

Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being among First-Year  
Counselling Psychology Students at Selected Private Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya

Caroline Nthenya Okumu

YS79/00012/2021

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts in  
Counselling Psychology

Institute of Youth Studies

Tangaza University

October 2024

## DECLARATION

By affixing my signature here, I unequivocally affirm that the contents of this thesis are exclusively my own and have not been formulated through any kind of collaboration. To the best of my knowledge, no other educational institution has received the work for evaluation. I have fully acknowledged and correctly cited all sources used. I understand that Tangaza University has the authority to provide this thesis for study and reproduction.

Student: Caroline Nthenya Okumu

Reg. No. YS79/00012/2021

Signature of the student: .....

Date: .....

As the faculty supervisors, we endorse this thesis.

Supervisor: Rev. Dr. Henry Tucholski

Signature of the Supervisor: .....

Date: .....

Supervisor: Dr. Phyllis Muraya

Signature of the Supervisor: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research to Sr. Eleanor Gibson. Your guidance in academic writing and critical thinking was instrumental in helping me analyze my journey as a therapist and grow interested in the formation of the therapist. I hope that this thesis reflects your expectations of me and adequately acknowledges your diligent efforts.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for the opportunity to improve my education, and I attribute this chance and my existence to God's divine grace. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Rev. Dr. Henry Tucholski, SDB, and Dr. Phyllis Muraya, for their meticulous and insightful guidance throughout this study. I appreciate their outstanding support and willingness to go above and beyond to help me. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Alice Nzangi, Dr. Ruth Walioli, and Dr. Stella Nyagwencha for the input they provided on my concept paper and proposal, which greatly enhanced the quality of my work.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Pius Muasa, my therapist, for providing invaluable assistance and direction during the challenging process of writing my research paper. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Gabriel-Mario Ugbong for his unwavering support and encouragement throughout the 2-year academic journey. I am equally grateful for the unmeasurable steadfast support and attentive listening provided by my spouse, Tom Okumu, and my children Paula, James, Melanie, Melissa, and Marlene. Grace Kamidigo, Lead Counsellor at Sama, Shadrack Kyove, Fr. Don Phiri, Fr. Ime Inyang, and Susan Kahema, who are my friends and colleagues in the counselling fraternity.

Immense gratitude goes to Doreen and Damaris from the Institute of Youth Studies (IYS) Tangaza University, Joy from the Tangaza printing shop, and the entire library team for the prompt assistance they have always accorded me. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the administrations of Tangaza University, Catholic University of East Africa, International Leadership University, Kenya Methodist University, and KCA University for allowing me to conduct research within their institutions and providing research assistants who generously supported me during the data collection process. Without your support, this study would not have been possible. Thank you.

## ABSTRACT

Previous research has examined factors that affect the mental well-being of college students, specifically in regards to their academic achievements and overall university experience. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research regarding the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students. This relationship was examined using a relational approach rooted in positivist philosophy. The study sought to examine four research objectives: the level of meaning in life among first-year counselling psychology students; the level of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students; the relationship between demographic characteristics and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students; and the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students. The study employed a correlational research design and the sample was obtained using cluster sampling. Two theories were utilized: logotherapy theory and Ryff's six-factor model. Data was collected using two standardized scales: the Meaning in Life Questionnaire and the Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale. The data was analyzed using, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlational analysis and regression analysis with SPSS. The study included a sample of 102 participants from five private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The findings showed that  $n = 48$  (47.1%) individuals had discovered meaning in their lives, while 50% ( $n = 51$ ) were actively seeking their purpose. A hundred and one (99.0%) reported moderate psychological well-being. The study found no significant correlation between demographic characteristics and psychological well-being, specifically age ( $r=0.122$ ) and gender (t-statistic of 0.171 and a p-value of 0.865,  $p > 0.05$ ). Employment status yielded significant results ( $F = 9.760$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), demonstrating a notable relationship in psychological well-being scores between unemployed participants,  $t(58) = -3.508$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . The research indicated a positive relationship (p-value, 0.007) between the presence of meaning in life and psychological wellbeing. The study recommended targeted support programs to foster meaning; tailored support for employed and unemployed students; holistic mental health interventions; and regular monitoring and evaluation of student well-being.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF TABLES .....	xi
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	xii
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	xiii
OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONCEPTUAL VARIABLES.....	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background to the study .....	1
1.3 Statement of the problem.....	6
1.4 Purpose of the study .....	7
1.5 Research Objectives .....	7
1.5.1 General Objective .....	7
1.5.2 Specific Objectives .....	8
1.6 Research Questions .....	8
1.7 Justification of the study.....	9
1.8 Significance of the study .....	10
1.9 Scope and delimitation .....	11
1.10 Assumptions of the study.....	12
1.11 Chapter Summary.....	13
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Theoretical Literature Review .....	14
2.2.1 Logotherapy theory.....	14
2.2.2 Six-factor model .....	16
2.3 Empirical Literature Review.....	18
2.3.1 Level of meaning in life among university students.....	18

2.3.2 Level of psychological wellbeing among university students.....	20
2.3.3 Relationship between demographic characteristics and psychological well-being.....	23
2.3.4 Relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being.....	25
2.4 Conceptual framework .....	27
2.5 Chapter Summary.....	29
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....	30
3.1 Introduction.....	30
3.2 Epistemology .....	30
3.3 Research Design.....	31
3.4 Location of the study.....	31
3.5 Target population.....	32
3.6 Sampling design.....	33
3.6.1 Sampling frame.....	33
3.6.2 Sampling techniques .....	34
3.6.3 Sample size determination .....	34
3.7 Research Instruments .....	35
3.7.1 Meaning in Life Questionnaire.....	35
3.7.2 Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale .....	36
3.7.3 Validity and Reliability .....	37
3.8 Data Collection Procedures .....	38
3.9 Data analysis .....	40
3.10 Ethical considerations.....	42
3.11 Chapter Summary.....	43
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS.....	44
4.1 Introduction.....	44
4.2 Response Rate.....	44
4.3 Demographic Characteristics .....	45
4.4 Level of Meaning in Life among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students .....	47
4.5 Level of Psychological Wellbeing among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students .....	47
4.6 Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Psychological Well-being .....	48
4.7 Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-being.....	51

4.8 Limitation of the Study.....	55
4.9 Chapter Summary.....	56
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	57
5.1 Introduction.....	57
5.2 Levels of Meaning in Life among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students.....	57
5.4 Levels of Psychological Well-being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students ....	60
5.5 Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Psychological well-being .....	61
5.6 Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-being.....	64
5.7 Suggestions for theory improvement .....	67
5.8 Revision of the Conceptual framework.....	69
5.9 Chapter Summary.....	70
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	69
6.1 Introduction.....	71
6.2 Summary of Key Findings.....	71
6.3 Conclusions.....	72
6.4 Recommendations .....	73
6.5 Suggestions for Further Research .....	75
References .....	76
Appendix A: Introduction Letter.....	88
Appendix B: Informed Consent.....	89
Appendix C: Questionnaire for First-Year Counselling Psychology Students.....	90
SECTION A: Demographic.....	90
SECTION B: Meaning in Life.....	901
SECTION C: Psychological Well-being .....	91
Appendix D: Permission to use Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale .....	93
Appendix E: Permission to use Meaning in life questionnaire .....	95
Appendix F: NACOSTI Permit .....	97
Appendix G: Research Authorization Letter from the Nairobi County Governor .....	98
Appendix H: Research Authorization Letter from the County Commissioner .....	100
Appendix I: Research Authorization Letter from Director of Education.....	101
Appendix J: Permission to Collect Data at CUEA .....	102

Appendix K: Permission to Collect Data at KEMU .....	103
Appendix L: Permission to Collect Data at ILU.....	104
Appendix M: Permission to Collect Data at KCAU .....	105
Appendix N: Permission to Collect Data at TU .....	106
Appendix O: Map of Nairobi County .....	107
Appendix P: Plagiarism Report .....	108

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual framework .....	288
Figure 2: Scatter plot between meaning in life and psychological wellbeing .....	522
Figure 3: Revised Conceptual framework .....	69

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: First-year students in private universities in Nairobi County .....	333
Table 2: Levels of Meaning in Life.....	366
Table 3: Levels of psychological well-being .....	377
Table 4: Data Analysis.....	411
Table 5: Response rates .....	455
Table 6: Demographic Characteristics of Participants .....	466
Table 7: Level of meaning in life .....	477
Table 8: Level of psychological wellbeing.....	488
Table 9: Pearson correlation between Age and Psychological Wellbeing.....	49
Table 10: Independent T-test for Employment Status and psychological wellbeing .....	500
Table 11: Relationship between gender and psychological wellbeing.....	511
Table 12: Correlation between meaning in life and psychological wellbeing.....	533
Table 13: Regression between presence of meaning in life and psychological wellbeing .....	544

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CUEA:</b>	Catholic University of East Africa
<b>ILU:</b>	International Leadership University
<b>KCAU:</b>	KCA University
<b>KEMU:</b>	Kenya Methodist University
<b>MiL:</b>	Meaning in Life
<b>MLQ:</b>	Meaning in life questionnaire
<b>PIL:</b>	Purpose in Life
<b>PWB:</b>	Psychological Well-Being
<b>RPWBS:</b>	Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale
<b>SD:</b>	Standard Deviation
<b>TU:</b>	Tangaza University
<b>UON:</b>	The University of Nairobi

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- First-year students:** This included a wide range of individuals, from recent high school graduates to people of all ages starting their first university journey. It also encompassed both employed and unemployed individuals.
- Meaning in life:** It is the perception that a person's life and contributions hold significance for themselves and others. It is also the existence of free will, the will to find meaning, and the ability to find meaning in any given situation (Frankl, 1947). This study focused on meaning in life as defined by Frankl.
- Psychological well-being:** The ability to feel positive emotions and find purpose in life experiences. Includes self-acceptance, building strong relationships, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, and environmental mastery (Ryff, 1989). This study focused on psychological well-being as defined by Ryff.
- Transition:** The shift from high school to university, including working individuals and retirees. Moving from one state of experience or incorporating higher education into life tasks.

## **OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONCEPTUAL VARIABLES**

**Meaning in Life:** The concept of meaning in life was measured using Meaning in Life Questionnaire by Michael F. Steger (2005). The questionnaire includes 10 items with a response scale from 1 to 7. The instrument includes two subscales that each represent a different dimension of meaning in life: there are five items to evaluate the presence of meaning in life and another five items to evaluate the search for meaning in life. In this study, a score above 24 on presence and below 24 on search suggests a life filled with meaning and purpose. A score below 24 on presence and search, suggests a deficiency in life values and purpose. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25.

**Psychological Well-Being:** Carol D. Ryff developed the scale to measure psychological well-being in 1989. The 42-item questionnaire assesses six elements of happiness and well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The scale employs a 6-point rating system to assess agreement or disagreement with the 42 statements. In this study, high psychological well-being correlated to scores in the top 25% of the distribution, while low psychological well-being correlated to scores in the bottom 25% of the distribution. The researcher conducted the analysis using SPSS version 25 to measure the levels of psychological well-being.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the study, including the problem under examination, the objectives and research questions. The chapter also presents the justification, the significance of the study, its scope, limits, and underlying presumptions.

### 1.2 Background to the study

Transitions encompass all the fundamental elements of a person's lifelong physical and psychological changes, as well as the process of moving from childhood to adulthood. Considered a dynamic process, transitions can take many different forms that transcend the advancement associated with particular phases (Zittoun, 2014). This describes how one moves between several settings, including home, school, or the workplace.

Between the ages of 18 to 29, individuals experience a developmental stage referred to as emerging adulthood (Arnette, 2000). Young adults experience environmental, emotional, and cognitive adjustments while adapting to university life, including changes in relationships and responsibilities (Conley et al., 2014). During this phase, young people undergo social and academic adjustments that necessitate psychological changes, potentially linked to meaning in life (MiL) and psychological well-being (PWB).

Older students may have distinctive and demanding experiences when they enroll in the university for the first time. In a qualitative study by Pearce (2017) at a mid-sized university in England, first-year students over the age of 40 reported experiencing difficulties, including a lack of confidence, family and work pressure, as well as inadequate skills in using technology. These

challenges, may similarly be linked to meanings that mature students attach to life events, their education, as well as overall psychological well-being.

In addition, the counselling psychology course requires individuals to reflect on their reasons for choosing a career in the field. According to Corey et al. (2007), students should thoroughly analyze the impact of their personal issues and psychological histories on their future professional pursuits. Paivandi (2018) suggests that students should adjust their approach to interacting with texts, themselves, and their unfamiliar environment. The adjustment process, being a psychological activity, requires further navigating the complexities of emerging adulthood, work responsibilities, family obligations, and a rigorous academic program, which may increase or decrease one's MiL and psychological well-being.

Meaning in life is inherently intricate, consisting of a convoluted web of associations, interpretations, and comprehension and therefore important in helping students understand their experiences and formulate plans to attain their future objectives (Steger, 2013). According to Frankl (1984), meaning in life can be found through various means. Firstly, by engaging in meaningful work or deeds; secondly, by deriving experience from nature, culture, or by forming deep connections with others. Thirdly, by navigating through hopeless situations and transforming personal tragedy into personal achievement. Assessing meaning in life for counselling psychology students is valuable in understanding the motivation levels of these future therapists in their quest to become people helpers.

Psychological well-being plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's transition experience, encompassing both affective and cognitive components. Ryff (1998) suggests that psychological well-being involves six dimensions, including independence, mastery of one's surroundings, personal development, healthy relationships, a sense of purpose, and self-

acceptance. Measuring PWB among first-year counselling psychology students was crucial because of the significant psychological changes they undergo when transitioning to university and the course content. First-year counselling psychology students might have found the course to be intense, as it explores personal existential concerns through theories, experiential groups, and mandatory personal therapy.

To gain a greater comprehension of students' first-year experiences, Thompson et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study on 10 psychology undergraduates at a university in the south-west region of England. Respondents in the focus group had a mean age of 22.1, whereas those in the interviews had a mean age of 19.8. The study aimed to comprehend the diverse origins of anxiety that students may experience during the transition period. According to the study, students faced challenges in adapting to independent living, including feelings of being inadequately equipped for self-directed learning, struggles with social networks, and the influence of their peers. This means that undergraduate students undergo psychological stress as they endeavor to adjust to their new academic environment and establish a sense of belonging.

Kohútová et al. (2021) carried out a study to investigate the relationship between the attributes of emerging adulthood, satisfaction with life, and a sense of MiL. The researchers examined features that led to further variation beyond the Big Five factors. The sample consisted of 244 Slovak university students, with the majority of 86.9% being women and the remaining 13.1% being men. The participants had a mean age of 21.36. This study found specific personality qualities such as negative emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, and open-mindedness to be important predictors of meaning in life. These characteristics accounted for 26.2% of the additional variability in the existence of meaning in life. The results suggested that psychological factors

significantly influenced the search for and presence of MiL as individuals go through developmental transitions.

In a study by Conley et al. (2023), researchers tracked the psychological well-being and psychological anguish of 5,537 undergraduates in the United States over time. The participants had an average age of 18.5. The study examined self-esteem as a measure of psychological well-being, along with indicators of depression, anxiety, and stress as measures of distress. The findings showed that during transition, a significant proportion of women (43.4%) and men (62.4%) exhibited high self-esteem, which experienced a slight decline before stabilizing over time. In terms of psychological distress, approximately 77.5% of women in the sample experienced low levels of distress. Over time, these levels showed a slight worsening at first and a slight improvement later. Among men, 77.8% reported low distress, which exhibited a curvilinear pattern of worsening followed by a plateau. Overall, the study revealed that the level of psychological well-being is initially high for both men and women but levels of distress increase during the transition period.

Van der Walt (2019) conducted quantitative research at the Vaal University of Technology in Vanderbijlpark, South Africa, to analyze the relationships between first-year students' sense of purpose, meaning in life, academic achievement, and mental health. The study included 269 first-year students, with 150 females (55.80%) and 119 males (44.20%). The study found female students had  $M = 110.36$ , ( $SD = 20.11$ ), while male students had a  $M = 107.85$ , ( $SD = 22.22$ ) indicating a strong link between the respondents' purpose and meaning in life and their mental health. The study by Van der Walt (2019) was significant because the results were critical in evaluating the correlation between MiL and PWB within the framework of an academic program.

Aloka (2023) examined the influence of gender on the stress levels of first-year students at a public university in Kenya. The study involved 198 first-year students who were enrolled in the Bachelor of Education undergraduate degree program. From the sample, there were 128 male participants (64.6%) and 70 female participants (35.4%). Female students had slightly higher stress levels in academic demands  $M = 3.71$ , ( $SD = 0.74$ ) compared to male students  $M = 3.40$ , ( $SD = 0.88$ ). Female students experienced higher levels of stress due to financial difficulties  $M = 2.94$ , ( $SD = 0.93$ ) compared to male students  $M = 2.54$ , ( $SD = 0.80$ ). Aloka's study uncovered a significant disparity in stress levels between female and male students. This position emphasized the need to carry out the present research in Kenya amidst difficult economic conditions and among a population that undertakes a course with a bidirectional nature.

Nyaundi and Chebet (2023) highlighted that the government of Kenya assistance, including scholarships, would cease to be accessible for private universities. Kigotho (2023) observed that the revised funding model placed a greater financial responsibility on students who were financially capable, while simultaneously limiting the educational choices available to financially disadvantaged students who wished to enroll in private universities. In addition, during June 2023, the Kenyan shilling (KES) saw a depreciation of 13.5% in comparison to the start of the year, resulting in a value of more than 140 units against the US dollar (Ndung'u, 2023). The depreciation of the shilling resulted in a decrease in the affordability of essential goods and services for individuals, including education. First-year students in 2024 may experience worry and anxiety due to the country's prevailing economic conditions, which might have a link to their psychological well-being.

The aim of this current study was to measure the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private

universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. Aloka's 2023 research, which examined the influence of gender on stress levels among first-year university students at a public university, served as a source of inspiration for this study. In the current study, the researcher aimed to address the lack of empirical research in Kenya in relation to levels of MiL and PWB among students charged with the responsibility of ensuring individuals overall well-being but more importantly psychological well-being. The researcher bridged this gap by conducting a study on the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Achieving life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and a sense of meaning are important goals in the process of human growth and development. Psychological well-being is crucial for individuals to reach their maximum potential and accomplish their life goals (McDowall, 2016; Reis et al., 2018). Life events have a link to the psychological well-being of individuals, particularly first-year students. These events can lead to a range of challenges, including depression, anxiety, and stress (Adiabat et al., 2014). Transitioning to university can be a demanding experience for both high school graduates and older students. It involves navigating various aspects, such as building connections, managing academics, handling finances, juggling work and family commitments, making independent choices, and adjusting to the changes that come with growing older.

Counselling psychology students participate in a demanding academic program that highlight the significance of first of all addressing their existential concerns. These concerns can be challenging, particularly when dealing with personal traumatic experiences. Besides a demanding academic program, there are rising stress levels due to the recent government decision

to remove scholarships for private university students (Kigotho, 2023) that may be causing a considerable psychological strain for university students including first-year counselling psychology students in Nairobi County, Kenya, in the academic year 2024.

Failure to conduct this research would enlarge the significant gap in our understanding of how the six components identified by Ryff (1998)— environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance—relate to the presence or search for meaning in life for first-year counselling psychology students who are tasked with assisting clients gain PWB and discover MiL. Hence, the general objective of this research was to employ quantitative study methods to measure the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study hoped to fill this knowledge gap.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The current research had one main objective and four specific objectives.

##### **1.5.1 General Objective**

The primary aim of this study was to measure the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **1.5.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the level of meaning in life among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.
2. To assess the level of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.
3. To determine the relationship between demographic characteristics (age, gender, employment status) and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.
4. To measure the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

There were four research questions derived from the four specific objectives of this study.

1. What was the level of meaning in life among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya?
2. What was the level of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya?
3. What was the relationship between demographic characteristics (age, gender, employment status) and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya?
4. What was the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya?

## **1.7 Justification of the study**

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. Bathmaker et al. (2016) note that for emerging adults, the shift from high school to university can pose difficulties for students, especially during their initial year of study. On the other hand, first-time university students who are mature confront a multitude of hurdles, ranging from family-related issues to difficulties in adapting to technology and new ways of learning.

Both emerging adults and mature students who enroll in a counselling psychology course embark on their journey with enthusiasm, aspiring to eventually assist others. However, the process of helping others actually starts with first healing oneself and gaining a deeper awareness of oneself. In addition to the anxiety of starting university, the process of self-healing can be highly intimidating for many individuals. One could argue that the reciprocal nature of the course could have a mark on the students' MiL and PWB.

Recently, in Kenya, the government revoked scholarships for students who choose to attend private universities, as noted by Kigotho (2023). This new funding model places more financial burden on students who have the means to pay, while also restricting educational opportunities for financially disadvantaged students who aspire to study at private universities. Furthermore, Nairobi County, the capital city of Kenya, serves as a central location for the bulk of private universities in Kenya that offer courses in counselling psychology. This provides the researcher with an opportunity to obtain a sample that accurately represents the target population.

The standardized instruments utilized in this study possessed the capacity to enhance the participating students' understanding of their pursuit or presence of meaning in their lives and

psychological well-being. Likewise, the study findings had the potential to offer useful insights to the counselling psychology fraternity regarding students at the beginning of their four-year degree. This knowledge would promote a method of consciously encouraging students in their pursuits of overall well-being including MiL and PWB.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

To understand the whole range of human interactions, social science research must develop a set of guiding principles, and provide actionable guidance for addressing pressing problems in interpersonal relationships (Kothari & Garg, 2019). Given Kothari and Garg's description of the significance of a study, the following will benefit from this research:

***First-year counselling psychology students.*** This research can greatly benefit first-year counselling psychology students by motivating them to recognize the importance of pursuing meaning in life and gain insight into the components of psychological well-being through active participation with the research instruments.

***Counselling psychology practitioners.*** The can provide clinical and counselling psychologists a foundation for creating therapeutic strategies that incorporate preventive interventions. The findings can be a valuable resource for therapists in identifying areas that require motivation in the first-year of academic programs and therapeutic interventions in relation to MiL and PWB.

***Parents, guardians, and sponsors.*** The findings can help cultivate effective strategies that promote psychological well-being and positive experiences, motivating parents to support their children's pursuit of meaningful goals. This, in turn, can enhance the student's overall well-being and success in both academic and personal endeavors.

***Higher Education Administration.*** The findings could offer valuable insights for private universities seeking to address mental health concerns among their students. Private universities may want to consider implementing measures that can help new students transition to university life, thus providing an avenue for overall well-being and goal attainment.

### **1.9 Scope and delimitation**

How the topic is defined has a direct impact on the scope of the study, which defines the limits within which the research will be conducted. Constraints (limits) put on the research and the deliberate exclusionary and inclusionary choices made by the researchers as the study is created provide the features that determine the scope of the investigation (Simon & Goes, 2013). As a result, the following served as the scope and delimitation of this study:

The scope of this study was limited to the investigation of the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research aimed to fill the current research gap regarding the relationship of the two variables among counselling psychology students. The sample consisted of first-year students who were registered for a degree in counselling psychology in the semester between September-December 2024. The researcher chose this population because they prioritize exploring life's meaning and enhancing psychological well-being for both themselves and others. Private universities in Nairobi County were preferred due to the significant representation of universities that offer degree courses in counselling psychology. The researcher expected the study to span approximately 6 months, taking into account the various stages involved.

The delimitation of this study included the exclusion of counselling psychology students in their second, third, or fourth year of study. This is because the transitional period to university

served as a unique experience, which meant students in their subsequent years had gone past the psychological intricacies associated with first-year experience. The study only included students enrolled at the selected private universities within Nairobi County, Kenya. Private universities located outside of Nairobi County were not part of the sample because they are located outside the geographical scope of the study.

Similarly, students not undertaking a counselling psychology course were excluded because they did not represent the target population for this study. Qualitative research methods were excluded because they do not generate the statistical data needed for generalizing findings. For this study, the Meaning in Life questionnaire and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale were used for data collection. A section for demographic questions was added in order to capture the demographic characteristics of the participants. Other scales were disregarded as they did not contain the necessary elements of investigation for this study.

### **1.10 Assumptions of the study**

According to Simon and Goes (2013), many studies rely on unproven assumptions that are nonetheless necessary to carry out the research itself. As a result, the following five assumptions functioned as the basis for this investigation.

1. First-year counselling psychology students were willing to participate in the research.
2. The provided data was reliable for drawing valid conclusions and recommendations.
3. The study findings were generalizable to the intended population.
4. The findings provided a credible platform for future researchers to expand on.
5. The findings were valuable in inspiring interventions to support first-year students.

## **1.11 Chapter Summary**

The chapter provided an introduction and background to the study, emphasizing the importance of the first-year transition on an individual's MiL and PWB. Various empirical studies were examined to provide references to the existence of the proposed research problem. These studies focused on the transition into higher education from different perspectives, including international, regional, and local. The chapter presented a clear and concise statement of the problem, highlighting the knowledge gap it aimed to address. The next chapter focuses on literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an examination of the existing data on meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year students. The literature review includes a theoretical framework that explains the core concepts of meaning in life (MiL) and the various elements of psychological well-being (PWB). The empirical literature review focuses on analyzing quantitative and qualitative studies from scholarly journals to address research questions, achieve research objectives, and identify areas where knowledge is inadequate.

The researcher excludes literature that does not meet the following criteria: being published within the last 10 years, written in English, peer-reviewed, and officially published. This is because literature that does not meet the criteria lacks scientific authentication and contains outdated knowledge that is currently neither relevant nor practical. This chapter provides a conceptual framework that combines theoretical and empirical elements.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Literature Review**

According to Blumberg et al. (2011), a theory consists of a collection of statements that clarify the connection between human behavior and the various elements that influence it. The objective of this section was to create a theoretical literature review that examined theories explaining the research variables of MiL and PWB.

##### ***2.2.1 Logotherapy theory***

According to Frankl (1967), humans possess a spiritual dimension known as the *noös* Greek for mind, alongside their physical and psychological dimensions. This means that meaning and values are found in the spiritual dimension. Frankl's theory is founded on three fundamental

principles: the existence of free will, the primary driving force of the will to find meaning, and the inherent possibility of finding meaning in any given situation (Frankl, 1984). These are achieved in multiple ways. One method is described as "creating a work or doing a deed". The other way can be through experiencing nature, and culture, forming deep connections with other individuals, and lastly, finding meaning even in the face of seemingly hopeless situations.

Frankl's theory identifies the tragic triad as universal experiences that can undermine meaning in human existence. These include pain, guilt, and death (Frankl, 1949). The theory indicates suffering as an unavoidable aspect of life and can prompt one to question the significance of events. This perspective highlights the concept of finding optimism amid tragedy by turning suffering into a personal achievement, using guilt as a catalyst for self-improvement, and seeing life's impermanence as motivation for taking proactive steps.

This study applied Frankl's perspective on optimism to the experiences of first-year university students adjusting to a new way of life. The researcher argued that individuals must adapt to a novel environment and culture in order to embrace a new way of learning, interpersonal connections, and the pursuit of academic and professional objectives. Without a positive outlook, the challenges of transitioning to university can potentially result in feelings of stress and anxiety. To echo Frankl's perspective (Frankl, 1984), it is important for first-year students to view transition challenges as opportunities for growth and development.

Frankl believed individuals can confront and overcome adversity and fears in their pursuit of meaning (Frankl, 1970). Nevertheless, he observed a type of disorder known as collective neurosis in situations where meaning is lacking. This disorder is characterized by aimlessness, fatalism, collective thinking, and fanaticism (Frankl, 1967). He linked the prevalence of these symptoms to modernization and the decline of traditional values and instincts (Frankl, 1984).

According to Frankl, discovering meaning and purpose in life can help individuals escape the cycle and find direction and energy.

A key element of Frankl's theory is the emphasis on embracing life transitions, which was a crucial facet of this study, in order to promote responsible behavior. Therefore, the current study particularly benefited from logotherapy, which explains the significance of MiL and the connection to an individual's overall well-being. However, the theory failed to elucidate the elements of psychological well-being, which may explain how one can sustain psychological well-being throughout the life span. To address this gap, Carol Ryff's six-factor model explained the concept of PWB and provided a framework for discerning high and low levels of psychological well-being.

### ***2.2.2 Six-factor model***

Carol Ryff (1989) developed the six-factor model, which is a theory of psychological well-being. The theory indicates six factors that are significant in an individual's psychological well-being. These include Self-acceptance: understanding and embracing oneself, including being aware of personal limitations; Building strong relationships: the quality of the bonds with other people; Personal growth: ongoing progress and development as an individual; Purpose in life: striving for meaningful outcomes and purpose in life; Independence: autonomy in thinking and behavior; Environmental mastery: the skill of effectively navigating and adapting to complex environments in alignment with personal needs and values.

Ryff (1989) highlighted the importance of achieving optimal psychological functioning for the growth and self-fulfillment of each person. She argues that happiness can be understood as a temporary state of psychological well-being and required an individual to transition from mere happiness with life to finding a deeper sense of purpose and staying true to one's authentic self. Additionally, three texts provided theoretical guidance on understanding psychological well-being.

Ryff (1989) described wellness as an ongoing process of growth that occurs throughout the lifespan, as discussed in developmental psychology. Clinical psychology also offered a variety of perspectives on well-being, including Allport's notion of maturity, Jung's definition of individuation, Rogers' notion of the wholly functional person, and Maslow's notion of self-actualization. In the field of mental health, Jahoda's (Ryff, 1992) formulation of the concept of well-being introduced criteria that focus on the positive aspects of mental health. On the other hand, Biren's concept emphasized positive functioning in later life.

In 2013, Ryff found that resilience was essential for sustaining well-being, enabling individuals to maintain or regain their well-being in challenging situations. Furthermore, the theory suggested that well-being increased as adults managed adult life tasks, despite a decline in purpose and personal growth with age. However, psychological well-being could vary when people compare themselves socially and get involved in the community, work, family, and parenting. The six elements of psychological well-being emphasized important conditions shared by emerging adults and older students. For example, autonomy is a skill developed in early childhood, while personal growth tends to decrease among elderly individuals.

Ryff's six-factor model provided a comprehensive examination of various elements of psychological well-being that encapsulates both emerging adults' experiences as well as those of mature students. The theory highlighted resilience as an important quality that facilitates development in autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Through the integration of logotherapy and the six-factor model, the researcher was able to examine the relationship between meaning in life and PWB among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities in

Nairobi County, Kenya. This study assessed an individual's desire to find MiL and the achievement of a balanced PWB state.

## **2.3 Empirical Literature Review**

The literature review focused on primary research papers published in academic journals. According to Galvan and Galvan (2017), original reports are the best sources for detailed research methods and thorough discussions of findings.

### ***2.3.1 Level of meaning in life among university students***

People view meaning in life as a subjective assessment based on personal experiences. However, transitioning to university is a challenging period for many students, which may lead to difficulties in the search for meaning in life. The following studies presented levels of meaning in life in various contexts.

A study carried out by Romero-Parra (2020) assessed the link between the level of depression and the meaning of life among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study included 300 participants from the Continental University of Peru and 300 participants from the "Rafael María Baralt" National Experimental University of Venezuela. Among Peru students, the study revealed that 48.5% found meaning, 32.7% were unsure, and 18.9% felt no meaning. Among Venezuelan students, most (55.45%) had a clear sense of purpose. 31.36% were still searching for meaning, while 13.18% felt a lack of purpose in their lives. The study highlighted the uneven distribution of meaning in life, indicating the influence of difficult situations and finding meaning in adversities.

Raza et al. (2019), examined meaning in life and stress levels in 254 Pakistani undergraduate students. The study reported higher perceived stress levels in women ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) compared to men ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ). In contrast, men scored higher in meaning

in life ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) than women ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ),  $t(244) = 4.69$ ,  $p < .05$ . Females showed a stronger connection between stress and meaning in life, with higher stress levels and a lower sense of meaning compared to males.

Asagba et al. (2017), conducted a study to measure the relationship between self-esteem, life orientation, and meaning in life among 192 undergraduates at the University of Ibadan. Among the participants, there were 104 males (54.2%) and 88 females (45.8%). The presence and search for meaning, optimism, and pessimism were found to be key predictors of self-esteem ( $R^2 = .24$ ;  $F(4, 185) = 13.10$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Self-esteem levels were found to be higher among female students compared to male students ( $t(184) = -3.03$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Female students reported an average score of 28.89, while male students had an average score of 26.53. The study findings indicated that searching for purpose in life can enhance one's sense of self-worth.

Locally, Kagwe (2019) conducted a study in Kenya involving 1173 students from various universities, including the University of Nairobi (UoN), the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA), Kenyatta University (KU), Egerton University (EU), and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). The study found significant differences in students' perceptions of the meaning and purpose of life, particularly among students from private universities. The comparison between UoN and CUEA showed a notable difference of -3.83 ( $p\text{-level} = .000$ ), indicating a lack of motivation among students at private universities. The study suggested that students at private universities lack the motivation to find their life's purpose. This premise was essential for the current study as it aimed to evaluate meaning in life and psychological well-being among students at selected private universities.

The studies conducted by Romero-Parra (2020), Raza et al. (2019), Asagba et al. (2017), and Kagwe (2019) found differences in the levels of MiL among university students when it

involves searching for and presence of meaning in life. However, research on MiL among counselling psychology students in Kenya was limited. Examining the concept of MiL was highly important for students studying counselling psychology because the search for and presence of MiL is a journey they will most likely walk their clients through. This argument aligned with Frankl's belief in the value of meaningful work and overcoming personal challenges to help others.

### ***2.3.2 Level of psychological wellbeing among university students***

Psychological well-being greatly influences a student's overall health and academic performance. The following studies focused on examining existing literature on the levels of PWB among university students.

Malinauskas and Dumciene (2016) examined students' psychological well-being and self-esteem as they transitioned from secondary school to university in Kaunas, Lithuania. There were 197 students in the study, consisting of 82 males and 115 females. The participants' mean age at the beginning of the study was 18.54 years. The researchers obtained mean differences (Ds) based on the simple main effects analysis. Students experienced noteworthy enhancements in autonomy ( $D = 1.14, p = .008$ ), personal growth ( $D = 1.37, p = .001$ ), environmental mastery ( $D = 1.88, p = .000$ ), positive relations ( $D = 1.15, p = .004$ ), and purpose in life ( $D = 1.15, p = .005$ ). The study suggested that the transition to university positively affects psychological well-being, without any notable gender disparities.

Cobo-Rendon et al. (2020) carried out a longitudinal study involving 200 first-year undergraduate students in Chile to evaluate affective well-being, psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and academic performance. The study revealed that in 2017, 47% of participants reported high levels of positive emotions, such as satisfaction and joy. However, this percentage slightly decreased to 43.5% in 2018, reflecting a 3.5% decline. In contrast, negative emotions were

prevalent among 59% of students in 2017, and this number increased to 70% in 2018, indicating an 11% rise in negative emotional experiences during the second academic year. These findings highlighted the shifting emotional landscape of students as they progress through their studies with elevated levels of PWB.

Slykerman and Mitchell (2021) undertook a study in New Zealand to evaluate stress, anxiety, and PWB among 120 undergraduates. At the beginning of the semester, a significant proportion of students experienced high levels of stress (20.0%), anxiety (66.7%), and poor well-being (44.2%) based on established cut-offs. Among those who initially reported low anxiety levels, 69.4% maintained low anxiety by the end of the semester, whereas 30.0% experienced an elevated level of anxiety. In terms of psychological well-being, 33.3% of students continued to report good well-being, while 66.6% noted a decline in their psychological well-being by the end of the semester. These results highlighted the dynamic changes in students' psychological well-being over the course of the initial semester.

Rugira (2015) conducted research in Tanzania to highlight the importance of implementing programs to enhance psychological conditions among university students, considering the variations in their levels of well-being. The study involved a total of 82 participants, with 42 being married and 40 being single. Additionally, there were 46 female participants and 36 male participants. The ages of the participants varied between 19 and 40 years, with an average age of 29.5. The results showed that 68.18% of individuals were flourishing. Additionally, 31.82% of individuals were moderately mentally healthy. The study findings suggested that implementing a program focused on psychological well-being at universities could enhance the general psychological health of university students.

Madu et al. (2022) carried out a local study in Nairobi, Kenya, focusing on the correlation between career choice and psychological well-being among first-year students. The study involved 270 participants from three universities and examined factors such as parental influence, age groups, and their impact on career choices and psychological well-being. The findings revealed that autonomy increased from ages 18 to 22 with a mean score of 4.60, decreased from ages 27 to 30, and peaked at age 36 at 5.00. Environmental mastery scores varied across age groups, with the highest mean score observed in the 18–22 age group. Personal growth scores were highest in the 23–26 age group. Older students, specifically those aged 36 and above, displayed higher scores for positive relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance. In contrast, participants aged 23–26 exhibited elevated levels of personal growth. The findings indicated that PWB changes with age and that the strength of decisions is determined by life events.

In light of the considerable body of research conducted on the psychological well-being of university students, it was worth noting the dearth of studies that specifically examined counselling psychology students. Prior research conducted by Malinauskas and Dumciene (2016), Cobo-Rendon et al. (2020), Slykerman and Mitchell (2021), Rugira (2015), and Madu et al. (2022) had extensively explored different facets of PWB in first-year university students undertaking various academic programs. Moreover, there was no prior examination conducted on the specific measurement of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at private universities within Nairobi County, Kenya. The lack of research in this context emphasized the importance of a focused study to gain an understanding of the level of psychological well-being among this population. Therefore, the current study sought to fill this gap by conducting a study among first-year counselling psychology students.

### ***2.3.3 Relationship between demographic characteristics (age, gender, employment status) and psychological well-being among university students***

Demographic variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic situation, cultural background, and religious affiliation are associated with psychological well-being. The following studies illustrated this relationship among university students:

Punia and Malaviya (2015) conducted a study among 100 first-year college students in India. The participants had an average age of 21. The study revealed significant findings about the comparison of PWB between female students and male students. This difference was observed in the total score of psychological well-being ( $t = -3.43$ ) as well as in the factors of self-esteem ( $t = -4.05$ ), environmental mastery ( $t = -5.27$ ), and self-acceptance ( $t = -2.15$ ). Furthermore, the examination of the psychological well-being of female and male university students revealed a notable distinction, primarily in the aspect of self-esteem ( $t = 1.36$ ). These findings emphasized the correlation between gender and age with regard to the psychological well-being of university students.

In 2020, Morales-Rodríguez et al. conducted a study in Granada to examine the relationship between psychological well-being and psychosocial factors among university students. The sample comprised 149 first-year students from the University of Granada, with a majority of 67.7% being women and the remaining 32.3% being men. The mean age of the participants was 21.59 years, with an SD of 4.64. The study revealed that there were no notable disparities in the PWB of male and female students. There were no significant differences found in self-acceptance ( $t = 0.285$ ,  $p = 0.776$ ), positive relationships with others ( $t = -0.971$ ,  $p = 0.333$ ), autonomy ( $t = 0.929$ ,  $p = 0.354$ ), environmental mastery ( $t = 0.067$ ,  $p = 0.947$ ), purpose in life ( $t = -1.344$ ,  $p = 0.181$ ), or personal

growth ( $t = -0.955$ ,  $p = 0.343$ ). This study indicated that there were no notable gender discrepancies in the levels of PWB among the first-year students.

Mason (2017) conducted a research study employing both qualitative and quantitative methods at a university in South Africa. The study included 225 first-year students, comprising 139 females and 86 males. The age range of the participants ranged from 18 to 25 years. The study identified six primary categories of stressors: financial, spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, and institutional. The qualitative analysis identified three main coping strategies: problem-focused coping at 86.67%, emotion-focused coping at 78.22%, and meaning-making at 97.33%. Physical stressors represented 90.67%, emotional stressors were at 90.22%, and mental stressors stood at 88.89%. A total of 198 individuals, representing 88% of the sample, expressed concern regarding institutional stresses. The study showed that factors beyond meaning in life influenced psychological well-being. Employment as a demographic characteristic significantly influenced the coping techniques individuals chose for their well-being.

The previous research conducted by Punia and Malaviya (2015) and Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2020) offered contributions to understanding the correlations between demographic variables, such as gender and age, on psychological well-being. Unfortunately, there was limited amount of research that specifically examined the demographics of employment status, age, gender, and psychological well-being within the African context. This study sought to fill the existing research gap by measuring the relationship between demographic characteristics (age, gender, and employment status) and psychological well-being among counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### ***2.3.4 Relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among university students***

Demir et al. (2023) investigated the link and differences between meaning in life, PWB, and happiness in university students. A total of 323 students from the Hatay Mustafa Kemal University Faculty of Education in southern Turkey were part of the study. Out of the total students, 236 were women (73.1%) and 87 were men (26.9%). About 30% of the variance in their well-being scores was accounted for. Additionally, meaning in life explained about 23% of the variance in the students' happiness scores. A key finding of this study was that psychological well-being was dependent on meaning in life, irrespective of gender.

Bano (2014) conducted a study to evaluate the influence of meaning in life on psychological well-being and stress levels among 560 university students from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. The age range was 19 to 38 years  $M = 22.81$ , ( $SD = 2.71$ ). The findings revealed a substantial impact of the level of meaning in life on both stress levels and psychological well-being. It accounted for 17% of the variation in positive psychological well-being and 19% of the variation in stress levels. According to the study, there was a correlation between the perception of meaning in life and reduced stress levels, as well as improved PWB among the students.

In a study by García-Alandete (2014), the connection between meaning in life and psychological well-being was examined among 180 undergraduates in Spain, with 138 women (76.7%) and 42 men (23.3%). Their ages ranged from 18 to 55, with a mean age of 22.91 and an SD of 6.71. The study found that meaning in life was a strong predictor of psychological well-being, explaining a significant amount of the variance in various aspects of well-being. It accounted for over 50% of the variance in general psychological well-being; over 40% of the

variance in purpose in life, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery; over 20% of the variance in positive relationships and personal growth; and slightly less than 20% of the variance in autonomy. The study emphasized the importance of MiL for predicting PWB.

In another study, Chan et al. (2022) examined 536 university undergraduate students from Hong Kong, China, to determine the correlation between compassion, meaning in life, and different psychological factors. The study revealed significant correlations between meaning in life, flourishing, compassion, and resilience ( $PS < 0.001$ ). The variables exhibited significant negative correlations with psychological distress ( $PS < 0.001$ ). There was a positive correlation between being male and resilience ( $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, family income showed a positive correlation with flourishing and meaning in life ( $PS < 0.05$ ) and a negative correlation with psychological distress ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study highlighted the significant influence of family flourishing on overall well-being and psychological distress, along with the potential contribution of students' resilience in discovering purpose in life.

Olasupo et al. (2017) examined adjustment, psychological well-being, and mental health of first year students in a sample of 300 first-year students at North West University in South Africa, comprising 27% male and 73% female participants. The results revealed that psychological adjustment in female participants was strongly associated with depression ( $\beta = -.58, p < .01$ ) and social dysfunction ( $\beta = -.21, p < .01$ ). Psychological adjustment had a significant impact on anxiety ( $\beta = -.60, p < .01$ ) and depression ( $\beta = -.60, p < .01$ ) in male participants and also had a smaller effect on social dysfunction ( $\beta = -.11, p < .01$ ). The study found that psychological well-being was negatively associated with anxiety ( $\beta = -.24, p < .01$ ), depression ( $\beta = -.20, p < .01$ ), and social dysfunction ( $\beta = -.10, p < .01$ ). The study highlighted the significance of embracing change or life transitions to engage in meaningful experiences and ensure psychological well-being. The

evaluation revealed that psychological adjustment played a crucial role in determining the mental well-being of both male and female students.

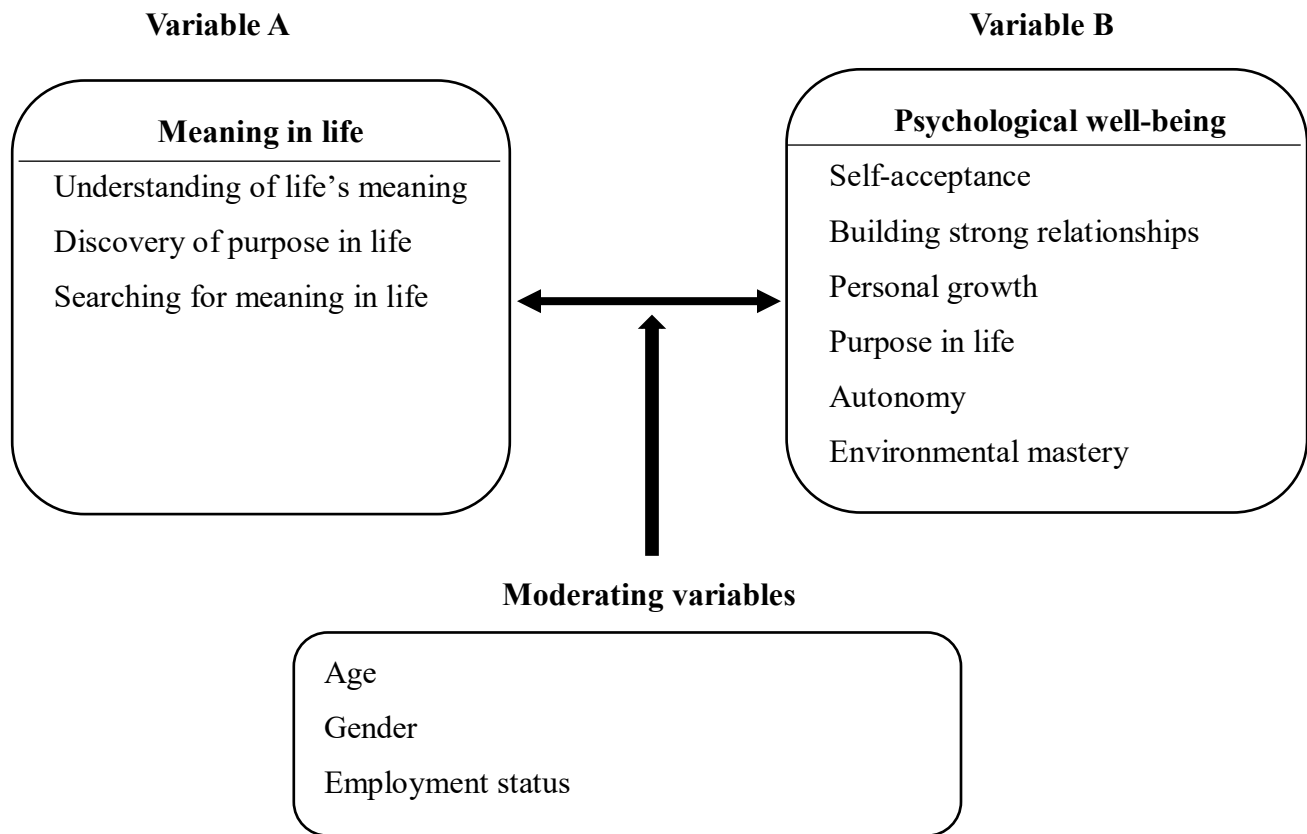
Despite the extensive global research on the link between MiL and PWB among university students, it's important to note that no specific study in Africa had yet focused on this topic among university students. Previous research in international studies examined the relationship and impact of meaning in life on stress and psychological well-being (Bano, 2014). Additionally, scholars have investigated meaning in life, happiness, and psychological well-being (Demir et al., 2023). Nonetheless, a notable disparity persisted in understanding the relationship between the MiL and PWB among counselling psychology students. This study sought to address the existing knowledge gap by examining the relationship between MiL and PWB among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### **2.4 Conceptual framework**

The framework is a structured representation that illustrates the organization of key research concepts and the potential interrelationships between variables. It provides a clear and accurate explanation of the phenomenon being studied (Shikalepo, 2020). The following are key elements of meaning in life and psychological well-being.

**Figure 1**

**Conceptual framework**



*Source: Researcher (2024)*

Figure 1 illustrated the association between MiL and PWB. The horizontal arrow travels in both directions, indicating a potential relationship. The vertical arrow showed the inclusion of three moderating variables: age, gender, and employment status, to provide insight into the variations in psychological well-being among participants. The analysis focused on two age groups: emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 29 and mature students aged 30 years and older. The study also delved into the distinctions between male and female students, as well as those in employment and those without.

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented a theoretical literature review that was suitable for the study. The chapter presented two theories: Victor Frankl's logotherapy (1949) and Carol Ryff's Six Factor Model (1986). The chapter also included a literature review that supports the research objectives. The goals of this study are to assess the level of meaning in life, examine levels of psychological well-being, investigate the relationship between demographic characteristics and psychological well-being, and measure the relationship between MiL and PWB among first-year counselling psychology students. Combining theoretical and empirical elements produced the conceptual framework. The next chapter will cover the methodology.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the epistemology, research design, context, population of interest, and sample design, which includes the sampling frame, sample size calculation, and sampling technique and determination. The chapter also covers data collection methods, evaluation techniques, and a detailed description of the investigation instruments. The anticipated inferences of the research and ethical concerns are equally presented.

#### **3.2 Epistemology**

This research focused on first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study aimed to measure the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among the participants. The researcher utilized positivism as the philosophical foundation for the study. Positivism was favored because it places a strong emphasis on concrete evidence through empirical data, leaving little opportunity for the researcher's subjective interpretation.

Park et al. (2020) state that positivism is expressed quantitatively and allows for establishing functional relationships between variables in a study. Moreover, positivism ensures that research is objective, measurable, and predictable. By applying this philosophical framework to explain knowledge, the researcher was in a position to measure the objectives and create a system to evaluate the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The phrase research design refers to the tactical strategy that describes the general roadmap and fundamental elements of the tasks that will be performed in a study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). This study utilized scientific research methods to provide evidence supporting the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being. The researcher employed quantitative research methods for data collection and analysis instead of qualitative methods. Choosing quantitative methods meant gathering data through questionnaires and converting it into statistical data for target population generalization.

The researcher further utilized a cross-sectional method and employed a correlational survey design to examine the relationship and variations within the study population. The design was chosen for its ability to facilitate a thorough examination of the association between study variables. In this study, the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya, was measured.

### **3.4 Location of the study**

The study was carried out in private universities in Nairobi County. Nairobi County is the capital city of Kenya. Kenya is situated in eastern Africa, with Nairobi County in the south-central part of the country, and located 140 km (87 mi) south of the Equator. In 1899, Nairobi was founded and has developed into one of Africa's most advanced cities (LatLong.net, 2023), becoming the thirteenth-largest metropolis in Africa (Statista, 2024). Nairobi, the capital of Kenya and a top tourist location enjoys excellent transport options such as international airlines, regional rail, and a well-developed road network connecting it to other major cities in East Africa. Additionally, the county is involved in various economic activities such as manufacturing, agriculture, building and

construction, energy, trade, tourism, and transport (Nairobi City County, 2023). The County is located at coordinates -1.286389 and 36.817223. Providing GPS coordinates: 1° 17' 11.0004" S, 36° 49' 2.0028" E (LatLong.net, 2023). Nairobi County is home to Nairobi National Park.

The Nairobi National Park covers an area of approximately 112 square kilometers, consisting of flat land, cliffs, and dense forest (70 mi<sup>2</sup>). The Ngong Hills are situated west of the city, while the Rift Valley is found to the east. Mount Kenya is found north of Nairobi, while Mount Kilimanjaro is situated southeast of the capital (Nairobi City County, 2023). In 2021, Kenya had a total of 74 licensed universities. These included thirty-one public Chartered universities, six public university constituent colleges, eighteen private Chartered universities, five private university constituent colleges, and fourteen private universities with a Letter of Interim Authority (LIA). Of the 37 private universities, 25 have town campuses in Nairobi County, Kenya (Universities and Colleges in Nairobi County in Nairobi Province, n.d).

### **3.5 Target population**

The target populace refers to the overall number of individuals included in the study sample (Obwatho, 2014). Data from Statista (2024) indicates that Kenya had a total of 94.6 thousand students enrolled in private universities during the academic year 2020–21. It was anticipated that this figure may have changed during the ongoing year 2024. This study aimed to include a comprehensive sample of all 163 first-year students currently enrolled in counselling psychology programs at the selected universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

The participants consisted of male and female students, including those who are single as well as those who have families. The age requirement for participation was 18 years and older. Participants included both employed individuals and those financially supported by their parents,

guardians, or sponsors. Furthermore, the sample encompassed individuals representing a wide range of religious backgrounds and ethnicities, including both in-person and online students.

### 3.6 Sampling design

The researcher's methods for selecting samples from the target population are known as sampling design (Kabir, 2016). The current study employed cluster sampling of the universities, which entailed dividing the universities into groups that were geographically and logically close. The study aimed for generalizability; thereby, collecting data at a single point from all the participants enhanced the external validity of the study context.

#### 3.6.1 Sampling frame

The frame consists of sampling units from the target population, such as individuals, organizations, or other units of analysis (Rovai et al., 2014). The frame included the five universities selected for this study. The five universities were chosen for their extensive experience offering counselling psychology degrees, resulting in a larger student enrollment. This offered the chance for this study to have a sufficient sample size.

**Table 1:**

*First-year students in private universities in Nairobi County*

University	M	F	Population	Percentage
The Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA)	9	36	45	28%
Kenya Methodist University (KEMU)	2	22	24	15%
International Leadership University (ILU)	13	22	35	21%
Tangaza University (TU)	7	26	33	20%
KCA University KCAU)	7	19	26	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Administrations of the respective universities (September-December Semester, 2024).*

Table 1, showed the elements that make up the sample frame of the study, it also showed the student counts for each university, including male and female students, as well as the total population of counselling psychology students per university. The next section described the method used to achieve the sample size.

### ***3.6.2 Sampling techniques***

Creswell (2014) explains that investigators use sampling procedures to select a small group of participants for a study from the target population. To measure the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya, the researcher utilized a multi-stage sampling technique. The researcher adopted the probability sampling technique and employed a cluster sample to divide the private universities into clusters that were geographically close. After identifying a cluster within Nairobi County, Kenya, data collection was carried out in a methodical manner, focusing on one university at a time to ensure a systematic approach was maintained across all five campuses selected for this study.

### ***3.6.3 Sample size determination***

According to Bryman (2016), the process of determining the sample size involves making decisions about the number of people to survey, data points to collect, or objects to analyze in order to generalize the results to a larger population. This research employed cluster sampling. The researcher systematically selected each first-year student enrolled in counselling psychology at the designated universities for inclusion in the study. The researcher derived this sample from students in their first-to-fourth year of study. To ensure the accuracy and relevance of the sampling technique, the researcher employed the group administration of questionnaires among first-year students to maximize data security and reduce the risk of data loss.

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

Research instruments are tools or methods used to collect information. Questionnaires, focus groups, and participant observation are examples, according to Munir (2017). The researcher employed standardized measurement scales after receiving permission from the original authors of the instruments. Permission was requested via email and responses were included in the appendix. The selected standardized scales for this study aligned with the research goals and demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability.

#### ***3.7.1 Meaning in Life Questionnaire***

Michael F. Steger developed the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) in 2005 to measure the search for or presence of meaning in an individual's life. The questionnaire includes 10 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale by selecting a response that resonates with them. 1 = absolutely untrue, 2 = mostly untrue, 3 = somewhat untrue, 4 = can't say true or false, 5 = somewhat true, 6 = mostly true, and 7 = absolutely true. The instrument includes two subscales that each represent a different dimension of meaning in life: there are five items to evaluate the presence of meaning in respondents' lives and another five items to evaluate their search for meaning. The subscales are Presence = 1, 4, 5, 6, and 9-reverse-coded and Search = 2, 3, 7, 8, and 10. According to Steger (2005) the tool indicates strong internal consistency, with alpha values ranging from .84 to .91 for each subscale.

#### ***Scoring the Meaning in life Questionnaire***

According to Steger (2005) a score above 24 on presence and below 24 on search suggests a life filled with meaning and purpose. A score below 24 on presence and above 24 on search suggests a lack of life purpose and value, which can result in feelings of loss, dissatisfaction, and occasional anxiety or depression. A score below 24 on presence and search suggests a deficiency

in life values, purpose, and curiosity. Steger (2005) notes this may lead to occasional feelings of anxiety, nervousness, sadness, or depression.

**Table 2:**

*Levels of Meaning in Life*

<b>Score</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Low score	10-30	Below 24 on presence and search
Middle score	31-50	Below 24 on presence and above 24 in search
High score	51-70	Above 24 on presence and below 24 on search

Table 2 indicated the levels of high, middle, and low meaning in life according to Steger (2005).

**3.7.2 Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale**

Carol D. Ryff developed the 42-item Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (RPWBS) in 1989 to measure individuals' levels of psychological well-being. The tool can be used among adults and requires an individual to have the capacity to read. Participants rate their concurrence with statements on a 6-point Likert scale by circling the number that best describes their present agreement or disagreement with each statement. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree Somewhat, 3 = Disagree Slightly, 4 = Agree Slightly, 5 = Agree Somewhat, and 6 = Strongly Agree. Furthermore, the final scoring reverses responses to negatively scored items, reflecting high self-ratings on the assessed dimension.

Negative wording reverses the items, converting a 6 (strongly agree) into a 1, a 5 into a 2, and so on. The revised items were (# 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 39, and 41). In a study by Ryff (1989), the 42-item scale showed the following internal

consistency coefficients: autonomy (.83), environmental mastery (.86), personal growth (.85), positive relations with others (.88), purpose in life (.88), and self-acceptance (.91).

***Scoring of RPWBS***

According to Ryff (1989), the scores on individual scales are combined to obtain an overall psychological well-being score. High well-being corresponds to scores in the top 25% of the distribution, while low well-being corresponds to scores in the bottom 25% of the distribution. Another option was to consider high well-being as scoring 1.5 standard deviations above the mean, while low well-being scores 1.5 standard deviations below the mean.

**Table 3:**

*Levels of psychological well-being*

<b>Score</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Low score	42-95	25%
Implied moderate score	96-200	50%
High score	201-252	25%

Table 3 indicates the levels of high and low psychological well-being according to RPWBS. Presented also are scores that accommodate the 50% of responses that do not align with either the lower or higher scores of psychological well-being.

***3.7.3 Validity and Reliability***

Ensuring a research instrument is validated is crucial for obtaining reliable results (Vogel & Draper, 2017). The researcher chooses to conduct construct validity for the research instruments. In addition, Pratt and Yeziarska (2018), assessing a tool's consistency in generating

repeatable results is a reliable measure of its performance. Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) suggest that an alpha value ranging from .70 to .99 signifies satisfactory reliability for an item.

Naghiyae et al. (2020) examined 301 patients with life-threatening illnesses, ranging in age from 20 to 80. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ). The alpha coefficient for the MLQ was 0.90, indicating a high level of internal consistency in its subscales. Specifically, the MLQ-Presence subscale demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.84, while the MLQ-Searching subscale showed a coefficient of 0.88. On the other hand, in a study by Saajanaho et al. (2020), the researchers examined the RPWBS reliability and validity among 968 senior citizens in Finland. The total psychological well-being revealed high internal consistency and reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

Walliman (2011) emphasizes the importance of following research protocols when collecting and using research data. According to strict research protocols, the researcher began the data collection process by obtaining the required approvals and clearance from the Tangaza University Research Ethics Committee (TUREC) which enabled the researcher apply for a research permit from NACOSTI, the National Council of Science, Technology, and Innovation. After receiving the NACOSTI permit, the researcher further sought authorization to conduct research from the Nairobi County Governor, the County Director of Education, and the County Commissioner. Following that, the researcher sought permission from the five private universities' Deputy Vice Chancellors—Academics and Research.

Upon receiving the research authorizations from the universities, the researcher further sought an opportunity to directly interact with the first-year counselling psychology students to

provide a concise explanation of the study goals, in addition to providing a formal introduction letter. In the first week of September 2024, the researcher, the respective heads of departments, and the participants came to a mutual agreement regarding the dates for data collection. This collaborative approach was critical because it demonstrated respect for the institute's programs, as well as the participants' time and schedule.

On the specified dates, the researcher distributed the coded research instruments to the participants at the specific universities and applied a collective administration method. The participants completed the questionnaire on-site, and the researcher promptly collected it. It is only in one university that the collective administration was not feasible; the researcher employed the "drop and pick" method. The method entailed distributing the questionnaires to a representative of the participants, and the researcher collected the filled questionnaires the following day. Both collective administration and drop-and-pick methods were efficient and accommodating to the participants' online and onsite study schedules.

While the study did not present any physical or legal risks, such as pain, injury, illness, or legal consequences, there was a foreseeable risk that was important to consider and address. This involved psychological or emotional risks that could lead to the resurfacing of past emotional experiences, feelings of guilt, stress, or a decrease in self-esteem. Ryff's psychological well-being scale evaluates different aspects of a person's life that may lead them to reflect on their abilities and current state of being.

For instance, the sub-scales related to autonomy and environmental mastery can lead to feelings of inadequacy or incompetence if a person does not have a sense of control over their life or lacks the necessary skills to adapt to new situations. The sub-scale on personal growth can evoke a sense of disappointment, where individuals may feel like they have missed opportunities and

wasted time, resulting in a feeling of being stagnant in life with minimal or no progress in terms of personal growth. The sub-scales related to relationships and self-acceptance can evoke challenging emotions for individuals who have not fully embraced certain aspects of themselves or who struggle with their relationships with others.

In order to minimize any potential psychological risk, the researcher held two debriefing sessions. These sessions focused on the nature of the tools and the potential for certain questions to trigger difficult emotions and memories. The first session was prior to administering the tool, and the second session was immediately following the tool's collection. Together with the participants, the researcher evaluated the experience of filling out the questionnaire, their thoughts and feelings, and discussed coping strategies that involved seeking personal therapy to address personal challenges. Generally, the researcher completed the entire data collection process, from receiving approvals to analyzing the data, within 70 days.

### **3:9 Data analysis**

This study outlined one goal for quantitative data analysis: to statistically measure the research objectives.

**Table 4***Data Analysis*

<b>Data analysis of:</b>	<b>Variable type</b>	<b>Purpose of the test</b>	<b>Type of the test</b>
Demographic characteristics	Nominal Scale	Categorize in exclusive groups	Frequencies, percentiles, mean, median, Standard Deviation (SD).
Objective One	Ordinal	Level of meaning in life	Frequencies, Median, Standard Deviation (SD)
Objective Two	Ordinal	Level of psychological well-being	Frequencies, Median, Standard Deviation (SD)
Objective Three	Scale Nominal	Relationship between demographic characteristics and psychological well-being	Pearson coefficient and <i>T-test</i>
Objective Four	Scale Nominal	Relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being	Pearson coefficient and Regression analysis

Table 5 provided a comprehensive overview of the analyses for this study, including the variables, test justifications, and specific tests to be conducted. The study sought to provide a detailed and accurate account of demographic characteristics, collecting numerical data for each category and conducting descriptive analysis through frequencies, percentages, and standard deviation. The researcher utilized Pearson coefficient and *T-test* to demonstrate the relationship between demographic characteristics and psychological well-being. Further, Pearson coefficient and regression analysis were employed to measure the existence of a relationship between MiL and PWB as well as the strength of the relationship between MiL and PWB.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

Ethics establishes standards for behavior, distinguishing between right and wrong (APA, 2017). Securing consent in this study involved addressing ethical concerns by being transparent with participants about confidentiality limitations, data usage, and material handling. To avoid causing harm to any participant, the researcher was mindful of the various roles currently held. These roles consist of being a student, counsellor-in-training, and researcher.

To maintain ethical standards, the researcher sought permission to conduct the study after the research proposal received approval. Authorization was sought from the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI), the Tangaza University Research Ethics Committee (TUREC), the Nairobi County Governor, the Nairobi County Commissioner, and the Nairobi County Director of Education, as well as the universities where the study took place. Following receipt of authorization from the appropriate authorities, the researcher sought participants' informed consent and understanding of the potential benefits and risks of participation.

Before the distribution of the questionnaires, a briefing session took place that provided participants with an overview of the study. This included an explanation of informed consent, including voluntary participation, compensation, and withdrawal from the study. The debriefing session covered the purpose of the study and potential benefits, including interacting with the questionnaires, which served as an education tool for participants on the components of psychological well-being and engagement with thought-provoking questions about the search for or presence of meaning in life.

The researcher did not collect the participants' names to ensure their anonymity and privacy. To monitor their responses, the researcher used a unique code for each participant and institution. To ensure the highest level of data security, the researcher diligently safeguarded the

questionnaires by storing them in a securely sealed bag and keeping them in a locked drawer during and after data analysis. This meticulous approach significantly reduced the potential for unauthorized access or disclosure. The researcher checked the study for misrepresentation and plagiarism.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

The chapter outlined the methodological framework that directed this study. The chapter described the study's population and outlined the study design, specifically emphasizing the use of a correlational survey within a quantitative framework. The sampling design was developed, detailing the reasoning behind the choice of sample size and the sampling method used. The chapter detailed the research instruments used for data collection. It described the methods for gathering data and analyzing it, with a focus on using both descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the study objectives. The next chapter will present the findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The researcher sought to examine the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students. This chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of the findings derived from data collected from five private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The chapter is organized into sections that cover response rates, demographic characteristics, and the four study objectives: One, the levels of meaning in life among first-year counselling psychology students; Two, the levels of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students; Three, the relationship between demographic characteristics and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students; and four the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students. The chapter also provides limitations of the study and ends with a summary of the chapter.

#### **4.2 Response Rate**

The researcher targeted 163 first-year students from five universities who registered for a counselling psychology course in the September to December semester of 2024. As shown in Table 6, 105 students completed the questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 64.4%; however, only 102 questionnaires were deemed valid for analysis.

**Table 5: Response rates**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Target	163	100.0
Filled	105	64.4%
Valid Responses	102	62.6%

In 2023, Lund reviewed 801 articles and determined that typical response rates varied from 16.5% to 50.0%. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) state that “a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good, and 70% and over is very good (p. 83).” The response rate of 62.6% in this study was sufficient to yield important insights into the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **4.3 Demographic Characteristics**

This section outlines the demographic composition of the participants, detailing the universities they attend, along with their age, gender, and employment status.

**Table 6: Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

<b>University</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
CUEA	25	24.5
ILU	20	19.6
TU	15	14.7
KCA	24	23.5
KEMU	18	17.6
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 29 years	82	80.4
30 years and above	20	19.6
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	27	26.5
Female	75	73.5
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Employed	22	21.6
Unemployed	80	78.4

This study involved 102 participants from five distinct universities. The largest percentage of respondents came from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), representing 24.5% (n = 25) of the participants. KCA University accounted for 23.5% (n = 24), and students from the International Leadership University (ILU) represented 19.6% (n = 20) of the sample. Tangaza University College accounted for 14.7% (n = 15) of participants, while Kenya Methodist University (KEMU) represented 17.6% (n = 18).

The age distribution indicates that a significant portion of participants, specifically 80.4% (n = 82), fell within the 18 to 29 age range (emerging adults), whereas 19.6% (n = 20) were aged 30 or older (mature students). The participants were primarily female, comprising 73.5% (n =

75), while male participants accounted for 26.5% (n = 27). 78.4% (n = 80) of the sample reported unemployment, while 21.6% (n = 22) reported employment.

#### 4.4 Level of Meaning in Life among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students

This section presents statistics on the level of meaning of life among first-year counselling psychology students at the five selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The results are as presented in Table 8.

*Table 7: Level of meaning in life*

Meaning in life	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low levels of meaning in life	10-30	3	2.9
Moderate levels of meaning in life	31-50	51	50.0
High levels of meaning in life	51-70	48	47.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10-70</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7 presents result that show different levels of meaning in life among participants, categorized into three clear groups: low, moderate, and high levels of meaning in life. A small percentage (n = 3) of the participants indicated low levels of meaning in life. Fifty percent (n = 51) had moderate levels of meaning in life and 47.1% exhibited elevated levels of meaning in life.

#### 4.5 Level of Psychological Wellbeing among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students

This section presents statistics on the level of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at the five selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. Table 9 presents the distribution of participants across these levels, highlighting the overall psychological well-being of the sample population.

**Table 8: Level of psychological well-being**

<b>Psychological well-being</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Low	42-95	0	0%
Moderate	96-200	101	99.0%
High	201-252	1	1.0%
Total	42-252	102	100%

The findings in Table 8 show that a majority of first-year counselling psychology students in private universities in Nairobi demonstrate a moderate level of psychological wellbeing  $n = 101$  (99.0%). The analysis indicates that no participants (0%) exhibited low levels of psychological well-being, and that only 1% of the participants ( $n = 1$ ) indicated high levels of psychological well-being.

#### **4.6 Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Psychological Well-being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students**

This section presents data to evaluate the relationship between demographic factors (age, gender, employment status) and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

**Table 9: Pearson correlation between Age and Psychological Wellbeing**

Correlations			Correlations		
		Total Well-being Score	Age of Participants		
Total Well-being Score	Pearson Correlation		1	-.122	Total Well-being Score
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.222	
	N		102	102	

Table 9 indicated a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = -0.122$ , reflecting a weak negative correlation between age and psychological well-being. Moreover, the correlation is not statistically significant, as indicated by a p-value of 0.222, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is insufficient evidence to imply that age significantly affects psychological well-being among the first-year counselling psychology students in this sample. Table 10 presents the findings from Independent T-test examining the relationship between employment status and psychological wellbeing.

**Table 10: Independent T-test for employment Status and psychological well-being**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Total	Equal	9.760	.002	-2.449	98	.016	-9.37500	3.82866	-16.97285	-1.77715
Wellbeing	variances									
Score	assumed									
	Equal			-3.508	58.000	.001	-9.37500	2.67246	-14.72452	-4.02548
	variances									
	not									
	assumed									

Levene's test for equality of variances yielded significant results ( $F = 9.760$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), demonstrating a notable difference in psychological well-being scores between employed and unemployed participants,  $t(58) = -3.508$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . The mean difference of  $-9.375$  indicates that employed participants had an average psychological well-being score that was  $9.375$  points lower than that of unemployed participants. The 95% confidence interval covers from  $-14.72$  to  $-4.03$ , affirming the statistical significance of this difference.

**Table 11: Relationship between gender and psychological wellbeing**

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total Wellbeing Score	Equal variances assumed	.455	.502	.171	100	.865	.60000	3.50753	-6.35885	7.55885
	Equal variances not assumed			.178	49.590	.860	.60000	3.37401	-6.17829	7.37829

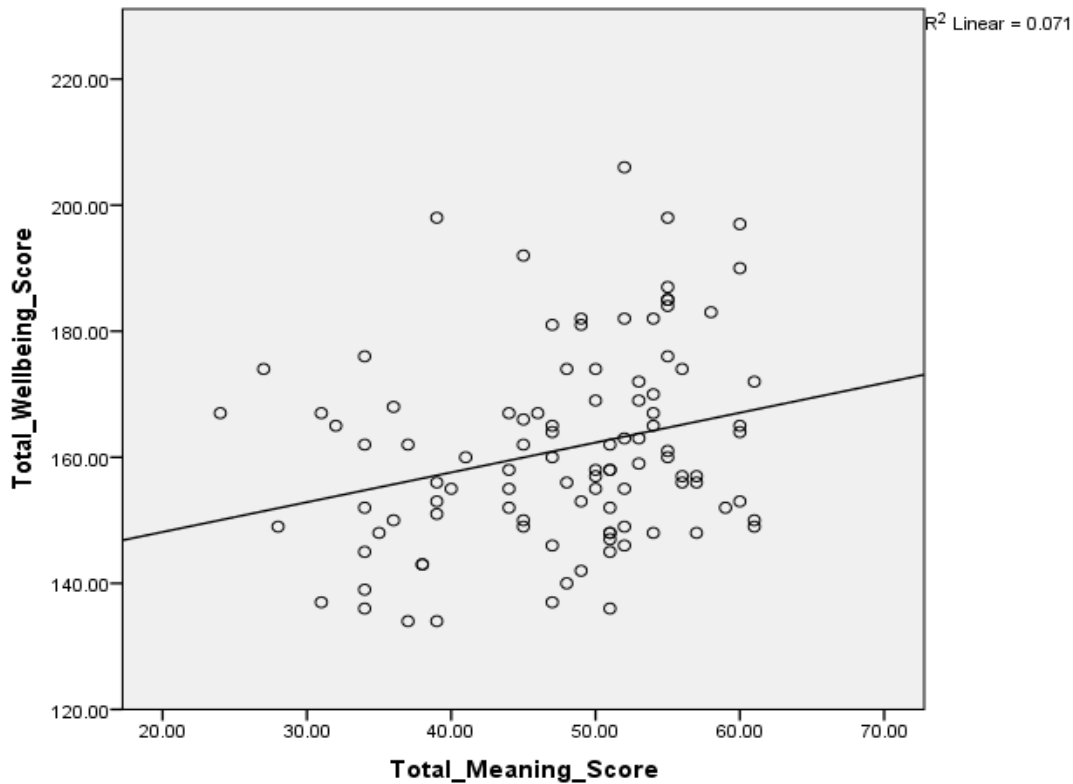
A t-test was performed to analyze the relationship between gender and psychological well-being. The Levene’s test for equality of variances shows that the assumption of equal variances holds, with an F-statistic of 0.455 and a p-value of 0.502, exceeding the 0.05 threshold. The t-test indicates no significant relationship in psychological well-being between males and females, with a t-statistic of 0.171 and a p-value of 0.865 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The mean is 0.600, and the 95% confidence interval spans from -6.36 to 7.56. The confidence interval includes zero, and the p-value is not significant.

#### **4.7 Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students**

Sections 4.4 and 4.5 provided scores regarding the levels of meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. This section employs correlation and regression analysis to determine the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being. Figure 2,

Tables 12, and 13 display the results. Figure 6 below shows a scatter plot between meaning in life and psychological wellbeing among first-year counselling psychology private university students.

**Figure 2: Scatter plot between meaning in life and psychological wellbeing**



The scatter plot shows a positive correlation between meaning in life and psychological well-being. As the Total Meaning Score increases, there is a clear trend for the Total Well-being Score to also increase, suggesting that individuals who experience a greater sense of meaning in life frequently report improved psychological well-being. The fitted straight line indicates a linear relationship, while the arrangement of points around it suggests a positive association that might not be very strong. The Total Meaning Score accounts for approximately 7.1% of the variance in the Total Well-being Score, based on an R-value of 0.071. This indicates that other factors, aside from meaning in life, may also affect psychological wellbeing. While most points fall within the

midrange values, a few outliers demonstrate higher meaning in life scores, while having moderate psychological wellbeing.

**Table 12: Correlation between meaning in life and psychological wellbeing**

<b>Correlations</b>			
		Total Meaning Score	Total Wellbeing Score
Total Meaning Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.266**
Total Wellbeing Score	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	102	102
	Pearson Correlation	.266**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	102	102
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			
Correlations		Total Wellbeing Score	
Total Meaning Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.266**

The correlation coefficient between the Total Meaning Score and Total Wellbeing Score is 0.266. This value indicates a moderately positive correlation between the two variables. This suggests that those who express a greater sense of meaning in life are likely to experience improved psychological well-being. The p-value for the correlation is 0.007, which is below the standard alpha threshold of 0.01.

**Table 13: Regression between presence of meaning in life and psychological well-being**

Model	Coefficients				
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	138.693	8.315	16.679	
	Total Meaning Score	.473	.172	.266	2.754

a. Dependent Variable: Total Wellbeing Score  
Coefficients

The regression coefficients table offers important insights into the relationship between Total Meaning Score and Total Wellbeing Score. The fixed value of 138.693 signifies the anticipated Total Wellbeing Score when the Total Meaning Score is zero, suggesting that if a participant experienced no "meaning in life," their projected wellbeing score would be around 138.69. Additionally, for every extra point in the Total Meaning Score, there is an increase of 0.473 in the Total Wellbeing Score, indicating that greater meaning in life correlates with enhanced psychological wellbeing. The standard error of 0.172 quantifies the accuracy of this coefficient estimate, suggesting a reasonably accurate estimate for the predictor variable since smaller standard errors indicate higher accuracy.

The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.266) facilitates comparisons among variables by normalizing them to a uniform scale, suggesting that the Total Meaning Score exerts a moderate positive influence on the Total Wellbeing Score. The t-value of 2.754 assessed if the coefficient for Total Meaning Score differs significantly from zero, indicating its significant predictive power

for psychological wellbeing. The p-value of 0.007 confirms the statistical significance of the relationship between the Total Meaning Score and Total Wellbeing Score at the 0.01 level, indicating that this predictor is meaningful and not a result of chance.

#### **4.8 Limitation of the Study**

First, conducting the study at the start of the semester presented challenges because students were undergoing registration and orientation. Additionally, not all students had reported for the semester. Second, the challenge of coordinating online students and in-person students arose due to the different days and times of lectures; however, the assistance of field researchers facilitated data collection.

Ryff (1998) does not include scoring for "moderate levels" of psychological well-being in the RPWBS. This study finds moderate levels of psychological well-being. The study found that  $n = 101$  (99.0%), with scores between 96 and 200 categorized as having "moderate" psychological well-being may have experienced uncertainty due to the developmental transition (emerging adulthood) coinciding with their first experience at the university. This provides an opportunity for the tool's developer to consider the effects of transitions in individuals' lives and how this may influence the scale's scoring.

Another possible explanation for the 99% in RPWBS is that the collective administration method of the questionnaires may have been inappropriate for this population. Students may have needed more time to reflect on their engagement with the tool. This could be a relevant case, given that most individuals were in their first year and first semester, just two weeks into the semester, suggesting they had not fully adjusted to their new environment to comprehend their circumstances. The researcher did not foresee this position, underscoring the necessity for other researchers to acknowledge this limitation.

## **4.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter delineated the study findings by first examining the response rate, participant demographic information, and results related to the research four objectives. Tables and figures presented the data, illustrating percentages, relationships, and significance. This chapter clearly indicated the limitations of the study. The following chapter will focus on the evaluation of the study results.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings based on the empirical data from chapter two, along with an evaluation of the two theories that guided the study. The chapter provides an analysis of the conceptual framework in relation to the study findings and concludes with a summary.

#### 5.2 Levels of Meaning in Life among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students

This research evaluated the meaning in life among first-year counselling psychology students at five private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya, utilizing the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) created by Michael F. Steger. The results showed a varied range of meaning levels among participants. Only 3 (2.9%) of respondents indicated low levels of meaning in life, demonstrating a minimal occurrence of significant life dissatisfaction or purposelessness within this sample. According to Steger (2005), people who score low in the meaning and purpose subscales have a deficiency in life values, purpose, and curiosity. A substantial number of participants exhibited moderate levels ( $n = 51, 50.0\%$ ) and high  $n = 48 (47.1\%)$  levels of meaning, with almost all respondents (97.1%) categorized as having either moderate or high meaning in life.

The findings of the current study are both in agreement with those of Romero-Parra (2020), who assessed the link between the level of depression and the meaning of life among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study included 300 participants from the Continental University of Peru and 300 participants from the "Rafael María Baralt" National Experimental University of Venezuela. Among Peru students, the study revealed that 48.5% found meaning, 32.7% were unsure, and 18.9% felt no meaning. Among Venezuelan students, most

(55.45%) had a clear sense of purpose. 31.36% were still searching for meaning, while 13.18% felt a lack of purpose in their lives.

The study by Romero-Parra (2020) explores the unequal distribution of meaning in life, highlighting the influence of challenging circumstances and the identification of meaning within hardships (the study was conducted during COVID-19). The study indicates that students in Peru and Venezuela experienced significant levels of meaning in life, with 48.5% in Peru and 55.45% in Venezuela. The results agree with the findings of this study, which found  $n = 48$ , (47.1%) to have high levels of meaning in life in 2024. However, a notable number of students were searching for meaning in life, with 32.7% in Peru and 31.36% in Venezuela, and 50% in Nairobi County, Kenya. The high numbers of students searching for meaning in Nairobi County, Kenya, might indicate that the academic environment of counselling psychology cultivates a desire to find purpose in life, likely because their studies focus on understanding and supporting others in discovering meaning.

Raza et al. (2019) examined the effect of meaning in life on perceived stress levels in a sample of 254 undergraduate students in Pakistan. The study indicated that female participants reported greater perceived stress levels ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) than their male counterparts ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ). Additionally, men achieved higher scores on the purpose in life questionnaire ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) compared to women ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ). Female students exhibited a more pronounced relationship between stress and meaning in life. The current study did not specifically analyze stress levels; however, the significant percentages of students reporting moderate  $n = 51$  (50.0%) and high  $n = 48$  (47.1%) levels of meaning may suggest a potential protective factor against stress. This indicates that counseling psychology students might have a

distinct edge in their quest for meaning, potentially lessening the effects of academic stressors that were more evident in Raza et al.'s (2019) study.

Asagba et al. (2017) looked at the relationship between 192 college students' self-esteem, life orientation, and search for meaning in their lives. They found that both the presence and search for meaning were significant predictors of self-esteem ( $R^2 = .24$ ;  $F(4, 185) = 13.10$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Female students exhibited greater self-esteem levels ( $M = 28.89$ ) compared to males ( $M = 26.53$ ). The current study indicates that the elevated levels of meaning among counseling psychology students may be associated with improved self-esteem. The notable presence of meaning  $n = 48$  (47.1%), among the participants indicates that involvement in counselling psychology not only offers students a sense of purpose but also likely enhances their self-worth and overall psychological well-being.

Kagwe (2019) conducted a study with 1,173 students from different universities in Kenya, revealing notable differences in students' perceptions of life's meaning and purpose, especially among those from private universities. The study observed a lack of motivation to find purpose in life among students at private institutions, which was particularly highlighted by the difference in perceptions between students at the University of Nairobi (UON) and the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA), with a variance of  $-3.83$  ( $p = .000$ ). The current study indicates that counselling psychology students at private universities exhibit a high prevalence of meaning in life, with only 3 (2.9%) reporting low levels. This finding suggests that certain academic programs, like counselling psychology, foster a greater sense of meaning than the broader trends noted in Kagwe's (2019) study.

The current study shows high levels of meaning among first-year counseling psychology students, while previous studies demonstrate varying degrees of meaning shaped by contextual

factors like stress, gender, and the socio-political climate. The findings indicate the significance of presence and search for meaning in life, especially within the distinct context of academic programs like counselling psychology.

#### **5.4 Levels of Psychological Well-being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students**

The findings on the psychological well-being of first-year counselling psychology students in Nairobi County revealed a notable distribution of well-being levels among participants. No respondents (0%) reported low psychological well-being, indicating the absence of significant psychological distress according to Ryff (1989). A substantial majority, (n = 101, 99.0%) of participants, exhibited implied moderate levels psychological well-being, suggesting they maintained a reasonable degree of well-being amid potential stressors during the transition to university. Only 1.0% (n = 1) reported high psychological well-being (scores of 201-252), reflecting exceptional resilience, self-awareness, and coping skills.

Malinauskas and Dumciene (2016) discovered that students moving to university underwent significant changes in several aspects of psychological well-being, including autonomy (D = 1.14) and purpose in life (D = 1.15), during this important life stage. Their study emphasizes that students typically manage this transition effectively, a conclusion that somewhat corresponds with the moderate (n = 101; 99.0%) well-being noted in the current research. Moreover, Malinauskas and Dumciene (2016) found that the transition to university had a positive impact on psychological well-being, with no significant gender differences in line with the current study (P-value 0.865).

Furthermore, the results from Rugira (2015) indicated that 68.18% of university students were flourishing, underscoring a significant level of psychological health among Tanzanian students, as noted in the current study, with n = 101 (99.0%). Rugira highlighted the importance

of psychological well-being programs, yet the findings of the current study may indicate that counselling psychology students possess superior psychological resources or support systems. Madu et al. (2022) examined the variations in psychological well-being across different ages in students, indicating that scores for autonomy and environmental mastery reached their highest points at distinct life stages. Madu's findings indicate that developmental factors significantly influence psychological well-being; however, the current study's sample is uniform in age, gender, and discipline, which may restrict the variability commonly observed in more diverse student populations. The findings in this study showed a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.122, indicating a weak negative correlation between age and psychological well-being.

In summary, the findings of the current study show a mainly moderate level of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students. However, contrasting data from other studies, which frequently highlight that many students experience psychological distress, contradict with the current results.

### **5.5 Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Psychological well-being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students**

The study on the relationship between demographic factors and psychological well-being in first-year counselling psychology students uncovered several significant insights. The Pearson correlation analysis investigating the impact of age revealed a weak negative correlation (-0.122) with psychological well-being; however, this relationship did not reach statistical significance ( $p = 0.222$ ). This suggests that age does not significantly affect the psychological well-being of the participants, implying that the mental health of students, regardless of their age, remains relatively stable. Levene's test for equality of variances yielded significant results ( $F = 9.760$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), demonstrating a notable difference in psychological well-being scores between employed and

unemployed participants,  $t(58) = -3.508, p = 0.001$ . The mean difference of -9.375 indicates that employed participants had an average psychological well-being score that was 9.375 points lower than that of unemployed participants. The independent samples t-test revealed no significant difference in psychological well-being between male and female students ( $t = 0.171, p = 0.865$ ). This finding shows that gender does not have a significant effect on the psychological well-being of first-year counseling psychology students, indicating that both male and female students encounter comparable psychological well-being or challenges in similar ways.

The results of the current study both align with and differ with several elements of prior research on psychological well-being (PWB) in first-year students. The current study diverges from the findings of Punia and Malaviya (2015). This difference was observed in the total score of psychological well-being ( $t = -3.43$ ) as well as in the factors of self-esteem ( $t = -4.05$ ), environmental mastery ( $t = -5.27$ ), and self-acceptance ( $t = -2.15$ ) among male and female students. The current study revealed no notable differences in psychological well-being between male and female participants ( $t = 0.171, p = 0.865$ ), indicating that in this context, gender did not significantly influence well-being. This difference may stem from cultural or contextual factors, as gender dynamics could affect PWB in varying ways across different regions and populations.

In contrast, the findings of this study align with those of Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2020), who also observed no significant gender differences in the psychological well-being of first-year university students. There were no significant differences found in self-acceptance ( $t = 0.285, p = 0.776$ ), positive relationships with others ( $t = -0.971, p = 0.333$ ), autonomy ( $t = 0.929, p = 0.354$ ), environmental mastery ( $t = 0.067, p = 0.947$ ), purpose in life ( $t = -1.344, p = 0.181$ ), or personal growth ( $t = -0.955, p = 0.343$ ). Likewise, the current study found no notable differences in dimensions of self-acceptance, autonomy, or purpose in life, reflecting the non-significant gender

effects noted in this research. Both studies highlight that in specific academic settings, gender might not significantly influence students' psychological well-being, possibly because of common experiences and challenges faced during early university life.

The study conducted by Madu et al. (2022) in Nairobi, Kenya, highlights a significant age-related difference. Their research revealed that psychological well-being varies with age, particularly in areas such as autonomy, environmental mastery, and personal growth, demonstrating distinct differences across various age groups. The findings revealed that autonomy increased from ages 18 to 22 with a mean score of 4.60, decreased from ages 27 to 30, and peaked at age 36 at 5.00. Environmental mastery scores varied across age groups, with the highest mean score observed in the 18–22 age group. Personal growth scores were highest in the 23–26 age group. Older students, specifically those aged 36 and above, displayed higher scores for positive relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance. In contrast, participants aged 23–26 exhibited elevated levels of personal growth.

The current study did not identify a significant correlation between age and psychological well-being ( $r = -0.122$ ,  $p = 0.222$ ); however, Madu et al. emphasized the developmental trajectory of well-being as students' progress in age. This indicates that, although age might not have an immediate effect on first-year students, it could become a more significant factor as individuals advance through different life stages and gather varied life experiences. Madu et al.'s findings on the relationship between employment status and well-being ( $p < 0.000$ ) confirm the potential influence of employment. However, the current study findings showed that unemployed students demonstrated higher psychological well-being ( $F = 9.760$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) than employed students,

$t(58) = -3.508, p = 0.001$ . This finding warrants further investigation into the factors that may contribute to enhanced psychological well-being amidst challenging economic conditions in Kenya.

### **5.6 Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students**

Findings of the current study reveal a positive correlation ( $r = 0.266, p = 0.007$ ) between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students. This statistically significant relationship suggests that students who report higher levels of meaning in life tend to experience greater psychological well-being. The regression analysis further supports this, indicating that for every additional point in meaning, well-being increases by 0.473, although other factors also likely contribute to well-being. The  $R^2$  value of 0.071 shows that meaning in life explains about 7.1% of the variance in psychological well-being.

The current study's findings align with those of Demir et al. (2023), both emphasizing the positive correlation 30% between meaning in life and psychological well-being in university students. While the current study indicated that meaning in life accounted for roughly 7.1% of the variance in well-being, Demir et al. observed a significantly greater effect, with meaning in life contributing to about 30% of the variance in psychological well-being and 23% in happiness. This indicates that the impact of meaning in life might vary significantly across different cultural or educational settings, as Demir et al.'s research centered on Turkish students, whereas the present study examined Kenyan students.

Chan et al. (2022) examined 536 university undergraduate students from Hong Kong, China, to determine the correlation between compassion, meaning in life, and different psychological factors. The study revealed significant correlations between meaning in life,

flourishing, compassion, and resilience ( $PS < 0.001$ ). The variables exhibited significant negative correlations with psychological distress ( $PS < 0.001$ ). There was a positive correlation between being male and resilience ( $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, family income showed a positive correlation with flourishing and meaning in life ( $PS < 0.05$ ) and a negative correlation with psychological distress ( $p < 0.01$ ). Chan et al.'s (2022) findings suggest that psychological well-being is a complex concept, as previously noted. To achieve high levels of psychological well-being, an individual must experience qualities such as resilience and flourishing, along with family income rather than just personal income, as well as a reduction in psychological distress.

Both Demir et al. (2023) and Can et al. (2022) reveal significant correlations between meaning in life and psychological well-being. However, Chan et al. introduce additional variables such as resilience, compassion, and family income, which are absent from the current study. Their research reveals that a variety of factors, beyond just meaning in life, shape well-being, a finding that aligns with the current study's low R-value of 0.071 on the influence of meaning in life and psychological well-being. This suggests that elements like resilience or flourishing may also significantly impact psychological well-being.

Bano (2014) conducted a study to evaluate the influence of meaning in life on psychological well-being and stress levels among 560 university students from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. The age range was 19 to 38 years  $M = 22.81$ , ( $SD = 2.71$ ). The findings revealed a substantial impact of the level of meaning in life on both stress levels and psychological well-being. It accounted for 17% of the variation in positive psychological well-being and 19% of the variation in stress levels. According to the study, there was a correlation between the perception of meaning in life and reduced stress levels, as well as improved PWB

among the students. The findings in Bano's study align with the current study's results (7.1%), highlighting a significant influence of MiL on PWB, albeit not strong enough.

In a study by García-Alandete (2014), the connection between meaning in life and psychological well-being was examined among 180 undergraduates in Spain, with 138 women (76.7%) and 42 men (23.3%). Their ages ranged from 18 to 55, with a mean age of 22.91 and an SD of 6.71. The study found that meaning in life was a strong predictor of psychological well-being, explaining a significant amount of the variance in various aspects of well-being. It accounted for over 50% of the variance in general psychological well-being; over 40% of the variance in purpose in life, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery; over 20% of the variance in positive relationships and personal growth; and slightly less than 20% of the variance in autonomy. García-Alandete's study highlighted the significance of MiL in predicting PWB among undergraduates. This finding underscores the necessity of incorporating psychological concepts into academic curricula to facilitate students' self-discovery and enhance their sense of meaning and psychological well-being during their higher education experience.

Finally, Olasupo et al. (2017) reported negative correlations between psychological well-being and factors of psychological distress, including anxiety and depression. The results revealed that psychological adjustment in female participants was strongly associated with depression ( $\beta = -.58, p < .01$ ) and social dysfunction ( $\beta = -.21, p < .01$ ). Psychological adjustment had a significant impact on anxiety ( $\beta = -.60, p < .01$ ) and depression ( $\beta = -.60, p < .01$ ) in male participants and also had a smaller effect on social dysfunction ( $\beta = -.11, p < .01$ ). The study found that psychological well-being was negatively associated with anxiety ( $\beta = -.24, p < .01$ ), depression ( $\beta = -.20, p < .01$ ), and social dysfunction ( $\beta = -.10, p < .01$ ). The study highlighted the significance of embracing change or life transitions to engage in meaningful experiences and ensure psychological well-

being. The evaluation revealed that psychological adjustment played a crucial role in determining the mental well-being of both male and female students. The current study did not explicitly address psychological distress; however, MiL and PWB play a significant role in contributing to overall well-being. Olasupo and colleagues underscore the importance of psychological adjustment during life transitions, potentially explaining the current study's limited variance.

### **5.7 Suggestions for theory improvement**

The study explored the concepts of logotherapy by Viktor Frankl and the six-factor model of psychological well-being by Carol D. Ryff. Frankl's theory proposes that the noös, a spiritual dimension, coexists with the physical and psychological aspects of humans. He holds the belief that one can discover meaning in various contexts, including work, culture, relationships, and challenging situations. He identifies the "tragic triad" of pain, guilt, and death as universal experiences that can threaten one's sense of meaning. The study applied Frankl's optimistic outlook to first-year university students undergoing a new environment, emphasizing the importance of a positive outlook to reduce stress and anxiety. Ryff's model emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance, positive relationships, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, and environmental mastery.

The two theories effectively explained behavior in the context of this study and provided a robust framework for examining the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counseling psychology students. However, Logotherapy has limitations when applied to individuals who have not encountered significant life challenges. While it resonates with those who have endured suffering and can find meaning in overcoming adversity, the theory lacks sufficient guidance for individuals who have not experienced tragedies or for those who struggle to perceive positivity in tragic circumstances. In cases where life has not been marked

by significant adversity, Logotherapy may fail to offer a compelling framework for finding meaning. This position offers a chance to enhance the theory by explaining how to find meaning in situations where tragedy has not occurred.

Another limitation of Logotherapy lies in its ambiguity regarding the developmental stages at which one attains meaning in life. Frankl's theory seems more suited to adults who have developed language, self-awareness, and reflective capacities. It is less applicable to young children or adolescents who may be in the process of forming their identities and may not yet be equipped to engage with existential concepts at the same depth.

On the other hand, Ryff's Six-factor Model remains highly relevant for understanding psychological well-being across different life stages, as it incorporates various psychological perspectives, including clinical and developmental viewpoints. However, the model might benefit from the inclusion of a "moderate well-being" category to better capture the nuanced experiences of individuals, particularly during times of transition. Psychological well-being is not a binary state but a continuum that fluctuates based on life circumstances and context. By incorporating a moderate level of well-being, the model could more accurately reflect the complex and often transient nature of individuals' mental states.

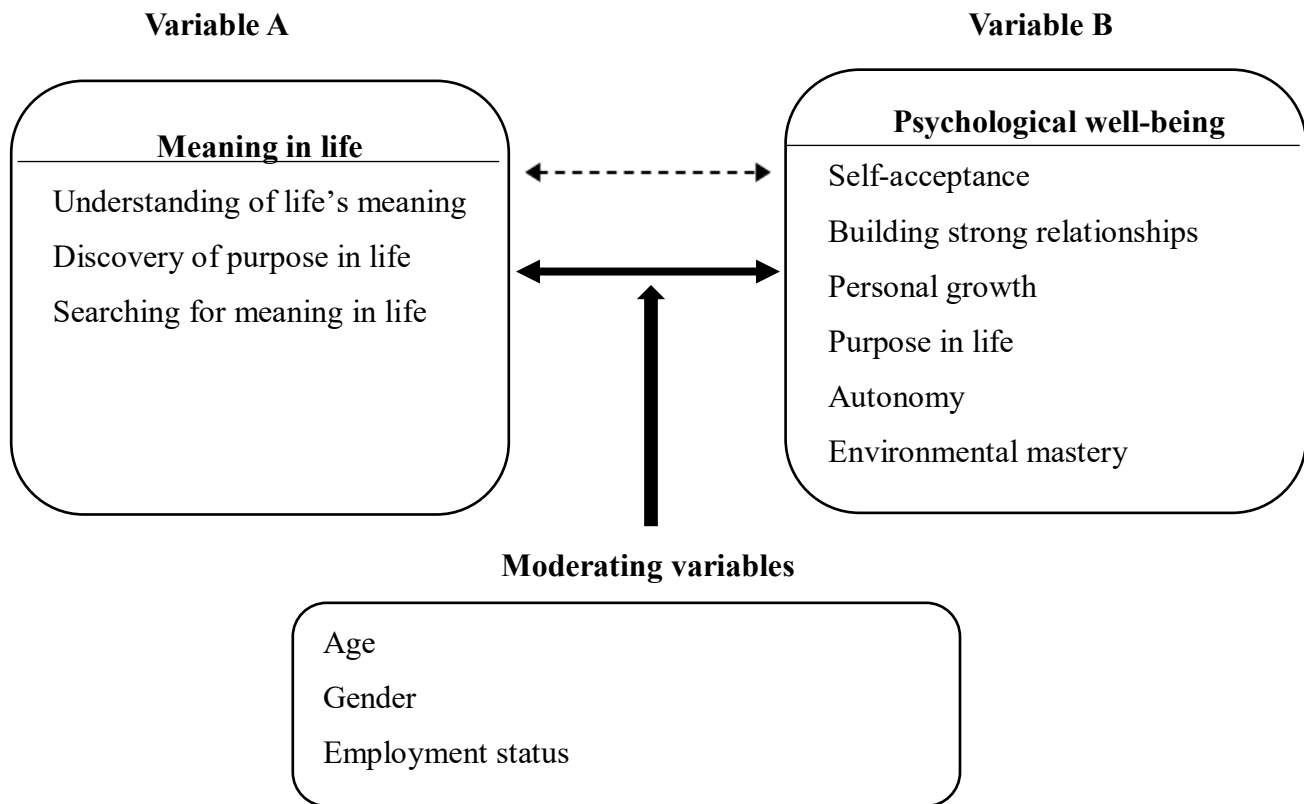
In conclusion, while both Logotherapy and Ryff's Six-factor Model were useful for explaining the constructs under investigation, Logotherapy may need further adaptation to better address the experiences of individuals who have not undergone significant adversity. Ryff's model could also benefit from a more nuanced categorization of well-being, particularly emerging adults navigating developmental transitions.

### 5.8 Revision of the Conceptual framework

This study was initially based on the premise of a relationship between meaning in life (variable A) and psychological well-being (variable B). The study findings support this proposition by indicating a relationship between the two variables.

**Figure 3**

*Revised Conceptual framework*



*Source: Researcher (2024)*

The results indicated a significant relationship ( $r = 0.266$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) between meaning in life and psychological well-being in first-year counselling psychology students. This relationship indicates that students who report higher levels of meaning in life generally experience greater psychological well-being. The regression analysis further supports this. The  $R^2$  value of 0.071 indicates that meaning in life accounts for approximately 7.1% of the variance in psychological

well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at the selected private universities in Nairobi, Kenya. This study confirms the relationship between the two variables.

### **5.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented the study findings in line with the four research questions. The researcher presented interpretations and explanations based on the empirical literature review presented in chapter 2. An assessment of the theories was conducted, along with a review of the conceptual framework informed by the current findings. The following chapter will focus on the summary, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research study, presenting conclusions that align with the statement of the problem and the gap addressed. The chapter offers clear recommendations for the beneficiaries of this study, along with suggestions for future research.

#### 6.2 Summary of Key Findings

The research aimed at examining the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at specific private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study utilized a quantitative approach with a correlational design. A census technique sampled a population of 102 first-year counselling psychology students from five private universities. Data collection involved two instruments: the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger, 2005) and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff, 1989). Stata 16 was utilized for the data analysis.

The first objective examined the level of meaning in life among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The findings indicated that a small portion of first-year students in private universities in Nairobi County,  $n = 3$  (2.9%), reported low levels of meaning in life. Fifty percent ( $n = 51$ ) of the participants exhibited a satisfactory sense of purpose. Forty-eight (47.1%), showed increased levels of meaning in life.

The second objective assessed the level of psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The results indicated that no participants (0%) exhibited low levels of psychological well-being. Only 1% of the participants ( $n = 1$ ) indicated high levels of psychological well-being. The majority of

first-year university students at the selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya, exhibited a moderate level of psychological well-being  $n = 101$  (99.0%).

The third objective determined the relationship between demographic characteristics (age, gender, employment status) and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The results indicated a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $-0.122$ , reflecting a weak negative correlation between age and psychological well-being. Levene's test for equality of variances yielded significant results ( $F = 9.760$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), demonstrating a notable difference in psychological well-being scores between employed and unemployed participants,  $t(58) = -3.508$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Moreover, the t-test indicated no significant difference in psychological well-being between males and females, with a t-statistic of  $0.171$  and a p-value of  $0.865$  ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The fourth objective measured the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The correlation coefficient between the Total Meaning Score and the Total Wellbeing Score was  $0.266$ . This value indicated a positive correlation between the two variables. The regression coefficients revealed that the standardized coefficient (Beta =  $0.266$ ) indicated a moderately positive effect on the Total Wellbeing Score,  $0.01$  level, the t-value of  $2.754$  and the p-value of  $0.007$ .

### **6.3 Conclusions**

The research examined the meaning of life and psychological well-being among first-year counseling psychology students in Nairobi County, Kenya. Numerous students lacked a clear sense of purpose, leading to emotional challenges like dissatisfaction and anxiety. Nearly half of the students reported a significant sense of meaning in life, which contributed to their psychological

resilience. Most students displayed average levels of psychological well-being, indicating they were managing university life but not achieving their maximum potential. One participant exhibited high psychological well-being, whereas none demonstrated low levels.

Factors like age, gender, and employment status had minimal effects on psychological well-being; however, unemployment status demonstrated a significant correlation with it. The relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being was analyzed using correlation and regression analysis, revealing a positive correlation. However, meaning alone was not enough to enhance psychological well-being, and other elements could also play important roles.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

The analysis of meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students in private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya, yields several significant recommendations.

***First-year university students:*** Targeted support programs are necessary for university students, particularly those who lack a clear sense of purpose, leading to emotional challenges such as dissatisfaction and anxiety. Universities could establish support programs that assist students in discovering their life purpose and values. These may consist of workshops centered on self-awareness, personal development, meaning, and mindful existence. Moreover, mentorship programs connect students with older peers or professionals to assist them in navigating personal and academic challenges. Findings of the current study revealed that the majority of the students were in search of meaning in life.

***Tailor Support for Employed and unemployed Students:*** The relationship between employment status and psychological well-being shows that employed students face unique challenges. This highlights the need for universities to provide resources to help employed students

balance their work and academic responsibilities by providing flexible learning options, such as evening or weekend classes, to accommodate their schedules. Universities might also consider creating financial assistance programs or part-time job opportunities on campus to alleviate the financial burden on unemployed students. This study's findings indicated that employed students had lower psychological well-being.

***University administrations:*** Holistic mental health interventions are imperative in higher education institutions. Various factors, not just meaning in life, influence psychological well-being. Universities could implement a comprehensive strategy that takes into account the values and significance of life for their students. Encouraging the development of character and living a harmonious lifestyle that encompasses physical health, academic achievement, and social wellness. Another strategy is promoting extracurricular activities that enable students to discover new interests, build friendships, and improve their overall experience of university life. This includes incorporating elements of well-being into the curriculum by teaching students coping strategies, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness practices. As a result, students may find the university environment supportive and a positive environment for self-discovery. According to the findings of this current study, MiL and PWB had a positive correlation.

Universities could also attain success by leveraging assessment data to improve existing support services and introduce new initiatives, ensuring that the outcomes from these evaluations inform policy changes focused on enhancing student welfare. Implementing these recommendations could allow universities to foster a supportive environment that enhances the psychological well-being and sense of purpose of first-year students, leading to improved academic and personal outcomes.

*Parents and guardians:* Parents and guardians must engage in their children's university experience by guiding them through the transition to university life, helping them make informed decisions, tracking their academic progress, and collaboratively assessing their involvement in the university environment, social activities, academics, and, crucially, the psychological well-being of students.

### **6.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

The current study explored the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at specific private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The researcher focused on the first year of study for counselling psychology students. Students from various academic programs could conduct similar research, enabling a comparison of findings. This could provide valuable insights into the potential differences in measuring meaning in life and psychological well-being depending on the type of the program.

It is recommended to use the RPWBS among fourth-year counselling psychology students. The objective is to determine whether moderate psychological well-being, will manifest, considering that this scoring is not provided for by Carol Ryff (1998). Another recommendation is to conduct a longitudinal study from the first to the fourth year of study, using the same research tools, to evaluate any increase or decrease in MiL and PWB. Additionally, undertaking a study to evaluate PWB and self-awareness may prove advantageous. Lastly, exploring the factors that influence PWB in unemployed students may yield important insights that enhance our overall understanding of emerging adults.

## References

- Aldiabat, K., A. Matani, N., & Le Navenec, C.-L. (2014). Mental health among undergraduate university students: A background paper for administrators, educators and healthcare providers. *Universal Journal of Public Health*, 2(8), 209–214.  
<https://doi.org/10.13189/ujph.2014.020801>
- Aloka, P. J. O. (2023). Effect of Gender on Stressful Experiences of First Year Students. An inside from a public university in Kenya. *Academicus: International Scientific Journal*, 28, 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.7336/academicus.2023.28.04>
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469>
- Asagba, R. B., Agberotimi, S. F., & Wimberly, C. (2017b). Meaning in Life and Life Orientation as Predictors of Self-Esteem Among First-Year Undergraduate Students of a Nigerian University. *International Journal of Existential Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 6(1), 12.  
[http://ir.library.ui.edu.ng/bitstream/123456789/1721/1/%2834%29ui\\_art\\_asagba\\_meaning\\_2016.pdf](http://ir.library.ui.edu.ng/bitstream/123456789/1721/1/%2834%29ui_art_asagba_meaning_2016.pdf)
- Bathmaker, A.-M., Ingram, N., Abrahams, J., Hoare, A., Waller, R., & Bradley, H. (2016). *Higher education, social class and social mobility: The degree generation*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bano, A. (2014). Impact of Meaning in Life on Psychological Wellbeing and Stress Among University Students. Wien: Existenzanalyse, *GLE-International*, 21-25.
- Bhandari, P. (2023, March 4). *Attrition Bias / Examples, Explanation, Prevention*. Scribbr.  
<https://www.scribbr.com/research-bias/attrition-bias/>

- Blumberg, Boris, Donald Cooper, and Pamela Schindler. 2011. Business Research Methods. *The International Journal of Accounting* 42: 330–33
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research. Houghton Mifflin.
- Chan, K. K. S., Lee, J. C., Yu, E. K. W., Chan, A. W. Y., Leung, A. Y. M., Cheung, R. Y. M., Li, C. W., Kong, R. H., Chen, J., Wan, S. L. Y., Tang, C. H. Y., Yum, Y. N. C., Jiang, D., Wang, L., & Tse, C. Y. (2022). The Impact of Compassion from Others and Self-compassion on Psychological Distress, Flourishing, and Meaning in Life Among University Students. *Mindfulness*, 13(6), 1490–1498. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-022-01891-x>
- Cobo-Rendón, R., Pérez-Villalobos, M. V., Páez-Rovira, D., & Gracia-Leiva, M. (2020). A longitudinal study: Affective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, self-efficacy and academic performance among first-year undergraduate students. *Scandinavian journal of psychology*, 61(4), 518-526.
- Commission for University Education - Accredited Campuses of Universities in Kenya - 2016 - Universities data*. (2021). [https://www.cue.or.ke/index.php?option=com\\_phocadownload&view=category&id=18:universities-data-0-3&Itemid=491](https://www.cue.or.ke/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=18:universities-data-0-3&Itemid=491)
- Conley, C. S., Kirsch, A. C., Dickson, D. A., & Bryant, F. B. (2014). Negotiating the Transition to College: Developmental Trajectories and Gender Differences in Psychological Functioning, Cognitive-Affective Strategies, and Social Well-Being. *Emerging Adulthood*, 2(3), 195-210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696814521808>

- Conley, C. S., Shapiro, J. B., Huguenel, B. M., & Kirsch, A. (2018). Navigating the College Years: developmental trajectories and gender differences in psychological functioning, Cognitive-Affective strategies, and Social Well-Being. *Emerging Adulthood, 8*(2), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818791603>
- Conley, C. S., Huguenel, B. M., Shapiro, J. B., & Kirsch, A. (2023). Developmental trajectories and predictors of Psychological Well-Being and Distress across the college years. *The Journal of Higher Education, 94*(6), 792–821. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2023.2171213>
- Cooke, R., Bewick, B. M., Barkham, M., Bradley, M., & Audin, K. (2006). Measuring, monitoring and managing the psychological well-being of first year university students. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 34*(4), 505-517.
- Corey, G., Corey, M., & Callanan, P. (2007). *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Brooks/Cole.
- Creswell, J., W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Sage.
- Das, A. K. (1998). Frankl and the realm of Meaning. *The Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 36*(4), 199–211. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-4683.1998.tb00392.x>
- Demir, S., İşgör, İ. Y., & Yılmaz, Y. (2023). Predictive Effect of Meaning of Life on Psychological Well-Being and Happiness among University Students. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research, 18*(2), 27–48. <https://doi.org/10.29329/epasr.2023.548.2>
- Eloff, I., & Graham, M. A. (2020). Measuring mental health and well-being of South African undergraduate students. *Global Mental Health, 7*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2020.26>
- Fischer, I. C., Secinti, E., Cemalcilar, Z., & Rand, K. L. (2021). Examining cross-cultural

- relationships between meaning in life and psychological well-being in Turkey and the United States. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 22, 1341-1358.
- Frankl, V. (1949). *The doctor and the soul: From psychotherapy to logotherapy*. Second Vintage Books.
- Frankl, V. E. (1963). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Frankl, V. E. (1965). *The doctor and the soul: From psychotherapy to logotherapy*. New York: Vintage Books. Frankl, V. E. (1966). What is meant by meaning? *Journal of Existentialism*, 7, 21–28.
- Frankl, V.E. (1967). *Psychotherapy and existentialism: Selected papers on logotherapy*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Frankl, V.E. (1969). *The will to meaning: Foundations and applications of logotherapy*. London: Souvenir Press.
- Frankl, V.E. (1978). *The unheard cry for meaning: Psychotherapy and humanism*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Frankl, V.E. (1984). *Man's search for meaning (revised Ed.)*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Frankl, V.E. (1986). *The doctor and the soul: From psychotherapy to logotherapy (3rd Ed.)*. New York: Random House.
- Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N.E. (1996). *How to design and evaluate research in education (3rd Ed.)*. McGraw-Hill.
- Galvan, J. L., & Galvan, M. (2017). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Routledge.

- Hardeman, R. R., Przedworski, J. M., Burke, S. E., Burgess, D. J., Phelan, S., Dovidio, J. F., Nelson, D., Rockwood, T., & Van Ryn, M. (2015). Mental Well-Being in First Year Medical Students: A Comparison by Race and gender. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 2(3), 403–413. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-015-0087-x>
- Hughes, G., & Spanner, L. (2019). The University Mental Health Charter | [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340869528\\_The\\_University\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Charter](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340869528_The_University_Mental_Health_Charter)
- Kabir, S. M. (2016). Retrieved on November 15, 2021. Guidelines for Research: An Introductory Approach for All Disciplines (pp.168-180). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325846982\\_sample\\_and\\_sampling\\_designs](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325846982_sample_and_sampling_designs).
- Hong, L. (2008). College stress and psychological well-being: Self-transcendence meaning of life as a moderator. *College Student Journal*, 42(2).
- Kagwe, C. M. (2019). *Meaningful and purposeful transition to institutions of higher learning: A Kenyan Perspective*.
- Kigotho. W. (2023). New funding model places greater burden on the financially able. *University World News*. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20230503180948135>
- Kohútová, V., Špajdel, M., & Dědová, M. (2021). Emerging Adulthood – an Easy Time of Being? Meaning in Life and Satisfaction with Life in the Time of Emerging Adulthood. *Studia Psychologica*, 63(3), 307–321. <https://doi.org/10.31577/sp.2021.03.829>
- Kothari, S.P., Leone, A.J. and Wasley, C.E. (2005) Performance Matched Discretionary Accrual Measures. *Journal of Accounting and Economics*, 39, 163-197. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jacceco.2004.11.002>

- Kothari, C. R., & Garg, G. (2019). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International (P) Limited, Publishers.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). *Determining sample size for research activities*. National Emergency Training Center.
- Largest cities in Africa 2023 | Statista*. (2024, February 13). Statista.  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1218259/largest-cities-in-africa/>
- LatLong.net. (2023). *Nairobi, Kenya*. Lat Long Finder. Retrieved April 6, 2023, from <https://www.latlong.net/place/nairobi-kenya-27614.html>
- Liu, X., Zhao, Y., Suo, X., Zhang, X., Pan, N., Kemp, G. J., Gong, Q., & Wang, S. (2023). Psychological resilience mediates the protective role of default-mode network functional connectivity against COVID-19 vicarious traumatization. *Translational Psychiatry*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41398-023-02525-z>
- Lund, B. (2023). The Questionnaire Method in Systems Research: An Overview of Sample Sizes, Response Rates and Statistical Approaches Utilized in Studies. *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*, 53(1), 1-10.
- Madu, P. A., Ndung'u, E. M., & Egunjobi, J. P. (2022). Career Choice and Psychological Well-being of Undergraduate Students of Universities in Langata Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya. 10.13140/RG.2.2.33144.11522.
- Malinauskas, R., & Dumčienė, A. (2017). Psychological wellbeing and self-esteem in students across the transition between secondary school and university: A longitudinal study. *Psihologija*, 50(1), 21–36. <https://doi.org/10.2298/psi160506003m>

- Mason, H. D. (2017). Sense of meaning and academic performance: A brief report. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 27(3), 282–285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2017.1321860>
- McDowall, J. J. (2016). CREATE’s Advocacy for Young People Transitioning from Care in Australia. In *Palgrave Macmillan UK eBooks* (pp. 285–308). [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55639-4\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55639-4_14)
- Memon, M. A., Ting, H., Ramayah, T., Chuah, F., & Cheah, J. (2017). A Review of the Methodological Misconceptions and Guidelines Related to the Application of Structural Equation Modeling: A Malaysian Scenario. *Journal of Applied Structural Equation Modelling*, i–xiii. [https://doi.org/10.47263/jasem.1\(1\)01](https://doi.org/10.47263/jasem.1(1)01)
- Morales-Rodríguez, F. M., Espigares-López, I., Brown, T., & Pérez-Mármol, J. M. (2020). The relationship between psychological well-being and psychosocial factors in university students. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(13), 4778.
- Mugenda, A. G., & Mugenda, O. M. (2012). *Research Methods Dictionary*. Kenya Arts Press.
- Mugenda, A. & Mugenda, O. (2013). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. ACTS Press.
- Munir, U. (2017, October 10). *Research Instruments for data collection*. Academia.edu. [https://www.academia.edu/34823600/research\\_instruments\\_for\\_data\\_collection](https://www.academia.edu/34823600/research_instruments_for_data_collection).
- Naghiyae, M., Bahmani, B., & Asgari, A. (2020). The Psychometric Properties of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) in Patients with Life-Threatening Illnesses. *The Scientific World Journal*, 2020, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/8361602>
- Nairobi City County. (2023). *About Nairobi City County*. Nairobi City County. Retrieved April 6, 2023, from <https://nairobi.go.ke/about-nairobi/>
- Ndung’u, M. (2023). *Insights*. Grant Thornton Kenya. <https://www.grantthornton.co.ke/insights/>

- Nyaundi, C. C. a. L. (2023, August 19). New funding model threatens survival of private universities. *Health*.  
<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/health/education/article/2001479641/new-funding-model-threatens-survival-of-private-universities>
- Office for National Statistics (OnS). 2018. *Estimating Suicide among Higher Education Students, England and Wales: Experimental Statistics*.  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/estimating-suicide-among-higher-education-students-england-and-wales-experimental-statistics/2018-06-25#:~:text=The%20rate%20of%20suicide%20in,it%20difficult%20to%20identify%20statistically>
- Office for Students (OfS). 2019. *Mental Health: Are All Students Being Properly Supported?*  
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/mental-health-are-all-students-being-properly-supported/>
- Obwatho, S. (2014). *Academic Research Writing: The Logical Sequence*. Starbright Services Ltd.
- Olasupo, M. O., Idemudia, E. S., & Dimakatso. (2017). Adjustment, Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health of First Year students in a South African university. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 20(1), 55.  
<https://repository.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/27749?show=full>
- Paivandi, S. (2018). Performance universitaire, apprentissage et temporalité des étudiants. *Revue Française De Pédagogie*, 202, 99–116. <https://doi.org/10.4000/rfp.7546>

- Park, Y. S., Konge, L., & Artino, A. R. (2020). The positivism paradigm of research. *Academic Medicine, 95*(5), 690–694. <https://doi.org/10.1097/acm.0000000000003093>
- Pearce, N. (2017). Exploring the learning experiences of older mature undergraduate students. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 19*(1), 59–76. <https://doi.org/10.5456/wpll.19.1.59>
- Pratt, J. M., & Yeziarski, E. J. (2018a). A novel qualitative method to improve access, elicitation, and sample diversification for enhanced transferability applied to studying chemistry outreach. *Chemistry Education. Research and Practice, 19*(2), 410–430. <https://doi.org/10.1039/c7rp00200a>
- Punia, N., & Malaviya, R. (2015). Psychological well-being of first year college students. *Indian Journal of Educational Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 2*(1), 60-68.
- Reis, H. (2018). *Relationships, Well-Being and Behaviour: Selected works of Harry Reis*. Routledge.
- Romero-Parra, R. M. (2020b). Depression and the meaning of life in university students in times of Pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Psychology, 9*(3), 223. <https://doi.org/10.17583/ijep.2020.6784>
- Rovai, A. P., Baker, J. D., & Ponton, M. K. (2013). *Social science Research design and statistics: A Practitioner's Guide to Research Methods and IBM SPSS*. Water tree Press LLC.
- Rugira, J., Nienaber, A., & Wissing, M. P. (2013). Psychological Well-Being among Tanzanian University students. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 23*(3), 425–429. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2013.10820647>

- Ryff, C. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>
- Ryff, C. D., & Essex, M. J. (1992). The interpretation of life experience and well-being: The sample case of relocation. *Psychology and Aging*, 7(4), 507–517. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.7.4.507>
- Ryff, C. D. (2014). Psychological well-being revisited: advances in the science and practice of eudaimonia. *Psychotherapy and psychosomatics*, 83(1), 10–28. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000353263>
- Saajanaho, M., Kokko, K., Pynnönen, K., Tourunen, A., Törmäkangas, T., Portegijs, E., & Rantanen, T. (2020). The Scales of Psychological Well-Being – a validation, usability and test–retest study among community-dwelling older people in Finland. *Aging & Mental Health*, 25(5), 913–922. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2020.1725801>
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1989). *Overwhelmed: Coping with Life's Ups and Downs*. Lexington Books.
- Simon, M. K., & Goes, J. (2013). *Assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and scope of the study*. studylib.net. Retrieved October 12, 2022, From <https://studylib.net/doc/8312012/>.
- Slykerman, R. F., & Mitchell, E. A. (2021). Stress, anxiety, and psychological wellbeing in first year university students: Changes over time. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology (Online)*, 50(3), 39-45.
- Statista. (2023, September 22). *Private university enrollment in Kenya 2013-2021*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1237593/private-university-enrollment-in-kenya/>

- Steger, M. F., & Frazier, P. (2005). Meaning in Life: One Link in the Chain from Religiousness to Well-Being. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(4), 574–582. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.4.574>
- Steger, M. (2013). Experiencing meaning in life: Optimal functioning at the nexus of well-being, psychopathology, and spirituality. *The Human Quest for Meaning*, 211–230. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203146286-17>
- Thompson, M., Pawson, C., & Evans, B. (2021). Navigating entry into higher education: the transition to independent learning and living. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45(10), 1398–1410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877x.2021.1933400>
- Raza, A. N., Bhatti, Z. G., & Mehmood, H. (2019). Meaning In Life as a Moderator of Stress in Undergraduate Students. *J. Psychology and Mental Health Care*. Doi, 10, 2637-8892
- Romero-Parra, R. M. (2020). Depression and the Meaning of Life in University Students in Times of Pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 9(3), 223. <https://doi.org/10.17583/ijep.2020.6784>
- Universities and Colleges in Nairobi County in Nairobi Province | Study in Kenya*. (n.d.). <https://studyinkenya.co.ke/universities-and-colleges-in-nairobi-county?page=1>
- Shahira, N., Hanisshya, H., Zm, L., Riza, N., & Azlini, C. (2018). Psychological Well-Being among University Students in Malaysia. 2454-6186.
- Universities UK. (2020). Stepchange: *Mentally Healthy Universities*. <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis /reports/Documents/2020/uuk-stepchange-mhu.pdf>

- Van Der Walt, C. (2019). The relationships between First-Year students' sense of purpose and meaning in life, mental health and academic performance. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v7i2.3828>
- Visser, M., & Law-van Wyk, E. (2021). University students' mental health and emotional wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdown. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 51(2), 229-243.
- Vogel, S., & Draper-Rodi, J. (2017). The importance of pilot studies, how to write them and what they mean. *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine*, 23, 2–3.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijosm.2017.02.001>
- Walliman, N. (2011). *Research Methods the Basics*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203836071>
- Wangare, J. (2020, August 18). *A well-compiled list of the most popular private universities in Kenya*. Tuko.co.ke - Kenya News. <https://www.tuko.co.ke/273383-list-private-universities-kenya.html>
- Zhao, Y., An, Y., Sun, X., & Liu, J. (2019). Self-acceptance, post-traumatic stress disorder, post-traumatic growth, and the role of social support in Chinese rescue workers. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 25(3), 264–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2019.1672935>.
- Zhijia, Y., Razak, R. R. A., Fee, L. Y., & Muhammad, Z. (2023). Influence of Purpose in Life on Meaning in Life among International Chinese University Students in Malaysia.
- Zittoun, T. (2014). Transitions as dynamic processes: A commentary. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 3(3), 232–236.

**Appendix A**  
**Introduction Letter**

Dear Participant,

My name is Caroline Nthenya Okumu, and I am currently pursuing a master's degree in counselling psychology at Tangaza University. I am conducting research on the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study forms part of Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology degree.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. All submitted information will be restricted to the agreed-upon scope and your identity will remain confidential. Please note that you are free to withdraw from the research without facing any consequences. Your participation in this academic study is appreciated and contributes to the existing body of knowledge. However, kindly note that there is no financial compensation available for your involvement. If agreeable, please sign the attached informed consent form and proceed to complete the questionnaires for this study.

I appreciate you taking part in this research.

My heartfelt thanks,

Caroline N. Okumu  
MA- Counselling Psychology Student  
Tangaza University

**Appendix B  
Informed Consent**

<b>Tangaza University</b>
<b>The Name of the Study:</b> Relationship between Meaning in life and Psychological Well-being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students at Selected Private Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This research is being undertaken as part of the master's degree coursework in counselling psychology.</li> <li>• The faculty supervisors have approved. (Contact: <a href="mailto:iysma@tangaza.org">iysma@tangaza.org</a>)</li> <li>• There is no risk to participants in this study, and there is no deceit. Participating in the current phase of the study takes about 25 minutes.</li> <li>• All respondents are kept completely anonymous. The findings of each participant will only be presented in aggregate form, not individually.</li> <li>• There is no monetary compensation or other inducement for participation in this study; your participation is entirely voluntary. All participants have the option to withdraw at any time and have their information deleted without repercussions.</li> </ul>
<b>Researcher:</b> Caroline Nthenya Okumu
<b>Qualifications in the Field of Study:</b> Master's Degree Student
<b>Tangaza University mailing address:</b> Tangaza University, Langata, Nairobi, Kenya, 15055-00509,
<b>Telephone number of the Program Leader:</b>
<b>Researcher's signature</b> ..... <b>Date</b> .....
<p><b>Signed Participant Declaration</b></p> <p>I attest that I have been given with a detailed explanation of the project's aims and my role in it by the organizer and have gotten a copy of the information sheet. There were multiple opportunities for me to ask questions concerning this project, and I affirm that they were all provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I acknowledge that my engagement is voluntary and that I may terminate my involvement at any time.</li> <li>• I consent to taking part in this research.</li> </ul>
<b>Signed by participant</b> ..... <b>Date</b> .....

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire for First-Year Counselling Psychology Students

#### SECTION A: Demographic

Please answer the following questions

1. University: CUEA   
 ILU   
 TU   
 KCAU   
 KEMU

2. Your age: 18-29   
 30 and above

3. Gender: Male   
 Female

4. Employment Employed   
 Unemployed

#### SECTION B: Meaning in Life

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life feel important to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the following: **1 = Absolutely Untrue, 2 = Mostly Untrue, 3 = Somewhat Untrue, 4 = Can't say true or false, 5 = Somewhat True, 6 = Mostly True, 7 = Absolutely True**

<i>Presence of Meaning in Life</i>								
5	I understand my life's meaning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	My life has a clear sense of purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I have discovered a satisfying life purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	My life has no clear purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Search for Meaning in Life</i>								
10	I am looking for something that makes my life feels meaningful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I am always looking to find my life's purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I am searching for meaning in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Source: Michael F. Steger, 2005.

**SECTION C: Psychological Well-being**

The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your life. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement. **1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree Somewhat, 3 = Disagree Slightly, 4 = Agree Slightly, 5 = Agree Somewhat, 6 = Strongly Agree**

<i>Autonomy</i>							
15	I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	I tend to worry about what other people think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Environmental Mastery</i>							
22	In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	The demands of everyday life often get me down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I have been able to build a living environment and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Personal Growth</i>							
28	I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Positive Relations with Others</i>							
36	Most people see me as loving and affectionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6

38	I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members and friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40	People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41	I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42	I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b><i>Purpose in Life</i></b>							
43	I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44	I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45	I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46	My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47	I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48	Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49	I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b><i>Self-Acceptance</i></b>							
50	When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51	In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52	I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53	I like most parts of my personality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54	In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55	My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56	When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Source: (Ryff, C. D, 1989)

## Appendix D

### Permission to use Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale



Caroline N Okumu <ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke>

---

## RYFF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING SCALE

3 messages

---

Caroline N Okumu <ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke>

Mon, Aug 21, 2023 at 8:21 PM

To: "cryff@wisc.edu" <cryff@wisc.edu>

Dear Dr. Ryff,

I am honored to have the opportunity to write to you. Thank you for the opportunity to contact you and for your significant contributions to the field of counselling psychology.

I am Caroline Nthenya Okumu, a graduate student at Tangaza University College in Nairobi County, Kenya. My area of study is counselling psychology, specifically trauma counselling.

I am currently conducting research for my thesis, which aims to quantify the following:

**Relationship Between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being Among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students at Private Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya**

I am writing to respectfully seek your authorization to utilize your instrument for the purpose of conducting the study. Dr. Ryff, I would greatly appreciate any information you can provide about the instrument.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,  
Caroline N. Okumu

---

Theresa Berrie <berrie@wisc.edu>

Tue, Aug 22, 2023 at 4:21 PM

To: "ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke" <ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke>

Greetings,

Thanks for your interest in the well-being scales.  
I am responding to your request on behalf of Carol Ryff.  
She has asked me to send you the following:

**You have her permission to use the scales for research or other non-commercial purposes.**

They are attached in the following files:

"Ryff PWB Scales" includes:  
- psychometric properties

- scoring instructions
- how to use different lengths of the scales (see note about the 18-item scale, which is NOT recommended. It does a bad job measuring the six dimensions.)

“Ryff PWB Reference Lists” includes:

- a list of the main publications about the scales
- a list of published studies using the scales

There is no charge to use the scales and no need to send us the results of your study. We do ask that you please send us copies of any journal articles you may publish using the scales to: [berrie@wisc.edu](mailto:berrie@wisc.edu) and [cryff@wisc.edu](mailto:cryff@wisc.edu).

Best wishes for your research,

-

Theresa Berrie  
UW-Madison Institute on Aging  
[berrie@wisc.edu](mailto:berrie@wisc.edu)  
Work Days: Tuesday through Thursday

**From:** CAROL RYFF <[cryff@wisc.edu](mailto:cryff@wisc.edu)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 21, 2023 12:55 PM  
**To:** Theresa Berrie <[berrie@wisc.edu](mailto:berrie@wisc.edu)>  
**Subject:** FW: RYFF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING SCALE

[Quoted text hidden]

**2 attachments**



**1- Ryff PWB Scales.docx**  
92K



**2- Ryff PWB Reference Lists.docx**  
208K



**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
*Teaching minds | Touching hearts | Transforming lives*

*Certificate, Diploma, Degree and Post Graduate Courses in  
School of Theology | School of Arts and Social Sciences  
and School of Education*

January 2024 Intake Ongoing

Tangaza University College +254 722 204 724 [www.tangaza.ac.ke](http://www.tangaza.ac.ke)  
 tangazauniversity @TangazaCollege



## Appendix E

### Permission to use Meaning in life questionnaire



Caroline N Okumu <ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke>

---

## PERMISSION TO USE MEANING IN LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

2 messages

---

Caroline N Okumu <ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke>

Mon, Mar 4, 2024 at 2:26 AM

To: "Michael F. Steger" <Michael.F.Steger@colostate.edu>

Dear Professor Steger,

I am honoured to have the opportunity to write to you. Thank you for the opportunity to contact you and for your significant contributions to the field of counselling psychology.

I am Caroline Nthenya Okumu, a graduate student at Tangaza University College in Nairobi County, Kenya. My area of study is counselling psychology, with a specialisation in trauma counselling.

I am currently writing my proposal to conduct research for my thesis, which aims to measure psychological well-being and meaning in life among first-year counselling psychology students at private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

I am writing to respectfully seek your authorization to utilise your instrument for the purpose of conducting the study. Professor Steger, I would greatly appreciate any further information you can provide about the instrument.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,  
Caroline N. Okumu

---

Steger, Michael <Michael.F.Steger@colostate.edu>

Mon, Mar 4, 2024 at 9:57 PM

To: Caroline N Okumu <ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke>

Hello,

**You certainly have permission to use the MLQ in your research.**

**Best of luck,**

Mike

Michael F. Steger, Ph.D. (*he/him/his*)

Director of the Center for Meaning and Purpose

Professor, Counseling Psychology & Applied Social and Health Psychology

Colorado State University

[michaelfsteger.com](http://michaelfsteger.com)

*I acknowledge, with respect, that the land I live and work on today is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations and peoples. This was also a site of trade, gathering, and healing for numerous other Native tribes.*

---

**From:** Caroline N Okumu <[ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke](mailto:ys79000122021@tangaza.ac.ke)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 3, 2024 4:26 PM  
**To:** Steger,Michael <[Michael.F.Steger@colostate.edu](mailto:Michael.F.Steger@colostate.edu)>  
**Subject:** PERMISSION TO USE MEANING IN LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

**\*\* Caution: EXTERNAL Sender \*\***

[Quoted text hidden]



**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
*Teaching minds | Touching hearts | Transforming lives*






*Certificate, Diploma, Degree and Post Graduate Courses in  
School of Theology | School of Arts and Social Sciences  
and School of Education*

**January 2024 Intake Ongoing**

 Tangaza University College  +254 722 204 724  [www.tangaza.ac.ke](http://www.tangaza.ac.ke)  
 [tangazauniversity](https://www.instagram.com/tangazauniversity)  [@TangazaCollege](https://twitter.com/TangazaCollege)



**Appendix F**  
**NACOSTI Permit**

 <b>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</b>	 <b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b>	
<b>RefNo: 351100</b>	<b>Date of Issue: 11/July/2024</b>	
<b>RESEARCH LICENSE</b>		
		
<p><b>This is to Certify that Ms. Caroline Nthenya Okumu of Tangaza University College, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students at Selected Private Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya for the period ending : 11/July/2025.</b></p>		
<b>License No: NACOSTI/P/24/37587</b>		
<b>Applicant Identification Number</b> <b>351100</b>		<b>Director General</b> <b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b>
<b>Verification QR Code</b>		
		
<b>NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.</b>		
<b>See overleaf for conditions</b>		

Appendix G

Research Authorization Letter from the Nairobi County Governor



NAIROBI CITY COUNTY  
www.nairobi.go.ke

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

County Secretary and Head of County Public Service

Institution....

NCC/CS/RPD/ 19/01/2024

Name Caroline Nthony Okumu

Institution Tanzania University

1?/1.f.dü....

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

We are in receipt of a letter/clearance/request from

Tanzania University

regarding research authorization in Nairobi City County on:

Relationship b/w meaning in life & psychological well-being among first year counselling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted for a period of...t...H.QP<sup>d</sup>., as per your letter/clearance/request.

This authority notwithstanding;

A student(academic) must have;

- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation(NACOSTI) clearance
- Institution clearance
- Personal application letter
- Copy of the proposal and research tool
- Proof of payment where applicable (cf: Nccg finanæ bill 2023)
- Ethical clearance where applicable

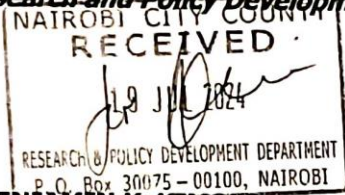
For individuals,

- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation(NACOSTI) clearance
- Personal application letter
- Copy of the proposal and research tool
- Proof of payment where applicable (cf: Nccg finance bill 2023)
- Ethical clearance where applicable

For institutions,

- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation(NACOSTI) clearance
- Institution clearance
- Int-oduction letter
- Research tool
- Proof of payment where applicable (cf: Næg finanæ bill 2023)
- Ethical clearance where applicable

A final copy of the research findings should be forwarded to the Directorate of Research and Policy Development



**DR. BENJAMIN K. KIMOLO**

DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

CC. COUNTY SECRETARY AND HEAD OF PUBLIC SERVICE

## Appendix H

### Research Authorization Letter from the County Commissioner



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION  
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Telegrams: .....  
Telephone: Nairobi 316845/341666  
When replying please quote

COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
NAIROBI COUNTY  
P.O. Box 30124-00100  
NAIROBI

REF: ED 10/6 VOL.XXIX (147)

22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2024

Caroline Nthenya Okumu  
TANGAZA UNIVERSITY

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Your letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 refers.

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted to conduct research on the topic "Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being Among First-Year Counseling Psychology Students" in Nairobi, Kenya for the period ending 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

NURIA MOHAMED  
**for: COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

Copy to: Deputy County Commissioner.

**KASARANI SUBCOUNTY**

Deputy County Commissioner.

**STAREHE SUBCOUNTY**

Deputy County Commissioner.

**WESTLANDS SUBCOUNTY**

Deputy County Commissioner.

**LANGATA SUBCOUNTY**

## Appendix I

### Research Authorization Letter from Director of Education



Republic of Kenya

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR BASIC EDUCATION**

Telegrams: "SCHOOLING", Nairobi  
Telephone: Nairobi 020 2453699  
Email: [rcenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:rcenairobi@gmail.com)  
[cdenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:cdenairobi@gmail.com)

REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI REGION  
NYAYO HOUSE  
P.O. Box 74629 – 00200  
NAIROBI

When replying please quote

Ref: RDE/NRB/RES/1/65 Vol.1 (S4)

Date: 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2024

Ms. Caroline Nthenya Okumu  
Tangaza University.

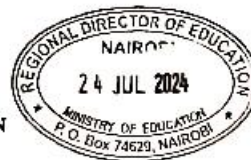
**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

We are in receipt of a letter from National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation, regarding research authorization in Nairobi County on the topic: "RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEANING IN LIFE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG FIRST -YEAR COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS AT SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NAIROBI, KENYA". For a period ending 11/07/2025.

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted on the condition that the exercise will be carried out within the ethical and professional standards as required.

A report on the exercise will be required on completion.

  
DR. PETER KIRIKA  
FOR: REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI.



## Appendix J

### Permission to Collect Data at CUEA



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & RESEARCH

Our Ref: Ag.DVC/AA&R/GK/jm/093/2024

29<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Ms. Caroline N. Okumu**  
Tanga University  
P. O. Box 30623  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Email: [carolinenokumu@gmail.com](mailto:carolinenokumu@gmail.com)

Dear Caroline,

**Re: Permission to Collect Data at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)**

Greetings from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa!

I am glad to inform you that your request to research the topic: ***“Research Between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being among First Year Counselling Psychology Students at Selected Private Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya”***, has been granted. You are therefore authorized to collect data from the targeted participants at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. You are expected to strictly observe the normal ethical cautions and discretions while conducting the research.

I wish you well with your study and I look forward to you sharing your findings with the Directorate of Research and Innovation of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

Regards

**Prof. George Kimathi**  
**Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Academic Affairs & Research**



CC Directorate of Research and Innovation

## Appendix K

### Permission to Collect Data at KEMU



#### Kenya Methodist University

P.O. Box 267-60200, Meru, Kenya, Tel: (+254) 724 256 162, 064-3131279/097 Email: [vice.chancellor@kemu.ac.ke](mailto:vice.chancellor@kemu.ac.ke), Website: [www.kemu.ac.ke](http://www.kemu.ac.ke)

#### OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR, ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

August 07, 2024

Caroline Nthenya Okumu  
TANGAZA UNIVERSITY

Email: [carollinenokumu@gmail.com](mailto:carollinenokumu@gmail.com)

Dear Caroline,

RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA

Greetings from Kenya Methodist University.

Your request to be allowed to collect data for your research titled, "*Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students in Selected Private Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya; A case Study of Kenya Methodist University, Nairobi Campus, Nairobi County, Kenya*" at Kenya Methodist University has been approved.

Please note that only approved data forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants with their individual consent. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. Further, any substantial changes in the scope of your research from what is presently provided will require an approval from the University.

If the terms are acceptable to you, please sign a copy of this letter and return it to the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Extension as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

REV. DR. MARY KINOTI, Ph.D  
DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

I, the undersigned hereby confirm acceptance of this offer and the conditions stated herein.

Name..... Signature.....

## Appendix L

### Permission to Collect Data at ILU



#### Office of the Dean School of Education and Social Sciences

19<sup>th</sup> August, 2024

Caroline Okumu  
Tangaza University  
P.O BOX 15055-00509  
Langata South Road, Nairobi

Dear Caroline,

**RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA AT INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY**

Greetings from ILU.

This is to acknowledge receipt of your email requesting permission to collect data from ILU for your research titled: **'Relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counseling psychology students at selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.'**

It is important that you secured the necessary research approvals and clearance. The permission to collect data from ILU is therefore granted. Please note that the data collected **must** be used anonymously to safeguard the participant's confidentiality and maintain ethical standards. Further, you are required to share the research data with us for our own records.

We wish you all the best in your valuable contribution to academia.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr. Naomi Makau

Dean School of Education and Social Sciences

# Appendix M

## Permission to Collect Data at KCAU



Thika Road, Exit 5, Utalii Lane, Ruaraka  
P.O. Box 56808-00200 Nairobi, Kenya  
Telephone: 0754 888022, 0710888 022  
Email: dvcrio@kcau.ac.ke  
Website: www.kcau.ac.ke

### OFFICE OF THE DVC RESEARCH, INNOVATION & OUTREACH

Ref: KCAU/DVCRIO/08/Vol. 13

8<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Caroline N. Okumu  
Tangaza University  
P.O. Box 15055-00509  
**NAIROBI.**

Dear Ms.Okumu,

#### **RE: AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT KCA UNIVERSITY**

Reference is made to your letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 requesting authorization to conduct research at KCA University on the topic *"Relationship Between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being Among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students at Selected Private Universities in Nairobi"* for your Master's Program at Tangaza University.

I am pleased to inform you that your request to collect data has been considered and approved. KCA University guidelines and policies as well as the Data Protection Act of 2019 shall apply as you collect your data in the University. It is noted that the data collected at KCA University shall solely be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

The University requires that upon completion of your research, you will submit a copy of your report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Research, Innovation and Outreach (RIO) for records.

Thank you.

**Professor Vincent O. Onywera**  
**DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND OUTREACH &**  
**PROFESSOR OF EXERCISE AND SPORTS SCIENCE**

cc Vice Chancellor & CEO  
DVC – Academic & Student Affairs  
DVC – Finance, Planning & Development  
Dean, Research, Innovation and Outreach  
Chair, KCAUSERC  
KCA University Data Protection Office

Sponsored by ICPAK

**Appendix N**  
**Permission to Collect Data at TU**

Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics, Research, & Student Affairs  
Tangaza University  
P.O. Box. 15055-00509,  
Nairobi, Kenya

25/07/2024

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION AT TANGAZA UNIVERSITY**  
**(TU)**

My name is Caroline Nthenya Okumu, and I am a student at Tangaza University pursuing a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology. I am writing to request permission to conduct research to measure the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being among first-year counselling psychology students. I will be conducting my research at five selected private universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. I have chosen your esteemed university for this research.

The other universities are as follows:

International Leadership University (ILU)  
Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA)  
KCA University  
Tangaza University (TU)

Giving me an opportunity will greatly contribute to the development of knowledge within the counselling psychology community.

Looking forward to your favorable response.

Yours Faithfully,

*Caroline N. Okumu*  
Caroline N. Okumu

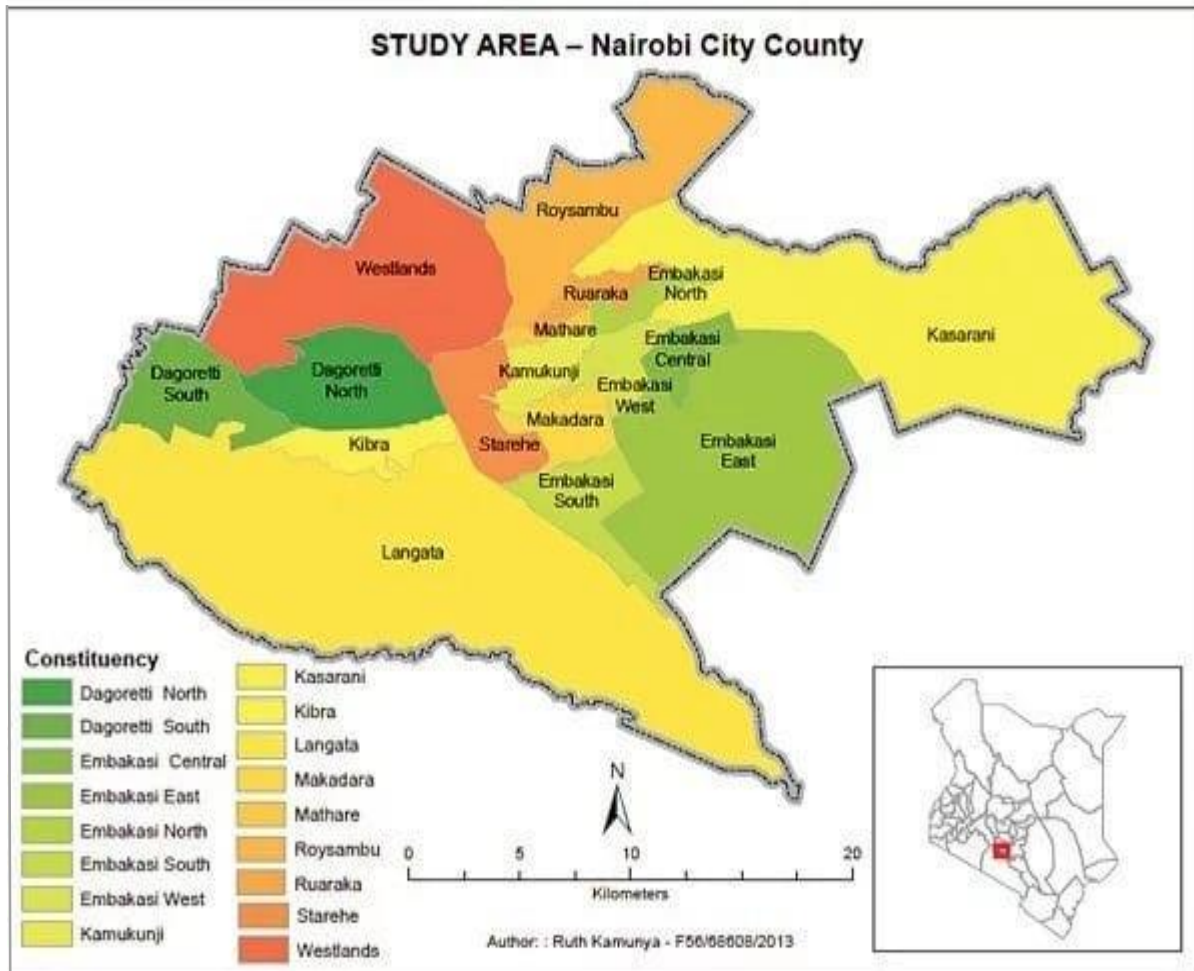
Tangaza University- MA Student (Counselling psychology)



*Authorised to proceed  
to the relevant offices  
for Assistance*

## Appendix O

### Map of Nairobi County



# Appendix P

## Plagiarism Report

10/11/24, 9:51 AM Turnitin - Originality Report - Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being among First-year Counseling P...

<p><b>Turnitin Originality Report</b></p> <p>Processed on: 15-Oct-2024 15:03 EAT          ID: 2485951144          Word Count: 15922          Submitted: 1</p> <p>Relationship between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being among First-Year Counselling Psychology Students at Selected Private Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya By Caroline Nthenya Okumu</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <p><b>TANGAZA UNIVERSITY</b>            University Librarian            P.O. Box 15055 - 00509,            Nairobi.</p> </div> <p><i>Apilina</i></p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Similarity Index</td> <td style="text-align: center;">13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Similarity by Source</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Internet Sources:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publications:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Papers:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6%</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table>	Similarity Index	13%	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Similarity by Source</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Internet Sources:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publications:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Papers:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6%</td> </tr> </table>		Similarity by Source		Internet Sources:	12%	Publications:	6%	Student Papers:	6%
Similarity Index	13%													
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Similarity by Source</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Internet Sources:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publications:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Papers:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6%</td> </tr> </table>		Similarity by Source		Internet Sources:	12%	Publications:	6%	Student Papers:	6%					
Similarity by Source														
Internet Sources:	12%													
Publications:	6%													
Student Papers:	6%													

- < 1% match (Internet from 29-Feb-2024)  
[https://kindf.com/does-meaning-in-life-predict-psychological-well-being-an-analysis-using-the-span\\_Sab49d291723dd349c816fc9.html](https://kindf.com/does-meaning-in-life-predict-psychological-well-being-an-analysis-using-the-span_Sab49d291723dd349c816fc9.html)
- < 1% match (Internet from 20-Feb-2024)  
[https://kindf.com/impact-of-meaning-in-life-on-psychological-well-being-and-stress-among-universit\\_Sab49c371723dd329c63fdb1.html](https://kindf.com/impact-of-meaning-in-life-on-psychological-well-being-and-stress-among-universit_Sab49c371723dd329c63fdb1.html)
- < 1% match (Internet from 25-Jun-2021)  
<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/13/4778/html>
- < 1% match (Internet from 01-Feb-2023)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247839194\\_Assessment\\_of\\_Existential\\_Meaning\\_and\\_Its\\_Longitudinal\\_Relations\\_with\\_Depressive\\_S](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247839194_Assessment_of_Existential_Meaning_and_Its_Longitudinal_Relations_with_Depressive_S)
- < 1% match (Internet from 12-Feb-2023)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311631803\\_Structure\\_and\\_Levels\\_of\\_Meaning\\_in\\_Life\\_and\\_Its\\_Relationship\\_With\\_Mental\\_Health\\_in](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311631803_Structure_and_Levels_of_Meaning_in_Life_and_Its_Relationship_With_Mental_Health_in)
- < 1% match (Internet from 26-Mar-2023)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335397353\\_Meaning\\_in\\_Life\\_and\\_Life\\_Orientation\\_as\\_Predictors\\_of\\_Self-Esteem\\_Among\\_First-Year\\_Undergraduate\\_Students\\_of\\_a\\_Nigerian\\_University](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335397353_Meaning_in_Life_and_Life_Orientation_as_Predictors_of_Self-Esteem_Among_First-Year_Undergraduate_Students_of_a_Nigerian_University)
- < 1% match (Internet from 30-Dec-2022)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271658855\\_Mindfulness\\_Basic\\_Psychological\\_Needs\\_Fulfillment\\_and\\_Well-Being](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271658855_Mindfulness_Basic_Psychological_Needs_Fulfillment_and_Well-Being)
- < 1% match (Internet from 04-Feb-2023)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Salim-Ibisi/publication/294827854\\_Boloesel\\_Otel\\_Isletmelerinin\\_Kuresel\\_Otel\\_Isletmeleri\\_Ile\\_Rekabette\\_Bilgi\\_Iletisim\\_Teknolojilerinin\\_Onemli/links/5f0tel-isletmelerinin-Kuresel-Otel-Isletmeleri-Ile-Rekabette-Bilgi-Iletisim-Teknolojilerinin-Onemli.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Salim-Ibisi/publication/294827854_Boloesel_Otel_Isletmelerinin_Kuresel_Otel_Isletmeleri_Ile_Rekabette_Bilgi_Iletisim_Teknolojilerinin_Onemli/links/5f0tel-isletmelerinin-Kuresel-Otel-Isletmeleri-Ile-Rekabette-Bilgi-Iletisim-Teknolojilerinin-Onemli.pdf)
- < 1% match (Internet from 15-Jan-2024)  
<https://worldwidescience.org/topicpages/p/positive+well-being+psychological.html>
- < 1% match (Internet from 12-Nov-2023)  
<https://worldwidescience.org/topicpages/p/patient+financial+well-being.html>
- < 1% match (student papers from 23-Jul-2017)  
 Submitted to Mount Kenya University on 2017-07-23
- < 1% match (student papers from 20-Aug-2019)  
 Submitted to Mount Kenya University on 2019-08-20
- < 1% match (Internet from 29-Apr-2023)  
[http://etd.uwc.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11394/9690/rotich\\_m\\_chs\\_2023.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](http://etd.uwc.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11394/9690/rotich_m_chs_2023.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)
- < 1% match (student papers from 19-Oct-2023)  
 Submitted to University of the Western Cape on 2023-10-19
- < 1% match (student papers from 19-Oct-2023)  
 Submitted to University of the Western Cape on 2023-10-19
- < 1% match (student papers from 16-Oct-2023)  
 Submitted to University of the Western Cape on 2023-10-16
- < 1% match (Internet from 14-Jan-2023)  
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/232559872.pdf>
- < 1% match (Internet from 23-Sep-2022)  
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/81996571.pdf>
- < 1% match (Internet from 26-Dec-2022)  
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/188733618.pdf>
- < 1% match (Internet from 18-Jan-2023)  
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/213087682.pdf>
- < 1% match (Internet from 19-Oct-2022)

[https://www.turnitin.com/courent\\_printview.asp?doc=1&ch=1&cm=5&cid=2485951144&cid=0&n=0&m=2&ev=6&f=70\\_62714042803650&lang=en\\_US](https://www.turnitin.com/courent_printview.asp?doc=1&ch=1&cm=5&cid=2485951144&cid=0&n=0&m=2&ev=6&f=70_62714042803650&lang=en_US)