Student Perceptions of Active Shooters on Campus

Barry T. King

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Student Perceptions of Active Shooters on Campus.

A Thesis Presented

By

BARRY T. KING

MAY 2017

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Student Perceptions of Active Shooters on Campus.

A Thesis Presented

By

BARRY T. KING

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies
Bridgewater State University
Bridgewater, Massachusetts

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

In Criminal Justice

MAY 2017
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Della Giustina, Dr. Hartsfield, and Dr. King for their unconditional support and commitment throughout the completion and success of this thesis. This Committee's knowledge, expertise, and remarkable recommendations were undoubtedly linked to the quality of research and completion. These individuals’ encouragement and willingness to assist me with this project, which was immensely prolonged due to life obstacles, further signifies the astounding educational stature of Bridgewater State University. Throughout this journey, it has truly been an honor to have been fortunate enough to be guided by such a notable committee. I am beyond grateful to all of them; for all the hard work and dedication that has gone into this project. Once again, thank you, and this will be an experience that will never be forgotten.

Secondly, I would like to thank my wife for her devotion and willingness to see me succeed with this thesis. Without her alongside of my beautiful children’s love, support, and encouragement, this success may not have happened. I am truly appreciative for everything she has done for me throughout this journey. I am obliged and grateful to say I have an amazing family.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents. I could not have been blessed with better parents and I am truly indebted for everything you have done for me. Without your love and support, I would not have been able to attend college or complete this thesis.
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Introduction

This study examines the level of fear Bridgewater State University students experience about becoming a victim of a violent attack on campus by an active shooter. Since 1996, nearly 60 school shootings have taken place in American schools, resulting in hundreds of deaths. This study examines the impact on students’ fearfulness in the wake of the most recent mass murders happening on college campuses at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University.

Unfortunately, school shootings are not something new. In fact, one of the first recorded school shootings happened as early as 1966, when Billy Ray Prevatte brought a .22 caliber rifle to Maryland Park Junior High and shot three teachers. Two other attacks took place in 1966, one at the University of Texas and the other at Grand Rapids High School in Minnesota (Lieberman & Sachs, 2008). Two of the most recent and devastating school shootings happened at Columbine High School in 1999 and Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012.

Deadly violence on college campuses is not a new phenomenon either. A study jointly conducted by the Secret Service, the Office of Education, and the FBI analyzed 272 incidents of targeted violence on college campuses that occurred between 1900 and 2008. Guns used in 54 percent of the reported cases, and almost 60 percent of fatal violent incidents, were initiated against someone previously known to the assailant (Drysdale, Modzeleski & Simons, 2010). However, given these statistics, the chances of becoming a victim of a random fatal attack by a stranger or unknown person on a college campus have been, and remain, exceptionally small.
The media plays a major role in portraying each of the mass shooting situations as they unfold. Although this is informative to the happenings around the country, it adds to the hysterics of public perception. The media takes advantage of the ‘if it bleeds it leads’ motto, by taking advantage of these tragic events to improve ratings. News outlets also use these stories to distort the public’s fear of crime regardless of the actual crime rate.

Many researchers with statistical data argue that school shootings are not a cause for concern, or at least not as much as the media leads us to believe. Researchers have spent the past 30 years attempting to understand the nature of fear of crime, as well as its causes and consequences (Warr, 2000; Williams et al, 2000). The media has tended to overreact to school shootings, thus resulting in the public overestimating the risk of violence and homicide at schools. The media hysteria also causes great levels of fear to students, parents, faculty, and staff who are left asking whether a shooting could happen at their school. Unquestionably, this perception is linked to the style and pervasiveness of news-media coverage, owing in large part to advances in technology (Heath & Gilbert, 1996).

Violence is considered “school-associated” if such behavior occurs on school grounds, while traveling to or from school, or during school-sponsored events (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). The umbrella of “school” covers everything from elementary school through and including college. The most common forms of school-based violence are predominantly verbal-bullying and sexual harassment (AAUW, 2001). School-associated homicides, despite widespread news coverage, are extremely rare. The probability of a student becoming a homicide victim throughout the course of a school year is approximately one in 1.7 million (Anderson et al., 2001). Furthermore, fewer than one
hundredth of all homicides of 6-to-18 year olds are school associated (Greene, 2005). School-based violence, however, remained a secondary concern in the national zeitgeist until the unprecedented press coverage of the Columbine shootings in April 1999 (Snell, Bailey, Carona, & Mebane, 2002). Thereafter, the mantra “it can happen anywhere” was widely adopted and school administrators rushed to do “something” to avert such a tragedy in their own schools (Greene, 2005).

The United States Government has defined the term “active shooter” as an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008).

Whether an active shooting attack happens at an elementary school, high school or college campus there seem to be several questions that are asked every time an incident happens. School safety and firearms laws are almost always the first two questions to arise and shortly thereafter, the issue of the shooter(s)’ mental state is raised. Media headlines refer to the shooter(s) as a “loner” or “mentally ill” and may compare the shooting to other shootings that have happened previously, possibly labeling the shooter as a “copycat”. The debate whether to allow firearm licensed faculty and staff to carry firearms on school grounds and on college campuses arises. This includes allowing not only firearm licensed faculty and staff to carry firearms, but allowing licensed students to do the same.

This study was an in-person questionnaire about media exposure and levels of fear of crime. The respondents were 170 undergraduate students at Bridgewater State University who were randomly selected by using a random number generator of the
Registrars’ spring 2016 course listings for the semester at Bridgewater State University.

Once the courses were selected, the professors were contacted, and if allowed to do so the questionnaires were administered. Females represented 101 of the respondents and males represented 69 of the respondents. Approximately 80% reported that their media exposure was either daily or weekly, and the remaining 20% reported they were never, rarely or monthly exposed to media. When students were questioned about their levels of fear within certain scenarios or locations, approximately 20% responded no fear at all. Approximately 96% of respondents reported somewhat fearful or no fear at all for all of the questions. However, female respondents reported that they were nearly twice as fearful in comparison to the male respondents.

**Literature Review**

From the mid-1990s to the present, an unprecedented number of school shootings occurred in which students carried deadly weapons to school and opened fire on fellow students and faculty. Since 1996, nearly 60 school shootings have taken place in American schools resulting in hundreds of deaths (Rocque, 2012). However, school shootings are not something new. In fact, one of the first recorded school shootings happened as early as 1966, when Billy Ray Prevatte brought a .22 caliber rifle to Maryland Park Junior High and shot three teachers. Two other attacks took place in 1966, one at the University of Texas and the other at Grand Rapids High School in Minnesota (Lieberman & Sachs, 2008). Two of the most recent and devastating school shootings happened at Columbine High School in 1999 and Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012.
Deadly violence on college campuses is also not a new phenomenon. A study jointly conducted by the Secret Service, the Office of Education, and the FBI (Drysdale, Modzeleski & Simons, 2010) analyzed 272 incidents of targeted violence on college campuses that occurred between 1900 and 2008. Guns were used in 54 percent of the reported cases, and almost 60 percent of fatal violent incidents were initiated against someone previously known to the assailant. However, the chances of being a victim of a random fatal attack by a stranger or unknown person on a college campus have been, and remain, exceptionally small.

Campus safety has always been a top priority at all colleges, but in the wake of two recent mass murders on the campus of Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University, colleges have been prompted to answer the question, “how safe is our campus, and what is being done to make it safer?” Many campuses have armed their security officers as well as their police officers in the wake of these tragedies. Many campuses have expanded their emergency communication systems using multiple notification routes, such as text, e-mail, and phone alerts (Hamblen, 2008). Other initiatives in place or under construction include the use of campus lockdowns, increasing security personnel, student profiling, and allowing students, faculty, and staff to carry concealed firearms on campus (Fox, 2008). Undoubtedly, schools are feeling immense pressure to divert scarce resources from academic needs over to security, with many suggesting that these are knee-jerk safety measures which have become counterproductive. These campus security measures can have the unintended consequence of making students feel like walking targets, thereby intensifying the level
of anxiety. At the same time, obsessive attention to the potential for bloodshed may actually increase the likelihood of a campus copycat (Fox & Savage, 2009).

However, it is important to maintain a perspective on the actual level of risk. Based upon data from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting program and the U.S. Department of Education’s records mandated by the Cleary Act, as well as detailed media reports gathered from searching electronic newspaper databases, 76 homicides were reported on college campuses nationwide between 2001 and 2005. Leaving aside cases involving faculty, staff, or other nonstudents as victims, the count of undergraduates and graduate students murdered at school numbered 51, an average of about 10 per year (Fox & Savage, 2009).

Surveillance cameras and metal detectors are the most widely used electronic approaches to security in schools. Other security-related strategies and policies adopted by schools include the closing of sections of a school building, increased lighting, closed campus policies, electronic-card-entry devices, use of security guards or police officers, locked doors, dress codes, and locker searches (Dwyer & Osher, 2000; G.D. Gottfredson et al., 2000; Small et al., 2001). With all of these new and evolving security measures the faculty at schools are left viewing their students as prospective assailants rather than young minds on a quest for knowledge. This can be more harmful than good in the sense that when students have a trust and sense of closeness to their teachers they will be more likely to notify their teacher if they hear about another student’s plan to harm others. This is particularly important in the light of the finding that peers were fifteen times more likely to be informed in advance of a school attacker’s plans than were adults (Fein et al., 2002). Despite a school’s best efforts to avert violence related crises,
the possibility of such an occurrence needs to be taken seriously. The creation of Crisis Response Teams (CRTs) is essential to minimize injuries and to effectively and efficiently respond to the needs of all key stakeholders during and after a crisis (Fein et al., 2002; Schonfeld & Newgass, 2001).

The consequences of school violence that subvert the academic purposes of schooling include school avoidance, diminished ability to focus on academic pursuits, internalizing psychological problems such as depression and social anxiety, fearfulness among teachers and other school personnel, increased aggression and weapon carrying for purposes of self-defense, and the acceptance of violence as a reasonable form of conflict resolution (Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998; Hawker & Bolton, 2000). High campus crime rates or high-profile mass shootings may discourage prospective students from attending certain universities, and may similarly dissuade parents from paying tuition to send their children to institutions that could be regarded as unsafe (Fisher & Nasar, 1992). Campus crime can also be seen as an issue that destabilizes the core principals of higher education itself, and according to Tseng, Duane, & Hadipriono (2004, p. 23) “criminal activities on campus not only undermine the quality of the learning environment, but also reduce the positive activities of people associated with the campus.”

**Guns and Gun Control**

Due to the nature and severity of these acts of terror, gun control is immediately called into question. Firearm advocates argue that tougher restrictions or total banning of firearms only affect the “law abiding citizen” who does not violate laws and would become defenseless if their firearms were taken away. Firearm support groups such as the
National Rifle Association, want college campuses to lift the ban allowing licensed students, faculty, and staff to lawfully carry firearms on campus. Stating that the presence of firearms on campus would not only deter a possible attack from happening in the first place but also allowing for greater self-defense, and also possibly ending an attack before lives are lost. On the other hand, firearm control advocates argue that tougher gun laws would prevent incidents from happening in the first place. They also argue that allowing firearms on campuses would lead to more negative consequences such as accidental shootings and innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire if an active shooter attack were to happen. In addition, the presence of a firearm in the classroom whether visible or concealed will cause anxiety or fear in students, thus having a negative impact on the learning environment.

The gun culture is as American as apple pie: There may be as many as 300 million civilian guns in the United States, or about one for every person (Winkler, 2011a). The gun-control culture has had a long history dating back to 1881 with the gunfight at OK corral, where the Earps and Doc Holliday tried to enforce an ordinance banning firearms in town. Gun rights advocates argue that easing gun restrictions could enhance both individual and collective security on campus and may deter violence (Birnbaum, 2013). In contrast, the vast majority of college administrators, law enforcement personnel and students maintain that allowing concealed weapons on campus will pose increased risks for students and faculty, will not deter future attacks and will lead to confusion during emergency situations (Birnbaum, 2013). Gun rights advocates such as The National Rifle Association, claim that criminals would be less likely to use guns or commit violent crimes if they had reasons to believe that targeted
citizens, or others around them, might also be armed and able to defend themselves. The alternative of establishing “gun-free” zones does not work, they say: stickers on campus saying “no guns allowed” just announce to criminals and psychopaths the absence of defensive weapons (Birnbaum, 2013). Those who oppose firearms on campuses state that a student or faculty member with a gun would only make things worse. Gun rights advocates stick to the old cliche: “It’s better for a law-abiding licensed gun owner to carry their weapon and not need it, than need it and not carry it.” The right to bear arms is the American people’s second amendment right and you will never be able to take that away, without amending the Constitution, and the Constitution has only been amended 17 times since the first 10 amendments were ratified in 1791. However, something must be done to make firearms less accessible to potential perpetrators, especially those perpetrators in middle and high school who are not old enough to legally purchase a firearm.

**Firearms on Campus**

The vast majority of the 4,300 colleges and universities in the United States have taken the position about concealed handguns on campus that their potential for harm is far greater than their ability to provide personal protection and to serve as effective crime deterents (Armed Campuses, 2011). Nevertheless, Utah was the first state to pass a law allowing concealed handguns on public college campuses in 2004. Since then, many states have revised or proposed revisions to legislation concerning whether firearms should be permitted on campus. Twenty three states leave the decision up to colleges and universities to either allow or ban concealed carry weapons on campuses, while twenty
four states explicitly disallow or ban all firearms (Guns on Campus: Overview, 2010; Oswald 2009). A 2002 study published in the Journal of American College Health states, in according to Miller, M., Hemenway, D., & Wechsler, H. (2002, p. 60) “A study of 119 four-year colleges found that 4% of college students reported having a firearm at college, approximately 700,000 firearms based on the size of the current college population.”

There is, however, circumstantial evidence that the policy of banning firearms on campus has helped limit firearm violence on campus. For example, it has been estimated that there are over 30,000 violent crimes on campuses against students annually (Baum, Klaus, 2005). However, the number of homicides on US college campuses typically numbers less than twenty-five deaths per year. Additionally, the US Department of Education has placed the overall homicide rate on college campuses at .07 per 100,000 persons (US Department of Education, 2011). On the other hand, the homicide rate in the United States for persons ages 17 to 29 is 14.1 per 100,000 persons, which is a rate more than 200 times the college homicide rate (US Department of Justice, 2008). In addition, numerous researchers have found that firearms stored in residences are associated with significantly higher suicide rates (Dahlberg, et al.2004; Grassel, et al. 2003; Weibe, 2003). It is estimated that 24,000 college students attempt suicide each year and that 1,100 of those college students are successful at committing suicide each year in the United States. A large portion of those suicides are impulsive acts (Joffle, 2008; Brady Center, 2007). It is easy to see that when adding the potential firearm into the mix of consuming alcohol and or drugs, high stress, depression, or conflict resolution the outcome could be fatal. Never mind the impending consequences for all college students and faculty if the firearm became “misplaced” or stolen due to the lack of secure places
for firearms to be stored on campus. Arming students would not save lives even in the extremely rare instances where mass shootings occur on campuses. Even trained police officers, on average, hit their intended target less than 20% of the time (Brady Campaign, 2010).

Whether or not the previous statement is 100% accurate in regards to the percentage of police officers being accurate only 20% of the time, it brings up an interesting point to mention. If legislation were passed allowing firearms to be carried on campus by only faculty and staff, these people would have to be trained by the college and university most likely on a yearly basis just as law enforcement professionals are. Also, how many faculty and staff members would actually carry a concealed firearm on campus with them? This could make them a potential target for someone to obtain their firearm. If a student knew that a particular faculty member had a firearm with them and such a student wanted to commit a shooting but could not obtain a firearm at home or elsewhere they now know where they can get a firearm on campus with most likely little effort or resistance. Another point regarding faculty and staff having firearms is how many staff would actually use it if there were a shooter on campus?

A related and testable point in the concealed carry debate is the assumption that lifting bans on the concealed carry of handguns on college campuses would lead to sizable increases in the numbers of handguns being carried. If, however, lifting the ban on carrying concealed handguns on campus does not produce a significant increase in the number of individuals legally carrying guns, there may be no meaningful increase in the likelihood of either deterring or intervening to stop a campus shooter (Bouffard, Nobles, Wells, & Cavanaugh, 2012).
Mental Illness

Research also suggests that mass shootings can increase mental health stigma, reinforce negative stereotypes that people with mental illness are dangerous and violent, and influence public policy, all of which undermine treatment and recovery (Corrigan, 2004; McGinty, Webster, & Barry, 2013; Pescosolido; Monahan, Link, Stueve, & Kikuzawa, 1999). This can be linked to media headlines, which days after a school shooting almost always label the shooter a loner, angry, unstable, schizophrenic, or mentally ill. For instance, the US media diagnosed shooter Adam Lanza with schizophrenia in the days following the tragic school shooting at Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown Connecticut, in December 2012. News reports suggest that up to 60% of perpetrators of mass shootings in the United States since 1970 displayed symptoms including acute paranoia, delusions, and depression before committing their crimes (Follman, 2012; Lankford, 2013). Even the US Supreme court, which in 2008 strongly affirmed a broad right to bear arms, endorsed prohibitions on gun ownership “by felons and the mentally ill” because of their special potential for violence (District of Columbia v. Heller, 2008). The New York Times found that in Connecticut in the aftermath of similar legislation, “there were more than 180 instances of gun confiscations from people who appeared to pose a risk of ‘imminent personal injury to self or others.’ Close to 40% of these cases involved serious mental illness” (Luo, & McIntire, 2013:13). No one wants another tragedy like Newtown or Virginia Tech- on this point all sides of the gun debate agree. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged by persons on all sides of the debate that there is no guarantee that the types of restrictions voted down by the US Senate in 2013,
(firearm purchases through unregulated private sale or gun shows), based largely on background checks, would prevent the next mass crime (Healy, 2013; Frumin, 2013).

Databases that track gun homicides, such as the National Center for Health Statistics, show that fewer than 5% of the 120,000 gun-related killings in the United States between 2001 and 2010 were perpetrated by people diagnosed with mental illness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Nestor (2002) theorizes that serious mental illness such as schizophrenia actually reduces the risk of violence over time, as the illnesses are in many cases marked by social isolation and withdrawal. Brekke et al (2001) illustrate that the risk is exponentially greater that individuals diagnosed with serious mental illness will be assaulted by others, rather than the other way around. Their extensive surveys of police incident reports demonstrate that, far from posing threats to others, people diagnosed with schizophrenia have victimization rates 65% to 130% higher than those of the general public (Brekke et al., 2001).

Nevertheless, concerns that “Virginia Tech could happen here” have brought a renewed and much-needed focus on mental health services. These kinds of resources have been lacking, even though, in sharp contrast to the low risk of random shootings, the risk for suicide and alcohol-related deaths through incidents such as binge drinking continues to be relatively high (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005). The dozen or so students murdered each year pale in comparison with the approximately 1,000 college students who commit suicide each year and the nearly 2,000 who die from alcohol abuse (Hingson et al. 2009). Rather than focusing on these “not my son or daughter” concerns, many parents instead obsess about Virginia Tech-type shootings (Fox & Savage, 2009).
Media

As noted earlier, the media play a major role in portraying mass shootings situations as they unfold. Although news coverage is informative to the happenings around the country, the tone adds to the hysterics of the situation. While the media is taking advantage of the ‘if it bleeds it leads’ motto to improve ratings, it also causes great levels of fear to students, parents, faculty, and staff who are left asking if this could happen at their school. News outlets also use these stories to distort the public’s fear of crime regardless of the actual crime rate. Researchers have spent the past 30 years attempting to understand the nature of fear of crime, as well as its causes and consequences (Warr, 2000; Williams, et al. 2000). The media has tended to overreact to school shootings, resulting in the public overestimating the risk of violence and homicide at schools, arguing that school shootings are not a cause for concern, or at least not as much as the media leads us to believe (Baldassare, Bonner, Petek, & Shrestha, 2013.) Unquestionably, this perception is linked to the style and pervasiveness of news-media coverage, owning in large part to advances in technology (Heath & Gilbert, 1996).

The impact of the media on fear of crime is likely to be magnified in urban areas. Numerous studies demonstrate that residents of inner neighborhoods of larger cities are more likely to fear crime than those who live in smaller towns, rural areas or the suburbs (Fisher, 1981; Finley, 1983; and Krahn, 1984). The vast media coverage given to these urban crime events creates the impression that there is a school shootings “epidemic” that is still ongoing, creating something of a “moral panic”, or a socially constructed crisis that may not reflect reality (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009). The reality that no one wants to hear is that school shootings are extremely rare, though a
school shooting could happen at any school any day at any time. Nevertheless, students should not fear going to school because they feel they may become a victim of such violence.

At the same time, a downside to media overexposure and obsession with records is the possibility that some like-minded and obscure individual will see an opportunity for recognition and perhaps a chance to break a record for bloodshed (Dietz, 1986). As Fox and Burstein (2010) point out, not only are children and adolescents exposed to the idea of getting even for perceived injustices through violence, but they are taught that such violence can earn them celebrity status. Indeed, more than the media coverage itself, the notoriety that popular culture showers upon school shooters teaches our youth-especially alienated and marginalized teenagers- a lesson about how to get attention and how to be in the spotlight (Fox & Burstein, 2010; Larkin, 2007). When TIME magazine placed the two Columbine High School gunmen on its May 3, 1999, cover with the headline “The Monsters Next Door,” most readers saw the “cover boys” as just that-monsters. A few like-minded teenagers would have considered them celebrities who had the courage to get even, to claim a victory for bullying victims everywhere (Paton, 2012). As noted before, one measure of media attention, the Associated Press’s year-end poll of news editors placed mass shootings as the leading news story of 2012 (Associated Press, 2012). Simply by turning on your high-definition television you can watch these tragic events unfold, making it feel as if the event is happening just down the street. Whatever the extent of imitation, it is important that media coverage not obsess over large and especially record-setting body counts and avoid the tendency to sensationalize already
sensational events (Duwe, 2000). The media needs to ensure the critical distinction between shedding light on a crime and a spotlight on the criminal.

Fear of Crime

As noted earlier, researchers have spent the last thirty years attempting to understand the nature of fear of crime, as well as its causes and consequences (Warr 2000; Williams et al. 2000). Certain demographic groups—women, elderly, racial/ethnic minorities, lower income people, and single people—have higher personal fear of crime (e.g., Schafer et al., 2006; Stack, 2000). Previous research has also examined community effects associated with fear of crime, focusing on how neighborhood and community characteristics (e.g., trash in the streets, dilapidated neighborhoods, and lack of social capital) may contribute to fear of crime (McGarrell et al. 1997).

In regards to gender differences, research has consistently found that women are more likely to self-report personal fear of crime than men (Ferro 1995; Reid and Konrad 2004; Schafer et al. 2006). When considering men’s absence of fear of crime, studies have found that men may not report fear of crime because they are socialized to believe that “real” men do not fear crime (e.g., Gilchrist et al. 1998; Goodey 1997).

However, research using a sample from Kentucky demonstrates that women are more likely to use “avoidance” behaviors (e.g., avoid places late at night) while men are more likely to use “defensive” behaviors (e.g., carry a weapon) (May et al. 2010). In previous works, it has been found that living with someone else may significantly affect fear of crime and fear of crime for other people (e.g., Rader 2008; Rader 2010). This
research suggests that married women felt more fear of crime when their spouse was not home (Rader 2008). In turn, qualitative research showed that married men felt more fear for others when they were not at home (Rader 2010). In regards to a study of college students, fear of others may be significant among college students because of the proximity of college students to each other and the influence of other college students' social networks (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987). Also because college students live with a variety of others while in college, fear of crime for others is a likely possibility for college students. An example of this would be that a student is worried about his/her roommates' safety on the walk back to the dorm late at night from basketball practice alone.

Avenues of research grounded in both environmental and spatial cognition, and psychological theories have been used to identify what cues provoke fear of crime and describe how these cues generate fear of crime and limit behavior (Kitchin, 1996; Pain, 2001; Valentine, 1990). However, the research findings on fear provoking cues suggests that there is not one cue that influences fear but rather a constellation of cues that include specific features of the physical environment, the presence of others, and the visibility of others whose duty is to provide surveillance and protection (Warr, 1990, 2000). Several cues include lighting, foliage, groups loitering, and visibility of the police. Visibility of an environment is an important component of individuals being able to see what awaits them. At the core of the concept of lighting is the notion of individuals being able to see potentially threatening or harmful situations, including being able to see a hiding place for a predator (Fisher, 2009).
In a study of perceived safety on a university campus, Kirk (1988) reported that the two factors most often chosen as making the environment appear unsafe were poor lighting and places for attackers to hide. Foliage, such as flowers, grasses, bushes, trees, are widely planted to provide aesthetic beauty to the environment. Consistent with the emphasis in the environmental criminology literature, the growth and density of foliage can also block visual views into spaces and provide hiding places for would be offenders and thus result in heightened crime-related fear (Fisher & Nassar, 1993). In a study by Borooah and Carcach (1997), women were six times more likely to feel unsafe walking alone after dark than were men. Fear of crime is highest for women under 30 years old, then declines steadily after age 45 (Maxfield, 1984a; Ferro, 1995).

Social environments also provide signals that individuals incorporate into their fear assessment (War, 1990). Individuals consider incivilities and visible “signs of crime” as indications that dangerous elements are present and their personal safety might be compromised and threatened, hence resulting in a heightened fear of crime. For example, the presence of young people loitering has been linked to heightened fear levels among males and females (Skogan, 1990). Lastly, the visibility of police seems to have a conflicting effect on fear of crime. Researchers report that when the presence of police on foot such as a walking beat or part of a community policing initiative seems to reduce the level of fear in the public. Adversely, when the public views police consistently driving in their vehicle in a certain area it seems to make the public more fearful of a potential property or violent crime thus heightening their sense of fear of crime or fear of becoming a victim of a crime (Skogan, 1997).
Safety Measures

Shootings on college campuses resemble the high school cases in some ways, but depart sharply in others, largely because there are many differences between these two types of schools and the shootings that occur there, including the age and motivations of the shooter, as well as the surrounding environment itself. Older shooters may be further along in the development of serious mental illness, and more disconnected from the familiar landmarks of adolescent peer group formation (Fox & Newman, 2009).

Common safety and security measures adopted by middle schools and high schools include physical access control (i.e., locks on building doors during school hours), requiring faculty and staff to wear ID badges, random searches for drugs, and using security cameras to monitor the school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). About 10% of schools use random metal detector checks on students entering the school building. Lockdown plans have also become increasingly common among high schools, with many schools conducting lockdown drills (Higgins, 2008). Because high schools and middle schools are typically housed in a single building where entrances and exits are easily controlled, these measures are feasible. On the other hand, colleges and universities are usually spread across large campuses with multiple buildings. Thus, making a campus lockdown impractical if not impossible. Due to the free flow and expressions of individuals who attend college, security is a greater challenge. Unlike middle and high schools where students generally have no choice to attend, colleges and university students are considered “adults” who can make their own attendance choice. If colleges and universities try to infringe on the free flow of “college life” by tightening
security measures prospective students may search elsewhere for a school that has not infringed on the freedom of students for the sake of security.

**Theories of School Shooters**

The issues that motivate campus shooters and their younger counterparts are vastly different. Shootings at high schools are often precipitated when students feel bullied or persecuted by their classmates and/or teachers (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borun, & Modzeleski, 2004). However, the perpetrators of mass shootings at colleges and universities are often graduate students—older individuals who turn to violence in response to what they perceive to be unbearable pressure to succeed or the unaccepted reality of failure. Indeed, the most striking fact pattern among campus shootings is the disproportionate involvement of graduate students as perpetrators (Fox & Savage, 2009).

Unlike undergraduates, students in graduate and professional programs often lack balance in their personal lives, narrowly focusing on academic work and training to the exclusion of other interests and other people in their lives. Students who had been at the top of their class in high school and college may find themselves struggling to get by with just passing grades. No longer supported financially by parents, they experience great pressure to juggle apprenticeship activities or outside employment with coursework and thesis research, with little time attending to social networks. At some point, their entire lifestyle and sense of worth may revolve around academic achievement. Moreover, their personal investment in reaching a successful outcome can be viewed as a virtual life-or-death matter. This perception can be intensified for foreign graduate students from certain cultures where failure is seen as a shame on the entire family. Foreign students also experience additional pressures because the academic visas allowing them to remain in
the country are often dependent upon their continued student status (Fox & Savage, 2009). Indeed, a recent study of student mental health at the University of California reported that both graduate students and international students are particularly vulnerable to mental health problems due in large part to their increased levels of stress (University of California Student Mental Health Committee, 2006).

One of the earliest systematic examinations of mass murder incidents challenged the widespread view in the popular press and professional literature that mass murders are crazed lunatics who suddenly snap, go berserk, and kill indiscriminately (Levin & Fox, 1985). This notion has persisted in the public’s mind over the past few decades largely because of the vast media coverage of such horrific, unthinkable acts of violence. Nevertheless, mass murder rarely encompasses a sudden explosion of rage. To the contrary, most mass killers plan, in grave detail, their assaults for days, weeks, or months. Such preparations include where, when, and whom to kill, as well as what weapon(s) they will use. These assailants are deliberate, determined to kill, with little regard for what obstacles are placed in their path (Fox, 2013). These assailants spend so much time and energy planning these attacks that when it comes time for their master plan to unfold they remain calm and execute their plan the exact same way that they have been fantasizing it would happen. This ideology can be used to explain why these individuals remain calm amidst all the chaos and terror unfolding.

By far the most prevalent psychological theories developed to explain school shootings are those that involve mental illness. Case studies of school rampage shooters reveal very troubled youths. Some, perhaps most, suffer from severe depression (Harding et al., 2003; Langman, 2009; Sullivan & Guerett, 2003). Others have noted that while
mental illness is rarely recognized prior to the shootings, many of the perpetrators are diagnosed after the fact (Newman et al., 2004). Jonathan Fast has also offered a psychological explanation on school rampage shootings. His theory, while focusing on mental illness, introduces a new dimension: the ceremony. He argues that the school rampage shootings are distinct because they are “theatrical, tragic, and pointless” (Fast, 2008:11). This theory suggests that ceremonial violence is a result of several factors: mental illness, perhaps brain damage; social isolation; and suicidal, but in ceremonial fashion. These perpetrators seem to try to gain status or prestige by committing these acts of violence. Many of the shooters want to commit suicide but cannot bring themselves to do so or want to make a spectacle of the event (Fast, 2008; Langman, 2009; Newman et al., 2004).

Some social commentators argue that bullying is a cause of school shootings. A logical and perhaps safe explanation for why youth want to attack fellow students is that they have been relentlessly tormented by their peers. Research finds that a large majority of school shooters are victims of bullying (Larkin, 2007; Newman et al., 2004). Such bullying can and often includes masculinity. According to the sociologist Michael Kimmel, school shooters demonstrate their hegemonic masculinity through violence. Often, the rampage shooters have been denied traditional male status, perhaps having their sexuality questioned (Kimmel, 2008; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003).

Whatever the style of killing, the motives for mass murder are organized around five primary themes that can occur singly or in combination (Fox & Levin, 1998). Specifically, revenge, power, loyalty, terror, and profit. Revenge is, by far, the most common motive for these acts of terror. Mass murderers often see themselves as victims
of injustice (Bowers et al., 2010; Palermo, 1997). They seek payback for what they believe is unfair treatment by targeting those they hold responsible for their misfortunes. Often times the victims are family members or coworkers. In many cases, there may be a primary target (which can be a place, such as a school, a company, or agency) while others are killed as surrogates, in what has been termed “murder by proxy” (Fox & DeLateur, 2013). Frazier, 1975 described the concept “murder by Proxy” in which victims are chosen because they are identified with a primary target for revenge.

Oftentimes, mass murders will target an entire category of people (e.g., women, Jews, immigrants, whites, blacks, etc.), constituting a hate crime in the extreme. Victims may be chosen randomly, however the type of victim or place to find them may not be. In these cases, unknown victims are punished just because of their class membership or group association (Fox & DeLateur, 2013).

The rarest form of mass murder is the completely random attack (often in a public place) committed by someone who in his or her paranoid thinking suspects that the whole world is corrupt and unfair (Petee, Padgett, & York, 1997). The level of paranoia may truly be psychotic (e.g., God, the President, ISIS, or some other powerful entity is behind a wide-ranging conspiracy) or involve a lesser form of paranoid personality disorder in which the perpetrator consistently misconstrues innocent acts or gestures by others as purposely malicious (Fox & DeLateur, 2013).

Even though most mass murderers deliberately target specific people or places, it is, of course, the seemingly senseless random massacres that are most frightening to people. After all, they can happen at any place, at any time, and to anyone-usually without warning-and, for this reason, random acts of mass murder, although the least
frequent form, receive the most attention by the mass media and the public alike (Fox &
DeLateur, 2013).

The fact of the matter is that students from kindergarten through graduate school
should be able to attend school without fear. Schools are supposed to be a safe place
where students can learn and grow to better themselves and their community. Colleges
and universities thrive on the freedom of “college life” that should not be infringed on
due to safety precautions. Statistically, schools are safe and students should not fear
violence. There is an average of somewhere between one to two dozen college students
murdered each year. The media flourishes on depicting the high profile school shootings
thus causing a media initiated moral panic. The media’s moral of “it bleeds, it leads”
causes panic not only to the victims of said tragedy but also to the victims of previous
incidents. This moral panic also affects the way schools must delegate scarce resources to
prevent and act like this from happening at their school.

Since Columbine, schools have been focusing even more on mental health in
order to try to identify people who show signs and symptoms of distress or depressive
behavior, in order to get people who need treatment the attention they need before any
bloodshed. Schools have also been addressing bullying more seriously, especially in
middle and high schools. This is due to the majority of middle and high school shooting
perpetrators causing mayhem as a source of revenge for their mistreatment or exile by
specific persons or peer groups. Of course, no matter how diligent and responsible
academic and police/safety officials are in improving violence prevention and security,
there can be no absolute guarantee that a tragedy like Virginia Tech will not recur. If any
prospective student-undergraduate or graduate-requires 100% assurance of safety at school, then the only recourse might just be an online degree (Fox & Savage, 2009).

Nevertheless, this review finds that policies implemented in response to school shootings have mostly involved situational “target hardening” measures and have not been theoretically informed. Because of the relatively recent interest in these types of crimes, research – and especially theory – is somewhat lacking. To the extent theories require data, and as research progresses, theory will likely follow suit. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, to the extent that school shootings remain rare occurrences, the argument of others that the media has created a sort of moral panic is relevant here. Because of the disproportionate media attention given to school shootings, these events may have come to appear more distinct than they are in reality (Rocque, 2012). Thus the media suggests that the reactionary and broad sweeping policies enacted in part due to the public fear over school shootings since the 1990’s are warranted. Perhaps a more appropriate solution to this moral panic is public education concerning the actual threat of school shootings. Finally, based on a review of the literature regarding school shootings, it is unclear whether this form of violence is sufficiently unique to warrant separate theories or responses.

The purpose of this study, was to determine if a relationship exists between media exposure and students’ level of fear. This is in part because the media over­portrays school violence and terrorism as a sort of moral panic. This survey examines the levels of fear students have in certain situations or places, as well as examining the level of media exposure that students report. By using the data that is collected we will be able
to determine if in fact the media has any impact on the level of fear that students at Bridgewater State University have regarding school shootings.

Research Question

The research question asked in this study is whether increased exposure to media coverage of college campus shootings results in an increase in the level of fear that Bridgewater State University students have of an active shooter on the BSU campus.

Research Hypothesis

Increased media exposure to campus shootings increases the level of fear that Bridgewater State University students’ have of an active shooter on Bridgewater State University.

Methodology

Since this research survey involves human subjects, the Bridgewater State University Institutional Review Board was required to review and approve all aspects of the survey and data collection process. This review and approval by the Institutional Review Board was completed before any research began. “The Institutional Review Board operates under the policies and procedures of the university to ensure compliance with the National Research Act. The purpose of Institutional Review Board review is to protect the rights and personal privacy of individuals and assure a favorable climate for conduct of scientific inquiry at Bridgewater State University. The IRB applies three basic principles in its review of research using human subjects: - respect for the personal
dignity and autonomy of subjects and special protection for those persons with diminished autonomy - the obligation to protect subjects from harm by maximizing benefits and minimizing possible risks of harm - fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of research These principles underlie the information requested in the application: the need to obtain informed consent; the need to engage in a risk/benefit analysis and to minimize risk; and the need to select subjects fairly” (Bridgewater State University, 2016). Institutional Review Board approval was obtained and is located in Appendix A.

This study was implemented on the campus of Bridgewater State University in the classrooms of each randomly selected courses. A survey is a data collection tool used to gather information about individuals, and a self-report is a survey that relies on the individual’s own report of their symptoms, behaviors, beliefs or attitudes. In order to have a diversified survey selection, the spring 2016 course listings from the Registrar’s office was requested.

By using a random number generator on the internet (www.random.org) to determine a number between one and one hundred, which the random number generator produced the number sixty three. Next the 52 pages of course listings were printed and then proceeded to count from one to 63, selecting every 63rd course listing for the survey pool. There were 38 courses selected, ten of the selected courses were on-line courses and thus would not work for my in person survey, and one course was not able to be located. This left 27 courses for my survey selection. Each course professor was emailed asking for their permission to come to class and administer the survey in person (See Appendix B). Replies were received from 11 professors, (approximately 40%). From that three,
(approximately 25%) declined the request to come to their class and administer the survey. The remaining eight, (approximately 75%) however, graciously approved my request, lastly a schedule was compiled and the professors were re-contacted and the survey was administered to each of their classes.

The survey is a 35 question, paper and pencil survey constructed by compiling questions that would generate useful data regarding students’ perceptions (See Appendix C). In order to get sufficient background information from the subjects the first eight questions asked their age, gender, race, class year, graduate or undergraduate, major, military background, and campus resident status. The remainder of the questions examined the students’ sources of media and exposure as well as many situational questions that asked them to rate their fear or anxiety level when presented in a particular situation both on and off campus. Also, questions were asked regarding how often the respondents heard about school shootings broadcast by the media. The last question was an open-ended asking what one thing that the subject could change on campus to make them feel safer? If anything at all? (See Appendix E)

At the beginning of each class I was introduced by the professor to the class. I then introduced myself and gave a brief background of my history. Informed consent was read at the beginning of the questionnaire (See Appendix C), and asked if there were any questions. At that point the questionnaires were distributed to each student in the class as a whole and they were informed that upon completion the questionnaire would be collected and they were thanked for their participation. Once all the questionnaires were collected, the subjects and the professors were thanked again and wished the best luck in their endeavors.
Demographics

This study surveyed 170 male and female, graduate and undergraduate students whose ages ranged from 18-26 years old with various majors and demographic backgrounds. Of the 170 respondents, 101 were female (nearly 60%), the remaining 69 respondents were males (40%). As mentioned above respondents ages ranged from 18-26 years old, and 70% of the survey population was 18-20 years old. This is consistent with class year data collection as well. Freshman students represented 63 (37.1%); Sophomore students represented 53 (31.2%); Juniors represented 31 (18.2%); Seniors represented 22 (12.9%); and one responded Graduate. On the other hand, when the question was asked to identify whether they were studying undergraduate or graduate, two responded graduate and the remaining 168 responded undergraduate. Of the 170 respondents, 102 stated that they were residents on campus whereas 68 identified themselves as commuters. Ethnicity was largely represented by 133 white respondents, African American/Black represented 13, Hispanic/Latino ten, Cape Verdean seven, and Asian/Pacific Islander six. Respondents with military background were extremely low, only one indicated having any form of military background.
Dependent Variables

The dependent variables are:

*How fearful are you going to the cafeteria or library?*
*How fearful are you going to a concert or sporting event?*
*How fearful are you going to class?*
*How fearful are you going to the restroom alone?*
*How fearful are you of other students?*
*How fearful are you of teachers/faculty/ or campus staff?*
*How fearful are you of a school shooting?*

Students were asked to indicate their level of fear on a 4-point Likert-type scale.

Students were asked to indicate the relative strength which they agreed with the above statements (e.g., Extremely Fearful, Fearful, Somewhat Fearful, No Fear) which we renamed **stufear**. By adding, School, Gathering, Class, Restroom, Others, Faculty, Shooting, we created a continuous measure for each of the four types of fear, extremely fearful coded as 3, fearful coded as 2, somewhat fearful coded as 1, and no fear coded as 0. **Stufear (n=170)** ranges in value from .00 to 16 with a mean of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 2.56.

Independent Variables

The survey data allowed us to examine the relationship between students exposure to media and level of fear experienced. Students were asked to indicate how often they consulted the news. The response choices were Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Rarely, and Never. We created a continuous measure for each of the five types of exposure, daily coded as 4, weekly coded as 3, monthly coded as 2, rarely coded as 1, and
never coded as 0. Due to the skewed nature of the distribution of each variable, we created a new, dichotomous variable named ExpRec (Exposure recoded), with those who consult the news daily and weekly coded to 1 and those who consult the news monthly, rarely, and never coded to 0 (See Table 1 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure Recoded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**

**Description of Subjects**

This study involves one hundred and seventy male and female college students (N=170) who have completed a survey about media exposure and levels of fear of crime. All of the respondents were students at Bridgewater State University.

**Age.** All of the 170 respondents ages ranged from 18 years old to 26 years old (See Table 2 below). The majority of these respondents were aged 18-21, 147 respondents or 86.5%, whereas the remaining 23 respondents or 13.5 % were ages 22-26.
Table 2. Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender. Of the 170 respondents, females made up the majority with 101 respondents or 59.4% (See Table 3 below). On the other hand, there were 69 male respondents or 40.6%.

Table 3. Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residency. When looking at the residency status of the 170 respondents, 102 of them or 60% indicated that they lived on campus (See Table 4 below). The remaining 68 respondents or 40% indicated that they were commuters and did not live on campus.
Table 4. Residency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class Level. All of the 170 respondents were either Undergraduate or Graduate students at Bridgewater State University (See Table 5 below). Undergraduate respondents made up the overwhelming majority of the survey respondents. Of the 170 respondents, 168 or 98.8% indicated that they were Undergraduate students, while the remaining 2 respondents or 1.2% indicated that they were Graduate students.

Table 5. Class Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnicity. From the total of 170 survey respondents, a large majority of them, 133 or 78.2% indicated that their ethnicity was White (See Table 6 below). There were 13 or 7.6% African American/Black respondents; 7 or 4.1% identified as Cape Verdean. In this study, 10 respondents or 5.9% indicated that they were Hispanic/Latino. There
were six or 3.5% of the respondents who indicated that they were Asian/Pacific Islander, and there was one respondent or .7%, who did not indicate an ethnicity.

Table 6. Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American/Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verdean</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class Year. The respondents of this survey at Bridgewater State University were asked to indicate which class year they would place themselves in regarding to academic year (See Table 7 below). Of the 170 respondents, 63 or 37.1% indicated that they were freshman level students. There were 53 or 31.2% respondents who indicated that they were sophomore level students. Respondents who indicated that they were juniors were 31 or 18.2%, and respondents who indicated as senior level students were 22 or 12.9%. Lastly there was one or .6%, respondent who indicated that they were a graduate level student.
Table 7. Class Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Military. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had any prior military background (See Table 8 below). Of the 170 respondents, a staggering 169 or 99.4% indicated that they had no military background. There was however, one respondent or .6% who indicated having some form of military background.

Table 8. Military

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Fear. As presented in Table 9 below, it appears that the level of fear students have is extremely low or nonexistent. There are differences in the proportion of students who experienced zero and minimal fear as compared to those who experienced
higher levels of fear. For example, 33 respondents or 19.4% reported that they felt **No Fear**, whereas 117 respondents or 68.9% of students reported they felt **Minimal Fear**, and 19 respondents or 11.7% of students felt a somewhat **Heightened Fear** level. Lastly there was one respondent who did not indicate a level of fear experienced.

**Table 9. Student Fear**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Fear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.00</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exposure.** The following table will indicate how much the students are exposed to some form of media. As presented in Table 10, it appears that the majority of students are exposed to media either weekly or daily. There were 136 respondents or 80% of the 170
students surveyed who reported that they are exposed to media weekly or daily. On the other hand, there were 33 respondents or 19.4% students that reported they are exposed to the media monthly or rarely, and one respondent (.6%) reported that they have never been exposed to the media.

**Table 10. Exposure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11. Exposure Recoded (ExpRec)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In table 11, a new, dichotomous variable named ExpRec (Exposure recoded), was created with those who consult the news daily and weekly coded to 1 and those who consult the news monthly, rarely, and never coded to 0 (See also Table 1).

T-Test

The T-test compares two means (averages) and indicates if they are different from each other. Also, the t-test indicates how significant the differences are.

Table 12 below is a T-test for the difference in two group means, student fear between daily/weekly media exposure and monthly/never/rarely exposure. By comparing the means of these two types of media exposure, it will be determined if there is any statistical significance in the amount of fear students have based on the amount of media they are exposed to.

Table 12. T-test for the difference in two group means, student fear between daily media exposure and no media exposure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily/Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly/Never/Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean student fear score</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-test</td>
<td>-1.143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P=</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean student fear score for students who are exposed to media daily or weekly is 2.61 compared to 3.18 for those students who are exposed to media monthly, never, or
rarely. This difference produces a t-test of -1.14 which is not statistically significant at the p<.05.

Table 13 below is a T-test for the difference in two group means, student fear between males and females. By comparing the means of these two gender groups, it will be determined if there is any statistical significance between the fearfulness of each gender.

Table 13. T-test for difference in two group means, student fear between males and females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean student fear score</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-test</td>
<td>-4.173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean fear score for students who were male is 1.78 compared to 3.38 for female students. This difference produces a t-test of -4.17 which is statistically significant at the p<.05. What this test indicates is that the mean or average fear level for females is almost twice that of the males. Which concludes that females are almost twice as fearful as males.

Police Visibility

After conducting an analysis of student fear levels, the decision was made to see if the visibility of police had any impact on the level of fear students experienced. By looking at table 13, to see if police visibility has any effect on students in terms of fear levels. Research shows that visibility of police seems to have a conflicting effect on fear
of crime. Researchers report that when the presence of police on foot such as a walking beat or part of a community policing initiative seems to reduce the level of fear in the public. Adversely, when the public views police consistently driving in their vehicle in a certain area it seems to make the public more fearful of a potential property or violent crime thus heightening their sense of fear of crime or fear of becoming a victim of a crime (Skogan, 1997).

Because research shows police visibility having a correlation with fear levels decreasing as well as heightening, I included survey question number 17 in the questionnaire that asked respondents *How does seeing BSU police on campus make you feel?* By looking at table 14 below it is determined that only 17 of the respondents or 10.6% indicated that seeing police on campus makes them somewhat unsafe. On the other hand, the remaining 153 respondents or 89.4% indicated that seeing police make them feel either safe, somewhat safe, or very safe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Unsafe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Unsafe</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Safe</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Safe</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This research study examined the relationship between media exposure and the level of fear students at Bridgewater State University experience regarding an active shooter on campus. By design the results reported are among the initial steps to determining the relationship among different amounts of media exposure and the level of fear experienced, in order to provide informative findings for future research.

In this study, the hypothesis is that increased media exposure to campus shootings increases the level of fear that Bridgewater State University students’ have of an active shooter on Bridgewater State University. Unfortunately, this hypothesis was not supported.

One possible explanation for the lack of an increase in level of fear regardless to the amount of media exposure is desensitization. What is meant by desensitization, is that because the media consistently broadcasts violence and violent acts, the consumer has become almost emotionless to these stories. It appears that almost every time the media covers their top story it is some form of violent act usually resulting in the killing death of somebody. This consistency of violence in the media could make the consumer feel as it is just another story with no cause for concern. Whereas if the media never covered any violent stories and then one day covered a story about a violent killing, the consumer may become more alarmed and therefore may be more fearful. This can also be linked to the advances in social media. When users “post” or “re-post” stories on social media it adds
to the “normalcy” of these happenings which in turn can cause the consumer to become un-phased by what is being reported.

As noted earlier, researchers have spent the last thirty years attempting to understand the nature of fear of crime, as well as its causes and consequences (Warr 2000; Williams et al. 2000). Certain demographic groups- women, elderly, racial/ethnic minorities, lower income people, and single people- have higher personal fear of crime (e.g., Schafer et al., 2006; Stack, 2000). Previous research has also examined community effects associated with fear of crime, focusing on how neighborhood and community characteristics (e.g., trash in the streets, dilapidated neighborhoods, and lack of social capital) may contribute to fear of crime (McGarrell et al. 1997).

It is important to keep in mind that research shows the impact of the media on fear of crime is likely to be magnified in rural areas. Nevertheless, looking at this study conducted within a suburban college community the fear of crime level may be significantly lower compared to a college or university in Boston or any other major city. Because numerous studies demonstrate that residents of inner neighborhoods of larger cities are more likely to fear crime than those who live in smaller towns, rural areas or the suburbs (Fisher, 1981; Finley, 1983; and Krahn, 1984).

Another possible explanation for the lack of support for the hypothesis is the fact that Bridgewater State University is located in a quiet suburban town. Where the crime rate is low and the violent crime rate is nearly nonresistant. Nevertheless, when the media depicts a violent incident such as a murder or school shooting, these incidents are usually not located anywhere near Bridgewater State University. Thus not causing any immediate threat or alarm from anyone who is happening to see the media reports.
In regards to gender differences, research has consistently found that women are more likely to self-report personal fear of crime than men (Ferro 1995; Reid and Konrad 2004; Schafer et al. 2006). When considering men's absence of fear of crime, studies have found that men may not report fear of crime because they are socialized to believe that "real" men do not fear crime (e.g., Gilchrist et al. 1998; Goodey 1997). When considering our study of college students, fear of others may be significant among college students because of the proximity of college students to each other and the influence of other college students' social networks (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987).

This survey did however find that females were nearly twice as fearful as males. This is consistent with the research data as mentioned above. On the other hand, even though the data illustrated that females were nearly twice as fearful as males, the mean scores for the level of fear was still exceptionally low. Thus indicating that regardless of the amount of media that a respondent was exposed to the amount of fear they experienced was exceptionally small.

Never the less, research findings on fear provoking cues suggests that there is not one cue that influences fear but rather a constellation of cues that include specific features of the physical environment, the presence of others, and the visibility of others whose duty is to provide surveillance and protection (Warr, 1990, 2000). Several cues include lighting, foliage, groups loitering, and visibility of the police. Visibility of an environment is an important component of individuals being able to see what awaits them. At the core of the concept of lighting is the notion of individuals being able to see potentially threatening or harmful situations, including being able to see a hiding place for a predator (Fisher, 2009).
The visibility of police seems to have a conflicting effect on fear of crime. Researchers report that when the presence of police on foot such as a walking beat or part of a community policing initiative seems to reduce the level of fear in the public. Adversely, when the public views police consistently driving in their vehicle in a certain area it seems to make the public more fearful of a potential property or violent crime thus heightening their sense of fear of crime or fear of becoming a victim of a crime (Skogan, 1997). By looking at table 14 above, we can determine that only 17 respondents or 10.6% indicated that seeing police on campus makes them somewhat unsafe. On the other hand, the remaining 153 respondents or 89.4% indicated that seeing police make them feel either safe, somewhat safe, or very safe.

Lastly the term media may have been too broad of a term for the research question. Perhaps the survey respondents were unaware that social media groups such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram are indeed sources of media that respondents were exposed to. It is possible that when the respondents were faced with questions regarding the media they were exposed to that illustrated such stories as they unfold, were only thinking of strictly news media such as CNN or Fox.

Limitations

Although we have uncovered a number of interesting findings, this study is not without limitations. First, this study was conducted with a very limited sample group, 170 persons to be exact. Of the 170 persons surveyed almost all were undergraduate students, there was only one graduate student included in our sample group. Also the gender breakdown was not as evenly distributed as we would like to have seen. This survey definitely should has been more specific in regards to the fear-provoking cues, for
example; questions could have been asked incorporating specific time of day as well as the respondent being alone or in a group. Lastly, questions concerning police visibility and interaction should have been more specific regarding the respondents perceptions of the police during each of the questions involving police.

Future researchers should be more specific with the questions on the survey. Many of the questions within the current survey could have been asked four different ways. This would allow for more detailed data on perceptions of fear during certain times of day as well as within a group or alone. For example question #25 *How fearful are you going to class?* This question could have been broken down four different ways as followed:

*How fearful are you going to class alone, during the day?*

*How fearful are you going to class in a group, during the day?*

*How fearful are you going to class alone, at night?*

*How fearful are you going to class in a group, at night?*

By simply adding time of day and with others to a question will give more detailed fear cues that researchers can use when trying to determine if there is any correlation between fear and time of day or when someone is alone.

Lastly, with regards to police visibility and interactions our survey asks multiple questions about societies perceptions of the police. Approximately 9% of our survey asked questions regarding police visibility and interactions. However, future researchers should ask questions about what the police are doing when they are seen and what time of
day they are seen. This will give a more defined fear association if one is applicable. For instance if a question asked; *When the police are visible at night what are they doing?* If the police are seen with their blue lights on frequently responding to calls or constantly patrolling certain areas persistently, these actions could make respondents perceived fear level heightened. On the other hand if the police are seen walking on foot and happily interacting with passersby in the middle of the day, these actions may make the respondents feel like everything is great police are happy, not harassing anyone, but they are close by if needed. Therefore, causing fear levels to be low or nonexistent. There is no doubt that by asking more specific and pinpointed questions as well as questions multiple ways will give more meaningful data to analyze.

**Recommendations for future research**

Future researchers should make a valiant effort to obtain a much larger survey population as compared to the survey size of this study, this should include having a more even gender ratio because, this survey had approximately 1/3 more female respondents than male respondents. Future researchers should survey undergraduate and graduate students, high school students and junior high school students. This would provide a much larger and more diversified survey population. Age could also be a contributing factor in the level of fear that students have and by surveying a larger more diversified sample could provide insight on this theory. Also surveying students in rural, suburban, and urban communities, as well as various parts of the country to determine if there is a significant difference in the level of fear students have. Socioeconomic status could also be something that may be a contributor to both levels of fear and media exposure. People
who are married or in a serious relationship may experience fear at different times as compared to those who are not married or in a serious relationship.

Another idea worth exploring would be to add questions to the questionnaire asking if perspective students would be deterred from attending a college that had such strict rules for safety measures. Questions regarding bullying could certainly be added to a questionnaire, to determine if fear levels are elevated if someone was a victim of bullying. Lastly, because of the constant “gun” debate it would be interesting to ask Firearm related questions. For instance if respondents own, use, like/dislike firearms. As well as if respondents felt that Bridgewater State University should allow licensed students, faculty, staff, or visitors carry a firearm on campus.

Future researchers could certainly expand and develop exponentially on this study as well as prove or disprove the findings of this study by taking some or all of the suggestions and exploring more in depth on this topic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, contrary to the media’s portrayal of school violence as a moral panic, this study shows that there was no statistical significance between media exposure and levels of fear that students at Bridgewater State University possessed. Subsequently, my hypothesis for this study was not supported. However, as research has shown in a previous study regarding gender differences females were six times more likely to feel unsafe walking alone after dark than were males. Although my study did not address walking alone at night, this study determined that women were nearly twice as fearful compared to males. Future researchers could certainly take this study and develop further
to determine if media does not in fact have an impact students level of fear on a broader spectrum with additional survey questions asking more targeted questions.

Appendices
Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval
October 27, 2015

Dr. Jo-Ann Della Giustina
Criminal Justice
311E Maxwell Library

Re: IRB Application – Case #2016049

Dear Dr. Della Giustina:

This letter is to inform you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved (expedited) the research project titled, Student Perceptions of Active Shooters on Campus.

The approval for your study is active for a period of one (1) year from the date of this letter. You are expected to adhere to the procedures as outlined in your proposal. Any changes in procedures, protocol, or the consent form will require the approval of the Institutional Review Board. You are also expected to notify the IRB immediately in the event of injury to or any problem with the subject participating in the study.

As the principal investigator, you have primary responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human research subjects and for complying with the provisions of the Institutional Review Board.

Best wishes on the completion of your research project. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Elizabeth Spievak
Chair, Institutional Review Board

ES/dfd

cc: Barry King
Appendix B

Professor Permission email
Dear Professor

My name is Barry King. I am a graduate student here at Bridgewater State University and I am currently working on my Master’s Degree thesis. As a part of my thesis I must conduct an in-person ten minute anonymous written survey to your students. I currently have IRB approval and the surveys in hand. I have randomly selected several courses from the BSU course catalog to survey and your class __*(Course Number and Title)*__ has been selected. I am writing you today to ask your permission to come to your class and administer my survey to your students. If permission is granted I would ask that you reply back to this email and inform me of your class meeting days, times, and location. Afterwards, I can compile a schedule and re-contact you informing you of the date and time I will be present to administer my survey. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments please feel free to contact me at Bkingent1@gmail.com I look forward to hearing from you. If you need more information you may contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jo-Ann Della Giustina at jdlaggiustina@bridgew.edu.

Kind regards,

Barry King
Appendix C

Informed Consent/ Survey Questionnaire
Thank you for volunteering to respond to this 15 minute survey about the perceptions and experiences of Bridgewater State University students. Although you may not personally benefit, this study is important to society because it will add to the limited literature on the perceptions and experiences of college students in an effort to aid in the development of appropriate campus policies. There are no foreseeable risks, your responses are anonymous, and you may to refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw from this survey at any time.

Survey Questionnaire

Please fill in the blanks or answer the questions with an X as provided in the example.

Example: My student status is:

Full Time (X)
Part Time ( )

1. What is your age? ________________________________

2. Are you Male or Female?

   Male ( )
   Female ( )

3. What is your Major? ________________________________

4. Are you a campus resident or commuter?

   Resident ( )
   Commuter ( )

5. Are you studying as Undergraduate or Graduate?

   Undergraduate ( )
   Graduate ( )

6. What race are you?

   White ( )
   African American/ Black ( )
   Hispanic/ Latino ( )
   Cape Verdean ( )
   Asian/ Pacific Islander ( )
   Native American ( )
   Other ( )
7. Class year:
   Freshman ( )
   Sophomore ( )
   Junior ( )
   Senior ( )
   Graduate ( )

8. Have you served in the military?
   Yes ( )
   No ( )

9. Do you consider yourself to be?
   Extremely Anxious ( )
   Anxious ( )
   Worrisome ( )
   Laid back ( )
   Neither anxious nor laidback ( )

10. What is your primary source for news?
    Television ( )
    Social Media ( )
    Newspaper ( )
    Text Message ( )
    Email ( )
    Radio ( )

11. How often do you consult the news?
    Daily ( )
    Weekly ( )
    Monthly ( )
    Rarely ( )
    Never ( )
12. Do news stories in the media make you feel?
   Extremely Concerned ( )
   Concerned ( )
   Neither Concerned nor Unconcerned ( )
   Unconcerned ( )
   Very Unconcerned ( )

13. Have you been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder?
   Yes ( )
   No ( )

14. Have you ever sought out campus police for any reason?
   Yes ( )
   No ( )

15. If so, how helpful were they to you?
   Extremely helpful ( )
   Fairly helpful ( )
   Not very helpful ( )
   Not helpful at all ( )

16. Do you think BSU has done everything in their power to make students feel safe?
   Always ( )
   Most of the time ( )
   Sometimes ( )
   Never ( )

17. How does seeing BSU police on campus make you feel?
   Very Safe ( )
   Somewhat Safe ( )
   Safe ( )
   Somewhat Unsafe ( )
   Very Unsafe ( )
18. How safe do you feel on Campus?
   - Very Safe ( )
   - Somewhat Safe ( )
   - Safe ( )
   - Somewhat Unsafe ( )
   - Very Unsafe ( )

19. How safe do you feel in public?
   - Very safe ( )
   - Somewhat safe ( )
   - Safe ( )
   - Somewhat Unsafe ( )
   - Very Unsafe ( )

20. How safe do you feel Walking on campus alone?
   - Very safe ( )
   - Somewhat safe ( )
   - Questionably Safe ( )
   - Safe ( )
   - Very Unsafe ( )

21. In the past year how many times have you been in direct contact with campus police?
   - Everyday ( )
   - Weekly ( )
   - Monthly ( )
   - Each Semester ( )
   - Once ( )
   - Never ( )
22. Where do you feel most safe?

   Home ( )
   School ( )
   Dorm ( )
   General Public ( )
   Work ( )
   Nowhere ( )

23. How fearful are you going to the cafeteria or library?

   Extremely Fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat Fearful ( )
   No Fear ( )

24. How fearful are you going to a concert or sporting event?

   Extremely Fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat fearful ( )
   No fear ( )

25. How fearful are you going to Class?

   Extremely Fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat fearful ( )
   No fear ( )

26. How fearful are you going to the restroom alone?

   Extremely fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat fearful ( )
   No Fear ( )
27. How fearful are you of other students?
   Extremely Fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat fearful ( )
   No fear ( )

28. How fearful are you of teachers/Faculty/ or Campus Staff?
   Extremely Fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat fearful ( )
   No fear ( )

29. How fearful are you of a school shooting?
   Extremely Fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat fearful ( )
   No fear ( )

30. How much more concerned do you become once you hear about a school shooting?
   Extremely Concerned ( )
   Concerned ( )
   Somewhat Concerned ( )
   Not Concerned ( )

31. Where do you get media from?
   News ( )
   Newspaper ( )
   Online ( )
   Text Alert ( )
   Email ( )
   Friends ( )
32. Exposure to media reports of mass shootings in the past six months?
   1-3 ( )
   4-5 ( )
   6-7 ( )
   8-9 ( )
   More than 10 ( )

33. How Fearful do news reports of mass shootings make you?
   Extremely fearful ( )
   Fearful ( )
   Somewhat Fearful ( )
   No Fear ( )

34. What do you feel the odds are of a campus shooting at BSU are?
   Very High ( )
   High ( )
   Moderate ( )
   Slim to none ( )
   No Chance ( )

35. What one thing do you wish you could change on campus to make you feel safer? If anything at all?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix D

Survey Code book
Thank you for volunteering to respond to this 15 minute survey about the perceptions and experiences of Bridgewater State University students. Although you may not personally benefit, this study is important to society because it will add to the limited literature on the perceptions and experiences of college students in an effort to aid in the development of appropriate campus policies. There are no foreseeable risks, your responses are anonymous, and you may to refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw from this survey at any time.

Survey Questionnaire Code Book

*Please fill in the blanks or answer the questions with an X as provided in the example.*

**Example:** My student status is:

- Full Time (X)
- Part Time ( )

1. **What is your age?** ________________________________
   
   Age (Write in)

2. **Are you Male or Female?**

   Gender

   1  Male ( )
   0  Female ( )

3. **What is your Major?** ________________________________

   Major (Write in)

4. **Are you a campus resident or commuter?**

   Residency

   1  Resident ( )
   2  Commuter ( )

5. **Are you studying as Undergraduate or Graduate?**

   Class Level

   1  Undergraduate ( )
   2  Graduate ( )
6. What race are you?

**Ethnicity**

1. White ( )
2. African American/ Black ( )
3. Hispanic/ Latino ( )
4. Cape Verdean ( )
5. Asian/ Pacific Islander ( )
6. Native American ( )
7. Other ( )

7. Class year:

**Class Year**

1. Freshman ( )
2. Sophomore ( )
3. Junior ( )
4. Senior ( )
5. Graduate ( )

8. Have you served in the military?

**Military**

1. Yes ( )
0. No ( )

9. Do you consider yourself to be?

**Descriptive**

4. Extremely Anxious ( )
3. Anxious ( )
2. Worrisome ( )
1. Laid back ( )
0. Neither anxious nor laidback ( )
10. What is your primary source for news?

Sources
1. Television ( )
2. Social Media ( )
3. Newspaper ( )
4. Text Message ( )
5. Email ( )
6. Radio ( )

11. How often do you consult the news?

Exposure
4. Daily ( )
3. Weekly ( )
2. Monthly ( )
1. Rarely ( )
0. Never ( )

12. Do news stories in the media make you feel?

Feelings
4. Extremely Concerned ( )
3. Concerned ( )
2. Neither Concerned nor Unconcerned ( )
1. Unconcerned ( )
0. Very Unconcerned ( )

13. Have you been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder?

Disorder
1. Yes ( )
0. No ( )

14. Have you ever sought out campus police for any reason?

Police
1. Yes ( )
0. No ( )
15. If so, how helpful were they to you?

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<tr>
<th>Helpfulness</th>
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<th>Fairly helpful</th>
<th>Not very helpful</th>
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16. Do you think BSU has done everything in their power to make students feel safe?

<table>
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<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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17. How does seeing BSU police on campus make you feel?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Police Visibility</th>
<th>Very Safe</th>
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<th>Safe</th>
<th>Somewhat Unsafe</th>
<th>Very Unsafe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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18. How safe do you feel on Campus?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Very Safe</th>
<th>Somewhat Safe</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>Somewhat Unsafe</th>
<th>Very Unsafe</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. How safe do you feel in public?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Public</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Somewhat safe ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Safe ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Somewhat Unsafe ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Very Unsafe ( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. How safe do you feel Walking on campus alone?

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<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Somewhat safe ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Questionably Safe ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Safe ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Very Unsafe ( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. In the past year how many times have you been in direct contact with campus police?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Weekly ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monthly ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Each Semester ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Once ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Never ( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Where do you feel most safe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secure</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Home ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>School ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dorm ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Public ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Work ( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Nowhere ( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. How fearful are you going to the cafeteria or library?

School

3 Extremely Fearful
2 Fearful
1 Somewhat Fearful
0 No Fear

24. How fearful are you going to a concert or sporting event?

Gathering

3 Extremely Fearful
2 Fearful
1 Somewhat fearful
0 No fear

25. How fearful are you going to Class?

Class

3 Extremely Fearful
2 Fearful
1 Somewhat fearful
0 No fear

26. How fearful are you going to the restroom alone?

Restroom

3 Extremely fearful
2 Fearful
1 Somewhat fearful
0 No Fear
27. How fearful are you of other students?
   Others
   3 Extremely Fearful ( )
   2 Fearful ( )
   1 Somewhat fearful ( )
   0 No fear ( )

28. How fearful are you of teachers/Faculty/ or Campus Staff?
   Faculty
   3 Extremely Fearful ( )
   2 Fearful ( )
   1 Somewhat fearful ( )
   0 No fear ( )

29. How fearful are you of a school shooting?
   Shooting
   3 Extremely Fearful ( )
   2 Fearful ( )
   1 Somewhat fearful ( )
   0 No fear ( )

30. How much more concerned do you become once you hear about a school shooting?
   Aware
   3 Extremely Concerned ( )
   2 Concerned ( )
   1 Somewhat Concerned ( )
   0 Not Concerned ( )

31. Where do you get media from?
   Media
   1 News ( )
   2 Newspaper ( )
   3 Online ( )
   4 Text Alert ( )
   5 Email ( )
   6 Friends ( )
32. Exposure to media reports of mass shootings in the past six months?

Exposed
0  1-3 ( )
1  4-5 ( )
2  6-7 ( )
3  8-9 ( )
4  More than 10 ( )

33. How Fearful do news reports of mass shootings make you?

Fearfulness
3  Extremely fearful ( )
2  Fearful ( )
1  Somewhat Fearful ( )
0  No Fear ( )

34. What do you feel the odds are of a campus shooting at BSU are?

Likelihood
4  Very High ( )
3  High ( )
2  Moderate ( )
1  Slim to none ( )
0  No Chance ( )

35. What one thing do you wish you could change on campus to make you feel safer? If anything at all?

_________________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________

Write_in
Appendix E

Question #35 responses
Responses to question #35

What one thing do you wish you could change on campus to make you feel safer? If anything at all?

1. I think the campus police and staff are doing their best & they do not get enough credit for what they do.
2. Better checking of students and guests that they have.
3. Make boys and girls living area a little more distant to avoid any issues
4. Blank
5. More campus police patrolling at night
6. Nothing
7. N/A
8. Nothing
9. Have more cameras outside of buildings and around campus.
10. I feel very safe on campus
11. Blank
12. Nothing
13. More lights for walking at night
14. Police focused on something other than parking tickets
15. Blank
16. Stop giving so many parking tickets
17. I would feel safer if the police didn’t care so much about parking tickets rather than actual people
18. As a very recent transfer student I have yet to experience anything that I would wish to change. So far so good.
19. Blank
20. Greater security in dorms-> barely look in bags
21. Nothing 😊
22. Blank
23. Blank
24. Blank
25. Nothing
26. Blank
27. Less rules, cops directly trying to get students in trouble.
28. The BSU campus be a little more aware of inappropriate things
29. Blank
30. The campus is poorly lit on the way to the parking garage. It is dangerous because the train station is there as well as any random person can walk onto our premises and lurk in the dimly lit areas.
31. More lighting and better bus stops, closer to buildings
32. I guess cameras around certain places on campus where the lights aren’t as bright.
33. Blank
34. Blank
35. Blank
36. National, state, and local legislation and policy reflecting the potential detriment associated with a gun culture and readily accessible firearms.
37. More lights near commuter parking lots
38. I wish I could change some of the bus stops so they can drop us off right in front of our destination.
39. Blank
40. Blank
41. Blank
42. Make the emergency exits of buildings able to open from the outside. In certain cases, they could become inoperable from the outside in
43. Blank
44. Blank
45. Blank
46. Motion sensor lights to save energy!
47. Bring back campus safety!!
48. Blank
49. I’m not sure
50. Practicing drills
51. The one thing I would change is be less strict with policies like drinking, only nerves that many students feel.
52. The police here need to be more assertive to students, rather than just there to hand out parking tickets. My friend was someone sexually assaulted on campus + the police were of NO help.
53. Bring campus safety transit back, since it has been removed there has been a noticeable increase in crime.....
54. Maybe the police focus on building a better image and relationship with the students. No one wants to see anyone break the law, and so having a friendly relationship with the community may dismantle illegal activity.
55. Walking in parking lot- people pulling out of spots too quickly or not looking out for people walking.
56. Maybe seeing campus police more
57. Blank
58. There should be more emergency buttons or a cop at the commuter lots at night time.
59. Blank
60. More notice of lockdown procedure if there was to be an emergency, what do we do?
61. n/a
62. More text alerts about what’s going on, instead of email.
63. Nothing
64. Surveillance cameras
65. More blue light kiosks
66. More police presence
67. To security cameras on each building ie Scott and others. Not only outside
68. More blue lights
69. Ensure that the attending students drive in the correct manner
70. Stop getting in trouble/ pulled over for dirty license plates and have cops spend
   more time with matters that actually effect safety of students (alcohol isnt one of
   those matters…)
71. Blank
72. Asking none students for a ID to go anywhere on campus.
73. Blank
74. More booz
75. Better lighting at night
76. Tell the cops to chill on alcohol violations
77. More lights on pathways during the night for when I have to walk around campus
78. To have the campus police so strict and concerning more about drugs and alcohol
   compared to rapes and school shootings.
79. I believe that kids should be allowed to go back to their dorms intoxicated, it
   allows them to get off the street and be safe within a confined building rather than
   worrying that they’ll be arrested and get into more trouble.
80. Blank
81. Blank
82. More blue lights
83. Blank
84. I’m not sure
85. Blank
86. Blank
87. More transits
88. Don’t see much police presence very late a night
89. Blank
90. Blank
91. Blank
92. Blank
93. Nothing
94. N/A
95. Check dorms for suspicious weaponry etc.
96. Less sketchy people.
97. More police around, I walk back from work alone a night and rarely see any
98. Blank
99. Blank
100. Blank
101. Blank
102. More security in dorms or people to go to during issues.
103. Not leaving the doors to the buildings unlocked all day long. Anyone could walk in
104. Blank
105. Security cameras in the dorm hallways, classrooms and lunchrooms
106. I wish the security in dorms were more strict. They should monitor who and why is someone entering the BSU campus area.
107. Have immediate alerts about rape reports or assaults in the area, whether or not they are directly on campus
108. ----------------------------------------
109. I would make the police on campus less intimidating
110. More campus security
111. Make it a wet campus
112. Blank
113. I think the campus is doing everything they can to make us feel safe
114. Blank
115. Presence at crosswalks + commuter lots make outside persons unable to enter buildings/ lots
116. Blank
117. Blank
118. N/A
119. Blank
120. Blank
121. Blank
122. None, police make me feel safe
123. Having police walking around at night in all parts of the BSU campus.
124. More friendly interactions with officers. I would not want to go to them for help because they are more concerned with catching students speeding or drinking alcohol than keeping kids safe
125. BSU police do a decent job as it is.
126. Vigilance at every parking lot at BSU.
127. Bringing back the safety bus at early hours in the morning & and having them drop you off at the dorm instead of having to walk after they drop you off somewhere kind of near the dorm
128. The way we go about reporting rapes to other students
129. Blank
130. Better security checks into dormitory
131. Blank
132. Blank
133. More police patrol on the actual campus of BSU
134. More blue lights, more of a police presence at night, more faculty around
135. Blank
136. None
137. Nothing
138. Blank
139. More security cameras because we don’t have many
140. Nothing
141. Nothing
142. Blank
143. Blank
144. Blank
145. Blank
146. More lights
147. Parking lots closer to classrooms. Long walks alone are somewhat fearful mostly when its dark out or in between passing period when very few people are walking on campus.
148. Blank
149. -More lights at night –A parking lot closer to Harrington (that commuters can actually park in)
150. Street lights
151. Police officers should be less discriminating towards people of color and only stop individuals if actual law permits or actual suspicion is in place. This “perspective” they have on colored people can caused much more further issues.
152. I would not change anything we have an active police force and dorm security so people can rarely enter with out permission
153. Blank
154. If the campus police wasn’t so strict on alcohol and drugs and worried more about school shootings, rape, and violence
155. Blank
156. More police at night/ early morning
157. Blank
158. I wish that tower lot had more lighting so I could feel safer walking back to my apartment at night.
159. More police force around campus at night- not just in their cars.
160. Blank
161. Blank
162. Nothing.
163. Big cement dicks everywhere
164. Less harassment from police and more protecting the students
165. Blank
166. More security especially evenings when walking alone.
167. More blue light
168. Nothing
169. More campus police involvement
170. Blank
### Table 15. Age

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### Table 16. Residency

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<td>Commuter</td>
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### Table 17. Class Level

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Gendered Demographic Tables
### Table 18. Ethnicity

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<td>African American</td>
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<td>Cape Verdean</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>169</td>
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### Table 19. Class Year

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84


