

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY



INTRODUCTION

The Department of Psychology at the University of Nairobi was started in 1988 to offer Educational Psychology units to the Bachelor of Education students in the School of Education and Nursing Science students in the School of Health Sciences. In 1999, the Department introduced the Bachelor of Psychology degree in counseling in response to a growing need and demand for Counselling Psychologists in the country.

This was in recognition of the fact that traditional African structures and systems that long provided the needed psychological, emotional and spiritual support had been eroded by modernism, urbanization and individualism leading to a number of psychological problems in the society. Consequently, this has brought about the need for counselors, clinical psychologists, social and community psychologists, lecturers and researchers in psychology to name a few. The Bachelor of Counselling Psychology programme offered by the Department of Psychology was the first professional programme in Kenya aimed at responding to this need.

COMPETITIVENESS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

The Department of Psychology has highly qualified and competent staff who are both locally and internationally trained and have published widely. Teaching at the department is focused on developing understanding and generation of solutions to community problems. One of the strongest areas in our psychology programmes is the training in research methodology which is taught at all levels from undergraduate to PhD. The aim is to produce graduates who are versatile and knowledgeable about the society's problems and the search for solutions. At every level of learning, therefore, a student is usually required to conduct field work and write a research paper or project report under supervision.

Due to our competitiveness in the academic

sector, our academic staff have been at the forefront in providing high quality consultancy services to a number of National Institutions including the Kenya Police, Kenya Prisons, Kenya Defence Forces, Kenya Institute of Special Education, Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund and Kenya National Examinations Council.

The caliber of graduates we produce is unmatched. Most of them are highly recognized and they hold positions of responsibility in society including: teachers, nurses, counselors, bankers and military and police officers. Many of them have taken keen interest in the forthcoming general elections as returning officers, organizers and analysts in the opinion polls.

In order to ensure good quality of service to our clients and stakeholders, the department strives to promote a caring attitude among staff members as well as students. Both academic and administrative staffs are always ready and available for consultation. Students are encouraged to consult staff through email and messaging services (chat) as they engage in self-directed learning. Academic staff members are also trained in the use of electronic programmes such as 'Blackboard' and Power Point which has helped in making learning more interactive. Above all, our students have access to a well-stocked library that provides current reading materials on all areas of Psychology. They also have access to the internet where they are able to access world class journal articles to supplement class discussions.

The department also seeks to develop a sense of social responsibility besides academic competences in the students. As such, students have a vibrant Psychology Club, through which the department links them with institutions such as NACADA, St. John's Ambulance, National and Disaster Management Authority. Staff from these institutions are occasionally invited to train students in life skills including First Aid, handling Disasters and Peer Counseling in order to empower them on the need to avoid drugs and other social problems. The Club also organizes community voluntary services to disadvantaged children and homes for the elderly.

PSYCHOLOGY AS A SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT

Psychology is a science. As a subject, it seeks

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| Prof. Priscilla W. Kariuki Chairperson Dept. of Psychology | Prof. Preston Augustine Chitere Dean Faculty of Arts | Prof. Enos H. Nthia Njeru The Principal College of Humanities and Social sciences |

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| Dr. (Rev.) Lucas G. Mwaura Lecturer Dept. of Psycholog | Dr. Luke N. Odiemo Lecturer Dept. of Psychology |

to systematically study behavior of organisms and the underlying mental processes in order to understand, predict and where necessary influence that behavior for the betterment of the organism. It is an area of study that cuts across both Natural and Social Sciences.

Depending on the orientation one takes, it is possible to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology or a Bachelor of Arts degree. Studies in areas such as Community Psychology, Social Psychology, Environmental Psychology or Family Psychology can lead to a BA (Bachelor of Arts) degree while studies in Cognitive Science, Artificial Intelligence or Biopsychology will lead to a BSc. (Bachelors of Science) degree. There are also cross-cutting areas that can either lead to a BA

or BSc. Degree such as Clinical Psychology, Psychological Testing, Health Psychology, Educational Psychology, Child Development, Counselling among others. In total, there are about 55 areas of psychology that one can pursue a degree in. These areas of psychology address virtually all aspects of human life including Military Psychology, Police Psychology, Engineering Psychology, Legal Psychology, Sports Psychology besides the more familiar areas such as Educational Psychology, Counseling Psychology and Clinical Psychology.

In broader terms, psychology as a discipline basically seeks to understand human behaviour in all spheres of human undertaking whether in Politics, Security, Education, Health, Economics or Management. This means that it is a discipline that is applicable to all aspects of human life.

Since psychology as a discipline is dynamic and can combine with other disciplines, currently through the Department of Psychology it is offered in the Faculty of Arts as a Major or a Minor specialization. Many students taking other disciplines such as Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Languages, History, Literature and Philosophy have enjoyed various units as core or electives in psychology. Upon a successful completion of the studies, candidates are usually awarded the degrees of Bachelor of Counselling Psychology, Bachelor of Arts (Psychology), Master of Education (Measurement and Evaluation) as well as a Diploma in Counselling.

Besides the services offered in its parent unit, The Faculty of Arts, the Department of Psychology also services other schools and faculties at the University of Nairobi.



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In the College of Education and External Studies, psychology staff members usually teach educational psychology to students in the Bachelor of Education program and the Master of Education in Measurement and Evaluation programme. The Department also teaches psychology in the Faculty of Agriculture, School of Nursing Sciences at the Medical School, College of Engineering and Architecture, School of Economics and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication respectively.

Due to a high demand in the training of specialized psychology students the department has introduced two new Masters Programmes as follows:

i) Master of Psychology degree with seven areas of specialization namely:-

Community Psychology, Health Psychology, Consumer Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Social Psychology and Counselling Psychology.

ii) Master of Psychology in Special Needs Education. Many areas in the study of Disability including sign language are included.

CAREER PROSPECTS FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

Graduates of Psychology are able to work in a number of areas. Among others, they can work as Clinical Psychologists; School Psychologists; Educational Psychologists; Human Resource Managers; Teachers; Counselors; Criminologists; Economic, Political and Military Strategists, Social Workers, Community Development Officers, Children's Officers, Sales and Marketing Agents, Teachers, Researchers and Journalists.

Generally, a background in psychology offers graduates a great opportunity to either be self-employed or employed as a consultant or practitioner. Whether employed or self-employed, career opportunities for psychologists in the Kenyan labour market are ever expanding due to the emerging challenges to the established cultural structures that people relied on to solve personal and family problems.

LINKAGES BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Studying Psychology at the University of Nairobi equips a person with the necessary skills to favorably compete with graduates from any other institutions and to pursue further studies anywhere in the world. The department has linkages with International Universities including:

- Birmingham Southern College at Alabama (USA)
- The School of Psychology at the University of Queensland (Australia)
- University of Vanderbilt, Nashville, Tennessee (USA)
- University of Maine, USA
- In the region, the Department consults with the University of Swaziland, Dar-es-Salaam and Makerere Universities where their Psychology Departments have similar concerns.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Since its inception the Department of Psychology has been quite successful in the achievement of its goals. It has managed to graduate over 8500 students since 1999. Over 500 students have graduated with Bachelor of Counselling Psychology degree and with the rest being awarded a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology degree. Well over 100 students have also graduated with a diploma in counseling psychology. Besides the above students who have graduated from the Faculty of Arts, since 1988 more than 10000 students who have graduated from other colleges of the University of Nairobi where the department has usually offered service such as College of Education and External Studies among others.

Graduates from this department have been extremely successful. Even though most of them are employed as professionals in various fields such as academics, teaching, military, police, nursing just to mention a few, quite a number have also gone ahead to set up their own private consultancies in counseling.

There has been existence of The University of Nairobi Psychology Club that has initiated the following activities:

- Drugs and alcohol campaign conducted by NACADA
- Identification of community needy cases
- Organizing free medical camps
- Linked with Kusoma Tu foundation situated at Kawangware Primary school.

Some of these activities are captured in the photos.

MODE OF LEARNING

The programs in the department are offered in three modes. The regular students who are admitted through Joint Admissions Board (JAB) learn under module I. Privately funded students learn under Modules II and III. Whereas module I and II students learn on full time basis, their module III counterparts only come for 2 week face-to-face sessions three times in a semester. This ensures that students who are not able to attend full-time sessions due to other commitments also get opportunity to study.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION

Module I students usually apply through JAB. Students for Modules II and III apply after the Faculty of Arts has advertised in the media and on the university's webpage. There are three semesters offered within one annual year and Module II and III students are admitted at the start of every semester. However, a prospective student ought to have applied for admission a semester before the semester that he/she intends to commence studies. The student must meet the minimum university entry requirement of a C+ in KCSE. However, in case one does not meet this criterion, he/she can still join the department by enrolling as a diploma in counseling offered at the department student or hold a diploma from a higher learning institution that is recognized by the Commission for University Education (CUE).



PARTING SHOT:

The Department of Psychology highly welcomes students to pursue their dreams of becoming psychologists at the University of Nairobi. When you come, you will be molded and mentored by some of the best psychology specialists in the East and Central African region



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