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EMPIRICAL TEST OF THE GENERAL STRAIN THEORY ON
WORKPLACE SHOOTINGS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Criminal Justice

by
Joshwan Marcus Cobbs
September 2012

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A Thesis
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by
Joshwan Marcus Cobbs
September 2012

Approved by:


Dr. Andrea Schoepfer, Chair,
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9/20/12
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ABSTRACT

The current study makes the attempt to extend Robert Agnew's (1992) General Strain Theory to the adult population in a U.S. organizational setting, to predict criminal offending at the work site. A content analysis has been conducted to determine how adult employee's perception of mistreatment and unfairness by co-workers within a professional setting affects their attitudes and behavior.

50 case studies involving random men and women over the age of eighteen were collected through Cal State's library data base ProQuest Newsstand website in the attempt to examine the ability of the General Strain theory to predict the seriousness, and different outcomes, of criminal offending based on exposures to different types of strains outlined in Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory. The results revealed that the General Strain Theory was able to link certain types of strain that could possibly explain the seriousness and outcome of criminal behavior. However, a few problems within the current study indicated that the predicted outcome of certain strains may not be able to be generalized to all employed individuals experiencing these exact strains because pertinent information related to these criminal outcomes

also depends on coping skills and negative strains such as anger, frustration, and depression which were not included in this study. The absences of this critical information suggested that outside factors such as coping skills and various negative strains could also contribute to the different types of criminal outcomes. The theoretical relevance of the findings is further elaborated in the summary and conclusion section.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The popular imagery of violence in the workplace perpetrated by the media depicts an ordinary individual who is overwhelmed and weighed down with personal problems and negative life experiences who suddenly reaches a boiling point of anger and frustration and engages in violent behavior. The result of their violent behavior stems from being discharged from a job where they have invested blood, sweat, and tears for many years of their service and the initial reaction would be to return to their former job armed with a handgun and hatred in the heart. This popular imagery, illustrated by the media of workplace violence, showcases a disturbed former employee who seeks revenge and retribution on those who he or she has perceived to have done them harm, by eliminating them from the equation such as executing their targeted victims and spontaneously sparing or killing others who have crossed their path of destruction (Hinduja, 2007; Kennedy, Homant, & Homant, 2004). After the shooting has concluded and all of the perpetrator's targets have been eliminated, reality begins to set in and they realize that the end is near. Faced with two options, the disgruntled employee

either surrenders to local authorities or turns the gun on themselves, ending their life. Workplace violence such as this has occurred over the past two decades and is becoming more and more problematic for all managers across America (Stone, 1995).

The tragic incident discussed above is an example of workplace violence that is gripping our society at alarming rates. Workplace homicide is defined as an individual being killed while performing their job in a work setting. Reports have shown that workplace homicide during the 1980s has estimated that 7,600 workers were victims of workplace homicide during that time. It was the third leading cause of death among workers on a job. Since the 1980s, it has been reported that each day of every year 23 people become victims of workplace homicide making it the second leading cause of death of work-related deaths today (Harvey, Cosier, 1995). According to Deborah Antai-Otong (2001), Sameer Hindjua (2007), and Frank Bensimon (1994), work place murder is the leading cause of death for working women; which is estimated at being 42% of all female workplace deaths and is the second leading cause of death for men. Similar findings suggested that from 2005-2009 the victims of workplace homicide were male and middle-aged. Males accounted for approximately 4 out

of 5 victims of workplace homicide (Harrell, 2011). In addition, this type of violence that takes place in the work setting is now beginning to be recognized as a category of violent crime. Reports show that approximately one million assaults occurred annually in the workplace in the United States between 1987 and 1992 (Toscano, Weber, 1994). In addition, reports from the North Western National Life Insurance Company (1993) estimated that one in four full-time workers claimed to be the victims of at least one violent incident of workplace violence between the years of 1992-1993 (Eisele et al., 1998).

Sameer Hindjua (2009) estimated that 1,000 homicides have been estimated to occur in the workplace each year which makes American employees seven times more likely to be victimized in this way than in other industrialized nations. However, one has to realize that these statistics downplay the significance of this problem because reports indicate that some accounts of workplace violence have a tendency not to be reported to proper authorities which can have an effect on the actual statistics of workplace violence. Research has shown that workplace violence was slightly less likely than non-workplace violence to be reported to the police (Harrell, 2011). Hinduja (2007) reported that 58% of harassment and 43% of threats, and

24% of attacks were not reported by victims to the proper authorities. In addition, 47% of workplace violence was reported to the police compared to 52% of non-workplace violence. Furthermore, victims aged 35 and older were least likely to report workplace violence to the police because these individuals believed that the incident was a personal matter; they believed the incident was not important enough to report to the police; they believed their employer would not take the necessary actions to solve the problem; and they believed, if reported, this would only encourage more violence from the attacker (Harrell, 2009; Hinduja, 2007). However, despite the lack of reporting, workplace violence is a serious issue that has a negative impact on private and public sectors; overall, threatening the economic stability of our society.

Even though personal and interpersonal problems play a major role in the serious forms of workplace violence, many other workplace cases that are less dramatic occur more often than none. By virtue of association with colleagues, it is a mistake to doubt that all employees do not face some type of exposure to violence because the traditional structure of the job setting inclines all employees to work in close proximities of each other.

According to the study of "Workplace Violence at Government Sites," no workplace or professional business is immune to such violent acts (Eisele, Watkins, & Matthews, 1998). Reports from Deborah Antai-Otong (2001) support the findings from Hinduja (2009) and Eisele et al. (1998), whereas it is estimated that 2 million people in the United States are assaulted each year by colleagues and threatened by 6.3 million co-workers. In addition, it is also estimated that 723 attacks, 43,000 harassments, and 16,400 threats take place every day on the job in America (Antai-Otong, 2001; Eisele et al., 1998; Hinduja, 2009).

Since the 1990s, it has been reported that cities big and small across the world are becoming increasingly more violent where violent crimes have increased more than 200% over the last two decades, such as the 80s and the 90s, and is likely to get worse (Stone, 1995). In contrast, the number of homicides in the workplace has decreased by 51% between 1993-2009, indicating a decrease in workplace violence. From 2005-2009, the average annual rate of violent victimization in the workplace against employed people ages 16 and older was about 5% violent crimes per 1,000 workers (Harrell, 2011). According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

(CFOI), it has been reported that victims of ages 16 and older of workplace homicides have decreased by 39% from 1,068 in 1996 to 648 in 1999. This number also decreased again in 2004 to 559. 2009 estimated that there were 521 workplace homicides which were slightly lower from 526 in 2008 (CFOI, 2009).

Despite the decrease in workplace violence, no occupational setting is immune to such violence and the Department of Justice (1996) reported in their study that one million people each year become victims of work-related crimes (Department of Justice, 1996). Homicide accounts for a larger share of the more fatal injuries as opposed to serious nonfatal injuries that occur more frequently in the workplace. However, homicide is the fastest growing crime at work accounting for 17% of the 6,271 work fatalities that took place in 1993 which translates to 20 employees killed at work each week for a whole year (Stone, 1995; Toscano, Weber, 1994; The Department of Justice, 1996).

Many researchers suggest that workplace violence has been triggered by negative life events such as economy recession, downsizing, marital problems, psychological issues, terminations etc. while others point to the recent surge in violence showcased in movies, television, video

games, pop culture music, and books which subconsciously incline individuals to become more tolerant of violence (Stone, 1995). Another important fact to mention is the easy access and vast amount of guns that are available to the public which can possibly serve as an indication to the increasing rate of work-related homicide. Later in this study, you will learn that 75-80% of all workplace homicide is carried out by the use of a gun which seems to be the preferred weapon of choice in committing workplace violence; while 9% of fatal attacks were carried out by stabbings, 3% from beatings, and 6 % from strangulations or fires.

It is reported that in 1993 the gun population in this country had been estimated at 212 million firearms with half of all households owning at least one type of gun while other households were averaged out to about 4.5 (Department of Bureau and Justice Statistics, 1996; Stone 1995).

The purpose of this research paper is to look at the occupational setting within America and determine the cause of workplace shootings, how workplace violence is defined, what workplaces are more susceptible to workplace violence, which conditions of the work setting predisposes workplace violence, how often does workplace violence

occur, identifying warning signs that leads to murderous outbursts, and what are the causes of such heinous acts. In addition to answering these questions, I will attempt to investigate whether a relationship exists between workplace violence and different types of strains that employees may suffer from and how it can possibly play a crucial role in predisposing them to behave in deviant ways.

Research suggests that when an employee fails at their attempt to cope with such daily stress and anger, stemming from their working conditions, in a legal manner while suffering from a cluster of multiple negative issues such as; deficiency in health, financial problems, harassment, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, sexual discrimination, psychological issues, and loss of job or property, their alternative is to be more inclined to maladaptively cope with such issues behaving in a unconventional criminal manner. For the purpose of the current study, it will focus on type III workplace violence that deals with shootings of former or current employees. The theoretical framework of Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory will be used as guidance to examine the shootings of 50 individual case studies that have made headlines in the media and newspapers by identifying the

type of job, the location of the attack, the gender of the attacker, the relationship the attacker has with the workplace, and other variables that highlight the motivation of the attacker that prompted them to engage in criminal activity while tracing a relationship between workplace violence and individual strain.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Strain theories such as Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory explore the structure of a society and assert that organizations, to some extent, impact the lives and behavior of its members which produces more crime than others. This theory has the ability to combine macro level variables such as capitalism and society with micro level variables such as anger, depression, and frustration for a more in depth understanding of their importance. For example, we presently live in a culture that celebrates individual success, individual identity, and personal achievement while neglecting social responsibility, selflessness, and mutual interdependence. In other words, there is an inequality of the social structure (macro level variable) and culturally uniform goals (micro level variable) which can lead to the outcome of strain and deprivation. For example, there are some people who have been awarded by society the means to succeed in achieving their goals; but in contrast, those who have been stripped and cheated out of these means by the forces of their social structures will ultimately lead to unlimited

aspirations which can only be pursued through criminal behavior.

The General Strain Theory has been reported to be one of the leading theories to predict criminal behavior because, for one, it assumes that humans in some form or fashion are socialized to be goal seeking and most individuals within our society are driven by money which measures one's material success. The American dream lies at the core of most individual's heart despite the people's difference of specific goals. Such behavior can be predicted if their dreams have become obstructed or blocked in such a way that will ultimately lead to negative emotions that may be converted to criminal behavior to pursue their desired goals (Agnew, 2006; Cullen, Wright, & Belvins, 2006; Henry, Lanier, 2006).

The General strain theory has three categories that suggest that certain stressors in a person's life can increase their risk of committing a crime. (1) The failure to achieve positively valued goals, such as the American dream, measured by autonomy, social statues, and money; (2) the loss of positively valued stimuli, such as romantic partner, property, or something of sentimental value; (3) and the presentation of negative valued stimuli such as verbal and physical abuse. From the perspective of

strain theories, under any abnormal circumstances; crime is reported to be a potential reaction to such stressful situations as outlined in the three categories of Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory.

The basis of this research is to utilize Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory to better understand why and how individuals deal with daily burdensome stressors that they have to succumb to in an occupational setting. What sets my research apart from other current research is that many attempts have been made using this theoretical framework to test delinquency but not many have offered data that supports or adds to the research that extends our knowledge to the adult population in a corporate environment such as the work setting. This research makes an attempt to suggest that there is a relationship between general and specific stress related variables such as: racial and ethnic discrimination, harassment, verbal and physical assault; and economic stressors such as: layoffs, forced retirement, disputes in social security, retirement pension, and hourly wages which are all variables that stem from the workplace and, consequently, force certain individuals to maladaptively cope with their anger and frustration.

Defining Workplace Violence

The Department of Bureau Justice and Statistics (2001) and the National Institute of Occupational Safety Health (2001) workplace violence go beyond verbal or physical attacks. Homicide and other physical assaults occur on a continuum that is accompanied by bullying, emotional abuse, stalking, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other forms of conduct that create large amounts of anxiety in the workplace. All of these deviant acts are part of workplace violence and they have become a pervading fear for both white and blue collar workers. Workplace violence is defined as one of the greatest threats to an occupational work setting (Rugala, 2002). In addition, the commission of perpetrating criminal acts, such as (e.g. coercive behavior, assault, robbery, kidnapping, forcible sex offense, homicides, harassment, and disorderly conduct) all fall within the definition of workplace violence. Furthermore, according to the HR and Employment Law News, the FBI defined workplace violence as any action that may threaten the safety of an employee, impact the employee's physical or psychological well-being, or cause damage to company property (NIOSH, 1993; Rugala, 2002).

Along with the definition of workplace violence, reports from Kennedy and Homant (2004) have categorized five different types of workplace perpetrators that indulge in such deviant acts. These workplace assailants are the angry customer, the batterer in a domestic dispute, the typical criminal assailant, the mentally or medically disturbed person, and the disgruntled employee. In addition, workplace violence has also been categorized in four different types of workplace violence. Type 1 workplace violence crimes are violent acts committed by criminals who have no former or current relationship or affiliation with the actual workplace or its employees where the crime is taking place. Type 1 crimes usually involve robbery, trespassing, shoplifting, or other crimes based off the criminal's intent. These crimes are more incidental rather than planned or organized by the perpetrator. Reports from Felipe Estrada, Anders Nilsson, Kristina Jerre, and Sofia Wikman (2010) have noted that of the vast majority of workplace homicides, 85% are type 1 crimes. Similar findings in support of type 1 crimes were found in a Los Angeles Times article titled "Armed and Angry" which also found that type 1 crimes account for more than 80% of homicides that take place at work. The reason for this is because the motive behind these

incidents is usually theft and the perpetrator or perpetrators usually carry a weapon such as a gun or knife which increases the risk and high probability of someone being seriously wounded or killed at work (Estrada et al., 2010; Los Angeles Times, 1997). In 1998 out of 6,026 fatal work related injuries, 709 were homicides and two-thirds of the 428 cases involved robbery and 63 of the people were killed by co-workers (Kennedy, Homant, 2004). The type of job one works at usually is a great indicator of how serious or likely their chances are of being victimized; however, workplace violence typically falls heavily on businesses that deal with large amounts of cash transactions or jobs involving employees who work late throughout the night (Estrada et al., 2010). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, no other occupation had workplace violence rates higher than security guards, law enforcement, and bartenders (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009).

Type 2 crimes are very unique in a way because these crimes involve a broad range of individuals such as a customer, client or patient, student, or inmate who commit crimes against an employee. This type of crime differs from Type 1 crimes because the perpetrators involved in Type 2 crimes are people who become hostile and violent

while they are receiving service and therefore have some sort of relationship or affiliation with the business. Studies indicate that the largest industry that receives a high rate of Type 2 workplace violence crimes is the health industry. This is because the occupation of doctors, nurses, therapists, or psychologists often interacts with dangerous people who are unstable and whose behavior is often hard to predict when they may be triggered by a disagreement or argument for being rejected, refused, or denied or a dispute concerning the lack of quality services (Estrada, et al., 2010; Los Angeles Times, 1997).

It is estimated that only about 3% of all workplace homicides result from Type 2 crimes because the majority of these crimes usually include verbal abuse or simple assault which can be translated to nonfatal injuries. Certain occupations (e.g. Health care professionals, police officers, teachers, and customer services workers) are likely to be victimized while on the job because they deal with violent individuals daily with the possibility of having mental and criminal histories.

Type 3 workplace crimes can be defined as an individual who is a former or current employee of the business who threatens or attacks other employees in their

attempt to seek revenge, or (from their perception) right a wrong. This type of crime can be understood as worker-on-worker and this can range from an employee assaulting a colleague or co-worker to someone of authority such as a manager or supervisor. According to statistics, workplace violence is usually directed at people of authority or importance such as HR professionals, and these individuals have a greater risk of being attacked at work (Bensimon, 1994). HR professionals are responsible for lay-offs, terminations, promotions or demotions, reprimands or disciplinary actions taken out on current employees; thus far making them the primary targets of workplace violence.

Worker-on-worker violence is composed of various criminal acts such as threats, abuse or physical attacks that leave serious injuries; or homicides directed towards supervisors, managers, or co-workers. The amount of fatalities that this type of workplace violence accounts for is rather low and it is estimated to be approximately 7% of all workplace homicides (NIOSH, 2001). The type of workplaces that are at most risk of an attack are businesses that usually do not conduct a thorough background criminal investigation on new applicants or the company is experiencing economic issues and, as a result, are downsizing and reducing its workforce to

alleviate some of the economic stress on the company (NIOSH, 2001; Pfeffer, 2010).

Type 4 workplace violence crimes can be characterized as a personal relationship that the perpetrator has with the employee but not the business where the attack takes place. The relationship that the perpetrator has with the victim is usually a personal relationship that involves domestic violence that results in the intended victim being threatened, stalked, or harassed at work. Domestic violence can also leave the intended victim seriously wounded from either simple or aggravated assaults and for the most part, left dead at their workplace. Studies show that Type 4 workplace violence is estimated to account for 5% of all workplace homicides (Estrada et al., 2010; Los Angeles Times, 1997).

Due to the various forms and the destructive nature of workplace violence, reports show that the increasing attention and knowledge devoted to workplace violence can help criminologists develop a theory that can carefully explain and define the nature and the given types of workplace crimes. For the purpose of this study, Type 3 workplace violence will be investigated and discussed only because many findings and support from various studies have indicated a strong relationship between interpersonal

conflict within relationships and workplace violence. In addition, Type 3 workplace violence can be best understood from the broader perspective of Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory because Type 3 workplace violence has been linked to stress, anger, frustration, expression of hostility, perceived injustice, and other negative emotions that further contribute to job-related violence (Agnew, 2006; Broidy, 2001; Hinduja, 2006a, 2007b, 2009c; Kennedy, Homant, & Homant, 2004; Langton, Piquero, 2006; Williams, 2000).

Atkinson Williams' study (2000) generalized three types of perpetrators that are involved in type 3 workplace violence. This study indicated that type 3 workplace violence may be perpetrated by individuals who have psychological dysfunctions such as mental illness which is estimated to be prevalent in 25% of all workplace violence cases (Williams, 2000). In addition, Williams also reports that Type 3 perpetrators with psychological issues (such as those who suffer from agitated states of depression, bipolar, and paranoia disorders) may misinterpret their state of well-being by perceiving an event on the job as a form of injustice, exacerbate their perception of being treated unfair, have explosive temper issues, have irrational ideas or beliefs, and be unable to

deal with criticism. The second perpetrator to be involved in Type 3 workplace crimes is identified as a bully. These individuals are people who have a chronic nature of verbal abuse by doing what they want and when they want for the simple pleasure of being overly aggressive. These bullies on the job target people with demographic differences such as sex, age, race, and religion.

Another form of Type 3 perpetrator workplace violence are those who feel they have been "victimized" or forced into a corner with their backs against the wall by co-workers, managers, and supervisors. Their perception of being victimized stems from them being treated unfairly such as harsh disciplinary actions, being denied for promotion, or discharged from a job based on their race, age, sex, and religious affiliation (Williams, 2000). Perpetrators who feel they are being singled out based on their differences may not know how to cope with such strain in a verbal manner. Therefore, these individuals are more likely to be inclined to respond with physically deviant behavior.

One can understand how workplace violence greatly impacts the society as a whole and how the consequences of such violence affect American businesses across the world. Some of the more important consequences of workplace

violence deal with the emotional and physical harm sustained by the innocent victims. Survivors of these tragic events (despite whether they suffered physical injuries) can still run the risk of suffering from anxiety, depression, stress, embarrassment, poor concentrations, nightmares, sleeplessness nights, and exhaustion which can further lead to chronic problems (NIOSH, 2001; Spector, 2002; Williams, 2000). Other consequences of workplace violence can result in the loss of business such as losing good employees who either enter retirement early or resign to protect themselves from a hostile working environment or finding it difficult to attract future employees because of the reputation of the hostile workplace. Outside health reasons, workplace violence can have intangible effects such as the substantial economic cost for employee compensation, repairing damaged property, and settling civil or criminal lawsuits are all consequences that accompany these tragedies.

Reports indicated by Dennis Johnson, John Kiehlbauch, and Joseph Kinney (1994) stated that workplace violence in 1992 had more than 111,000 cases of serious physical assault including homicide and harassment That estimated to cost all businesses and companies involved over 3

billion dollars that year and the problems are only getting worse (Johnson, Kiehlbauch, & Kinney 1994). Loss of productivity due to workplace violence can manifest in many ways such as high employee absences due to fear of sustaining injuries from recurring attacks or violent confrontations at work. A slower work pace can be evident if a drawn out external and internal police investigation has commenced. In addition to the high economic cost of workplace violence, some demographic variations also are impacted by this epidemic. For example, according to Toscano and Weber (1994) workplace homicides were considered to be an urban problem because reports indicated that eight of the largest metropolitan areas had accounted for almost half of work related homicides, and fatal work injuries were the leading cause of in the United States (Toscano, Weber, 1994).

Furthermore, minorities such as Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians face a higher risk of homicide that was reported to be more than one fourth of all homicide victims compared to one eighth of the total work force they represented. Toscano and Weber offered some suggestions to explain this disproportionate amount of violence to the type of work they were assigned to do which exposed them to greater risk of severe or fatal

injuries such as taxi cab drivers, chauffeurs, and managers of small business establishments that were located in high risk metropolitan areas. At this time, Blacks represented 10 percent of the total labor force but they also accounted for 24 percent of all taxi drivers, while Hispanics represented six percent of this type of work-related homicide and all other immigrants accounted account for 9 percent of the total work force but represented 22 percent of homicide victims (Toscano, Weber, 1994).

Challenging Toscano and Weber's findings of minorities having a higher risk of being victimized at work, The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2009) reported that Whites had a higher rate of committing more workplace violence than any other group while Blacks and Hispanics were reported to have higher rates of non-workplace violence, meaning violence that occurred outside of work. In addition, White employees have a higher estimated rate at 78 percent of all workplace violence victims while Hispanics and Blacks had a smaller rate of being victimized at work estimated at 8 percent of Hispanics and 9 percent for Blacks (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). It is imperative that managers confront workplace violence head on to prevent or reduce the seriousness and the

potential number of employee homicide incidents that take place in their businesses; along with the more prevalent and common forms of insidious day to day problems "verbal threats, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and fist fights".

General Strain Theory

While workplace violence continues to emerge as a critical safety issue to all business around the world, there is a lack of empirical research to prevent and predict such outbreaks. This section will identify some causes and factors that exacerbate and fuel such explosive reactions by disgruntled employees who feel like they have been left with no other alternative. Some researchers have noted that, due to so many factors that may result from violence against employers, this can serve as the main purpose as to why there is a limited amount of data on this topic; because researchers find it extremely difficult to accurately measure the multitude of causes and factors that play a part in these violent reactions. However, many sources claim that the number one cause of workplace violence, such as homicide, is attributed to the pressures many people face from the economic recession

(Bensimon, 1994; Geordie, 1992; Joyner, 2010; Pfeffer, 2010).

The immense pressure of an economic recession includes, but is not limited to, over-working employees, downsizing, job loss, company mergers, and layoffs which affect people of all race and sex across the board. In the 2000s, many people faced a tougher and smaller job market than they did in the 1990s. Fewer jobs were available to many applicants and the competition had risen and people were starting to become frustrated and angry for not being able to find a suitable job or losing a potentially good one. If an individual, for some reason, has been laid off, reports show that in a tough job market, as in the current one, it can be extremely frustrating to an individual to find a new job which may result in them losing out on their home, car, life time savings, and which jeopardizes the future education of their children (Bensimon, 1994; Geordie, 1992; Joyner, 2010; & Pfeffer, 2010).

This type of strain and stress can cause and promote negative emotions that drive an individual to compromise their integrity, self-esteem, and loss of identity by behaving irregularly in hopes of escaping from the clutches of strain or to strike back at the source of strain in a criminal manner. These various triggering

events can be enough to force individuals to seek retribution by committing a violent act in the workplace after they feel that they have been mistreated or when they get worked up beyond their control and they lose any sense of reasoning and rational thinking which enables them to justify their actions (Geordie, 1992; Joyner, 2010; Pfeffer, 2010; Stone, 1995). Reports from Robert Agnew and others have suggested that crime can be a means to lower or eliminate strain. Such strain, or stressors, related to the job can make people feel bad enough that they cope through crime (Agnew, 2001a, 2006b; Cullen, Wright, Blevins, 2006; Henry, Lanier, 2006). One important note is that not all strained individuals cope through criminal activity; rather, some strained individuals, as stated by Agnew, are more predisposed to criminal behavior if the cost of crime is low, if they are unable to engage in legal coping strategies, and if they have disposition towards crime (Agnew, 2001a, 2006b; Cullen et al., 2006; Henry, Lanier, 2006).

The beauty of using the General Strain Theory in this current study is that it was built on the foundation of previous strain theories and has overcome the criticisms that plagued earlier strain theories that were solely focused on the delinquency of urban and lower class

individuals (Agnew, 2001; Broidy, 2009). Agnew's theory departs from Robert Merton's, Albert Cohen's, Richard Cloward's, and Llyod Ohlin's strain theories because it is able to allow the individualized conceptualization of strain that does not rely on the identification of certain universal goals, permitting the theory to take the differences in gender, social economic status, race, and other personal differences in goals while taking strain into account (Broidy, 2009).

Robert Agnew's revision of the strain theory was developed in attempts to succeed where previous strain theories had failed because earlier strain theories faced much criticism. For example, early theories were unable to explain the delinquency of the middle class. They argued that there was no universal pressure at all levels to achieve monetary success and that only the lower and urban communities suffered and are unable to achieve such a wealthy status (Broidy, 2009; Langton, Piquero, 2006). In other words, earlier strain theories suggested that people of upper class did suffer a little strain to an extent to earn and gain more money but not to the point that they were tempted to engage in criminal behaviors to cope with such strain as opposed to the lower class who had limited

resources to legally cope with strain and were more inclined to cope in illicit acts.

The reinvigorated strain theory by Agnew postulated that strain is not specifically tied to wealth or economic status, but rather it is a psychological reaction that individuals engage in when they perceive the threat of any negative aspect of one's social environment. In other words, strain is universal and does occur across all types of social classes whose members have the ability to engage in criminal offenses because they can suffer negative emotions in life, such as strain (Broidy, 2009; Langton, Piquero, 2006). These findings serve to weaken and discredit the claims and support of the earlier strain theories because Robert Agnew went a step further by expanding the concept of strain and recognized that there were multiple sources of strain in order to allow it to not only include preventing one to attain goals in life, but also the concept of removing beneficial and positive factors and the introduction of persistence and presence of detrimental factors in one's life (Hinduja, 2006a, 2007b).

The General Strain Theory asserts that violence is more likely to erupt when a goal-oriented individual feels as if their dream is being blocked or obstructed, such as

denied form a promotion, a disgruntled worker receiving a poor evaluation of their performance, a cut in salary or wages, and termination. These traumatic events will change the perception of the individual which may further exacerbate them to (and pressure them to) the point that they begin to internalize their situation as an unsolvable problem which harbors intense and chronic emotions, or anxiety, having self-protection and preservation to become the sole concern of those who feel threatened. This is then followed by internal conflict where this person attempts to commit and, or in, a violent manner (Agnew, 1992; Antai-Otong, 2001; & Benismon, 1994).

What is Strain?

In order to understand which types of strain lead to crime, strain must be defined to clarify and understand what is meant by strain. Strain has been defined as a relationship, or relationships, where an individual is treated unfairly and has not been treated as they would prefer (Agnew, 2001, 2006). Furthermore, the term strain can also be used to describe a condition, or objective event such as the presence of physical abuse, or be the result of receiving a poor evaluation on a job. Two types of strain have been listed to help further clarify the

meaning of strain: objective strains and subjective strains (Agnew, 2001, 2006). Objective strains are referred to as strains that all members of a group oppose or dislike. No matter what the event (e.g. verbal / physical abuse) or condition (e.g. homelessness) maybe, many people, regardless of group membership, dislike these types of strains. Agnew has reported that objective strains can be easily empirically tested because the evaluation of events and conditions can possibly vary among group member characteristics such as gender, age, and race which provide us with a more in depth understanding of objective strains (Agnew, 2001, 2006).

Subjective strains are referred to as an event or condition that is disliked by one particular member in a group. If an individual is experiencing subjective strain, then they are experiencing an event or condition that they dislike only by themselves. The importance of subjective strain is that it provides group and member differences that highlight how the level of certain strained events or conditions may have a greater effect on one individual in a group but a different strain effect on another. This further supports the idea that not all individuals cope with strain by engaging in criminal behavior. Objective strain can be empirically tested by making observational

research, interviewing a sample of respondents, or surveying them with a list of questions on events/conditions that will measure their objective strain. In contrast, since subjective strain deals with only one person at a time, the best way to empirically test this type of strain is through a range of factors such as individual level of self-esteem and personal and social resources such as social support, self-efficacy, and other individual traits (Agnew, 2001, 2006).

It is extremely important not to underestimate the power of examining both objective and subjective strains because this is one of the key features of the General Strain Theory that makes it successful. The General Strain Theory allows one to better understand and distinguish external events from subjective strains by examining the conditions that influence both individual and group differences in crime (Agnew, 2001, 2006). One limitation of the General Strain Theory is that Agnew did not discuss the correlation between the two types of strains (objective or subjective) and which are more likely to result in crime; rather, both types were treated as equal in terms of their impact on crime. The likelihood of each type of strain to result in crime depends on the characteristics of the individual experiencing the strain.

Types of Strain

Strains that mostly lead to crime are (1) seen as unjust, (2) high in magnitude, (3) associated with low social control, and (4) create some pressure or incentive for criminal coping. These are the four main types of strain that will most likely lead to criminal activity if legal coping mechanisms are unavailable to the individual. However, other types of strain that can also increase crime are things such as abusive peer relations, abusive discipline or parental rejection, low school grades, chronic unemployment, poor working conditions, marital problems, gender and racial discrimination, criminal victimization, unpleasant jobs, homelessness, and the inability to achieve one's personal goals through the social economic ladder (Agnew 2001, 2006; Cullen et al., 2006; Henry, Lanier, 2006).

The General Strain Theory argues that these types of strains result in the outcome of criminal behavior because they contribute to one or more negative emotions that range from anger, frustration, depression, and hopelessness, ultimately overwhelming the individual. Such pressures and emotions perceived as a threat will cause the individual to correct the problem, and crime is one way to make such corrections. When an individual suffers

from one or multiple strains that Agnew suggest are most likely to lead to crime, their ability to reason is reduced, their concern for law or others has been diminished, and the cost of crime will increase their disposition for crime (Agnew, 2001; Cullen et al., 2006; Henry, Lanier, 2006). Anger is an example of one of the negative emotions derived from the various strains and it has the tendency to reduce one's ability by altering their perception of the world by enabling them to be unreasonable with others, reducing their concern for the cost of crime and their awareness, and, most importantly, fostering the belief that their desire for revenge can and will be justified through their criminal actions (Henry & Lanier, 2006).

Test of the General Strain Theory

There has been a surge of interest in addressing the issue of workplace violence within the world of criminology (Hindjua, 2007). Hinduja has noted that this topic of interest is similar to other topics such as white collar crime and corporate crimes because they, too, have attracted limited interest of research from criminologists. In contrast, the advantage in the limited empirical study of workplace violence proves to be

advantageous because few attempts have been made to examine the phenomenon of workplace violence within the context of criminological theories, which makes it unique. Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory has been used to explain delinquency in juveniles but no further attempts have been extended to the adult population with regards to their delinquent behavior in an occupational setting and their coping strategies to strain. Therefore, the General Strain Theory is a great way to test workplace violence and the outcomes of how individuals cope with both general and specific stressors in an occupational setting because few studies have made the attempt to fully understand the relationship with the victims that suffer from various strains accompanied at work such as physical, social and psychological stress and how individuals react to these stressors (Hinduja, 2006a, 2007b, & 2009c; Langton, Piquero, 2007).

Research shows that there are strong correlations between workplace violence and negative reactions to stress in the work place. The impact of work stress has been shown to lead to high employee absenteeism, poor job performance, family problems, layoffs, alcohol and drug use, and violence. Due to the extremely limited amount of work using Agnew's General Strain Theory to test workplace

violence, only three studies were found. All three studies were developed for the sole purpose of determining why employee mistreatment by co-worker's or work performance while in occupational or organizational settings, were more likely to maladaptively-cope in various ways (Hinduja, 2006, 2007, 2009).

Examining the relationship between workplace related stressors and maladaptive behaviors and emotional outcomes, secondary analyses and personal interviews from a private sector corporation were used to test workplace violence while using the General Strain Theory. Hinduja's three studies have found strong links of negative life hassles, negative peer relations, and negative life events as they significantly associate with delinquency. In addition, the strain that is categorized as the presentation of a negative or noxious stimuli was measured using demographic characteristics as independent variables, and results found strong links of perceived negative treatment based off race, gender, age, ethnicity, education, and religion which were also used as predictors of maladaptive emotional and behavioral responses (Hinduja, 2006, 2007, 2009). Furthermore, a sample from Hinduja's studies found that those who indicated that they were treated negatively based off discrimination because

of race or education, and were denied or overlooked for certain promotions, were all found to have a significantly higher likelihood to cope in a deviant and aggressive manner (Hinduja, 2006).

A number of studies have shown that unjust treatment has a strong association to anger, and they suggest that anger increases the likelihood of violent crimes when a person perceives that they have been treated unjustly (Agnew, 2001, 2006; Broidy, 2001, 2006; Cullen et al., 2006, Henry, Lanier, 2006; Kennedy, Homant, 2004; Langton, Piquero 2006). There are three ways people distinguish the perception of justice: (1) Distributive justice is when one receives a fair share of available rewards or resources that are given out to their relative contribution to a social exchange. (2) Procedural justice is how fairness is divided by the process of available rewards at a given time. (3) Interpersonal justice includes the courteousness and consideration to all individuals during the process (Kennedy, Homant, Homant, 2004). Results suggest that the unjust treatment in "procedural justice," as indicated by respondents in their reports, was found to be linked to the highest levels of support for aggression (Hinduja, 2007; Kennedy, Robert Homant, & Michael Homant, 2004).

Demographic triggers in Hinduja's studies are a good way to explain why some individuals are prone to cope maladaptively to crime while others are not. Research suggests that a general demographic profile has a strong linkage between workplace violence and negative reactions to stress in the workplace based off demographic characteristics. Prior research has shown strong factors associated with workplace violence and stress that include discrimination of race, gender, education, religion, and age as strong predictors of negative reactions to mistreatment, and of which differ and manifest in different forms. Reports found in a study by Eisele, Watkins, and Matthews (1998) give a general profile of those most likely to behave in counterproductive or other workplace violence incidents, that suggests that these acts are primarily committed by males between the ages of 30 and 50 years old, despite their social class and the type of occupation they have (e.g. white collar or blue collar) (Eisele et al., 1998).

Similar research found that the typical workplace violence perpetrators are white males between the ages of 30 and 50 who have lost their job or are expecting to lose their job, are loners, have a history of not getting along with others, a fascination with weapons, family or marital

problems, and have difficulty accepting authority (Bensimon, 1994). Furthermore, Larry Chavez, a workplace violence expert, has noted that the typical workplace violent perpetrator, 95% of the time, are men who are veteran employees suffering from stressful issues. These individuals are usually the ones that react aggressively, because their jobs are their lives and they have invested numerous amounts of years on their jobs, giving them time to develop grudges that can lead to desperation if they feel that someone, or something, has jeopardized their career (Bensimon, 1994; The Christian Science Monitor, 2010). The Department of Justice and Statistics (2009) reported that older workers represented a larger proportion of workplace violence offenders, and that 54% of them were between the ages of 35 and older. These findings illustrate a distinction between younger and older workers in their reactions to unjust treatments and the presentation of other negative and noxious stimuli, because older workers maybe were inclined to react violently against their employers, who they felt had betrayed them after working there for many years.

Racial Discrimination

Hinduja (2006, 2007, 2009) has reported that workplace violence is a reoccurring problem that stems from racial discrimination. In addition, studies have shown that diversity within the workforce has led to many workplace problems such as prejudice, discrimination, and harassment. Findings in Hinduja's studies listed that 7.7% (105) workers reported that they have been the victims of prejudice and discriminatory mistreatment in their working environment while another 6.2% (85) of interviewees reported that racial bias, such as prejudicial jokes and insults were personally aimed at them (Hinduja, 2009). Overall, findings reported by Hinduja specify that victims of racial discrimination report experiencing higher levels of negative physical, social, and psychological distress than non-victims.

Gender

The General Strain Theory argues that strain is the result of negative emotions, such as anger, triggered by stressful events that are associated with delinquent outcomes. If legitimate coping mechanisms are not available or are ineffective, then the individual is more apt to adopt illegitimate coping strategies (Agnew, 2001,

2006; Broidy, 2001). However, Hinduja has extended this analysis by examining the relationship between delinquency and strain and considered the possible variations of delinquency and strain across gender by focusing on interpersonal strain issues. Since it has been determined earlier in the study that males make up 95% of all perpetrators of workplace violence, one has to understand why reports have come to such conclusions. In terms of female deviance, Hinduja has reported that strains in the form of sexual harassment and gender discrimination on the job have been found to be predictors of aggressive tendencies in female employees that lead to hostility and violent behavior. Their offensive behavior stems from men's heterosexual interests to maintain solidarity among themselves through the objectification and sexualization of women (Hinduja, 2009).

Reports indicated by the study of Lisa Broidy (1997) revealed that males are reported to experience more strain or stressors than females. Males also are more likely to respond to anger and strain with criminal behavior.. They have a different emotional response to strain that makes them more conducive to crime, and males are subject to different strains than females (Broidy, 1997). However, it has been argued that males do not experience more strain

than females; rather that females experience just as much as strain, if not more than males (Eaton, 1990).

Females experience stressors just as much as men do in an occupational setting because they, too, have been identified to fall under the three categories of the General Strain Theory such as failure to achieve positively-valued goals (including relational and economic goals) and the failure to be treated equally and just by their peers. Females also suffer from stressors that involve the loss of positively-valued stimuli such as the loss of a romantic partner, a family member, friends, and valued property. The presentation of negative stimuli is a key feature in examining the level of stress accounted for in females because they are frequently subjected to a wide range of excessive demands from work and home and they experience verbal, sexual, physical, and other abusive behaviors at home and at work (Broidy, 1997).

Prior data has shown that the General Strain Theory cannot explain the higher rate of male crime compared to the rate of female crime, but, rather, the General Strain Theory allows a better understanding and exploration of the differences in gender crimes based on the amount and types of strain they experience. Reports have noted that different types of strain have different, and substantial,

impacts on the well-being and emotional outcomes of individual behavior. Males may experience somewhat different types of strain than females which are more conducive and lead to more crimes. The General Strain Theory has been claimed to offer gender differences in the three types of strain outlined in the theory in support of these findings. (1) The first strain is failure to achieve positive goals. Males have been reported to have more distinct goals than their female counterparts regarding fairness and just treatment. Males are more concerned with monetary and material success as well as extrinsic achievements. These correlate to higher rates of workplace violence when men have financial problems and are upset when they perceive that they are in jeopardy of losing their job. Conversely, females are more concerned with maintaining close relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners and they are often more upset when they experience work related stressors that threaten their interpersonal relationships (Agnew, 2001; Broidy, 1997).

The (2) second type of strain is loss of positive stimuli. Females are more likely to report higher levels of this type of strain because they are constant targets of gender-based discrimination in addition to working in lower prestigious positions, earning lower wages, and

experiencing a heavy burden from excessive demands placed on them at work as well as in the home. Males suffering from this type of strain are at a minimum, but they do report interpersonal issues among peers at work in the form of competition and jealousy, which may be a reason for why men are reported to have higher rates of victimization in the workplace in the result of workplace violence (Broidy, 1997; Hinduja, 2009; NIOSH, 1993).

In addition to males having a higher rate of victimization compared to females, the General Strain Theory can possibly explain why males also account for a larger portion of perpetrators committing workplace violence. The (3) type of strain is the presentation of a negative stimuli. The General Strain Theory argues that females respond to strain with different emotions than males, such as with depression or sadness, instead of with anger. Men are more apt to get angry and hostile with others when they are responding to negative emotions like strain (Agnew, 2001; Broidy, 1997). This is not to say that women do not get angry or upset; however, their form of anger is experienced differently than the anger that men experience, which predisposes them to commit more violent acts. Men's anger is likely to be characterized as moral outrage, whereas female anger is characterized as

crying, shame, guilt, fear, and anxiety (Broidy, 1997). It is reported that men are more likely to blame others for their aversive treatment and interpret such treatment as a challenge or deliberate insult, whereas females blame themselves when adversely treated by others and tend not to harm others for fear of jeopardizing valued relationships central to their self-concept. If the reports from the Broidy's (1997) study are true, then it can be said that men make up a larger portion of perpetrators in workplace violence because their anger propels them to commit more serious forms of violent crimes, whereas females make up a smaller portion of perpetrators because their anger is more internalized leading to more self-destructive forms of deviance, such as excessive drinking, drug use, and low self-esteem (Agnew, 2001; Broidy, 1997).

Job Stress

Job stress can be defined as when a person suffers from both emotional and physical responses that are harmful to the overall state of the body. This can be seen when a worker's job requirements far exceed their abilities to fully complete their work due to a mismatch in inadequate workers on a specific task with limited

resources and capabilities. This type of job stress, where the managers demand almost impossible results from their employees, can lead to injury and poor health. Research has also suggested that the extreme conditions of a particular work organization can further lead to short and long term physical health problems such as anxiety, headaches, loss of sleep, and cardiovascular disease (Antai-Otong, 2001; NIOSH, 2001; & Spector, 2002). Reports from the National Institute of Occupational Health (1996) reported that 40% of workers claimed that their jobs are extremely stressful and 26% claimed that they are often very burned out or stressed by the type of work they do.

What makes a job stressful is the number of factors, called job stressors, such as the results of daily co-worker interactions and the physical characteristics and conditions of the actual job. Job stress has been argued to cost businesses across America more than 150 billion dollars per year due to the loss of productivity, health costs, and high number of worker absences (Spector, 2002). Such job stressors can include anything that a person or employee perceives as threatening such as constraints or hindrance that interrupts the proper flow of work, interference with employees accomplishing their daily task, constant abuse from internal conflict from

interpersonal issues among other employees, and job uncertainty regarding what is required of the employee (Spector, 2002).

The General Strain Theory suggests that when an individual is exposed to high levels of strain or stress, their emotions begin to run wild. Tempers may flare and anxiety begins to build that causes that person to panic and feel bad. In order to cope with such stressors, the General Strain Theory advises that certain individual coping mechanisms can be activated or engaged to curb and alleviate some of the negative pressures one feels when they are stressed out. These include exercising, venting to extended family members, poetry, vacation, spending time with friends, and other positive outlets in life. Similar findings for positive coping were also attributed to lower levels of strain that included actions people engaged in to cope with stressors and their negative drawbacks (Spector, 2002).

Furthermore, coping with daily stressors can include constructive acts that help an individual overcome the pressure of intense emotions, or they could include destructive acts that enable them to vent and cope in a criminal manner such as excessive drinking, drug abuse, and other illicit acts including not coming in to work,

intentionally doing work incorrectly, starting fights with other co-workers, making threats, vandalizing company property, and stealing from work (Agnew, 1992; Spector, 2001). Reports from the Boston Globe (2002) highlighted the results from a survey that measured workplace violence due to the impact of the recession; the findings indicated that 10% of employees mentioned that they work in a stress-related occupation that exposed them to physical violence. 42% also mentioned that verbal abuse and yelling does occurs regularly, while 1% of the American workforce stated that stress from their job does causes certain individuals to strike back at a co-worker. Lastly, 29% admitted to yelling at colleagues at some time during their working years (Gomstyn, 2002).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This research provides a different way to examine workplace violence and Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory by exploring the behaviors of employees in an occupational setting to see if certain types of strains can predict the seriousness of criminal behavior and different outcomes. The General Strain Theory asserts that strain is most likely to increase the likelihood of crime when the strained individual perceives unjust treatment associated with low self-control, high in magnitude, and creates incentive to engage in criminal coping. If these arguments are correct in the intended outcome of such negative perception, then the different types of strain that meet these criteria serve as a function to the relationship that the characteristics of strain and the characteristics of the people experiencing them will explain their criminal behavior. Therefore, I propose two hypotheses that will focus on the relationships among the types of strains and the severity of the outcome of the criminal act.

Hypotheses

The General Strain Theory identifies three types of strain that serves as triggering mechanisms for various types of strain that individuals are exposed to while performing in an occupational setting such as the failure to achieve positively valued goals, the loss of positively valued stimuli, and the presentation of negative stimuli. Based on the preliminary data set that has been constructed, the seriousness and severity of the outcomes in violent crimes that takes place will be examined. The following hypotheses are research questions that are expected to predict a certain outcome when one variable is affected by another variable indicating the relationship of workplace violence and strain.

Hypothesis 1: I argue that the more strain an individual is exposed to the more possibility there is it can lead to a more serious crime such as multiple victims, fatalities, and/ or the number or types of serious weapons used in their assault at work (such as handgun vs assault rifles). Agnew (2001 and 2006) found that strains most likely to lead to crime are (1) seen as unjust, (2) high in magnitude, (3) associated with low social control, and (4) create some pressure or incentive for criminal coping. This hypothesis suggests that if a person suffers multiple

strains simultaneously, then the outcome of a more serious crime is likely to occur.

Hypothesis 2: I argue that the different types of strain one is exposed to can possibly lead to different outcomes in criminal offending. Agnew (2001 and 2006) has found that certain types of strain can possibly increase the likelihood of crime, especially the more violent crimes. Individuals experiencing certain strains are more likely to lash out and commit harsher crimes while reducing their concerns for others and lower the cost of crime as opposed to others who may experience strains that predispose them to less serious crimes. This hypothesis suggests the possibility that different strain lead to different types of deviant outcomes. Different types of strain will be observed separately (categorized in the three strains that Agnew refers to (1) failure to achieve positive goal, (2) loss of positive stimuli, and (3) presentation of negative stimuli) to see if they produce different outcomes like harsher crimes.

Data

The data that will be utilized in this study is of content analysis. 50 newspaper articles used as case studies were collected in the form of manifest content

that deal with workplace shootings involving employees who have been identified as suffering from the types of strain indicated in the General Strain Theory. These 50 newspaper article case studies involve the systematic study of newspaper articles depicting shooting events at the workplace that have been popular enough to make national headlines within the media and have occurred within the last 10 years. In the current study there are no central reporting systems such as conducting personal interviews, administering surveys, or questionnaires of the reported incidents of workplace violence because no human subjects were utilized in this study. The manifest content data was collected through a school source of Cal State University of San Bernardino Library ProQuest Newsstand which is an online newspaper resource of various articles that meet their patrons needs by providing them access to receive a selection of major national newspaper articles from a data base that includes international, regional and national papers such as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, The Guardian, El Norte, South China Morning Post, Washington Post, and the Jerusalem Post. One important note to mention, due to the vast amount of accessible information through ProQuest, the current study

will only focus on workplace shootings in the United States.

The ProQuest Newsstand gives the customer access to more than 80 full text newspapers from the world's top leading news and information providers such as Gannett and seven additional U.S military titles as well. The full text newspaper articles provide the highest quality of reporting to local and regional constituencies. The highlight of collecting workplace data through ProQuest is the detail and high quality of information it provides to their patrons and customers. ProQuest is not limited to just bibliographies, like other newspaper sources, but it also allows access to subjects, companies, people, products, and geographic areas. With basic and advance searching, ProQuest is suitable for everyone including beginners and professional researchers. Researchers using this database are able to quickly find the news they want and the topics they are studying abundantly.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of work related stress and strains measured in the form of interpersonal conflict, prejudice, ethnoviolence, discrimination, and physical and verbal harassment and to determine the influence of these types of strains on the severity of a criminal event. Content

analysis would be the best way to study these research questions and finding if it is true or not because it is the best way to study any form of communication such as books, magazines, videos, songs, letters, programs, laws, and constitutions as well as any other collection of artifacts because it is particularly well suited for the study of messages and answering classic questions of communication research such as why, how, and with what effect?

The coding of manifest content is an operation that represents the measurement process in content analysis. However, some of the limitations found in content analysis involve reliability and validity issues because coding such terms as these indicated in various newspaper articles will be highly subjected to many interpretations if key variables and terms are not specified clearly. Therefore, the first step in making sure the researcher does not run into any reliability or validity issues is to clearly conceptualize and develop operational definitions of all key variables used in the inquiry by insuring that the operational definition of any variable is either mutually exclusive or exhaustive. At no point in time should the reader be confused as to which attributes make up the indicated research variables.

Reliability in content analysis is simply a matter of whether the researcher's measuring technique can be applied repeatedly to the same thing and yet, yields the same exact results each time which implies the level of consistency and stability. Fortunately for this current research, reliability in content analysis can be considerably high because no other person will be coding or collecting the data. This proves to be the best method to assess the reliability of coding content analysis. The data will be coded and collected by one person, "the researcher," insuring that there is a high level of uniform coding where the researcher will be able to apply the specified measuring technique and yield the same results. The content of the 50 newspaper articles that will be collected will determine the type of attributes in the research variables listed in the data set that specify information such as: the type of offense committed, number of fatalities and victims injured, type of weapon used, number of weapons used, permit for weapon, type of stress suffered from, status of employment, education level, years worked on the job, location, and the stressful motivation that could have inclined them to act in criminal behavior. These research variables are examples of manifest content news story characteristics that will

be operationalized in such a way that will require little or no interpretation and can be reliably coded.

Content analysis validity issues deal with whether the researcher does not cover the measure and range of meanings included within the concept. Simply put, the researcher is not measuring what is intended to be measured. In order to correct this problem, validity issues in content analysis can be addressed by developing a concept (or research question) that is not out of the range of being measured by the researcher. For example, instead of measuring each negative emotion felt by the perpetrators in all 50 manifest case studies, (which at some point will prove to be problematic because negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and depression are so broad that it will be nearly impossible to measure and account for all these emotions). The research question has been revised to measure the seriousness of the crime committed by the perpetrator by indicating the number of fatalities and victims in the attack and the type of weapons used (whether it was a hand gun vs a machine gun). The best way to test this research question validity is by construct validity because this can offer some form of evidence without definitive proof as to whether it does or

does not measure the characteristics of the research question by assessing the seriousness of crime.

Independent Variables

The independent variables illustrate the actual types of strain (or strain categories) the individuals are exposed to; such as either failure to achieve goals, loss of positive stimuli, the presences of negative stimuli, and the number of strains an individual is exposed to. Each independent variable that is categorized into a particular strain type has been coded dichotomously (0 = no, 1 = yes) for the purpose of running a statistical analysis of the present findings.

The reason given is that not every individual will suffer all three types of strains. Some individuals will suffer from one particular strain without ever being exposed to other types of strain. In contrast, others may suffer from two or more strains simultaneously and can possibly be exposed to a higher risk of more serious criminal behavior. For example, if an individual has suffered from all three types of strains, the independent variables will be coded as (failure to achieve goals = 1, loss of positive stimuli = 1, and the presentation of negative stimuli = 1).

In addition to the actual types and strain categories, the number of strains that an individual experiences while at work also included as an independent variable. The possible answer choices for the various strains include, but not limited to be, racial discrimination, loss of job, dispute in salary wages, verbal harassment, unjust treatment, loss of valued property, denied promotions, etc. However, since there are a myriad of different strain types, each individual strain will be placed in a certain category that fills the criteria of Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory. For example, loss of job, dispute in salary wages, and denied promotions will be categorized as failure to achieve goals. Strains such as loss of valued property and loss of a romantic partner or relative will be categorized as loss of positive stimuli. Other strains such as racial discrimination, unjustly treated, stressed out at work, anger, and verbal harassment will be categorized as the presentation of a negative stimuli.

These independent variables have also been coded in a numerical value. However, distributing a number to each type of strain may prove to be a challenge because there are too many specific strains to measure which will demonstrate to be problematic. Therefore, for the purpose

of running a statistical analysis, this independent variable will be coded as a number value that represents the total number of strains that the individual is exposed to. For example, if a person suffers from loss of job, disputes with co-workers, and verbal harassment, this will be coded as a 3 representing the total number of strains exposed to. In contrast, if the same person suffered only one or two types of strain, then that case will be given a 2 or 1 representing the total number of strains they have suffered from. These independent variables are used to measure the extent or level of degree of strain.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables will be characterized as severity and harshness of the outcome as determined by the type of weapons used, whether or not they committed suicide, if they attacked their supervisor, number of victims, and the number of fatalities. The Dependent variable, the number of victims and fatalities, is continuous while the variables "suicide" and "attacked supervisor" are dichotomous types that represents the level of seriousness and they will be both measured as 1 = yes, and 0 = no.

The type of weapon used is coded in as a numerical value because there are a variety of different types of

weapons that have been listed in the studies; and, in order to measure their seriousness, they will have to be coded in a number scale representing the least = 1 to the greatest = 5. (Handguns are coded = 1, shotguns are coded = 2, rifles are coded = 3, assault rifles are code = 4, and combination weapons are coded as = 5). Combination weapons = 5 is when an individual used one or more of these weapons in their assault in workplace violence. This means that they either used a shotgun while wielding one or more handguns or they carried an assault rifle while using a handgun and shotgun. Two or more of the same caliber type are not coded as combination weapon = 5 and retains their original coding. For example, if a suspect carried two handguns or two shotguns, then two handguns will retain their original number value as 1 and two shotguns as 2.

Control Variables

Demographic factors such as age, gender, race and other control variables such as did suspect cope, mental history, previous criminal record, did suspect show prior warning signs before the attack, and the number of times the suspect reloaded their weapon, are all appropriate to use as control variables to test how strain contributes to certain perceived and actual mistreatment and the outcomes

that result from maladaptive coping. Each control variable is coded as a dichotomous variable such as race:

white = 1; non-white = 0, gender: male = 1; female = 0, did suspect commit suicide is: 1 = yes; 0 = no, mental history: 1 = yes; 0 = no, warning signs: 1 = yes; 0 = no, prior criminal history: 1 = yes; 0 = no, and did suspect cope legally: 1 = yes; 0 = no. The only two control variables that are not dichotomous are age and the number of times reloaded because these variables are continuous.

The following chapter provides two qualitative case studies as examples to give the reader knowledge on how the data will be collected and analyzed. The two qualitative case studies display important information about the suspect that illustrates the different types of control variables, dependent variables, and independent variables that will be used throughout the data set. In addition, the chapter after next will present quantitative results using a series of t-tests, and regression models to examine the seriousness and various outcomes of exposures to different strain types.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUALITATIVE CASE STUDIES

The following case studies are two examples of workplace violence incidents where the employee became aggressive and hostile towards other co-workers while at work. These examples give the reader some insight on how certain workplace violence incidents met the criteria for this particular research and selected for data processing. The perpetrators in these two examples suffered from different types of strain because they had assumed a false perception that they had been unjustly mistreated and believed in a false reality that a conspiracy was underway where their co-workers were out to cause harm against them. The following case studies are newspaper articles that have been paraphrased from the original content that was accessed from the ProQuest Newsstand website through the Cal State library database.

San Marco was a petite 44 year old Hispanic female who worked at the Goleta mail processing plant in California for no more than six years until she was involuntarily removed by the local sheriff authorities in restraints because she was suspected by the postal service inspector of having psychological issues that put herself

and others at harms-way which ultimately led to her being placed on immediate medical disability, indefinitely. Reports by some of her former co-workers described Mrs. San Marco as a normal attractive woman who was a loner, and was quiet, and kept to herself, and would politely speak when spoken to. Other co-workers described her as rude and a peculiar person with a history of strange behavior who, at times and for no apparent reason, would pick on and harass a particular utility worker by screaming and shouting at her while accusing other employees of strange accusations. Her strange behavior began to become more and more serious as co-workers noticed at times she would engage in constant conversations and frequently would argue among herself as if she were two different people. Mrs. San Marco's former boyfriend described her as "crazy" and reminisced the times when they were living together how she would go outside and sing loudly in obnoxious ways that disturbed nearby neighbors almost to the point of prompting many 911 calls for disturbing the peace and multiple verbal altercations with Beverly Graham, their next door neighbor.

Mrs. San Marco's psychological and mental disability became such a problem that many of her colleagues dreaded

her and her presences were unwelcomed by many. Her racially charged tirades and statements against others made her a target that was frequently disliked and outcast by many. After breaking up with her current boyfriend at the time, Ms. San Marco finally became enraged because on June 30, 2006, three years after her departure from the post office job in 2003, she gained access through a heavily guarded security station of her former job by passing behind the car she was following into the mail processing plant and obtained an employee's badge who she held at gun point armed with a 15 round 9mm handgun. On this day, San Marco shot and killed six of her former colleagues after, earlier that day, shooting her former neighbor Beverly Graham before taking her own life. Ms. San Marco's odd behavior began to unravel as she believed that she was a prime suspect centered in a conspiracy at the Goleta postal facility. She obviously suffered from a psychological disability where she perceived the world around her and the events that took place in her life in a false belief which prompted her to behave oddly and kill six of her employees and commit suicide (Molloy, 2006).

This next particular case study fits perfectly into the criteria of the General Strain Theory and workplace violence, where the perpetrator was exposed to a stressful

working environment and tried to cope legally but their efforts were denied and they resorted to criminal coping and illicit acts to strike back at the source. Yvonne Hiller, 43, was a former employee working at Kraft Foods (a facility in Philadelphia) who was suspended multiple times for her hostile behavior towards her co-workers and supervisor. Yvonne was reported to have mental problems and she claimed that she was constantly harassed by her co-workers who she claimed sprayed toxic chemicals mixed with deer scent on her and her home. The toxins gave off a potent smell that was both unbearable and intolerable to stand. Due to this type of strain, Hiller's violent behavior began to increase to a point that her co-workers brought it to their supervisor's attention because they felt threatened, worried as to what Hiller might do next.

Hiller was viewed as a problem child who blamed others for mistakes that were her own and who often engaged in verbal confrontations with co-workers using profanity and sometimes escalating to physical altercations. After her last confrontation with three employees, she informed the supervisor of her reoccurring problem with her co-workers and explained her side of the story; but after hearing both sides, the supervisor decided to suspend Hiller who had worked for Kraft Foods

for over 15 years. After she was disciplined, Hiller was escorted off the property and her employee badge was then confiscated and she left. Reports show that Hiller entered her car to arm herself with a magnum .357 and returned to work to seek revenge on those who had caused her harm. On September 10, 2010, Yvonne Hiller sought revenge on her co-workers and she reportedly killed two former co-workers and seriously wounded a third. This type of workplace violence serves as an example of workplace stress and strain because Yvonne, in her mind, was a victim of abuse and harassment; who was tormented emotionally and was physically exhausted by the taunts and threats of her co-workers to the point that she finally had enough and she snapped allowing her anger to take over. This shooting was not just some spontaneous act that took place while her victims were not randomly killed. This unfortunate incident was the result of a stressed-out person who tried to deal with her situation the best she could by coping with such job stressors using the resources she had available to her (Snyder, 2010).

Both studies show how a lack of healthy interpersonal relationships at work (such as poor social environment, and lack of support or help from friends, other workers, supervisors or family members) can lead to stress. Yvonne

Hiller is a prime example of someone who did not have a healthy interpersonal relationship with others because she was a divorced, single mom that lived by herself and was disliked by neighbors and co-workers. Her psychological disorder only exacerbated this type of stress which heightens one's senses of being depressed and feeling burned out at work. Suffering economic hardships and negative life experience will only further contribute to more suffering (NIOSH, 2001). Yvonne Hiller sought revenge against three of her co-workers who she thought had treated her poorly; and she then attempted to gun down a fourth, her supervisor, who survived the attack. Reports show that killing a boss is a basic trend in America where many disgruntled employees attempt to do so because the bosses are usually the ones that enforce the disciplinary actions such as layoffs, suspension, termination, or other (Geordie, 1992).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

In the current study there are a total of 50 workplace shooting case studies in the sample. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the demographic features of the respondents in the sample by describing the statistics of

the characteristics of an adult population in the work place in an experimental group that have met the criteria of specific strains while on the job that Robert Agnew has outlined in the General Strain theory. These characteristics serve as representation of the studies hypothesized in measuring the magnitude of certain strains. Different outcomes from these strains will lead to harsher, more serious criminal offenses.

Table 1. Description of Adult Population in the Work Force while Testing the General Strain Theory

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
Gender	50	.00	1.00	.9200	.27405
Age	50	21.00	68.00	42.5200	11.91679
Race_Dicot	50	.00	1.00	.4200	.49857
Number of strains	49	1.00	3.00	2.7551	.52164
Fail goals	50	.00	1.00	.8600	.35051
Neg stimul	50	.00	1.00	.9200	.27405
Loss positive	50	.00	1.00	.2000	.40406
Warning sign	50	.00	2.00	1.7200	.49652
Number of victims	50	1.00	31.00	4.4600	4.44104
Number of fatalities	50	.00	12.00	2.5600	2.35745
Type of weapon	50	1.00	5.00	1.6600	1.23899
legal permit	35	.00	1.00	.6286	.49024
Criminal history	50	.00	1.00	.3200	.47121
Suicide	50	.00	1.00	.5400	.50346
Mental history	50	.00	1.00	.2000	.40406
Supervisor attacked	50	.00	1.00	.8600	.35051
# of times Reloaded	35	.00	3.00	.5143	.74247
Suspect legally cope	50	.00	1.00	.3600	.48487

Table 2. Independent T-Test of Sample for Failure to Achieve Goals

Variable	Fail goal Yes=1 No=0	N	Mean	Std. D	Sig Lev	t
Age	1.00	43	43.0698	12.2812	.424	.806
	.00	7	39.1429	9.40618		
Gender	1.00	43	.9302	.25777	.518	.651
	.00	7	.8571	.37796		
Race dct	1.00	43	.4186	.49917	.961	-.049
	.00	7	.4286	.53452		
# of victims	1.00	43	3.7209	2.30244	.003	-3.175
	.00	7	9.0000	9.79796		
Fatalities	1.00	43	2.2093	1.89684	.008	-2.780
	.00	7	4.7143	3.72981		
# of times relaoded	1.00	29	.4828	.63362	.588	-.547
	.00	6	.6667	1.21106		
Suicide	1.00	43	.5349	.50468	.861	-.176
	.00	7	.5714	.53452		

The significant value are Equal variances assumed.

Table 2 reveals the results of an independent t -test sample to evaluate the number of victims, fatalities, number of times reloaded, gender, race, age, suicide, and whether or not there is a mean difference between those who fail to achieve goals and those without these strains. The T-test variable number of victims and fatalities is significant at $p = .003$, $t = -3.175$ and $p = .008$, $t = -2.780$. The table suggests that those who suffer from

failure to achieve goals kill fewer victims with a mean of 3.72 compared to those who do not suffer from failure to achieve goals and who kill more victims with a mean of 9.000. In addition, those who suffer from failure to achieve goals have fewer fatalities with a mean of 2.2093 compared to those with who did not suffer with a mean of 4.71 fatalities.

Table 3. Independent T-test of Sample for Loss of Positive Stimuli

Variable	Loss of posit Yes=1 No=0	N	Mean	Std. D	Sig Lev	t
Gender	1.00	10	.9000	.31623	.799	-.256
	.00	40	.9250	.26675		
Age	1.00	10	45.400	11.94618	.398	.852
	.00	40	41.800	11.95118		
Race dct	1.00	10	.4000	.51640	.889	-.140
	.00	40	.2450	.50064		
# of victms	1.00	10	7.3000	8.57710	.022	2.364
	.00	40	3.7500	2.28420		
Fatalities	1.00	10	3.8000	3.76534	.062	1.909
	.00	40	2.2500	1.79386		
# of times reloaded	1.00	7	1.1429	1.21499	.010	2.732
	.00	28	.3571	.48795		
Suicide	1.00	10	.3000	.48305	.092	-1.719
	.00	40	.6000	.49614		

The significant value is Equal variance assumed

Table 3 reveals the results of an independent t-test sample to evaluate gender, race, age, number of victims, number of times reloaded, and fatalities, suicide, and whether or not there is a mean difference between two groups: those with the loss of positive stimuli and those without this strain. The t-test variable's number of victims and number of times reloaded is significant with a p value of .022, $t = 2.364$ and a p value of .010, $t = 2.732$. The table reports that those who suffered the loss of positive stimuli have a higher number of victims with a mean of 7.3 compared to those who did not suffer a loss of positive stimuli and had fewer victims with a mean of 3.75. Also, those who suffered a loss of positive stimuli reloaded more with a mean of 1.1429 compared to those who did not suffer any loss that showed fewer reloads of .3571.

Table 4. Independent T-test of Sample for Negative Stimuli

Variable	Neg stimuli Yes=1 No=0	N	Mean	Std. D	Sig Lev	t
Gender	1.00	46	.9130	.28488	.548	-.605
	.00	4	1.000	.00000		
Age	1.00	46	42.4565	12.02166	.900	-.126
	.00	4	43.2500	12.28481		
Race Dct	1.00	46	.4348	.50121	.483	.707
	.00	4	.2500	.50000		
# of victms	1.00	46	4.4656	4.52993	.985	-.019
	.00	4	4.5000	3.78594		
Fatalities	1.00	46	2.5870	2.41823	.787	.272
	.00	4	2.2500	1.70783		
# of times reloaded	1.00	46	.5000	.76200	.716	-.367
	.00	4	.6667	.57735		
Suicide	1.00	46	.5435	.50361	.870	.164
	.00	6	.5000	.57735		

The significant value is Equal variances assumed

Table 4 reveals the results of the independent t-test sample to evaluate whether or not there is a mean difference between those who had negative stimuli and those who did not have negative stimuli based off gender, age, race, number of victims, fatalities, and number of times reloaded. The t-test variable gender is significant with a p value of .004, $t = -2.070$. This says that out of the total respondents, 4 were not exposed to the strain

presentation of negative stimuli. All other variables are not significant.

After running a series of independent T-tests for the sample study, the overall conclusion and cumulative results indicate that the strain type "failure to achieve goals" has fewer fatalities and fewer victims, and the findings were significant. Furthermore, the strain type, loss of positive stimuli, reported a significant finding and the results indicated that those who suffer from the loss of positive stimuli have more victims and have high numbers of reloading their weapons more. The strain type, presentation of negative stimuli was the only strain that had no significant mean difference. The results from the series of T-tests have found that there are different strains that lead to different outcomes which is a key finding that was predicted in the study's hypothesis.

Table 5. Regression Model Examining the Predictions of
Dependent Variable Fatalities

Model	B	Std. Err	Sig Lev
Constant	4.689	2.148	.035
Fail goals	-.2489	.935	.033
Gender	-.089	1.194	.965
Age	-.004	.028	.735
Race dicot	-.469	.660	.514
Negative stimuli	.141	1.206	.908
Loss positv	1.146	.838	.179
Adjusted R Square .071			

"B" is unstandardized coefficient

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the prediction of the seriousness of fatalities committed at the jobsite from gender, age, race, and the respondents' failure to achieve their goals, negative stimuli, and loss of positive stimuli. The table specifies that there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable fatalities and the independent variable failure to achieve goals because the p value is significant at .033 which is less than .05. However, my non-standardized coefficient "B" value indicates that there is an inverse relationship between these two variables which indicates that those with failure to achieve goals have fewer fatalities than those with other types of strain that may

increase the number of fatalities. In addition, there were no significant findings between negative stimuli and loss of positive stimuli with the prediction of fatalities. However, it is important to note the direction that these two strains report having is a positive relationship which means that those who suffer from negative and positive stimuli are likely to have more fatalities.

Table 6. Regression Model Examining the Predictions of Dependent Variable Number of Victims

Model	B	Std. Err	Sig Lev
Constant	8.311	3.846	.036
Fail goals	-4.634	1.743	.011
Gender	1.208	2.149	.577
Age	-0.16	.050	.758
Race dicot	-1.514	1.191	.210
Neg stimul	-.231	2.159	.915
Loss posit	2.666	1.500	.083
Adjusted R Square .162			

"B" is unstandardized coefficient

A linear regression model has been conducted to evaluate the prediction of the number of victims from independent variables failure to achieve goals, negative stimuli, and loss of positive stimuli with other control variables: race, age, and gender. The table indicates that

there is a significant linear relationship between dependent variable number of victims and independent variable failure to achieve goals because this has a p value of .011 which is less than .05. The table specifies that there is an inverse relationship between the two variables according to the unstandardized coefficient "B" value. This says that the numbers of respondents who fail to achieve their goal are likely to have less numbers of victims. In contrast, negative stimuli did not attain significance but it also has an inverse relationship which means, those with negative stimuli are likely to have less number of victims. Loss of positive stimuli did not attain significance but it is marginally significant at .083 and has a positive relationship with the number of victims which says those with a loss of positive stimuli are likely to have higher numbers of victims.

Table 7. Regression Model Examining the Type of Weapon

Model	B	Std. Err	Sig Lev
Constant	1.874	1.151	.111
Fail goals	.084	.521	.873
Gender	.242	.643	.709
Race	.274	.356	.446
Age	.016	.015	.285
Neg stimul	-1.454	.646	.030
Loss posit	.110	.449	.808
Adjusted R Square .035			

"B" is unstandardized coefficient

A linear regression model has been conducted to evaluate the type of weapon used from independent variables failure to goals, negative stimuli, and loss of positive stimuli with other control variables. The table indicates that there is significance between negative stimuli and type of weapon used with a p value of .030 which is less than .050. The table shows that there is an inverse relationship between the two variables according to the unstandardized coefficient "B" value. This says that those who suffer from negative stimuli are likely to use fewer weapons or choose a less serious weapon such as a hand gun in their attack in the workplace. Other strain variables such as failure to achieve goal and loss of positive stimuli did not attain significance, but they

have a positive relationship with type of weapon. This says that, if the suspect suffered any of these two strains, then they are likely to use multiple weapons or more serious weapons such as shotguns and assault rifles.

Table 8. Binary Logistic Regression Model Predicting Supervisor Attack

Variables	B	S.E.	Sig Lev
Gender	-20.127	18960.216	.999
Age	-.008	.053	.818
Race	.934	1.022	.312
Fail goals	1.155	1.143	.285
Neg stimuli	-19.582	.000	.999
Loss positv	-.439	.173	.677
constant	40.465	.000	.999
-2 Log Likelihood	35.266		
Nagelkerke R2	.179		

"B" unstandardized coefficient

Table 8 reveals the results of a Binary logistic regression model that was conducted to predict dependent variable supervisor attacked from gender, age, race, failure to achieve goal, negative stimuli, and loss of positive stimuli. However, there are no significant findings to indicate. It is still important to note the positive or negative direction of the independent

variables. According to the unstandardized coefficient "B" value, failure to achieve goal reports a positive direction with supervisor attacked while negative stimuli and loss of positive stimuli reported inverse relationships. This means that those who suffer from negative and loss of positive stimuli are less likely to attack their supervisor as opposed to those who fail to achieve their goal that are more likely to attack the supervisor. The reason is that, failure to achieve goal has to do with being terminated from a job, laid off, and denied from promotion which places the supervisor at the center of all these unfortunate events who plays a critical role in affecting the future of the individual's success.

Table 9. Binary Logistic Regression Model Predicting Suicide

Variable	B	S.E.	Sig Lev
Gender	-.016	1.106	.989
Age	.037	.028	.181
Race	.848	.640	.185
Fail goal	-.801	1.006	.426
Neg stimuli	-.012	1.217	.992
Loss positive	-1.646	.851	.053
constant	-.712	2.212	.737
-2 Log likelihood	61.363		
Nagelkerke R2	.189		

"B" unstandardized coefficient

Table 9 describes the results of a logistic regression model that was conducted to predict the dependent variable suicide from different strain types such as failure to achieve goal, negative stimuli, loss of positive stimuli, and other control variables. However, there are no significant findings in this model. It is still important to note the direction of each strain type. For this particular model, according to the unstandardized coefficient "B" value, all three-strain types failure to achieve goal, negative stimuli, and positive stimuli all have an inverse relationship with dependent variable suicide. This means that if an individual suffers from any

of these three strains, then they are less likely to commit suicide.

The following tables 10 and 11 are Binary logistic regression models ran with various other adaptations of strains that have not been categorized in the three major strains that Agnew refers to in his General Strain Theory. The reason is that, since failure to achieve goal, negative stimuli, and positive stimuli did not attain any significance in the earlier binary regression models, it is important to see if other external factors recorded in the data affect the outcome of different criminal behaviors.

Table 10. Binary Logistic Regression Model Predicting Supervisor Attack

Variable	B	S.E.	Sig Lev
Gender	-19.698	19744.866	.999
Age	.012	.037	.738
Race	.533	.963	.580
Suspect cope	-1.815	1.111	.102
Criminal history	-1.269	1.161	.274
Mental history	.849	1.363	.533
Warning signs	.199	1.021	.846
Number of strains	.693	.701	.323
constant	21.479	19744.867	.999
-2 log likelihood	36.673		
Nagelkerke	.124		

"B" unstandardized coefficient

Table 10 describes the results from a binary logistic regression model that was conducted to predict the dependent variable supervisor attacked from independent variables criminal history, warning signs, mental history, suspect coping skills, number of strains and other control variables. There are no significant findings based on those results. However, variables suspect coped and criminal history both have inverse relationships with supervisor attacked according to the unstandardized coefficient "B" value. This means that those who cope legally and those who have prior criminal history are less

likely to attack their supervisor. Whereas, suspect mental history, showed warning signs of distress, and number of strains all have a positive relationship which means they are all likely to attack their supervisor.

Table 11. Binary Logistic Regression Model Predicting Suicide

Variable	B	S.E.	Sig Lev
Gender	-.290	1.366	.832
Age	.020	.030	.496
Race	1.076	.735	.143
Suspect cope	.165	.820	.840
Criminal history	-1.021	.860	.235
Mental history	-1.546	1.020	.130
Warning signs	.351	.778	.652
Number of strains	-1.747	.997	.080
constant	4.026	3.159	.203
-2 log likelihood	52.348		
Nagelkerke	.354		

"B" unstandardized coefficient

Table 11 describes the results from a binary logistic regression model that was conducted to predict the dependent variable suicide from multiple strains, suspect mental history, criminal history, suspect coping skills, and other control variables. However, there are no significant findings at this time. Independent variables

criminal history, mental history, and number of strains all have inverse relationships with dependent variable suicide which is according to the unstandardized coefficient "B" value. This means those who have prior criminal history, mental history, and multiple strains are less likely to commit suicide. Whereas, suspect cope and warning signs have a positive relationship which means they are more likely to commit suicide.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY

The purpose of the current study was to attempt a partial empirical study of Agnew's General Strain Theory with respondents in the adult population while in the work setting during the time of a workplace shooting incident. The relationship between failure to achieve goals, negative stimuli, positive stimuli, and various forms of adaptation to strain by respondents who were employed was examined. To examine the General Strain Theory's ability as to whether or not certain strains can predict the seriousness of different outcomes in workplace shooting; three types of analyses were conducted to test if there was any significance between these variables.

It is important to note that the binary regression model was constructed to predict whether or not an employee would shoot his supervisor based off demographic factors such as race, sex, and age with a number of adaptations of strains such as the number of strains they are exposed to, warning signs, criminal history, mental history, and their coping skills. The results from the binary logistic model determined that there was no

significant evidence that could predict the outcome of a supervisor shooting based on these variables.

Furthermore, the prediction of whether the suspect would attempt suicide after the workplace shooting produced no significant findings, and the likelihood that they did commit suicide was mostly due to some other determining factor not included within this study such as intense emotions like anger, frustration, or depression that have been proven to increase the likelihood of crime, especially the more violent crimes (Agnew, 2001, 2006; Henry, Lanier, 2006).

Other findings from the binary regression models suggested that the predictions of a supervisor being attacked by an employee based on certain types of strain (outlined in Agnew's General Strain Theory) such as the failure to achieve goals, loss of positive stimuli, and the presentation of negative stimuli did not produce any significant findings. However, the interesting factor to note is the relationship they had with the dependent variables. Failure to achieve goals did not attain significance, but it had a positive relationship with attacking the supervisor which is a key finding because research shows that HR professionals such as managers and supervisors are people who are in leadership positions

that can give and take away because they usually are the ones who can authorize individuals for certain job promotions. However, in this case they are the ones who have to tell employees that they are being fired, laid off, demoted, or disciplined. These leadership roles often make them the targets of personal rage.

Table 9 dependent variable suicide was also examined and its prediction based on failure to achieve goals, loss of positive stimuli, and the presentation of negative stimuli could not produce any significant findings. In this particular case, the interesting key factor is the relationship that shows all three strains have an inverse relationship which indicates that those who suffer from failure to achieve goals, negative stimuli, and loss of positive stimuli are less likely to commit suicide. It may be possible that these strains are not strong enough predictors of suicide alone and that other key variables, not determined in this study, could contribute to attain significance such as the type of job, marital status, negative emotions, education, and religion.

Based on the series of results of the study's binary regression models, this is not to say that the General Strain Theory cannot accurately predict the outcome of workplace shootings. Instead, there is the possibility

that other control factors, not included within the study, could somehow contribute to the findings such as anger, frustration, and other forms of negative emotions. Unfortunately, certain types of strain that were thought to predict certain outcomes within the current study were unable to produce significant findings in the predictions of suicide or whether the supervisor would be attacked. However, there were significant findings found in the independent t-test that examined the mean difference between the General Strain Theory, those who failed to achieve their goals, and those who did not.

Table 2 independent t-test of failed goals described those who failed to achieve their goals would be more likely to have fewer fatalities and have fewer number of victims. These significant findings support the research hypothesis because the findings revealed that those who did fail to achieve their goal had a different criminal outcome with fewer victims and fewer fatalities than those who did not fail at achieving their goals.

Table 3 independent t-test of loss of positive stimuli also was determined to be significant and its estimates proved that those who suffered the loss of positive stimuli were more likely to have more victims in their shooting rampage than those who did not suffer a

loss. In addition, those who suffered a loss of positive stimuli, on average, had a higher number of weapon reloads than those who did not suffer a loss.

In a sense, these results make a compelling argument because in a typical shooting, the likelihood of the shooter having more victims can possibly depend on the number of times they reloaded their weapon. In terms of the correlation table, the results have attained significance and found that variable number of reloads was significantly correlated with the number of victims. A correlation analysis has been conducted and can be found in the Appendix section.

Table 4 independent t-test examined the strain presentation of negative stimuli and the results can be reviewed on page 78 table 4. Interestingly, this was the only strain that was unable to produce any significant findings between those who suffered from the presentation of a negative stimuli and those who did not based off the dependent variables, number of victims, fatalities, suicide, number of times reloaded, and the control variables sex, age, and race.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Previous research has tested the General Strain Theory by measuring the specific types of strain that are conducive to crime. What makes this current study unique is that it attempts to examine strain by providing a different way to examine workplace violence. Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory was able to conclude significant findings by examining different strain types and their influences on the seriousness of criminal behavior and different criminal outcomes. This study builds on the foundation of Agnew's General Strain Theory by describing the characteristics of different strain types and conditions that may influence the relationship to different criminal outcomes.

As mentioned earlier, strains are most likely to lead to crime when they are (1) seen as unjust, (2) are seen as high in magnitude, (3) are associated with low social control, and (4) create some pressure and incentive to engage in criminal coping. These four criminal triggering mechanisms were not individually measured in this particular study; but they were used to describe different strain types that the individual assumed to be

unjust, high in magnitude, low social control, and increased their risk of engaging into criminal coping. Based off this argument, two hypothesis questions were constructed and stated that the more strain an individual is exposed to can possibly lead to more serious crimes such as multiple victims/ fatalities and/ or the number or types of serious weapons used in their assault at work (such as handgun vs assault rifles). Additionally, it was argued that different types of strain one is exposed to can possibly lead to different outcomes in criminal offending. Based on these characteristics, the results revealed that certain types of strains indicated were either related or unrelated to the seriousness of crimes and different outcomes. Such strains included the failure to achieve goals, the loss of positive stimuli, and the presentation of negative stimuli with other strains that were found to be stressors of negative life events such as prior criminal history and mental disabilities.

The arguments presented in this study can be used as a template for future efforts to test the General Strain Theory in explaining the certain types of strains that should and should not be related to crime because certain types of strains in this current study were identified as having some type of relationship with the seriousness and

outcome of crime, such as failure to achieve goals and loss of positive stimuli. Examples of strains that were categorized in failure to achieve goals were those that were denied promotions, salary disputes, terminated, laid off, and disciplined. All of these strains were collected from the data and recorded as failure to achieve goals. Examples of loss of positive stimuli are those factors that the suspect placed a high value of importance such as the loss of home, loss of parental rights with their children, loss of a loved one, and other types of property loss. The presentation of negative stimuli did not attain any significance; but examples of the strains that were to define this type of strain were verbal abuse, harassment, interpersonal conflict with co-workers, psychological issues, and financial problems.

Agnew's General Strain Theory argued that one of the primary reasons certain strain types lead to crime is that they contribute to a wide range of negative emotions such as anger and frustration which create a tremendous amount of pressure on the individual causing them to want to correct their problems by reducing their ability to cope in a legal manner as well as reducing concern for cost and crime, all the while increasing their disposition for crime (Henry, Lanier, 2006).

From the results, strains such as failure to achieve goals and loss of positive stimuli can be assumed as those types of strains that make people feel bad and promote anger, which in turn increases the likelihood of more violent crimes. If somehow an individual's goal or dream to attain success in a career, educational status, or mere material success has been blocked either by being terminated, laid off, denied promotion, salary dispute, loss of valued property, or loss of a romantic lover, the results can be frustration, intense anger, depression, and other forms of negative emotions that can convert to illegal behaviors.

It is important to note that the three strain types failure to achieve goals, the presentation of negative stimuli and loss of positive stimuli were not consistent throughout the different analyses in attaining significant findings. Some strain types were able to attain significance in the t-test analyses but were unable to attain significance in other table analyses. For example, the presentation of negative stimuli did attain significance in table 5 of the linear regression model, but was unable to attain significance in the t-tests and the binary logistic tables. Similar results can be concluded with the other strains. The lack of evidence on

these types of strains could be due to inadequate measuring abilities on the researcher's part or it could be assumed that some strain types are not strong enough factors alone to predict different criminal outcomes and conclude significant findings. This case may support the fact that not all strained individuals cope through engaging in crime. Some, depending on the strain type, will likely engage in illicit behavior that is self-destructive such as drugs and alcohol use.

The current research purpose was to extend the knowledge of Agnew's General Strain Theory by attempting to expand and increase the knowledge of workplace violence through arguing the different outcomes and reaction of strains possibly linked to crime. However, the researcher fell short of this attempt because prior research has argued and successfully defended the fact that the reaction to different strains depends on two functions, the individual characteristics and the characteristics of the strain that is being experienced. Furthermore, strain is most likely to lead to crime when individuals possess characteristics conducive to criminal coping and the experience types of strain conducive to criminal coping (Agnew, 1992).

The factors in the current study that were used to describe the individuals' characteristics and the characteristics of the strain they were experiencing at the time were described as: age, race, sex, whether the suspect had mental disability, prior criminal record, the ability to cope legally, the number of strains they suffered from, and the type of strain they suffered. However, some of the characteristics above describing the individual state of condition and the type of strain suffered proved to be unrelated to likelihood of serious crime according to the results in this study. Therefore, the lack of statistical results may prove to be noteworthy to future efforts of the General Strain theory because the arguments in this current study are in need of future research and development in the predictions regarding the impact of the reactions to different strain types. The current arguments presented in this study are in need of further development; however, this does not discredit or diminish the central fact that some strains are more likely than others to result in the outcome crime. By utilizing the arguments of this study, future research can better understand and determine the extent to which these and other types of strain are seen as unjust, high in

magnitude, associated with low self-control, and increasing incentive for crime.

Limitations

The results reported in the analyses offer some support for the General Strain Theory, but also indicate a few errors on the researcher's part. For example, the way in which the theory was measured did not adequately account for some of the predicted criminal reactions of different types of strain. The presentation of negative stimuli and the magnitude of strain, such as the number of strain an individual is suffering from, are all key characteristics that Agnew has suggested lead to crime. In addition, the current analysis results reported that negative stimuli and the number of strains do not have a significant relationship to outcome of criminal behavior. Furthermore, the General Strain Theory also suggested that legitimate coping strategies serve as an important function in predicting the likelihood of crime. However, legitimate coping strategies were not measured or used in this study.

It is important to keep in mind that the present study offers some support for the General Strain Theory but failed to provide support for other strains that were

suggested to explain the seriousness and outcome of criminal behavior. The limitations of the current findings may suggest that the nature of the relationship among the assigned variables appears to be underdeveloped for the complexity of this research because Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory has shown that negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and depression that were not measured, defined, nor used in this current study are the primary strains that are strongly linked to the more violent crimes. These particular strains were not included in the study and may have possibly impacted the results.

In addition, due to the nature of the project, gender did not play a critical role in this study. Research has shown that strain/crime relationships also have significant relationship with the role of sex. In the current study with a sample of 50 respondents, sex did not play a key factor because there were only 4 respondents that were female. The lack of variation within the sex may have proven to have had a detrimental impact on this study because the role of sex has been proven to be a significant predictor of criminal outcomes.

The data collected was gathered from 50 case studies accessed through Cal State University of San Bernardino library data base ProQuest from the years 2000-2011. This

type of data collection limits the researcher mobility and control of certain factors that impedes and affects the outcome of their results. Future research should take a different approach in collecting data where they should go out and explore different job sites that have been targeted for workplace violence and ask and record respondents' answers based off stressful events and their emotional and behavioral responses, which may prove to provide a better test of the General Strain Theory in regards to predicting shootings and workplace violence.

APPENDIX
CORRELATIONS TABLE

Correlations	Number of Victims	Number of times Reloaded
Number of victims: Pearson Corr	1	.610**
Sig. (2tail)		.000
N	50	35
Number of times Reloaded: Pearson Corr	.610**	1
Sig. (2tail)	.000	
N	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

This correlation table was conducted to see if there is an significant correlation between the two variables. The results suggests that there is a positive correlation between variable number of victims and number of times reloaded because the Pearson correlation reads .610** which is less than .01 and has two asterisk which usually indicates a highly significant effect. The positive correlation means that the more victims there were, the more times the suspect possible reloaded their weapon. This makes intuitive sense because for example, if there are 7 to 10 victims that have been fatally shot. Depending on where the victims were shot other than the head which is likely to cause imminent death, this means that that there is a strong possibility that the suspect reloaded their weapon more than once. The overall finding is that there is a positive direction between the two, variables are highly correlated with a strong significance level which means they are less unique and they have more common with each other and there are no multicollinearity.

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