

**FACTORS INFLUENCING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ASPIRATIONS TO
HIGHER LEARNING IN DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYERI CENTRAL
DISTRICT, NYERI COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The inspiration of secondary school students, especially the poor performing students found in day schools, has been critical in relation to their low transition into higher learning institutions. This has been influenced by: poverty at the household level which forces parents to make a choice as to which children to enroll in school; socio-cultural attitudes and practice; teachers' attitudes, behavior and teaching practices; lack of role models; poor teaching; and lack of conducive environment, which lead to lack of motivation. This study aimed at investigating the factors influencing day secondary school students' aspiration levels for higher education. The study specifically assessed the contributing factors such as role of the individual students, parents, schools, socio-economic environment and the government. Several theories were used to guide the study. In addition, the study attempted to explain the aspiration concept using the motivation, social cognitive, self determination and Goal-setting theories. The study took place in Nyeri Central District. The research adopted a survey research design. The study adopted a quantitative research approach which involved in collection of numerical data. The study was also explanatory and cross sectional in nature as it aimed at describing the sample at a particular point in time. The target population of this study comprised all day-scholars from secondary schools in Nyeri Central District. The sample size was arrived at through simple random and stratified sampling. The researcher selected 48 form fours and 16 teachers of 8 day secondary schools in Nyeri Central District. The study applied structured questionnaires and in-depth interview instruments to ensure validity of the study. The collected data was coded and entered into a computer data analysis program, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 software for onwards analysis and interpretation. The findings established that most day school students had moderate aspirations for higher learning. This has been contributed to by school-based factors, students, and socio-economic, parent and government factors respectively. The recommended interventions include; enhancement of teaching and learning environment, students motivations, empowerment of community, sensitization and role model programs and promotion of day secondary schools.