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STUDENT WILLINGNESS TO REPORT WEAPONS AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE AT
A RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL IN ARKANSAS: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

By

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Abstract

STUDENT WILLINGNESS TO REPORT WEAPONS AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE AT
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Travis Blake Poole

School safety continues to be a concerning and vital topic in education. This quantitative study examines the willingness of students from a rural Arkansas school district to report weapons being brought to school or violent occurrences happening at school and analyzes the behavior associated with students reporting or not reporting. The study examines barriers that exist to help to explain why students would not report weapons or violent incidents to staff members or adults in the school district. The study surveyed 52 students from a secondary school with Likert-style survey questions. The questions were grouped into different variables such as demographics, academic success, relationship to the perpetrator, reporting frequencies, and knowledge of available school resources. This allowed the researcher to analyze any data trends from students who were willing to report violent occurrences or weapons being brought to school versus those who would not. The relationship between the victim/perpetrator and the potential reporting student was a statistically significant indicator of reporting behaviors. The fear of retaliation was also a statistically significant variable in students' willingness to report. Lastly, the knowledge of available resources at school to report and whom to report to was statistically significant in comparing the groups of students who were willing to report versus those who were not. The findings of this study allow the school district to revisit or implement its school safety plans and procedures to add emphasis to educating students and staff about the importance of reporting. A suggested recommendation from

the findings would also be to increase reporting methods and opportunities for students

and to have continuous education on how to report within the school.

Keywords: School safety, school violence, weapons, reporting

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Chapter I: Introduction

Background of the Problem

School violence has continued to increase despite the safety measures and preventive steps taken place by school districts (Wang, 2020). "From July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017, there were a total of 42 school-associated violent deaths in the United States. During the 2017-2018 school year, 80 percent of public schools recorded that one or more incidents of violence, theft, or other crimes had taken place, amounting to 1.4 million incidents" (Wang et al., 2020). Gastic (2010) argued that students and adults should work together to keep schools safe. Positive relationships and communication avenues for students to talk to staff members in school can be an outlet and prevention of violent crime and help to increase students reporting of weapons at school. "Data show that peers often are the first to know when potential harm is brewing" (Fleishauer, 2001). However, when it comes to reporting these incidents to the staff at school, other adults, or students that could help, there is often a "code of silence." (Fleishauer, 2001). Many factors can lead to a student not wanting to talk about seeing a weapon or a violent incident; most of them are tied to the perceived risk involved with telling someone the information (Brank et al., 2007).

The issue of students bringing weapons to school is still a relevant problem, not only in Arkansas but country-wide. The serious issue is understanding why students who know about these issues are not willing to report these to adults and, ultimately, help prevent violent attacks at school. According to Brinkley et al. (2006), students that have a terrible relationship with the school or a history of being in trouble themselves tend not to

report violent behaviors to anyone compared to students who do not have a history of trouble.

Problem Statement

According to prior research on school violence and weapons reporting, there has been an issue with students' willingness to report seeing or knowing about weapons or violent situations that occur at school (Brank et al., 2009). Nobody has an exact idea of how many weapons are being brought into Arkansas schools or the number of violent incidents that aren't being reported. To help the students, staff, and parents, this research showed if weapons were being brought, the types of violent incidents at school, and the number of incidences of each. There is also little, if any, research about Arkansas students reporting these incidents at school or the characteristics of the students who report or do not report these incidents to adults.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to examine how often weapons are observed or violent occurrences happen at a rural public secondary school in Arkansas and whether these were being reported. A secondary purpose of the study was to examine the behavior associated with reporting or not reporting incidents to adults or staff. The characteristics of the students were analyzed to see if there were trends among reporters and non-reporters. The third purpose of the study was to examine the barriers that exist that may explain why students do not report weapons or violent incidents to staff members or adults in the school district.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

2. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not?

3. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

4. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not?

5. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not?

6. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

2. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not.

3. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

4. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not.

5. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not.

6. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not.

Significance of the Study

This study helped identify issues directly related to students reporting weapons at school, which can help mitigate or prevent violent or deadly attacks on school campuses. This could lead to a safer school environment. Identifying the issues of why students don't report weapons or violent occurrences on campus will allow administrators to implement change procedures to address the problems. Students should be reporting such

matters at school. Educating students, teachers, and parents about these issues should lead to an overall safer environment.

At the time of the research, there were no studies involving Arkansas students to be found. This study could be replicated in other districts in the state to enlarge the knowledge base regarding this topic. The results could be shared with the Arkansas Safe Schools, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, and the Arkansas Department of Education to see if there are any state and local policies or procedures that could be developed to help ensure student safety. This study's findings provided the impetus for the creation of several professional development opportunities to share with teachers and administrators.

Nature of the Study or Research Design

This quantitative comparison study involved secondary students in grades 6-12 at a public school district in Arkansas. The study examined student responses to the inquiries about knowing of violence at school, bringing a weapon to school, knowing someone who brought a weapon to school, and reporting violent activities to adults at school or home. It also attempted to ascertain the reasons why students do or do not report such activities.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that the respondents understand the questionnaire and that all students will be able to make cogent choices when presented with a continuous response Likert-type scale.

2. Students will present reliable information to the survey.

3.   Students are aware of weapons being brought or violent occurrences happening at the school.

4.   The information gathered from the willing participants will be reliable for drawing conclusions about the perceptions of the student population at the school.

Limitations

A limitation is social desirability bias. Social desirability bias occurs when participants report answers they believe are acceptable or desired by the researcher.

1.   Students will only be able to participate with a permission slip signed by their parents or guardians.

2.   The study is limited to only students in grades 6-12 at one school in Arkansas.

3.   Participants voluntarily complete the survey.

4.   The accuracy of the study will be attributed to the reliability of the participants.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 of this study investigated the statistical information on school violence and weapons being brought to schools within school districts nationwide. Data on these were looked at for research purposes to gain insight into how it could be used to benefit school districts regarding school violence and weapon reporting. This chapter also included the problem statement, the purpose of the study, assumptions, and limitations.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature regarding the topic of school climate, school safety, violence, and weapon prevention. The literature review will examine the willingness to report information to adults and/or school staff, as well as the behavior surrounding the students who do and do not report these instances that are occurring on

school grounds. Information will be presented regarding local or national trends on

student demographics who see these occurrences and do or do not tell the appropriate

adults or authorities.

Chapter 3 of this study will present the methodology. This includes a description

of the study, the different variables in the study, how the variables are measured, the tools

used, and the procedures for gathering and analyzing the data within the study.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of the analysis and investigation in-depth.

Chapter 5 will have a summary of the findings, the conclusions based on the data,

as well as future recommendations for any similar studies.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Parents and guardians turn their most precious asset over to educators and the schooling system with the vision of getting their children ready for college, a career, and becoming productive citizens locally and nationally. Over the past three decades, school violence and safety have been significant issues in how administrators view schools and prepare for these students. School violence and safety have become one of the most prominent issues that educators, parents, and students regularly face (Brinkley & Saarnio, 2006). Unfortunately, school violence has become normalized as we look back on Parkland High School and Sandy Hook Elementary events and the emergence of school shootings in the 1990s with Columbine High School and Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Schools have tried to develop practical approaches to battle this ongoing issue while also taking on a preventative approach in coming up with ideas to keep kids safe. Many school districts have upped their security with more security resource officers on campus, while other schools have installed technological equipment such as metal detectors, alarms, and security surveillance. However, some of these measures prove incredibly costly for the district and still do not consistently achieve their goal of protecting students and staff (Brank et al., 2007). Until the mid-2000s, school and district leaders were trained to make sound instructional and operational decisions for the district and community. The thought of violence and weapon determent is still a relatively new issue and one that, if the wrong choices are made, could potentially result in the loss of life.

Weapons and school violence is undoubtedly a hot-topic issue. Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and there isn't a correct answer that can solve all the

problems. With guidance from community leaders, parents, legal authorities, and state and national entities, school districts give the best and most current advice and policies, but we can still do better. This study will investigate how violence can be prevented with the help of students reporting knowledge of weapons or violent activities at school and confiding in adults who can help. The purpose of this chapter is to review three main components: school violence as an overview, school violence prevention, and students reporting information pertaining to school safety.

School Violence: An Overview

According to the Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2020, published by the National Center of Education Statistics in conjunction with the US Department of Education and the US Department of Justice, "overall, several crime and safety issues have become less prevalent at school throughout the last decade." The information provided from the report was a nationally published survey by the Centers for Disease Control for students in grades 9-12. 22% of students reported being involved in physical fights as either the aggressor or as an unwilling victim, while 8% of students admitted to being in a physical conflict on school grounds (Wang et al., 2020). A higher percentage of males than females who fought on campus (11% versus 4%), and White and Asian students had the lowest participation at 6% and 5%, respectively. In comparison, Black students and Native Americans had the highest at 15% and 19%, respectively (Wang et al., 2020). According to the same report, 2.8% of students in grades 9-12 reported carrying a weapon to school in the past 30 days. (For this study, weapons included guns, knives, or clubs) and 7.4% of students said they were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the previous 12 months. Teachers

also responded to the Indicators of School Crime and Safety. In 2020, 9.85% of teachers responded with having reported that they were threatened with injury by a student from the previous 12 months at their school. The teachers also responded that a student from their school had physically attacked 5.7% of the teacher population during the last 12 months.

Problems in schools have changed from year to year and decade to decade. As school violence became an issue in the 1980s and prevalent in the 1990s, government agencies began to take notice and implement legislation to attempt to help. School violence is a vague and complex problem that many educational leaders, politicians, and safety experts have tried to solve. There are many variables involved with school safety related to violence and weapons in school. For example, the perpetrator could be a student, staff member, parent, employee, or a random stranger with no ties to the school whatsoever. When making preparations and precautions, school officials and administrators must plan for all of the above.

One of the main problems associated with violence or violent attacks at school is bullying. Bullying, like school safety, has had many acts of legislation passed at the state and national levels to help curb the behavior. With the acceleration of technology and the widespread use of social media, cyberbullying has gone hand in hand with physical bullying with the advantage of hiding behind anonymity (Martinez, 2014). For example, in 2006, a mother-and-daughter duo created a fake account on Myspace and began to cyber bully a girl in her daughter's class. The mother and daughter taunted and bullied the girl to the point where she eventually committed suicide. After the investigation, it was

found that the account was run by the mother and daughter who lived right down the street (Zetter, 2008). There have been numerous cases of both students and adults bullying others through technology, and it has a lasting impact on the victims and the victims' families. The victims of bullying were found to have a higher rate of school avoidance in order to not be in contact with their bullies and had thoughts of retaliation against their oppressors at school (Martinez, 2014). This retaliation can come in the form of physical harm, but there can also be emotional harm that can come from the fact that there is now a lack of support from peers.

It is common for school districts to develop policies and procedures to address school violence. Schools have implemented specific programs for the prevention and mitigation of school violence and also programs to help the students to come up with or adopt new behavior development strategies to keep them from being the aggressor in certain situations (Hodnett, 2008). School districts must own the problem of school violence and adopt the best practices and policies to protect students. Furlong and Morrison said, "Teachers must talk about violence; they must recognize it, examine it, dissect it, and let children see and understand its secrets and its sources." It isn't taught to aspiring educators, but it is becoming a common professional development piece for districts to teach to new educators. Whether going through active shooter drills or learning how to identify bullying and bullying behavior, the problem is all around us and isn't going anywhere anytime soon (Furlong and Morrison, 2015).

When students are met with peer aggression due to bullying or other related issues, most find a way to pretend they were not bothered and get away from the offender

and the incident. These students usually use some strategy that doesn't involve confrontation (Sulkowski et al., 2014). Violence in schools can be triggered by many factors and have various endings. We don't have a solid answer to fix the problem with this issue. Violence and weapons at school will continue. Bullying will continue. We must continue looking at preventing these issues. The ability to avoid and the avenues for students to talk about these issues are pressing on our educational system and our students.

Violence Prevention

With the rising number of school shootings and the media following when these events occur, headlines have been on school violence for the past three decades. With this extra exposure, school administration and legal entities outside of the school system have tried to devise ways to prevent these occurrences from ever happening. Districts have enacted new policies and hopeful deterrents to their campuses to keep unwanted violence out of their schools. A local principal said, "The single most effective strategy is the physical presence of a responsible adult in the immediate vicinity (Yi, 1998)." Teachers play an essential role in violence and weapon prevention in schools by keeping schools safe by teaming up with assessment teams and making connections with students. (Gastic, 2010).

Averted Violence

We hear primarily about the events that have transpired; one area that is lacking much information is looking into successfully averted crises. Studies have been conducted on averted school shootings. The primary method that these schools were able

to use to prevent a shooting was by having the potential shooter make written or verbal threats. By doing this, they were able to act on the issue before the plan could be carried out (Daniels et al., 2010). Since Columbine, schools and students began to be more aware of what was going on with other students in the school and what was going on around them (Madifs, 2014). Many schools have one or more school resource officers on staff that have a presence in the hallways and classrooms. It has been found that punitive discipline policies have not played a significant role in deterring these issues from happening (Madifs, 2014). Students being comfortable in telling adults and faculty members vital information is a significant turning point in changing the climate at the school and allows students to help a situation that they know about. In the majority of events that have been studied, at least one other innocent bystander had prior knowledge of the attack, and most of the individuals who knew were close in relationship to that person (Brinkley and Saarnio, 2006). Along with averted violence, it is hard to completely understand this issue because not only are attacks being prevented without school officials knowing about it, but school officials are also underreporting occurrences that happen on their campuses. In New York schools, like Arkansas, school safety plays an integral part in their overall rating of the school building and district in comparison to other schools and communities in the entire state. An auditor in New York looked through past violent or weapon-related occurrences and found that many school officials and districts had failed to report these events (Fix Reporting School Violence. 2006). New York educators interviewed for these audits claimed ignorance or claimed all the other districts were doing it, so they needed to do the same to compete with the ratings.

In Arkansas, schools are required to fill out disciplinary reports in our School

Information System, known as Eschool. In Eschool, educators select the type of offense,

and certain crimes will go into various accounts to the state that will be found in

statewide audits. Categories that are reviewed are weapons and assault. These descriptors

require additional information to be submitted with the discipline referrals and will also

be found in cycle reports that are sent to the state. A similar situation to that of New York

occurred in Nevada with the Clark County School District that was happening in New

York Schools with underreporting of violent occurrences and suspensions and

expulsions. Through an audit of the school districts in their area, the findings were that

there were many more expulsion recommendations than there were incident reports that

were reported to the state department of education. While some of the administrators

claimed that it was the online systems that were used and their inefficiency, the

underreporting does indeed help boost the school's overall score in relation to other

schools (Reporting School Violence. 2007).

Threat Assessment

Schools have also been instructed to create a threat assessment team in case of

emergencies at school (Barnes, 2010). The training of these teams can be highly

beneficial to the school district. These teams can analyze and assess various threats and

make a group-informed decision to take preventative action. Some schools have

implemented a school-based violence program delivered digitally. Teachers that have

gone through a program training on violence prevention have a higher rate of success in

reaching students and preventing violent events (Schultes et al., 2014). Youth are more

engaged with digital media than ever before, so integrating a program within the school

to relay the dangers that are possible through this means of media is something these students are familiar with (Fingar & Jolls, 2014). The school climate is a major contributing factor in students reporting the threats to adults who work at the school. The environment is directly related to whether bystanders would come forward with information regarding threats or if they decided to withhold that information (Pollack et al., 2008). Proper training in this area is crucial for teachers to identify viable threats. For example, training teachers could gather relevant information to help stop a threat from conversations they overhear that would otherwise be perceived as just "kids being kids."

Bullying Prevention

Bullying has been such an issue that legislation has been passed to criminalize the act. Bullying has been shown to leave detrimental impacts on the victim, and the offender can start a pattern of behavior that leads to legal troubles as an adult. Bullying is one of the leading causes of school violence and aggression (Barnes, 2010). Bullying and now cyberbullying, leave student victims unable to focus at school and they struggle with academic performance. The victims also tend to skip school to avoid confrontation or retaliate with violence. These students also have increased anxiety and a higher instance of mental health issues if they are repeat victims (Barnes, 2010). Arkansas passed anti-bullying legislation with Act 1029 of 2019. This act defines bullying as,

> "the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, or threat of incitement of violence by a student against another student or public school employee by written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that may address an attribute of the other student, public school employee or person with whom the

other student or public school employee is associated and that causes or crates

actual or reasonably foreseeable: a) physical harm to a public school employee or

student or damage to the public school employee's or student property;

b)substantial interference with a student's education or with a public school

employee's role in education; c)a hostile education environment for one (1) or

more students or public school employees due to the severity, persistence, or

pervasiveness of the act; or d) substantial disruption of the orderly operation of

the school or educational environment (Guidance on Bullying Prevention, 2019)."

Arkansas legislatures passed the first anti-bullying laws in 2003, and they have

had many updates since then. The new requirements make schools follow due process for

the victims of bullying. There are reporting requirements to both parents of the victim(s)

and the offender(s). The schools must also go through a thorough investigation to get to

the bottom of the situation. The superintendents are also required to give the school board

members an annual update on bullying situations that occur on campus. The new

regulations further require educators to undergo professional development training in

bullying prevention and recognition (Bullying Prevention in Arkansas. 2019).

Student Violence Prevention – Avoidance (Skipping School)

Just like some students pretend issues don't bother them as a coping mechanism,

students also look to solve problems independently. For example, many students turn to

school avoidance or skipping school to handle the issues of violence or the potential of

violence at school. Studies have shown that students who perceive their school to be

dangerous for them have decreased levels of attendance, an increase in discipline

referrals, and lower grades. (Barrett et al., 2012).

The students who perceived fear or a threat at school are more likely to skip

school and have a higher chance of failing instead of having As or Bs in their classes.

Educators fail to plan as policymakers. Educators and school officials enact rules and

procedures with the notion that students and parents have our complete trust in protecting

them. This trust does not exist when students are skipping school of their own accord in

hopes of being safe or averting a school violence situation (Barrett et al., 2012).

School Interventions

Schools also have put specific interventions in place to try to curb the problems of

school violence and students bringing weapons to school. Legislation passed in the 1990s

resulted in many schools enforcing a zero-tolerance policy that would give them the

power to suspend and expel students for violations, in this case bringing a weapon to

school or assaulting a student or staff member (Hodnett, 2008). While zero-tolerance

policies brought some positive impacts to schools and their scope of actions to keep

students safe, at the same time, these same zero-tolerance policies also came with a small

number of negative issues that impacted schools. The biggest negative problem was how

the policy affected students who had inadvertently or accidentally broken the discipline

policies. For example, there have been students who had accidentally brought a knife to

school without intent to do so and with no intentions to harm anyone. However, these

students were still expelled under the umbrella of zero-tolerance policies (Madifs, 2014).

School districts also utilize and have implemented a separate program of learning for students who are at risk of offending or breaking these policies or who have violated these policies in the past and are still enrolled in the school district. These programs are called alternative learning environments and operate as their school within a school. The students in his programs are at risk. They are usually accompanied by a teacher and possibly aides who are aware of the student's academic or behavioral struggles. They personalize a curriculum to work, not just on academics, but also to cater to behavioral issues in hopes that the student will not re-offend and, when they graduate high school, can be a productive member of society. (Hodnett, 2008).

Several school districts have also started using an approach of armed members of their staff in their school district. This move has been met with very high criticism from gun control advocates, but schools have turned to this in hopes of preventing a crisis from happening in their school districts. Clarksville School District in Clarksville, Arkansas, was the first school district in Arkansas to arm and train volunteer teachers and staff when they began their first training class in 2013 (Stanglin, 2013). As of 2019, 31 states are authorized to have teachers or other staff carry weapons legally in their school districts (Richmond, 2019). While many schools utilize School Resource Officers, the availability of funds and personnel to have enough SROs to be used in all the buildings in the district is hard to attain. Clarksville Superintendent David Hopkins had the following to say about the situation: "We're not just talking about passing out guns to whoever. We're putting people through some very rigorous training. Now, this is not a solution to the problem; if there were a solution to the problem, we would all go buy it and have it in every school (Stanglin, 2013)."

The school district has signs posted alerting the public that there is armed staff on the premises (Stanglin, 2013). However, it is clear this isn't the perfect answer, but districts have tried to find anything that they can look into to keep kids safe. With arming teachers being such a recent issue, there isn't any data or research to determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of schools using this option.

As another line of defense, school districts in Arkansas also have crises and emergency plans that the Arkansas Department of Education directs in conjunction with Arkansas Safe Schools. These plans include emergency response drills. These drills include fire evacuation, tornado safety drills, an annual lockdown drill, and bus emergency evacuations. The lockdown drills allow students and staff to go through specific scenarios, such as a soft and hard lockdown, to help practice if these occurrences occur in the future (Arkansas Department of Education, 2021). The crisis director for each school district follows up with their administration team after these drills to debrief with law enforcement agencies and educational personnel to see what can improve and what works well. The goal is for law enforcement, educational personnel, administration, teachers, and students to be prepared in the event of a crisis.

Students Reporting Violence and Weapons

The researcher wanted surveyed students to determine if they were reporting violence or occurrences of weapons being brought to school. In looking at these students, the big challenge is determining if they did know any information if they were reporting it, and, in the event, the information was reported, to whom they are reporting. The adults, in this case (parents, teachers, faculty members), are a missing link in helping

solve violence issues and bullying issues and to prevent or mitigate issues happening on campus because of weapons being brought to school. While the training may not adequately prepare each teacher, the adults are far more capable of handling these issues than a student attempting to process and manage this information on their own

Another component of the study is to determine if students did know about any situations of violence or weapons being brought to school and did not report, what were the reasons were for doing so, and how these reasons can be remedied in the school systems. From past studies, it is evident that the aggressor or the person bringing weapons or making threats is usually telling someone about their plans, and the people that they tell are generally close to them personally. If students are telling adults, what are the characteristics of the students that are telling, and what are the characteristics of the adults to whom they are telling this information? What made these students open up to those particular adults when frequently there is a barrier preventing students from disclosing this type of information?

Naylor and Cowie (1999) found that telling an adult, whether that is a teacher, faculty member, or parent, helps to improve the situation that is going on with the victim of violence or bullying. However, there is also a negative association with telling someone. Perception of students show that by telling an adult about the issue, the victim has a high likelihood of the bullying situation or violent situation becoming worse due to retaliation. (Naylor & Cowie, 1999).

There is a code of silence among students when reporting activities that are suspicious or possibly dangerous or violent. Through research and investigation, it is

believed that this code of silence has somewhat lessened post-Columbine due to numerous pushes via legislation and through new ways of educating students, parents, and teachers about the dangers that are happening and how reporting can be beneficial (Madifs, 2014). Educating students about the benefits of reporting is a way of relating the behavior to the likelihood of it happening. Students can be an integral tool (Hollister et al., 2017). School districts have implemented programs such as "See something, say something." The goal is to educate students on why it is important to tell somebody about potentially life-saving information, even if the student wouldn't deem the information to be credible or life-threatening. One study that looked at the percentages of students that did report knowing about specific details showed that the students who were more willing to bring this information to adults were generally not friends with the potential perpetrator. Friends of the perpetrator had a stigma around "telling on" their friend. They didn't want to see their friends get in trouble and brushed it off as it being them just joking around (Madifs, 2014). This common code of silence, while it may be diminishing, it is still the main barrier for students not to report suspicious activity. There is little research into this area on the code of silence for students. The students see that telling on their peers is a practice that is not socially acceptable. Students fear rejection from certain groups that they aspire to be in or are already in and fail to speak up to keep from being ostracized (Brinkley et al., 2006). Students who also come from a home that distrusts authority or themselves have been delinquent at school and hold the school and authority figures in a negative light are less inclined to report situations that are going on at school to any of the faculty members or their parents. The distrust that they hold towards a figure of authority makes them perceive that bringing this information forward

could bring problems on themselves (Brinkley et al., 2006). As these students grow from elementary towards high school, these sentiments grow stronger. They don't want to be labeled as "snitches," and this behavior can continue into adulthood (Brank et al., 2007).

A similar study was conducted among 322 Virginia high school students. This study found that 16% of students indicated that they would not report a homicidal threat to anyone (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021). Crichlow-Ball and Cornell analyzed this group of students to see if there were any similar characteristics as to why they would not be reporting these specific threats. Their study of 85,000 high school students, 13,000 of which said they would not report the threat, revealed some specific commonalities. First, the students with lower grades, male and non-white, were less willing to report a threat than other students (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021). Their study also revealed that this same group of students who were not willing to report were generally in trouble more often, had lower grades than their peers, and did not view teachers as a person of support or someone they could trust.

According to research conducted by William Pollack in 2008, looking at prior knowledge and information students have that can help prevent an attack, the students that bring forth information vary in their relationship to the ones planning an attack. Of his study, 34% were friends, 29% were acquaintances, 6% were family members, and 31% didn't have any connection to the person making the threats. Pollack's study also found that the bystanders did not come forward because they believed the threats to lack credibility and did not perceive it likely that the events would transpire.

Students are more likely to report a scenario when their relationship with the potential attacker or person bringing a weapon is not a friend but rather an acquaintance or unknown person. The Safe School Initiative found that at least one person knew about the attacks in 81% of the cases studied. In 59% of those incidents, at least two other students knew about the intentions before the attack (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021). Students would also be more willing to report suspicious behaviors if they could do so with anonymity. The willingness to report relies on many factors and, at times, comes down to the relationship with the prospective perpetrator and how well they know this person, as well as the implications of that student being in trouble versus the perception of the threat being carried out. Being able to stay hidden from any possible negative consequences of reporting gives students a greater chance to come forward with critical information (Brank et al., 2007). Student input on violence and weapons at school is the best prevention tool. School districts can get all the supplies and newest technology that money can buy, but the information will be the most pivotal tool in prevention. To alleviate some of the barriers to this code of silence, educators need to look at adopting some strategies in their schools. First, students need a way they can report things anonymously. Having a way for kids to report anonymously helps to remove some of the stigma as well as the barriers that come with the struggle of reporting these incidents. Several states have begun using different types of software or programs that allow students to text a number to report any anonymous tips or threats. Some studies, however, still show that if students are unwilling because of how they feel about their school or if they are delinquent, then an anonymous tip line still will be insufficient (Wylie et al., 2010).

Students also need to have their feedback and input gauged regularly. Analyzing

their thoughts and ideas on these situations can be a positive factor in looking at how we

can improve as a school system. There should also be a schoolwide implementation and

procedure for reporting said events should they start to happen. Kids do well with routine.

Getting them familiar with the procedures will help them be more comfortable reporting

issues to the adults in the school or the adults at home (Fleishauer, 2001).

School climate can be one of the biggest influences on whether a student finds the

courage to confide in an employee at school or report these types of behaviors to anyone

(Madifs, 2014). The youth in schools underestimate the support they have from the

various adults within the school. This increases as the students get older; the students

perceive that the school won't take specific threats seriously, so they don't bother

reporting issues to the authorities (Perkins et al., 2019). A study in 2011 looked at youth

violence and juvenile justice at northeastern US schools. The data from this reported that

76% of kids said they would report a knife to a school official, and 88% said they would

report a gun, if it were found, to a school official (Study Uncovers Factors in Students'

Reporting of Weapons at School, 2014). One of the principals that was interviewed said

the following,

> "We theorize that the students who knew about the security measures feel safer
>
> because they feel like the adults are doing something to keep them safe. We don't
>
> often think about prevention efforts as a joint effort between school administrators
>
> and students, but research like this shows students' voices matter. They are the

first line of defense to something like the prevention and intervention of weapons (Study Uncovers Factors in Students' Reporting of Weapons at School, 2014).

As of current research, race and gender can be inconclusive on their influence on the probability of students reporting weapons or violence to school officials or other adults (Wylie et al., 2010.) Some studies show that males report less than females, and other studies do not correlate at all. Some studies look at the rates of violence or bullying among the two groups but do not analyze the reporting by each group. This is an opportunity for future studies to look at specific race and gender influences on reporting and bringing weapons to school.

A positive school climate can help "normalize" the attitudes and behaviors by students trusting school officials and reporting threatening behaviors (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021). Schools that have a positive climate were associated with being paired with safer schools and had lower rates of bullying and school violence. There must be a schoolwide initiative for schools to buy into the process of creating a positive school climate to help change the culture. It also helps to have better infrastructure, such as better fencing, surveillance, and other safety guards in place on the campus (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). Furlong and Morrison's research on school climate also reveal that having a positive climate at school, along with respect for students and rules, supports better behaviors and lessens safety fears among students and staff. The other end of the spectrum also exists on school climate; In school climates that also support and encourage aggressive behavior, "students are more reticent to report bullying victimization to staff" (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021).

According to Brinkley and Saarnio's investigation, about 75% of all students reported that they would tell someone if they knew about someone who brought a weapon to school, or if they had heard about a threat to hurt someone with a weapon. The students that are the ones who are not likely to report weapons for various reasons, such as delinquency, distrust towards figures of authority at the school, or an adverse school climate, are also the same students that have a higher probability of bringing weapons to school. Poor parent relationships and being around peers that have these same negative connotations of school increases a student's likelihood of carrying a weapon or not reporting to authorities if they know about a violent situation or a threat at school (Brank et al., 2007).

The Brank et al. study (2007) examined weapons reporting by middle school youth. This was a quantitative study of middle school students in several states. Their study showed that age could be a variable and a predictor in indicating which students will report. The Indicators of School Crime and Safety also reports that as students' age increase, both males and females, the likelihood of the students reporting decreases. As students get older, they start to disconnect from the school, do not see or identify with the school, and begin to not view teachers as friends (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021).

Summary and Next Steps

The safety and well-being of students and staff at school is an issue that will continually need to be revisited and analyzed. School districts, law agencies, and government entities see that this is a problem that is not going away, but rather, it is evolving. While this is an ongoing issue, there is insufficient evidence and recent

research to stay ahead of the curve. Educators know that this is a problem in schools. Policymakers make the best informed and educated decisions they can to help alleviate this issue, but it still falls short. There are still students that slip through the cracks, and there are injuries and deaths that still occur. Schools can assess situations, create threat assessment teams, hire more school resource officers, enforce zero-tolerance policies, and get all the latest technology, still, the issue can remain present in schools.

There are hurdles in implementing strategies and deterrents at school as well. The number one problem that schools face across the nation is spending. School districts are allocated and budgeted enough to run the school. Many of the different technologies that can be purchased are astronomical in price and many of the smaller school districts cannot allocate that money from their budget. School districts also face political pressure. Most policies are passed down at the state level for schools. Whichever party is in control of the legislature in that state will have the authority to pass or block bills for student safety. There is a concern over invasiveness and privacy and where that line is drawn when trying to keep all of the parties safe at school. School leaders must change the culture of the school and help empower and educate students on the importance of reporting information while also educating teachers and staff on the effectiveness of receiving credible information from students at school. Schools must find the disconnect between the student and the school to bridge the gap of knowledge.

While there have been studies done on a multitude of topics covering violence in schools, shootings at schools, and weapons at schools, the research cannot keep up with the latest incidents. Administrators must look at past research to help make decisions and

implement new policies and procedures, as well as look at the newest technology that can help school districts keep students and staff safe. School shootings and school violence continue to evolve, and some of these incidents do not have any parallels to events that have happened in the past. In the 1990s, when the shootings at Columbine, Colorado and Jonesboro, Arkansas, occurred, the media and public were on high alert and wanted change. Law-enforcement agencies began to change the way they view and handle violent situations in school districts and began to look at different ways to prevent and mitigate occurrences of school violence. Most of the research was done before the latest large-scale school shooting, which happened at Stoneman Douglas high school in Parkland, Florida and in the school shooting at Sandy Hook elementary school.

One thing is sure, school safety and student safety will continue to be one of the most important topics and issues that educators, administrators, and policymakers must look at when making decisions for school districts. Unfortunately, school is not thought of as a safe place as it once was. School districts must find a balance to focus on academia in the latest state standards for education and stay up to speed with the latest safety procedures and recommended practices.

Chapter III: Methodology

The primary purpose of the study was to examine how often weapons are observed or violent occurrences happened at a rural public secondary school in Arkansas and whether these were being reported. A secondary purpose of the study was to examine the behavior associated with reporting or not reporting incidents to adults or staff. The characteristics of the students were analyzed to see if there are trends among reporters and non-reporters. The third purpose of the study was to examine the barriers that exist that may explain why students do not report weapons or violent incidents to staff members or adults in the school district.

The data was studied to see if there were common identifiers in demographics of the students who do or do not report. The study also focused on seeing to whom the students report these issues; were they reporting to their friends, a counselor, their parents, or another adult somehow associated with the school? The goal was to see if there is a trend in the adults being confided in and identify correlations in the data.

This chapter will review and present the research questions, hypotheses, research design, methodology, sampling procedure, population, data collection, instrumentation, and procedures that were used for the study of this topic.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

2. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not?

3. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

4. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not?

5. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not?

6. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

2. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not.

3. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

4. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not.

5. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not.

6. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not.

Research Design

This is a quantitative study and analysis of secondary students in grades 6-12 at a rural school district in Arkansas. The study focused on students bringing weapons to school, knowing about weapons being brought to school, violence at school, and violence prevention. With this being a quantitative study, the targeted number of students will be around 500 students. Students will be surveyed from three campuses within a rural school district in the same city in Arkansas.

This quantitative, comparative, and descriptive study analyzed responses based on the type of questions posed in the survey. The independent variables in the study were

age, gender, ethnicity, school climate, community/home values, and fear of retaliation from the perpetrator. A quantitative research design allowed the researcher to analyze relationships between the different variables within the survey data.

The first part of the survey looked at the student demographics, including age, grade, ethnicity, and gender. The second part of the survey examined the content-related questions, including violence at school, bringing a weapon to school, knowing someone that brought a weapon to school, reporting violent activities to adults at school or home, and the reasons why people do or do not report such activities.

Population and Sample Selection

The study collected responses from a sample of secondary students at a middle school and junior high in a rural school district in Arkansas. The study addressed a student's willingness to report weapons being brought to school and violent acts happening at school.

For this study, the researcher administered surveys at a rural secondary middle school and junior high school, all in the same school district in Arkansas. The researcher partnered with the school administration to help get surveys out to all students who will return a completed consent form. The survey was administered by paper to students after they had their parents complete the permission form. Students brought the forms back at their convenience and dropped them in a locked box that was only accessible by the researcher. Principals from the buildings helped communicate the parent letter, student letter, and student announcement to help in the recruitment of students to participate. The

researcher will keep the paper copies locked up for three years after the study ends at which point they will then be destroyed.

The middle school and junior high are within the same school district. These schools run on a traditional school model of a 10-month school year. The 2021-2022 enrollment for the middle school (grades 6-7) was 426 students. The ethnic breakdown was 46.2% White, 39.7% Hispanic/Latina, 8.9% Asian, 3.5% Two or More Races, 0.9% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 0.5% Black, and 0.2% American Indian. The enrollment for the Junior High (grades 8-9) was 399 students. The ethnic breakdown was 49.4% White, Hispanic/Latina 37.1%, 8% Asian, 2% Two or more races, 1.8% Black, 1.3% American Indian, and 0.5% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. For all of the schools combined, English Language Learners comprise 29% of the population, 14% are Special Education students, and 71% qualify as low-income for their socio-economic status.

Instrumentation

The survey was developed by an online form via Google Forms, which is a component of Google Drive that allows the user to create custom questions. The questions from the survey were used in existing surveys from school safety studies. Some may have been modified to more closely resemble this study as it combines both weapons reporting and reporting school violence. Questions 1-3 are basic demographic questions. Questions 4, 26-28, and 31-36 are from a study looking at middle school students reporting weapons titled, Will *They Tell? Weapons Reporting by Middle School Youth* (Brank et al., 2007). Questions 5, 10, 24, 25, 30, were used in the student reporting survey in Lupejkis' study, *Student willingness to report violence in secondary schools.*

(2010). Questions 6,10,12,13,21-23, 29, 37-38 were student survey questions in Wilhelm's study on violence and reporting behavior among native Hawaiian high school students (2010). Questions 7-9, 11, and 14-21 were modified from Brinley and Sarrnio's study, *Involving Students in School Violence Prevention: Are They Willing to Help?* (2006). The survey was sent out to all students combined with a consent form for their guardians to sign. After both the student and parent both agreed to the survey, the students brought the signed forms, detached them from the survey, and submitted the survey anonymously in a locked box in each school. The students selected were chosen based on the students who brought back their consent forms signed by them and their parents. Having the survey completed anonymously gives the student a feeling of being safe from identification by whoever is sending the information in, taking away the possibility of any repercussions from their answers. The data was downloaded via Excel and uploaded to SPSS to look at the survey data for specific trends in depth as requested by the researcher. Finally, the survey allowed students to skip questions if they felt they did not want to answer specific questions within the survey.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections, with each of the sections analyzing the independent variable to be studied from the student responses. The sections are demographics, school climate, community/home values, personal incidents, and reporting. Aside from the demographic questions, the rest of the survey was built using Likert-type questions where the participant will respond from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. There are 38 questions.

The first section of the survey consisted of questions to identify the student's demographic information, including grade, gender, ethnicity, and academic performance. The next part of the survey asked school climate perception questions. Section three contained specific questions regarding the student knowing about weapons being brought into the school and if the student is comfortable reporting them or not. This section also examined various information regarding bringing weapons, reporting violence, or witnessing violence.

Sections 4 and 5 of the survey, "Personal Incidents" and "Reporting," addressed the first research question. This section inquired about specific incidents in which the students may have been involved. It asks questions like if they have brought weapons to school, been in a violent incident at school, or if they have witnessed either one of these occurrences. Being able to cross-reference their answers to their section 1 demographic information allowed the researcher to study trends based on age, grade, gender, ethnicity, race, and academic performance. Section 2 of the survey, "School Climate," focused primarily on Research Question 2 and addresses some of Research Question 5. In addition, this section investigated student perceptions of their school system. The goal was to see if students feel safe at school and what their general feeling about educators at their school is like. Section 4 of the study provided the actual data of kids reporting on seeing weapons or violent occurrences at school. Section 5 of the questionnaire looked at students reporting as it relates to relationships with the perpetrator and how consequences could affect the likelihood of reporting these issues to school figures or people of authority. Since all of the questions from the survey have been used in other research studies for many students, there wasn't a need for a pilot study for these questions. The

only revisions made to questions were to reword them to make specific to include both weapons reporting and violence reporting at school.

Data Collection

A survey was created to study violence and weapons in school and determine the personal and social characteristics of the students involved in these activities to prevent these occurrences. Permission was obtained from Arkansas Tech University's Institutional Review Board prior to the administration of the survey to schools and students. After reaching an agreement with local schools in the rural school district in Arkansas, the building administrators agreed to help facilitate and administer the surveys to students willing to participate. In May of 2022, students received a school announcement detailing the research information (Appendix D) as well as a packet of handouts to take home to their parents (Appendix C), a parental permission/consent form (Appendix B), and an assent form for students ages 12-17 was built into the student survey (Appendix A). The survey that was created in Google Forms by the researcher was given to building-level administrators to hand out to all students with the included paperwork for the consent forms for parents/guardians. The students that wished to participate in the survey brought the completed survey back to the school and placed them in a locked box only the researcher had access to. When the survey was over and completed, the researcher compiled the data into Excel and eventually into SPSS for more data analysis to share with the building administrators later in the semester. All appropriate forms are uploaded to the appendix.

Data Analysis

The researcher downloaded the responses from Google Drive into Excel to be organized in a format to be opened by SPSS. Descriptive statistics were computed, and data was analyzed for trends to answer research question 1. Research questions 2-6 were answered using t-tests and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Research question 2 asked if there is a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not. To answer this question, a school climate number was computed by finding each student's average response to the seven school climate statements. An average greater than 2.5 will be considered a positive perception, while an average of 2.5 or less will be considered a negative perception. A willingness to report number was computed by finding each student's average response to the reporting statements. An independent samples t-test was used to answer the question. The willingness to report number will be the dependent variable, and the school climate number will be the independent variable. Further analysis of the data will be undertaken considering the factors of grade, gender, and ethnicity. Furthermore, the data was examined using the average response to each reporting statement to determine if any patterns emerge.

Research question 3 asked if there is a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetuated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, while also considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity. To answer this question, a reporting

friend number must be computed by finding the average response to the relationship to victim/perpetrator questions. An average greater than 2.5 will be considered that they will report their friends regardless of perception, and a number less than 2.5 will be considered that students will not report their friend's violence or an occurrence of them bringing weapons to school. A willingness to report number will be computed by finding each student's average response to the reporting statements. An independent t-test was used to answer this question. The willingness to report number will be the dependent variable, and the reporter's relationship to the perpetrator will be the independent variable. Further analysis was taken on this statement to look at factors of grade, gender, and ethnicity in relation to whether they would report their friends in these types of situations.

Research question 4 askedif there is a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not. To answer this question, a fear of personal consequences number will be computed by finding each student's average response to the personal consequences statements. An average greater than 2.5 will determine they have a fear of personal consequences, while an average lower than 2.5 will determine they do not have a fear of personal consequences. A willingness to report number will be computed by finding each student's average response to the reporting questions. An independent samples t-test was used to answer this question. The willingness to report numbers will be the dependent variable, and the fear of personal consequences will be the independent variable.

Research question 5 asked if there is a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not. To answer this question, an academic success number will be computed by finding the student's responses to question four of the survey on their grades in school. A number higher than 2.5 will be considered to have high grades, and a number lower than 2.5 will be considered to have low grades. A willingness to report number will be computed by finding each student's average response to the reporting statements. An independent samples t-test was used to answer this question. The willingness to report number will be the dependent variable, and academic success will be the independent variable.

Research question 6 asked if there is a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the reporting resources available to them at school compared to students who do not. To answer this question, the knowledge of available resources number will be computed by finding the student's responses to the questions about their knowledge of resources available at school to report. A number higher than 2.5 will be considered that the students know where to report, and a number lower than 2.5 will be considered that the students do not know about the available resources at school to report. A willingness to report number will be computed by finding each student's response to the reporting statements. The willingness to report numbers will be the dependent variable, and the knowledge of available resources will be the independent variable.

Table 1

Research Questions, Variables, and Tests

Research Question	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Statistical Test
RQ 1. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?	Demographic Information: Q. 1-3	Reporting Behavior	t-test/ANOVA
RQ 2. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not?	Perception of School Climate Q 7-11	Reporting Behavior	t-test
RQ 3. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not considering factors of grade, gender or ethnicity?	Reporter's relationship to victim/perpetrator: 26-28	Reporting Behavior	t-test/ANOVA
RQ 4. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not?	Fear of personal consequences/retaliation. Q 31-39	Reporting Behavior	t-test
RQ 5. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not?	Academic Success 4	Reporting Behavior	t-test
RQ 6. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to those who are not?	Knowledge of reporting resources available at school. 40-42	Reporting Behavior	ttest

Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Results

The primary purpose of the study was to examine how often weapons are observed or violent occurrences happen at a rural public secondary school in Arkansas and whether these were being reported. A secondary purpose of the study was to examine the behavior associated with reporting or not reporting incidents to adults or staff. The characteristics of the students were analyzed to see if there are trends among reporters and non-reporters. The third purpose of the study was to examine the barriers that exist that may explain why students do not report weapons or violent incidents to staff members or adults in the school district.

RQ1. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

H10: There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

RQ2. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not?

H20: There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not.

RQ3. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

H30: There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

RQ4. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not?

H40: There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not.

RQ5. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not?

H50: There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not.

RQ60. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not?

H60: There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not.

Descriptive Findings

      The sample for this study was taken from a rural school district in Arkansas with an emphasis on the secondary grades (grades 6-12). All grades from 6 through 12 were invited to participate, however, only students from grades 6-9 responded to the survey questions. There were approximately 800 students in grades 6-9, but only 52 chose to respond. There were 26 males and 26 females. They were broken down into grades 6-7 (20 student responses) and grades 8-9 (32 student responses). There were 14 9th graders, 18 8th graders, seven 7th graders, and 13 sixth graders that participated in the study. Grades 6 and 7 make up the Middle School in this school district, and grades 8 and 9 make up the Junior High in this school district. Twenty-four students, or 46.2%, were Hispanic, twenty-two students, or 42.3%, were White, and three students identified as other races or 11.5%. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data. The respondents' academic success was as follows: fifteen students reported making all A's, eighteen students reported making A's and B's, sixteen students reported making A's, B's, and C's, and one student reported making C's and D's only.

      Three students (5.8%) of the 52 reported knowing of someone who has brought a weapon to school in the past twelve months. Of the three students, two students reported this to adults. Twenty-nine students (55.8%) reported that they had heard someone threaten to hurt someone else in the past twelve months. Nine students (17.3%) reported that someone had intentionally injured them or slapped them in the past twelve months. Students were asked to whom they would most likely report and answered as followings: 31.4% teacher, 29.4% principal, 27.5% parents, and 11.8% close friend. Thirty-three

students (65.7%) of the students said it didn't matter if it was a male or female to whom they reported results.

Students provided their level of agreement to a series of seven statements regarding school climate. For statistical purposes, the four levels of agreement were reduced to two. Responses, "Strongly agree" and "Agree," were combined into a new variable to denote agreement with the statement, whereas "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree" were combined to denote disagreement with the statement. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

School Climate Frequency Responses

School Climate Statements	SA	A	D	SD
I feel safe at my school.	16	33	2	1
I believe that my school provides a safe environment for me to report violent behavior or weapons being brought to campus.	20	24	6	2
Most of the students in this school have respect for other students.	5	24	15	8
When I am having problems, my teachers are supportive.	24	26	2	0
Most of the students show respect for their teachers.	7	33	9	3
I feel there is at least one teacher or adult in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.	36	12	4	0
Teachers develop caring relationships with students in my school.	19	28	4	1

Students also provided their level of agreement to a series of 14 statements

regarding reporting incidents of actual or potential violence or weapons on campus. For

statistical purposes, the four levels of agreement were reduced to two. Responses,

"Strongly agree" and "Agree," were combined into a new variable to denote agreement

with the statement, whereas "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree" were combined to denote

disagreement with the statement.   Frequency results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Reporting Frequency Responses

Reporting Statements	SA	A	D	SD
I would report a student even if he/she was my friend.	16	24	9	2
I would report a student who was my friend if I could do so without giving my name.	13	30	6	3
I would be more likely to report violent activities or weapons on campus if I could do so anonymously.	27	20	2	3
If I heard a student threaten to hurt someone else with a weapon, I would tell an adult.	33	14	4	1
If I heard about or saw a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school being committed at school, I would report it to a school adult staff member.	30	19	3	0
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if I believed that the student who carried the weapon would probably not use it.	23	25	4	0
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student might get arrested.	22	25	4	1
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon would get in trouble.	28	23	1	0

I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if people might think that I am snitch or tattletale.	22	27	0	3
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon might find out I told.	17	27	5	2
I would not tell an adult about a violent incident on campus because the adults cannot protect me from retaliation from other students.	3	3	25	19
I would not report violent incidents in my school because I feel that telling an adult is a betrayal to my classmates.	1	5	26	19
I would not report violent incidents in my school because I would feel shameful about it.	0	4	28	20
I know who to report a potential problem, violent act, or threat.	26	22	3	0
I know where to report if I hear about or see a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school.	27	22	3	0
The school has made it clear about who at school I should report these activities to.	24	22	3	0

Quantitative Data Analysis

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked whether there were significant differences in students'

willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade,

gender, or ethnicity. A one-way ANOVA statistical test was conducted to compare the

willingness to report violence or weapons on campus, considering the student's grade

level. Of the 14 reporting statements, only one showed a significant difference in

responses. An analysis of the survey question, "I wouldn't tell an adult about a violent

incident on campus because the adults can't protect me from retaliation from other

students," revealed a statistically significant difference in responses based on the student's grade levels, F (3,48) = 2.87, p = .046. However, the Sidak post hoc analysis did not reveal any significant difference between grade levels.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the willingness to report violence or weapons on campus, considering the student's gender. Of the 14 reporting statements, none showed any significant difference in responses based on gender.

Analysis of the survey question based on ethnicity revealed no statistically significant difference in responses to any of the 14 reporting statements.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked whether there was a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not. Seven survey statements addressed school climate. Students could strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement with values of 1 through 4, respectively. Students who strongly agreed or agreed with the statements were considered to have a positive perception of the school climate. Otherwise, they were considered as having a negative perception.

Results of the school climate questions are presented in Table 4. Because of the disparity in the number of students who had and did not have a positive perception of the school climate; a Mann-Whitney test was conducted. While the Mann-Whitney can be used with small samples, a sufficient sample size is needed for a valid test, usually more than five observations in each group (McClenaghan, 2022). Because some of the groups had less than five observations in a group, it was not possible to definitively state whether

a valid significant difference did or did not exist. Subsequently, results are only reported for samples with a minimum of six respondents in each group.

Forty-four students agreed with the statement, "I believe that my school provides a safe environment for me to report violent behavior or weapons" ($M = 1.41$, $SD = 0.54$). At the same time, eight disagreed ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.84$). A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding their willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students with a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not. There were 14 statements to which the respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statement. No significant difference was observed between the two groups regarding any of the 14 statements.

Twenty-nine students agreed with the statement, "Most of the students in this school have respect for other students" ($M = 1.38$, $SD = 0.49$). Twenty-three disagreed ($M = 1.61$, $SD = 0.72$). A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding their willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students with a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not. There were 14 statements to which the respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statement. No significant difference was observed between the two groups regarding any of the 14 statements.

Table 4

Willingness to Report Based on Perceptions of School Climate

	Agree			Disagree		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
I feel safe at school.	49	1.45	0.58	3	2.00	1.00
I believe that my school provides a safe environment for me to report violent behavior or weapons.	44	1.41	0.54	8	1.88	0.84
Most of the students in this school have respect for other students.	29	1.38	0.49	23	1.61	0.72
When I am having problems, my teachers are supportive.	50	1.52	0.50	2	3.00	0
Most of the students show respect for their teachers.	48	1.41	0.49	4	3.75	0.50
I feel there is at least one teacher or adult in this school that I can talk to if I have a problem.	48	1.25	0.43	4	3.25	0
Teachers develop caring relationships with students at my school.	47	1.59	0.49	5	3.2	0.44

*Significant at $p < .05$

Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked whether there was a significant difference in students'

willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between

those who would report and those students who would not. Two survey statements

addressed students' willingness to report weapons or school violence if a friend

perpetrated the actions. Students could strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly

disagree with the statement with values of 1 through 4, respectively. Students who

strongly agreed or agreed were considered to be those that would report their friend.

Otherwise, they were considered to not report their friend. A Mann-Whitney test was

conducted to compare the willingness to report the person if they were a friend or not

based on the statement, "I would report a student even if he/she was my friend." Forty

students confirmed that they would report a student even if he/she was their friend ($M =$

1.60, $SD = 0.49$), while eleven disagreed ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.40$). The Mann-Whitney test

revealed a significant difference in eight of 13 reporting statements between the two

groups – those who would or would not report a friend. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Willingness to Report a Friend

	Agree		Disagree			
	n	Mean Rank	n	Mean Rank	U	Sig.
If I heard a student threaten to hurt someone else with a weapon, I would tell an adult.	40	23.63	11	34.64	125.0	.011
If I heard about or saw a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school being committed at school, I would report it to a school adult staff member.	40	22.80	11	37.64	92.0	<.001
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if I believed that the student who carried the weapon would probably not use it.	40	23.61	11	34.68	124.5	.015

I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student might get arrested.	40	23.50	11	35.09	120.0	.011
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon would get in trouble.	40	24.39	11	31.86	90.0	<.001
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school, even if people might think that I am a snitch or tattletale.	40	22.40	11	39.09	76.0	<.001
I wouldn't tell an adult about a violent incident on campus because the adults can 1t protect me from retaliation from other students.	39	29.15	11	12.55	72.0	.001
I wouldn't report violent incidents in my school because I feel that telling an adult is a betrayal to my classmates	40	27.69	11	19.86	90.5	.001

A Mann-Whitney test was also performed to compare the willingness to report a friend "if I could do so without giving my name." Forty-three students agreed that they would report a student if they could without giving their name ($M = 1.69$, $SD = 0.46$), while nine students disagreed that they would report a friend even if they could remain anonymous ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.50$). The analysis indicated a statistically significant difference in two of the 13 reporting statements between the two groups – those who would or would not report a friend if they could do so anonymously. The results are shown in table 6.

Table 6

Willingness to Report a Friend Anonymously

	Agree			Disagree		
	n	Mean Rank	n	Mean Rank	U	Sig.
I would report a student even if he/she was my friend.	42	23.32	9	38.50	76.5	.003
I would be more likely to report violent activities or weapons on campus if I could do so anonymously.	43	24.70	9	35.11	116.0	.036

Research Question 4

Research question 4 asked whether there was a significant difference in students'

willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the

likelihood of personal consequences versus those who do not. Two survey statements

addressed reporters' fear of personal consequences. Students could strongly agree, agree,

disagree, or strongly disagree with statement values 1 through 4, respectively. The

statements gaged whether students' perception of personal consequences made a

difference in reporting behavior.

A Mann-Whitney test was conducted to compare the willingness to report violent

activities or weapons based on the statement, "I would report a student exhibiting violent

behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon might

hurt me." Forty-two students agreed that they would report a student even if doing so

might cause them harm (M = 1.43, SD = 0.50), while 10 disagreed (M = 3.20, SD =

0.42). The Mann-Whitney test revealed a significant difference in five of 13 reporting

statements between the two groups – those who would or would not report a friend. The

results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Willingness to Report Based on Fear or Personal Consequences

		Agree		Disagree		
	n	Mean Rank		Mean Rank	U	Sig.
I would report a student even if he/she was my friend.	41	23.87	10	34.75	117.5	.025
If I heard about or saw a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school being committed at school, I would report it to a school adult staff member.	42	24.51	10	34.85	126.5	.026
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if I believed that the student who carried the weapon would probably not use it.	42	24.69	10	34.10	134.0	.049
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if that student might get arrested.	42	24.56	10	34.65	128.5	.036
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if people might think that I am a snitch or tattletale.	42	24.11	10	36.55	109.5	.008
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon might find out I told.	41	27.10	10	41.30	52.0	<.001

Regarding the second statement related to fear of personal consequences, "I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if people might think that I am a snitch or tattletale," only three individuals disagreed with the statement. Since the group was not of sufficient size, no further statistical analysis was performed.

Research Question 5

Research question 5 asked whether there is a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not. Students could report having all A's, A's and B's, all C's, or C's and D's. For statistical analysis, students who reported making all As or As and Bs had high grades, while those who did not report making all As or As and Bs were considered low grades. A Mann-Whitney test was conducted to compare the willingness to report the person based on whether the respondent had high or low grades. No significant difference was observed in any of the 14 reporting statements between students with high grades and those with low grades. Results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Willingness to Report Based on Academic Performance

	Agree		Disagree			
	n	Mean Rank	n	Mean Rank	U	Sig.
I would report a student even if he/she was my friend.	32	23.97	18	28.22	239.0	.287
I would report a student who was my friend if I could do so without giving my name.	33	25.30	18	27.28	274.0	.612

I would be more likely to report violent activities or weapons on campus if I could do so anonymously.	33	25.17	18	27.53	269.5	.544
If I heard a student threaten to hurt someone else with a weapon, I would tell an adult.	33	25.95	18	26.08	295.5	.978
If I heard about or saw a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school being committed at school, I would report it to a school adult staff member.	33	24.86	18	28.08	259.5	.394
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if I believed that the student who carried the weapon would probably not use it	33	26.80	18	24.53	270.5	.560
I would a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student might get arrested	33	24.89	18	28.03	260.5	.426
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon would get in trouble	33	24.35	18	29.03	242.5	.216
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon might hurt me	33	23.71	18	30.19	221.5	.108

I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if people might think that I am a snitch or tattletale	33	25.47	18	26.97	279.5	.697
I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon might find out I told	32	23.52	18	29.03	224.5	.156
I wouldn't tell an adult about a violent incident on campus because the adults can't protect me from retaliation from other students.	31	26.11	18	23.08	244.5	.431
I wouldn't report violent incidences in my school because I feel that telling an adult is a betrayal to my classmates	32	27.13	18	22.61	236.0	.246
I wouldn't tell other adults in my school about violent acts because I would feel shameful about it.	33	27.27	18	23.67	255.0	.352

Research Question 6

Research question 6 asked whether there is a significant difference in students'

willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are

knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who

are not. Three survey statements addressed students' willingness to report weapons or

school violence among students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to

them at school. Students could strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with

the statement with values of 1 through 4, respectively. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the willingness to report based on the knowledge of resources available based on the statement, "I know whom to report a potential problem, violent act, or threat." Forty-eight students confirmed that they agreed about knowing about the resources ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.50$), while three students disagreed ($M = 3$, $SD = 0$). The analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in students who know whom to report to versus those who do not, t (49) = -5.253, p = 0.001. An independent samples t-test was also conducted to compare the willingness to report based on the statement, "I know where to report if I hear about or see a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school." Forty-nine students confirmed that they agreed to knowing where to report incidents ($M = 1.44$, $SD = 0.50$), while three students disagreed ($M = 3$, $SD = 0$). The analysis indicated that there was a statically significant difference in these groups of students, t (50) = -5.296, p = .001. The last independent samples t-test analyzing the knowledge of reporting resources available at school was based on the statement, "the school has made it clear about whom I should report these activities." Forty-six students agreed with the fact that the school has made it clear about whom they should report to ($M = 1.47$, $SD = 0.50$), while three students disagreed about the school being clear on whom to report to ($M = 3$, $SD = 0$). The analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in students who believe the school has made it clear who violent occurrences should be reported to, t (47) = -5.168, p = .001.

Chapter V: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This quantitative comparison study examined how often weapons are observed or violent occurrences occur at a rural public secondary school in Arkansas and whether these are reported. The study also looked at the behavior associated with students that decided to report versus those who did not. The researcher analyzed the characteristics and traits of these students. Lastly, the study looked at the barriers that may exist and could explain why students do not report weapons or violent incidents to staff members or adults in the school district. This study focused on secondary students' willingness to report weapons or violent occurrences. Because of the issue of student safety and weapons on campuses across the nation and the lack of research regarding students' willingness to report these occurrences (Brank et al., 2009), the researcher intended to gain insight into this topic in an Arkansas school. Therefore, one of the primary goals of this study is to provide specific information to school districts within the state that could be beneficial in developing, implementing, or modifying existing school safety plans.

The survey was administered by paper and kept anonymous. There were multiple sections within the survey. The first section consisted of demographic information, the next part looked at weapon reporting, the third looked at violence reporting, and sections four and five looked at personal incidents and reporting. The survey consisted of Likert-type questions to gauge their perception of the questions. In chapter IV, the researcher outlined the quantitative data collection and analysis findings. Finally, chapter V reviewed the research findings and limitations of the study. It also listed recommendations for improving safety conditions and reporting capabilities of students within the sampled school district and suggested future studies.

Limitations

       This study had limitations, primarily in the research group of participants. The researcher's study targeted responses from secondary students within one Arkansas school district. The findings of this study and, its participants, cannot guarantee that perceptions and results align with other students or schools within Arkansas or throughout the country.

       While the survey was open to students in grades 6-12 at the selected school district, the researcher could only obtain participants from grades 6-9. Since the survey was voluntary and not required, the student responses could also not necessarily apply to all students; the researcher had to use the results given and come to conclusions with those results. Participant reliability and reporting accuracy are factors in the study and its findings. Fifty-two students responded to the survey, and all the students were in grades 6-9. While time-sensitive, expanding the research and data collection to other school districts in Arkansas would have added more insights into other students to compare the findings among the differing school districts and locations.

Questions and Hypotheses

       RQ1. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

       Null Hypothesis 1. No statistically significant relationship exists in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

       Findings: The null hypothesis for this study is retained based on the data analysis conducted via SPSS, as described in Chapter 4. The statistical test to compare the

willingness to report violence or weapons on campus, considering the student's grade level, revealed no significant difference. Neither did the factors of gender nor ethnicity. For example, an analysis of the survey question, "I wouldn't tell an adult about a violent incident on campus because the adults can't protect me from retaliation from other students," revealed a statistically significant difference in responses based on the student's grade levels. However, the Sidak post hoc analysis did not show any significant difference between grade levels. Based on the data analysis, factors of grade, gender, and ethnicity do not have a statistically significant effect on reporting factors related to violence or weapons on campus.

RQ2. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not?

Null Hypothesis 2. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have a positive perception of school climate compared to those who do not.

Findings: The null hypothesis for the study is retained based on the data analysis conducted via SPSS, as described in Chapter 4. Due to some groups having less than five observations, it was impossible to determine if there was a significant difference in positive perception of school climate as a factor. The researcher also conducted a Mann-Whitney U test to determine students' willingness to report based on positive verse negative perceptions. Of those 14 statements, the perception was not a statistically significant factor.

RQ3. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity?

Null Hypothesis 3. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus perpetrated by a friend between students who would report their friend compared to those who do not, considering factors of grade, gender, or ethnicity.

Finding: The null hypothesis for the study is rejected based on the data analysis conducted via SPSS, as described in Chapter 4. A Mann-Whitney test conducted based on the factors of the willingness to report a friend showed to be a statistically significant factor in 8 of the reporting statements. The following statements yielded statistically significant differences while being compared with the willingness to report a friend:

1. If I heard a student threaten to hurt someone else with a weapon, I would tell an adult.

2. If I heard about or saw a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school being committed at school, I would report it to a school adult staff member.

3. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if I believed that the student who carried the weapon would probably not use it.

4. I would a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student might get arrested.

5. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school, even if the student who carried the weapon would get in trouble.

6. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school, even if people might think that I am a snitch or tattletale.

7. I wouldn't tell an adult about a violent incident on campus because the adults can 1t protect me from retaliation from other students.

8. I wouldn't report violent incidents in my school because I feel that telling an adult is a betrayal to my classmates.

Statistical analysis revealed a willingness to report a friend anonymously based on the following reporting statements:

1. I would report a student even if he/she was my friend.

2. I would be more likely to report violent activities or weapons on campus if I could do so anonymously.

RQ4. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not?

Null Hypothesis 4. No statistically significant relationship exists between students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences compared to those who do not.

Finding: The null hypothesis for the study is rejected based on the data analysis conducted via SPSS, as described in Chapter 4. The statistical test compared the

relationship between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences to those who do not and found that in five of the 13 reporting statements, this relationship between students was a significant factor. The following statements yielded a statistically significant difference:

1. I would report a student even if he/she was my friend.

2. If I heard about or saw a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school being committed at school, I would report it to a school adult staff member.

3. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if I believed that the student who carried the weapon would probably not use it.

4. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school, even if that student might get arrested.

5. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school, even if people might think that I am a snitch or tattletale.

RQ5. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not?

Null Hypothesis 5. There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who have high grades in school compared to those who do not.

Findings: The null hypothesis for the study is retained based on the data analysis conducted via SPSS, as described in Chapter 4. The researcher ran a Mann-Whitney test to examine students' academic success and willingness to report. Based on 14 survey

statements, academic success was not a significant factor in the students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus.

RQ6. Is there a significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not?

Null Hypothesis 6 There is no significant difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus between students who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them at school compared to students who are not.

Findings: The null hypothesis is rejected based on the data analysis conducted via SPSS, as described in Chapter 4. The independent samples t-test compared the willingness to report based on the knowledge of resources at school. Knowing whom to report and where to report were significant factors in the willingness to report violence or weapons on campus.

Summary of Findings

The researcher found no statistical difference in students' willingness to report violence or weapons on campus based on demographics (grade, gender, ethnicity), perception of school climate, or on the academic success of the students. One past study that the researcher reviewed showed that age or grade were factors in students' reporting, mainly alluding to the grade being a factor when looking at students in the primary levels compared to those of junior high and high school. Because the researcher had participants in similar grades (6-9), it can be inferred that there wouldn't be a correlation to the participant's willingness to report these occurrences without a large difference in ages and grades. The Chrichlow-Ball and Cornell study found similarities in the group of students

that admitted to not reporting, with one of the factors being that they usually had lower grades than their peers (Crichlow-Ball & Cornell, 2021). The researcher did not find that commonality within this study. This academic success factor could be attributed to not only the number of participants in the study, but also the diverse group of students. Most of the students that responded to the researcher's study received moderate to high academic success, so there isn't enough data to see if there would be a significant difference within this subgroup of students.

The research found statistical differences in students' willingness to report based on students' willingness to report their friends and those who would not, fear of personal consequences or retaliation, and the knowledge of resources available at school. Eight reporting statements tied to reporting friends and being anonymous yielded statistically significant results when comparing the groups of students who were willing to report versus those who were not. Most of the research into this area of student safety alluded to the biggest problem with student reporting: the effective "code of silence" that existed among friends at school (Fleishauer, 2001). The same conclusions showed up in this research showing that there was a code of silence among friends in reference to their willingness to report. One reason for this is that students could feel that they don't want to get their friends into trouble and attribute it to them as just "joking" (Madifs, 2014.) Students also perceive reporting as socially unacceptable and will ultimately lead to rejection from their peer groups (Brinkley et al., 2006).

This research also found statistically significant differences in student groups when comparing the relationship between students who fear the likelihood of personal consequences versus those who do not based on their willingness to report. Previous

research into this found that fear of personal consequences contributed to students'
unwillingness to report suspicious activity at school. As a result, students have a negative
feeling associated with reporting someone, which can lead to a high chance of retaliation
(Naylor & Cowie, 1999).

The last area that showed statistically significant differences in student responses
was the willingness of students to report based on the groups of students who are
knowledgeable about resources at school to report the occurrences of violence or
weapons brought to school versus those who are not knowledgeable. There was a
statistically significant difference in the willing group of students versus the unwilling for
the following reporting statements:

1. I know whom to report a problem, violent act, or threat.

2. I know where to report if I hear or see a violent act or someone bringing
   weapons to school.

3. The school has made it clear to whom I should report these activities to.

While no research was found on the effect of the availability of resources or the
knowledge of the availability of resources affecting reporting behaviors, the researcher's
study showed a relationship between students' willingness to report and their knowledge
of available resources at school to do so.

Recommendations for Education

A recommendation for this Arkansas school district is to have an educational
campaign regarding the importance of reporting behaviors for students. Although this is a
prevalent issue, creating opportunities for students and staff alike to learn more about

why students don't report in certain situations, specifically using their friend as an example, could help some students see the importance of doing so.

An additional recommendation would be creating resources for students to report these behaviors and educating students about the available resources. The researcher would recommend that the school district looks into additional anonymous reporting tools with various avenues for reporting. Schools should educate students concerning whom to talk to, where to go, and where to report these situations. This topic should be presented more than once a year to help continue the education of existing students and give new students to the district the opportunity to learn about the programs. If students and staff are clear on what is available and how to use the reporting tools and resources, it could prevent safety concerns at school.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends the following based on the findings and limitations of this study:

1. This study focused solely on one school district. Future researchers could look at several schools within a particular region or state to obtain more willing participants, therefore, more data to analyze.

2. This study was limited to secondary students in grades 6-9. A study involving more grades or more students might reveal different results.

3. A replication study with mixed methods will look at not only the quantitative data but also qualitative data into the perceptual reasons behind the student's logic into their willingness to report and the barriers that exist.

4. Future research could look specifically into what reporting tools or educational programs are available at the school(s) to encourage reporting of violence or weapons on campus.

Conclusions

School safety and the safety of students will continue to be one of the most important topics in education. Parents entrust schools with the safety of their children, and it is the school's duty and responsibility to do everything in its power to keep kids safe. This study intended to examine students' reporting characteristics and see if there were any identifiable characteristics among the reporting and non-reporting students. Further, the study examined the barriers that exist for students as to why they wouldn't report weapons or violent occurrences at school. This study found commonalities within the data to help support existing research into the effects of students fearing retaliation and the existence of the "code of silence" among many students within schools. It also revealed that students being aware of where and how to report could make a difference in their willingness to report such behaviors. School and student safety is a team approach, and all stakeholders should be willing to contribute to the education of safety plans at school. Unfortunately, we will continue to witness school violence in the future; however, we must continue to look at data and conduct more research into these areas to understand more completely and, ultimately, help students.

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Appendix A: Student Survey

Willingness to report weapons and school violence survey.

CONSENT TO TAKE SURVEY

The following information is provided to inform you about a college research project regarding your willingness to report incidents that occur at school. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about this study and the information given below. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions and have your questions answered. This study is being conducted by Mr. Blake Poole (Clarksville Junior High Principal), a doctoral student at Arkansas Tech University, in order to better understand the current attitudes of students' willingness to report incidents that occur at school. This study is not affiliated with my role as Principal at Clarksville Junior High. This research will help the school provide more resources to assist students if needed. Your responses to the survey are confidential and only available to the researcher. You will participate by completing the following survey questionnaire, which will focus on determining the predominant beliefs of the participant. The time needed to complete this survey is approximately 20 minutes. Responding to the survey could cause psychological discomfort, depending on the question. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question, please skip to the next question. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Over 1400 individuals are being invited to participate in this survey. The researcher will know which students completed surveys because of signed parental consent forms and entering information into the AirPod raffle. However, confidentiality is assured, and there will be no identifiers linking the students to their answers. The researcher will keep your information stored on a password-protected device, and paper copies of surveys will be in a lockbox. After three years, the paper copies will be destroyed, and the electronic data will be deleted. Permitting your responses to be used in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the survey at any point. The potential benefits to you from participating in the study are minimal. The study provides opportunity for students to express their attitudes regarding their willingness to report incidents that occur at school. There are no alternative procedures to participate in the study. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you can contact Mr. Poole at tpoole6@atu.edu. This study has been reviewed and approved by Arkansas Tech University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB at irb@atu.edu.

Your rights as a volunteer: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. Some questions may cause discomfort. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question, please skip to the next question. You are free to

withdraw from this study at any time with no penalty to you. Your responses will be confidential. After completing the survey, you will fill out a separate form online that will enter you in a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods. The separate form will in no way be tied back to your original survey responses.

By continuing with the survey, you are giving your consent to participate.

* Required

1. What is your gender? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 1. Female

   ◯ 2. Male

2. What grade are you in?

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 6

   ◯ 7

   ◯ 8

   ◯ 9

   ◯ 10

   ◯ 11

   ◯ 12

3. What is your ethnic background? (Choose the ethnicity you most closely identify with)

   Mark only one oval.

( ) 1. Hispanic

( ) 2. White

( ) 3. Other

4. What grades did you get on your most recent report card?

Mark only one oval.

( ) 1. All As

( ) 2. As and Bs

( ) 3. As, Bs, and Cs

( ) 4. Cs

( ) 5. Cs and Ds

( ) 6. Mostly Ds and Fs

School Climate

5. I feel safe at my school

Mark only one oval.

( ) 1. Strongly agree

( ) 2. Agree

( ) 3. Disagree

( ) 4. Strongly Disagree

6. I believe that my school provides a safe environment for me to report violent behavior or weapons being brought to campus.

Mark only one oval.

○ 1. Strongly Agree

○ 2. Agree

○ 3. Disagree

○ 4. Strongly Disagree

7. Most of the students in this school have respect for other students.

Mark only one oval.

○ 1. Strongly agree

○ 2. Agree

○ 3. Disagree

○ 4. Strongly disagree

8. When I am having problems, my teachers are supportive.

Mark only one oval.

○ 1. Strongly agree

○ 2. Agree

○ 3. Disagree

○ 4. Strongly disagree

9. Most of the students show respect for their teachers,

Mark only one oval.

○ 1. Strongly agree

○ 2. Agree

○ 3. Disagree

○ 4. Strongly disagree

10. I feel there is at least one teacher or adult in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 1. Strongly Agree
- ◯ 2. Agree
- ◯ 3. Disagree
- ◯ 4. Strongly Disagree

11. Teachers develop caring relationships with students in my school.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 1. Strongly agree
- ◯ 2. Agree
- ◯ 3. Disagree
- ◯ 4. Strongly disagree

Community/Home Values

12.   In my home, I am taught that if I am being bullied or picked on in school I must fight back rather than tell an adult.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 1. Strongly agree
- ◯ 2. Agree
- ◯ 3. Disagree
- ◯ 4. Strongly disagree

13.   In my community, I am taught to trust authority figures (adults, police, teachers etc.)

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 1.   Strongly agree

   ◯ 2.   Agree

   ◯ 3.   Disagree

   ◯ 4.   Strongly disagree

Personal Incidents

14.   I know of someone who has brought a gun or knife to school in the past 12 months.

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

15.   Did you report this to anyone?

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

   ◯ N/A: Hasn't Happened

16.   I have heard a student threaten to hurt someone else in the past 12 months.

Mark only one oval.

○ Yes

○ No

17.   During the last 12 months, has anyone intentionally injured you at school (punched, hit, or slapped in an unfriendly way)

Mark only one oval.

○ Yes

○ No

18.   How many times has this happened in the last 12 months?

Mark only one oval.

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3 or more

○ 0 (It hasn't happened)

19.   Did you report this assault to anyone?

Mark only one oval.

○ Yes

○ No

○ N/A It hasn't happened

Reporting

20. If you were a victim of violent incidents at school, witness violent incidents, or knew about weapons being on campus, who would you most likely report this to :

Mark only one oval.

○ my close friend or

○ classmate my

○ parents or family

○ member teacher

○ or counselor

school principal none of

the above

21. If you were to make a report at school about a dangerous situation, who would you prefer to report this to?

Mark only one oval.

○ Male

○ Female

○ It does not matter

22. I would report a student even if he/she was my friend.

Mark only one oval.

○ 1.   Strongly Agree

○ 2.   Agree

○ 3.   Disagree

○ 4.   Strongly Disagree

23. I would report a student who was my friend if I could do so without giving my name.

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1. Strongly Agree

◯ 2. Agree

◯ 3. Disagree

◯ 4. Strongly Disagree

24. I would be more likely to report violent activities or weapons on campus if I could do so anonymously.

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1. Strongly Agree

◯ 2. Agree

◯ 3. Disagree

◯ 4. Strongly Disagree

25. If I heard a student threaten to hurt someone else with a weapon, I would tell an adult.

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1. Strongly Agree

◯ 2. Agree

◯ 3. Disagree

◯ 4. Strongly Disagree

26. If I heard about or saw a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school being committed at school I would report it to a school adult staff member.

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 1.   Strongly agree

   ◯ 2.   Agree

   ◯ 3.   Disagree

   ◯ 4.   Strongly disagree

27. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if I believed that the student who carried the weapon would probably not use it

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 1.   Strongly agree

   ◯ 2.   Agree

   ◯ 3.   Disagree

   ◯ 4.   Strongly disagree

28. I would a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student might get arrested *Mark only one oval.*

   ◯ 1.   Strongly agree

   ◯ 2.   Agree

   ◯ 3.   Disagree

   ◯ 4.   Strongly disagree

29. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon would get in trouble *Mark only one oval.*

    ⬭ 1.   Strongly agree

    ⬭ 2.   Agree

    ⬭ 3.   Disagree

    ⬭ 4.   Strongly disagree

30. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon might hurt me *Mark only one oval.*

    ⬭ 1.   Strongly agree

    ⬭ 2.   Agree

    ⬭ 3.   Disagree

    ⬭ 4.   Strongly disagree

31. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if people might think that I am a snitch or tattletale *Mark only one oval.*

    ⬭ 1.   Strongly agree

    ⬭ 2.   Agree

    ⬭ 3.   Disagree

    ⬭ 4.   Strongly disagree

32. I would report a student exhibiting violent behavior or bringing weapons to school even if the student who carried the weapon might find out I told *Mark only one oval.*

   ◯ 1.   Strongly agree

   ◯ 2.   Agree

   ◯ 3.   Disagree

   ◯ 4.   Strongly disagree

33. I would not tell an adult about a violent incident on campus because the adults can not protect me from retaliation from other students.

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 1.   Strongly agree

   ◯ 2.   Agree

   ◯ 3.   Disagree

   ◯ 4.   Strongly Disagree

34. I would not report violent incidences in my school because I feel that telling an adult is a betrayal to my classmates *Mark only one oval.*

   ◯ 1.   Strongly agree

   ◯ 2.   Agree

   ◯ 3.   Disagree

   ◯ 4.   Strongly disagree

35. I would not tell other adults in my school about violent acts because I would feel shameful about it.

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1. Strongly agree

◯ 2. Agree

◯ 3. Disagree

◯ 4. Strongly disagree

36. I know who to report a potential problem, violent act, or threat

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1. Strongly agree

◯ 2. Agree

◯ 3. Disagree

◯ 4. Strongly Disagree

37. I know where to report if I hear about or see a violent act or someone bringing weapons to school.

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1. Strongly Agree

◯ 2. Agree

◯ 3. Disagree

◯ 4. Strongly Disagree

38. The school has made it clear about who at school I should report these activities to.

Mark only one oval.

1. Strongly Agree

2. Agree

3. Disagree

4. Strongly Disagree

Appendix B: Parental Consent

INFORMED CONSENT FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH: PARENTAL

PERMISSION

Arkansas Tech University

<div style="border:1px solid black; background:#d9d9d9; text-align:center">

INFORMED CONSENT FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH:

PARENTAL CONSENT

</div>

Student Willingness to Report Weapons and School Violence at a Rural
Secondary School in Arkansas: A Quantitative Study

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Blake Poole,
Ed.D. candidate, Principal Investigator (CJH Principal), and Dr. Steve Bounds, faculty
advisor, from Arkansas Tech University because your child is a student between the
ages of 11 and 19. Your child's participation is voluntary. You should read the
information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before
deciding whether to allow your child to participate. Please take as much time as you
need to read the consent form. Your child will also be asked his/her permission and
given a form to read, which is called an assent form. Your child can decline to
participate, even if you agree to allow him/her. You and/or your child may alsodecide
to discuss it with your family or friends. If your child decides to participate, you will
be asked to sign this form. This study is not affiliated with my role as Principal at
Clarksville Junior High. If your child chooses to participate in the study, they will be
entered into a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine how often weapons are being brought to
school and how often violent occurrences happen at school as well as how often
these incidents are being reported.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you agree to allow your child to participate, your child will be asked to take a 20-
minute survey consisting of 38 questions about the community or home values,
his/her school, and his/her friends and acquaintances. Your child will be asked to
respond to questions abouttheir values from home, how supportive the school and the

Principal are, and how much influence your child and his/her friends have on your child's making when it comes to reporting violence or weapons being brought to campus. If you would like a copy of the questions asked of your child, please contact the researcher. The contact information is at the end of this form.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no anticipated risks in your child's participation in this study. Your child may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. Your child does not have to answer any questions s/he does not want to.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no anticipated direct benefits to your child. However, adding to the research onviolence and reporting behaviors can assist schools in increasing reporting behaviors and, through that, engender a safer learning environment for students.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will be disclosed onlywith your permission or as required by law Neither you nor your child's teachers will have access to your child's responses. Your child's responses will not contain any identifiers, such as your child's name, studentID number, or the name of the school. The data will be stored with the Principal Investigator as a typed document and in electronic format for a maximum of 3 years at the end of the study. Again, the answers obtained in the survey will not identify your child. Only members of the research team will have access to the surveys and data. When the results of the research are published or discussed at conferences, no identifiableinformation will be included.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your child's participation is voluntary. Your child's refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent, and your child may withdraw his/her assent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You, or your child, are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your child's participation in this research study.

INVESTIGATORS CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact Blake Poole, CJH Principal, Principal Investigator at (479)XXX-XXXX or by email at blake.poole@csdar.org

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB directly. If you havequestions, concerns, or complaints about the research and are unable to contact the research team, or if you want to talk to someone independent of the research team, please contact ATU's IRB at irb@atu.edu

I/we have read the information provided above. I/we have been given a chance to ask questions. My/our questions have been answered to my/our satisfaction, and I/we agree to participate in this study and/or have our child(ren) participate in this study. I/we have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant

_____

Name of Parent

_____   _____

Signature of Parent   Date

Appendix C: Parent Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As part of my doctoral degree program at Arkansas Tech University, I am conducting a research study to help educators understand student reporting behaviors as related to their observance of weapons or violence occurring on the school campus. Because the study involves students under the age of 18, I must obtain parental permission to involve the student in the study. This study is not affiliated with my role as Principal at Clarksville Junior High.

I have created a 38-question survey and would like to invite all students in grades 6-12 to participate by completing the survey. The survey consists of a statement, and the student will mark whether they strongly agree with the statement, agree with the statement, disagree with the statement, or strongly disagree with the statement. The student will also be asked to select the grade they are in, their gender, and their ethnicity for reporting purposes, but no other personal information will be obtained. A copy of the survey can be viewed online at the following address: https://forms.gle/ssFfphmpXk6Tqvme8. No one, including me, will know which student completed which questionnaire.

The survey will be passed out at school and will be done on paper at the student's convenience to further protect the student's identity so it cannot be traced to a specific device or IP address. The student will not be graded on their participation. The survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete, and they may stop answering questions at any time if they feel uncomfortable continuing with the

survey. Students who participate in the survey will be entered into a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods.

If you are willing to allow your child(ren) to participate in this survey, please enter his/her name(s) below, sign the document, and have your child return it to me. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me or my Arkansas Tech advisor, Dr. Steve Bounds (sbounds1@atu.edu).

Thank you,

Blake Poole
479-XXX-XXXX
Blake.poole@csdar.org

Appendix D: Student Recruitment Posting/Announcement

Students,

As part of my doctoral degree program at Arkansas Tech University, I am conducting a research study to help educators understand student reporting behaviors as related to their observance of weapons or violence occurring on the school campus. This study is not affiliated with my role as Principal at Clarksville Junior High.

I have created a 38-question survey and would like to invite all students in grades 6-12 to participate by completing the survey. The survey consists of a statement, and you will mark whether you strongly agree with the statement, agree with the statement, disagree with the statement, or strongly disagree with the statement. You will also be asked to select the grade you are in, your gender, and your ethnicity for reporting purposes, but no other personal information will be obtained. No one, including me, will know which student completed which questionnaire.

The survey will be passed out at school and will be done on paper at your convenience to further protect your identity so it cannot be traced to a specific device or IP address. You will not be graded on their participation. The survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete, and they may stop answering questions at any time if you feel uncomfortable continuing with the survey. Students who participate in the survey will be entered into a drawing to win a pair of Apple AirPods.

If you are willing to participate in this survey, I will need written permission from your parents. These forms will be passed out to you all to take home and will need to be returned before you are able to participate. If you are 18 or older, you don't need your parent's permission, but you will need to sign the Informed Consent Form.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me or my Arkansas

Tech advisor, Dr. Steve Bounds (sbounds1@atu.edu).

Thank you,

Blake Poole
479-XXX-XXXX
Blake.poole@csdar.org

Appendix E: IRB Approval

ATU™ ARKANSAS TECH
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND
SPONSORED PROGRAMS

1509 North Boulder Avenue
Administration, Room 207
Russellville, AR 72801

479-880-4327
www.atu.edu

May 16, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Tech University Institutional Review Board has approved the IRB
application for Travis Poole's proposed research, entitled "Student Willingness to Report
Weapons and School Violence at a Rural Secondary School in Arkansas: A Quantitative Study."
The Institutional Review Board used full board review procedures. Please use
"F-2022-01" when referencing this study.

Please note that in the event that any of the parameters of the study change, the
researcher may be required to submit an amended application.

Please proceed with your research. We wish you success with this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Tennille Lasker-Scott, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
Arkansas Tech University