the intake counsellor. With a focus on the importance of gender roles in counselling, feminist counselling purports the

same gender counselling dyads. Giving a rationale for this approach, Koile and Bird (1970) noted that women counsellors should be able to understand and empathize with women clients far better than men counsellors. In terms of preferences, women clients who were aware of the dynamics of gender role stereotyping and were against the oppressive role of the men dominated society would prefer to seek a relationship with a feminist-oriented female counsellor. However, no specific reasons were provided for this preference, and yet such rationale could be important among students seeking therapy and thus this study.

Palmer and Gladeana (2000) points out that one of the most important issues in therapy is the gender of the counsellor vis-à-vis the client. Many female counsellors will not take on male clients for fear of male mental or physical violence but also because they feel that women have been doing men's emotional 'work' for them for centuries and would rather concentrate their energies on women who have usually been giving rather than getting emotional support. Many female clients will choose to have a female counsellor who will also have grown up as a female in a male oriented society with whom they would feel comfortable in opening up (palmer and Gladeana, 2000).

Banikiotes and Merluzzi, (1981) reported that women expressed "overwhelming" preference for the female egalitarian counsellor. Not only do some clients make gender a priority in choosing a therapist but also some therapists make gender-based recommendations for clients. For example, some

women victims of sexual abuse find it difficult to work with men and hence, some counsellors suggest that female therapists should counsel them (McCarthy and Holiday, 2004). Gelso and Fretz (1992) suggests that therapists of the same gender should treat adolescents because sexual issues are so pressing, embarrassing and intrusive at adolescent stage that gender conflicts can interfere with therapeutic progress. This is important for young adults at universities and thus the need for this investigation in Kenyan universities.

Howard and Orlinsky (1980) examined the satisfaction and preferences of 118 women outpatients in a mental health clinic. All subjects had participated in at least five counselling sessions and all completed a structured response questionnaire concerning their thoughts of the benefit of treatment they had so far received. In their assessment of treatment, the clients found counselling sessions with the nine women counsellors to be more satisfying than sessions with 18 men counsellors. The results of Howard and Orlinsky (1980) are similar to Koile and Bird's (1970) when examining women client preferences. However, no reasons were given on what made the session's successful, information that this study investigates.

Rhoda and Crawford (1996) carried out a research on the impact of counsellor's characteristics and its influence on therapist's selection and recommended that females select a female therapist. Lemon and Porter (1990) contend that a greater number of similarities between client and therapist are associated with a more satisfactory therapeutic outcome. Female therapists can

provide role models of strong effective professionals for their clients (Greenspan, 1988). Females have also been found to express feelings in interactions with male clients than male therapists. This and other studies conclude that the choice of counsellor is important and beneficial to the client. This study aims at investigating the extent to which seeking help and the choice of therapist can enhance therapeutic alliance among university students. Withers and Wantz (1993) predicted that, for the female client, counsellor-trainees who endorsed feminist attitudes more strongly, as compared to those who did not, make more external attributions as to the locus of the problem and gave a more positive prognosis. They also gave a greater helpfulness score for a female than a male professional helper, and recommend a female counsellor as a primary treatment agent. Blier and Atkinson (1987) reports that their female clients preferred to be counselled by feminist counsellors for personal concerns, male counsellors for assertiveness concerns, and androgynous counsellors for academic concerns. Mogul (1982) assessed the effects of counsellor and client gender and counsellor gender role on clients' perceptions. Mogul concluded that the counsellor's role and subject gender had a greater impact on client's perception than gender of the counsellor. Mogul reported that male clients not only experienced the greatest satisfaction with counsellor of feminine sex-role orientation but also had the highest regard for counsellors of masculine gender-role orientation. However, Mogul's findings did not provide significant degree of preference for gender choice of counsellor, an area that this study investigates

Kirshner (1998) studied a large number of counsellor-client matches in short-term individual counselling and found that female clients showed greater responsiveness and that greater client satisfaction and self-rated improvement occurred with female counsellors. More improvement was seen in attitudes toward careers, academic motivation, academic performance and family relations. Kirshner reported that the female clients of female counsellors were less likely to describe their counsellors as competent than were the clients of other gender. When counsellors' experience and gender were considered, more experienced counsellors seemed to have better therapeutic results and showed fewer gender effects than did less experienced counsellors. Counsellor's experience is an important variable which interacts with gender. The gender of a less experienced counsellor has a more negative impact on outcome than the gender of a more experienced counsellor. Less experienced female counsellors do better with women than with less experienced male counsellors. This study sought to investigate whether the same applies in long-term individual counselling.

Njoya (2009) carried out a study of the composition of Kenyan masculinity so as to evaluate how this determines men-women relationship. The study did not find any traces of masculinity that justifies the establishment of male dominance, in other words all common ideas of masculinity have male dominance embedded in them (Njoya, 2009). The study covered all ethnic, class and racial diversity and discovered that Kenyan masculinity contains the defects of male dominance. Njoya concludes by saying that even if all women

liberation movements were to close shop, men should persist with dismantling patriarchy and deconstructing masculinity in order to save themselves, humanity and the environment (Njoya, 2009).

Davies (2010) carried out a research in an American university on barriers to seeking help in counselling. Seven Focus Group Discussions at a university campus were formed to identify college men's health concerns and barriers to seeking help. Results of the study revealed that college men were aware that they had important health needs but took little action to address them. The participants identified both physical and emotional health concerns. For example, men's life expectancy is seven years less than women's and men engage in fewer health promoting behaviours and have less healthy lifestyles than women. Men are less likely than women to seek medical care. Men are also less likely to perform testicular cancer self-examinations than women are to perform breast self-examination (Davies, 2010).

The Davies (2010) study found that young men of traditional college age (between 15 and 25 years) have distinctive health threats and are more likely than women to engage in risk taking behaviours. Men are more likely than women to use drugs and alcohol, to engage in risky behaviours like having multiple sex partners and having sex while under the influence of alcohol and also drive dangerously. Death by suicide was four to eight times higher for men than women. The study identified alcohol and substance abuse as the most important issues for men. The greatest barrier to seeking services was the

men's socialization to be independent and conceal vulnerability and gender role stereotypes (Wango, 2006). This study seeks to investigate the gendered factors that influence University students in choice of counsellors.

Gelso and Fretz (1992) contend that preferences are dynamic and work at different cognitive levels. However, because of this multidimensionality of preference, a person can opt for a number of characteristics at the same time. A time factor is also related to both deciding and preferences. Persons repeat the act of deciding again and again as they get new information and new experiences. As a result of this, preferences develop, evolve and change as time passes. Hence knowing a person's preferences at one point in time is not sufficient to fully understand their preferences hence this study.

### **2.3. Factors influencing Gender Preference of the Client**

One of the first theories of gender preferences for counsellors was proposed by Brown (1956). Brown's contention was that clients' preferences for counsellors were entirely based on the masculine over the feminine gender roles. Regardless of the gender of the client, the male was the preferred one due to the perceived advantages of the male role in the culture at that time. Brown stated that their identification with the male was a phenomenon beginning at earlier age and tended to be persistent through one's lifetime. Most clients at the time tended to choose male counsellors. Brown's hypothesis was examined by Koile and Bird (1970) who carried out a research on first years in a teacher's college. Their findings were inconsistent with Brown in that male

preferred male counsellors and females preferred female counsellors. Koile and Bird's research provided no information on factors that influence clients to choose a counsellor of a particular gender, a gap that this study investigates.

Previous studies have determined numerous components of males' attitude towards seeking professional help, such as fear and psychological distress, self-concealment tendency, emotional openness and psychological symptom severity, perceived social stigma, confidence in mental health professionals, and whether people recognise the need for help. The type of the problem has also been identified as concerned in peoples' help seeking (Cheung and Liu, 2005). Individuals are likely to seek professional help for different problems such as emotional, personal, interpersonal, academic/vocational problems, stress related problems, relationship issues and mood problems (Cheung and Liu, 2005). Thus there is need to investigate other variables like the influence of the gender of the counsellor in therapy.

In a study of 311 American and international college students, Good and Dell (1999) found that college students closed attitudes towards experiencing their emotions caused them to be reluctant to seek counselling and that those with greater psychological distress had more incentive and would be more willing to seek counselling. The study found that emotional openness accounted for the largest percentage of variance in attitudes toward counselling in international students. The results suggested that international students had positive attitudes

toward seeking counselling in proportion to their greater degree of acculturation if confidentiality was guaranteed.

Confidentiality is the ethical and legal responsibility of counsellors to safeguard clients from unauthorised disclosures of information given in a therapeutic relationship. It is a means of providing the client with safety and privacy and thus protects the client's autonomy. Confidentiality is considered fundamental to counselling because by its very nature counselling is an intimate relationship which often involves the client in divulging information about their current and past situations as well as their opinions and innermost feelings (Bond and Mitchels, 2008). This can only take place in a relationship based on trust. Confidentiality is central to developing a trusting and productive client/therapist relationship and therefore is the highest priority and should be carefully monitored when working with clients (Timuluk, 2011).

Good and Dell (1999) reports that there appears to be a distinct difference in psychological help seeking tendencies between the two gender. Good and Dell found out that two-thirds of the clients seeking help were women. Good and Dell also noted that one in seven men sought counselling services from a mental health professional at some point during their lifetime. The reason they gave was that men tend to adhere more to traditional gender roles. They are primarily responsible for the family reputation and seeking counselling would reflect poorly upon them. Gender studies have found that women are more likely to seek professional help than men (Butcher, Rouse, and Perry, 1998).

Men are socialized to be self-reliant and to avoid self-disclosure. They believe that seeking help shows potential incompetence, communication of feelings and should be avoided (O'Neil, 1991). This study endeavours to find out whether this applies to University students.

Njuguna (2009) researched on the relationship between locus of control, gender, class and attitude towards seeking counselling help among secondary school students. Njuguna's analysis shows that female students had a slightly higher mean score than male students. Female students recorded a mean of 27.7 and a standard deviation of 3.4 while the males recorded a mean of 25 and a standard deviation of 3.6. Thus, Njuguna concludes that gender plays a more significant role in determining both the attitude towards seeking help in counselling and the tendency to actually seek help. However Njuguna did not look at the factors influencing choice of gender of counsellor, a gap which this study sought to fill.

Simon and Helms (1996) reveals that both men and women tend to prefer therapists of their own gender. A male client with a female counsellor is particularly prone to fewer struggles as he is used to the idea that men should always be in the controlling position in relation to women (Olson, 2000). Male clients with male counsellor were found to get into stereotypical male competition for supremacy that still lurks underneath so many supposedly helping male relationships (Palmer and Gladeana 2000). According to Jocelyne (1999), most women growing up in a patriarchal society tend to perceive men

as the experts, the all-knowing ones. Thus, for a woman going to see a male counsellor there can be particular difficulties concerning her wanting to give him great authority but also resenting it and him rejecting but still enjoying that authority.

Rhoda and Crawford (1996) carried out a research on the impact of therapist's characteristics and their influence on therapist's selection and recommended that females select a female therapist. Lemon and Porter (1990) contend that a greater number of similarities between clients and therapists are associated with a more satisfactory therapeutic outcome. Female therapists can provide role models of strong effective professionals for their clients (Greenspan, 1988). Females have also been found to express feelings in interactions with male clients than male therapists.

Clients give many reasons for their choice of a therapist. Most reasons given are based on stereotyped views such as men's tendency to perpetuate patriarchal values or that females provide more nurture. It is also true that some clients have no particular preference regarding therapist's gender and feel that they can work equally well with either gender in therapy (Palmer and Gladeana, 2000). Even if choice of therapist is based on stereotype, without regards for characteristics of the specific therapist, clients' feeling of greater comfort or empathy can facilitate initial development of positive therapeutic alliance (Palmer and Gladeana, 2000). A study carried out by Nadelson and Notman (2005), demonstrates that stereotypes and expectations about females

affect male clients as well. A male seeks treatment from a female in order to avoid a competitive or an authoritarian relationship with a fellow male, to avoid homosexual feelings or because he has had poor relationships with females in the past and wants to work this with a female. A male's expectation is that a female will provide the core for his problems with intimacy (Nadelson and Notman, 2005). The suggestions given are stereotyped and cultural. This study investigates specific reasons for client's preference of counsellor's gender.

In a review of the literature on therapist variables, Teyber and McClure (2002) cite disparate findings from several studies on counsellor characteristics such as race, gender, and age. Furthermore, in reference to therapist-client characteristic matching, Sterling, Gottheil, Weinstein, and Serota (1998) found no significant effects in favour of matching client and therapist by gender on substance abuse. The researchers concluded that gender of the therapist and/or matching client and therapist by itself is not essential to client treatment and outcomes. Marikis, Russel and Dell (1985) researched on impact of gender preferences on the rating of counsellor performance. In the same way, matching students' needs with the counsellor gender could be essential as it impacts on therapeutic outcome and thus need for this study.

#### **2.4. Issues that are taken to Male / Female Counsellors**

Gilbert and Scher (1990) have questioned what they call the '*iron rule*' that presumes gender differences within each sex. However, it is acceptable that

differences have been noted between males and females in help seeking. Russell et al (2008) surveyed a large sample of international students attending an Australian metropolitan university to examine the distribution of the problems for which they sought help, 76.1 % said they needed academic-educational counselling, 60.1% career-vocational help, and 56% requested personal-social emotional counselling. Cheung and Liu (2005) found that adolescents tend to seek help mostly for academic problems and less for interpersonal and emotional problems. However no reasons were given for this, hence this study

Sutton and Stewart (2009) contend that people frequently seek counselling at times of crisis or change. They have reached the end of their tether or cannot see light at the end of the tunnel and are struggling to cope. A current precipitating event in life such as moving from married to widowed or single, or coming to terms with a terminal illness or a pending change in career direction will spur a person to seek help. Equally the motivation might stem from deeply rooted unresolved traumatic experiences such as child abuse, loss, neglect, abandonment or issues of attachment which are interfering with a person's ability to cope and function in the present (Sutton and Stewart, 2009). The desire to change self-thinking patterns or self-harming behaviours such as compulsion, phobia addiction, an eating disorder or self-injury could be the driving force. Interpersonal relationship problems, intimacy and sexual problems or work related issues are other potential reasons. Thoughts, feelings and emotions that the person cannot make sense of such as feeling emotionally

overwhelmed, numb, debilitating depression and unrelenting anxiety. Others include stress, feelings of hopelessness, helplessness or despair or suicidal thoughts. These will be the final ignition that fuels the desire to seek help which should be forthcoming when needed (Wango, 2015). However Sutton and Stewart's study does not show which of the above issues are taken to male/female counsellor, a gap which this study sought to fill.

McCarthy and Holiday (2004) contends that clients do project on to counsellors feelings that they had towards parents or siblings of both gender. A male counsellor can sometimes have feelings about his mother projected onto him. However, it is more likely that issues connected with the clients further arise when working with a male counsellor. Even females who need to work with female counsellors at first can choose to work with a male in order to look at specific "father issues" but it must be the client's choice (Palmer and Gladeana, 2000). Sexual orientation is also an important consideration. Many gay individuals request counselling by gay counsellors (Kottler, 1993). Although there has been a controversy about appropriateness of this disclosure, some counsellors have indicated that such a revelation could be beneficial in therapy. Thus, gays are likely to choose male counsellors while lesbians choose female counsellors.

Blier and Atkinson (1987) examined potential clients' willingness to seek counselling based on their perceptions of various counsellor characteristics. Participants were asked to review descriptions of counsellors which identified

the counsellors' gender (that is male or female) and gender role (that is feminine, masculine, or androgynous) and then asked to indicate their willingness to seek services from each counsellor for a variety of listed problems. Results suggest that there was no difference in preference of counsellor's gender in regard to participants' willingness to seek counselling. However, results indicate that counsellor gender role was significantly influential in participants' preference, but this was dependent on presenting problem (Blier and Atkinson, 1987). More specifically, participants indicated that they would prefer to seek services from a feminine counsellor for personal problems, a masculine counsellor for assertiveness problems, and a masculine or androgynous counsellor for academic problems (Blier and Atkinson, 1987). A study by a male counsellor on the topic client preference for gender of health professionals, established that 25% of females had a preference for a female counsellor, 73% had no preference, whereas only 13% of males had a preference of female counsellors and 83% had no preference (Keeves and Lacomski, 1999). This shows that males and females have gender preferences. However, no reasons were given for the preferences, hence the need for further research.

Mezzano (1989) carried out a research on gender preferences as well as perceived problem areas of secondary school students from seventh through twelfth grades. Mezzano wanted to investigate the problem area and their associated gender preferences of each grade and changes that these preferences underwent while a student was progressing through high school. In the

vocational problem areas both gender preferred the male counsellor across the six grades supporting Brown's (1956) gender role approach and Lee (2000). With regard to Mezzano's (1989) research on home and family problems, 57% males at the seventh grade level preferred the male counsellor but with each year the preference shifted to the female counsellor. These findings suggest that in the male pre-adulthood years, the gender preference for family concerns were for the male counsellor but as the students approached adulthood, gender preference shifted to the female counsellor. This study sought to investigate the extent to which the above applies to university students.

Lee (2000) found that preference for counsellor gender was dependent on presenting problem of the clients. More specifically, Lee presented participants with videotaped sessions involving a client presenting with vocational concerns or a client presenting with child-rearing concerns. Each presenting problem was videotaped once with a male counsellor and once with a female counsellor (Lee, 2000). In addition, the participants were asked to complete an assessment regarding their views of the counsellors. The results indicate that there was no overall difference in perceived credibility of the counsellors based on counsellor's gender (Lee, 2000). However, the results also suggest that male counsellors were preferred for presenting problems regarding vocational concerns, whereas female counsellors were preferred for concerns dealing with child-rearing problems (Lee, 2000). The author seems to suggest the significant influence that presenting concerns appear to have on preference for counsellor gender, although perceived credibility does not seem to differ among male or

female counsellors. Just as Boulware and Holmes (1985) and Lee (2000) found, presenting problem appears to be influential in determining counsellor's gender preference hence this study.

A research carried out by Macharia (1991) shows that clients who received their preferred counsellor had more favourable outcome than did those with less preferred assignments. Different types of problems are viewed as appropriate for different types of help providers. Macharia concludes that the nature of the client's problems influence his or her own help seeking tendencies and that client's preferences depend on whether the problems are personal, social, educational or vocational. The theoretical orientation of a counsellor could also be important. Males are more likely to be referred to male counsellors and female counsellors get fewer referrals of male clients (Mayer, 1992). However, Mayer's research does not give data that will guide clients to the preferred gender of counsellor who will provide specific social psychological services, thus this study.

The effect of gender and gender function can also affect family functioning and self as identity (McGoldrick, 1998). Many cultures throughout the world have also tended to place the male in higher status or prominence than the female despite the obvious bias (Gilbert and Scher, 1990; Lips, 1999; Wango, 2015) and though most of the gender stereotypes have been overcome, a lot of negative gender overtones still persist in traditional societies such as Kenya (Wango, 2015). Research also reveals some gap in factors that influence

clients' choices of counsellor by gender. Preferences develop, evolve and change as time passes. Hence knowing a person's preference in time is not sufficient to fully understand one's choices throughout life (Gelso and Fretz, 1992). Consequently, this study investigates gender perspectives in counselling among university students in Kenya. Most of the studies cited were done in western countries, in different settings, environments and culture. But this research sought to establish the situation in an African setting, specifically in Kenya and with University students

This section has highlighted various studies conducted in and outside Kenya. The section has highlighted studies on prevalence of counselling services in various institutions of learning, student's preference of the gender of the counsellor, factors that influence such preference and issues that are taken to male / female counsellors. This study seeks to fill in some of the identified gaps.

## **2.5. Theoretical Framework**

Therapeutic practice is based on a theoretical framework. This study is guided by Person Centred Theory (PCT) and Social Learning Theory (SLT). PCT is a gender neutral theory thus the need to compliment it with SLT which is a gender based theory.

### **2.5.1. Person Centred Theory**

PCT was formulated by Carl Rogers (1961) who was the major proponent of PCT and lived between 1902 -1987. The theory was further perpetuated by McGuiness, Alfred, Cohen, Hunt, and Robson (2001) and Mearns and Thorne (2000; 2003; 2006; 2008). The theory emerged in the 1960s as a reaction to Psychoanalysis and Behaviourism theories. Carl Rogers presented a phenomenological subjective approach to understanding human beings by claiming that the master motive behind human action is the actualizing tendency (Rogers, 1961). According to Rogers, all living organisms are subject to this inherent tendency to maintain and enhance their growth. Mearns (2003) concurs with Rogers that the actualising tendency is the sole motivational force behind human behaviour. Rogers believed in the innate goodness of the individual whose freedom comes from within (Moblely, 2005). PCT views the client as their own best authority on their own experience and as being fully capable of fulfilling their own potential for growth (Patterson, 1984).

Rogers had four basic views: that people are trustworthy; people innately move toward self-actualisation and health; people have the inner resources to move themselves in positive directions and respond to their uniquely perceived world (Mombley, 2005). The goals of PCT includes helping clients move towards self-actualisation, increased self-esteem, greater openness to experience, closer agreement between the clients idealised and actual selves, better self-understanding, lower levels of defensiveness and guilt, more positive and comfortable relationship with others and increased ability to experience and

express feelings (Mearns and Thorne, 2008; Rogers, 1961). This study adopts a similar stance in that despite the gender of the counsellor or client, all clients should be provided with an opportunity for self-actualisation.

PCT is a relationship model. The focus in counselling is on the client and the issues they bring to counselling. According to PCT, the person of the counsellor is the key to therapy (McGuiness, 1998). It is the quality of the relationship that the counsellor creates with the client which is healing or therapeutic. Rogers (1961) maintains that the individual has within the self, vast resources for self-understanding, altering the self-concept and for self-directed behaviour. However, the theory recognizes that achieving potential requires favourable conditions and that, under adverse conditions, individuals cannot grow and develop in ways that they otherwise could. In particular, when individuals are denied acceptance and positive regard from others, or when that positive regard is made conditional upon the individual behaving in particular ways, they begin to lose touch with what their own experience means for them, and their innate tendency to grow in a direction consistent with that meaning is stifled (Mearns and Thorne, 2008). This calls for choice of counsellor that would promote growth in the client. PCT's major concepts include: clients should be allowed to find solutions to their problems, the focus should be on the client not the counsellor, and that the role of the counsellor is to provide the necessary and sufficient conditions to enable clients reach their goal (Mobley, 2005). This can be facilitated by a counsellor of a particular gender.

A fundamental tenet of PCT is that behaviour is to a large extent acting out of how one feels about self and the world. What people do is a reflection of how they evaluate themselves in terms of their self-image. If people have come to the conclusion that they are inept, worthless and unacceptable, they will behave in a way that demonstrates the validity of such an assessment (Macleod, 2003). As clients choose counsellors, their individual self-image is likely to influence their choice of gender. For females/males who evaluate themselves negatively, they could be looking for a counsellor who could appraise them and perhaps this could be of a specific gender and not just any other.

PCT maintains that there are core conditions which provide a climate conducive to growth and therapeutic change. The core conditions are: unconditional positive regard; empathic understanding and congruence / genuineness (Mearns and Thorne, 2008). PCT conceptualises the individual as motivated in positive directions: that is, the potential for self-actualisation is present in all people. Individuals are rational, forward moving, realistic and have the ability if resources are mobilised to control their own destiny. If the proper environment is created, individuals will grow. Therefore, as clients choose therapists, they will opt for a gender that will provide the right environment for their therapeutic healing. PCT advocates that counsellors accept their clients unconditionally and non-judgementally. Any client should be free to explore all thoughts and feelings, positive or negative, without the fear of rejection or condemnation (Rogers, 1961). The need for positive regard

is a universal, pervasive and persistent need in human beings (Mearns and Thorne, 2008).

Acceptance is a key component of the counsellor's positive regard for the client. Davis and Lewis (1983) view acceptance as an attitude of the counsellor. The counsellor should allow the client to express their feelings freely no matter how hostile or outrageous. Acceptance does not mean that the counsellor should approve client's undesirable behaviours. Instead, acceptance grants the client the right to make decisions which they must accept responsibility. Through acceptance, the counsellor makes the counselling session a place where clients can explore their inner worlds. Defensive attitudes are less likely to be shown by clients and the clients are more likely to be involved in the counselling process.

Mearns (2003) supports Rogers' (1961) argument that very early in life, human beings develop a self-concept which, dependent upon early experiences, can develop at odds with the overall development of the whole organism. Thus, conflicts arise between the actualising tendency and the self-concept, creating dissonance and disturbance for the person. In the development of self-concept, Rogers saw conditional and unconditional positive regard as key. People raised in an environment of unconditional regard have the opportunity to fully actualize themselves. People raised in an environment of conditional positive regard feel worthy only if they match the conditions that have been laid down for them by others (Rogers, 1961; Mearns and Thorne, 2008). As clients

choose therapists they will look for one who will help them become fully functional. According to Rogers (1961), a fully functioning person is able to move away from defences, live each moment fully, trust their own judgements and their ability to choose behaviour that is appropriate for each moment. Fully functioning persons have freedom of choice, are more creative and can be trusted to act constructively. Such people lead a rich full life: that is, they experience joy and pain, love and heartbreak, fear and courage more intensely.

Rogers (1961) portrays actualizing tendency as a major motivational force which determines the development of a human being. It is this tendency, which despite every kind of opposition, would ensure that an individual continues to strive to grow towards the best possible fulfilment of their potential. As clients choose counsellors, they are likely to opt for a gender that would continue to promote their growth and fulfilment. A PCT counsellor should be genuine. This means that the counsellor is authentic. The counsellor should not present an aloof, professional facade, but should be present and transparent to the client. There should be no air of authority or hidden knowledge, and the client does not have to speculate about what the counsellor is really like (Maulhauser, 2008). It is the degree to which counsellors freely and deeply relate to people in a sincere and non-defensive manner. Genuineness stimulates authentic behaviours in clients and encourages self-disclosure.

Males/females are likely to choose therapists of either gender if they are genuine to themselves and to the clients. As clients choose counsellors, they

choose a gender that they feel is genuine. Female/male clients will choose counsellors who accept them and who understand what they are going through, including developmental issues and crises at various stages of life.

One of the central dimensions of therapeutic relationship is empathy (Mearns and Thorne, 2008). Wilkins (2003) contends that in early development, human beings rely on the empathy of their caretakers to help them learn to process their experiences. Empathic understanding means that the counsellor accurately understands the client's thoughts, feelings and meanings from the client's perspective (Maulhauser, 2008). When the counsellor perceives what the world is like from the client's point of view, it demonstrates not only that the client has value, but also that the client is being accepted. Empathic understanding is the crux of PCT concept for which this approach was named. Counsellors who immerse themselves in their clients' experiences walk a mile in the client's shoes (Rogers, 1961). The counsellors become part of their clients' world, seeing it through their eyes. As clients seek for therapy, they hope to find a therapist with their situation, who will see the world through their eyes and who will understand their phenomenological world. Counselling deals more with feelings than thinking, (Mearns, 2003). In Britain, there are more female than male counsellors (Mearns and Thorne, 2008). Many men are said to be thinkers than feelers, and as clients choose therapists they will choose a gender that empathizes with them. They are likely to choose more female than male counsellors (Person, 1983).

A major tenet in PCT is that attractiveness, expertness and trustworthiness will enhance the relationship between the client and therapist. Ruth (1998) refers to the three as Relationship Enhancement Variables. The three make the quality of the relationship better and encourage client's involvement in counselling. These three variables are related to client's satisfaction in counselling, changes in client's self-concept and less likelihood of premature termination in therapy. These variables are likely to influence client's choice of therapists.

PCT is applicable in the field of counselling, and in this study. McGuiness, Alfred, Hunt, Cohen and Robson (2001), in an article on globalising counselling, highlights the potential benefits of Person Centred counselling in a developing country like Kenya. According to Mearns and Thorne (2008), PCT's insistence on the uniqueness of a person, on the need for attention to process, on the trustworthiness of the human organism seems out of touch with a materialistic culture where the profit motive, short term goals, technological efficiency and sophisticated surveillance techniques govern the lives of majority of citizens in developed and developing world. PCT contributes to empowerment and self-development of the individual so that they are more resourceful and independent in a world where directives have been the order of the day (Mearns and Thorne, 2008). As Julal (2013) argues, university students, being young adults are undergoing a transition in their lives. They are struggling with issues of relationships, academics and social adjustment and this researcher agrees with Mearns and Thorne (2008) that the use of PCT would contribute to their empowerment and self-development. There is

growing evidence that for many clients, their experience of Person Centred Counselling has enabled them not only to find more satisfaction in their work and relationships but also to discover a new sense of purpose and meaning in their lives (Thorne, 2002).

PCT is a humanistic theory. Its humane approach has much to offer at a time of great political, intercultural and ecological crises when despair is an increasingly common response (Mearns 2003). The attack on American Embassy in Nairobi in 1998, the land clashes in 1992, 1997, the violence witnessed in 2008 in various parts of Kenya, the insecurity threat by Al-Shabaab militia and husband battering have all created a psychological world where trust is in short supply. Anxiety breeds suspicion, individual liberties have been curtailed in the interest of corporate security and impulsive solutions have been imposed upon the proliferating problems engendered by a society under threat (Mearns and Thorne, 2008). This researcher agrees with Rogers and Rayback (1980) and Mearns and Thorne (2008) in their argument that Person Centred Psychology need to be used on the global level to reduce conflicts within nations and among warring factions and this is also applicable to university students as it would help them deal with their interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships.

PCT is a gender neutral theory. It contends that a human being is caring, genuine, empathic and has actualizing tendency. It does not emphasize whether

a therapist is male or female, thus, there is need to compliment it with Social Learning Theory which is a gender based theory.

### **2.5.2. Social Learning Theory**

Social Learning Theory (SLT) was formulated by Albert Bandura (1977). SLT involves how both men and women learn behaviour and inherent cultural roles. Certain behaviour will produce certain outcomes (Jonker and Gijs, 2000). Essential components include observational learning, labelling, cultural influences, social control, mass media's influences and the socialization process (Golombok and Fivush, 2004).

Observational learning, a component of social learning theory, involves learning by watching, observing and being aware of the actions and behaviours of others. Observational learning pertaining to the gender domain is concerned with how learning to "act" like a boy or girl, man or woman, or masculine or feminine is facilitated by observing others in a social context (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). This researcher concurs with Golombok and Fivush (2004) in that in counselling males/females may not share what their gender does not share with the other gender because it will be considered as less feminine/masculine. This may also influence which gender of the counsellor the client is likely to choose and which issues he/she is likely to discuss with male/female gender. This makes Social Learning Theory very relevant in this study. Labelling is a component of social learning which influences a person's behaviour and identity. Labelling is essentially learning how to act and

internalize an identity by observing how people treat you and the titles subscribed to you as an individual (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). While looking at the implications of socialization process on individuals' mental and environmental wellbeing, O'Neil (2006) contend that genetically inherited physical and mental capabilities have an impact on how others see us and subsequently how we see ourselves. For instance poor motor skills and grades will be labelled by teachers and friends as failure or inadequacy. Child rearing practices are critical in that if children do not follow their societies' traditional paths, they are often labelled as deviants (O'neil, 2006). Whether one is accepted by others as being normal or abnormal can lead one to think or act in a socially acceptable or even deviant way (O'neil, 2006). As clients choose male/female counsellors and share their issues, they may be concerned with the titles that may be prescribed by their gender or the other gender.

Social learning theory pertaining to gender involves cultural influences, that is, shared values, customs and belief systems that a community upholds specific to expectations of how males or females are supposed to act. The implication of expected gender-related behaviours is very exacting and specific to the roles that both males and females are supposed to engage in. From the beginning, a person is assimilated into a culture void of his/her own choice and proceeds to learn by observing what is culturally accepted by others (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). Social control pertaining to gender involves influences from the mass media. The mass media has the capacity to widely distribute and insert

into someone's identity labels, notions and manufactured events regarding expected gender roles and interpretations, truthful or otherwise.

Socialization is the process of transferring norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours to future group members (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). Gender socialization is the process of educating and instructing potential men and women how to behave as members of that particular group (Jonker and Gijs, 2000). Gender socialization begins even before a baby is born. Gender is socialized through media messages, school instructions, family expectations, and experiences in the workplace. The process of gender socialization continues as adolescents enter the workforce (Jonker, 2000). Research has found that adolescents encounter stereotypes of gendered performance in their first jobs. Sociologists and other social scientists generally attribute many of the behavioural differences between men and women to socialization. In regard to gender socialization, the most common groups people join are the gender categories of male and female (Jonker and Gijs, 2000). Even the categorical option of gender that an individual chooses is socialized; social norms act against selecting a gender that is neither male nor female (Jonker and Gijs, 2000).

According to Bandura (1977), gender role behaviours are acquired through the process of socialization. Gender-typed behaviour is thought to result from differential reinforcement of boys and girls. Stockard and Pearson (1992), the main proponents of gender socialization, contend that men and women act the

way they do because of gender socialisation. Gender socialization is a primary means of controlling human behaviour. A society's ideals of gender-linked behaviours are reinforced by its social institutions. Parents are the first to teach children the fundamental expectations of gender socialization. The mass media, including popular music, movies and television shows, reinforces the gender message initiated by members of the family. From the first day of life, human beings live in a highly gendered world. Female infants are perceived as weaker and more vulnerable than male infants (Golombok and Fivush, 2004) and Wango (2015) argues that such stereotypes could inadvertently affect both males and females.

According to SLT, behaviour is acquired through reinforcement and modelling (Bandura, 1977). SLT states that men and women receive positive reinforcement when they behave in a way appropriate to their gender while receiving negative reinforcement for behaving like the other gender. Gender Socialization leads to society trying to push individuals into certain social roles despite their preferences. The process of reinforcement is based on the principle that behaviour is modified by its consequences. Behaviour that has favourable reinforcement is more likely to be repeated whereas behaviour that is not rewarded is less likely to be performed again. According to Bandura (1977), gender role behaviours are acquired through the same process like all other behaviours. Gender socialization also gives alternative explanation to biological aspects of gender behaviour. Children learn very early in development. They begin to consistently label themselves and others as men or

women and associate particular behaviours and traits with one gender or the other. As children grow and are socialized, they develop prejudices against certain gender. Thus socialization influences one's life values, beliefs and concepts of self (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). Socialization and gender roles influence the counselling process. This is likely to influence therapist selection by gender.

Men are stereotypically considered and socialized to be instrumental. They act in the world and make things happen. Men are assumed to be financially successful, confident and self-reliant. They tend to be active, assertive and combative (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). Pennington (1991) asserts that when men disclose themselves and talk about their problems, they usually consult women. They rarely share intimately with other men. However, they can be friendly to each other. Thus, men mainly centre their conversations on sports, business, or personal stories of each achievement in the physical relation or with women. They can be pressured to control their emotions rigidly. Also they seem to fear losing status should they reveal themselves.

Women are socialized to be relational, concerned with social interactions and offer emotional support (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). These two types of orientation towards the world have implications for virtually all aspects of psychological functioning including emotional development, play and friendship, moral reasoning and attitudes towards work and family. This is likely to influence counsellor selection of either gender. Overall, men tend to

hold more stereotyped views about gender than women. Also individuals with more years of formal education tend to be less stereotyped in their views about gender than those with less formal schooling (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). Thus university students are less likely to be influenced by stereotypes in counsellor selection by gender. Hence, the need to investigate other factors that are likely to influence counsellor selection by gender.

Peers also serve as an important source of gender-role standards. Children are likely to react when other children violate gender-typical behaviours and boys' cross-gender behaviours are more likely to meet with negative reactions from peers. Reactions from peers typically result in changes in behaviour, particularly if the feedback is from a child of the same gender. This pattern of responsiveness leads to gender segregation, which, in turn, provides opportunities to learn gender-typical roles. In self-socialization, children often spontaneously adopt gender-appropriate behaviour.

The pressure to stay within gender appropriate boundaries is strong. Children as young as three years punish their peers for gender role non-conformity. Pre-school children, especially pre-school boys are less likely to play with cross-gender toys in the presence of another peer. From an early age, girls are expected to be girls and boys to be boys. Girls should play with dolls and be passive; boys should play with trucks and be active. Adult men should be strong and independent and head the household, whereas adult women should be warm and take care of children (Dryden, 1984).

Rubin (1974) asked parents of new-borns to describe their babies. Parents described their daughters as softer, fine-featured and more delicate whereas sons were thought to be firmer, more alert and stronger. Mothers and fathers also interact with their sons and daughters differently from early in infancy. Male infants are given more stimulation than female infants, whereas female infants are held, touched and talked to more than male infants (Power and Parke, 1982). Parents seem to ensure that no confusion arises about their child's gender. They dress their girls in pink, decorative clothes and boys in blue functional ones (Shakin and Sternglanz, 1985) and surround them with gender-type toys and furnishings (Rheingold and Cook, 1975). From as early as 12 months, infants are encouraged to play with such toys and to avoid those considered to be more appropriate for children of the other gender (Snow and Lohman, 1984).

The differential encouragement of gender-typed activities in boys and girls become even more apparent as infants grow into toddlers. Fagot (1986) observed 24 children between 20 and 24 months of age at home with their parents and found clear differences in the activities of their sons and daughters. The girls were given approval for dancing, dressing up in female clothes, playing with dolls, asking for help and following their parents around and were discouraged from running, jumping, climbing and manipulating objects. But the boys were punished for feminine activities such as playing with dolls and seeking help. Instead, they were encouraged to play with toys considered to be gender appropriate such as blocks.

Levine (1983) found that parents treated boys and girls differently with regard to gender role socialization. Parents, especially fathers encouraged gender type activities in their children. By about age three, gender segregation in play groups becomes the norm and evidence shows that these groups have markedly different concerns. In boys' play groups, the focus is dominance and constriction of interaction whereas in girls' play groups, the focus is cooperation and facilitation.

Children of pre-school age, particularly boys, do receive differential encouragement of gender activities. Bloom and Corvington (1998) argue that differential exposure to toys with dissimilar characteristics results in different play and problem-solving experiences for girls and boys and this has far-reaching implications for cognitive and personality development. While boys' toys encourage invention, manipulation and understanding of the physical world, girls' toys encourage imitation, proximity to the caretaker and understanding of the interpersonal and social world. According to Bloom and Corvington (1998), the greater opportunity that boys have to explore the physical world gives them a greater sense of competence and mastery than girls, who are reared in a more restrictive way and are not encouraged to learn about their physical environment.

Gender socialization and cultural experiences shape identities of women and men, define their behaviour, and set up expectations for how they interact in the world (D'Andrea, 1997). Gender role behaviours change between various

cultural groups. However, significant themes reflect commonalities across cultures. For example, among many cultural groups, female roles typically reflect caretaking responsibilities while male roles focus on status at work, in relationships and in society. Gender role behaviours are influenced by spiritual/religious experiences.

Counselling of university students is affected by their gender differences. Pennington (1991) points out the non-verbal expressions between the two gender types. For instance, males often unconsciously exhibit their superiority and females their inferiority. In most cases, when talking to a man, women typically give low signals as smiling, nodding, hold their bodies or keep their legs together. Men are more likely to use high status gestures by smiling only occasionally, holding their heads still and assuming symmetrical released body postures. This researcher agrees with Pennington (1991) that the knowledge of social pattern of body language is important in understanding the clients. Moreover, if the counsellors have to assist the university students develop their academic, personal and social competencies, they have to understand the influence and impact of gender in the counselling process.

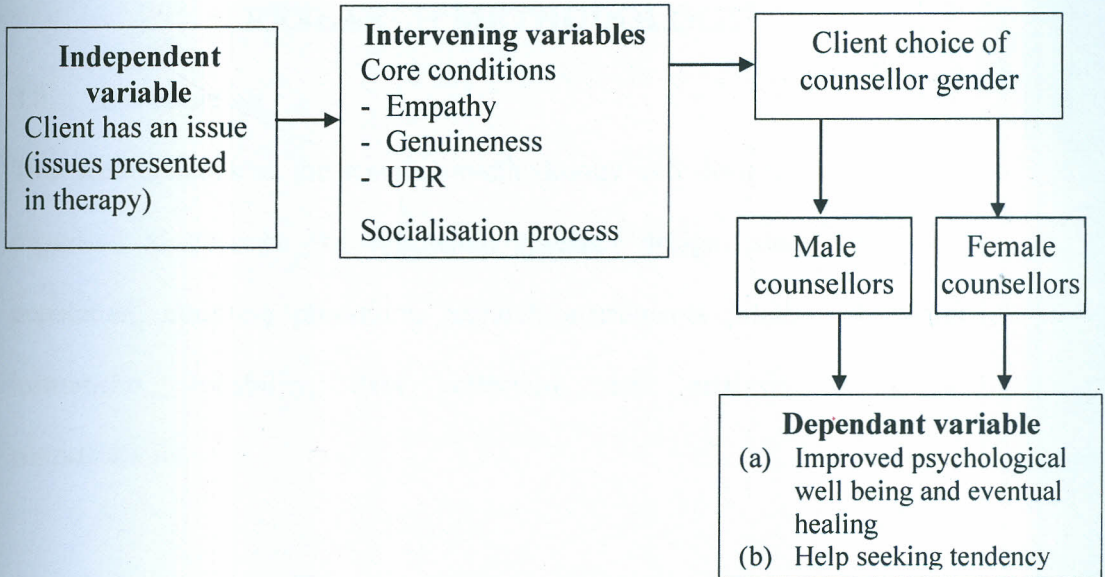
The two theories PCT and SLT guided this research. PCT is a counselling theory while SLT is a gender based theory. PCT shows how actualizing tendency and core conditions influence clients in choice of counsellor while SLT claims that such a choice is influenced by the socialization process of the client. The two theories are applicable in this research because core conditions

influence choice of counsellor and also which challenges clients will open up to depending on their socialization process. The researcher used the two theories to analyze data by establishing the relationship that exist between the gender of the counsellor, the client and the issues shared in therapy.

### **2.5.3. Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework below illustrates the two theoretical frameworks chosen for this study and their relationship to therapy and client seeking tendencies including the gender of the counsellor. The influence of core conditions (person centred therapy and its actualising tendency) and socialisation (social learning theory and the gender of the client and counsellor) processes impact on client's choice of counsellor gender. Clients will choose a counsellor who is genuine, empathic and non-judgemental (the basic tenets of PCT). As the client interacts with the social environment, they also internalize aspects of how the society expects them to behave according to their gender. This includes choice of counsellor gender and the issues they discuss with male / female counsellor.

**Figure 2.1. Choice of Counsellor Gender**



The arrows indicate the flow in the overall counselling process commencing with the presenting issue, the intervening variables and the outcome of the counselling process. The nature of help seeking can thus be summarised as follows: when a client has an issue (there are various issues presented in therapy), they will choose a counsellor who provide the core conditions of therapy. This is also guided by the socialisation process of the client and counsellor (gender). Ultimately, they might have a preference of the gender of the counsellor (and choose a male or female counsellor). If once again the counsellor, whether female or male is helpful, it will lead to (a) client improved psychological well being (b) and as a result of the effectiveness of therapy, help seeking tendency. The research methodology adopted in the study is discussed in the next section.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0. Introduction

This section looks at the research methodology and design. The chapter is organised to describe the following: research design, study area, target population, sampling procedure, research instruments piloting of research instruments, reliability, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1. Research Design

The study was conducted using descriptive survey design (Kerlinger, 1973). According to Kerlinger, a survey can be utilised to study large or small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population, such as the large number of university students involved in this study. This in turn enables one to determine 'what is', and the state of affairs as they exist, for instance, the extent to which the gender of the counsellor affects therapy (Gall, Borg and Gall (2007). This method describes the characteristics or behaviour of a particular population in a systematic way and in this study by use of questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions guide.

The descriptive survey method was chosen because the target population was large, that is, MKU Faculty of Education-Department of Education Psychology-500, JKUAT Faculty of Science- Department of Botany-450 and

KEMU Faculty of Business and Economics-Department of Business Administration and Economics-600, hence the need for a survey. A survey helped this researcher to gather information that describes the nature of existing conditions in the three Kenyan universities. A survey research is an important method of collecting information from a large group because the researcher studies a small group then generalizes the findings to a large group (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The survey gathers information with the intention of describing the same nature of existing conditions (Cohen and Swerdlik, 2005). The method eliminated fluctuation of data because students that participated answered the same questions in the same order which made the responses easy to summarise and analyse (Kothari, 2004).

### **3.2. Study Area**

The study was carried out in May – December, 2013. At the time, Kenya had 30 accredited universities, 7 public and 23 private universities and satellite campuses (Commission for University Education, 2013). Universities in Kenya are classified into public and private depending on the establishment of the institution. Public universities are funded by the government exchequer, while private universities are sponsored by individuals or religious institutions. The study targeted the two categories of universities. This was because they would give a wide range of information based on students' experiences as well as the therapy provided by the counsellors. Using stratified sampling, two categories were obtained that is public and private universities. This was followed by simple random sampling for each category and the following were sampled:

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), a public university; Mount Kenya University (MKU), and Kenya Methodist University (KEMU), both of which are private universities.

JKUAT is a government sponsored university and was established in 1981 as a College of Agriculture. It became a university in 1994. It has satellite campuses in Karen, Westland and Mombasa, among others. It has 11 Faculties / Schools. It is *ISO 9001:2008* certified. MKU is a privately owned university and was established in 1996 as a College of Technology (Thika Institute of Technology). The College was transformed into a university in 2006. The university was chartered in 2012 and is *ISO 9001:2008* certified. It has satellite campuses including Eldoret, Nairobi, Meru, among others. The university had 11 Faculties / Schools.

KEMU is a private Christian based university and was established in 1997 as privately sponsored, and was chartered in 2006. It has satellite campuses in Nairobi, Nakuru, among others. The study was carried out in the main campuses of the selected universities. The rationale for choice of main campus was based on the Commission for University Education regulation that states that a third of the programmes should be in the main campus of the university (Commission for University Education, 2006). Thus main campuses would be more representative than satellite campuses.

### **3.3. Target Population**

The study targeted students who had attended counselling and also potential student clients because they are the ones who obtain help in therapy and thus choose the counsellors. Students' counsellors were selected as practitioners because they handle students as clients by offering therapy and thus would augment information from the students regarding the counselling services provided in the universities. Student counsellors are professionally trained members of staff who assist students in difficulty to adjust to difficult situations and make appropriate decisions (Ndondo, 2004). The student counsellors were major points of reference since they provided the students with guidance and counselling services in the universities. Thus, as Ndondo (2004) states in line with Carl Rogers' (1961) Person Centred Theory, it is the quality of the relationship between the student (as client) and the service providers (student counsellors) that would facilitate effective utilisation of counselling services among students.

### **3.4. Sampling Procedure**

Using stratified sampling, two categories of universities were selected, that is public and private. Out of each stratum a sample ratio of 10% was calculated. Dierckx (2013); Freedman (2007); Milroy (1985) and Sullivan (2007) suggest that 10-30 % of the accessible population is often an adequate sample for descriptive survey research. Ary and Razaviah (1979) also observed that for a survey design, a sample of 10 % is also justifiable for data collection.

The selection was conducted as follows:

- a) There were seven public universities, thus  $10/100 \times 7 = 0.7$ , which was one public university. According to the Commission for University Education (2014), the accredited number of Public universities, both public and private stood at 30.
- b) There were 23 private universities, thus  $10/100 \times 23 = 2.3$ , which were two private universities.

The researcher wrote the names of all the universities in the two strata on papers and put them in two different containers and mixed them. Using simple random sampling, the researcher picked one paper from public and two from private containers. Grix (2006) recommends the use of simple random sampling because it gives an equal chance without bias. The researcher picked the following universities: Public University (Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology) and Private Universities (Mount Kenya University and Kenya Methodist University).

Through random sampling, the researcher selected Faculty of Business and Economics from KEMU, Faculty of Education from MKU and Faculty of Science from JKUAT. KEMU's faculty of Business and Economics had three departments: the department of Accounting, Finance and Investment, Business Administration and Economics and Applied Statistics. Through random sampling, the department of Business Administration and economics was selected. MKU's faculty of Education was composed of the following departments: Educational Psychology and Foundations, Early Childhood

Education, Special Needs Education and Curriculum Instruction. Through random sampling, the department of Educational Psychology and Foundations was selected. JKUAT's faculty of Science had the following departments: Zoology, Chemistry, Physics, Biochemistry, Botany, Pure and Applied Maths, Actuarial and Statistics. Botany department was randomly sampled. At the time when sampling was done, KEMU's department of Business Administration and economics had an estimated 600 students, MKU's department of Education Psychology and Foundations had 500 students' and JKUAT's department of Botany had 450 students. Once again, this was in line with Commission for University Education (2006) that the universities must promote their core areas of specialisation.

This study targeted a sample size of 310 respondents drawn from the three target universities. This sample size was determined using the sample size determination table (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) (Appendix V) which corresponded well with the online sample size calculator ([http://www.calculator.net/sample\\_size\\_calculator.html](http://www.calculator.net/sample_size_calculator.html) accessed on 15th Jan. 2012) based on a confidence level of 95% and a Margin of error + or -5%. Systematic random sampling method was then used to pick the specific respondents from each of the department. For example, in a population of 600 students in KEMU's Business Administration department, every fifth student on the list was picked. This provided the required sample of 120 students. This was also a 20% representative sample. The same was repeated for the two departments in MKU and JKUAT.

This sample size was then stratified into male and female students. The researcher requested students who stated in the questionnaires that they had attended counselling sessions to get involved in in-depth interviews as this would allow further probing and observations of non-verbal behaviour. In KEMU, 32 students were involved in interview schedule (20 females, 12 males); 20 students from MKU (12 females, 18 males) and 14 students from JKUAT (8 females, 6 males). The researcher also decided to involve students in FGD for further probing. This being a gender study, it was necessary to have three groups: a male only group, a female only and a mixed gender group for each of the target universities. This ensured that the researcher captured male/female only views during the discussions and what would emanate from a mixed gender group. The mixed group had 3 males and 3 females, six males in male only group and six females in female only group. Interviews and focus group discussions were useful in this study since counselling involves interactions and consultations between the counsellor and the client in order to enable the latter gain insight in their lives.

**Table 3.1: Sample Size**

University	Questionnaires		Total
	Female	Male	
KEMU	76	44	120
MKU	60	40	100
JKUAT	52	38	90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>310</b>

The other participants in the study were students' counsellors who offer assistance to the student clients. The study purposively sampled 7 student

counsellors: four females and three males. This being a gender study, this researcher needed participation of both male and female counsellors.

### **3.5. Research Instruments**

The researcher used both structured and semi- structured questionnaires (Appendices I and II) Interview Schedules (Appendix III) and Focus Group Discussion guide (Appendix IV) to elicit quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data was necessary in the study to supplement the quantitative data (Cohen and Swerdlik, 2005). Questionnaires were chosen to widen participation in research by allowing several participants to respond (Keeves and Lakomski, 1999). McLeod (2003b) highlights the use of questions as an important strategy in counselling. Questionnaires also reduce interviewer bias. They also give respondents enough time to provide objective answers in such a large sample in order to achieve more reliable data. In any case university students are literate and so they would have no problems filling in the questionnaire.

Questionnaires solicited for information from participants through several items. They contained both open and close-ended questions. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions enabled the triangulation of responses from the questionnaires (Wango, 2006). The interviews and Focus Group Discussions provided an opportunity to seek for further clarification and observations of non-verbal cues.

### **3.5.1. Piloting of Research Instruments**

Bryman (2001) suggests a need to conduct a pilot study before the actual research in order to ensure that all research instruments function well. Piloting was, therefore, important so as to eliminate ambiguities in wording, identify redundant questions and gain feedback on the validity of the research instruments. The instruments were piloted in both public (Egerton) and private (St Paul's) universities. The questionnaires were purposefully administered to 4 counsellors (2 from the private: one male and one female; and two from public university: one male and one female) and 10 students (5 from the private and 5 from public universities). The researcher, through Piloting noted the necessity of getting students' opinion using the Likert Scale of questions. This was incorporated into the questionnaire. This pilot study was held in April 2013 and the research itself in May – December, 2013. The one month duration was an ideal time to determine the extent to which respondents produced same information with same research items.

### **3.5.2. Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistence of measurement or the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection and the extent to which measures are free from errors (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). According to Orodho (2004), reliability of an instrument concerns the degree to which a particular instrument can consistently yield a similar result over a number of repeated trials. The focus is how consistent the scores are for each respondent from one administration of an instrument to

another and from one set of items to another. In this case, the descriptive survey method (Kerlinger, 1973) forms a basis for investigation of ‘what is’ (Gall, Borg and Gall, 2007) and enabled collection of relevant data on therapy from diverse students.

The reliability of this study was achieved through asking the university counsellors and students about the client’s preference for a counsellor’s gender among university students. The reliability of the questionnaires was determined via test-retest method. The test–retest reliability coefficient ensures that a group of people is measured twice, using the same instruments and the two sets of scores obtained are then correlated (Kothari, 2004).

The scores of each administration were recorded separately. Pearson’s Product Moment Formula (Kothari, 2004) was used to calculate the correlation coefficient between the tests. According to Orodho (2004), a coefficient correlation ( $r$ ) of about 0.75 and above should be considered high enough to judge an instrument as reliable. As already mentioned, a total of 4 counsellors participated in the test of reliability for the counsellors’ questionnaires.

The results of the reliability tests for the counsellors are given in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: University Counsellors’ Test Retest Scores**

University Counsellors	Test (X)	Re-test (Y)
1	76	78
2	75	79
3	68	67
4	77	76

The results of the test retest scores show a correlation coefficient of 0.93 that indicates that the instruments were highly reliable (see Appendix VI).

As already mentioned, a total of 10 students participated in the reliability test for the students' questionnaires. The results of the reliability tests for the students are given in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: University Students' Test Retest Scores**

University Students	Test (X)	Retest (Y)
1	80	78
2	76	78
3	75	79
4	68	67
5	77	76
6	74	75
7	76	74
8	69	67
9	73	71
10	71	69

The results of the test retest scores show a correlation coefficient of 0.89 that indicates that the instruments were highly reliable (see Appendix VII).

### 3.6. Data Collection

The actual data collection was undertaken by the researcher. Students were issued with the questionnaires and asked to fill them and return. The researcher also conducted interviews with students who stated in the questionnaires that they had been to counselling. Focus Group Discussions were also conducted in each of the universities. In this way, aspects that required follow up such as strong emotions towards therapy and perceptions were further investigated.

Data was collected procedurally from one selected university to the other to avoid a mix up and also to enable coherence.

The study targeted 310 students and 194 questionnaires were returned. This yielded a response rate of 63%. According to Dierckx (2013), 50% and above response rate is acceptable. Seven (7) university counsellors purposively sampled for the purpose of the study responded and returned the questionnaires.

### **3.7. Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data analysis involves the interpretation of meaning and the functions that are assigned to the data. In this study, quantitative and qualitative data required different forms of analysis. According to Maxwell (1998), the main categorizing strategy in quantitative data analysis is coding. Once the questionnaires were collected, they were coded according to the universities to allow correlation of data with other research instruments from the same university. This was important before the questionnaires were keyed in. Due to the enormous amount of data collected, data was analyzed using a computer analysis programme and the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version 22).

Frequency tables were calculated for each and every questionnaire item as an initial step in the quantitative analysis. Combined frequency tables were calculated for all multiple response questionnaire items in an attempt to reduce

analyses-output and thereby create compact results of manageable proportions for both the counsellors and students. The information in these tables was also enhanced by data from the students' interview schedules and Focus Group Discussions. Chi-tests were calculated for the Likert Scale rating question-like items to indicate the relationships between the item responses of either the counsellor or the students and in some cases for both.

The data obtained from questionnaires was coded for analysis. This was done by studying closely the responses in each one of them. The data was grouped into tables, pie charts and graphs for easier interpretation. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected. Quantitative information is presented in form of bar graphs, pie charts and percentages. For qualitative data, emerging patterns of the content analysis is presented thematically according to research objectives.

### **3.8. Ethical Considerations and Data Management**

The study was ethical in data collection, analysis and reporting (American Counselling Association, 2014; Bond, 2009; Bond and Mitchels, 2008; Wango, 2015). The researcher obtained a letter from the Dean, Graduate School addressed to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and to the National Council for Science and Technology for issuance of a research permit (Appendix IX). The questionnaires had introductory statements explaining the purpose of the research and assuring respondents that confidentiality would be maintained (Appendix I, II and III).

Clear emphasis was also made in the questionnaires on the need not to indicate the names of respondents.

All questionnaires were coded to ensure anonymity, confidentiality in reporting of data, data recording and analysis (Bond and Mitchels, 2008) and to allow linkages to different questionnaires completed in the same university. Informed consent was sought from the respondents and all of them signed the consent form. All the participants were informed of the purpose of the research and asked to sign a research consent form (Appendix VIII) to demonstrate willingness to take part in the study. All respondents were treated with utmost dignity and respect. All respondents were given an opportunity to express themselves confidentially and their opinions in regard to the items identified for the purpose of the research.

The three universities that took part are acknowledged and will receive a summary of the report so that goodwill can be maintained in future research and so that they can benefit from the information the study might generate. Findings of the study constitute the overall reports of respondents in the selected universities. Data collected was coded, edited, entered and stored in hard disk in case the need for crosschecking arises.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0. Introduction

This study investigated gender perspectives in counselling among university students in Kenya as perceived by students and university counsellors. This Chapter discusses prevalence of counselling services by students and their preferences for the gender of the counsellor. The study findings also include the factors which influence the gender preference for the counsellor by the client and issues that are taken to male/female counsellors by either male/female students. Suggestions of improving gender counselling services in the universities have also been given. The data generated is summarised in form of tables, Bar graphs and Pie charts.

#### 4.1. Demographic Information of Participants in the Study

There were slightly more female students than male students who participated in the study. Specifically, 110 (57%) females as compared with 84 (43%) males responded to the research questionnaires. The low participation rate of male students in the counselling process is a great challenge to Kenyan universities.

Information concerning students including gender, age, university type attended and their respective Schools/Faculties is presented in Table 4.1:

**Table 4.1: Biographical Variables among University Students**

	<b>Variable description</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Gender	Male	43
	Female	57
Age	18-20 years	29
	21-25 years	47
	26-30 years	13
	31-40 years	11
University Type	Private	71
	Public	29
School/Faculty	Science	29
	Education	33
	Business studies	38

This concern arises from the fact that students' enrolment in private university education in Kenya is characterized by wide gender disparities in favour of females (Republic of Kenya, 2007). For example, out of the 600 students in KEMU's Business Administration and economics department, 347 were females while 253 were males. The same was observed in MKU's Educational Psychology and Foundations department where out of 500 students, 298 were females while 202 were males. This is attributed to the fact that they tend to offer more courses in Humanities such as Business, Education and Social Sciences which are very popular among females (Macharia, 1991). In addition, the gender disparity in seeking counselling can also be attributed to the perception in the African cultural context that males are strong and are socialised to overcome problems (O'neil, 1991). This concurs with the social learning theory adopted in this study to the effect that males are stereotypically considered and socialized to be instrumental (O'neil, 1991).

Student participants in the study ranged from 18 years and 40 years with a mean (M) of 24.2 years, (SD=5.12). However, majority were between 21 and 25 years (n=92, 47%) followed by those aged between 18 years and 20 years (n=54, 29%). The results indicates that age of students had some effect on participation rate in counselling services with majority of them aged between 21 years and 25 years showing a greater interest in seeking assistance. Those below 20 years could still be having the secondary school mentality that counselling was for disciplining students (Wango, 2006).

The study investigated further details about the university counsellors. This was necessary in order to find out the gender of the counsellors as well as other variables such as age and qualification which could influence delivery of services.

**Table 4.2: Biographical Variables of University Counsellors**

<b>Biographical variables</b>	<b>Variable description</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Gender	Male	43
	Female	57
Age	30-39 years	14
	40-49 years	57
	50+ years	29
University Type	Private	57
	Public	43
School/Faculty	Science	42
	Education	29
	Business studies	29
Academic Qualifications	Masters	71
	PhD	29
Working experience as university counsellor	1- 4 years	14
	5-10 years	57
	11+ years	29

There were more female university counsellors than males who took part in the study. This is attributed to the misconception that counselling is a female profession and that is why many males are shying away from it. The Kenyan constitution (Republic of Kenya, 2010) provides that no more than 2/3 of each gender should hold elective and appointed positions and universities are currently employing men to balance the equation although there is still a challenge since few men are being trained as counsellors. Peer counsellors also existed in the three universities. Counsellors in universities are recruited through an interviewing process whereby academic qualification and counselling experience are considered (Wachira, 2012).

The majority of university counsellors were between the 40 and 49 years of age (n=4, 57%) and very few counsellors were between 30 and 39 years of age (n=1, 14%). This is an aspect that could require further investigation as most of the regular students are between 20–30 years and hence most of the counsellors are out of their range in age. Wango (2006) raised a similar issue among school counsellors in secondary schools. These are aspects that influence therapy and require in-depth investigations in subsequent studies.

The study noted that that all the seven university counsellors had Masters or Doctoral level of training. This indicates that the university counsellors were competent enough to offer quality counselling services to university students. In addition, they had adequate experience in dealing with students. Engelks and Vandergoots (1982) point out that in a university setting, masters or doctoral

level training in counselling psychology is needed for one to work as counsellor. In a study, Weber (2007) noted the lack of a preference for a therapist with only a Bachelor's degree. This indicates some participant insight into the educational and experiential requirements for counsellors and it was noted that universities had taken in such important consideration in recruitment of university counsellors. This researcher is in agreement with Feltham (1996) who contends that it is essential that trainee counsellors receive in-depth training in theory so that they possess a set of practical competencies that can be applied to their work.

The qualification of therapists is significant. Atkinson and Poston (1986) concurs with Weber (2007) that participants' overall educational levels and general dislike for a Bachelor-level therapist reflects a preference for one who had simply attained more education and training than themselves. Corey (1996) points that training is a basic component of counselling practice. Weber (2007) also indicates that students prefer a well-educated therapist of advanced training who is a good listener, makes them feel comfortable and is non-judgmental. This is in line with Roger's (1961) qualities of effective counselling abilities and significantly relate to positive outcomes and retention. Mutie and Ndambuki (2004) and Wango and Mungai (2007) highlight the need for counsellor training in Kenya. The four scholars explain that counsellors' should be knowledgeable about the nature and pattern of students' problems, especially the usual adolescent ones which students are likely to encounter and the various adjustment mechanisms one is likely to use when they are

unbalanced, uncomfortable or tense. Thus, in-depth knowledge and qualification are necessary for effective and efficient counselling.

The three universities that took part in this study had a total of eleven counsellors and seven (64%) came from the public universities. Distribution of counsellors by the university type shows that there were more counsellors in private universities ( $n=4$ , 57%) than public universities ( $n=3$ , 43%) who took part in this study. Chi-square test of independence between gender of the counsellors and the university type shows a significant relation at .05 levels between the variables ( $\chi^2=3.2$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.049$ ).

#### **4.2. Gender of the Counsellor**

There was disproportional female counsellors' domination in the public university with four female and three male counsellors. An almost equal sample of counsellors was drawn from the university Schools / Faculties where 3 (42 %) were drawn from the School / Faculty of Science, 2 (29 %) from Faculty/School of Education; and 2 (29%) from School / Faculty of Business Studies and Economics. Chi-square test of independence between gender of the counsellors and the university Schools/Faculties shows no significant relation at .05 levels between the variables ( $\chi^2=1.283$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.526$ ).

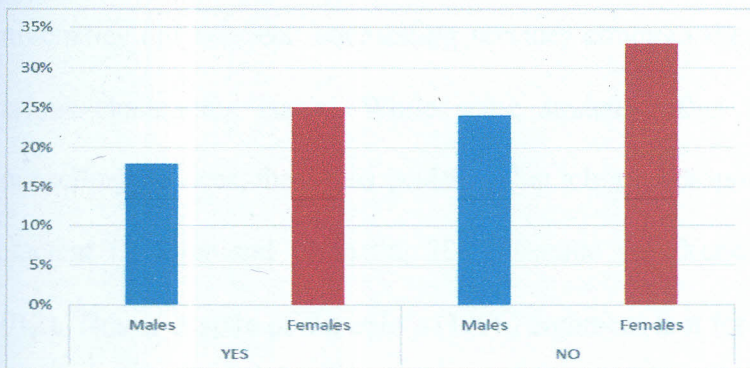
There were 7 female counsellors as compared to four male counsellors. This is an indication of lack of gender consideration in appointments and/or involvement among males in counselling in both the private and public

universities. This gender disparity was also noted by Wango (2006) among counsellors in secondary schools. The participation of more female counsellors and corresponding involvement of less male counsellors could imply that gender factor has an influence in counselling services in both private and public universities.

#### 4.3. Prevalence of Counselling Services in Kenyan Universities

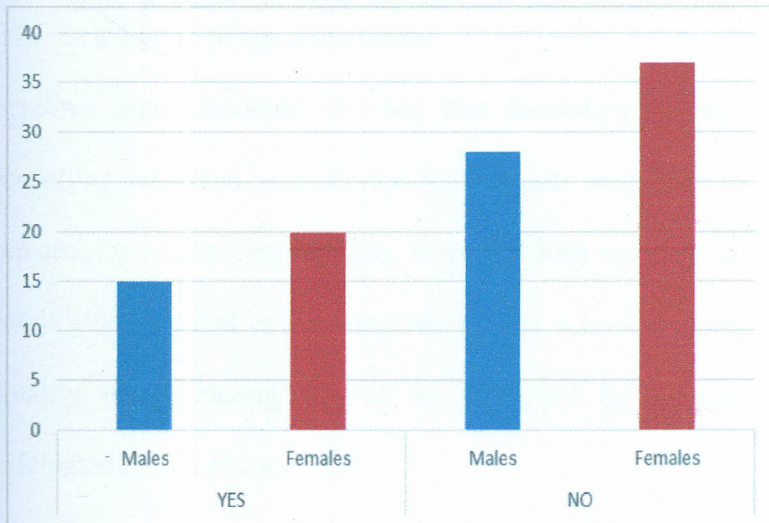
The first research question in this study aimed at seeking information on the prevalence of counselling services in Kenyan universities. Research questionnaires formulated for this study sought to gather information from both counsellors and students on the prevalence for services from the university counselling departments. A summary of the findings is presented in Figures 4.1. and 4.2:

**Figure 4.1: Counsellors' Responses on Prevalence for Counselling Services**



It was evident from the counsellors that majority of students did not seek counselling services. Students taking part in the study also agreed that their colleagues did not seek helping services.

**Figure 4.2: Students Responses on the prevalence for Counselling Services**



Majority of students in both public and private universities were not fully utilizing counselling services provided for them by their respective universities. This was attested by majority of counsellors ( $n=4$ , 33% female, 24% male) and students ( $n=126$ , 37% female, 28% male) who indicated that students in universities did not seek counselling services although they were faced with various challenging issues. While some students often utilized university counselling services, there was evidence that a higher proportion of them were reluctant (Mertler and Vannatta, 2005; Raunic and Xenos, 2008; Wachira, 2012). This is in spite of Biswalo's (1996) argument that for most students, the college years represented unique challenges. It is actually a time of significant personal growth and decision making regarding one's values, interpersonal relationships, career and other life goals all within a stressful student academic environment. A male student explained:

*Students perceive counselling as a service for those with problems. When I was in secondary school, students that had discipline problems would be referred for counselling after being punished by the deputy head teacher. So here we do not seek counselling except for those involved in drugs and alcohol.*

Therefore, some students still had that secondary school mentality where counselling was seen as a service for deviants and this was inhibiting them from seeking counselling services. Wango (2006) notes the discipline aspect in overall guidance and counselling services in schools among men as well as sexuality issues among women as explained by a female student who participated in this study;

*We seek help mostly on pregnancy and sexual issues. For example, I took my friend for counselling when she was raped. Then we suggested to another girl to see a counsellor because she was crying a lot after her boyfriend suddenly dropped her. Other than that, we are okay.*

This implies that despite efforts made by universities to provide counselling services, the services are underutilized. A female counsellor reported:

*Universities should do something about counselling for university students. Only a few students seek the help of counsellors although the services are diverse and offered free of charge.*

This researcher concurs with Sutton and Stewart (2009) who contend that the road to the counsellor's door can be a long one. This was illustrated by one of the female student who was also a peer counsellor:

*Students fail to seek counselling help because of a number of reasons. For example, fear of being stigmatized, lack of trust with counsellors, tight academic schedule and thus no time for seeking counselling help. There are also cultural values that prohibit men from seeking help such as men should not seek help from females.*

Some students felt that they needed to use the available time for their studies and so considered counselling as a waste of time.

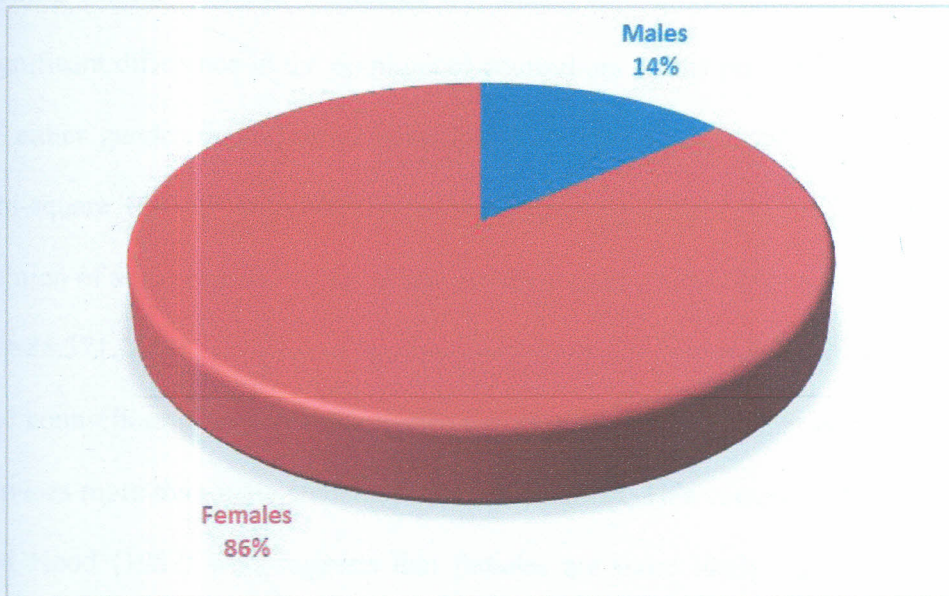
From this study, a sizeable population of students sought the services of counsellors as indicated by 43% of counsellors and 35 % of students. It was notable that students did appreciate the accrued benefits. For instance, the students who sought counselling services developed effective problem-solving and decision-making capabilities useful in the enhancement of developmental capacity for academic, social and personal growth. A female student who had gone for counselling said:

*I often seek the services of a counsellor when I have challenges and have found it very useful. Personally, I encourage my colleagues to seek assistance and some have approached a counsellor here in campus while others shy away.*

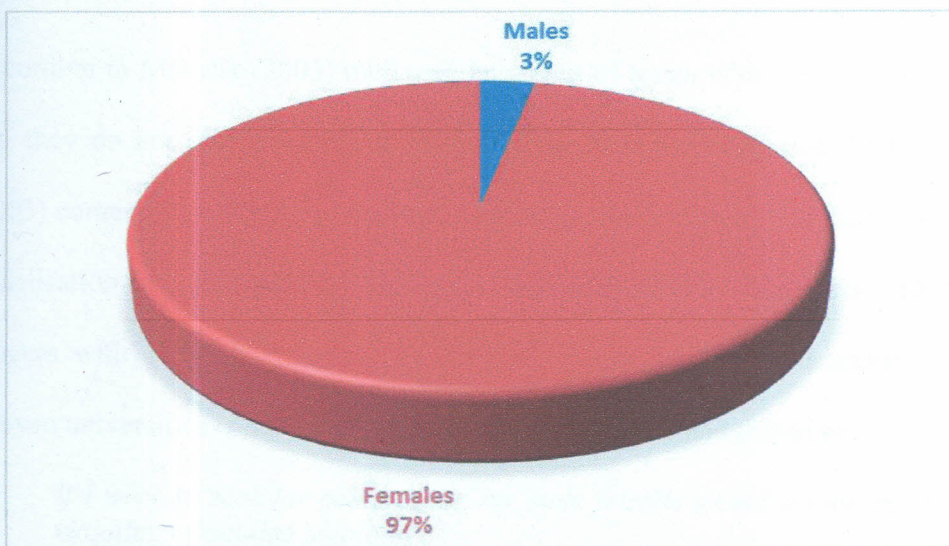
Such students have encouraged others to be positive about seeking counselling help. Another female student agreed with the above when she said that some students made use of counselling services because they had heard someone talking positively about counselling in the university.

Further, the researcher sought to find out from the counsellors and students selected for the study which gender (men or women) sought the services of counsellors more than the other in the university. In this line, Russell, Thompson and Rosenthal (2008) reported that most of the students who sought help from a counselling centre were females. Data regarding this information is presented in Figures 4.3. and 4.4:

**Figure 4.3: Opinions of Counsellors on Gender Seeking Counselling Services**



**Figure 4.4: Opinions of Students on Gender Seeking Counselling Services**



More females than males sought the services of university counsellors with majority of counsellors (n=6, 86%) and majority of students (n=188, 97%) sharing similar opinions. Computed Chi-square test for counsellors shows no significant difference in the opinions of counsellors on the number of students of either gender that sought counselling services ( $\chi^2=3.571$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.059$ ). Chi-square test for students also indicated no significant difference in the opinion of students concerning which gender sought counselling services more ( $\chi^2=85.371$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.076$ ). The computed statistics confirmed that students and counsellors were of similar views; that female students sought counselling services more than male students in the universities. This concurs with Fisher and Hood (1987) who suggests that females are more likely than males to become counselling clients. As a result, women are more willing than men to reveal highly personal and vulnerable information about themselves to counsellors (Herink, 2001).

According to Mahalik (2003) men may be so out of touch with their emotions that they do not even realise that they are, for example depressed. Mahalik (2003) contend that admitting that one need help conflicts with masculine role socialisation and that asking for help is not normal male behaviour. This concurs with social learning theory adopted in this study. The scenario in Kenyan universities is not different, one male interviewee had this to say:

*If I were to seek for counselling, my male friends would accuse me of violating masculine ideologies.*

Such a male student is suffering from what Timothy Njoya calls flawed masculinity (Njoya, 2009). In his study of masculinity, Njoya contend that the social construct of male masculinity causes men to relax the use of their vital organs and die of atrophy earlier than women. In Kenya, men get indolent, irrelevant and redundant and die of atrophy 21-31 years earlier than women (Njoya 2009). Study findings suggest that only a small proportion of male students' access counselling services as one counsellor explained:

*The male students do not want to come here, unfortunately they are the same ones involved in drinking and drugs. It is a pity that they fail to seek help when it is actually readily available.*

It is possible that males do not want to be perceived as unable to resolve their issues, and Wango (2006) as well noted reluctance among males to seek help especially from female counsellors. This researcher concurs with Cornell (2009) who points out that females are more likely to use counselling services than men. Cooke (2005) study involving first year university students in a British university contends that only 3% of students in the university (majority being females) sought professional counselling services by the end of the second semester.

The students claimed that men seek counselling less than women not because they have less counselling issues than women but because they keep them to themselves. Furthermore, they shied off from seeking the counselling services. According to Dusek (1996), many female clients who seek counselling are concerned with a lack of self-esteem, an inability to assert themselves and an

inability to seek power or control their lives. Females have been socialised to take a lower position than males thus may not take control of their lives as power belongs to men (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). When difficulties or conflicts arise between them and males, the females tend to blame themselves and to harbour mixed feelings of guilt, shame, resentment, hostility and depression (Dusek, 1996).

As for the counsellors, female students engage in more open and personal self-disclosure than male students. This disclosure difference has been explained in terms of gender-role socialization as supported by Social Learning Theory adopted in this study. The counsellors noted that whereas the male gender-behaviour of being tough and emotionally inexpressive discourages them from disclosing to others, the female gender-behaviour of being connected and social promotes intimacy. According to counsellors, and in agreement with Turner (1981), men are reluctant to seek counselling and when they do, they tend to resist a close counselling relationship. However, Pedersen, Sue and Ivey (1996) states that although men have in the past been reluctant to seek counselling, they are now willing to seek counselling services as supported by 14% male counsellors. According to counsellors, men seek counselling services when they experience personal dissatisfaction or feeling of inadequacy, exhibiting addictive behaviour, having problems with intimate relationships or when they realize that they are developing pathological patterns of violence and abuse of others.

According to the findings of this study, university counsellors encounter and provide counselling to male students with addictive behaviours. Men develop addictive behaviours to defend themselves against depression. Addictive behaviours include: compulsive drinking, gambling, eating, obsessive sexual urges, work holism and sports among others. These addictions are a form of self-medication. They disconnect men from themselves and can lead to violent and destructive behaviours towards others. Chandra (2002) points out that because women are permitted by the culture to experience and acknowledge their feelings, they are more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression. Male depression, in contrast, is masked and hidden within the person, and with others around them.

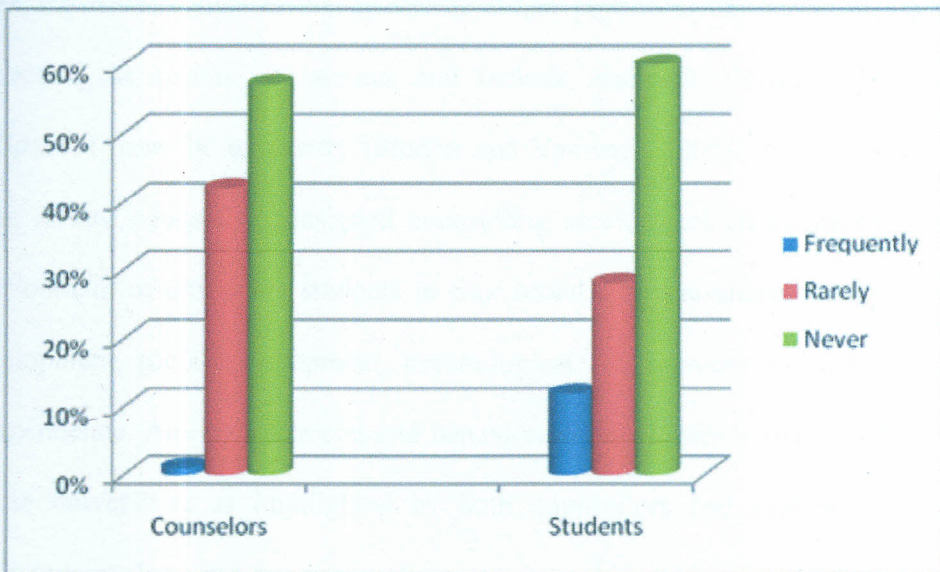
Men portray symptoms such as numbness of feelings to the extent that the man disassociates and disconnects with others, especially the loved ones. Both male and female form of dysfunction is similarly caused by early socialization which forces boys and girls to acquire gender-based behavioural patterns (Gelso and Fretz, 1992). Thus, girls are allowed to express anguish and shame, cry and weep, and are expected to remain in this weak, submissive role.

Consequently, female students feel disempowered and lose their ability to assert themselves to develop their academic, social and personal competencies. Males are traumatized even more because not only are they ashamed if they also fail to follow expected masculine behaviours but they cannot reveal feelings of disappointments as they would be taken to be less masculine. Thus,

males deny the pain, shame and despair in general. The males are also trained to separate emotionally from their mothers as a necessary step in gaining masculine identity, whereas girls are encouraged to maintain connections with their mothers (Gelso and Fretz, 1992)/

The researcher enquired from the counsellors and students how regularly students sought counselling services from the university. A summary of this data is presented in Figure 4.5:

**Figure 4.5: Counsellors and Students Responses on Students' Frequency in Seeking Counselling**



Counsellors and students responses shows that students do not frequent counselling services.

### 4.3.1. Reasons Why Students Seek Counselling Services

The study also investigated issues that make students seek help in counselling.

**Table 4.3: Reasons Why Students Seek Counselling Services**

Reasons for seeking help	Counsellors		Students	
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)
Academic Issues	37	49	34	45
Social Issues	43	57	41	53
Psychological Issues	30	41	31	40
Economic Issues	12	17	17	23

Table 4.3 confirms that the reasons presented to counsellors were generally students' counselling issues. As noted by Atwarter (2003), university students often experience high levels of stress. When psychological difficulties go untreated, the results get serious and include academic failure and even withdrawal from the university (Mertler and Vannatta, 2005). In response to these issues, counsellors designed counselling services which addressed the development of university students in four broad essential areas: educational development, social development, psychological development and economic independence. Among the social and behavioural issues which affect students in the universities as highlighted by both counsellors and students were: drunkenness, drug and substance abuse, sexual relationships among students which could lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Poor relationships with other students was also noted to be prevalent among some of them hence an area which needs counselling.

According to the university counsellors, today the youth (university students included) are faced with many issues and conflicts relating to identity crises as a result of the 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 counsellors help students face a wide range of challenging issues. The empirical findings are in line with Cheung and Liu, (2005) who argues that individuals are likely to seek professional help for different problems such as emotional, personal, interpersonal or academic/vocational problems, stress-related problems, relationship issues and mood problems.

Students identified some educational and career aspirations which are inhibited due to social or personal difficulties that ought to be addressed by counsellors if students are to experience success in the universities. Examples of personal difficulties which students experience included low achievements, low self-esteem and poor attitude towards the university education. The interview conducted with a sample of students noted that counsellors assist students who are annoyed, unhappy and frustrated.

One male interviewee had this to say:

*I am comfortable seeking counselling when I have personal problems and if someone is feeling low they should seek for counselling.*

This researcher concurs with the above that some students appreciate the role of counselling in their lives, though some can again be unable to seek therapeutic

services for reasons outside the profession (Wango, 2006) especially in the developing countries where formal counselling is only gaining prominence (Wango, 2015). In the present study, the students too noted that the core reasons which make them seek assistance from the counsellors is the belief that counsellors provide them with experiences that increase knowledge of occupations, training paths, lifestyles, employment-seeking styles, decision-making strategies and, above all, knowledge of self.

Additionally, academic achievement was noted by a majority of counsellors (n=6, 37% male and 49% female) and students (n=144, 34% male and 45% female) as a concern. This concurs with Russell et al (2008) findings. Russell (2008) surveyed a large sample of international students attending an Australian metropolitan university to examine the distribution of the problems for which they sought help, also found out that of the 268 students who needed help. 76% said they needed academic-educational counselling, 60% career-vocational help, and 56% requested personal-social-emotional counselling.

Students in this study suggested that issues such as shyness and feeling of inferiority, poor academic results, and loss of interest in studying, loss of self-esteem, peer pressure and immaturity in intellectual development should be prioritised and addressed through the university counselling programmes. Both counsellors and students identified psychological issues which affect students in the universities. Psychological issues included the following: health problems arising from HIV/ AIDS as well as stigma and discrimination; stress

resulting from isolation from peers, family and the lecturers; drug and substance abuse; bereavement through death of significant members of the family such as parents and other family members.

The study also noted that some students sought help from counsellors due to economic challenges. This fact was attested by 12% male and 17% female counsellors and 17% male and 23% female of students. Counsellors explained that students from humble families faced difficulties in paying tuition fees, accommodation expenses and other upkeep costs. The affected students felt that they could not cope up with university education and their trend in academic achievement therefore kept on declining.

The study identified a variety of reasons as to why students seek counselling. For example students experience academic difficulties in universities. Students score poor grades as compared to secondary school. This is frustrating, especially for those that were being paid for by donors for they had to show reports at the end of the semester. It was more frustrating for those that were put on probation or even suspended for a whole year as it meant more money and a longer stay in campus. According to Mertler and Vannatta (2005), some students are admitted to universities with very high grades but end up being discontinued due to low academic achievement. For some students, University is a place they had longed to be, for to their peers it was a sign of achievement. For many this turned out to be a long dream for life was challenging. The free

life with no control in terms of whether one attends class or not and lack of competition in class as they had witnessed in secondary school was frustrating.

Challenging class work, poor grades and failed relationships lead to anxiety for some students and suicidal thoughts. For some students, having come from very strict family background and schools, the freedom in campus took a toll in their lives. This is worse when they have no one to share with as everybody is concerned about their own life as one female student put it:

*I have no one to share with as no one is willing to listen. I just lock myself in my room and cry. I feel like I have come to the wrong place.*

Having come from close-knit families where their significant others cared was something they longed for in campus.

University students are affected by family problems which include separation, divorce and chronic illnesses among family members. This often affected their relationship with other gender, thus loneliness. It was frustrating for students to realise that the courses they were studying would not earn them much money as they had anticipated. For education students, the constant strikes by teachers created a negative image among their peers in other professions who would look down upon them especially when teacher's salary was analysed in the press. Worse still, some had been persuaded to do the courses and still looked forward to a course of their choice. This concurs with Julal (2013), who contends that students have difficulties finding employment and such stress can have major effects on students experiencing such negative academic performance.

University life compared with secondary school was different. According to students, when one lost a loved one, the university community was not even informed. Students who come from communities where mourning is a community affair felt alone when a loss occurred. One female student said;

*It is devastating to lose a loved one. When I lost my mother, I felt I had lost everything because she was very close to me. I expected my close friends to feel with me but they were so busy with their own life and I wondered whether they care. All they told me was that all will be well. No one really understood my pain.*

The student felt that no one empathised with her as compared to her community that mourned together. Having been socialised in that community, she found it difficult to go through the mourning process.

The freedom experienced in campus had pushed some students into drugs and alcohol. For some students it was the challenges that they were experiencing that were difficult to cope with thus took alcohol and drugs as a way of escaping such challenges. For some male students alcohol was acceptable. One male student said;

*Almost every man takes alcohol and it would be abnormal for me not to take.*

For this Student, the argument was that traditionally men have been socialised to conform to the norms of other men (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). This is in line with the social learning theory adopted in this study. Unfortunately some male students were squandering fees thus would end up not doing exams and others engaged in a sexual lifestyle that made some get infected with sexually transmitted diseases. It is such effects that made them seek counselling services.

As for female students, past traumatic events like sexual abuse, child battering and coming from a background of abuses was a contributing factor. This concurs with Bloom and Covington (1998), who contend that women begun abusing drugs and alcohol after a specific traumatic event. Female students claimed they were treated with disrespect by male students. This concurs with Brissett (1998) who contends that substance use disorder in African American women, especially a maternal figure, violates a culturally transmitted pattern for families of descendants of slaves. Historically women of colour have been socialized to rear their children at all costs despite all odds.

#### 4.3.2. Reasons why Students do not seek Counselling Services

The study sought to find out the reasons why students in the universities do not seek professional counselling services yet the services were available free of charge.

**Table 4.4: Reasons why Students do not Seek Counselling Services**

Responses	Counsellors		Students	
	M%	F%	M%	F%
Social Mistrust		14	10	13
Lack of Confidence in Counsellors		14	2	3
Confidentiality level of Issues	14		3	4
Gender of Counsellors	14	16	21	26
Peer Pressure		14	6	9
Seek help from significant others	14		1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>57</b>

Two counsellors (14% male, 16% female) and 90 students (21% male, 26% female) identified gender of the counsellor as a key reason that makes students fail to seek counselling services. For instance, male students do not seek help

for masculine related issues from female counsellors lest they are seen as 'weak' or 'unable to cope' with issues. This can be attributed to their socialisation process where males are socialised to be strong (O'neil, 2006) and is in line with the social learning theory adopted in this study. Social mistrust took second position with 14% counsellors and 23% students. Others include confidentiality level of issues (14% counsellors, 7% students), peer pressure (14% counsellors 15% students) and help from significant others and the internet (14% counsellors, 3% students).

According to the university counsellors, university students undergo tremendous stress from personal issues, academic pressure, career emphasis and social problems. Counselling is meant to provide linear paths for students to address their problems. However, some students are reluctant to seek help from counsellors. This study established that a large number of students in the universities failed to seek counselling from counsellors due to a variety of reasons. They complained that some of the counsellors occasionally make students' issues public and thus those who are affected feel disillusioned since confidentiality as a cardinal skill in counselling is not being adhered to by such counsellors (American Counselling Association, 2014; Bond, 2009). As a result, students with counselling issues feared being used as 'examples' by lecturers when teaching. Furthermore, some of the students consider seeking for help from counsellors as a waste of time since they have their own ways of resolving problems. For instance, students get information and solutions of their problems from significant others, peers and the internet. Above all,

confidentiality is seen as essential since it helps the client to trust the privacy of their revelations to the counsellor and it enhances the counselling relationship.

Another complaint made by students was that few issues attracted immediate solutions which made them either to look for alternative ways of solving their problems or they kept those issues to themselves. For instance, there were no immediate solutions to financial issues. This complicated help-seeking encounters with the clients. A discussion with the students elicited varying feelings. Students used counsellors to get help and understanding for their problems and whether this worked or not depended on how genuine the counsellor was, how able the student was to speak about their problems and the relationship between the two. This is in line with Person Centred Theory adopted in this study.

The importance of being non-judgmental cannot be underscored. Being non-judgmental is advocated by PCT adopted in this study. Counsellors should accept their clients unconditionally. The client should be free to explore all thoughts and feelings, positive or negative, without danger of rejection or condemnation (Rogers, 1961). Positive regard is a universal, pervasive and persistent need in human beings (Rogers, 1961). The student could on the other hand have trouble accepting the counsellor as being genuine. Students might not trust counsellors to keep their information confidential and this could cause them to hold back. Genuineness is one of the tenets of PCT. Some Students that were interviewed said they preferred to share their problems with their

family members and close friends rather than choosing to use counselling services when faced with challenges.

This study noted that there was a gender difference in attitude toward seeking counselling services among university students in which the female student is more positive than the male student (Nelson, 2003). Speight and Vera (1997) explored the actual importance of the similarities between the counsellor and the client giving advantages whenever the client and counsellor share similarities like gender and ethnicity. Both counsellors and students indicated that the other barriers to seeking counselling help were as follows:

- a) Students' fears of being labelled in a negative way.
- b) Counselling room not appropriately located.

Other students claimed that counselling was for lower level students, not university students. Other factors responsible for students' underutilization of university counselling services included: Perceived self-sufficiency, denial as a coping style, unwillingness to discuss personal problems and lack of knowledge about counselling services. Also, tight academic schedules for students with issues mean that students have little or no time left for counselling. Consequently, students seek answers to 'fix' their problems from the internet and fellow students. In addition, they attributed their failure to seek counselling services to being 'shy' and therefore unable to disclose to counsellors some very personal issues. For instance, few male students would approach female counsellors for masculine issues while few female students would seek menstruation problems from male counsellors.

Several students voiced concern about friends seeing them entering the counselling centre. "My friends will think I am crazy" was the way one summed it up. Thus the greatest source of anxiety was the potential devaluation of the self in the eyes of others. A university counsellor described students walking past the office door several times before finally entering and recommended having the counselling centre next to the health centre so that the students' reason for entering the building would be uncertain.

#### 4.3.3. Period When Students Seek Counselling Most

Counsellors and students expressed varying responses regarding the duration when students sought counselling services in the university. A summary of the findings are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Period When Students Seek Counselling Most**

When Do Students Seek Counselling Most	Counsellors		Students	
	M%	F%	M%	F%
During Exams	14		18	23
In Times of Crises	18	26	22	28
Before Breaking For Holidays		14	1	2
After Holidays	14		1	2
All the Time		14	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>57</b>

The table above shows the periods at which counselling took place in the university. Three of counsellors (n=3, 43%) and students (n=97, 50%) indicated that students sought counselling help mostly in times of crises. According to Sutton and Stewart (2009), people frequently seek counselling at times of crisis or change. They have reached the end of their tether or cannot

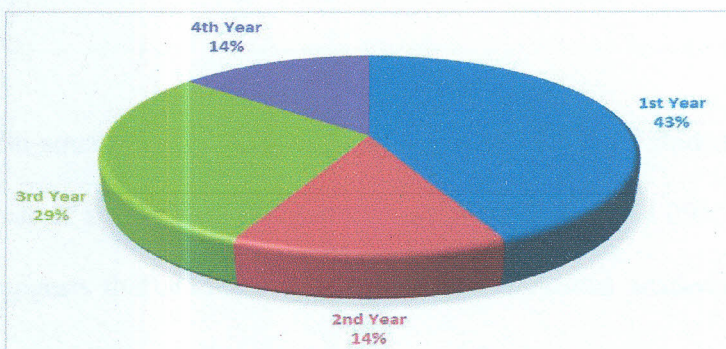
see light at the end of the tunnel and are only struggling to cope. Rana (2000) contend that most students seek counselling when a crisis point is reached: that is, when they cannot find a way of moving forward on their own.

King and Wheeler (1999) indicate that when timely, a brief period of counselling is often sufficient to get students “back on track”. However, if they have to wait long for help, they will give up and withdraw. Thus Rana (2000) emphasizes that counselling services that are accessible when students want and need them are much likely to be effective than that which is available weeks later.

#### 4.3.4. Academic Year Students Seek Counselling Services Most

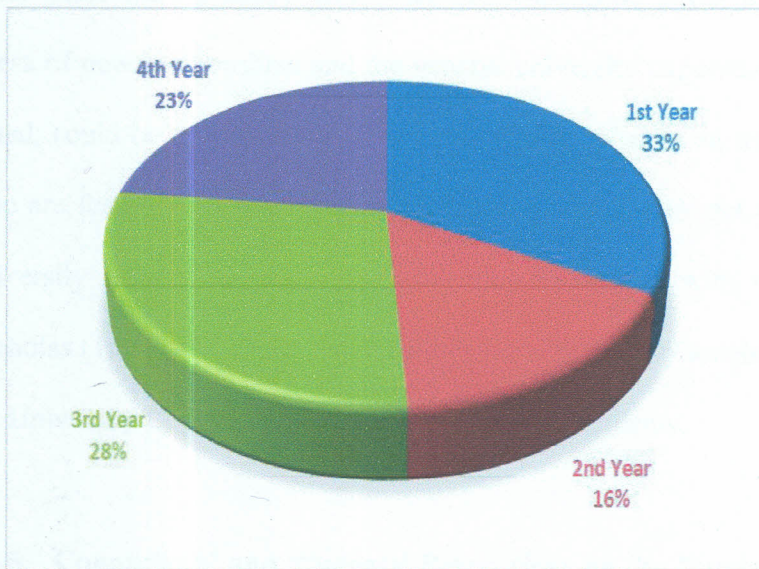
The study was concerned to find out which students seek counselling most and why the students could have sought and/ or needed such help. A summary of the findings (presented in Figures 4.6 and 4.7) indicate that three counsellors ( $n=3$ , 43%) felt that students in the first year of study present themselves for counselling more than students in any other academic years. These findings are also supported by sixty six students ( $n=66$ , 34%).

**Figure 4.6: Academic Year When Students Seek Counselling Services Most according to Counsellors**



According to students, first year students get overwhelmed by life in campus as they try to adjust to the new environment. They encounter other students from different economic, cultural and social background. For some, courses chosen are too demanding and the excessive freedom, unstructured education programmes in universities affects them negatively because they have been used to a controlled routine in secondary schools. Slaa and Barkam (2010) contend that psychological wellbeing in students decreases significantly from Pre University to the first semester and that at this time many of the negative effects can be experienced.

**Figure 4.7: Academic Year When Students Seek Counselling Services Most According to Students**



Chi-square test of independence between gender of students and the academic year of study showed significant results at .05 ( $\chi^2 = 4.095$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .025$ ). This suggests that students' gender across the various academic years is different.

There is disproportional female domination in all the academic years. On comparison with other academic years, students in third year assumed the second position in seeking counselling services. This is because of poor results in first and second year and the realisation that they are not far from finishing their studies. For some third year students, they come to realise that their area of study may not lead to the career they had wanted to join. Thus look for career counselling (Russell et al, 2008).

This study findings are in agreement with the findings of a study of Spanish university students seeking counselling services which reported that first year students were 10% more likely to attend counselling services than students in other years (Arco, 2005). Combined with academic stress and perhaps the stress of new relationships and the general university experience, the students noted, could be disappointing. Where this experiences exist, troubled students who are feeling depressed, stressed or overwhelmed seek out the aid of their university counsellors. This study findings also agree with the findings of Nicholas (1997) who argue that most of the students who sought counselling at the University Counselling Centre were first year students.

#### **4.3.5. Counsellors' and Students' Perceptions on the Number of Students Seeking Counselling Services**

The sub-sections in the questionnaire contained a 5-point Likert Rating (LR) Scale which consisted of five statements adopted from Stephen and Smith (1991). A scale is a series of gradation, levels or values that describe various

degrees of variables. Scales are used in questionnaires because they allow accurate assessment of beliefs or opinions. The five choices ranged from; 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.

The respondents were instructed to tick the number which best represented their feelings about each statement in the Likert Rating Scale. The test's information derived from the attitude scale was used to enrich information acquired from the students through the Focus Group Discussions and the interviews by use of Chi-Square test of independence. In this study, the chi-square test of independence was used to examine possible association between categorical variables such as whether the pattern of response on issues differed significantly for some of the statements on the subject under study. If significance was established, it implied that respondents' opinions on the statements were not the same.

Interpretations and decisions on the results of the test were dependent upon the p-values. The respondents could evaluate some statements 'more positively' (more to the 'agree/strongly agree' side) and others to the more 'negatively' ('disagree/strongly disagree' side). The rule of the thumb applied that if the p-value was less than .05, then the results were significant. However, if it was more than .05, then the results were not significant. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Perceptions on Students with Issues who Seek Counselling**

Respondents	Opinion of Counsellors and Students	Chi-square tests		
		$\chi^2$	Df	P
Counsellors	No students seeks counselling	2.286	4	.00
	Few students seek counselling	3.215	4	.41
	Majority of students seek counselling	1.236	4	.00
	Female students seek counselling more than males	2.286	4	.27
	Male students seek counselling more than females	2.239	4	.00
Students	No students seeks counselling	277.2	5	.00
	Few students seek counselling	314.1	5	.51
	Majority of students seek counselling	274.1	5	.00
	Female students seek counselling more than males	267.6	5	.67
	Male students seek counselling more than females	332.3	5	.00

The computed Chi-square test for counsellors and students showed a significance difference in the perception of counsellors and students on certain statements. For example, the opinion of counsellors and students that no students with issues seeking counselling services in the university showed a significant relationship at .05 level between the variables ( $p=.000$ ). The significance established for these statements implied that counsellors and students held different perceptions when comparing responses on the number of students seeking counselling services. According to the counsellors and students, not all the university students refused to seek counselling services as postulated by the statement under study. However, the opinion that only few students with issues seek counselling services and that female students seek them more than males showed no significant relationship at .05 level between

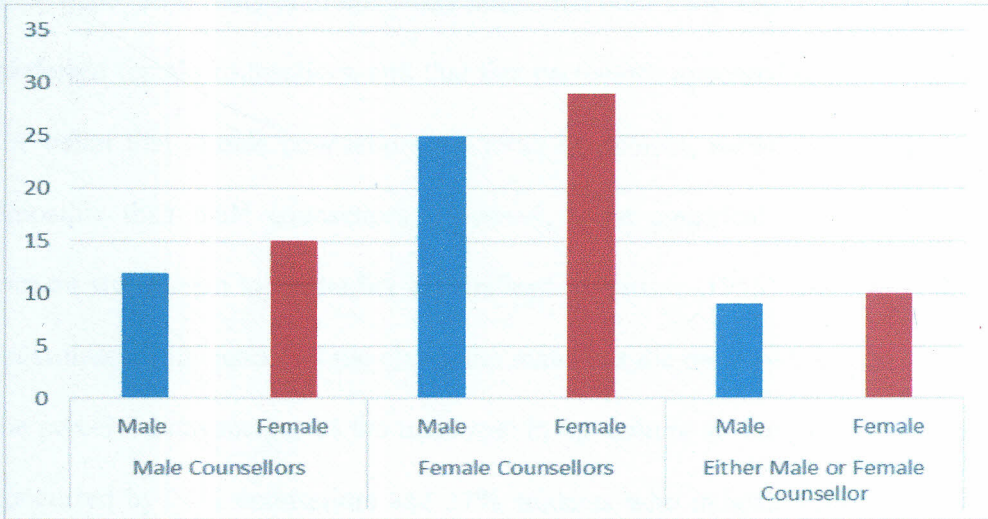
the variables ( $p=.27$ ,  $p=.67$ ). Both counsellors and students were of similar view that more females than males are seeking counselling services in the universities.

#### **4.4. Students Preference of Male or Female Counsellors or any One of Them**

The second research question sought information on the extent to which students seeking counselling services from the university counselling departments were influenced by the gender of the counsellor. Every person has preferences for and opinions about most aspects of life, including psychotherapy (Stigall, 2006). Many people have preferences for the therapist from whom they seek therapy. According to Stigall (2006), therapists just like teachers and doctors are not created equal. Stigall (2006) emphasizes the need for clients to choose the right therapist including gender of therapist. One of the first theories of gender preferences for counsellors was proposed by Brown (1956). Brown believed that clients' preferences for counsellors were entirely based on both gender preferences for the masculine over the feminine sex role.

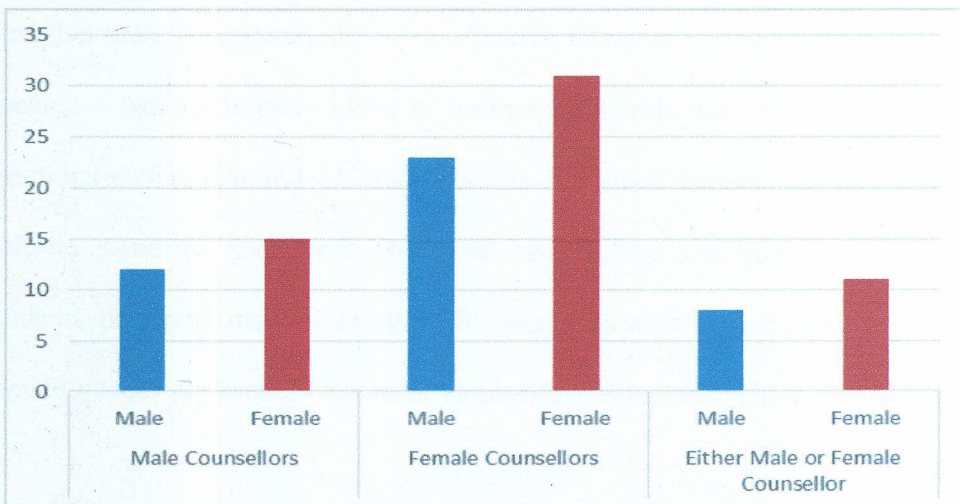
This section presents the results of an investigation of male and female students' expressed preferences for gender of their counsellor. Both counsellors and students were asked to state whether students would prefer a male or female counsellor, or any one of them in a counselling session. Summary of the findings from the questionnaires is presented in Figure 4.8. and 4.9.

**Fig 4.8. Students' Preference of Male or Female Counsellor According to Counsellors**



This study addressed one major comparison: students with an expressed preference for female versus those with a preference for a male counsellor. Data of students who did not prefer the gender of the counsellor were also collected and analysed.

**Figure 4.9: Students' Preference of Male or Female Counsellor According to Students**



Majority of students (n=104, 31% female , 23% male) and counsellors (n=5, 25% male, 29% female) in this study noted that both male and female students preferred female counsellors, and that this preference appeared to be based on the belief that female counsellors are more competent, nurturing, caring and empathic than male counsellors. However, these empirical findings in the current study seem to contradict the findings of Brown (1956) who stated that regardless of the gender of the client, the male was the preferred gender due to the perceived advantages of the male role in the culture at that time. This was concurred by 14% counsellors and 27% students who indicated that students prefer male counsellors. The non-influence of the gender of the counsellor is also interesting to consider. Some students (n=38, 19%) and counsellors (n=1, 14%) were of the opinion that students have no preference of gender during the counselling process. They claimed that all counsellors with counselling skills can offer services to both males and females.

Students expressed a higher preference for and anticipated comfort with female counsellors as compared with male counsellors. This supports Turner's (1981) idea that there is tendency for more effective therapists to be females. This is because a woman is more likely to listen supportively and understand men's emotions such as fear and self-doubt. However, female students demonstrated a definite same-sex preference for some counselling situations, while male students preferred male counsellors for personal/social counselling and had female gender preferences for other counselling situations. These findings are

consistent with Koile and Bird (1970) who found out in their research that male students prefer male counsellors and females prefer female counsellors.

#### 4.5. Reasons why University Students Prefer Male or Female Counsellors

The study was concerned to investigate reasons why students, when they seek counselling, would prefer a counsellor of any particular gender.

The data on the reasons for preferences by students' on the university counsellors are set out in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Students Preference of Male or Female Counsellor**

Gender of Counsellor	Reasons	Counsellors (%)		Students (%)	
		M	F	M	F
Male	High Degree of Solving Problems	20	26	25	32
	Solve Masculine Issues Better	18	25	18	24
	Very Confident and Keeps Secret	33	44	37	24
Female	Solves more Problems than Males	39	39	28	36
	Genuine, Caring and Polite	12	17	31	40
	Females Offers Immediate Solutions	12	17	21	27
	Able to Solve Feminine Issues	18	25	38	50
	More Friendly and Understanding	31	74	23	31
	Handles both Feminine and Masculine Issues well	37	49	15	19
	More Trustworthy Than Male Counsellors	12	17	21	27
Any of Them	Both are Trained	24	33	29	38
	Both are Bound by Professional Ethics	6	8	32	42
	General Issues and One Who is Friendly	18	25	18	24
	Either Gender Can Solve Problems	37	49	14	19
	Gender will Not Affect the Quality of Counselling	37	49	10	12
	Students Preference and Level of Interaction	30	41	20	26
	One who Maintains Confidentiality	18	25	12	15
	Both Have a Role To Play in Counselling Clients	30	41	10	14

Students and counsellors had conflicting opinions on the preferences of students who seek counselling services from male and female university counsellors. However, as seen from Table 4.7 counselling services are dependent on a number of reasons.

Some of the reasons cited by both counsellors and students to have significant impact on counselling were:

- (1) Degree of confidentiality maintained by the counsellors (33% males, 44% females) and students (37% males, 47% females).
- (2) Level of friendship and understanding cultivated likewise by the counsellors towards the students (31% males, 41% females) and students (23% males, 31 % females).
- (3) The counsellors' proficiency in handling both feminine and masculine issues with perfection (37% males, 49 % females) and students (15% males, 19% females).

This study noted that female counsellors appear more trustworthy than male counsellors in the eyes of the students (21% males. 27%females) unlike their own impression that they were more trustworthy (12% male,17% female), especially taking into consideration that a majority of the respondents were females.

These findings concur with Carter, Lytton and Craft (1991) who noted that female counsellors were able to understand and empathize with female clients far better than male counsellors. Empathic understanding is the crux of PCT

adopted in this study. Empathy means that the counsellor accurately understands the client's thoughts, feelings and expectations. According to PCT, counsellors who immerse themselves in their clients experience "walks a mile in their shoes".

Further, male counsellors were rated as having high degree of solving students' problems as indicated by counsellors (20% male, 26% female) and students (25% male, 32% female). However, female counsellors were more preferred by both gender of students since they possessed more qualities than males. For instance, a majority of counsellors (30% male, 39% female) stated that female counsellors appeared to offer more solutions, and this was acceptable to more than a half (28% males, 36% female) of the students. It was further noted that students of both gender were more willing to seek help from a counsellor of their own gender than from one of the other gender. Republic of Kenya (1999) document observed that for counselling services to be more effective, students needed to be attended to by counsellors of their own gender unless they made special requests to the contrary. According to Simon and Helms (1996), both men and women tend to prefer counsellors of their own gender.

In contrast, information gathered by the researcher from a sample of the students indicates that overall, a male counsellor is preferred to a female counsellor for masculine issues for example male dysfunction. However, both male and female students prefer same-gender counsellors. According to Howard and Orlinsky (1980), women clients who are aware of the dynamics of

gender role stereotyping and are against the oppressive role of the male dominated society prefer to seek a relationship with a feminist-oriented female counsellor. One other argument advanced by the students in the study indicates that females would make better counsellors because the clients who have been counselled by them tend to report greater improvement and satisfaction.

It was also evident from both the counsellors and students involved in this study that some university students do not have definite preferences for male or female counsellors. Palmer and Gladeana (2000) point out that some clients have no particular preference regarding counsellor's gender and can work equally well with either gender in therapy. Students sought counselling services from any of the counsellors because of the following reasons; both counsellors have been bound by professional ethics, both have a role to play in counselling clients, either gender can solve problems and gender should not affect the quality of counselling.

An interesting argument that arose from students was why males seek counselling from females. The reasons given for the preference are that female counsellors are caring, empathic, understanding, good listeners, give warm welcome and are generally soft spoken. This is in line with PCT adopted in this study. Mearns and Thorne (2000) found that therapist warmth, friendliness and empathy contributed to alliance and outcomes. In a meta-analysis on therapist variables, Howard and Orlinsky (1980) found that empathy and openness as well as communication skills, exploration, and flexibility in the therapy session

have an impact on effective alliance, especially in the early treatment phases. Counselling is mainly associated with females because these services involve the kind of nurturing and sensitivity that are associated with femininity (Howard and Orlinsky, 1980). This is in line with the Social Learning theory adopted in this study.

This study also noted that some female students prefer male counsellors to handle their issues. These findings agree with Jocelyne (1999) who contend that most women growing up in a patriarchal society tend to perceive men as the experts, the all-knowing ones. But those female students who preferred male counsellors attributed this to the fact that women are perceived as 'enemies' of themselves. In addition, students who preferred a male counsellor mentioned that men are able to keep information. A number of the respondents indicated that they would prefer any counsellor, male or female, provided they were qualified.

#### **4.6. Factors that Influence the Gender Preference of the Counsellor by Client**

The third research question investigated factors which influenced the gender preference of the counsellor by the client among students in the universities. This included the gender of the counsellor, and using the person centred framework, the extent to which the therapist was acceptable to the client. As argued by McLeod (2012), it is significant to investigate what the client want in therapy, including university students as they seek help in counselling.

#### 4.6.1. Factors Students Considered Important When Seeking Counselling Services

One of the factors identified by counsellors (n=4, 24 male, 33%female) and students (n=116, 26% male, 34% female) was the age of the counsellor. This information is summarized in Table 4.8:

**Table 4.8: Factors Students Considered Important When Seeking Help**

Factors to Consider in Counselling	Counsellors		Students	
	M%	F%	M%	F%
Gender	37	49	41	53
Age of Counsellor	24	33	26	34
Topic of Counselling	37	49	39	52
Ethnic Group/Cultural Value	18	25	26	34
Method of Counselling	18	25	33	44
Religion of Counsellor	24	33	10	14
Experience and Skill	30	41	7	9
Dressing Mode of Counsellor	12	17	5	7
Urgency of Issues for Discussion	24	33	28	37
Availability of the Counsellor	30	41	28	37

Six of the counsellors (n=6, 37% male, 49%female) and majority of students (n=182, 41%male, 53% female) identified gender issues as factors which influenced counselling process. Boulware and Holmes (1985) results indicates an overall preference for the older men counsellors for both the vocational and personal problem areas showing that age and gender are factors to be considered in choice of a counsellor. This also concurs with the Koech Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1999) that a good number of learners do not seek counselling from counsellors who are relatively young, even if they are professionally trained. Other factors considered important when seeking counselling services are; topic of counselling, ethnic group/cultural value,

methods used in counselling and religion of the counsellor. Others include, dressing mode of counsellor, urgency of the issues for discussion and availability of the counsellor.

These findings are similar with Derlega and Chaikin (2002) who examined the following factors in relationship to counselling process: gender, age, and topic of communication, circumstances of self-disclosure, reciprocity, ethnic group/cultural value, and language of communication, seating arrangement and administrative authority. Derlega and Chaikin (2002) notes that reactions to ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation and disability status can affect the way in which emotional distress is manifested and also could impact help-seeking behaviour.

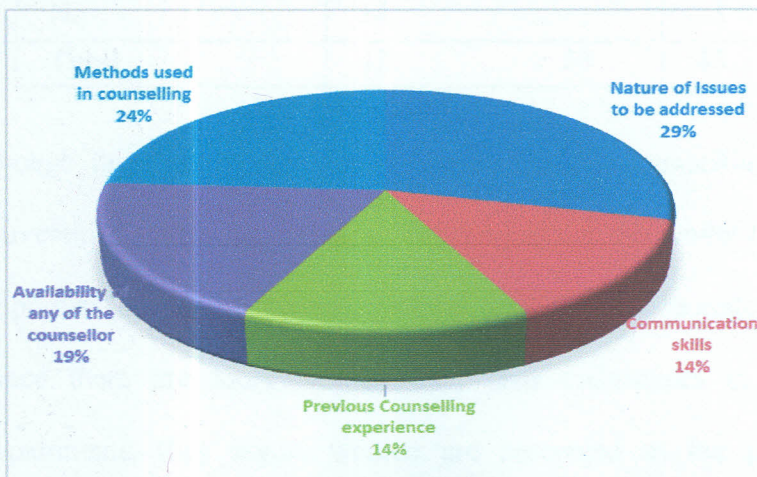
Other factors that students consider when seeking counselling services included: stigma, gender, culture, experience and knowledge, fear and accessibility. According to them, each of the six factors has an impact on students' use of counselling services. As a major reason for students avoiding to seek help from counsellors, they identified the concept of stigma in two main areas: social (or public) stigma and self (or personal). The students pointed out that public and social stigma among university students includes the perception or views of the larger society towards those who seek psychological help, and the views of an individual's small social or familial circle.

#### 4.6.2. Gender Factor of the Counsellor Considered Important by University Students in Counselling

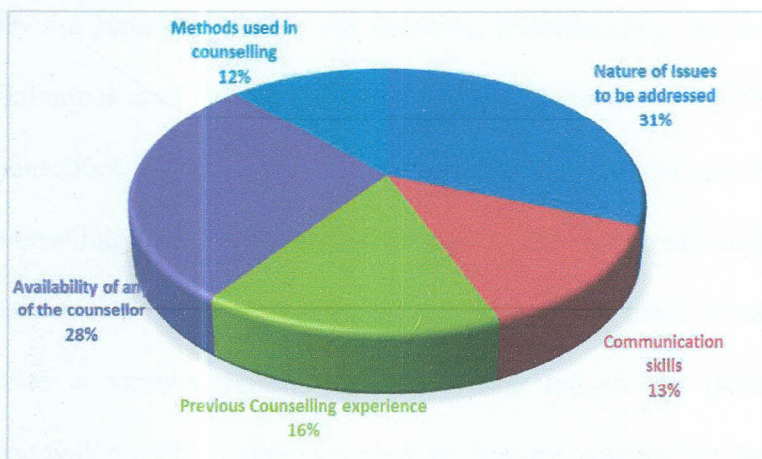
The study noted that university counselling services are designed to help the students to deal with stress as well as with more serious problems such as substance abuse and depression. The degree to which counselling is an effective helping relationship is not independent of counsellor characteristics, one of which is gender (Schaeffer, 2002). In addition, the degree to which clients are helped is often influenced by the characteristics of their counsellors such as counsellors' gender (Cormier and Cormier, 2005). Further, majority of counsellors (n=6, 86%) noted that students considered the factor of gender when seeking counselling services.

The study further enquired about factors which influence the gender preference of the counsellor by the client. This was necessary because the outcome of a counselling service is dependent on the factors that influence students' seeking help. The gender factors which have been identified by both the counsellors and students are summarized in Figures 4.10. and 4.11.

**Figure 4.10: The Gender Factors in Counselling According to Counsellors**



**Figure 4.11: The Gender factors in Counselling according to Students**



Gender factors in counselling as earlier reported are the nature of issues to be addressed by either gender, communication skills, previous counselling experience, availability of any gender of the counsellor and the methods used by either gender counsellors. From the results, gender biases in counselling seem to have a very strong influence in students seeking help.

**Table 4.9: Views of Students and Counsellors on the Existence of Gender Factor in Counselling**

Responses	Counsellors		Students	
	M%	F%	M%	F%
Yes	28	58	42	52
No	14		3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>55</b>

Though there are many factors influencing the counselling process in the universities, students and counsellors singled out the gender factor as the most important (n=182, 42% males, 52% females), (n=6, 28% males, 58% females).

Since there are more women than men counsellors in the counselling departments, they argue, women are perceived as the primary users of

counselling services. Moreover, counsellors are predominantly women because they are perceived to be more sensitive, understanding and are better listeners (Golombok and Fivush, 2004). In Britain there are more female than male counsellors (Mearns and Thorne, 2000). A list obtained from the Kenya Counselling Association shows that out of all registered counsellors, 75% are females and only 25% are males. There are also more female trainees than males in various training institutions and universities (Kenya Counselling Association, 2009). Perhaps men go less for counselling because generally they are socialised to deal with problems themselves and counselling is seen as a female profession (Golombok and Fivush, 2004).

The study findings established interesting revelations whereby female and male counsellors alike expressed a preference for female clients. They argued that female students are often offered more sessions than male clients. One reason associated with this assertion was that women are seen to 'do better' in counselling and are more responsive to counselling than male students. They also tend to have more counselling issues. Students had a greater tendency to seek help from female counsellors regardless of their own gender. However, it was noted that preference for counsellor gender has been found to depend on the student's gender as well. Perhaps this could reiterate what McLeod (2012) and Wango (2015) have stated, that research in counselling and therapy must be concerned with the needs of the client, their preferences as well as aspects such as gender that was the concern of this study. Subsequently, the next section investigates the perception on gender preference.

### 4.6.3. Counsellors' and Students' Perceptions on Reasons that Make Students Prefer Women Counsellors

As earlier mentioned, the counsellors' and students' questionnaires contained 5-point Likert Rating (LR) Scale which consisted of five statements ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. In this study, the chi-square test of independence was used to examine possible association between categorical variables. If significance is established, it implies that respondents' opinions on the statements are not the same. This data is presented in Table 4.10 and Table 4.11:

**Table 4.10: Opinions of Counsellors and Students on Reasons why Students Prefer Female Counsellors**

Respondents	Opinion of counsellors and students	Chi-square tests		
		$\chi^2$	df	P
Counsellors	Genuine, Caring and Understanding	3.223	4	.67
	Congruent and empathic	2.476	4	.41
	Tell the Clients they are Worth	1.282	4	.32
	Social	2.206	4	.77
	Previous Counselling Experience	3.651	4	.66
	Have High Help Seeking Attitudes	2.724	4	.82
	Depends on the Issues to be Discussed	2.219	4	.67
Students	Genuine, Caring and Understanding	277.8	5	.52
	Congruent and empathic	2.286	5	.14
	Tell the Clients they are Worth	2.286	5	.33
	Social	2.286	5	.45
	Previous Counselling Experience	2.286	5	.12
	Have High Help Seeking Attitudes	2.286	5	.09
	Depends on the Issues to be Discussed	2.286	5	.22

The computed Chi-square statistics for counsellors shows no significant difference on the perception of counsellors on the reasons that make students prefer female counsellors. The Chi-square statistics for students also do not indicate significant difference on the perception of students regarding the reasons that make them prefer female counsellors. Insignificance established

for the reasons that make students prefer women counsellors implies that counsellors and students do hold insignificant different perspective when comparing responses to these different reasons that make students prefer female counsellors.

#### 4.6.4. Counsellors' and Students' Perceptions on the Reasons that Make Students Prefer Male Counsellors

A chi-square test was also used to establish a relation in categorical variables in this section. If the probability associated with the chi-square value is less than .05, significance on the 5% level significance is established. A summary of this data is presented in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11. Opinions of Counsellors and Students on the Reasons that Make Students Prefer Men Counsellors**

Respondents	Opinion of Counsellors and Students	Chi-square tests		
		$\chi^2$	Df	P
Counsellors	Genuine, Caring and Understanding	3.221	4	.09
	Congruent and empathic	2.526	4	.07
	Tell the Clients they are Worth	2.226	4	.21
	Social	3.286	4	.67
	Previous Counselling Experience	3.219	4	.42
	Have High Help Seeking Attitudes	2.286	4	.47
	Depends on the Issues to be Discussed	2.225	4	.57
Students	Genuine, Caring and Understanding	237.1	5	.04
	Congruent and empathic	317.2	5	.00
	Tell the Clients they are Worth	257.5	5	.05
	Social	307.2	5	.07
	Previous Counselling Experience	277.3	5	.33
	Have High Help Seeking Attitudes	276.1	5	.00
	Depends on the Issues to be Discussed	279.4	5	.41

The computed Chi-square statistics for counsellors and students were above .05 level of significance shown in table 4.11. This mean that counsellors and students had the same view that reasons why students prefer female counsellors were similar but with varying degree of perception.

#### 4.7. Issues taken to Male / Female Counsellors by University Students

The fourth research question sought to find out issues that are taken to male/female counsellors by female or male students in the universities. The study sought to find out from students and counsellors whether there are issues students would prefer to discuss with a man or woman in counselling process.

Table 4.12 summarizes this information:

**Table 4.12. Occurrence of Issues Students Would Discuss with a Male or Female in Counselling Process**

Issues	Counsellors		Students	
	M%	F%	M%	F %
Yes	28	58	39	52
No		14	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>	

Majority of the counsellors (n=6, 28% males, 58% females) and students (n=166, 39% males, 52% females) were of the opinion that there exists specific issues that students prefer to discuss with either gender of the university counsellors. However, the converse is also true according to a section of the counsellors (n=1, 14% females) and students (n=18, 4% males, 5% females).

Information from some counsellors revealed that students seek professional help for different problems such as emotional, personal, interpersonal or academic/vocational problems, stress-related problems, relationship issues and mood problems. However, they consult the counsellors depending on their gender and the nature of the problem presented.

Information from students revealed that a high percentage of students sought counselling for academic problems. The students identified academic problems such as: planning academic progress, orientation of new students on how to adjust to the university's academic and social life, guidance on choice of courses, decisions on interests and abilities, good study habits, learning techniques, gaining confidence, timetabling and examination techniques.

According to Sikolia and Lutomia (2002), the problems often encountered by university students include: academics, interpersonal relationships and sexuality, family problems, financial challenges, self-identity issues, feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem and depression or anxiety. Students in the educational institutions search for values that can give meaning to life after college or training. Nondo (2004) notes that students can become frustrated when they have difficulty relating their education or training to the rest of their lives. Fuster (2000) contends that counselling helps individuals to understand and use personal opportunities that they have. This makes counselling services vital in educational institutions.

Vocational counselling services provided to students include selection of careers of their choice. The students are given the opportunity to choose their career wisely. One of the essentials of vocational counselling is that it enables students to define their training programmes in terms of employment opportunities and draw up possible career development plans. A counsellor revealed that the counsellors can provide information on conditions of work, wages, benefits, contracts, prospects for promotion or other advancement, employer demands, professional associations and workers' union.

In addition, students identified relationship and social problems as another potential counselling area. Students noted that they would all need social counselling to enable them gain understanding of the root causes of their problems and to make rational decisions on how to solve or cope with them. The students can be encouraged to practice various social skills. These social skills can help promote good interpersonal relationships within the universities.

Further, the students stated that in addition to social issues taken to counsellors for help, they also receive counselling on personal issues. They noted that they have problems related to their personal lives which interfere with their academic and social life. Psychological problems which are taken by students for counselling include lack of friends and loneliness. Other issues which are taken to counsellors by students include: spiritual issues, health and physical issues and marital counselling.

#### 4.7.1. Issues Students Discuss With University Female Counsellors

As earlier mentioned in a section of this study, there are specific issues which students discuss with university female counsellors. This study noted that students' preference for counsellor's gender can change depending on the problem type for which the individual student seeks help.

A summary of the issues that students discuss with female counsellors is presented in Table 4.13:

**Table 4.13: Issues That Students Discuss With University Female Counsellors**

Gender of Students	Issues to Discuss With Female Counsellors	Counsellors		Students	
		M (%)	F	M (%)	F
Male	Economic Issues	18	25	14	19
	Social Issues	24	33	25	33
	Psychological Issues	30	41	29	38
	Spiritual Issues	14		10	12
	Physical Issues		14	5	7
	Academic Issues	37	49	26	33
Female	Economic Issues	30	41	21	27
	Social Issues	37	49	40	52
	Psychological Issues	43	57	34	45
	Spiritual Issues	24	33	20	27
	Physical Issues	30	41	25	33
	Academic Issues	37	49	39	52

Table 4.13 categorizes the issues students presented for counselling to female counsellors as psychological, social, vocational, physical, spiritual, and education/academic problems.

Koile and Bird (1970) identified eleven types of problems ranging from psychological and physical development concerns, through finance concerns to issues regarding adjustment to university work. The study findings reveal that both female and male students have faith in female counsellors to handle their counselling issues. Further, Chi-square test of independence shows a highly significant relation at .05 between gender of students and issues students discuss with university female counsellors ( $\chi^2= 3.095$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=.00$ ). More females than males present more issues to female counsellors. Information got from counsellors attributes the failure of males from seeking counselling from female counsellors as a function of men's stereotyping as 'being strong' and 'able to cope' with problems. Among the social issues highlighted by both students and counsellors which are presented to female counsellors are sexual relationships among students which could result into unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Poor relationships among university students are also noted to be prevalent and needed counselling.

The psychological issues identified by the respondents include:

- a) Health problems arising from HIV/AIDS as well as stigma and discrimination; stress resulting from isolation from peers and family;
- b) Drug and substance abuse;
- c) Bereavement through death of significant members of the family such as parents and other family members.

The trend in academic performance for some students keep on declining. Students who are affected tended to show signs of despair and withdrawal and hence consult female counsellors for further guidance. Female counsellors are considered for academic-educational counselling, career-vocational help, and personal-social-emotional counselling.

Information from a section of students revealed that both gender prefer seeking help from same-gendered counsellors for career problems. This study further noted that for personal and emotional problems, majority of female and male students prefer seeking help from same-gendered counsellor. These findings have been explained in terms of the belief that same-gender counsellors better understand gender-specific problems as a result of having been through the same difficulties themselves. The findings indicate that same-gender preferences are particularly improbable with females seeking help for educational and financial concerns. This concurs with Boulware and Holmes (1985). However, whereas most female students preferred seeking help from same gendered counsellor for their personal problems, some male students prefer seeking help from female counsellors for their personal and academic problems.

According to Feltham (1996), individuals want to seek help from counsellors who are supportive and warm. This is in line with Person Centred Theory adopted in this study. Female counsellors are perceived to have these characteristics. Male students perceive female counsellors to be less

judgemental. Male students worry that male counsellors will accuse them of violating masculine ideologies if they were to seek help. As a result, the degree of importance male students assign to academic problems, their perceptions of the functions of counselling services, attributed characteristics of university counsellors and threats to masculine ideology encourage males to have more positive attitudes towards seeking help for academic problems and to build more confidence in female counsellors. This diversity in responses exposes a rather complex scenario in counselling processes.

According to this study's findings, university counsellors advocate for same-gender pairings in counselling, particularly for female clients, since female counsellors are much more able to fully understand and empathize with women's feelings about such topics as menstruation, pregnancy and rape. However, it is important to note that counselling processes associated with gender are influenced by the types of personal problems discussed between clients and counsellors. The counsellors suggested that females were more willing than males to discuss highly personal relational information with female counsellors. Boulware and Holmes (1985) noted that female clients, almost invariably, prefer a female counsellor for discussing personal concerns.

#### **4.7.2. Issues That Students Discuss With University Male Counsellors**

Counsellors and students in this study reported that university students seek help from counsellors for a variety of reasons such as academic problems, family problems, personal problems, peer relationship problems and socio-

economic problems. These are the issues presented for counselling depending on the gender of the counsellor. This section presents a summary of these issues as indicated in Table 4.14:

**Table 4.14: Issues That Students Discuss With University Male Counsellors**

Gender of Students	Issues to Discuss With Male Counsellors	Counsellor M (%) F		Students M (%) F	
Male	Economic Issues	18	25	14	19
	Social Issues	24	33	25	33
	Psychological Issues	12	17	15	19
	Spiritual Issues	6	8	10	12
	Physical Issues	18	25	23	30
	Academic Issues	37	49	26	33
Female	Economic Issues	30	41	28	36
	Social Issues	12	17	10	14
	Psychological Issues	18	25	20	26
	Spiritual Issues	12	17	20	27
	Physical Issues	30	41	25	33
	Academic Issues	37	49	32	42

As depicted in Table 4.14 and in contrast to the responses in Table 4.13, both the counsellors and students presented varied views concerning the issues presented to male counsellors by both student genders. According to a majority of students (n=144, 32 %male, 42% female) and counsellors (n=6, 37% male, 49% female) female and male students had confidence in male counsellors handling academic issues. Due to their masculine nature, male counsellors are believed by female students to offer informed counselling on physical issues. This assertion was informed by a majority of students (n=112, 23% male, 30% female) and counsellors (n=6, 18 % male, 25 % female).

These findings indicate that problem type is more influential on attitudes towards help seeking among males than is the case for females. The first underlying reason is that male students see academic problems as being more commonplace than personal problems. These findings agree with Mahalik (2003) who contends that males are more willing to seek help if their problems are perceived as normal and common. This researcher's counselling experience concurs with the findings of this study, and with Mahalik (2003) that males share problems that are common for example academic and will share personal problems rarely and only after establishing trust.

Moreover, Mansfield and Addis (2003) state that the ego-centrality of the problems plays an important role for males. Mansfield and Addis (2003) suggest that people are less likely to acknowledge the need for help for problems that reflect an important quality about themselves. If academic problems compared to personal problems are perceived as less ego-central for males, then males will be more willing to discuss problems of an academic nature with a professional, and less likely to share personal problems (Mansfield and Addis, 2003). This agrees with the findings of this study that male students have more inclination to seek professional help for academic problems as said by 37% of male, 49 % female counsellors and 26% of male, 33% female students. Male students in this study contend that disclosing personal-emotional problems will threaten the masculine image among male students. This concurs with the social learning theory adopted in this study.

According to the students who participated in this study, female students prefer male counsellors actively for problems involving only academic (74%), physical (58%) and economic issues (64%). Both male and female students present the following for counselling; financial problems, academic issues, psychological, social, family, relational and physiological issues. For academic issues, a male counsellor is preferred by both male and female clients, the study further notes. Female clients, on the other hand, almost invariably prefer a female counsellor for discussing personal concerns as earlier noted. According to the students, for academic problems, gender pattern is inconsistent. Again for economic issues, the students noted that male counsellors are preferred by both female and male students.

**Table 4:15: Relationship between Gender of the Counsellor and Issues Discussed with Male/Female Students**

Issues discussed with university male/ female counsellors							
Respondents	Gender	Social		Academic		Psychological	
		Male counsellor	Female counsellor	Male Counsellor	Female counsellor	Male counsellor	Female counsellor
Students	Female	14%	52%	42%	52%	26%	38%
	Male	25%	25%	26%	26%	15%	29%
Counsellors	Female	12%	49%	49%	49%	25%	57%
	Male	24%	33%	37%	37%	12%	43%

A cross tabulation of issues discussed with male/female counsellors by male and female students shows that 52% of female students would discuss academic issues with a female counsellor while 37 % of male counsellors

contend that students would discuss academic issues with a male counsellor. Also 15% of male students were of the opinion that they would discuss psychological issues with a male counsellor while 57% of female counsellors said that students would discuss psychological issues with female counsellors. In addition, 52% of female students said that they would discuss social issues with a female counsellor while compared to the male students where 25 % would discuss social issues with either male or female counsellor. This researcher concurs with Lee (2000) and Boulware and Holmes (1985) the nature of presenting problems plays a great role in determining counsellors gender preference.

#### **4.8. Views of Counsellors and Students on Ways to Enhance Gender Counselling in the University**

The fifth research question sought to find out from the counsellors and students about ways to improve and enhance gender counselling in the universities. To enhance gender counselling in the universities 57 % female counsellors were of the view that there is a need to train and hire more male and female counsellors to accommodate the preferences of all students in the universities. And because counselling services are designed primarily to respond to the needs of students, their gender preferences have to be sought in the planning of counselling services. This is possible by asking the students what gender of counsellor they would want in a possible counselling process. According to the counsellors, client's gender preferences help in determining counsellors' selection and development. For example, in the appointment of university counselling staff,

serious considerations ought to be given to the needs of the students which include gender. Whenever possible, it is important to engage counsellors whose gender is similar to the gender of student receiving the service. It is thus helpful when appointments are made, to select equal number of counsellors of the other gender.

In addition to what counsellors suggested for the enhancement of counselling process, the students noted that universities are faced with severe shortage of counsellors since the ratio of students' population to the number of counsellors is too large (1:2000). It is thus important for the universities to increase urgently the number of counsellors to bridge this gap as suggested by 43% males and 57% females. This should include gender balance. Moreover, the role of peer counsellors should be recognized. The peer counsellors should play a vital role of sensitizing other students on the importance of seeking counselling help.

The students suggested that counsellors should try to understand the various cultural backgrounds of their clients since a client's behaviour in a counselling room could easily be misinterpreted by a counsellor who is ignorant of the culture. For instance, the study noted that male clients in some communities do not respect female counsellors.

#### 4.9. Conclusion

This researcher summarises this chapter by highlighting the views of both counsellors and students on some gender aspects that either promote or inhibit therapy among university students in Kenya. Female counsellors attribute failure of males from seeking counselling from females as a function of men's stereotyping as being strong and able to cope with problems. Male counsellors are of the view that male students do not seek counselling from female counsellors for fear of being accused of violating masculinity. As for the female students, females would not seek help from male counsellors for feminine issues like menstruation. Likewise male students will not seek help from female counsellors for masculine issues for example erectile dysfunction. Female counsellors are preferred by both male and female students for being caring, nurturing and empathic while female students prefer male counsellors for maintaining confidentiality. However students of both gender are also willing to seek help from their gender of counsellors and argue that counsellors better understand personal problems as a result of having been through the same difficulties.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0. Introduction

This section provides a summary of the findings and conclusions arising from the study. Several recommendations have been made as well as suggested areas of further research.

#### 5.1. Summary of Research Findings

This section is a summary of the findings of the study. It summarizes the main findings of the study.

- 1) The purpose of this study was to investigate gender perspectives in counselling among university students in Kenya. The study findings reveal that majority of students did not seek counselling services although they were faced with various challenging issues. This was said by 57% counsellors and 65% students. Further, 43% of the counsellors and a half (50%) of the students indicated that students sought counselling help mostly in times of crises and 43% counsellors and 34% students felt that students in the first year of study present themselves for counselling more than any other academic years.
- 2) The study findings reveal gender discrepancies in the university counselling programmes in that there were more female university counsellors than males. Also more female than male students sought for the services of university counsellors as said by 86% counsellors and

97% students. Further 29% counsellors and 46% students identified gender of the counsellor as a key reason that make students fail to seek counselling services. The study findings also suggest that female and male students express a preference for a female or male counsellor. However, both males and females express a higher preference for and anticipate comfort with female counsellors as compared with male counsellors. Male students prefer male counsellors for personal/social counselling and have female preferences for other counselling situations. The study notes that client preference for counsellor's gender varies across problem types.

- 3) The gender factors in counselling identified are; the nature of issues to be addressed, communication skills, previous counselling experience, availability of the counsellor and the methods used. This study found out that students in the universities have a particular preference for male or female counsellor. This is dependent on whether the counsellor possesses high degree of solving problems, the nature of the counselling issues, levels of keeping confidentiality, levels of training, and past experience.
- 4) Also there are specific issues which students prefer to discuss with either gender of the university counsellors. Those that they particularly discuss with university female counsellors are: psychological, social, spiritual, and education/academic problems. But the issues they discuss

with university male counsellors are academic, family, personal, economic, peer relationship problems and physical matters.

- 5) To enhance gender counselling in universities, counsellors were of the view that there is need to train and hire more male and female counsellors to accommodate the preferences of all students. Also student's gender preferences have to be sought in the planning of counselling services. As for the students, there is need to increase the number of both male and female counsellors. They also suggested the need for counsellors to take into consideration the cultural background of students because male clients in some communities may not respect female counsellors.

## **5.2. Conclusions of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate gender perspectives in counselling among university students in Kenya. Based on the results of the findings, it can be concluded that very few students with problems in both the private and public universities are utilizing the counselling services. This is due to gender of counsellors, lack of confidence in counsellors and peer pressure. Some students also seek for help from their significant others. The study also concludes that there is severe shortage of counsellors. This is because the ratio of student to counsellor was very large (on average 2000:1 in every university).

The findings reveal that huge gender discrepancies exist among the university counsellors. In the target universities, there were more female counsellors (7) as compared to (4) male counsellors. Also huge gender discrepancy exist among the students with more female than male seeking counselling service. Students also express a preference for a female or male counsellor. However, both male and female students express a higher preference and comfort with female counsellors as compared with male counsellors.

The study findings show that there are gender factors in counselling for example, the nature of issues to be addressed, communication skills, previous counselling experience, availability of the counsellor and the methods used. Therefore it can be concluded gender is an important variable to be considered in counselling. Gender interacts with other characteristics of a counsellor like age and therefore any institution offering counselling should consider the gender of the counsellor while allocating counsellors to clients.

Based on the results of the findings it can be concluded that both male and female students are faced with many counselling issues such as academic, psychological, social, personal, economic, health, physical, vocational and spiritual that .It can be concluded threat to masculine ideology encourages males to have more positive attitude towards seeking help for academic issues and that female students seek social psychological counselling to help them gain understanding of root causes of their problems.

### 5.3. Study Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings, several recommendations have been drawn from this study:

- a) This study noted that both male and female students are not fully utilizing counselling services. Several students made comments regarding feeling overwhelmed by the volume of information delivered during the few days immediately preceding the start of their studies. This study recommends that university counsellors should initiate vigorous campaigns to encourage male/female students to seek for counselling services by providing follow up information to students in the form of newsletters, notices in student newspapers and fliers for special programmes in order to sensitize them on the need for counselling.
- b) Male students are not utilizing counselling services for fear of violating masculine ideologies. University counsellors should raise awareness among male students that the issues they need help with are normal. This can particularly be effective if done by male counsellors for male students are likely to identify with another male. University counsellors can also work to make the terminologies they use to describe therapy/counselling more appealing to men. For example they can use terms like consultations and to make therapy/counselling more attractive to males.

- c) The knowledge about clients' gender preferences of their counsellors is useful in determining counsellors' selection, appointment, deployment and development thus this study recommends that Universities in Kenya should tailor their services to meet the needs of both female and male students by acknowledging their preferences of the gender of the counsellor. The intake counsellors should also be gender sensitive and allocate the preferred gender according to the presenting problems.
- d) In addition, client preference for counsellor gender varies across problem types. Therefore, this study recommends that when assigning clients to counsellors, counselling centre staff persons should consider clients' preference for a specific counsellor gender according to the intimacy level of self-disclosure and the emotional level of presenting issues. Counsellors should also discuss with the clients, or at least be aware of, in what ways clients' potential gender preference might influence the therapeutic relationship.

#### **5.4. Areas for Further Research**

This study has established that gender is a major factor in therapy. However, it the study is not exhaustive and there is need to further enhance student seeking counselling services, as well as factors that affect their gender preference. The following research areas require considerations when undertaking a similar study:

- (1) This study involved three universities (one public and two private) in Kenya. The sample is small compared with the current number of universities chartered to offer higher education. Future research should be done with a larger sample to increase representativeness.
- (2) There are many factors which influence the gender preference of the counsellor by the client which have not been investigated by this study for example religion and culture. Further investigation of these factors should be carried out to establish how they can enhance counselling process in both public and private universities.
- (3) This study established that 57% of university counsellors were between 40 and 49 years of age. This is an aspect that requires further investigation to establish if it has an impact on university counselling as most of the regular students are between 20 - 30 years.
- (4) There is need to investigate the gender preferences of students in other Faculties / Schools other than Education, Business and Science.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

This study intends to investigate client's preference for counsellor gender among university students. You are kindly requested to participate in the study. Please respond to each item in the questionnaire as honestly as possible by ticking (✓) or making comments where necessary. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of the study.

1. University ..... School / Faculty .....
2. Gender (Tick ✓) Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Age ..... Years Year of Study .....
4. Have you ever gone for counselling in the university?  
(Tick ✓) Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, briefly explain why you had gone for counselling

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

If No, list down some of the possible issues that make students go for counselling, or would make you seek counselling at the university

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

6. When seeking counselling services, tick whether you would prefer a male or female counsellor, or you would be comfortable with any one of them. (Tick ✓)  
 Male [ ] Female [ ] Any one of them [ ]

6. Explain why you would prefer a male or female counsellor, or any one of them.

Gender of Counsellor	Reason/s
Female	..... ..... .....
Male	..... ..... .....
Any one of them	..... ..... .....
Any other comments	..... ..... .....

7. List down various issues that made you go for counselling, or would make you seek counselling services and state your preference of a male or female counsellor.

Reason that made me go for counselling or would make me seek counselling	My preference of male / female counsellor	Reason for my preference

8. Are there issues you would prefer to discuss with a male or female in counselling? (Tick ) Yes [ ] No [ ] I'm not sure [ ]

If Yes, explain the issues you would discuss by filling in the table below:

Issue to be discussed in counselling	My preference of male / female counsellor	Reason for my preference

9. If you have gone for counselling in the university, would you say that it was helpful or useful?

(Tick ✓) Yes [ ] No [ ] I'm not sure [ ]

If Yes, why and how was it useful

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

If you have never gone for counselling explain why

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

10. If you had a problem, would you go for counselling?

(Tick ✓) Yes [ ] No [ ] I'm not sure [ ]

Explain your answer .....

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

11. If you were to seek counselling, what are some of the considerations or factors you would consider?

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

In your opinion, is the gender of the counsellor one of the factors you would consider?

If Yes, why .....

.....  
.....

If No, Why

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

12. In your opinion, do students seek counselling in the university?  
 (Tick  $\checkmark$ ) Yes [ ] No [ ] I'm not sure [ ]  
 If Yes, about how many among you and your friends have sought counselling in the last one year  
 .....  
 .....  
 If No, explain why  
 .....  
 .....
13. In your opinion, who are the students, if ever, that seeks counselling services more among male and female students?  
 (Tick  $\checkmark$ ) Males [ ] Females [ ]  
 Explain your answer .....  
 .....  
 .....
14. In terms of academic year, which students make use of counselling services (Indicate in the order 1 – 5 starting with 1 to indicate those that seek counselling most):
- |                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Year | [ ] |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year | [ ] |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year | [ ] |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Year | [ ] |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Year | [ ] |
15. When do most students seek counselling services (Indicate in the order 1 – 5 starting with 1 to indicate the highest priority):
- |                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| During examinations          | [ ] |
| In times of crisis           | [ ] |
| Before breaking for holidays | [ ] |
| After holidays               | [ ] |
| All the time                 | [ ] |
| Any other (specify) .....    |     |

16. Please tick (✓) the appropriate box that best represents your opinion on each of the following statements.

STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	D	SD
There are no students with issues seeking counselling					
Few students with issues are seeking counselling services					
Majority of students with issues seek counselling services					
University students are advised to seek counselling services from counsellors					
Female students seek counselling service's more than males					
Male students seek counselling service's more than females					

17. Please tick (✓) the appropriate box that best represents your opinion on each of the following statements

STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	D	SD
Male students seek more services from male counsellors					
Male students seek more services from male counsellors					
Female students seek more services from female counsellors					
Male counsellors seek more help from female counsellors					
Students of either gender do not prefer the gender of the counsellor					

18. How often have you sought counselling services from the university counsellors?
- a) Never [ ]
  - b) Once or twice [ ]
  - c) 3-5 times [ ]
  - d) More than 6 times [ ]
19. Women would make better counsellors than men because they are more nurturing.
- a) SA [ ]
  - b) Agree [ ]
  - c) Undecided [ ]
  - d) Disagree [ ]
  - e) SD [ ]
20. Both male and female clients who were seen by male counsellors tended to report greater improvements and satisfaction
- a) SA [ ]
  - b) Agree [ ]
  - c) Undecided [ ]
  - d) Disagree [ ]
  - e) SD [ ]
21. Same gender pairing produce greater potential for more effective counselling
- a) SA [ ]
  - b) Agree [ ]
  - c) Undecided [ ]
  - d) Disagree [ ]
  - e) SD [ ]
22. Both male and female clients who were seen by female counsellors tended to report greater improvements and satisfaction.
- a) SA [ ]
  - b) Agree [ ]
  - c) Undecided [ ]
  - d) Disagree [ ]
  - e) SD [ ]

23. Counselling process associated with gender of the students are influenced by counselling issues of the client.

- a) SA [ ]  
 b) Agree [ ]  
 c) Undecided [ ]  
 d) Disagree [ ]  
 e) SD [ ]

24. PLEASE tick the appropriate box that best represents your opinion on each of the following statements

(a) Students prefer female counsellors because of the following reasons:

STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
Genuine and caring					
Sensitive and non-judgmental					
Understanding					
Non-directive					
They avoid stereotyping					
Open					
Congruent and empathetic					
Tell the clients they are worthy					
Social trust					
Previous counselling experience					
Have high help seeking attitudes					
Depends on the issues to be discussed					

(b) Students prefer male counsellors because of the following reasons:

STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
Genuine and caring					
Sensitive and non-judgmental					
Understanding					
Non-directive					
They avoid stereotyping					

Open					
Congruent and empathetic					
Tell the clients they are worthy					
Social trust					
Previous counselling experience					
Have high help seeking attitudes					
Depends on the issues to be discussed					

25. PLEASE tick the appropriate box that best represents your opinion on each of the following statements

STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
Male students seek help for male associated issues more from men counsellors					
female students seek help for female associated issues more from men counsellors					
female students seek help for female associated issues more from female counsellors					
Students do not prefer the gender of counsellor if they have counselling issues					

26. In your opinion, explain how counselling in the university can be improved so that more students can seek help in counselling at a time of need. ....

.....

27. Any comments .....

.....

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY**

## APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT COUNSELLORS

This study intends to investigate client's preference for counsellor's gender among university students. You are kindly requested to take part in the study. Please respond to each item in the questionnaire as honestly as possible by ticking or making comments where necessary. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of the study.

1. University ..... School / Faculty .....

2. Gender (Tick  $\checkmark$ )      Male [   ]      Female [   ]

3. Age (Tick  $\checkmark$ ):

(a) Below 29 years      [   ]

(b) 30 - 39 years      [   ]

(c) 40 - 49 years      [   ]

(d) 50 + years      [   ]

4. Academic qualification (Tick  $\checkmark$ )

a) Diploma      [   ]

b) Bachelors      [   ]

c) Masters      [   ]

d) Ph.D      [   ]

5. Years you have worked as a Counsellor or Dean of students (Tick  $\checkmark$ ):

a) Below 1 year      [   ]

b) 1 - 4 years      [   ]

c) 5 - 9 years      [   ]

d) 10 - 19 years      [   ]

e) Over 20 years      [   ]

6. How many counsellors are there in this university?

	Counsellors	Deans of students
Male		
Female		
Total		

7. Do students in the university come for counselling?

(Tick ✓) Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, approximately how many students seek counselling in a day, week, month or semester:

Students	Day	Week	Month	Semester
Male				
Female				
Total				

Explain some of the issues that make students in the university come for counselling, or would make them seek counselling.

	Issues that make, or would make students seek counselling
Male	..... ..... .....
Female	..... ..... .....
Both	..... ..... .....

If students do not seek counselling, or few students than expected actually come for counselling, kindly list down some of the possible reasons that make them fail or refuse to come for counselling, or would make students fail to seek counselling at the university

	Issues that make, or would make students fail to seek counselling or refuse to go for help in counselling
Male	..... ..... .....
Female	..... ..... .....
Both	..... ..... .....

8. When seeking counselling services, tick whether students are allowed to state their preference of a male or female counsellor, or they are assigned any one of them. (Tick ✓)

Yes [ ] No [ ] Assigned any one of them [ ]

If Yes, when are they allowed to make a choice or preference

.....  
 .....

If No, explain

.....  
 .....

9. Who are the students that seek counselling services more among male and female students? (Tick ✓)

Male [ ] Females [ ]

Explain your answer .....

10. In terms of academic year, who are the students that make use of available counselling services (Indicate in the order 1 – 5 starting with 1 to indicate those that seek counselling most):

- a) 1<sup>st</sup> Year [ ]
- b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Year [ ]
- c) 3<sup>rd</sup> Year [ ]
- d) 4<sup>th</sup> Year [ ]
- e) 5<sup>th</sup> Year [ ]

11. When do most students seek counselling services (Indicate in the order 1 – 5 starting with 1 to indicate the highest priority):

- a) During examinations [ ]
- b) In times of crisis [ ]
- c) Before breaking for holidays [ ]
- d) After holidays [ ]
- e) All the time [ ]
- f) Any other (specify) .....

12. Explain why a student may prefer a male or female counsellor, or any one of them.

Gender of Counsellor	Reason/s
Female	..... ..... .....
Male	..... ..... .....
Any one of them	..... ..... .....
Any other comments	..... ..... .....

13. List down various issues that make a student go for counselling, or would make a student to seek help in counselling and tick in your view their preference of a male or female counsellor.

Reason that made a student go for counselling or would make a student seek counselling	Student preference of male / female counsellor	Reason for my preference

14. When students have come for counselling, or if a student was to come for counselling in the university, would you say that it was helpful, or would be useful for him or her? (Tick ✓)

Yes [ ] No [ ] I'm not sure [ ]

If Yes, why and how was it useful, or would it be helpful.....

.....

If a student or students have NOT come to you for help, or have never gone for counselling, explain why they may not have gone for counselling .....

.....

15. If a student had an issue or challenge, would she or he come to you, or go for counselling? (Tick ✓)

Yes [ ] No [ ] I'm not sure [ ]

Explain your answer .....

.....

16. When students seek counselling, or if a student were to seek counselling, what are some of the considerations or factors they consider, or would take into account before seeking for help.....

.....

In your opinion, is the gender of the counsellor one of the factors they consider, or would consider?

If Yes, why .....

.....

If No, Why .....

.....

17. In your opinion, do students make use of counselling services available in the university?

(Tick ✓) Yes [ ] No [ ] I'm not sure [ ]

If Yes, to what extent would you say they make use of the services

.....

If No, explain why .....

18. Are there counselling records for students (Tick ✓)

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, how are they maintained to ensure confidentiality

.....

If No, explain

.....

.....

.....

19. Is confidentiality maintained when handling counselling cases of students?

(Tick ✓) Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain .....

20. In your opinion, explain how counselling in the university can be improved so that more students can seek help in counselling when at a time of need

.....

21. Briefly describe the gender challenges you may have encountered, or encounter in the provision of counselling services at the university.....

.....

22. Any other comments

.....

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY**

**APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS**

This study intends to investigate client's preference for counsellor's gender among university students. You are kindly requested to be a participant in the study. Information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of the study.

1. University ..... School / Faculty .....

2. Gender .....

3. Age..... Years                      Year of Study.....

4. How many times have you gone for counselling in the university?  
Briefly explain why you had gone for counselling (*probe for actual time when student went for counselling,, observe facial expression*)  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What are some of the possible issues that make students go for counselling, or would make you seek counselling at the university  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. When seeking counselling services, would you prefer a male or female counsellor, or you would be comfortable with any one of them.  
.....  
.....

7. Explain why you would prefer a male or female counsellor, or any one of them. (*Observe non-verbal cues like facial expression fidgeting and body movement as the student explain*)  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. What issues made you go for counselling, or would make you seek counselling services and what would be your gender preference?  
*(Probe for how many issues and observe non verbal cues as the student states male or female counsellor)*

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

8. Are there issues you would prefer to discuss with a male or female in counselling?  
If Yes, explain the issues

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

9. Was the counselling useful to you *(Probe for how useful it was)*

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

If No *(Probe for why it was not useful)*

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

If your friend, classmate or colleague have never gone for counselling, explain why they may not have gone for counselling

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

- 10. If your friend, classmate or colleague had a problem, would they go for counselling?

Explain your answer (*Observe non-verbal cues as they explain the answer*)

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

- 11. When you have a challenge that you would like to seek help in counselling, what are some of the considerations or factors you would consider? (*Probe more on why these factors*)

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

In your opinion, is the gender of the counsellor one of the factors you or your friend, classmate or colleague would consider?

If Yes, why

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

If No, Why

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

- 12. In your opinion, do students seek counselling in the university?

If Yes, about how many among you and your friends have sought counselling in the last one year (*Probe for specific answers*)

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

If No, explain why

.....  
.....

13. In your opinion, who are the students, if ever, that seeks counselling services more among male and female students?

Explain your answer

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

14. In terms of academic year, which students make use of counselling services (*Probe for specific reasons why students in that academic year make use of counselling services*)

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

15. When do most students seek counselling services?

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

16. In your opinion, explain how counselling in the university can be improved to assist male and female students at a time of need.

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

17. Any other comments

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

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY**

**APPENDIX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

- 1) What is the prevalence of counselling services among students in the university?
- 2) What are the reasons why some university students make use of counselling services, and why others do not
- 3) Which gender of the counsellor do university students prefer and what are the reasons for this preference
- 4) What are the gendered challenges university students are likely to encounter or may have encountered in counselling and how did they deal with them.
- 5) What are the issues university students would be comfortable to discuss with counsellor of
  - a) Their gender
  - b) Either gender
- 6) Suggest various ways that can be used to enhance gender counselling.
- 7) Any other comments.

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY**

**APPENDIX V: TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE  
FROM A GIVEN POPULATION**

**(Confidence level 95%; Margin of error + or - 5%)**

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is population size  
"S" is sample size.

## APPENDIX VI: PILOT TESTING

## University counsellors' Test -Retest Scores

University counsellors	Test(X)	Retest (Y)
1	76	78
2	75	79
3	68	67
4	77	76

Pearsons Moment Product correlation

$$r = \frac{N \sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}$$

University counsellors	Test (X)	Retest (Y)	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
1	76	78	5776	6084	5928
2	75	79	5625	6241	5925
3	68	67	4624	4489	4556
4	77	76	929	5776	5852
	$\sum x = 296$	$\sum y = 300$	$\sum x^2 = 21954$	$\sum y^2 = 22586$	$\sum xy = 22261$

$$r = \frac{4(22261) - 300 \times 296}{\sqrt{[4(21954) - (296)^2][22586 - (300)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{89044 - 88800}{\sqrt{[87816 - 87616][90344 - 90000]}}$$

$$r = \frac{244}{\sqrt{200 \times 344}}$$

$$r = \frac{244}{68800}$$

$$r = \frac{244}{262.2}$$

$$r = 0.93$$

The result of the test retest scores show a correlation coefficient of 0.93 that indicates that the instruments were highly reliable as suggested by Orodho (2004)

## APPENDIX VII: University Students' Test -Retest Scores

University students	Test (X)	Retest (Y)
1	80	78
2	76	78
3	75	79
4	68	67
5	77	76
6	74	75
7	76	74
8	69	67
9	73	71
10	71	69

Pearsons Moment Product correlation

$$r = \frac{N \sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2] [N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}$$

University students	Test (X)	Retest (Y)	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
1	80	78	6400	6084	6240
2	76	78	5776	6084	5928
3	75	79	5625	6241	5925
4	68	67	4624	4489	4556
5	77	76	5929	5776	5852
6	74	75	5476	5625	5550
7	76	74	5776	5476	5624
8	69	67	4761	4489	4623
9	73	71	5329	5041	5183
10	71	69	5041	4761	4899
	$\sum x = 739$	$\sum y = 734$	$\sum x^2 = 54737$	$\sum y^2 = 54066$	$\sum xy = 54380$

$$r = \frac{10(54380) - (739 \times 734)}{\sqrt{[10(54737) - (739)^2] [10(54066) - (734)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{54380 - 542426}{\sqrt{[547370 - 546121][540660 - 538756]}}$$

$$r = \frac{1374}{\sqrt{2[1249] [1904]}}$$

$$r = \frac{1374}{\sqrt{2378096}}$$

$$r = \frac{1374}{1542.10}$$

$$r = 0.89$$

The result of the test retest scores show a correlation coefficient of 0.89 that indicates that the instruments were highly reliable as suggested by Orodho (2004)

## APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

**RESEARCH CONSENT FORM**

Dear Participant,

My name is Ruth Kamunyu. I am a student at Kenyatta University undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Gender and Development Studies.

The questionnaire attached or the interview I will conduct with you is part of my research in counselling for the award of a Ph.D. Kindly feel free to take part in the study. You can ask any questions regarding the study. Also, if at any point you would like to withdrawal from taking part, you are free to state your decision and it will be duly honoured.

Research ethics will be observed at all times in the collection of data, data analysis and use to which the data may be put. The data from the interview will only be used for the purpose of research. Excerpts from the interview may be included as part of the final report, but no names will be included, and any identifying characteristics will be removed. The findings of the study may also be used as part of written papers or books, but without your name and excluding any identifying characteristics, and subject to research ethics.

A copy of the thesis will be submitted to Kenyatta University as part of the requirement of the study.

*Acknowledgement: Please sign this form to show agreement and your willingness to take part in the study.*


**Name** .....

**Signature** .....

**Date** .....

## APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Telephone: 254-020-2213471, 2241349  
254-020-310571, 2213123, 2219420  
Fax: 254-020-318245, 318249  
when replying please quote  
secretary@ncst.go.ke

P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA  
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/012/1527**

Date:  
**7<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

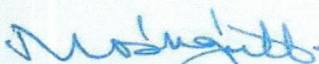
Ruth Njeri Kamunyu  
Kenyatta University  
P.O.Box 43844-00100  
Nairobi.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority dated 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 to carry out research on "*Client's preference of counsellor's gender among university students in Kenya,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Public and Private Universities** for a period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2013.

You are advised to report to the **Vice Chancellors of selected Public and Private Universities** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.



**DR M.K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.**  
**DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY**

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