INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON CAREER GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS' CHARACTERISTICS AND ACTIVITIES ON CAREER PLANNING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAKURU NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA

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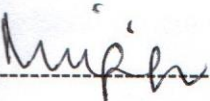
EGERTON UNIVERSITY

APRIL 2013

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree in this or any other University.

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Recommendation

This research project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This research project report is dedicated to God Almighty who is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. Also dedicated to those who mean so much to me; my parents, husband, sons and daughter for their love, encouragement, and understanding. Thank you and may the Almighty God bless you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

Perception influences individuals' behaviour in all facets of life. Students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities determines their use of career guidance services for career planning. This study sought to establish the influence of students' perceptions of career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities on career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District. The target population for the study was 3102 form three students in 57 secondary schools and 23 guidance counsellors in Nakuru North District. The sample composed of 341 students selected using stratified sampling methods, and 19 guidance counsellors purposively sampled. The study adopted the descriptive survey where views, perceptions and opinions about the perception of career guidance counsellors characteristics and activities and importance of career guidance counsellors in planning and preparation of future careers were surveyed. Students' and guidance counsellors' questionnaires were used to collect data. Items in the questionnaires captured guidance counsellors' characteristics, career activities, perception of students on career activities, guidance counsellors' characteristics on career planning and career aspirations. Piloting was done with twenty students and two career guidance counselors from two schools which were not part of the sample. Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.707 was established the students' questionnaire Reliability for the guidance counsellors' questionnaire was 0.732. Descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies) were used to analyze the data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Results revealed that students' perception of guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities was positive and career information resources scarce. Consequently, perception positively influenced students' career planning to some extent. Other factors such as academic achievement, parents' involvement, peer influence, and role models played also influenced students' career decisions. Career guidance counsellors and students should be encouraged to utilize facilities that are within their immediate environment to improve on quality of career services. The researcher suggests further research on influence of students' gender on career aspirations among secondary school students.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBC- British Broadcasting Corporation

CHE-Commission for Higher Education

CRE- Christian Religious Education

D.E.O- District Education Office

JAB- Joint Admissions Board

KCPE-Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

KCSE-Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KESI- Kenya Education Staff Institute

KISE- Kenya Institute of Special Education

MOE- Ministry of Education

MOEST- Ministry of Education Science and Technology

SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNESCO- United Nation Educational Social and Cultural Organization

NCCK- National Council of Churches of Kenya

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Perception is a cognitive process responsible for social behavior. Perception refers to a mental process through which individuals come to know and think about other people, events and the world. Perception constitutes a whole sequence of events, beginning with things that happen in the physical world, and then proceeds through the translation of these external events into patterns of behavior (Larsen & Buss, 2005). Sociologists and psychologists concur that most behaviour is a result of perceptions that individuals form about situations or persons (Myers, (2002); Mussen, Conger, Kagan & Huston (1984); Blake & Sekuler (2006); Carole & Carole (2008). People are always forming opinion of other people and situations. Epictetus, a philosopher of the 1st century stated that "men are not disturbed by the things, but by the view which they take of them" (Stone & Bradley, 1994:9). An individual's worldview is entirely a function of their perception.

Cognitive-Development Theorists (Jean Piaget) and Social Learning Theorists (Albert Bandura) leading figures view behavior as a product of mental processes referred to as cognitions (Shaffer, 1990). Cognitive perspective argue that a person chooses the alternative that appears to be in his or her own best interest, based upon a particular, though subjective view of the situation (George & Cristian, 1990). Accordingly, therapists help clients sharpen discriminations and correct misconceptions that may result from faulty learning.

World Bank (2005) describes secondary education as the highway between primary schooling, tertiary education and the labor market, connecting different destinations of desired career occupations. Today's world of work and the social-economic environments are going through radical changes. Without proper planning, secondary education can act as a bottleneck, constricting the expansion of education attainment and career opportunities. Career guidance and counselling seeks to assist individuals identify special talents, interests, and special abilities. The greater the degree of accurate self-understanding one has in terms of interests, attitudes, abilities, aptitudes and other personality characteristics, the more likely one is to make realistic, satisfying

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educational and career choices. The experiences the students acquire as they interact with their families, teachers, guidance counsellors and peers influence their cognitive, affective and behavioral facets of life including perception (Butler-Por, 1987). These experiences are cognitively processed to enable students understand their world through a process referred to as perception.

Career guidance was spearheaded by Frank Parsons in United States of America way back in 1908 as vocational guidance. Parsons endeavored to train students for occupations commensurate with the social situation prevailing in USA at the time. Young people require information on which to base the choices of their study programmes if they have to fit into the world of work and also achieve their career goals. Career guidance counsellors provide the much needed guidance which help students discover themselves in terms of their abilities, aptitudes, interests, values and aspirations and career occupations in which they are best gifted. Students are always forming perception of people with whom they interact who include their career guidance counselors, parents, peers and media personalities among others. There are situations where students have been dissatisfied with their experiences of school guidance counsellors (Reid, 1996). Students' perception of career guidance counselors is highly subjective; it is based on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and his knowledge of the world of work, study programmes and vocational options available to students. On the other hand career guidance objectively establishing individual's strengths, work environments and career occupations available in the society. This study sought to establish the influence of students' perceptions of career guidance counsellors' activities and characteristics on career planning.

Career guidance counsellors like other mental health workers must possess certain characteristics relevant to the counselling profession. They need to be caring, empathic and have unconditional positive regard for their students (stone & Bradley, 1994). In this way, the students learn to trust, hope, and respect and thus will be willing to consult the career guidance counsellor when making career decisions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem
An important aspect of career planning is career guidance which is a component of school guidance programme. Without appropriate career guidance, students are unlikely to make

appropriate subject choices appropriate for their future career aspirations. Makinde (1984) also observed that students' lack knowledge about work options and the career planning process. This situation underscores the need for career guidance coupled with the complexities that come with emerging trends in the world of work and technological advancement. Studies indicate that students appear to approach individuals such as friends, parents, teachers, and other family members for guidance because of the perception that such people are able to provide the much-needed information (Taviera (1998); Mau & Biko, (1998); Alexitch & Page, (1997). Many studies have been done on career guidance in Kenyan schools (Sindabi, 1992; Gacohi, 2008; Rochlem, 2008; Choi, Park, Yang & Lee, (2009) but few have addressed perception of students on importance of career guidance activities in career planning. Career guidance counselors in secondary schools are expected to guide students in subject and careers selection to assist students experience a smooth and rewarding transition to the world of work. This can only be realized if students perceive career guidance activities as vital towards this end. This study sought to establish the influence of students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities in career planning among secondary school students in nakuru north district.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study sought to establish the influence of students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities on career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study
This study was guided by the following specific objectives.

1) To establish students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors' characteristics in secondary schools in Nakuru North District.

2) To establish students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors' activities in career planning in secondary schools in Nakuru North District

3) To establish career guidance counsellors' characteristics in secondary schools in Nakuru North District

4) To establish career guidance activities provided in secondary schools in Nakuru North

District.

5) To investigate the influence of students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities on career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1) What are the perceptions of secondary school students on career guidance counsellors' characteristics in secondary schools in Nakuru North District?

2) What are the students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors' activities in secondary schools in Nakuru North District?

3) What career guidance activities are provided in secondary school in Nakuru North district?

4) What is the influence of students' perception of career guidance characteristics in career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District?

5) What is the influence of students' perceptions of career activities in career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

1) This study reveals students' perceptions of career guidance counselors' characteristics and its influence in career guidance.

2) Career guidance counsellors will realize the responsibilities placed on them to guide students in making career decisions. Career guidance counsellors will realize their limitations and acknowledge that they need in-servicing in the area of career guidance to be effective in delivering career guidance.

3) The students will realize need for appropriate guidance in matters that affect their future.

4) School administrators will see the need to programme guidance activities and relieve guidance counsellors of their teaching load in order to avail quality guidance and counselling time.

5) Other stakeholders such as parents will appreciate the influence they have on their children. The Ministry of education will see the need to invest in career guidance programmes in schools.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study targeted form three students in 57 secondary schools in Nakuru North District. The secondary school curriculum is broad based and students select subjects that have a bearing with their career aspirations in form three. Nakuru North district has a large population of students with diverse culture from its rich catchment which includes other districts such as the larger Nakuru, Nyandarua and Laikipia. Teachers (including career guidance counselors) have access to career information, formal and in-service training from the big number of public and private universities within the larger Nakuru district. The Commission for Higher Education and the Ministry of Education organize career fairs annually to educate students on career opportunities For Central Rift Region, the career fairs are hosted in Nakuru Town and all students are invited through their school principals. The students also had access to career information resources from Kenya National Library Services and from the universities. In addition Nakuru has a good number of industries and businesses enterprise's which offer employment and middle level colleges for further education and training.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study encountered a number of limitations.

1) The study was restricted to selected secondary schools in Nakuru North District.
2) Only form three students from sampled schools were involved in the study. Therefore, the findings of the study should be confined to the sampled schools and generalization to other schools should therefore be done with caution.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that:-

1) The respondents had similar characteristics with all other students in the same class throughout the district.
2) The students had already selected their subjects for K.C.S.E. examination.
3) Career guidance services were being provided in secondary schools in Nakuru North District

1.10 Definition of Terms

The following are the operational definitions of terms used in this research.

Career: Refers to the type of job or work one engages in on completion of studies and advancement one gains in his chosen profession.

Career Activities: Refers to functions carried out by guidance counsellors in assisting students understand issues pertaining to various occupations, the world of work, requirement for different jobs, training, remunerations and personality characteristics that match with different jobs.

Career Assessment: Refers to use of psychological tools designed to help individuals understand how personal attributes such as interests, values, preferences, motivations, aptitudes and skills impact their potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments (Lynn, 2000).

Career Development: Refers to a process of growth and learning in which an individual acquires career attitudes through career guidance and provision of information with the purpose of assisting students in choosing, preparing for and entering appropriate occupations.

Career Education: Refers to the provision of information to students on the world of work. This information may include entry requirements, job opportunities and the factors affecting the market such as level of unemployment, information technology, and international relations

Career Guidance: Refers to a process of helping students to understand and use wisely the educational, vocational and personal opportunities they have or can develop to become useful members of the society through appropriate occupational placement.

Career Guidance Counsellors' Characteristics: refers to personal attributes that the career guidance counsellor should possess besides the professional qualifications. Personal attributes include ability to listen, warmth and willingness to work in the helping profession. Professional qualities include formal training in theory and practice in guidance and counselling

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Career Guidance Counsellor: Refers to a teacher in a secondary school in charge of assisting students make decisions on courses of study through implementing the guidance programme in school. Guidance counsellors are referred to as a career masters/mistress in secondary schools.

Career Guidance Programme: Refers to systematically organized activities and functions aimed at facilitating and promoting the school's contribution to growth, development and adjustment of students in secondary schools.

Career Planning: Refers to a process of estimating, predicting and calculating all steps necessary to achieve a career goal. It involves self-awareness, educational awareness, career awareness and career exploration (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003).

Counselling: Refers to process involving direct contact of students with a counsellor, individually or in groups, to help the students better understand themselves in terms of their strengths, abilities, values, aptitudes, and beliefs; and the career opportunities or alternatives available to them (Mutie & Ndabuki,1999).

Competency: Refers to ability to provide guidance and counselling services based on personal characteristics and possession of knowledge and skills acquired through education and training.

Educational Guidance: Refers to the process of helping an individual in planning an educational programme in such areas as choice of courses of study, assessment of interests, abilities, decisions on choice of colleges/universities and school adjustment. (Sindabi, 1992)

Subjects: Refers to the fields of study in the school curriculum that guide the educational programme in Kenyan secondary schools.

Perception: Refers to a mental process through which individuals come to know and think about other people, events and the world. Knowledge, information, skills and experiences acquired

through sensation such as hearing, seeing, smelling or touching are processed to give meaning and understanding.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines various scholarly works that had a bearing on this study. It focuses on the historical development of education in Kenya, history of development of guidance and counselling in Kenya, career guidance programmes, career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities, parents influence on career aspirations, perception formation, importance of career planning, theories of career development, theoretical framework and conceptual framework of the study.

2.2 Historical Development of Education in Kenya

The education sector has undergone numerous restructuring from pre-independence time through the post-independence period to present day. Essentially the changes were in response to environmental and economic pressure. Before the coming of the Europeans, there was traditional African education that addressed relevant issues such as provision of skills, knowledge and values aimed at helping individuals become useful to the society (Eshiwani, 1993). During the colonial era, the British school curriculum was largely technical oriented to create a pool of appropriate labour to work in farms owned by the settlers (Tum, 1996). According to Commonwealth Education Fund (2003), the East African Protectorate Education Report of 1919 formed the basis of provision of education in the colony until 1949 when The Beecher Report was released. These two reports emphasized a heavy industrial curriculum with emphasis on technical skills. Some of these skills included brick making, carpentry, tailoring, agriculture and road building in line with the needs of the Kenya colony at the time.

At independence, the Africans realized that the departure of the white settlers had created employment opportunities that they could not fill due to lack of managerial skills. They therefore demanded for change in the education system to prepare learners for managerial and administrative jobs that were previously reserved for the white minority. The curriculum was revised accordingly to prepare learners for white-collar jobs.

In their separate reports, Gachathi (1976) and Mackay (1981) recommended the implementation

of guidance and counselling services to provide educational and vocational guidance when it became apparent that white-collar jobs were becoming fewer. Currently the Ministry of Education revised secondary school syllabus incorporates emerging trends touching on social life and contemporary issues such as unemployment, information technology, life skills and globalization. A lot of emphasis is on entrepreneurship skills, which prepares students for self-employment.

Students need to be equipped with decision-making skills to facilitate their transition from secondary school to the world of work. Guidance counsellors play a central role by helping the students identify alternative ways, places, vocations and institutions to construct and develop their personal identity and maximize their potential (World Bank, 2005). Guidance in secondary schools can avert a situation where resources such as funds and time are misappropriated due to inappropriate career paths. Perception of students on their guidance counsellors' competencies in provision of appropriate guidance is critical for successful career preparation and planning.

2.3 Historical Development of Guidance and Counselling in Kenya

Counselling and guidance services began in the United States as vocational guidance in 1900. Its development was as a response to the needs that existed at the turn of the 20th century. During this time, United States was experiencing social and economic reforms that necessitated change in skills development (Brewer, 1942). In 1908, Frank Parsons organized the Boston Vocational Bureau to provide vocational assistance to young people seeking employment and to train teachers to serve as vocational counsellors. These teachers were to help select students for vocational schools and assist students in choosing a vocation wisely and making the transition from school to suitable occupations (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003). Parsons is referred to as the "father of the guidance movement" in recognition of his contribution to what guidance is today.

In Kenya, like in nineteenth century U.S.A, structural changes emerged around 1960s after attainment of independence. At the end of 1962, the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with the Ministry of Education introduced formal guidance in school with emphasis on assisting students complete employment forms and write applications for employment (Nasibi, 2003). The guidance movement gained momentum from the realization that there was need for trained work force to fill in vacancies created by the departure of the colonial masters yet the workers lacked

appropriate skills commensurate with the jobs available.

In 1967, the Ministry of Education organized the first guidance conference to establish how guidance and counselling could support all learning activities in secondary schools. It culminated into the establishment of Guidance and Counselling Unit in 1971 and subsequent preparation of "Handbook for Guidance and Counselling"; a booklet that emphasized career choice and career placement of secondary school leavers (M.O.E, 2006; 2007). The responsibilities of the unit were three fold; educational guidance to help students plan for a suitable programme in line with the country's manpower needs; vocational guidance and counselling to help students make vocational choices based on individual's interest; and aptitude and psychological counselling aimed at assisting students with personality maladjustment (MOE, 2007). As Kenya pursues Vision 2030, career guidance is paramount in ensuring that the Kenyan youth receive appropriate training commensurate with he goals of the country.

2.4 Career Guidance Programme

Guidance refers to a systematic and organized activity, which helps a person grow in his power to give direction to his own life, gaining richer personal experience while making his own unique contribution to society (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). Guidance assists a person to decide where he wants to go, what he wants to do and how he can best accomplish his purpose as he tries to solve problems that arise in life. It does not solve problems for the individual but helps him to solve them. The focus on guidance is on the individual and not on the problem. Its purpose is to promote the growth of the individual in self-direction.

A guidance programme provides the students with relevant information that promotes self-understanding, self-direction, self-guidance and self-improvement through an increased understanding of their resources, strengths, weaknesses, limitations and problems. Through guidance, people can shape their own destiny, shape their own life, achieve personal goals and realize their full potential.

2.5 Career Guidance Counsellors' Characteristics

A fundamental goal of secondary education in the 21st century as implied in the Kenya National Development Goals of Education is to "promote the social economic, technological and

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industrial needs for national development" (MOEST, 2005). One of the recommendations of "The Report on the Task Force on the Students Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools" was strengthening guidance in schools (Republic of Kenya, 2001). The Teachers Service Commission, due to inadequate manpower deploys teachers as Heads of Guidance and Counselling Department with little consideration of professional qualifications in guidance and counselling. Mutie and Ndambuki (2002) observed that majority of guidance counsellors in Kenya are untrained which poses a major challenge to the realization of the goals of education.

Professional training of Career guidance counsellors should ensure their proficiency in consultation, coordination, measurement and evaluation, research, placement, follow-up and referral (Evangelista, 2008). Research adeptness enables guidance counsellors to keep abreast of current trends in career occupations. Matters pertaining to the nature of the work, qualifications for specific occupations, working conditions, opportunities for advancement within the career, access to an educational institution with the training available, nature and length of training, estimated cost of training and possible sources of funding are central to students career decision making process.

Personal counselling, keeping journal of feelings and experiences, attending workshops, and seminars designed for personal growth or carrying out a personality test ensure Guidance counsellors' self-understanding and assessment. They are able to assess their strengths, weaknesses, values, attitudes, fears, defenses, vulnerable spots and their total impact on others. They should continuously endeavor to increase their knowledge in order to assists students to understand, accept and utilize their aptitudes, interests, talents, attitudinal aspirations and personality and match these with career requirements.

Attributes pertinent to the helping profession such as empathic understanding, positive regard for the client, ability to listen, emotional stability, sensitivity to the needs of others, and aspiration to help others reach fulfillment augment effectiveness of career guidance service delivery.

Other personality aspects such as patience, a genuine interest in people, sensitivity to the attitudes and the actions of others, emotional stability and objectivity are noteworthy for

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guidance counsellors because students respond best to people who they perceive like and care about them (Reid, 1996).

Career guidance counsellors have other responsibilities besides counselling such as normal classroom teaching and maintaining discipline. The dual roles of teaching and guidance may influence perception and interfere with effective delivery of guidance services. An encounter in a classroom setting may depict the teacher as a firm disciplinarian which precisely disqualifies him or her as a counsellor who should be friendly. These conflicting roles may confuse the students while they frustrate counsellors who aspire to offer their guidance services.

2.6 Career Guidance Activities

Career guidance activities aim at assisting students to make informed decisions. These activities include, but are not limited to, career assessment, career education, study skills counselling, consultation, job placement, career counselling, and career exploration. Career assessment involves assisting students to understand their abilities, skills, interests, preferences and special talents. Such knowledge is important in identifying careers through which individuals can utilize their individual assets, thus provide an opportunity for self-actualization.

Career education involves providing information to students on different occupations, availability of career opportunities, entry requirements, remuneration, fridge benefits and current trends in different occupations. The students acquire a clearer perspective of the world of work through career education. Guidance in appropriate study skill such as SQ3R (survey, questioning, reading and writing, rehearsing/recite and reviewing) method, improving memory, time management, and note making among others solves the problem of low academic achievement. This is necessary because achievement influences students' career decisions with students often pursuing subjects in which they perform well. Poor grades in schoolwork may be attributed to a variety of causes. Study skills counseling involves helping students to overcome problems of achievement in schoolwork by providing concrete behavioral and attitudinal strategies (Butler-Por, 1987).

Consultation with significant others in the lives of students is necessary because of its influence on decision-making. Individuals are affected by family cultures that include attitude, believes

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and values acquired during childhood. Parents' expectations have also been shown to have an influence on students' career aspirations (Mau & Biko 2000). Job placement services (also referred to as internship) enable students to have a hands-on experience in different occupations. Students have a variety of options after secondary school education that include continuing with education, working and studying part-time or going into business. Students who prefer continuing with university education require information on minimum academic qualifications for different courses of study, different educational institutions (universities and middle level colleges), length of courses of study and financial implications.

The guidance counsellors also initiate forums where successful professionals give career talks. According to social learning theory, individuals learn from observation and modeling. Guidance counselors organize career exploration activities such as industrial tours, organizing lectures on different careers by professionals, demonstrations, debates and interschool competitions.

Vocational counselling is an activity in which the guidance counselor assists students in integrating information about themselves and the world of work. Personal information includes personality traits, interests, aptitudes and attitudes among others.

2.7 Parents Influence on Children's Career Aspirations

Family members have a strong influence on values, interests and beliefs, which may affect future career decisions. Parents' level of education is an important factor that influences children's career decisions (McMahon, 2001). In a survey conducted by Klesges (2009), it was revealed that parents with good education take more interest in their children's' career choice. According to the study, more than 80 percent said families were having a greater impact on their educational goals. According to BBC (2010), more and more educated parents heavily invested in their children's higher education. Consequently, they influence their children's choice of careers and institutions of higher learning. In Kenya, parents have to grapple with the high cost of education notwithstanding the high level of poverty and unemployment characterizing developing countries. The level of parents' education directly influences the quality of guidance provided to children (Taylor, (2004). Mothers tend to have more influence than fathers on children's career aspirations. (Mickelson & Viesco, 1998) as cited in Taylor, 2004). Parents are in a better position of understanding students' aptitudes, interests and values than the guidance

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counsellors and therefore influence their career decision (McMahon, 2001). Mau et al (1998) posits that parents' educational and occupational status affect career information passed on to their children.

2.8 Perception Formation

When individuals interact with their environment, they make opinions of their experiences and create meaning through the process of perception. Perception constitutes a sequence of events, beginning with things that happen in the physical world, external to the perceiver to the internal factors such as cognitive and mental processes (Blake & Sekuler, 2006). Just as Mussen *et al* (1984) postulate, individuals are constantly processing and interpreting information received through sensation from the environment and proceeds through the translation of these external events into patterns of behavior. Students' experiences include their interaction with their teachers, parents, peers, the career guidance counselors, the media and close family relations. Theories of perception formation suggest that individuals form perception formation based on schemas, scripts, stereotypes, exemplars and memory.

A schema refers to an abstract representation of events and their relation to one another (Mussen *et al*, 1984; Gregory, 1966). Scripts are schemata about events while prototypes are images we have of people belonging to a particular category for example the prototype formed of 'teacher' by a group of school children are likely to be very similar (Butler-Por, 1987). Exemplars are seen as representations of prototypes as a result of familiarity with a particular category of people. Stereotypes reflect information about a particular group of people and its interpretations. This information is likely to be positive, neutral or negative. Similarly memory influences individuals' perceptions of situations and events. It is the ability to remember past events, images, or previously learned information or skills. According to Coolidge (1995) memory is the storage system that allows us to retain and retrieve previously learned information. Students gather a lot of information on unemployment, labour unrest, and commentaries on emerging issues by media personalities and role models. Guidance counsellors have many different roles in schools including but not limited to classroom instructions, maintaining discipline and acting as a link between the students and their parents on academic issues. All these factors shape students' perceptions of the importance of the career guidance counselors and their activities and may influence them in seeking guidance and counselling services.

2.9 Importance of Career Planning

Career planning refers to a process of estimating, predicting and calculating all steps necessary to achieve a career goal (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003). It involves self-awareness, educational awareness, career awareness and career exploration. Rowe (2003) defines career planning as a goal that an individual desires to achieve in a selected field or occupation with a well thought out plan to get there. Career planning therefore involves getting information on which to base the desired goal. Although career planning starts at an early age, it is more pronounced as students enter secondary school. The secondary school curriculum is broad based and students need guidance to help them understand different courses of study and the career paths to which such courses lead.

Career guidance counselors facilitate students' exploration of interests and skills, career awareness reflection on individual career goals and assessment of individual abilities and aspirations for desired future career paths. Self-awareness and career awareness are then used as a point of reference in choosing careers. Career awareness involves making a concerted effort to seek career information in order to get insight in the world of work, requirements of different careers, entry requirements, personality characteristics, career interests, aptitude among other factors. Gary (1998) argues that a career reveals how a person sees himself, and that it tells what that person is. This implies that proper match between self-awareness and career-awareness enables students to get the career in which they are best suited. Gary further posits that there is more gratification when one chooses a career basing on personality as opposed to the struggle and frustration associated with careers that may not match with an individuals' personality.

Decisions on what subject to pursue in the last two years of secondary school are made at the beginning of the third year of study (MOE, 2005). Guidance counsellors help students set their academic goals and plan for future careers, but just like in all cases of the helping relationship, career guidance is based on a positive, personal relationship between the student and the guidance counsellor. Guidance is essentially democratic and the student has to determine his or her own destiny. The absolute responsibility for making decisions about educational plans and life goals rests with the individual student (Sindabi 2007).

Guidance counsellors' responsibility is to provide students with the much needed academic counselling or pre-vocational guidance. Makinde (1984) argues that this type of guidance operates from the knowledge of the distinguishing factors concerning each individual student. Guidance counsellor must have experience, knowledge and wisdom to be able to help students understand their abilities, interests and other personality traits relevant in career decision making. The subject choices that students make influence future career openings, determining the kind of jobs that they will find and the degree of satisfaction they will derive from their careers. Subject choice is irreversible as reversing the decision may mean repeating a class in order to enroll for subjects that may have been compromised during selection. A student who registers for subject "A" (e.g. a third science) may be required to drop subject "B" (e.g. a foreign language or a humanity). If the student discovers latter that he or she is not science oriented, he or she does not have a chance to register and sit for subject "B" in KCSE examination.

According to Shertzer and Stone (1987) Jesse Davis, as early as 1898 while working as a teacher in Detroit had already discovered the concept of matching individuals' personality, interests, and achievement with career occupations. He did a self-analysis and identified teaching as his perfect occupation. From then on, he started guiding and counselling his students emphasizing that one should feel a clear sense of direction with regard to the choice of a career. Today, more than one century later career guidance is more important to students due to the complexities that have come with technological and social- economic advancements.

Effective guidance can assist students in securing the information about themselves and the field of work open to them and plan their life careers. Students require appropriate guidance to understand the complexities of the world of work and individual attributes. They are faced with dilemmas as they make decisions regarding which careers to pursue and by extension, courses to study in secondary school. Internal factors such as the student's personality traits, values, beliefs, attitudes, abilities and interests and external forces arising from the social settings of the students, their family background, financial ability, gender roles and gender stereotypes are fundamental in career decision making. Career information assists students when choosing courses of study in secondary schools and careers to pursue in future.

Work occupies an important part in an individual's life and a means of livelihood. It determines social status giving a sense of worth to an individual. Work is an opportunity for establishing social network and appraisal of self-identity and security in life. George and Cristian, (1990) propose that on average an individual spends 35 years of his life working. When enjoyed, work can be a source of need satisfaction, self-esteem, and healthy adjustment. Occupations influence individuals' self-concept and feelings of value and personal identity. Someone is likely to say "I am a teacher at school X" rather than "I teach at school X". In the first statement, there is identification with the teaching profession unlike the second. When disliked, it can cause worry, stress, frustration, even physical illness and psychological maladjustment (Rathus & Nevid, 1992). It is important that people are able to find meaningful and satisfaction in their job. Individuals should not land on career paths accidentally having no prior planning for them. This can be achieved by providing career planning and preparation as early as in secondary schools

According to JAB (Joint Admissions Board), a student needs to attain a specific grade in specific subject combinations referred to as clusters. Students need to be updated each year on the changing conditions for qualifying for admission to different degree programmes in different public universities. Failure to seek guidance leaves students guessing only to discover much later that they may not qualify for admissions having failed to meet the minimum requirements. Students who fall short of JAB's requirement for university admission should not be condemned to a live of hopelessness with no career advancement. Guidance counsellors should assist them in identifying alternative career paths such as middle level colleges, formal and non-formal employment. All students should eventually achieve self-actualization regardless of their academic abilities. Career education ensures availability of information on courses, careers, scholarships and entrance examinations among other issues. Students' perception will influence their utilization of these services as they plan for their future careers.

2.10 Theories of Career Development

Career development is a process shaped by an "interaction of self-references, self-knowledge, knowledge about training and occupations, educational and occupational opportunities, genetic and early childhood influences, personality styles, and patterns of traits that individuals express in their choice of behavior and career opportunities" (George & Cristian, 1990:225). Theories in career counselling assist students discover their abilities, interests, aspirations and other personal

traits on one hand and guide them through the process of setting goals and evaluate different courses of study available to them on the other hand (Makinde, 1984).

Trait-factor Theory developed by Wiliamson (1965) is highly scientific recognizing individual differences in personality. Occupations are analyzed in terms of the required traits for each such that individuals are matched with occupations that secure the best fit (George & Cristian, 1990). The significance of this theory in guiding secondary school students rests in the fact that without guidance, students may not easily recognise their traits and effectively match them with career occupations.

Holland (1985) developed the Vocational Preference Theory which emphasises personality structure of an individual and the structure of working environments. He categorises people and work environments into six types. He designed the RIASEC model representing individual personalities and work environments. RIASEC is an acronym for Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional personality types. By matching their personality with work environments, students can identify their skills and abilities or work towards improving themselves while at school. They can assess their attitudes, values and beliefs and select courses of study that would lead to the most appropriate career paths. Similarly, Blau, Gustad, Jessor, Parnes, and Wilcock (1956) view career choice as a compromise between what is available in the world of work and personal preferences. They outlined eight factors that determine career options: four in relation to the occupations and the other four in relation to the individual characteristics. Those characterizing occupations are demand, technical qualifications required, personal qualifications and, rewards while those characterizing individuals are information about occupations, technical skills, social. When Frank Parsons (1908) organized Boston Vocational Bureau, his main objective was to train teachers to serve as vocational counselors. These teachers were to help students select vocational schools wisely thus making a smooth transition from school to suitable work. Jesee Davis, like Parsons based his argument on self- study and study of occupations. His theory is referred to as the social gospel given that he posits that students should be preached to about the moral value of hard work, ambition, honesty and development of good character as assets to any person who planned o enter the business world.

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Developmental Theories spearheaded by Ginzberg (1951) view career development as consisting of three phases; fantasy (0-11 years), tentative (11-17 years) and realistic (17-20 years). Super (1953) in his theory identified five stages through which an individual progresses in career development. He refers the second stage as the exploration stage, which coincides, with Ginzber's realistic stage when students are in form three (14 years). At this stage, the adolescents assess the realities of life in terms of their capabilities and world of work. The secondary school students are developing their interests, building capacity, and establishing their values. Students make compromise between wishes and realities depending on these factors.

According to Ginzberg, high school is the final transition into adulthood and into the world of work. On average, a student completes his secondary education at 18 years of age. Major decisions have to be made such as continuing with education, work and go to school part time or get a job. Guidance counselors have the responsibility of assisting students make appropriate decisions early to facilitate smooth transition. Makinde (1984) argues that career guidance should be provided at the primary and secondary levels. Guidance helps students make rational decisions before entering into transition stage, which commences after completion of secondary school education. It is therefore crucial to seek guidance while at school to promote capacity building in the selected subjects. According to Super (1953) career choices are methods of implementing an individual's self-concept and therefore information about self-characteristics such as attitudes, aptitudes and values is important in decision-making (Stone & Bradley, 1994). Guidance counsellors need to assist students to establish their self-concept as they guide them through career choices.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two theories; the Vocational Preference Theory advocate d by John Holland and Client Centered Theory whose proponent was Carl Rogers.

2.11.1 Vocational Preference Theory

This study was informed by Vocational Preference Theory of career development theories and client centered theory. Career development process is shaped by an "interaction of self-references, self-knowledge, knowledge about training and occupations, educational and occupational opportunities, genetic and early childhood influences, personality styles, and patterns of traits that individuals express in their choice of behavior and career opportunities"

(George & Cristian, 1990). It is important for students to discover their individual differences and classify themselves into either of the six personality types as discussed by Holland (he REASEC model). Only then can they establish their career-personality match which will ensure that they enter into occupations in which they are best suited. Guidance counselors on the other hand need to provide career guidance services for the students to realize this self-awareness. They also have to provide career information and career education so that the students can relate different school subjects to appropriate career options. Consequently by providing information on work environments, students can make appropriate career choices while at school.

2.11.2 Cognitive-Development Theory

The Cognitive-Development Theory of Swiss scholar Jean Piaget (1896-1980) explains perception formation through schemes (Shaffer, 1990). Piaget argues that a cognitive structure which he called a schema is an organized pattern of thought or action that is used to explain some aspects of experience. Career developmental theorists are similar to Piaget's cognitive-development theory in a number of ways. While career development theorists view career development as a life long process that begins with childhood as fantasy increasingly moving towards realism as one gets older (Ginzberg,1951; Havighurst, 1954), Piaget studied children at pretend play to explore children's fantasies with gender roles and identifying with work at an early age (preoperational stage, 2-7 years). He argued that children are egocentric in their understanding. Egocentrism is a tendency to view the world from one's own perspective and to have difficulty recognizing another person's divergent point of view (Shaffer, 1990). As children engage in pretend play, they become anything according to their world of fantasy such as the doctor, teacher, police, pilot, truck driver, mother or father (similar to Ginzbergs first stage of ego-ideal). At times they adorn the appropriate attire for each role; this parallels Havigursts third stage of acquiring identity as a worker in the occupational structure. In his formal operational stage (age 12 and beyond), Piaget posits that children become more objective and start thinking in a more hypothetical and abstract way. Piaget used the term hypothetical-deductive reasoning where the individuals approach to problem solving becomes increasingly systematic and abstract. Students can therefore make appropriate career decisions from detailed description of career occupation and career environments to challenge their perceptions.

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2.13 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable	Intervening Variable	Dependent Variable
Perceptions on Career Guidance characteristics • Career Counsellor training • Career counsellor experience • Cousellor's personality Perceptions on Career guidance activities • Career assessment • Career exploration • Career education • Consultation • Job placement services • Individual counselling • Visits by Professionals • Industrial tours	• Parental influence • Academic performance • Type of school • School environment • Media influence • Socialization process • Peers	Career planning • Subject choice • Career choice • Career information • Career awareness • Career exploration

Figure 1: Factors Influencing Students' Career Planning

This study was based on the concept that perception of individuals determines their response to other people. Students form perceptions of the career guidance counsellors' activities and characteristics based on their encounter with them in the school environment. Perception may be positive, neutral or negative. Career guidance activities captured in the conceptual framework are career assessment, career education, career exploration, consultation, job placement services, and individual counselling. Career guidance counselors also expose students to career information through guest speakers who are usually professionals in their chosen occupations.

Arrangements are also made to take students to industrial establishment to help them envisage the world of work. Career guidance characteristics included training, experience and personality.

Factors such as parental influence, students' abilities as measured in achievement tests, type of school, media influence, socialization process and gender identification, stereotypes, and the contextual framework influence students' perception. The context in which career guidance occurs may influence the students' perceptions on the importance of career guidance services in career planning. There are other personal reasons that make people not to enter a profession in which they have the abilities. Gelso and Fretz (1992) explain that university graduates who have the intellectual ability necessary to enter the teaching profession do not do so due to status, income, and peer and parental influence. The intervening variables were controlled by randomizing the sample. Kathuri and Pals (1993) expound randomizing as spreading an effect of a variable evenly across the groups of the study.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed in this study. It discusses the research design, the location of the study, target population, sampling procedures and sample size, instrumentation, data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. In this design, researchers collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current situation of that population without manipulating any variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2005; Kathuri & Pals, 1993). Surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions (Cohen & Manion, 1994). This design was appropriate because the students had already selected subjects and therefore the researcher was not in a position to manipulate the factors that may have influenced the students in their subject choices, career planning and career preparation.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in secondary schools in Nakuru North District. Nakuru North district has a large population of students with diverse culture from its rich catchment which includes other districts such as the larger Nakuru, Nyandarua and Laikipia. It also has a well developed infrastructure that enabled the researcher to access the schools with ease. The students also had access to career information resources from Kenya National Library Services and universities that are easily accessible in Nakuru town and its environs. In addition Nakuru has a good number of industries and businesses enterprise's which offer employment and middle level colleges for further education and training. There are many secondary schools with a high population of students and adequate representation of all categories that were of interest to the researcher. The schools were also in close proximity to each other. The student population was varied in terms of their cultural, socio-economic and educational background. The headquarters of the district are at Bahati Centre, which is 22 km from Nakuru along the Nakuru-Nyahururu road.

3.4 Population of the Study

In the study, the groups of people under study were form three students in secondary schools and

guidance counselors. Secondary school curriculum is broad based but is narrowed down to a minimum of seven and a maximum of eight in form three. The selective subjects have a bearig on ha students future career opportunities. Career guidance counsellors were selected for the study because hey play a major role in providing students with information that can be used to identify the careers they are best gifted in.(Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define the target population as that population to which the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study.

Table 1

Distribution of Target Population by Type of School

Type of school	Boys only	Girls only	Mixed	Students population per category	Guidance counsellors population
Public day	-	-	1035	1035	7
Public boarding	-	363	339	702	6
Private day	42	24	269	335	4
Private boarding	222	357	451	1030	6
Total	**264**	**744**	**2094**	**3102**	**23**

(Source: DEO, Nakuru North).

Table 1 shows that the population of boys in the district was slightly higher than that of girls 56.7% and 43.3 % respectively). There were no "boys only" schools in all categories or "girls only" public day schools. Some schools were relatively small with only two classes (form one and two) and were therefore not included in the population of the study. Some of the schools were grossly understaffed with no particular teachers appointed as guidance counsellors. The accessible population reflected the proportion of gender in the target population as indicated in the table below.

3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

A sample is a small part of a population, which is representative of the larger population. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) define a sample as a group in a research study on which information is obtained. According to Polland (2005), in drawing a sample, the goal is to draw that which

represents the population on all relevant and important characteristics. The main factor considered in determining the sample size is manageability and affordability in terms of time, finances and human resources (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The researcher ensured a high degree of correspondence between the sampling frame and the sample population as the accuracy of the sample depends on the sampling frame (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The sample population was 341 students and 19 guidance counselors from 17 schools.

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) developed a formula for estimating the required sample size for research. The formula has been simplified by Kathuri & Pals, 1993 into a table indicating required sample sizes for different population sizes (appendix D). Reference was made to this table to arrive at a sample size of 341 respondents for the students and 19 career guidance counsellors.

Stratified sampling was used to ensure all categories were adequately represented. The population was divided into four strata by type of school. This was further stratified into male and female students. The selection of the respondents into the sample was done based on the proportion of each stratum to the entire population. This ensured adequate representation of the population because the population was not homogeneous.

Proportionate sampling was used in order to include sufficient number of respondents from each category. The number of schools drawn from each type of school was done based on the proportion of the students to the entire population. Respondents from various categories were then randomly selected from sampled schools to give each student an equal chance of participating in the study.

The second group of respondents was guidance counsellors. Not all schools had guidance counsellors. Purposive sampling was therefore used to select respondents to address the needs of the study. The accessible population of guidance counsellors constituted the sample, which was purposively selected from the 17 sampled schools. Table 2 presents a summary of distribution of sample population by type of school.

Table 2

Distribution of Sample of Students and Guidance Counsellors by Type of School

Type of school	Girls	Percent	Boys	Percent	Guidance counsellors	Percent
Public day	64	61.53	40	38.84	6	31.5
Public boarding	25	44.64	31	55.35	6	
Private day	26	49	27	51	3	31.5
Private boarding	27	35.5	49	64.5	4	
						15.7
Total	142	49.1	147	50.9	19	100

(Source DEO; Nakuru North).

Majority of the sampled students from public day schools were girls (61.53) while 38.84 percent were boys. This was a fair representation because the target population had more girls in public day schools than boys. However, in the public boarding schools category, the boys were the majority at 55.35 percent while the girls were represented at 44.64 percent. In the private schools category, both boys and girls had an almost equal representation under the private day category at 49 and 51 percent representation respectively. This was different for the private boarding category with more boys (64.5 %) than girls (35.5 %) did. Guidance counsellors from public day and public boarding schools had an equal representation (31.5 %). Only 37 percent of the sampled guidance counsellors were from private schools.

3.6 Instrumentation

By carefully examining the research objectives and related literature, the researcher developed data collection instruments that comprised of two sets of structured questionnaires to collect primary data from students and guidance counselors. Some items were adopted from Sindabi (1992) who carried a similar study in selected Kenyan schools. Questionnaires were preferred because they are convenient in handling a large number of respondents. In developing the questionnaire items, both closed and open-ended formats of items were used. The items provided the respondents with an opportunity for self-expression. The fixed choice questions such as the likert ratings scale and the dichotomous key type of questions were developed because they would allow easy tabulation, analysis and interpretation of the responses. The five-

point rating scale required respondents to respond with strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD) to depict agreement and/or disagreement with the given statements. The dichotomous items required a Yes or No response.

The students' questionnaire contained 23 items divided into four sections. Section1 elicited preliminary information on students' demographic data that included gender, type of school and parents' level of education. Section 2 was intended to capture information on career preparation. Students were presented with items depicting subjects they had selected and what they intended to do after high school.

Section 3 presented students with seven items eliciting response on their perception on guidance counsellor's competencies. They were required to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items (5-point likert scale). The ratings ranged from 1 to 5 where 5 indicated strongly agree and 1 strongly disagree. Each item was rated and a mean score calculated. Similarly, each individual response was rated and a mean rating score calculated. If all the respondents strongly agreed, the statement would have a mean rating score of 5.0; likewise, if they all disagreed, the mean rating score would be 1. The higher the score, the more positive was the students' perception. A rating higher than 3.5 (70%) and above was considered positive, 3.3 to 3.4 was considered neutral while lower than 3.3 was considered negative. The mean scores were used to interpret the students' perception.

Section 4 elicited response on students' perception on the career resource centers and career activities provided in the school. Competent guidance counsellors are expected to maintain a well-equipped career resource center and provide services that advance students' understanding of the world of work. The items captured information on operation of career guidance program. The students were requested to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. Like in section 3, the 5-point likert scale was used. The highest rating of 5 indicated that respondent strongly agreed with the item while the lowest rating of 1 indicated that they strongly disagreed. All items were rated and a mean score obtained. The mean rating scores were used to interpret students' perception on importance of career resource centers in career planning and preparation.

The guidance counsellors' questionnaire contained 24 items divided into four sections. Section 1 collected demographic data of the guidance counsellors, which included gender, type of school, age, and teaching load. Section 2 had 12 items seeking information on competencies that were assessed on professional qualifications (teaching and counselling), the length of service in the teaching profession and in guidance counselling, mode of appointment and appointing authority. Section 3 had four items imploring information about guidance activities provided in the school while Section 4 sought information on the state of career resource centers. Other items in this section sought to establish the use of resource persons and guidance counsellors' suggestions on improving service delivery.

Questionnaires were delivered to the respondents and picked on completion to ensure reliability of information and high return rate. The return rate of the students' questionnaires was 85.7% percent (289) while that of the career guidance counsellors was 89.4 percent (17) and was considered adequate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003), a return rate of 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting.

3.7 Validity of Instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure. Frankel and Wallen (2000) refer to validity as the defensibility of the inferences that the researcher makes from the data collected using the said instruments. Neuman (2000) states that validity as the degree to which the results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. Validity shows how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study. If it is a true reflection of the variables, then inferences based on such data will be accurate.

The initial method involved the researcher going through the instruments in relation to the set objectives to make sure they contained the information that could answer the research objectives and that the respondents would interpret all questions in the similar ways (Orodho, 2003). Some items were found ambiguous at this first stage and were revised.

Secondly, the researcher subjected the instrument for validation to research experts at the

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Education Foundations, Faculty of Education and Community Studies, Egerton University. The research experts looked at the measuring technique and coverage of specific areas (objectives) under study. They advised the researcher on corrections on the identified items hence fine-tuning the items, making them more effective in gathering the required data. Areas causing confusion and ambiguity were restructured to make them more understandable by the respondents and to gather uniform responses across various respondents (Orodho, 2003). Finally, the instruments were piloted on a population that was similar to the target population in two schools in Bahati Division. The piloting included 20 students and 5 guidance counsellors.

3.8 Reliability of Instruments

Reliability of instruments is a measure of the degree to which the instruments yield consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). It refers to the degree to which an instrument's scores are free from errors of measurement. Errors may arise from inaccurate coding of raw data, inaccurate instruments or ambiguous instructions to the respondents or bias. The split-half technique was preferred to test internal consistency of the instruments due to its ability to reduce chance error that may arise from different test conditions of the respondents when using test-retest or the equivalent-form technique. Piloting was done with twenty students from two schools from Bahati division which were not part of the sample. Eleven items were used to test reliability of students' questionnaire. It was established a 0.707 using Cronbach alpha coefficient. Similarly, 12 items were used from the guidance counsellors' questionnaire on five guidance counselors from the same schools.

Reliability for the guidance counsellors' questionnaire was 0.732. This is a high coefficient for both instruments implying that items correlated highly among themselves; that is, there was consistency among the item. This was considered acceptable for the study (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996)

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought authority to collect data from the District Education Office (DEO) through the Chair, Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations, Egerton

University. Subsequently authority was obtained from the District Education Office, Nakuru North and National Council for Science and Technology for the same. A visit was made to the selected schools with the objective of establishing rapport and enlightening the school principals, career guidance counsellors and the students on the purpose of the intended study. A covering letter was presented to school principals to explain the purpose of the study. With permission from the school principals, the researcher took the guidance counsellors and students separately through the instructions before letting them fill in their responses.

Respondents were assured that the information would be kept confidential and would be used only for the purpose of the study. Consequently the respondents were asked not to indicate their names or the names of their schools in the questionnaires. The researcher administered the questionnaires to the respondents assisted by guidance counsellors. After completion, the researcher personally collected the instruments to ensure a hundred percent return of all the questionnaires. Students' questionnaires had a 85.7 percent return rate while guidance counsellors' response was 89.5 percent.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data collected from the respondents was edited, coded and entered into a computer. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for processing and analysis using descriptive statistics to facilitate addressing the research objectives.

Frequencies and means presented in tables, pie charts, bar graphs and histograms were used to summarize and organize data and to describe the characteristics of the sample population. Means were used to analyse perceptions on different aspects of career guidance while frequency distributions were constructed to examine the pattern of responses. Percentages were used to facilitate comparisons between responses. Chi-square test was used to evaluate observations and to interpret the respondents' perceptions of the issues raised in the questionnaires so as to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results and discussion of the research findings which were analyzed according to the following research objectives:

1) To establish students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors' characteristics in secondary schools in Nakuru North District.

2) To establish students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors' activities in career planning in secondary schools in Nakuru North District

3) To establish career guidance counsellors' characteristics in secondary schools in Nakuru North District

4) To establish career guidance activities provided in secondary schools in Nakuru North District.

5) To investigate the influence of students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities on career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents. There were two groups of respondents in the study. These were form three students and guidance counsellors (referred to as career masters/mistresses in secondary schools). The students' characteristics are discussed under gender, type of school, and parents' level of education. Guidance counsellors' characteristics included gender, age, teaching load, and length of service. These variables were considered important in providing a clear understanding of the respondents as well as presenting a good foundation for a detailed discussion of the results.

4.2.1 Gender of Students

This section categorizes the sampled students according to their gender. The information was essential in understanding the respondents' characteristics and aided in analyzing the findings of the study. Okunbor and Magbor (2005) as cited in Chesire and Kodero (2011) argue that gender

is an important variable because it defines behaviour, attitudes and relationships in society.
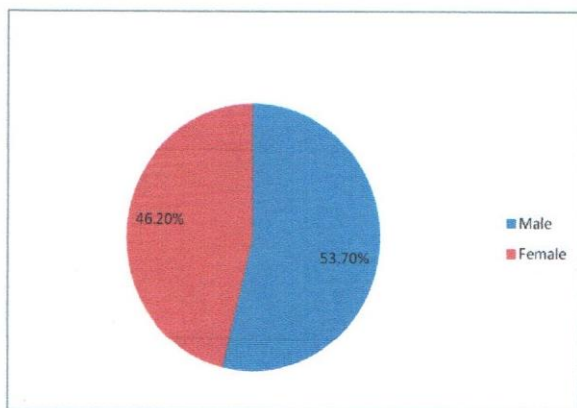
Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Sampled Students

The results in figure 2 revealed that out of 289 students included in the sample, 147 (53.70%) were males while 142 (46.20%) were females. The variation in gender distribution was attributed to the general gender imbalance in the target population that had 1760 males (56.7%) and 1342 (43.3 %) females. There were only three boarding schools in the district, two for girls only and one mixed gender. According to Keynes (1987), parents have a preference of boarding schools to day schools for their daughters for fear of negative social influence. Probably the girls may be schooling in boarding schools outside the district.

4.2.2 Distribution of Students' Sample by Category of Schools

Selected schools were classified into public and private schools categories. These were further categorized into day and boarding. The number of students in public schools was 160 (55.4%) while private schools had 129 (44.6%). This indicated that the majority of the students were in public schools. Table 3 presents distribution of sampled students by category of schools.

Table 3

Distribution of Students' Sample by Category of School

Type of school	Frequency		Total	Percent	Cum %
	Male	Female			
Public Day	40	64	104	36.0	36.0
Public Boarding	31	25	56	19.4	55.4
Private Day	27	26	53	18.3	73.7
Private Boarding	49	27	76	26.3	100
Total	**147**	**142**	**289**	**100**	

As indicated in table 3, there were more girls (64) than boys (40) from public day schools. However, under the public boarding category there were more boys (31) than girls (25). Both boys and girls had an almost equal representation under the public day category. However, there were more boys (49) in private boarding schools than girls (27). Public day schools had the highest number of students (104) representing 36 percent followed by private boarding schools with 76 students (26.3%).

4.2.3 Parents' Level of Education

The results on highest level of education for parents are presented in figure 3.
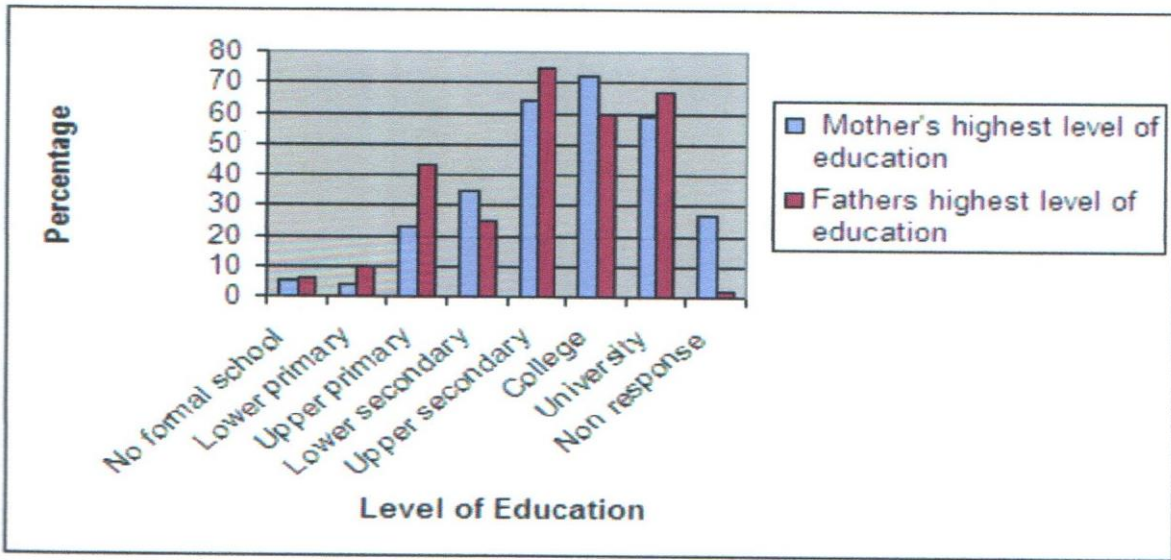
Figure 3: Parents' Level of Education

The results in figure 3 indicate that mothers who had attained primary education and below constituted 12.2 percent (n=32). Similarly, fathers with the same level of education were 20.6 percent (n=59). Majority of the parents had secondary education and above. The fathers who had attained secondary school levels (26%) were more than the mothers were (24.4%). At this level, they are at par with the respondents under study. Closer examination of data reveals that almost half of the parents had secondary level of education and below. At college level there were more mothers (25%, n=75) than fathers (22.9%, n=60). Sixty-seven (23.3%) of the fathers had gone up to university level compared to fifty-nine (22.5%) of the mothers. These results differed with the findings of a study conducted by Kimalu *et al* (1998) on education indicators which established that educational attainment among working-age population was dominantly primary and secondary education.

4.2.4 Distribution of Career Guidance Counsellors' Gender
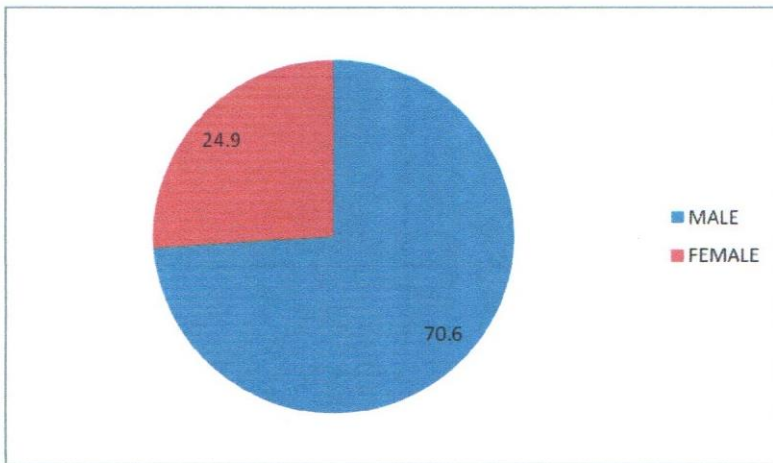
Figure 4: Gender Distribution of Career Guidance Counsellors

Figure 4 shows that of all the 17 career guidance counsellors in the study, 12 (70.6 %) of them were male while 5 (24.9 %) were female. There was gender disparity in the distribution of guidance counselors. The results differed with a study done by Kiarie, Sirera and Mwenje (2011) which indicated that most schools appointed female teachers as counsellors because they have a more positive disposition towards the counselling profession. However, it agreed with the observations of Maragia, Nabiswa, & Amadalo, (2011) who found out that there were more male than female teacher counsellors in secondary schools although this study focused on career guidance counsellors.

4.2.5 Distribution of Career Guidance Counsellors by Age

Age is an important factor in guidance in many societies. Society regards the old as a valuable source of wisdom. This study sought to establish whether guidance counsellors' age was relevant in appointment of guidance counsellors. Figure 4 presents the distribution of guidance counsellors by age.
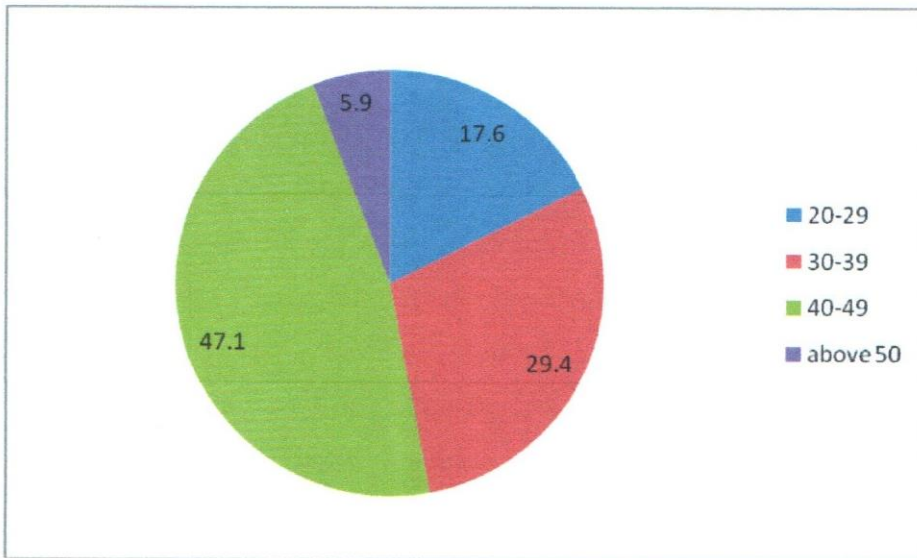
Figure 5: Distribution of Career Guidance Counsellors by Age

As figure 5 indicates, the majority of the guidance counsellors (47.1%) were aged between 40 and 49 years. Respondents aged between 30-39 years were 29.4 percent. The lowest representation was for the respondents who were above 50 years (5.9%. Respondents aged below 29 years were only 3 (17.6%). The results indicated that appointing authorities avoided the extremes. They did no appoint too young or too old teachers as career guidance counsellors.

4.2.6. Career Guidance Counsellors' Teaching Load

Another important variable considered as important was career guidance counsellors' teaching load. This has an effect on availability of time allocated for guidance activities. Table 4 is a summary of the respondents teaching load.

Table 4

Career Guidance Counsellors' Teaching Load

No. of lessons per week	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
10-20	6	35.3	35.3
21-24	5	29.4	64.7
24 and above	6	35.3	100
Total	**17**	**100**	**100**

Results from table 4 indicate that the majority of guidance counsellors had a heavy teaching load. The majority (64.7%, n=11) had more than 21 lessons in a week. This translates to an average of four lessons per day. This observation supports several studies that established that guidance counsellors were burdened with a heavy teaching load which reduced the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services (Ramani, 2000; and Kinuthia, 1989 as cited in Boit and Chepchieng (2011). Career guidance is very involving particularly where schools are very large. Some school had more than four streams. One of the schools had seven streams in form three. Each individual student is unique and requires individual attention for career guidance to be effective. Career guidance counsellors had to contend with the dual responsibilities of counselling and teaching. Observations from several studies established that workload was a barrier to effective counselling (Nderitu, 1998; Kiarie et al 2011; Mureu & Wasanga, 2011).

Career guidance counsellors should be relieved of their teaching duties to enable them concentrate on guidance and counselling (MOE, 2009; Mutie & Ndabuki, 1999; Chibber, 1999). Kamunge (1988) and Ndambuki (1999) posited that teacher counsellors were overburdened with teaching load which left them with little time to concentrate on guidance and counselling. Most school programmes do not allocate time for individual counselling. Gachathi (1996) lamented that the heavy workload and inadequate knowledge remained a challenge in teachers' endeavors in assisting students develop decision-making skills and enhance their transition into the world of work. The guidance counsellors should be relieved of their teaching duties in order to enable them concentrate on guidance and counselling for effective delivery of guidance services.

The guidance programme is not officially incorporated in the school programme and counsellors have to provide guidance outside the normal school hours. Many schools lack facilities such as counselling rooms and resource centers, which hampers effective provision of guidance services. This study revealed how students chose their subjects in this milieu in secondary schools. Schools in Kenya are grossly understaffed and guidance counsellors have to contend with a heavy workload (TSC, 2011).

4.2.7 Length of Service as a Guidance Counsellor

Length of service in a particular field provides individuals with new learning opportunities.

When people meet challenging situations they are likely to actively examine ways of dealing with such difficulties. According to McNergney (1998), teachers (as well guidance counsellors) continue to learn from the challenges they face on the job. The researcher sought to determine the period the respondents had been providing guidance services. The responses are presented in figure 6.
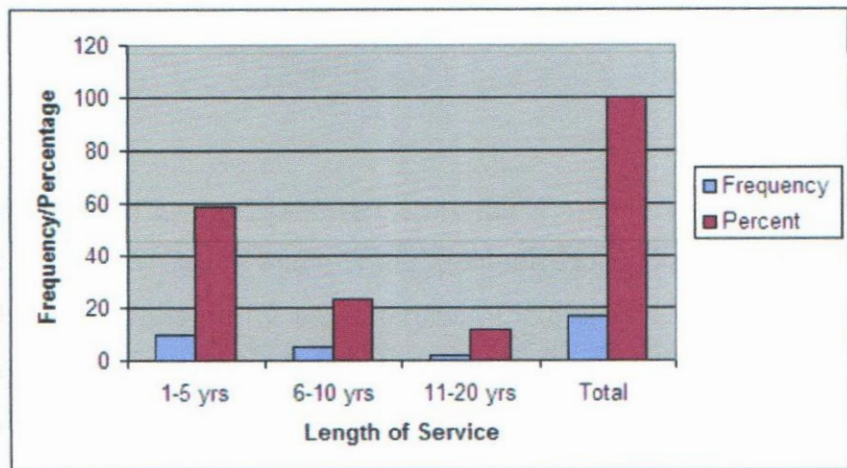
Figure 6: Length of Service as a Career Guidance Counsellor

The results from figure 6 indicated that majority of the respondents were relatively new in the field with 58.8 percent having served for less than five years. Respondents who had served between 6 and 10 years were 22.4 percent while 11.8 percent had served for over 11 years. The results imply that guidance counsellors had little experience in career guidance.

4.2.8 Career Guidance Counsellor Appointment Criteria
According to George and Cristian (1990), while personality is important in enhancing counsellor effectiveness professionalism cannot be overlooked in appointment of guidance counsellors. However, when the researcher asked the respondents to indicate the criteria on which they believe was the basis for their appointment, it was observed that counsellor qualifications were not a priority in guidance counsellor appointment as presented in figure 7.
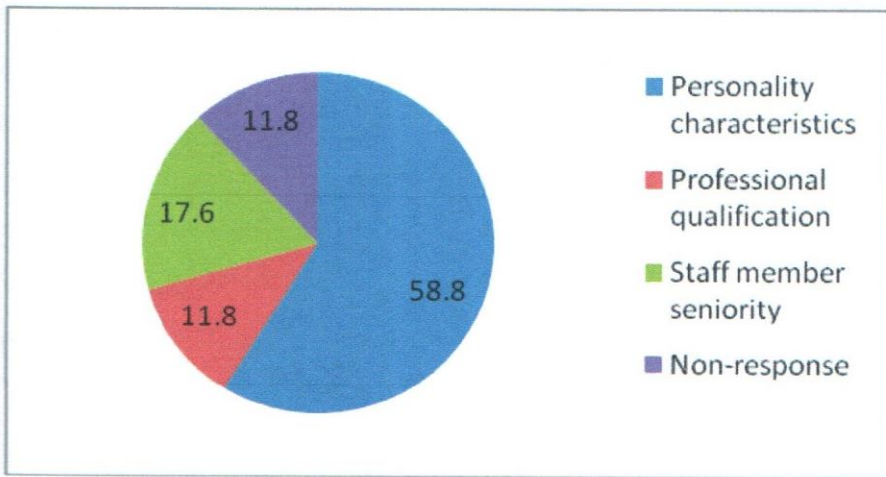
Figure 7: Career Guidance Counsellor's Appointment Criteria

Figure 7 shows that majority of the sampled guidance counsellors felt that their appointment was based on personality characteristics (58.8%, n=10). It was not clear whether the guidance counsellors understood personality assessment and how it affects guidance and counselling. Two (11.8%) respondents believed that they were appointed on the strength of professional qualifications. Two other respondents (11.8%) believed that they were appointed on seniority (age). The results coincided with observations made by Walsh *et al* (1999) that majority of school counsellors in developing countries are appointed on an *ad hoc* basis. Although older members of the society are held in high esteem in regard to giving guidance and advice to the younger generation they may not have current information on work situations, emerging trends, technological advancement and trends in education and training among other issues. MOEST (2005) is in charge of deployment of guidance and counselling teachers to public schools by the TSC under the Guidance and Counselling Unit. This has not been the case in Nakuru North district as indicated by the results in table 5

Table 5

Appointing Authority as Reported by Career Guidance Counsellors

Appointing authority	Frequency	Percent
TSC	1	5.9
School administration	14	82.4
Missing	2	11.8
Total	**17**	**100**

Results from table 5 reveal that majority (82.4%) of the respondents were appointed by school administration. Only one respondent (5.9%) was a TSC appointee. The ministry of education needs to revisit its commitment in promoting the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in schools by implementing its policies to the letter. This implied that the government was far from achieving its objective of promoting effective guidance and counselling in schools (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Staffing is a responsibility of the TSC and should not be left to school administrators. The TSC should put policies in place to identify individuals who are competent in career guidance and deploy them to all secondary schools in Kenya. Ministry of education should also facilitate training of more guidance counsellors by providing the necessary materials and financial support.

4.3 Students' Perceptions of Career Guidance Counsellors characteristics

The first objective of the study was to establish students' perceptions of their career guidance counsellors. The researcher first sought to establish students' awareness of guidance counsellors and requested respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement "There is a guidance and counselling committee in our school to whom students go for advice as well as information on personal, social, subject and career counseling". The response is presented in table 6.

Table 6

Students' Awareness of Career Guidance Counselors and their Roles

Statement	N=289						
	A		U		D		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	MEAN
1) There is a guidance and counseling committee in our school which assists students in personal and academic issues.	274	95	6	2	9	3	4.52
2) There is a guidance counsellor in our school to whom students go for advice as well as information on career counselling.	141	46	94	29	72	5	3.9
3) Career guidance and counselling information from guidance counsellors is important when selecting subjects in form three.	112	39	108	37	69	23	3.2

KEY
A= Agree
U= undecided
D= Disagree

Results from table 6 indicate that majority of the students (95 %, n=274) confirmed that there were career guidance counselors in their schools who assisted students in academic issues. Three percent indicated that there were no career guidance counselors while anther two percent were undecided. The item's mean rating score was highly positive at 4.52%. Secondly, the researcher sought to establish whether the guidance counsellors assisted students in subject and career choices. She requested the respondents to respond in a similar manner to the statement; "there were guidance counsellors in the school who assists students on career and subject

selection". A similar statement specifically sought to establish whether career guidance was provided. The responses indicated that career counselling was also provided. Those who were in agreement with the statement were 46%. A paltry 5% disagreed indicated that career counselling was not provided while 29% were undecided. The item's mean rating score was 3.9% which was considered as positive. There was a lot of similarity between item 1 and 2.

The third item sought to establish students' perceptions on the importance of guidance when choosing subjects in form three. The results indicated that only 39 percent perceived career guidance as important in selecting subjects in from three. A relatively big number (37%, N=108) were undecided while 23 percent perceived career guidance as unimportant. The item's mean rating score was 3.2 which was very low and therefore implied a negative perception.

Table 7

Career Guidance Counsellors' Characteristics as Perceived by Students

Statement	N=289						
	A		U		D		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	MEAN
1) Career guidance counsellor has ample time to assists students in choice of careers.	41	14	143	49	105	37	2.6
2) Career guidance counselling has important information which is useful when making future careers.	265	92	16	5.5	8	2.7	4.3
3) The guidance counsellor understands the connection between school subjects and career occupations	132	46	72	25	84	29	3.7

KEY
A= Agree
U= undecided
D= Disagree

Results from table 7 indicate that majority (49%; n=143) were undecided indicating that they were not sure whether there career guidance counsellors had ample time for providing career guidance. Quite a significant number (37% n=105) also felt that their career guidance counsellors did not have time to provide these services. Only 14 percent agreed with the statement. The item's mean rating score was negative at 2.6. The study therefore concluded that students' perceptions on the availability of their career guidance counsellors were negative.

Item 2 sought to establish students' perceptions of the career guidance counsellor as a resourceful in career information. Respondents who perceived their guidance counsellor as resourceful were the majority at 92 percent. Respondents who were undecided were only 5.5 percent while those who disagreed were 2.7 percent. The item's mean rating score was 4.3 indicating positive perceptions.

Results also indicated students' perception of their career guidance counsellors understanding of subjects-careers relationship was positive although it had a lower mean rating score. Respondents who agreed with item 3 were 46 percent; those who disagreed were 25 percent while those who were undecided were 29 percent. This indicated that not many students (less than half) were likely to consult their career guidance counsellors on career issues. The item's mean rating score was 3.7 indicating negative perception. From the results, it was concluded that students' perception on the career guidance counsellors characteristics were positive with a grand mean rating score of 3.8.

4.4 Career Guidance Counsellors' Activities as Perceived by Students

The second objective of the study was to investigate students' perception of career guidance counsellors' activities. Awareness of availability of guidance services alone is not sufficient since the student must take the initiative to utilize the guidance services. The responsibility of the guidance counsellor is to assist the students through academic counselling to meet these goals. Perception plays a key role in determining whether the students will adequately plan for their careers by utilizing career guidance services. Brewer (1932) as cited by Makinde (1984) argues that the person seeking guidance must consent to receive guidance, reserves the right to use the guidance offered and make his own decisions. The expectation therefore was that if students' perception were positive, they would seek appropriate guidance in career related issues. These

services would help the respondents in making subject choices, which is an indicator of career planning. On the other hand, if it was downbeat, then they may decline to seek such guidance. This may restrict them in realizing their career goals. To implore information on students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors activities, the researcher asked respondents to show the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the several statements highlighting activities provided under the career guidance programme.

The respondents were required to rate each item on a 5-point scale (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree). The researcher then calculated mean rating score for each individual item. The maximum rating score an individual item could attain was five and the minimum one. For example if respondents agreed, the mean rating score would be five (5) and if they disagreed, it would be one (1). This mean rating score indicated the respondents' perception. High mean rating scores of 3.5 and above (70%) were associated with positive perception while low mean rate scores of below 3.5 indicated negative perceptions. In order to simplify presentation of results, responses for "Strongly Agreed" and "Agreed" were combined under "Agreed" while responses for "Disagreed" and "Strongly Disagreed" combined under "Disagreed".

The fact that teachers may not provide quality serviecs may contribute to negative perception and hinder students from approaching them for career guidance (Alexitch & Page, 1997). In a study involving high school students in Canada, Mau (1998) observed that students perceived their teachers as helpful in regards to specific course content but not as a source of help during career planning. There is need to establish functional guidance committees to handle differen areas of guidance. Career guidance is a component of guidance and counseling. The researcher sought to establish students' awareness of guidance and counseling committee under which the career guidance counsellors function. Respondents were provided with three items that elicited response on awareness of guidance counselors and their roles in career guidance. Respondents' perception of the career guidance counsellors' activities are presented in table 8

Table 8

Career Guidance Activities as Perceived by Students

Career Guidance Activity	A		U		D		
N=289	N	%	N	%	N	%	MEAN
1. The career guidance counsellor gives psychological and career tests to help students understand their personality, interests, values and abilities	5	1.6	17	5.9	267	92.4	1.7
2. The career guidance counsellor invites speakers from outside to come to talk to students about careers	144	50	8	2.8	137	47.3	3.3
3. The guidance counselor organizes industrial tours for students	34	11.8	17	5.9	238	82.4	1.9
4. The career guidance counsellor assists students to explore educational and career information in order to make appropriate education and career decisions and choices	167	57.7	37	12.8	85	29.4	3.8
5. The career guidance counsellor consults with teachers, parents and the head teacher on students' academic issues	235	81.3	15	5.2	39	13.1	3.9
6. The career guidance counsellor assists students in job placement	0	0	25	9.7	261	90.3	1.1
7. Career guidance counsellor provides individual counselling to students regularly	17	5.9	34	11.8	237	82.3	2.4

KEY

A= Agree

U= undecided

D= Disagree

Career Assessment

Table 8 illustrates that psychological tests were not used in determining students' abilities, interest and aptitudes. Majority (92.4%) disagreed with the statement that guidance counsellors conducted career tests. Only 1.6 percent agreed while 5.9 were undecided on use of tests. The items mean rating score was 1.7 (33%). This raises the concern of the quality of services provided in the absence of professionalism. Guidance counsellors used unprofessional methods in guiding students in planning for their careers and heavily relied on students' individual opinions. This implied that the students would have planned their career without the services of guidance counsellors.

Guest Speakers

Invited guests are a valuable source of career information and should be invited to schools to give talks on their areas of career occupations. The researcher sought to establish whether such speakers were invited to schools and the results indicated that majority of the respondents (N=144; 50%) agreed that such professionals were invited to schools to give career talks. Also an equally significant number of respondents indicated that their career guidance counselors did not invite such speakers (N=137; 47.3%). Career guidance counselors should be encouraged to establish contact with professionals as they also serve as role models to the young students.

Industrial Tours

Industrial tours provide students with a realistic appraisal of the situations in the world of work in different occupations. Students are able to understand real life situation and the working conditions in different careers. The researcher sought to find out whether the guidance counsellors organized industrial tours as a way of providing information on different career occupations. Results indicated that career guidance counselors did not arrange for such visits. The items mean rating score was negative at 1.9. Majority of the respondents (82.4%) indicated that there were no such tours organized in their schools. Only 11.8 % indicated that they had industrial tours while 5.9 % were undecided. Nakuru north district is privileged to be adjacent to a fast growing town (Nakuru Town) endowed with many industries and business establishments. Career guidance counselors should therefore be encouraged to explore this option of availing career education and exploration.

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Career Exploration

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (62.2%) agreed that guidance counsellor assists students to explore educational and career information in order to make appropriate education and career decisions. Those who strongly agreed were 103 (35.6%) and those who agreed were 77 (26.6%). However a good number of the respondents (26%, n=75) indicated that guidance counsellors did not assist students in this aspect. Respondents who were undecided were 11.8 percent. The mean rating score for the item was 3.5 (70%). The results indicated that students generally received guidance when making career related decisions. Results also revealed that 58.8 percent reported that schools invited speakers. Those who reported that their schools did not invite career resource persons to talk to students were 41.2 percent. Resources persons provide dependable sources of information on different occupations and work environments. Maingi and Wasanga (2011) suggest that professionals should be hired to provide insight into issue of career exploration

Career Education

Half (50%) of the respondents reported that career guidance counsellors provided career education to their students while 47.3 percent indicated that this service was not provided. Undecided respondents were 2.8 percent. The items mean rating score was 3.3. Career education involves providing information to students on different occupations, availability of career opportunities, entry requirements, remuneration, fridge benefits and current trends in different occupations. The students acquire a clearer perspective of the world of work through career education

Consultation

Majority (81.3%) reported that guidance counsellors consulted others people when guiding students, 13.5 percent disagreed while 5.2 percent were not sure. The mean rating score for this item was 3.5 (70%) indicating that consultations were done during career guidance. An important component of the guidance programme is consultation with significant others in the lives of individuals. Families, parents and guardians in particular play a significant role in the occupational aspirations and career goal development of individuals. According to Taylor (2004), children need approval and support from their parents in order to pursue or even explore

diverse career possibilities. Similarly, Anderson (2009) proposes that teachers need to know from parents what is going on in a child's life that may influence career decisions.

Job Placement Services

Majority (89.26) percent of the sampled students indicated that job placement services were not provided to students. No student in the sample strongly agreed that guidance counsellors offered job placement, 9.7 percent (n=28) were undecided while 261 (90.3%) disagreed. The mean rating score for the item was only 1.1 indicating absence of this important career activity in the secondary schools. The respondents indicated that guidance counselors did not carry out this function of job placement. This may be attributed to the fact that secondary school leavers are not may not have the necessary skills required by employers.

Individual Counselling

Career planning is a process and not a one-time activity. According to Brown and Lent (2005) in Gacohi *et al* (2011), career behaviours include choice of study subjects and areas of specialization. Although students' choice of subjects is a one-time activity, a comprehensive examination of the consequences of such a choice on future career opportunities requires a number of guidance and counselling sessions. Lehmannowsky (2001) posits that students may not recognize the connection between the courses they are taking and their career aspirations. Makinde (1984) argues that in order for the guidance and counselling programme to be effective in secondary schools, it should be proactive and frequent and not a one-time activity. The researcher sought to establish how regular career guidance sessions were conducted in schools. From the results 82.3% of the respondents were in disagreement with the item. Only 5.9% reported that there was individual counselling in their schools. The proportion of the undecided was 11.8 %. The items mean rating score was 2.4 indicating a negative perception. The career guidance counselors did not perform this important function of individual counselling. To establish individual differences, a counselor needs to have several sessions with a client. In the absence of such an important activity, students planned for their career with inadequate information.

4.4.1 Students Awareness of Career Resources

Effective guidance and counselling programme should have properly equipped career resource center in order to serve the students' need for information. Career resource centers should have library books, magazines and newspapers, college or university catalogues, journals and publications, posters and occupational charts, audiovisual aids such as videos, and internet services. Resource persons such as professionals in various fields should also be invited frequently to give career talks to students in order to compliment the resources. The researcher sought to find out whether there were resource centers in the schools; whether the centers if any, were sufficiently equipped to effectively furnish students with career information and whether career resource persons were invited to schools. In order to establish whether there were careers resource centers were appropriately equipped, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement "The teacher counsellor maintains a well-equipped resource centre where I read information concerning different career opportunities".

Majority (78%) disagreed implying that many schools lacked career resource centers. Only 13 percent reported that there were career resource centers in their school while 9 percent were not sure. The mean rating score for the item was 1.9 (38.6%). Career resource centers are expected to have a collection of career information resources such as career booklets, magazines, library books, catalogues and the internet among others. A list of nine possible information sources was presented to the respondents. They were asked to indicate whether these sources were available at the sampled schools. Their responses are presented in table 9.

Table 9

Students' Responses on Availability of Resources

Resource	Yes	%	No	%
Career books	238	82.4	51	17.6
Library books on careers	170	58.8	119	41.2
Magazines and newspapers	215	74.5	74	25.5
College or university catalogue	138	47.1	151	52.9
Journals and publications	34	11.8	255	88.2
Posters and occupational charts	102	35.3	187	64.7
Audiovisual aids such as videos	0	0	289	100
Internet;	3	5.9	286	94.1
Visits by professional	28	58.8	261	41.2

As indicated in table 9, majority of the respondents (82.4%) indicated that their schools had career books. The Ministry of Education distributes a career guidebook to secondary schools. Schools also receive guidelines annually from Joint Admissions Board, which are used by students when choosing degree courses. Respondents who reported that schools had newspapers and magazines were 74.5 percent while 58.8 percent reported availability of library books.

Many schools also invite resource persons such as professionals to schools to provide students with information on the world of work (58.8%). Quite a number of schools (47.1%) had college catalogues and bulletins while another 35.3 percent indicating that they had posters and charts. Only one respondent reported that the school had internet facilities (5.9%). None of the schools sampled had audiovisual aids. The results revealed that career guidance counselors and students had adequate resources to assist them make appropriate career decisions.

4.5 Guidance Counsellors' Characteristics

The third objective of the study was to establish the level of guidance counsellor competencies. Competencies were assessed on the level of training, counsellors role in providing career guidance and counsellors' personality. Several studies (Sindabi, 1992; Paisley, 2001; Ngumi *et*

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al 2011; Gatua, 2008;) have revealed that professional training affects counsellors effectiveness. Earlier, Sindabi (1992) in an analysis of the guidance and counselling programme in selected schools in Kenya observed that provision of career guidance and counselling services requires appropriate competencies by the providers of the counselling services.

Guidance counsellors should be competent in counselling, consultancy, coordination, career development, measurement and evaluation, referral, placement and follow-up and research (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003). Adequate training makes the guidance counsellors capable to identifying students' strengths, abilities and interests. The researcher sought to establish two aspects of qualifications of the sampled guidance counsellors namely, qualifications in teaching and qualification in career guidance. Professionally trained teachers are people who possess specialized knowledge and skills. Teachers are evaluated during their professional studies and only graduate after fulfilling the requirements for certification. The responses of guidance counsellors regarding their qualifications are presented in figure 8.
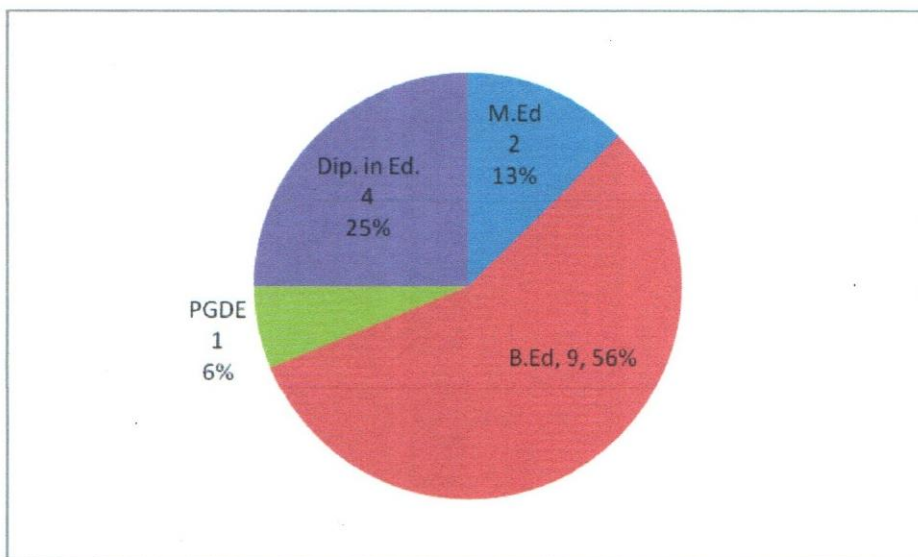
Figure 8: Teaching Qualifications of Career Guidance Counsellors

Figure 8 illustrates that all the sampled guidance counsellors were professionally qualified teachers. Results revealed that 56 percent of them had a first degree in education, 25 percent were diploma holders while 6.3 percent had a postgraduate diploma in education. The highest level of education among the sampled guidance counsellors was a masters degree (12.5%).

4.5.1 Formal Training

Psychology in Education is a basic course in teacher training programme at all levels of teacher training. All the respondents were professionally trained as teachers. This demonstrated that respondents were equiped with basic level of understanding of child psychology and behavior. Guidance and counselling competency is an imperative requirement when giving direction to students in their career decision-making (Smith, 2010). Career guidance deals with assessment of personal attributes such as interests, values, preferences, motivations, aptitudes and skills (Lynn, 2000). Career assessment involves use of tool that are designed to help individuals understand how a variety of personal attributes impact their potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments (Guarneri, 2009). Career guidance counsellors use assessment of some or all of these attributes to help students gain self-understanding, make informed career decisions and take appropriate measures to that end. The researcher sought to establish the level and nature of training undertaken by guidance counsellors. Results are presented in figure 9
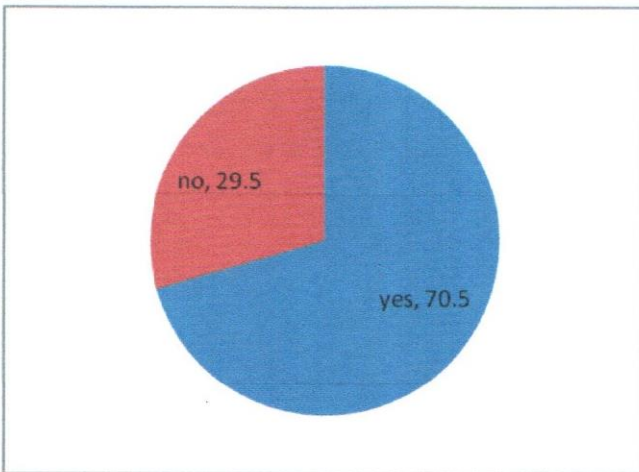
Figure 9: Guidance and Counselling Course Undertaken During Teacher Training

The researcher asked career guidance counsellors to report whether they had attended guidance and counselling course during teacher training. Results from Figure 9 reveal that majority (70.5%) of the guidance counsellors covered guidance and counselling courses during their teacher-training programme while 29.5 percent had not. In-service training has been used for

capacity building in teacher education (KESI, 2011). School administration should support their guidance counsellors materially and financially to enable them attend career guidance courses whenever they are arranged. The researcher sought to establish whether respondents had been in-serviced in guidance and counselling. Table 10 is a summary of the number of times respondents have attended in-service courses.

Table 10

In –Service Courses Attended by Career Guidance Counsellors

Number	Frequency	%
None	3	17.6
1-3 times	8	47.1
More than 3 times	5	29.4
None response	1	5.9
Total	**17**	**100**

As indicated in table 10, majority (47.1%) of the respondents had attended at most three such courses. Only 29.4 percent had attended in-service courses more than three times. This suggests that most respondents were ill-equipped in career guidance. To find out the particular courses that guidance counsellors had attended, the researcher requested the respondents to indicate which among five listed career guidance courses they had attended. Figure 10 is a summary of their responses.
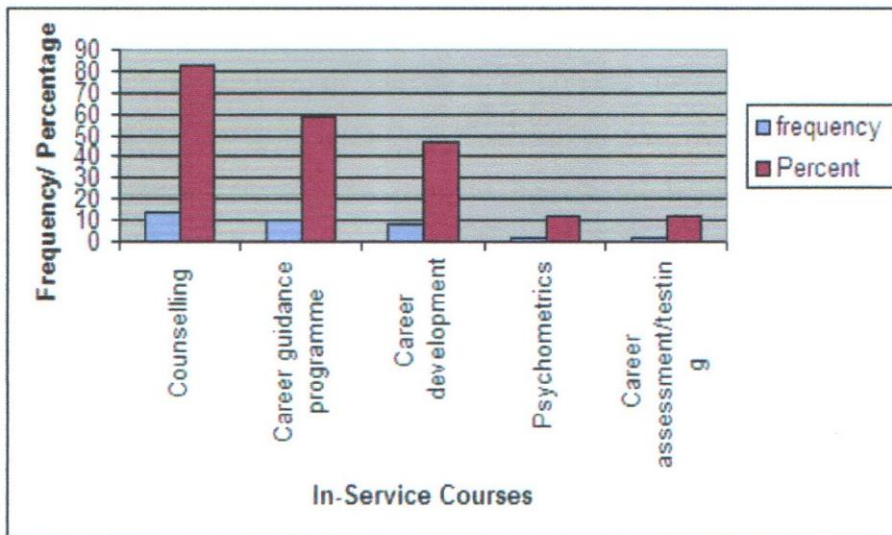
Figure 10: In-Service Courses Attended by Career Guidance Counsellors

Results from figure 10 indicate that 82.4 percent of the 14 career guidance counselors who had attended in service courses were trained in counselling. Respondents who had attended a course in career guidance programme were 58.8% while 47% had attended a course in career development. Career guidance counsellors trained in psychometric and career testing were 10.2% and 10.1% respectively. These two areas of career guidance are paramount in assisting students understand their abilities. He results therefore indicated that the career guidance counselors could not provide appropriate career guidance in the absence of psychological tests.

4.5.2 Management and Administration of Guidance Programme

Guidance counsellors have the responsibility of designing guidance programmes in their schools. The programme specifies relationships and responsibilities of staff, parents, students and the community with the guidance counsellor as the leader (Shertzer & Stone, 1987). Programme development begins with planning where the guidance counsellor makes needs assessment, formulates the programme rationale and sets goals and objectives. This is followed by an analysis of resources and staff required for implementing the programme. Periodically, the programmes should be evaluated and revised where necessary. A system should be designed that should facilitate monitoring and evaluation. More than half (60%) of the career guidance counselors had knowledge of administration and management of guidance programme.

4.5.3 Career Development

A clear understanding of career development theories assists an individual to select an occupation that matches with individual values and needs. Majority of the respondents had not covered career development theories and therefore may not have been effective in career guidance. Only 46 percent of the respondents had attended a course in career development theories.

4.5.4 Psychometrics in Career Guidance

Psychometrics (career assessment) is concerned with matching individual traits with appropriate occupations which in turn provides an individual with job satisfaction. Career assessment involves the use of tools that are designed to help individuals understand how a variety of personal attributes impact their potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments (Guarneri (2009). Tests aid in identifying individual abilities, aptitudes and interests. To establish whether the guidance counsellors administered such test, the researcher asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the item stating that guidance counsellors administered psychological tests when guiding students in choosing careers. The findings implied that guidance counsellors were ill-trained in psychometrics and therefore lacked this professional approach to career assessment techniques.

Guidance counselors rated their performance in career guidance on a 4-point likert scale and gave the responses as presented in figure 11.
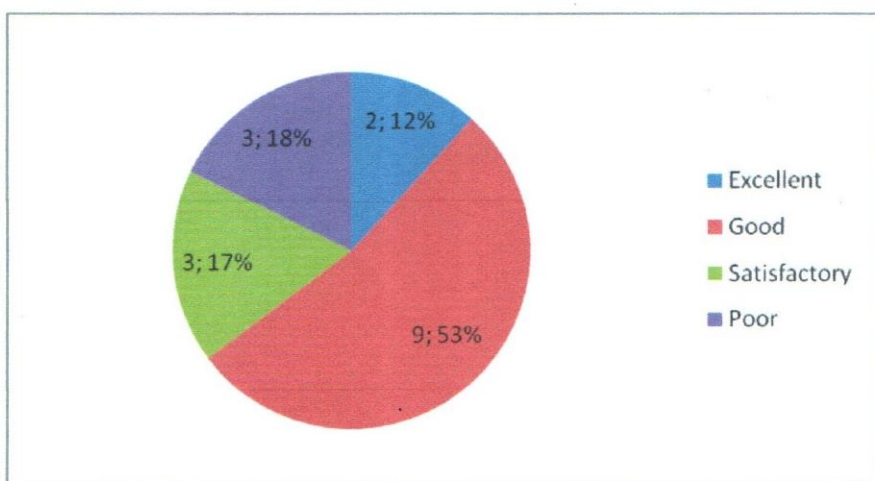
Figure 11: Career Guidance Counsellors' Self-Rating on their Competencies

From figure 11, guidance counsellors' self-rating on their competencies revealed that majority (52.9%) perceived themselves as "good". Those who rated themselves as "satisfactory" and "poor" were at 17.6 percent in each case. Only 11 percent felt that they were excellent in providing guidance services. The results differed with observations made by Ngumi *et al* (2011) who reported that teacher counsellors felt they were not competent in guidance and counselling. Further, the researcher asked the respondents to suggest ways of improving service delivery. Figure 12 illustrates their responses.
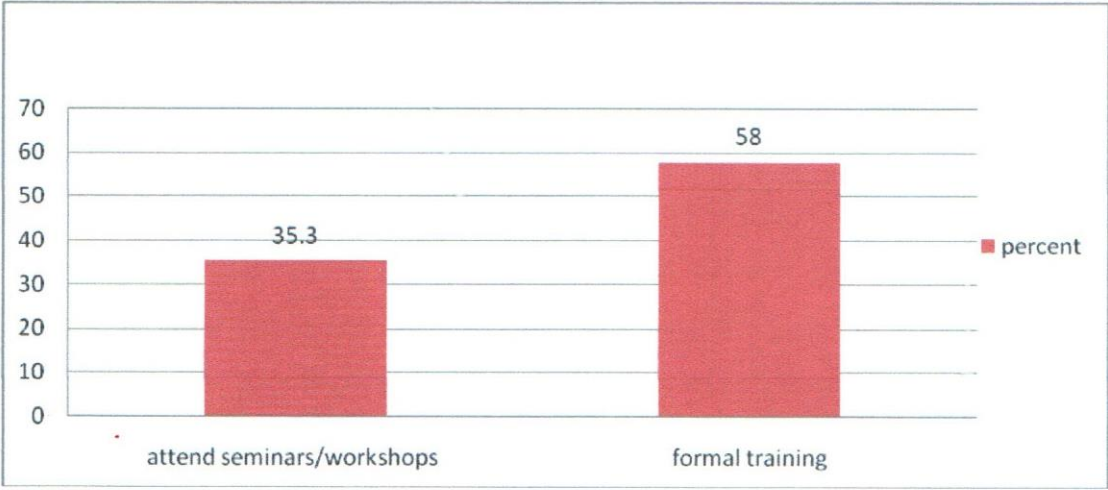
Figure 12: Career Guidance Counsellors' Suggestions on Enhancing their Effectiveness

In response as indicated in figure 12, majority (58%) of the respondents suggested formal training; while 35.3% suggested attending seminars and workshops. This concurs with observations made by KESI (2011) that school management should facilitate capacity building for their teachers through organized seminars, workshops and training.

Table 11

Regularity of Guidance Services According to Career Guidance Counsellors

	Frequency N=17	Percent
Once a week	1	5.9
Once in two weeks	2	11.8
Once a month	3	17.6
Once a term	14	82.35
Total	**17**	**100**

From table 11, majority (82.35%) of the respondents indicated that they organized career guidance sessions once a term. Respondents who indicated that career guidance sessions were held once a month were 17.6%. Two respondents reported that they had guidance sessions once in two weeks (11.8%). Only one respondent reported having sessions once a week (5.9%). The results indicate that counselling sessions were not enough. This may be attributed to lack of time to concentrate in guidance services since; guidance counselors are also subject teachers with a heavy teaching load. Students at secondary school level are in their adolescent stage which is characterized by instability in both behavior and self-concept as they pursue self-discovery and identity. Counselling sessions should be frequent to meet the changing needs of the students as they negotiate this volatile stage of development.

4.6 Career Guidance Activities

The fourth objective of the study was to establish if guidance activities were available in the secondary schools and if so, its extent of coverage. Career guidance is a major component of the guidance and counselling programme (Makinde, 1984). Several activities relating to career guidance activities were investigated in this study. These activities included guidance committees, career resource centers, consultations, job placement services, resource persons, career assessment and industrial tours. The researcher presented the respondents with six items each representing a career activity. They were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed

or disagreed with the item. For easy presentation, responses under "Strongly Agreed" and " "Agreed" were combined to represent agreement while "Disagreed" and "Strongly Disagreed" combined to represent disagreement. The results are presented in table

Guidance and counselling personnel in schools provide moral, emotional, social and intellectual support to students (Coolidge, 1995). The researcher sought to establish how guidance counsellors performed their roles in provision of guidance services. A list of four alternatives was provided and the guidance counsellors requested to indicate the ones used in guiding students plan for their career. Their responses are as presented in table 12.

Table 12

Method of Assisting Students Choose Careers

Method of assisting students	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Ask the student	10	58.8	58.9
Administer a test	1	5.9	64.7
Ask the parent	4	23.5	88.2
I do not know	2	11.7	100
Total	**17**	**100**	**100**

As indicated in Table 12 only 5.8 percent (n=1) would administer a test in advising the students. Majority of the sampled guidance counsellors (58.9%) reported that they would ask students while 23.5% would ask the parents. Guidance counsellors who did not know how to assist students were 11.7%. This implies that unprofessional methods of identifying appropriate careers were used. These results reveal that lack of skills handicap guidance counsellors making them unable to provide effective and meaningful career guidance. Competency in career planning would foster professional administration and interpretation of career tests.

4.7 Influence of Students' Perception on Counsellors' Activities on Career Planning

The fifth objective of the study was to investigate the influence of students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities on career planning among secondary school

students in Nakuru North District. Career planning starts with enrollment in appropriate subjects which is done in form three in secondary schools. Since students may not recognize the connection between the subjects they are taking and future career occupations, they require concrete information on post-secondary education, career opportunities available in specific fields, and general information about various universities programmes. Students who would not wish to continue with education need information on alternative career paths. Subjects that are considered for university admissions to various degree programmes by the JAB are as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Biology is a prerequisite for careers in medicine, environmental science, food technology and animal and plant related courses. Physics directs students to engineering, computer science, architecture and technology among other courses. Students have an option to enroll in these two subjects (from group two), restricting their choices from art-based subjects or they can choose either of the two.

Among group three subjects, Geography is the only one singled out by JAB as a requirement for degree course. Other subjects in this group are History, Christian Religious Education (CRE), Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Hindu Religious Education. While the latter are not a requirement under any degree programme, a student wishing to pursue careers in earth science, geology, meteorology, and planning (urban planning, geospatial technology and land economics) must undertake geography.

Agriculture has a bearing on agricultural engineering or other agriculture related courses. Students who enroll in this subject forfeit computer studies, building and electronic, home science and music among other subjects from group four. Home science, which is a group four subject, is important for students wishing to pursue courses in hotel management, apparel and fashion design, catering and interior design. The researcher sought to investigate students' enrollment in optional subjects. The results are indicated in figure 13.
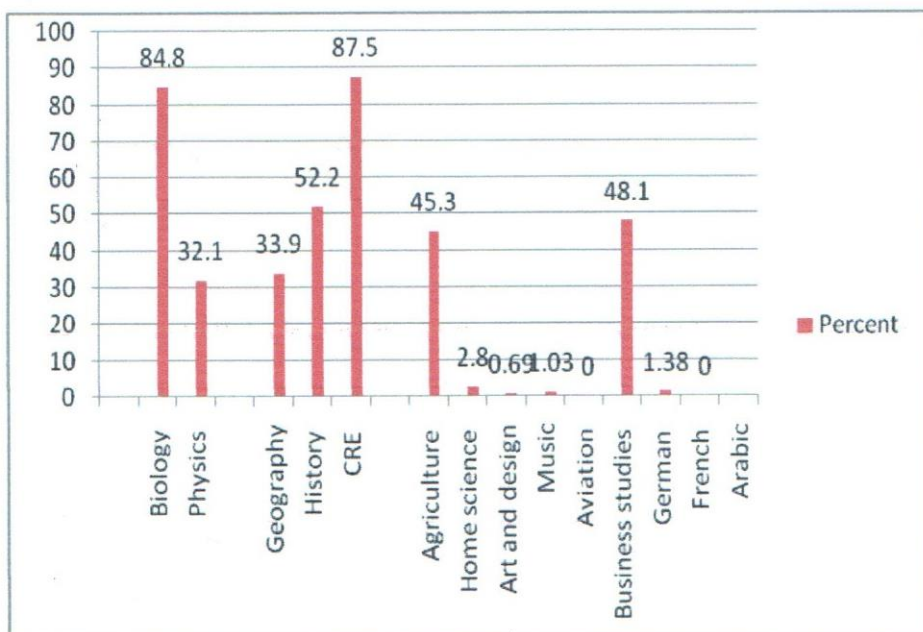
Figure 13: Distribution of Students' Subjects Enrollment

Results from figure 13 revealed that among the optional subjects, the most popular was CRE with 253 (87.5%) enrolment. Only 36 respondents did not enroll for this subject. The majority of respondents who enrolled for CRE were girls (68.3%; n=166) while 77 (31.7%) were boys. It was not clear what caused the gender disparity or the high preference for this subject. One possible explanation for gender disparity could be gender stereotype where some subjects are viewed as soft and thus appropriate for girls (Makinde, 1984). High enrollment could be as a result of the school administration making the subject compulsory as a way of instilling values in the students and improve school discipline. Another possible reason could be that the students may have felt that the subject was easy and as such, more likely to boost their mean KCSE score. This would enable them to meet the JAB requirements and secure vacancies in public universities. CRE is not specifically required under any cluster combination for degree programme by the Joint Admissions Board (JAB).

Between the two science subjects, biology had the highest enrollment at 84.8 percent while physics had 32.1 percent. Students may perceive biology as a "softer" subject than physics. However, the so-called soft subjects may be more rewarding than taking subjects which may not assist students to enter into a career (Makinde 1984). History (52.2%) had a higher enrollment than Geography (33.9) percent. History is regarded as a subject for lawyers while Geography is

deemed to be more of a science than an art subject.

Among the technical subjects, agriculture had the highest enrollment at 45.3 percent. Others (Home Science, Art & Design, Music and Aviation) had relatively few entrants below 3 percent. Two (0.69%) students were taking Art and Design while three (1.03%), Music. Home Science had eight (2.8%) students. In group five (Business and Foreign languages category), Business Studies had the highest enrollment at 48.1 percent. This implied that many students may perceive it as important in today's world of work. No student enrolled for French and Arabic among the sampled students although these two subjects are in the curriculum. Students who had enrolled in German were only four (1.38%).

4.7.1 Sources of Information Available to Students

When the researcher asked the respondents to indicate the person(s) they consulted when selecting subjects in form three, the results revealed a number of sources including the guidance counsellor, parents, class teachers, friends and siblings. More and more people are using the internet, which is relatively cheap and readily available. There are many internet services providers and information can be accessed using computers or mobile phones. Julian (1999), in a study involving secondary school students in Canada found that students have and use other sources of information such as library services, mass media, and governmental career centers. Respondents were presented with six possible sources of information that students could use when making subject and career decisions. They were asked to indicate which among the six sources they consulted. They were also provided with a seventh option for those who did not consult. Their responses are presented in table 13.

Table 13

Sources of Information Available to Students

Source of information	Frequency	Percentage
Guidance counsellor	107	37
Parents	96	33.2
Class teacher	22	7.6
Head teacher	2	0.7
Friends	11	3.8
Brother and/or sister	5	1.7
No one	10	3.4
No response	36	12.8
Total	**289**	**100**

As table 13 reveals, 37 percent of the respondents indicated that they sought assistance from their guidance counsellors. About a third (33.2%) of the respondents reported that they relied on their parents for guidance in career planning. Respondents who reported seeking help from s brothers and /or sisters were 1.7 percent. Respondents who indicated that they received guidance from the head teachers were 0.7 percent while 3.8percent consulted friends. A very small proportion of respondents (4.4 %) reported that they sought guidance from their class teachers. However, a significant number of respondents (16.6%) did not consult anyone while 12.8 percent did not respond to this item.

The results concurred with several studies which revealed that parents have a strong influence on their children's career aspirations (Knowles, (1998); Majoribanks, (1997); Mau & Bikos,(2000); Smith (1991); Wilson and Wilson (1992); as cited in Taylor (2004) Raney & Borders (1997); Alexitch & Page, (1997); Julian (1992). Hiebert *et al* (2001) suggests that students look for support from family and friends rather than competency when approaching others for help. Raney and Borders (1997) posit that young people who are overly dependent on their parents may eliminate potential career paths.

According to the family systems theory, family members are interdependent and operate as group rather than sum total of individual members (Lauer & Lauer, 2000). This implies that the decision of one member affects the family and thus the need for consultation.

Results also concurred with Hiebert *et al* (2001 in a survey on Canadian Secondary School who made similar observations indicating that students were not willing to approach their classroom teachers for help with career planning. Class teachers interact freely with their students and may be viewed as helpful in regards to specific course content rather than sources of help in career planning. The results disagreed with observations by Alexitich and Page (1977) that students obtained career related information from their high school teachers and that this advice was significantly more useful than advice they had received from their guidance counsellors. As Taviera *et al* (1998) in Lynn, (2000) postulates, adolescents seem to approach certain individuals because they are available but not because they believe these individuals will be of help in their career exploration. Head teachers maintain a remarkable social distance with their students and this may have contributed to their unavailability for consultation. As Tate (2001) theorized membership in a peer group provides an important developmental point of reference through which young people gain an understanding of the world.

The results illustrate that although students' perceptions of their guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities was positive, the majority (63%) did not consult their guidance counselors when planning for their future careers. It was therefore concluded that perceptions influence students in career planning only to some extent. From the results, it is evident that although career guidance services were important in choosing of subject there were other forces such as the family, peers, media, and gender stereotype, which also influenced on the students' decisions regarding career planning.

The results coincide with observations by Alexitich and Page (1977) who found that less than one-third of the students reported having received information concerning career planning from their guidance counsellors. Chesoto (2005) as cited by Mureu and Wasanga (2011) also noted that students preferred seeking help from other people instead of the school counsellor because

they perceived teacher counsellors as subject teachers and not as counsellors. This indicated that although students' perception of their guidance counsellors was positive, majority failed to utilize guidance services for career planning.

4.7.2 Influence of students' perception of Career Guidance Activities in Career Planning

The fifth objective of the study was to establish the influence of students' perception of guidance activities on career planning. Respondents were presented with two items seeking to establish their attitudes towards guidance and counselling in career planning. They were required to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items. Results are presented in table 14.

Table 14

Students' Perceptions of Importance of Guidance Services in Career Planning

Statement	Response						
	A	%	U	%	D	%	MRS
1. Career guidance and counselling information is useful to students when choosing subjects in form three.	267	92	6	2	16	6	3.72
2. Career guidance and counselling information is useful to students when making career choices.	281	95	6	2	9	3	4.52

Table 14 shows that majority (92%) of the sampled students agreed that career guidance was important when choosing careers. Only 6 percent disagreed with the statement while 2 percent were undecided. The mean rating score for the item was 3.72. This implied that the sampled students had a positive perception on the importance of career guidance when choosing careers. Similarly, their response on importance of career information revealed positive perception with 95 percent in agreement, 5 percent disagreeing while 2 percent were undecided.

4.7.3 Students' Preferred Courses at University/College Level

Another decision that students must make in pursuit of their preferred occupations is choice of study programmers or areas of study. As Matano (1992) postulates, to think of going to the

university merely for the sake of it is both unnatural and unnecessary. More important is the course of study the student intends to pursue in preparation of future career occupation. The researcher sought to establish respondents preferred courses at college and university level. The respondents were restricted to only one career choices for easy cross-tabulation and analysis. Their responses are presented in table 15.

Table 15

Students' Preferred Courses at the University/College level

Preferred course	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Medicine	29	30	42	20.4
Enginering	35	22	57	19.7
Law	22	26	48	16.6
Accounts	23	19	42	14.5
Agriculture	9	7	16	5.5
Education	5	10	16	5.2
Technology	8	3	11	3.8
Mathematics	4	4	8	2.8
Building technology	6	2	8	2.8
Vet. Med	5	3	8	2.8
Environmental studies	0	1	1	0.3
Others	1	15	16	5.5
Total	**147**	**142**	**289**	**100**

From table 15, respondents ranked medicine (20.4%) as the most preferred course followed by engineering (19.7%); law (16.6%) and accounts (14.5 %). Other courses had relativley low representations. Preference for agriculture was at 5.5 percent, education 5.2 percent while technology had 3.8 percent representation. High preference for medicine could be attributed to glamour (Chibber, 1999) or early career awareness (Rowe, 2003). Rowe posits that as children grow, the first professionals they interact with besides teachers are health professionals such as doctors and nurses. Children often display their career fantasies in their role-play games. Though children may become aware of other professionals, their understanding may be curtailed by lack of information and the abstract nature of such profession (e.g. engineering). As Ginzberg (1951) posits, these early experiences (which he referred to as fantasy stage) may have a lasting effect in an individuals' life. The results also revealed that respondents had limited knowledge on other degree programmes besides those indicated in the questionnaires.

Table 16

Students' Perception of their Subjects-Careers Match

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	283	97.9
No	6	2.1
Total	**289**	**100**

Table 16 indicates that respondents (97.9%) believed that their choice of subjects matched with their choice of careers. Only a negligible number (2.1%) felt that their subjects did not match their career choices. Chi-square test was done to establish whether there was a relationship between preferred courses and subject choices (95 % level of confidence and $p<0.05$). The results are presented in table 17

Table 17

Chi-square Test on Preferred Courses and Choice of Subjects

	Value	df	Asmp.sig.(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1175.988	4	0.001
N of Valid Cases	223		

Results from table 17 indicates that there was a significant relationship between career choice and subject combination. The chi-square generated was 1175.988 with a p-value of 0.001. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between the choice of subjects and the preferred courses. It is evident from the results that the students had knowledge in matching their career aspirations with subjects offered in form three.

4.7.4 Factors Influencing Students in Career planning

The researcher listed six factors and sought to establish their influence on students' career decision. Career guidance counsellors were asked to indicate as many factors as they believed influenced students' career decisions. Their responses are as presented in figure 14
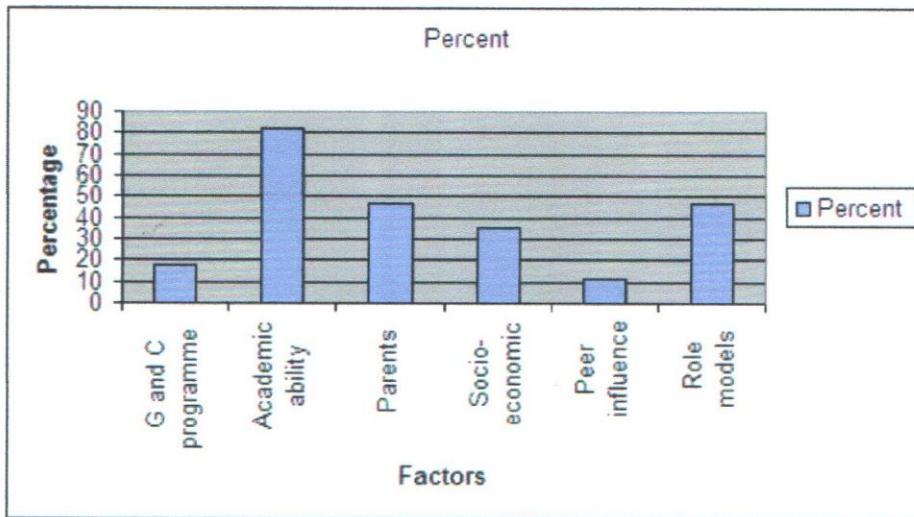
Figure 14: Factors Influencing Students in Choosing Careers

As indicated in figure 14, fourteen out of seventeen guidance counsellors (82.3%) cited academic ability as having the greatest influence in choice of careers. Unfortunately, academic ability may be due to underachievement, which can be corrected through study skills counselling. UNESCO (2000) suggests that students need guidance in mastering memory and study skills in order to improve academic performance. In order to assist students overcome learning difficulties, counsellors may use a number of well-documented study techniques. Techniques such the 5-s method (select, sample, skip, skim, scan), PERU (preview, enquire, read, and use) method, PQRST (preview, question, read, state and test) and SQ3R (survey, question, read, rehearse and review) to help students overcome their challenges (Moms & Chesley 1997). This therefore implies that achievement alone should not be an overriding factor in career decision making.

Career guidance counsellors who reported that career guidance programme influenced students when selecting careers were only 17.6 percent while parents and role models had equal representation at 47 percent. This implied that students valued their parents' advice. Role models also had a considerable influence (47%). It could be concluded that there is need for organized visits by professionals and guest speakers who serve as role models to young children. Socio-economic factors influence was at 35.3 percent while peers presented 11.8 percent.

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Career guidance counsellors suggested various strategies of assisting students to prepare for their future careers as indicated in table 18

Table 18

Guidance Counsellors' Suggestions on improving Students' Career Planning

Suggestion	Frequency	Percent
Assist students attend career fairs	14	82.3
Have resource persons frequently	13	76.4
More career books	13	76.4
More opportunities for in-service training	10	58.8
Help identify career interests early	7	41.2
Have career days in secondary schools	5	29.4
Introduce counselling as a unit in teacher training	3	17.6

Results from table 18 illustrate that 82.3 percent of the sample guidance counsellors suggested students' exposure to more career fairs. The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) organizes annual career exhibitions for students and other interested parties as a means of exposing students to career opportunities. Guidance counsellors should arrange for their students to participate in such fairs. One such exhibition was held at Golf Hotel in Kakamega in March 2011 (CHE, 2011).

Resource persons and career books had the same representation at 76.4 percent. Ten respondents (58.8%) suggested that guidance counsellors should be in-serviced while 41.2 percent suggested identifying students' career interests early in their academic programme. Five respondents (29.4%) suggested organizing career days in schools while 17.6 percent suggested incorporation of career guidance in teacher training programmes. As noted by Paisley (2001) students and guidance counsellors should have ready access to reliable sources of career information to avoid frustrations and discontentment associated with inappropriate career occupations. According to US Department of Labour (2011), 45 percent of American's are satisfied with their careers while (55%) who are dissatisfied cited career-personality mismatch as a source of frustration.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the research findings based on the research objectives, conclusions from the findings and recommendations drawn from the conclusions and suggestions for further research. The study sought to establish the influence of students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities on career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District.

1) To establish students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors' characteristics in secondary schools in Nakuru North District.

2) To establish students' perceptions on career guidance counsellors' activities in career planning in secondary schools in Nakuru North District

3) To establish career guidance counsellors' characteristics in secondary schools in Nakuru North District

4) To establish career guidance activities provided in secondary schools in Nakuru North District.

5) To investigate the influence of students' perception on career guidance counsellors' characteristics and activities on career planning among secondary school students in Nakuru North District.

5.2 Summary of Research Findings

Based on the objectives, research questions and the analysis of the collected data, the following findings were established.

1) Student had a positive perception of the guidance counsellors' characteristics. However student's perception on importance of career guidance in choosing careers was negative..

2) Only one-third of the students utilized services of career guidance counsellors when making career choices. However students sought information from other sources which included parents, friends and their peers.

3) Career guidance counselors were of mixed gender, were relatively mature and trained in the teaching profession. Majority also believed that they had been appointed as career guidance counsellors on personality factors.

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4) Career guidance counsellors' major challenge was lack of training in areas such as psychometrics and career assessment. Majority had not received any form of professional training in guidance and counselling, were relatively new in guidance and there were no clearly defined criteria of appointment. Most of them reckoned that they were not adequately equipped to handle career guidance effectively and that they required some form of training. They therefore used unprofessional techniques to guide students in career related issues. They also had to grapple heavy teaching load leading to inadequate time for guidance.

5) Students' perceptions on career guidance activities were positive. Schools had access to career information from a variety of sources which were available in the resource centers.

6) Students and career guidance counsellors had access to career information on which to base career decisions

7) Students were influenced more by availability of career information than characteristics of career guidance counselors or career activities. However the positive perception influenced them partially i.e. in choosing subjects. However when choosing careers, students sought information from other sources which included parents, friends and their peers

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the objectives, research questions and the analysis of the collected data, the study made the following conclusions

1) Students' perceptions of guidance counsellors characteristics were positive.

2) Students' perceptions on career guidance activities were also positive and this made them approach their career guidance counselors when selecting subjects.

3) Career guidance activities provided in the schools were not adequate to equip students in career decision making. This was partly because of lack of training of the career guidance counsellors and inadequate resources. The heavy workload could also have interfered with services delivery.

4) The study concluded that students' perception of their career guidance counsellors' characteristics and career activities influenced students' career planning partially. Perception does not in

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, a number of recommendations have been made which if

implemented will improve career planning and preparation at secondary school level.

1) Career guidance counsellors characteristics are an important aspect when appointing career guidance counsellors in secondary schools. Like all other school programmes, career guidance programme should be placed under qualified personnel and should also be accommodated in the normal school programme.

2) Career guidance counsellors should be encouraged to utilize opportunities that are within their immediate environment to improve their service delivery. Where industries, universities and other business establishments are a close proximity like in Nakuru, students should be encouraged to make frequent visits which will expose them to work environments.

3) Parents have a significant influence on their children's education and future career aspirations. Therefore, it is necessary to involve parents when organizing for career fairs for the students.

4) Guidance counsellors should be relieved of their teaching duties in order to provide ample time for individualized career guidance.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study recommends further research in the following areas.

1) Influence of students' gender on career aspirations among secondary school students

2) Influence of type of schools attended by students on career planning among secondary school students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent I am an M.Ed candidate and currently undertaking a research study in the area of career guidance. My research topic is "student's perception of career counsellors' competencies and the influence it has in career planning and preparation in secondary schools". You have been selected as on of my respondents in this project. Kindly assist me fill the questionnaire attached to the best of your knowledge. The information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and it will only be used for the intended purpose of this study. Your sincere and honest answers will be important in attaining this goal. Please do not write your name or the name of your institution. This questionnaire is to collect data purely for academic purposes. All information will be treated with strict confidence. Thank you

Yours Cordially,

Nancy M. Ngigi

APPENDIX B: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire is designed to collect information concerning career planning through choice of subjects·in form three and the role of guidance counsellors (career teachers) in assisting the student in the exercise. You are kindly asked to respond to all items correctly and honestly to the best of your ability

Section 1: Demographic Data

1. Gender : Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Type of school.

Boys' day ☐   Boys' boarding ☐   Mixed day ☐

Girls' day ☐   Girls' boarding ☐   Mixed boarding ☐

3. Category of your school

Private ☐   Public ☐

4. Indicate the highest level of education of your parents by putting a tick (☐) in the appropriate box.

Parent	No Formal School	Lower Primary	Upper Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	College	University.
Mother's							
father's							

Section 2: Career Planning

5. Indicate with a tick (√) in the appropriate box the subjects you are doing in school.

Biology ☐ Geography ☐ Agriculture ☐ Business studies ☐

Physics ☐ History ☐ Home science ☐ Music ☐

French ☐ CRE ☐ German ☐ Art and design ☐

Arabic ☐ Aviation ☐

6. What do you intend to do after finishing high school?

Get a job ☐ Go to training college ☐

Go to university ☐ Work and go to school part time, ☐

I do not know ☐ Other (specify) --------------------------

7. Which of the following courses would you pursue if you were to proceed to college or university?

Accounting ☐ Building Tech. ☐ Mathematics ☐

Engineering ☐ Technology ☐ Agriculture ☐

Veterinary service ☐ Law ☐ Environmental studies ☐ Medicine ☐

Education ☐ Other_____

8. Does your career goal correspond to your choice of subjects?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section 3: Students' Perception of Counsellor's Competencies

9. When choosing subjects in form three, who provided you with relevant information?

Guidance counselor (career teacher) ☐ My parents ☐ Friends ☐ No one ☐

Class teacher ☐   Head teacher ☐

Others (specify) --

10. Do you think your performance is an important factor to consider in choosing a career?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

Read the items that follow carefully and indicate the response you consider to be the most appropriate from the choice given below in the space provided.

SA= strongly agree.   U= undecided   D= disagree

A= agree.   SD= strongly Disagree

STATEMENT	SA	A=	U=	D	SD
11) There is a guidance and counseling committee in our school which assists students in personal and academic issues.					
12) Career guidance counsellor has ample time to assists students in choice of careers.					
13) Career guidance and counselling information is useful to students when making future careers.					
14) There is a guidance counsellor in our school to whom students go for advice as well as information on career counselling.					
15) Career guidance and counselling information from guidance counsellors is important when selecting subjects in form three.					
16) The guidance counsellor understands the connection between school subjects and career occupations.					

Section 4: career activities

Read the items that follow carefully and indicate the response you consider to be the most appropriate from the choice given below in the space provided.

SA= strongly agree.   U= undecided   D= disagree

A= agree.   SD= strongly Disagree

STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
17) The career guidance counsellor maintains a well equipped resource centre where I read information concerning different career opportunities					
18)The career guidance counsellor assists students to explore educational and career information in order to make appropriate education and career decisions and choices					
19) The career guidance counsellor gives psychological and career tests to help students understand their personality, interests, values and abilities					
20) The career guidance counsellor assists students in job placement					
21) The career guidance counsellor consults with teachers, parents and the head teacher on students' academic issues					
22) The career guidance counsellor invites speakers from outside to come to talk to students about careers					

23) Indicate with a "yes" or "no" if the following resources are available in your school

Resource	Yes/No	Resource	Yes /No	Resource	Yes /No
Library books on careers		Career books		Journals and publications	
Magazines and newspapers		College/ University catalogue		Posters and occupational charts	
Audio-visual aids e.g. Videos		Internet		Visits by professionals /speakers	

Adopted with permission from Sindabi (1992)

APPENDIX C: GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR'S QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire is designed to collect information concerning career planning through choice of subjects in form three and the role of guidance counsellors (career teachers) in assisting the student in the exercise. You are kindly asked to respond to all items correctly and honestly to the best of your ability

Section 1: Personal Information

Please indicate the most appropriate response by putting a tick (☐) in the appropriate box

1.   Gender

Male ☐   Female ☐

2.   In which category is your school?

Private ☐   Public ☐

3.   Please indicate the age bracket in which you fall.

20 – 29 yrs ☐   30 – 39yrs ☐   40 – 49yrs ☐

Above 50yrs ☐

4.   How many lessons do you teach per week (teaching load)?

Below 10 ☐   10-20 ☐   21-24 ☐   28 and above ☐

Section 2

Career Guidance Competencies

Please indicate the most appropriate response by putting a tick (☐) in the appropriate box

5.   What is your level of professional qualification as a teacher?

B.Ed ☐   PGDE ☐   Dip. Ed ☐

M.Ed ☐

Any other (state briefly) ---

6. How Long have you been in the teaching profession

Less than 5yrs ☐   6-10yrs ☐   11-20yrs ☐   Above 20 yrs ☐

7. For how long have you been a guidance counsellor?

1 – 5yrs ☐   6-10yrs ☐   11-20yrs ☐   Above 20 yrs ☐

8. Who appointed you as a guidance counsellor?

TSC ☐   School Administration ☐   Other (specify) -------------------------

10 Which of the following was the major basis for your appointment as a counsellor?

Personality characteristics ☐   Professional qualifications ☐

Staff member seniority ☐   Counsellor training ☐

Other (specify) --------------------

11 Did you take any course in guidance and counselling in your teacher training programme?

Yes ☐   No ☐

12 How many seminars/ workshops/ training courses have you attended as a counsellor?

None ☐   Not more than Three ☐   More than three ☐

13 Indicate by ticking against Yes or No if you covered the following areas in the seminar/ workshop/ training courses?

Title of course	Yes	No

Career counselling		
Career development theories		
Components of career guidance programme		
Psychometrics		
Career assessment tests		

Any other (specify) ---------------------------------

For the items that follow, indicate the most appropriate response by putting a tick ( ) in the appropriate box

14.   How would you assist a student to know about his/ her career interests, value and aptitudes

Ask the students [ ]   Administer a test [ ]   Ask the parent [ ]

Guess [ ]   I don't know [ ]

Others (Specify) _____

15.   How would you rate your knowledge about careers and the world of work

Excellent [ ]   Good [ ]   Satisfactory [ ]   Poor [ ]

16.   Do you think you have sufficient knowledge, skills and training to be an effective counselor

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

17.   What would you recommend so as to enhance your effectiveness?

Attend Seminars /Workshops [ ]   Go for formal training [ ]

Others (specify)_____

Section 3

Guidance Activities

Please indicate the most appropriate response by putting a tick (☐) in the spaces provided.

18.   How often do you have career guidance ounselling sessions in your school?

Once a week ☐   Once in two weeks ☐   Once a month ☐

Once a term ☐

Others (specify)_____

19.   Do you have guidance and counselling Committee in your school?

Yes ☐   No ☐

20.   If yes how many members are in the committee

Two ☐   three ☐   four ☐   five and above ☐

21. How often do you have the following career guidance counselling? (Please indicate with a tick (☐) the most appropriate response in the spaces provided).

Activity	Every week	Once a month	Once a term	Once a year	Never
Industrial tours					
Career days					
Career clubs					
Career counselling					
Professionals					

Section 4

Career Planning Resources

22.   Indicate with a Tick ( ) if the following career information resources are available in the school

Source	Yes	No
News papers and magazines		
Career books and booklets		
College catalogues/ bulletin		
Library books		
Joint admission board booklets		
Career journals and publications		
Audiovisual aids e.g. videos		
Posters and occupational charts		
Resource persons e.g. speakers		
Internet		

23.   What factors influence the career aspirations and decisions of the students in your school

Academic ability [ ]   Career guidance programme [ ]   Parents [ ]

Peers [ ]   Social economic status [ ]

Others (specify) _____

24. How can the guidance and counselling in your school facilitate students' career development? Give suggestions.

_____

_____

_____

Thank you

Adopted and modified with permission from Sindabi , M., A., (1992)

APPENDIX D: REQUIRED SIZES FOR RANDOMLY CHOSEN SAMPLES (KATHURI & PALS)

Required Size for Randomly Chosen Sample

Table for determining needed size of a randomly chosen sample from a given finite population of N cases such that the sample proportion P will be within plus or minus .05 of the population proportion P with a 95 percent level of confidence.

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	241	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377

APPENDIX E: RESEARCH PERMIT -1

EGERTON
Tel: 051-
62276//9/62280/-4
Fax: 051- 62213

UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 536
Egerton, Kenya

EMAIL: regadmin@egerton.ac.ke

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, COUNSELLING AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

9th February 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: MASTERS' STUDENTS' FIELD RESEARCH

It is a requirement for our Master of Education students to carry out a field research for their project report. The research can be carried out in institutions of learning or other institutions that the student may be interested in.

I therefore wish to introduce to you **Nancy Mugech Ngigi** registration number **EM16/2596/10** for your kind assistance in her study entitled: *"Students' Perception on Career Guidance Counsellors' competencies and its influence on career planning and preparation among secondary school students in Nakuru North District, Kenya*

Please, accord her the help she may need in order to achieve this objective. While she is carrying out the research, she is familiar and bound by the ethical standards of collecting information, safeguard of the same, and using the findings pro-actively.

On behalf of the University, I wish you well and thank you for your partnership in the training of our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. M. Chepchieng
CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY,
COUNSELLING AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS.

For: Vice-Chancellor- Egerton University

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Telegrams: "LEARNING".
Telephone: 020-2103613
When replying please quote

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE
NAKURU NORTH
P.O. BOX 50,
BAHATI

NKU.N/ED/

February 14, 2012

All Principals
Secondary Schools
Nakuru North District

RE: AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH
        NANCY MUGECHI NGIGI REG.NO. EM16/2596/10

The above named is post-graduate student at Egerton University and has been authorized by this office to carry out research on *"Students' Perception on Career Guidance Counsellors' Competencies and its Influence on Career Planning and Preparation among Secondary School Students in Nakuru North District, Kenya"*.

While she is carrying out the research she is familiar and bound by the ethical standards of collecting information, safeguard of the same and using the findings pro-actively.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.

FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
NAKURU NORTH DISTRICT
P. O. Box 50 - 20113
BAHATI
TEL:0202103613

Leonard Ongori
 For: District Education Officer
 Nakuru North District

PAGE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution
Nancy Mugechi Ngigi
of (Address) Egerton University
P.O.Box 536-20115, Egerton
has been permitted to conduct research in

	Location
Nakuru North	District
Rift Valley	Province

on the topic: Students' perception on career
guidance counselors' competencies and its
influence on career planning and preparation
among secondary school students in Nakuru
North District, Kenya.

for a period ending: 30th September, 2012.

PAGE 3

Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/012/393
Date of issue   18th April 2012
Fee received   KSH.1,000

Applicant's
Signature

Secretary
National Council for
Science &Technology

APPENDIX H: RESEARCH PERMIT-3 (b)

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/14/012/393**

Date: **18th April 2012**

Nancy Mugechi Ngigi
Egerton University
P.O.Box 536-20115
Egerton.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Students' perception on career guidance counselors' competencies and its influence on career planning and preparation among secondary school students in Nakuru North District, Kenya,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nakuru North District** for a period ending 30th September, *2012*.

You are advised to report to **The District Commissioner and the District Education Officer, Nakuru North District** 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

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
The District Education Officer
Nakuru North District.

"The National Council for Science and Technology is Committed to the Promotion of Science and Technology for National Development."