

## **Factors Contributing to Students Poor Performance in Mathematics in Public Secondary Schools in Tharaka South District, Kenya**

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### **Abstract:**

The performance of students in mathematics in K.C.S.E has been generally poor as compared to other subjects in Kenya and in particular Tharaka South district. This study was initiated to find out the factors that lead to students' poor performance in mathematics in the district. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to establish the factors that lead to students' poor performance in mathematics. The study was carried out in Tharaka South District, Kenya, which has a total of 14 public secondary schools. The target population was 2,332 respondents. The population was sampled using the stratified sampling technique so that all categories of schools were included in the study and then proportionately sampled to give a sample size of 248 respondents. The study used 4 questionnaires, the head teachers', and heads of Department, teachers and students questionnaires. Split-half technique using Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was used to check the reliability of the questionnaires and experts from the department of education validated the instruments. Coefficients of 0.702, 0.741, 0.753 and 0.707 were realized for the head teachers, heads of departments, mathematics teachers and students' questionnaires respectively. Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S) version 11.5 windows and then presented in form of frequency tables and percentages. The significant factors leading to poor performance included inadequate teaching force, students' absenteeism, poor entry marks, poor assessment techniques and poor teaching methods. The intervention strategies suggested included completing the syllabus in time, provision of adequate and qualified teaching force and in-service programmes. The study is significant as its findings will be used by education policy makers and pre-service training of teachers.