

**SOCIO- ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCESS TO PUBLIC  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THIKA WEST DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY,  
KENYA**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which socio-economic factors influence access to public secondary schools in Thika West District. The study objectives were; To establish whether the parental level of education influences access to public secondary schools in Thika West District; to investigate whether the income/ occupation of the household head influences access to secondary schools; to determine whether the size of the family influences access to public secondary schools and to establish whether cost of education influences access to public secondary schools. The study was guided by human capital theory and Elite-mass stratification theory. The study adopted descriptive survey design to targeting all the 18 principal, 60 parents and 1591 students in all the 18 public secondary schools in Thika West District. Stratified sampling was used to select 6 schools; each strata representing boys only, girls only and mixed day schools.

Purposive sampling was used to select 6 headteachers while simple random sampling was used to select 330 students and 30 parents, yielding a total of 366 respondents. Descriptive and analytical statistics were used to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data collected from the field. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and descriptive statistics such as measure of central tendency were used. The study established that that parental level of education, family economic status/ occupation, family size and cost of education had a great impact towards students' access to secondary schools. The study also established that most of the parents were semi illiterate which led to lack of role models in the community. It was established that lack of parental involvement in children education, parents' attitude towards education, poverty, parent ignorance and lack of parental guidance influenced students' attitude towards education. The study recommends that: the Government should provide more bursaries to cater for the needy cases in Secondary schools; parents and the community as a whole should be sensitized on the importance of education. This would help to increase the number of good role models in the society as most people would enroll for college and University education which could help them secure well paying jobs; guidance and counseling should be strengthened in schools as this would help to minimize indiscipline cases which influence students negatively and hence lack interest in education.