



Understanding school safety: Perceptions, realities, and risk factors

Ivy Janine Bernadez ^{1*}, Arvin Bantilan ², Mikka Quisada ³, Gery An Punay ⁴, Chloe Pol ⁵, Aira Bicog ⁶, Justin Rafosala ⁷, Charleton Amalla ⁸, Clent Lomo ⁹, Randy Lamanilao ¹⁰

¹⁻¹⁰ SHS Students, Balite National High School, Balite, San Francisco, Surigao del Norte, Philippines

¹¹ Research Teacher, Balite National High School, Balite, San Francisco, Surigao del Norte, Philippines

* Corresponding Author: **Ivy Janine Bernadez**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 05

Issue: 03

May-June 2024

Received: 04-04-2024

Accepted: 13-05-2024

Page No: 795-803

Abstract

This research investigated the perceptions of school safety among students and explored the prevalence of weapons-related incidents, as well as potential risk factors contributing to weapon possession in schools. The study encompassed a comprehensive analysis of data collected from a diverse sample of 191 students across various grade levels in Balite National High School, a public school in the Philippines. Findings revealed that while a majority of students report feeling safe at school most of the time, a significant number are aware of other students carrying weapons, indicating a discrepancy between perceived safety and the reality of weapons in the school environment. The research identifies various risk factors contributing to students feeling pressured or considering carrying weapons, including trouble or conflicts at school, academic challenges, problems at home, aggressive behavior, and feeling disconnected from school. Additionally, demographic differences in potential risk factors are examined, revealing no significant variations based on grade level, age, or sex. These findings underscore the importance of proactive measures to address safety concerns, promote positive school environments, and provide support for students facing challenges that may lead to weapon possession. The research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in developing effective strategies to enhance school safety and promote the overall well-being of students.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMRGE.2024.5.1.795-803>

Keywords: School Safety, weapons, risk factors, student perceptions, intervention strategies

Introduction

The factors contributing to weapons among students within school environments is beamed become a growing concern, prompting increased attention from educators, parents, and policymakers alike this issue is multifaceted, involving a complex interplay of social, economic, psychological, and environmental factors. This study delves into the multifaceted aspects of school safety, examining how students perceive safety within educational environments. By integrating quantitative approaches, the research highlights the complexities of ensuring a safe learning atmosphere, identifying key factors that contribute to both real and perceived safety issues. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and school administrators to enhance safety protocols and foster a secure, supportive educational environment.

The position of weapons with which students can access weapons is a key practical factor contributing to their position. The availability of weapons within the community, lax gun control measures, or insufficient security measures in schools can significantly contribute to the prevalence of weapons among students and addressing the sources of weapon accessibility are crucial steps in developing effective it becomes evident that the issue of weapons position among students in school environments is complex and multifaceted. By undertaking a comprehensive examination of these contributing elements,

We can begin to formulate targeted interventions and strategies aimed at fostering safer and more conducive learning environments for all students. This research endeavor seeks to contribute to the broader conversation on school safety and serve as a foundation for evidence-based policies and practices.

Review of Related Literature

Several studies have delved into various aspects of school safety and students' willingness to report incidents involving weapons or violence. Poole *et al.* (2023) ^[7] focused on pupils from a remote Arkansas school and their readiness to attend classes at Radion, a school with children from diverse backgrounds. Their findings revealed that behavior reporting and incidents involving weapons or violence were analyzed. There was a statistically significant difference in the willingness to report incidents, with some pupils fearing repercussions. Those who did report suggested additional manpower was needed in the district.

Wylie Undsey *et al.* (2016) ^[8] investigated the predictors of middle school students' willingness to report weapons at school under different reporting conditions. They found that students were more willing to report anonymously, emphasizing the importance of ensuring confidentiality in reporting systems.

The study of Khoury *et al.* (2007) ^[6] this study is to determined the weapon carrying in Israeli schools, the contribution of individual and school factors. Results show that the individual factors, such as victimization and fear, are positively associated with weapon carrying in school.

Branks (2007) studied middle school students' inclination to report when they knew someone was carrying a firearm on school property. They found that reporting varied depending on conditions and demographic attributes, with factors like parental involvement increasing reporting and rebellion decreasing it.

Boswort (2011) explored how both teachers and students perceive school safety. Their findings could help schools develop better policies and measures to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Beubenisty and Astor (2021) ^[2] investigated weapon-related behaviors and experiences in California secondary schools. They highlighted the lack of research on the percentage of students who have seen guns in school, suggesting that such experiences could negatively impact students' psychological sense of safety.

Baiden *et al.* (2019) ^[3] aimed to understand the relationship between teenage suicide attempts and weapon carrying at school. Their findings could help identify teenagers at risk of suicidal behavior.

Hawkins *et al.* (2004) ^[1] examined weapon-carrying behavior among suburban adolescents, noting that concerns about violence had increased following school shootings. They found similarities in weapon carrying between suburban and urban areas, with different characteristics emerging for boys and girls.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the factors contributing to weapons position among students within school environment. This sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profiles of the students in terms of grade level, age, and sex?
2. What are the perceptions of the students in terms of

trouble, school problem, family problem, behavior?

3. Is there a significant difference on the perception of the students when compared to their profiles?
4. Based on the findings, what activity for students can be designed?

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilize the quantitative design. The quantitative research design require numerical data and design to understand school safety measures as perceived by the students.

Research Locale

The research locale of the study was Balite National High School, Balite San Francisco, Surigao Del Norte, Philippines. This school is a medium school headed by Secondary school head with one master teacher. It has more than more 28 teachers and 2 non-teaching staff with the population of 368 students for school year 2023-2024.

Research Participants

This study used a simple random sampling method under probability sampling approach to determine the the participants of the study. Students of Balite National High School were the participants of the study.

Table 1: Participants of the Study

Grade level	Population	Percentage	Sample Size (n)
Grade 7	41	11.10%	21
Grade 8	41	11.10%	21
Grade 9	59	16.00%	31
Grade 10	73	19.80%	38
Grade 11	60	16.30%	31
Grade 12	94	25.50%	49
Total	368	100%	191

Research Instrument

The study employed a survey questionnaire designed by the researchers to gather data. This instrument facilitated the collection of respondents' opinions and perspectives regarding understanding safety while they are in the school environment. The questionnaire was carefully crafted to cover various factors that could influence student participation.

Ethics and Data Gathering Procedure

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. The researcher obtained permission from the school principal to conduct the study within the school premises. Subsequently, the relevant teachers were informed about the study, and their permission was sought to administer the survey in their classrooms.

To protect participants' confidentiality and privacy, each student was assigned a code instead of using their real names in the survey responses. This measure ensured that individual responses remained anonymous and that participants felt comfortable providing honest feedback. The research adhered to ethical standards and maintained respect for the participants' rights throughout the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tool were used to analyze and interpret the data.

Frequency Count and Percentage Distribution. This statistical tool is used to summarize categorical data by counting the number of occurrences of each category and presenting them as frequencies and percentages. It helps in understanding the distribution of responses within different categories, providing insight into the prevalence of certain phenomena within the dataset.

Mean. The mean is a measure of central tendency that calculates the average value of a dataset. It is calculated by summing all the values in the dataset and then dividing by the total number of values. The mean provides a single value that represents the "typical" value in the dataset, making it useful for summarizing continuous data.

Standard Deviation. Standard deviation measures the dispersion or variability of a dataset around the mean. It indicates how spread out the values are from the average. A higher standard deviation indicates greater variability, while a lower standard deviation indicates that the values are closer to the mean. It provides valuable information about the consistency or variability of the data.

One-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). One-way ANOVA is a statistical test used to compare the means of three or more groups to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between them. It examines whether there are differences in the means of the groups based on one categorical independent variable. The ANOVA test calculates an F-statistic and p-value, where a low p-value (<0.05) indicates that there are significant differences between at least two of the groups.

Independent Sample t-test. The independent sample t-test is used to compare the means of two independent groups to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between them. It is commonly used when comparing means of a continuous variable between two groups. The t-test calculates a t-statistic and p-value, where a low p-value (<0.05) suggests that there are significant differences between the two groups.

Results

This section presents results, analysis, and interpretation of data. All specific questions in the statement of the problem were answered in this section and supported with tables.

Demographic Profiles

Table 2: Demographics of the Participants

Profile	f	%
Grade level		
7	21	11%
8	21	11%
9	31	16%
10	38	20%
11	31	16%
12	49	26%
Total	191	100%
Age		
12-14	68	36%
15-17	100	52%
18 above	23	12%
Total	191	100%
Sex		
Male	71	37%
Female	120	63%
Total	191	100%

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. As for grade level, grade 12 has the highest count with 26% of total, compared with the grade 7 and 8 which both have 11%, and both grade 9 and grade 11 which have both 16%, grade 10 with 38%. As for age, respondent in the bracket 15-17 have the highest number of the participants in this research compared to ages 12-14 with 36% and ages 18 above which have 12% only. And for Sex, 120 are female and 71 for male.

School environment and personal experiences

Table 3: Feeling of being safe at school most of the time

Response	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Yes	132	69 %	69.1 %
No	12	6.3 %	75.4 %
sometimes	47	24.6 %	100.0 %

The data in Table 3 illustrates students' feelings of safety at school.

- **Yes (132, 69%):** This category represents the students who feel safe at school most of the time. It's reassuring that a majority of respondents fall into this category, indicating that a significant portion of students feel secure in their school environment.
- **No (12, 6.3%):** A small percentage of students, represented by this category, do not feel safe at school most of the time. While this number is relatively low, it's still concerning as it indicates that there are some students who perceive their school environment as unsafe.
- **Sometimes (47, 24.6%):** This group comprises students who feel safe at school only sometimes. This is a significant portion of the respondents, and it suggests that there may be certain factors or situations within the school environment that intermittently affect students' sense of safety.

Looking at the cumulative percentages, it can be seen that 69.1% of respondents feel safe at school most of the time, while 75.4% either feel safe sometimes or not at all. This indicates that there's room for improvement in ensuring a consistently safe environment for all students.

Table 4: Awareness of other students carrying weapons at school?

F	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Yes	98	51.3 %	51.3 %
No	93	48.7 %	100.0 %

The data in Table 3 indicates students' awareness of other students carrying weapons at school:

- **Yes (98, 51.3%):** This category represents students who have witnessed or been aware of other students carrying weapons at school. This is a concerning statistic, as it suggests that a significant portion of the student body has either directly observed or been informed about the presence of weapons on campus.
- **No (93, 48.7%):** Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they have not witnessed or been aware of other students carrying weapons at school. While this is somewhat reassuring, the fact that almost half of the students are still aware of weapons being present indicates that there may be underlying safety concerns within the school environment.

Looking at the cumulative percentages, it can be seen that 51.3% of respondents are aware of students carrying weapons, while 48.7% are not. This means that the majority of students have some level of awareness regarding the presence of weapons at school.

This data underscores the importance of implementing effective measures to address weapons-related issues in schools. It may involve stricter security protocols, increased awareness and education about the dangers of weapons, and providing support for students who may feel threatened or unsafe. Additionally, it highlights the need for proactive intervention to prevent potentially dangerous situations and ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Table 5: Feeling of being pressured or considered carrying a weapon yourself at school

H	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Yes	72	37.9 %	37.9 %
No	118	62.1 %	100.0 %

Table 5 presents data on students' feelings of being pressured or considering carrying a weapon themselves at school. Among the respondents, 37.9% indicated that they have experienced such pressure or have contemplated carrying a weapon. This finding is concerning, as it suggests that a significant portion of students may feel threatened or unsafe within their school environment. It indicates a potential underlying issue that needs to be addressed to ensure the well-being and safety of all students.

On the other hand, the majority of respondents (62.1%) reported not feeling pressured or considering carrying a weapon at school. While this is somewhat reassuring, it's crucial for schools to recognize and address the concerns of the minority who do feel this way. Even though the majority of students may not feel pressured, the fact that a notable proportion do is significant and warrants attention.

Looking at the cumulative percentages, nearly 38% of students have felt pressured or considered carrying a weapon at school, while 62.1% have not. This data underscores the importance of creating a safe and supportive school environment where all students feel protected and valued. It highlights the need for schools to address underlying issues such as bullying, harassment, and a lack of support systems that may contribute to students feeling unsafe or pressured.

Table 6: Main reasons behind this pressure or consideration

Reasons	Counts	% of Total
1. Feeling unsafe or threatened	18	25.0%
2. Wanting to protect myself or others	45	62.5%
3. Peer pressure	3	4.2%
4. Feeling angry or frustrated	2	2.8%
5. Carrying a weapon is part of my culture or community	4	5.6%

Table 6 presents the main reasons behind students' feelings of pressure or consideration to carry a weapon at school. Among the respondents, various factors contribute to these sentiments:

Feeling unsafe or threatened emerged as a significant factor for a quarter of the students (25.0%). This highlights the importance of addressing safety concerns within the school environment to ensure students feel secure and protected. Wanting to protect themselves or others was cited by the

majority of respondents (62.5%). This indicates a perceived need for self-defense or defense of peers, reflecting underlying fears or concerns about safety among students.

A small percentage of respondents (4.2%) mentioned peer pressure as a reason for their consideration to carry a weapon. While relatively low, this indicates the influence of social dynamics within the school environment on students' decisions regarding weapons.

Some students (2.8%) mentioned feeling angry or frustrated as the main reason behind their consideration to carry a weapon. This suggests that emotional factors can also play a role in students' decision-making regarding weapons.

Additionally, a small but notable proportion of respondents (5.6%) indicated that carrying a weapon is part of their culture or community. This highlights the importance of understanding cultural contexts and addressing diverse perspectives when addressing weapons-related issues in schools.

These reasons provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of students' feelings of pressure or consideration to carry weapons at school. It underscores the need for schools to address safety concerns, provide support for students facing peer pressure, manage emotions effectively, and understand cultural contexts to create a safer and more inclusive school environment. By addressing these underlying issues, schools can work towards mitigating the perceived need for weapons and fostering a safer and more supportive atmosphere for all students.

Potential Risk Factors

The next table presents potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons, each with its mean score and standard deviation. These factors provide insight into various challenges students may face that could influence their decision to carry weapons.

Table 7: Potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons as experienced by the students

Items	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I experience frequent trouble or conflicts at school	191	1.35	0.477
2. I have difficulty keeping up with my homework	191	1.65	0.477
3. I have frequent problems or conflict at home	191	1.40	0.491
4. I engage in aggressive or disruptive behavior at school	191	1.34	0.475
5. I feel disconnected from school and lack positive relationship with teachers or peers	191	1.28	0.450
Total	191	1.17	0.395

Students experiencing frequent trouble or conflicts at school, as indicated by a mean score of 1.35 and a standard deviation of 0.477, may feel unsafe or threatened, potentially leading to the consideration of carrying weapons as a means of protection. Academic challenges also play a significant role, with students who have difficulty keeping up with homework scoring a mean of 1.65 and a standard deviation of 0.477. This suggests that academic stressors can contribute to feelings of frustration or inadequacy, increasing the likelihood of seeking protection through weapon possession. Furthermore, students facing frequent problems or conflicts

at home, with a mean score of 1.40 and a standard deviation of 0.491, may bring those issues into the school environment, impacting their overall well-being and potentially influencing their decisions regarding weapons. Engaging in aggressive or disruptive behavior at school, with a mean score of 1.34 and a standard deviation of 0.475, may also contribute to students feeling the need to carry weapons for protection or as a means of asserting control.

Feelings of disconnection from school and a lack of positive relationships with teachers or peers, with a mean score of 1.28 and a standard deviation of 0.450, are also significant risk factors. Students who feel isolated or unsupported may be more susceptible to seeking security through carrying weapons.

The total mean score for all potential risk factors is 1.17, with a standard deviation of 0.395. This suggests that, on average, students exhibit some level of vulnerability to carrying weapons due to the identified risk factors.

Addressing these risk factors requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses support for students both within and outside the school environment. Providing resources for academic support, conflict resolution, family counselling, and fostering positive relationships within the school community are essential to mitigate the risk of students resorting to carrying weapons. By addressing these underlying challenges, schools can create a safer and more supportive environment for all students.

Significant difference on potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons as experienced by the students and their profile

Table 8: Significant Difference on Potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons as experienced by the students and their grade level and age

Profile	X ²	df	P	Conclusion	Decision on ho
Grade level	0.856	5	0.1712	Insignificant	Do not reject Ho
Age	0.754	2	0.3770	Insignificant	Do not reject Ho

Table 8 analyzes the significant differences in potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons based on their grade level and age. The chi-square test was conducted to determine whether these demographic variables had a meaningful impact on the risk factors associated with weapon possession.

For grade level, the chi-square value is 0.856 with 5 degrees of freedom, resulting in a p-value of 0.1712. This suggests that there is no significant difference in potential risk factors among students of different grade levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is not rejected. This implies that the risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons remain consistent across various grade levels.

Similarly, the analysis for age yields a chi-square value of 0.754 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.3770. Once again, the results indicate that there is no significant difference in potential risk factors among students of different ages. The null hypothesis (Ho) is not rejected, suggesting that age does not significantly impact the risk factors associated with weapon possession.

In summary, both grade level and age do not show significant differences in potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons. This implies that regardless of their grade

level or age, students face similar underlying factors that may influence their likelihood of carrying weapons. Therefore, interventions to address these risk factors should be implemented uniformly across all grade levels and age groups to effectively mitigate the risk of weapons-related incidents in schools.

Table 8: Significant difference on potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons as experienced by the students and their sex

Independent Samples T-Test						
		Statistic	df	p	Conclusion	Decision on Ho
Sex	Student's t	-0.403	189	0.688	Insignificant	Do not reject Ho

Note. $H_a \mu_{Male} \neq \mu_{Female}$

Table 8 examines the significant difference in potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons based on their sex. An independent samples t-test was used for this analysis.

The test statistic for sex is -0.403 with 189 degrees of freedom, resulting in a p-value of 0.688. This indicates that there is no significant difference in potential risk factors between male and female students. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is not rejected, suggesting that the risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons are similar regardless of sex.

In summary, the analysis shows that there is no significant difference in potential risk factors between male and female students. This implies that both male and female students face similar underlying factors that may influence their likelihood of carrying weapons. Therefore, interventions aimed at addressing these risk factors should be tailored to all students, irrespective of their sex.

Whole year activity plan for students

Based on the study's findings, the activity design aims to address the discrepancy between perceived safety and reality, mitigate weapons-related incidents, identify and reduce risk factors, tackle underlying issues of insecurity, and ensure inclusivity across all demographic groups. The activities are designed to create a safe, supportive, and engaging school environment.

Monthly Themes and Activities

January: Building Trust and Community

- **Week 1: Welcome Back Assembly**
 - Objective: Reinforce school policies, emphasize the importance of safety, and introduce the year's theme.
 - Activity: Guest speaker (local law enforcement or community leader) discusses the importance of a safe school environment.
- **Week 2: Classroom Discussions**
 - Objective: Allow students to express their feelings about safety.
 - Activity: Guided discussions led by teachers, using prompts about safety, trust, and community.
- **Week 3: Trust-Building Activities**
 - Objective: Foster trust among students and staff.
 - Activity: Group activities such as team-building exercises and trust falls.
- **Week 4: Parent-Teacher-Student Meetings**
 - Objective: Engage parents in discussions about safety

and community.

- Activity: Meetings to discuss concerns, strategies, and support systems.

February: Conflict resolution and peer mediation

- **Week 1: Introduction to conflict resolution**
 - Objective: Teach students how to handle conflicts non-violently.
 - Activity: Workshops on conflict resolution techniques.
- **Week 2: Peer Mediation Training**
 - Objective: Train selected students to become peer mediators.
 - Activity: Intensive training sessions for peer mediators.
- **Week 3: Role-Playing Scenarios**
 - Objective: Practice conflict resolution and mediation skills.
 - Activity: Role-playing common conflict scenarios.
- **Week 4: Peer Mediation Launch**
 - Objective: Introduce peer mediation program to the school.
 - Activity: Assembly to explain the program and introduce mediators.

March: Academic Support and Stress Management

- **Week 1: Academic Workshops**
 - Objective: Provide additional academic support.
 - Activity: Workshops on study skills, time management, and exam preparation.
- **Week 2: Stress Management Techniques**
 - Objective: Teach students how to manage academic stress.
 - Activity: Stress management sessions including mindfulness and relaxation techniques.
- **Week 3: Tutoring and Mentorship Programs**
 - Objective: Offer ongoing academic support.
 - Activity: Launch of peer tutoring and mentorship programs.
- **Week 4: Mental Health Awareness**
 - Objective: Raise awareness about mental health resources.
 - Activity: Mental health fair with information booths and guest speakers.

April: Addressing Aggressive Behavior

- **Week 1: Understanding Aggression**
 - Objective: Educate students on the causes and effects of aggression.
 - Activity: Workshops and discussions on aggressive behavior.
- **Week 2: Anger Management Techniques**
 - Objective: Equip students with skills to manage anger.
 - Activity: Anger management classes.
- **Week 3: Positive Behavior Reinforcement**
 - Objective: Encourage positive behavior.
 - Activity: Reward system for positive behavior and conflict resolution.
- **Week 4: Role Models and Mentorship**
 - Objective: Provide positive role models.
 - Activity: Mentorship programs with community

leaders and alumni.

May: Enhancing school connectedness

- **Week 1: School Spirit Week**
 - Objective: Foster a sense of belonging and school pride.
 - Activity: Spirit week with themed days and school-wide activities.
- **Week 2: Clubs and Extracurricular Fair**
 - Objective: Encourage student participation in school activities.
 - Activity: Fair showcasing various clubs and extracurricular activities.
- **Week 3: Community Service Projects**
 - Objective: Promote community engagement.
 - Activity: School-wide community service day.
- **Week 4: Reflection and Feedback**
 - Objective: Gather feedback on the activities and initiatives.
 - Activity: Surveys and reflection sessions with students and staff.

June: End of Year Review and Celebration

- **Week 1: Review of the Year's Activities**
 - Objective: Reflect on the year's progress.
 - Activity: Review sessions in classrooms, highlighting successes and areas for improvement.
- **Week 2: Celebration of Achievements**
 - Objective: Celebrate students' achievements and milestones.
 - Activity: Awards ceremony and end-of-year party.
- **Week 3: Preparing for the Next School Year**
 - Objective: Plan for the next school year's activities.
 - Activity: Planning sessions with student leaders and staff.
- **Week 4: Summer Safety and Engagement**
 - Objective: Provide resources for a safe and productive summer.
 - Activity: Distribution of summer activity guides and safety tips.

July - August: Summer Programs

- **Summer Camps and Workshops**
 - Objective: Provide continuous engagement and support.
 - Activity: Various summer camps and workshops focusing on academic enrichment, arts, sports, and personal development.

September: Reorientation and Goal Setting

- **Week 1: Welcome Back and Reorientation**
 - Objective: Reintroduce school safety policies and support systems.
 - Activity: Reorientation assemblies and classroom sessions.
- **Week 2: Goal Setting Workshops**
 - Objective: Help students set academic and personal goals.

- Activity: Workshops on goal setting and planning.
- **Week 3: Peer Support Networks**
 - Objective: Strengthen peer support systems.
 - Activity: Group activities to form peer support networks.
- **Week 4: School Safety Drills**
 - Objective: Ensure students are prepared for emergencies.
 - Activity: Safety drills and emergency preparedness training.

October: Anti-Bullying and Inclusivity

- **Week 1: Anti-Bullying Campaign**
 - Objective: Raise awareness about bullying and its effects.
 - Activity: Campaigns, posters, and assemblies on anti-bullying.
- **Week 2: Inclusivity Workshops**
 - Objective: Promote inclusivity and respect for diversity.
 - Activity: Workshops on inclusivity, led by diverse guest speakers.
- **Week 3: Peer Mentoring Programs**
 - Objective: Strengthen peer mentoring relationships.
 - Activity: Mentoring activities and check-ins.
- **Week 4: Cultural Celebrations**
 - Objective: Celebrate cultural diversity within the school.
 - Activity: Cultural fair with student performances and displays.

November: Family and Community Engagement

- **Week 1: Family Engagement Night**
 - Objective: Strengthen family-school connections.
 - Activity: Family engagement evening with activities and discussions.
- **Week 2: Community partnerships**
 - Objective: Build partnerships with community organizations.
 - Activity: Visits and presentations from local community organizations.
- **Week 3: Volunteer opportunities**
 - Objective: Encourage community service.
 - Activity: Volunteer fairs and sign-up opportunities for students.
- **Week 4: Reflection and Gratitude**
 - Objective: Foster a culture of gratitude.
 - Activity: Gratitude journals and reflection sessions.

December: Reviewing progress and planning ahead

- **Week 1: Mid-Year Review**
 - Objective: Assess the progress of the year's initiatives.
 - Activity: Surveys and review meetings with students and staff.
- **Week 2: Celebrating Successes**
 - Objective: Celebrate the achievements of the first half of the year.
 - Activity: Recognition ceremonies and celebrations.
- **Week 3: Planning for the New Year**
 - Objective: Set goals and plan activities for the upcoming year.

- Activity: Planning sessions with student leaders and staff.
- **Week 4: Holiday Break Preparations**
 - Objective: Ensure students have a safe and enjoyable holiday break.
 - Activity: Distribution of holiday safety tips and activity guides.

Evaluation and Feedback

Throughout the year, regular feedback sessions and surveys will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the activities and make necessary adjustments. This will ensure that the initiatives remain relevant and impactful for the students.

This year-long activity design aims to address the key findings of the study by creating a safer, more supportive, and engaging school environment. By focusing on trust, conflict resolution, academic support, aggressive behavior management, school connectedness, and inclusivity, the program seeks to mitigate the risk factors associated with weapon possession and foster a positive school culture.

Discussion

The findings from Tables 2 to 8 shed light on various aspects of students' perceptions of safety at school, their experiences with weapons, and potential risk factors contributing to weapon possession. These findings underscore the complex interplay of factors that influence students' sense of safety and their behaviors related to weapons.

Firstly, Tables 2 and 3 reveal that while a majority of students report feeling safe at school most of the time, a significant number are aware of other students carrying weapons. This suggests a concerning discrepancy between perceived safety and the reality of weapons in the school environment. Despite efforts to create safe spaces, the presence of weapons remains a prevalent issue that requires attention.

Moreover, Table 4 highlights that a considerable proportion of students have felt pressured or considered carrying a weapon themselves. This finding indicates underlying feelings of insecurity or vulnerability among students, possibly stemming from safety concerns, peer influences, or personal experiences. Addressing these underlying issues is crucial to prevent further escalation and promote a culture of safety and trust within schools.

Table 5 provides insights into the frequency of weapons-related incidents, with a notable portion of students witnessing or hearing about such incidents at least once or twice a year. This suggests that weapons-related incidents are not isolated occurrences but rather a persistent issue that demands consistent attention and intervention.

Furthermore, Table 6 identifies various reasons why students feel pressured or consider carrying weapons, with the desire to protect oneself or others being the most prevalent. This highlights the importance of creating a supportive environment where students feel safe and valued, as well as implementing strategies to address conflict resolution and provide alternatives to violence.

In Table 7, potential risk factors contributing to students carrying weapons are outlined, including trouble or conflicts at school, academic challenges, problems at home, aggressive behavior, and feeling disconnected from school. These findings emphasize the need for a multifaceted approach to address underlying issues such as conflict resolution, academic support, family counseling, and social-emotional learning.

Lastly, Table 8 examines demographic differences in potential risk factors and finds no significant variations based on grade level, age, or sex. This suggests that the risk factors contributing to weapon possession are consistent across different demographic groups, highlighting the universality of these challenges.

In-depth discussions stemming from these findings could involve the development and implementation of comprehensive intervention programs tailored to address the specific needs of students. Such programs might include conflict resolution training, mental health support services, academic support programs, and community engagement initiatives to foster positive relationships and a sense of belonging among students.

Moreover, addressing the root causes of weapon possession, such as feelings of insecurity, peer pressure, or academic challenges, requires collaboration among school administrators, teachers, counselors, families, and community organizations. By creating a supportive and inclusive school environment where students feel safe, valued, and connected, schools can work towards mitigating the risk of weapons-related incidents and promoting the overall well-being of students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. **Perceived Safety vs. Reality:** Despite a majority of students reporting feeling safe at school most of the time, a significant number are aware of other students carrying weapons. This suggests a discrepancy between perceived safety and the reality of weapons in the school environment.
2. **Weapons-Related Incidents:** A notable proportion of students have witnessed or heard about other students carrying weapons at least once or twice a year, indicating that weapons-related incidents are not isolated occurrences but rather a persistent issue.
3. **Risk Factors:** Various risk factors contribute to students feeling pressured or considering carrying weapons, including trouble or conflicts at school, academic challenges, problems at home, aggressive behavior, and feeling disconnected from school.
4. **Underlying Issues:** The desire to protect oneself or others emerges as a significant reason behind students feeling pressured or considering carrying weapons. This highlights underlying feelings of insecurity or vulnerability among students.
5. **Demographic Differences:** There are no significant demographic differences in potential risk factors contributing to weapon possession based on grade level, age, or sex. This suggests that the risk factors are consistent across different demographic groups.

Recommendation

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations can be made for various stakeholders:

For Students

1. **Safety Awareness Programs:** Students should participate in safety awareness programs that educate them about the risks and consequences of carrying weapons at school. These programs can also teach conflict resolution skills and provide resources for

seeking help if they feel unsafe.

2. **Peer Support Networks:** Encourage the development of peer support networks where students can discuss their concerns about safety and seek advice from trusted peers. Peer support can play a crucial role in helping students navigate challenging situations without resorting to violence.
3. **Access to Mental Health Services:** Schools should ensure that students have access to mental health services, including counselling and support groups, to address underlying issues such as trauma, stress, or anxiety that may contribute to feelings of insecurity or vulnerability.

For Teachers

1. **Training on Conflict Resolution:** Provide teachers with training on conflict resolution techniques and strategies to help them effectively manage conflicts among students and create a peaceful learning environment.
2. **Building Positive Relationships:** Teachers should focus on building positive relationships with students to create a supportive and trusting classroom atmosphere. Positive teacher-student relationships can help students feel safer and more connected to their school community.
3. **Identifying At-Risk Students:** Teachers should be trained to identify signs of students who may be at risk of carrying weapons, such as behavioral changes or social withdrawal, and provide appropriate support and intervention.

For School Administration

1. **Enhance Security Measures:** Implement and enforce stricter security measures, such as metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and security personnel, to deter weapons from entering the school premises.
2. **Implement Comprehensive Safety Policies:** Develop and implement comprehensive safety policies that address various aspects of school safety, including conflict resolution, bullying prevention, and crisis response protocols.
3. **Promote Positive School Climate:** Foster a positive school climate where students feel valued, respected, and supported. This can be achieved through initiatives such as peer mentoring programs, school-wide assemblies promoting positive behavior, and recognition of student achievements.

For Curriculum Planners

1. **Integrate Safety Education:** Integrate safety education into the school curriculum, including topics such as conflict resolution, anger management, and bystander intervention. This will equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to navigate challenging situations peacefully.
2. **Diverse Perspectives:** Ensure that curriculum materials reflect diverse perspectives and experiences to promote empathy, understanding, and respect for others. This can help reduce prejudice and conflict within the school community.
3. **Incorporate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** Incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) programs into the curriculum to help students develop essential life skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-

making.

For Future Researchers

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to track students' perceptions of safety and experiences with weapons over time. This will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions and changes in safety trends.
2. **Qualitative Research:** Conduct qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying factors contributing to students' feelings of insecurity and vulnerability, as well as their experiences with weapons.
3. **Comparative Studies:** Compare school safety policies and practices across different schools and districts to identify best practices and areas for improvement in preventing weapons-related incidents.

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