

Exploring High-Risk Causal Factors for School Shootings in the United States: A Case Study of Student- Perpetrated School Attacks

استكشاف عوامل العنف المدرسي المسلح في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. دراسة حالة

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Abstract:

School shootings in the United States are viewed as a serious social issue with multiple individual, relationship, and societal factors. In this paper, we are going to explore this phenomenon and attempt to understand the causes through a descriptive historical stratification. Seventy-one school shootings have been selected, and three main causal factors have played a major role in motivating these attacks. The availability of guns, bullying, and psychological problems were found to be the direct causal factors shared by the majority of the studied cases.

Keywords: access to guns; bullying; psychological problems; risk factors; school attacks.

ملخص :

يعد العنف المدرسي المسلح في الولايات المتحدة ظاهرة حساسة لا بد من الوقوف عليها وتحديد أسبابها وبالتالي معالجتها، لما يترتب عنها من إصابات جسدية وأخرى نفسية قد تؤدي إلى الهلاك في غالب الأحيان، ويبدو أن المشكلة معقدة تتضمن عوامل فردية واجتماعية مختلفة. وعليه عملت هذه الورقة البحثية من خلال التدرج التاريخي على إبراز أهم العوامل والأسباب التي تدفع المتمدرس على ممارسة مثل هذه الأعمال الشنيعة داخل مؤسساته التعليمية. وبعد دراسة 71 حالة من الهجمات المدرسية دراسة وصفية، تبين أن ثلاثة عوامل مباشرة ألا وهي: توفر السلاح، التنمر والمشاكل النفسية لعبت دورًا رئيسيًا في التحفيز على معظم الهجمات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: توفر السلاح؛ التنمر؛ المشاكل النفسية؛ العوامل الرئيسية؛ الهجوم المدرسي.

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Introduction

The issue of school attacks in the United States has deep historical roots, dating back to the 1920s, with a significant increase observed since the 1970s. Despite extensive research, this problem continues to persist, manifesting itself in incidents of school shootings that occur to this day. School shootings, as a form of armed violence, are characterized by multifaceted and interconnected causes.

This descriptive study aims to gain insights into this phenomenon through historical stratification. It seeks to identify the primary reasons that prompted seventy-one school shooters. These cases occurred on American soil between 1970 and 2010 and were selected based on specific criteria, which will be detailed in the methodology section.

The focus of the study is on identifying the common motives shared by the majority of these cases, referred to as “direct causal factors”. The analysis reveals that three principal causal factors played a significant role in motivating these attacks. However, it is essential to note that the findings do not imply that only three reasons contribute to school shootings. Other factors, including family problems, exposure to violent media, and the influence of American violent culture, were also identified. These, while important, were less commonly shared among the cases examined and were categorized as “indirect causal factors”.

In this paper, the direct causal factors are prioritized, as they appeared to be pivotal in motivating a significant number of the studied attacks.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Definition and Typology of School Shootings

School shootings are a type of armed assault that, according to Newman (2005, p. 50), “take place on a school-related public stage before an audience; involve multiple victims, some of whom are shot simply for their symbolic significance or at random; and involve one or more shooters,” who are not systematically schooled in the assaulted school.

Glenn W. Muschert, an Associate Professor of Sociology at Miami University, has classified school shootings into five categories: targeted shootings, government shootings, terroristic shootings, mass shootings, and rampage school shootings. According to Muschert, each category has a

particular type of perpetrator motivated by specific motives. He also pointed out that all types of school shootings share a common criterion: “they must occur at school or during a school-sponsored activity” (Mongan, 2013, p. 2).

1.2. Problem Background

School attacks have often been perceived as an American problem because most of the infamous instances of school attacks have occurred in the United States. Additionally, while countries such as Germany, Finland, and France have also experienced some cases of gunfire on school grounds, the problem remains predominantly American due to the recurring occurrence of this kind of lethal violence on U.S. soil. Indeed, this phenomenon traces its origins several decades ago and saw an unprecedented outburst during the 1990s. However, before delving deeper, a brief historical background of school shootings will be traced to visualize the evolution of this complex phenomenon.

Deadly school violence in the United States dates back to 1927 when Andrew Kehoe blew up an elementary school in Bath, Michigan, killing forty-five, mostly children, and injuring fifty-eight others. His loss in the election for Bath Township Clerk and the foreclosure notice were cited as the main motives behind Kehoe's decision to carry out the attack. Kehoe's school attack is considered the bloodiest act of school mass murder in U.S. history (Plaza, 2015, p. 306).

In 1966, Charles Whitman, a former student at the University of Texas and a former Marine, carried out a shooting spree on the university's campus, killing sixteen people and wounding thirty-two others. The attack was the second deadliest school massacre in U.S. history and the bloodiest school shooting committed by a former student. Whitman's history of family abuse, life failures, and a brain tumor were reported as the reasons behind his deadly act (Texas Governor's Committee, 1966, p. 11).

In 1976, Edward Charles Allaway, a custodian at the library of California State University, fatally shot seven people and injured five others. Multiple mental health experts diagnosed him with “paranoid schizophrenia”, a long-lasting mental illness in which a person loses touch with reality. Edward was found guilty of first-degree murder, but the trial ruled that he was insane. As a result, he was transferred to a mental health facility (Lindsey, 1976).

In 1985, James Allan Kearby, a 14-year-old student at Goddard High Junior School in Kansas, murdered the principal and wounded two teachers and a

student. Kearby was charged with first-degree murder. Investigators did not declare clear motives, but a teacher stated that “the youth was a loner with a quick temper who was fascinated by weapons” (The New York Times, 1985).

These instances of school attacks demonstrate that the issue of school attacks is not a recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, the term “school shootings” is reported to have become common during the 1990s (Langman, 2010, p.3). During this period, juveniles began targeting their own educational institutions, and researchers observed a clear increase in youth violence overall. Consequently, parents, school officials, and researchers became increasingly interested in this phenomenon, and they began speculating about the underlying reasons behind these seemingly inexplicable acts.

Indeed, different comparative studies have been conducted to decipher this complex matter, and diverse causes have been pinpointed. For sociologists, social exclusion is the key element for violence in general. In a meta-analysis of thirty-four surveys, it has been argued that: “Poverty and income inequality, educational attainment, mobility of the population, ethnic composition, population density, and high proportions of female-headed households are correlated with area crime rates” (Gottfredson, 2001, p. 69).

In addition to socio-economic-related problems, the violent history of the South is also believed to have influenced modern southern men. This conclusion stemmed from an experiment led by social psychologists Richard Nisbett and Dov Cohen who concluded that the agonizing history of the South has had a profound impact on the character of southerners, leading them to often respond brutally to problem-solving and the pursuit of social status (Newman, 2005, p67-68).

On the other hand, individual traits have also been identified as significant risk factors for delinquency. Among the behavioral characteristics that may predict antisocial behaviors, we can list: hostility, hyperactivity, concentration problems, impulsivity, low verbal IQ, delayed language development, and poor academic performance (Shader, 2001, p6).

Furthermore, some researchers argue that violent video games and movies are significant contributing factors to lethal school violence. Professor Henry Jenkins, an American media scholar, attributed the causes of the infamous Columbine High massacre in 1999 to rock music and violent video games. Jenkins explained that adolescents' personalities are shaped by the media they

are exposed to because they directly absorb and replicate what they see in their daily lives (Heins, 2001, p1).

As we can see, the causes behind school shootings are multifaceted. Therefore, the question that requires exploration is whether there were any common, recurring, and high-risk motives shared by the majority of these attacks.

To effectively address this inquiry, a historical stratification has been conducted to better understand, identify, and categorize the motives that compelled these children and adolescents to violently target their educational institutions.

2. Study Methodology

2.1. Research Questions and Objectives

The current comprehensive description will place particular emphasis on two categories of school shootings: "targeted school shootings" and "rampage school shootings." In other words, the study will focus on incidents where students from a specific educational institution carried out shootings with a specific target in mind. Additionally, it will examine situations where individuals, who were current or former students of the targeted school, carried out rampages with more arbitrary or general objectives.

Seventy-one cases of school shootings were chosen based on several standardized parameters for the study. Firstly, all selected cases occurred in the United States between 1970 and 2010. Secondly, the perpetrators of these attacks were current or former students of the targeted educational institution. Incidents involving strangers or school staff members were not included. Thirdly, the studied shootings resulted in at least one fatality, meaning the shooter either killed one person or missed the target and committed suicide. Accidental school attacks were not part of the study. Finally, the selected attacks occurred either on school grounds or during school-sponsored events. Shootings that happened on buses or outside school premises were excluded.

The primary objective of this study is to address the following questions, among others: Who were the individuals responsible for these shootings? What were the motivations that drove them to attack their own educational institutions? Additionally, the study aims to explore whether there were any common personality traits or shared causal factors among the perpetrators.

2.2. Analytical Tools

The seventy-one chosen cases underwent a thorough and detailed examination, and the available data were meticulously analyzed to accurately categorize them. To stratify the cases and identify both commonalities and distinctions among them, a variety of sources were utilized, including digital archives, historical newspapers, news broadcasts, police reports, research articles, and review articles.

The shootings were divided into the following categories: the shooter's name, gender, and age; the date and location of the shooting; the type of school; the number of victims; the motives behind the attacks; the source of firearms; the nature of the shooting (whether it was targeted or random); and descriptions of the shooter provided by fellow students. (For further details, please refer to Appendices 1, 2, and 3.)

3. Discussion and Analysis of Results

Following an extensive analysis of the chosen cases, a number of key findings have been identified. Perhaps the most remarkable discovery is the significant overrepresentation of male students as the culprits. Out of the seventy-one school shootings, only four were carried out by females, which can be explained by the fact that school violence appears to be a type of violence that attracts more males than females.

Furthermore, high schools emerged as the most frequently targeted educational institutions, with forty-six shootings. Universities witnessed thirteen shootings, secondary schools experienced nine attacks, and elementary schools were the setting for three attacks. In essence, school shootings tend to involve adolescent male students who are often characterized by immaturity, vulnerability, and impulsiveness.

It has also been observed that the majority of American states (thirty-one) experienced at least one school attack in thirty years. However, while some of them witnessed multiple school attacks, others experienced only one or a couple of school shootings. An exception was California, which surpassed all other states with six school shootings during the same period. This can be attributed to the fact that throughout the 1980s and 1990s, California had the highest gun mortality rate among American states (Miles, 2012).

The study also revealed that the motives behind school shootings varied to some extent. However, certain motives appeared to play a critical role in

motivating most of the attackers. In fact, the current research established a direct link between school shootings and the following three causal factors: the availability of guns, bullying, and psychological problems. Therefore, these causes will be closely scrutinized, as they seemed to be the predominant motives that triggered a significant number of the cases under study.

3.1. Access to Guns

The phenomenon of school shootings would not exist without guns. In other words, all the shooters attacked their schools with firearms, and none of them canceled their attacks due to an inability to obtain a gun. Moreover, the results revealed that the majority of the attackers had easy access to guns. Available data showed that at least twenty-nine shooters obtained the gun from their own homes or the residences of their relatives. Twenty-two attackers purchased firearms legally, while ten shooters acquired the guns through illegal means, such as theft or obtaining them from a friend or stranger. Unfortunately, for the remaining ten shooters, accessible data do not provide information about the source of the gun.

Several American organizations acknowledge and believe that the availability of guns poses a significant problem in their country. As a result, they advocate for and emphasize the necessity of implementing stricter gun control measures to save lives. Among the gun control activists, notable organizations include Everytown for Gun Safety, Stop Handgun Violence, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, National Gun Victims Action Council, Million Mom March, and the Brady Campaign.

The Brady Campaign, for instance, acknowledges that: “Gun violence is a disease, and guns and bullets are the pathogens” (Brady Campaign, 2018). This declaration underscores the organization's deep concern regarding the imminent threat of gun violence. It compares the problem to a disease that can affect anyone but can also be cured if we address its principal cause, which is the availability of firearms.

In an ideal world, the prohibition of private gun ownership would be a solution to eliminate gun violence. However, this assumption remains an unrealistic remedy due to the constitutional guarantee of the right to bear arms in the United States protected by the Second Amendment (National Archives and Records Administration, 1789), (*District of Columbia v. Heller*, 2008), (Doherty, 2008, p. xvi).

In addition to the easy obtainability of firearms, our study revealed that bullying was another significant risk factor that motivated many school shooters to carry out their violent plans.

3.2. Bullying

Premeditated and recurring acts of school harassment have long been recognized as a significant issue in American schools. Glenn Stutzky, a school violence specialist at Michigan State University, emphasized the direct link between bullying and lethal school violence. He warned:

Bullying is probably the most frequently occurring form of violence in American schools today, and it's really the engine that's driving the majority of violence. It's a huge problem...We have allowed a culture of abuse to thrive unchecked in our nation's schools, and we are paying for it with the bodies of our children. (Garrett, 2003, p. 61)

Available data showed that at least twenty-one school shooters were victims of moderate or serious acts of bullying, which left them frustrated enough to commit murderous acts. Individuals like Nathan Ferris, Asa Coon, and Scott Pennington endured severe and frequent bullying in school. For instance, Nathan Ferris, the perpetrator of the Townville Elementary School shooting in 1987, had been subjected to recurrent intimidation from a young age due to his weight. When Nathan reached a breaking point, he decided to end the unbearable situation through lethal means. Consequently, he brought a concealed gun to school, killed his bully, and ended his own life as well (Crews, 2016, p. 8).

Asa Coon, the student who opened fire at the Success Tech Academy in 2007, was regularly dressed in gothic clothes and, as a result, became the target of repeated acts of bullying. Coon carried out a random attack at his school, injuring four individuals, before taking his own life (Maag, 2007).

Another victim of bullying was Scott Pennington, the perpetrator of the East Carter High School shooting in 1993. Pennington had been continuously subjected to bullying from a young age due to his 'thick glasses, odd haircuts, and stuttering' (Langman, 2016). Scott committed a random school attack, took a classroom hostage for forty minutes, and fatally shot a staff member (Lebrun, 2011, p. 173).

Other shooters, such as Michael Carneal (the perpetrator of the Heath High School shooting in 1997) and Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (the attackers of the infamous Columbine High massacre in 1999), also had experiences related to feelings of rejection. However, some studies have reported that these attackers were not genuine victims of bullying, but rather used it as a rationalization to explain the inexplicable.

For instance, Michael Carneal justified his actions by stating that he could no longer endure the intimidation he faced from his peers. He wrote: “I knew I would go to prison, but in my mind, I was leaving everything behind. I perceived my life as miserable. Nobody loved me, and nobody cared” (Beane, 2008, p. 195).

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold expressed the same feelings of loneliness and abandonment. In a suicide note, Eric declared: “Your children who have ridiculed me, who have chosen not to accept me, who have treated me like I am not worth their time are dead” (Veash, 1999). Dylan Klebold conveyed a similar sensation with the following words: “Oooh god, I want to die sooo bad... such a sad, desolate, lonely, unsalvageable feeling. I am not fair, NOT FAIR!!! Let's sum up my life as the most miserable existence in the history of time.” (Langman, 2014, p5).

According to Peter Langman, an influential American expert in the field of psychology and school shootings, many school shooters who had feelings of rejection or experienced real acts of bullying were not entirely blameless victims. Langman argued: “Some of them triggered their own harassment by behaving in provocative or antagonistic ways. They displayed arrogance, obnoxiousness, or insulted others. When other kids told them to 'knock it off' or responded with insults, they ended up feeling like victims.” (Langman, 2010, p. 13).

Dr. Langman demonstrated how individuals like Michael Carneal, Eric Harris, and Dylan Klebold, through their bothersome and provocative behaviors, often led their classmates to mistreat them and even avoid them. For instance, Eric and Dylan frequently shouted “Heil Hitler!” during their bowling classes, and Dylan's misbehavior extended to interactions with his teachers, where he would “throw things across the classroom and slam the door”. Eric, too, had a volatile temper, frequently expressing his inner wrath through actions such as “punching walls” and starting fights (Langman, 2010, p. 94-95).

Indeed, school bullying is considered a serious problem in American schools, as frequent acts of bullying can shatter students' self-esteem and, in some cases, lead them to react violently towards their bullies. As mentioned earlier, while some of the shooters appeared to use bullying as a rationalization for their violent acts, others were genuine victims of consistent acts of intimidation. Regardless of whether the shooters were victims of bullying or not, the issue of school bullying should be addressed decisively because its consequences are, in most cases, devastating.

In addition to school harassment, psychological problems have also been identified as a significant factor in the analyzed cases. Psychological issues appeared to be directly linked to numerous school attacks, making it the third direct causal factor that requires discussion.

3.3. Psychological Problems

Based on our study, it has been observed that psychological problems were the motivating factor for at least twenty-five school shooters. These perpetrators suffered from various psychological issues, with twenty of them ultimately committing suicide after the shooting. Additionally, there were some attackers who were initially suicidal and planned to take their own lives during the attack. However, due to certain circumstances or a lack of courage, they did not follow through with their initial plan. One example is Anthony Barbaro, a 17-year-old student who targeted unknown individuals from the windows of his high school in New York in 1974. He killed three innocent people and injured eleven others.

In a suicide letter that Barbaro left, he explained his motive by stating that his aim was simply to end his own life. In his own words, he confessed: “I guess I just wanted to kill the person I hate most, myself, I just did not have the courage. I wanted to die, but I could not do it...” Once in jail, Barbaro committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell (Fessenden, 2000).

Similarly, Scott Pennington, the perpetrator of the East Carter High School shooting in 1993, stated that his murderous attack was a form of self-punishment. Pennington aimed to kill at least two individuals to be 'eligible for the death penalty' (Buckley, 1993).

Other shooters, such as Thomas Kakonis, the student who attacked Ferris State College in 1980 (The Harvard Crimson, 1980), and John Christian, the student who targeted his English teacher in 1978 (Levy, 2002), were both placed

in a mental institution after their attacks because they were deemed to be insane at the time of the shooting.

In his book “Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters” (2009), the American psychologist Peter Langman examined the psychological profiles of several school shooters and classified them into three main categories: psychopaths, psychotics, and schizophrenics.

Notably, according to Langman, many school shooters suffered from at least one of these psychological disorders (Langman, 2009, p. 21). Furthermore, numerous were both homicidal and/or suicidal, and several were taking antidepressant medications during or before their violent incidents. Some experts, however, have emphasized the dangerous side effects of these medications.

Dr. Peter Breggin, an American psychiatrist, has raised alarm about antidepressant drugs, which are intended to calm aggressive children but may be making them more violent. Instead of helping children, these medications may be harming them. Breggin has argued that these medications have numerous dangerous side effects that can adversely affect those who take them or attempt to withdraw from them (Breggin, 2014), (Unruh, 2007).

Mike Adams, an American natural health researcher, has also asserted that antidepressants are the primary reason for school shootings. In his view, psychiatrists who prescribe these drugs to their patients are poisoning them and potentially pushing them to commit violent acts. Adams goes a step further, accusing these psychiatrists of conspiring with the pharmaceutical industry to maximize their profits. According to Adams, the issue of gun violence in the United States is closely linked to psychiatric medications, and he believes that the problem will not be resolved by banning guns but by prohibiting these types of drugs (Adams, 2009).

In fact, our study revealed that several school shooters were taking psychiatric medications at the time of their attacks. For example, Kip Kinkel, the adolescent who killed his parents and carried out an attack on his school in 1998, was reported to have been taking Prozac for depression a few months before the shooting. Eric Harris, one of the attackers at Columbine High, was on the antidepressant Luvox at the time of the massacre. Jeffrey Weise, the perpetrator of the Red Lake killing spree in 2005, was prescribed the antidepressant Prozac. Additionally, Steven Kazmierczak, the perpetrator of the Northern Illinois

Shooting in 2008, was prescribed an anti-anxiety drug called Xanax, a sleep aid named Ambien, and Prozac as well (Langman, 2010, p. 6), (Boudreau, 2008).

In 2004, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recognized the need to alert the public about the dangerous side effects of antidepressants. Consequently, it instructed the pharmaceutical industry to include warnings about the risk of suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts in children taking antidepressants. In June 2005, the FDA expanded this warning to include all young adults under the age of twenty-five (Levin, 2018).

To sum up, mental disorders and antidepressants proved to be directly linked with numerous school attacks. This category of students who suffer from psychological instabilities represents a real threat against themselves, their families and their classmates. Consequently, they should be closely and regularly supervised, and there should be a constant collaboration among parents, medical professionals, and school staff.

Conclusion

Reasons behind school attacks are multifaceted, yet three main causal factors have been highlighted in this paper: easy access to guns, bullying, and psychological problems. These factors were found to play a significant role in motivating most of the studied cases. Accordingly, the problem of school shootings could be mitigated if these three high-risk causal factors were seriously addressed. Therefore, stricter gun control regulations, stricter measures against bullying and closer supervision of mentally unstable students seem to be ideal solution.

Nevertheless, for complex social problems, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Numerous American states and several associations have struggled for years to protect their schools from these violent acts, but their efforts have often been insufficient and very challenging. Private ownership of guns will likely never be prohibited due to the constitutional protection of citizens' right to bear arms. Bullying will likely persist, in part, due to elements of American culture that sometimes glorify violence through movies and video games. Additionally, psychological problems may never be fully eliminated given the challenges of addressing their underlying causes.

Consequently, students will continue to experience acts of bullying and suffer from various mental disorders, yet an attack will never take place without firearms. Hence, it is likely that schools will unfortunately continue to face

incidents of school shootings unless sweeping political decisions are made to target the key instrument that has triggered the problem from the beginning; that is, ‘the firearm’.

Recommendations:

This research topic requires thorough follow-up. I strongly encourage interested researchers to delve deeper into the issue and conduct comprehensive studies on additional cases of school attacks especially those occurring in different periods of time to assess and emphasize the obtained results. Examining a wider range of incidents will not only improve our understanding of the factors that contribute to such events, but will also provide valuable insights into potential preventive measures and interventions.

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SARRADJ Siham «Exploring High-Risk Causal Factors for School Shootings in the United States: A Case Study of Student- Perpetrated School Attacks»

• Appendices:

Appendix I School shootings that occurred in the United States from 1970 to 1990.

Shooter (s)	Sex	Location (the city + the type of the institution)	Level of Education	Year	Age	Number of victims	Suicide (YES/NO)	Motive	Source of guns	Targeted (T) or ordon (R) Shooting?	Descriptions Bright/ weak/ lonely/ friendly
1)Robert Cantor	M	Pennsylvania	University	1970	33	1 injured teacher + 1 dead teacher +himself	Y	Distressed over his doctoral thesis	His own.	T	Bright+ Quiet
2)Steven Guy	M	Illinois	Elementary school	1974	14	1 dead principal+ 1 injured	N	Expelled from school	His father.	T	Not Available
3)Anthony Barbaro	M	New York	High School	1974	17	3 dead+ 11 injured	Y	No apparent motive	Not Available	R	Bright + Quiet
4)James Briggs	M	Oklahoma	High School	1975	15	1 pupil dead + 5 injured	N	Racial disturbance dispute	N. A	T	N.A
5)Ricardo Lopez	M	Texas	High School	1977	17	1 dead principal	N	No apparent motive	N.A	R	Good Lonely
6)Roger Needham	M	Michigan	High School	1978	15	1 dead schoolmate + 1 injured	N	Being taunted	His father	T	Bright Loner Fascinated by Nazi
7)John Daniel Christian	M	Texas	High School	1978	13	1 dead teacher	N	schizophrenic	His father	R	Very Bright
8)Robin Robinson	M	Alabama	High School	1978	13	1 dead principal	N	Was paddled by the principal	Brought it from his home.	T	N.A
9)Evan Hampton	M	Arkansas	High School	1980	16	1 dead student	N	Being bullied	Brought it from his home.	T	(typical student) No prior disciplinary problems
10)Thomas Kakonis	M	Michigan	University	1980	20	1 dead teacher	N	Failed an exam	Probably his own	T	N.A
11)Rudy Farmer	M	Alabama	High School	1980	17	1 injured + killed himself	Y	Unknown	N.A	R	N.A
12)Leo E. Kelly	M	Michigan	University	1981	22	2 dead students	N	Falling grades	Probably his own	R	N.A
13)Jason Price Rocha	M	Colorado	High School	1982	14	1 dead student	N	N.A	His grandfather	R	N.A
14)James Hartzog	M	Mississippi	High School	1982	18	1dead student + himself	Y	Lovers' quarrels	N.A	T	Dropped out school
15)Patrick Lizotte	M	Nevada	High School	1982	17	1 dead teacher + 2 injured	N	Being bullied + angered at the teacher	His father	T	Very lonely "aloot"
16)David F. Lawler	M	Missouri	Secondary	1983	14	1dead student + himself	Y	Dispute over a pen	His family	T	Bright
17)Todd Dunahoo	M	Iowa	High School	1984	17	1 dead student + himself	Y	Lovers' quarrels	His own	T	Friendly
18)James Alan Kearbey	M	Kansas	High School	1985	14	1 principal killed + 3 wounded	N	Bullied	His father	T	Loner Got angry easily
19)Heather Smith	F	Washington	High School	1985	14	2 dead students + herself	Y	Lovers' quarrels	Her family	T	Bright
20)Floyd Warnsley	M	Connecticut	High School	1985	13	1 killed janitor + 1injured	N	Being suspended	His father	T	Troublesome student
21)Ritchie Overman	M	Missouri	High School	1986	16	1 dead	N	Dispute	His friend	T	Good
22)Kristopher Hans	M	Montana	High School	1986	14	1 dead + 3 injured	N	Falling grades	N.A	T	N.A
23)Fawaz Abdin	M	California	University	1987	25	1 dead teacher	Y	Falling grades	Probably his own	T	Graduate student moody introverted
24)Nathan Faris	M	Missouri	High School	1987	12	1 dead classmate	Y	Being bullied	His father	T	Bright
25)Jason Harless and Jason McCoy	M	Florida	High School	1988	15/ 15	1 dead + 2 injured	N	1 being suspended	Stole them from their neighbors	R	Typical normal students
26)Nicholas Elliot	M	Virginia	Secondary Private school	1988	16	1 killed + 1 injured	N	Being bullied or racial dispute	Bought it illegally	R	Shy, depressed, with below average intelligence

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SARRADJ Siham «Exploring High-Risk Causal Factors for School Shootings in the United States: A Case Study of Student- Perpetrated School Attacks»

Appendix II School shootings that occurred in the United States from 1990 to 1999.

Shooter	Sex	Location	Level of Education	Year	Age	Number of victims	Suicide (Yes/No)	Motives	Source of guns	Targeted or random shooting?	Description
27)Lakeeta Cadoree	F	Texas	High School	1991	15	1 dead student	N	He had called her names	Borrowed from a friend	T	Bright
28)Gang Lu	M	Iowa	University	1991	28	4 deaths + 1 injured	Y	Didn't get an academic award for his PhD	His own	T	Very good
29)Khalil Sumpter	M	New York	High school	1992	15	2 deaths	N	Dispute	His friend	T	N.A
30)Eric Houston	M	California	High School	1992	20	4 deaths + 10 injured	N	Failed in the teacher's class	His own	T	N.A
31)Wayne Lo	M	Massachusetts	University	1992	18	2 deaths + 4 injured	N	Psychological problems	His own	R	Average, racist
32)Scott Pennington	M	Kentucky	High School	1993	17	1 dead 1 injured	N	Psychological problems (wanted to kill 2 to become eligible for death penalty)	His father	R	Bright
33)Robert Heard	M	California	High School	1993	15	1 dead	N	Thought the victim was involved in the death of his cousin	Bought it from a stranger	T	Above average, troublesome
34)Leonard D.McDowell	M	Wisconsin	High School	1993	21	1 dead	N	Psychological problems	His own	R	Troublesome student
35)Jason Smith	M	Pennsylvania	High School	1993	15	1 dead	N	Bullied	His father in law	T	quiet
36) Floyd Eugene Brown	M	South Carolina	High School	1994	18	1 dead	N	Dispute, self defense	Probably his own	T	N.A
37)Darrell Cloud	M	Washington	Secondary	1994	24	1 dead	N	Sexual abuse	His own	T	Good student
38)Jason Osmanson	M	Montana	Elementary	1994	10	1 dead	N	Bullied because his parents had AIDS	N.A	T but missed his target)	N.A
39)Keith A. Ledger	M	Ohio	Secondary	1994	37	1 dead +2 injured	N	Mentally ill (was drinking at the moment of the shooting)	His own	R	N.A
40)Keith E. Johnson	M	Florida	Secondary	1995	14	1 dead	N	Disputes+ probably Bullied	Stole it from his neighbors	T	"mad at the world"
41)Toby Sincino	M	South Carolina	High School	1995	16	2 dead + 1 injured	Y	Bullied and suspended	Stole it	R	Troublesome, out of control
42)Jamie Rouse	M	Tennessee	High School	1995	17	2 dead + 1 injured	N	Poor grades + schizophrenic	Probably his own	R	Troublesome, fascinated by violence (music, films...)
43)Barry Loukaitis	M	Washington	Secondary	1996	14	3 deaths + 1 injured	N	Depression, bullied + family problems	His father	T (one teacher)	Pathetic, easily influenced
44)Frederick Martin Davidson	M	California	University	1996	36	3 dead teachers	N	Psychological problems	His own	T	Felt he was being exploited
45)Evan Ramsey	M	Alaska	High School	1997	16	2 deaths + 2 injured	N	Bullied + family abuse+ psychological problems	Foster mother's son	T	Not very smart
46)Luke Woodham	M	Mississippi	High School	1997	16	3 dead+ 7 injured+ his mother	N	Lover's quarrels + involved in Satanism	His own	T	Obsessive

47)Michael Carneal	M	Kentucky	High School	1997	14	3 dead+ 5 injured	N	Bullied (called him gay) + psychological problems	His father	R	Bright, Funny
48)Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson	M	Arkansas	Secondary	1998	11/14	5 dead+ 10 injured	N	Andrew(prior history of violence) Mitchell (sexual abuse + girl rejection+ bullying)	Stolen from Andrew's grand father	R	Bullies, Andrew more troublesome
49)Andrew Jerome Wurst	M	Pennsylvania	Secondary	1998	14	1 dead teacher+ 2 injured	N	Psychological problems+ being rejected by girls	His father	R	Said odd things like I am God, Satan...
50)Jacob Lee Davis	M	Tennessee	High School	1998	18	1 dead student	N	Dispute over a girl	Brought it from his home	T	Bright, Top 20
51)Kip Kinkel	M	Oregon	High School	1998	15	His parents + 2dead students	N	Expelled, Schizophrenic	His home	R	Immature, dyslexic, strange
52)Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold	M	Colorado	High School	1999	18/ 17	13 deaths + 24 injured	Y	Bullying, psychological problems	Their friend	R	Eric was a good student/ Dylan disrespectful

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Appendix III School shootings that occurred in the United States from 2000 to 2010.

Shooter	Sex	Location	Level of Education	Year	Age	Number of victims	Suicide (Yes/No)	Motive	Source of guns	Targeted or Random shooting?	Description
53)Dedrick Owens	M	Michigan	Elementary	2000	6	1 dead student	N	Dispute+ violent parents	His uncle	T	Violent
54)Nathaniel Brazill	M	Florida	Secondary	2000	13	1 dead teacher	N	Being suspended, traumatized	His grand father	T	Honor student, likeable
55)James Easton Kelly	M	Arkansas	University	2000	36	1 dead (faculty advisor)	Y	Dismissed from his PhD	His own	T	Promising student
56)Charles Andrew Williams	M	California	High School	2001	15	2 deaths + 13 injured	N	Family problems+ bullied + was suicidal	His father	R	Lost, hopeless
57)Peter Odighizuwa	M	Virginia	Private University	2002	42	3 deaths+ 3 injured	N	Was dismissed + falling grades	His own	T	Prone to outbursts
58)Robert Stewart Flores	M	Arizona	University	2002	40	3 deaths	Y	Falling grades	His own	R	Strange, pleasant
59)James Sheets	M	Pennsylvania	High School	2003	14	1 principal killed	Y	Depression	His step father	R	Average, nice with no problems
60)John Jason Mc Laughlin	M	Minnesota	High School	2003	15	2 deaths	N	Bullied, psychological problems	His father	T	Quiet
61)Jeffrey Weise	M	Minnesota	High School	2005	16	7 deaths + 5 injured	Y	Bullied + family problems + depression	His grand father	R	Gentle, Goth
62)Kenneth Bartley	M	Tennessee	High School	2005	15	1 dead+ 2 injured	N	N.A	His father	R	N.A
63)Eric Hainstock	M	Wisconsin	High School	2006	15	1 dead	N	Bullied + family problems+	His father	R	Normal, but troublesome
64)Douglas S. Chanthabouly	M	Washington	High School	2007	18	1 dead	N	Dispute, Psychotic	Probably his own	T	N.A

65)Asa Coon	M	Ohio	High School	2007	14	4 injured+ killed himself	Y	Suspended +psychological problems+ bullied	N.A	R	Gothic, frustrated
66)Seung Hui Cho	M	Virginia	University	2007	23	32 deaths + 17 injured	Y	Depression	His own	R	Loner, very quiet, weird
67)Latina Williams	F	Louisiana	University	2008	23	2 deaths	Y	Paranoid	Her own	R	Funny
68)Brandon McInerney	M	California	High School	2008	14	1 death	N	Teased + dispute 5 (hate crime)	His relatives	T	Popular, athletic, respectful
69)Steven Kazmierczak	M	Illinois	University	2008	27	5 killed + 17 injured	Y	Mental illness	Probably his own	R	Normal with very good academic record,
70)Jamar Siler	M	Tennessee	High School	2008	15	1 death	N	Dispute, instable family life, fetal alcohol syndrome	N.A	T	Bully
71)Teah Wimberly	F	Florida	High School	2008	15	1 death	N	Dispute, difficult family life	N.A	T	Troubled

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