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## **Gun Violence in American Schools: Roots and Consequences**

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this work to my dear parents, who have been doing their best to help me reach my goal; to my brothers and sisters.

**Khaldi Samiha**

To Mom and Dad. Thank you for your sacrifices and unconditional love, which allowed me to reach for my dreams. And to my husband, your endless patience kept me going towards a brighter future.

**Guezei Hadjer**

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Thanks to Almighty Allah for his guidance and help to achieve this work.

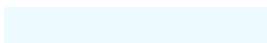
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## **Abstract**

One major issue that has recently spread throughout the United States is school gun violence. Finding out the primary causes and consequences of this phenomenon is the aim of this dissertation. The assessment of the accessible records served as the foundation for the documentary research design employed in this investigation, which dug further into the issue to pinpoint its origins and effects. The study's conclusions connect various political, psychological, social, economic, and media factors to the causes of gun violence in American schools. Mental, physical, and psychological health damage and low academic achievement among students are some of the effects of school gun violence. In addition, this study examines current policies, procedures, and initiatives in an effort to find viable plans for enhancing school security and lowering the risk of gun violence on school grounds.

**Keywords:** American schools, mass shooting, gun violence.



## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

|               |                                                           |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>APA</b>    | American Psychological Association                        |
| <b>CCTV</b>   | Closed-Circuit Television                                 |
| <b>CDC</b>    | Centres for Disease Control                               |
| <b>CDC</b>    | Centers for Disease Control                               |
| <b>CTC</b>    | Communities That Care                                     |
| <b>GFSA</b>   | Gun Free School Act                                       |
| <b>ID</b>     | Identity Document                                         |
| <b>JAMA</b>   | Journal of the American Medical Association               |
| <b>KFF</b>    | Kaiser Family Foundation                                  |
| <b>KFF</b>    | Kaiser Family Foundation                                  |
| <b>NCLB</b>   | No Child Left Behind                                      |
| <b>PBS</b>    | Public Broadcasting Service                               |
| <b>PTSD</b>   | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder                            |
| <b>SAMHSA</b> | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration |
| <b>SBLE</b>   | School-based law enforcement                              |
| <b>SSSC</b>   | School Shooting Safety Compendium                         |
| <b>STS</b>    | Secondary Traumatic Stress                                |
| <b>TASSS</b>  | American School Shooting Study                            |
| <b>USDHHS</b> | United States Department of Health and Human Services     |

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# **General Introduction**

## **1. Background of the Study**

A growing number of educators around the world are concerned about school gun violence. This term describes violent crimes carried out inside schools by students or other outsiders armed with firearms. These incidents can happen at any time of the day or week and usually result in several injuries and even deaths among the school stakeholders. According to the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's K-12 School Shooting Database, the United States is one of the countries with the highest prevalence of school gun violence in the world. Every year, numerous incidents of gun shootings occur in many primary, middle, or secondary schools around the American territory. Although American authorities frequently employ various strategies to reduce the causes of school gun violence, the prevalence of such violence is still rising, with academic, social, economic, and psychological consequences.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Many schools in the United States have experienced a surge of gun violence. The impact of this tragedy on students' educational experiences and the school environment is alarming. The lives of many people are under constant threat all the time. This calls for a thorough investigation of this phenomenon to identify its causes and effects to help reduce its negative impact on schoolchildren and teachers alike.

## **3. Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the causes of gun violence in American schools?
  - How has the historical development of gun culture in the United States shaped the prevalence of school gun

violence?

2- What are the consequences of gun violence in American schools?

- How does gun violence impact the overall sense of safety and security within schools?

#### **4. Aims of the Study**

The primary aim of this research study is to explore the roots and consequences of gun violence in American schools. By examining historical, economic, social, psychological, and cultural factors, the study aims to contribute valuable insights to inform evidence-based policies and interventions.

#### **5. Research Methodology**

This study uses both descriptive and analytical methods. The qualitative study is structured into two chapters. Both chapters utilize the descriptive method to study the causes and consequences of school gun violence in America. The main characteristic of this research design is the collection and use of existing documents to analyze data and provide logical results. Data obtained from primary and secondary sources would help us gain a deeper understanding of the problem of school gun violence in the United States.

#### **6. Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in the fact that since school gun violence is one of the most significant concerns in the United States, it is important to analyze the economic, social, cultural, religious factors, and psychological dimensions behind this problem. In addition, it is beneficial to assess the immediate and long-term consequences of gun violence on students, educators, and the wider community and to offer significant perspectives on the effectiveness of various strategies for averting school shootings and advancing a secure

learning environment.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

There are two chapters in this work. The first chapter explores the causes of school violence in the United States and is provided under subsections. The second chapter covers the consequences of school gun violence and also analyzes the preventive policies and intervention procedures implemented to address this phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Causes of School Gun Violence in the U.S.**

## **Chapter One: Causes of School Gun Violence in the U.S.**

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## **Introduction**

Over the years, mass shootings in American schools have drawn a lot of research interest since the American educational system has been interrupted by the fear of gun violence. Seeking school safety is one of the main concerns of American instructors to ensure that students learn in a suitable environment. However, the sense of safety has been steadily fading, and American students are victims of gun violence due to many factors. In this chapter, there are numerous definitions of gun violence in American schools, as well as its categories, types of perpetrators, and weapons used, in addition to a brief history of firearms in the United States. Besides, this chapter discusses the political, psychological, social, economic, and cultural factors of school gun violence as well as the possible influence of extremist religious beliefs. By looking closely at this complex problem, we can learn more about the reasons behind these occurrences and possibly even come up with preventative measures.

### **1.1. Definition of School Gun Violence**

Several studies have made various attempts to address the problem of school gun violence or school shootings in the United States. School Gun violence or School Shooting refers to acts of violence that are carried out by current or former students, as well as by outsiders, using firearms inside a school (Versa, 2021).

In general, a school shooting occurs when a student at an educational institution, such as school, elementary, middle, or high school, college, or university shoots and kills at least one other student or faculty member on the school's property. These incidents typically result in multiple deaths (Belknap & Greathouse, 2024).

According to SSSC (2022), school shooting is defined as an incident in which "a gun is brandished, is fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of

victims, time of day, or day of week” (p.3). Another definition provided by The School Shooting Safety and Preparedness Act, a school shooting is defined as any event in which a firearm results in the death or serious injury of one or more people: at or around a school, even if it is after or before school hours; during the victim's commute to or from a scheduled class; or during the victim's attendance at or transit to an official school-sponsored event (Blad, 2023). Malcolm (2015) introduced another definition of school shootings that are an "overwhelmingly American" phenomenon since weapons are readily available in the United States. Additionally, TASSS (2016) defines school-associated gun violence as "the firing of a gun anywhere on K-12 school property, resulting in one or more gunshot injuries or fatalities, irrespective of the time of day or season" (p.2).

## **1.2. History of School Gun Violence in the U.S.**

The narrative of school gun violence in America is a poignant and multifaceted one. Since the Columbine High School massacre in 1999, more than 338,000 students have been subjected to the horror of gun violence on school grounds (Everytown Research, n.d.). For 25 years, from the 1997-1998 academic year to 2021-2022, there have been 1,453 school shootings recorded in the United States (AAP Publications, 2022). The frequency of these incidents has escalated notably in recent years, with the last 5 years witnessing a much higher number of shootings compared to the preceding two decades. In 2022 alone, there were 46 reported school shootings, marking the highest tally since at least 1999 (Washington Post, n.d.).

But behind these stark numbers lie human stories of profound loss and trauma. Children who have experienced or witnessed school shootings suffer deep psychological scars. The aftermath of such violence can lead to depression, anxiety, PTSD, substance abuse, and academic struggles among youth (Everytown Research, n.d.; Sandy Hook Promise, n.d.).

Rooted in complex societal issues such as poverty, income inequality, and racial disparities, the prevalence of school gun violence underscores systemic challenges. Communities

grappling with concentrated poverty and limited economic opportunities often bear the brunt of gun violence, disproportionately impacting youth (CT Mirror, 2022).

Examining the historical background of gun violence in schools while keeping in mind the larger social context of these incidents is crucial. Although the availability of firearms is often listed as a major contributing factor to violent crimes, a closer look reveals that the underlying reasons for gun violence in schools are complex socioeconomic and cultural variables. Don B. Kates et al. (2006) assert that the presence of firearms alone does not significantly impact the frequency of violent crime and murder; rather, underlying socioeconomic factors play a more significant role. However, as noted by Aleklett et al. (2010), there is a genuine risk connected to the use of firearms in violent crimes, particularly those that take place at educational institutions. As a result, analyzing the historical background of gun violence in schools necessitates a sophisticated approach that considers the interplay between governmental incentives, societal structures, and the accessibility of lethal weapons. Developing comprehensive strategies to address the underlying causes of violence in schools and other settings requires this in-depth investigation.

According to O'Neill (2024), Firearms continue to be deeply woven into the fabric of American society in the 21st century. Many citizens view gun ownership as fundamental to the nation's founding principles, symbolizing individual liberty, self-reliance, and the right to defend oneself and one's property. The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791, guarantees the right to bear arms at the federal level. However, regulations regarding gun acquisition, public carry, and self-defense rights differ on a state-by-state basis. The United States stands apart from other developed nations in its gun culture. In contrast to countries where firearms are primarily associated with the military, hunting, or sport, American gun ownership is more closely tied to personal protection and national identity. Remarkably, the U.S. civilian population now possesses more guns than there are people in the country, and its stockpile of firearms surpasses the combined arsenals of all the world's militaries (O'Neill, 2024).

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were isolated events involving police or protesters, and early school shootings in the United States entailed fights with Native Americans (Pontiac's Rebellion, 1764, for example). A major mass shooting occurred at the University of Texas in 1966. The Columbine High School massacre in 1999 is widely seen as a turning moment in the public's response to mass shootings. The Red Lake shootings in 2005, the Amish school shooting in 2006, the Virginia Tech massacre in 2007, and the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012 are examples of subsequent instances (Eadens Daniel et al., 2020).

### **1.3. Categories of Gun Mass Shooting in American Schools**

Muchert (2007) identifies five types of school shootings (rampage, mass murder, terrorist attack, targeted, government) based on perpetrator affiliation (in-group/out-group) and victim selection (targeted/untargeted). The first type is Rampage school shootings (highly publicized attacks on schools with random/symbolic victims) are linked to feelings of powerlessness and a desire for revenge against the institution (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). Perpetrators may be current/former members (Newman, 2004).

The second type is the school-related mass murders involve a single, non-affiliated adult targeting specific groups or the school system itself, often fueled by revenge, power, or warped loyalty (Levin & Fox, 1999). These "postal-type shootings" mirror rampage incidents. The third type is terrorist attacks that target schools symbolically to spread fear and advance political agendas—capitalize on societal horror against harming children (Levin & Fox, 1999). The Next type is school-related targeted shootings that involve current/former students seeking revenge on specific individuals (unlike rampages targeting the whole school). Finally, government shootings at schools involve police/military responding to riots or protests (Levin & Fox, 1999). Rampage, mass killings, and targeted attacks dominate media and research likely due to their recent surge, despite the existence of terrorist and government-related shootings.

### **1.4. Types of School Violence Perpetrator and Weapons Used**

Crews (2017) identified distinct categories of school shooters (traditional, gang-related, mentally ill) with varying motivations and backgrounds. This highlights the heterogeneity of school shooters and the need for multifaceted approaches. Crews (2017) found handguns to be the most common weapon in school shootings, with caliber preference varying by perpetrator type (e.g., traditional shooters favored .22 caliber, gang-related preferred 9mm). This suggests a link between shooter motivation and weapon choice. Crews also found that shotguns/rifles are less common in school shootings, with choices varying by perpetrator type (traditional: rifles, gang-related: AK-47). This reinforces a link between motivation and weapon selection. Again, he asserted that knives (10%) were used in some school violence, with mentally ill perpetrators more likely to use improvised weapons (machetes, baseball bats) compared to firearms. This suggests a potential link between mental state and weapon choice. Additionally, he pointed out that single-weapon use was common (95%) in school shootings, but mentally ill perpetrators were more likely to use multiple weapons (20%). This suggests a possible link between mental state and planning/resources behind the attack.

### **1.5. The Meaning of "Safe in School"**

American schools should provide students with safe campuses for studying, socializing, and career advancement without fear of violence. (Sander, 2023)

The majority of school vision or mission statements seem to contain the word "safe" or one of its derivatives. Educational leaders work hard to adjust to changes in school safety, both procedurally and structurally. The principal at the building level is ultimately in charge of ensuring a safe learning environment.

School administrators in the twenty-first century must be aware of and acknowledge the grave risks associated with school violence, which is sadly a current reality. The focus in schools should be on teaching teachers and students to be aware of their surroundings. Also, school leaders should take charge of creating a safer and more positive school environment, which can help

prevent violence (as cited in Eadens Daniel et al, p. 3). Unfortunately, there is a growing concern in the United States about safety in educational settings due to the increasingly violent and damaging behavior, which directly influences children's capacity to learn effectively at school and feel safer. According to a recent study done by Gallup (1999), parents in the U.S. are more worried about their kids' safety at school than they were 20 years ago (as cited in Sander, 2023). Recently, 44% of American parents expressed anxiety about their child's safety at school, this proportion has increased by 10%. The findings reveal that parental worry reached its high 55% in April 1999, the day following the Columbine High School shooting. Furthermore, EdWeek Research shows that teachers themselves feel less secure than they did previously. His most recent study indicates that 40% of educators are more concerned about safety than they were five years ago (as cited in Sander, 2023). The growing number of school shootings is a source of concern for educators. According to a survey, six out of ten educators are most concerned about the rise in school shootings in recent years. (Sander, 2023)

## **1.6. Causes of School Gun Violence**

A variety of factors likely interact to cause school shootings, rather than just bullying, video games, or notoriety.

### **1.6.1 Political Causes**

American school gun violence is a deeply troubling and multifaceted issue that has attracted significant attention in recent years. This issue often carries political motives that shape its context and impact. Understanding these motives is crucial for comprehending the broader implications of such violence.

#### **1.6.1.1 Gun Control Legislation**

Compared to other high-income countries, the United States has some of the most lax gun laws among developed nations, and gun ownership and violence are also rather high (Council on

Foreign Relations, n.d.). The Supreme Court has interpreted the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, which states that "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed," as an individual right, which makes efforts to enact stricter gun control laws more difficult (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; Gale, n.d.). In the wake of multiple mass shootings, Congress has repeatedly failed to enact significant gun reform, despite widespread popular support for various limitations on firearms (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; Pew Research Centre, 2023). The National Rifle Association (NRA) and other powerful gun rights organisations have exerted tremendous political influence at the federal and state levels to thwart the passage of new gun control legislation and reverse current rules (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; Gale, n.d.). The Gun Control Act of 1968 is the primary federal law governing firearms; it forbids the purchase of firearms by specific groups of persons and mandates that gun dealers obtain federal licences (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, n.d.; U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, and the need for firearm safety instruction are not currently prohibited by federal law (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). Additionally, there is no comprehensive national gun registry or gun owner licencing programme in the United States (Pew Research Centre, 2023). Although some states have passed tougher gun regulations, it has been challenging to drastically cut down on gun violence in the United States due to the absence of consistent national standards and legal loopholes (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; Gale, n.d.).

#### **1.6.1.2. Influence of Interest Groups**

Through lobbying, campaign contributions, and grassroots mobilisation, the National Rifle Association (NRA) and other pro-gun advocacy groups, like Gun Owners of America (GOA), wield significant political influence (Both sides of the gun issue seek to stir up US voters as NRA influence wanes, 2024; As the NRA fades, a more zealous US pro-gun group rises as lobbying, 2023; Common Cause, n.d.). The NRA nearly doubled its expenditure from 2014 to over \$54 million in independent expenditures during the 2016 federal election cycle (Common Cause, n.d.).

By depicting gun control measures as threats to individual freedoms and the Second Amendment, these organisations have successfully opposed them (Both sides of the gun debate aim to inflame US voters as NRA influence declines, 2024; As the NRA declines, a more fervent US pro-gun group emerges as a lobbying, 2023). Legislation like the Dickey Amendment, which forbids the CDC from using government funds to promote gun control, and the Firearm Owners Protection Act have been influenced by the NRA's lobbying activities (National Rifle Association, 2024). Other groups, such as the GOA, are stepping in despite the NRA's financial and legal woes; in 2022, the GOA spent a record \$3.3 million on lobbying (Both sides of the gun debate aim to inflame US voters as the NRA's influence declines, 2024; As the NRA declines, a more fervent US pro-gun group emerges as lobbying, 2023). These groups' unyielding stance is highlighted by their opposition to even modest gun control legislation like the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (As the NRA fades, a more passionate US pro-gun group rises as a lobbying, 2023).

The gun lobby's power has prevented meaningful reforms to gun regulations, even if the public supports programmes like universal background checks (Common Cause, n.d.; Effect of the NRA (National Rifle Association) As a Citizens Special Interest, n.d.). The Republican Party's support of gun rights and the NRA's sophisticated grassroots initiatives have increased the political influence of the gun lobby (Common Cause, n.d.; National Rifle Association, 2024).

### **1.6.2. Psychological Causes**

Psychological causes are all of the internal, frequently ingrained variables that affect a person's behavior and mental health. Different factors, such as personality traits, major life experiences, and genetic predispositions, can contribute to these reasons. In order to address mental health concerns, substance abuse, and the long-term impacts of exposure to childhood trauma, it is imperative to comprehend these reasons.

#### **1.6.2.1. Mental Health Issues**

A review of the available studies indicates that fewer than 50% of public mass shooters had been clinically diagnosed with mental illness (National Threat Assessment Centre, 2018, 2019). Otherwise, there are various psychological characteristics such as a lack of empathy, anger management problems, and a self-created image of themselves characterized by paranoia and arrogance combined with an inferiority complex (Wike & Fraser, 2009). Additionally, Wike and Fraser (2009) found that school shooters were highly likely to have suicidal thoughts or be depressed. Also, many of these perpetrators end up committing suicide themselves. Multiple-victim school shootings that were reviewed by Newman et al. (2004) showed that approximately 85% displayed some form of psychological distress, such as mental illness or depression.

#### **1.6.2.2. Substance Abuse**

According to the 2014 report procured by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an estimated count of 21.6 million individuals aged 12 or older in 2013 in the United States were presumed to have been afflicted with a disorder related to substance use. The primary substances subjected to misuse included, but were not limited to, analgesics, cocaine, ethanol, and cannabis. The age demographics showcasing the highest prevalence of substance use complications were those in the late-adolescent to mid-20s bracket and those spanning from the late 50s to early 60s. An appreciable positive correlation has been deduced from myriad studies between narcotic use and firearm-related violence (Sheehan, et al., 2013; Rivara et al., 1997; Reid, 2001). Though an evident paucity of research specifically delineating narcotic consumption and gun violence persists, a substantial corpus of literature implies a noteworthy association between narcotic usage and criminal behaviors. A notable investigation by Reid in 2001 unveiled a robust positive correlation between the narcotic use of juvenile detainees and their possession of firearms. Data revealed in the study indicated that firearm possession escalated the propensity for drug use by 60%, whereas narcotic consumption heightened the likelihood of firearm usage in criminal engagements by 34%. These empirical observations substantiate the significant interrelationship between narcotic use and firearm-related violence.

### **1.6.2.3. Childhood Trauma Exposure**

Unfortunately, a lot of American children experience trauma in their lives. Up to 90% of kids are thought to have gone through some kind of trauma at some point in their lives (Heinzelmann & Gill, 2013). Childhood trauma exposure is associated with an increased risk of several psychopathologies, such as substance misuse, anxiety, depression, disruptive behaviors, and post-traumatic stress disorder (McLaughlin et al., 2012, 2013). The impact of childhood trauma can extend beyond its influence on personal relationships and individual well-being. Research has established a correlation between adverse early experiences and an increased risk of criminal behavior by the age of 35. This association is particularly pronounced with regard to violent and serious offenses (Fox et al., 2015). According to Huesmann (2018) and Anderson and Bushman (2002), adverse experiences may significantly contribute to the development of risk factors associated with gun violence, potentially culminating in future acts of gun violence themselves. Duke et al. (2010) identify a link between childhood trauma exposure and several violence risk factors, including weapon ownership and carrying, criminal justice involvement, impulsivity, and aggression. This claim is further supported by the research of Leeb et al. (2007) and Smith and Thornberry (1995).

### **1.6.3. Social Causes**

Gun violence in schools is a complicated problem with many societal roots. According to research, bullying, unsuccessful relationships, rejection, and abusive parenting can all be factors in this issue.

#### **1.6.3.1. Violent Parenting**

An estimated 15 million children are impacted by domestic violence in the United States alone, making it a widespread problem (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2023). Nearly 900,000 children are thought to have been abused by parents or other carers,

according to studies looking into the frequency of child abuse (United States Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2006). Studies indicate a robust correlation between the development, severity, and recurrence of mental health issues in children and their repeated exposure to domestic violence (Jouriles et al., 2018; Münger & Markström, 2018; Zarenezhad et al., 2016). Nonetheless, there is still a dearth of research on the precise influence that fathers have on the behavioral and psychosocial outcomes of their children in the setting of domestic violence. Febres et al (2014) investigated the relationship between domestic and family violence, father traits, and child psychological functioning in a sample of 145 American men arrested for domestic abuse. The study discovered a link between fathers' antisocial personality traits, family and domestic violence, and the general psychosocial impairment of children. According to the authors, fathers may provide an example of aggressive behavior and poor emotional control for their children. Furthermore, they proposed that abusive fathers produce an excessively stimulating environment, which hinders children's ability to focus or drives them to engage in attention-seeking behaviors (Thompson-Walsh et al., 2021). This is consistent with earlier studies by Sullivan et al. (2000), which found a direct link between children's behavior and development and seeing father violence. Moreover, a correlation has been regularly shown by population-based, longitudinal, and meta-analytic research to exist between the transmission of violence between generations and early exposure to domestic violence (Fergusson et al., 2013).

#### **1.6.3.2. Rejection and Unsuccessful Relationships**

In Kalish and Kimmel's (2010) perspective, school shooters' escalating anger stems from a sense of "aggrieved entitlement," a masculine emotional response to perceived unjust humiliations that necessitate revenge. This sense of entitlement, along with their rage, builds over time, ultimately culminating in the decision to commit a violent act (Langman, 2009). However, a triggering event often precedes this final choice. This trigger can be a single, emasculating loss, such as romantic rejection from a real or imagined lover (Leary et al., 2003). Studies suggest that

romantic rejection is particularly detrimental to adolescents, potentially leading to sadness, suicidal ideation, and aggressive behaviour (Furman et al., 2009). Romero-Canyas et al. (2010) found a particularly strong correlation between romantic rejection and aggression in their experimental study with teenagers. Furthermore, Leary et al. (2003) analysed 15 school shootings (high school or lower grades) in the U.S. and found that 46% of the perpetrators had recently experienced a romantic rejection. Similarly, Sommer et al. (2014) examined high school and university shootings, revealing that romantic rejection played a role in 29.9% of the 67 incidents studied. Dumitriu's (2013) research on perpetrators under 30 further supports this connection. She found that 76.3% of these individuals exhibited a combination of troubled relationships with girls, bullying experiences, and a lack of friends.

The perpetrators often target not only romantic rivals but also those perceived as contributing to their social rejection. Many cases involve plans or desire to harm classmates or instructors who bullied or degraded them (Fast, 2008; Kidd & Meyer, 2002; McGee & DeBernado, 1999). This focus on peer rejection aligns with the findings of Leary et al. (2003) who identified a strong correlation between aggressive behaviour and interpersonal rejection, encompassing experiences of teasing, shunning, and unrequited affection. Their case study results further support this connection between social rejection and violence.

#### **1.6.3.3. Bullying**

Teenage involvement in bullying, as a victim or offender, may be one factor contributing to their carrying of weapons. In fact, carrying a firearm was found to be highly related to both perpetrating and victimizing bullying, according to a recent meta-analysis of 35 research. Bullying generally refers to hostile verbal, physical, or interpersonal behaviors that are meant to cause harm to the victim (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). According to Modecki et al. (2014), traditional bullying (35%) and cyberbullying (15%) are rather widespread among teenagers. It is plausible to believe that bullying contributes to school shootings because research has shown that bullying has

a strongly detrimental influence on children's psychosocial development.

According to "Effects of Bullying" (2014), the shooters in 12 out of 15 school shooting events throughout the 1990s had a history of being bullied. This was acknowledged by Leary et al. (2003), who stated that the main conclusions in the U.S. Secret Service report indicate that the potential perpetrators had endured recurrent bullying that apparently bordered on torture before the shooting. The nature and severity of the confrontations between the offenders, their instructors, and other school personnel varied. In several instances, educators and administrators had neglected to take action because they chose to ignore or minimize the bullying that the potential schoolyard attacker had experienced. According to Newman et al. (2004), some shootings that targeted teachers and administrators may have been caused by being suspended from school, as the majority of students encounter rejection, including those who are bullied and rejected by classmates or instructors.

#### **1.6.4. Economic Causes**

Gun violence in schools is a complicated problem with many societal roots. According to research, bullying, unsuccessful relationships, rejection, and abusive parenting can all be factors in this issue.

##### **1.6.4.1. Poverty**

The US's crime rate is greatly impacted by poverty, a complex subject. Poverty may encourage crime for two basic reasons. People who are struggling financially may turn to crime to acquire desired things. On the other hand, some people might view violent crime as a dangerous but rapid means of obtaining resources, possibly outweighing the fear of being caught (Fundamental Finance, 2008).

Poverty lies at the heart of the surge in gun violence, a sobering reality revealed by recent studies (Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2022). Counties grappling with high poverty

rates experienced a distressing spike in firearm homicides, shedding light on the profound link between poverty and escalating gun violence (Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2022). Even after considering various demographic factors like age, race, and urbanicity, poverty remains tightly intertwined with heightened rates of gun violence (Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2022). The pathways through which poverty fuels gun violence are intricate and deeply human: Economic Struggles: Poverty brings forth economic hardships, intensifying stress and despair, pushing individuals towards acts of violence in search of relief (Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2022; UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, n.d.). Limited Horizons: Impoverished neighborhoods often lack hopeful prospects, breeding feelings of despondency and anger, which can erupt into violence (Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2022; CT Mirror, 2022). Social Bonds: The gap between the rich and the poor, coupled with dwindling social connections, leaves communities vulnerable to higher rates of violent crime (PubMed, 1998). Neighborhood Struggles: Communities grappling with socioeconomic hardships, marked by soaring poverty rates and limited economic avenues, become fertile grounds for gun violence (CT Mirror, 2022).

The connection between poverty and school gun violence is stark. Research shows that poverty significantly increases the risk of gun violence among youth, particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Concentrated poverty and racial disparities are key factors driving the prevalence of gun violence, which profoundly affects mental health and community safety. To tackle the root causes of school gun violence, it's crucial to address poverty directly and implement supportive policies (Herrick, 2022; UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, 2022).

According to Ludwig et al. (2005), neighborhoods with high rates of poverty foster a criminal atmosphere that may impact other people. A study by Fundamental Finance (2008) quantifies this effect, indicating that a 1% increase in poverty can result in 135 more crimes overall and 25 more violent crimes. This translates to a projected 2% rise in both overall and violent crime rates for a mere 1% increase in poverty (Fundamental Finance, 2008). There is evidence to refute

the notion that youths are inherently more likely to commit crimes (Brown & Males, 2011; Males, 2009). These contend that conventional theories overlook how socioeconomic disadvantages, such as poverty, affect this kind of behavior. Said another way, these ideas ignore the outside forces that encourage youth to commit crimes. Research has shown for decades that criminal behavior is highly influenced by poverty and related social disadvantages (Shelden et al., 2001; Donziger, 1996; Jencks, 1992).

#### **1.6.4.2. Income Inequality**

Kwon and Cabrera (2019) presented the fact that mass shootings in the United States have been increasing over the past few decades, and during that same time there has been dramatic growth of income inequality in developed economies around the world. In their study's methodology section.

Kaufman et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between mass shootings and disparities in income. They discovered a significant correlation between the frequency of mass shootings in the United States and high levels of income disparity and household income. In their analysis, which examined data from 3,144 counties between 1990 and 2015, mass shootings were classified as incidents in which three or more persons were hurt. They used the post-tax Gini coefficient to measure income inequality. One of their key discoveries was that the combination of income inequality and high household income was a powerful predictor of mass shootings, more so than either factor alone. The researchers suggest this is because people in these situations feel a deep sense of frustration and anger when they can not achieve the economic success they see around them, leading to increased violence (Kaufman et al., 2019).

#### **1.6.4.3. Easy Access to Gun**

The United States stands out among 65 high-income nations and territories for having a disproportionately high rate of gun violence. Its ranking—seventh out of 65 for age-adjusted firearm homicides—reflects this alarming trend (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2023). Sadly, the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are the only US territories to rank first and fourth, respectively (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2023).

Sanchez et al.'s (2018) study provided evidence in favour of this link between gun accessibility and violence. An analysis of Communities That Care (CTC) programmes conducted in 2018 found that almost 20% of youth had access to firearms, mostly through friends who were gun owners. The study, (as cited in Siegel et al., 2014), further highlighted that approximately 7% of young people thought it was simple to get a gun, 9.5 % knew where to get one, and 18.5% had friends who were gun owners. Even while only a small portion of people physically own guns, this accessibility is alarming. Studies indicate a strong correlation between higher gun-related death rates and this kind of accessibility, especially for youth (Sanchez et al., 2018). There are serious public health issues because of the greater potential access rate of 20%. Gun-related occurrences are more likely to occur among young individuals who have easy access to firearms, particularly through peer networks (Sanchez et al., 2018).

#### **1.6.5. Cultural and Media Influences**

In the US, school shootings continue to be a persistent public health concern (Fox & De Lugan, 2019). To fully comprehend this intricate phenomenon, more research is needed on sensationalised media coverage (Ferguson et al., 2016) and cultural elements including gun rights and the glorifying of violence (Winkler et al., 2019).

##### **1.6.5.1. The Internet and Social Media Platforms**

Szabo (2023) suggests a link between social media platforms and increased gun violence among adolescents, particularly in areas with prevalent gun violence. The pervasive information

on gun violence on social media platforms warrants an investigation into its potential association with the increased frequency of mass shootings. The 2018 Parkland school shooting serves as a prime example, whereas survivors and eyewitnesses leveraged various social media applications (Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) to disseminate graphic content and immediate updates during the incident. This phenomenon may contribute to the formation of online communities that celebrate perpetrators, attracting individuals susceptible to such glorification. These individuals may even exhibit a desire to replicate the actions of the shooters, including their mannerisms, expressions, and number of victims (Raitanen & Oksanen, 2018). Following the Parkland tragedy, there was a concerning surge in copycat threats targeting schools nationwide, with 638 reported threats within a mere two weeks. Although these threats are often unsubstantiated or intended as pranks, their rapid dissemination via social media can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and insecurity within communities. Recent tragedies, such as the 2022 Uvalde Elementary School shooting, highlight the potential for a mass shooting contagion effect (Madani, 2022). This theory posits that media coverage of mass shootings may inspire copycat attacks. Social media platforms may further exacerbate this issue by disseminating graphic content and shooter manifestos, potentially inciting violence.

#### **1.6.5.2. Video Games, Movies, and Music**

In a study by Bushman (2016), a majority of paediatricians (over 90%) and media researchers (around two-thirds) indicated violent video games increase aggression in children. This aligns with Helfgott's (2015) review highlighting over 1,000 studies finding a connection between televised violence and increased aggression, social anxiety, and a negative worldview. The media has historically linked popular culture to violent acts, such as music, video games, and aesthetics following the Columbine shooting (Cullen, 2009; Yamato, 2016). Similarly, news reports associated the 2016 Munich shooting with the perpetrator's violent video game habits (CNN Wire, 2016; Reuters, 2016). Films have also been implicated, with eight murders linked to "Natural Born

Killers" (Bracci, 2010; Brooks, 2002; PBS, n.d.). These examples illustrate the ongoing debate regarding the influence of violent media on real-world aggression.

A study by Edubirdie (2022) suggests a correlation between hip-hop music and gun violence in the United States. The analysis focuses on the lyrical content, particularly within the drill music subgenre, which depicts themes including gang violence, and firearms. The authors argue that this portrayal normalizes gun violence, especially for adolescents who constitute a significant portion of the hip-hop listener base. Furthermore, the study highlights the influence of prominent gangsta rap groups like N.W.A. whose lyrics have been interpreted as promoting gun ownership and hostility towards law enforcement (Edubirdie, 2022).

#### **1.6.6. Religious Causes**

Religious convictions can influence school gun violence, frequently as a result of domestic extremism and erroneous interpretations of the Bible. Violent ideologies motivated by politics or fanaticism can result in acts of violence against religious communities.

##### **1.6.6.1. Misinterpretation of Scriptures**

Several verses from religious texts have been misinterpreted or manipulated to justify violence. In Islam, verses such as Quran 9:5 (Sahih International). Similarly, in Christianity, certain passages from the Old Testament, such as Exodus 22:18 and Deuteronomy 20:16-17 (New International Version). Hinduism's Bhagavad Gita, some interpretations of verses, such as Chapter 2, Verse 47 (Eknath Easwaran). And Judaism's Tanakh, certain passages from the Hebrew Bible, such as Joshua 6:21 (Jewish Publication Society). All these verses are used to justify violence and are often taken out of context or misinterpreted by extremists to justify their violent actions.

##### **1.6.6.2. Domestic Extremism**

In a recent study by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (2021), a rise in violent extremism linked to white supremacists and anti-government ideologies was identified as a significant threat. This report highlights a concerning connection between this extremism and readily available firearms, suggesting that easy access to guns may amplify the dangers of domestic extremism in the United States. According to Edmund (2022), easy access to firearms significantly increases the frequency and severity of attacks by domestic extremists, who often view guns as their weapon of choice. This is exemplified by the January 6th attack on the Capitol Building, where some perpetrators were armed. This incident, fuelled by right-wing rhetoric and disinformation about the 2020 election, highlights the dangers of such ideologies. The author further argues that these events are part of a larger trend, citing the 2014 Bundy standoff and the 2022 Buffalo supermarket shooting by a white supremacist as examples of how right-wing extremists use anti-government ideology to justify violence (Edmund, 2022).

Edmund's study suggests a link between easy access to guns and the increase in domestic extremism, with violent extremists often resorting to mass shootings. This is exemplified by incidents like the Charleston shooting (2015) where a white supremacist used a firearm to kill nine black people, allegedly aiming to spark a racial conflict (Edmund, 2022). Similarly, in Buffalo (2022), a gunman motivated by the extremist "replacement theory" targeted a predominantly black community, resulting in ten deaths (Edmund, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to highlighting the major causes of gun violence in American schools, although one of the main causes of gun violence in the United States is the nation itself for allowing gun ownership. The scourge of gun violence is specific to the United States. Students' unique personalities are seen to be a major contributing factor to the rise in violence. Including diminished empathy, anger management issues, and distorted self-perception. There is a significant correlation between school shooters and suicidal ideation or depressive symptoms.

Most of the perpetrators display signs of mental illness and depression. Substance abuse, childhood trauma exposure, and violent parenting are significant factors contributing to the rise in gun violence. Social causes, poverty, and income inequality are all contributing factors to the rise in crime rates in the United States. Gun violence is also a significant public health issue, with mass shootings often gaining media attention. Cultural norms, social media platforms, and video games have historically linked violent acts to aggression, social anxiety, and a negative worldview. Drill music, in particular, has been linked to gun violence, normalizing it, especially for adolescents. Moreover, school gun violence in the United States is influenced by political gun control laws and political polarization, which heighten social tensions and foster a violent culture, impacting people's conduct in resolving disputes. Religious texts have been used to justify violence in various religions. Domestic extremism, linked to white supremacists and anti-government ideologies, poses a significant threat, with easy access to firearms increasing the frequency and severity of attacks.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **EFFECTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN THE U.S.**

## **Chapter Two: Consequences of School Gun Violence in the U.S.**

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## **Introduction**

One of the most developed countries facing a high prevalence of school gun violence is the United States. Students in this country are affected by this issue, whether as victims or perpetrators. Gun violence impacts students both physically and psychologically, making it difficult for many to adjust to the school environment. This often disrupts their education and affects their future. This chapter highlights the impact of school gun violence on children, parents, and the school environment. It also examines the social, economic, and psychological effects of such violence. However, school gun violence needs to be addressed and strategies for limiting it must be implemented. This chapter also attempts to outline some of the strategies that can reduce gun violence in American schools.

### **2.1. Consequences of School Gun Violence**

School gun violence transcends the immediate shock and loss of life, leaving a ripple effect of profound consequences. This analysis delves into the multifaceted nature of this issue, exploring the academic, social, economic, and psychological ramifications that extend far beyond the initial event. By examining the impact on survivors, educational environments, communities, and mental well-being, this work aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the lasting effects of school gun violence.

#### **2.1.1. Academic Consequences**

School shootings can significantly hinder the academic performance of exposed students (Cabral et al., 2020). This negative effect is particularly pronounced in districts that have endured mass shootings with multiple fatalities (Levine & McKnight, 2020). Studies like the one examining the aftermath of the 2012 Sandy Hook tragedy documented a substantial decline in test scores across subjects (Levine & McKnight, 2020). However, the detrimental impact is not limited to

high-fatality incidents. Research by Cabral et al. (2020) examining shootings in Texas schools between 1995 and 2016 (all with one or fewer fatalities) revealed that exposure to a school shooting increased instances of grade repetition and decreased graduation rates.

#### **2.1.1.1. Impact on Children**

It should be noted that Cabral et al. (2020) studied the long-term effects of school shootings on students' academic progress and economic outcomes in Texas for the last 30 years. Focusing on non-fatal shootings and those with low fatalities resulted in a wider data set compared to studies centred on incidents involving many deaths. According to this research, such cases of school violence led to bad results in education like a 0.4% rise in truancy, a 1.8% increase in chronic truancy, and a 1.3% increase in grade repetition rates. Moreover, individuals who were involved in school shooting at age ten or eleven had lower likelihoods of completing high school by about 4%, enrolling into colleges by almost 6%, and earning a bachelor's degree by twenty-six years by approximately more than five cents (Cabral et al., 2020). This educational setback translated into fewer opportunities in the labour market as well as lower lifetime salaries with estimates that indicate an over \$115,000 decrease (Cabral et al., 2020). It is important to note that their findings are consistent with other studies indicating that community gun violence has detrimental impacts on scholastic attainment (e.g., Sharkey).

It is becoming increasingly evident that exposure to violence has a detrimental impact on students' academic achievement in various ways (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998; Martinez & Richters, 1993; Osofsky, 1999). This impact is manifested through acute stress reactions, which result from experiencing violence at a young age, as well as chronic psychological stress, which arises from prolonged exposure to violence. These stressors can lead to conditions such as depression, aggressive behaviour, anxiety, sleep disorders, and poor concentration, ultimately resulting in decreased academic performance.

Exclusion from school activities can lead to poor performance in class as indicated by test scores and grade point averages (Borofsky et al., 2013). This is especially true in the case of gun violence and test scores. A cross-sectional study conducted in Syracuse, New York in 2018 established that students in the elementary schools in the areas with high exposure to gun violence had lower English and mathematics scores (Bergen-Cico et al., 2018). These students were also more likely to drop out of school and fail math and English tests than their counterparts who lived in safer neighbourhoods. Likewise, a study done on students in New York City indicated that violence, especially in the week before a standardized test reduced the English scores of students in grades 3-8 and reduced the probability of passing the test by one. 1 percentage point (Sharkey, 2010). This effect was even harsher for Black students, with a 2. a reduction of 8 percentage points, thus developing a huge gap between the Blacks and the Whites in terms of achievement. In addition to this, studies propose a “cumulative disadvantage” effect. This is because early test scores in violent neighbourhoods can be lower and this creates a gap in achievement by the time the child is in high school (Burdick-Will, 2016).

School gun violence deeply impacts children, leaving them with enduring emotional and psychological wounds. Experiencing such violence can result in a variety of negative psychological effects, including anger, withdrawal, posttraumatic stress, and numbing desensitization to violence (Mitigating the Effects of Gun Violence on Children and Youth, n.d.; The Impact of Gun Violence on Children, Families, & Communities, n.d.). Children who witness violence first-hand, live in violent neighbourhoods, or frequently consume violent media are especially susceptible to these harmful effects (Mitigating the Effects of Gun Violence on Children and Youth, n.d.; The Impact of Gun Violence on Children, Families, & Communities, n.d.). The trauma from gun violence doesn't just disappear; it can have long-term impacts on a child's mental and emotional health, as well as their academic performance and relationships with peers and adults (Centre for Violence Prevention, n.d.). The constant fear and anxiety that comes from such violence can make school feel like a dangerous place, damaging the overall sense of safety and

community (Centre for Violence Prevention, n.d.). Children who are directly involved in or witness gun violence are more likely to suffer from significant mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression (Mitigating the Effects of Gun Violence on Children and Youth, n.d.; The Impact of Gun Violence on Children, Families, & Communities, n.d.). Moreover, this trauma can create a vicious cycle, as children exposed to violence may be more likely to engage in violent behaviours themselves (Mitigating the Effects of Gun Violence on Children and Youth, n.d.). To help children affected by gun violence, it is crucial to provide comprehensive support and resources. This includes enhancing parental monitoring, offering targeted services for at-risk youth, and developing therapeutic programs to help children heal from their trauma (Mitigating the Effects of Gun Violence on Children and Youth, n.d.).

#### **2.1.1.2. Impact on Parents**

Parents are deeply impacted by the spectre of school gun violence, with nearly 40% feeling a weight of worry about the safety of their children, and two-thirds finding themselves in difficult conversations about firearm safety with their kids (Vanderbilt University, 2024). These concerns stretch beyond just physical safety to encompass fears about their children's emotional well-being and the quality of education they receive, ranking school gun violence alongside issues like bullying and mental health struggles (American Psychological Association, 2023; Vanderbilt University, 2024). When confronted with the aftermath of such tragedies, parents may grapple with tough decisions, contemplating moves to new schools or even home schooling, all fuelled by their profound desire to protect their children (Vanderbilt University, 2024).

The effects of school shootings on parents' mental health, especially that of mothers, may go beyond the students. Parents' ability to support their children in mourning could be hampered by reduced well-being due to gun violence at school, with an extra burden added. However, because this research work is limited by a lack of data on what happens to parents once a shooting incident occurs, previous studies provide some hints supporting a possible relationship between

maternal psychiatric problems and student outcomes. Nonetheless, there were no increases in prescription rates for antidepressants amongst adults following any mass shootings as found by Rossin-Slater et al (2020), but Nabors (2022) argued the opposite indicating a decline in the psychological health among parents and family members after such incidents. For instance, Bharadwaj et al (2022) underline a deterioration in the mothers' mental health triggered by the Utøya massacre. This decrement in parental welfare particularly focusing on maternal psychopathology will have far-reaching implications on child development as well.

A Pew Research Centre survey conducted in the United States confirmed that parents are concerned about the possibility of school shootings (Pew Research Centre, 2022). The Mom Detected in the study was conducted in September-October 2022 ages 3,757 adults who are parents of kids under 18 years with at least one student in K-12 education showed that 32% of the parents said they were very worried about the chances of a shooting happening in their child's school. More to the point, the mothers' concern was significantly high at 39% as opposed to the fathers who had 24%. Moreover, there are differences in worry by race/ethnicity as shown in the same study. The subject have shown the most concern from Hispanic parents in the survey at 50% while black parents at 40%, Asian parents at 35% and white parents at 22%. Socioeconomic factors were also significant, 49 % of parents with low income revealed that they had a significant worry altogether with parents in a low-income bracket while only 26 % parents of in middle-income bracket and 19 % of upper-income bracket claimed that they had a significant worry. These results earmark the high rate of perceived risk that parents of K-12 students have towards the possibility of future school shooting incidents concerning differences in parents' gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

#### **2.1.1.3. Impact on School Environment**

The impact of school gun violence on school staff, which includes teachers, administrators, and support personnel, is deeply felt. The trauma and stress caused by such incidents can have

lasting effects, leading to mental health struggles, decreased job satisfaction, and higher turnover rates among staff. Additionally, many school staff members may feel uncertain about the effectiveness of the trauma intervention strategies implemented in schools and often find themselves lacking adequate support in the aftermath of a shooting. This lack of support can foster negative feelings toward the school environment, heighten the risk of mental health issues, and diminish overall job satisfaction among staff. Furthermore, the presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) has been associated with increased rates of suspension, expulsion, and arrest, as well as lower graduation rates, particularly impacting marginalized student groups (National Education Association, 2023).

The repercussions of school shootings extend beyond the individuals involved affecting students and parents alike. These incidents have the potential to shape outcomes by influencing decisions related to resource distribution and classroom teaching methods. Unlike gun violence, in settings school shootings have an impact on educational resources. How schools respond to events can either improve or worsen student performance. Positive responses may involve allocating resources to support students dealing with trauma such as hiring counsellors or psychologists. On the other hand, negative responses like school closures or staff changes can disrupt learning continuity and hinder progress as evidenced by previous studies (Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Atteberry et al., 2017). School administrators may choose to implement measures or security protocols like metal detectors and frequent safety drills in response to shootings. These actions can significantly influence a child's ability to learn and adjust psychologically after experiencing trauma. Research by Cabral et al. (2020) has shown a link between school gun violence and turnover, among faculty/staff in years indicating that these incidents may destabilize learning environments by causing staff turnover potentially leading to academic consequences.

The NCTAF, (2002) provides two indicating episodes of tragic features but in this case, school shootings have negative impacts on educators. One of the reports is about a lady known by the pseudonym Melissa who taught in a school and one day shot dead a student. Emotional

drama, while the failure of her school district to support her might have made her fail in teaching prompting her to drop the profession completely. This shows how much anger and pressure these incidents can bring to the victim out there as well as to the school and denies education in having the loss of a prolific teacher and restricting the students. On the other hand, Mike, a 23-year-old man presented at the centre with a complication of serious emotional disturbance is a subject that is different to a great extent. The outcome of the story is rather optimistic: Mike was the average man able to save people on a school territory and, despite the shooting, got much support from the district and people of the town so he might return to teaching his students. This premise indicates that there is a need for appropriate professional assistance to help education stakeholders deal with such traumatic events as school shooting occurrences. Therefore, the following are factors crucial to wrap an understanding, whenever changing the behaviour of the educator profession to avoid high turnover of teachers and shield the students learning from such disasters.

### **2.1.2. Social Consequences**

The issue of school gun violence is a critical and pressing concern that has far-reaching social consequences. School shootings, therefore, have a negative social impact on families who lose their loved ones, education which is disrupted by this unlawful act, and have long-lasting effects on those who have undergone the trauma. These attacks eliminate faith in schools' safety and have adverse effects on learners, their families, and teachers.

#### **2.1.2.1. Loss of Life and Survivors**

The aftermath of school gun violence in the United States profoundly impacts both the lives lost and the survivors. Firearms stand as the leading cause of death among American children and adolescents, surpassing even motor vehicle accidents (CDC, n.d.)

For survivors of school shootings, the journey is marked by enduring trauma and lifelong challenges. Research suggests that youth exposed to gun violence may turn to antidepressants for

over three years following the event (KFF, n.d.). These survivors are also at heightened risk of grappling with chronic physical ailments, substance abuse, and mental health disorders (KFF, n.d.). Moreover, the ripple effects extend to family members, particularly mothers, who often bear the burden of increased psychiatric disorders and mental health consultations (KFF, n.d.).

The impact of school shootings reverberates across survivors' educational and economic trajectories. Those affected are more likely to face chronic absenteeism, diminished graduation rates, and lower lifetime earnings compared to their unexposed peers (PBS, n.d.). The collective toll of school gun violence, in terms of lost earnings potential, amounts to an estimated \$5.8 billion (PBS, n.d.).

A semi-recent analysis demonstrated in a study by Langton & Armor (2020) illustrates the frequency with which school shootings take place. This particular study reveals that during the span of the previous twenty years, there have been no fewer than 143 public educational institutions which have been subjected to such shootings, resulting in an excess of 300 fatalities as a consequence of these incidents. The distressing trend, extending beyond immediate fatalities, has been demonstrated to impact the student populace significantly. These calamitous events occurred while over several approximately 180,000 students were present, potentially incurring substantial trauma. The devastating nature of firearm-related violence within educational settings, culminating in mortality, stands as a paramount societal issue requiring comprehensive attention. Psychological investigations concerning collegiate individuals' perceptions of gun violence emphasize the prominence of mental health in the context of such grievous occurrences (Lee et al., 2015). The varying perspectives promulgated by media sources regarding gun violence, encompassing gun regulation and mental health considerations, elucidate its multifaceted, intricate nature (Betke et al., 2019). Instances of school shootings not only fragment familial and communal bonds but also instigate disruption within educational facilities, impeding academic progress and diminishing institutional trust. Attending to the welfare of those who survive school-related gun violence holds fundamental importance in mitigating the extensive, long-lasting societal

repercussions of these tragic episodes, given that their psychological and physical welfare exerts influence over not solely their individual lives but also impacts their familial units, the neighborhoods in which they reside, and societal constructs broadly. A semi-recent analysis demonstrated in a study by Langton & Armor (2020) illustrates the frequency with which school shootings take place. This particular study reveals that during the span of the previous twenty years, there have been no fewer than 143 public educational institutions which have been subjected to such shootings, resulting in an excess of 300 fatalities as a consequence of these incidents. The distressing trend, extending beyond immediate fatalities, has been demonstrated to impact the student populace significantly. These calamitous events occurred while over several approximately 180,000 students were present, potentially incurring substantial trauma. The devastating nature of firearm-related violence within educational settings, culminating in mortality, stands as a paramount societal issue requiring comprehensive attention.

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outcomes of school shootings emanate from the abrupt traumatic occurrence, possessing a deeply profound and enduring effect on the survivors' quality of existence. In some cases, these people are exposed to different psychological disorders that can range from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse to self-harm practices; major depressive episodes and panic attacks. Long after they have occurred, up to 95% of individuals who undergo such incidents are seen displaying PTSD symptoms with most still facing psychological complications even beyond months or years. This perpetual trauma not only obstructs the healing process and recovery but also results in a phobia cycle and the likelihood of aggressive conduct among victims. Moreover, it is necessary to consider victims' wellness when dealing with consequences stemming from school shooting incidences since it has durable impacts upon communities and members themselves including mental health disorders affecting them physically through many generations together with extended social structure.

#### **2.1.2.2. Disruption of Learning**

Gun violence within US schools has a profound impact on students' learning and well-being. School shootings notably hinder academic performance and proficiency rates, particularly in subjects like math and reading, with more significant repercussions observed in schools catering to minority and disadvantaged students. The aftermath of such incidents results in a substantial decrease in freshman enrolment, and other traumatic events like the Beltway Sniper attacks contribute to declining school proficiency rates. These experiences, along with other forms of childhood violence, detrimentally affect academic achievement, attendance, graduation rates, and mental health, depriving students of the safe learning environments they deserve (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022; Brown et al., 2023; Economic Policy Institute, 2023).

School shootings, whether at elementary or secondary schools, have a profound effect that is more than physical violence. The presence of guns in schools causes fear, and young learners and educators do not feel safe inside school walls. According to Lynn-Whaley et al. (2017), the

literature on trauma delves into the long-term effects of exposure to violence which includes cases when there was a gun in use during these violent acts within the society. Furthermore, dynamic technology makes it hard to track students online whether they are on campus or not making it impossible to attribute what happened to the victim to any single person (Sweeney et al., 2019). These issues inhibit teaching and erode trust which is necessary for supportive learning environments especially ones disrupted by school-related gun violence. As such, this paper examines difficulties arising from the intersection of traumatic experiences with technological advancements as well as regulations controlling students' internet speech about how academic performance and general social well-being are influenced by incidents like school shootings.

School shootings in the U.S. can seriously mess up students' learning and economic opportunities (Cabral et al., 2020; Levine & McKnight, 2020). Research shows that there's a whole chain of negative effects. For example, Cabral et al. (2020) found that students in Texas who experienced shootings had more absences, had to repeat grades, and had lower graduation rates. These students also had a harder time going to college, graduating, and finding good jobs as young adults (Cabral et al., 2020). Likewise, Levine and McKnight (2020) discovered that test scores dropped and students were frequently absent after school shootings with high fatalities. This shows how the psychological impact of these events can have lasting effects on academic achievement and future economic well-being (Levine & McKnight, 2020). These studies highlight the urgent need for strong support systems to help students deal with the long-term consequences of school shootings.

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### **2.1.2.3. Loss of Trust**

After school shootings, trust in schools dwindles among students, parents, and the community, causing ripple effects throughout society and shaking up how safe schools feel (The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, n.d.). Research, backed by funding from The New York Community Trust, emphasizes the urgency of tackling youth gun violence, especially in places where it mixes with poverty, scarce resources, and inequality. Take Chicago, for example. There, the trauma from gun violence in struggling neighborhoods keeps poverty and aggression cycling, showing how violence, tough living situations, and academic struggles are tightly knit (The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, n.d.). Without addressing this trauma, kids might find it tough to succeed in school and society's challenges could worsen. Rebuilding trust in schools and getting to the heart of why school shootings happen demands a big-picture approach.

The educational domain has long acknowledged the school as a place of refuge (Fisher et al., 2019). This serves as a protective mechanism offering solace to students confronted with violence at home or in their locality. Regrettably, this notion is shattered following school shooting incidents, eroding trust in the institution's ability to ensure the safety and well-being of its students (Lines 5-7). This erosion of trust may endure irrespective of casualties, as such events serve as stark reminders to learners and their parents of other grave occurrences akin to those witnessed at Columbine, Sandy Hook, Parkland, and Uvalde schools that could transpire within their schools. premises (Lowe & Galea, 2017).

School shootings undermine trust in society. When students fear violence at school, it damages their trust in institutions and each other (National Education Association, n.d.; Washington Post, 2017). Research shows that peers often don't report warning signs of potential shooters due to distrust in adults, fearing repercussions or being dismissed (National Education Association, n.d.; Everytown for Gun Safety, 2020). This loss of trust extends beyond schools, affecting the wider community. After shootings, parents worry about school safety, and people feel uneasy attending public events (Washington Post, 2017). Declining trust can escalate into violence, including mass shootings, as minor conflicts may turn volatile when individuals feel marginalized (Washington Post, 2017). Rebuilding trust is crucial. Schools must foster a safe environment where students feel comfortable reporting concerns (National Education Association, n.d.; Everytown for Gun Safety, 2020).

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institutions. Likewise, the loss of confidence in school safety proves harmful to the lives of students, teachers, and parents over a prolonged duration.

### **2.1.3. Economic Consequences**

This completely checks the economic repercussions of the school shootings in the USA have gone beyond the societal sector and get to different parts of society.

#### **2.1.3.1. Healthcare Costs**

The healthcare costs associated with treating victims of gun violence in the United States are substantial and extensive, affecting individuals, families, and society as a whole:

The average hospital stay for a nonfatal gun injury costs more than \$62,000, nearly matching the U.S. median household income for an entire year (Everytown Research & Policy, 2021).

Nationwide, gun violence results in over \$1 billion in annual spending on initial hospital costs alone. This figure does not include emergency room visits, physician costs, or long-term rehabilitation and mental health care (Equitable Growth, 2022).

Among survivors of nonfatal firearm injuries, medical spending increased by \$2,495 per person per month—a 402% increase compared to those not exposed to gun violence. Costs are particularly high in the first month after the injury, averaging \$25,554 per person (Equitable Growth, 2022).

Readmission rates for gun violence survivors are high, with up to 16% requiring readmission within six months at an average cost of \$8,000-\$11,000 per patient (Equitable Growth, 2022).

The total lifetime healthcare costs of gun violence are not well-studied, but estimates suggest they are immense and continue to grow over time (Equitable Growth, 2022; NCBI, 2023).

In summary, the immediate and long-term medical costs of treating gun violence victims and survivors place a substantial financial burden on families, employers, and taxpayers (Everytown Research & Policy, 2021; Everytown, 2021; Equitable Growth, 2022).

### **2.1.3.2. Societal Implications**

The negative effects of school gun violence are expanding and society is not only going through psychological trauma but also economic loss and conflict as well. Speaking of the paper (Lee et al., 2015), which discusses the centrality of the mental health crisis in such kind of behaviors, the next issue to thin out during the debate is the legal approach to this issue, as analyzed by (Banuelos et al., 2018). In Australia and Japan, strict firearm regulations have been effectively enforced, whereas, in the United States, the profound cultural attachment to guns and the Second Amendment presents challenges to implementing similar measures (Chapman et al., 2006; Iwata et al., 2022). Addressing gun violence in schools necessitates a multifaceted approach that considers both economic ramifications and social dynamics. Safeguarding schools entails striking a delicate balance among individual convictions, societal norms, and governmental policies. The financial aftermath of gun-related incidents in American educational institutions encompasses more than immediate costs such as medical expenses and security enhancements; it also includes emotional distress among victims and communities, disruptions to education, and enduring economic burdens (Miller, 2012).

Effective strategies should prioritize limiting access to firearms, bolstering mental health services, and reinforcing educational initiatives. Without comprehensive measures, ongoing violence will continue to undermine both the economy and the well-being of future generations (Cook & Ludwig, 2006). Australia and Japan, among other countries, have recorded success internationally in the enactment of stricter gun laws; nonetheless, in the US, given the strong entrenchment of culture and constitutionality provisions vis-à-vis the Second Amendment, formidable roadblocks stand against the true implementation of practical solutions. As a result, a

complex approach rather than pragmatic thinking should be the chancellor, one that considers not only the economic costs but also the complex societal dynamics at play in combating school gun violence. Therefore, the question of safety in education is inversely proportional to how complex it is on the issue of compatibility between individual perceptions, societal norms, and policy as bases of a safer school.

Research shows that students exposed to school shootings are more likely to miss school, have lower graduation rates, and are less likely to attend college, which adversely affects their future earnings and employment prospects (Crawford, 2021; Cabral, Kim, Rossin-Slater, Schnell, & Schwandt, 2020). For example, a study by the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research found that these students earn 13.5% less by their mid-twenties compared to those who did not experience such events (Crawford, 2021). Furthermore, research from Harvard Medical School highlights the increased financial burden on survivors and their families, who face higher rates of psychiatric and substance-use disorders (Miller, 2023).

These educational and employment disruptions not only create significant financial challenges for individuals but also result in broader economic losses for society. This underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to prevent gun violence and support affected communities (Schnell, Schwandt, Rossin-Slater, Cabral, & Kim, 2021).

#### **2.1.4. Psychological Consequences**

The psychological health of everyone affected by school gun violence survivors, bystanders, and even people who learn about it indirectly can suffer greatly. The trauma may result in several psychological repercussions. In the long term, disasters have increased psychological impacts that pervade and persist for a traumatic duration (Pfefferbaum, 2018; Borum et al., 2010), which include emotional distress.

##### **2.1.4.1 Mental Well-Being**

Those who attend schools, teachers, the eyewitnesses of school gunfights generally tend to feel a great deal of anxiety and fear (Schuster et al., 2001). A growing body of research (e.g., Bisson, 2017; Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020; Schimelpfening, 2020) has examined the effects of stress and depression on student performance. These studies consistently show that stress and depression are negatively linked to academic achievement (e.g., Pascoe et al., 2020). Because school shootings may indirectly cause problems with students' emotional health on a school-wide scale, they can lower the academic performance of all students. In line with the study indicating multiple biological mechanisms that trauma may affect children, this is a conflict with the existing displayed research. According to current research, school shootings, in particular, have significant and long-lasting detrimental effects on young people's mental health (Travers et al., 2018; Iancu et al., 2019; Rowhani-Rahbar et al., 2019; Levine and McKnight, 2020a; Rossin-Slater et al., 2020).<sup>9</sup> A student's exposure to a school shooting may have a negative impact on their mental health, which could lead to worse long-term consequences. Research has shown that poor mental health throughout childhood is associated with lower educational attainment and worse economic prospects in adulthood (Currie and Stabile, 2006; Goodman et al., 2011). This is often the case because heightened levels of mental health distress hinder learning. The place where school shootings occur may become more troubling than some of the other well-known criminal acts. Another distinct feature from other gun violence settings is that students are faced with such trauma, they are expected to learn and perpetuate in the school where the sentiments occurred. The extensive time in school and the near-impossible situation to effectively combat the trauma leads to a shutdown of the recovery process (Trigg, 2009; Schonfeld & Demaria, 2020). Another difference between violence in the community and violence in schools is that the latter can blur into the learning process that schools were established to teach students. Additionally, particular shootings may facilitate remembering and learning about this particular episode of events for students in school and the immediate neighborhood.

#### **2.1.4.2. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Immediately after a school shooting, PTSD is commonly acquired by the direct victims. Symptoms include hyperarousal, avoidance behaviours, negative mood and thoughts, and intrusive memories. PTSD can seriously reduce one's ability to function daily and enjoy life. Trauma from gun violence is frequently not fully recognized or addressed in its entirety due to its personalized, complicated, and long-lasting character. Up to 90% of gun violence victims reportedly experience trauma, according to research (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023). Despite this, less than half of survivors say they received adequate support in the year following the incident (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023). The trauma of gun violence has impacts that go beyond the survivors and affect their relationships, jobs, family life, physical and mental health, and finances. Indeed, survivors who have been recently subjected to gun violence mostly reported that the negative impacts on their general functioning and well-being were more frequent.

Around one-third of gun violence survivors live in constant fear and feel unsafe. It's really sad to see how their sense of safety and their ability to navigate their surroundings are deeply affected by the trauma of gun violence. It's like a vicious cycle - the exposure to such violence makes their trauma reactions even more intense, leading to hypervigilance, numbness, paranoia, anxiety, and depression. Within the first six months after experiencing gun violence, almost half of the survivors reported needing help, services, or support to cope with the aftermath (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-i).

To make matters worse, many people who have suffered trauma are at risk of being re-traumatized. This happens when they experience fresh traumatic stress reactions following another similar incident. It's hard to imagine the unimaginable trauma that gun violence causes (Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 2023-i). It doesn't just end there - the long-lasting consequences of gun violence include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and secondary traumatic stress (STS), which affect both individuals and communities directly and indirectly. Those affected by this kind of trauma can include:

Direct victims: This includes teachers and students who have witnessed or experienced gun violence first hand. They may develop PTSD, especially if they have lost a loved one, survived a shooting, or witnessed one. First responders: When police officers, paramedics, and medical personnel are exposed to gun violence, they are also at risk of experiencing STS. Community members: Gun violence doesn't just impact the immediate victims; it affects the larger community as well. Friends, family, neighbours, and even those who hear about an incident through media coverage can all be considered part of the community and may suffer from STS. Teachers: Imagine being a teacher who has to work with students who have been directly or indirectly affected by gun violence. It takes a toll on their well-being too. Teachers in frontline positions are particularly vulnerable to experiencing "compassion fatigue" (Psychology Today, 2024).

The impact of gun violence goes far beyond the immediate physical harm. It leaves lasting scars on individuals and communities, affecting their mental health and overall well-being.

## **2.2. Measures to Prevent School Gun Violence**

An efficient strategy that is aimed to decrease violence in US schools has to require high-quantity thinking and go deeper than just simple physical barriers. It has been pointed out that school safety means not only students' physical securement but also the health of their psyche and emotions. So, a sufficient solution is to change the school policies, in particular- more money should be allocated to public education to develop the teacher-student relationship ("Barbara Fedders et al.", 2013). Furthermore, according to House et al., (2018), the study has also proposed that the prevention of gun violence cannot be solely the mental illness argument but a factor that also realizes the importance of social surroundings and the availability of firearms. A potential option would be the wider implementation of background checks and waiting periods; nevertheless, the best way is to change the culture to the one with fewer guns. This way, a better view can be given to the society in general that all these units would form and the way they would interact with each other.

School gun violence necessitates extensive intervention measures to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff. Effective strategies have been proposed to address this problem. The following strategies that have been widely implemented are discussed below.

### **2.2.1. Gun-Free Schools Act**

The Improving Americas Schools Act of 1994 included the Gun-Free Schools Act. The act required states to pass legislation mandating a minimum one-year expulsion for any student found in possession of or bringing a handgun to school. The chief administering officer of a local educational agency is authorized by law (Section 4141 of No Child Left Behind) to alter such expulsion on an individual basis. When the act was passed, there had been 322,400 instances of major violent offences, or 13 incidences of violent behaviour per 1,000 students, which was close to the apex of the problem (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007).

The GFSA, being a federal law, was intended to focus on the possession of firearms. However, since the law allowed states to enact their laws, numerous states passed laws requiring expulsion for offences like bringing a firearm to school making threats, assaulting teachers, and selling drugs. For this reason, many people consider the GFSA's passage to be the start of the zero-tolerance movement ("We Need to Get Tough," 2000). as cited in (Borum et al, 2010).

### **2.2.2. Zero Tolerance**

The phrase "zero tolerance" refers to a set of regulations that aim to punish small infractions in schools severely—usually by suspension or expulsion—to deter more significant ones. These programs are grounded in the theory of deterrence; however, despite being implemented for almost ten years (nearly 75% of schools report having such policies) and having

been associated with well-documented increases in suspensions and expulsions, there is still a dearth of empirical data supporting any beneficial effects on preventing or lessening school violence (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). as cited in (Borum et al, 2010). On the other hand, zero-tolerance policies have been heavily criticized. People have questioned their legality, attacked them as interventions at odds with the principles of healthy child development, and expressed grave concerns about their racially disproportionate implementation (Gregory, et al, 2001).

### **2.2.3. Persistently Dangerous Schools Section**

Following Section 9532 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), states must establish policies allowing students from consistently unsafe schools or those victimized by violence on school premises to transfer to safer schools within the district (Borum et al., 2010). However, the provision, known as the Unsafe School Choice Option, lacks specific guidelines on transfer timeframes and criteria for identifying persistently hazardous schools (Mayer & Leone, 2007). Despite advisory guidance from the U.S. Department of Education in 2004, it lacks legal enforceability (Borum et al., 2010). Many states rely on suspension and expulsion rates to categorize schools as persistently dangerous, though the method's effectiveness is uncertain (Snell, 2005). Several states and major cities report few or no schools meeting this classification, indicating a reluctance to address the issue (Borum et al., 2010). Additionally, the NCLB's Unsafe School Choice Option hampers communication among local districts, state education agencies, and schools with high rates of criminal violence, a concern highlighted by the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Advisory Committee in 2007 (Borum et al., 2010).

### **2.2.4. Target Hardening and Security Measures**

Target hardening and other security measures have been used in schools for many years. They started during the desegregation era with the establishment of school security agencies in urban schools, mostly high schools, and have progressed to include the widespread use of metal detectors and cameras to record and monitor conduct as well as the stationing of police officers on the premises (Redding & Shalf, 2001).

Currently, schools all over the nation are combining more advanced security measures with more basic ones, like having visitors sign in (93%; Dinkes et al., 2007), locking entrances and/or exit doors during school hours (54%), and having school personnel search lockers (53%). Digital cameras that can pan across an area and be observed by several observers have replaced analog cameras that were fixed on one site and monitored from one position (Grant, 2003 as cited in Borum et al, 2010).

There hasn't been much research done on how security cameras affect student conduct. Research on security monitoring in different contexts has yielded contradictory findings (Gill & Spriggs, 2005; Welsh & Farrington, 2002, 2004). However, the effects of the camera may vary depending on whether the person being seen is aware of it. According to some studies, being noticeable can both promote prosocial or helpful acts and decrease disorderly public conduct (Priks, 2008; van Rompay, Vonk, &c Fransen, 2009). As cited in (Borum et al, 2010).

Some schools require staff and students to wear badges or picture IDs, and they have controlled access that is supervised by school staff, in order to discourage unauthorized presence or access. There have been many attempts to improve safety through the use of access control devices, metal detectors for school officials, and surveillance systems, but there isn't much actual research to support these methods (Borum et al, 2010).

#### **2.2.5. Profiling and Warning Signs**

There is currently insufficient evidence to support the use of warning indicators and profiles to prevent school shootings. Following the Columbine High School massacre, some officials noted apparent patterns in these incidents and proposed a standard profile for a school shooter (Band & Harpold, 1999; McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). However, most students who fit the profile will not commit a school-based attack, as these incidents are rare, and some potential attackers may not match the expected profile (Sewell & Mendelsohn, 2000).

The use of profiling has been criticized for potentially misidentifying students as dangerous and restricting their civil liberties (Sewell & Mendelsohn, 2000). Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley stated that "we simply cannot put student behaviours into a formula to come up with the appropriate response" regarding the use of profiling in schools (Cooper, 2000, p. All). A systematic study by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Secret Service found no reliable or helpful profile of school attackers (Vossekuil et al., 2002).

Furlong and colleagues' extensive studies using data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, which included over 40,000 students, highlighted the challenges in predicting school behaviour based on risk factors (as cited in Borum et al., 2010). Even the most accurate prediction formula would wrongly identify many students as weapon carriers. The researchers concluded that the accuracy level was insufficient and impractical for individual students, noting a moderate correlation with weapon carrying using the nine strongest predictors. Interestingly, those who carried weapons most frequently had a higher likelihood of having no school risk factors than having many (7-9) risk factors (as cited in Borum et al., 2010).

Using checklists or warning signs to identify students at risk for general behaviour problems, such as fighting or displaying anger, poses similar challenges for law enforcement and school officials (as cited in Borum et al., 1999). Although some warning sign checklists state they do not predict violent behaviour or form a profile, it is unclear if these cautions are followed in practice (Sewell & Mendelsohn, 2000).

To effectively address the issue of school gun violence in the United States, a comprehensive strategy is imperative. This commences with the enforcement of secure storage and Child-Access Prevention (CAP) laws, mandating firearms to be securely stored and unloaded when not in use, while also holding gun owners accountable if a child accesses an unsecured gun (Everytown Research & Policy, 2023). Improving school security entails implementing measures such as single-entry points, fencing, external door locks, and interior locks to enable teachers to swiftly secure classrooms during emergencies (Everytown Research & Policy, 2023). Additionally, nurturing a supportive school environment through trauma-informed and restorative practices is paramount. These practices address students' mental health and emotional needs, recognizing early warning signs without resorting to racial profiling (National Education Association, 2023). Gun violence prevention policies should encompass mandatory secure firearm storage, the implementation of extreme risk protection orders to temporarily remove firearms from individuals showing signs of potential violence, raising the minimum purchase age for semi-automatic firearms to 21, and enforcing comprehensive background checks for all gun sales (Everytown Research & Policy, 2023). Evidence-based strategies, including the application of the hierarchy of controls to minimize risks and advocacy for policies that promote gun violence prevention, are critical (National Education Association, 2023). Lastly, school-based interventions must offer comprehensive support to students and take action when signs of a crisis emerge, ensuring schools can respond promptly and effectively to any threats (Everytown Research & Policy, 2023). Collectively, these strategies aim to prevent school shootings and mitigate all forms of gun violence in American schools.

## **Conclusion**

One of the most pressing issues facing Americans today is gun violence in schools. This phenomenon significantly impacts society, affecting students, parents, and the school environment. Gun violence in schools undermines trust in safety, hampers academic achievement,

and takes a toll on the mental health of survivors, eroding confidence in the education system. Preventing school gun violence in the United States requires a multifaceted approach that includes gun control legislation, mental health support, and school safety measures. Stricter gun control laws are critical for limiting access to firearms for individuals who are likely to commit violence. Furthermore, increasing funding for mental health resources in schools can aid in identifying and supporting students who may be experiencing mental health issues that could lead to violence. Improving school safety measures, such as implementing active shooter drills and beefing up security, can also help deter potential perpetrators and reduce harm in the event of an attack. By addressing the many variables that lead to school gun violence, society may endeavour to create safer environments for both children and instructors.

## **General Conclusion**

The United States society is counted among such societies, which are wrecked with rampant school gun violence epidemic. The negative impact of this tragedy on pupils' lives, their educational experiences, and the school atmosphere is alarming. The objective of this research is to identify the causes and effects of this phenomenon to help reduce its negative influence on both schoolchildren and teachers. It also aims to provide significant insights that will help inform evidence-based policies and interventions. This research project was pursued using the documentary research design that entailed analyzing documents such as books, reports, scholarly articles, and trustworthy websites. While gun violence in American schools has attracted global attention, few studies provide a comprehensive overview of its causes and impacts.

Many American schools witnessed multiple incidents of gun violence, which were caused by the widespread availability of guns, as well as the perpetrators' mental health issues, bullying experiences, and social isolation. Furthermore, media such as violent video games, movies, and music may attract individuals. Because of inadequate security measures, the school environment also contributes significantly to the proliferation of such violence. Thus, school gun violence has far-reaching effects on people, communities, and society as a whole. Survivors frequently report long-term psychological repercussions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression. Families of victims, on the other hand, are devastated by grief and loss, which can lead to long-term emotional and psychological difficulties. Furthermore, the environment in schools can become more stressful and less conducive to learning as a result of increased fear and security measures.

American history witnessed many gun school violence events including; the University of Texas Tower Shooting in 1966, the Columbine High School Massacre in 1999, the Red Lake Massacre in 2005, the Virginia Tech Shooting in 2007, the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting in 2012, Robb Elementary School Shooting 2022. These shootings have left lasting scars

on the affected communities and have intensified discussions about the need for better mental health resources, stricter gun control laws, and enhanced school security measures, which made a high risk of violence.

The study associates violence with mental health difficulties, bullying, gun ownership, and socioeconomic variables such as poverty and minority exploitation. It suggests that these disadvantages, particularly among students and minorities, play a significant role in violent conduct in the United States.

Research suggests that media exposure, including songs, films, and video games, can significantly influence students' aggressive behavior and potentially affect their cognitive, emotional, and perceptual abilities. Additionally, social media violence has been linked to triggering real-world violence, particularly gun violence.

The study examines the impact of gun school violence in the U.S. on students' academic achievement and trust in educational institutions. It highlights the negative effects on students, teachers, and staff, including physical and psychological harm. The study suggests strategies like the Gun Free Schools Act, zero tolerance, persistently dangerous sections, targeted security measures, and profiling and warning signs to reduce gun violence.

Although this study was able to get deeper insights into the causes and effects of school gun violence, it has certain limitations due to a lack of data on the causes of school gun violence and its frequency over time. As a result, the current study suggests that more research be conducted on the causes of school gun violence in American society, as well as the negative consequences for children, parents, school staff, the larger community, and America itself.

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## ملخص

إحدى القضايا الرئيسية التي انتشرت مؤخرًا في جميع أنحاء الولايات المتحدة هي العنف المسلح في المدارس. إن البحث عن الأسباب والعواقب الرئيسية لهذه الظاهرة هو هدف هذه الدراسة. وتعتمد المنهجية النوعية المستخدمة في هذا التحقيق على فحص الوثائق المتوفرة للتعمق أكثر في هذه المشكلة وتحديد أسبابها. وترتبط استنتاجات الدراسة بين العوامل السياسية والنفسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية والإعلامية المختلفة وأسباب العنف المسلح في المدارس الأمريكية. يعد الضرر العقلي والجسدي والنفسي وانخفاض التحصيل الأكاديمي بين الطلاب من بعض آثار العنف المسلح في المدارس. تبحث هذه الدراسة أيضًا في الممارسات واللوائح والتدخلات الحالية في محاولة لتحديد الاستراتيجيات المحتملة لتحسين السلامة المدرسية وتقليل احتمالية العنف المسلح في ممتلكات المدرسة .

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** المدارس الأمريكية، اطلاق النار، العنف المسلح .