

# Escalation of Arson Attacks in Secondary Schools and Policy Implications for Education in Kenya

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**Abstract:** Arson attacks in secondary schools in Kenya are slowly beginning to get institutionalized thus causing a lot of concern amongst the affected students and stakeholders. The causes of these attacks are varied and unclear. This paper presents a summary of findings of a study in seven randomly selected Counties whose key objective among others was to examine the underlying causes of these school arson attacks and draw policy implications on education in Kenya based on the findings. The study was founded on the conflict and consensus theories. A sample of 1850 respondents: 50 head teachers, 300 teachers, 1000 pupils and 500 parents participated in the study. Questionnaires, interviews, observations and focus group discussions were used as research instruments to generate data. The obtained data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Some of the findings were that the school dormitories were the major targets of the arson attacks. The reasons advanced by the respondents for such attacks were varied although most of them pointed at five main causes: students' open dislike for boarding and its facilities; high-handedness of school administrators; fear for sitting for examinations; students perceived second term as too long; inadequate food at school and finally medias' sensational reporting of school arson attacks. The study concludes that the measures undertaken by the authorities were neither pertinent nor exhaustive enough to forestall future arson attacks. In this regard, a calm situation which emerges after the resumption of classes appears deceptive since students wait for the most opportune time to attack. The following recommendations which were based on the findings and have a bearing on policy were made : Newly appointed principals to understudy senior and successful colleagues; delink and privatize boarding facilities; Restructure the school calendar to be more friendly to students; infuse practical skills and internship to university curriculum; medias' sensational reporting on school strikes or arson need to be toned down; quantity and quality of food for students to be increase ;Quality Assurance and Standard's department in the MoE to intensify school supervision for quality education to be enhanced; Principals to be retooled on the management and administrative skills; police stations to be constructed near learning institutions as a deterrent strategy; increasing parental and students' involvement in school management and employment of guidance and counseling teachers for addressing students' concerns.

**Keywords:** Arson attacks, secondary schools, destruction of property, school stakeholders, supervision, school management.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Student unrest often culminating to wanton destruction of property in arson attacks is gaining widespread attention globally and locally. Arson refers to the intentional setting up of a building on fire and is considered a criminal activity. All countries in the world at some point have had fire outbreaks disrupting their education programs. However the magnitude and the severity of these fires differs from country to country (Kahwa, 2009). Arson attacks including fire outbreaks results in destruction of property and loss of human lives (Waruhiu et al, 2016).

In Britain since 2004, there has been a 55% reported rise of arson attacks in schools across the country with statistics indicating that 1 in every 15 schools suffer an arson attack and an estimated loss of property worth 96.6 million pounds (Thompson, 2004). Most of these attacks happen during the day posing serious safety challenges to learners. Following these rising attacks a British government official made the following observation:

‘The rise in daytime arson attacks on schools is very alarming and poses a very real and increasing risk to the safety of pupils. And in addition to safety, these attacks can cause severe disruption to pupils’ education, impacting on the morale of the school and its pupils for many years’ (Thompson, 2004).

In the United States of America, however, fire outbreaks in schools are said to be low compared to most developed countries due to increased mitigation and fire awareness programs.

Elsewhere in Africa, cases of fire outbreaks are a common occurrence in schools. In Tanzania for example, fires have been reported in several schools such as Shautanga and Machame Secondary Schools in Kilimanjaro region, Nzumba and Imalilo Secondary Schools in Mwanza region, Bigwa Secondary Secondary in Morogoro and Bagamoyo Secondary School in Coast region among others (Kahwa, 2009). Several probe teams formed to investigate the causes of these fires attribute them to arson attacks. Nonetheless, Kahwa (2009) reports that other fires are accidental and cites the case of a 2009 fire outbreak at Idodi Girls secondary school also in Tanzania as resulting from a candle which a student was using to study.

Besides destroying school property, some cases of arson have led to loss of lives. In 2004, a predawn Islamist arson attack in a dormitory locked from outside in a school in Northern Nigeria left 48 students dead (The telegraph, 2014). Some of the students of the attacks were reportedly burnt alive.

In South Africa school arson attacks are not uncommon. Arson attacks were reported in Limpopo Province in the town of Vuwani in the second term of 2016, which left 20 schools damaged, 18 partially damaged and 24 others vandalized (Tandwa, 2016). But unlike what happens in most schools where students are the prime suspects of the attacks, the fires in Vuwani were majorly carried out by the area residents who were venting out their anger when they lost a court battle to have the area merged into a new municipality (African News Agency, 2016: Tandwa, 2016). The buildings targeted were the administration block and classes. A select team was set up to investigate the fires similar to what happens in other countries where education select committees are set up to investigate the causes meanwhile the arson attacks continue with impunity.

### **Arson attacks in Secondary Schools in Kenya**

In Kenya, fire outbreaks in schools though equally not a new phenomenon have recently taken a different dimension with over 6000 students sent home after more than 120 schools were burnt down in the span of less than two months in the second term of 2016 (Mungai, 2016). The frequency of this deliberate wave of fires outbreak differs markedly from the past where there were isolated cases some of which were nevertheless fatal. In 1998 for example, twenty five students died in a fire at Bombolulu Girls’ High School (the present day Mazeras Memorial School and in 2001 there were 58 student casualties at Kyanguli secondary school after fire razed a dormitory (Rowan, 2001).

Kimuyu (2015) noted that secondary schools are sitting on a time bomb in that arson attacks happens when schools are about to administer end of term or year examinations. Arson attacks also occur in dormitories where students sleep and there are rare circumstances classrooms are got on fire. The questions have emerged as to whether secondary schools have the capacity and adequately prepared to deal with emergencies as outlined in the Ministry of Education manual.

In 2008 alone several secondary schools counted losses emanating from reported fire outbreaks in the space of one month. On 13th July 2008, at Ambothugusi Boys’ Secondary School in Meru County, fire suspected to have been deliberately caused by students gutted down the school. The same happened on July 10th 2008 at Mitaboni ABC High School in Machakos district which was subsequently closed down and 500 students sent home after their dorm was destroyed. Earlier on in 10 June 2008, students of Mukuunu Secondary School attempted to burn their school but did not succeed (Daily Nation, 2009).

Other past cases of arson attacks in schools in Kenya though not exhaustive include fire at Endarasha Boys, Kinyui Boys, Mbiuni Boys and more recently, in 2015 at Stephjoy, secondary school. The causes of these fires still remain unexplained. A report of a commission of inquiry set up by the government to investigate the Bombolulu Fire tragedy pointed at arson

as one of the likely causes. The fresh wave of attacks in 2016 where at least 100 secondary schools were affected by arson attacks; has however sparked a lot of attention with stakeholders fearing that arson is getting institutionalized and impacting negatively on provision of quality education since schools are forced to close down and students sent home with each real or suspected arson attack. Fingers have pointed out at the attacks as a sign of student indiscipline which has strong ramifications in as far as provision of quality education is concerned (Mungai, 2016).

Republic of Kenya (2017) reported that the causes of burning of secondary schools included peer pressure, examination fatigue, school work load, extension of school dates in second term, proliferation of indiscipline across schools, limited professional guidance and counselling services and possible institutional or individual interferences. The local politics, leadership and management of schools have been strongly cited as fueling the arson attacks in secondary schools in Kenya (Waruhiu et al, 2016).

The Ministry of Education has continued to seek for ways of intervention to ensure solutions are arrived at in resolving conflicts and ensuring non-occurrence of arson in schools (Republic of Kenya, 2017). Education quality continues to receive the attention of education providers worldwide (UNESCO, 2005; Robin, 2008; Benoit, 2013). The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in their Education For All (EFA) monitoring report (UNESCO, 2005) stressed that the achievement of universal participation in education would mainly depend upon the quality of education available. This quality education according to The 2000 Dakar Framework for Action can only be realized in an environment that is welcoming, gender sensitive and healthy and safe for the learners (Robin, 2008). Yet there are strong fears that frequent school closures provoked by fires which culminate to wanton destruction of property and sometimes loss of lives may be an hindrance towards the realization of the quality objective. Fires force schools to divert monies that would have otherwise been spent on acquisition of learning resources to either rebuilding, refurbishing and or restocking the damaged buildings.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over 120 secondary schools were burnt by arsonists within a period of three months in the second term of the year 2016. The deliberate fire attacks stated in one county and spread too fast to almost all the counties in the country. All these attacks were concentrated in the second term of the calendar year. Its aggressiveness, frequency, intensity and magnitude have never been witnessed in the country before. Schools were burnt almost on daily. Property worth millions of shillings was destroyed. Several theories have been advanced to explain this phenomenon yet despite these explanations there still seems to be lack of clarity on the real causes of these fires and therefore leaving a lacuna in knowledge. Stakeholders are left to ask reasons relevant to the aggressive behavior displayed by the students while burning schools, how the arsons attacks spread too fast to almost all the counties in the country, why the fires were in the second term of the academic calendar, why the intensity and magnitude of the damage being was unmatched to the earlier cases and why School administrators and stakeholders were caught either unawares or unprepared by the wave of destruction. This worrying situation called for a study to unravel the mystery surrounding the arson attacks in the Kenyan schools.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were therefore to:

1. To examine the underlying causes of school arson attacks
2. To find out if the attacks were planned or not.
3. To explore why arson attacks were concentrated more on the second term of the school academic calendar.
4. To identify the school facilities that were targeted most by the arsonists.

### 3.1 Research Questions

The study investigated the following questions based on these objectives:

1. What are the under lying causes of school arson attacks?
2. Were the arson attacks planned or spontaneous?
3. Why is arson attacks more concentrated on the second term of the school academic calendar?

4. What are the probable reasons for targeting school dormitories?

### 3.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the conflict theory as advanced by the German philosopher and scholar Karl Marx (1818-1883). According to the theory, society is in a state of perpetual conflict. Owing to this, the theory directs us to question broader structures and ideological values within the society by stressing the connections between these broader contradictions and the personal stresses that people experience in their own day today life. It is Karl Marx's view that conflicts lead to build up of tension especially among those who are affected. The results of such tension are:

- (1) Disagreement and disharmony in the organization for example in the way resources are distributed.
- (2) Divergent views and opinions which could lead to further conflict. Such conflict can result to students expressing themselves in primitive ways such as setting school buildings on fire.

To counter conflict, literature emphasizes on the role of Consensus Theory which operates on the basis of convergence of ideas in order to create harmony.

### 3.3 Conceptual framework

The following conceptual framework was teased out to guide the study. It indicates that school arson attacks emanate out of a variety of reasons ranging from student indiscipline, internal and external incitement of students to a poor school management which is full of high handedness and in some cases full of laxity. However this scenario may be changed with a policy shift especially in teacher recruitment where only principals who have the requisite knowledge and management skills are selected to head the schools among other options. The diagram below captures these interrelationships:

#### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

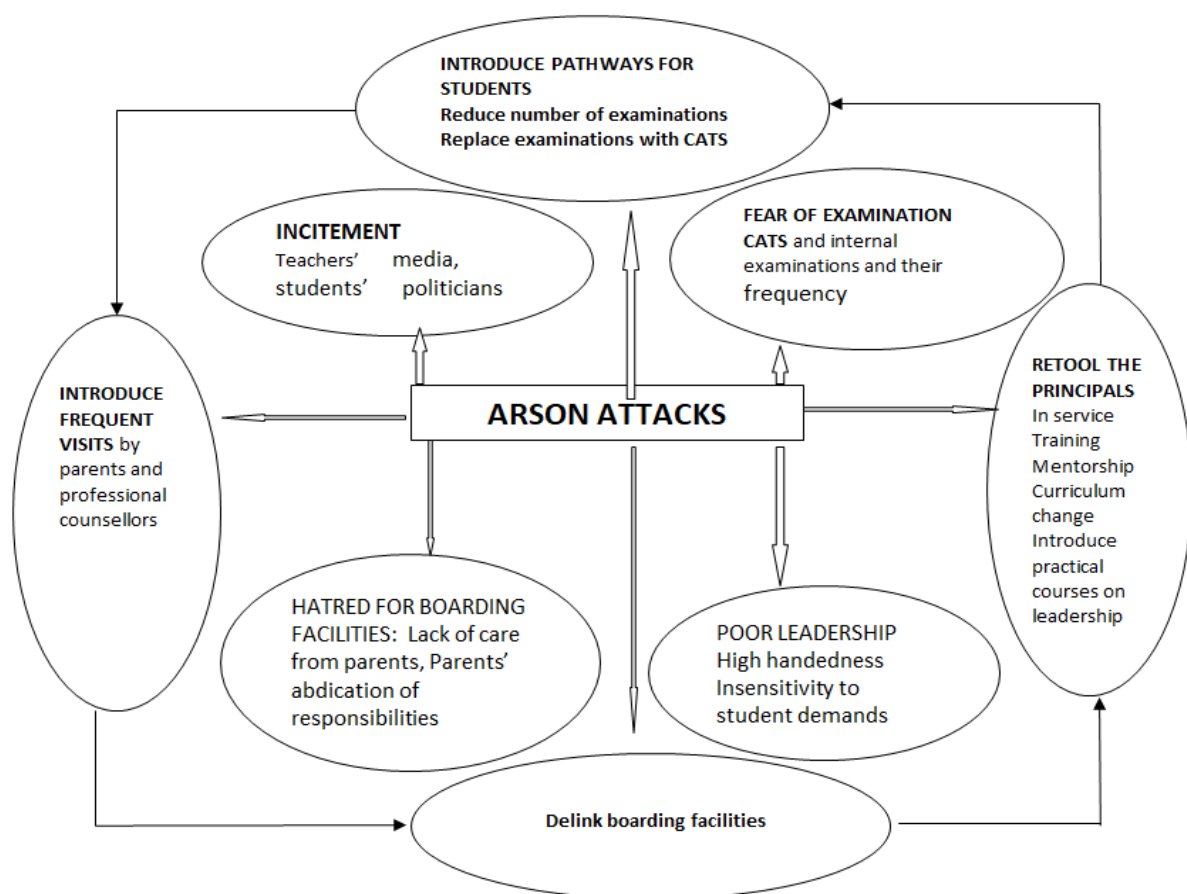


Figure: Conceptual Framework

#### 4. STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study relied heavily on the descriptive research design. Lists of counties and schools were compiled for the purpose of selection. Seven counties which were on the upper quartile of those affected were sampled for the study. Simple random sampling method was used to pick on schools which had been affected by arson attacks. The final sample consisted of 1850 respondents from 50 secondary schools (50 head teachers, 300 teachers, 1000 students and 500 parents). Principals were selected as long as their schools were sampled. Teachers and students were randomly selected from the sampled schools. Parents who were found at the sampled schools at the time of research formed part of the study sample.

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through the use of questionnaires, interviews, documentary analysis, Focus Group Discussions guides and observation schedules.

**Table 1: Summary of sample size**

County	Number of schools n=50	Principals n=50	Teachers n=300	Students n=1000	Parents n=500
County 1	7	7	42	140	72
County 2	8	8	46	147	75
County 3	7	7	43	142	71
County 4	7	7	42	143	69
County 5	7	7	43	142	70
County 6	7	7	42	142	72
County 7	7	7	42	144	71
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>500</b>

**Piloting:** The instruments were piloted in one of the affected Counties. This County was not included in the final list of Counties that participated in the study. The purpose was to check for reliability and validity of the study instruments. Thereafter, adjustments were done accordingly.

**Analysis of Data:** The collected data from the questionnaires, interviews, observation guides and focus group discussion (FGDs) were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition, descriptive statistics was employed in order to tease out frequencies and percentages.

#### 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2 presents the type of school and gender of the respondents.

**Table 2: Arson attacks by type and gender of school**

	Type of school/ Gender of school	Girls only	Boys only	Mixed schools	Total
1.	Boarding	22 (18%)	34 (28%)	30 (26%)	86 (72%)
2.	Day	5 (4%)	12 (10%)	17 (14%)	34 (28%)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27 (22%)</b>	<b>46 (38%)</b>	<b>47 (40%)</b>	<b>120 (100%)</b>

Documentary analysis revealed that over three quarters of the schools (72%) that reported cases of arson attacks were boarding schools. Of these schools a combined 60 percent (22% girls only and 38% boys only) were single sex schools while 40 percent were mixed boarding schools. There were fewer day schools in all categories involved in the attacks (4% girls' day schools, 10% boys' day and 14% mixed day). The fact that majority of the schools that were razed down are boarding schools is a pointer to the hatred students harbor about general boarding life and the probable reason why the target of the attacks were school dormitories. In day schools, students commute from home daily and probably have less issues given the fact that they are able to interact with family and friends daily.

##### 5.1 Causes of arson attacks

One of the objectives of the study was to find the underlying causes of school arson attacks. In order to address this objective, the respondents were asked to tick from a list provided what they considered as the most probable reasons of the causes of the arson attacks. The table below captures these perceptions:

**Table 3: Perceptions on causes of arson attacks**

	Statement	F %	F %	F %	F %
1.	Principal's high handedness	819(82%)	2(4%)	117(39%)	15(3%)
2.	Food Uncooperative & unfriendly teachers	69(7)%	3(6)%	2(0.7%)	8(2%)
3.	Peer pressure	46(4.6%)	45(90%)	157(52%)	131(26%)
4.	Sensational reporting of attacks by the media (newspaper, TV, radio, social media)	635(64%)	43(86%)	87(29%)	17(3.4%)
5.	Incitement by teachers, politicians and others	43(4%)	34(68%)	138(46%)	187(37%)
6.	Fear of mock/trial exams	778(79%)	22(47%)	147(49%)	213(43%)
7.	Unnecessary long academic terms.	767(77%)	17(34%)	28(9.3%)	4(1%)
8.	Parents/guardians dump their children at schools	734(73%)	32(64%)	51(17%)	8(2%)
9.	Student's general dislike of school	56(6%)	37(74%)	169(56%)	100(20%)
10.	Poorly cooked ,low ratios of food & monotonous diet/ menu at schools	760(76%)	16(32%)	33(11%)	345(69%)
11.	Hatred for boarding schools	862(86%)	21(48%)	97(32%)	96(19%)

The results showed that there was a lack of convergence of ideas by the respondents as to what the exact causes of the attacks. Whereas 86% of the students indicated a dislike for boarding school life and its facilities followed by 82% who pointed fingers at the highhandedness of the school administration, 90% of the principals attributed the attacks to peer pressure and 86% to the much hyped sensational reporting of prior attacks by the media (i.e newspaper, TV, radio, social media). 79% of students blamed the attacks on the fear generated by the mock exams and 76% attributed the attacks to the poor diet that they were subjected while in school. 56% Of the teachers saw attacks as tied to general indiscipline in schools. 69% of the parents indicted themselves by tying the arson attacks to lack of parental involvement at school and at home. Principals never considered/viewed themselves as a source of problems as their perception centered on the peer pressure, mass media and incitement as major causes of arson attacks. The interpretation of these findings is that all the respondents read from different scripts. Therefore, it was not easy to have a common stand on the exact causes of the attacks given varied perceptions. Therefore, it's not surprise that the problem of indiscipline continues to haunt schools.

Interview with the students also roped in their parents in the worrying trend. They felt that their parents had dumped them at school and denied them the essentials which to them created a feeling of loneliness. When they visited them during the open and visiting days students decried that their parents gave them long and boring lectures on how to behave and post good results instead of finding out the challenges faced them at school. In this regard, a barrier was created which was a fertile ground for mischief. To students such behaviors were strategies for attracting attention, venting out their anger and also of punishing their principals, parents/guardians.

#### **Rank of the causes in order of importance:**

Next the respondents were asked to rank the causes of the attacks. The purpose was to document the main contributors to arson attacks in schools. The responses appear in table 4 below:

**Table 4: Ranking the causes of the attacks in order of importance**

Statement					
Principals' high handedness	2	Rank 1	Rank 4	Rank 2	Rank 3
Sensational Reporting	6	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Fear of local & national examinations	3	Rank 1	Rank 3	Rank 2	Rank4
Parents abdicating & dumping their children	5	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Unnecessary long academic terms	7	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Drug abuse in schools	9	Rank 4	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Uncooperative & unfriendly teachers	8	Rank 4	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 1
Dislike for boarding life& its facilities	1	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Inadequate food portions & a monotonous diet/menu	4	Rank 1	Rank 4	Rank 3	Rank 2



The ranking of the causes of the arson attacks equally demonstrated a divergence of views as to the most contributory factors of the attacks. Nonetheless the ranking identified the following causes as the major contributors to arson attacks:

- a) Students' dislike for boarding life and the boarding facilities was ranked highly
- b) Principals' high handedness attained the second rank
- 3) Students' fear of sitting for examinations attracted a very high score.
- 4) Inadequate food portions & a monotonous diet/menu featured prominently (Note that 76% of the students had identified this as a major factor).

Further information from FGDs revealed that most of the students viewed principals as administrators who were out of touch with the reality. They accused them of failure to avail themselves at their time of need. yet they enjoyed finding them at fault and never seeing anything good in them. Thus the students abhorred them. They averred that the principals were sadists who enjoyed seeing them in problems and they even punished them on flimsy grounds. They viewed their principals as unreasonable for not giving them a fair chance to defend themselves. 60% of the students blamed failure by the school administration to listen to student grievances as a pertinent issue than needed to be addressed. Self-expression is a key human right which when denied may force victims to resort to wrong methods of expression including burning down of buildings. The United Nations Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) 2009) advocates for Child Friendly Schools (CFS) where self-expression is permitted and where children's voices are taken into account especially on matters concerning them (UNICEF, 2009).

The fear of sitting for examinations was cited by 79% of students as among the major causes of arson attacks. From the FGDs it emerged that the emphasis placed on examinations both by the society and the family put unnecessary pressure on students. This was worsened by the students' fear of being seen as poor performers.

In one school students claimed that complaints on quantity and quality of foods served fell on deaf ears yet in another their request for entertainment and weekend exit from school had not been addressed. In this school they attempted to burn the entertainment hall which they felt was not serving them. However their effort was thwarted by the school watchman. 38% of the student respondents felt that the attacks had nothing to do with substance abuse. This probably was away of exonerating themselves from drug and substance abuse in schools. Similarly over 60% did not want to admit that their parents' failure to guide them may have led to arson attacks on their schools.

Coincidentally teachers, principals, parents and students seemed to concur from their responses that the Ministry of Education was partly to blame for the attacks. They attributed some of the arson attacks to the lengthening of the school calendar by the ministry of education which they felt had been done without due consultation. Majority of the students (73%) who participated in the FGD indicated that the raft of new regulations which the ministry had recently put in place including banning midterm and any visits to the school during the last term of the school was done in bad taste and they therefore had no choice but to indicate their displeasure by burning down the school buildings. It emerged from the study that some schools (43%) may also have suffered the effects of internal and external incitement by either their teachers who had problems with the administration or from politicians who wanted the principal ejected for diverse reasons. Discussions revealed that some of the reasons were related to tender issues and the fact that the principals were considered 'outsiders'.

## 5.2 Planned or Spontaneous Arson Attacks

The study sought to find out if the arson attacks had been preplanned or they were spontaneous.

**Table 5: Planned or Spontaneous Arson Attacks**

Respondent	Number of respondents N	Planned N	%	Not planned N	%	Do not know	%
Principals	50	14	34%	29	58%	7	14%
Teachers	300	105	35%	150	50%	45	15%
Parents	500	300	60%	95	19%	105	21%
Students	1000	652	65%	297	29.7%	51	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>57.9%</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>13.9%</b>

Principals and students gave a contrasting position. 34% of them indicated that the attacks were not planned while 65% of the students answered to the affirmative. The interpretation from this scenario is that some principals were not in touch with the reality. In an interview, some students said that the aloofness of principals enabled them to plan for strikes/attacks undetected.

A related question sought to find out from the principals who indicated that the strikes had been planned why they never acted on time despite this knowledge. The principals said that they thought the threat would just fizzle out. The interpretation to this is that the principals made serious mistakes of assuming all would be well and in the midst of an impending threat. Further interpretation is that the principals lacked the capacity to interpret the situation and the will power to act in the face of looming danger.

A follow up question relating to any warning signs prior to the attacks was asked. This is because previous research findings have shown that before in any case of arson, strike and violence in schools there are always warning signs (Mungai and Muriuki, 2016). This question therefore sought to find out if indeed there were any tell tale signs and what the schools had done about them. About 70% of the principals denied knowledge of any warning signs arguing that they were always on the ground and if there were signs of an impending attack they would have easily known the plot and arrested the culprits on time before the occurrence. The fact however that over 60% of the students and parents asserted that the attacks were planned further showing a disconnect between what the students know and what those who lead them are saying.

Respondents were asked whether all the students in the school were roped into the problem of strike. One student was quoted to have said that--"students empathized and acted in solidarity with the students in form four. In addition, they supported since they expected others to support them at the time rebelling against the examination"

The only escape available for avoiding examination was through the disruption of the school calendar.

### 5.3 Reasons for Arson attacks in the second term of the secondary schools calendar

Students were asked to explain why they thought most of the attacks took place in the second term of the academic calendar. About 65% of them said that the term was unnecessarily too long which gave them humble time to plan for the attacks. They went further in the interview to say how students were burdened with a lot of work from their teachers. In this respect, strikes and by extension arson attacks were viable considered viable excuses to avoid these extra work. Principals and teachers concurred with the students' sentiments stating that a long term caused students to lose interest in academic work and to become mischievous.

A follow up question was asked on how the academic calendar was structured and the table below presents this structure.

**Table 6: Structure of Academic Calendar**

Serial number	Term	Number of weeks
1	First term	13
2.	Second term	12
3.	Third term	12

From the structure it was notable that the term dates had an equal distribution of weeks which however from students' perception presented challenges. The students felt thirteen weeks was such a long time to be away from home.

### 5.4 Reasons why Arson Attacks target School Dormitories

The findings indicated that the school dormitories were the major target of the arson attacks. There were however varied reasons given as captured in the table below in explaining why the dorms were the target of the attacks.

**Table 7: Reasons why dormitories are the target of Arson Attacks**

	Statement	N	%
1.	Dormitories were infested with bed bugs and lice	763	80%
2.	Life in boarding schools was unbearable could equated to prison cells due to strict rules governing their behavior	676	68%
3.	Dormitories were crowded and unhealthy	453	45%



4.	Boarding structures were an eye sore	348	35%
5.	Perceived their parents to have dumped and ignored them in boarding schools	670	67%
6.	Dormitories offered easy target since they were hidden/far from the administration block	644	65%
7.	Easy to Vent their anger and frustration.	424	42%

Nonetheless, a particular line of thought emerged with dislike for life in boarding schools featuring prominently. 763 (80%) of the student respondents posited that they detested dormitories and by extension boarding facilities since they were infested with bed bugs and lice. One student averred that “parasites in the dormitories made their lives unbearable at night”. He went on to say that “the school administrators and parents were aware of their plight and yet they never acted to solve their problem. This had caused to totally dislike the school dormitories with a passion.

676 (68%) of the students equated boarding life to prison life. They averred in the interview that the strict rules enforced by the dormitory masters and prefects were unbearable in the congested dormitories. They went further to say how they loathed the rules touching on time for waking up and sleep time. 676 (67%) of the students felt that their parents had dumped them at school. It emerged in the FGD that they disliked being at school. Their perception was that their parents had abandoned them at school as they had no time for them. Their perception was exemplified by the way the parent talked to them during the visiting or open days. They accused their parents of giving them long lectures on the huge amounts of money they were spending to educate them. One student said that the parents who visited spent a lot of time lecturing them on academic performance and good behavior. Such sentiments demonstrate that parents did not spend quality time with their children in order to bond well with them and hence the friction.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded thus:

Education for sustainable development would become a mirage if stringent measures are not put in place to contain uncalled for disruption of school programs through arson attacks. Measures undertaken by the authorities to address the causes of arson attacks in the Kenyan schools just scratch the surface since real causes are not addressed. Therefore, a calm situation which follows after the attacks and resumption of classes appears deceptive. In this regard, attacks are just postponed until the most opportune time. Therefore, the vicious cycle of disruptions and damage to school property sets in the moment an opportunity arises. Attacks are likely to become a permanent feature unless permanent solutions are put in place. Such attacks divert the attention of the education sector from its core mandate of producing useful citizens to the society. They also deter Investors from investing in the sector since profitable returns are not assured. Such acts produce agents of anarchists in the society.

There is need for workable policies and actions in order to counter the spread of arson attacks in Kenyan secondary schools. From the findings of the study, the following are recommendations;

1. Policy on boarding schools. It became apparent from the findings that boarding life and boarding facilities were not popular with the students. Therefore, boarding schools as a matter of policy should be abolished forthwith. Therefore, all school should revert to day schools in the country.
2. The existing boarding facilities should be privatized as a measure of offloading the extra burden on the principals. In this respect, principals should be allowed only to deal with the core business of the work. Therefore, the students will not use their extra energy to burn buildings which are under the private hands Principals' high handedness was ranked as the highest contributor to arson attacks in schools. Its implies that principals were not open for dialogue . It implies that they had no skill to handle divergent or dissent views.
3. Policy on appointing teachers to the position of principals be revised in order to consider teachers who have a track record of flexibility and tolerance.
4. Re-tooling principals as a policy in order to avoid high handedness in schools.

5. Policy on the curriculum at university should be revised in order to infuse/ incorporate internship in the course. The would be graduates of the course would be better prepared to manage all eventualities if they are put under experienced principals for professional growth
6. Policy on the appointment of principals to be expanded in order to include mentorship. Newly appointed principals should be placed under experienced and successful colleagues. This would give them a chance to learn the skills of management before they are allowed to stand on their own.
7. Policy on examinations. Fear for sitting for examination was cited as one of the causes of arson attacks. Policy on coming up with different pathways for students with different capabilities /potentials. Examinations would be given depending on the choice of course. This would reduce tension of sitting for an examination. Examination should be for Students who are academically endowed are allowed to take examinations. equally, marks from continuous assessment should form part of the students' final grade. Examination at the end of the course should be discarded since it encourages tension and fear. Therefore, a radical shift on the examination is necessary.
8. MOE officials under the department of quality assurance should ensure that students operate in serene and hygienic environments This move would reduce unnecessarily conflict between the students and the school administrations.
9. Policy on the involvement of parents in the schools' management. Parents should be given more say in the management of their schools. Their involvement would be include and not limited to the supervision of teachers, principals and all the projects Such a policy would erase suspicion between them (parents) and the principals. This practice succeeded in other countries such as Honduras & Nicaragua. it can be replicated in Kenya. Parents should have a direct access to their children. This move would enable them enable to sort out their children's discipline problem as soon as they appear.

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